Organizational Culture and Equality/Diversity: A Minority Ethnic (ME) Perspective

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Aim and Proposition

- To explore the organizational culture implications for equality and diversity

- Managing Organizational Culture (MOC) increases the labour market disadvantage of Minority Ethnic Groups (MEGs) defined in terms of access to work and career progression.

- Why Minority Ethnic perspective?

Persistence of Inequality

Overall unemployment rate 8% and 7% for Whites (DWP Data)

	2012	2013
Minority Ethnic Groups	13%	14%
Black	16%	17%
Pakistani/ Bangladeshi	17%	19%

- 55% of Black men aged 16-24 unemployed (ONS, 2012).

- 25% of minority ethnic unemployment attributable to discrimination (Heath and Li, 2013).

- Overt Racism?

- Covert Racism?

Degree Qualification by Ethnic Groups (Census Data)

	1991	2011
White	13%	25%
Pakistani	7%	25%
Black Caribbean	9%	25%
Bangladeshi	5%	20%
Indian	15%	42%
Black African	26%	40%
Chinese	26%	43%

- 'Ethnic penalty' persists despite improvement in education and qualification!

- Human capital is not sufficient, we need to look at other explanations

Organizational or Societal Culture?

- Organizations can develop cultures that are different from societal culture

- They develop practices to help maintain such cultures

- 'Enact' their environment (Weick, 1979)

Organization

Immediate Environment

Environment at large
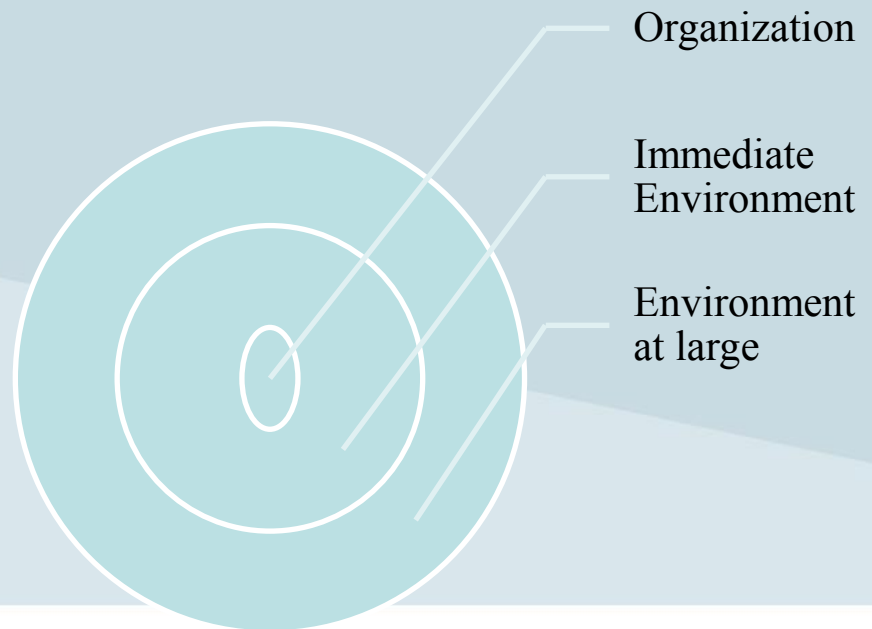
Conceptions of Culture

- Edgar Schein (1985; 2004)
  - ➢ Assumptions
  - ➢ Values
  - ➢ Artefacts

- Joanne Martin (1992; 2002)
  - ➢ Integration
  - ➢ Differentiation
  - ➢ Fragmentation

Culture: Problems and Issues

- The problematic nature of 'shared values'
  - ➤ What values
  - ➤ Whose values
  - ➤ Cultural domination
- Stereotyping and Cultural Assumptions
  - ➤ ME women not perceived to be career minded
  - ➤ Problems with adjusting to dominant cultural values

Managing Organizational Culture (MOC)

- Executives continue to view culture as a source of competitive advantage (Barney, 1986; Bremer, 2012)

- Aim is to create a 'strong culture' (Robbins, 1987)

- From NHS to Ryan Air!

- Culture change models identify critical success factors which have implications for equality and diversity (e.g. Schein, Bates, Silverzweig and Allen)

The Importance of Leadership

- Leaders shape culture but ME employees are less likely to be leaders/managers or to have influence

  ➢ ME employees need more impressive education and qualifications to be leaders (Zweigenhaft and Domhoff, 2006)

  ➢ 5% of senior managers are ME (ONS, 2013)

  ➢ ME leaders rarely in strategic functions

- *P1: Strong culture organizations are likely to have fewer ME leaders/managers and they are likely to lack influence in MOC.*

Recruitment and Selection

- Employment of 'like-minded' people key to culture management

- MEGs disadvantaged

  ➢ Recruitment from a narrow pool

  ➢ Informal recruitment

  ➢ Lack of social networks

  ➢ Recruitment agency discrimination

- *P2*: *MOC through value-oriented selective recruitment practices are likely to disadvantage MEGs*

Socialisation

- Relational challenges arising from demographic dissimilarity make it harder for MEGs to socialise and access informal networks (Dumas et al., 2013)

- MEGs less likely to be involved in 'informal bonding'

- The problem of 'bi-cultural stress' (Kamenou and Fearfull, 2006)

P3: MOC through intensive socialisation will impact negatively on the careers of MEGs

Internal Labour Market (ILM)

- Internal labour market reduces employment opportunities for MEGs

- MEGs have less career support than their white counterparts (James, 2000)

- 2011 Survey: 50% MEGs negative about ILM

- Stereotyping of career aspirations (e.g. ME women: Kamenou and Fearfull, 2006)

P4a: Internal labour market policies are likely to perpetuate existing patterns of ethnic inequality.

P4b: MOC through ILM is likely to extend the disadvantage of MEGs.

Football Example

- 30% of players in top 4 divisions are ME

- 2 ME managers in the 92 clubs in football

- Resistance to the 'Rooney Rule'

- Strong Culture to blame?

  ➢ Emphasis on history

  ➢ Desire to maintain status quo

  ➢ Poor leadership examples

Indicative Quotation 1

- They have this tradition of going to the pub every Friday. The managers go with them as well. They do ask me whether I want to join them but of course they know I am Muslim and we are not allowed to drink or patronise pubs so I guess I can't go with them. You hear things that are happening in the office the next Monday and you know they discussed them at the pub. (ME Female, 44 years).

Indicative Quotation 2

- When you go to a business function, you are often one of very few black people… Everyone is a group chatting away. You stand on your own and no one will talk to you. I know I should get used to it but I find it quite distressing and it puts me off going … (ME Female, 37 years).

Indicative Quotation 3

- Although I am senior in rank, I find that my white colleagues have informal gatherings inside and outside the office where they discuss and agree strategies before we have our formal meetings. The formal meetings are simply there to rubber-stamp the decision and those of us in the minority don't stand a chance of making our views count (ME Male, 50 years).

Indicative Quotation 4

- I have noticed that there is a great deal of snobbery here… where you went to high school, which university you went to all play a part in determining your career progression. This creates a structural disadvantage against ethnic minorities because, although we can do the jobs, we did not attend prestigious schools and universities (ME Male, 33 years).

Indicative Quotation 5

- I have seen the way they treat the one ethnic minority manager we have in my office. He is treated as though he is not there and he has no allies to fight his corner. Even the junior staff don't have much respect for him… They would often go to his colleagues for things that are within his area of responsibility (ME Female, 25 years).

Indicative Quotation 6

- When jobs are advertised they go into overdrive. They have meetings to nominate people that they will approach informally for the jobs. The names they agree on invariably become the short-list for the interview. Occasionally you have the token minority candidate that is short-listed for completeness sake. What chance do they have? (ME Male, 44 years).

Way Forward

- Research Agenda
  - ➤ Study 'dark side of culture management'
  - ➤ Multiple and integrated studies
  - ➤ Explore role of HR Managers as gatekeepers
- Implications for organizations
  - ➤ Undertake cultural audit to identify issues
  - ➤ Set targets for ME representation
  - ➤ Promote ME mentoring and networking
  - ➤ Make unconscious bias and cultural awareness training compulsory
  - ➤ Develop open and transparent recruitment process
  - ➤ Blank name application forms?