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**Career Development of Girls and Women:
the challenge for guidance**

by

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ABSTRACT

The adequacy of the theory underpinning current careers guidance practice is increasingly being questioned for particular client groups, including girls and women. Key criticisms relate to the philosophy of science that has dominated the research informing these theories, neglect of context, bias in sampling procedures and their failure to take account of changes in the labour market. The research reported in this thesis explores some of the factors that inhibit women's career development in the UK, as well as some that enhance it, in a way that takes account of these criticisms. The focus is on both the theory and practice.

Grounded theory informed the data collection and analysis phases of the research. Two questionnaires, the first of which was completed by one hundred and two participants, provided a progressive focusing of the study. In-depth interviews with nine of the female participants who had experienced discrimination in employment comprised the final stage of data collection. The research highlights, simultaneously, the similarities of the experiences of girls and women compared with boys and men, and the different ways girls and women responded to these experiences. Findings relate both to the contextual and individual factors that have influenced the career development of participants. Discrimination and sexual harassment emerge as important, and the strategies developed by participants to cope are identified. Perhaps most importantly, the research examines the lived experiences of women participants conveyed in their own voices. Implications for careers guidance practice are discussed. An accurate understanding of the context in which women's career development in the UK occurs is emphasised together with strategies which could improve guidance practice.

PART I: BACKGROUND

Chapter 1 Context of the Study

1.1 Introduction

Varied definitions of and approaches to research exist, reflected in terms such as investigation, inquiry, study, review and research. Activities implied by such terms may involve different techniques, levels of analysis, scrutiny and rigour and are probably undertaken for a range of purposes. Blaxter *et al.* (1996) present the image of a research spiral, stressing the features of the research process as one which is 'cyclical; can be entered at almost any point; is a never-ending process; will cause you to reconsider your practice; will return you to a different starting point' (p.10). This image of a spiral captures my own experience of research. In particular, the notion that research is never-ending resonates powerfully. Years of professional practice, teaching and research brought me to study for a doctorate. This provided me with the opportunity to develop a formal framework to make sense of my experience and thinking. It provided the challenge of gathering and interpreting data on an issue of personal importance, as well as making an original contribution to knowledge. Not least, it provided the challenge of engaging with a sustained piece of writing. Now this task is complete, perhaps the most powerful learning is to confront the inevitable truth that the process of my learning for research will, in fact, never be complete.

An interesting research question opens up an area of knowledge and allows different aspects of the topic to be seen (McLeod, 1999). My original research proposal, submitted

for registration for a doctorate in May, 1996 focused on the current theoretical base informing the practice of careers guidance in the United Kingdom. It implied the inadequacy of its theoretical underpinning with the following research questions:

- *Given the changed and changing labour market conditions, how adequate are theories developed from models of labour markets operating in the 1950s and 1960s for the new millennium?*
- *How can an understanding of social difference be integrated into guidance practice?*
- *Can guidance practice be developed in a way that protects the professional integrity of the practitioner, and preserve the objectivity of guidance whilst serving the requirements of fundholders?*
- *Can the concept of 'key competencies' form the basis of an empowering theory of guidance practice?*

The process of developing a research proposal and deciding the focus is discussed by Robson (1993). He emphasises the importance of identifying the specific issue about which information is gathered but reassuringly reminds us that a clearer focus and refinement of original ideas are an almost inevitable feature of the research process. Similarly, McLeod (1999) considers that identifying a research question that is both practically relevant and personally meaningful represents something of a challenge. It requires, he argues: 'a substantial amount of individual thought and working-through' (McLeod, 1999, p.44). So it was with my research. The topic area remained the same, the theoretical basis of current guidance practice, whilst the specific focus became much sharper:

- *In what ways does the career development of girls and women represent a challenge for guidance practice?*

The question still implied the inadequacy of the current theoretical underpinning of guidance practice, but shifts attention away from the labour market and service delivery to the particular challenge that girls and women pose, as clients, for guidance practice. This general area of inquiry is acknowledged to be under-researched (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1995; Hackett, 1997; Patton and McMahon, 1999; Phillips & Imhoff, 1997; Sharf, 1997). Harmon and Meara (1994) identify both the challenge and dilemma for research in this area:

Because this arena is fraught with uncertainty and because men and women are intimately involved in the issues related to career counseling and family life for women, perhaps we need to recognize that a more attainable goal may be to conduct career counseling with women 'better' rather than 'right'. Setting a goal of 'doing it better' acknowledges our commitment to our clients, and our understanding that both we and our clients are in the midst of growth processes that make it difficult to determine whether or not we are doing the 'best' or the 'right' things in our practice.

(Harmon & Meara, 1994, p.355)

1.2 Developing Research Competence

My research competence was already at a reasonable stage of development at registration for a MPhil/PhD. This resulted from a combination of education, training and employment experiences. Social scientific research was required for both my undergraduate and Masters degrees. Employment as a research assistant/fellow (with the University of London, 1972-1975) and subsequent involvement with a number of research and development contracts secured as part of my current role as Head of Centre for Training in Careers Guidance at a University in the south east of England have also provided relevant experience. However,

this competence has been substantially developed over the period of study for my doctorate. Though familiar with a range of approaches and methods as a result of past experiences, closer reflection revealed that I had previously tended to operate reactively and pragmatically rather than proactively and creatively. Resources (particularly time) were limited for research undertaken for educational purposes and I had operated within the circumscribed boundaries of assessment requirements, like word limits. Other research projects have often been restricted in the scope for selection and design of methods because of the requirements and conditions of funding bodies.

The features 'considered by researchers to characterise the antecedents of their successful and unsuccessful research' are reviewed by Robson (1993, p.26). Four out of five of the features of successful research arguably applied to my own context. Specifically these were: activity and involvement with the field; concern for theoretical understanding; intuition that the work is important, timely and appropriate; and the potential for practical application. The fifth, convergence, referring to the 'coming together of two or more activities of interest' (p.26) could also be regarded as a feature of my own research context, though perhaps less obviously. My occupational role as trainer for practice has both endorsed and developed my belief in the importance of theory for practice and my understanding of its current weaknesses. It constantly brings me into contact with practitioners, researchers and trainers. This continual involvement with theory, practice and research has produced the firm conviction that more practice-based research in careers guidance and counselling is needed.

Bell (1993) discusses how many educational researchers stress the desirability of

considering the practical applications of research because of a desire to improve practice for future generations of learners. This, they argue, does not deny the value and importance of focusing beyond current practice. Indeed, my own research focus seems to have settled somewhere between these two domains, reflecting the belief that a greater understanding of what happens beyond practice has the potential to improve it.

1.3 Motivation and Focus

My occupational role has also been an important source of motivation and focus for my research, additionally providing opportunities for data collection. For the past two decades, I have been educating and training postgraduates for careers practice in different departments in the University. Since 1983, the courses have been located in the Department of Psychology. This provides limited contact with psychology undergraduates. Additionally, as a tutor on the postgraduate Diploma in Careers Guidance and course tutor of the Masters in Careers, I have ongoing contact with two groups of postgraduates. Details about the manner in which I gained access for the purposes of research, and the nature of my relationship with these different student groups are provided in sections 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5, below.

Teaching responsibilities on the careers courses include four modules: 'labour market studies', 'equal opportunities', 'guidance and counselling theory' and 'advanced theory for practice' at both postgraduate and masters levels. The part of the labour market module for which I have responsibility requires the examination of subjective meanings of employment, unemployment, work, leisure, etc., together with a more objective consideration of statistical trends in the labour market. The 'equal opportunities' module focuses on the

effect of social variables such as social class, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation on educational achievement and success within the labour market. 'Guidance and counselling theory' and 'advanced theory for practice' examines past, current and promising future contributions with particular emphasis on how theory can be applied to practice. Teaching these modules has partly moulded my research interests and, of course, it was my interest in these areas that resulted in my teaching these modules. Two themes emerged recurrently as problematic for my teaching. First, how should careers guidance and counselling present and deal with the persistent inequalities experienced in the labour market in one-to-one interactions with clients? Second, how does and should theory informing practice support and facilitate this process?

The other strong motivational factor for undertaking doctoral research at what is undoubtedly a late stage of my career, came from my experiences of being a full-time working mother. From an analysis of UK labour market data, Hakim (1995) identifies three employment profiles for women. These are: 'continuous employment', referring to full time employment from leaving full-time education to retirement; 'the homemaker' consisting of a single period of continuous employment after leaving full-time education which ends in early adult life and is never resumed; and 'discontinuous or intermittent employment' describing periods of employment broken by domestic breaks or other period of non-work (Hakim, 1995, p.133). In these terms, my own employment profile has been continuous. For each of my own two pregnancies, I took only eighteen and twenty weeks, respectively, away from full time employment to give birth and recover. Hakim argues that whilst this continuous pattern of employment fits eighty per cent of men, it is typical of only about one quarter of women and that 'there has been a systematic decline in continuous employment

within successive cohorts of women' (Hakim, 1995, p.133). It appears, therefore, that my particular career trajectory is relatively unusual amongst women and is attracting fewer numbers. Indeed, my experiences of struggling with the employment structures within which I was located and balancing competing demands forced me to confront the questionable relevance of career theories to my own situation. This led, perhaps inevitably, to my questioning their relevance for other groups of women. Since I was teaching these theories to students for use in professional practice, something of an ethical dilemma emerged which I sought to resolve, in part, through my doctoral research.

Overall, my occupational context provided the motivation and focus for my research. Additionally, it provided the opportunity to gather data from various student groups.

1.4 Structure of Thesis

The thesis is structured into four parts. Part 1 has provided a general introduction. Part 2 consists of a literature review. Three bodies of knowledge are examined as relevant to the current inquiry: first, the policies, theories and practices of careers guidance and occupational choice; second, gender, education and the labour market; and third, careers counselling for women. Part 3 contains the research study. It discusses its purpose, describes the context, outlines methods and presents an analysis of data. A discussion of findings and the conclusions are presented in the final section, part 4.

PART 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2 Careers Guidance and Occupational Choice

2.1 The Policy Context & Definitions

Over the past two decades, the strategic importance of careers guidance in the UK has been acknowledged in a manner unprecedented during its relatively short history (Bimrose & Wilden, 1994). Various government reports and papers published during the 1980s and early 1990s positioned it as crucial in the general drive to increase the country's international competitiveness (for example, Department of Employment/Department of Education & Science, 1986; Department for Trade and Industry, 1994; Employment Department, 1994; Employment Department, 1995). Most recently, careers guidance has been 'refocused' on the socially excluded with the creation of the new Connexions Service, as one means of reintegrating the disadvantaged and disaffected into society (Department for Education and Employment, 1999; Department for Education and Employment, 2000a; Social Exclusion Unit, 1999).

Despite different ideological emphases of governments of the day regarding the primary focus of careers guidance, its policy focus has consistently assumed that if individuals who are in transition from education, who are not in employment or who wish to change jobs are matched with the 'right' jobs, training or education courses as quickly and effectively as possible, then everyone gains. This begs a number of questions. Two important ones are: who defines 'right' in this particular context, and what exactly are the forces operating

which prevent the matching of individuals to these opportunities without the intervention of guidance?

Alongside and possibly as a result of, the increasing importance attached to careers guidance by policy makers have come fundamental changes to the structures of guidance delivery. The Trade Union Reform and Education Rights Act of 1993 (Cabinet Office, 1993) contained the blueprint for a radical change to the delivery of careers guidance in England and Wales for young people. The provision of careers services (under the control of Local Education Authorities since 1974) was opened up to competitive tendering and successful bidders were required to contract directly with the Secretary of State for Employment (Education and Employment after 1995) for periods of between three to five years. The new careers service companies were funded on the basis of measurable outcomes. Initially, this was the number of action plans completed at the end of a careers guidance interview which met specified criteria (Department for Education and Employment, 1998). Watts (1991) suggests that the three main strands of influence shaping these changes are: 'using guidance as a form of social control; supporting guidance as a means of making markets work; and making guidance services themselves more responsive to market forces' (p.230).

The change of government in 1997 brought a different philosophy for careers guidance, at least in England. Careers services were mandated to re-focus on socially excluded young people. From September 1999, performance has been measured on the basis of the numbers of 'disaffected' young people placed into long-term education, training or jobs by

the newly created profession of 'Personal Advisor' (Department for Education and Employment, 2000b). The structures for the delivery of careers guidance are also set to change (Department for Education and Employment, 2000c). A new, national organisation called 'Connexions' will require partnership arrangements with other agencies (such as the Youth Service). This change will be effected from April, 2001, with thirteen pilots operating before this deadline (Department for Education and Employment, 2000d).

Alongside changes to policies and mechanisms for the delivery of careers guidance, government attention has also been focused on training for the practitioners and managers on whom the success of Connexions will rest. Policy makers for careers guidance uncritically accepted the ideology underpinning narrow forms of work-based assessment in the early 1990s. National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) for guidance (levels 3 and 4) and for management (levels 4 and 5) were introduced in the mid 1990s with no account taken of published critiques which discussed problems with (NVQ) competence-based assessment in practice in other occupational areas (for example, Butterfield, 1995; Hodkinson & Issit, 1995; Hyland, 1994; Wolf, 1995). The development and implementation of a new 'Qualification in Careers Guidance' (QCG) for practitioners, with a heavy bias towards work-place assessment and competency, is currently underway with full implementation indicated for the year 2001/2002. Although the QCG is a qualification in its own right, it seems likely that those successfully completing the QCG off-the-job in higher education will then be required to complete the NVQ4 in Guidance, before being regarded as occupationally competent – at least for government contracts.

An understanding of the volatile policy context for careers guidance is important in any evaluation of its effectiveness. So, too, is an understanding of its meaning. The definition of careers guidance is, however, elusive. One of the major conclusions of a review of careers literature by Collin and Young (1986) was that the area 'lacks rigorous definition and clarification of its basic concepts' (p.839). In North America, Holland (1982) identified the absence of any clear definition as accentuating many difficulties with both theory and practice (p.8). In the UK, Heaviside (1995) argued that lack of clarity of definition of careers guidance confused clients and inhibited the development of practice (p.8).

Miller *et al.*'s (1983) proposition that guidance consists of five inter-related activities (informing, advising, teaching, counselling and feeding back) represents one way of making sense of its meaning. The conceptualisation of 'guidance' as consisting of a number of related activities has been adopted and developed in recent years (Oakeshott, 1990; Standing Conference of Associations for Guidance in Educational Settings, 1991). Similar definitions, comprising a collection of activities, are advanced from European research findings (Watt, 1996; Watts *et al.*, 1994). Yet no one definition is generally accepted (Hawthorn and Butcher, 1992, p.11; Killeen and White, 1992, p.1). This view was endorsed by the then Lead Body (Advice Guidance & Counselling Newsletter, 1993) which reported on the inconsistency of definitions and functions of the activities of advice, guidance and counselling and referred to the way the task of identifying occupational standards for these professional activities had been 'haunted by difficulties with terminology and definitions arising out of a lack of clarity about the differences between advice, guidance and counselling' (p.2).

The ambiguity continues, exacerbated by the changing nature of 'career'. In the North American context, Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) postulate that the concept of career has recently undergone a transformation (p.50) and distinguish between career choice as a point-in-time 'event' and a developmental 'process' over a longer period of time (p.54). Whilst acknowledging that broader definitions which include life roles and life span have emerged, they suggest a more 'parsimonious' definition (p.51), limited to vocational behaviour and vocational development. This is one offered by Arthur *et al.* (1989) who proposed that career is 'the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time' (p.8). Similarly, Young and Collin (2000) consider career to have been a key notion in twentieth-century Western societies, and identify a range of meanings. These comprise career as an abstract concept referring to the 'individual's movement through time and space'; as a construct used in academic, professional and lay discourse; as a construct used in organisational and social rhetoric (to motivate and persuade employees); as a construct embracing attitudes and behaviours associated with work-related experiences over a life-span; and as a construct involving self-identity, hopes, dreams, fears and frustrations (p.3). 'Overall, career can be seen as an overarching construct that gives meaning to the individual's life' (Young & Collin, 2000, p.5).

In the UK, a debate is underway regarding the adoption of 'career' in careers guidance in the singular or plural. Collin and Watts (1996) argue its use in the singular, since this represents 'a clear signal of intent to move to a new post-industrial definition' (p.396). There is some evidence that this argument has been won, at least in some quarters, since the professional association for careers guidance recently (from September, 2000) adopted

the singular form of career for its official title, Institute of Career Guidance, and for its journal, *Career Guidance Today*.

Because of the ongoing debate about the nature of careers guidance, a number of terms that variously combine 'guidance', 'counselling' and 'careers' are currently used to imply subtle, but important distinctions in practice such as: guidance, careers guidance, vocational guidance, vocational counselling, adult guidance, educational guidance, careers counselling, careers education and guidance (Bimrose, 1996, p.54). An examination of practice in the area reflects the terminological confusion. Whilst 'counselling' has succeeded in establishing itself with a single professional body, namely the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), 'guidance' remains a more fragmented area of activity. Watts (1991, p.232) identifies no less than four professional guidance associations: the Institute of Careers Officers, the National Association of Careers and Guidance Teachers, the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services and the National Association for Educational Guidance for Adults.

Overall, then, an examination of the current policy context for careers guidance reveals a relatively new occupational area struggling to emerge and establish its identity as a profession. Over the past two decades, it has been manipulated by fundholders to fit various visions of support for those in transition from education in employment, of support for economic competitiveness and, most recently, to address the problems of social exclusion. Debates about definition continue. Legislation to date has been confined to entitlements for young people, though resources are increasingly being directed by government towards

adult guidance to expand this area of service provision. An examination of the development of practice provides further insights to its current status and operation.

2.2 The History of Practice

A ping-pong ball being batted from one opponent to another provides a useful image of the development of the careers service in the UK over the past hundred years. Around the beginning of the 20th century, dual-service provision existed for youth in transition from compulsory education into the labour market (Heginbotham, 1951). On the one hand, educationalists were concerned that 'youth' (in those days, this referred to young men) be supported and assisted with their transition into the labour market. On the other hand, there were those aligned to the Ministry for Labour who recognised that the State needed to take some responsibility in assisting school leavers to settle into their niche in the labour market. Thus, provision initially developed from the concerns of individuals located both in the Ministries for Education and Labour, and (perhaps because of this) was somewhat patchy for the first half of this century. The Second World War redefined policy priorities for many social areas, including labour market services.

The first major piece of employment legislation relating to careers guidance was the Employment and Training Act of 1948 (Heginbotham, 1951, p.135). This defined the requirement for a national 'Youth Employment Service', controlled by the Ministry for Labour. It acknowledged young people in transition from compulsory education needed to have help available from information and job placement services. No accredited training was required for 'youth employment officers' and training support, where provided,

generally took the form of short (usually six weeks) skills training. The rationale for the provision of such a service related to the pragmatic requirement to ensure the best fit for the labour-force in a country undergoing economic recovery after World War II.

The second piece of legislation redefining the role and functions of careers guidance was the Employment and Training Act 1973 (Department of Employment, 1973). This reflected economic, social and political changes, which had occurred during the 1950s and 1960s. Control was transferred from the Ministry of Labour to Local Education Authorities, which were given statutory responsibility to provide a career guidance service for young people up to the age of 18 (or older in certain circumstances).

Recommendations were made about professional training for the newly established 'careers officers'. This was to take two years. The first year was 'off-the-job' in higher education, successful completion of which resulted in the award of the Diploma in Careers Guidance (DCG) Part I. This was followed by a further year of supervised practice with a local authority careers service to qualify for the award of Part II. This legislation marked the first major step towards the creation of a professional careers guidance service.

The rationale for the new careers service was, once again, to facilitate the satisfactory placement of young people into jobs, education or training courses. However, the Act established a different ethos by recognising young people as primary clients (Bimrose and Wilden, 1994). Consequently, careers guidance was more readily identifiable as a professional activity. Moreover, while individual interviews with young people still formed the core activity of the careers service, additional responsibilities were defined, such as

work with employers, group work with young people in schools and colleges, advisory and consultancy work with parents and teachers and work with the unemployed (Ranson and Ribbins, 1988). New theories were necessary to equip practitioners with the knowledge and understanding necessary to respond to the increasing and varied policy demands.

The third major piece of legislation, the Trade Union Reform and Education Rights Act (1993) stripped Local Education Authorities of their powers of control over careers services and returned them to the (then) Employment Department through competitive contracts awarded by central government. Private careers service companies were formed and for the first time funding was based directly on performance and outcomes. A culture of competitiveness was engendered, with companies required to generate income from a variety of sources.

Further change, referred to in section 2.1 above, is pending. Roberts (2000) proposes that careers guidance 'is undergoing its most thorough change since 1910' (p.27). Once again, the structure and functions of careers services will be transformed, together with the role of practitioners. New ways of working are being required involving collaboration and co-operation, rather than competition. The new service must respond to the special needs of disaffected young people, whilst maintaining universality of provision.

In summary, responsibility and control for careers guidance for young people has rested variously with the departments for education and/or employment over its short history, with control being shifted from central to local government and back again to central

government. However, none of these changes (or the merger of the departments for education and employment in 1995) have affected the dominant ideology for careers guidance imposed by different governments. Current policy still emphasises the desirability of matching individuals to the needs of the labour market, with the Connexions service being judged on its ability to place disaffected young people in ‘appropriate’ long-term education, training or employment.

2.3 Theory Underpinning Practice: past and present

Whilst legislation defining structures and outcomes for careers services has reflected the varied ideological pre-dispositions of policy makers in the UK, theories underpinning practice have come mainly from North America. Varied accounts exist which identify the main influences in the development of this body of knowledge (for example, Arthur *et al.*, 1989; Brown *et al.*, 1990; Gibson and Mitchell, 1999; Miller-Tiedeman, 1999; Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996; Scharf, 1997; Seligman, 1994; Zunker, 1994). Despite competing perspectives on the particular strands of influence, there is general agreement that Frank Parsons was the founder of the vocational guidance movement. His seminal work ‘Choosing a Vocation’ was published posthumously in 1909, with the key idea about how people choose jobs being initially referred to as the ‘talent matching’ approach (Parsons, 1909). This later developed into what became known as the ‘trait and factor’ or matching theory of occupational choice, generally located within differential psychology (see the following section, 2.3.1 below).

Theorists from this academic tradition have had (and continue to have) a significant impact

on practice in the UK, particularly Alec Rodger (1952) and John Holland (1966, 1973, 1985, 1992). The legacy of their ideas is evident. For example, documentation used by careers practitioners to record client information throughout the 1970s was modelled on Rodger's Seven Point Plan with headings such as 'physical characteristics' and 'circumstances' providing prompts for data collection by practitioners. Additionally, materials often used during interviews and careers education programmes reflect Holland's ideas about matching personality to congruent occupational environments (for example, 'Signposts', a card index box through which clients can sort, with each section indicating a particular type of occupational context like 'Active/Outdoor' which contain cards describing different jobs characteristic of this type of environment). Still further testimony of the influence of this approach in the UK came from the Chief Inspector for Careers Services, who argued that; 'Matching appears to be at the heart of all guidance' (Heaviside, 1995, p.10).

Whilst the dominant influence of trait and factor theories is still evident in practice, the range of theories that careers guidance practitioners have used to inform their practice has expanded. Kidd *et al.* (1993, 1994) undertook research into the working models of guidance practice and identified theories that qualified and experienced practitioners reported as being influential to their practice. These included career theories from both psychology (differential, developmental, psychodynamic, behavioural and humanistic) and sociology (occupational allocation and community interaction). There is reason to believe that a wider range of theories than this research suggests inform practitioners (Bimrose & Bayne, 1995). However, a brief outline of career theories influencing UK practice, as

identified by Kidd *et al.* (1993, 1994) and Kidd (1996), follows.

2.3.1 Trait and Factor Theories

Parsons (1909) adopted a 'talent matching' approach which subsequently developed into the 'trait and factor' theory of occupational choice. The core concept is one of 'matching'. Parsons (1909) postulates occupational choice occurs when people have achieved first, an accurate understanding of their individual traits (e.g. personal abilities, aptitudes, interests, etc.); second, a knowledge of jobs and the labour market and third, made a rational and objective judgement about the relationship between these two groups of facts. A key assumption is that it is possible to measure, objectively, both individual talents and the attributes required in particular jobs, which can then be matched to achieve a 'good fit'. It is when individuals are in jobs best suited to their abilities, they perform best and productivity is highest.

As previously indicated (section 2.3), the two theorists who developed their ideas within this tradition who have been particularly influential on UK guidance practice are Alec Rodger (1952) and John L. Holland (1966, 1973, 1985, 1992). Like Parsons (1909), both assumed that matching is central, that vocational choices are largely one-off events, essentially rational and devoid of emotions.

Rodger's (1952) 'Seven Point Plan', originally devised for use in selection interviews, was enthusiastically embraced by guidance practitioners as a useful model to inform practice. It consists of seven attributes: physical characteristics, attainments, general intelligence,

specialised aptitudes, interests, disposition and circumstances. Application to practice of this model involves first, an evaluation of jobs against these seven attributes and second, assessment of an individual client against these seven attributes to ascertain the extent to which the client is a 'good fit'. Only when there is an acceptable match of the two sets of attributes can a recommendation be made by the guidance practitioner to the client that this is an area worth pursuing. The model can also be used to assess whether client aspirations for a particular job or career are realistic when reviewed against actual achievements or potential; to generate job ideas for a client who had few or no job ideas; and to analyse jobs, employment and training opportunities.

Holland (1966, 1973, 1982, 1985 & 1992) developed an occupational classification system that categorises personalities and environments into six model types: realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising and conventional. In his matching approach he proposed first, that everyone can be categorised into one or more of six personality types; second, that work environments can also be categorised in this way; third, that vocational choice involves individuals searching for work environments that are congruent with their personality type. Subsequent developments of the theory place more emphasis on the interaction of the individual with their environment and the influence of heredity (Holland, 1985, 1992). Holland (1994) noted how he had 'been renovating the internal structure of [his] own theory (Holland, 1992) to give it more explanatory power' (p.50). He referred specifically to the way in which he had elaborated his typology to include life goals, values, self-beliefs and problem-solving styles, and how the developmental nature of types over the life-span is now incorporated (Holland, 1994).

Osipow & Fitzgerald (1996) consider Holland's study of vocational selection and behaviour to be very comprehensive, within his theoretical framework (p.80). They verify how extensive investigations and modifications to the original ideas have been undertaken, yet the theory 'remained fundamentally unchanged' (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996, p.90). On the 40th anniversary of Holland's first theoretical statement, the *Journal of Vocational Behaviour* documented the progression and development of his ideas. In the introduction to this festschrift, Savickas (1999) describes Holland's contribution as 'a surpassing achievement in vocational psychology' (p.2). Continuing this theme, Gottfredson (1999) describes how Holland's 'monumental research, theoretical, and practical contributions have irrevocably altered the manner in which career assistance is delivered around the world' (p.15). It seems unquestionable, therefore, that Holland's ideas have had, and continue to have, a major impact.

The significant, continuing influence of differential approaches on the practice of careers guidance is acknowledged by Savickas (1997) who claims that: 'Parson's paradigm for guiding occupational choice remains to this day the most widely used approach to career counselling' (p.150). Krumboltz (1994) concurs, suggesting that most current practice is 'still governed by the three-part theory outlined by Frank Parsons (1909)' (p.14). However, he is critical of Holland's influence, attributing current problems with career counselling to the continuing influence of this approach. These problems include the low prestige of the profession, the lack of fit of careers counselling within a particular academic tradition and the absence of any significant input in educational reform (Krumboltz, 1994, p.14).

The continued popularity of the matching approach to guidance can be explained, partly, by its practical appeal. It provides practitioners with a clear rationale and framework for practice. Their role is clearly defined as 'expert', with specialist knowledge about the labour market and the methods to assess individual suitability and capability for the labour market. Additionally, and importantly in the UK, the underlying philosophy of differential approaches have suited policy makers since they lend themselves to the servicing of labour market requirements. People perform best in the jobs for which they are best suited. Consequently, it has been embraced enthusiastically by policy makers and barely questioned by the majority of practitioners.

The theory contains, however, serious flaws. Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996) criticise its usefulness in current labour market conditions. Matching assumes a degree of stability in the labour market. The volatility of many occupational environments, together with the increased pressure on individuals to change and adapt to their circumstances makes: 'Trying to place an evolving person into the changing work environment is like trying to hit a butterfly with a boomerang' (p.263). Osipow & Fitzgerald (1996) also highlight the failure of the theory to address the issue of change in environments and individuals. Additionally, they draw attention to problems inherent with the theory's associated measures for gender, but regard the most serious limitation to be its failure to explain the process of personality development and its role in vocational selection (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996, p.104). Scharf (1997) reminds us that:

There is little research supporting or refuting trait and factor theory itself as a viable theory of career development. Rather, the research that has been done, of which

there is a large amount, has related traits and factors to one another or has established the validity and reliability of measurements of traits and factors.

(p.26)

Research designed to evaluate Holland's theory for particular client groups also reveals weaknesses. Mobley and Slaney (1998) suggest that although extensive empirical and theoretical investigations have explored the use and relevance of Holland's theory, 'considerably less attention has been devoted to investigating the implications of the theory from a multicultural perspective' (p.126). For example, Leong *et al.* (1998) studied the cross-cultural validity of Holland's (1985) theory in India. Whilst its internal validity was found to be high, results regarding external validity were 'less than encouraging on several fronts' (p.449). They concluded that their findings suggest that culture specific determinants of occupational choice should be studied as alternatives to the 'Western assumption of vocational interests being the primary determinants' (p.453).

In their study of gender differences in Holland's occupational interest types, Farmer *et al.* (1998) found limitations for the practical applications of the theory for women, concluding that 'counselors may need to re-evaluate Holland *et al.*'s advice on consistency and job stability' (p.91). Sexual orientation is an aspect of Holland's theory that Mobley and Slaney (1998) consider overlooked. In particular, they suggest that the relationship between Holland's concept of congruence and gay and lesbian development need to be carefully researched. Another relevant aspect neglected in Holland's ideas is homophobic tendencies both in the workplace and society at large (p.131).

Despite weaknesses, it is likely that the theory will continue to inform practice. Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) suggest that Holland's theory 'will exert an influence on research in career choice for some time and begin to have a growing impact on counseling itself' (p.105). No viable alternative existed during the first half of this century, and it was not until the 1950's and 1960's that theories originating from different branches of psychology like developmental, behavioural and psychodynamic, together with other academic disciplines such as sociology meant that practitioners had other options. Theories developed from these academic disciplines emphasised, respectively, the importance of the maturation process of individuals, the key role played by the environment in facilitating the learning of the individual, the importance of parental influences and the constraining influence of the context in which occupational 'choice' occurred. It is to the theory that argued that vocational choice was a developmental process, rather than a 'one off', that we now turn.

2.3.2 Developmental Theory

The general principles underlying developmental approaches to careers guidance are that individual development is a continuous process; the developmental process is irreversible; these processes can be differentiated into patterns called stages in the life span; and that the result of normal development is increasing maturity. Names most closely associated with this theory of vocational choice are Eli Ginzberg and Donald Super.

Ginzberg *et al.* (1951) proposed three life stages, which broadly corresponded with chronological age. First came the fantasy stage which lasted up until eleven years old;

second, the tentative stage, lasting from ages eleven to seventeen, with the three sub-stages of interest, capacity and value; third, the realistic stage, which lasted from age seventeen onwards, with sub-stages of exploration, crystallisation and specification.

Super was one of Ginzberg's doctoral students who developed many of his ideas. He thought Ginzberg's work had weaknesses, one of which was the failure to take into account the very significant existing body of information about educational and vocational development (Osipow & Fitzgerald, 1996, p.111). Super (1957) and Super *et al.* (1961) extended Ginzberg's three life stages to five (with slightly different sub-stages), arguing that occupational preferences and competencies, individual's life situations (and hence their self-concepts) all change with time and experience. He also developed the concept of vocational maturity, which may or may not correspond to chronological age. Super's five stages were growth, which lasted from birth to fourteen; exploration, lasting from fifteen to twenty four, with the sub-stages of crystallisation, specification and implementation; establishment, from twenty five to forty four, with sub-stages of stabilisation, consolidation and advancing; maintenance, from forty five to sixty four, with sub-stages of holding, updating and innovating; finally the fifth stage of decline, from age sixty five onwards, with sub-stages decelerating, retirement planning and retirement living (Super, 1957).

In Super's formulations about career, a time perspective is centrally important to the career development process:

It has always seemed important to maintain three time perspectives: the past, from which one has come; the present, in which one currently functions; and the future, toward which one is moving. All three are of indisputable importance, for the past shapes the present and the present is the basis for the future. But if I were forced to

declare a preference in orientation to time, it would be for the future - even after more than fifty years of work experience.

(Super, 1990, p.197).

He continued to develop his thinking for over forty years, with the life-career rainbow (1980, p.289) representing a significant advance. It emphasised the importance of different roles that individuals assume at different stages of their life (specifically child, student, leisurite, citizen, worker, homemaker), the concept of life space and life cycles. The life cycle assumed an increasingly central role in the more recent versions of Super's theory (1980, 1990 & 1994) and the development of his ideas about self-concept and vocational adjustment resulted in a redefinition of vocational guidance as:

the process of helping a person to develop an integrated and adequate picture of himself and of his role (sic) in the world of work, to test this concept against reality and to convert it into a reality, with satisfaction to himself and benefits to society.

(Super, 1988, p.357)

It was not until his archway model that Super formally conceded the importance of contextual influences operating on individual choice, and acknowledged the contributions from a range of academic disciplines to our understanding of vocational choice (Super, 1990).

Brown (1990) notes the phenomenological, developmental and differential influences on the expansion and refinement of Super's thinking, suggesting that it was because of these disparate influences that Super failed to integrate strands into a cohesive statement (Brown,

1990, p.355). Indeed, Super acknowledged that a weakness of his theory was its fragmented nature, anticipating its future development:

What I have contributed is not an integrated, comprehensive and testable theory, but rather a 'segmental theory'. A loosely unified set of theories dealing with specific aspects of career development, taken from developmental, differential, social, personality and phenomenological psychology and held together by self-concept and learning theory. Each of these segments provides testable hypotheses, and in due course I expect the tested and refined segments to yield an integrated theory.

(Super, 1990, p.199)

This fragmentation was identified as the most serious criticism of the theory (Super *et al.*, 1996) in a chapter published after Super's death in 1994: 'Its propositions are really a series of summarizing statements that, although closely related to data, lack a fixed logical form that could make new contributions of their own' (Super *et al.*, 1996, p.143).

Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) consider the original version of the theory was too general to be of much practical use, with its conceptual value being limited by its sweeping style - though this weakness had been addressed by subsequent refinements (p.143). They argue that a particular weakness is the failure of the theory to integrate economic and social factors that influence career decisions (p.144). This concern is echoed by Scharf (1997) and Brown (1990), who propose that Super's theory does not adequately address the particular challenges that women and ethnic groups present career theory (Brown, 1990, p.355; Scharf, 1997, p.153). Brown (1990) also specifically criticises the theory for its failure to account adequately for the career development of persons from lower socio-economic groups (Brown, 1990, p.355). Linked with these criticisms is an important concern

identified by Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) that 'in recent years relatively few new empirical tests of the theory have been conducted' (p.144).

Despite weaknesses, Brown (1990) suggests that Super's theory 'occupies stage centre, along with Holland's thinking. There seems to be no reason to doubt that it will continue to be of considerable importance in the future' (p.356). In contrast to the developmental emphasis placed by Super (1959, 1980, 1990) on the career process, the next theory to be discussed focuses attention on the centrality of learning to career progression.

2.3.3 Social Learning Theory

Originating from behavioural psychology, social learning theory has been adapted by John Krumboltz and associates (for example, Mitchell, Jones and Nicols) into a theory for careers counselling. The initial theory (Krumboltz *et al.*, 1976, Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1990), known as the social learning theory of career decision making (SLTCDM), has recently been developed into the learning theory of careers counselling (LTCC) (Mitchell and Krumboltz, 1996). The more recent version attempts to integrate practical ideas, research and procedures to provide a theory that goes beyond an explanation of why people pursue various jobs:

While the two theories were published at different times, they can be conceptualized as one theory with two parts. Part one (SLTCDM) explains the origins of career choice and part two (LTCC) explains what career counsellors can do about many career-related problems.

(Mitchell and Krumboltz, 1996, p.234).

The key concept of the theory is learning, and the focus is on teaching clients career

decision-making strategies. Within this theoretical framework, careers practitioners operate more in a teaching support role, helping their clients to identify and then rectify inaccurate beliefs. Methods central to this process are reinforcement and modelling, used to help clients unlearn inaccurate and/or incorrect beliefs and relearn correct ones.

The SLTCDM was designed to address the question of:

why people enter particular educational programs or occupations, why they may change educational programs or occupations, and why they may express various preferences for different occupational activities at selected points in their lives.

(Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1996, p.237)

Krumboltz *et al.* (1976) posited the influences of four categories of factors on career choice. The first is genetic endowment and special abilities, which refers to inherited qualities such as race, sex and physical characteristics. The second set focuses upon environmental conditions and events, including social, cultural, political and other influences, which are generally outside the control of individuals. Third, individual learning experiences, including both instrumental and associative learning are delineated. Fourth, there are task approach skills, comprising skills such as work habits and standards of performance (Krumboltz, 1976). It is the interaction of the first three groups of influences that result in the development of the fourth. Furthermore, people develop beliefs about themselves and the world of work which represent their own reality as a result of a complex interaction of these four sets of factors in what is referred to as 'the living systems framework' (Krumboltz and Nicols, 1990, p.175). These beliefs influence the approach to learning new skills and ultimately affect aspirations and behaviour.

The implications of the SLTCDM are first, that occupational placement is the result of a complex interaction of genetic components, environmental events and learning experiences which result in development of various task approach skills. Second, that selection is a 'mutual process' (Krumboltz *et al.*, 1976, p.80) involving individual decision-making and social forces. Third, that because of the complexity of the process, prediction is impossible. Fourth, that career selection is a lifelong process. Fifth, indecision is the result of not having had certain learning experiences. So, the tasks of the practitioner are to arrange relevant learning experiences and to help clients learn a rational sequence of career decision-making skills (Krumboltz *et al.*, 1976, p.80). Subsequent research revealed that clients who felt little personal control might be most receptive to being taught rational decision-making strategies (Krumboltz *et al.*, 1986).

Like others, this theory has been developed in response to changing circumstances. In particular, the consequences of shifts in labour markets has stimulated the identification of particular issues with which clients are likely to require assistance from careers practitioners. Specifically, the need to expand their capabilities and interests; the need to prepare for changing work tasks by re-skilling and up-skilling; and the need to be empowered to take action. In order for these issues to be effectively addressed, an integrated approach to practice needs to be adopted which combines personal with careers counselling (Mitchell and Krumboltz, 1996, p.250).

The need to measure the outcomes of guidance and evaluate practice are also discussed by

Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996), in response to the changing policy context in which careers counselling is now delivered. Traditional goals for careers counselling were to reduce indecision in clients and to try to ensure congruence, or fit, between the individual client and their work environment. However, it is argued that these criteria are no longer relevant and should be replaced by criteria such as whether the client has been stimulated towards learning and whether the client has been helped adjust to the constant changes in the world of work (Mitchell and Krumboltz, 1996, p.263).

Empirical evidence relevant to the SLTCDM is reviewed by Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996), who conclude that there is considerable support for key propositions in the theory, but that 'much remains to be learned' (p.270). The strength of the theory lies in its potential to 'evolve and change easily as new facts and anomalies are revealed' (Krumboltz, 1994, p.29). Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) identify the strengths of SLTCDM as: 'first in its great explicitness with respect to its objectives and the means to accomplish these objectives, and second in its emphasis on the environment and social influences' (p.177). Brown (1990) agrees with this analysis, though observes that although materials have been produced, they have not yet been integrated into career development programmes to the extent of those produced by Holland and Super (p.357).

Negative aspects of the theory are also identified. Brown (1990) argues that the biggest weakness of the theory is its failure to account for job change (p.357), whilst Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) argue that there is too much emphasis on the choice itself and not enough on the adjustment process. One other weakness is the 'paucity of new data to validate the

idea of the theory and the relative shortage of new ideas or methods to accomplish its objectives' (Osipow and Fitzgerald, 1996, p.177). Brown (1990) notes that although Krumboltz's theory is currently not a major influence on either research or the practice of career counselling, this seems likely to change since it is attractive in different respects to both researchers and practitioners (p.357).

If social learning theory emphasises the importance of the external context in which individuals advance their career, psychodynamic approaches highlight internal, individualist processes.

2.3.4 Psychodynamic Theories

The term 'psychodynamic' refers to systems that use motives, drives, and related covert variables to explain behaviour. Psychodynamic career counseling refers to counseling approaches that are guided by attempts to understand, make meaning of, and utilise individual motives, purposes and drives to facilitate career exploration.

(Watkins & Savickas, 1990, p.79)

Compared with other psychological schools of thought, there has been little progress on developing psychodynamic approaches to career choice, change and development. However, ideas and concepts from this theoretical perspective have already influenced thinking in the area of careers. For example, Anne Roe (1956, 1957), who trained as a clinical psychologist as an extension of occupational psychology, undertook research, which was heavily influenced by psychodynamic theory. More recently, other researchers (for example, Bordin, 1990; Savickas, 1989; Watkins and Savickas, 1990) have begun

developing and applying ideas fundamental to this theoretical perspective.

None emerge as particularly significant in the UK context, though since Roe was identified by practitioners in the research carried out by Kidd *et al.* (1993), a brief outline of her ideas, and some originating from Mark Savickas, follow.

Roe had no experience of careers counselling, and was originally interested in personality theory and occupational classification (Roe, 1956, 1957). Much of her research focused on the possible relationship between occupational behaviour (that is, not just choice) and personality (Roe and Lunneborg, 1990). She found Maslow's hierarchy of basic needs (1954) a useful framework, as it offered the most effective way of discussing the relevance of occupational behaviour to the satisfaction of basic needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, in order of their potency (from the most to the least potent) comprised eight categories: first, physiological needs; second, safety needs; third, needs for belongingness and love; fourth, the need for importance, respect, self-esteem, independence; fifth, the need for information; sixth, the need for understanding; seventh, the need for beauty; and eighth, the need for self-actualisation. Maslow considered these needs to be innate and instinctive but (apart from physiological needs) modifiable, and proposed that the lower the potency of need in the hierarchy, the more it is suppressible (Maslow, 1954).

Roe (1956) accepted Maslow's hierarchy as originally proposed, though exchanged the need for importance, respect, self-esteem, independence (number four in Maslow's original hierarchy) with the need for self-actualisation (the eighth need in the original version). Two

of her key propositions were that, first, occupation is potentially the most powerful source of individual satisfaction at all levels of need; and second, that social and economic status depend more on the occupation of an individual than upon anything else (Roe, 1957, p.213).

She also constructed a new system of occupational classification, since she considered that none of the systems available followed any logical system (Roe, 1957). She saw that occupations could be arranged along a continuum based on the intensity and nature of the interpersonal relationships involved in the occupational activities and in an order that would have contiguous groups more alike than non-contiguous ones. The eight occupational groups she posited were service, business contact, organisation, technology, outdoor, science, general culture, and arts and entertainment (Roe, 1957, p.217). The levels of difficulty and responsibility involved in each occupation were then considered, and six occupational levels based on degree of responsibility, capacity and skill were identified. These were: professional and managerial (independent responsibility); professional and managerial; semi-professional and small business; skilled; semiskilled and unskilled (Roe, 1956 & 1957).

The original theory contains various propositions on the origin of interest and needs, though subsequent research concentrated on the proposition that since early experience is usually dominated by the family situation and particularly by relations with the parents, some description of parental behaviours was necessary (Roe and Lunneborg, 1990). These are conceptualised as emotional concentration on the child, which could be either

overprotective or over-demanding; avoidance of the child, expressed either as emotional rejection or neglect, or acceptance of the child, either casually or lovingly. It was also argued that there are two basic orientations, either toward or not toward persons, that these are related to early childhood experiences and that they can be related in turn to occupational choice.

A central weakness in Roe's (1957) original ideas are identified by Roe and Lunneborg (1990) who suggest that it has become clear that there is no direct link between parent-child relations and occupational choice. Brown (1990) identifies other weaknesses including the lack of any longitudinal research necessary to test key propositions; its failure to provide an adequate explanation of how socio-demographic variables interact with career choice; lack of insight into the career-decision making process itself; and Roe's lack of interest in the practical application of her theory. Brown (1990) predicts that unless the research necessary to validate Roe's theory is undertaken, it will 'fall into disuse', even though some ideas and concepts may continue in practice (p.352).

Other psychodynamic approaches include Adlerian approaches, and it is within this academic tradition that Mark Savickas developed his career-style assessment (1989). His approach to careers counselling makes use of Adlerian concepts such as lifestyle and career style, encouragement and the use of private logic that emanates from childhood experience (Scharf, 1997, p.290). Savickas's approach is very structured and specific, consisting of two phases, assessment and counselling. The assessment phase consists of a careers interview which focuses on gathering information about lifestyle issues. Each question is

focused and provides particular clues about the client's life goals. They include role models, books, magazines, leisure activities, school subjects, mottoes, ambitions and decisions. After the initial assessment interview, three more sessions are required. The first is to discuss career style and path, decision-making difficulties and interests; the second focuses on developing a list of occupations for further exploration and the third focuses on any difficulties that the individual may be having in making a choice. Throughout the process, there is an emphasis on presenting observations that the practitioner has made about the client (Scharf, 1997, p.290).

Watkins and Savickas (1990) argue that psychodynamic theories represent a subjective approach to careers guidance. 'The real value of psychodynamic career counseling is to complement the objective perspective with the subjective perspective' (p.101). Bordin (1994) considers that a real strength of this approach is to provide the perspective of the family as a system which provides a framework for understanding the transmission of social influences (p.60). However, psychodynamic approaches to careers have almost totally ignored the importance of social variables (Brown, 1990, p.353), and remain inaccessible to most practitioners. These approaches have not been incorporated generally into careers guidance in the UK, though certain ideas and concepts have been used to enhance and inform our approaches to guidance, such as the influence of role models. Brown (1990) considers that the 'present status of psychoanalytical thinking is that it has relatively few supporters' (p.354).

The next theory to be considered was not specifically developed for careers. It has,

nevertheless, had a major impact on practice.

2.3.5 Humanistic Theory

Carl Rogers' client-centred therapy (1951), derived from humanistic psychology, has also influenced the practice of careers guidance in the UK (Kidd *et al.*, 1993, 1994). Rogers developed his ideas as a theory of psychotherapy. His ideas had 'a penetrating influence' (Bozarth and Fisher, p.45), which impacted on group work, education, international conflict, mediation and career counselling. The emphasis placed by this approach on the attitude and orientation of the practitioner and the therapeutic relationship experienced by the client provided a new way of conceptualising the careers guidance process. It also challenged practitioners to regard counselling as relevant to, indeed part of, the activities of careers guidance.

Bozarth and Fisher (1990) propose a model of person-centred careers counselling comprising:

a relationship between a counsellor and a client, arising from the client's concerns, which creates a psychological climate in which the client can evolve a personal identity, decide the vocational goal that is fulfilment of that identity, determine a planned route to that goal, and implement that plan.

(p.54).

The three core qualities of empathy, genuineness and unconditional positive regard, which Rogers (1957) argued had to be displayed to clients by counsellors for successful interventions, became (and remain) accepted as important for effective guidance practice. Bozarth and Fisher (1990) emphasise the importance of these core qualities in the

application of the theory to careers, together with the way that the locus of control for decisions should remain with the client (p.54).

This non-directive approach remains a viable alternative to the directive approaches implicit in many psychological theories of career choice. Bozarth and Fisher (1990) regard it as complementary to Super's developmental approach, because of the way both deal with unique personal identity. Specifically, their person-centred career counselling focuses on the integration of the self-concept with vocational goals (Bozarth and Fisher, 1990). Their model is based on Super's definition of vocational guidance and occupational adjustment, which emphasises the importance of the individual developing an integrated sense of themselves that can guide entry into and progression within the world of work (Super, 1988).

Person-centred career counselling is based on four propositions. First, the person-centred career counsellor has attitudes and behaviours that focus on promoting client self-actualisation, and the locus of control lies within the client. Second, there is an initial emphasis on work, though as the relationship develops, this may extend. Third, there are opportunities for the client to test their emerging self-concept with real or simulated work activities. Fourth, the practitioner has certain information available to the client to help them towards achieving a career goal (Bozarth and Fisher, 1990). An important feature of the approach is that it casts the practitioner in the role of facilitator, rather than an expert in authority. (p.54)

The theories so far examined (differential, developmental, behavioural, psychodynamic and humanistic) were all derived from psychology. One other significant contribution to careers guidance in the UK has come from sociology.

2.3.6 Opportunity Structure

The opportunity structure model was proposed by Roberts (1968, p.176) as an alternative to theories of career development advanced by Ginzberg (1951) and Super (1957, 1980, 1990). Roberts (1968) does not suggest that his theory has universal validity (p.179). Rather, he argues that entry to employment in different social contexts requires different explanatory frameworks and that entry into employment does not take place in a similar manner amongst all groups of young people, even in the same society. The determinants of occupational choice identified are: the home; the environment; the school; peer groups and job opportunities. On the basis of a survey covering 196 young men aged between 14 and 23 selected by a random canvas of households in a part of London, Roberts (1968) suggested that the 'momentum and direction of school leavers' careers are derived from the way in which their job opportunities become cumulatively structured and young people are placed in varying degrees of social proximity, with different ease of access to different types of employment' (p.179).

He challenged the relevance of the concept of choice embedded in psychological theories, emphasising the structure of constraints: 'An adequate theory for understanding school-leavers' transition to employment in Britain needs to be based around the concept not of 'occupational choice', but of 'opportunity structure' (Roberts, 1977, p.183). His

contribution carried with it particular significance because he spelt out the implications for careers guidance in the UK (Roberts, 1977). Careers guidance cannot, he argued, make jobs inherently more rewarding for the individual, change the tendency of jobs in an industrial society to alienate individuals, nor create opportunities for personal growth and development. Its scope remains, therefore, somewhat restricted. Psychological theories imply that guidance practitioners are able to support the development of an individual's self-concept (developmental), assist individuals into jobs that fit their abilities and attributes (differential), control their own destinies (humanistic) or teach individuals to manage their futures more efficiently (behavioural). Roberts' (1977) conception of careers guidance was that it became, rather, a matter of adjusting the individual to opportunities to which she/he would have to be reconciled. He argued that the guidance process should be centred on an individual's immediate problems and that careers services should concentrate on developing a good information service and more on placement and follow-up. The role of the practitioners, according to this theory, was of someone servicing the needs of the labour market, rather than educator, facilitator, or indeed anything else implicated by other theories (Roberts, 1977).

Roberts' critique of developmental theories and new model of occupational allocation was received with caution and scepticism by the guidance community in the UK. A strident critic of Roberts' early ideas was Peter Daws. He criticised both Roberts' (1977) opportunity structure model and his views about the limited effects of careers guidance as both conservative (Daws, 1977) and fatalistic (Daws, 1992). In response, he promoted the value of careers education programmes as being capable of encouraging social change by

supporting and educating the individual (Daws, 1977).

Far from changing his ideas as a result of these criticisms, Roberts (1984) revised and expanded his determinants of occupational allocation as a result of research into comparative labour markets (buoyant compared with depressed) in the UK. He emphasised the importance of local labour markets on job seeking for young people, finding that the average distance to work was three miles because of the costs of travel. The importance of qualifications was highlighted once again, since even low-grade exam achievements made the difference between finding work and becoming unemployed. Informal contacts were also discussed, since Roberts' research found that the extent to which large firms operated as internal labour markets for young people was considerable. He also focused on the importance of ethnicity, since, he argued, race operated as a multi-dimensional disadvantage with regard to the housing, education and employment loop. Additionally, gender was identified as a significant inhibiting factor because, despite the fact that more than half of all women worked and a third of marriages ended in divorce, Roberts still found that the aspirations of girls and women were low and short term. Finally, cyclical and structural factors operating within the economy at the time were found to result in demand for smaller labour forces in which higher skill levels were required. In this climate, young people were found to be particularly vulnerable (Roberts, 1984).

Further research into comparative labour markets in the UK and Germany revealed striking similarities in the labour market constraints operating upon young people in these different European countries. Bynner and Roberts (1991) assessed the importance of a country's

education and training system for its economic prosperity. Key findings included, first, that broadly similar routes to employment in the two countries were found to exist (career trajectories); second, that for each career trajectory, these routes originated in education, family and background.

Like many theorists, Roberts has modified his views over a thirty-year period. In 1995, he argued that the debate about 'choice versus opportunity' was never won decisively by either side (Roberts, 1995, p.111). He argues that the importance of this debate has now subsided for various reasons including an increasing acknowledgement that the opportunities for choice have always varied between groups of young people. Additionally, the transition period for young people between the time they leave education and training and enter employment is now so extended that all young people are able to exercise choices at some stage of this process, even if this is a choice about the type of subject or qualification taken in education or training.

Roberts (1995) suggests that 'choice versus opportunity' has now been replaced by a new set of debates, despite the fact that the main routes to good jobs are not fundamentally different (1995). This is because of the changes that have occurred like economic restructuring, higher unemployment and pressure from young people and their parents who want qualifications that will get them decent jobs. New concepts are needed, Roberts argues (1995 & 1997) to understand the process of transitions into employment. These include individualisation, referring to the notion that life patterns have become more unique than ever before, because of shrinking social networks and changed social behaviour.

People are far less likely to share events and experiences with as many people as previously. Uncertain destinations are another feature of transition because of economic, social and educational change, and career transitions are likely to involve risk:

It is as if people nowadays embarked on their life journeys without reliable maps, all in private motor cars rather than the trains and buses in which entire classes once travelled together these 'cars' in which individuals now travel don't all have equally powerful engines. Some young people have already accumulated advantages in terms of economic assets and socio-cultural capital. Some have to travel by bicycle or on foot. But everyone has to take risks.

(Roberts, 1995, p.118).

Roberts (1995) once again identifies implications for career guidance, claiming there is a need for continuous, individualised careers guidance for young people to support them through their transitions.

As in the past, so in the present and future, guidance will only assist young people in aggregate to operate within the constraints of their particular situations. The macro-role of guidance, as ever, will be to assist young people in handling their own transition problems without, in most cases, affecting the eventual outcomes.

(Roberts, 1997, p.352).

In an assessment of the impact of the Connexions Service on careers guidance, Roberts (2000) concludes that it will be at the heart of the new service. The policy priorities embodied in the new service demand a particular combination of knowledge and skills which careers services can supply. 'Many careers officers have long aspired to broaden out into life counselling. They will now have that chance. The attractions of careers in careers guidance will receive a boost' (p.27).

Another theory that explores the effects of external circumstances on individual career progress, and that UK careers practitioners identified as influential to their practice (Kidd *et al.*, 1993, 1994) focuses on community.

2.3.7 Community Interaction

Law (1981, 1996) developed his community interaction theory from secondary research sources. He suggests:

The way in which who-does-what in society is decided is the product of a plurality of interpersonal transactions conducted in local settings, and on the basis of interaction within and between groups of which the individual is a member - the community The evidence gives significance to the personal exchanges which occur between individuals and the people with whom they are in community contact - notably family, neighbourhood, peer group, ethnic group and teachers at school.

(Law, 1981, p.218)

Thus, Law suggests that events occur in the context of 'community interaction' between the individual and the social group of which she or he is a member. A number of modes or sources of community influence are identified, specifically: expectations, from an individual's family and community groups; feedback, referring to the varied messages that individuals receive about their suitability for particular occupations and roles; support, relating to the reinforcement of young people's aspirations; modelling, referring to the process by which people are influenced by example; and finally, information, which is defined as young people's observations of other people's work habits and patterns.

In 1996, Law extended his theory to include additional propositions relating to the roles of

innate abilities, more advanced abilities and feelings in career choice. He identifies the processes linked with these abilities as understanding, focusing, sensing and sifting, arguing that the more developed capacities cannot be engaged unless some basic capacities have been successfully developed to support them. These are all crucial for career development, though Law (1996) suggests that like all other forms of learning, individuals can acquire the necessary skills through education.

Law has influenced programmes of careers education and guidance in schools more than individual careers guidance. For example, a distance learning pack used nationally in the training of careers teachers uses many of Law's ideas (Open College/DfEE, 1995).

If these theories currently influence practice, which new theories present alternatives for practitioners?

2.4 Future Practice

There is an emerging consensus regarding the inadequacies of theories that inform careers practice. Savickas (1995) relates current problems with theory to the more fundamental issue of different philosophical origins. He identifies inherent tensions which arise from the academic traditions of different theories: 'sharp lines have been drawn on which philosophy of science to choose' (Savickas, 1995, p.15). Arguing for theoretical convergence, he concludes that:

vocational psychology could benefit simultaneously from refinements forged within the distinct career theories, from advances produced by convergence among career macrotheories and from break-throughs induced by divergence in work-role

microtheory.

(p.29)

As a result of comparing theories, Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) conclude that they differ not only because of the different philosophical orientations of authors, but also because they are trying to achieve different objectives (p.323). They distinguish those that focus on explanations of the choice process, those that focus on career development over time, and those that focus more on providing practical techniques. A common weakness is their tendency to claim universality for their concepts (p.323).

Two distinct trends in theory development, which sometimes overlap, are emerging. One is towards developing theories that attempt to meet the needs of specific client groups, such as minority ethnic groups or girls and women. Traditional theories tend to assume choice and autonomy for the individual, whereas some critics question this as a reasonable assumption for some client groups. For example, Osipow and Littlejohn (1995) discuss serious weaknesses in applying theory to minority ethnic groups. A major problem is the manner in which all theories use concepts which 'assume cultures that are relatively affluent and have good opportunities for education, upward mobility and family support and encouragement' (p.255), because many members of minority ethnic groups do not have access to these privileges. Attempts are being made to develop approaches that address the particular issues related to these client groups. Leong (1995), for example, presents theory and research on particular ethnic groups such as Asian Americans, Hispanics and African Americans, and discusses progress towards developing a multicultural theory of career

development. In addition to minority ethnic groups, another client group for which the relevance of traditional theories is being questioned is girls and women. Emerging theories for this client group are discussed below, in section 4.5.

The second trend in career theory development is towards those characterised by a post-modern approach (Collin and Watts, 1996, Savickas, 1993). Savickas (1993) discusses the general move away from 'logical positivism, objectivist science, and industrialism' towards 'a multiple perspective discourse' (p.205), summarising key differences between the modern and post-modern era (p.209). Career counselling has produced six notable innovations to mark its entry to the post-modern era. These are, first, a rejection of the notion that careers practitioners are experts: 'instead of portraying themselves as masters of truth, counselors are creating a space where those involved can speak and act for themselves' (p.211). Second, the replacement of the concept of 'fit' with 'enablement', and affirmation of diversity. Third, recognition of the importance of context and culture, together with the broadening of focus beyond pre-occupation with work-role. Together, these signal a move toward life-design counseling and grand narratives (p.212). Fourth, a questioning of the legitimacy of separating career from the personal, with a move toward the greater integration of these two domains. Fifth, the realisation that career theory has provided objective guidance techniques which practitioners have increasingly had to combine with subjective techniques derived from counselling theory for their practice. Embryonic career theories are thus being developed which focus more on meaning, invention and construction, and move towards 'co-construction or social construction of meaning' (p.213). Finally, a shift away from objectifying clients by measurement to a

preference for autobiography and meaning-making.

Savickas (1993) suggests that changes in career counselling re-define the practitioner as co-authors and editors of career narratives. Instead of diagnosing, assessing and matching, they authorise careers by narrating coherent stories; invest career with meaning by identifying themes and tensions in the story line; and help clients learn the skills necessary for the next episode in the story (p.213). Brief summaries of five new approaches follow.

2.4.1 Constructivism

Constructivists believe that we actively participate in the construction of what we observe.

(Chartrand *et al.*, 1995, p.51).

Constructivist perspectives assume that we construct and perpetuate our social realities, which remain independent of ourselves (Chartrand *et al.*, 1995, p.56). These approaches to career are therefore significantly different from the traditional approach to science that has dominated theory in this area (Chartrand *et al.*, 1995; Cochran, 1997; Collin & Young, 1986; Peavy, 1992; Savickas, 1993; Savickas, 1997; Young *et al.*, 1996). Savickas (1997) regards constructivism as a metatheory that emphasises proactive features of human knowing. He acknowledges the recent trend for researchers to use it to understand careers, with the result that career counselling is being reshaped 'from an objective enterprise to an interpretative science' (p.150).

As an approach, constructivism is conceptualised both as a contextual explanation of career

(Young *et al.*, 1996) and as an interactional approach (Chartrand *et al.*, 1995). It is regarded as one of nine contextual explanations of career by Young *et al.* (1996, p.481) because it emphasises the context in which careers unfold. Chartrand *et al.* (1995) suggest that constructivism, together with systemic approaches to career, are interactional approaches because both focus on the relationship between the person and their environment (Chartrand *et al.*, 1995). Similarly, there are different opinions about which approaches, within the broad category of constructivism, represent promising developments for careers. For example, Chartrand *et al.* (1995) identify conversational analysis, discourse analysis and narratives. While Savickas (1997) suggests that personal construct psychology, biographical hermeneutics and narratives represent innovative applications of constructivism to career theory.

The constructivist approach has not yet had a major impact on careers theory and practice, though research in the area promises greater understanding of vocational behaviour (Chartrand *et al.*, 1995). The next two new contributions exhibit many of its characteristics.

2.4.2 The ‘Boundaryless Career’ and Enactment Perspective

Like constructivist approaches, Arthur *et al.* (1999) reject traditional approaches to careers as outdated. They develop their alternative approach from research carried out in New Zealand with seventy five participants over a ten year period and argue that their research findings are representative of the career context of developed economies and new labour market conditions. The researchers set out to ‘hear the voices’ (p.ix) of working people

across a range of social groups, occupations and employment contexts. They propose that 'we are both the products and producers of the work environment in which we participate' (p.7) and that career development can only be understood as the result of a 'dynamic interplay between episodes of the career itself' (p.6). 'Flexibility', they argue, 'is a word that turns conventional career thinking on its head' (p.9). The central image they present is one of a wandering troubadour, moving from company to company, gaining new experiences and skills and then moving on (p.37), compared with the image of the classical, scripted theatre typical of the industrial age and encapsulated in traditional career theory.

Boundaryless careers, supposedly typical of the new economy, are characterised by multiple employment situations, wide inter-company networks and multi-employer arenas of choice for the implementation of their careers. All workers accumulate learning and develop networks, using these acquisitions to enact their careers on the surrounding environment. 'As individuals enact their careers, they enact the environment itself' (Arthur *et al.*, 1999, p.12).

From their research data, Arthur *et al.* (1999) found that participants reported a strong pattern of relative job stability within a larger context of persistent career mobility. Specifically, most participants performed one job for a considerable period of time, but then took their next job with a different employer. Typically, this represented a lateral move rather than orthodox career advancement. Most career moves took place across company boundaries, implicating high levels of movement across occupational, industrial and geographical boundaries as well (p.37). The cyclical model of careers, evident in feminist

careers counselling, is cited as relevant to the way careers are played out (p.36) in these ways.

Five common elements in career stories are identified. First, improvisation: most participants improvised fresh choices in response to changing circumstances, rather than implementing pre-determined plans. Second, sense-making: participants were found to act, reflect upon and make sense of their actions with the benefit of hindsight. Third, adaptation: with new experiences, participants were able to see new patterns in, and make new sense of, their earlier career behaviour. Fourth, learning: participants learned from their experiences, maintained this learning and applied it to new situations. Fifth, agency and communion: career stories reflected 'agency' (the pursuit of independence and autonomy) or 'communion' (the nurturing of relationships and connectedness). Most career stories contained elements of both.

Arthur *et al.* (1999) conclude that the enactment of careers will persist, that employing organisations will have to adapt, that institutions will change and that the study of careers must change. This is because careers are now situated in a more complex and broader milieu than previously and that individuals will:

learn to live without the security derived from any single employer company, to persistently develop their own career competencies, and to contribute to continuing innovation and flexibility both in their own lives and in the economic systems of which they are a part.

(Arthur *et al.*, 1999, p.177)

2.4.3 Life-Is-Career

Another new approach which shares many similarities with constructivist approaches is Miller-Tiedman's (1999) 'life-is-career'. Like other new approaches, it emanates from a comprehensive review and criticism of traditional, established career theory, derived from the Newtonian worldview. The central proposition is that 'simply stated, Life, not job, is the big career' (Miller-Tiedman, 1999, p.xiv). The emphasis is on career as process, not outcome, with the image of the practitioner being like a midwife: 'a professional who understands process can help midwife the unfolding of a client's life mission' (Miller-Tiedman, 1999, p.xiv).

New theories are also criticised on the grounds that 'what pass for emerging theories still linger in the shadow of trait, factor and logical positivism' (p.41). Here, Miller-Tiedman cites value-based, social cognition, cognitive information processing and contextual explanations of career choice and development. All such theories, it is argued, require the career professional to assess the situation, rather than the client (p.41), and suggest that clients often lack self or occupational knowledge as well as career decision skills, and that the client may not be an effective problem-solver. Instead, Miller-Tiedman suggests that career theory should place personal knowledge as primary, value the individual as a 'theory maker' and empower the personal journey of the client in a framework larger than the job.

Other key concepts in this model include complementarity, uncertainty and connectedness; self-organising systems; left and right handed decisions and living for today. Complementarity, uncertainty and connectedness are taken from quantum physics. They

are borrowed to emphasise the notion that focusing on one thing risks missing something else (Miller-Tiedeman, 1999, p.6), that if we look for something, we will find it, thus creating our own reality (p.10), and that things cannot be divided, because everything is connected (1999, p.10).

Two major aspects of self-organising systems which are emphasised are 'self-renewal' (systems continually renew and recycle their components while maintaining the integrity of the overall system) and 'self-transcendence' (living systems can grow beyond physical and mental boundaries), with growth remaining a choice (p.11). Finally, the concept of left and right handed decisions focuses on the value of wrong as well as correct decisions and events in life. Mistakes (left turns) provide information for the next decision and should be valued as highly as 'right' decisions (p.12) and the fourth concept, that of living for today, reminds us of the importance of making every day count. This should help prevent 'living under tomorrow's stress' (p.12), which in turn increases the probability of 'flow' with the rhythm of life, and listening to the signals.

Eleven principles that support living 'life-as-career' are identified and the differences between this model and traditional careers are explored (Miller-Tiedeman, 1999, p.7). Its implications are discussed in some detail (pp.181-271), with the conclusion that by the year 2050 career practice as we know it today may be totally irrelevant. Children will 'mature vocationally with the help of their parents and technology, and they won't ask questions like today's children do in regard to work' (p.181). Professionals will 'work with individuals and groups assisting them in understanding that life is a whole fabric, even

though the design keeps changing' (p.182).

Amongst new methods and techniques that should be embraced is the electronic CV and job search via the internet (p.189), financial planning (p.225) and reducing stress and maintaining health (p.311). In the UK context, these expanded roles for careers counselling have also been identified by Collin and Watts (1996, p.395).

2.4.4 Pragmatic Rationalism & Careership

Hodkinson *et al.* (1996) studied career decision-making of young people in the UK, together with their career development, through the first eighteen months on a government funded training scheme. The policy direction at the time of the data collection emphasised individualism and market forces. These values were embedded in a government initiative called 'training credits', designed to give young people choice and control whilst at the same time increasing market competition amongst training providers. The dominant model of career decision-making assumed to underpin the training credits initiative was technical rationality, involving the application of rational skills to objective information derived from the labour market. Essentially an individual activity, this process takes place within 'discursive consciousness' (Hodkinson *et al.*, 1996, p.122) and is directed at long term goals (though ideas often change before the goal is reached and follows a planned linear sequence). Its ideal aim is to be totally rational. It is based on maximising personal benefits, often seen in financial terms, and is only improved by making it more rational and/or providing better information (p.122).

Data, collected during 1992-1993 from a group of ten young people, comprises 196 taped interviews (Hodkinson *et al.*, 1996). Analysis and interpretation of the data resulted in 'a new theoretical model of career decision making and career progression', called 'careership' (p.3) which involves three interlocked dimensions: pragmatic rationalism, social interactions and progression over time. The first, pragmatic rationalism, refers to the way young people make actual choices about job placements. These decisions were found to be neither rational nor irrational. Rather, they were both constrained and enabled by the young people's 'horizons for action', partly determined by external opportunities, and partly by their own subjective perceptions. It is argued that the two sides are linked because 'what is available affects what we perceive to be possible and what we perceive to be possible and what we perceive as desirable can alter the available options' (Hodkinson *et al.*, 1996, p.3).

The second dimension is social interactions with others who have some influence on the process. This involves a complex system of negotiations, bargaining and sometimes struggle with different players in the field (for example, young people, employers, parents, careers officers and training providers), all of whom have resources of varying types and quality, producing unequal power relations. Social interactions and pragmatic decisions were found to be interwoven, so neither could be understood alone.

Progression over time is the third dimension. Career decisions are often transitory in nature, and determined by choices and/or by the social and cultural structures within which individuals are located. Career paths are subject to varied influences and can best be

understood through the concept of 'careership'. This comprises periods of routine linked by 'turning points'. Three types of turning points are identified: those forced by unexpected external events (for example, redundancy); those built into the structure of British life (e.g. end of compulsory education at 16); and those initiated by the young people themselves (Hodkinson *et al.*, 1996, p.142).

Career-decision making based on pragmatic rationalism is seen as part of the development of 'habitus' (Hodkinson *et al.*, 1996, p.122). Information is both subjective and objective, deriving from habitus as well as being external to it. It is a socially and a culturally embedded activity, taking place within both practical and discursive consciousness. Whilst it may be directed at a long-term goal, there are other possibilities, described as 'serendipitous' (p.122). It does not follow a linear sequence, is always rational within boundaries, may be made for a wide range of reasons (for example, maximising benefits) and can be enhanced by various means such as giving information (p.122).

This alternative model conceptualises: decision making processes as part of a wider choice of lifestyle and strongly influenced by the social context and culture of the individual; decision-making as part of the ongoing life course; and decision-making as part of the interaction with other stakeholders, which can be seen as part of the action of others, as well as the individual (Hodkinson *et al.*, 1996, p.139).

Since Hodkinson *et al.* (1996) set out to examine an initiative (training credits) relevant to vocational education and training (VET) for young people, it is not surprising that the

discussion of the implications of their findings relates to VET policy, rather than careers guidance practice (p.136). They do, however, highlight 'aspects of cultural complexity of the transition to work that are ignored in the current technicist approach' (p.137) which have clear implications for practice based on technical, rational models of career. The policy focus on the individual, they argue, detracts attention away from the need to change structures, like industrial employment, the youth labour market and British financial systems (p.137). They also suggest that technically rational models of management and choice appeal to policy makers, senior managers and senior careers professionals because they 'offer the illusion of control and managerial solutions' (p.138).

The efforts of professionals such as teachers and careers offices to assist and support young people with the degree of individual freedom they do possess is regarded as commendable (p.140). However, 'if we are serious about doing something to ameliorate existing inequalities, individual help alone is not enough. We also have to address more intransigent problems at a cultural and structural level' (p.141).

The next new contribution similarly reflects a concern with structures and the ways they influence career development.

2.4.5 Systems Theory

Chartrand *et al.* (1995) suggest that the systemic perspective incorporates 'the complex, multi-level nature of environments' and is evident in the work of several influential theorists, including Super 1990 (Chartrand *et al.*, 1995, p.50). They argue that the sheer

complexity of a systems approach represents both a strength and a weakness. A strength since it is comprehensive in scope, taking account of individual and societal factors in career development. A weakness since consistent research designs to validate the theory have proved difficult to implement (p.51).

A Systems Theory Framework (STF) for careers, proposed by Patton and McMahon (1999), comprises an overarching framework which attempts to synthesise existing theoretical literature in the area, and offers a perspective that embodies the philosophy reflected in the move from positivist to constructivist approaches. Two broad components are identified, content and process. Content refers to the variables applicable to the individual and the context, which emphasise the key influences on career development. These are the individual system and the contextual system. Process refers to the 'recursive interaction processes' (1999, p.155) within the individual and context, as well as between the individual and context. This relates to decision-making, change over time and chance.

The individual is placed at the centre of the career choice and development process (Patton & McMahon, 1999, p.155) and is represented diagrammatically by a circle containing a range of features influencing career development. They comprise personality, values, knowledge of the world of work, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, ability, health, physical attributes, interests, skills, beliefs, self-concept and aptitudes. Each individual is regarded as a system in his/her own right. However, as a system the individual exists as part of a much larger system, broken into two subsystems: social contextual systems and environmental/societal contextual systems (p.158). The social contextual

system represents the principal social influences with which individuals interact or from which they receive input. Specifically, family, media, community groups, workplace, peers and education institutions. The environmental-societal systems are geographical location, political decisions, historical trends, globalisation, socio-economic trends and the labour market (p.161).

Each system and their sub-systems are open systems, with a change in the nature of influences being reflected in a change in the degree of their influence. In terms of practice, careers professionals become part of the interconnected system of influences, affecting the career development of their clients.

Patton & McMahon (1999, p.166) argue that the advantages of STF include recognising the important contributions of all career theories, the interconnections between theories and the contributions of other theory and disciplines to career theory. It also provides the potential for integrating psychological and sociological theories, offers new techniques for use in practice and broadens the current narrow focus of 'career' (for example, the concept of 'non-traditional roles for women' is replaced by emphasising the diversity of women's lives and fostering the development of broad choices, including 'homemaker'). All career options are validated and explained in terms of systems influence. 'Career could be viewed as the pattern of influences that coexist in an individual's life over time' (p.170).

Within STF, the role of practitioner is defined as facilitator. Theories and assessment methods are no longer used to predict or direct, but rather they are fed into the system for

processing by the individual. It is the clients who determine prominent themes and stories in their lives, and the practitioner helps them to process and make sense of these elements.

Overall, this is an interesting development in career theory, representing the first formal attempt to bring existing theories together into a coherent whole. It provides the means to integrate an understanding of many previously neglected variables in career theory into practice (for example, gender and ethnicity) and acknowledges the importance of utilising all the best ideas from past theory. However, to apply the STF to practice requires familiarity of (and probably practical experience with) many other theories, so that they can be combined into best practice in working with clients.

2.5 Conclusion

As the practice of careers guidance has become more established, policy requirements in the UK have increased its range of clients and tasks. Varied and complex demands on services have produced questions about how best to deal with their associated challenges. Answers are increasingly being sought in career theory (the number of requests from careers companies to the Centre for Training in Careers Guidance at the University for in-service training courses for qualified and experienced practitioners which up-date theoretical understanding and introduce new frameworks has doubled since November, 1999). The dominant training needs of the previous decade, which related to the production of action plans within a strict time frame, have been replaced by a different set related to social exclusion.

New theories signal a rejection of scientific, positivist approaches to career, replacing them with paradigms embracing more holistic, fluid models of human behaviour. The process of working out (and working through) the implications of new approaches for practice is underway, with a key challenge likely to be reconciling new approaches and thinking to policy directives embedded in traditional theory.

As bodies of knowledge informing career practice have expanded, their critiques are becoming a well-established feature of the literature. A particularly well developed critique of current theory relates to girls and women. Hackett (1997) identifies several problems in trying to apply current theory to women:

I am suggesting the need for formal testing of competing models as well as attempts at unification and integration we also need to incorporate issues of sexism, racism and their interaction, along with considerations of relational orientation, support and barriers into all our developing conceptions of women's career psychology.

(p.187)

An examination of the achievements of girls and women in the education system in the United Kingdom, together with an evaluation of their position in the labour market, provides an introduction to these critiques.

Chapter 3 Gender: Education and the Labour Market

3.1 Introduction

A study of gender in society is a study of the multi-dimensional inequality that exists between women and men. The report on the United Kingdom prepared for the fourth United Nations World Conference (Employment Department Group, 1995) presented data on: participation in public life, national machinery for women, legal rights, education, training, employment, social trends and the social welfare system, health, violence against women, the criminal justice system, women in the media, environment and infrastructure, migration and international co-operation. Examination of each of these areas provides evidence of the different life experiences and inequalities experienced by women compared with men.

Oakley (1972) argued for a distinction to be drawn between gender and biological sex. Within this distinction, gender is a social category, referring to a process of social construction which results in the qualities attributed to 'being male' being valued differently from the qualities attributed to 'being female'. In contrast, biological sex relates to genetically determined divisions (male and female) in terms of reproductive functions. Similarly, Reid and Stratta (1989) suggest gender is:

rooted in social and historical circumstances rather than nature it draws attention to the way in which the sexes experience society and occupy particular positions the social differences between women and men constitute a powerful form of inequality, which is integral to society.

(Reid & Stratta, 1989, p.13)

Theoretical perspectives seeking to explain gender differences are many and varied. It can be argued that they fall broadly into three categories: biological, psychological and sociological. For biological explanations, genetic differences between males and females are pivotal (Charles, 1993; Hargreaves and Colley, 1986; Tavis and Offir, 1977). Psychological explanations range across various theories such as psychoanalytic, social learning and cognitive-development (Hargreaves and Colley, 1986; Tarvis and Offir, 1977) and propose explanations of gender inequality located within the individual. Sociological theories include different forms of feminism and Marxism (Charles, 1993; Reid and Stratta, 1989) and generally concern themselves with constraining structures that define gender.

The practice of careers guidance is less concerned with the causes of gender inequality than with its consequences. Traditionally, it has placed an emphasis on two particular domains relevant to individual clients, education and employment. This is because of the ways in which educational achievement enhances or inhibits entry into, and progress within, the labour market. This chapter will, therefore, confine itself to an examination of gender issues within these two broad inter-linked and overlapping areas. Of course, this choice of focus does not deny the importance of gender inequalities found elsewhere, like in health care and the social welfare system; nor, indeed, other dimensions of inequality like social class, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age and disability. Nor should the complex interaction of different forms of inequality be overlooked. However, the focus here will be on educational achievement and labour market participation, as perhaps the most immediately relevant to the career development of girls and women.

3.2 Gender and education

3.2.1 Continuity and change

....the education of women in British society is frequently different from, and sometimes inferior to, the education received by men in the same society.

(Deem, 1978, p.127)

Despite the increased awareness of the need to afford pupils equal opportunities and equal access to the curriculum, the wealth of accumulated evidence demonstrates the persistence of difference in the opportunities afforded to the sexes by contemporary schooling.

(Clark & Millard, 1998, p.3)

Separated by two decades of social change and policy reform, these quotes illustrate the strong theme of continuity and change for the education of girls in the UK. Changes to the educational system (for example, the introduction of the National Curriculum) have resulted in improved levels of achievement for girls compared with boys in certain subjects. Yet many things remain the same.

The United Nations report on the UK (Employment Department Group, 1995) heralds the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1988 as a major policy reform for women: ‘.... all girls and boys will study a more balanced range of subjects including science and modern foreign languages up to age 16’ (p.35). Yet concedes that much progress still needs to be made in persuading and supporting women into some areas of study: ‘In common with

other European countries, women's participation in science, engineering and technology from age 16 onwards - and their subsequent occupational participation - shows only limited improvement' (p.35). One other measure of improved equality of opportunity for women identified in the same report is the increased participation of women in further and higher education to a level that more or less reflects, for the first time, the gender composition of the population of the country:

The position of women in further and higher education continues to improve, with women accounting for more than half the enrolments on further education courses and just under half on higher education courses. Women account for most of the considerable increase in numbers enrolling on both further and higher education courses in recent years.'

(Employment Department Group, 1995, p.35).

Thus, a key issue is highlighted: differential participation and achievement rates for girls in Maths and Science post sixteen. As Francis (2000) argues, the introduction of the National Curriculum has resulted in girls catching up with boys in these subjects. However, as soon as girls are free to choose which subjects to take, they largely revert to traditional, gendered, patterns of subject choice, preferring Arts and Humanities subjects to Maths and Science (p.22). Continued gender inequality in education, despite some fundamental changes, will now be considered.

3.2.2 Rhetoric and reality

In the 1970s, legislation was introduced to address inequalities that existed between men and women in employment. The Sex Discrimination Act (1975) prohibited discrimination on the grounds of sex at work, in education and in the provision of goods and services. The

Equal Pay Act (1970) originally provided for women to be paid the same as men working for the same employer where the woman was engaged in similar work to the man and where the employer had voluntarily carried out a job evaluation scheme which graded the woman's job the same as the man's.

Both Acts became effective on 29 December 1975. Shruballs (1994) suggests the delayed implementation of the Equal Pay Act was 'in the fond hope that employers might be encouraged to move towards compliance with the provision of the Act gradually so that the cost of implementation could be staggered' (p.31). However, this strategy did not work. The inadequacy of UK law was challenged by the Commission of the European Communities in 1982, and from January 1984 there was a change in law with the adoption of a procedure for equal value claims (Clarke 1995, p.64, Shruballs 1994, p.34).

The precise nature of the impact of this legislation has been interpreted differently (Walby, 1988, p.10). Some argue its positive influence; some its negative effects. For Clarke (1995), the legislation has played a useful role in the development of equal opportunities policies and improving women's rights at work. Shruballs (1994, p.30) similarly suggests that it has proved useful in encouraging good practice. Both, however, acknowledge the difficulties of successful implementation (Clarke, 1995, p.55, Shruballs, 1994, p.30).

Others argue that the legislation has had a negative impact (Cockburn, 1985; Coyle, 1988). In particular, the effectiveness of the Equal Pay Act is called into question. For example, Coyle (1988) suggests the Equal Pay Act has increased inequality at work since employers

deliberately segregated women and men's work to avoid equal pay: 'Legislation, therefore, has not been able to tackle the fundamental problem of women's employment - that is, the segregation and differentiation of women's work' (p.8). Cockburn (1985) supports this view: 'It is now widely accepted that the reason Equal Pay legislation of the 1970s failed to achieve equal pay for women is that the majority of women are segregated into fields of employment in which they are unable to compare themselves with men for purposes of grading and pay' (p.19).

So, whilst it can be argued that equal opportunities legislation has made a worthwhile contribution to addressing gender inequality, many anomalies remain - not least within the educational system. Research by Sharpe in the early 1970s and replicated in the early 1990s, illustrates differences which exist between the public rhetoric around gender equality in education and the realities confronted by individuals.

The first study (Sharpe, 1976) involved two hundred and forty nine girls from the fourth forms of four schools in the London borough of Ealing. Data was collected using a questionnaire and some interviews. Of the four schools, three were comprehensive, one was secondary modern and all were mixed. One hundred and forty nine girls came from English families, fifty-one were of West Indian origin and forty-nine were of Asian origin. Most were working class. A statistical analysis of data was abandoned in favour of: 'writing about the girls in a more comprehensive way' (Sharpe, 1976, p.8), and a descriptive analysis of the situation of young British girls in education at that time is presented.

Two decades later, she returned to the same four schools to collect data from a similar cohort of fourteen to fifteen year old girls (Sharpe, 1994). Changes are recorded. One of the original schools had closed, so was substituted with another located in an area populated mainly by the Asian community. Two hundred and thirty two girls participated in the second study, with a larger proportion coming from Asian families. The same methodology was adopted (questionnaire and some interviews), covering the same areas as previously. All four schools were mixed comprehensives and over two-thirds of the girls were working class.

A number of emerging contradictions are discussed (Sharpe, 1994). First, the inherent contradiction between the emphasis placed by the 1944 Education Act on education for all according to age, aptitude and ability, and the numerous ways in which schools and education discriminated against the girls in the initial study. In particular, Sharpe (1994) highlights the negative effects of sexism, socialisation and culture; curricular discrimination and differentiation; teacher expectations and school policies. Discriminatory processes identified in the 1970s by Sharpe (1994) in schools were verified by other researchers (for example, Deem, 1978; Deem, 1980; Deem, 1984; Spender, 1982; Spender and Sarah, 1980; Stanworth, 1983). Recent research continues to emphasise the extent to which school experiences are gendered in significant ways (for example, Jesson, 1998; Unwin, 1998; Younger *et al.*, 1999).

Second, Sharpe (1994) draws attention to the contradiction evident in the changed ideology supporting women's domestic role with the realities of available childcare.

Specifically, although it is no longer assumed that a primary aim of education should be to prepare girls to become good wives and mothers, in 1999 only one quality childcare place (that is, in day nursery, family centre, with a registered childminder or at an out of school club) was available for every seven children aged under eight (EOC, 1999, p.1).

Third, Sharpe (1994) emphasises the contradiction evident between the changed curriculum, designed (partly, at least) to discourage gender stereotyping in the choice of subjects and the persistent segregation of the workforce into occupational areas that are broadly 'male' and 'female' beyond the school gates. For example, in 1999 women outnumbered men three to one in clerical and secretarial occupations, whilst men outnumber women ten to one in craft and related occupations (EOC, 1999, p.1).

Finally, Sharpe (1994) focuses on the contradiction between the improved achievement rates of girls and women as measured by examination passes and the continued failure of women to gain employment in significant numbers in senior positions within organisations. Scrutiny of recent statistics verifies this claim. The number of women listed in the Directory of Directors was under one per cent; among Institute of Management members, only seven per cent of women described themselves as 'chairman' or chief executive compared with fifteen per cent of men (Employment Department Group, 1995, p.56).

In a number of respects, therefore, and despite significant changes, Sharpe's research (1976, 1994) emphasises the gap that exists between the rhetoric and reality of girls' education in the UK.

3.2.3 Old trends, new trends

As noted in section 3.2.1 above, changes in educational policy over the past two decades have brought certain improvements in girls' examination success. In 1999, the EOC reported that fifty one per cent of girls compared with forty one per cent of boys at age sixteen had gained five or more passes at grades A*-C of GCSE or grades 1-3 of SCE Standard. Additionally, thirty two per cent of girls compared with twenty six per cent of boys gained two or more A level passes aged 17-19 either at school or at a Further Education institution or three or more SCE Highers in Years S5/S6 (p.1). Girls now appear to be achieving at least equal to, and in some respects out-performing, boys particularly up to the age of sixteen, though some argue that girls were actually doing better than boys overall two decades ago (Francis, 2000) - just in the 'wrong' subjects like domestic science.

However, a closer examination of 'gendered' subjects, like Mathematics and Science, reveals that in other ways, little has changed. For example, in 1996/7, 43,000 girls were entered for 'A' level English compared with 25,000 boys; 21,000 girls were entered for 'A' level French compared with 8,000 boys; 10,000 girls were entered for 'A' level Physics compared with 33,000 boys; and 33,000 girls were entered for 'A' level Maths compared with 54,000 boys (EOC, 1999, p. 3). Statistics relating to the take-up for vocational qualifications along gender lines reveals similar trends. In 1999, young women represented only four per cent of Modern Apprentices (MAs) in engineering, but ninety seven per cent in child care (EOC, 1999, p.3). In 1997/8, seventy three per cent of the uptake of Personal and Protective National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) was by women with only ten per cent of the uptake of Craft and Related NVQs accounted for by women (EOC, 1999, p.4).

Recent research into two curriculum areas, Information Technology and Science, has investigated how these gendered patterns develop and persist. Opie (1998) examined the differential access to and success with information technology (IT) that girls have experienced compared with boys in schools. He concludes that although the way schools manage IT provision provides some valuable insights into current problems, the solution must consider both influences outside schools (including social influences affecting attitudes and access to computers in the home and the workplace) and the ways in which IT has already significantly changed everybody's lives (Opie, 1998 p93).

Scaife (1998) reviews research into girls' and boys' achievement patterns in science subjects and challenges recent popular coverage of girls out-performing boys at school. He identifies barriers that still exist in science and technology for girls and condemns the continuing tolerance of bias in this subject area. Whilst recognising powerful forces outside of the control of schools, he issues a challenge to the teaching profession to change this situation (Scaife, 1998, p.77).

In answer to the question 'why do these barriers still exist?', Millard (1998) identifies three main reasons. First, gender is deeply embedded in both the minds and behaviour of individuals, and the cultural patterns and practices that exist inside and outside education. Second, schools continue to reinforce particular versions of gendered identity. Third, the introduction of the National Curriculum has focused the attention of educationalists on attainment, distracting attention away from reflective practice that sought to illuminate pupil motivation and attitudes.

It is interesting to note that one response to girls' increased attainment levels in what were traditionally male subjects up to GCSE level has been increasing public concern about boys' low achievement. OFSTED (1996) has linked this relative low achievement to increased alienation and anti-social behaviour with the media quick to pick up on these trends, suggesting that schools are no longer conducive for boys' learning and achievement. Lack of male role models in schools (particularly primary schools), unsuitable teaching methods and curriculum have variously been identified in the popular press and media as part of a social problem deserving immediate attention. However, the notion of boys' underachievement is controversial. Francis (2000) argues that boys have been steadily improving their performance, though this is still perceived as underachievement compared with girls (p.22). Both Mac an Ghail and Haywood (1998) and Quicke (1998) warn against over-simplistic analysis of gender differences in education which hide new forms of institutional discrimination, affecting both males and females. They emphasise emergent inequalities linked to race and class, together with the importance of the interplay between gender, race, class, sexuality and age.

Focusing on this interplay between education, race and gender, Mirza (1997, p.271) discusses the 'collective educational urgency' among young Black women as they strive to participate and achieve in education. She quotes figures from the Labour Force Survey (1993) showing that sixty one per cent of Black women aged 16-59 have higher and other qualifications (Employment Gazette, 1993) and that fifty two per cent of all Black women aged 16-24 are in full-time education compared with twenty eight per cent of White women, thirty six per cent of Black men and thirty one per cent of White men

(Employment Gazette, 1995). Mirza argues that the desire of Black women for inclusion is strategic and subversive, so that they may 'transform and change'. They do not just resist racism; they 'live "other" worlds' (Mirza, 1997, p.270). She concludes that research into Black women shows they redefine their world, values and codes. They don't resist dominant definitions of their situation, but recreate their reality. They strive to be successful on their own terms and gain power within institutions so that they can change them.

In summary, the participation of girls and women in post-compulsory education has steadily increased, whilst the educational performance of girls up to the age of sixteen (measured by examination passes) is now comparable with, sometimes surpassing, boys' in various subjects (EOC, 1999a). These gains have been made despite continuing gender inequalities. Younger *et al.* (1999) remind us that the 'emerging gender gap hides significantly rising levels of performance of boys as well as girls' (p.326) and advocate that girls' apparent superior attainment should be seen as 'a cause for celebration and congratulation' (p.326), rather than representing a problem which requires solving. Whatever the interpretations of, and explanations for, gender inequalities in education or possible solutions, their consequences for entry to and success within the labour market is of particular concern to careers guidance practice. This will now be examined, within the broader context of women's employment.

3.3 Gender and the labour market

3.3.1 Level of participation

A distinctive feature of women's participation in the UK labour market is their increased number. Hakim (1979) examined participation rates from 1901-1971 and concluded that, overall, work rates for women of working age were fairly stable from 1901 to 1931, remaining at thirty eight per cent. This compared with a participation rate of ninety six per cent for men during the same period. Women's employment rates began to increase after the Second World War: in 1951, forty three per cent; by 1961 forty seven per cent and by 1971 fifty five per cent (Hakim, 1979, p.3). By 1999, statistics reveal that sixty eight per cent of women compared with seventy eight per cent of men of working age were in employment (EOC, 1999, p.7). Compared with other countries in the European Union, Great Britain had one of the highest participation rates for women in 1995 (second only to Denmark) with this trend predicted to continue (that is, eighty per cent of labour force growth by 2006 is projected to be accounted for by women, Employment Department Group, 1995, p.52).

However, the claim to increased female participation in the labour market has proved controversial. Hakim (1995) considers it to be a 'feminist myth' and argues that: 'There was absolutely no increase in the volume of female employment, measured in full-time equivalent (FTEs) workers, from World War Two up to 1987 in Britain (Hakim, 1995, p.431). She also argues that changes in the post-war period comprised the substitution of part-time for full-time jobs, and of married women for single women, largely as a result of

the abolition of the marriage bar: 'It was only in the late 1980s that there was a genuine expansion in the volume of women's employment, and this trend was halted and reversed by the recession of 1990-1993' (Hakim, 1995, p.432).

This questioning of women's increased labour market participation by Hakim (1995) has itself been contested. Ginn *et al.* (1996) exclude the use of FTEs as a measure of women's employment, since it leads to an oversimplification of complex social change. Bruegel (1996) advances the argument that Hakim's analysis represents a 'sleight of hand' (p.175). She argues that the rise in women's employment emphasises the shifting pattern of distribution of paid work between household members, with the model of the male as sole wage earner fast disappearing.

Whether women's participation in the labour market is measured by actual numbers in employment or the volume of hours worked overall, one other notable and related feature is the rise in part time employment.

3.3.2 Part time employment

Women's relationship to the labour market continues to be distinctly different from men. While men are overwhelmingly concentrated in full-time work, large numbers of women work part-time (EOC, 1999a, p.10). Indeed, the numerical growth of women in employment has been linked to the availability of part-time work and this, in turn, relates to childcare responsibilities (Coyle, 1988; Maxwell, 1995). Eighty seven per cent of part-time workers in Great Britain in 1995 were women (Maxwell, 1995, p.3). Only fifty per cent of

mothers with children under five were in employment in 1999, compared with eighty nine per cent of fathers and in the same year, sixty five per cent of working mothers with children aged under five were in part-time work, compared with three per cent of fathers (EOC, 1999a, p.1).

Part-time workers are identified as typically appointed on basic grades, ineligible for social benefits and having more limited careers prospects (Maxwell, 1995, Bolle, 1997). Robinson (1988) confirms part-time employees as those who are: 'predominantly female, work mainly in service sector industries and are generally engaged in unskilled, low-graded and low-paid occupations' (p.131).

Advantages to employers of part time workers are considerable (Bolle, 1997; Maxwell, 1995; Robinson, 1988). These include economic benefits (because of lower wages and exemption from payment of certain benefits) and flexible workplace practices (like job sharing, term-time working, nine day fortnights, zero hour contracts and flexitime) in which women are more involved than men (EOC, 1999a, p.9). The extension of employment protection rights to part-time workers in Great Britain attempted to address inequalities associated with part-time work, suffered mainly by women. This was secured by the use of the concept of indirect discrimination in the form of the Employment Protection (part-time Employees) Regulations 1995, which took effect on 6 February, 1995. However, this legislation has proved limited in its effectiveness because the domestic definition of indirect discrimination has 'given rise to enormous technical and procedural difficulties' (Maxwell, 1995, p.12). Additionally, it does not benefit the growing numbers of workers who are not

technically employees, and who constitute 'an increasingly isolated and vulnerable group within society' (p.14).

As a result of their study into part-time work in Europe, Gregory and O'Reilly (1996) concluded that whilst growth in part-time employment was a feature of labour markets across the European Community, attempts at regulation had foundered because of differences in the bases of employment law and social security systems. Additionally, national governments had resisted such regulation because of the perceived potential for undermining the basis of competitive advantage (Gregory and O'Reilly, 1996, p.227). However, a Framework Agreement on part-time work was concluded that obliged Member States to bring into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with the Directive not later than 20th January, 2000 (EU, 1997). This illustrates:

the willingness of the social partners to establish a general framework for the elimination of discrimination against part-time workers and to assist the development of opportunities for part-time working on a basis acceptable to employers and workers.

(EU, 1997, p.7).

The extent to which this will be achieved remains to be seen.

A study carried out across eight European countries by McRae (1998) concludes that part-time jobs may not always meet the interests of both employers and employees. Specifically, the type of part-time work favoured by employers does not necessarily meet the needs of employees seeking flexible working patterns. So, while a woman may need to work part-

time to combine employment with care activities, the part-time employment available may not permit her to do this easily. McRae (1998) also highlights the contradictory nature of part time employment. On the one hand, it creates employment opportunities for women and accommodates continuous working during childbearing and child rearing. On the other hand, it results in lower incomes, sometimes for the same work. It is also incompatible with career advancement, since promotion is often biased towards full time workers and part-time jobs are available in only a narrow range of occupational areas (McRae, 1998, p.110).

Women's motivation to engage in the part-time employment and flexible practices in Britain and Europe is the subject of debate. Hakim (1995) proposes that women in Britain and Europe actually prefer part-time employment, giving priority to 'non-market activities' (Hakim, 1995, p.435). To support this claim, she cites research evidence indicating that not only do part-timers report the highest levels of job satisfaction, but that many women without childcare responsibilities choose either not to work at all, or part-time. Voluntary childlessness, strongly associated with increasing levels of qualifications, and social class differences are also used to advance this argument (Hakim, 1995, p.438). She argues that current labour market conditions offer women real choices about their life style: 'modern industrial society creates the conditions for women to make genuine choices between two polarised lifestyles, so their preferences have become an important new social factor....' (Hakim, 1996, p.215). These choices have increased for various reasons, including the increased accessibility of contraception. Such lifestyle choices do not exist for men in the same way because of the continuous and unremitting social pressure exerted upon them to work (Hakim, 1996, p.209).

Bruegel (1996) refutes this claim. She argues that it does not necessarily follow that part-time workers without children under the age of sixteen 'choose' not to work full-time, without constraints. Gender role expectations undoubtedly play their part (Bruegel, 1996, p.176). Ginn *et al.* (1996) support this line of argument, suggesting that 'preference' for part-time work needs to be understood in the context of demands on time, as well as childcare costs. They highlight an increased polarisation of employed women, with an elite minority who have the financial resources, buying 'exemption from some of the effects of motherhood on employment, while the majority are trapped in a vicious circle of low pay, inability to afford full day childcare and part-time employment' (Ginn *et al.*, 1996, p.169). Other factors also effect women's employment, such as cultural traditions, employment policies and care responsibilities for the elderly (Ginn *et al.*, 1996).

The question of whether women make a conscious choice to engage in part-time employment, or whether they are forced by varied structures of constraint, throws into focus their patterns of employment and related commitment.

3.3.3 Employment patterns and commitment

Given the distinctly different relationship most women have to the labour market compared with men, what is known about their employment patterns and levels of commitment? Twenty years ago, Hakim (1979, p.4) studied available data (which did not permit subtle patterns of participation to be identified) and concluded that women had a 'bimodal' employment pattern, where a single period of not working, for child-births and child-rearing, was preceded and succeeded by employment. A little later, Dex (1984) discovered

a slightly more complex set of patterns: 'progressively more women have been returning to work soon after childbirth and between childbirths' (p.1). She conceptualised the general structure of the phases of women's work-cycle as threefold: the initial work phase, the family formation phase and the final work phase' (Dex, 1984, p.13). From this study, she drew conclusions about women's work commitment, suggesting it was greatest during the initial work phase which was typified by continuous, full-time employment (Dex, 1984, p.102).

These conclusions are supported by Harmon's follow-up study of < three hundred and ninety one women six years after they entered college in the American mid-west (Harmon, 1981). Most planned to work after marriage, with forty seven per cent planning to work most of their lives despite marriage and family responsibilitiesForty one per cent planned to take time off to raise a family, and eight per cent planned to take turns with their spouses working. Only two per cent planned for minimal employment over their life span (Harmon, 1981, p.419). When asked to evaluate the relative importance of family and career, fifty five per cent rated them equal, compared with thirty five per cent who ranked family over career, and ten per cent ranking career over family.

Coyle (1988) suggests that the increased participation of women in the labour market represents one of the most important recent social and economic changes in the UK, because of associated changes in life-style patterns. Most households typically have joint income earners, without which one in three families would be living in poverty (Coyle, 1988, p.3). The increased levels of economic activity on the part of women have brought

increasingly complex patterns of participation which, in turn, reflect different types and varying levels of commitment to employment (Coyle, 1988).

Women's career commitment, together with two other types of commitment (organisational and community), was studied by Steffy and Jones (1988) in a group of 118 married female professionals (nurses). They found that these three commitment variables operated independently and that 'extra-work factors' (p.209) positively predicted career commitment, rather than simply the initial stage of work proposed by Dex (1984). Career commitment in this study was found to be greater among women who were satisfied in their marriage, engaged in both individual and dual-career planning, earned more than their husbands, used coping strategies to manage multiple role demands and did not have relatives living in the near vicinity.

Nearly two decades after proposing that women's employment patterns were essentially bimodal in nature, Hakim (1995, 1996) explored further the notion of work commitment. She acknowledges that 'as a group, women are heterogeneous, diverse and divided' (Hakim, 1996, p.2) and identifies two qualitatively different groups which polarise women's experiences in the labour market (Hakim, 1995, p435). Her key conclusion is that women's social and economic position in society is being significantly restructured. A sharp divide between women has been produced by the polarisation process that began in the 1980s - though claims about the relative sizes of the two groups vary. In one source, Hakim (1995) suggests that the adult female population: 'divides into two fairly equal sectors. The first group of women are committed to careers in the labour market The

second group of women give priority to the marriage career' (Hakim, 1995, p.434). In another source, (Hakim, 1996), she suggests the proportions are unequal, with a minority of women committed to employment who are labelled 'career-oriented', for whom employment is just as central to their lives as it is for men, and the majority of 'home-centred' women who lack this commitment (p.215).

Other research challenges Hakim's conceptualisation of women as either having commitment to work or family, whatever the actual proportions. For example, Hallett and Gilbert (1997) studied the perception of women at university of their future patterns of work and family life and found that they did not see themselves as having to choose between career and a family. They assumed both are possible (Hallett & Gilbert, 1997, p.320), and not all wanted to integrate work and family in the same way. Two distinct patterns were identified: a conventional pattern and a role sharing pattern (Hallett and Gilbert, 1997, p.309). In the conventional pattern, the female maintains primary responsibility for the home and for parenting, expanding her role of worker to that of wife and mother. In the role-sharing pattern, both spouses actively pursue their careers as well as involving themselves in housework and parenting.

Ginn *et al.* (1996) contest Hakim's (1995) claim that women in part-time employment are less committed to work than men, and suggest that women's commitment to employment could be more usefully conceptualised as fluctuating over changes in their life patterns (Ginn *et al.*, 1996, p.168). Crompton and Harris (1998) also challenge Hakim's analysis of women's career patterns, arguing that 'women actively construct their work-life

biographies in terms of their historically available opportunities and constraints' (p.119). They propose an alternative framework for explaining women's career patterns which allows for the possibility of women 'desiring both "employment" and "family" careers', with their work commitment varying according to the stage reached in their life cycle.

Their comparative analysis of women's employment in five countries, Britain, Norway, France, Russia and the Czech Republic (Crompton & Harris, 1998) revealed that attitudes relating to employment for both men and women will vary 'depending on occupation-specific and national contexts' (p.123). The research sample consisted of professional women in banking and medicine, who were all committed to employment, according to Hakim's classification (1996). Yet within this single category, Crompton and Harris (1998) found that all the women in their sample were clear that they wished to combine employment with family life. The ways in which they sought to do this are categorised by Crompton and Harris (p.126) into four sub-types or orientations. First, the 'satisficer', who attempts to achieve success in both employment and family life without maximising either. Second, 'domestic life first' refers to women who, whilst realising both goals, had given priority to their domestic lives. Third, 'maximizers' actively seek to maximize their goals in respect of both employment and family life. Fourth, 'careerists' consciously put their careers before their domestic lives (some by choice, some by necessity). Crompton and Harris (1998) therefore argue that Hakim's (1996) categorisation of women according to commitment to employment over-simplified women's 'orientations to employment and family life which were complex and variable' (p.127). Women's choices, they conclude, are often multi-dimensional, vary over time and are structured by context.

Another study, which emphasises the importance of context, was a longitudinal study carried out by Pulkkinen *et al.* (1999) in Finland. Here, not much difference exists between men and women regarding the extent of employment outside the home. Mothers typically work full-time, with only fifteen per cent of Finnish families having only the father as the breadwinner (Pulkkinen *et al.*, 1999, p.41). Despite this, many working women are family orientated and try to adjust their employment to the needs of the family. The research focuses on individual factors in explaining commitment to employment by examining the relationship between personality and employment commitment. Data from one hundred and seventy three girls and one hundred and ninety six boys at age eight was analysed together with data from follow-up studies at ages fourteen, twenty-seven and thirty. Results suggest that personality characteristics indicating high self-control of emotions relate to high career orientations, whilst those indicating low self-control of emotions relate to low career orientation. This applied to women and men, and both to career orientation and career stability (Pulkkinen *et al.*, 1999, p.52). There were, however, important gender differences. Characteristics conventionally described as masculine correlated positively to employment stability and independence (for example, high self-esteem, self-efficacy, internal locus of control, non-anxiety and assertiveness). Characteristics categorised as feminine, weaken work commitment (for example, external locus of control, submissiveness, and emotional instability). This study highlights the interaction of individual personality with time, culture and social status in directing employment possibilities for women and shaping choices (Pulkkinen *et al.*, 1999, p.55).

So, our understanding of the varied patterns of women's commitment to employment,

together with possible causes, has expanded considerably over the past two decades or so. From available evidence, it is clear that women's labour market participation in numerical terms is now roughly comparable with men's, but that their relationship to the labour market, motivation, employment patterns and related commitment are often different, in many ways more complex, and seem to be increasing in diversity. The different experiences of women compared with men in the labour market are emphasised further when gender segregation is examined.

3.3.4 Occupational segregation

.... women remain disadvantaged compared to men, as occupational segregation means they are concentrated in lower skilled and lower paid jobs with less access to vocational training and education.

(EOC, 1999b, p.1)

Gender inequalities in the labour market persist. Hakim (1979) used the terms 'horizontal' and 'vertical' segregation (p.19) to describe the tendencies of women to be employed in a restricted range of occupational areas compared with men (horizontal segregation), and at lower levels than men in organisations (vertical segregation): 'there are two types of job segregation, vertical and horizontal, which are logically distinct even if they often occur together'. She also observes that: 'there has been little change overall in the degree of occupational segregation in Britain' (Hakim, 1979, p.43).

Hakim (1979) suggests that horizontal segregation may have slightly diminished since the introduction of the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) because of the movement of men into

‘women’s work’, rather than the other way round (Hakim, 1979, p.25). Indeed, in 1999, women outnumbered men three to one in clerical and secretarial occupations, whilst men outnumbered women ten to one in craft and related occupations (EOC, 1999, p.1). In contrast, vertical segregation may have increased. Hakim (1979) found that women were more evenly represented in managerial and administrative grades in 1911 than in the 1970s, and commented that: ‘it is wrong to believe that the position of women in the labour force has improved over the century - on the contrary it has deteriorated quite markedly in some respects’ (Hakim, 1979, p.29). As argued above (section 3.2.2), women continue to be seriously under-represented in management positions.

Overall, there seems to have been only a marginal improvement in the gains made by women in the labour market. Robinson (1988) argues that part-time work sustains, probably increases, occupational segregation and accounts for the continued growth in female employment. Research by Beechey (1987) into part-time employment in selected sectors of Coventry’s manufacturing industry and the public sector supports these conclusions. She found that part-time work provided employers with the means to organise their workforce flexibly and this was, in turn, inextricably linked to occupational segregation (Beechey, 1987, p.167).

Cockburn (1985) identifies particular constraints placed on women by their domestic responsibilities. These include: the tendency to drop in and out of employment to accommodate the requirements of the family; the preference for part-time work which fits in with domestic duties; and the inability to work overtime or move location (Cockburn,

1985, p.31). This combination of factors has resulted in the exploitation of women, with employers paying women less than men and offering them inferior conditions and prospects. Hatt (1997) supports this argument by suggesting that the domestic division of labour dictates the terms on which women participate in the labour market. Gender segregation remains intact because of women's dual responsibilities relating to care in the home. Even significant changes which the British economy has undergone over the past three decades, including the decline in manufacturing industry, the development of new technologies and the introduction of government policies to ensure increasingly flexible labour markets, have not significantly effected this inequality. Such changes have not been 'gender neutral' (Hatt, 1997, p.33) since women have remained in the service sector, taking new part-time jobs that have become available in large numbers.

The importance of the social milieu in which labour market decisions are made are emphasised by Straits (1998). Research into interpersonal environments revealed the ways in which reliance on same-sex contacts either promoted or hindered opportunities. It was found that women's networks reflect gender differences in activity foci as well as constraints on establishing beneficial contacts, because they typically assume more parenting, family and household responsibilities than men. Consequently, the initial choice of a predominantly female occupation constrains subsequent structural opportunities, thus reinforcing horizontal segregation.

Impediments to progress by women within employing organisations were studied by Ragins and Sundstrom (1989), who reviewed research into the differences in power between men

and women in organisations. A useful framework is proposed, identifying four levels of analysis, specifically, social-systems, organisational, interpersonal and individual. They conclude first, that power develops over time through career transitions, and that the path to power for women can 'best be characterised as an obstacle course' (Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989, p.81). Second, that power derives from various resources and levels within organisations. At the individual level, resources include skills and qualities; at the interpersonal level, they include peer networks, mentors, and supervision that allows autonomy; at the organisational level, resources include control over organisational resources and 'position power'. Third, 'power begets power' and 'powerlessness perpetuates powerlessness' (Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989, p.81), with serious consequences for women's potential for progress.

Cassell and Walsh (1993) also studied the barriers women face in the workplace. They focus on the covert, psychological barriers that keep women in powerless positions in organisations and suggest that women are unable to become powerful in employing organisations because: 'definitions of power are inappropriate to our experiences, we are socialised into fearing power and using second-class power tactics to get what we want' (Cassell and Walsh, 1993, p.112). Similarly, the corporate cultures that maintain 'old boys' networks' and make it extremely difficult for women to break into management are identified by Hatt (1997). She discusses how the lack of role models represents a serious barrier for young women considering their futures; the lack of adequate child care facilities constitute a major structural barrier for women with child care responsibilities; how sexual harassment operates to make women feel isolated in male environments; and how even

trades unions have contributed to restricting access for women (Hatt, 1997, p.80).

Organisational cultures, particularly those operating in relation to selection and promotion, are regarded as crucial to the maintenance of vertical segregation by Lyness and Judiesch (1999). From their research into the personnel databases of a large multinational financial services organisation in the United States, they found that female managers received more internal promotions than their male counterparts, largely because promotions were more likely in lower-paid occupations where women predominate (Lyness and Judiesch, 1999, p.167). In contrast, men were more likely to obtain positions due to external selection, both because of selection practices and because there are more external male candidates than female candidates (Lyness and Judiesch, 1999, p.168). In the organisation studied, women were under-represented in the upper levels of management of the company (only five per cent of top management). One key conclusion was that it would take a long time for more women to reach senior management positions, because of a bottleneck beyond which few women progressed. Advice given by the researchers to women is that they should be cautious about changing companies, since it is more likely they will gain promotion internally than be recruited externally (Lyness and Judiesch, 1999, p.170).

Outside employing organisations, women continue to be under-represented in positions of power, so are still unable to participate in or determine the decision-making processes which affect their lives. For example, the General Election of 1997 saw a marked increase in the number of female Members of Parliament (MPs), to one hundred and twenty one women MPs, compared with five hundred and thirty eight men (EOC, 1999, p.11).

However, this proportion of just eighteen per cent of women MPs participating in decision-making at the heart of government remains lamentably low.

The notion that occupational segregation is being maintained against the wishes of women is not, however, universally accepted. For example, Randle (1999) suggests that the glass ceiling concept itself contributes to gender inequality, since it 'implants into the general consciousness unnecessary preconceptions' (Randall, 1999, p.108). She argues that women can have equal opportunities, and that inevitably, there will be an increase in the proportion of women in top positions, because of the sheer numbers of qualified women coming through the system. Like Hakim (1995, 1996), she considers the current position of women in the labour market to be largely one of choice, advocating the ability for both men and women to choose the employment level they wish to reach (Randall, 1999).

Although the idea that women are exercising choice has a certain appeal, the notion that all women choose their positions in the labour market is clearly contentious. Theories that attempt to explain the extent and persistence of occupational segregation reflect competing perspectives around the dynamic interplay of structure and agency. Walby (1988) suggests that the key difference in these theories is between 'those who theorise segregation as a result of rational, freely made choices and those who argue that it is a result of structural constraints on women' (Walby, 1988, p.14). She outlines human capital theory, cultural theories, segmented labour market theory, dual labour market theory, Marxist segmented labour market theory and dual systems theory, considering their weaknesses as explanatory frameworks. In particular, she highlights the issue of race as representing a major challenge

to all theories which treat 'women' as a unifying category and as indicative of significant internal divisions (Walby, 1988, p.23). In seeking to explain sex segregation, she argues that patriarchal, capitalist and racist structures must be taken into account (Walby, 1988, p.27).

Crompton and Sanderson (1990) summarise theories of occupational segregation as 'general theories which seek to explain the location of individuals in the positional structure' (Crompton and Sanderson, 1990, p.27). Like Walby (1988), they also distinguish rational choice theories (in which individual choice is emphasised), from those theories focusing on external constraints on the individual (for example, Marxist, neo-Marxist and Patriarchy theories) and from theories, which stress the importance of an overarching value system (such as normative functionalism). Additionally, they highlight theories of supply and demand, of labour market segmentation and capitalist exploitation, and even descriptive accounts from cultural anthropology, which have all been used to explain occupational segmentation. All of these approaches, they argue, contribute something to our understanding of the complex issue of occupational segregation (Crompton and Sanderson, 1990).

Other writers, such as Siltanen (1994), argue for the development of new explanatory frameworks which address differences over time as well as particular points in time, and which take account of domestic responsibilities, wage rates and gender experiences.

Our understanding of why occupational segregation by gender persists has been advanced

by varied theoretical explanations, and by studies that have focused on mechanisms that operate to maintain this segregation. One such mechanism, sexual harassment, will now to be considered in some detail.

3.3.5 Sexual Harassment

Studies of women's employment have tended to focus on women's experience of work in relation to their child care and family responsibilities, and thus ignored the very concrete structures and very real social relations which keep women 'in place' in the employment structure.

(Coyle, 1988, p.12)

.... sexual harassment simultaneously rises from and reinforces women's subordinate position in society.

(Fitzgerald, 1993, p.1072)

Every woman has her own highly individualised biography, yet there are recurring, universal themes identifiable in the experiences of women which increasingly require some acknowledgement. Sexual harassment is one such theme. Stanko (1988) set out to study the interrelationship between occupational segregation and sexual harassment. She argues that 'sexual harassment remains a common experience of working women' (Stanko, 1988, p.99) and represents a form of male control over women's lives. This applies to all levels within organisations. In her brief review of the prevalence and consequences of sexual harassment, Fitzgerald (1993) similarly concludes that it 'has recently been recognized as a social problem of enormous proportions' (p.1070), with as many as one in every two

women subjected to some form of harassment during her academic or working life (p.1071). Like Stanko (1988), Fitzgerald emphasises how sexual harassment functions as an agent of social control (p.1073).

Stanko (1988) studied both traditional and non-traditional occupations for women, finding that in non-traditional occupations, women were more likely to report sexual harassment than those in traditionally female areas. Sexual harassment therefore represents a powerful means of maintaining occupational segregation which has been used to warn women away from invading previously male work spheres (Farley, 1978 and MacKinnon, 1978 quoted in Stanko, 1988, p.97).

The higher risk of sexual harassment associated with traditionally male work environments is also emphasised by Fitzgerald (1993), who additionally highlights the extent of sexual harassment in educational institutions. Data is discussed which suggests that fifty per cent of female students had been harassed 'in some way by their professors or instructors, ranging from insulting remarks, come-ons, propositions, bribes and threats to outright sexual assault' (p.1071).

Stanko (1988) and Fitzgerald (1993) also discuss the penalties suffered by women as a result of unwanted and imposed sexual attention. These include humiliation, self-blame, anger, loss of self-confidence, reduction in the ability to perform in the job, resignation, transfer, demotion, loss of jobs, decreased job satisfaction, decreased morale and damage to interpersonal relations at work.

A study of sexual harassment of women in organisational settings by Fitzgerald *et al.* (1997) both supports these findings and provides additional insights. They set out to test the proposition that sexual harassment in employment settings operates at the levels of group and organisational cultures, and is a function of two conditions: organisational climate and job gender context. Organisational climate refers to 'organizational characteristics that communicate tolerance of sexual harassment', whereas job gender context denotes 'the gendered nature of the work group, for example, group gender ratio' (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1997, p.579). Additionally, the consequences of sexual harassment were examined, and found to fall into three outcome categories: psychological (for example, anxiety and depression); job-related (job satisfaction and organisational withdrawal) and health-related (for example, headaches and sleep disturbances). Their findings confirm first, that organisational conditions (such as complaints not being taken seriously, too risky to complain and perpetrators are unlikely to be punished) are potent facilitators of sexual harassment; second, that the presence of large numbers of male workers combined with traditionally male-oriented tasks are strongly related to sexual harassment (Fitzgerald *et al.* 1997, p.586).

In contrast to Stanko's (1988) proposal that sexual harassment is used to maintain occupational segregation, Adkins (1995) suggests that sexual harassment is an outcome of the gendered organisation of relations of production (Adkins, 1995, p.155). Her research focus was the conditions of women's employment in the tourist industry, with fieldwork undertaken in both a leisure park and an hotel. She concludes that first, female labour is 'appropriated' by males through the organisation of labour relations in the leisure industry

(for example, where a husband and wife team manage a public house, the husband typically contracts directly with the brewery or supplier whereas the wife works, usually without any formal contract, for the husband). Second, that women employed in this industry 'had to work heterosexually' (Adkins, 1995, p.156). That is, the conditions of work surrounding women's employment illustrated the way in which their sexuality was objectified and made compulsory, whether this was as 'barmaid', 'waitress' or 'receptionist'. It was in these roles that women were expected to play an occupational role in which their female identity was made explicit, for the benefit of customers.

Adkins (1995) also found that sexual harassment and sexualisation of women at work is deeply embedded in the gendered relations of production, contributing to the production of economic divisions between men and women:

The sexual harassment of women within the labour market thus works to systematically disadvantage women in employment, for it is an abuse of economic power by men, but operates in a structural situation in which women can be (and are) systematically subordinated to men sexually and in other ways.

(Adkins, 1995, p.62).

In a discussion of recent changes to women's employment in Britain, Perrons and Shaw (1995) note that even in management positions, women often have to tolerate forms of behaviour from their male colleagues which include sexual harassment (p.30). Similarly, Wajcman (1996) researched women and men managers in five multinational companies (oil, chemicals and computing services). The companies were partly selected because, as so-called 'Opportunity 2000' companies, they were 'widely acknowledged to be at the forefront of equal opportunities policies' (Wajcman, 1996, p.263). Despite this, women

were still seriously under-represented at senior levels of the management in all five organisations. All the senior women managers and a representative sample of men were surveyed, a total of four hundred and thirty nine managers. Three hundred and twenty four managers completed a postal questionnaire, of which one hundred and eight were women and two hundred and sixteen men. There was a marked difference between the men and women in the reporting of sexual harassment. Seventeen per cent of women compared with one per cent men indicated they had experienced sexual harassment (Wajcman, 1996, p.271).

In her research into professional women, Nicolson (1996) identifies the difficulties associated with bringing a complaint of sexual harassment. She compares the process with rape, although in sexual harassment cases the identities of the women, the details of their sexual histories and current lifestyle are made public, with the penalties associated with this process for women being heavy (Nicolson, 1996, p.128). Fitzgerald (1993) cites research which found that fifty per cent of women who had filed a complaint about sexual harassment were fired from American companies, with another twenty five per cent resigning because of the stresses of the complaints process or the harassment itself (p.1072).

Sexual harassment, which can be either a single or continuous set of events, is defined by Stanko (1988) as:

unwanted sexual attention. Its behavioural forms are many and include visual (leering); verbal (sexual teasing, jokes, comments or questions); unwanted pressure for sexual favours or dates; unwanted touching or pinching; unwanted pressure for sexual favours with implied threats of job-related consequences for non-co-

operation; physical assault; sexual assault; rape.

(p.91).

A more discerning definition is provided by Fitzgerald *et al.* (1995b), who set out to develop an instrument for assessing the incidence and prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace. The first systematic attempt 'to map the conceptual domain of sexual harassment and develop a comprehensive framework for harassment was initiated in 1980' (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1995b, p.426). A theoretical model of sexual harassment is proposed comprising three related, but conceptually distinct dimensions: sexual coercion, unwanted sexual attention and gender harassment (p.430). Gender harassment refers to a broad range of verbal and non-verbal behaviours that convey insulting, hostile and degrading attitudes about women, not aimed at sexual co-operation (p.430). Unwanted sexual attention includes a wide range of verbal and non-verbal behaviour that is offensive, unwanted and unreciprocated whilst sexual coercion refers to 'the extortion of sexual co-operation in return for job-related considerations' (p.431).

The failure to analyse the construct of sexual harassment is identified by Fitzgerald *et al.* (1995b) as 'arguably the single greatest weakness plaguing the body of sexual harassment prevalence literature as it exists today' (p.437). Other problems of definition are further discussed in sections 8.7 and 9.5 below. Stockdale and Hope (1997) suggest that a clear, unambiguous consensus on the definition of sexual harassment has only just begun to emerge, and suggest that until such a definition is agreed, an accurate understanding of sexual harassment will remain problematic. They set out to evaluate a three-factor model of

sexual harassment (comprising sexual coercion, unwanted sexual attention and gender harassment) against two national surveys in North America, and found the established methods to be inadequate measures. Employers, they argue, should start surveying the prevalence of sexual harassment in their organisations and monitor their harassment climates. Only when a clearer understanding of the constructs underlying sexual harassment has been achieved will the theory and research into sexual harassment be advanced (Stockdale and Hope, 1997, p.355).

Notwithstanding current problems with definition and measurement, sexual harassment emerges clearly as a common experience for women in employment from studies into varied occupational sectors and different status levels. Its frequency and effects on women's career development will be further discussed in chapters 8 and 9.

3.3.6 Pay Levels

One other indicator of women's inferior position in the UK labour market is their pay level, compared with men. A combination of occupational segregation and part-time working has resulted in women's pay being set at levels significantly lower than men's. In 1998, women's average hourly earnings were eighty per cent of men's average earnings, with weekly earnings standing at just seventy two per cent of men's (EOC, 1999, p.12). In the adult population, women's individual income is on average only fifty three per cent of men's (EOC 1999, p.1).

This, despite sex discrimination legislation introduced over twenty years ago, which Clarke

(1995) acknowledges 'is routinely criticized for having failed to deliver much of what it promised' (p.55). Snell (1986) found that while many women received substantial increases as a result of the introduction of the Equal Pay Act, 1970, they nonetheless received less than they might have done because of actions taken by employers to minimise their obligations under the Act (Snell, 1986, p.20).

Various writers, however, remind us that despite its shortcomings, the legislation has played a useful, if limited, role in developing equal opportunities policies and improving women's rights at work (Clarke, 1995; Cockburn, 1985; Rees, 1998; Snell, 1986). For example, throughout the second half of the 1980s, many large retail companies such as Tesco, Marks and Spencers and Sainsburys undertook job evaluation studies which resulted in an upward re-evaluation of some women's jobs (Employment Department Group, 1995, p.54).

The Equal Pay Act 1970 originally provided for women to be paid the same as men working for the same employer in two circumstances: where the woman and man are employed on 'like' jobs (Section (4)) and where the employer has voluntarily carried out a job evaluation scheme which graded the woman's job and man's job as the same (Section 1 (5)). It was designed to cover all aspects of sex discrimination in the contract of employment and deals, therefore, not only with inequality in pay but also other terms and conditions of employment such as holidays, sick pay and fringe benefits.

The principle of similarity on which this law was constructed is, Clarke (1995) suggests,

based on an assimilationist model which takes the male role as the norm, requiring women to be exactly like men. This is deeply flawed since women's lives are invariably different from men's, not least because most have two jobs, to a much greater extent than men. They carry the main burden of care, for children and the elderly, and still carry out more domestic tasks than men. Often, these demands make it impossible for women to enter employment at all or where this is possible, it is usually in the twilight zone of part-time, poorly paid employment in the service sector (Clarke, 1995).

The Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value amendment, introduced in 1984 to address the inadequacies of the original legislation, has had, Rees (1998) argues, limited effect 'because of cultural barriers attached to valuing work largely done by women in the same terms as that done by men' (p.33). She discusses the way in which financial and personal costs associated with bringing legal action have inhibited further the use of equal opportunities legislation.

Pay levels, therefore, represent just one more symptom of the multitude of disadvantage women experience in their private, as well as public, employment lives. Perhaps more than any other feature of women's employment, it operates to maintain inequality, by ensuring that women remain marginalised in all domains of their lives:

The systematic discrimination which women face in employment contributes to the lack of power women experience within the private world of home and family: women become and remain dependent upon a 'male' breadwinner, or increasingly, the state.

(Clarke, 1995, p.57)

3.3.7 Ethnicity, gender and employment

Before concluding this review of literature on women in the labour market, brief acknowledgement must be made of the relationship between gender and ethnicity. In fact, much data on women in employment actually relates to White women, since Black women are so under-represented in many occupational sectors, like television, finance and higher education (Coyle, 1988, p.2). However, the characteristics of the employed population by ethnic group are outlined for us by Green (1997), who concludes that for women, as for men, some ethnic groups are segregated in particular industries and occupations (Green, 1997, p.82). However, she cautions against generalising employment trends for Black women, reminding us that patterns of occupational concentration are complex and vary by ethnic group. For example, while minority ethnic groups are, on aggregate, more concentrated in declining industries than White women, this is largely because South Asian women are concentrated in these industries (Green, 1997, p.89).

Phizacklea (1988) discusses the way in which the UK labour market has witnessed 'the development and reproduction of "ethnic" niches within the larger body of "women's" work' (Phizacklea, 1988, p.43). Her analysis of gender, racism and occupational segregation concludes that Black women suffered high levels unemployment from the mid 1970s to the mid 1980s; that an increased tendency for Black women (particularly Asian women) to engage in homeworking was clearly discernible; and that, because of sexism, racism and racial discrimination, Black women were finding it harder than White women to get and keep employment (Phizacklea, 1988, p.53).

By deciding to opt for 'accessible careers' (meaning jobs that are gendered and racialized), Mirza (1997) argues that Black women are demonstrating the strategic decision to choose an area which will permit entry to a qualifying course of study and possible promotion. Targeting occupational areas like social work and nursing is not, therefore, an indication of conformity to stereotypes. Rather, it represents the strategic optimisation of opportunities and routes available (Mirza, 1997, p.271).

Asian women workers are conceptualised by Wilson (1997) as a sub-class of the working class. Consisting of sweat-shop workers and homeworkers, she discusses how they are treated by employers as having no rights at all: 'Before Asian immigrants came to Britain, these jobs were done by previous waves of immigrants in certain areas (like the East End of London). But elsewhere in the country, they were usually done by indigenous working-class women' (Wilson, 1997, p.31). She concludes that now Asian women have taken their place, White working class women have moved slightly upwards in the hierarchy.

A study into the key barriers to employment for Pakistani and Bangladeshi young people in Oldham (Karla *et al.*, 1999) revealed that the gender divide was more significant than ethnicity when examining overall levels of participation. Bangladeshi females were the most likely to be on unstable pathways, and the low level of participation of Asian young women in employment, education and training was the result of a combination of domestic responsibilities and poor institutional experiences (Karla *et al.*, 1999, p.78).

The importance of employment for Black women is emphasised by Mama (1997), since

they are so often head of their families. In this capacity, they are more likely to have more dependants, more likely to have unemployed men as members of their family, and where men are in work, wages are low (Mama, 1997, p.40). She argues that the employment situation for Black women is deteriorating, and concludes: 'In short, what is bad for women is worse for Black women' (Mama, 1997, p.40).

Any examination of the relationship of women and the labour market needs to take cognisance of ethnicity. Women's position in the labour market continues to be different and unequal, compared with men. These trends are exacerbated for some ethnic groups. Coyle (1988) stresses the fundamental limitations of the concept of equal opportunities for women because it fails to challenge other major divisions, like class and ethnicity, on which organisational hierarchies are premised (p.2). It is important to avoid regarding women as a homogeneous group and to acknowledge the extent and degrees of inequality within this group.

3.4 Conclusion

Inequalities in the education and employment of girls and women in the UK persist, despite legislation introduced to address these injustices. Girl's educational performance, as measured by examination results and compared with boys, is steadily improving. Women's participation in education beyond compulsory schooling is increasing. These successes are not being matched by achievements in the labour market. Given the crucial importance of educational achievements for entry into and success within the labour market, what particular challenges do these anomalies present for careers counselling, which exists to

help, support and assist clients in their transitions from education? These issues will be examined in the next chapter.

4.1 Introduction

More than two decades after equal opportunities legislation was implemented in the UK, the position of women in the labour market shows a disturbing resistance to significant, positive change (EOC, 1999a; 1999b; 1999c; 1999d). In comparison, women's employment patterns are changing rapidly, demonstrating an intriguing complexity which reflects status, context and commitments (Crompton & Harris, 1998; Dex, 1984; Hakim, 1996; Hallett & Gilbert, 1997; Harmon, 1981; Steffy & Jones, 1988).

Many argue that traditional career theories serve this particular client group inadequately (Astin, 1967; Fitzgerald & Crites, 1980; Hansen *et al.*, 1993; Holland, 1966; Osipow & Littlejohn, 1995; Psathas, 1968; Zytowski, 1969). This inadequacy has been variously defined. For example, Fitzgerald *et al.* (1995), Hackett (1997), Meara *et al.* (1997) and Richie *et al.* (1997) argue that these theories have been largely developed from research samples which excluded girls and women while Brooks (1990), Collin, (1997), Edwards and Payne (1997) and Savickas (1995) consider that the academic discipline of psychology from which most of these theories derive is wanting in certain respects. This growing disquiet has, over the past two decades or so, stimulated considerable research and development in career theory building for women (Hackett, 1997; Phillips & Imhoff, 1997). Much is now known about factors which both enhance (Betz, 1994; Lucas, 1997; McCracken & Weitzman, 1997; Rainey and Borders, 1997; Richie *et al.*, 1997; Russell & Burgess, 1998; Schaefer *et al.*, 1997) and inhibit (Betz, 1994; Klonoff & Landrine, 1995;

Krumboltz & Coon, 1995; Lafontaine & Tredeau, 1986; Schneider *et al.*, 1997; Swim *et al.*, 1995; Ward & Bingham, 1993) the career development of girls and women. Theories are being developed, tested and refined which take cognisance of the particular challenges confronted by girls and women in their transitions into and through the labour market (Brooks & Forrest, 1994; Farmer, 1997; Gottfredson, 1996; Hackett & Betz, 1981). This chapter reviews research on the enhancers and inhibitors of women's career development and summarises five new theories of career guidance practice developed to meet the particular needs of girls and women. Finally, it discusses some implications for practice of these new approaches.

4.2 Adequacy of Current Career Theory

Brown (1990) discusses the criteria used to judge the efficacy of theory. These include comprehensiveness, clarity and predictive value. To these, Brown adds 'provision of a guide to practice' (p.338). Krumboltz and Nichols (1990) compare a theory with a map, suggesting that, like maps, 'theory is constructed to serve the specific purposes of its users - understanding a complex phenomenon, making predictions about future outcomes, or deciding on courses of action' (p.161). Thompson (2000) argues for the importance of theory in professional practice, highlighting its potential role in guarding against discriminatory practice (p.31). To what extent, then, do traditional and established career theories satisfy such criteria?

Career theories developed during the first part of the last century and subsequently refined, like those derived from differential psychology (for example, Rodger, 1952; Holland, 1966,

1973, 1985) and developmental psychology (Super, 1957, 1980, 1988, 1990), have influenced careers guidance practice in the United Kingdom, at least up to the end of the twentieth century (Kidd *et al.*, 1993). Yet they were developed primarily from empirical studies of men to explain the career development of men. This immediately raises questions about their applicability to women and their value in promoting anti-discriminatory practice. Some criticisms relate specifically to the theories developed by Holland and Super. For example, Hansen *et al.* (1993) question the relevance for women of Holland's theory of occupational choice. Indeed, even Holland acknowledged the weakness of his original theory on this point, noting that 'it is based chiefly on studies of men and is probably less useful for understanding the behavior of women. A special but closely related theory for women is desirable, but at this point, I have none to offer' (Holland, 1966, p.13).

Fitzgerald and Crites (1980) commented that Super was the only 'major theorist' (p.45) who made any serious attempt to extend his ideas to women by developing a classification of women's career patterns and introducing the notion of role and role conflict. However, they criticise this theoretical extension on the grounds that it does not move beyond a description of patterns, failing to address the need for 'separate explanatory concepts to account for women's career behavior' (Fitzgerald and Crites, 1980, p.45). The concept of self-realisation through employment, central to Super's theory, is criticised by Forrest and Mikolaitis (1986). They argue that 'family or relational roles' often impede women's ability to self-realise and suggest that existent theory be extended by incorporating this 'relational component' (p.86). Brown (1990) confirms that even with theoretical developments which had extended over forty years, Super still failed to address the needs of girls and women:

'Propositions regarding the processes that propel women into career patterns similar to and different from men's have also not emerged' (p.355).

So it is clear that early career theories, still in use, were developed mostly by men and for men. Perhaps not surprisingly, therefore, a recurring theme in recent theoretical critiques emphasises the way women were largely under-represented in the research populations from which traditional theories were developed. Collin and Young (1986) discuss the limitations of career theory because of the biases in research design in favour of middle class males ((p.840). Fitzgerald *et al.* (1995) observe that:

researchers and theorists in the area universally and unselfconsciously investigated men's vocational interests, described their career plans, and sought to explain their vocational behavior - with women representing (sometimes literally) only a footnote to their work.

(Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1995, p.67)

Similarly, Meara *et al.* (1997) comment: 'as is well known, early work in career counseling and assessment focused on well educated, upwardly mobile men' (p.116).

Some who have examined the adequacy of current careers theory for girls and women have extended their criticisms beyond gender to other, inter-related dimensions of diversity such as ethnicity, social class and sexual orientation. Richie *et al.* (1997), for example, considered the relationship between gender and ethnicity. Their research into the career development of African American-Black and White women who were high achievers 'confirms the inappropriateness of applying career theories written by and based on white

men to white women and people of color' (Richie *et al.*, 1997, p.145). A separate study by Gainor & Forrest (1991) highlighted the lack of an appropriate careers model for practice with Black women which took account of the interactive effects of racism and sexism (Gainor & Forrest, 1991, p.261).

An examination of the inter-relationship between gender and social class was undertaken by Meara *et al.* (1997) who studied the working lives of women from lower socio-economic groups. Poverty and deprivation, which may exist alongside physical and emotional abuse, are frequently associated in this social group with low levels of achievement in formal education and poor marketable skills. This combination of factors limit vocational opportunities which, in turn, restrict options to self-improve by investing in education and/or training. They conclude that current career theory, with its traditional emphasis on client autonomy and choice, may not be relevant for this particular group (Meara *et al.* 1997, p.116). Brown *et al.* (1996) advocate that more focused attention be given to this particular dimension of diversity (Brown *et al.* 1996, p.185), identifying social class as 'an important omission in the field of vocational psychology' (Brown *et al.* 1996, p.159).

The relationship between gender and sexual orientation is one other neglected area. Morgan and Brown (1991) studied the career development of lesbians and observed that, although women's career development is now attracting a good deal of attention, the 'unique career development issues of lesbians have not been addressed' (p.273). They argue that the needs of lesbians have erroneously been subsumed under the study of the general female population, and that: 'It is now time to expand this area to address the

unique needs of lesbians and thus to eliminate heterosexism in the field of career and vocational development' (Morgan and Brown, 1991, p.289). In developing a new body of knowledge, we are in danger of falling into the same theoretical trap of generalising findings from one population to another, for which they are not relevant.

Rather than focusing on specific areas, some argue that career theory should respond more effectively to all dimensions of diversity. In her review of recent developments in theory building, Brooks (1990) noted how the salient criticisms of current theory focused on how these theories inadequately explain the vocational behaviour of certain groups, 'particularly women and racial and ethnic minorities' (p.364). Fitzgerald and Betz (1994) discuss the lack of empirical attention in career theory, which has been paid to class, sexual orientation, gender and race. They question the general relevance for many clients of the core concept of career development evident in traditional theory and criticise the failure of theories to take structural and cultural factors into account (p.103). Similarly, in a discussion of the promise and problems in the theory and research on women's career development, Hackett (1997) concludes that research populations should represent ethnic minority women, younger people and other dimensions of diversity (p.186).

Marshall (1989) argues that we need to 're-vision career theory because it is rooted in male values and based on disguised male psychology' (Marshall, 1989, p.282). Brooks (1990) suggests that traditional theories have not provided an adequate explanation of the vocational behaviour of particular groups such as women and ethnic minorities (p.364). This is because they are based on limited models and definitions of human development, are

too psychological and have over-emphasised career roles, neglecting other life roles. Savickas (1995) relates current problems with theory to the more fundamental issue of different philosophical origins. He identifies inherent tensions which arise from the academic traditions of different theories: 'sharp lines have been drawn on which philosophy of science to choose' (p.15). He concludes that:

vocational psychology could benefit simultaneously from refinements forged within the distinct career theories, from advances produced by convergence among career macrotheories and from break-throughs induced by divergence in work-role microtheory

(p.29)

The traditional, well-established explanations of how people enter and progress within the labour market are, therefore, now considered inappropriate for women. Many are striving to fill this theoretical gap. Fitzgerald *et al.* (1995) describe the study of careers counselling for women as 'the most active and vibrant area of research and theory in all vocational psychology' (p.67). A rapidly expanding body of research evidence provides some interesting leads, though Brooks & Forrest (1994) remind us that psychologists have produced most research data available in this area. They highlight an inherent weakness in the approach of psychologists who prefer to separate the individual from the context in which she exists. This, they argue is a particular weakness when studying women because 'who can deny on simply intuitive grounds that women's vocational behavior is a product of the interaction between individual and social contextual variables?' (p.128).

One set of questions being asked as part of the quest for a fuller and more accurate

understanding of women's vocational behaviour relates to the dominant influences, enhancers and inhibitors for women's career development.

4.3 Factors enhancing career success for women

A good deal of evidence now exists providing us with strong clues about factors which enhance the career success of women, measured against the dominant norm of male achievement (Gallos, 1989). For example, Betz (1994) summarises research identifying a combination of individual and structural factors that include a supportive family background; educational qualifications; instrumentality (self-assertion and competence); later marriage and/or single status; few or no children; high self-esteem; career-related self-efficacy; and the rejection of traditional attitudes towards women's roles.

Other research evidence from North America relates mainly to individual characteristics. For example, the centrality of career self-efficacy beliefs emerges as an important factor (Betz *et al.* 1996, Richie *et al.*, 1997), together with high self-esteem and instrumentality (Betz, 1994). Proven ability regarding 'multiple role planning' and possessing a strong 'locus of control' are identified as important intervening variables for successful career women (McCracken and Weitzman, 1997, Richie *et al.* 1997). The role of value systems (for example, hierarchical value systems compared with relational systems) is also identified as potentially significant (Betz 1994, McCracken & Weitzman, 1997, Richie *et al.* 1997, Schaefers *et al.* 1997). A study conducted by Rainey and Borders (1997) highlights the influence of the mother-daughter relationship for future career, whilst Lucas (1997) focuses on emotional separation from parents as critical for the career success of both women and

men.

In addition to factors which have been identified as linking generally with the career success of women, we are also gaining valuable insights to the ways women have become successful in different employment settings. Russell and Burgess (1998) researched women who had set up in their own business, identifying individual strategies for career success. Five categories of factors are identified: career goals and strategies (for example, acquiring feedback on performance, initiating career discussions with management); exhibiting positive traits (for example, taking on difficult and challenging tasks, especially those that are visible); taking opportunities (for example, being willing to relocate); acquiring specific skills (for example, communicating and dealing with members of the 'men's club' on an individual basis); and positive and productive interactions with others (for example, developing a style that 'works' in the organisation, that is, one with which men are comfortable) (Russell and Burgess, 1998, p.371).

4.4 Factors inhibiting career success for women

If the above factors operate as enhancers for women's career progression within the labour market, what do we know about the inhibitors? Individual factors include poor self-concept and low expectations of success together with the effects of gender role and occupational stereotypes (Betz, 1994, p.23).

In addition, a larger number of structural barriers to women who wish to work outside the home have been identified, including the manner in which educational systems operate to

negative effect. For example, at secondary level, the ways in which gender roles are emphasised result in girls being excluded from certain activities and curricular areas (Betz, 1994, p.14). In higher education, women often feel 'put down' or have gender differences ignored completely (referred to as the 'null environment', Betz, 1994, p.17). Other structural barriers identified (Betz, 1994) include the lack of role models and gender-biased career counselling, particularly the lack of unbiased information and tendency to steer women/girls towards traditional roles (Betz, 1994). Career-family conflict (penalties attached to having children which are not experienced by men) and mathematics - 'the critical filter' (mastery of mathematics and science has become essential for full participation in the world of employment in an increasingly technological society) - are identified as other impediments to women's career success (Betz, 1994, p.23).

Our understanding of barriers to women's progress within organisations has also advanced. For example, Ragins & Sundstrom (1989) reviewed research into the differences in power between men and women in organisations and propose a useful framework that was discussed previously in section 3.3.4. Other inhibiting structural factors operating within organisations are identified by Russell and Burgess (1998). Four categories were emphasised: stereotypes and assumptions (for example, assumptions that women will not relocate); organisational culture and human relations practices (for example, unequal bonuses for men and women); lack of career opportunities (for example, limited opportunities in higher status, more remunerative sectors of professions); and skills, abilities and interests (for example, lack of ability, self-efficacy or interest in the field) (Russell and Burgess, 1998, p.367).

The deleterious effects of discrimination and sexual harassment are also emerging as important inhibitors of women's career progression. Sexual discrimination and harassment have been identified by Krumboltz and Coon (1995) as 'major stressors' in the lives of working women alongside home conflicts, child-care responsibility, office politics and lack of career progress. So how widespread are they? The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) reported that in 1998, 16,000 people made enquiries for information about sex discrimination and pay issues with another 6,700 people contacting the Scottish and Welsh offices for advice (EOC, 1999d). In addition, it was reported that in 1998 seven hundred women contacted the Commission about sexual harassment, making up more than 10 per cent of all caseload advice (EOC, 1999d).

The anticipated effects of sexual discrimination also have an impact. In her study of Year 10 and 11 pupils' constructions of gender and learning, Francis (2000) found that the girls in her study talked about the possibility of sexual harassment in the work place and discrimination in employment. She concludes that 'the diversity of issues raised by girls, and the numbers of girls voicing these anxieties, indicates a strong concern with the future work environment on their part' (p.23). Indeed, Francis (2000) attributes the additional educational efforts of girls in the UK to their awareness of the issue of work place discrimination (p.24).

Lafontaine and Tredeau (1986) set out to clarify the frequency and nature of sexual harassment among women in traditional male occupations, specifically, engineering, science and management, since they recognised that sexual harassment has become a major

problem confronting working women. The definition of sexual harassment used was 'any action occurring with the workplace whereby women are treated as objects of the male sexual prerogative' (Lafontaine and Tredeau, 1986, p.435). Data was collected from one hundred and sixty female participants by questionnaire survey. They found that 75 per cent of the sample reported experiencing at least one form of harassment; that the incidence of harassment was inversely related to the level of severity; that peers were the most frequent source of harassment; that married workers and older respondents reported lower levels of harassment; and that individuals employed by companies with strong equal opportunities policies reported significantly lower level of harassment.

A more recent study of sexual harassment (Schneider *et al.*, 1997), based on a sample of four hundred and forty seven female private-sector employees and three hundred female university employees, examined the outcomes of sexual harassment and concluded that 'sexual harassment, even at relatively low frequencies, exerts a significant negative impact on women's psychological well-being and, particularly, job attitudes and work behaviours' (p.412).

The effects of prejudice associated with sexism and racism are highlighted by both Lent *et al.* (1994) and Richie *et al.* (1997) as important variables that are under-researched in careers research. Ward and Bingham (1993) emphasise the need to incorporate knowledge of how race and ethnicity influence women's expectations and aspirations into careers practice, though this is not yet fully understood. For example, Gainor and Forrest (1991) discuss the importance of the interactive effects of racism and sexism in the career

development of Black women, whilst McWhirter (1997) found significant ethnic and gender differences, but no interaction effects (p.134) in her research into the perceived barriers to education and careers among Mexican American and Euro-American students. From her research into British Muslim girls, Basit (1996) concludes that while 'discrimination is compounded by the dual effect of race and gender inequality' for minority ethnic women, they still have high career aspirations (Basit, 1996, p.229).

A study of discrimination by Swim *et al.* (1995) concluded that prejudice and discrimination against women has become increasingly subtle and covert. They compare 'modern sexism' with 'modern racism' and argue that in contrast to old-fashioned sexism, characterised by 'endorsement of traditional gender roles, differential treatment of women and men, and stereotypes about lesser female competence' (p.199), modern sexism is characterised by 'denial of continued discrimination, antagonism towards women's demands and lack of support for policies designed to help women' (p.199). They found that people who endorse modern sexist beliefs about women are also likely to hold traditional beliefs about women. Such people tend to perceive greater equality in the workforce than actually exists and are more likely to attribute sex segregation to individualistic causes (like ability and motivation) rather than discrimination or prejudice against women (p.209).

Klonoff and Landrine (1995) note that although a weight of evidence currently exists testifying to widespread discrimination against women, few studies have examined the impact of this discrimination. They therefore developed the Schedule of Sexist Events

(SSE), comprising twenty items designed to measure sexist events experienced by women (Klonoff & Landrine, 1995). The definitions of sexist events used consist of broad categories of experiences including sexist degradation, sexism in distant relationships, sexism in close relationships and sexist discrimination in the workplace.

Six hundred and thirty one women (diverse in terms of age, ethnicity, socio-economic status and educational background) completed the SSE, with Klonoff and Landrine (1995) asserting that the SSE is, indeed, a 'valid, reliable measure of sexist discrimination' (p.464). In their study, they found that only one per cent of women reported that they had never experienced sexist discrimination. No income or educational differences were found in frequency of reporting sexist discrimination, though younger women reported more discrimination than older women (p.454-455). Single (never married) women reported experiencing more discrimination than married women and when the relationship between ethnicity and workplace discrimination was examined, again no significant differences were found (p.461).

In conclusion, Klonoff and Landrine (1995) found that 'sexist discrimination is rampant in women's lives' (p.439) and that 'the volume of research needed to elucidate the meaning and costs of sexist discrimination in women's lives is enormous' (p.464). In particular, they identify the need for research into the role of sexism in 'career choice, educational attainment and career aspirations and success among women' (p.465). Findings from a further study (Landrine & Klonoff, 1997) indicated that the widespread discrimination against women in America not only contributed to physical and psychiatric symptoms but

also was the single best predictor of those symptoms (p.xii).

An examination of the factors which enhance and inhibit women's career development therefore reveals some recurring themes. These include the nature, type and extent of support systems together with the effect and interaction of sexual harassment, sexism and racism on women's vocational behaviour. Fitzgerald *et al.* (1995a) stress the need to study concepts and variables for women which were previously regarded as unnecessary and irrelevant, concluding that this will lead to a greater understanding of the vocational behaviour of everyone (p.68).

Five models for careers counselling developed to respond to criticisms of traditional theories by incorporating such variables are discussed below.

4.5 Approaches to careers counselling for women

Some researchers strongly argue that the creation of theories unique to women is required because of the singular and complex nature of women's career development.

(Hacket, 1997, p.185)

Based on existing evidence, it is reasonable to suppose that the career guidance needs of girls and women are different from boys and men. Indeed, their particular needs have been a focus for career development theorists since the 1960s (Farmer, 1997, p.355), with Betz and Fitzgerald (1993) suggesting that this 'may well be the fastest-growing area within

counselling psychology today' (p.346). Since the 1960s, then, it has been increasingly acknowledged that traditional theories do not provide careers professionals with realistic frameworks for effective practice with girls and women (Astin, 1967, Psathas, 1968, Zytowski, 1969). Fassinger (1985) observes that, despite the large quantity of research into factors related to women's career choice, the 'lack of unifying theory' made it difficult to assess which variables are most influential (p.124). However, a number of theories, which focus on the vocational behaviour and career development needs of women have been developed. Five such contributions will now be briefly discussed, together with some implications for practice.

4.5.1 Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription and Compromise

Gottfredson's developmental theory of occupational aspirations (1981) is applicable to both women and men, and represents an attempt to reconcile the different academic perspectives of psychology and sociology. She set out to explain 'how the well-documented differences in aspirations by social group (e.g. race, sex, social class) develop' (1983, p.204). Strongly influenced by the theorist John Holland (she was a student in his research centre) and a sociologist by professional training (1996, p.180), Gottfredson was concerned with career aspirations and how they develop. Gottfredson acknowledges the influence of the theories of both Holland and Super to the development of her own theory (Gottfredson, 1996, p.181), which she indicates is similar to these earlier theories because it proposes that career choice reflects the process of attempting to implement an individual's preferred self-concept and that career satisfaction depends on the match or fit with the self-concept (Gottfredson and Lapan, 1997). It is different from psychological theories (Gottfredson,

1996, p.181) since it proposes that career development is an attempt to implement, first, a social self and, second, a psychological self. It pays attention to the ways in which beliefs about the self and occupations develop and treats vocational choice largely as a process of eliminating options and narrowing choices. It also considers how individuals compromise their goals in coming to terms with reality as they try to implement their aspirations.

The model contains three basic tenets, summarised by Brooks (1990, p.374) as: first, people differentiate occupations along dimensions of sex type, level of work and field of work; second, they assess the suitability of occupations for themselves according to their self-concepts and the amount of effort they are willing to expend to enter the occupations (so jobs that are compatible with the self-concept will be attractive, and vice versa); third, elements of the self-concept that are vocationally relevant are gender, social class, intelligence, interests, values and abilities, and occupational aspirations are circumscribed according to these elements of the self-concept.

Gottfredson (1981, p.555) proposed that vocationally relevant elements of the self-concept are developed during four stages of cognitive development. During the first stage (ages three to five), orientation to size and power, the child develops the concept of being an adult. During the second stage of development (ages six to eight), orientation to sex role, the child develops a gender self-concept. During the third stage of development (ages nine to thirteen), orientation to social valuation, the child is concerned with developing abstract concepts of one's social class and intelligence. During the fourth and final stage of development (age fourteen onwards), orientation to the internal unique self, a refinement of

one's distinctive values, traits, attitudes and interests takes place.

As individuals progress through these four developmental stages, they successively reject occupations, which are unsuitable for their gender, then as inappropriate for their social class and ability level, and finally on the basis of personal interests and values. The result is a 'zone of acceptable alternatives' or a 'set or range of occupations that the person considers as acceptable alternatives' (1981, p.548). It is only under unusual circumstances that a person will reconsider an occupation which has been rejected as outside this range.

Occupational preferences are, therefore, the result of judgements about the compatibility between the self, the job and the accessibility of the job. 'Accessibility refers to obstacles or opportunities in the social or economic environment that affect one's chances of getting into a particular occupation' (1981, p.548). Perceptions of accessibility are based on factors like the availability of a job in the preferred geographical area, perceptions of discrimination or favouritism, and so on.

Because the jobs people view as suitable for themselves are not always available, they must compromise. The typical pattern of compromise is the following: people first sacrifice interests, then prestige, and finally sex type. In other words, given two choices - one that fits one's interests but not one's sex type, and one that does not fit one's interests but is viewed as sex-appropriate - the latter will be chosen.

Gottfredson's explanation of why women are in lower-status, lower-level positions is that

these occupations are compatible with their self-concepts and views about accessibility. Her 1996 formulation of the theory is 'the same in most respects as the 1981 version' (1996, p.183). It differs 'in providing a clearer definition and account of compromise, more discussion of cultural change and/or race and gender differences, and more guidance on counseling applications' (Gottfredson, 1996, p.183).

The implications for practice of Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise are discussed both at the level of individual client work and at the organisational level for careers education programmes. Work with individual clients should encourage both 'exploration and constructive realism' (Gottfredson, 1996, p.227). This refers to discussion with clients about why, for example, certain options seem to be out of the question or why some compromises are more acceptable or accessible than others. Work at the organisational level refers to careers education programmes which Gottfredson (1996, p.220) argues should span stages two (ages 6-8) to four (ages 14+), and deal explicitly with ways in which individuals restrict their career choices and be sensitive to the dimensions of self and occupations along which circumscription and compromise take place (sex type, social class, ability, and vocational interests).

Gottfredson and Lapin (1997) discuss the results of some limited field testing of an instrument for 'Mapping Vocational Challenges (MVC)' (1997, p.432), the design of which has been based on Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise (1981, 1983 and 1996). It is described as an example of 'theory-based assessments and interventions to counteract inappropriate circumscription' 1997, p.432) which aims to

increase awareness of choices that have been rejected by clients as unacceptable, since circumscription is a question of 'deciding what one wants to avoid' (Gottfredson and Lapan, 1997, p.429). Their findings suggest that occupational stereotyping along gender lines still operates, as high school and middle school girls and boys agreed in their ratings of gender difference for different types of work (p.438), and 'one group of seventh grade girls linked their avoidance of careers currently dominated by men to their fears about encountering sexual harassment on the job' (p.439). They also highlighted that 'assessed and expressed interests are often discrepant' (p.440).

4.5.2 Astin's Need-Based Sociopsychological Model

Astin was 'invited to write a "treatise on the career development of women" because "...a comprehensive yet parsimonious theoretical statement is lacking"' (Astin, 1984, p.117). This invitation came from Helen S. Farmer, then Chair of the Committee on Women, which Astin accepted 'with the hope of producing some new and useful theoretical insights' (Astin, 1984, p.117). Astin's (1984) primary intent was to construct a theory that would describe more adequately the career-choice process of women, as well as explain recent changes in women's career aspirations. It is also applicable to men. She attempted to develop a model of career choice and work behaviour that included personal (psychological) and social forces and their interaction. Her need-based socio-psychological model contains four important constructs: motivation, expectations, sex-role socialisation and structure of opportunity, thus combining psychological and sociological variables in the model (Astin, 1984, p.119).

Astin's theory comprises four major principles: first, that work behaviour is motivated behaviour to satisfy three basic needs of survival, pleasure and contribution; second, career choices are based on expectations concerning the accessibility of alternative forms of work and their capacity to satisfy the three basic needs; third, that expectations are shaped, in part, by early socialisation through family, childhood play, school experiences and early work experiences and, in part, by the perceived structure of opportunity; fourth, that expectations developed through socialisation and early perceptions of the structure of opportunity can be modified by changes in the structure of opportunity, which, in turn can lead to changes in career choice and behaviour (Astin, 1984, p.119).

Astin (1984, p.120) argues that all humans are motivated to satisfy the three primary needs of survival, pleasure and contribution and that these needs are the same for men and women, though they can be satisfied in different ways. An individual's expectations reflect their perceptions about the kind of work that will satisfy these needs and the types of jobs that are accessible which they are capable of performing. They are different for men and women because of the sex-role socialisation process and the structure of opportunity (e.g. distribution of jobs, sex typing of jobs, discrimination). During the sex-role socialisation process, a person is rewarded and reinforced for gender-differentiated behaviour. The result is that the individual internalises social norms and values regarding appropriate sex-role behaviours and choices.

Interacting with the sex-role socialisation process is the opportunity structure which is different for men compared with women, and is fluid. Social changes modify the

opportunity structure for everyone. It is the interactive relationship between sex-role socialisation and the opportunity structure that accounts for the changes in women's aspirations and choices in recent years.

The socialisation process probably sets limits to changes in the structure of opportunity, whereas the structure of opportunity ultimately influences the values that are transmitted through the socialisation process.

(Astin, 1984, p.122).

Astin's contribution represented the first theoretical statement on women's career development (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1995a, p.85), yet it has had limited impact on practice to date. Fitzgerald *et al.* (1995a) suggest that it may be 'best thought of as a general conceptual framework rather than an articulated theoretical statement', since its value lay in the way in which it directs attention to important factors influencing women's career development. Astin's most important contribution, they contend, is the attention she focused on the structure of opportunity (p.86).

Brooks (1990, p.381) suggests that Astin's model provides general diagnostic directions that can be pursued by counsellors. For example, women's (and men's) indecision may result from lack of clarity about which of the three needs is the most important to satisfy, or about which occupations would satisfy these needs. Also, a person may feel conflict between internalised views of appropriate sex-role occupations and changes in the occupational structure (for example, one woman may feel restricted by the occupational structure, another may feel changes are placing pressure on her to expand her view of sex-role appropriate occupations). Finally, problems may arise when an imbalance develops

among the three primary needs (for example, when an individual becomes fixed on survival needs at the expense of pleasure and contribution).

4.5.3 Career self-efficacy theory (Hackett and Betz)

Another notable example of an attempt to develop a theoretical approach that is more relevant for women and girls is Hackett and Betz's career self-efficacy theory (1981). They argue that there was a need to move beyond 'listings of barriers' to women's choices and achievements to an investigation of the mechanisms that are effective in embedding society's beliefs and expectations in women's vocational behaviour and achievement (Hackett and Betz, 1981, p.327).

A study of twenty occupations was designed to 'investigate the usefulness of self-efficacy theory to the understanding of vocational behaviour and, in particular, to the understanding of women's career development' (Betz and Hackett, 1981, p.400). The results of this study indicated that there exists 'significant and consistent sex differences in self-efficacy with regard to traditional and non-traditional occupations' (Betz and Hackett, 1981, p.407). Women demonstrated more career self-efficacy in relation to jobs that are traditionally female (like dental hygienist, social worker, secretary) and men were more efficacious in relation to traditionally male jobs (like accountant, mathematician and engineer). Betz and Hackett concluded from this research that the self-efficacy approach to career development for women (and men) provides a potentially useful framework for further study and could have important implications for practice (1981, p.410).

Hackett and Betz's (1981) basic premise is that low expectations of self-efficacy for women regarding various career areas, particularly those which have historically been male dominated, are a major mediator of gender differences in occupational choice and subsequent vocational behaviour (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1995a, p.95). The key concept in the theory, self-efficacy, was defined by Bandura as 'people's judgements of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances' (1986, p.391). Hence, career self-efficacy theory represents an attempt to apply a theory from one realm (social learning theory) to another.

Career self-efficacy theory (Hackett and Betz, 1981) places a strong emphasis on thinking processes (compared with behaviour) and focuses on the strength of the individual's belief that they can successfully accomplish something. The theory considers that belief is more powerful than interests, values or abilities, emphasising that an individual's belief system affects their behaviours (rather than the behaviours themselves being critically important). Career behaviour, like other types of behaviour, is regarded as a result of interaction between self-efficacy, outcome expectations and goals. If an individual has a low sense of self-efficacy, they may not persist in a difficult task. They may believe they will be unable to do the task well and feel discouraged or overwhelmed by the task. Judgements of self-efficacy influence whether behaviour will be initiated, the degree of effort that will be expended, and how long the behaviour will be maintained in the face of obstacles (Bandura, 1977, p.191). This provides one explanation of why women (and men) might not apply for 'non-traditional' (in terms of gender stereotypes) jobs.

Bandura (1977, p.194) proposed that self-efficacy expectations vary on three dimensions: level, that is, the degree of difficulty of task that an individual feels capable of performing; strength, that is, the confidence the person has in his/her estimates; and generality, that is, the range of situations in which the person feels efficacious. The variable that interacts with self-efficacy expectations is 'outcome expectations'. Bandura defines this as 'a person's estimate that a given behaviour will lead to certain outcomes' (p.193). Distinguishing outcome expectations from self-efficacy expectations can be difficult because outcomes are contingent on performance. However, in some situations, outcome expectations are readily distinguishable from self-efficacy expectations. For example, a woman may believe she is able to perform the role of Chief Executive, but does not expect that she would be selected for the job if she applied. Environmental factors are perceived as controlling or influencing the outcome rather than the level or quality of your own behaviour.

One other variable influencing whether behaviour will be initiated are goals (Bandura, 1977, p.193). Individuals set goals to organise behaviour and guide their actions, which may result in the identification of sub-goals. For example, 'I want to go into National Health Service (NHS) Management' represents an overall goal. To achieve that goal, the individual will have to set sub-goals, including successfully completing a first degree, perhaps undertaking further study, applying for the NHS two-year training programme and then applying for a job of NHS manager. Goals are self-motivating and are a source of great personal satisfaction.

Bandura (1977, p.195) identified four sources of information important to the process of

development and modification of efficacy beliefs. These are performance accomplishments, vicarious learning experiences, emotional arousal and verbal persuasion and encouragement. First, performance accomplishments refer to successful performance of tasks that increase expectations regarding efficacy. Hackett and Betz (1981, p.331) argue that boys are at advantage since gender role socialisation is likely to encourage them to gain experiences in a wider range of areas outside the home than girls. Second, vicarious learning experiences are acquired by observation. Again, Hackett and Betz (1981, p.331) suggest that males are at an advantage since they are more likely to be exposed to vicarious learning experiences which are positive and relevant to career self-efficacy (with women persistently portrayed in homemaker and mother roles in the media, books and children's literature). Third, emotional arousal refers to anxiety and stress. High levels of anxiety and stress are generally recognised to be debilitating. Hackett and Betz (1981, p.332) remind us how research indicates that females score higher on anxiety measures than males. This higher level of anxiety increases the difficulty of developing positive efficacy expectations. Fourth, verbal persuasion and encouragement towards a behaviour would increase efficacy whilst lack of encouragement or overt discouragement is likely to fail to increase or at worst decrease efficacy expectations. Again, Hackett and Betz (1981, p.332) argue that, because of traditional societal views about being male and being female, males have received more encouragement for career pursuits and achievements than females.

In summary, applying self-efficacy theory to vocational behaviour, Hackett and Betz (1981) stated that where individuals lack expectations of personal efficacy in one or more career-related areas, behaviour critical to success is less likely to be initiated or, if initiated,

sustained. Whilst acknowledging that self-efficacy theory requires research on various key aspects (Hackett and Betz, 1981, p.334) they suggest that a 'self-efficacy approach to the career development of women appears promising due to its explanatory power, implications for counseling practice, and research potential' (1981, p.337).

Lent and Hackett (1987, p.349) reviewed literature on applications of self-efficacy theory to careers and warned against over zealous use of the concept: 'care must be taken lest the potential effects of self-efficacy beliefs be overemphasised' (Lent and Hackett, 1987, p.377). They stress the view that self-efficacy may only have relevance where individuals possess both the necessary skills and motives to perform, and identify particular aspects of the theory requiring further research (p.377). Nevertheless, they stress the potential of career self-efficacy theory for identifying effective career interventions (p.378), particularly in relation to women since self-efficacy beliefs 'serve as a potent internal barrier to women's career choices and achievements' (Lent and Hackett, 1987, p.368).

Brown (1990, p.374) also argues that self-efficacy theory has considerable potential for broadening options in careers practice with women. For example, the practitioner could use incremental graded success experiences to help build confidence. S/he could arrange for work shadowing experiences with successful representatives of groups not normally successful in a particular area (that is, women in career fields that are of interest). Desensitisation procedures could be used to reduce excessive anxiety about career choice or performance (for example, relaxation techniques). Or the provision of high quality information could be used which project images that challenge common stereotypes.

Betz and Hackett (1997, p.383) assert that 'Meta-analyses and reviews of 15 years of research.....strongly support the role of career self-efficacy as a predictor of educational and career preferences, academic performance, and persistence in the pursuit of desired career options'. They conclude that the theory and measures of career-related self-efficacy are useful both in research examining barriers to and facilitators of women's career development and for designing and evaluating the effectiveness of practice grounded in this theory. They advocate the use, by the career practitioner, of structured measures of career-self efficacy and informal assessment techniques like the interview to ascertain the extent to which gender role socialisation may have limited the client's range of options. In parallel, a focus on male dominated occupations, mathematics, science and technology should ensure that options have not been limited:

.... our job as counselors is not to make a client's decisions or to push a client toward a non-traditional career, but to restore options that may have been *de facto* removed by sexism and gender role stereotyping as well as by other environmental barriers.

(Betz & Hackett, 1997, p.398)

Overall, self-efficacy theory could have great potential for careers work with groups who have traditionally underachieved in certain areas, in particular, girls, women and minority ethnic groups. It asserts that as individuals get older, it becomes more difficult to change interests, goals and performance outcomes. One of its particular strengths is that it does not ignore biological, social or environmental influences, nor the individual's current context.

4.5.4 Feminist Careers Counselling

Feminist counselling is a philosophy rather than a comprehensive theory of practice. There is no school of feminist counselling. Chaplin (1990) defines it as 'a different way of being, having different attitudes to each other and different values and ways of thinking' (p.2). She argues that it is about working towards a different future, as well as living more fully in the present. This future refers to a society in which so-called 'feminine' values and ways of thinking are valued as much as so-called 'masculine' ones. Similarly, Marshall (1989) advocates that careers theory needs to shift its emphasis away from male 'agency', where tension is reduced by changing the world, to female 'communion' where union and co-operation are preferred ways of coming to terms with uncertainty (Marshall, 1989, p.279).

Feminist counselling rejects the prevailing hierarchical model of thinking in which, as Chaplin (1990) argues, there is always a winner. It recognises the interconnection between different, even opposite, sides of life and of ourselves. This contrasts with current thinking in which we are taught to strive for goals and move in one direction up a hierarchical ladder (Chaplin, 1990, p.6). The feminist counselling model is more like a spiral path that goes back and forth through many cycles of development and fulfilment (Chaplin, 1990, p.5). In particular, feminist counselling suggests that the impact of 'second-class status' associated with gender has damaged women, and also men. It is also concerned with the influence of other social hierarchies such as race and class, sexual orientation and disability, proposing that society could use and value differences between groups, rather than defining one group as permanently superior to and in charge of the other.

Brooks & Forrest (1994) outline some practice implications of applying this philosophy to careers counselling. Feminist approaches to careers assume that social structures and societal prescriptions have moulded and limited women's career development, experiences and opportunities. It follows from this that in addition to the assessment of individual attributes such as abilities, interests and preferences in the careers guidance interview, there is a need to incorporate an assessment of the ways in which gender-role issues have affected the client and created barriers within careers practice for women and girls.

Two stages are identified which are necessary to achieve this goal, pre-assessment and assessment. The first stage refers to the preparation of the practitioner. This involves practitioners familiarising themselves with research on the relationship between gender and career development, which could include the interaction between gender and demographic variables such as race and class, together with discriminatory practices that might occur in education and the workplace. The second stage, the assessment process with the client, focuses on how the client has experienced gender-role socialisation. This could involve gathering contextual data on the culture of the family of origin, family roles for men and women, client's perception of societal gender-role prescriptions for her age cohort. Gender role issues are more relevant for some clients than others, though Brooks & Forrest (1994) argue that it is difficult to imagine any situation where they are totally irrelevant (Brooks and Forrest, 1994, p.123).

One other focus of careers counselling should be to help clients develop a political awareness of the ways the social structure has moulded and limited them, for example,

restricted perceptions of occupational options or the emphasis on nurturing roles to the neglect of achieving roles. Through gaining an awareness of the ways in which the environment has affected women's career choice and development, Brooks and Forrest (1994, p.124) argue clients reduce self-blame for conditions over which they had no control. This may have particular relevance for minority ethnic women, given the evidence of an 'ethnic penalty' suffered in the labour market (Cross, 1991, p.311).

Establishing and maintaining an equal relationship is one other characteristic of feminist career counselling. The practitioner does not deny expertise or competence, but rather works to avoid abuse of power and use power sharing strategies. To implement this principle, feminist career counsellors aim to establish their relationships with clients as collaborative and facilitative rather than hierarchical and authoritarian; inform clients about the procedures and goals of counselling and the philosophy of the practitioner; encourage the client to give feedback to the practitioner; and encourage the client to be selective about the practitioner with whom they work.

Finally, Brooks and Forrest (1994, p.126) identify the overall goal of careers counselling as being the empowerment of the client towards self-determination. That is, helping clients gain the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to take control over her own life and to begin to influence others. Reaching these goals often requires special techniques and strategies, which might include the use of groups, female role models, interventions in the curriculum and upon other social structures.

Brooks and Forrest (1994, p.127) acknowledge that feminist critiques of research have not yet had a major impact, but suggest that feminist ideas may have infiltrated thinking at a more subliminal level (Brooks and Forrest, 1994, p.128), with many of the points made by feminist philosophy having been incorporated into research practice (for example, an acknowledgement that research samples should avoid the gender bias evident in the past). Brooks and Forrest advocate more use of feminism as a relevant framework for the critical review of research and practice, since 'our research and practice are heavily biased toward understanding the individual apart from the social context' (Brooks and Forrest, 1994, p.128).

4.5.5 Farmer: Diversity and Women's Career Development

Using social learning theory as a framework, Farmer & Associates (1997a) challenge the viability of traditional careers theory for women. They criticise current careers programmes and practices, offering concrete practical suggestions for addressing these weaknesses. Farmer's ideas were developed from a longitudinal research study conducted over a period of two decades. The particular focus of the research was women's persistence in science careers (1997a, p.xi). Data collection took place during three time periods (1980, 1990 & 1991-1993) in North America. Questionnaires were used to collect the data during the first two phases. The 'usable' (Farmer, 1997a, p.21) questionnaires from participants during this first phase (1980) numbered 1,863. By 1990, 459 participants returned usable questionnaire data (p.26). What appeared to be inconsistencies were found in the data collected during these first two phases and the researchers decided to investigate further. For the third phase, 105 participants were interviewed for one to two hours, since Farmer recognised

'that more quantitative data would not suffice to unlock the meaning behind the inconsistencies' (1997a, p.xi).

The theoretical model underlying the longitudinal study has been revised (Farmer, 1985, 1997a, 1997b). For the 1980 phase of data collection, three types of factors were assumed to affect women's behaviour: motivation, personal and environmental variables (Farmer, 1985, p.365). Personal factors included home role salience, sex role orientation, self-esteem, co-operative and competitive achievement style, success/failure attributions (four dimensions - ability, effort, luck and task difficulty), and achievement values. Environmental factors included parent support, teacher support, counsellor support and support for women working. Motivation referred to career motivation, achievement motivation and career aspiration/educational level.

For the 1990 phase of data collection, the same categories were used, with some items enhanced (Farmer, 1997a, pp.14-15). Important assumptions underlying interpretations of the data are identified (Farmer, 1997b, p.363). Career planning must take place within a life-planning framework, and such plans must take account of other life roles, such as those of spouse or partner and parent, as well as personal roles. Choice of a career field should be consistent with a woman's or a man's abilities, aptitudes, values and interests as well as realistic in light of societal opportunities and constraints. The role of people as agents in their learning, choosing and behaviour is an important aspect of the potential for change.

Over the period of the longitudinal research, Farmer remained convinced that social

learning theory provides the most promising theoretical basis for effective careers counselling with girls and women:

Social learning theory is optimistic in that it allows for behaviours to change over time as a result of new experiences, new ideas, and self-perceptions and plans... Operating within many realistic constraints, women still may have much to say about their destinies.'

(1997a, p.9).

Based on the research findings, Farmer makes the following suggestions for careers counselling with 'young women and men today and in the coming decades' (1997a, p.291). An enhanced careers education curriculum should be introduced into further and higher education which emphasises sexual equality and addresses issues such as sexual harassment in the workplace. Life planning should be undertaken with clients, including exploration of values and how these fit in with long-term career plans. This would address career-family role conflicts which arise in 'dual-worker couples'(1997a, p.282) and aim to develop 'multiple role realism' (1997a, p.284). Careers counsellors can contribute much by increasing self-efficacy in clients. Finally, careers practitioners should aim to reduce the 'null environments' (p.292) in education (that is, those that are indifferent to women's achievements), essential if women are to start realising their potential. This requires reduction of the 'chilly environment' (p.292) and sexual harassment present in many educational settings, especially non-traditional areas for women (like science, maths and engineering).

4.6 Conclusion

The aim of careers guidance is ultimately to meet the needs of clients. This can only be

achieved if their real, rather than their imagined needs are understood and theories which meet criteria such as comprehensiveness, clarity, predictive value and guides to practice are available. For decades, careers guidance practice has been influenced by theories that assume that the career behaviour and development of women is the same as men's. Now we know better. To be effective across the full range of clients, career theory must take account of diversity in all its forms - including class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation and gender - and acknowledge the contexts in which clients live their lives. Certainly, for girls and women, careers guidance practice can only be enhanced by the integration into practice of new theoretical concepts, which are derived from the real experiences of girls and women.

It is the real experiences of women on which the next section (3) focuses. The research study investigates the employment experiences of a group of women, emphasising what has helped their career development and what has hindered them.

PART 3: RESEARCH STUDY

Chapter 5: Research into Careers

5.1 Introduction

The task of carrying out a research inquiry is complicated by the fact that there is no consensus about the way this should be done (May, 1993, p.3; Robson, 1993, p.18). A fundamental difference relates to the sequence and relationship of activities involved. One model requires the collection of data before analysis whilst the other requires that these two activities are intertwined. Another important difference relates to views about the role of theory, with one approach usually regarded as starting with theory and the other developing, elaborating and amending the theory as the research progresses. These differences have been categorised into two main traditions, referred to as quantitative (scientific positivist, natural-science based, deductive) and qualitative (interpretative, ethnographic, inductive) (Robson, 1993). This chapter identifies the research paradigm which currently dominates the area of careers, reviews its growing criticisms and notes some key characteristics of the major research traditions.

5.2 Careers Research

As discussed in section 2.3 above, theories informing careers guidance practice in the UK have mainly been developed by psychologists (Gibson and Mitchell, 1999; Scharf, 1997; Zunker, 1998) operating from scientific positivist paradigms of research. A growing body of opinion suggests that current understanding would be enriched by approaches that go

beyond those particular paradigms (Arthur *et al.*, 1999; Cochran, 1997; Collin & Young, 1986; Collin, 1997; Edward and Payne, 1997; Hodkinson *et al.* 1996; Miller-Tiedman, 1999; Patton & McMahon, 1999; Peavy, 1992; Savickas, 1993 & 1997; Young & Valach, 2000). Not only would different approaches to research enrich understanding *per se*, but methods reflecting broader philosophical orientations than currently exist would be more appropriate for researching client groups previously neglected, such as women (Brooks and Forrest, 1994; Hackett, 1997; Harmon and Meara, 1994; Rainy and Borders, 1997).

Brooks and Forrest (1994) criticise the tendency of psychologists using quantitative approaches to separate the individual from his or her context as part of the research process. This, they argue, is a particular weakness when studying women, because: 'who can deny on simply intuitive grounds that women's vocational behaviour is a product of the interaction between individual and social contextual variables?' (Brooks & Forrest, 1994, p.128). Collin and Young (1986) who advocate a 'contextualised world view' of career, which draws on ecological, biographical and hermeneutical approaches (p.849) endorse this view. The narrow, individualistic perspective characteristic of current career theory is criticised by Collin (1997): 'rather than taking in its broad sweep, theory has particularly addressed intra-individual and job characteristics, and the process of matching them' (p.435). Edwards and Payne (1997) suggest that there is a need 'to embrace ideas from a wider moorland of study than is presently the case' (p.537).

Quantitative or traditional experimental approaches purport to quantify and measure, objectively, the contributions of different factors to various phenomena. A large enough

sample is necessary to ensure statistical significance, and the sample must be representative so that findings can be generalised:

Quantitative research is concerned with the collection and analysis of data in numeric form. It tends to emphasise relatively large-scale and representative sets of data, and is often presented or perceived as being about the gathering of facts.

(Blaxter *et al.*, 1996, p.60)

This approach to research also often involves the use of various types of measurement (like tests, questionnaires, attitude scales) with the resultant numerical data analysed using various statistical techniques. Such methods have been specifically criticised by Hackett (1997) in her review of the existing literature on women's career development. She concludes that there is a need to move beyond 'simple correlational designs' (Hackett, 1997, p.184), and identifies alternatives. These include the need to triangulate across different data sources using focus groups, diaries, archival documents, or observations. A key conclusion is that: 'future research will also benefit from the integration of qualitative and quantitative methods' (Hackett, 1997, p.186). Rainey and Borders (1997) similarly advocate alternative, qualitative approaches, like narratives and constructivist methods, as more suitable for examining environmental factors for girls and women (p.169).

Qualitative research, increasingly advocated for careers research, studies real life in context and concerns itself with vivid, dense and full descriptions of the phenomena studied in natural language (Polkinghorne, 1994, p.510). It requires flexibility and the ability not to pre-judge issues:

Qualitative research is concerned with collecting and analysing information in as many forms, chiefly non-numeric, as possible. It tends to focus on exploring, in as much detail as possible, smaller numbers of instances or examples, which are seen as being interesting or illuminating, and aims to achieve 'depth' rather than 'breadth'.

(Blaxter *et al.*, 1996, p.60)

Key features of this approach are selection and interpretation, with research design, data collection and analysis intertwined (Bryman and Burgess, 1994).

The value of qualitative research to enhance understanding of policy and practice is emphasised by Harmon & Meara (1994). They highlight the need for more research into these particular areas of careers counselling for women, suggesting that they have been neglected by empirical psychologists because the necessary inquiry 'can result in messy science' (Harmon and Meara, 1994, p.362). Consequently, they argue, two separate traditions have developed within counselling psychology: one concerned with science, one with practice, and that 'those who are interested in career counseling for women seem to be swimming against this tide in an attempt to integrate science and practice' (Harmon & Meara, 1994, p.362).

In summary, traditional, quantitative approaches to researching career behaviour are now being criticised, with qualitative approaches increasingly advocated, particularly for previously neglected groups like women.

5.3 A Qualitative Approach

My primary research focus is the career development of women. The approach adopted can be described as essentially qualitative in nature, whilst embracing aspects of quantitative methodologies. Blaxter *et al.* (1996) note that 'the positions taken by individual researchers vary considerably, from those who see the two strategies as entirely separate and based on alternative views of the world, to those who are happy to mix these strategies with their research projects' (Blaxter *et al.*, 1996, p.61). Robson (1993) suggests that the difference between quantitative and qualitative approaches are technical rather than epistemological 'enabling the enquirer to 'mix and match' methods according to what best fits a particular study' (Robson, 1993, p.20).

An approach was adopted for my research which mixed elements of both approaches. A qualitative approach allowed for the exploration of the full experiences of participants, both from their own point of view and in their own words using in-depth unstructured interviews. However, a degree of quantification was needed both to ensure that previously under-represented groups were adequately represented (especially women and ethnic minorities) and to explore selected aspects of the career development of women in the UK context. Specifically, certain inhibitors and enhancers of career development (such as locus of control, relational orientation and discrimination) have emerged from previous research as specially important to under-researched groups (Betz, 1994, Hackett, 1997) and lent themselves to quantitative methods of data collection.

5.4 Issues and Challenges

McLeod (1996) discusses issues and challenges inherent in adopting a qualitative approach for research into counselling, which are relevant to careers counselling. These include relationship with participants, ethical dilemmas and reflexivity. First, the relationship fostered with the subjects in qualitative research is important, because 'most methods of data collection depend on the quality of the relationship between researcher and informant' (McLeod, 1996, p.311). The frankness and honesty with which participants disclose their stories will depend, in part, on the extent to which they trust the researcher.

This was a particular issue for my own research, since participants were students in the department and institution where I am Principal Lecturer. In my research, I was asking them to disclose information which was very personal and potentially emotionally charged, particularly their experiences of discrimination. For Black participants, there may well have been an issue around the disclosure of this type of information to a White researcher. Additionally, the research methods (two questionnaires and a follow-up interview) required a significant investment of time and effort. Many of the participants were mature students with many and varied commitments outside their study. Involvement as research participants required a considerable investment of that most precious resource, time. The quality of the relationship I was able to establish was likely to determine whether the disclosure of relevant information occurred and whether participants were willing to continue their participation in my research through three stages of data collection.

The second major issue relates to ethical dilemmas likely to emerge in counselling research.

McLeod reminds us that central principles of research ethics are 'informed consent, confidentiality and avoidance of harm' (McLeod, 1996, p.311). In my research, what McLeod (1996, p.311) refers to as 'process consent' was utilised, with participants being asked for their consent at each stage of data collection. Confidentiality was assured, respected and maintained throughout. Additionally, participants in the in-depth interviews were invited to read drafts of their transcripts so that they could both correct the account and satisfy themselves that their identity had been effectively concealed.

Avoidance of harm was the biggest ethical challenge, since, in recalling experiences of discrimination, participants risked re-living at least aspects of these experiences. My own training and experience in counselling was arguably one safeguard for ethical interviewing practice. King (1996) compares the research interview to the counselling interview. She acknowledges important differences between the two: the research interview does not offer therapeutic interventions and the participant is there to help the researcher, not be helped (King, 1996, p.182). However, she goes on to argue the relevance of training in counselling for research interviewing (King, 1996, p.183) and highlights features of good practice from counselling. For example, allowing time for questions and elaboration at the beginning of each interview; making sure the participant understands they have the right to opt out at any stage by not answering questions and/or stopping the interview at any time; and the importance of keeping any promises made, such as providing a copy of the interview transcript (King, 1996, p.179). All of these features of good practice were evident in my own research interviews, and other techniques learned during training were used to create safety for the participant, build rapport and establish trust. Nevertheless, it is hard to

imagine that there were not some occasions when participants found my interview evocative, even upsetting, since they were being asked to re-live painful experiences.

Robson (1993) identifies ten questionable practices in social research: involving people without their knowledge or consent; coercing them to participate; withholding information about the true nature of the research; otherwise deceiving the participant; inducing them to commit acts diminishing their self-esteem; violating rights of self-determination; exposing participants to physical or mental stress; invading their privacy; withholding benefits from some participants; not treating participants fairly, or with consideration, or with respect (Robson, 1993, p.32). The avoidance of each was used as a measure of my own practice in a further attempt to ensure that a high standard of ethical practice was maintained throughout.

The third major challenge concerned reflexivity. As a researcher in the qualitative tradition, I was aware that I could not be regarded as an objective recorder of absolute truths. Rather, I regarded myself as a participant in the research process. McLeod (1996) notes that: 'It is no easy matter to achieve an appropriate level of reflexivity in a research study,' and that: 'It can be hard to know where to include a reflexive commentary' (McLeod, 1996, p.312). I have been acutely aware of my own reactions and emotions whilst undertaking this research. How privileged I feel to have been permitted glimpses into the lives of my participants, and the responsibility I feel for representing their stories as accurately and as powerfully as they were from their original source. Section 1.3, above, explicates my 'motivation and focus' for the research, and includes some biographical

details. As I present the findings from my research in the following pages, I have tried to be explicit about the precise nature of my relationship with participants and the circumstances under which data was gathered. I also include a personal reflection in the final part (4) of this thesis. In these ways, I have attempted to address the issue of reflexivity in qualitative research.

5.5 Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is qualitative in its philosophy of science, its data collection, its methods of analysis, and its final product offers a rich and complex explanatory system of social phenomena.

(Hutchinson, 1988, p.126)

Within a qualitative approach, grounded theory provided a suitable paradigm for my own inquiry. It was developed as an alternative to what was considered an over-emphasis on the collection of facts and testing of existent theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p.1) and provides a way of producing theory from data as a way of arriving at theory suited to prospective users (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p.3).

Hypotheses and key concepts were generated during the data collection and analysis. Methods of data collection were used which enabled immediate recording. Theoretical sampling occurred to maximise comparability. Coding of data occurred simultaneously with its collection, allowing the focus to change and leads to be pursued and the substantive literature review was delayed. As researcher, I also tried to remain constantly alert to the

effects of my own behaviour and reactions, together with the behaviour of the participants, keeping a diary to record overall progress, significant moments and transition points. These are all identified as characteristics of grounded theory (Charmaz, 1995; Hutchinson, 1988; Pidgeon, 1996; Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

It also offered a framework for combining elements of qualitative and quantitative research. The originators of grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967), state that: 'In many instances, both forms of data are necessary - not quantitative used to test qualitative, but both used as supplements, as mutual verification and, more important for us, as different forms of data on the same subject...' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p.18). Strauss and Corbin (1998) argue that various combinations of both traditions produce useful research, and advise researchers 'to think in terms of the interplay between quantitative and qualitative methods' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.31). Charmaz (1995) also suggests that grounded theory methods offer systematic and rigorous procedures for interpreting and analysing rich qualitative data as well as being applicable to quantitative data. My own research combined the use of quantitative methods (questionnaires) with qualitative methods (in-depth, unstructured interviews).

Moustakas (1994) discusses practices of grounded theorists relevant to my inquiry including: continually questioning gaps in the data; stressing open processes in conducting research; and recognising the importance of context and social structure (Moustakas, 1994, p.5). He reminds us that in grounded theory research 'the focus initially is on unravelling the elements of experience' (Moustakas, 1994, p.4), a particular objective of my inquiry.

As stated, no formal hypothesis for testing was identified. Rather, general exploratory questions related to women's career development were formulated, relevant to my original research question (see 1.1 above). Specifically:

- what are the inhibitors and enhancers of womens' career development in the UK context?
- how extensive is discrimination in womens' lives?
- what is the nature of discrimination suffered?
- what effect does discrimination have on women's career development?
- what strategies are developed to cope with discrimination?

Overall, the approach adopted for my research inquiry can be described as qualitative, drawing substantively on grounded theory method. My rationale is threefold: first, it took account of a growing body of opinion which suggests that the inadequacies of current theory are partly attributable to the limited scope of a positivistic approach to knowledge in this area; second, it allowed for the exploration of the full experiences of participants from their own points of view and in their own words, avoiding positivistic assumptions which lead to studies from the 'outside' (Charmaz, 1995 p31); third, it permitted the integration of some quantitative data.

5.6 Feminist Research

As a White, female researching the career development of an ethnically diverse female sample, the issue of gender is undoubtedly important. Ball (1990) discusses social relations in the field, referring specifically to the way data are collected, the status attributed to the

data and interpretation in light of the ways data are collected (Ball, 1990, p.162). He argues that not only is the experience of the female researcher an important aspect of field research, but so is the way in which her research is affected by gender assumptions. Research on women might be different, and women's research generally may be different (Ball, 1990, p.162).

Indeed, my research approach has many features in common with feminist research.

Maynard (1994) argues that:

One of the driving forces of feminism was to challenge the passivity, subordination and silencing of women, by encouraging them to speak about their own condition and in so doing to confront the experts and dominant males with the limitations of their own knowledge and comprehension.

(Maynard, 1994, p.23).

A hallmark of feminism is the legitimacy of women's own understanding of their experiences. Feminist research reflects this key value.

A key motivation for my research inquiry was to challenge the invisibility of girls and women in career theory. It seemed to me that the female experience was largely overlooked, and that it was likely that there was something distinctive about their career development that needed to be acknowledged and taken account of in careers practice. Brunskell (1998) argues that feminist methodological approaches must 'be consistent with the political aims of the women's movement for equality between men and women' and that feminist research, like every other form of social research, aims to facilitate social

change (p.46). In striving for careers practice which acknowledged the female experience, rather than ignored it, my research, therefore, conformed to feminist methodology.

However, Maynard (1994) notes that, whilst feminists accept that there exists a distinctly feminist mode of enquiry, there is no agreement on what this might mean or involve (Maynard, 1994, p.10). In this, feminism, she argues is 'no different from the rest of the social sciences' (Maynard, 1994, p.10). The in-depth, face-to-face unstructured interview which distinguished feminist research in its early days (May, 1993; Maynard, 1994; Brunskell, 1998) is no longer a necessary feature (Brunskell, 1998; Maynard, 1994). Brunskell (1998) stresses the importance of recognising that feminist researchers now use a variety of methods that are suitable for their areas of study (Brunskell, 1998, p.45). Kelly *et al.* (1994) argue that the problem for feminists is not the form of surveys or the creation of numeric data, but rather the ways in which research participants are treated and the care with which researchers interpret experience (p.35).

Now that method does not distinguish feminist research, Maynard (1994) suggests that two important features remain: first, the position from which distinctively feminist research questions might be asked; second, the political and ethical issues involved in the research process (Maynard, 1994, 14). There are, undoubtedly, some compelling reasons to align my own approach with that of feminism. However, Maynard (1994) states that all feminist work is theoretically grounded: 'whatever perspective is adopted, feminism provides a theoretical framework concerned with gender divisions, women's oppression or patriarchal control, which informs our understanding of the social world.' She goes on to claim that:

‘No feminist study can be politically neutral, completely inductive or solely based in grounded theory. This is a contradiction in terms’ (Maynard, 1994, p.23).

Based on this analysis, although my approach has many similarities with feminist research, the approach I took was not feminist. It may be that for future research, I need to review my philosophical and methodological alignment. For the moment, whilst acknowledging a pull from feminist research, I remain more strongly identified with grounded theory.

5.7 Conclusion

A clear rationale for the adoption of a qualitative approach to research into careers is evident in the literature. The dominance of theories derived from quantitative methods within careers guidance is increasingly being acknowledged as a weakness, and alternative approaches are being urged. Within the broad philosophical tradition of qualitative research, my own approach settles within the tradition of grounded theory method, with its tolerance (even encouragement) for combining methods associated with quantitative research with those more comfortably aligned within the qualitative domain. The next section (6) describes the research populations from whom data was collected and the process with which I engaged for this purpose.

Chapter 6: Research sample

6.1 Sample bias in previous research

Scrutiny of the research populations from which current careers theory has developed reveals a strong bias in favour of white, middle-class males. The exclusion of girls and women from these populations was discussed in some detail in section 4.2 above. Osipow and Littlejohn (1995) discuss problems in applying current theory to minority ethnic groups, also largely excluded from research populations. They argue that current theories use concepts which 'assume cultures that are relatively affluent and have good opportunities for education, upward mobility and family support and encouragement' (p.255) - privileges to which many members of minority ethnic groups do not have access.

Sample bias is, therefore, recurrently identified as an important limitation for the application of resultant theory to practice. Hackett (1997) argues that in order to achieve real progress in theory development, research groups should include ethnic minority women and representatives of other dimensions of diversity: 'to importantly advance the literature, we need to extend promising theories and models beyond the White college-age groups on which they are often developed' (Hackett, 1997, p.186). A major goal for my research was to ensure some redress for the bias of previous studies. This would be achieved by focusing on groups previously unrepresented (or under-represented) and by being explicit about the gender, ethnic origins and ages of participants (see tables 2, 3 & 4 in section 7.2, below).

6.2 Research Context

The University in which my research was undertaken has a diverse student population. The 'Staff Induction Notes' published by the University Personnel Department in September 1999 states 'the background of our students is varied, and the University is justifiably proud of its unparalleled achievements in securing access to Higher Education for "non-traditional" students, including mature students without conventional academic qualifications and those from ethnic minority groups and disadvantaged backgrounds' (p.12). The same publication states that in academic year 1998/1999 'of the 11,500 students, approximately 8,800 are full-time and 2,200 are part-time; that 2,100 are postgraduate; that 56% of full-time undergraduates were over 21 when they first enrolled; that 54% are female; that 50% are from ethnic minority backgrounds and that 50% are "local" (i.e. from the boroughs in which the University has campuses)' (p.13). Metcalf (1993) examined the experience of 'non-traditional' students in higher education, applying this term to:

groups which are in a minority and whose group membership (or minority status) might affect their experience and, consequently, their success. The following groups are considered as 'non-traditional': ethnic minorities, the working class, disabled people, those without standard entry qualifications and mature students.

(Metcalf, 1993, p.3).

Women were not included because they comprised nearly half full-time higher education students, though Metcalf acknowledged that in many respects, women could be considered as deserving minority, and therefore non-traditional, status (Metcalf, 1993, p3). According to this definition, a large proportion of the student population at the University are non-

traditional, so presenting the opportunity to gain access to sectors of the population so far neglected in research into vocational behaviour.

6.3 Access to Research Sample

As a lecturer in the psychology department at the University, I have privileged access to student populations for the purpose of research. Personal teaching responsibilities are confined to postgraduate students in careers guidance and counselling at both postgraduate diploma and Masters level. This provided easy access to these student cohorts, who had both familiarity with and interest in the area of careers guidance.

Additionally, I was able to gain access to first year undergraduates in the academic year 1998/9 for data collection. In this, there was an element of serendipity. The outline plan for my research, submitted as part of my MPhil/PhD upgrade, indicated that research participants for my study would be drawn from the courses I teach. However, a revision of the first year undergraduate teaching, which was implemented in the academic year 1998/9, provided an additional, unanticipated opportunity to involve this student cohort.

Ball (1990) discusses the selection of research participants in fieldwork: 'Hunches, third-party suggestions or pragmatism all play their part in orientating the researcher to one area of pursuit rather than another' (Ball, 1990, p.165). Since students from minority ethnic groups were more likely to be represented in larger numbers on the undergraduate than the postgraduate courses originally targeted for data collection, the teaching revision provided a potentially valuable opportunity to involve a group previously under-represented in

careers research (Hackett, 1997). I therefore acted on a hunch in deciding to involve undergraduate students, in the belief this was likely to give me more access to minority ethnic students. Strauss and Corbin (1998) state that: 'Researchers in the human and social sciences are operational pragmatists', adding that the more flexibility they are allowed to work, the more creative their research is likely to be (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.30). My approach to data collection was definitely pragmatic and the adaptation of my strategy for data collection to take advantage of changed circumstances (see section 6.4) demonstrates a flexible approach which I believe resulted in greater creativity.

Data was collected using two questionnaires (initial and follow-up) together with in-depth interviews. Ninety-one first year psychology undergraduates and eleven postgraduate students completed an initial questionnaire. Eighty-two of the undergraduates and all eleven postgraduates indicated a willingness to complete a follow-up questionnaire. In the event, sixty undergraduate students and eleven postgraduate students actually completed the follow-up questionnaire out of a possible ninety-three, representing a response rate of seventy six per cent. In-depth interviews each averaging an hour were subsequently carried out with three undergraduates and six postgraduate students (table 1, below).

Sections 6.4 and 6.5 below describe in more detail the samples from which the data was collected and their relationship with the researcher.

6.4 Undergraduates

One hundred and thirty nine students enrolled on the first year BSc Psychology for the

academic year 1998/9. Data from application forms indicates that: one hundred and fifteen

Table 1: Research Sample

	First Year UG	PG DCG	MA Careers	Total
Initial Questionnaire Completed	91	6	5	102
Indicated willingness to complete Follow-up questionnaire	82	6	5	93
Completed follow-up questionnaire	60	6	5	71
In-depth interviews	3	3	3	9

were female, twenty four male; sixty six were twenty one years of age or over at the start of the course; sixty four were White and forty six were non-White (Black Caribbean: 8, Black African: 9, Black Other: 5, Indian: 8, Pakistani: 4, Bangladeshi: 1, Chinese: 1, Other Asian: 5, Other/Unknown: 5).

As part of a compulsory 'Study Skills' Unit in the first year of their degree course, psychology undergraduates are required to participate in two different types of research study so that they are able to submit a written, reflective evaluation on this experience to their unit tutor. The assessment for this submission does not count towards the final degree classification. Its purpose is twofold: first, it helps prepare students for their own research study, which is a compulsory requirement of the final year; second, students receive tutor

feedback on their written communication skills. A change to the session introducing this requirement was implemented during the third week of the first term (beginning 5th October, 1998). The aim of the session was to introduce students to research. The change aimed to assist with student participation in the two research studies required. After an overview of different approaches to research (taking one hour), presentations by five active researchers on their research in progress were timetabled (each lasting twenty minutes). As part of these presentations, the researchers invited participation from students. Additionally, each researcher was required to de-brief the student group eight weeks later (on 3rd December, 1998), with a further twenty minutes allocated for this purpose.

Two months before the timetabled session, I submitted my request to be one of these five active researchers. Places were allocated on a 'first come first serve basis', and I was allocated a slot about six weeks in advance. Though students are obliged to participate in two research studies, they are able to choose the two studies in which they wish to become involved. Participation in my research was, therefore, voluntary since students could have opted to participate in two of the other four research studies presented, or indeed were at liberty to find other research studies in which they could participate.

I undertake no teaching on the undergraduate psychology degree, so had no prior or prospective relationship with these students, nor any responsibility for assessment. My status, however, was clearly one of an academic member of staff. Of the twenty minutes allocated, I spent the first ten minutes presenting a brief outline of my research, including aim and objectives, allowing a further ten minutes for those students choosing to participate

to complete the initial questionnaire (Appendix 1). A handout was distributed to all students attending the session, summarising my input (Appendix 2). Ninety-one of the students attending the teaching session on 8th October 1998, completed my initial questionnaire. The final question asked respondents to indicate whether they would be prepared to participate in the second, more detailed stage of data collection. Ninety per cent (N = 82) indicated their willingness and provided contact details for this purpose.

The follow-up questionnaire (Appendix 3) was sent out to participants on 5th November, with an accompanying letter (Appendix 4) requesting the return of the completed questionnaire by 11th December, 1998. An addressed envelope was supplied, together with instructions where this could be left. Like the first questionnaire, the second also asked whether respondents would be willing to participate in the third and final stage of the data collection, comprising an in-depth interview. Fifty of the sixty students who completed and returned the first questionnaire answered 'yes', seven answered 'no' and three did not answer.

Of the fifty who indicated that they would be willing to be interviewed, nine were selected for in-depth interviews and contacted by letter (Appendix 5) which invited them to attend for an interview. Theoretical sampling is a technique used in grounded theory research which enables the researcher to look for relevant data to fill in the evolving categories and theoretical codes (Ball, 1990, p.165; Charmaz, 1995, p.28; Hutchinson, 1988, p.136; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Glaser and Strauss (1967) describe this as 'the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his

[sic] data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p.45). The narrowing down of participants by careful selection for the third stage of data collection was necessary to explore emerging conceptual categories related to the incidence, nature and responses to sexual and racial discrimination in employment.

This technique was used to select participants by gender (all were female), ethnicity (five indicated they belonged to a minority ethnic group) and on the basis of their responses to certain questions in the follow-up questionnaire about discrimination. Specifically, one question had asked whether respondents had 'ever suffered discrimination connected with any type of employment?'. Twenty-one answered in the affirmative, together with related questions asked about the nature of this discrimination (whether the experience of discrimination had affected aspirations for the future and whether the respondent expected to be subjected to discrimination in future employment). Two were between the ages of 40 and 49, four were between the ages of 30 and 39, two were between the ages of 20 and 29 and one was under the age of 20.

Three of the nine participants replied to the invitation, and subsequently attended for interview. All were White. Two were aged between 40 and 49 and the other was aged between 30 and 39. This low level of response may be attributable, of course, to many factors. However, the three who did respond suggested that it might be because of work pressure. Letters offering dates for an interview were sent out on 8th of April, and first year examinations were scheduled for May/June. Ball (1990) argues that time is 'the most neglected dimension' in field research (Ball, 1990, p.163). Focusing on educational

establishments, he discusses how time is 'a complex, often overbearing, and frequently referred to fact of life' (Ball, 1990, p.163). Two particular dimensions are identified: first, the effects on participants of the amount of time spent within an educational institution (for example, experienced compared with inexperienced teachers); second, the effects of the relentless academic cycle. Both of these time dimensions may have relevance to the relative lack of response from undergraduate students. First, the time spent within the University. The completion of the two questionnaires had taken place in the first term of the first year of their course, when students had only just embarked on their student career. However, they were being asked to participate in the in-depth interviews towards the beginning of the third term. Whilst motivation to participate in research studies as new students may have been high, this could have diminished towards the end of their first year. Second, the effects of the relentless academic cycle. Around the time of the in-depth interviews, students were confronting their first year examinations. As the three undergraduates who did agree to be interviewed suggested, this could have been a discouraging factor, with students suffering from a combination of stress and revision pressure.

It may also be significant that none of the five minority ethnic group respondents who were contacted replied, despite being sent another follow-up letter. The purpose of the interview was specified as an opportunity to explore further aspects of the answers given in the second questionnaire, which included the question on discrimination. Three of the five minority ethnic women had, on their questionnaire, identified experiences of racism, two of sexism. The effects of ethnicity and gender on the process of data collection and how these impact in different ways are discussed by Ball (1990):

the history and immediacy of power relations and ideological assumptions built into male-female and black-white research are insurmountable obstacles and make it impossible to establish workable, equitable research relations.

(Ball, 1990, p.161)

Although participants had, initially, indicated their willingness to participate further in my research on this basis, perhaps they subsequently felt uncomfortable at the prospect of discussing their experiences of discrimination with a (White) stranger. My role as a White female lecturer would have represented a power imbalance, which could have resulted in students feeling that divulging information about their experiences of discrimination was too risky. Whatever the reason for their non-participation in the third stage of my research, I was disappointed that I did not have the opportunity to interview any Black, female undergraduates.

All respondents to the first and follow-up questionnaires were asked if they would like to receive a copy of the first draft of results. Those indicating they would were sent a copy of the draft on 16th April, 1999, together with an accompanying letter (Appendix 6).

6.5 Postgraduates

Eleven postgraduate students from the Psychology Department (six from the Postgraduate Diploma in Careers Guidance and five from the MA Careers) completed both the initial and follow-up questionnaires in April/May, 1999. Data from this postgraduate student cohort were collected four months later than from the undergraduates (who completed the initial

questionnaire in October and the follow-up questionnaire by mid December, 1998). This was partly for pragmatic and partly educational reasons. Pragmatic, because of continuing access I had to the postgraduates. In contrast, I had no routine contact with the undergraduate students, so collection of data from them was the priority. The larger number of undergraduates also presented more of a challenge in terms of follow-up and follow-through. Educational, since the postgraduates did not complete their career theory course until March, 1999, and I considered that participation in the research would be more relevant to them after this component of their training.

The postgraduate cohort of students had a significantly different relationship with me from the undergraduates. I had taught and assessed all these students, and was the course tutor for the five students on the MA Careers. The MA students had also undertaken their professional postgraduate Diploma in Careers Guidance at the University previously, so had been taught and assessed by me during this initial training period.

For both postgraduate student groups, I taught the theory and practice of careers guidance. Inadequacies of current theory were identified and discussed as part of these teaching sessions. It was within this context that I described my research and invited participation. There were nineteen full-time postgraduate Diploma students in the year 1998/9. Sixteen were women, all were over the age of twenty-one at the start of the course, and twelve were White. Of the nineteen students, six chose to participate in my research. The first year of the MA Careers in the year 1998/9 had only six students. All were women, over the age of twenty-one at the start of the course and four were white. Of these six students, five

chose to participate in my research.

Five out of the six participating Diploma students indicated a willingness to be interviewed, and all the five participating MA students. The technique of theoretical sampling (Ball, 1990; Charmaz, 1995; Hutchinson, 1988; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) was used as it had been for the undergraduates (see section 6.4 above). Three from each of these two cohorts were selected on the same basis as the undergraduates, that is, their gender (all were women), their experiences of discrimination in employment, and (to ensure that ethnic diversity was reflected in the nine participants interviewed), two from each postgraduate group were selected from minority ethnic groups. Four were aged between 40 and 49; the other two were aged between the ages of 20 and 29.

6.6 Piloting

Piloting is the process whereby research techniques and methods can be tried out to see how well they work in practice. This enables modification of research plans before too much time is committed to one procedure (Blaxter *et al.*, 1996, p.121). However, Robson (1993) acknowledges that piloting is not always possible in real world research, and exhorts would-be researchers to 'pilot if at all possible' (Robson, 1993, p.301).

Strauss and Corbin (1998) discuss the near impossibility of preparing ahead of time for every possible contingency that might arise during the research process in the biological and social sciences (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.30). Indeed, the time lapse between being notified of the opportunity to gain access to the first year undergraduate students as an

active researcher and the timetabled session was short (approximately six weeks). This gave limited opportunity to design a questionnaire, run a pilot, evaluate and modify its design. Given these problems, together with the competing demands on my time at the beginning of an academic year, I decided to use peer review of my questionnaire content and design. Two of my colleagues were asked to complete the questionnaire and make comments. Helpful suggestions for were given for improvement, which were acted upon.

Similar constraints operated on the design and piloting of the follow-up questionnaire. Time was at an even greater premium because, using grounded theory method, I needed to analyse the data collected from the first questionnaires, so that the results could inform the design of the second (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.168). Since the technique of peer review had worked successfully for the first questionnaire, it was adopted again for the follow-up questionnaire. Learning by experience is the process of making generalisations and conclusions about your own direct experiences (Kolb, 1984). It is based on three assumptions: first, people learn best when they are personally involved in the learning experience; second, knowledge has to be discovered if it is to mean anything or make a difference in behaviour; third, commitment to learning is highest when people are free to set their own learning goals and actively pursue them within a given framework (Johnson & Johnson, 1997, p.53).

Kolb's (1984) thesis is that experience is a powerful source of learning, provided individuals understand how to learn from it. They should be able to learn from any sort of experience - failure just as much as success. On reflection, the wisdom of running a follow-

up questionnaire without piloting was dubious. The complexity of data I wished to collect for two of the questions (one and three) should have indicated more formal piloting. However, my experience of using peer review to evaluate the first questionnaire had been successful. Consequently, I repeated the procedure. Difficulties encountered in the analysis of data from one of these questions (3) are discussed in section 8.5 below. I learned a salutary lesson from my decision not to run a formal pilot of the second questionnaire.

6.7 Conclusion

As a real world researcher in full-time employment, I took full advantage of the opportunities for data collection offered by my employment context. This opportunism was not, however, permitted to compromise the integrity of the data collection process. The technique of theoretical sampling (Strauss & Glaser, 1998, p.201) and the principle of informed consent (Robson, 1993, p.32) guided the involvement of participants. Having described the context of the study and the nature of the research sample, the results and analysis from the first questionnaire will be presented in the next section (7).

Chapter 7: Initial questionnaire

7.1 Introduction

A central purpose of the design of the initial questionnaire (Appendix 1) was to collect data about the research population, and judge whether it reflected the populations previously neglected in careers research (see sections 4.2 and 6.1 above). In addition, basic data on the employment histories of participants were collected, so that the feasibility of collecting further data on employment-related issues could be evaluated. Finally, information about the marital status of participants, family support and role models was collected, because of the influence that these factors were likely to have on career development for women (Betz, 1994; Hackett, 1997).

7.2 Descriptive statistics: gender, age & ethnicity

The first three questions asked about gender, age and ethnicity respectively. The first, on gender (table 2, below) revealed that females were in the majority in the research sample, with seventy-six of the ninety-one undergraduates and ten of the eleven postgraduates (84.3 per cent across the combined group of undergraduates and postgraduates). This compares with 51.5 per cent of full time undergraduates in Great Britain, in the academic year 1997/8 (452.9 thousand women compared with 425.9 thousand men on full time undergraduate courses (EOC, 1999, p.5). The predominance of women in my research sample addresses the criticism relating to the under-representation of women in previous research into vocational behaviour (Collin & Young, 1986; Fitzgerald, 1995; Meara *et al.*, 1997).

Table 2: Gender of Research Sample

	Number			Percentage		
	UG	PG	Total	UG	PG	Total
Female	76	10	86	83.5	90.9	84.3
Male	15	1	16	16.5	9.1	15.7
Total	91	11	102			

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

The second question asked respondents to indicate into which of five age ranges they fell: under 20, between 20 and 29, between 30 and 39, between 40 and 49 or over 50. The results are presented in table 3.

Table 3: Age of respondents

	Number			Percentage		
	UG	PG	Total	UG	PG	Total
Under 20	26	0	26	28.6	0	25.5
20 - 29	41	2	43	45.1	18.2	42.2
30 - 39	17	3	20	18.7	27.3	19.6
40 - 49	5	6	11	5.5	54.5	10.8
Over 50	2	0	2	2.2	0	2.0
Total	91	11	102			

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

Reviewing recent developments in career theory building, Brooks (1990) notes how research samples underpinning current practice 'have focused on young people, to the neglect of adults' (p.364). In their research into discrimination against women, Landrine and Klonoff (1997) found that: 'older (ages 40 to 55) groups of women are rarely included in studies in feminist psychology', and that 'age differences within samples typically are not reported by researchers'. They go on to conclude that 'the need to include older women in future studies is clear' (Klonoff and Landrine, 1997, p.63).

Metcalf (1993) found that the largest group of non-traditional students in higher education are mature students (that is, those over 21 on entry), with 11 per cent aged 25 or more (p.3). Further, she found that mature students were almost twice as common in the then polytechnic and college sectors with 27 per cent of entrants to these sectors being mature compared with 14 per cent of university entrants. Given the large proportion of non-traditional students at the University (section 6.2, above), it was expected that a significant proportion of research sample would be mature students. The age profile of students in my research sample was more mature than Metcalf's (1993) age profile for undergraduate students would suggest: 25.5 per cent of the sample were under the age of 20, with 32.4 per cent over the age of thirty.

The third question asked respondents 'to write down the ethnic group to which you feel you belong' (table 4, below). Bowman (1995) notes the neglect of minority ethnic groups in the careers literature: 'the vocational literature has scarcely addressed racial identity and its potential effects on careers counseling, development and decision making. This topic seems

Table 4: Ethnicity of sample (self-report)

Ethnic Group (self-report)	Number			Percentage		
	UG	PG	Total	UG	PG	Total
White	46	6	52	50.5	54.5	51.0
Indian	6	1	7	6.6	9.1	6.9
Asian	4	0	4	4.4	0	3.9
British	3	0	3	3.3	0	2.9
Black British	3	1	4	3.3	9.1	3.9
Afro Caribbean	3	0	3	3.3	0	2.9
Mixed	3	0	3	3.3	0	2.9
Pakistani	3	0	3	3.3	0	2.9
Refused	3	0	3	3.3	0	2.9
African	3	1	4	3.3	9.1	3.9
Afro Asian	2	0	2	2.2	0	2.0
Turkish Cypriot	1	0	1	1.1	0	1.0
British Caribbean	1	0	1	1.1	0	1.0
Black Caribbean	1	0	1	1.1	0	1.0
African British	1	0	1	1.1	0	1.0
Black African	0	1	0	0	1.1	1.0
Guyanese	1	0	1	1.1	9.1	1.0
Goan	1	0	1	1.1	0	1.0
Asian/Sri Lankan	1	0	1	1.1	0	1.0
Irish	1	0	1	1.1	0	1.0
European	0	1	1	0	9.1	1.0
Hellenic	1	0	1	1.1	0	1.0
St. Helenian	1	0	1	1.1	0	1.0
Finnish	1	0	1	1.1	0	1.0
British African/Arabic	1	0	1	1.1	0	1.0
Total	91	11	102			

to be a valid one for further research' (p.160). Betz and Fitzgerald (1995) stress the necessity:

of simply identifying [original emphasis] research participants' racial or ethnic group membership, so that readers may evaluate the representativeness of the findings and their potential relevance (or lack thereof) to a group in which they are interested.

(p.274)

They claim that many researchers and editors have failed to follow this guideline (p.275).

There is, therefore, clearly a need to collect data about ethnic origin from research samples.

Exactly how this is done, however, is problematic.

Gordon (1992, p.18) argues that all ethnic or racial data has been racialised. By that he means that racial data reflects the way in which 'race' has been focused upon as an issue of some importance, that the subjects have been defined in a particular manner, and that a decision has been made about the categories used. He also reminds us that 'the study of human beings has been unable to identify significant characteristics that can be found in some groups of people but not in others that would allow us to define and delineate distinct racial groups' (Gordon, 1992, p.18). Following from this, Gordon (1992) argues that racial groups and categories are socially constructed - by particular institutions or organisations, for particular purposes, at a particular moment in time.

Categories used variously to collect data for social survey purposes illustrate this point. For example, the National Census used to ask for information on country of birth. According to Karn *et al.* (1997, p.xv), the accuracy of assessments of disadvantage generated from

this method was diminishing as a growing proportion of the minority ethnic population was born in Britain. Consequently, the precise way that an ethnic group question should be framed became the subject of extensive debate and testing from the mid 1970s. The result was a self-assessment question, included for the first time in the 1991 Census. The 1991 census asked people to select one of nine categories, namely, white, black-Caribbean, black-African, black-other, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, or other Asian. Where the 'Other' box was ticked, the respondent was asked to describe their ancestry in a space provided. (Office of Population Censuses and Surveys General Register Office for Scotland, 1992, p.30).

The principle of self-report, which was used in the 1991 census, was adopted for collection of data about ethnicity in the present research study. However, categories were not suggested. Respondents were asked to write down the ethnic group to which they felt they belonged. Fifty one per cent described themselves as 'White', with forty nine per cent identifying a particular minority ethnic group (table 4, above). In 1984, the Commission for Racial Equality adopted the practice of distinguishing between 'Black' and 'White', with further sub-divisions in terms of regional origins (for example, Afro-Caribbean, Asian, European, etc.). This practice was based on the belief that colour was a major problem to be overcome (Gillborn, 1990, p.5). Gillborn (1990) argues that the strength of using 'Black' as a category of people who experience White racism lies in the fact that it emphasises the shared experiences of ethnic groups. Eight respondents identified themselves as belonging to categories that could be interpreted as 'White' based on country of birth, that is, British, Irish, European, Hellenic, St. Helenian and Finnish. However, since

they described themselves as belonging to specific ethnic groups other than 'White', their self-report definitions will be respected for the purposes of this research.

Metcalf (1993, p.6) found that the then polytechnics and colleges had a greater proportion of ethnic minority students than universities, 16 per cent and 8 per cent respectively. It seems, therefore, that the research sample had a significantly higher proportion of students from minority ethnic groups than might be expected. Bias in favour of 'White college-age groups' (Hackett, 1997, p.186) would not, therefore, be an issue.

7.3 Employment histories and aspirations

Women's experiences of employment were central to the research investigation. It was necessary, therefore, to establish the duration of employment amongst respondents. The fourth question asked whether respondents had ever been in employment for more than six months. The results appear in table 5, below.

Table 5: Employed for more than 6 months

	Number			Percentage		
	UG	PG	Total	UG	PG	Total
Yes	73	11	84	80	100	82.4
No	18	0	18	19.8	0	17.6
Total	91	11	102			

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

Since 82.4 per cent of respondents reported that they had been in employment of six months or more, it was concluded that questions about experiences in employment were legitimate for the follow-up questionnaire. For those answering 'yes' to the question 'have you ever been in employment for longer than six months?', a further question probed the length of time they had been employed in the job in which they had been employed for the longest period of time. The results are presented in table 6, below.

Table 6: Longest period of employment

	Number			% of employed		
	UG	PG	Total	UG	PG	Total
6 < 12 months	14	0	14	19.2	0	16.7
1 < 2 years	16	0	16	21.9	0	19.0
2 < 3 years	10	2	12	13.7	18.2	14.3
3 < 4 years	5	0	5	6.8	0	6.0
4 < 5 years	7	1	8	9.6	9.1	9.5
5 < 6 years	4	0	4	5.5	0	4.8
6 < 7 years	6	3	9	8.2	27.3	10.7
7 < 8 years	2	1	3	2.7	9.1	3.6
8 < 9 years	1	2	3	1.4	18.2	3.6
10 < 13 years	4	1	5	5.5	9.1	6.0
14 < 15 years	2	0	2	2.7	0	2.4
17 years	0	1	1	0	9.1	1.2
Total	73	11	84			

NB. Two undergraduates answered 'yes' to the question about employment - then did not complete section on length of service.

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

Thirty six cent (N = 30) of those who had been employed for more than six months had been employed for between six months and two years. The remaining sixty four per cent of those who had been employed for more than six months had been in employment for between two to seventeen years duration. In summary, 82 per cent (N = 84) of all participants had been in continuous employment for more than six months. It was clear, therefore, that the majority of participants had significant employment experience.

Much has been written about occupational segregation along gender lines in the labour market (see section 3.3.4 above). Hakim (1979) identified vertical and horizontal segregation as a dominant feature of female employment in the UK. Sixteen years later in 1995, the Employment Department reported that more than two-thirds of women of working age were employed in non-manual occupations, compared with just over half of men; and that 83 per cent of women worked in the service industries compared with 56 per cent of men:

Women are still more likely than men to work in clerical/secretarial, personal services such as nursing/care assistants/childcare and catering and sales occupations many more women than men also work as health professionals and teachers.

(Employment Department, 1995, p.54).

In 1999, the Equal Opportunities Commission reported that little has changed: 'women outnumber men three to one in clerical and secretarial occupations, whilst men outnumber women ten to one in craft and related occupations' (EOC, 1999, p.10). In the same publication the EOC reported that 74 per cent of people employed as sales assistants were women and 26 per cent were men whilst 82 per cent of those employed as retail check-out

operators were female and 18 per cent were men (EOC, 1999, p.10). Respondents in the research sample were asked to write down the job title for the job in which they had been employed the longest. The results have been presented separately for women (tables 7a to 7g, below) and men (tables 8a to 8e, below).

Table 7a: Job titles for women. Service: people.

SERVICE (people)	UG	PG	Total
Nurse/Student Nurse	4	0	4
Receptionist	2	0	2
Teacher	1	0	1
Residential Social Worker	2	0	2
Hairdresser	1	1	2
Support Worker	1	0	1
Care Assistant	1	1	2
Crew Member	1	0	1
Education Welfare Officer	1	0	1
Training Assessment Officer (LA)	1	0	1
Tele-Assessor	1	0	1
Health Care Assistant	1	0	1
Housing Benefits Officer	1	0	1
Employment Consultant/Adviser	0	2	2
Careers Adviser	0	2	2
Educational Guidance Worker	0	1	1
Special Support Assistant	1	0	1
TOTALS	19	7	26

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

Table 8a: Job titles for men. Service: people.

SERVICE (people)	UG	PG	Total
Crew Member	1	0	1
TOTAL	1	0	1

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

Job titles have been grouped broadly under three headings: service, distribution and miscellaneous. The service category has been subdivided into five: 'people' (tables 7a and 8a); 'catering/food' (tables 7b and 8b); 'office' (table 7c); 'administration' (table 7d) and 'finance' (tables 7e and 8c). Jobs related to distribution are presented in tables 7f and 8d with those falling into the 'miscellaneous' category appearing in tables 7g and 8e.

Twenty six women respondents were employed in jobs which involved service to people compared with one man (see tables 7a and 8a, above). This starkly reflects societal roles, with women bearing the major responsibility for caring (Employment Department Group, 1995).

The difference between the number of women and men employed in catering/food preparation jobs was also marked (see tables 7b and 8b, below), but not quite so marked as service to people with nine women compared with one of the male respondents.

Table 7b: Job titles for women. Service: catering/food.

SERVICE (Catering/Food)	UG	PG	Total
Waitress	5	0	5
Cook	1	0	1
Food Preparation/Waitress	1	0	1
Duty Manager (Fast Food)	1	0	1
Bakery Assistant	1	0	0
TOTAL	9	0	9

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

Table 8b: Job titles for men. Service: catering.

SERVICE (Catering)	UG	PG	Total
Barman	1	0	1
TOTAL	1	0	1

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

Four women had been employed in office jobs (table 7c, below), compared with no men.

Table 7c: Job titles for women. Service: office.

SERVICE (Office)	UG	PG	Total
Secretary	2	1	3
WP Operator	1	0	1
TOTAL	3	1	4

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

Similarly, six women had been employed in administration (table 7d, below), compared with no men.

Table 7d: Job titles for women. Service: administration.

SERVICE (Administration)	UG	PG	Total
Admin. Assistant	2	0	2
Personnel Assistant	2	0	2
Assistant Controller	1	0	1
Office Administrator	1	0	1
TOTAL	6	0	6

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

Six women compared with one man had been employed in the finance sector (see tables 7e and 8c, below).

Table 7e: Job titles for women. Service: finance.

SERVICE (Finance)	UG	PG	Total
Insurance	1	0	1
Accountants Assistant	1	0	1
Finance Officer	1	0	1
Bank Officer	1	1	1
Postal Officer	0	1	1
TOTAL	4	2	6

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

Table 8c: Job titles for men. Service: finance

SERVICE (Finance)	UG	PG	Total
Banking Cashier	1	0	1
TOTAL	1	0	1

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

In distribution, seventeen women had been employed, compared with three men (see tables 7f and 8d, below).

Table 7f: Job titles for women. Distribution: retail.

DISTRIBUTION (Retail)	UG	PG	Total
Shop/sales	9	0	9
Customer Service	4	0	4
Air line ticket agent	1	0	1
Tote Operator	1	0	1
Telesales	1	0	1
Assistant Fashion Buyer	1	0	1
TOTAL	17	0	17

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

Table 8d: Job titles for men. Distribution: retail.

DISTRIBUTION (Retail)	UG	PG	Total
Customer Sales Rep.	1	0	1
Salesperson	1	0	1
Computer sales	1	0	1
TOTAL	3	0	3

Overall, 81 per cent of women in the sample who had been in jobs for more than six months (N = 68) were occupied in either the service or distribution sectors. Jobs held by the females in the research sample strongly reflect, therefore, occupational segregation current in the UK labour market.

Tables 7g and 8e, below, present 'miscellaneous' job titles, referring to those that belong in categories other than service or distribution.

Table 7g: Job titles for women. Miscellaneous.

MISCELLANEOUS	UG	PG	Total
Manageress	1	0	1
Farm Worker	1	0	1
Military Personnel	1	0	1
Junior Medical Lab. Scientific Officer	1	0	1
TOTAL	4	0	4

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

Table 8e: Job titles for men. Miscellaneous.

MISCELLANEOUS	UG	PG	Total
Radio Producer	1	0	1
Executive Trainee	2	0	2
Quality Control Inspector	1	0	1
Stockroom Assistant	1	0	1
Farm worker/ Manager	0	1	1
TOTAL	5	1	6

The small number of men in the research sample who had held jobs for six months or more (N = 12) makes it impossible to draw any conclusions about male employment. However, only half (N = 6) were employed in the service and distribution sectors combined (see tables 8a to 8d, above) compared with 81 per cent of the women respondents. The remaining men (50 per cent) were spread across other occupational sectors (see table 8e, above).

Metcalf (1993, p.6) found that the then polytechnics and colleges took a much higher proportion of manual working class students than universities - 30 per cent and 19 per cent respectively. Although an explicit question about social class was not included, the job titles indicated by the students in the research sample supports Metcalf's (1993) findings, since few respondents indicated that they been in jobs which would be classified as professional or even semi-professional.

Table 9: Reasons for leaving employment

REASONS	UG	PG
Still employed	11	2
Education	17	3
Pregnancy; family	7	1
Redundancy; dismissed (1)	7	1
Relocated; emigrated	4	0
Miscellaneous (road accident; to join the career service; travel; to return to the UK)	5	1
Dissatisfied (see table 10 for details)	22	3
TOTAL	73	11

The seventy three undergraduates and eleven postgraduates in the research sample who reported having held jobs for six months or more were also asked their reasons for leaving. The results can be found in table 9, above. 15.5 per cent were still employed (N = 13) and 23.8 per cent (N = 20) said they had left employment to continue with their education. 29.8 per cent (N = 25) reported that they had left their jobs because they were dissatisfied for some reason. The reasons given for this dissatisfaction are detailed in table 10, below.

Table 10: Nature of dissatisfaction

Left previous employment because of dissatisfaction:	
~	improve job
~	better pay/accommodate family
~	lost interest
~	antisocial hours
~	hated the job
~	job tedious/management unbearable/hours
~	not fulfilling/negative atmosphere
~	management problems
~	new management/chaos
~	HQ/managers out of order
~	difference of opinion/problems at home
~	threatened by customer for short changing, supposedly!
~	boredom/change of job function
~	dead end route/degrading
~	lack of promotion/too much discipline
~	management problems
~	low pay
~	unfair treatment/favouritism
~	no respect from manager/crap money
~	lost responsibility/poor pay
~	disillusionment with the ethics of 'retail management'
~	wanted more contact with people & deadlines didn't fit in with rest of life
~	family reasons/precarious nature of farming/desire for education
~	boredom/lack of challenge

Over half the sample (53.6 per cent, N = 45) indicated that they had left employment either to continue with their education or because they were dissatisfied with their job, indicating aspirations towards self-improvement.

Respondents were then asked whether they intended to seek employment after their current course of study. As part time students, the five MA Careers students were already in employment. This question, therefore, did not apply to them. Ninety-one undergraduates and the six students studying on the postgraduate Diploma in Careers Guidance, all full-time students, answered this question. The results are presented in table 11, below.

Table 11 - Intention to seek employment after study

	Number			Percentage		
	UG	PG	Total	UG	PG	Total
YES	81	6	87	89.0	100	89.7
NO	10	0	10	11.0	0	10.3
TOTAL	91	6	97			

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

The 87 respondents who answered 'yes' to this question were then asked if they knew the type of job they would be seeking. Table 12, below, details their responses.

Table 12: Knowledge about type of job sought

	Number			Percentage		
	UG	PG	Total	UG	PG	Total
YES	47	6	53	58.8	100	61.6
NO	33	0	33	41.3	0	38.4
TOTAL	80	6	86			

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

N.B. One undergraduate who indicated they intended to seek employment on completing their course did not answer this question.

Those respondents who had indicated they both intended to seek employment and knew what type of job they would be seeking were then asked to indicate the job(s) to which they aspired. All of the postgraduates indicated the job for which their course was preparing them (though this can never be assumed). The responses are summarised in table 13, below. Of the fifty three respondents who were clear about their career aspirations, 94 per cent (N = 50) identified professional roles, supporting the suggestion that this research group consisted of individuals who wished to self-improve.

7.4 Marital status, family support & role models

Question six asked respondents to indicate their marital status. Richie *et al.* (1997) reported from their study of highly successful career women that 'influences of partners or spouses were found to be positive and important for many of the women in this sample, although a few had apparently disengaged from previous partners who were unsupportive' (1997, p.141). Phillips and Imhoff (1997) found that variables thought to influence well-being

include 'husbands' views about women's employment' (p.43) and that research has found 'a significant relationship between types of coping and marital satisfaction' (p.44).

Table 13: Job Aspirations

JOB ASPIRATIONS (where more than one indicated, only the first has been recorded).	UG	PG
Clinical Psychologist	6	
Psychologist	6	
Educational Psychologist	7	
Counselling	5	
Forensic	4	
Occupational Psychologist	4	
Criminal Psychologist	2	
Police	2	
Consultant	1	
Work with mentally sick	1	
Assistant Psychologist	2	
Artistic	1	
Underprivileged children	1	
Bar/pub manager	1	
Teaching psychology	1	
Writer	1	
Careers adviser		6
Did not answer	2	
TOTAL	47	6

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

Landrine and Klonoff (1997) argue that the marital status differences of women are significant since unmarried women tend to have higher occupational status than their married counterparts and are generally more assertive (p.64). They conclude that: 'controlling for marital status in future research may be beneficial' (Landrine and Klonoff, 1997, p.64). Participants in the research study were asked to indicate whether they were single, married or living with a partner, divorced or separated (see table 14, below).

Table 14: Marital status

Status	Number			Percentage		
	UG	PG	Total	UG	PG	Total
Single	62	4	66	68.1	36.4	64.7
Married/Partner	16	5	21	17.6	45.5	20.6
Divorced	4	1	5	4.4	9	4.9
Separated	6	1	7	6.6	9	6.9
Other	1	0	1	1.1	0	1.0
Single parent	2	0	2	2.2	0	2.0
TOTAL	91	11	102			

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

Of the total sample of one hundred and two, seventy eight per cent (N = 80) indicated that they were single, divorced, separated or a single parent and only 20.6 per cent (N = 21) indicated that they were married or living with a partner (see table 14). The type of support an individual enjoys has also been identified as important for women's careers. In their review of a decade of research into women and career, Phillips and Imhoff (1997) conclude

that 'the empirical literature is ... consistently showing that interpersonal and familial domains appear to be uniquely central to the development of identity for women' (p.33).

Richie *et al.* (1997), in their research into highly successful career women, concluded that:

these women discussed their reliance on the support they receive professionally and personally and attributed their successes to the networks of which they are a part. In particular, all the women discussed the roles that their families of origin, husbands or partners, friends, mentors, role models, teachers, colleagues, and other women have played in their career pursuits, and most also reported the use of social support in dealing with stress.

(Richie *et al.*, 1997, p.145)

Question seven asked respondents to indicate whether they felt supported by a family member. A high proportion of research participants (ninety-two per cent, N = 94) indicated that they did feel supported by a family member (see table 15, below).

Table 15: Supported by family member

	Number			Percentage		
	UG	PG	Total	UG	PG	Total
Yes	84	10	94	92.3	90.9	92.2
No	7	1	8	7.7	9.1	7.8
TOTAL	91	11	102			

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

Respondents answering 'yes', were then asked what form the support takes. Results are presented in table 16, below. Twenty three per cent reported financial, emotional and practical support; twenty two per cent financial and emotional; seventeen per cent emotional and sixteen per cent emotional and practical.

Table 16: Nature of support received

	NUMBER			Percentage		
	UG	PG	Total	UG	PG	Total
Financial; emotional; Practical	18	4	22	21.4	40	23.4
Financial; emotional	20	1	21	23.8	10	22.3
Practical; spiritual	1	0	1	1.2	0	1.1
Emotional	15	1	16	17.9	10	17.0
Emotional; practical	14	1	15	16.7	10	16.0
Moral; emotional	2	0	2	2.4	0	2.1
Moral	1	0	1	1.2	0	1.1
Emotional; guidance & advice	1	0	1	1.2	0	1.1
Financial	6	1	7	7.1	10	7.4
Financial; practical	2	2	4	2.4	20	4.3
Financial; emotional; spiritual; moral	1	0	1	1.2	0	1.1
'Yes' & then no answer	3	0	3	3.6	0	3.2
TOTAL	84	10	94			

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

The final question on the initial question asked respondents to indicate whether they had (or have had) a role model. Betz (1994) summarises major barriers and facilitators of women's career choices, identifying the lack of role models as a barrier and the availability of female models as a facilitator. Lack of role models are identified as a particular barrier in respect of educational experiences, particularly in higher education, where this can result in

stereotypical choices of subject and associated limitations on entry to certain careers (Betz, 1994, p.12). A large proportion of the research sample (71.6 per cent) indicated that they had (or have) a role model. Responses are summarised in table 17, below.

Table 17: Role models

	Number			Percentage		
	UG	PG	Total	UG	PG	Total
Yes	69	4	73	75.8	36.4	71.6
No	22	7	29	24.2	63.6	28.4
Total	91	11	102			

UG = undergraduate students; PG = postgraduate students

Bowman (1995) draws attention to the way in which little attempt is made to provide role models for minority ethnic clients, even though the careers literature is full of studies demonstrating their importance (p.141). She cites research which gives a strong indication of the value of role models who are of the same ethnicity, and in particular the same ethnicity and gender for ethnic minority females (p.142). Analysing the data by gender and ethnicity (see table 18), 62 women reported having role models. Of these, forty one were white and nineteen were Black. Two had chosen not disclosed their ethnicity. Eleven men had role models, nine White, one Black and one who had chosen not to disclose his ethnicity. It would seem that a high proportion of women and men research participants had benefitted from role models. When the data relating to ethnicity and role model is examined, more Black women than White women (40.6. per cent and 21.2 per cent

respectively) did not have a role model. This seems consistent with Bowman's (1995) contention.

Table 18: Role Models by ethnic origin

WOMEN (N=86)		MEN (N=16)	
Role Model	No Role Model	Role Model	No Role Model
41 White 19 Black 2 (Did not disclose ethnicity)	11 White 13 Black	9 - White 1 - Black 1 (Did not disclose ethnicity)	2 White 2 Black
Total = 62	Total = 24	Total = 11	Total = 4
1 male did not respond to the question			

7.5 Conclusion

Data collected from the first questionnaire provides detailed information about the gender, ethnic and age composition of the research sample. Groups previously under-represented in careers research are well represented in the research sample. Additionally, it provides data on the employment histories of participants, specifically, whether respondents had been employed for longer than six months; the types of jobs in which they had been employed; reasons for leaving; and future employment aspirations. Over half the sample indicated aspirations towards self-improvement, and a similar proportion to professional roles. Information was also collected about marital status, whether support was provided to respondents and where this was so, the nature of this support. Whilst the majority of participants were not living with a partner, it was the case that most did feel supported.

Finally, data on whether respondents had a role model was collected, with the majority of respondents indicating in the affirmative.

As discussed in 6.4 above, a feature of the grounded theory method is theoretical sampling. The discovery that previously neglected groups in careers research were well-represented in my research sample, that they had significant employment histories, had certain support mechanisms in common and had been successful in gaining a place in higher education, shaped the design of a second questionnaire. The follow-up questionnaire was structured around emerging themes and questions. It was designed to probe in more depth particular aspects of the career development. In this way my simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis meant that my emerging analysis shaped data collection procedures (Charmaz, 1995, p.31).

Chapter 8: Follow-up questionnaire

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of the second questionnaire (Appendix 3) was to explore enhancers and inhibitors of women's career development (see sections 4.3 and 4.4, above). Two questions (1 and 3) investigated different aspects of the 'worldview' of respondents, using a Likert scale. Two others asked for open-ended responses to a question about the difficulties and obstacles (question 2) and the encouragement and support (question 4) anticipated by the respondents. The fifth question explored experiences of discrimination using a combination of closed and open-ended questions. The final question asked respondents if they wished to receive a summary of research findings and whether they would be willing to be interviewed about their questionnaire responses. For those indicating an interest in receiving a summary, one was sent, with an accompanying letter (Appendix 6). Sixty undergraduates and eleven postgraduates completed the follow-up questionnaire (see section 6.4, table 1).

8.2 'Worldviews'

Sue and Sue (1999) propose that 'worldviews are not only composed of our attitudes, values, opinions, and concepts; they may also affect how we think, define events, make decisions and behave' (p.166). Ivey *et al.* (1997) describe worldview as 'the way you frame the world and what it means to you' (p.2) and Ibrahim (1985) refers to it simply as 'our philosophy of life', embedded in a cultural context (p.626). Worldviews are strongly associated with an individual's context, being 'highly correlated with a person's cultural

upbringing and life experiences' (Sue and Sue, 1999, p.166). Writing about minorities in America, Sue and Sue (1999) state that 'a strong determinant of worldviews is very much related to racism and the subordinate position assigned to them in society', and that '... it must be kept in mind that economic and social class, religion, sexual orientation, and gender are also interactional components of a worldview' (Sue and Sue, 1999, p.166). Individuals, therefore, sharing similar social and cultural positions are likely to hold similar worldviews. This proposition was one I wished to explore further.

The concept of worldview has significance for the practice of careers counselling for two reasons. First, because of the way they have the potential to influence client behaviour: 'Each and every one of us possesses a worldview that affects how we perceive and evaluate situations and how we determine appropriate actions based upon our appraisal' (Sue and Sue, 1999, p.165). Understanding the worldview of a client could enhance knowledge about that client *per se* and have some predictive value. Second, because theories underpinning current practice are biased toward an individualistic, futuristic worldview, (Ivey *et al.*, 1997; Ibrahim, 1995; Sue and Sue, 1999). Practice informed by these theories would, therefore, risk making certain erroneous assumptions about clients not sharing this worldview, leading to ineffective, perhaps even unethical practice.

Two important aspects of worldviews are locus of control (Sue and Sue, 1999, p.169) and locus of responsibility (Sue and Sue, 1999, p.171). Question one on the follow-up questionnaire relates to these two psychological orientations. Rotter (1966) first formulated the concept of internal/external control, conceiving the 'Internal-External' (I-E)

dimension as measuring a generalised personality trait that operated across several situations. He developed 'The I-E Scale' based on a twenty-nine item, forced-choice test (Rotter, 1966, p.10). Summarising several experiments into differences in group behaviour, Rotter found an 'unusually consistent set of findings' (p.24) regarding the internal-external dimension. External control (EC) refers to the belief that the future is determined by chance and luck:

When reinforcement is perceived by the subject as following some action of his own, [*sic*] but not being entirely contingent upon his action, then, in our culture, it is typically perceived as the result of luck, chance, fate, as under the control of powerful others, or as unpredictable because of the great complexity of the forces surrounding him. When an individual interprets the event in this way, we have labelled this a belief in *external control*.

(Rotter, 1966, p.1) [original emphasis].

In contrast, internal control (IC) refers to the belief that people can shape their own fate. 'If the person perceives that the event is contingent upon his own behaviour or his own relatively permanent characteristics, we have termed this a belief in *internal control*' (Rotter, 1966, p.1)[original emphasis]. Based on past experience, people learn either that the locus of control rests with them, as an individual, or that it rests with external forces.

In their application of the concept of internal-external control to cross-cultural counselling, Sue and Sue (1990, p.141) cite research findings that correlate high internality with better coping strategies and cognitive processing of information, lower risk of anxiety, higher motivation to achieve, high involvement in social action, greater value placed on skill-determined rewards and greater attempts at controlling the environment. These behavioural

predispositions correspond closely to those necessary to achieve the positive outcomes from guidance and counselling processes which focus on action planning for the future, emphasised in many psychological theories of career. In fact, most career theories assume high internality, individual autonomy and control, and choice in career decision-making (see section 2.3, above). They have attracted a good deal of criticism as a consequence (Arthur *et al.*, 1999; Hodkinson *et al.*, 1996; Miller-Tiedeman, 1999; Osipow & Littlejohn, 1995). Only a comparatively small number of theories of career behaviour focus rather on external control which is exerted on individuals and beyond their control. For example, Blau (1956) and Roberts (1968, 1977, 1984) focus on constraining influences of factors like social class, ethnicity or gender and opportunity structures in the labour market; Hodkinson *et al.*, (1996) discuss the operation of pragmatic rationality in career decision-making by individuals who take account of systemic factors limiting their aspirations; and Miller (1983) discusses the effects of 'happenstance' on individual career histories, referring to the influence of chance, luck or accident (Miller, 1983, p.17).

The adoption of theories that assume internal-control as a central characteristic of human behaviour as guiding frameworks for practice may lead practitioners to judge clients high on external-control negatively. For example, a client scoring high on external control may rule out a particular course of action involving a degree of risk because: 'it is not worth trying, I won't be able to do it anyway'. Such responses are likely to be regarded as unhelpful, even dysfunctional by careers practitioners assuming individual control, since it is likely such clients would be unwilling to co-operate with recommended outcomes emphasising choice, control, risk and action. Equally, the same clients are likely to

experience practitioners' approaches which assume individual control to be unrealistic, alienating and not relevant to their situation. An understanding and acknowledgement of worldviews is important in practice, therefore, to ensure that proper account is taken of different cultural and social experiences (Sue and Sue, 1999, p.169).

To what extent, then, might external or internal orientations link with individual difference compared with differences between social groups? Sue and Sue argue that minority ethnic groups, people from low social classes and women score significantly higher on the external end of the locus-of-control continuum: 'it seems plausible that different cultural groups, women and lower-class people have learned that control operates differently in their lives than for society at large' (Sue and Sue, 1999, p.169). Indeed, if worldviews do correlate with particular client groups as Sue and Sue (1990, 1999) suggest, implications for practice follow. My research sample provided the opportunity to explore aspects of this proposal in a UK context.

The other important aspect of worldviews identified by Sue and Sue (1990, 1999) derives from attribution theory (Jones *et al.*, 1972) and is referred to as locus of responsibility. This measures the degree of responsibility or blame placed on the individual or system. Either the individual blames themselves as responsible for outcomes or, in contrast, blames the system. Those placing responsibility on the individual emphasise an understanding of an individual's motivations, values, feelings and goals as well as believing that there is a strong relationship between ability, effort and success in society. In contrast, those placing responsibility on the system (or systems) view the socio-cultural environment as more

potent than the individual.

These two notions of control and responsibility, argued by Sue and Sue (1990, 1999) to be integral aspects of worldviews, were taken into account when constructing question one of my follow-up questionnaire, which combined the two notions of control and responsibility, argued by Sue and Sue (1990, 1999) to be integral aspects of worldviews. McCracken and Weitzman (1997) highlight the importance of researching locus of control in studying women's career choice:

In the future, researchers should investigate individual difference variables such as locus of control and self-consciousness and environmental variables such as role model influence, partner support and the influence of workplace leave policies.

(McCracken and Weitzman, 1997, p.156).

The first question asked respondents to score eight statements using a Likert scale of one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree), in an attempt to gain insight, in broad terms, into the respondent's worldview.

Robson (1993, p.256) discusses attitude measurement as part of research. He argues that a set of items can operate as a form of triangulation, since putting the responses together enables a fuller picture to emerge, thereby helping to tease out complex issues. He also suggests that an attitude scale, such as a Likert scale, can be interesting to respondents who often derive enjoyment from their completion. Since factual data had already been collected in the first questionnaire, it seemed appropriate to begin the follow-up questionnaire with an attitude scale as a contrasting method of data collection, to provide interest for

respondents.

The first stage in developing such a scale involves gathering together a pool of relevant items from various sources, including literature searches, "borrowing from existing scales and "brainstorming" (Robson, 1993, p.257). Items selected for inclusion in question one were adapted from both Sue and Sue (1990, 1999) and Rotter (1966). The follow-up questionnaire was designed to ensure completion would take no longer than twenty minutes to increase the probability of return. The total number of statements in question one was, therefore, limited to eight.

Items in any Likert scale should reflect contrasting views on the issues under investigation and there should be about the same number of statements reflecting one position compared with the other (Robson, 1993, p.257). Four statements, therefore, were developed which related to internal control and responsibility and four to external control and responsibility.

The former were as follows:

- success or failure is due to an individual's skills and abilities (or lack of them);
- there is a strong relationship between ability, effort and success in society;
- factors like individual motivation, values and feelings are important to success;
- individuals shape their own future.

Four contrasting statements referred to external control and responsibility:

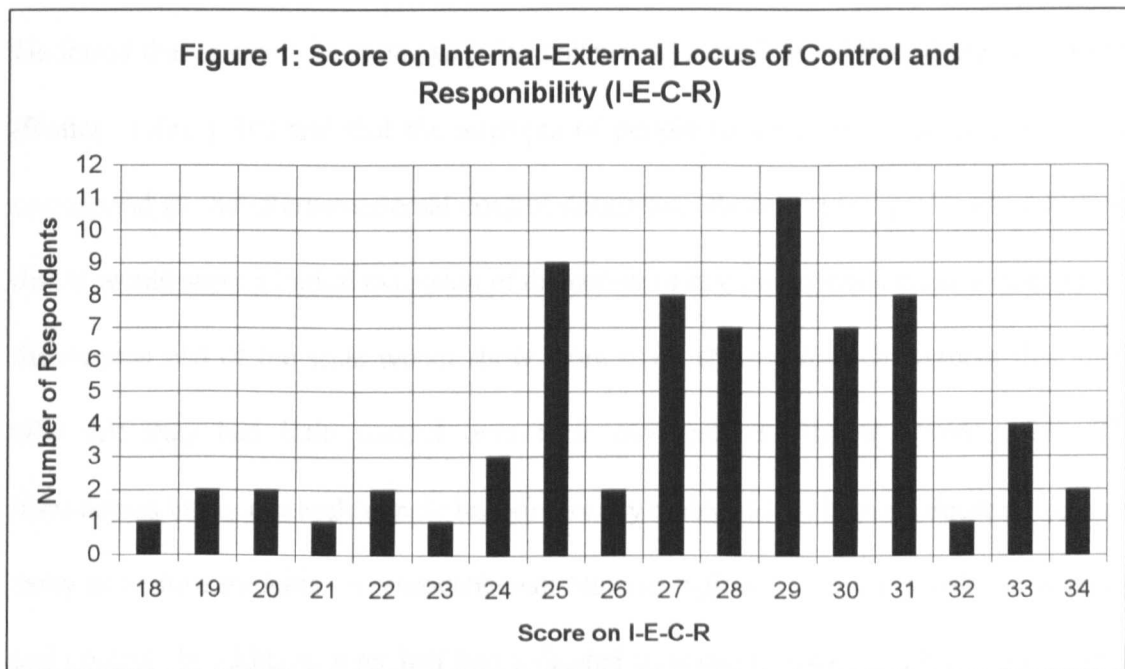
- social, economic and political forces are more powerful than personal attributes;
- events that shape your life are often outside your control;
- families and communities are more important than the individuals within them;
- the future is determined largely by chance, luck and fate.

Robson (1993, p.257) states that items should be in random order with contrasting items intermingled. The eight items on the follow-up questionnaire were randomised and alternated.

A total score of internal locus of control and responsibility (ILCR) for each respondent was obtained by summing the relevant values of each of the responses. This was done by accepting the four scores related to the individual items on internal locus of control and responsibility and reversing the scores on the items giving an external locus of control. To reverse the scores: 1 became 5; 2 became 4; 4 became 2; 5 became 1. In this way, it was possible to construct a score of internal locus of control and responsibility (ILCR) for each individual: $ILCR = \text{sum of } (1,3,5,7) + \text{sum of (reversed } 2,4,6,8)$.

The minimum possible ILCR score of 8 (8 x 1) would represent someone who saw events as completely outside their control and responsibility. The maximum possible ILCR score of 40 would represent someone who believed individuals were in total control of, and responsible for, their own destiny. Writing about internal and external control, Rotter (1966) reminds us that 'we do have indications that people at either extreme of the reinforcement dimension are likely to be maladjusted by most definitions' (p.4). In fact, the

highest score in the sample was 34 and the lowest 18. Taking the mid point as 24, a score of 25 or above would denote an inclination towards an internal locus of control and responsibility with a score of 23 or less indicating an inclination towards an external locus of control and responsibility. On this interpretation of scores, it is striking to note that only nine out of the seventy-one respondents scored 23 or less (five White females, two Black women and two White men). That is, 83.1 per cent of respondents scored more than 24, inclining towards an internal locus of control and responsibility, with twenty two (31%) scoring 30 or above, indicating a strong internal locus of control and responsibility (see figure 1, below).



Rotter discusses the effects of testing conditions on respondents, with more internal scores

being accounted for by the perceived social desirability in certain test conditions (Rotter, 1966, p.16). This could, in part, account for the high number of participants scoring high on internal control and responsibility. It is possible that some participants, perceiving their participation in the research as part of their course, wished to give the 'right' answers.

Rotter (1966) also discusses the relationship between strong locus of control and people who are high on the need to achieve. He suggests that such people have a belief in their own ability or skill to determine the outcome of their efforts, though he concedes that this relationship is probably not straight forward since it is possible that a person high on motivation to achieve might not be equally high on a belief in internal control and that people low on achievement motivation may believe they are in control (Rotter, 1966, p.3). He found that students intending to go to college are more internal than those who do not (Rotter, 1966, p.16) and that the attempts of people to better their life conditions also correspond to the internal-external control dimension (Rotter, 1966, p.18). He concludes that 'it would seem a logical extension of the notion of internal-external control that those at the internal end of the scale would show more overt striving for achievement than those who felt they had little control over their environment' (Rotter, 1966, p.21). The respondents in my research sample had all recently embarked on higher education courses, many as mature students - a reasonable indication of high motivation towards achievement and control. In addition, over half had indicated aspirations towards self-improvement in the first questionnaire. Perhaps it is not surprising, therefore, that the majority of participants in the current research scored high on internal control and responsibility.

Even taking into account the possible effects of the conditions under which participants completed the questionnaire and their status as students in higher education, participants scored high on the Internal Locus of Control and Responsibility irrespective of their gender, ethnic identity, social class and age. This may challenge the universality of Sue and Sue's (1990, 1999) proposition that people from certain social groups, like women and minority ethnic groups, are more likely to score highly on external control and responsibility.

8.3 Worldview and discrimination

The relationship between the I-E-C-R dimension and the experience of discrimination was also examined. Question five of the follow-up questionnaire asked respondents to indicate if they had 'ever suffered discrimination connected with any type of employment' (see question 5, Appendix 3). A high proportion, 40.8 per cent (N=29), answered in the affirmative. Of these, twenty-four were women. The definition of 'discrimination' in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1990, 8th Edn.) is the 'unfavourable treatment based on prejudice, especially regarding race, colour or sex.' This type of definition has been contested. For example, Banton (1994) argues that it combines the objective treatment (that is, different) with a moral judgement (that is, unfavourable). As there are disagreements about what constitutes 'unfavourable' and because the law relating to discrimination is constantly changing, Banton argues that these two components should be separated out. He suggests an alternative definition for discrimination: 'the differential treatment of persons supposed to belong to a particular class of persons' (Banton, 1994, p.1), arguing that the moral judgement about this different treatment should be made separately. However defined, the notion of different treatment by others, irrespective of the

wishes of the targeted individual, remains constant.

Scrutiny of the responses to individual items in question one of those twenty-nine participants who had suffered discrimination reveals some interesting patterns (table 19, below).

Table 19: I-E-C-R for those reporting discrimination

Discriminated Against N=29	Agree	Disagree	Un- Decided	Total
Factors like an individual's motivation, values and feelings are important to success	26	2	1	29
There is a strong relationship between ability, effort & success in society	24	4	1	29
Individuals shape their own future	19	6	4	29
Social, economic & political forces are more powerful than personal attributes	5	19	5	29
The future is determined largely by chance, luck & fate	8	19	2	29
Families & communities are more important than individuals within them	2	16	11	29
Events that shape your life are often outside your control	13	10	6	29
Success or failure is due to an individual's skills and abilities	13	10	6	29

For example, in response to the statement: *factors like an individual's motivation, values and feelings are important to success*, twenty six respondents who had experienced

discrimination agreed (of whom thirteen strongly agreed) compared with only two who disagreed (of whom one strongly disagreed). For the statement: *there is a strong relationship between ability, effort and success in society*, twenty-four agreed (of whom five strongly agreed) compared with four who disagreed (of whom two strongly disagreed). For: *individuals shape their own future*, nineteen agreed compared with six who disagreed. For: *social, economic and political forces are more powerful than personal attributes*, nineteen disagreed (of whom three strongly disagreed) compared with five who agreed. For: *the future is determined largely by chance, luck and fate*, eight agreed and nineteen disagreed. For: *families and communities are more important than the individuals within them*, two agreed and sixteen disagreed. The scores of these six statements all indicate strong inclination towards a belief in internal control and responsibility. So, despite having suffered discrimination in employment, most continued to believe that progress and success in society was largely due to individual factors. They did, however, recognise that some influences lie outside their control.

Scores on the two other items also support this interpretation, though this is not quite so clear cut. To one of these: *success or failure is due to an individual's skills and abilities (or lack of them)*, thirteen participants agreed whilst ten disagreed, and to the other: *events that shape your life are often outside your control*, the same response pattern emerged with thirteen agreeing and ten disagreeing.

Sue and Sue (1999) discuss the importance of taking account of the cultural context of individuals, stressing the importance of situations in which 'cultural and discriminatory

forces may both be operative' (Sue and Sue, 1999, p.171). The questionnaire as a research method is limited in its scope to provide comprehensive information about the cultural context of respondents. In-depth interviews were therefore used for follow-up with a small number of participants (see chapter 9, below).

The pattern of responses to the same questions for those who did not report experiences of discrimination are presented, for the purposes of comparison, in table 20, below.

Table 20: I-E-C-R for those not discriminated against

Discrimination Not Experienced N=42	Agree	Disagree	Un-Decided	Total
Factors like an individual's motivation, values and feelings are important to success	39	2	1	42
There is a strong relationship between ability, effort & success in society	35	3	4	42
Individuals shape their own future	26	3	13	42
Social, economic & political forces are more powerful than personal attributes	15	12	15	42
The future is determined largely by chance, luck & fate	6	18	18	42
Families & communities are more important than individuals within them	7	19	16	42
Events that shape your life are often outside your control	17	9	16	42
Success or failure is due to an individual's skills and abilities	28	7	7	42

These are similar, except for two statements: *success or failure is due to an individual skills and abilities*, to which 28 out of a possible 42 agreed in the group which had not suffered discrimination, compared with 13 out of 29 in the group which had suffered discrimination. Additionally, for the statement: *social, economic & political forces are more powerful than personal attributes*, 15 out of the possible 42 agreed from the group not discriminated against, compared with only 5 out of 29 who reported experience of discrimination.

Stiles (1993) discusses the tentative nature of interpretations made by qualitative researchers. Such interpretations accept: 'the limitations of context, shifting dimensions, technically chaotic causal relationships' (Stiles, 1993, p.598) and therefore do not claim that their interpretations apply to all cases or even try to specify when these interpretations may apply. Interpretations from question 1 remain, necessarily, tentative. There were only eight items in question 1, which has not been re-tested on a different group of participants. However, the result from the question about control and responsibility when compared with the results from the question about the experience of discrimination does raise questions about Sue & Sue's claim (1990, 1999) that socially disadvantaged groups, such as minority ethnic groups and women, likely to be the victims of discrimination, are likely to believe that they have little control and/or responsibility in their lives.

8.4 Inhibitors of career development

The second question on the follow-up questionnaire asked respondents to identify

difficulties or obstacles that they anticipated when thinking about future employment. The inhibitors of women's career development have been discussed in some detail in section 4.4, above. These include gender, role and occupational stereotypes, lack of role models, poor self-concept, and low expectations of success (Betz, 1994, p.23). Sexual discrimination and harassment (Krumboltz & Coon; 1995, Schneider *et al.*, 1997) are also identified as barriers, together with the interactive effects of sexism and racism (Gainor & Forrest, 1994; Lent *et al.*; 1994, Richie *et al.*, 1997). Multiple disadvantages associated with low socio-economic status are emphasised by Meara *et al.* (1994) while Krumboltz and Coon (1995) discuss work-related disadvantages: home conflicts, child-care responsibility, office politics, lack of career progress, sexism, discrimination and sexual harassment (p.394).

Responses to question two reveal various external inhibitors (table 21, below) which correspond with previous findings from North America, specifically, gender, age, ethnicity, social class and labour market conditions, although only one person identified social class as a prospective difficulty. Additionally, internal inhibitors (lack of career self-efficacy, and lack of awareness and understanding) were identified. This suggests that the anticipated inhibitors of career development for women in the UK may be broadly similar to those operating in the American labour market

Individual responses reveal the particular ways in which gender and ethnicity were perceived as potential difficulties. For gender, participant responses included the following comments: sexism; children's welfare; childcare; any form of discrimination; child-care [twice]; being a women in her child bearing years; being female; 'I am a woman'; prejudice

Table 21: Prospective difficulties

(Question: When thinking about employment in the future, what (if any) do you expect to be the main difficulties or obstacles you would have to overcome?)

DIFFICULTIES/OBSTACLES N=71 (multiple answers possible)	Number of respondents
Gender	19
Age	14
Ethnicity	10
Social class	1
Disability	2
Lack of awareness (e.g. of opportunities available, of best way to market self)	4
Self-efficacy (e.g. lack of confidence in ability to do the job, lack of self-confidence)	11
Lack of knowledge/understanding of the labour market	7
Labour market conditions (e.g. lack of appropriate jobs, high levels of competition and entry requirements)	27
Miscellaneous	9

(female); being a woman and having children; sex discrimination; quality child-care provision; being female and Asian; bringing up children; family commitments (child-care and elderly relatives and limited opportunities).

Nine of the comments relating to gender specifically identified child-care responsibilities as a prospective difficulty. Forth *et al.* (1997) set out to map family-friendly working arrangements in Britain in 1996 and found that opportunities to combine employment and

family were rare:

only 5% of work places offered the type of employment that helped employees around the time of childbirth, assisted them with the care of infant or school-age children and gave them some flexibility in working time that would help with the full gamut of potential family responsibilities.

(Forth *et al.*, 1997, p.195)

They found that arrangements that were 'family friendly' (perhaps this should be referred to rather as child-care friendly) to some degree were most commonly found in the public, rather than the private, sector. The lack of child-care provision in the UK forces working parents to be dependent on child-care provision. The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) reported that in 1998, there were 5,037,000 children who were under the age of eight, compared with 1,070,000 registered childcare or playgroup places (EOC, 1999, p.6). So, the UK currently suffers from both a chronic shortage of quality provision and a lack of child-care friendly employment policies. It would seem, therefore, that the anxieties of the respondents in my research about child-care representing a major barrier to employment in the future are well founded.

Forth *et al.* (1997) also found that: 'Aside from giving up paid employment, switching from full-time to part-time working was the most radical change in their working lives which the mothers of new babies made in order to accommodate their new responsibilities'. In contrast, it was apparent that 'the working patterns of fathers were, understandably, much less affected by the birth of a new baby than were the mothers' (Forth *et al.*, 1997, p.195). National statistics support this contention. In 1998, 1,357,000 women with children aged 0-4 were in employment. Of these, 480,000 worked full-time compared with 877,000 who

worked part-time. In comparison, 1,940,000 men with children aged 0-4 were in employment. Of these, 1,884,000 were in full-time employment compared with 56,000 in part-time employment (EOC, 1999, p.11).

With regard to ethnicity creating a barrier to future employment, participants' comments included: being a foreigner; ethnic background and name; sometimes question whether my colour will also be a problem; colour of my skin; ethnicity; being Asian; discriminatory factors: race, age, gender. Owen's (1997) analysis of data from the 1991 Census provides evidence of the way which ethnicity continues to operate as a disadvantage in the UK labour market. He found key differences in the experiences of ethnic minority groups in the labour market, compared with White people: 'On average, ethnic minority groups display lower rates of labour market participation, and suffer higher rates of unemployment than White people, while being more likely to be self-employed than employees' (Owen, 1997, p.65). Again, the actual position of Britain's Black population in the labour market justifies participants' anticipation of racial discrimination in employment.

Overall, twenty-two responses indicated that their lack of awareness, self-esteem and/or their lack of understanding of labour market conditions would prove to be a difficulty in the future. Forty-six responses anticipated difficulties caused by fixed variables like their gender, ethnic origin, social class and age; and twenty-seven responses identified labour market conditions as potentially problematic (please note: more than one response to this question was possible).

8.5 Value orientations

The third question in the follow-up questionnaire related to personal philosophy, or value orientation. Findings from careers research have highlighted the role of a relational value system as potentially significant for successful career development for women (Betz, 1994; McCracken and Weitzman, 1997; Richie *et al.*, 1997; Schaefers *et al.*, 1997). Richie *et al.* (1997), for example, found that highly successful career women:

did not appear to mute their femininity in order to succeed in their careers, and they displayed expressive characteristics (for example, nurturance, relational orientation and sensitivity) that contrast with the rugged individualism often depicted in traditionally masculine styles of achievement.

(Richie *et al.*, 1997, p.145)

Hackett (1997) emphasises the need to include 'considerations of relational orientation' into all aspects of women's career psychology (Hackett, 1997 p.187).

Question one had explored locus of control and locus of responsibility, both suggested by Sue and Sue (1990, 1999) as central to worldviews. Ibrahim (1985) argues that personal philosophy or value orientation is one other, equally important dimension (Ibrahim, 1985, p.625) and argues that an understanding of this is essential for effective cross-cultural counselling practice (Ibrahim, 1985, 1991). Ibrahim's model (1985, p.629) of value orientations is derived from Kluckholm and Strodtbeck's (1961) analytical schema, developed to compare value emphases and value orientations in different cultures. Categories common to all humanity, are:

- Human nature (good, bad, immutable);

- Human relationships (lineal-hierarchical, collateral-mutual, individualistic);
- Relationship of people to nature (harmony, subjugation and control, power of nature);
- Time orientation (past, present, future);
- Activity orientation (being, being-in-becoming, doing).

(Ibrahim, 1985, p.629)

Ibrahim argues that these categories should be used in counselling practice to 'establish clearly how the client views the world to understand the nature of the specific crisis and its apprehension by the client to establish mutually agreed-upon goals and processes....' (Ibrahim, 1985, p.630). Further, he argues that a full understanding of personal philosophy, or worldview, can only be achieved by placing it 'within the context of the client's primary subculture and how his or her values relate to the majority culture' (Ibrahim, 1985, p.630). An understanding of individual worldviews also 'helps in focusing on within-group variation' (Ibrahim, 1991, p.14).

Sue and Sue (1990, 1999) slightly adapted Ibrahim's (1985) framework (Sue and Sue, 1999, p.167) [see Appendix 7]. This adaptation comprises a value-orientation model with four dimensions: time focus, human activity, social relations and people/nature relationship together with three value orientations. For the first, the time focus is on the past, which is all important; we should learn from history. Human activity should focus on being; it's enough to just be. Social relations (lineal) are conceptualised as linear and vertical; there are natural followers and leaders in society. The people/nature relationship emphasises subjugation to nature; external forces (God, genetics, fate, etc.) largely determine life and

destiny.

In contrast, the time focus of the second model stresses the present and the importance of living for today; the future is not a concern. Human activity is expressed as 'being and in-becoming' meaning that the purpose of life is to develop the inner self. Social relations emphasise the importance of consulting with friends and families when problems arise (collateral, relational). The people/nature relationship advocates harmony with nature; people should strive to co-exist in harmony with nature.

The third value model focuses on the future and stresses the need for planning; making sacrifices today will ensure a better tomorrow. Human activity focuses on 'doing'; being active and working hard ensures that efforts will be rewarded. Social relations stress individual autonomy and individualism; it is assumed that everyone controls their own destiny. The people/nature relationship advocates mastery over nature; the challenge is to conquer and control nature.

This particular model of value orientations has potential relevance for women's career behaviour since certain aspects, in particular human relationships, link with existent research findings. For example, Gilligan (1977) details different patterns of development and the ways of being, experienced by women compared with men, and discusses how these have been systematically undervalued - though this is beginning to change: 'The relational bias in women's thinking that has, in the past, been seen to compromise their moral judgement and impede their development now begins to emerge in a new

developmental light' (Gilligan, 1977, p.482).

For question three, respondents were asked to score each of the following twelve statements which related to different value orientations on a scale of one to five (1 = strongly agree, 5 = strongly disagree). Three statements related to time focus:

- The past is important; learn from history.
- Live for today; don't worry about tomorrow.
- Plan for the future; sacrifice today for a better tomorrow.

Three others related to human activity:

- Work hard and your efforts will be rewarded.
- Our purpose in life is to develop our inner self.
- It's enough just to be.

Three related to social relations:

- There are leaders and followers in the world.
- We should consult with friends/families when problems arise.
- Individual autonomy is important; we control our own destiny.

The remaining three statements related to people/nature relationships:

- Life is largely determined by external forces (e.g. fate, genetics, God, etc.).
- Our challenge is to conquer and control nature.

- People and nature co-exist in harmony.

These statements were randomised. The maximum score for each of the three value orientations was 20 (4 x 5) with the lowest being 4 (4 x 1). A high score, indicating a strong inclination towards one of the value orientations, was interpreted as being 15 or above. If a high score was indicated on one value orientation, then lower scores would be expected on the other two.

In fact, no such patterns emerged. Thirty-seven scored 15 or more on one (or more) value orientation, but of these, eight scored 15 or more on more than one value orientation. Four respondents scored equally across all three value orientations, with 28 (39.4 per cent) indicating scores of between 12 and 15 across all three value orientations. The scores of thirteen respondents (18.3 per cent) indicated a difference of five (or more) between the top and bottom scores. Of these, six scored the highest for 'past' value orientation, two for 'future' and three for 'present' (two scored equally on two value orientations).

Overall, then, the majority of respondents indicated similar scores across all three value orientation models, rather than within one. Charmaz (1995) asks what happens if the data: 'do not illuminate the researcher's initial interests?' (Charmaz, 1995, p.32). Grounded theorists evaluate the fit between their initial research and their emerging data, rather than forcing preconceived ideas and theories on the data (Charmaz, 1995, p.33). Thus, when no clear patterns emerged in the responses to question three, I asked four interviewees if they would like to comment on the question or their responses to it. Comments help explain the

patterns of responses. For example, one respondent indicated how she had considered her own personal values alongside those of her friends, and that her age was important (she would have answered one way when younger, and another now she was in her forties). One explained how she had been thinking of refugees, (a client group with whom she worked) as a distinct social grouping, sometimes answering how she imagined they would answer; sometimes for herself. Another indicated that for her there was confusion about how she thinks things should be and how they really are. The fourth said that the changes she was making in her life affected her answers. Once these transitions were complete, she imagined her responses would be quite different.

It is evident, therefore, that the categories used in the questionnaire were extremely complex. Depending on the particular contexts, it may not be irrational for the same individual to agree with all three of the items under the value orientation: 'human activity' (that is, work hard and your efforts will be rewarded; our purpose in life is to develop our inner self; it's enough just to be). In fact, three respondents wrote comments on question three asking for further clarification about some of the statements. One wrote so many qualifying comments that at the end of the questionnaire she added: 'I'm sorry for making a mess of your questionnaire. I would be happy to do it again or discuss my answers with you if you wish!' Perhaps this suggests that at least some of the respondents wished to respond at a level of complexity not permitted by the items included in the follow-up questionnaire. This indicates the necessity of further exploration of the value orientation model by using in-depth interviews, which focus on context and allow open-ended responses. Nevertheless, question three served a useful purpose since it revealed that

individuals sharing particular social characteristics (like ethnicity or social class) did not emerge clearly as sharing the same or similar value orientations, (Sue and Sue, 1990, 1999), and emphasised the importance of the cultural and social context of the individual for an understanding of such a complex sets of values.

8.6 Enhancers of career development

The fourth question asked respondents to indicate sources of support and encouragement, again when thinking about future employment. A combination of individual and structural factors are identified in current research, which act as enhancers of women's career development. For example, Betz (1994) identifies family background, educational qualifications, instrumentality (self-assertion and competence); later marriage and/or single status; few or no children; high self-esteem; career-related self-efficacy; and the rejection of traditional attitudes towards women's roles. Career self-efficacy beliefs also emerge as an important factor (Betz *et al.* 1996; Richie *et al.*, 1997). Abilities regarding 'multiple role planning' and possessing a strong 'locus of control' are identified as important intervening variables for successful career women (McCracken and Weitzman; 1997 Richie *et al.*, 1997). As discussed above, the role of value systems (for example, hierarchical value systems compared with relational systems) is also identified as potentially significant (Betz 1994; McCracken and Weitzman, 1997; Richie *et al.* 1997; Schaefers *et al.* 1997). A study conducted by Rainey and Borders (1997) highlights the influence of the mother-daughter relationship for future career, whilst Lucas (1997) focuses on emotional separation from parents as critical for the career success of both women and men. Enhancers anticipated by the research participants correspond with many of these findings (table 22, below).

Table 22: Prospective sources of support
(Question: Again, when thinking about employment in the future, what (if any) do you expect to be the main sources of support and encouragement?)

SOURCES OF SUPPORT N=71 (multiple answers possible)	No
Family, parents, loved ones	46
Friends	39
Personal Qualities, for example: Motivation: (8) Past Experience: (2) Other e.g. personality, confidence, my energy, initiative, self belief, abilities (10)	23
Partner	12
Colleagues	12
Manager, employer, boss	10
Tutor	3
Religion, beliefs	4
Careers adviser	2
Professional acquaintances	2
Other: * role models * mentor * past contacts * job satisfaction * knowledge that I'm privileged * someone in higher authority * knowing what I'm doing is helping others * bank * emotional support * church members	16
No answer	3

Overall, respondents, supporting current findings, highlight varied influences of family and friends together with personal pre-dispositions as particularly important.

8.7 Discrimination

Questions 5, 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 5f, and 5g related to the experience of discrimination in employment. Banton (1994) suggests that the belief that humans are equal in dignity and rights has increasingly gained ground and is reinforced by the institutions of mass society (p.90). He goes on to argue that since the 1950s, the concept of discrimination has 'come into increasing use to denote some act or practice which denies equality of treatment and is therefore objectionable', and recognises the deleterious effect on individuals: 'Those denied equal treatment often feel a more intense sense of grievance than is ever appreciated by people who escape such experiences'. (Banton, 1994, p.90).

Discrimination in UK society takes many forms and occurs within many spheres of life. The focus of my own research, however, was on the career development of women, so discrimination related to employment was of particular interest. Question 5 therefore asked: 'Have you ever had a job (including temporary, short-term or casual)?'. Sixty-eight (95.8%) of the sample replied 'yes'. Question 5a) then asked respondents to indicate whether they had ever actually experienced discrimination related to employment. Twenty-nine (40.8%) replied in the affirmative. Of these, twenty-five were women.

For those answering 'no' to question 5a), questions 5b), 5c), 5d), 5e), 5f) and 5g) were not relevant. For those answering 'yes' to Question 5a), question 5b) asked them to indicate whether this discrimination related to selection and/or recruitment, to the time when they were in employment or 'other' (table 23, below).

Table 23: Timing of Discrimination

TIMING OF DISCRIMINATION N=29 (multiple answers possible)	Number
Entry into employment (selection/recruitment)	4
Time when you were employed	23
Other	9

Most of the discrimination identified related to time in employment (N = 23). Question 5c) asked whether the experience of discrimination had contributed to their leaving employment. Eleven (37.9%) of those who had experienced discrimination reported that these experiences had, indeed, contributed to their leaving.

Banton, (1994) argues that it is not possible to determine that an action is discriminatory without indicating the basis of the different treatment. Article 55 of the United Nations Charter (1945) declares that the United Nations will promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all 'without distinction as to race, sex, language and religion'. Eight additional grounds for possible discrimination were subsequently added, specifically, colour, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status (quoted in Banton, 1994, p.2). Question 5d) asked what type of discrimination had been suffered (table 24, below). The category 'other' included three responses, which could be interpreted as sex discrimination: pregnancy, being a single parent (female respondent) and being over-weight. However, since respondents placed these in the 'other' category, this has been respected.

Table 24: Type of discrimination

TYPE OF DISCRIMINATION N=29 (multiple answers possible)	No.
Racial	7
Sexual	11
Other: age (4) social class (3) homophobia (2) pregnancy (1) single parent (1) over weight (1) personality (2) political correctness (1) being a student (1)	16

Question 5e) asked respondents to describe their worst example of employment-related discrimination. All twenty-nine respondents who reported they had experienced discrimination provided examples, though the focus here will be on the twenty-five responses from female respondents. Landrine and Klonoff (1997) found that discrimination against women takes a wide variety of forms:

Such discrimination includes (but is not limited to) being sexually harassed; being called sexist names such as "bitch"; being treated unfairly by family members and spouses/partners; being treated unfairly by teachers and professors; being discriminated against by people in service jobs (e.g. mechanics); and being discriminated against at work (e.g. salaries, promotions).

(Landrine and Klonoff, 1997, p.21)

The difficulties of defining sexual harassment, regarded by Landrine and Klonoff (1997) as a sub-category of sexual discrimination, were discussed in section 3.3.5, above. One

respondent to the follow-up questionnaire wrote about her abusive experiences of sexual harassment as an employee in an all-male environment:

Woman 3: I worked as a PA to Vice-Chairman of a Football Club. Women were viewed as objects for the purpose of group sex. I cannot begin to outline how badly I was treated by my boss. I was manhandled, blackmailed, forced by subversive measures to leave when I questioned the corruption, which was extremely prevalent in their dealings.

Physically violent forms of discriminatory behaviour, like the example cited above, are easily recognised as abusive and damaging. However, in their research into the prevalence and consequences of discrimination on women's lives, Landrine and Klonoff (1997) found that non-violent types of sexual discrimination have been under-researched, are more common in most women's lives and can be just as harmful (Landrine and Klonoff, 1997, p.20). Sexual harassment also takes non-violent forms, and this also represents a powerful form of discrimination in the workplace. According to Piotrkowski (1998), the incidence of sexual harassment is widespread: 'It is estimated that about half of all women workers are sexually harassed during their working lives' (Piotrkowski, 1998, p.33). She found that gender harassment in the workplace is a problem that has been seriously underestimated: 'studies have underestimated the prevalence of sexual harassment because the more impersonal forms of harassment and "bystander" harassment have been de-emphasised' (Piotrkowski, 1997, p.40).

Landrine and Klonoff (1997, p.11) define sexual harassment as '(a) unwelcome sexual advances, (b) requests for sexual favours, and (c) any verbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature'. O'Connell and Korabik (2000) specify this discriminatory behaviour in even

more detail. They propose that it consists of three related, yet conceptually distinct dimensions: gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion.

Gender harassment involves the display of insulting, hostile and degrading attitudes toward women. Unwanted sexual attention includes both verbal and non-verbal behaviour and can range from repeated, unreciprocated requests for dates, intrusive letters, and phone calls to touching, grabbing, cornering and gross sexual imposition. Sexual coercion involves bribes or threats, whether subtle or explicit, that condition some job-related benefit on sexual co-operation.

(O'Connell and Korabik, 2000, p.300).

By these definitions, five respondents to the follow-up questionnaire described experiences of sexual harassment:

Woman 13: Sexism - manager and his friends making comments about women workers (and me), size of our breasts and bums and saying what they liked/disliked - in very loud voices every time you go near them.

Woman 55: (Male) Employers making comments and being rude all the time.

Woman 72: I was told that, because I was a woman, I should make the teas and was subjected to name calling about my anatomy and being blond.

Woman 75: I do believe that racism would be the worst but sexism is not nice. Being judged on something that you've no control over. I've had suggestions that I'm disadvantaged because of my sex. Older males make advances on you. You don't feel equal at all!

Woman 84: Working as a volunteer within an Employment Advice setting. Had men passing sexual comments and physically touching me.

Other forms of discrimination against women are less overtly sexual in nature. For example, women are less likely than men to be promoted, 'even when their job performance evaluations match those of men' (Landrine and Klonoff, 1997, p.9). Six respondents identified such experiences:

Woman 5: I applied for a managerial post, was told by my direct manager that

I had the job, to be later told by a senior manager that there was an imbalance between males and females in senior posts and the job would have to be given to a less qualified male.

Woman 65: My longer experience was overlooked in favour of younger, slimmer people.

Woman 71: Not given the promotion, 'overlooked'.

Woman 82: Not enough students enrolled to support all part-time members of staff. One had to go. I was chosen, despite greater seniority, because I had just had a baby and was known not to be reliant on income.

Woman 91: Been passed over for promotion in work that I could do (and have since proved I am able to do) due to the fact of being both female and 'working class'.

Women are also offered fewer opportunities than men at work, including opportunities to increase their levels of responsibility (Landrine and Klonoff, 1997, p.9). Again, two respondents to the follow-up questionnaire identified this type of restriction:

Woman 45: The fact that I had no voice when trying to have an input with work related duties. Also felt left out of the team. Oh yes, and the bosses separated me from my co-workers when we were of the same rank. Put us on different days/shifts so we never met!

Woman 88: Access to training restricted i.e. admin. staff had access to lower level courses. Professional qualifications available only to men or older (over 30's) women.

Two respondents reported experiences of subtle acts of discrimination. These acts are described as 'pernicious, subversive hard to identify (let alone complain about) because they are constant, low-level background noise' (Landrine and Klonoff, 1997, p.15). Yet they bother women just as much as other types, because they are unfair:

Woman 74: Asked for day off because my child was poorly and I was told to re-assess my priorities and I answered that I didn't need a re-assessment, because it's my family.

Woman 76: Sexual - being undermined and discredited due to gender.

Landrine and Klonoff (1997) found that 'women of colour experience more frequent sexist discrimination than White women in certain areas' (Landrine and Klonoff, 1997, p.64). They go on to highlight the anomaly that, despite this, Black women have been largely overlooked by feminist psychology, feminist social science and the women's movement: 'the women who experience gender discrimination *most* often (women of colour) are the very women feminist social science ignores continuing to neglect women of colour in our work is simply indefensible' (Landrine and Klonoff, 1997, p.64) [original emphasis]. Piotrkowski (1998) supports this contention, 'there is a dearth of research on the health-related outcomes of sexual harassment among racial or ethnic minorities' (Piotrkowski, 1998, p.34). She also notes that minority women may suffer more from sexual harassment because they also suffer from racism, and racism and sexual harassment may be combined (Piotrkowski, 1998, p.34). Seven respondents to the follow-up questionnaire from minority ethnic groups wrote about the discrimination they had experienced:

Woman 24: Racial discrimination: This was not obvious, but I was restricted in progressing, when I knew that I could do the work and gain new responsibilities, because of my colour and dislike of the new senior MLSO. When I was an MLSO at XXXX's hospital, I was prejudiced against by the new Senior. The new MLSO at the same level as myself was registered to take part in obtaining renal specimens, but he brushed me aside saying that I was not experienced enough.

Woman 52: Racial discrimination. Speaking to a manager of a well known hotel in the City, I was offered the job over the telephone. But when I arrived at the hotel, I was told that kitchen staff had to go to the rear entrance. When I tried to explain who I was, and why I was there, I was called a liar.

Woman 61: Not being offered a position because of my colour.

Woman 63: Combination of sexual discrimination and racial discrimination. He used to live in South Africa and this was quite evident from his behaviour. I

questioned procedure, which was not appreciated. Also, those that socialised with him all eventually got high positions in the company [original emphasis].

Woman 83: 1) Numerous small comments made by two white male colleagues. For example, 'This place is like Bombay!' (referring to the catchment area we worked in).

2) Extremely negative body language when I was in the presence of certain white colleagues.

Woman 90: Although it has been extremely hard to prove because of lack of accumulated supporting evidence, I believe I was passed over in promotion and finally offered redundancy because the manager believed I could not manage an all white/predominantly white staff team. They thought they were doing me a favour by letting me go.

Woman 92: Given flimsy explanations as to why I was not offered a job. This happened in Boroughs where I expected the reaction anyway.

For the purposes of comparison, the comments from the five men who reported discrimination follow. The first comment is from a respondent who reported himself to be homosexual:

Man 19: Maybe just relating to me with feminine nouns (Miss instead of Mister!). As stated, not too serious - but in a right context and with sensitivity levels tensions raising enough [sic]. From a friend I would not consider it an insult.

Man 37: There were people who worked there without responsibility and earned much money than me [sic]. And this was obvious, not an assumption!

Man 54: Rather than individual instances I have to listen, for seven hours a day, to my gender being insulted with me present. Any generally 'crap' jobs come my way and as the only male in the office I am an open target for comments and jokes.

Two of comments from male respondents related to racial discrimination:

Man 78: Because I did not get recruited as only British Nationals were said to fit the job. In fact, a kitchen porter job does not need such a specification.

Man 81: Racial - individuals being ousted via petty disciplinary action as a

way of streaming elite personnel.

Question 5f) asked whether the experience of discrimination had affected aspirations for the future. Nine respondents indicated that this was the case.

Finally, Question 5g) asked if respondents expected to be discriminated against in the future. Thirteen answered in the affirmative.

8.8 Conclusion

The data collected from the follow-up questionnaire extended and complemented that from the initial questionnaire. It provided insights to values relating to control and responsibility together with the anticipated enhancers and inhibitors of women's career development. Additionally, information is provided about the nature and extent of discrimination suffered in employment. This sets the scene for the third and final stage of data collection using in-depth interviews, providing more detailed information about the contexts in which these experiences of discrimination took place.

Chapter 9: In-depth Interviews

It is much easier to deal with career questions through personal life histories than to discuss them abstractly.

(Baumgardner, 1982, p.215)

9.1 Introduction

In-depth interviews were carried out with nine female participants who had completed the first two questionnaires, had suffered discrimination and who had indicated their willingness to be interviewed. Of these, five described themselves as White and four as belonging to a minority ethnic group. Six were between the ages of 40 and 49; one was between the age of 30 and 39 and two were between the ages of 20 and 29.

9.2 In-depth, unstructured interviews

Interviewing as a method of data collection was selected for the final stage of research since it offered a way of exploring in more depth information provided by the two questionnaires (Appendices 1 and 3) as well as the social and cultural contexts of the respondents. It is a technique with which I feel very comfortable, having received formal training and accreditation in both the theory and practice. In addition to earning my living for five years as a professional interviewer whilst a careers adviser, I have trained postgraduate counselling and careers guidance students in interviewing techniques over the past twenty years. It is, therefore, probably justifiable for me to lay claim to being a competent interviewer who understands the importance of building rapport, establishing trust, introducing the purpose of the interview, defining its boundaries, and agreeing outcomes

with the interviewee.

Interpersonal effectiveness and skilled interviewing in research are variously acknowledged to be of value. For example, Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.6) discuss the self as an instrument in data collection and analysis. They stress essential attributes for qualitative researchers, which include intuitiveness, sensitivity and authenticity. These qualities closely correspond to the 'core qualities' of congruence, unconditional positive regard and empathy which underpin humanistic counselling (Rogers, 1951) - the counselling approach in which I have been trained. Polkinghorne (1994) discusses how skilfully conducted interviews in research can establish a climate of trust and openness between researchers and their subjects. This, he argues, can lessen the potential for bias in accounts given and also facilitates 'the exploration of private and privileged aspects of subjects' experiences' (Polkinghorne, 1994, p.510). Within grounded theory, Hutchinson (1988) suggests interviews are important since they help the researcher see the world through the eyes of their participants, and adds that 'the human touch, the capacity to empathise with others, is essential to successful interviewing' (Hutchinson, 1988, p.130).

However, McLeod (1996) warns that interviewing, as a research method can be problematic for trained counsellors. Interviewing is used differently in research from counselling. The trained counsellor must, therefore, be able to suspend their professional beliefs and assumptions about practice when interviewing for research (McLeod, 1996, p.314). During the nine interviews conducted, I found it challenging to restrain myself from moving into counselling mode whilst using my counselling skills and techniques. On one

occasion, after talking about a harrowing set of experiences related to racial and sexual discrimination, one interviewee stopped talking mid-sentence, laughed at the discomfort I was clearly expressing non-verbally, and stated: 'It's not as bad as it sounds, Jenny!'. An indication, perhaps, that I was not always entirely successful in achieving this balance!

9.3 Research process

Participants were invited to attend for interview by letter (Appendix 5). The letter specified the purpose and location of the interview together with its expected length. Confidentiality was assured and a promise given that information from the interview would only be used for the purpose of research. A selection of dates and times was offered, with a request for the return of the completed proforma, indicating preferences. One participant (Kathy) was interviewed, at her request, in her place of work. The others were interviewed in my office at the University.

At the beginning of each interview, the understanding of each participant was checked regarding its purpose and the commitment to confidentiality reiterated. Even though participants had received a written briefing on my research (Appendix 2), an opportunity was given for questions. Permission was sought to audio record each interview. The immediate recording of data, using a tape recorder or hand-written notes, is considered vital to the success of grounded theory method. This recording, however done, must be sensitively undertaken to minimise the potential for intrusion and disruption (Hutchinson, 1988, p.132). Each participant was given her choice of seating arrangement and the recording equipment was positioned as inconspicuously as possible. Interruptions were

minimised (the voicemail was switched on and a 'please do not disturb' notice placed on the office door). Participants were informed that they should not feel obliged to answer all questions and could stop if, at any point, they felt uncomfortable. Finally, the time available was checked, and where constraints were indicated, these were respected. The length of the interviews varied from thirty five minutes to approximately one and a half hours.

Responses to the second questionnaire were used as a broad framework for the interviews. In grounded theory method, the interviewer will adapt the initial interview guide 'to add areas to explore and to delete questions that have not been fruitful' (Charmaz, 1995, p.34). This may be either to develop emerging theoretical categories or to gather 'thick descriptions' of behaviour about which theoretical questions can be asked (Charmaz, 1995, p.34). As the nine interviews progressed, the interview framework was adapted for both these purposes. For example, emerging theoretical categories, like those related to coping strategies, were developed alongside the collection of rich description such as experiences of discrimination.

9.4 Coding the data

All nine interviews were transcribed, verbatim, by a departmental secretary who undertook the work voluntarily, as overtime. The typist was told that the transcripts were part of some research I was undertaking and provided with blank copies of the two questionnaires as background information. She had no prior knowledge of the interviewees.

Charmaz (1995) advocates the transcription of audio-tapes by researchers themselves in

grounded theory method, to increase awareness of respondents' 'implicit meanings and taken-for-granted concerns' (Charmaz, 1995, p.36). Whilst accepting that transcribing my own audio tapes offered opportunities to pick up on subtle nuances of language and meaning, a fine judgement had to be made about the time that this would take. In the management of any research project, time will be a key issue. An important strategy for managing time effectively is to be realistic (Blaxter *et al.*, 1996). Given the limited time scale and other demands on my time, decisions were made constantly about what was optimally desirable compared with what was possible. In the case of the interview transcriptions, a trade-off was made regarding the value of immersing myself in the data by undertaking transcriptions and engaging more fully in the literature review. My decision was to delegate the task of transcription.

Coding in grounded theory method requires the creation of codes as data are studied. The researcher interacts with and asks questions of the data and, as a result of this process, codes emerge (Charmaz, 1995, p.37). It is referred to as an artificial but essential task that enables the researcher to comprehend the logic underpinning the analysis (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.101). Data analysis was already well underway from the two questionnaires. The concepts, which emerged from the first, informed the design of the second. In turn, the analysis of data from the second questionnaire informed theoretical sampling for the nine interviewees and the interview framework.

Three stages of sequential coding in grounded theory method are identified (Charmaz, 1995; Hutchinson, 1988; Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The first stage is variously referred to

as Level I coding (Hutchinson, 1988, p.133); line by line and focused coding (Charmaz, 1995, p.39); and naming or labelling (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.106). It involves identifying words that describe the behaviour in the setting. A distinction is made between in vivo and substantive codes, with the former referring to words taken from the respondents and the latter referring to names or labels imposed by the analyst (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.105).

The second stage is discussed as Level II coding (Hutchinson, 1988, p.134) and memo writing (Charmaz, 1995, p.42, Strauss and Corbin, 1998, 217). Defined simply as 'written records of analysis that may vary in type and form' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.217), it is the stage of analysis that helps: 'elaborate processes, assumptions and actions that are subsumed under your code' (Charmaz, 1995, p.43). It moves beyond individual cases and helps define patterns. In this respect, it can be regarded as condensing the original coding and may involve the discarding of some data (Hutchinson, 1988, p.134).

The third stage of coding, Level III (Hutchinson, 1988, p.135), the final draft analysis (Charmaz, 1995, p.42) or discovering categories (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.113) elevates the data to even higher levels of abstraction. These will represent theoretical constructs derived from a combination of academic and professional knowledge (Hutchinson, 1998, p.135) and can involve developing subcategories (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.115).

These three stages of coding are referred to collectively as the process of 'open coding' by

Strauss and Corbin (1998) who acknowledge that there are many different ways of recording concepts and theoretical ideas and that: 'Each person must find the system that works best for him or her' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.120).

Analysis of raw data from the nine interviews followed these three stages. The first involved scrutiny of each interview transcript, highlighting and coding key concepts. The second stage, memo-writing, involved the abstraction of general concepts and explication of process and content, supported by interviewees' verbatim comments. The third stage involved the integration of these concepts with theoretical abstractions from relevant literature. The first drafts were sent to each interviewee for comment (see Appendix 8 for accompanying letter) with an invitation to provide their own pseudonym. Six responded, with five correcting minor details and one changing her pseudonym. Final versions follow in sections 9.6 to 9.12, below.

It should be noted that one of the Black interviewees, Kirsty (see section 9.9, below), made some grammatical corrections to her written transcription related to her use of tense. She followed this up with a telephone call, explaining that she knew that she didn't always talk in a grammatically correct way, and that she did not want this exposed in her story. She also asked me to correct any other glaring errors she had not spotted. Subsequently, she phoned again, asking for a copy of the 'corrected' version. It was clearly a matter about which she felt strongly. This posed something of an ethical dilemma for me, as researcher, in the sense that I felt morally obliged to respond to this direct request. In fact, I had invited comment when I sent a draft copy of each transcript to its originator. I was, however,

acutely aware of the way in which the personal account would be slightly altered. There was also the matter of parity. If I made some corrections for Kirsty, should I not do the same for the others? I decided that I would make similar corrections, where necessary, across all nine interviewees. My corrections related only to use of tenses.

One other technique used in my analysis of data is referred to as the 'constant comparative method' (Hutchinson, 1988, p.135), and is regarded as a fundamental method of data analysis in grounded theory (Hutchinson, 1988, p.135, Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.93). It can involve the comparison of incidents or behaviour patterns of different groups (Hutchinson, 1988, p.135) and its purpose is to identify 'how often a particular concept emerges and what it looks like [i.e. its properties] under varying conditions' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.95). The overall aim is to generate theoretical constructs, which can form a theory that accommodates behavioural variation (Hutchinson, 1988, p.135). Constant comparisons of the individual stories of the nine participants were made, together with particular incidents recounted. Substantive accounts of these nine interviews are presented as discrete stories in sections 9.6 to 9.14 below, to give power to the rich descriptions of individual context which emerge.

9.5 Discrimination: a core concept

.... no scale, no matter how carefully and sensitively it was designed, can capture anyone's experiences. The feelings, the flavor, and the whole pain of the experiences are all lost between the cracks of the numbers

(Landrine & Klonoff, 1997, p.18)

The nine participants were selected for in-depth interviews partly because they had indicated experience of discrimination on their second questionnaire. A specific purpose of the interview was to explore the nature of these experiences and their meaning to the participants. Both sexual and racial discrimination emerged as significant for the interviewees. All four of the Black women reported multiple experiences of racial discrimination. The Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) distinguishes between direct and indirect discrimination, as specified in the Race Relations Act of 1976:

Direct discrimination occurs 'when you are able to show that you have been treated less favourably on racial grounds than others in similar circumstances Racist abuse and harassment are forms of direct discrimination'.

Indirect discrimination occurs 'when you or people from your racial group are less likely to be able to comply with a requirement or condition, and the requirement cannot be justified other than on racial grounds'.

(CRE, 2000, p.2)

By these definitions, all of the experiences reported by the Black women were of direct discrimination. The Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) (1975) similarly distinguishes between direct and indirect discrimination (Clarke, 1995, p.58). 'Direct' discrimination for women involves less favourable treatment than a man has received or would receive (Clarke, 1995, p.58). Indirect discrimination occurs where a person:

applies [to a woman] a requirement or condition which applies or would apply equally to a man but (i) which is such that the proportion of women who can comply with it is considerably smaller than the proportion of men who can comply with it, and (ii) which he [*sic*] cannot show to be justifiable irrespective of the sex of the persons to whom it is applied, and (iii) which is to her detriment because she cannot comply with it.

(Clarke, 1995, p.60).

This Act has been criticised as being too technical (Clarke, 1995, p.60) and the Equal Opportunities Commission's (EOC) interpretation of the legislation provides a simpler version. The SDA applies to two kinds of discrimination:

Direct discrimination means treating someone unfairly because of their sex;

Indirect discrimination means setting unjustifiable conditions that appear to apply to everyone, but in fact discriminate against one sex'.

(EOC, 2000, p.1)

Seven of the participants (three Black and four White women) reported experiences of sex discrimination, which by these definitions were a mixture of both direct and indirect discrimination.

Sexual harassment is not specifically identified as part of the definition of sexual discrimination by the EOC (2000, p.1), whereas the CRE promote racial harassment as an integral part of the definition of racial discrimination (CRE, 2000, p.2). Fitzgerald (1993) notes that a legal definition of sexual harassment did not even exist in the US until 1980 (p.1070). Similarly, in their review of the field of sexual harassment, Thomas and Kitzinger (1997) conclude that the term 'sexual harassment' is recent in origin, even though the behaviours it describes have been enacted for centuries (p.1). They trace its emergence to the mid-1970s in North America, and suggest the term was not adopted in the UK until the early 1980s (p.2). Sexual harassment (like racial harassment) is 'illegal in so far as it can be construed as an act of sex discrimination under the provision of the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act (or, when it results in unfair dismissal, under the Employment Protection Act)' (Thomas and Kitzinger, 1997, p.5). The first successful case in the UK,

when it was argued that sexual harassment was a form of sex discrimination, was not until 1986 under the Employment Protection Act (p.5).

It seems there is a long way to go in the UK before sexual harassment is accepted as a problem in women's lives. Many women still refuse to define experiences as sexual harassment, with many (both men and women) failing to recognise it when it occurs (Thomas and Kitzinger, 1997, p.8). Its identification is further complicated by other identities, which crosscut gender, such as ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation (p.9). Overall: 'the term "sexual harassment" is subject to different interpretations both within and across the sexes, and is also related to harassment based on other politically marked identities' (Thomas and Kitzinger, 1997, p.9).

By Stanko's (1988) definition of sexual harassment as unwanted sexual attention (see section 3.3.5 above), three of the participants reported such experiences - two White women and one Black woman - though all used the label 'discrimination', rather than 'harassment'. It is possible, therefore, that other women interviewees may have experienced sexual harassment, though they either failed to recognise it or were reluctant to label it in this way.

The nine studies which follow provide details of the contexts in which discrimination occurred together with insights into coping strategies developed by individuals to deal with these experiences. Some of these were based on individual, internal, dispositional factors and correspond to factors identified as enhancing women's career development (see section

4.3 above). For example, self-assertion and competence, high self-esteem, career related self-efficacy and instrumentality (Betz, 1994; Richie *et al.*, 1997); ability to multiple role plan and possession of a strong locus of control (McCracken & Weitzman, 1997; Richie *et al.*, 1997); and value systems (Betz, 1994; McCracken & Weitzman, 1997; Richie *et al.*, 1997; Schaefers *et al.*, 1997). Other coping strategies were based on external, situational factors, also identified as enhancers (see section 4.3). Specifically, supportive family background, few or no children and single status (Betz, 1994; Dale *et al.*, 1997).

The studies of the four women who identified themselves as members of minority ethnic groups are presented first. The names of all participants have been changed, and some points of detail omitted (for example, employer and country names) in the interests of confidentiality.

9.6 Evelyn

Evelyn describes herself as 'Black African', is single, without dependants, aged between 40 and 49 and is self-employed as a freelance consultant. The job in which she had been employed for the longest period of time (8 years) ended in redundancy. She was unfairly dismissed from her last job as a manager in a large, public sector organisation and is studying part-time for a Masters qualification.

Evelyn identified her varied experiences of sexual and racial discrimination as significant inhibitors of her career development. Enhancers of her career development were identified as strong support networks of family, friends and colleagues which had both helped her to

deal with discrimination and provided on-going encouragement and help. Both the inhibitors and enhancers identified by Evelyn could, therefore, be described as external or situational, as they related to factors which were external to and different from individual, personality factors.

Her educational career was quite distinctive. Born in Africa, she was sent to boarding school in England at age eleven. When asked about that experience, she answered:

I've had to take some counselling on this matter because it was a bit of a wrench. One day I was at home and the next thing I knew I was on a plane going to this place that I had never been to. I didn't know where it was and I woke up one day and I was in a strange place it's had its effects, its toll later on in life and so on it was very competitive I was being groomed to operate in this society, in this culture rather than in [Africa].

She is one of four children. Her father was a high ranking government minister until a *coup d'etat*:

My father became persona non grata he sought political asylum here but he was a nobody so he had to start all over again

Evelyn left school at 18, became a teaching assistant and then went on a teacher-training course. However, she hated teaching practice after which:

I spent a year just wandering, fed up and wandering. In fact I spent two years just totally out of it really. Wandering the world and wondering psychologically what I was going to do next.

Eventually, she returned to the UK and started her career in educational guidance. Her father was identified as her main role model, though she felt that his influence was somewhat limited because he was male. Her main sources of support were her family,

friends and colleagues - extremely important in all areas of her life. This network is the source of strong emotional and psychological support, as well as practical assistance (like the provision of information about possible employment opportunities).

Evelyn's experiences of discrimination related both to her gender and ethnicity. In addition to blatant examples, she described what Swim *et al.* (1995) refer to as 'modern racism' and 'modern sexism' - more subtle and covert behaviours which discriminate against individuals. An example of 'modern' discrimination relates to her account of operating as a freelance consultant, and the difficulty she has experienced in winning contracts. She believes this was because of both her gender and ethnicity:

Even though you may fill an application form in and feel that your answers have got you to the interview it does appear to me that the probing that goes on is more to see whether you would fit in I just feel that perhaps the people don't feel confident I might be able to deliver the way they would like and also I can't help feeling it's very difficult to prove this, but I just get the impression that being a Black woman as well has something to do with the whole situation That's my personal perception of what goes on.

She felt she had to work extremely hard to convince prospective contractors that she represented a sound risk. This involved investing considerably more effort into winning contracts than competitors, to reassure contractors that she did, indeed, represent a 'safe bet':

.... This European, a White man, actually, that sat on the money I had to make it comfortable for him to trust me I had to make the situation comfortable for him to actually give me the job I then said, look, what I would do is provide him with additional examples of work I had done and perhaps from there he could see I could do the job in the manner he wanted. So I had to justify myself. Whereas I suspect other people would have been talked through the project itself and given the job on the basis that they were able to produce what was said. but I needed to justify evidence that I was capable of doing it

About her experiences of employment within organisations, Evelyn identified other examples of subtle and covert racism:

.... when I have been in work and tried to be innovative it's been looked on as dead easy. Why didn't anybody else think about it? Or that it might be a bit unruly, you know. It might be politically unsound or too radical I've seen my White counterparts initiate ideas just out of the blue New systems have changed overnight I feel in the same forum and in the same discussions, if I (tried to) initiate the same kind of innovative ideas it was always treated with caution

Evelyn reflected on her experiences, striving for an understanding of why these situations arise, what the possible explanations might be:

I have questioned why this is was it the way I presented myself? Is it the way in which I put information across? I just, I feel very concerned that when I do put matters on the agenda it's treated differently to my counterparts. And I've seen this time and time again.

Evelyn identified the combination of gender and race as being particular problematic. Betz and Fitzgerald (1995) agree: 'the reality of the situation of ethnic minority women is one of double disadvantage economically and socially, because they are the victims of both racism and sexism' (p.267). Evelyn's perception of her own situation supports this analysis of 'double jeopardy' (Betz and Fitzgerald, 1995, p.267):

.... as a Black woman I feel the situation is doubled, the problem is doubled. You know, you've got the whole business about how you're going to present the work whether there's going to be some sort of cultural bias In addition to that you know, being a woman, whether the piece is going to have a strong voice and is going to have clout. There are all these issues that I grapple with in my head.

Evelyn talked about her experience of unfair dismissal. She explained the background to the incident, describing how she was never able to 'fit in' and become part of the organisational networks which ensured success and promotion. The section she managed consisted of an

all female team, of mixed ethnic origins. The organisation itself, was, in fact, dominated by women, with only a 'handful' of men, which included the most senior manager. Despite the dominance, in numbers, of women, she found becoming part of the 'in-crowd' impossible, indicating the more powerful influence of ethnicity over gender in this particular context.

The following example demonstrates subtle, covert and powerful forms of discrimination:

.... the colloquial 'in-your-face' stuff, when somebody comes up and shouts at you - those have been very minimal. But there's been kind of covert, under-handedness, you know, and it's all to do with when you reach a certain status in employment there are networks you have to fit into. Things work within networks and committees and if you're not part of those committees and part of this network, you're marginalised For example, I mean I remember the one that struck me most was I got an invitation for the (senior manager's) 50th birthday and I got it two days after the event. I had actually looked in my pigeonhole, I think it was the Thursday before, because I had a meeting, and it wasn't there. There wasn't an invitation in there. Perhaps somebody might have had a hindsight you know 'Evelyn might feel offended' On Monday when I went in, it was in my pigeonhole This is some of the discrimination that goes on.

As well as, or perhaps as a consequence of, not being accepted into the organisational networks, Evelyn found herself being passed over for promotion:

For example, I once decided perhaps I was getting a bit tired of the guidance bit and would like to go for internal change of jobs. There was a post that was coming up and it was a post that was less, in terms of salary I remember going to talk to my line manager about it, just to get a feel whether the possibilities would be there, and I met up with a very cold reception, extremely cold. I then talked to other colleagues in another department and they had had a very warm reception and been encouraged to make this career change It's all very covert if I was to challenge it in a verbal way, I think it would be all denied.

A more explicit example of racism in formal selection procedures within the organisation concerned reference to an incident, which did not involve Evelyn directly, but another black female employee. This was an example of a senior (female) manager acting in a discriminatory way during a selection process:

.... I've heard from other colleagues where they've been in an interview situation with the same panel, similar panel and the particular woman who I felt had a reservation about me (it was reported back to me just a few weeks back) she made them re-count the scoring because she couldn't believe it. You know, she made them recount the scoring because she couldn't believe that this Black candidate had actually scored over and above the person that she felt would fit in She wanted things to be re-counted and then practically said 'Oh well, on your head be it'.

Ostensibly at a more trivial level, Evelyn recounted another example of racism:

One particular incident - I can't remember the word we were trying to spell, but I said it was one way and somebody else said it was another. And it was 'Look, you people from Africa come here and teach us! Trying to tell us how to spell now!' It was treated as a joke and we were supposed to be laughing, but I took that as a bit of an insult, you know.

She recounted the very serious incident of her unfair dismissal, which she took to an industrial tribunal, with the court ruling in her favour. How, one day, on arriving at work, she was told that she would be interviewed two days later, because her department was being downsized:

Well, this is where the thing ended up in the industrial tribunal, because I arrived at work one day to be told that I needed to go and see (the senior manager) If I didn't get through that interview (which would be in two days), I'd have to vacate my desk by the following Sunday. (I don't work on a weekend) I was told that the department was being downsized and I would have to be re-interviewed.

Evelyn related the state of shock precipitated by this situation, which had been without warning:

.... I mean no discussion, no prior warning. There was general talk that there was going to be redundancies, but we didn't know who or what This is what we were trying to prove in court, that I did not know about the redundancies So, whether I was sacked or whether I was made redundant, that was the issue. And, in fact, the court proved that I was unfairly dismissed

The lack of any prior discussion or warning had won the case, with a verdict of 'unfair dismissal' being returned. However, Evelyn is very clear that she had actually been the victim of racial discrimination. Legal advisers told her that she did not have a strong enough case to proceed on grounds of race, because she had not kept a detailed record of events leading up to the dismissal:

.... you've got to have a catalogue, systematic ways and I hadn't kept a catalogue of events and incidents.

Evelyn reflected on the whole process of taking her case to court which, as well as proving eventually empowering, had taken a considerable toll at an emotional, physical and psychological level:

It made me ill, very, very ill. I was on anti-depressants. I felt very ashamed, guilty, unhappy. I just went through a very, very, very difficult time It was the shame, the guilt, the humiliation I didn't want to hear about (the employing organisation) you know, because I could imagine someone sitting at my desk, somebody handling my papers, somebody handling my documents and that was really very, very painful, extremely painful each time colleagues rang to kindly ask how I was and they would tell me things that were going on it was like an arrow in my heart. That was so painful. But as time went on and I started with the industrial tribunal, I felt I was doing something about it.

It was in this particular context that Evelyn's powerful support networks were highlighted. She could not afford legal representation, but from her social network, a barrister represented her, without charging a fee:

.... the interesting thing was that through my own network of friends, because I could never afford to pay myself, I got a barrister actually to take my case. So I had a solicitor and a barrister, so I never spoke for myself at all except to answer questions. And it just felt like, all of a sudden, a bully in the playground, you know, had been sorted out.

Evelyn also emphasised the importance of her religious beliefs in coping with and

recovering from the trauma of this experience:

.... I have a very strong faith so I think the healing came from there as well I wonder if I didn't have that how bitter and angry I possibly could have got

Both the quality and quantity of support she received during the court case from family and friends was significant. Without this support, Evelyn felt that she would never have got through the trauma:

We'd come home and we'd talk through again and they'd tell me what went on because half the time I couldn't hear. I was so nervous, doped up as well. We'd go over it and I'd get a sense of what was happening, what was going on and they'd talk but in a very positive sort of way for me and that was very, very helpful.

This experience of discrimination was, quite clearly, severe. In the second questionnaire, Evelyn answered that it has affected her future employment aspirations. When asked to comment further on this:

.... it has clouded my judgement of people and I've got a sixth, second, third, sixth sense. The antenna's always out you know to ensure that I'm reading the signals properly. Although it hasn't debilitated me I do look out for the signs, I do look out for the signals and like I said I do have strategies

In her final comments about this incident, Evelyn indicated the ways she was still dealing with its impact:

.... it is difficult to pin down I know this shouldn't be happening it's in your head you often wonder whether you are the one who's got the chip on the shoulder I'm dealing with my own feelings around it and I think most Black people tell you it's the head, the psychological damage that it does in your head. And you suddenly think, well, it must be me. Not that you did anything to deserve it, but this feeling, it's my baggage

Evelyn's story provides a powerful account of how an individual from a privileged social background has struggled to develop her career. She is acutely aware of the double

disadvantage of being a Black woman, yet has managed to overcome the destructive and negative effects of employment discrimination, continuing with her personal and professional development.

9.7 Abby

The second interviewee describes herself as African, aged between 40 and 49, is separated from her husband and supporting three children. She is studying part-time for an MA, and works full time in a professional capacity.

Abby was born in Africa, first coming to England when she was about three, returning when she was five. She visited England again when she was six, and returned as an adult to live in 1986. Her three children were born in England. The eldest two spent some time in Africa, being cared for by Abby's parents whilst she undertook postgraduate training in England. Subsequently, they joined her in England. Her parents came to England recently to live because of civil unrest in their country. She has one younger sister, also living in England. Family has been a strong source of support for Abby.

Abby started her career in Africa, recalling the part her father had played in her initial vocational 'choice' and the different cultural context in which this choice was made:

When I was younger my dad actually had a very strong influence on what he wanted me to do. But that wasn't a problem back home it was different there aren't a lot of opportunities, so you're more interested in income than if you would get job satisfaction It was a job for life So when I finished (school) and my dad was an accountant, he said: 'Oh, accountancy! Do an economics degree'. Alright, no objection. So I did an economics degree When I was at college, I realised accountancy was not for me I was just going through the motions of taking exams But so long as I was achieving, that's all that mattered.

She remembered the cultural meanings associated with different educational routes:

.... if you were a brilliant student you went into science, the average students went into arts or humanities and the not-so-bright ones went in secretarial courses

About herself, she stated:

.... and of course I fitted the stereotype, you know, I was always an average scholar

The move to England brought significant changes to the way decisions were made in Abby's life. A shift occurred away from her nuclear family playing a central part in her decision-making:

.... when I came here I had to make decisions on my own I didn't have my family with me But then I was married and I had my husband's support in that respect

In England she had various clerical, accountancy jobs, before gaining employment as a civil servant. Then she changed career direction by undertaking a professional qualification. Abby discussed how, ideally, she would now like to change her current job. However, advantages associated with the support she received from her employer, especially as a one-parent family, currently out-weighed this desire. In this respect, Abby acknowledged the inhibiting effect of gender on her career progression, with the provision of affordable, quality child care still woefully inadequate in the UK (Forth *et al.*, 1997):

I'm thinking of changing my job now, but in a way it's comfortable in that if there's a half term I can take my kids in and I can get time off for kid's appointments, hospital appointments so it's good in that respect I couldn't do it anywhere else so that is a problem. But that's any woman's problem.

On her second questionnaire, Abby identified her family and friends as her main source of support:

Well, if I was living back home it would have been extended family. But here it's mum and dad more. Not a lot from my sister because that's the way it worked out.

Her husband gave her a lot of support in the early years of marriage, but that changed and she has recently separated. She found this separation painful and difficult, but recognised that the event had triggered a change in her career direction by motivating her to undertake study for a higher qualification:

I needed something as traumatic as what I went through to realise that I had to achieve my full potential for my children's sake.

Like Evelyn, Abby also recognises the double disadvantage of being a Black woman (Betz & Fitzgerald, 1995), indicating a heavy reliance on self:

I think as a Black woman in this society you realise that you just have to push that bit harder especially now I'm determined not to fit the stereotype of a Black single parent.

She indicated that she has had, and still has, role models which have had an important effect on her behaviour:

.... I haven't had one particular model it's just that when you hear of what people have achieved you think, 'OK, I can do it!' I lack self-confidence a lot and it was only this year that I realised that I really have not achieved as much as I could This woman who had a degree and did a masters it was in the papers she did so well she was commuting quite a long way, she had a family and she had a job and I thought, 'God, that's wonderful'. That was two years ago. I'm doing the same thing myself now.

Abby explained how she has experienced different types of discrimination. One related to her ethnicity and the other to her social status:

.... I'm very much aware that I can experience prejudice on two levels. One, because I'm Black and two, because I'm African I experience prejudice from White people and from Black people. It comes in various ways because my upbringing back home was very middle class, almost upper middle class. Far more than my colleagues and my friends.

She explained that she was brought up with a strict understanding of etiquette in the home, and this has often been remarked upon. Her speech and behaviour identifying her social status:

.... I was working as a catering assistant and because back home we were taught the Queen's English, I speak proper English I've had to talk down, you know, since I came here. The girls I was working with couldn't understand me It wouldn't matter if I was White. But because I'm Black it looks strange.

Abby reflected on being Black in a White society, identifying positive aspects of her experiences of discrimination:

I look at it in two ways. I could sit back and say well, that's it. I'm Black, that's life. But then I look at it the other way, in that being a Black person has made me stronger. I would never, if I had to come back, I would never choose to be anything other than a Black person because I think you develop certain qualities and skills that otherwise you wouldn't have to.

She identified strategies she has developed for coping with racism, identifying as one the careful selection of her employment context:

I would only look for work in (an Inner City). I wouldn't look for work in (a Southern County). I don't feel comfortable in those sort of areas because you go in, the first thing you see ~ how many Black faces there are and if there aren't any I feel uncomfortable. I feel myself actually withdraw and make myself, not small, but I don't feel comfortable. I just sit down and I wouldn't be able to interact unless I feel really comfortable.

About institutional racism, she gave the example of her current employment context where three/four staff had left within the period of a year, because of an inept manager. Nicolson

(1997) discusses the way in which female professionals suffer a form of discrimination resulting from their exclusion from the 'old boys network'. In her research into the medical profession, Nicolson found that there are a number of ways men and women are treated differently: 'Men are regulated invisibly through a quiet word in the ear women are permitted to proceed even though their practices might be, or appear to be dubious - or at least until there is a such a potential problem that drastic action such as suspension is required' (Nicolson, 1997, p.44).

In the example cited by Abby, the manager was a Black woman. Abby was quite sure that if the same situation had arisen with a White manager, someone from a higher level would have intervened, sooner. The discrimination in this instance was attributed by Abby to race. Nicolson (1997) attributed the same type of behaviour to gender. Even though in this particular example nothing had, as yet, happened, Abby felt that the Black female manager was being set up for dismissal:

.... you have to think in a convoluted way and when you look at the organisation, there is a definite slant in the way things are done. You just know that the colour thing comes in

Abby identified some of her experiences of discrimination which related to her particular ethnic origins within the Black community:

.... the Afro Caribbeans, they will come up and call me 'Sister'. I say 'I'm not your sister!' Just because I'm African! They haven't got a clue what it's like to be African. A lot of Afro Caribbeans see Africa as Ghana, you know, and really when you're looking at the whole thing about the African concept, you're looking at the whole of West Africa because that's where the slaves were got from and that's where they were flung back. They call you 'sister', but at the same time they think we're little more than animals ourselves. When I worked as a catering assistant, a job I hated, I got a lot of crap (excuse my French) from the West Indians and the Afro Caribbeans. More than from my White colleagues, which is

weird in a way

She compares her current situation with what it could have been like back home:

.... I would have been very comfortable you know, the usual, two cars, family. I would have owned my own house for about ten years now I am not working class because I am Black. I'm very middle class and if you look at the way I live now, I find it painful. But at the same time I'm very philosophical. I know this is not going to happen now I've had to change the goal posts a bit. Owning my own property is no longer such an issue with me Let's be practical I've only got sixteen years to pay off the mortgage

About racism generally:

It is an ongoing issue, there's no getting away from it. It is institutionalised When I came here, I was so naive. It's only looking back that I realise that there were some incidents of racism. I've only been verbally abused once in twelve years that's not bad. It's such a shock when that happens, when someone is abusive towards you. I know some jobs I haven't had because I was the wrong colour It's just something you have to cope with you've got to be Black and in that position to actually develop that convoluted way of thinking, because it's very difficult to explain and it doesn't make sense. On the one hand, I don't agree with people who say 'I'll never get on because I'm Black'. That's nonsense. Yes, it's hard, but you can do it Prejudice is something that is there, you know, because you're brought up with it Back home, we're taught that you don't really associate with the country folk. You know, you don't marry someone from the country

She talked about one effect of colonialism, and acknowledged the way in which prejudice is an issue which Black people need to combat, as well as White:

.... we think we are Black-White people, and we aspire to things White, which is the effect of colonialism. I remember I went home and was speaking English to my parents. Rubbish! You see, you live in Africa, why are you speaking English to your parents? It's ridiculous! My children know my language but they won't speak it because they feel embarrassed and their peers do not speak the language We have to change the prejudices we have, you know, and it's been difficult We have this thing against the Asians as well because back home they own the shops, they don't treat their staff right so there is prejudice. We are brought up with prejudice, but I think we've got to learn to recognise it and change it.

Abby talked about the relationship between ethnicity and gender in a different way from Evelyn, identifying the disadvantage that young Black men suffered because of racial stereotyping:

.... the Black female is in a stronger position than the Black male I have had to point (that) out to my children because my daughter - she will experience racism, but my sons will suffer more because Black boys are seen as a threat I can see how that happens fourteen year olds, the White boys are puny but the Black kids are up there with men's voices and I could see a White person feeling threatened. When the boys start talking and waving their hands, as they do, then it's even more intimidating I can understand because I had that problem myself

Abby described an example of racial discrimination experienced in one of her jobs:

I had an experience of racism when I started I was visiting this woman for an hour and a half in the morning and going in an hour in the evening She made this comment, 'You coloured girls never dry up after washing up'. And I said 'Excuse me, did you say colour? Colour has nothing to do with it'. And I said, 'Listen, I don't have to take this'. I phoned up and said I'm not working with her, I don't have to take this That's the most recent It's still a bit of a shock, because when that happens you are actually trembling It's so shocking to be insulted because of your colour.

Abby talked more about the immobilising effect of racism, despite her intentions to be challenging and assertive:

You hear about racism going on and you think, 'If this happens to me, I'll give them a mouthful'. But when it happens, you can't speak. It is such a shock. When it happens you're speechless with mortification It's always such a shock. But I've learnt that when that happens, then I use my Queen's English I've had the police stop me and try to bully me That's the only time I use my class, when I'm being bullied.

On her second questionnaire, Abby had indicated that her experiences of discrimination had not affected future aspirations. This was because she had decided to be strategic and opt for what she judged to be accessible careers (Mirza, 1997,p271, see section 3.3.7). She

explained:

.... I'm lucky that I don't want any of those high flying jobs the sorts of areas I'm interested in are pertinent to women and ethnic minority groups. They may not be as well paid as I would like, but I'm not very competitive anyway.

In addition to the practical strategies Abby has developed to combat discrimination, such as making careful choices about location and type of employment, or the assertion of her social class identity in particular circumstances, Abby is clear that her religious beliefs provide a source of inner strength:

I've got so many challenges ahead of me, I'm not even thinking about them. I'm taking one step at a time I've just got more confidence in myself but I've got a long way to go. I became a Buddhist. I've been chanting for over a year and that changes your perspective on things because the Buddhist principle is that you are responsible for your life and you have the power to change it. So I have to change it, it's within me The fact that I've got three kids that I'm responsible for. I'm not going to get any support from anyone I am responsible to change my life, so that's what keeps me going and at the bottom of all this I'm an optimist.

Abby has coped with a mixture of discrimination by implementing a variety of strategies. The deliberate and careful selections of residential area and employment type employment, the deployment of features of her upper middle class upbringing together with her religious beliefs and optimism could be regarded as factors which were internal and dispositional. In contrast, the strong family support upon which she relied is external and situational.

9.8 Sonali

Sonali describes herself as Indian, is single, without children and aged between 20 and 29. She took a break from employment and was undertaking postgraduate professional training on a full time basis at the time of the interview. The job in which she had been employed for

the longest period of time (approximately two and a half years) was in a professional support role. She left this job voluntarily to undertake professional training because she felt frustrated with her situation:

I'm a person who likes to develop professionally and on a personal level as well. For a very long time I felt that that wasn't happening and I felt very stifled, very claustrophobic I knew I couldn't get up in the morning, go to the same place, know what the day was going to be like and return home again.... I was working in an environment where other people didn't grow. They themselves were having problems either to do with their job, or personal life. So to be in that kind of environment for me was not good I knew that I would like to study but that was just one option for me I knew I had to change and I also knew I had to move out of home because that was a big factor for me.

Individual, dispositional factors emerge strongly from Sonali's account of her career development. She recognises that one effect of this inner drive is behaviour that, in certain respects, sets her apart:

.... I don't know why I'm the kind of person that wants to do things. I mean, in my job I would push myself forward for training events and take more responsibility, just to make it more satisfying and challenging, to keep it enjoyable.

Family and cultural issues figure prominently in Sonali's story, since, at the time of the interview, she was trying to move (physically and emotionally) away from her parents. Her success is likely to be important for career progression since Lucas (1997) identified emotional separation from parents as critical for the career success of both men and women (see section 4.3). On her second questionnaire, Sonali indicated that she did not feel supported by her family. When asked about this, she felt that support had come rather from colleagues:

[Work] colleagues were a support in terms of encouraging me to do things Certainly my family didn't give me a lot of support. I had two particular colleagues that did. I would kind of bounce ideas off him and he would say, 'Go for it'. There was another colleague as well who sort of like pushed me forward

just listened to what I wanted to do. That was the first time someone had really done that.

She had also indicated on her second questionnaire that she felt that she suffered both from a lack of self-efficacy and positive mental attitude, attributing this largely to the unsatisfactory relationship with her parents (Lucas, 1997). About this, she commented:

It was a block for me until the start of the course. I just feel that people on the course have sort of changed that and I'm starting to feel more positive about what I can do It's always been suppressed by, especially by my family My father has always been very negative and said I couldn't do that, and still is. That hasn't changed. He will never change. But just hearing something different for a change What parents say and what they do, it affects you so severely you know. You're listening to them, but you know you want to do something else, and there's just such a conflict. It's only as you get older and you realise that you actually moved out of that kind of child protection zone and you yourself become an adult that you know you can make decisions for yourself and choices for yourself. And I think, that's what's happening to me now. I'm going through that My mother too not explicitly, but very implicitly. It would not only be in relation to career but in relation to other things, you know. To friends or in relation to what I did. Or other areas of my life as well The only regrets I've had are that I've lost too many wasted years Even the future is scary because parents are important, community is important and I'm on my own I don't have that support I'm sort of breaking away from that that is the hardest bit for me.

Sonali talked about her community, explaining that one aspect, the religious aspect, is very important to her. However, she finds what she refers to as the 'cultural side' as constraining:

There are two side of the community, there are two parts to it. There's the religious side and there's the cultural side. The religious side, to me, I have much more of a link towards. A trust towards and that will always be a part of me because I can relate to that and that is part of my core identity. The cultural side I distance myself from because it's difficult to explain, I can't really articulate it. The cultural side doesn't give me the autonomy or freedom I need and that's why I distance myself Because it says, well, you've got to be married; you've got to live a certain way, do certain things. And to me that just completely closes me in. It doesn't let me express myself or grow. The religious side gives me strength and it gives me a sense of identity which I still need to hang on to. More kind of

affiliating I do things I would go to religious events and I will take part in religious processions.

She had indicated that she had no important role model, on the questionnaire. Bowman (1995, p.142) discusses the lack of attempts to provide role models for minority ethnic clients and the particular value of role models of the same ethnicity and gender for minority ethnic females (see section 7.4 above). Sonali had nothing to add to her questionnaire answer when probed during the interview, reaffirming her view that she had never had a role model.

On the questionnaire, she had indicated that she had experienced discrimination whilst employed. This, she indicated, was possibly racial, though she couldn't be sure if the behaviour had resulted from a personality clash. She explained:

They were normally very small comments and it wasn't directly targeted at me. They were targeted at another colleague who was Indian They were small comments but they were comments that were unnecessary. I'm just trying to think the way it made me feel. I mean it didn't outright anger me but it did undermine me. I can't explain it. It did have an effect. The kind of effect it had was that you were made to feel, like small.

Sonali also described an instance when she had been the target of unprovoked violent racial abuse:

I have suffered racial discrimination quite severely I was driving the car one Saturday afternoon. My parents were in the car. We were sitting in a traffic jam. The car opposite was sitting in a traffic jam as well and these two men just started hurling abuse, vicious, racial abuse. Looking at me, looking at my parents. I was very angry, I was very scared and I was very angry. I wanted to get out of the car and confront these two men. I knew my parents were in the car and the situation would just explode. That's why I sort of like kept my cool and said, 'No, you've just got to ignore it', and I did ignore it These two vicious men, who were vicious in their racial abuse, they were banging the steering wheel of their car. They were red in the face, they were angry, they were really, really angry It was a

Saturday afternoon, it was a busy shopping area and still this was going on. People could see. Other people around could see that something was happening here. Luckily, the traffic started moving and I drove off, but it was a very nasty, scary experience because I was really concerned for my parents.

Another example of racial harassment, which had occurred during her adolescence, was also described:

When I was about fourteen, I was walking with my mother on an estate, a housing estate with my mother's friends and these lads just came up behind us and just started they started spitting at us. And that wasn't a nice experience at all, and they were calling us racial names. We shouldn't be here, the normal kind of racial abuse Things like, 'You're a Paki, you should go home. You're not good for anything'. Things like that was very severe and I still remember that.

In addition to these blatant examples of racial abuse and harassment, Sonali identified more subtle examples of discrimination experienced in the workplace:

In relation to work it's not explicit. They're very implicit comments made. Even from body language or facial expression or the look in someone's eye To me it seems like, I feel it's a racial thing because you know if I was a young White woman in that position, somehow I think I would get the encouragement and the support and saying, 'Yeah, you're doing fine, you're doing well.' But you know, I mean, I didn't get any outright negative comments but I just did not get anything. It was something I picked up on.

In answer to the question about her experiences of discrimination affecting future aspirations, she had answered that it had. When asked to expand on this, Sonali explained:

I'm just more mindful. I just know I don't want to be working in that kind of environment again. I think the type of people you work with are very important I just want to know that I'm going to be working in an environment where people are very supportive and encouraging of each other It would just be very good for my kind of emotional, spiritual, whatever well being and that I think is very important.

When asked to what she attributed her own success in managing her career development,

she identified values relating to her 'worldview' (see section 8.2 above):

I would actually say fate I think it's something to do with fate and God and I think it's something to do with, I just feel I'm very lucky in a lot of ways. I feel that I have a lot of anger and resentment, a lot. Which I'm dealing with. But I can't change the past. I can only learn from it if you have that kind of positive attitude then you know you'll have a purpose. I mean it's important to have a purpose.

So, Sonali identified a mixture of dispositional and situational factors as enhancers of her career development. Acknowledging her considerable personal qualities, she recognised these had not always been enough:

I think at times when I've been very down, you know I might have had those kind of personal resources, but I think it's external to that. I think you do need good support mechanisms. Or you don't need a negative support mechanism, if you like.

Overall, however, Sonali conveyed the impression that she was increasingly reliant upon internal, dispositional qualities.

9.9 Kirsty

Kirsty describes herself as Black British. She is single, aged between 20 and 29 and was undertaking postgraduate training at the time of the interview. About her family, she said:

My mum wasn't the sort of person who has had a lot of education, but at the same time she believes her children should do really well

About her family's values:

One thing my family's always drilled in my head, you earn your own money through education. Take every opportunity that comes your way

When she first left school, Kirsty had 'O' level art. Her family pressurised her to return to

school to re-take her exams. She complied and passed 'O' level maths. Whilst doing this, she describes why she got a Saturday job in a hairdressers to avoid the sexism within her family:

I just wanted to get away from my mum, so at least going to work on Saturday I didn't have to put up with cleaning the house and cooking The boys in my family don't do anything. It's just the females.

Landrine and Klonoff (1997) found that women from ethnic minorities reported more sexist discrimination than White women because they reported significantly more frequent sexism in their close, personal relationships with men and family (p.56). They also identify sexism in intimate relationships to be one of the most damaging types. Even when a woman escapes from the sexist situation (for example, by leaving home), the harmful effects are still felt because the insidious messages have been internalised (p.135). The consequent 'loss of voice' affects many aspects of women's lives: 'Within the family, it can prevent them from arranging a fair division of household responsibilities' (Landrine & Klonoff, 1997, p.137).

When she was eighteen, Kirsty was offered a full-time hairdressing job, which she accepted. Because the owner of the shop was a friend of her mother, she was permitted to attend college for a few hours a week to take a BTEC National in Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy. Then, when she was about twenty three, she:

.... looked back and thought 'OK, you need to get a degree. You can't just be working in a gym or a hairdressers. You've got 'O' levels. Go and do something with them. You need to, you know.'

Kirsty applied to University and was accepted to take a degree in Psychology and Health Studies. She considered training for social work, since mental health had been a long-

standing interest. During her first degree, she worked with children in residential care who had been abused or neglected. This involved spending evenings playing with the children. However, she eventually decided against social work, mainly because it would involve a further two years study:

.... because I felt well, I'm broke already I've hated this poverty student life and would never want to do that again. But at the same time I'm glad for the knowledge. I'm glad for the many experiences because it makes me stronger.

Instead, at the suggestion of a work colleague, she chose professional training that involved one year of study.

On the second questionnaire, Kirsty answered she had a role model:

I suppose my role model would be my brother because he's an accountant and you don't see many who are like him. He's one year older than me Financially he earns quite a lot of money to see how he's progressed you think: 'God, I've come from the same background' So I think my brother was my role model regardless of where you've come from If initially you work hard, you can achieve something.

She acknowledged the positive influence of her family:

.... the people in my family have worked hard....my grandparents have both worked hardOne aunt is a social worker and one of my uncles is an accountant. Both my aunts (I've got two aunts and five uncles) went back at quite a late age to education and became social workers...Two of my uncles went back I've got a lot of cousins and some of them are architectsOne of my family went over to Australia so I think [family] was an influence They don't dictate, but unless you've got their approval, you don't really [go ahead with a course of action].

Kirsty received 'practical and financial' assistance from her family:

My grandparents assisted me by giving me £100 a month. If I was in any difficulties, my brother would give me money. My aunt would say, 'Do you need travel money or for food?'

When asked what she expected to be the main sources of support and encouragement when thinking about employment in the future, she identified the workplace:

.... excellent leadership, good line managers, prospects of training development

Kirsty identified two instances of discrimination on the second questionnaire, one of which Kirsty referred to as racial discrimination and the other sexual. When asked to talk more about these:

I used to work in a ladies health gym on Saturdays and Sundays, as well as working in the hairdresser doing the reception, going through a fitness programme with the different clients who came in At one point, they sacked three Black receptionists in one go There were people who had come after us who were kept on Initially [the other two], made a lot of noise. They got reinstated. So I said, 'How can you reinstate them if there wasn't a job?'.... My mum worked in a solicitors at that time, so I got one of her colleagues to write a letter to ask why I had been sacked They rang me up and said, 'Oh yeah, you can use our facilities whenever you want for free'. I didn't even bother to take up their offer. I just thought, forget it. So that was one. I think that was about race I would have preferred it if they had just said, 'Well, look, we've got no money'.....

The second experience, of sexual discrimination, occurred during a period of work for an inner city organisation which focused on housing estates suffering high levels of deprivation - high unemployment, single mothers, etc. She worked here, in a voluntary capacity, for about six months whilst an undergraduate. The purpose of the organisation was to meet the needs of this community and Kirsty found that the manager of the organisation was supportive of tenants at the expense of the employees:

Whilst I was working for XXXX XXXX there was sexual discrimination because we had a group of Black guys who would just come in and hang out We tried to adopt this friendly atmosphere where you give them tea and biscuits and try to make it that you're on the same sort of level as they are But they just kind of abused it We had got a little room and we had one computer and we just used to put some newspaper articles and job adverts in the room outside When we were doing someone's CV, we'd have these guys come in and chat things like, 'Oh, baby love' On one occasion, I was typing a CV, and somebody came

up and he put his tongue in my ear I said 'What you doing?' He said, 'I'm putting my tongue in your ear'. I thought, 'You're crazy' I said to him, 'Can you kindly leave I'm not here for you to put your tongue in my ear'. Our manager, who was really soft, said'No, we don't want you to leave'. So I felt she really undermined me

This example of sexual harassment was not, in fact, perpetrated by work colleagues, but by a group of young Black men who were beneficiaries of the service being provided. It did, however, occur within an employment context, and it was the response to the situation precipitated by these young men by her manager that Kirsty experienced as damaging and discriminatory.

Thomas (1997) proposes a psychosocial explanation of the construction of masculine identities, which acknowledges both the psychological and sociological influences contributing to this process. Applying this explanatory framework to the behaviour of this group of young Black men, it is possible to see how 'doing power' (Thomas, 1997, p.135) in their dealings with Kirsty may have comprised an important part of forming and maintaining a masculine identity. Thomas further argues that much sexual harassment could be seen as the result of pressures exerted on men to identify with a form of 'masculinity' premised on misogyny (Thomas, 1997, p.135).

The same (female) manager took the side of the tenants on yet another occasion which Kirsty felt represented a potential threat to her personal safety:

On the same day, there was another group of guys who came into the room I was walking by and one put his legs around me he wrapped his legs around me. Our manager was at the door, so I said 'Can you move? Can you move your legs?'.... My manager said 'Can you stop that?' They turned round to her and said, 'Why - you jealous? Do you fancy him for yourself?' She went off and got tea

and biscuits to pacify the situation. I thought, 'This is madness'

I took this incident to the manager above [the line manager] She said, 'Oh, next time, you need to pick up your bag and run out of the facilities'. I said, 'If they're harassing us, why can't we call the police? But she said, 'No, no, no, we need to build up good relationships with the tenants'. I thought 'I don't really care about good relationships. They could kill us in there, and you're talking about good relationships.

Research into discrimination against women found more frequent sexist degradation against minority ethnic women than White women, typically involving 'being called sexist names, being picked on, pushed and shoved' (Landrine and Klonoff, 1997, p.58). As a result of these incidents and the response of her management, Kirsty decided she would take action:

They moved me to a different estate because I said 'I'm not working here. If she [the manager] wants to work under those crazy conditions that's up to her'. So they put me somewhere else.

Kirsty's concluding remarks highlighted, like Sonali, the role of values in her life:

Life is determined by external forces I believe very strongly in religion. I believe God determines quite a lot of things.....

However, she qualified this by acknowledging her role as an individual in mediating the effects of external forces:

.... if I stay [in a bad situation] I just get depressed and feel that I can't cope with this and I just can't function. So it's either sitting it out and wallow or saying 'No, I've got to get out'

Kirsty did, therefore, feel that circumstances in her life were determined in large part by factors outside her control. However, strong dispositional characteristics emerged on occasions, causing her to take control by re-directing and re-focusing her life.

9.10 Sue

Sue provides insights to strategies developed to deal with sexual harassment and discrimination based on internal, personal factors. She is White, aged between 30 and 39 and a single parent separated from her husband. At the time of the interview, she was a first year psychology undergraduate. She left the job (Personal Assistant to a Company Director) in which she had been employed the longest (4 years) to have children, who were 'nearly 5 and 6' at the time of the interview. Her father is a senior medical professional, so, whilst growing up, Sue's social class could be described as upper middle-class (OPCS, 1991, p.40). After completing 'A' levels at school, she travelled around the world doing humanitarian work for a charity for about 4 years.

Sue did not feel she had ever had an important role model, nor did she feel that any family member had actively supported her in her employment plans. In response to the question about future support for employment, she replied:

I find this from within myself. The strength to do what I do and what I want to achieve comes from within myself....

When asked to what she attributed this strong self-reliance, she answered:

Necessity well, also from the fact that perhaps earlier in life there was no-one else to lean on if you like. Not that I was looking for anyone to lean on but in finding my path in life, what I wanted to do, it's had to become a process of depending on myself because it doesn't come from anywhere else I'll get to where I want to get to, regardless of what other people in my life might be doing Also if I'm strong in myself, my children can depend on me, which obviously they do at the moment.

The two examples of discrimination indicated on her questionnaire were explored during

the interview. For the first, she said:

.... I remember when I first got the job I had done a typing test The boss said to me that there weren't many people whose work was up to scratch but mine was, which was fine. But then he said the reason he'd chosen me was because, 'You've got to have something nice to look at in the mornings, haven't you?' And this was his mentality. It wasn't even 'someone' it was 'something'. He used to yell at me to come in (from my office) and call me 'gal' more often than anything else He wasn't seriously harassing me, although I know that I could have made complaints. But he didn't ever try to touch me or anything like that.

In their research into the working lives of secretaries, Mott and Condor (1997) found that most of the respondents in their sample who had experienced harassing behaviour 'seemed keen to emphasise that they did not regard it as particularly important' (p.71). They argue that such behaviours have become so habitual or mundane that they are effectively 'functionally invisible' (Mott and Condor, 1997, p.71). In such cases, they suggest that it is particular hard for victims to label such behaviour as dysfunctional: 'We should not underestimate the extent to which it may be difficult, and indeed uncomfortable, for any particular social actor to recognize routine forms of social interaction as unwelcome or illegitimate' (Mott and Condor, 1997, p.77).

Mott and Condor also discuss the way in which women use the concept of 'joke' as a means to present a bright side to an otherwise problematic aspect of their daily lives (Mott and Condor, 1997, p.81). About the same manager, Sue explained how:

.... he used to make a lot of sexual jokes, too. For instance, I went for an injection. I was going abroad and so he offered to give me an 'injection', if you understand what I mean

It is perhaps surprising that the routine behaviour to which Sue was subjected involved

derogatory name-calling, the telling of sexual jokes and the adoption of a general demeanour by her manager which communicated a lack of respect was described by Sue as not 'seriously harassing'. Mott and Condor (1997) argue that 'whenever a woman claims that men's behaviour is 'harmless' she is tacitly acknowledging the possibility of actual sexual assault and violence' (Mott and Condor, 1997, p.81). So it was with Sue. To explain the interpretation of her experiences in this particular job as not threatening, Sue described another experience of sexual discrimination within an employment context which had been physically abusive.

At the time, she had been employed by a Football Club. This job lasted for just two months, before she resigned. The way in which Sue recounted her experiences of discrimination was extremely measured. However, her non-verbal behaviour (voice tone and emphasis, patterns of eye contact, gesturing and general demeanour) left no doubt that these experiences had been extremely serious, and had had a profoundly negative impact. She started to describe the context of her employment:

It was a very bad situation. Very. I mean their mentality, they're like cave men. They don't have any respect for women. They think that all women are just sex objects. I'm not just talking about the players but the Vice Chairman and the Chairman, everybody. Women are just sex objects It was a very, very bad situation. I was treated very badly.

The first instance described might sound, in many ways, unremarkable:

I had to be in an office with one other person He didn't seem to do very much. An older guy and he used to smoke, chain smoke, which I didn't like. Obviously, being in the office, I once complained [about the chain smoking] and the Vice Chairman came and grabbed me by the arm and dragged me physically out of the office and took me outside and just [stopped talking] It was very bad. That was physical, you know, that stuff.

Sue is small in height and stature, and her diminutive physical presence is relevant to an accurate understanding of the nature of the incident and its particular meaning for her. She did not expand on what happened after the Vice Chairman had 'grabbed' her arm and 'dragged' her outside, though the memory of it was still visibly painful for her to recall. She went on to describe another situation where, as responsible for public relations, she had to report on a football match. To write up the report, she had to know which players had scored the goals. She asked someone to tell her the names of the people who had scored, got her pen out, and wrote them down. The next day:

I was hauled into my boss's office and accused of taking down players' phone numbers and sneakily trying to make dates with them I tried to explain why I'd written down what I needed the information for, but I wasn't heard I started getting very unhappy with it and they started threatening me It was a very corrupt scene They began to threaten me in various ways Started taking away my job and giving it to other people, taking away my responsibilities just one by one.

Again, Sue did not expand further on the nature or manner in which these threats were delivered. She explained that the situation continued to deteriorate over a two-month period until one day she resigned:

.... they weren't going to give me any information to do with the club. I mean, I knew what was going on and I just said - well, I gave in my notice. I gave a week's notice and my boss came straight out and said to me, 'Right, you can go now! Go on!'. I virtually didn't even get time to clear my desk. He just stood over me and made me leave. I suppose he didn't want me to take sensitive information with me. But it was very very bad and I did get manhandled It was the way I was treated by the boss They had a kind of Mafia almost like way of dealing with things there They were also quite clever in that they would get people to deny that this had been said.

After a few seconds of quiet reflection, Sue remarked:

Yeah, I would have gone to the police now.

On the questionnaire, she had responded that her experience of discrimination had not affected her aspirations for the future. When probed about this, she responded:

I don't let things hold me down I know what human nature is like. Perhaps I wouldn't go for this kind of job or this environment next time and I'm not saying it would never happen again, but I'm more assertive now. Far more, and I'm not going to let things destroy my aspirations.

'Hardiness' is a quality identified by Landrine and Klonoff (1997) as mediating the negative impact of sexism on some women: 'hardy, "tough" women may be less harmed by sexist events than other women' (p.26). When asked how she felt she had become more assertive, she replied:

I suppose it's by being bashed down if you like. In a strange kind of way instead of lowering my self worth it made me (I'm talking about this type of experience, but also my marriage probably more so) made me think, 'No, why do I need to be treated like this? I'm a person too, you know. I shouldn't be treated like this' I suppose it's by being knocked down What I don't do in bad situations is internalise, kind of take it on board. I try to be very rational.

Sue is someone who, in many ways, has enjoyed a privileged background. She travelled abroad for four years after finishing 'A' levels, and apparently felt no pressure from her family to pursue a particular career. Yet life has dealt her several blows with unsatisfactory experiences of employment and a relationship breakdown behind her. A single parent with two small children, she is struggling to become a professional. Her experiences, far from having a negative effect on her self-perception or self-esteem, have made her self-reliant and confident. She has become more assertive and has consciously developed strategies, similar to Abby, (for example, avoidance of particular types of occupation and occupational environment) to cope. Sue attributes her strong, internal, individualistic response to the knocks that she has had in her life, which have served only to make her more determined to

succeed.

9.11 Pauline

Pauline describes herself as White, is married, aged between 40 and 49 and the mother of five children. She was in the first year of her undergraduate degree when interviewed. She had lost the job in which she had been employed the longest (approximately five and a half years) because the company went into debt and was closed down. Whilst raising her family, Pauline had been employed in a wide range of jobs:

.... Anything from working in a shop to working behind a bar. All sort of I would say menial Very worthwhile jobs but [while you have] a family, they've been just like sort of filler in.

Although Pauline did not refer to herself specifically as belonging to a lower socio-economic class, the jobs she had done give a strong indication that this was so. Brown *et al.* (1996) propose that: 'Social class is not merely a sociological phenomena but also a psychological one' and that it is 'typically indexed by levels of occupational prestige, educational attainment, or income level' (p.160). Pauline displayed a very pragmatic attitude to her pattern of employment, indicating that she was prepared to turn her hand to anything, when the financial need arose:

I did a lot of sort of odd jobs in between, when I was short of money. I worked in a bingo hall, I did casual work for agencies and did bits of work, you know. If we needed money I went out and did a week's work.

She referred to her 'proper job' in which she was employed before starting her family:

The proper job I had before I got married was in an insurance company, but I only worked there for about a year and then I met my husband and had a baby and that was the end of that.

When all of her five children were in school, she returned to employment on a more formal basis, though this was still part-time:

Even that wasn't full-time. It was a part time one it took a few afternoons and Saturday mornings. Again, it fitted around the family.

Eventually, she got a more permanent job as a Tote Operator, where she had been employed for approximately five and a half years:

I would have probably still been there but it went into liquidation Went in one day and the next day it was all locked up. Couldn't get in. Didn't get paid for the week we'd done which was the most frustrating part of the whole thing

When she lost this job, she felt quite disorientated. Meara *et al.* (1997) discuss the particular challenge that women from lower socio-economic backgrounds represent for careers counselling because they are unlikely to have thought of their career progression being: 'the result of a series of self-reflective, planful activities with a variety of exploratory activities' (p.119). So it was with Pauline. She had enjoyed the job as Tote Operator because of the contact with 'the punters' and had also been doing some voluntary work at the same time at the local Community Centre. The unanticipated situation precipitated by the liquidation:

.... left me with time on my hands because the voluntary work just wasn't quite enough That's when I started doing an Access Course and then came onto the [degree course].

The role that the Community Centre had played in her career development, including the decision to go on an Access course, was particularly significant. When asked to what she attributed her success, moving as she has done from semi and unskilled work through an access course to a degree course, she replied:

Probably the Community Centre has made a big difference to me because it gave me lots of support. But it also put me into positions I would never have got into in any other way I was put in positions where I had to attend meetings and I was part of a group called XXXXX that our Community Centre was a part of and it actually tried to empower people to get them to speak up on behalf of issues they felt strongly about I was going from being at the Community Centre where I was dealing with a few dozen people to talking at XXXX XXXX, in front of a few thousand people. Which I think moved me on a long way and gave me a lot more confidence because, even though I was big and I felt uncomfortable and I thought, 'I can't do this, I can't do this' (I really got quite jittery).... The people there were very good and very kind and they were very, 'Oh, why can't you do it? What's wrong with you? There's nothing wrong with you'....

The Community Centre also helped her to develop social skills:

I mean, this is going to sound really ridiculous, but the first time I went on a training course with them we went to a restaurant It was this big posh restaurant and, well, fish and chips is more my mark so I just died. I said 'I can't go in there'. I mean, that's how nervous I was. I said 'I can't go in there, I can't do this'.... They were very supportive and said 'Come on'.... They even said, 'If you don't like something, tell the waiter you don't like it. Just say 'No, I don't want any of that'.... you're just as important. You're not any more important, but you're as important as everybody else. It took a few years, but I think that made the difference

Meara *et al.* (1997) emphasise the importance of experiences and situations in which women from lower socio-economic backgrounds might acquire new skills or perform newly learned behaviours (p.121). Pauline's story provides a vivid illustration of how the Community Centre both helped her develop new skills and provide the opportunities to try them out. It had also played a key role in encouraging and supporting her idea to return to education:

.... although years ago I would have liked to have gone on to University, I just didn't think I was intelligent enough I just said to one of them, 'Do you think I could do it? Do you think I could do this access course?' And instead of saying, 'Mmm, no of course you can't', it was like, 'Of course you can!' And that again spurred me on and made me feel a bit more confident'.

Pauline talked about the Access Course. She had performed exceptionally well, though found it difficult to believe that she was actually deserving of the marks she received:

.... It was a boost to me to find that my first piece of work I'd got 3 I had one 3 minus, the rest were 3 or 3 pluses I thought I wouldn't even make the grade I thought, 'She can't have marked this right', and 'Oh, well, everybody must have got 3s' that's how unconfident I was....

The voluntary work with the Community Centre continued, involving a range of activities:

Jack of all trades. At times I worked in the office like when we lost an administrator for a year I'd stop in the office to keep the Centre going. I drove the mini bus when the play group went out and when the youth club went out. I helped with some NVQ classes and things. I used to go in and help those who had difficulty with English. Basically, if it wanted doing, I was there. I even cleaned the toilets out. Whatever was needed to keep the Community Centre going.

She also became a school governor, at the primary school near to her home. Pauline had stated 'None' on the questionnaire in response to the question about role models. During the interview she reflected that:

.... perhaps I have [role models] didn't view it as an individual

Her main source of support is her family:

Sometimes when I want a bit of peace and quiet I have to sort of holler a bit and say like, 'Shut up'. I like people to check on my work and even though they don't understand it, they'll do that for me you know So in that way they are supportive.

As well as her children, her husband is a valuable source of support:

My husband is normally very good I must admit. He's disabled too. He's at home all the time, but there are times when he doesn't feel well. So you know at those times the kids should be more supportive and help with the clearing up. But they just sort of like say 'Oh, I'll do it later', and it doesn't get done typical children really. I mean I can't really sort of say they're different to anyone else's.

When asked what she envisaged might be obstacles to finding employment in the future, she identified age, gender and the fact that 'I am extremely overweight'.

In the type of work I've been in anyway, it tends to be the younger, fitter and (when you're dealing with the public generally) the more attractive, you know, will get the positions as opposed to the older and slower.

In her evaluation of the code of practice on age diversity in employment, Jones (2000) found that: 'On the surface, employers do not appear to endorse policies that might encourage age discrimination' (p.2). However, a discrepancy between the employers' and employees' accounts of age discrimination was found in practice, with recruitment reported as a particular area of concern: 'Not all those reporting discrimination had been told they were "too old"; for some, the awareness was instinctive or by observation (e.g. seeing a less qualified but younger candidate offered the job)' (p.2). Indeed, one of Pauline's personal experiences of employment discrimination had depended on her instinct and observations, relating to how an employer had overlooked her significant employment experience in favour of younger, slimmer people:

When they opened a new building they wanted to run it in the evenings and they wanted young people and attractive people to come in. They didn't want any of the people that were already there I thought, 'Hang on, like, this doesn't seem right'. Some of the people they brought in were the same age as me but they were very slim and I thought, 'OK like, I get this'. But they fell down in the end, because [the new recruits] couldn't cope with the work and they ended up bringing me and a few others - even older - in, like, to come in and work in the evenings because the newer ones hadn't the experience I found it was blatant Well, they didn't actually say it

When asked about obstacles anticipated in future employment, she continued with the same theme:

Yes, I need to be slimmer. I can't do anything about my age and I'm a woman. Those two things, well, that's it. I can't do anything about them, but my weight

certainly I could and do feel that that does make a differenceI'm certainly not the image they want to portray, they want some sort of slim, high heeled smart looking executive like type.

So Pauline regards her gender and age as potential barriers to her future career development over which she has no control. Her weight is seen as a potential problem over which she does have control. Pauline seems reliant on external, situational sources of support, like the Community Centre and her family. Despite the considerable successes in her career development, her confidence remains fragile. She cited one occasion when she had given an essay to her husband to read. His reaction had been very negative, which had shaken her badly. It transpired that his negative comments related to disagreement with the subject matter, but the manner in which this message had been communicated had devastated Pauline. Despite growing evidence from a variety of sources that she is an extremely able student, she still seems to have difficulty in internalising this truth.

9.12 Kathy

Kathy is White, married, aged between 40 and 49 and currently undertaking a part-time Master's degree. She currently works in a professional role and refers to herself as working class. She has four children (all boys), the youngest of whom was fourteen at the time of the interview. Her husband took early retirement from a well-paid job a few years ago. In addition to the care responsibilities she has for her children, she is:

.... also now getting issues with elderly parents.

Kathy left school and went into a bank. Her next job was with the Post Office, until she left

to have children. When her fourth child was about a year old, she was recruited by a weight loss company to run self-help groups as a part-time employee. She began a 'Fresh Start' course five years later when all the children were at school, and went on from that to an Access Course, then to a degree, then postgraduate training. From this she got her current job.

On her second questionnaire, Kathy indicated that she had no role model. During the interview, she identified her mother as 'a kind of role model in a way':

.... In an indirect way because she's always been there as a support. She's always been there at the end of the day and I think in some ways as an intellectual support because although she's never done anything academic herself, she's very well read I think my mum should have done literature because there's not much she doesn't know about In fact one of my friends was doing a literature degree and she met her and my mum knew everything she was talking about, all the books she was reading I mean this really amazed me She just knew it all.

In response to the question on the questionnaire about sources of support, she indicated 'strong dependence on self-will and motivation. Possible encouragement from some family members, fellow workers and students and tutors (when in further training)'. For Kathy, individual and dispositional factors were seen as having carried her through difficult phases of her career development, especially when support from her family was not forthcoming:

It's myself. I think everything I've done is by will power because I suppose there wasn't a big issue that I had to get back to work My husband had quite a good job he's still got a reasonable income, even now he's left work. So it wasn't a big financial need that I had to go back to work. If I'd have chosen to, I could have stayed at home there were big issues about [this with her husband. He would say] 'This is what you have chosen to do'.... If ever there was a crisis or something, or there was an essay to write, or you know with work there's a commitment, it's 'Well, this is what you chose to do'.

Sexism in intimate relations with men is: 'often manifested in the criticism, irritability, or anger than men feel free to direct towards their female partners' (Landrine & Klonoff, 1997, p.134). It seems that Kathy's husband expressed his irritability (perhaps anger) about her academic success through his refusal to offer support or assistance at moments of pressure.

Kathy's response was to minimise her achievements:

I mean there was a big issue when I graduated from my degree and my postgrad [qualification]. My husband didn't come. I think he had issues around just getting better than me or something I do have to fluff it down a bit I have to keep it low key I do find that nobody is going to help me with it.

Landrine and Klonoff (1997) found this type of response was fairly common: 'Women may come to feel that they have to move about invisibly, on tiptoe, "walking on eggs". They may also learn that their own anger is unacceptable' (p.134). Kathy illustrated her determination to progress with her qualifications, despite the resistance she met from her husband:

I've got to do it myself and I've got to sort of rant, rave, scream, whatever that I need to make space to do it When I did my degree, the first year my mother-in-law died. She had cancer and was seriously ill, in a hospice and I had to deal with all that and got through the first year of the degree . The second year was when my father died, and again I can remember going home from the hospital where he died There was a week before the funeral and in that week I remember writing a critique on two journal articles and I got a brilliant mark for it I sort of dealt with the grief through work.

When asked where this drive came from, she replied:

Well, from my self-worth I think.

She explained how, from an early age, she had rebelled against gender stereotypes:

I mean I didn't have a particularly good education When I was at school girls did biology and boys did chemistry and physics you did domestic science

whether you liked it or not I went to a Technical School Well, you had to do shorthand and typing and domestic science and I was really rebelling. I never actually bunked off school, but always managed to find some excuse to be somewhere else in the building, especially when I was doing re-sits in the sixth form. I thought, 'If I do anything in my life it is not going to be a shorthand typist!' But they said 'You need these skills' So I went into the Bank and then to the Post Office because I had accounting skills. I could probably have been an accountant, but nobody ever told me that you could actually do anything like that.

The birth of her fourth child represented a turning point for Kathy. She decided that she had to assert her own identity and lose weight:

I had the fourth child. When he was about a year old I suddenly wanted to find out who I was. Wanted to reclaim me, because I was mum. Mum to four kids and suddenly I thought: 'Well, hold on a minute I'm not going to have any more children. Who am I?' You know, I'd got lost in this big fat lump. So I sort of joined Weight Watchers and lost umpteen stone and got really slim.

This led to other opportunities:

.... That's what happens if you show any sort of pizzazz or a bit of personality. They ask you to become a [Weight Watchers] lecturer I thought, 'OK'. Because it was part-time, it fitted in around the kids and the training was quite good. They got you to talk to people, gave you lots of tips and things about how to get people to talk and it gave me a lot of confidence.... I suddenly was there talking to a hundred people You'd go home on cloud nine because you'd think, 'Yes, all these people have actually listened to what I've said' It gave me such a kick I did that for five years and from that I thought, 'Yeah, I could do something', and I went and did a 'Fresh Start' course.

Kathy talked of the positive experience of this course, because most participants had so much in common:

.... Nearly all of us had got kids, you know, in the same sort of position It was very good.

Because of her experiences on this course, she realised she could become a teacher, through doing an Access Course:

I'm sitting there thinking well, I've already got a GCE in maths and English. Perhaps I could do teaching then. You know, I never thought of it. Just never occurred to me So, I'm sitting there thinking 'I can do this,' and it sort of grabs you My mum says to me, now I've discovered this, it's like well are you ever going to stop?

When she was on the Access Course, she realised she didn't want to teach after all, and started to think about other careers. However, her choice of degree was severely constrained by her domestic responsibilities:

I did want to do IT but for that course you needed to be there more I consciously didn't choose that because of child care commitments My husband was working and I knew that I was limited. I remember there was a big standing joke with the girl I did my degree with: 'Is it between 10 and 3?' It didn't matter what the unit was, if it was between 10 and 3 and we'd do it! It was a joke!

She reported an experience of what she described as sexual discrimination, though social class may have played a part:

I mean there were big issues when I was in the bank because I spoke with quite a thick London accent. I was always stuffed upstairs with the ledgers, sort of doing the manual stuff I mean it was really blatant. There was another girl started who was younger than me, had less experience than me I always kept saying I would like to be a cashier because I love to be with people I want to be on the counter, I want to work with people Anyway, this other young girl came in who spoke very, very well. Her dad had a yacht and they put her on the counter. That was when I left The Personnel people came down to speak to me I was saying this girl got put ahead of me I was trying to explain to her how hurt I felt and I thought, 'Well I'm just going to go'. And that was that.

Kathy recalled one other experience whilst in employment with the bank which could be described as sexual discrimination:

.... the boys were encouraged to do the banking exams and things like that but the girls weren't. You were just there to do the general secretarial posting If you were really good, you got sent on computer courses and learned about data input.

External sources of support were identified, such as various women's groups with which she had come into contact through education, and her mother:

I owe a lot to my mum because, although my mum never worked, she was always there at the back of you saying, 'You could do this', and 'You're just as good as them' I'm the older of three children, the younger are all boys, but I was always seen if anything, as better than them.

Kathy also considered that her age was increasingly a problem:

.... The other side is age. I find that very much now, the age. I get the feeling that job-wise, I'm beginning to get past it, and that you're not the new young thing that's going to come along I do increasingly get this feeling about my age

Jones (2000), in an employers' survey involving 800 UK companies, found that a majority of respondents (85 per cent) believed that employers discriminate against older workers in at least one area of work, especially in relation to recruitment or taking on new staff (75 per cent). Other areas where age discrimination was identified were selecting staff for promotion (66 per cent), redundancy (60 per cent), training (56 per cent) and deciding the age of retirement (55 per cent). It seems, therefore, that Kathy's fears are well founded. Her experiences of discrimination had not, however, affected her future aspirations, even though she did feel that age would act as a barrier. Kathy reflected on her experiences of employment, before child birth and after:

I look at my jobs as two separate areas and because there's quite a time gap in between I think I've noticed that things have changed. That sense of being working class, being female. Certainly I don't feel that [this is an issue] now, but I'm not sure I think generally things have changed Now I am very conscious of my age When I did my Access Course, there was quite a group of them that were ten years younger than me I thought, 'I wish I had started at their age rather than when I did because that would have given me another ten years'.

Kathy's employment pattern and career development have been dominated by her roles as

wife, mother and now increasingly as care-giver to ageing relatives. Inhibitors of her career development have been her social class, gendered role and in certain respects her nuclear family. Enhancers have been her inner strength, self-esteem, energy and drive to succeed, though her mother is a constant source of inspiration and external support.

9.13 Emma

Emma is White, single and aged between 40 and 49. At the time of the interview, she was in the first year of her undergraduate course. She left the job in which she had been employed for the longest period of time (seven and a half years) because she was bored and changes to the job made it unacceptable.

Her employment had been varied, including social worker, adult educator and training and assessment officer. Emma had been beginning to progress to management positions in social work when she gave it up altogether, mainly because of cuts and resource issues.

She:

.... just didn't feel like there was any hope at all in social work

There was an opportunity to move to a training post (training and assessment officer) on a secondment, which she took. Emma enjoyed certain aspects of this job, but found that she:

.... didn't like standing up in the front of big groups of people. I was really, really nervous and I think I had a couple of anxiety attacks. It was that bad I thought, 'Right, I can either go back into social practice and give up' (I hate the thing of giving up) so I thought, 'Right, that's it, I've got to stick with it I've got to keep doing it'. I thought something that would help me would be to go on a postgraduate teaching course make me more confident, generally.

Consequently, she got a place on a part-time postgraduate teaching course, so that she could work to support herself. Her employment as trainer and assessor (for NVQs in Care) brought her into contact with women employed in predominantly unskilled care work. She commented on the low status attached to an activity dominated by women:

.... Historically, care work was often seen as [something] women do that naturally, there's no particular skills and knowledge involved

Consequently, Emma found that the process of taking these women through NVQs improved their confidence generally. Specifically, the process of constructing a portfolio of evidence:

.... sort of enabled them the whole process is quite empowering really.

Emma's main source of support was identified as her friends, because, she said:

I'm not a coupley sort of person, because I haven't been in a relationship with anybody, like a steady relationship I've never been married Traditionally, a lot of people would have their partner, I suppose, if the relationship is good. Though I wouldn't imagine it always is My friends are my network of support really.

She identified one of her former managers as her role model:

.... She was a brilliant role model because she's such an assertive woman, so forthright and I loved it She wasn't worried at all and so sort of congruent. I think because she was a Black woman as well and I learned an awful lot from her I think we'd just got a really good relationship going where she was quite challenging but very, very generous as well She'll always be like a role model in a way I suppose because she is such a strong woman, very, very strong There's a trust between us.

She also reported having one other significant influence:

.... When I was doing my social work training I had what was called a 'study supervisor', who was like a sort of mentor and she used to have to help you with your written work. She's a brilliant role model I should say. Even though I

haven't seen her for ten years I still keep her in my mind I think because she was quite assertive. She didn't make excuses for herself. She was independent. She was all the things I like, knowledgeable and quite focused. She seemed to know what she was doing and where she was going and just didn't make excuses for herself really.

On her questionnaire, she had identified her worst example of discrimination suffered:

Sexism - manager and his friends making comments about women workers (& me), size of our breasts and bums and saying what they liked/disliked - in very loud voices every time you go near them.

When asked to talk more about this, she explained:

I was working in a residential place for people with mental health problems, learning difficulties, all sorts of people, and, how old was I? Twenty one. He was the manager there, and, oh God, he was foul, a swine, a git. He was horrible. Yeah, he just used to say comments and knew that they made me uncomfortable. One time, when he was sitting at his desk in his office and I was standing there, he was talking with me. He just kept looking at my chest, instead of my face. I remember I said to him 'Have I got something on my jumper? Is there something on here?' But he was still the same. When his friends came round, they'd still make comments, you know, like all the lads together you know.

These types of work-related sexist discrimination are considered by Landrine and Klonoff (1997) to be 'more important than brutal/physical discrimination (rape, battering) in women's lives' (p.20). However, Emma has strong support networks in place, and Landrine and Klonoff (1997) discuss how the impact of sexist events is likely to be mediated by social support: 'Sexist events no doubt have less of a negative impact on women who have strong, social support networks' (p.26). Emma also recalled discriminatory behaviour related to her sexual orientation:

.... loads of bits and pieces. I mean, I know that one time I stopped having relationships with men. I was having a relationship with a woman and I noticed every single comment You know, you assume your partner's a man. That was very different to a feeling of sexism, because it just seems like everybody everywhere, even in Local Authorities, assume that you're heterosexual If you

try and stop it, or if you try and pull them up, then you're exposing yourself.

She also commented on racism she had observed:

.... having a Black manager I learned a lot about stuff around race issues or Black and White issues. It seemed that once my consciousness was raised around those things, I would notice a lot more around people making assumptions about White being 'normal'. Or their language I do get shocked. I had an appointment with a financial adviser from XXXX's Bank a couple of weeks ago and he said to me so confident, (I was talking about pensions).... 'Oh, bloody refugees, coming over, the darkies' that was what he called them, and I couldn't believe it

Emma reflected upon discrimination as an intrinsic part of human nature and behaviour, sounding confident that she had the personal resources to deal with any experiences she may come up against in the future.

.... I think it will always be there I'm not angry about it it wouldn't stop me, it wouldn't stop me. Unless it was some institutional thing, and then I'd try and use some sort of resource For instance, if a man got a job over me, then I'd try and use legislation or whatever I could It wouldn't stop me, even if I lost the case but thought I was right It still wouldn't stop me from trying again or keeping on, or whatever, you know.

Nicolson (1997) is not quite so optimistic. As a result of research into the professions, she concludes that: 'It is therefore important to acknowledge both that personal assertiveness and organisational mechanisms for dealing with harassment and discrimination are not adequate for combating the problem' (Nicolson, 1997, p.45), especially in organisations she describes as 'toxic', where sexual harassment and discrimination are common and exist, though remain unacknowledged, within the organisational culture (Nicolson, 1997, p.46).

When asked to sum up to what she attributed her success, Emma felt that it was due to the

qualities and skills acquired as a result of her particular life experiences. She explained that she had been a rebellious teenager. Her parents were 'stiff and conservative', and she ended up getting into 'a lot of trouble'. This included having a baby when she was a teenager, who she brought up alone. She said that she had:

.... learned an awful lot from that, an awful lot

and that:

It was so difficult, especially when he was young. It was such a hard lesson in 'if you want something done, you've got to rely on yourself'.... Don't rely on anybody else.

Summing up, she reflected that:

I suppose it was mostly through life experience I don't think it was anything I was born with at all.

Perhaps the main inhibitors of career development for Emma was her lack of family support. Enhancers included strong role models, social networks and the dispositional, individualist qualities which have enabled her to deal with life's challenges.

9.14 Pamela

Pamela is White, married and aged between 40 and 49. At the time of the interview, she was a student on a postgraduate training course. She has two children who were aged fourteen and eighteen at the time of the interview. Her husband's employment has required the family to live in different parts of the world and she has consequently tended to take jobs, when possible, that accommodated her children's needs. Her longest period of employment was four years. She left this particular job because it did not provide her with

the contact with people she wanted and because the pressures and deadlines didn't fit in with the rest of her life.

On her second questionnaire, she had indicated that she felt supported by her family:

.... Financial support is from my husband. The emotional (support) is from all of them - that's the children as well as members of the extended family. In fact, my mother and father and sister. We're quite a close family, so they're usually involved in everything. And practical [support] yes, I mean practical from, again, my parents, sister and my children and husband.

She also mentioned friends:

.... Because we've moved a lot probably my closest friends are not in this country the ones who I have the closest emotional relationship are not actually here. So that's a bit odd. But I stay in touch with them.

In her questionnaire, she indicated that she didn't have an important role model:

I think I used to when I was much younger perhaps, but I couldn't really think of one as an adult. I mean, sort of aspects of different people, but I don't have, I mean when people say to me that they have a role model and they name the person - I don't have that sort of experience.

When asked to identify difficulties anticipated in future employment, she indicated age and 'responsibilities and interests outside work'. Age, she anticipated, would be a significant inhibitor to her career development:

Age is fairly obvious, isn't it? I mean, age - I'm just aware statistically it is much more difficult for people over 40 to get into employment, particularly in a new area.

Jones (2000), in her survey of 800 companies, found an observable bias towards employees aged 25 - 49 years, with 11 per cent of companies having no employees aged 50 - 59 years

and 43 per cent having none over 60 years (p.3). Brewington and Nassar-McMillan (2000) note that older workers as well as employers, may have perceptions and concerns that create barriers to re-employment. Consequently, older workers 'often have difficulty finding suitable replacement jobs and frequently face emotional and financial distress' (p.2).

The responsibilities Pamela alluded to were associated with her husband's frequent career moves and their implications for her child care role:

.... Responsibilities partly connected with moving a lot, responsibilities for the children and we moved to situations where the children were actually having to, were being put into a school where they didn't speak the language So I've had to provide a lot of support for that. Well, I chose to provide a lot of support for the children If the children were in a tricky situation, I more or less dropped out of work or did work that was purely convenient for them. Like I would get a job very near the school, or in the school sometimes It wasn't necessarily what I would have chosen to do. So that's the responsibility part.

Pamela's interests were also perceived as a potential source of difficulty for future employment prospects. She explained:

The interests - I wanted to write creative writing, and at a certain point I thought I was actually going to make a success of that. I mean, I had a play produced and sort of seemed to be getting somewhere with it. So I took a lot of time off to do that. Also it happened to fit in with the children and moving, so it was convenient

She indicated that she had experienced discrimination:

.... It was an odd kind of discrimination I think shades of this have happened to me in various situations. This is again related to travelling my husband did a lot in developing countries, so we had periods in different countries and on this particular occasion I had a job, a full time job almost, which was difficult for me to get That's the other thing about moving. Each time, you have to make the new connections work and learn how the system works and so on. I'd worked quite hard for about six months to get this full time job at a University It was technically part-time, but sort of full-time teaching hours, which was perfect for me. It was all fine, and it was supposed to [become] a real full time post when

they expanded their full time positions. I was very happy with that. Then I had my first child, and I was off from February, when I had him, until September. I wanted to go back in September. I did a course for them in the summer - their Summer School - so that got me sort of slightly in there. But then I wanted to go back on the same basis, fairly regular teaching. They said it was fine. I was put down for a couple of courses and it was all settled.

I went to a lot of trouble to get someone to look after my son, and everything was all fixed up and literally, on the day I was supposed to go in, with the babysitter in place, they said 'Oh no, there aren't enough students for the two courses you're supposed to be doing'.... I subsequently found out that apart from the shabby way they let me know someone who hadn't been there as long, or I think even two people, were actually given preferential treatment and pushed ahead of me The logic of it, apparently, was that I had a husband who was earning a good salary and I had a baby and didn't really need the money, whereas most of the [other] people there were single You know this was all, well my son's eighteen now, so it was some time ago The males had no problem

Despite seeing quite clearly that this discrimination occurred because of situation as a wife and mother, Pamela was reluctant to label it as sexual discrimination:

It wasn't a question of sex discrimination really. It was a question of, I think the baby was one aspect of it, quite a big aspect. But then it was an evaluation of my need, really I just didn't feel any of that would have happened to a man. They wouldn't have even thought to question how much his wife earned or whether his wife had a job. It just wouldn't have come into it.

Subtle, pernicious, subversive, 'sneaky' discrimination was identified by Landrine and Klonoff (1997) as ongoing in the lives of women and hard to identify because they are like: 'Constant, low-level, background noise' (p.15). They discuss the way these forms of discrimination bothered women just as much as more obvious ones because of their unfairness - and it was this that angered women. Pamela was able to identify other, more subtle forms of discrimination which had arisen in particular circumstances:

I can think of other situations where I haven't been discriminated against, but there's been a sort of sense of, 'Course, you won't mind working for nothing'. Or, 'You won't mind helping out with this. It will sort of fill in your time'. And again,

it's because I'm seen as attached to someone else Needing to do something interesting, but not needing to be paid for it People would find out what I'd done before and they'd think 'Oh yes, she can teach these people, or she can edit my magazine' I felt they wouldn't have presumed, they would never have asked a man to do that.

A particular example of this type of behaviour was described:

.... I was called up once to cook all the food, provide all the food for myself and another woman. I was called up [on the telephone] by a male to provide all the food for myself and another woman for a picnic. This was for ourselves and the children and our spouses, and all the rest of it, on the grounds that she worked and I didn't. So I'd have plenty of time to cook enough for both families!

Other experiences of discrimination were linked with the role of working mother:

.... I've been very careful not to bring children into it, but however scrupulous you are, just the fact that you have children It's like all sorts of other kinds of discrimination, any kind of slip up, and the children are somehow blamed absences that wouldn't be commented on in a male - they're seen as significant, because they know that these women have children and they wouldn't actually feel the same resentment to a male colleague who had to sort of leave early once every three months.

Pamela was able to identify a recurrent theme of discrimination associated with her role as wife and mother. She did not think that these experiences had affected her future aspirations, and now that her children were nearly grown, she did not anticipate similar problems in the future. She did, however, envisage that her age would act as a barrier to what her future career development.

9.15 Conclusion

As well as powerful descriptions of the types of contexts in which discrimination occurs, the nine women participants provide insights to the enhancers and the inhibitors of their

career development, together with the types of strategies developed to overcome inhibitors. They all demonstrated determination, perseverance and tenacity in their career development, sometimes in the face of overwhelming odds. This corresponds with findings of research by Richie *et al.* (1997) into the career development of highly achieving African American-Black and White women. They concluded that:

the women in this sample generally showed a great deal of persistence in the face of barriers. These barriers might be sexism, racism for the African American-Black participants, low socio-economic status, or personal life situations, but these women persevered in the face of those obstacles Many of these women welcomed the challenges that those obstacles created for them and were able to push through those obstructions and use them to their advantage.

(p.139).

The next and final section discusses the findings for my research study and presents conclusions.

PART 4: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Chapter 10 Overview & Discussion of Findings

10.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the challenges for careers guidance theory and practice posed by girls and women. Part 1, above, explained that the focus was progressively narrowed down to the research question:

- *In what ways does the career development of girls and women represent a challenge for guidance practice?*

A qualitative method, based on Strauss and Corbin's (1990) grounded theory, was used to examine the data. In this method, theory is constructed from and grounded in direct experience with the phenomena under study. Data collection, analysis and theory construction occur concomitantly, standing in 'reciprocal relation' (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.23) to one another as constructs are repeatedly verified by the data. Resultant themes are evaluated on the basis of both their methodological soundness and their value in capturing the depth and complexity of the phenomena under study both accurately and comprehensively (Polkinghorne, 1994, Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Accordingly, data from my research was explored to develop representational patterns of participants' experiences from two questionnaires and in-depth interviews.

Literature is important to provide a focus for data collection, though researchers should avoid over-concentration since this might inhibit relevant constructs from emerging within their own data (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The literature review was used to select two variables relevant to women's career development: background influences (for example, ethnicity, age, employment experiences and sources of support) and particular inhibitors (for example, experience of discrimination).

Overall, two seemingly contradictory strands emerged from my research: the diversity and similarity of women's experiences. These will be explored in the next section.

10.2 Emergent themes

Grounded theory method requires the simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis to enable the emerging analysis to shape subsequent data collection procedures (Charmaz, 1995). The three stages of my data collection (comprising two questionnaires and interviews) were characterised by these processes which stimulated the development of new ideas and shaped emergent themes. Deductive (comparing and contrasting phenomena) and inductive (looking for subordinate and superordinate themes) reasoning were used to organise data, using the following criteria: a) frequency of issues; b) importance of issues; c) relevance of issues to evolving ideas; and d) variety (Strauss, 1987). Strategies for data analysis included: a) comparison of groups by ethnicity (Black and White); b) analysis of data according to women's histories; and c) focusing on particular issues (for example, worldview, discrimination).

The first questionnaire confirmed that groups previously under-represented in careers research were well represented in my sample (N = 102), in particular women (84.3 per

cent), ethnic groups (49 per cent indicated an ethnic group other than 'White') and older clients (32.4 per cent were over thirty and 74.6 per cent were over 20). A large proportion (82 per cent) had been in employment for six months or more, with 64 per cent employed for between two and seventeen years. Data on employment histories revealed gendered occupational roles, with 81 per cent of the women having worked in traditionally female sectors (service or distribution). Over half the sample had come into higher education to improve themselves. Most (92 per cent) benefited from family support, and nearly three quarters of the sample (71.6 per cent) indicated that they had a role model.

Data from the follow-up questionnaire (N=71) pursued emergent themes from these background influences. Inhibitors of career development anticipated by participants included gender, age, ethnicity, lack of career self-efficacy and labour market conditions. Main sources of support were expected to be family, friends, parents and partners, with only two respondents (2.8 per cent) identifying careers professionals. A question on locus of control and responsibility suggested that a large proportion (83.1 per cent) of the sample inclined towards strong internality. Data from a question on value orientations was inconclusive and distinctive patterns commensurate with social groupings (like ethnicity) as suggested by Sue & Sue (1999) were not found. Finally, twenty-nine respondents (40.8 per cent) reported experiences of employment discrimination, twenty-five of whom were women. This strong theme, together with background influences, was explored in more depth during the third stage of research.

In-depth interviews of nine participants provided insights to the processes of women's career development and the contexts in which they are progressed. Enhancers of career

development were identified as family support, role models, social class, friendship networks, culture and religious beliefs. For two of the women (Sue and Abby) experiences of discrimination (sexual and racial, respectively) could be regarded as enhancers as well as inhibitors since they both identified the strength they had drawn from these experiences. Inhibitors included sexual and racial discrimination, sexual and racial harassment, social class, culture, childcare responsibilities, age, family and appearance (weight). As with discrimination, two factors - social class and family - operated as enhancers (for example, Abby), inhibitors (for example, Sonali) and both (for example, Pauline and Kathy). A summary of the factors affecting career development (enhancers and/or inhibitors) is presented in table 26, below. Given the neglect of ethnicity in previous studies of career development (Hackett, 1997; Richie *et al.*, 1997; Gainor & Forrest, 1991), findings from the group of four minority ethnic women will be discussed separately from the five White women, to enable comparisons along ethnic lines.

10.2.1 Minority ethnic women

The four Black women (Evelyn, Abby, Kirsty and Sonali) illustrate diversity along a number of dimensions, their stories emphasising both within and between group differences. It seems important to acknowledge that there is no such thing as a single 'Black experience'. Cross (1991) warns against any such tendency, and notes how ethnic minorities in Britain are increasingly divided by class: 'it is highly improbable that ethnicity will survive, in any simple sense, as a badge of belonging' (Cross, 1991, p.311). Locke (1992) discusses the acculturation of minority ethnic groups. By this he means the degree to which members of various minority ethnic groups have immersed themselves

Table 25: Summary of factors affecting participants

FACTORS:	Evelyn	Abby	Kirsty	Sonali	Sue	Pauline	Kathy	Emma	Pamela
Social class	Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes		
Culture/Community	Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes			
Childcare		Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Aloneness	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Sexual discrimination	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes
Sexual harassment			Yes		Yes				
Racial discrimination	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Racial abuse/ harassment	Yes	Yes		Yes					
Religion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes					
Family Support	Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes			Yes
Role Model	Yes	Yes	Yes				Yes	Yes	
Friends	Yes						Yes	Yes	Yes
Age						Yes	Yes		Yes
Weight						Yes	Yes		

in the dominant culture. The degree of acculturation accounts, Locke argues, for significant within and between group differences. Four categories indicate possible degrees of acculturation: first, bicultural where individuals are able to function as effectively in the dominant culture as in their own, while retaining features of their own culture; second, traditional, where many cultural traits from the original culture are retained whilst many of the dominant culture are rejected; third, marginal, where individuals have little real contact with traits of either culture; and fourth, acculturated, when individuals have given up most of the cultural traits of the culture of origin and assumed the traits of the dominant culture (Locke, 1992, p.6).

Though this aspect of ethnic identity was not specifically explored in my research, the stories and ethnic identities of the participants give indications of different degrees of acculturation. For example, Evelyn could be regarded as bicultural. She describes herself as Black African, though was sent to boarding school in England at age eleven to be groomed for English society. Whilst being socialised into the ways of English society through her education, she has maintained strong links with her with her family, and recently told me that she was seriously considering returning to live and work in her country of birth.

Abby is also arguably bicultural. She describes herself as African, and whilst visiting England when she was a small child for extended periods, did not settle here until she was in her twenties. She has retained strong links with her nuclear family, which recently came to live in England because of civil unrest in their country. She expects to remain in England, though has ensured her children are bilingual.

Kirsty describes herself as Black British. Born and educated in England, she seems to have assumed many values of the dominant culture, like 'you earn your own money' and get on through education, taking advantage of every opportunity. She has also retained strong links with her extended family, though she appears more acculturated than Evelyn or Abby.

Sonali is in transition. Her ethnic identity is Indian, though, at the time of the interview, she was in the process of rejecting significant parts of her cultural heritage. This involved breaking away from her family. She could, therefore, be regarded as marginal, espousing attachment to neither culture. Her transitional journey, however, was far from complete.

The four Black women identify different life experiences, perceptions and values which relate variously to social class membership, cultural heritage, their gender, experiences of sexual harassment, racial abuse, harassment and discrimination, family support and role models. Only two themes emerged as common for all the four Black women: religion and racial discrimination.

Religion is identified by all four as a strong source of support, strength and encouragement. Sonali described how she experiences her religion [Jainism] as empowering. Abby talked about her conversion to Buddhism and how this has not only re-directed her life but also given her the strength to realise her potential. Evelyn and Kirsty both referred to being strongly religious, and how they regard their beliefs as positive sources of support.

Racial discrimination is a strong, common theme, though experienced differently. Most

striking is Abby, who explains how being a Black person has made her stronger. More than this, she would never choose to be anything other than Black because of the skills and qualities this develops. Even Evelyn, who spoke at length about the toll the experience of unfair dismissal had on her, recognises that she is healing and has emerged with a new strength and awareness. In contrast, Kirsty and Sonali, both younger than Abby and Evelyn, recount negative experiences of racial discrimination without identifying significant positive outcomes.

Social class is also evidently a source of difference relevant to three of the Black women, Evelyn, Abby and Kirsty. Abby and Evelyn perceive themselves as upper middle class by background. Kirsty, however, refers to her mother having had little education herself (though ambitious for her children), admiring and emulating her brother for achieving his current professional status from where he started out. She thereby aligns herself with lower socio-economic origins. Abby identifies her social class membership specifically as a distinguishing characteristic, a feature of which (that is, her speech) she had learned to use as a strategy in certain circumstances to combat racial bullying. Similarly, Evelyn emphasised her social position by reference to her parents' social status, her education and social network of professionals. Like Abby, Evelyn has used her social class as a strategy to combat racism, since free legal representation was secured from her social network. Neither Kirsty nor Sonali, however, made any specific reference to their social class.

Cultural heritage was identified as a key factor for Sonali, who experienced the weight of social expectations associated with her cultural heritage as suffocating, compared with the

religious dimension, which was positive and supportive. Evelyn and Abby were acutely aware of the efforts of their parents to acculturate them into an English lifestyle. Evelyn was sent to boarding school in England at the age of eleven to 'groom' her for British society. Abby talked about the way she was expected to speak the 'Queen's English' in her birth country (which she refers to as 'Rubbish!'), the strict English etiquette observed within her family and the way her own three children are now 'embarrassed' to speak their own language. For Kirsty, cultural identity seemed less of an issue, with no particular references being made.

Both Evelyn and Abby identified the dual disadvantages of gender and ethnicity in the labour market. For Evelyn, this related to the manner in which a Black woman was regarded with suspicion by prospective contractors, whilst for Abby, the issue was very much bound up with the disadvantage of being a single Black mother of three children. She referred to the disadvantages of child-care as common across cultures ('but that's any women's problem'), and talked of her determination not to fit the popular stereotype of 'a Black, single mother'.

Gender emerged as an issue for Kirsty, but in a slightly different way. She talked about her experiences of sexual discrimination whilst in employment and was the only Black woman who reported experiences of sexual harassment. Unlike Evelyn and Abby, Kirsty did not make the link between ethnicity and gender as a double disadvantage. Sonali was the only Black woman who made no direct reference to her gender (though alluded to the constraints imposed on her gender within her culture, that is, through arranged marriage).

Family support was identified as an important, positive influence for Evelyn, Abby and Kirsty. However, Sonali dwelt on the negative and destructive influences of her family, and talked about her current preoccupation with breaking free from their influence.

Role models were identified as important by Evelyn, Abby and Kirsty. For both Evelyn and Kirsty, these were high achieving male family members (father and brother respectively). Abby identified a distant role model (a woman about whom she had read in the newspaper). Sonali was adamant that she had never had a role model.

So, for the four Black women, only two themes emerged as common: racial discrimination and strong religious beliefs. Of course, these women were specially selected because they had all indicated that they had experienced discrimination. However, they had all experienced multiple examples of discrimination and/or harassment or abuse, identified as racial.

10.2.2 White women

For the five White women (Sue, Pauline, Kathy, Emma and Pamela), sexual discrimination emerged as the only common theme. Social class was identified as an important factor by Kathy and Pauline, both working class. Kathy was sure that her accent had been the cause of her not being promoted in employment on one occasion. Pauline talked about her general lack of self-confidence and her ineptitude in social situations as problems which needed to be overcome.

The same two women also regarded appearance, specifically weight, as problems. This could, of course, be related to gender (Orbach, 1978). Pauline identified her appearance as a potential future barrier, specifically her weight, over which she had control. Kathy talked about overcoming weight problems after the births of her four children, needing to find herself ('I'd got lost in this big, fat lump').

Two White women, Kathy and Emma, felt that they had role models. For Emma, these role models (work colleagues) had been strong and influential figures in her development. For Kathy, the idea of a role model seemed more remote, though she acknowledged her mother as a consistently positive influence in her life.

Pamela described the support received from her family as constructive, whilst Sue and Emma considered their families to have exerted a strong, negative influence. Responses from Kathy and Pauline were mixed. Whilst they both identified constructive support from their children (and in Kathy's case, her mother), both reported that their husbands had exerted some negative influence. Kathy talked about her husband's refusal to attend award ceremonies, provide any practical support at times of peak pressure, and how she constantly had to 'fluff down' her achievements. Pauline described how, whilst generally supportive, comments her husband had made about an essay had been 'devastating'.

Four of the five White women identified sexual discrimination, with one (Sue) reporting sexual harassment in addition. Age was identified as a potential barrier in the future by Kathy, Pauline and Pamela. It does seem likely that Pauline's experience of being

overlooked in employment for 'younger, attractive people' constituted sexual discrimination that she had failed to recognise. If this were to be accepted, sexual discrimination is the unifying theme for the White women.

Comparisons of the Black with the White women thus reveal both striking similarities - since common themes emerge recurrently - and differences, since individual experiences were diverse.

10.2.3 Dispositional versus Situational

One other strong theme that emerged from the data analysis related to the dispositional and situational aspects of women's career development. In this context, dispositional factors relate to individual factors, such as confidence, self-efficacy and assertiveness; situational factors relate to external characteristics of an individual's context (largely out of their control) such as ethnicity, age, social class, family support and discrimination. A study by Lucas *et al.* (2000) of the contextual themes of career development of female clients who are depressed similarly focused on what they refer to as external and internal elements in clients' lives 'because these elements seemed most salient' (p.319).

When examining the sources of support of the women, three identified predominantly situational sources, three dispositional and three a mixture of the two (see table 26, below). Psychology, emphasising individual dispositional factors, has dominated current career theory. The neglect of context in psychological theory for the career development of

Table 26: Summary of sources of support

	External Support	Internal Support	Mixture
Evelyn	Yes		
Abby			Yes
Kirsty			Yes
Sonali		Yes	
Sue		Yes	
Pauline	Yes		
Kathy			Yes
Emma		Yes	
Pamela	Yes		

women has been specifically criticised by Brooks and Forrest (1994, p.128). Findings from this study support their contention. Six of the nine women interviewed emphasise the importance of external sources of support. Additionally, data from the seventy one respondents to the follow-up questionnaire showed a larger number indicating one or more sources of situational support as enhancers of their career development (124) compared with a smaller number (23) indicating more of a reliance on dispositional factors (see table 23, above). It seems likely, therefore, that careers guidance theory and practice, which gives more prominence to context than is currently the case, is more likely to enhance labour market transitions for girls and women.

10.2.4 Coping Strategies

Another emergent theme related to the ability of the women to cope with their multiple experiences of discrimination. Only three (Pauline, Evelyn and Sonali) of the nine women interviewed indicated on their second questionnaire that these had affected future aspirations. All nine women talked about strategies developed to cope with discrimination which included avoidance of particular occupational contexts (Evelyn, Sue, Kirsty, Abby and Pauline); exploitation of particular advantages like social class (Abby, Pamela and Evelyn), or qualities like a confident and positive attitude (Sue, Kathy and Sonali); and deployment of learned skills like assertiveness (Evelyn, Abby, Kirsty, Sue, Kathy, Pauline, Emma). It is likely that these strategies were structured, partially at least, by their contexts. Exactly why particular strategies were developed is beyond the scope of the present study. These women's accounts do, however, provide powerful insights to both the difficulties with which women developing their careers are likely to be confronted, together with ways in which they may be overcome - all relevant to career theory and practice.

10.3 Limitations of the study

Any research study can be compromised by researcher bias and this is considered a particular challenge for data interpretation in qualitative research (Lucas *et al.*, 2000). The use of open-ended questions in both the questionnaires and the interviews represented one attempt to guard against bias, but of course the very nature of these questions led participants to consider and respond to particular aspects of their career development at the expense of others. Bias in the interpretation of data represents an issue for the lone researcher, who works without the opportunity to discuss and check findings with a

collaborator in the research process.

A particular issue regarding the use of grounded theory method is the risk of losing sight of individual differences amongst participants as the analysis sets out to identify increasingly general, abstract categories (Lucas *et al.*, 2000; Richie *et al.*, 1997). This was addressed in part by including case studies of each interviewee in chapter 9. The process of selecting and interpreting data to present in these case studies involved the exclusion of some data, though the accounts were sent to each participant to ensure they represented an accurate and fair representation of their story.

One other limitation of my study relates to the sampling method. For the two questionnaires, participants were self-selected students on particular study courses in higher education at a university in southeast England. Such restrictions raise questions about the applicability of emergent themes to other women. However, the student cohorts were carefully chosen for participation in the research because they ensured strong representation of women, ethnic diversity and age. Since these are dimensions previously neglected in research populations for careers (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1995, Hackett, 1997, Meara *et al.*, 1997), I would argue that this helps to mitigate any potential negative effects.

Triangulating multiple sources of data can enhance the applicability of qualitative research (Robson, 1993). Although data was collected from questionnaires and interviews, additional sources of data could have further strengthened the study. For example, biographies or interviews with significant others in the lives of the interviewees could have represented valuable supplementary information. However, the logistical difficulties

encountered in organising one interview with each of the participants within time and resources available eliminated these other options.

Finally, the retrospective nature of the in-depth interview raises some concerns about the possible effects of selective attention and memory lapses. It could, therefore, be argued that emergent themes thus represent the experiences of participants that were most salient to them during a private interview at a specific moment in time.

10.4 Careers guidance for girls and women

Since its inception at the turn of the last century (Parsons, 1908), careers guidance theory and practice has generally assumed that girls and women have the same needs as boys and men. This has been a major weakness. Another relates to the lack of acknowledgement given to the variability of needs within client groups, like women. Both these will now be discussed.

10.4.1 Between group differences

First, the assumption that the needs of girls and women are the same as boys and men will be considered. Two contributory factors can be identified: theory and policy. Theories underpinning current practice in the UK, together with their limitations, were reviewed in section 2.3, above. The adequacy of current theory for girls and women was discussed in some detail in section 2.4.2, above, and three criticisms are worth emphasising. First, the neglect of context. The greatest influence on practice in the UK has been exerted by those theories derived from the academic discipline of psychology, with its preoccupation with

the individual and choice. However, the continuing role of women as primary care-givers in society highlights the constraints imposed on choice by structures and systems within which individuals pursue their career paths (Hackett, 1997, Phillips & Imhoff, 1997). Second, the neglect of women as subjects of research. Samples researched to inform these theories were biased in favour of boys and men (Fitzgerald *et al.*, 1995; Hansen *et al.*, 1993; Meara *et al.*, 1997). Consequently, comparatively little is known about the vocational behaviour of girls and women. Third, the neglect of qualitative research perspectives. Theories currently underpinning practice have been dominated by quantitative research methods. Understanding derived from this approach needs to be complemented by those drawn from qualitative methods (Hackett, 1997, Edwards & Payne, 1997). So, theories underpinning current practice have emphasised individual choice, neglected the social contexts of working women and relied heavily on an objective, technical and rational model of human inquiry. These factors have interacted to produce theories, which are often blind to the actual needs of girls and women.

Policy constraining careers practice in the UK has also legitimised the assumption of homogeneity amongst client groups. There has been a consistent emphasis on the matching of clients to suitable educational, training and employment opportunities as the desirable outcome for guidance (Department of Employment, 1973; Department of Employment/Department of Education & Science, 1986; Department for Education and Employment, 1998; Employment Department, 1995). Heaviside (1995), when Chief Inspector of Careers Services, argued that 'matching is at the heart of all guidance'. Resource allocation to careers guidance organisations over the past two decades has been

driven by a target culture reflecting this assumption. However, this is increasingly being challenged. For example, whilst Mitchell and Krumboltz (1995) acknowledge that, indeed, many career counsellors believe that their goal is to find a suitable occupational match for clients based on their existing interests values, skills and personality traits (p.252), they argue this is no longer relevant for current labour market conditions. Alternative criteria are suggested for judging the effectiveness of guidance interventions: the stimulation of new learning; increased competence to cope with the changing world of work; and progress towards creating a satisfying life for themselves (Mitchell & Krumboltz, 1995, p.264). Similarly, Osipow and Fitzgerald (1996) highlight the importance of the unanswered question of whether career choice is more appropriately thought of as a specific event or developmental process over time (p.54). A shift towards a preference for regarding career choice as developmental has, they argue, brought with it an emphasis on the influence of social context and processes on vocational behaviour.

The current policy emphasis in the UK on measurable outcomes from guidance itself poses something of a dilemma for guidance practice with girls and women. If guidance is regarded as being about matching clients to suitable education, training and employment opportunities, then it appears to be failing many women. Occupational segregation along gender lines was identified by Hakim in 1979, and evidence from the Equal Opportunities Commission (1999) twenty years later illustrates how this is still a characteristic of women's labour market participation. Since women are confined to narrow occupational sectors, and within these are relegated largely to lower status positions, it can hardly be claimed that girls and women are being matched to appropriate opportunities.

10.4.2 Within group differences

Second, why have within group differences amongst women been overlooked? Perhaps this is not surprising, since the study of women's employment patterns is relatively new: 'the lack of official data which fully reflect the realities of women's work profiles itself reflects the relatively low priority accorded until recently to investigating women's employment' (Hakim, 1979, p.55). However there is increasing understanding of the complexity of women's participation in the labour market, discussed in section 3.3, above. An examination of educational achievements reveals similar complexity (see section 3.2, above). The growing body of evidence, therefore, provides a sound base from which to suggest that differences between sub-groups of girls and women may be great, if not greater, than the differences which are evident between the two genders. Variables like ethnic origin, socio-economic group, sexual orientation and age produce significantly different experiences, aspirations and expectations.

Our increased understanding of the complex needs of girls and women should be reflected in the practice of careers guidance, as discussed in the next section.

10.5 Implications for practice

From a review of a decade of research into women and career development, Phillips and Imhoff (1997) conclude that 'women's lives are complex' (p.49) and note that the past decade has seen significant progress towards understanding this complexity. However, Meara *et al.* (1997) remind us that 'knowing what needs to be done and knowing how to do it are two different matters' (p.118). Some theories developed specifically for girls

and women have begun to identify practice implications (for example, feminist careers counselling, see 3.7.4, above). Others have also begun to identify strategies and techniques for use with female clients, based on the emerging body of knowledge about women's career development (see Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise, section 4.5.1, above).

Fitzgerald and Crites (1980) and Betz (1994) present overviews of practice issues, relating to women, for careers counselling. Fitzgerald and Crites (1980) highlight the need for career practitioners to incorporate knowledge about women effectively into their professional practice by adapting the theoretical base of their practice, updating their knowledge, reviewing their attitudes and revising their skills (p.44). Betz (1994) questions the validity of career theories that involve matching jobs to abilities or 'self-actualising', and recommends 'that career counseling for women focus on: (a) restoring their options to them and (b) convincing them that they, like men, not only can but deserve to 'have it all'" (p.32).

Meara *et al.* (1997) discuss practice implications for careers counselling with women of low socio-economic status. They caution against the use of career assessment techniques, unless this particular client group has been represented in the standardisation sample on which the interpretations of tests and inventories are based (p.120). Building a 'working alliance' with these women will be particularly important, which would involve familiarisation with 'some of the realities of these women's lives' (p. 126) and being prepared to work as an advocate on behalf of clients as well as lobbying within the community on their behalf ('non-traditional activities counselors may need to engage in', p.126). They also

propose counsellors help these clients 'to envision their future from a possible selves framework' (Meara *et al.*, 1997, p.128). This avoids preoccupation with past achievements or attainments, and focuses the client on what they 'hope to become, expect to become and fear becoming' (p.129). It is argued this represents a viable alternative to focusing upon their self-concept, and though requiring further investigation, represents a promising and appropriate technique for use with women and ethnic minorities (p.130).

Cook (1993, 1997) discusses the gendered nature of both individual relationships and workplace relations, identifying specific implications for careers counselling with women. She suggests that practitioners need to prepare women for the 'gendered context of work' (1993, p.234), including the prospect of sexual harassment, isolation in the workplace and restrictions which may be placed on their career progression (1997, p.149). Cook also exhorts practitioners to examine their own gender biases and challenge clients on society's work values. Finally, she advocates the use of models of career development which 'address how women blend the two domains in their lives' (Cook, 1993, p.235).

It is clear, therefore, that researchers in the area of women's career development have already begun to explore implications for practice. Findings from the present study indicate three categories within which practitioners need to develop competence to serve better this client group: self-awareness, knowledge and techniques. First, increasing self-awareness of gender as a dimension requiring particular attention. In-service training is necessary to ensure qualified and experienced practitioners are aware of their personal meaning of gender, resulting bias and/or gender 'blindness', and their potential impact on clients.

Second, knowledge of the effects of gender needs to be constantly updated and implications for practice identified. For example, a significant finding from my research is the extent of discrimination and harassment suffered. This throws into question the assumption embedded in equal opportunities policies that guidance should support, even encourage, girls and women into non-traditional occupational areas (Rolfe, 1999). If such environments are experienced by women as toxic, and damage the psychological, emotional and sometimes physical well being of women, how can such equal opportunity policies be considered ethical? Third, strategies to enhance women's coping skills. For example, assertiveness training and confidence building for girls and women could be incorporated into the guidance process.

Increasing the competence of practitioners to respond more effectively to girls and women will never be sufficient. Practitioners need to be encouraged and supported by their employing organisation. Rolfe (1999) researched 62 of the current 66 Careers Services in England (p.4) and found that: 'Less than a third of Careers Services have most of the features required of a sound equal opportunities policy, including an agenda for policy and practice and a structure for implementation' (p.21). Sue (1995) discusses multicultural organisational development, arguing that employers vary in their commitment, and that organisational culture is a necessary prerequisite to implementing significant change. A threefold typology is identified (p.483): monocultural organisations are those that are primarily Eurocentric and ethnocentric; non-discriminatory organisations have become more culturally aware and enlightened, having typically entered another stage referred to as 'non-discriminatory'; multicultural organisations have begun to value diversity and evidence

continuing attempts to accommodate ongoing cultural change. It would seem from Rolfe's (1999) research that two thirds of Careers Services could be described as monocultural organisations, according to Sue's (1995) typology. This needs to change to provide a supportive context for increased competence at practitioner level to be effective.

The next and final chapter reviews the challenge for careers guidance practice posed by girls and women, considers the potential contribution of grounded theory to advancing understanding in this area and presents my final observations and reflections.

Chapter 11: Conclusion

11.1 Girls & women: the challenge for careers guidance

An important finding from this research study relates to similarities and differences which exist, simultaneously, for girls and women. Similarities in so far as the experiences of girls and women are the same in many respects; differences since they often respond differently to similar situations.

Education provides an example of how girls' experiences can, in many ways, be regarded as similar in contrast to boys (see section 3.2. above). The similarity of girls' experiences in education are acknowledged by Clark and Millard (1998) who conclude that differences persist in the opportunities available to girls compared with boys in schools (p.3). Roberts (1997) also notes similarities in outcomes along gender lines: 'Young women are now outperforming males at all levels in education as well as, in the case of university graduates, in the labour market in the initial stages of their working lives' (p.357). There have, in fact, been improvements in both female and male achievements in education, and whilst it can be argued that girls are outperforming boys, it is important to remember that subject differentiation post-sixteen remains a feature of women's participation in vocational training and higher level education.

The labour market provides further evidence of the similarity of women's experiences. Section 3.3, above, examined some recurrent trends, including occupational segregation, pay levels and sexual harassment. Such features of women's employment distinguish their

experiences of the labour market from men's in fundamental ways.

Similarities are also illustrated by my research study. The female participants had experience of employment largely within narrow occupational categories (section 7.3, above, tables 7a to 7g & 8a to 8e) though had left employment for a variety of reasons (tables 9 & 10). Many shared common aspirations (table 13), sources of support (tables 15, 16 & 17), demonstrated a tendency towards internal control (table 19) and anticipated similar inhibitors (table 22) and enhancers (table 23) for their career development.

Scrutiny of other aspects of women's labour market experiences, however, reveals significant within group differences. Employment patterns and commitment to employment (see section 3.3.3, above) is one source. The relationship between ethnicity and gender provides another potential source (see section 3.3.7, above). Difference was also highlighted by my research, particularly in the case studies of nine women who had experienced discrimination and differed by ethnicity, social class and age (section 9, above). No common themes emerged across this group (see table 26).

Finally, the career development of minority ethnic women is under-researched (Hackett, 1997, Richie *et al.*, 1997). It has been argued that aspirations and behaviour of minority ethnic clients are likely to be similar to each other, and different from White clients, because of their worldviews (Sue & Sue, 1999). Findings from my research challenge this contention. As a client group, therefore, girls and women represent a particular challenge for careers guidance theory and practice.

11.2 Level of Guidance Interventions

Hodkinson *et al.* (1996) drew attention to the policy focus on the individual in the UK, which distracts attention away from the need to change structures (p.137). This is a fundamental issue for careers guidance practice - should its focus rest with the individual client, or rather on the systems and structures in which clients are located. My fieldwork highlighted the extent of sexual discrimination (including sexual harassment) suffered by women. Of the sixty eight respondents who had been in employment for six months or more, twenty-nine reported experiences of discrimination. Of these, thirteen expected to be discriminated against in the future. Twenty-five respondents who had suffered discrimination were women (section 8.7, above). Additionally, when asked about the main difficulties or obstacles to be overcome in relation to future employment, nineteen indicated gender, fourteen age, ten ethnicity and twenty seven labour market conditions (table 21, above: multiple answers possible). These factors can all be regarded as structural or systemic, outside the control of the individual.

Writing about counselling, Bimrose (1993, p.152) proposed a framework for making sense of alternative approaches to this key issue, comprising a threefold categorisation: individualistic, integrationist and structuralist approaches. Individualistic refers to counselling approaches which separate an individual's need for help from their social context. One of the central ideas of the existential-humanistic tradition (and therefore a major influence in the development of counselling theory and practice) is that individuals are able to determine their own destinies. Thus, control is seen as lying within the individual. Society's response (for example, racism and sexism) to individual characteristics

which are beyond the individual's control (for example, ethnicity and gender) is not regarded as a primary responsibility for the counselling process. This is equally true for other theoretical approaches that have influenced guidance practice, such as differential, developmental, behavioural and psychodynamic (see section 2.3, above).

In contrast, integrationist refers to the rapidly increasing number of counselling perspectives which propose that an understanding of society's response to individual difference (social context) must be integrated into counselling practice. This category includes those approaches which have focused on particular aspects of individual difference such as culture or gender, and their social consequences. Also within the category integrationist would be grouped those approaches which advocate an approach to counselling which advocates an understanding of individuals within systems.

Finally, structuralist refers to approaches which emphasise the structures within society (for example, political, economic and social) which create the circumstances giving rise to individual distress that requires counselling. These approaches question the legitimacy of current counselling or therapy practice at the individual level as an appropriate response to individual distress, and advocate fundamental structural change.

This typology is transferable to careers guidance, with the majority of traditional psychological approaches representing individualist approaches (see sections 2.3.1 to 2.3.5, above) and sociological approaches representing structural approaches (see sections 2.3.6 & 2.3.7, above). Many new approaches are concerned to integrate best practice from

current approaches with a better understanding of labour market conditions and/or social difference (see sections 2.4.1 to 2.4.5 and 4.5.1 to 4.5.5, above). Findings from the current research support an integrationist approach to careers guidance practice for girls and women, with a bias towards addressing the systems within which they are located.

11.3 Advancing Understanding

Our strategy of comparative analysis for generating theory puts a high emphasis on **theory as process**; that is, theory as an ever-developing entity, not as a perfect product.

(Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p.32) [original emphasis]

Grounded theory method, used for this inquiry, seems particularly apposite for advancing our understanding of women's career development. Current practice, informed by theory developed from quantitative research and dominated by technical rationality, is found wanting in many respects for various client groups, including girls and women. As Hackett (1997) observes, theories of women's career development are in their early adolescence and researchers are still grappling with measurement problems (p.186). It seems as though an acceptance that developing theory that will best serve this client group is bound to be an evolving process. The complexity of women's lives suggests that achieving an accurate understanding of factors influencing career development is likely to be a prolonged process. Indeed, the rapidly changing contexts in which women live their lives raises a question about whether an accurate understanding can ever be achieved in absolute terms. Grounded theory provides a method which enables detailed insights to the social context of individuals to be gained and permits potentially productive avenues of inquiry to be pursued as they

emerge as part of the research process.

11.4 Final Observations

Careers guidance is, once again, at something of a watershed. The policy agenda on social exclusion has redefined the target for, and process of, careers guidance whilst retaining an emphasis on the traditional outcome of matching individuals to the most appropriate long-term education, training or employment opportunities (Department for Education & Employment, 2000b). In this, of course, rests something of a contradiction. Increased emphasis on the process of careers guidance over a period of time reduces (*ipso facto*) the importance of quantifiable outcomes - yet performance is still judged on such outcomes.

In addition to the challenges to practice posed by policy changes, careers guidance theory is at a transitional point. As discussed in section 2.4, above, two distinct strands of theory development can be identified, which sometimes overlap. One seeks to address the needs of specific client groups. Within this particular strand, work on girls and women is pre-eminent. From their review of a decade of research into women and career development, Phillips and Imoff (1997) concluded:

The need for effective assistance is clear in all aspects of career development, and it is particularly critical in helping women broaden the personal array of alternatives; prepare for the complex and constantly changing array of choices, roles and commitments; and negotiate the challenges of the workplace and multiple life roles in creative ways.

(Phillips & Imoff, 1997, p.50)

Findings from this research study support the development of theory and practice to

address the needs of girls and women. A holistic, interpretative approach is indicated, which contextualises the client and defines a collaborative role for the guidance practitioner, as argued by Collin (1997):

The contextualist world hypothesis, therefore, challenges the view held in some quarters that 'experts' with their professional and technical knowledge, can make valid interpretations of others' words and behaviours and identify appropriate actions for them.

(Collin, 1997, p.357)

My research has made a contribution to understanding appropriate concerns for guidance theory and practice. Findings focus on the similarities and differences of girls' and women's experiences. It draws attention to situational compared with dispositional factors. The importance for women's career development of sexual discrimination and sexual harassment together with coping responses are emphasised. In the light of these findings, it is proposed that the nature of practice needs to be adapted. Competence for working at the level of the individual should be enhanced and the traditional focus on work at the individual level needs to be expanded to encompass guidance interventions at a systems and structural level. In tandem with enhanced practice, change to the political-legal structures, which ensures organisational and cultural transformation, needs to occur.

Finally, my findings question whether significant differences exist between women from minority ethnic groups and White women regarding their career development. In many ways, their hopes, dreams, aspirations and struggles seem to be similar. However, the extent, and depth of racial discrimination suffered has been illuminated, together with

strategies used to deal with this discrimination.

11.5 Final Reflections

Final reflections relate to learning from the research process, the relationship between practice and research, involvement with participants and my personal sense of loss. First, my personal learning has been profound. In part 1, a significant learning outcome was identified, as confronting the inevitable truth that the process of learning from research will, in fact, never be complete. During the course of this study, I have moved from periods of clarity and triumph to confusion and despair. As my understanding increased, the more complex it became, leading to the identification of other questions together with further re-interpretation of the original question. It has been, and will continue to be, a truly iterative process.

Second, undertaking doctoral study has represented a transitional process in a career from training for practice to research about practice. McLeod (1999) discusses the role of practitioner-researcher in counselling, regarding it as 'mysterious, unknown, vague' (p.201), suggesting that one of the key challenges is to develop ways of integrating research into work role and occupational identity. The concept of 'posturing', used by McLeod (1999, p.202) to discuss the different ways practitioner-researchers can sustain a link between research and practice, is relevant to my own situation. Registering on a doctorate is one of these 'postures'. Another is to work for an organisation which takes research seriously. Over the past five years, I have combined both, working for a university and undertaking a doctorate with training for practice. My goal now is to alter the balance of my occupational

role from one where teaching for practice has taken priority - with research as peripheral, to one where research is pre-eminent and training for practice is secondary.

Third, collecting and interpreting data from the participants in this study, particularly the nine interviewees, has been challenging, humbling and frustrating. Challenging, because I was keen to maximise the opportunities to make a real contribution to knowledge and apprehensive that I might fail in this endeavour. Humbling, because being admitted into the lives of these women to glimpse their struggles and achievements was a great privilege with the responsibility of representing, accurately, their powerful and instructive stories becoming a weighty task. Frustrating, because I was only ever able to scratch the surface, within available resources.

Finally, I would like to record my sense of loss. This study has been an integral part of my life for nearly five years. Strauss and Corbin (1990) recommend experience with the phenomena under investigation, since this sensitises the researcher to what happens in certain circumstances and why it happens. My interest in, and attachment to, the concept of women's career development has been a lived experience over the past thirty years. The completion of my thesis marks the resolution of a number of personal and professional issues, and (perhaps inevitably) has led to the identification of many more.

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APPENDIX 1

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON
Department of Psychology

CAREERS RESEARCH
Jenny Bimrose

All replies will be treated confidentially.

Please complete the questionnaire, and place in the box labelled 'JENNY BIMROSE' at the end of the session.

Thank you for your co-operation.

1. Gender (please tick appropriate box)

Female

Male

2. Age (please tick appropriate box)

Under 20 20 - 29 30 - 39

40 - 49 50 & over

3. Please write down the ethnic group to which you feel you belong:

4. Have you ever been in employment for longer than 6 months?

Yes No

If 'yes', please answer questions 4a),4b) and 4c). If 'no', please go straight to question 5.

4a) For the job in which you have been employed longest, please write (in years and months) the length of this employment:

4b) What was the job title? (e.g. secretary, engineer, teacher, sales person, insurance clerk)

4c) Please give your reason(s) for leaving:

continued over.....

5. Do you intend to look for employment after your course?

Yes No

If 'yes', do you know what type of job you will be looking for?

Yes No

Please write down what this is:

6. Please indicate whether you are:

Single Married/
Partner Divorced Separated

Other: (please state what this is)

7. Do you feel supported in your employment plans by any family member (e.g. parent, spouse, partner, sibling, child):

Yes No

If 'yes', what form does this support take (e.g. financial, emotional, practical)

8. Do you feel that you have (or have had) an important role model?

Yes No

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

PLEASE WRITE DOWN YOUR NAME, AND CONTACT INFORMATION.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone No: _____

Other (fax/email): _____

APPENDIX 2

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON
Department of Psychology

CAREERS RESEARCH
Jenny Bimrose, October 1998

My research focuses on careers guidance practice. This has been dominated by a particular psychological theory of occupational choice, which is derived from differential psychology. In summary, this theory suggests that occupational choice occurs when people have achieved first, an accurate understanding of their individual traits (e.g. personal abilities, aptitudes, interests, etc.); second, a knowledge of jobs and the labour market and then third, made a rational and objective judgement about the relationship between these two groups of facts. A key assumption is that it is possible to measure both individual talents and the attributes required in particular jobs which can then be matched to achieve a 'good fit'. It is when individuals are in jobs best suited to their abilities, they perform best, and productivity is highest.

However this theory has certain weaknesses. Scharf (1997) reminds us that: 'there is little research supporting or refuting trait and factor theory itself as a viable theory of career development. Rather, the research that has been done, of which there is a large amount, has related traits and factors to one another or has established the validity and reliability of measurements of traits and factors.' (p26).

Other influential theories have emerged to inform practice over the past 20 years, drawn from developmental, psychodynamic, humanistic and behavioural psychology together with contributions from other disciplines such as sociology. Whatever theories actually inform current practice, there is emerging consensus around the inadequacies of these theories. In particular, researchers are questioning the relevance of current theory for particular sectors of society. Osipow and Littlejohn (1995) discuss serious weaknesses in applying current theory to minority ethnic groups. They argue that a major problem is the manner in which all current theories use concepts which 'assume cultures that are relatively affluent and have good opportunities for education and upward mobility' (p255).

Hackett (1997) identifies several problems in trying to apply current theory to women: 'I am suggesting the need for formal testing of competing models as well as attempts at unification and integration...we also need to incorporate issues of sexism, racism and their interaction, along with considerations of relational orientation, support and barriers into all our developing conceptions of women's career psychology' (p187).

My research will examine aspects of occupational choice behaviour previously neglected. Hopefully, your participation in the research will provide you with valuable insights into your own career development and behaviour.

References:

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APPENDIX 3

UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON
Department of Psychology

CAREERS RESEARCH
Jenny Bimrose

Please complete this questionnaire, seal in the envelop provided and return as soon as possible (not later than 11th December, 1998).

All replies will be treated confidentially. Thank for your co-operation.

1. Please rate the following statements by circling the appropriate number where:

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

Success or failure is due to an individual's skills and abilities (or lack of them).

1 2 3 4 5

Social, economic and political forces are more powerful than personal attributes.

1 2 3 4 5

There is a strong relationship between ability, effort and success in society.

1 2 3 4 5

Events that shape your life are often outside your control.

1 2 3 4 5

Factors like an individual's motivation, values and feelings are important to success.

1 2 3 4 5

Families & communities are more important than the individuals within them.

1 2 3 4 5

Individuals shape their own future.

1 2 3 4 5

The future is determined largely by chance, luck & fate.

1 2 3 4 5

2. When thinking about employment in the future, what (if any) do you expect to be the main difficulties or obstacles you would have to overcome (this could relate either to entry to employment or progress within it)?

3. Please rate the following statements by circling the appropriate number, where:

1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree

The past is important; learn from history.	1	2	3	4	5
Live for today; don't worry about tomorrow.	1	2	3	4	5
Plan for the future; sacrifice today for a better tomorrow.	1	2	3	4	5
Work hard and your efforts will be rewarded; be active.	1	2	3	4	5
Our purpose in life is to develop our inner self.	1	2	3	4	5
It's enough to just be.	1	2	3	4	5
There are leaders and followers in the world.	1	2	3	4	5
We should consult with friends/families when problems arise.	1	2	3	4	5
Individual autonomy is important; we control our own destiny.	1	2	3	4	5
Life is largely determined by external forces (fate, genetics, God, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
Our challenge is to conquer and control nature.	1	2	3	4	5
People and nature co-exist in harmony.	1	2	3	4	5

4. Again, when thinking about employment in the future (entry to employment or progress within it), what (if any) do you expect to be the main sources of support and encouragement?

5. Have you ever had a job (including temporary, short-term or casual)?

Yes No

If 'yes', please answer question 5a). If 'no', please go to question 6.

5a) Have you ever suffered discrimination connected with any type of employment that you have had?

Yes No

If 'yes', please answer questions 5b) - 5g). If 'no', please go to question 6.

5b) Was this discrimination related to:

* entry into employment (selection/recruitment)?

Yes No

* the time when you were employed?

Yes No

* Other (please specify):

5c) Did the discrimination contribute to your leaving the employment where it occurred?

Yes No

5d) Was the discrimination you suffered (please circle as appropriate):

* racial discrimination Yes No

* sexual discrimination Yes No

* Other type(s) of discrimination Yes No
or a combination. Please specify:

5e) Please describe, briefly, your worst example of discrimination suffered related to employment:

5f) Has your experience of employment discrimination affected your aspirations for future employment?

Yes No

5g) Do you expect to be subjected to discrimination in future employment?

Yes No

If you would like to comment on any aspect of your answers above, please do so:

6a) Would you like to receive a summary of my research findings? Yes No

6b) Would you be willing to discuss aspects of your answers with me? Yes No

MANY THANKS FOR COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please seal it in the addressed envelope provided and return to the 'Help Desk' (035) in The Green, or to June Rayner in the Psychology General Office (315, The Green).

APPENDIX 4

Dear Student,

Re: Research Participation

Thank you for completing my first questionnaire, entitled **Careers Research** which I distributed during a teaching session on 8th October.

On this questionnaire, you indicated your willingness to answer some more questions about your experiences of employment and/or your occupational aspirations. I enclose the second questionnaire, together with an addressed envelope for its return.

Please would you complete your questionnaire and return it in the sealed envelope to the Help Desk (room 035) in The Green, or to June Rayner in the Psychology General Office (room 315 of The Green) as soon as possible, and not later than Friday, 11th December.

Thank you for participating in my research and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you every success with your studies at UEL.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Bimrose,
Head of Centre for Training in Careers Guidance

APPENDIX 5

8 April 2000

Dear

Re: Careers Research

During Semester 1, you completed two questionnaires for me about your experiences of employment and future aspirations. In the second questionnaire, you indicated that you would like to receive a copy of a summary report of my findings. This should be ready for distribution within two weeks of your receiving this letter.

Additionally, you indicated that you would be willing to discuss aspects of your answers with me further. I would like to spend about half an hour talking to you individually about some aspects of your responses. Our discussion would take place in my office (room 312 in The Green) and will be confidential. I hope that you are still willing to spend 30 minutes of your time for this purpose. Please complete the proforma and return to me as soon as possible either via the Psychology General Office or the Help Desk. Thank you.

With best wishes,
Yours sincerely,

Jenny Bimrose,
Head of Centre for Training in Careers Guidance

.....
PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN IN THE ADDRESSED ENVELOPE PROVIDED

Name: _____

Time you are able to attend for interview in room 312 (please tick your preferences);

Friday, 16th April 10.00am
Friday, 16th April 1.30pm
Wednesday, 21st April, 11am
Thursday, 22nd April, 1.00pm
Thursday, 22nd April, 1.30pm

Monday, 26th April, 11am
Tuesday, 27th April, 2.00pm
Wednesday, 28th April, 2.00pm
Thursday, 20th April, 11.30am
Thursday, 29th April, 1.00pm

If none of these dates/times are convenient, please suggest a time which is possible for you, below:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

APPENDIX 6

16 April 1999

Dear Student,

Re: Careers Research

You completed two questionnaires for me in the first semester about your experience of employment and aspirations for the future. In the second questionnaire, you indicated that you wanted to receive a report on the results of my research. This report is enclosed. I hope you find it of interest.

Many of you indicated your willingness to discuss aspects of your answers with me in the future. Those of you who did may hear from me again within the next week or so.

If not, may I thank you again for your help?

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Jenny Bimrose,
Head of Centre for Training in Careers Guidance

APPENDIX 7

Appendix 7: Ibrahim's value orientation model, adapted by Sue & Sue (1999) p.167

DIMENSIONS		VALUE ORIENTATIONS		
Time Focus: What is the temporary focus of human life?	Past: The past is important. Learn from history.	Present: The present moment is everything. Don't worry about tomorrow.	Future: Plan for the future: sacrifice today for a better tomorrow.	
Human Activity: What is the modality of human activity?	Being: It's enough to just be.	Being & In-becoming: Our purpose in life is develop our inner self.	Doing: Be active. Work hard and your efforts will be rewarded.	
Social Relations: How are human relationships defined?	Lineal: Relationships are vertical. There are leaders and followers in this world.	Collateral: We should consult with friends/families when problems arise.	Individualistic: Individual autonomy is important. We control our destiny.	
People/Nature Relationship: What is the relationship of people to nature?	Subjugation to Nature: Life is largely determined by external forces (God, fate, genetics, etc.)	Harmony with Nature: People and nature co-exist in harmony.	Mastery over Nature: Our challenge is to conquer and control nature.	

Ref: Ibrahim, F.A. (1985) 'Effective Cross-Cultural Counseling and Psychotherapy: A Framework' in *The Counseling Psychologist*, 13, p625-638, quoted in Sue, D.W. (1999) *Counseling the Culturally Different: Theory & Practice*, New York: John Wiley & Sons.

APPENDIX 8

15 May 2000

Dear

Re: Careers Research

About a year ago, you allowed me to interview you about some of your employment experiences, for my research.

I enclose a copy of my summary of the transcript of your interview and would be pleased to receive any corrections or amendments. To ensure confidentiality, I have given you a pseudonym, and omitted certain details. If you would like to suggest a different pseudonym, please do. A stamped, addressed envelop is provided for this purpose, and for you to return any corrections you wish to make to the script. If I have not heard from you by the end of June, I will assume my summary is acceptable to you.

In total, I interviewed nine women for my research. I would like to write an article (maybe more than one!) for submission to an academic journal, using short, selected sections of the transcripts from these interviews. If you have any objection to my using your material in this way, please let me know.

I would like to thank you, once again, for helping me with the research. I feel privileged to have been allowed to glimpse into your life, and sincerely wish you well for the future.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely

Jenny Bimrose,
Head of Centre for Training in Careers Guidance