



CRANFIELD UNIVERSITY

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**WHAT IT MEANS TO SUCCEED:
PERSONAL CONCEPTIONS OF CAREER SUCCESS HELD BY
MALE AND FEMALE MANAGERS AT DIFFERENT AGES**

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

PhD THESIS

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Academic Year 1996-1997

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December 1996

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to investigate how managers define career success for themselves. It seeks to discover what differences there are in the way that women and men, and older and younger managers, see their own career success. It fills an identifiable gap in the literature on career success, in that it examines the subject from the point of view of the individual, not the organisation. In doing so, it responds to calls for work in this area, especially the development of "orientational categories" which classify peoples' attitudes to careers according to their individual predispositions (Bailyn 1989).

The research, which took place in BT, uses qualitative methods, in particular in-depth interviewing, to elicit managers' own definitions of career success. Using techniques of qualitative data analysis and with the help of NUD.IST computer software, it develops a typology of managerial career success, which shows that managers view their own career success in one of four ways: as a Climber, who emphasises hierarchical position, pay and enjoyment in their definition of success; as an Expert, who sees success as being good at what they do and getting personal recognition for this; as an Influencer, who defines career success primarily as organisational influence; and as a Self-Realiser, who judges their own career success by achievement at a very personal level.

Women managers, who generally base their definitions of career success on internal and intangible criteria, are more likely to be Experts and Self-Realisers; men, who tend to base their ideas of success on external criteria are more likely to be Climbers and Influencers. Younger managers, especially men, are most likely to be Climbers, and older managers, Influencers who often see their own success in terms of achieving something at work by which they will be remembered.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would never have been written without the help and support of family, friends and academic colleagues. In particular, I would like to thank:

Sue Vinnicombe, my supervisor, for her untiring enthusiasm, even during my work's least promising phases;

Ian Kershaw, who inspired me with the confidence to undertake the project in the first place;

Lesley Robinson, for painstakingly proof-reading my thesis;

David Partington, for giving me advice on the methodology chapter;

All the staff at BT who helped to arrange the interviews and who participated in the research;

My mother, for never doubting that I would succeed in finishing my thesis;

and last, but of course not least, Andrew Pritchard, without whom it simply would not have been possible for me to undertake and complete this project!

J.S., London, December 1996.

CONTENTS

	Page
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 A personal perspective on researching career success	1
1.2 The importance of researching personal conceptions of career success to individual managers	3
1.3 The importance of researching personal conceptions of career success to organisations	5
1.4 The theoretical need for research investigating managers' personal conceptions of career success	7
1.5 The research questions	9
1.6 A summary of the thesis chapters	9
 CHAPTER 2: CAREER SUCCESS: THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND	12
2.1 The concept of career success	12
2.1.1 New careers; old success	12
2.1.2 Success on managers' own terms	13
2.1.3 The two dimensions of the career	16
2.1.4 The career from the individual's perspective	19
2.1.5 The meaning of career success to individuals	22
2.1.6 Career success and life success	26
2.2 The difference between male and female managers' ideas of career success	27
2.2.1 Women managers' conceptions of career success	27
2.2.2 Differences in work values between male and female managers	33
2.2.3 Psychological influences on women's attitudes to careers	36
2.2.4 The different reality of women managers' careers	39
2.2.5 The relationship between women managers' ideas of career success, their psychological development and their career paths	41

	Page
2.3 The effect of age on managers' conceptions of career success	43
2.3.1 Career success and age	43
2.3.2 The process of adult development	48
2.3.3 Men and women's career development	52
2.4 Conclusion	58
 CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODS	 60
3.1 Research strategy	60
3.1.1 Philosophical perspective	60
3.1.2 Pragmatic perspective	64
3.1.3 The choice of a research strategy	67
3.2 Research design	68
3.2.1 Research methods	69
3.2.2 The research setting	71
3.2.3 BT	73
3.2.4 The selection of the research participants	76
3.2.5 The participants in the first stage of the research	78
3.2.6 The participants in the second stage of the research	80
3.3 Field work	83
3.3.1 Interviewing the participants	83
3.3.2 Problems and successes of the interview process	86
3.4 Data analysis	87
3.4.1 The approach to data analysis	88
3.4.2 The process of data analysis	91
3.4.3 Presentation of the findings	95
 CHAPTER 4: AN EXPLORATION OF MANAGERIAL CAREER SUCCESS	 97
4.1 What do managers conceive career success to be on their own terms?	97
4.1.1 Internal criteria of career success	98
4.1.2 External criteria of career success	101
4.1.3 Intangible criteria of career success	101

	Page
4.1.4 Further evidence for the importance of internal and intangible criteria	103
4.2 The effect of gender on managers' personal conceptions of career success	104
4.3 The effect of age on manager's personal conceptions of career success	109
4.4 Discussion	112
4.5 Conceptualising managerial career success	116
 CHAPTER 5: DEVELOPING A MODEL OF MANAGERIAL CAREER SUCCESS	 118
5.1 Managers' personal conceptions of career success	118
5.2 Internal criteria of career success	120
5.2.1 Sense of accomplishment	120
5.2.2 Sense of achievement	122
5.2.3 Enjoyment and interest	123
5.2.4 Identifying sub-groups of internal criteria	124
5.2.5 Integrity criteria	127
5.2.6 Balance criteria	128
5.3 Intangible criteria of career success	129
5.3.1 Personal recognition criteria	130
5.3.2 Influence criteria	133
5.4 External criteria of career success	135
5.4.1 Grade criteria	136
5.4.2 Reward criteria	141
5.5 The effects of gender on personal conceptions of managerial career success	143
5.5.1 The differences in emphasis on external criteria	143
5.5.2 The differences in emphasis on internal criteria	149
5.5.3 The differences in emphasis on intangible criteria	151
5.5.4 Women's "broader" definitions of success	154
5.6 The effects of age on personal conceptions of managerial career success	154
5.6.1 The decline in emphasis on external criteria	154

	Page
5.6.2 The increase in importance of intangible criteria	156
5.6.3 The differences in emphasis on internal criteria	158
5.6.4 Evidence for changes in managers' conceptions of career success	158
5.7 Developing a model of managerial career success	161
CHAPTER 6: BUILDING A TYPOLOGY OF MANAGERIAL CAREER SUCCESS	168
6.1 Four types of manager	168
6.2 The Climber	172
6.3 The Expert	178
6.4 The Influencer	185
6.5 The Self-Realiser	192
6.6 Problematic managers	199
6.7 Climber, Expert, Influencer and Self-Realiser: what kind of manager is likely to see success as each type?	202
CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS	211
7.1 A summary of the research findings	211
7.2 What career success means to managers	212
7.3 The differences between male and female managers' ideas of career success	219
7.4 The effect of age on managers' conceptions of career success	226
7.5 The research findings in a wider context	232
7.5.1 Organisational change and the "new" psychological contract	232
7.5.2 Women in organisations	236
7.5.3 Areas of further questioning	240
7.6 Limitations of the research findings	244
7.7 Suggestions for future research	246
CHAPTER 8: POSTSCRIPT	248
8.1 The necessity for a postscript	248

	Page
8.2 The significance of the research findings for organisations	248
8.3 The significance of the research findings for individual managers	250
8.4 The personal significance of the research findings	251
REFERENCES	253
APPENDIX 1	266
APPENDIX 2	268
APPENDIX 3	270
APPENDIX 4	272
APPENDIX 5	273
APPENDIX 6	284

TABLES

		Page
Table 3.1	The participants in the first stage of the research	79
Table 3.2	The participants in the second stage of the research	82
Table 5.1	Internal criteria of career success	127
Table 5.2	Intangible criteria of career success	130
Table 5.3	External criteria of career success	136
Table 5.4	Managers' criteria for career success	163
Table 6.1	The Climbers	203
Table 6.2	The Experts	204
Table 6.3	The Influencers	204
Table 6.4	The Self-Realisers	205

FIGURES

		Page
Figure 2.1	Derr and Laurent's cultural model of career dynamics	17
Figure 2.2	Poole et al.'s theoretical model of the subjective view of career success	24
Figure 2.3	Powell and Mainiero's cross-currents in the river of time model	32
Figure 4.1	A model of managerial career success	117
Figure 5.1	A model of managerial career success (1)	162
Figure 5.2	A model of managerial career success (2)	165
Figure 5.3	A model of managerial career success (3)	167

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the research topic of managers' conceptions of career success. Section 1.1 explains briefly why it is of personal interest to the researcher; section 1.2 examines its importance to individual managers and section 1.3 discusses its relevance to organisations. Section 1.4 identifies the theoretical need for research which investigates career success from the individual's perspective. Section 1.5 outlines the research questions which the research tries to answer. Section 1.6 summarises the content of the subsequent chapters in this thesis.

1.1 A personal perspective on researching career success

The aim of this research is to discover how managers define their own career success, that is not what they believe organisations class as success, but what they perceive career success to be for themselves on their own terms. It also seeks to show what differences there are in the way that women and men, and younger and older managers, see their own career success. There are sound reasons both from the point of view of the individual manager and from the perspective of the organisation why such research is necessary and worthwhile; these will be described in detail below. Yet the nature of the research has a deeper significance to me, the researcher, at a personal level; accordingly, my experience of the research process has been a period of personal development as well as one of academic discovery. The most appropriate place for discussion of the research topic to begin therefore is, I believe, at this very personal level.

My own experiences of organisational life are, I suspect, very similar to those of many other women of my age and educational background. After virtually a single sex education (girls' grammar school, followed by women's college at university), it came as something of a shock for me to discover that I was not going to be treated just like everybody else when I started work. In my first job, with a printing company where I was the only woman who was not a secretary or a canteen assistant, I was perplexed by the comment one particularly disgruntled manager made to me, that "there'll never be a woman director of this company": I simply couldn't see why.

Eventually I took my career development in hand and moved on to what I perceived would be the more egalitarian world of journalism. There at least we were all seen to be the same, or were we? In fact I became increasingly frustrated by the attitude of

some of my superiors, in particular, an assumption that women journalists didn't want to be promoted to become editors of magazines. They seemed to see reward and recognition in a way that didn't mean much to me either, as progression up an increasingly sophisticated hierarchy of job titles, without any additional responsibility or interesting new challenges.

By now I was conscious that, as a woman, not only was I being treated somewhat differently from my male colleagues, but also that what I wanted from my career was not quite what I was supposed to want as described by my male bosses in the form of ever fancier job titles. I only began to reflect seriously on this, however, when I stopped working to study full-time for an MBA, when, of course, I had to think seriously about the future direction my own career was going to take. Something else that occurred to me at around that time was the "oddness" of some of my female friends' careers. They were not odd at all, actually, but they just did not fit the pattern of "normal" career development which I learned about on my MBA course. At that point most of my friends were in their mid-thirties. By and large, they had chosen to be self-employed, work part-time, or were in the kind of jobs career literature pretended didn't exist for well-qualified graduates. Others, like myself, had resumed or planned to resume their studies.

My thoughts about my own career and those of my friends came to a head, not surprisingly, at about the time when I was considering whether or not to embark upon a PhD. It is impossible to say whether my decision to study for a PhD was driven by my interest in women's careers or whether the decision drove my interest. In a sense it doesn't matter, because it seems right that the two were so intertwined. The fact that I had already deliberately put my own career development at the top of my agenda by leaving my job as a journalist to return to university meant this was an obvious topic for me to investigate. As Marshall (1995) says, research can often be linked with the researcher's life process "as they pursue topics of personal relevance and hope to achieve life development as well as intellectual insight".

My academic interests and the direction of my research have changed somewhat since those early days, but throughout the process my earliest ideas about women's position in organisations and their careers have continued to motivate me. Beneath these ideas, I think, lies a deeply-held belief that every person deserves the right to be treated as an individual and not stereotyped in any way. Studying for the PhD has proved to be a period of tremendous personal development for me, not least because I

have been forced to put my own attitudes about my career and my life as a whole under intense scrutiny. What I have gained from the process as a person is a better understanding of the strength of my belief in the integrity of the individual and the importance of this to my view of the world. I believe that the value I place on this relates closely to my earliest motivation to do PhD research in this area.

1.2 The importance of researching personal conceptions of career success to individual managers

There are likely to be important benefits for individuals from a better understanding of what career success means to managers themselves. Most research into careers, especially in the UK, has examined them from the point of view of the organisation, rather than the individual. As Herriot et al. (1994) say, it "has mainly focused on structural features of organisations and their effects on objective career variables and managerial levels". It is perhaps for this reason that career success is frequently presented as something which can be objectively determined and is measured solely through external criteria such as hierarchical position and salary level (e.g. O'Reilly and Chatman 1994, Melamed 1995). For many writers on careers it has proved easiest to assume "that external definitions coincide with internal ones" (Bailyn 1989). Nonetheless, this assumption flies in the face of the claim made by career theorists that career success for the individual can only be defined by the individual (Hall 1976, Gunz 1989).

There is widespread evidence that a description of career success in purely external terms does not match what managers feel about their own success (Korman et al. 1981, Nicholson and West 1988, Scase and Goffee 1989). In particular, this idea of career success does not correspond with how women managers and older managers appear to define success for themselves. Women often relate their own career success much more to a process of internal growth (Hennig and Jardim 1978) which involves interesting and challenging work (Marshall 1984, Asplund 1988) and balance with the rest of their life (Powell and Mainiero 1992). Older managers, particularly after the age of 40, place much less emphasis on external criteria for career success than their younger counterparts (Nicholson and West 1988, O'Connor and Wolfe 1987, Kalleberg and Losocco 1983).

There are other reasons, however, which make research into personal conceptions of career success of particular importance to individual managers at the present time.

For many people, uncertainty about their career and the kind of success they may be able to achieve is increasing, with good reason. Over the past ten years organisations have tended to rethink the way in which they operate. Competition has become much sharper due to, amongst other things, the world-wide economic downturn, the growing globalisation of business, and a faster pace of innovation thanks to rapid improvements in technology. As companies have introduced new ways of working in order to make themselves more competitive, stable employment and the traditional organisational career associated with it have begun to disappear.

Organisations have shed whole layers of management in order to speed up decision making, destroying the neat hierarchical ladder up which so many executives once climbed. A new emphasis on concepts like organisational learning (Pedler et al. 1991) and the need for rapid innovation have meant that communication now bypasses the traditional hierarchical channels. In the future, we are told, most companies will employ just a small core of permanent staff, with others being brought in on a temporary basis as and when required (Handy 1989).

Not surprisingly, these changes mean that the concepts of "career" and "career success", as they have been known, are under threat (Leach and Chakiris 1988). It is clear that hierarchical success, based on pay and position, may no longer be available to many people (Gelatt 1992). As Kanter says (1989), post-entrepreneurialism is hastening the demise of the traditional hierarchical career: "Climbing the career ladder is being replaced by hopping from job to job." Career responsibility, she claims, is now in the hands of individuals, who will need to acquire the correct mix of "portable" skills in order to enjoy a "successful" career in the new environment. Handy (1989) agrees that "discontinuous change and the new professionalism have therefore combined to spell the end of the corporate career for all but a few".

Some believe that the traditional organisational career may be replaced by the "boundaryless" career, which moves across the boundaries of separate employers and as such is independent of conventional organisational career principles (Arthur 1994, Mirvis and Hall 1994). If the boundaryless career becomes a reality, it will mean that, for increasing numbers of managers, it may not be possible to base career success on any kind of organisational success at all.

At the same time as organisational changes are forcing managers to rethink what a career and career success means to them, there is some evidence that men especially

are changing in a way which may also make existing preconceptions about career success less relevant than ever before. Whereas William Whyte's *Organisation Man* (Whyte 1956) was happy to devote his life to working his way up the company hierarchy, while his wife looked after the home and family, his present day successor is likely to have more ambivalent feelings about keeping the two parts of his life so separate (Gerson 1993).

According to writers like Kimmel (1993) and Hall (1990), men who achieve success on "traditional" terms today often feel that something is missing from their life. Scase and Goffee (1989) report that many male managers are less "psychologically immersed" in their work roles than their predecessors were. They believe that many men now see career advancement as a means of enhancing personal lifestyles, which are separate from, not subordinate to, work roles, like they were in the past. As a result, men's conceptions of personal success "are now more broadly defined and include non-work criteria" (Scase and Goffee 1989). The implications of this for male managers' definitions of career success have yet to be explored.

1.3 The importance of researching personal conceptions of career success to organisations

Organisations also have much to gain at the present time from a greater understanding of what career success means to the individual managers whom they employ. While the organisational changes described in section 1.2 may have made employees question the kind of success they might hope to achieve in their career, for organisations, the disappearance of the "career by advancement" means that many of the processes concerning career development and management development which they have traditionally employed will have to be rethought.

As discussed in detail in section 1.2, it is clear that organisations today are less and less able to develop their managers' careers through hierarchical progression in the way that they were in the past. If they want to continue to offer their staff opportunities for career development, these will have to be based on something other than the principle of upward mobility. The question which remains to be answered is on what career development can be founded, if it is no longer related to hierarchical progression. As Kanter (1989) says, "clearly, the bureaucratic pattern has to go". "But", she questions, "what do we replace it with? And what about the security it brought to people, a security that many still crave?" Research which illuminates how

managers themselves perceive their own career success may offer organisations a better idea of what they actually want from their careers and thus provide some indication of potential alternative focuses for future career development initiatives.

It is desirable in any case that the range of human resource management practices which organisations employ should reflect what employees feel about their careers and their own career success; Peluchette (1993), for example, suggests that "subjective career success has implications for one's mental well-being and quality of life, issues which most organisations are concerned about". The tendency for organisations to view career success in purely external terms presumably is damaging and demotivating for managers who do not see success in this way, and means that the outcome of human resource management practices related to their careers may be unfavourable. Gattiker and Larwood (1988) maintain that "success criteria can help human resource specialists achieve a fit between the employee's real career opportunities and needs".

If certain groups of managers, such as women managers or older managers, have different ideas about career success from those which they are generally assumed to hold, then their progress and development may be impeded, and the contribution they make to the organisation reduced. Consequently, gaining a better understanding of what career success means to different kinds of managers has particular implications, for example, for organisations who run special programmes to develop women managers: "Any understanding of career paths and effective personnel management is substantially reduced if the subjective side of career success is ignored" (Gattiker and Larwood 1986).

Measures of career success as it has been traditionally understood, such as salary level and hierarchical position, are also closely linked to the motivation and reward of managers. For this reason, it is evident that an improved knowledge of managers' perceptions of career success on their own terms is likely to make organisational practices related to motivation and reward, as well as career development, more effective. Likewise, such knowledge could offer a better insight into the importance managers place on balancing work and home life as part of their definition of success (Scase and Goffee 1989, Sekaran and Hall 1989), and allow organisations to devise efficacious and more acceptable "family friendly" policies.

1.4 The theoretical need for research investigating managers' personal conceptions of career success

It is widely acknowledged that career theory lacks a satisfactory conceptualisation of managers' own definitions of career success. Poole et al. (1993), for example, claim that "one of the major shortcomings in the career success literature has been an adequate conceptualisation of what 'career success' means" and add that "an individual's subjective view of the definition of 'success' would be a useful starting point for analysing self-evaluation of career success".

It is recognised that managers' personal definitions of career success are often overlooked or excluded from research into careers (Herriot et al. 1994). Gattiker and Larwood (1989) say: "The examination of individual perceptions of achievement, which are important because they might reveal that individuals feel differently about their accomplishments than an outsider might expect, has unfortunately not been a popular subject, so there is less research in this area."

For this reason there have been widespread calls for research into personal conceptions of career success (e.g. Gattiker and Larwood 1986, 1988 and 1990, Marshall 1989, Powell and Mainiero 1992, Newell and Dopson 1995). Powell and Mainiero (1992) believe that new research is needed which incorporates "expanded definitions of career success". "What would seem to matter most to women (and men) is whether they see themselves as successful on their own terms," they say. Newell and Dopson (1995) highlight the diversity of managers' views on careers, which they believe need to be "explored and explained". "The existing literature offers few helpful frameworks in this respect," they conclude. Marshall (1989) talks about the need for a re-focusing of career theory which "involves moving away from organisations and society judging the individual from the outside using socially defined criteria of success and towards self-assessment, including criteria setting and personal responsibility".

The suggestion that women managers and older managers in particular are less likely to see career success in the external terms by which it has traditionally been described (e.g. Marshall 1984, Asplund 1988, Gallos 1989, O'Connor and Wolfe 1987, Nicholson and West 1988) adds weight to the calls for research which investigates managers' personal conceptions of career success. It also indicates the weakness of much previous career theory, in that the studies on which it is based have looked

primarily at men's careers (e.g. Schein 1978, Dalton et al. 1982), and established them as the norm.

The few studies which have investigated success from the individual's point of view have either overlooked the issue of the potential effect of gender or age (e.g. Gattiker and Larwood 1986 and 1988) or failed to substantiate it (Poole et al. 1991 and 1993). There is a need, therefore, for research into managers' perceptions of career success which attempts to conceptualise what success means to female and male managers, and older and younger managers, and makes a contribution to career success theory both through the conceptualisation itself and by demonstrating the differences and similarities which exist between the various groups.

Bailyn (1989) has suggested how this line of enquiry might be pursued. She identifies the need for "orientational categories", taxonomies or typologies based on "individual actors' wants, plans and commitments" which classify people "according to individual predispositions", to be developed in order to conceptualise managers' attitudes to their career. "How can one best deal with the internal career?" she asks. "Not idiosyncratically, individual by individual, at least not for research and theory. Rather what is required is an aggregation of individual data which reflects differences in subjective meanings. It is my sense that such aggregation would result in what one might call orientational categories." In particular, Bailyn indicates the potential value of research which makes use of both orientational categories and social categories, such as gender and age, as a means of illustrating the differences and similarities between particular groups of individuals in terms of their attitudes to their career.

This research therefore seeks to fill a clearly identified gap in the theory on career success by developing a conceptualisation of managers' personal perceptions of career success, based on individuals' subjective definitions of career success (Poole et al. 1993), which takes account of the possibility that gender and age may have an effect on the way in which success is conceived. Its findings are used to build a typology of career success for managers after the fashion proposed by Bailyn (1989), that is "an aggregation of individual data which reflects differences in subjective meanings".

1.5 The research questions

The intention of this research is to conceptualise managers' own definitions of career success and investigate differences and similarities which exist between male and female managers and older and younger managers in terms of how they conceive their own career success. The gap identified in career success theory described in section 1.4 suggests that it considers the following research questions:

1. *What do managers conceive career success to be for themselves on their own terms?*
2. *Do women managers have different ideas about what career success is for them from men?*
3. *Do older managers have different ideas about what career success is for them from younger ones?*

The focus of the research questions on uncovering managers' personal definitions of career success, a topic that relates intimately to the psyche of the individual and about which to date few studies have been carried out, has important implications for the kind of research methods which might be used. It is widely argued that qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews, are most appropriate for this kind of exploratory research and in particular for studies which investigate the meanings and beliefs of individuals in the way that this study attempts to do (e.g. Easterby-Smith et al. 1991, Silverman 1993): the actual methods used in this research will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.6 A summary of the thesis chapters

The content of the subsequent chapters of this thesis can be summarised as follows:

Chapter 2 examines the theoretical background to the research questions. It considers existing theory in the field of careers and career success, which demonstrates that managers do not generally base their own ideas about success on external criteria alone, but also use internal measures of success. It reviews the evidence in the literature that male and female managers, and older and younger managers emphasise different kinds of career success.

Chapter 3 defends the choice of research methods used from both a philosophical and a practical point of view. It discusses how the research was conducted and considers the research setting, the managers who took part in the research, and the analysis of the data.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the first stage of the research carried out amongst 12 managers at BT. It discusses the criteria which they used to measure their own career success and comments on the similarities and differences found between the women and the men, and the older and younger managers. Using the managers' own criteria for success, it proposes a model of managerial career success.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the second stage of the research carried out amongst 24 managers at BT. It analyses in detail their criteria for success, comparing them with the findings of the pilot stage. It contrasts the women with the men, and the older managers with the younger ones, in terms of what criteria they used to define career success for themselves and how they used them. It uses the findings to build on the model of career success introduced in Chapter 4, as an intermediate step towards the creation of a typology of managerial career success.

Chapter 6 uses the analysis of both the first and second stages of the research to develop a typology of career success for managers, employing the model developed in Chapters 4 and 5 as a conceptual "bridge" between the individual criteria used by managers to define their own success and the typology. It describes each of the four "types" of manager in the typology in detail and classifies the managers who took part in the research within the typology according to how they see career success. It discusses which "type" women and men, and older and younger managers are likely to be, and considers what appear to be the common characteristics of the managers described as each of the four types.

Chapter 7 summarises and discusses the findings of this research, and demonstrates what contribution they have made to career success theory, relating them back to existing literature in this field. In addition, it considers the research findings in a wider context and explores their possible limitations, proposing fruitful avenues for future research.

Chapter 8 draws some brief conclusions about the research from the perspective of the organisation, the individual manager, and the researcher.

CHAPTER 2: CAREER SUCCESS: THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

CHAPTER 2: CAREER SUCCESS: THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter reviews the literature concerning career success and the different ways in which it is conceptualised by managers. Section 2.1 examines existing theory in the field of careers and career success, demonstrating that, while a model of career success wholly based on the external criteria of position and pay is commonly used to define success, this is not how managers themselves see their own success: like the career itself, career success has a internal as well as an external dimension. Section 2.2 discusses the evidence that male and female managers emphasise different kinds of career success. Section 2.3 considers the effect of age on what managers conceive career success to be. Section 2.4 draws conclusions from the theoretical background relevant to an investigation of managers' personal conceptions of career success.

2.1 The concept of career success

2.1.1 New careers; old success

The career has been described as "the supreme social reality" for large sectors of the twentieth century Western middle classes (Dahrendorf 1959). According to writers like Scase and Goffee (1989) and Roper (1994), corporate careers, as they developed in the post-war years, conferred a sense of order and security on those who participated in them. Managers could see their future mapped out for them within a clearly defined career structure which promised, at best, conspicuous success or, at worst, respectable stability: "They are keenly aware of how much more deeply beholden they are to the organisation than were their elders. They are wry about it, to be sure; they talk of the 'treadmill', the 'rat race', of the inability to control one's direction. But they have no great sense of plight; between themselves and the organisation they believe they see an ultimate harmony and, more than most elders recognise, they are building an ideology that will vouchsafe this trust." (Whyte, 1956)

The concept of the corporate career has been revised drastically in the forty years since Whyte first published his classic text *The Organisation Man* in 1956. Enormous changes in organisations have occurred in the past decade and many are still taking place, as discussed in Chapter 1, sections 1.2 and 1.3. Briefly, the upshot of these changes is that, today, we are told, managers must view their careers, not as a secure foundation for their lives, but as "portable" (Kanter 1989) and "boundaryless" (Hall and Mirvis 1994). Thus, for many, they are now a source of instability more

than anything else (Herriot and Pemberton 1995). As Pahl (1995) says: "Whether or not the golden age of orderly careers ever existed, the experience of most managers in the 1990s is of considerable insecurity and uncertainty about their future prospects."

What does remain of the old-fashioned corporate career is a paradox. Despite the apparent passing of the heyday of what Hall (1976) describes as "career as advancement", the kind of managerial success it embodied lives on. While the multi-tiered hierarchies and clear cut routes for progression have disappeared, the model of career success as upward mobility and salary growth persists both within the organisation and outside it (O'Reilly & Chatman 1994, Melamed 1995). The values which this type of career success reflects can be summed most appropriately by what Korman et al. (1983) call "the materialistic ethic", that is the higher the prestige, income and power, the more satisfying and successful the career.

Managerial success as traditionally perceived in terms of the level reached within the organisational hierarchy plus the amount of money earned (Rosenbaum 1979 and 1989, Gould and Penley 1984), continues to be represented in this way, both in popular literature (e.g. Mercer 1994) and an academic context. Two recent studies serve as good examples of this. O'Reilly and Chatman, researching the characteristics of MBA graduates who enjoyed early career "success", define this "success" in terms of salary attainment and promotions (O'Reilly and Chatman 1994). Melamed, comparing the routes to career "success" for men and women, uses just two criteria of career success: relative salary and management level (Melamed 1995).

2.1.2 Success on managers' own terms

There is a more important objection to such limited conceptualisations of managerial success: not only are these narrow definitions of success out of step with the changing nature of managerial careers, they also do not accord with what managers themselves feel about their own career success. For there is much evidence to suggest that describing managerial career success solely in material terms like position and pay does not represent accurately managers' own perceptions of how successful they are (Korman et al. 1981, Scase and Goffee 1989, Nicholson and West 1988, Russo et al. 1991, Marshall 1984, Asplund 1988). The fact that some of this evidence predates the current "crisis" in managerial careers indicates that managers may never have viewed their own success so myopically.

There are clear indications in the literature that hierarchical and monetary success on their own are not sufficient to make managers feel successful. Korman et al. (1981) found in their research that many apparently successful middle-aged (male) executives did not themselves believe they were a success, and were in reality suffering from feelings of alienation, particularly related to a loss of affiliative satisfaction. "It has long been assumed...that professional and managerial careers are desirable because people in these positions are more satisfied in both the job and the non-job aspects of their lives," they say. "It is now becoming apparent that these assumptions may no longer be as justified as they have been in the past."

Korman et al. (1981) point to what they describe as "the achievement versus affiliation conflict", which led them to conclude that, at the time their research was carried out at the beginning of the eighties, managers were changing, "even the males who typify the traditional, achievement-oriented, technologically-accepting male, that is the managers of organisations and the professionals of society": "To admit to a loss of affiliation and be concerned with it does reflect a changing world, a world which the leadership of our organisations needs to recognise", they assert. Korman et al.'s work also draws attention to the potential effect of age on managers' conceptions of career success, an issue which will be considered in detail in section 2.3.

Scase and Goffee (1989) believe that managers are increasingly disinterested in career success as it has been traditionally understood: "Personal achievement and life satisfaction are probably less likely to be solely equated with promotion within organisational structures; instead career advancement is seen as a means of enhancing personal lifestyles which are separated from, rather than subordinated to work roles." Managers, say Scase and Goffee, are more and more drawn to their families as a source of satisfaction and less and less prepared to sacrifice their lifestyles for their careers. "Conceptions of personal success have become more broadly defined in that they incorporate non-work criteria according to which the costs and benefits of career success are measured." This view is supported by Kimmel (1993), who suggests that male managers who achieve career success as traditionally defined may feel that something is "missing" from their lives.

Herriot and Pemberton (1995) also describe the emergence of the "reluctant" managers, those who do not want to pay the high price in terms of the extra work, extra hours, and extra stress required for promotion. They imply this phenomenon means that many managers' ideas of career success cannot match those held by people

occupying senior roles in organisations, who are most likely to see it in terms of position and pay: "Many communications of wants and expectations challenge the practices, values and assumptions of those with power," they conclude.

Sekaran and Hall (1989) claim that the work force at large has already adopted "a more individualised, 'protean' definition of success, which stresses autonomy, flexibility and balance between work and home": "Employees...are not as single mindedly promotion centred as they were ten or twenty years ago." They point out, however, that such "protean" definitions of success are not yet widely accepted in organisations and that "the promotion ethic" continues to be perpetuated in the corporate culture: "Promotions are written up in the company newsletter, while lateral and downward moves and parental leaves are not."

In addition, research findings suggest that managers who are not hierarchically successful can still be very satisfied with their careers and as such feel successful (Russo et al. 1991, Keys 1985, Chusmir 1986, Subich et al. 1986). Gattiker and Larwood (1988) claim that "the degree of satisfaction (in a career) is related to the degree to which the individual believes his or her success criteria have been achieved". If satisfaction is thus directly linked to perceived career success, then for many people success cannot be explained purely in objective external terms, such as pay and position; instead it must be based on other more subjective, internal criteria.

For example, in a survey of senior managers, Russo et al. (1991) found that salary and rank were correlated with career satisfaction for men, but not for women. They consequently describe men and women as having "a differential sense of entitlement". "Distributive justice research has established that - despite objectively similarly performances - women generally allocate fewer rewards to themselves and have similar job satisfaction to males, despite lower job-related rewards."

Likewise, Keys (1985) discovered that female accountants tended to rate themselves as successful as male accountants despite the fact that they had lower salaries, less career experience and lower expectations than the men. He postulates that the reason for this was that the women evaluated their success "more in terms of how difficult it is to achieve, rather than the level of their salaries". Similarly, Subich et al. (1986) conclude that females seem "more concerned with personal satisfaction on the job than economic returns".

The research on success and satisfaction indicates that female managers in particular are often as satisfied as men at work, and as such feel as successful, despite the fact that, in objective terms, they have not achieved the same levels of career success. This implies that women may have quite different ideas about career success from men, and be far less inclined to view it from the perspective of the "traditional" model of pay and position. The apparent difference between male and female managers' ideas about career success is also highlighted in the literature on women in management (e.g. Hennig and Jardim 1978, Marshall 1984 and Asplund 1988) and the literature on managerial values (e.g. Beutell and Brenner 1986, McGowen and Hart 1992). As crucial evidence that managerial career success cannot be conceptualised simply as hierarchical position and pay, these differences will be discussed in detail in section 2.2.

2.1.3 The two dimensions of the career

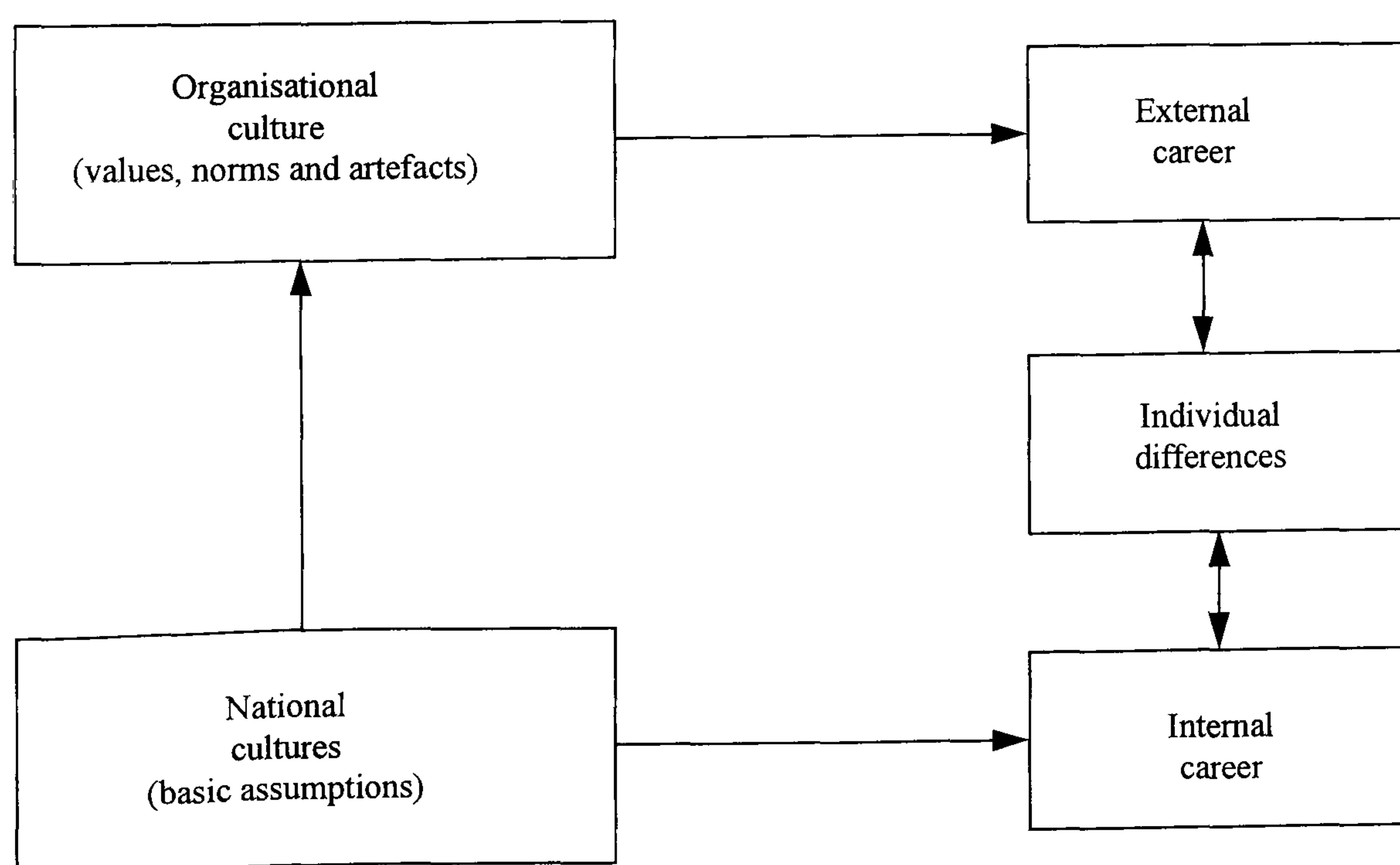
While definitions of career success have traditionally focused on the external criteria of hierarchical position and level of pay, it has long been acknowledged that careers have an internal as well as an external dimension. As long ago as 1937 Hughes pointed out that the career has two aspects: the objective career, the series of positions or offices ("statuses") which the person holds, that is the career as perceived by external observers; and the subjective career, which is the individual's view of their own career experiences. Hughes describes the notion of the subjective career as "the moving perspective in which the person sees his life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his various attributes, actions and the things that happen to him" (Hughes 1937).

This view of the career as an entity which has both a personal and an organisational context is supported by later writers. Schein says: "The concept (of the career) has meaning to both the individual pursuing an occupation - the 'internal career' - and the organisation trying to set up a sensible developmental path for employees to follow throughout their working life in the organisation - the 'external career' (Schein 1978). Gunz suggests that the two facets of the career represent the processes of personal and organisational development for the individual: "(Careers) can be seen both as a process of personal development (sometimes called the 'subjective' career) and as a sequence of externally observable jobs (the 'objective' career)" (Gunz 1989). Hall sees the distinction as being more like the difference between attitudes and behaviours: "Thus, one aspect of a career (the subjective career) consists of the

changes in values, attitudes and motivation that occur as (a person) grows older. Another aspect (the objective career) is made up of the observable choices that one makes and the activities one engages in, such as the acceptance or rejection of a particular job" (Hall 1976). (The epithets *internal* and *subjective*, and *external* and *objective*, used to describe the two dimensions of the career, often appear to be interchangeable in the literature.)

The identification of the two dimensions of the career is important, but it is also necessary to remember that, in order to comprehend the career as a holistic concept, it is the interaction not the separation of the dimensions which is crucial. As Hall says, "To understand fully the course of a person's work life, both the subjective and the objective careers must be considered together as two facets of the same process" (Hall 1976). With this in mind, Schein describes the essence of career development as its focus on "the interaction of the individual and organisation over time" (Schein 1978). Derr and Laurent (1989) see the two dimensional concept of the career as a link between the individual and the social structure, which fuses "the objective and the subjective, the observable facts and the individuals' interpretation of their experience". The two dimensions of the career are "inseparable and interactive

Figure 2.1: Derr and Laurent's cultural model of career dynamics



elements in the social construction of career reality": both elements are strongly influenced by organisational and national culture, as well as by individual differences, in the way the model shown in Figure 2.1 indicates.

Derr and Laurent use the model to question the existence of any kind of objective career reality, even an external one. They suggest that the "dynamic interaction" between the external career and the internal career means that both are affected by "individual differences" or the individual's perceptions of reality, and thus are perceptual in nature: "The internal career is influenced by the external career in that persons from all walks of life cope and perform within organisational settings by changing aspects of their internal career or cognitive map to fit their perception of the requirements of the external career. Also, the internal career affects perceptions of reality and so impacts the external career" (Derr and Laurent 1989).

It is not surprising that the inextricability of the two perspectives of the career often confounds research in this area. As Gunz points out, "The distinction between the individual and organisational levels of analysis is basic to the study of organisational and managerial careers, although the two levels constantly get confused in the literature" (Gunz 1989). Herriot et al. (1994) go further to suggest that "there has been little empirical research which incorporates both perspectives": "What research has been conducted has mainly focused on structural features of organisations and their effects on objective career variables and managerial level" (Herriot et al. 1994).

Nevertheless, the most efficacious definitions of "career", in particular, Hall's, succeed in synthesising the two aspects of the concept. Hall says: "To understand fully the course of a person's work life, both the subjective and the objective careers must be considered together as facets of the same process" (Hall 1976). He distinguishes between four generally accepted meanings of career: *career as advancement*, which associates the idea of a career with the notion of "vertical mobility", moving upward in an organisation's hierarchy; *career as profession*, which views only certain occupations with "some clear pattern of systematic advancement", such as the legal and medical professions, politics and education, as representing careers; *career as a lifelong sequence of jobs*, which regards any person's job history as a career; and *career as a lifelong sequence of role-related experiences*, which is the way each person experiences "the sequence of jobs and activities that constitute his work history", that is the subjective career. From the latter meaning in particular he derives his "working definition" of the career, which is as follows:

"The career is the individually perceived sequence of attitudes and behaviours associated with work-related experiences and activities over the span of the person's life." (Hall 1976)

2.1.4 The career from the individual's perspective

The belief that careers have an internal as well as an external dimension, and can be seen from the individual as well as the organisational viewpoint, has led some writers to develop career theory based on what Bailyn (1989) describes as *orientational categories* (e.g. Schein 1978, Driver 1982, Bailyn 1982, Derr 1986). As Bailyn (1989) says, such orientational categories deal with individuals' subjective meanings and classify people according to "individual predispositions" regarding their career: "They are taxonomies based on individual actors' wants, plans and commitments."

Schein (1978) attempts to capture the differing attitudes of managers towards their careers through his concept of the career anchor, by which means he categorises the different types of career, or "specific kinds of work or responsibility or job setting" that individuals favour. The career anchor is defined as "an occupational self-concept" which an employee becomes aware of after early work experience and is based on their talents and abilities, motives and needs, and attitudes and values. It then generally remains with a person for life (although if they are not aware of it, they may never act on it in terms of how they choose to develop their career). Its function is to "organise experience, identify one's contribution in the long run, generate criteria for kinds of work settings in which one wants to function, and identify patterns of ambition and criteria for success by which one will measure oneself" (Schein 1978).

Schein initially identified five basic career anchors, following a longitudinal study of (male) Sloan Management School alumni: a *technical and functional competence* anchor, where the individual's career is guided by a desire to emphasise the technical or functional content of a job; a *managerial competence* career anchor, where the individual's career is dominated by "a strong motivation to rise to positions of managerial responsibility"; a *security and stability* career anchor, where the individual's career focuses on securing long-term stability; a *creativity* career anchor, where the individual's career develops from a desire to create new businesses which can be closely identified with their own efforts; and an *autonomy* career anchor,

where the individual's career is driven by a wish to be as free from organisational constraints as possible (Schein 1978).

Further research led Schein to add a further three career anchors to his list. The three additional career anchors are: a *sense of service, dedication to a cause* career anchor, where the individual's career is shaped more by strong values than actual talents or competencies; a *pure challenge* career anchor, where the individual's career is dominated by a desire to seek high levels of challenge in their work; and a *lifestyle* career anchor, where the individual's career is seen as nothing more than an integral part of their total lifestyle (Schein 1993). (It may seem questionable whether *lifestyle* can be considered as a separate career anchor when life outside work impinges on the career of every person to some extent or another. Furthermore, an increasing number of people seem to find it hard to separate career success from life success (Scase and Goffee 1989, Super 1980). This will be discussed in more detail in section 2.1.6.)

Driver's research (1982) looks at career patterns, rather than career orientations, from the point of view of the individual: he proposes that there are four basic types of career development pattern or "career concepts" as he calls them: the *steady state* career concept, where one selects a job or profession early and remains within it, with little suggestion of hierarchical movement, for example, medicine; the *linear state* career concept, which corresponds to the traditional hierarchical career within an organisation; the *spiral state* career concept, which consists of a succession of "separate" careers in different fields; and the *transitory state* career concept, where one never settles on a set job or field but changes jobs in a random way.

Driver suggests that, while there is no necessary connection between these structural patterns of career concept and an individual's chosen area of work, certain fields "may be historically associated with a particular type of concept structure": "For example, the Transitory concept may be more frequently found among semi-skilled labourers or among actors. The Steady State concept may turn out to be very common among established professions (e.g. physicians) and among skilled trades (e.g. carpenters). One might find the Linear concept strongly represented among managers or among professors. Finally, the Spiral concept may be predominant among consultants or writers" (Driver 1982).

Derr's career success orientation theory (1986) is derived from his definition of the career as "a long-term work history characterised by an intended and intentional sense

of direction that allows and honours aspects of one's personal life". It attempts to categorise individuals' "intended and intentional sense of direction" in their careers by means of what Derr describes as their "internal and subjective career success orientation", that is "those unique personal career definitions, hopes and plans" which he believes everyone has. Derr's work was influenced by and attempts to build on the work of both Schein and Driver; unlike Schein, however, he maintains that an individual's orientation towards particular kinds of careers can change over the course of their lifetime. Derr also claims that career success orientations have become more diverse because the traditional career "ladder" no longer exists in many organisations, as discussed in Chapter 1, sections 1.2 and 1.3.

Derr identifies five different types of career success orientation, which seem to be closely related to five of Schein's career anchors: a *getting ahead* orientation, which describes individuals who aspire to reach the top of organisational hierarchies, rather like Schein's general management career anchor; a *getting secure* orientation, which roughly corresponds to Schein's security career anchor; a *getting free* orientation, which corresponds to Schein's autonomy career anchor; a *getting high* orientation, which is similar to Schein's pure challenge career anchor and is held by individuals with an inclination to seek excitement, challenge and adventure through their work; and a *getting balanced* orientation, which applies to individuals who wish to balance career and home life, in the way that Schein's lifestyle career anchor does (Derr 1986).

Bailyn's research (1982) also examines individuals' career orientations. In her study of engineering graduates who had reached mid-career, she found three different kinds of career orientations. One group of engineers had retained a technical orientation with regard to their work, a second was people-oriented, that is they were most interested in human issues and problems, and a third was non work-oriented, in that other aspects of their lives, such their family and the community, had become more important to them than their career. The impact of these orientations on the engineers' career development was such that there were more people-oriented individuals in the highest organisational positions, and more non work-oriented individuals in lower positions.

2.1.5 The meaning of career success to individuals

While it is acknowledged that the career has both an internal and an external dimension, in general little attempt is made to take this into account when considering individual managers' criteria for career success (e.g. O'Reilly and Chatman 1994, Melamed 1995). As discussed above, managerial success is still commonly viewed in exclusively external, organisational terms. Bailyn (1989) explains why it may have proved difficult to move beyond this narrow definition: "On the whole it is easiest to assume that external definitions coincide with internal ones. It is instructive, for example, to note how readily one falls into the presumption that upwardly mobile careers are experienced as successful even when one's adopted definition specifically denies such a connection."

Nevertheless it is logical that, if the career has two dimensions, the meaning of career success for the individual will be based on subjective internal success, as well as objective external success, and should not just be described in terms of the latter. This view is endorsed by a number of career theorists who believe not only that individual subjective definitions of career success are fundamental to an appreciation of the "success" or "failure" of a career, but also that such definitions will include subjective internal criteria as well as objective external criteria.

Gunz (1989) states that the "simple, objective" career "only scratches the surface of the meaning of careers to individuals". Each manager, he claims, has their own individual career "logic". Hall (1976) claims that career success or failure is "best assessed by the person whose career is being considered, rather than by other interested parties", because "there are no absolute criteria for evaluating a career": he uses the term "psychological success" to describe a person's own feelings of success.

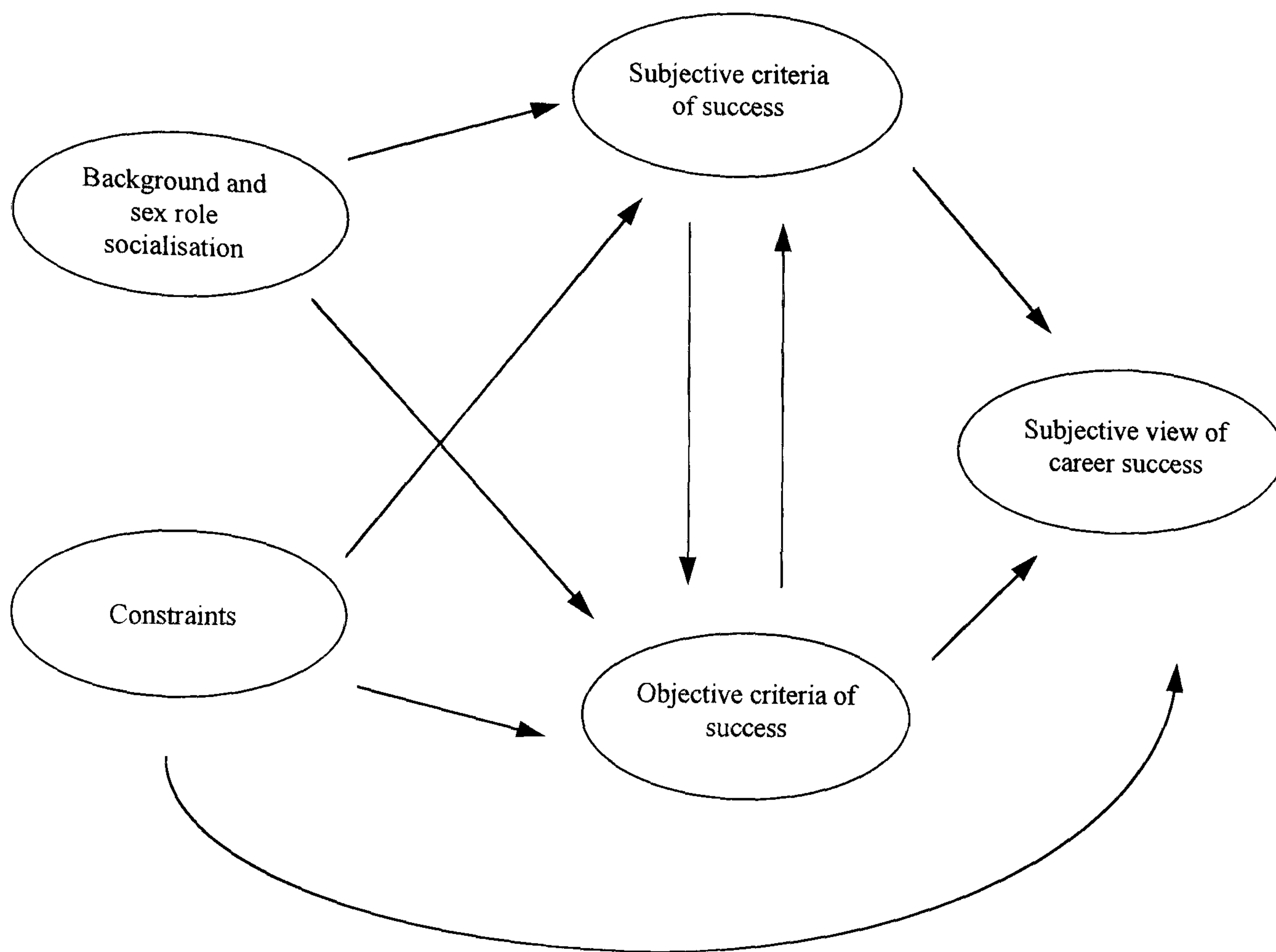
Gattiker and Larwood (1990) agree that individuals' perceptions of their own achievements tend to be based on "less obvious, more subjective personal standards". They point out that "research on career achievement has usually favoured the objective criteria of achievement": "The examination of individual perceptions of achievement, which are important because they might reveal that individuals feel differently about their accomplishments than an outsider might expect, has unfortunately not been a popular subject, so there is less research in this area" (Gattiker and Larwood 1990).

In their earlier work, Gattiker and Larwood propose that career success should be assessed by reference to both internal and external perspectives (Gattiker and Larwood 1988). They suggest that, while studies investigating career success have generally focused on the external perspective, with "progress" being judged in terms of objective measures such as income and job title, "a person's own assessment of his/her success may be strongly influenced by subjective internal career concepts" (1986). This leads them to conclude that any understanding of managers' conceptions of career success must incorporate the idea of subjective internal success, as well as objective external success: "The automatic assumption that hierarchical career success leads to feelings of success must be rejected", they state. They question the allegedly objective external reality of career success, as it has been traditionally defined, and concur with Hall (1976) in their statement that "career success is a construct which exists only in peoples' minds and which has no clear boundaries" (Gattiker and Larwood 1988).

Peluchette (1993) also points to growing evidence to suggest that career success for individuals consists of both objective and subjective criteria. She believes that "the subjective view concerns how a person feels about his or her career accomplishments and prospects for future achievements" and sets the importance of this internal dimension of success in an organisational context: "It should be emphasised that subjective career success has implications for one's mental well-being and quality of life, issues which most organisations are concerned about....Individuals who feel successful are likely to be happier and more motivated, which in turn, would enhance their performance." For this reason, she claims, it is essential that a greater understanding of subjective internal career success be achieved.

Following on from the arguments supporting the importance of the subjective internal dimension of career success, Poole et al. (1991 and 1993) identify what they describe as a shortcoming in the career literature, in that it fails "to supply an adequate conceptualisation of what career success means" to the individual. Like Gattiker and Larwood, they suggest that subjective internal success may in fact be a more important determinant of perceived career success than objective external success, and consequently conclude that career success is necessarily a personal subjective concept, as demonstrated by their theoretical model of career success, shown in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Poole et al.'s theoretical model of the subjective view of career success



This model includes what Poole et al. believe are two major sources of influence on perceived career success: background and sex role socialisation, and constraints, taken from Astin's model of career development (Astin 1984). Poole et al. propose that the interaction between objective external and subjective internal criteria for perceptions of success may be very complex: while they agree that subjective criteria, such as interest and work satisfaction, are highly important, nonetheless they point out that objective criteria, such as income and supervisory status, can also influence feelings of career success. The findings of their empirical research (1991 and 1993) confirm this complexity, whilst demonstrating that subjective internal aspects of career success "are more important determinants of career success than more objective measures".

Poole et al. develop their argument about how central subjective internal criteria are to conceptions of career success to propose that women's perceptions of career success in particular may be more dependent on internal measures of success than men's. "For women," they say, "such objective criteria as job status and salary may not be adequate for describing their perception of career success." However, they

were unable to corroborate this in their empirical research (Poole et al. 1991 and 1993).

The idea that women may have different ideas about career success than men, already alluded to earlier in this chapter, will be discussed extensively in section 2.2. Suffice it to say here that Poole et al.'s suggestion that any model of career success must be capable of showing the importance of the internal dimension is supported by Powell and Mainiero (1992 and 1993), who also believe that women emphasise subjective internal measures of success more than men do: "Subjective measures of success are at least as important as objective measures in determining whether women truly are successful," they state, although they stress that "this is not to say that men define their career success solely through objective measures or women by subjective measures". "What matters to most women and men in evaluating their careers and lives is whether they see themselves as successful on their own terms," they conclude (Powell and Mainiero 1993).

Although writers such as Poole et al. and Powell and Mainiero have advocated that career success be conceptualised to include both external and internal criteria for success, little has yet been written about the kind of internal criteria by which managers judge their own subjective career success. There is some evidence from empirical research, however, which suggests the type of more subjective criteria individual managers might regard as an important part of their own career success:

In a quantitative study carried out among 150 European executives at Insead, Derr and Laurent asked respondents to report their personal definitions of career success, based on a list of 36 criteria. The top three items chosen all related to being able to exert an influence at work, and the next two to balancing home and work life. "Becoming a general manager" was only in sixth place (Derr and Laurent 1989). In large-scale study of UK managers, carried out by Nicholson and West (1988), "challenging work", "work where individual accomplishment is appreciated", "opportunities to improve knowledge and skills" and "creativity" were all rated as being more important to the sample than "opportunities for advancement". In Scase and Goffee's investigation of the work and lifestyles of British managers (1989), which involved a survey of 374 managers, the most desirable job rewards for men were found to be "independent thought and action", "security" and "self respect/esteem and status". Pay was in fourth place and promotion in sixth place. The results for the women managers who took part in the research were rather

different: "self-respect/esteem and status" was seen to be the most desirable reward, followed by "independent thought and action" in second place, and "personal growth and development" in third place. Pay and promotion came equal fifth. These studies imply, therefore, that managers' own criteria for career success may include, amongst other things, influence, balance, challenge, autonomy and respect. Criteria for success shown to be important to women managers and older managers will be discussed in sections 2.2 and 2.3.

2.1.6 Career success and life success

In addition to developing the idea of career success to include an internal as well as an external dimension, some writers have questioned whether concepts of career success can ever be considered separately from concepts of life success. A growing desire by managers to view their personal and work lives as a whole has meant that the notions of lifestyle and balance have become an integral part of career theory: for many people it has become increasingly difficult to see career success in isolation from success in their life as a whole. Schein reflected this trend when he extended his career anchors to include a *lifestyle* anchor (1993). He explains that he decided to include the lifestyle anchor after identifying "a growing number of people who are highly motivated towards meaningful careers (who) are, at the same time, adding the condition that the career must be integrated with total lifestyle" (Schein 1993). Derr (1986) likewise categorises one of his career success orientations as *getting balanced*.

The trend towards viewing career and life success as an integral whole reflects the career development theory of Super (1980), who claims that the concept of a career should include all the roles that one plays during a lifetime, not just work roles, which he classifies as the occupational career. In total, he identifies nine roles which people may play during their lives, some of them simultaneously: child, student, "leisurite" (when one is engaged in leisure activities), citizen, worker, spouse, homemaker, parent and pensioner. "The constellation of interacting, varying roles constitutes the career," he states, defining the lifestyle as "the simultaneous combination of roles".

Research carried out by Nicholson and West (1988) and Scase and Goffee (1989) shows that managers today do not wish to separate their work and family lives in the way that their predecessors did (Evans and Bartolomé 1981). As discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.2, Scase and Goffee conclude that male managers' personal

identities in particular are no longer solely derived from their jobs: the major source of satisfaction in their lives is their family and personal relationships. As a result, they are more inclined to seek a balance between the demands of their jobs and their personal lives and see career advancement "as a means of enhancing personal lifestyles" (Scase and Goffee 1989). Nicholson and West (1988) also found that the managers who took part in their research believed that their family mattered most in their life and gave them more satisfaction than their work.

Gattiker and Larwood (1986) claim that, while individuals do distinguish between success within the organisation and outside it, there is an overlap between the concepts of career success and life success. They insist that "research on career success should be placed within the larger context of a person's life", and therefore that "the possible impact of non-work aspects and roles upon subjective career success should be investigated".

Looking at success in the context of a whole life, rather than just a work life, may be particularly important when constructing models of career success that are intended to apply to both male and female managers. Chusmir and Parker (1991) have shown that, when work values alone are considered, male and female managers seem similar, but when asked about their values relating to home life as well, they in fact appear to be very different. Powell and Mainiero (1992 and 1993) also suggest that models of career success should include consideration of non-work as well as work life, particularly for women: "Women's experiences, concerns and 'successes' in relationships outside work are important considerations in how they manage their careers," they say (Powell and Mainiero 1992). They see success for women switching in emphasis from career to relationships and back again throughout their lives. The question of whether women consider career success more holistically than men will be discussed in more detail in section 2.2.1.

2.2 The difference between male and female managers' ideas of career success

2.2.1 Women managers' conceptions of career success

The main conclusion to be drawn from the literature on career success is that external career success, as represented by objective external measures such as hierarchical position and level of pay, does not accurately describe what many managers conceive success to be on their own personal terms. In particular, it is suggested by writers

such as Russo et al. (1991), Keys (1985), Poole et al. (1991 and 1993) and Powell and Mainiero (1992 and 1993) that women managers' perceptions of career success may be even more dependant on subjective internal measures of success than men's, and as such are qualitatively different from those which male managers espouse.

Indeed, Powell and Mainiero (1992) describe the traditional external model of career success as specifically describing a "male" idea of success, reflecting the fact that the vast majority of research into careers and career development has looked at men's careers (e.g. Schein 1978, Dalton et al. 1982): "Measuring career success only by objective variables that emphasise 'getting ahead' in an organisation has been associated with a traditionally male definition of success," they say. "Women may focus more on measures of satisfaction that represent how they are feeling about their career, rather than what their careers actually look like." Thus, they conclude that, for women managers, career success relates more to *satisfaction with career*, defined in terms of its perceived quality, than objective career achievements "as measured by promotions, salary increments, and the like".

This theme is echoed in much of the research which has examined the position within organisations of women managers. Several studies have produced evidence that women managers, even those who are "successful" in the traditional external sense of the word, may see their own career success more in terms of self-development and meeting personal challenges, rather than in terms of organisational status and progression through the organisational hierarchy.

Hennig and Jardim (1978) found that women managers saw achieving success in their careers almost as a process of internal growth "towards an intensely personal goal which the individual alone can judge whether she has achieved". Comparing women with men, they state: "Women see a career as personal growth, as self-fulfilment, as satisfaction, as making contribution to others, as doing what one wants to do. While men indubitably want these things too, when they visualise a career, they see it as a series of jobs, a progression of jobs, as a path leading upward with recognition and reward implied." Amongst other things, they conclude, this leads women to separate the jobs they do from the idea of a career, which to them is so "intensely personal", and as a result continually treat each job as an opportunity to show that they can perform well, rather than a chance to develop their career.

In a qualitative study of 30 women managers working in publishing and retailing, Marshall (1984) discovered that many of the managers did not look far ahead in their careers but instead sought to get continual challenge, interest and growth from their work: many of the group did not want promotion; only when their job ceased to offer interest and challenge, did they begin to look for new opportunities. She concluded therefore that their motivation to work was personal, that is internal, rather than external and called for the traditional notions of "career" and "ambition" to be revised. "Challenge and satisfaction in a particular job are more important (for women) than recurrent promotion for its own sake", she says.

Marshall draws a distinction between what she describes as "agentic" and "communion-based" career planning (Marshall 1989, 1995). "Agentic" career planning describes an approach to the career which is "forward-looking, goal-directed, clear, pursuing external ideals, often against time scales" (Marshall 1995): this approach is seen as being typically "male" and, as such, encompasses what some writers (e.g. Powell and Mainiero 1992) have identified as the traditionally "male" idea of external career success. "Its goals", Marshall says (1989), "are identified largely in terms of organisational status and financial reward." "Communion-based" career planning is more "present-focused" and involves "being open to opportunities, listening to the next inner need without concern about longer-term consequences and generating change if a given situation becomes unsatisfactory" (Marshall 1995): this approach to a career is seen as typically female; success within a career "planned" on this basis will be much more internal. Its focus, Marshall says, has been "largely on jobs" which nevertheless has led to "satisfying and organisationally successful careers" (Marshall 1989). The concepts of agency and communion as they relate to male and female attitudes to careers are discussed in more detail in section 2.2.3.

Asplund (1988), who carried out her research amongst male and female managers in three Swedish organisations, also found that men's career strategies were more planned and purposeful, compared with their female colleagues', despite the fact that the women in her sample appeared to be no less eager for promotion than the men. Even women who had reached middle management level denied that any conscious effort on their own part had helped them achieve their present position. Instead, they chose to explain their career development in terms of luck or chance. Furthermore, unlike the men, their main focus at work was on the content of the job, in particular the interest and enjoyment they derived from it. Asplund summed up this important

difference she found between the male and female managers in her study as: "Women want to do something interesting, men want a career."

When asked what they were looking for from their career, she discovered that women were more inclined to mention internal psychological factors such as "developing myself" and "exploiting my inner resources". Men, on the other hand, talked openly of the need for external criteria of success such as power and status. As a result, Asplund concluded that "the incentives that drive women and men to enjoy a successful career are probably different. Women are not so ready to talk about careers in terms of status and power. They are more likely to be motivated by psychological factors and a desire for self-realisation".

Following research into UK managers and their work needs, (1988) Nicholson and West agree with this conclusion, stating that "women managers are less concerned than men with material rewards from work and are more interested in fulfilling a need for growth". They discovered that women valued *good fringe benefits, opportunity for high earnings and job security* less than male managers; women managers valued more highly, amongst other things, *working with people who are friendly and congenial, challenging work to do, work where individual accomplishment is appreciated, opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills and a job where I can be creative in doing things my own way* (Nicholson and West 1988).

White et al. (1992), in a study of 48 women "who had achieved extraordinary levels of career success", again report similar findings, concluding that, for their sample, a need for personal challenge was often felt to be stronger than a need for promotion: only two of the women they interviewed mentioned that they were striving "to reach the top". White et al. identify three other outcomes the women sought from their careers:

- *Self-development.* The desire for this was summed up by one woman in the study who said: "Everything is about feeding into me and what I need to keep me going. So I read a lot and I study and educate myself daily." White et al. claim that the theme of self-development did not emerge in a similar study of male high flyers (Cox and Cooper 1988).
- *Feedback and recognition for their achievement.* The need for this was encapsulated in the comments of one woman who said: "I want to be seen to do

things well. I want to be compared well with the next person. Maybe it's because I'm a woman in an all-male environment, but I would hate for someone to say, 'Oh well, I didn't expect her to do so well because she's a woman'."

- *Autonomy.* One of the women in the study explained: "I like having the power to make decisions and to stand by them. My definition of success is being in control and taking the responsibility for that." Several of the women also mentioned the importance of influencing events at work.

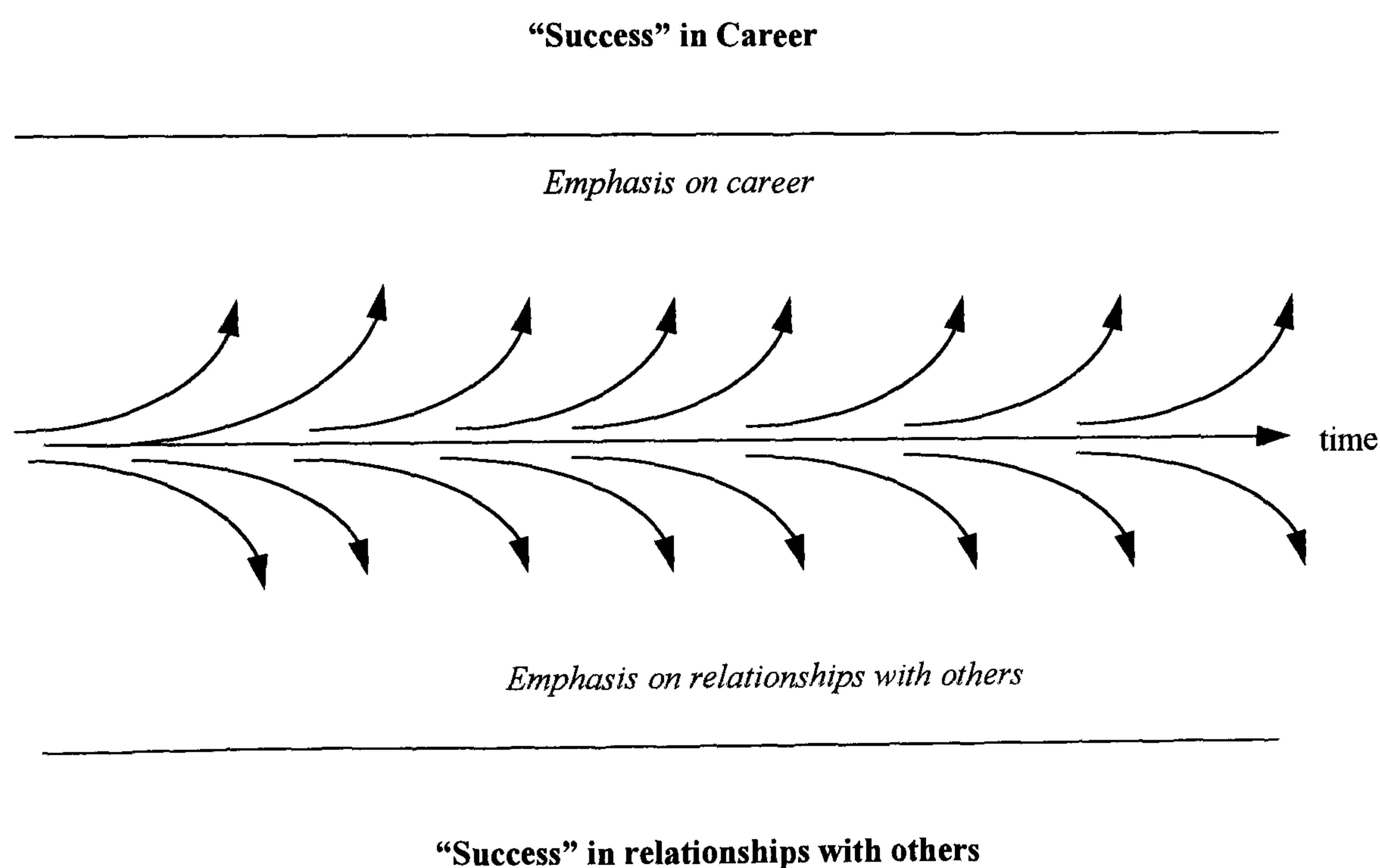
White et al.'s findings support the earlier work of Donnell and Hall (1980) and Alban-Metcalf (1989). Donnell and Hall's research showed that women managers reported lower basic needs and higher needs for self-actualisation than a matched group of men: the female managers in their sample were more concerned with opportunities for growth, autonomy and challenge, and less concerned with the work environment, pay and strain avoidance. In a study of 2,000 male and female managers intended to discover what they believed to be important in a job, Alban-Metcalf (1989) found that amongst the ten items which the women rated significantly more highly than the men were: a challenging job, opportunity for development, quality of feedback, working with friendly people and autonomy. Men, on the other hand, were significantly more concerned with external factors such as high earnings, fringe benefits and job security.

In addition to the evidence that, for women managers, subjective internal measures of career success are more important than they are for men, some writers (e.g. Gallos 1989, Bell and Nkomo 1992) claim that women differ from men in that they define success more holistically. Because women tend to be more involved with family issues than men, they argue, they are more likely than men to see success in their career as just one part of success in their life as a whole. Therefore the ability to balance their work life with their home life can become part of their definition of career success, because only by balancing the two parts of their life can they achieve true success on their own terms. Marshall (1995), for example, says that her research supports suggestions that "many women have more open senses of career than do many men", and that "women may make decisions as life choices rather than simply as career choices". Bell and Nkomo (1992) talk of "the mutuality of a woman's professional and personal life dimensions" and question why career success is always defined as "getting to the top", when women's lives do not fit neatly into career theories "built largely on male models of success and work".

Gallos (1989) argues that women have a different "perspective" of what career means to them than men, a perspective which includes an expression of their relationship and family needs. "The career is not as distinct an entity for them as it is for men," she states: "The boundaries between professional work and everything else in life are more permeable, allowing women to see relationships and family as critical work and reasons to pace their professional lives differently from men."

Powell and Mainiero (1993) agree that success at work and at home is important to women, saying: "In attempting to strike a balance between their relationships with others and their personal achievements at work, women seek some sort of personal or subjective satisfaction in both realms." For this reason, they conceptualise career success as being on one bank of what they describe as "the river of time" with success in relationships with others on the opposite bank, as shown in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: Powell and Mainiero's cross-currents in the river of time model



Powell and Mainiero explain their model of career development by saying that, at any point in time, a woman may place a particular degree of emphasis on career versus relationships with others in her actions and decisions. She may emphasise career or relationships to a greater extent, or she may strive to achieve a balance between the

two (Powell and Mainiero 1992 and 1993). Moreover, while Powell and Mainiero developed their model in an attempt to conceptualise better career success for women, they say that they believe it may also describe many men's careers too, as discussed in section 2.1.6: "As men's lives broaden, the study of men's careers may benefit from a "river of time" approach that focuses on the effort to balance work and non-work concerns over time" (Powell and Mainiero 1992).

2.2.2 Differences in work values between male and female managers

The argument that women have different ideas than men about what constitutes career success for them is supported by literature on managerial values, which suggests that women managers are likely to have attitudes and values relating to their work which contrast with those held by their male colleagues (e.g. Major and Konar 1984, Beutell and Brenner 1986, McGowan and Hart 1992).

Managerial values, that is the values which managers hold about their jobs and work, fall into the category of competence values, as defined by Rokeach (1973), in his study of the nature of human values. Competence values are said to be personal (that is self-centred, rather than society-centred) and are not particularly concerned with morality; violation of them leads to feelings of shame about personal inadequacy, not feelings of guilt about wrong-doing (Rokeach 1973). Examples of competence values that Rokeach uses in his Personal Values Index are *ambitious*, *capable*, *imaginative*, *independent* and *intellectual*, which are instrumental values, that is they relate to modes of behaviour; and *a sense of accomplishment*, *self-respect* and *social recognition*, which are terminal values, relating to desired end states of existence.

Powell et al. (1984), following work done by Connor and Becker (1975), define work values as "global beliefs about desirable end-states underlying attitudinal and behavioural processes". Beutell and Brenner (1986) similarly describe them as "qualities people desire from their work, which reflect a correspondence between need states and satisfaction". As such, they are inextricably linked to managers' conceptions of career success: England and Lee (1974) observe that "personal value systems influence the perception of individual and organisational success as well as their achievement". When "success" was defined as managerial pay relative to age, England and Lee found that more "successful" managers had values which emphasised qualities such as high productivity, aggressiveness, ability, creativity and

competition, whereas as less "successful" managers tended to root their values in concepts such as social welfare, trust, conformity, security and equality.

Rokeach likewise concludes (1973) that values have a motivational force, in that they offer goals to strive towards, and are used as conceptual tools by people to maintain and enhance their self-esteem. As confirmation of this, Rokeach showed that small entrepreneurs and salesmen placed a higher value than other Americans on personal values based on individual achievement, strivings for independence, material success and comfort, hedonism and security of the family.

Writers considering the issue of women in management frequently suggest that women bring into the workplace a different set of attitudes and values from male managers (e.g. Kanter 1977, Davidson and Cooper 1992). This is often presented as a problem for women managers, because it means that the predominantly "male" culture of most organisations can feel alien to them and thereby puts them at a disadvantage at work:

Pemberton (1992), for example, asserts that women managers see their own diversity "as something that is shed in order to be rewarded by the organisation". Alimo-Metcalfe and Wedderburn-Tate (1993) similarly argue that women have to adopt a "work personality" in order to fit in with male organisational culture. "For many women", they say, "the sense of alienation arising from working in a masculine environment, where there was an overriding emphasis on competition and aggression, and where they were strongly sanctioned if they did not comply, meant that in order to succeed, they had to behave in an unnatural way".

Scase and Goffee (1989) claim that aspiring managers must fit in with the values of their superiors to succeed and believe that this poses a particular problem for women managers: "Those who do accept the rules of the game are likely to experience personal stress as they attempt to cultivate personal identities which are acceptable to their male colleagues." For this reason, women managers' "different" values and consequent lack of comfort with many organisational cultures is now held to be an important explanation of why many women choose to opt of "conventional" careers (Rosin and Korabik 1992, Marshall 1995).

Nevertheless, the research which investigates whether women managers' work values do differ from men's is somewhat divided in its conclusions. Some studies claim to

show that all managers share similar values, regardless of their gender. For example, Brief and Oliver (1976), in a study of managers in a US retail organisation, report no significant differences in work attitudes "when occupation and organisational level are controlled". Their findings have been corroborated since by Gomez-Mejia (1990), de Vaus and McAllister (1991), Rowe and Snizek (1994), Lefkowitz (1994) and Fagenson (1993), who, using Rokeach's Value Survey, examined the values of male and female entrepreneurs and managers. She found that "occupational role, and not gender, is a better indicator of individuals' value systems".

However, while there is broad agreement that men and women who occupy managerial positions are more likely to be similar to each other in terms of their values than men and women in general (e.g. Gomez-Mejia 1990, Mason 1994), other research shows that some important differences between male and female managers do exist. The cogency of these findings is strengthened by the fact that the differences they report are closely related to the apparent differences between men and women in terms of how they conceive their own career success discussed in section 2.2.1. Much of the literature on managerial values suggests that women set greater store by values such as accomplishment, personal growth and respect, which might underpin a more internal definition of career success; men, on the other hand, place greater importance on values related to income and hierarchical advancement, which would support a more externally focused idea of success (e.g. Beutell and Brenner 1986, Nicholson and West 1988, McGowan and Hart 1992).

In Beutell and Brenner's 1986 study of MBA students, women rated 12 of the 18 work values surveyed higher than men, including *accomplishment*, *use of knowledge and skills*, *intellectual stimulation* and *congenial associates*. The six values that the men rated more highly than the women included *income*, *advancement*, *working on central organisational problems* and *responsibility*. McGowan and Hart's research (1992) showed that men value prestige and salary more than women do; women, they concluded, would be more likely to choose a job because it was consistent with their values than because it paid well. The higher worth that men appear to assign to salary and promotional opportunities, compared with women, has also been confirmed by Major and Konar (1984) and by Mottaz (1986).

Following a survey of the value patterns of male and female managers and clerical staff, Mason (1994) discovered that the most important value for women managers was *treated with respect*, whereas for male managers it was *wages/benefits*. Men

also rated *opportunity for advancement* more highly than women did. In a study of accountants, Kaufman and Feters (1980) found that the intrinsic values which women valued most were *personal and professional growth* and *collegial recognition*, whereas men valued most *professional aura* and *doing a good professional job*.

Similar differences in values between male and female managers have been found by many other writers, including Ryan et al. (1981), Jacobs (1992), Powell et al. (1984) and Scase and Goffee (1989). Their number adds weight to Posner and Munson's claim (1981) that "there are some value subsets which are perhaps more salient and more personally relevant to women in general than men, irrespective of occupation".

The difference between the sexes in terms of their managerial values is also apparent when the connection between values and career "success" in traditional, external terms is considered. Ryan et al. (1981) claim that certain values, such as obedience, employee welfare, organisational stability and social welfare, held by women managers, are negatively correlated with their "success" in external terms. Other values, such individuality, power and aggressiveness, held by male managers, are positively correlated with their external "success", they maintain. This gives support to England and Lee's conclusion (1974) that personal value systems influence "achievement", discussed earlier in this section.

Differences between men and women appear to become even more pronounced when managers' values are examined in the context of home life as well as work life. As discussed briefly in section 2.1.6, Chusmir and Parker (1991) found that, while male and female managers appeared to have similar work values, their values relating to their home life were quite different, suggesting that people operate dual value hierarchies. Thus it may not be appropriate to consider these hierarchies separately if one wants to give a complete picture of managerial values, or indeed examine the concept of managerial career success in its entirety.

2.2.3 Psychological influences on women's attitudes to careers

Theories of female psychological development strengthen the suggestion that women managers may tend to emphasise subjective internal measures of career success, rather than the "male" model of external success traditionally invoked. Writers such as Gallos (1989) and Marshall (1984 and 1989) argue that "traditional" career

success, seen in terms of competitive achievement within the organisation and measured by hierarchical position and level of financial reward, represents an aspect of male psychology to which females do not relate easily. Since career theory is largely based on research into male managers, this idea of success has become established as a norm which may not apply to women, given their quite different psychological development.

It is suggested that the differences between male and female psychology can be best represented as the contrast between the concepts of "agency" and "communion", which Bakan (1966) introduces to characterise "the two fundamental modalities in the existence of living forms". According to Bakan, agency, the masculine psyche, manifests itself as: self-protection and self-assertion; self-expansion; separation; isolation, alienation and aloneness; the urge to master. On the other hand, communion, the feminine psyche, manifests itself as: the sense of being at one with other organisms; lack of separation; contact, openness and union; non-contractual co-operation.

Gilligan (1980 and 1982), in her investigation of women's moral development, agrees with Bakan's fundamental distinction between the psychology of the masculine and the feminine. As a result, she argues, like Chodorow (1974), that the gender identity of men is tied to separation and individuation from others, whereas the gender identity of women is defined through attachment and connection: "For women, identity is defined in the context of relationships and judged by a standard of responsibility and care...instead of attachment, individual achievement rivets the male imagination and defines the standard of self-assessment and success" (Gilligan 1980). Consequently, women find it difficult to see their own success in the competitive terms in which men perceive theirs, and by which external organisational career success has traditionally been delineated. Not surprisingly, Gilligan casts doubt upon the validity of the concept of "competitive success" which men favour: "One question may be not why women have conflicts about competitive success, but why men show such readiness to adopt and celebrate a rather narrow vision of success" (Gilligan 1982).

Marshall (1989) and Gallos (1989) agree that the traditional definition of the concepts of the organisational career and organisational career success reflect male psychological values based on individuation and separation, and suggest that as a result women managers may find it harder to associate with them. "Women do not

have less career motivation as much as a different perspective of what career means to them," says Gallos (1989). Both writers use the distinction between male/agency and female/communion made by writers such as Bakan and Gilligan to discuss this "different perspective" and demonstrate the need for models of "career" and "career success" which take account of female as well as male psychological development.

Marshall (1989) sums up the difference between the psychological approaches to the career typically seen as male and female as being that between independence and interdependence: "The agentic principle works through self-assertion, emphasising its independence and competing with others for resources, rewards and importance...From this perspective 'success' is demonstrable and individual. Organisation promotion systems focus on the individual and reward them for these perceived impacts...Communion sees itself, including its actions, as part of a wider context of interacting influences. It tends not to assume personal accomplishment when events turn out favourably and is certainly less likely to be able to identify its contribution...Action based in communion may therefore go unrewarded by formal organisational systems." The masculine agentic approach to the career is epitomised by Rosenbaum's description (1979) of career development as a tournament, with early "winners" being more likely to achieve "success" later in their careers.

Marshall and Gallos's suggestion that women's psychological development leads them to have different ideas about what constitutes career success from men is supported by other writers, such as Diamond (1987), Powell and Mainiero (1992) and McGowen and Hart (1992). McGowen and Hart claim that their research findings, discussed briefly in the previous section, show differences in men and women's career values in line with what one would expect, bearing in mind the distinction writers such as Gilligan have made between male and female psychological development. They found that women gave higher priority to flexibility of work schedule and personally meaningful work in determining job satisfaction, whereas men put a higher value on salary and prestige. From this, they conclude: "If the contextual organisation of self-identity underlies the approach to careers which women bring into the workplace, then it is understandable that women need more flexible schedules to accommodate the complex, simultaneous integration of work tasks and obligations of relationships. It is also understandable that the focus on personal values takes precedence for women. Men, on the other hand, carry with them the separate and competitive orientation to their sense of self. Thus the priority for them would be given to salary and prestige" (McGowen and Hart 1992).

The process of adult development for men and women will be considered in greater detail in section 2.3.2.

2.2.4 The different reality of women managers' careers

Not only do women managers have different ideas about career success, their careers also often look very different from those of their male colleagues. In the UK, for example, women still represent a minority of those working in managerial positions, 12.3% according to the Institute of Management's 1996 survey (Institute of Management 1996). Far fewer succeed in reaching the most senior positions in organisations: the IM puts the number of female directors in the UK at 3.3% in total. This dearth of women at the top of organisations has led some to postulate the existence of a "glass ceiling", which prevents women from rising above a certain level (Morrison et al. 1992, Davidson and Cooper 1992).

Women managers are likely to occupy different types of managerial jobs than male managers. They tend to hold "specialist", support roles, in functions such as personnel and marketing, rather than "generalist" line management roles (Davidson and Cooper 1992). This is significant, since line management roles are generally higher status than support roles and experience in line management is said to be an important factor in achieving hierarchical success as a manager (Larwood and Gattiker 1987). Ohlott et al. (1994) conclude that organisations may not give women "key assignments involving international responsibilities, negotiation roles, managing multiple functions, and key business units". Furthermore, women managers in the UK are clustered in certain business sectors, such as the public sector and service organisations, like retailers (Davidson and Cooper 1992).

Lagging behind men in seniority and meaningful promotions, as well as occupying less influential positions, women managers enjoy less objective success than their male counterparts and have more complicated career paths. In a survey of 215 "successful" personnel from 17 major firms operating in California, Larwood and Gattiker (1987) found that, compared with the women in their sample, men had greater professional standing, were more often in line positions and were higher in their departments than women. The progression towards hierarchical success was less regular for women managers (Larwood and Gattiker 1987), who conclude as a result that there can be substantial differences between men's and women's career

development. This conclusion is endorsed by Nicholson and West (1988), who discovered that male managers had more "upward status" moves, whereas women managers had more changes of employer, and, in particular, more what they describe as "out-spiralling moves". Because of the differences, they suggest that women have an "immediate, value-driven, opportunistic" approach to job changing, compared with men's "predominantly goal-oriented, targeting approach", and assert that women who do reach a status equivalent to men's do so through different, more specialist career paths.

In an investigation of career paths in the banking industry Morgan et al. (1993) found that, despite the fact that banking is an industry with a majority of female employees, women in their study experienced patterns of career development similar to those in organisations where the majority of employees are male. Men reached middle management quicker than women with fewer promotions; women had more lateral promotions. Men also held more jobs in key areas, such as lending, whereas women tended to be in support jobs such as customer service. Their findings are backed up by Ragins and Sundstrom (1989), who infer that women are promoted less quickly than men and need a greater number of promotions to reach the same rank.

There is also evidence that women managers are paid less than men, and that their salaries increase more slowly. Stroh et al. (1992) and Cox and Harquail (1991) both report that women managers earn less than men, as well as having lower positions in the organisational hierarchy. Stroh et al.'s survey of 1,029 male and female US managers employed by 20 Fortune 500 companies found that female managers fell behind male managers in salary progression and geographic mobility, but not in promotion rates. They claim, however, that the latter may be illusory, since women seem more likely than men to characterise job changes as promotion, and conclude that following the traditional male career model is not sufficient to secure career success for women. From research based on a sample of MBA graduates, Cox and Harquail found that women experienced lower salary progression than men of comparable education, performance, age and experience. The women in their sample did not differ greatly in terms of total promotions but had significantly fewer management promotions and were at lower levels in their organisations.

The differences between men and women's career development will be considered in more detail in section 2.3.3.

2.2.5 The relationship between women managers' ideas of career success, their psychological development and their career paths

Whatever the exact relationship between women managers' conceptions of career success, their psychological development and the pattern of their career development, it is clearly one of complicated reciprocity. In all likelihood, the process of socialisation of males and female, discussed in section 2.2.3, and their experiences at work both have an impact on what women conceive career success to be and on the shape their careers assume.

There is undoubtedly a link between the different career paths which women managers follow, as described in section 2.2.4, and their view of career success as a more internal concept. The distinctive view of career success which women appear to hold may offer at least a partial explanation for the different types of managerial careers which they enjoy. If women do not see their own career success in terms of hierarchical status and salary progression, it is difficult to imagine that they will be driven to seek achievement in this way. As discussed in section 2.2.2, women managers' different values often make them uncomfortable with "masculine" organisational cultures (Scase and Goffee 1989). This may help explain women's more complicated career paths and frequent changes of employer (Nicholson and West 1988).

However, it is unrealistic to see women's psychological development and the ideas about success it may inculcate in them as the sole explanation for the different kind of managerial careers which men and women have. Women managers' organisational experiences overall are quite different from men's, for the reason that management has traditionally been perceived to be a "male" career (Schein 1973). Women still hold a small minority of managerial positions in most countries (Davidson and Cooper 1993, Adler and Israeli 1994). There is general agreement that stereotypes relating to the "masculinity" of the profession persist (Powell 1993, Kanter 1993, Davidson and Cooper 1992, Mills 1992), and that bias, however unconscious, still exists against female managers.

Men are likely to be looked upon more favourably in terms of promotion, particularly when posts considered to be key to the organisation's operation must be filled (Kanter 1993, Marshall 1984, Asplund 1988, Burton 1992). They also have better access to organisational networks and mentoring relationships, both considered crucial for

successful career development (Powell and Mainiero 1992). The "structure of opportunity" (Astin 1984) which women managers have to contend with at work is therefore less favourable than that which men enjoy, and as such is likely to have an adverse effect on their career development: while women's ideas about career success may partially determine the career paths they take, bias against them and the poorer structure of opportunity which they encounter at work also influence their lack of hierarchical success and lower levels of pay (Larwood and Gutek 1987, Larwood and Gattiker 1987, Stroh et al. 1992, Cox and Harquail 1991).

Furthermore, it is conceivable that women managers may, consciously or unconsciously, adjust their ideas about what they deem to be career success for themselves to be to suit the kind of "rewards" which they perceive organisations are likely to offer them (Posner and Munson 1981, Nicholson and West 1988, Gomez-Mejia 1991). Cox and Harquail (1991), for example, question whether gender differences in salary expectations lead women to accept lower salary offers than men would accept, both at the start of and during the course of their careers. If women do adjust their ideas of career success to fit their expectations of what male-dominated organisations will give them, then their organisational experiences, as well as their psychological development, play in role in determining their view of what success is for them.

While it is not the main focus of this research, it is important to note here that there is no evidence to suggest that women managers' aptitudes and skills make them less suited to managerial careers than men (Marshall 1984, Powell 1990). Nor is there any grounds to believe that their levels of ambition, motivation and commitment are any lower than men's. The lack of evidence for this is summed up by Powell (1990), who concludes: "When differences in motivational profiles appear, they are non-stereotypical and favour female managers." This is supported by Nicholson and West (1988), who found that the women they surveyed considered themselves more ambitious than the men, and Scase and Goffee (1989 and 1990), who discovered that women rated career achievements much more strongly than men and had higher levels of ambition. Other research also shows that women display levels of motivation and commitment to work similar to or higher than those of men (Kaufman and Feters 1988, Freedman and Phillips 1988, Donnell and Hall 1980, Powell 1990).

2.3 The effect of age on managers' conceptions of career success

2.3.1 Career success and age

Korman et al.'s research (1981), described in section 2.1.2, showed that achieving career success in organisational terms was insufficient to make many middle-aged managers feel successful. Korman et al. suggest that, while these feelings of alienation are partly the result of "a changing world", they are also influenced by the intertwined processes of personal development and career development, which appear to lead managers to evaluate their own success differently as they get older. The implication that managers' ideas of career success change as they and their careers develop is supported by other studies which have looked at managers in mid-career. In particular, there is evidence that the importance of material success may lessen, while the desire for a less tangible, more personal kind of success increases (Nicholson and West 1988, O'Connor and Wolfe 1987).

Evans and Bartolomé (1981), in a study of 532 (male) middle managers who attended executive development courses at Insead, which they supplemented with in-depth interviews with 22 of the managers and their wives, found that the managers showed "some degree of career disengagement" after the age of 40. This "disengagement" was not related to the level of organisational success which they had achieved but was linked rather to an increased emphasis on their relationship with their family. "The early forties", say Evans and Bartolomé, "are a period of reassessment, of questioning one's values, achievements and lifestyle." This process begins, they claim, in the mid-thirties, when, for the managers in their study, life outside work started to acquire a meaning that it had not had before. The central preoccupation of their early mid-life therefore was "the search for a meaningful and gratifying private life", as they strove to integrate work and family better.

"What all this indicates is a clear realignment of what is important in the life of a man (sic) at this time," Evans and Bartolomé state. "Private life now occupies centre stage. Consequently the source of self-esteem changes. The career calls for special attention only at times of crisis. Senses of well-being and of self-esteem depend fundamentally on the health and development of private life."

Marshall (1995) found that for women managers too, mid-life was a time for re-evaluating what their careers meant to them and making adjustments which brought

their working life more in line with what they considered to be important aspects of their identity. This sometimes meant a reduction in the importance they placed on external measures of success: "The organisational world had previously been a significant value system for some. Several talked about no longer using its markers, such as salary, as measures of worth." Marshall's findings echo those of Hennig and Jardim (1978), who discovered that women who had been organisationally "successful" put their careers on hold temporarily in mid-life and attended to other, more "feminine" aspects of their identity which they had previously neglected.

O'Connor and Wolfe (1987) confirm the existence of some kind of mid-life turning point, which brings about a change in managers' career orientation. In a study of 64 male and female managers aged between 35 and 50, they found that the managers' need for autonomy at work increased as a result of what they describe as "a mid-life transition". The idea of becoming more in touch with one's feelings and values, and becoming one's own person also became important at the time of the transition. However, O'Connor and Wolfe suggest that for managers who were less successful hierarchically, concerns about "stagnation and security" might be more prominent in mid-life than a desire for autonomy.

Their findings echo those of Evans and Bartolomé (1981), in that, for men, passing through a mid-life transition meant a reduction in the investment they made in their career. Women, on the other hand, had much lower levels of investment in their career before they entered the period of transition, but as they passed through it, increased the investment they made dramatically, to the point where, once they had completed the transition, their levels of investment were similar to those of men (O'Connor and Wolfe 1987). The evidence for some kind mid-life "crisis" which affects managers' conceptions of career success will be discussed further in section 2.3.2.

Nicholson and West (1988) also discovered that the period of "young middle-age", which they place between 36 and 45, was a watershed for managers in terms of what they wanted from their career. Nicholson and West claim that during this period managers' need for growth and need for rewards from work peak, before declining thereafter. Managers "nearing the end of their career" are "more relaxed, fulfilled, and less ambitious and are less concerned with material rewards", they say. On the other hand, they are more concerned with "opportunities to influence and contribute to their environments" (Nicholson and West 1988). Their conclusions support those

of Kalleberg and Losocco (1983), who found that income and promotional opportunities were of less concern to older employees than they were to younger ones, and also concur with what Lynn et al. (1996) describe individuals wanting at different stages of their career as it develops:

Dividing the career into three stages, establishment, advancement and maintenance, Lynn et al. say that in the advancement stage, "individual concerns are focused on upward mobility in the organisation, achievement and promotion", whereas at the maintenance stage, "the individual becomes less competitive and focuses on developing peer relationships and on strengthening the organisation" (Lynn et al. 1996). In theory, an individual can pass through the three stages at any age, depending on when their career begins, but in practice, older managers are more likely to be in the maintenance stage. The process of career development will be discussed in more detail in section 2.3.3.

Nicholson and West (1988) suggest that, over the course of their careers, managers may alter their needs to suit what they perceive organisations have to offer them, and thereby change their ideas about what career success is for them. Older managers, who may no longer believe that there are considerable opportunities for high earnings and advancement, "make adjustments in the value they place on these factors and so they continue to be fulfilled": "Desiring the unavailable is a recipe for frustration, alienation and dissatisfaction, and therefore it is in one's psychological self-interest to revise one's goals to levels which can be achieved within organisational settings." Scase and Goffee (1989) agree with this conclusion, claiming that less "successful" older managers readjust their expectations and adapt psychologically "by, for example, developing interests outside work or even by anticipating early retirement". This view is backed up by Mottaz (1986), who also believes that individuals adjust what they value at work to suit what may be available.

The suggestion that older managers may view career success in a different way from younger managers is supported by research into levels of work satisfaction. Clark et al. (1996), using data drawn from the British Household Panel Survey, conclude that the relationship between age and job satisfaction is U-shaped, especially for men. They found that, on average, job satisfaction declines until the age of 31, after which it rises again. Their findings endorse Scase and Goffee's conclusion (1988) that younger managers are more dissatisfied than older ones.

The increase in satisfaction with age which these studies show may be a manifestation of the process of psychological adaptation described by Nicholson and West (1988): Clark et al. (1996) suggest that one of the reasons why older employees are happier at work could be that their work values are different from those of younger people: income and promotional opportunities are of less concern to older employees, they say, which means that they are less of a cause of dissatisfaction in their working lives. (The fact that the pattern of women's satisfaction does not fit the U-shape as well may be explained, they say, by the greater number of promotions which men do receive, compared with women, and a "differential participation effect": men's withdrawal from unsatisfying jobs is more concentrated in later life, whereas women's may be spread out more evenly over the age distribution. The effect of age on women's levels of career satisfaction will be considered further below.)

Whilst the focus of this research is on managerial career success, not motivation, it is worth noting briefly here that any move away from an emphasis on financial success by older managers who have already achieved it may also be explained by the fact that this aspect of career success could operate partially as a hygiene factor (Herzberg 1968), that is to some extent only desired when it is absent. (The fact that Herzberg does not view "advancement" as a hygiene factor but as a motivator illustrates the complex nature of the relationship between conceptions of career success and motivational factors, a relationship on which it is beyond the scope of this study to speculate further.)

Research into managerial values also confirms that what managers want from their careers changes as their careers develop. Gomez-Mejia (1990) found that the values held by male and female managers become more similar as the number of years in a given occupation increases, suggesting that the process of organisational socialisation impinges on what managers find most important about their work. Posner and Munson (1981) agree that the effects of organisational socialisation may make the difference between men and women's work values less pronounced, concluding that "value structures may shift, in part, due to a transcendence of roles".

However, there is some evidence that women managers' experiences in mid-career may be very different from those of their male counterparts (Korman et al. 1981, Nicholson and West 1988). It seems that the difficulties which they experience throughout their careers, described in section 2.2.4, may become even greater at this

stage and may lead to a loss of satisfaction and self-worth. This is likely to have an important effect on what women in mid-career perceive career success to be (Nicholson and West 1988). Schneer and Reitman (1994), in a longitudinal study of MBA graduates, found no differences between men and women in career satisfaction, perceived boss appreciation and salary early in their careers. By mid-career, however, although men and women still had the same levels of commitment to their work, the women reported lower levels of career satisfaction and perceived boss appreciation; they also on average earned 13% less than the men.

"Women may become disillusioned with the mores of organisations and the quality of life which results." Schneer and Reitman suggest. "After trying to fit the male organisational mould, sometimes with success, women may reconsider the desirability of that mould compared to other work patterns." While a larger study (Schneer and Reitman 1995) failed to confirm that women in mid-career were actually less satisfied with their careers than men, it did show that women's level of career satisfaction had fallen since their early career, when they were more satisfied than men: "Thus, although on the surface, it appears in this study that women are as pleased as men with their careers, there are some suggestions that this equality may not necessarily continue," say Schneer and Reitman (1995). This view is supported by the fact that, by mid-career, almost a third of the women had opted out of a conventional managerial career: 21% of the women, compared with "a small percentage" of men, had left full-time employment and a further 9% had become self-employed. The second study also found that women who remained within organisations did not progress as far as men in the organisational hierarchy and earned, on average, 19% less than men by mid-career: "Women appear to reach upper-middle levels of management by mid-career but go no further," Schneer and Reitman conclude.

Research by Bishop and Solomon (1989) provides evidence that, by the middle of their career, women managers have lost much of their sense of self-worth. Their study of full-time MBA students shows that, while young men and women managers both have an internal locus of control, by mid-career women managers' locus of control has become external, while male managers' is more internal. Male and female managers in both age groups showed similar levels of commitment to their career. Bishop and Solomon suggest that an explanation for the change in women's locus of control may be "older women's experience in meeting obstacles to career establishment and advancement". "It is generally agreed", they say, "that the model

for success in most organisations is a male model.....Pursuing roles modelled after men might therefore present unique organisational adjustment problems for women. Additional conflicts are likely to be created for a woman in adapting to the masculine value system inherent in many occupations and may cause undue delays in the development of her career" (Bishop and Solomon 1989).

2.3.2 The process of adult development

Evidence that managers' conceptions of career success change over the course of their career, especially as a result of some kind of "mid-life crisis" as described in section 2.3.1, receives support from theories of adult development. They suggest that adulthood is not a fixed state psychologically but one which is marked by evolution, and sometimes even revolution. As Levinson (1986) says: "The course of life is not a simple continuous process. There are qualitatively different phases or seasons."

Levinson (1978), following in the footsteps of earlier writers such as Erikson (1963), as well as the work of Jung (Jung et al. 1964), argues that the development of the human personality is a life-long process. His theory of adult development, widely accepted as the most influential modern exposition of the adult life structure, views the course of adult development as a predictable sequence of transitions and periods of relative stability, through which individuals pass at certain ages. The framework for the developmental process is described by Levinson in terms of four consecutive "seasons": childhood and adolescence, which ends at around the age of 22; early adulthood, which lasts until about the age of 40; middle adulthood, which ends at about 60; and late adulthood (Levinson 1978).

The seasons are broken up and separated by a number of transitions as follows: an early adult transition, which separates childhood and adolescence from the start of early adulthood; an age thirty transition, which punctuates early adulthood, a mid-life transition, which ends early adulthood and heralds the passage to middle adulthood, an age fifty transition which occurs in the mid period of middle adulthood, and finally a late adult transition which divides middle adulthood from late adulthood (Levinson 1986). The transitions are periods of change and development during which a person evaluates and restructures their life as it currently exists, before moving on to the next phase of relative stability, when they consolidate the life structure they have created for themselves.

The two transitions likely to be particularly crucial for the development of managers' ideas about career success are the age thirty transition and the mid-life transition. Levinson believes that, while the age 30 transition does not herald the beginning of a new era, it can still be a time of crisis when a person evaluates "the flaws and limitations of the first adult life structure" (Levinson 1978). He views the mid-life transition as being especially important, because it is a time when people reflect on what they believe they have achieved so far in their life, and as a result may decide to change its direction completely: "If a man (sic) at 40 has failed to realise his most cherished dreams, he must begin to come to terms with the failure and arrive at a new set of choices around which to rebuild his life. If he has succeeded brilliantly, he must consider the meaning and value of his success" (Levinson 1978).

Sheehy (1976 and 1996) supports the idea of the existence of transitional periods or "passages" at around these times in a person's life. She characterises the passage to the thirties as a period of "psychological shift on all fronts": "The challenge is to sort out the qualities we want to retain from our childhood models, to blend them with the capacities and qualities that distinguish us as individuals, and to fit all this back together in some broader form" (Sheehy 1976).

Sheehy (1996) also agrees that the mid-life crisis, or "middlescence" as she calls it, is particularly significant, since it signals the entry into what she describes as "second adulthood": "The transformation of middle life is to move into a more stable psychological state of mastery, where we control much of what happens in our life and can often act on the world, rather than habitually react to whatever the world throws at us...it means throwing off all the old stereotypes, letting go of our outgrown priorities, and developing real clarity about what is most relevant in our lives for the future" (Sheehy 1996).

While the periods of transition are central to the process of adult development, Levinson (1978) identifies developmental activities that occur during periods of stability too. The phase up to and including the age thirty transition Levinson terms the novice period. He identifies four key tasks which a person must undertake during this time: forming a Dream; forming a mentor relationship; forming an occupation; and forming a marriage and family. The Dream is seen to be particularly important, since this is what inspires a person to strive to live the kind of life they want to lead. The thirties decade is seen as a period of settling down, at the end of which an

individual seeks a sense of "becoming his own man", (sic), that is achieving on their own terms.

Levinson's original study was carried out with a sample of 40 men; since then he has extended his work to include women too, although at the time of writing this thesis his findings on women's career development had not been published in the UK*. Nevertheless, he was confident enough about the results of his research into the development of women to claim that it followed the same pattern as that of men: "This sequence of eras and periods holds for men and women of different cultures, classes and historical epochs," he states (Levinson 1986). However, many writers, including Sheehy and Gilligan, do not agree and have challenged the applicability of Levinson's theory to the adult development of women (Sheehy 1976, Gilligan 1982, Ornstein and Isabella 1990, Smart and Peterson 1994). If they are correct, then the different developmental process which women experience could mean that their ideas about career success change at different times and in different ways to those of men.

Sheehy (1976) claims that men and women will be out of step developmentally for much of their adult life: "During the twenties, when a man gains confidence, a married woman is usually losing the superior assurance she once had as an adolescent," she says. "When a man passes thirty and wants to settle down, a woman is often becoming restless. And just at the point around forty, when a man feels himself to be standing on a precipice, his strength, power, dreams and illusions slipping away beneath him, his wife is likely to be brimming with ambition to climb her own mountain."

The difference in the psychology of men and women discussed in section 2.2.3 also suggests that the sequence and process of their adult development will differ too. Gilligan (1980) asserts that theories of adult male development emphasise the "male" psychology of separation at the expense of the "female" psychology of attachment. For this reason she concludes that they are unlikely to be able to describe adequately women's adult development: "Current studies of men's lives in their insistent focus on self and work provide scanty illumination of an adulthood spent in the activities of relationship and care."

*According to the British Library *The Seasons of a Woman's Life* was published in the US in 1996, but as yet is not available in the UK.

Women's emphasis on relationships, at the expense of themselves, is highlighted by other writers who have attempted to analyse women's development using Levinson's seasons model. Bardwick (1980) suggests that, rather than concentrating on finding a Dream in their twenties, "women imagine a future based on relationships". She concludes: "Despite the marked awareness in young women's awareness that they ought to decide actively upon career goals...there has been relatively little change in regard to the priority of a committed relationship and a sense of self and adulthood developed within relationships." Likewise Barnett and Baruch (1980) infer that, of the four developmental tasks Levinson outlined for the novice period, only the last, forming a marriage and family, is important to young women.

Following an appraisal of four pieces of research which used Levinson's theory to study women's adult development, Roberts and Morgan (1987) claim that women have "split" Dreams, which are concerned with relationships as well as occupation. Their Dreams are more complex and less motivating than the Dreams Levinson describes the men in his sample having, say Roberts and Morgan, and consist of "vague images of self in a particular kind of environment or community, rather than a concrete image of self in a particular occupational role". The fact that women's Dreams are "split" makes it harder for them to achieve success either in their personal lives or at work, they conclude: "Women's dreams contained an image of self-in-adult-world defined in relation to others, such as husbands, children and colleagues."

While Roberts and Morgan found evidence of the existence of an age 30 transition for women, during which their main developmental task was a reappraisal of the relative importance they had assigned to career and family, the thirties do not emerge as a period of "settling down" for women (Bardwick 1980, Roberts and Morgan 1987). They are still likely to be struggling to "form an occupation" or if they have successfully done so, are feeling anxious about the threat their "achievement" poses to their femininity. Roberts and Morgan (1987) conclude: "In the absence of a specific occupational goal, women's lives may be characterised as conflicted and unstable throughout much of early adulthood and into middle age." Thus, young women's adult development appears to be very different from the "male" pattern Levinson proposes of alternating stable and transitional periods.

Furthermore, the mid-life crisis may bring different developmental tasks for men and women. For men, it often involves reconsideration of their commitment to a career;

for women, this can be a time when they may begin to take this aspect of their life more seriously (Sheehy 1976, Bardwick 1980, Gilligan 1982). Bardwick (1980) says that, in contrast to men at this stage, women "will be better able to engage the world, experiencing themselves as initiators, having gratification as individuals". Her conclusion echoes the findings of O'Connor and Wolfe (1987), that women increased their investment in their career during a mid-life crisis, as described in section 2.3.1. Therefore, if women managers' ideas about career success change at this time of flux in their life, as men's do (e.g. Evans and Bartolomé 1981, Nicholson and West 1988), there is no reason to suppose that they change in a similar way.

2.3.3 Men and women's career development

Any changes in managers' ideas about career success are likely to be influenced not just by their psychological development, but also by their experiences at work as their career evolves. Theories of career development have traditionally proposed that organisational careers unfold in a set pattern, which entails particular developmental tasks at certain fixed stages of the career, closely related to age (e.g. Miller and Form 1951, Super 1957). This suggests that managers could have different views of what their career means to them and how they perceive success at different stages in their career (e.g. Nicholson and West 1988).

All the classic models of career development identify a sequence of similar stages through which the individual's career passes as it develops. While the theories differ in detail, they are all predicated on the notion that a career consists of continuous full-time work for the whole of the adult life, and as a result imply that particular career landmarks, such as initiation into the world of work, proving oneself and gaining acceptance, will occur at roughly the same age for everyone. The consequences of this rigidity will be discussed in more detail below.

Miller and Form (1951), for example, identify five stages in the development of the career:

- *Preparatory work period*: This lasts until the age of 15 and involves an introduction to the world of work through the ideas of others.
- *Initial work period*: This occurs between the ages of 15 and 18 and involves part-time work as a preparation for a full-time job.

- *Trial work period*: This begins at 18 and can last until 34; in this stage, one takes one's first permanent job and, after trying several options, finds a long-term position.
- *Stable work period*: This can begin from the age of 25 and lasts until 65; this stage involves long-term commitment to "the kind of work I've always wanted" or resignation to the fact that one will not find it.
- Retirement period: This begins at 65.

Super's career development theory (1957) also consists of five stages: *growth*; *exploration*; *establishment*; *maintenance*; and *decline*. While the tasks of these stages are similar to those described by Miller and Form, Super's growth period includes Miller and Form's preparatory and initial work periods, and he distinguishes between an establishment stage and a maintenance stage of the career in what Miller and Form describe as the stable work period. Unlike other career theorists, however, Super claims (e.g. Super 1980) that the concept of career development should not be restricted to the occupational career, but should include all of the roles played by a person during their lifetime. His holistic approach to a life career and the roles people play has already been discussed in section 2.1.6.

Schein (1993), drawing on the work of Super (1957), divides the career into ten stages, although he is far less specific than earlier theorists about the ages at which people pass through these stages and the length of time they may remain in them: "A career", says Schein, "consists of several meaningful units or stages that are recognised both by the person and by society, although the length of time associated with each unit or stage varies immensely according to the occupation and the individual in it." In addition to career stages similar to those identified by the earlier theorists, Schein's model also includes a stage of mid-career crisis and reassessment, which corresponds to the period of mid-life crisis identified by writers on adult development (e.g. Levinson 1978, Sheehy 1996). Schein believes that there is mounting evidence that most people go through "some kind of reassessment" when they are well into their career, which allows them to decide how to pursue the rest of their career. The reassessment may result in major career changes, to enable individuals to follow a career path more in line with their underlying values and goals (Schein 1993). Schein's ten career stages are as follows:

1. *Growth, fantasy and exploration*: This period is usually associated with childhood and early adolescence. At this stage the career has little meaning, except in terms of occupational stereotypes and "a general goal of success".
2. *Education and training*: The length of this period varies; it may include changing and clarifying occupational goals.
3. *Entry into the world of work*: The key task of this stage is to adjust to the realities of organisational life.
4. *Basic training and socialisation*: During this period the organisation begins to make demands to which the individual must respond. As a result, they will evaluate whether they wish to remain within the organisation or leave.
5. *Gaining of membership*: At this stage the individual is accepted as a full contributor to the organisation.
6. *Gaining tenure and permanent membership*: During this stage, typically within the first five to ten years of a career, the individual becomes aware of whether they can count on a long-term future in the organisation.
7. *Mid-career crisis and reassessment*: The key tasks for the individual in this period are to consider whether they are in the right career, whether their career has lived up to their expectations, and how well it fits in with the rest of their life.
8. *Maintaining momentum, regaining it, or levelling off*: The insights gained from the reassessment allow the individual to make decisions about how the rest of their career will be pursued. During this period they enact their personal solution, which may consist of "a determination to climb the ladder as far as possible", "a redefining of the areas of work they want to pursue", "a complex assessment of how to balance the demands of work, family and personal concerns", or simply "levelling off".
9. *Disengagement*: This period is one of slowing down, prior to retirement.
10. *Retirement*

Dalton et al. (1982) claim that there are four stages identifiable within a professional career, each with different tasks for the individual to attend to. Their stages are not necessarily linked to age but are connected both to length of service and seniority within an organisation. Dalton et al. suggest that, unlike other career development theories which show the career following a set sequence related to age, their model is not dependant on everyone passing through all four stages. Not all individuals will reach the fourth stage, they indicate, and some may miss stages out altogether as their careers develop. The four stages they identify are:

- *Apprentice*: During this stage the individual must make the transition from school to work and learn how to cope with organisational life.
- *Independent specialist*: At this stage the individual builds competence, often by developing a speciality.
- *Mentor*: During this stage the individual becomes involved in managing the work and development of others.
- *Sponsor*: At this stage the individual becomes concerned with the goals of the organisation, as well as the activities of subordinates.

Because classic models of career development are based on the premise that a career entails a pattern of full-time continuous working, during which certain tasks are achieved in a certain order at a certain age, it has been argued that it is more difficult to apply them to women's careers. (Most theories of career development are in fact derived from initial research into men's careers e.g. Schein 1978, Dalton et al. 1982.) It is clear that women, who are far more likely than men to take career breaks because of family responsibilities, may often be out of step with such orderly models of progression through organisational life, which, as Larwood and Gattiker (1987) observe, "are typified by the careers traditionally expected of successful males". Classic career development theory, they say, "ignores the influence of the unique social and family situations of women and also attaches little significance to demands on men external to the work environment".

Giele (1980) claims that in women's lives there is no set time developmentally for an occupation to be formed, nor does career development have to take place in the set pattern traditionally described for men; consequently women's career development must be seen in terms of "crossover", that is that the roles and tasks which writers on male development suggest assume occur at fixed points in the life cycle can in fact occur at other times if it is more appropriate.

Some have claimed that it is possible to apply "classic" career development models to women's careers, if allowance is made for the child rearing and family duties for which women tend to have responsibility. For example, Super (1984) argues that the career patterns of men are basically applicable to women if modified to take marriage and childbearing into account. Nonetheless, this approach, described by Larwood and Gattiker (1987) as a "neo-classic" model of career development, remains inadequate to describe the careers of women because it does not accommodate the fact that they also have to contend with a different structure of opportunity at work

from their male colleagues. This different structure of opportunity, which involves factors such as prejudice and stereotyping, as well as informal organisational barriers, is a key influence on the different reality of women's careers, as discussed in sections 2.2.4 and 2.2.5. Marshall (1995), for example, found that many of the women she studied had "unclear" starts to their career, and only gained confidence later, to become "deliberately career-minded" in their late twenties or early thirties.

Because the pattern of women's career development, unlike men's, is tied to the constraints women face in the workplace, as well as family responsibilities, it has been proposed that career development theory must describe women's careers separately from men's (Astin 1984). Larwood and Gattiker refer to this as the "dual development" model of career development. The dual development model suggests, they say, "that any understanding of the careers of men and women requires consideration not only of family and competing demands external to the work environment but of phenomena that may distinguish between men and women" (Larwood and Gattiker 1987).

Astin (1984) proposes a model of career development based upon four constructs, which she believes highlight the factors that shape women's careers: work motivation; work expectations; sex-role socialisation; and structure of opportunity. Astin believes that men and women have the same work motivation, but women make different career choices from men, she claims, because their early socialisation experiences and the structural opportunities which they face are different from those of men. (Astin's concept of structure of opportunity includes factors such as sex role stereotyping, distribution of jobs and discrimination.) While this theory of career development does identify some key factors which affect women's career development, it has been criticised for not considering sufficiently the impact of the structure of work (for example long working hours) on women's careers (Gilbert 1984).

Powell and Mainiero (1992 and 1993), with their "river of time" model, described in section 2.2.1, put the factors which influence women's career development under three main headings: personal factors; organisational factors; and societal factors. They claim that women have two overriding concerns in their lives, for their career and for others (family, friends and so on): their model of women's career development therefore incorporates the influence of personal, organisational and

societal factors to describe the balance between work and non-work aspects of life which most women strive to achieve.

Larwood and Gutek (1987) propose that any theory of women's career development must take account of five factors:

1. *Career preparation*: This determines how females are brought up to view the idea of a career and whether they believe they will have one or not.
2. *Opportunities available*: Consideration must be given to whether they are limited for women, compared with men.
3. *Marriage*: Marriage is viewed as neutral for men, but harmful to the careers of women.
4. *Pregnancy and children*: Having children inevitably causes women to take some kind of career break.
5. *Timing and age*: Due to factors such as career breaks, women's careers may not follow the same chronological pattern as men's. However, "a woman who enters the work force at middle age is more likely to find her career limited than a younger woman first entering it with identical credentials".

Since women's careers are subject to many influences to which men's are not, it seems likely that not only the nature of their conceptions of career success will diverge from the "male" model, but also the frequency and timing of any reconceptualisations. For example, Powell and Mainiero's proposition (1992) that women may alternate between emphasising success in their career and success in relationships implies that changes in women's definitions of career success may be much more driven by external circumstances than men's, and as a result, potentially more frequent. The evidence that women's career development is so different from men's suggests that any qualitative changes in their definitions of success will also differ from any "male" pattern. If women's careers are not continuous, like men's, then they will not necessarily have reached a mid-career crisis by the time they reach mid-life, which causes them to see career success less in external terms than before (e.g. Evans and Bartolomé 1981, Korman et al. 1981). Instead, their conceptions of career success at this time may reflect the fact that, as Bardwick (1980) describes it, they are now "better able to engage the world" than ever before.

2.4 Conclusion

The literature on managerial careers suggests that managers' conceptions of career success cannot be represented adequately by external criteria such as level in the hierarchy and pay (e.g. O'Reilly and Chatman 1994, Melamed 1995): there is widespread evidence that external organisational success is not on its own sufficient to make managers to feel that their careers are actually successful (e.g. Korman et al. 1981, Scase and Goffee 1989, Russo et al, 1991).

Just as the career has an internal as well as an external dimension (Schein 1978, Gunz 1989, Derr and Laurent 1989), so career success itself should include a subjective internal dimension, as well as the objective external perspective from which it is generally viewed (Gattiker and Larwood 1986). This means that, for managers, personal conceptions of career success will be based on both objective external and subjective internal criteria, as described by Poole et al. (1993).

The failure of many managers to relate their own success to purely external achievements (Korman et al. 1981) suggests that subjective internal criteria may in fact be a more important part of some individuals' personal definitions of career success. One group for whom this appears to be particularly true are women managers (e.g. Hennig and Jardim 1978, Marshall 1984, Asplund 1988), for reasons probably related to their psychological development (Gilligan 1982) and their organisational experiences (Cox and Harquail 1991).

The relative importance of external material criteria for career success also seems to wane as managers grow older (Nicholson and West 1988), with managers possibly becoming more concerned in middle age with criteria for success such as autonomy and influence (O'Connor and Wolfe 1987, Nicholson and West 1988).

Yet, despite the overwhelming evidence that managers' career success cannot be judged purely in external terms, one must agree with Poole et al. (1993) that "one of the major shortcomings in the career success literature has been an adequate conceptualisation of what 'career success' means". In particular, there has been no attempt to conceptualise what career success means to different kinds of managers, such as male and female managers, and younger and older managers, despite evidence that variations are likely to exist according to gender and age, as described

above. (A major criticism made of career theory e.g. Larwood and Gattiker (1987) is that it has traditionally been based on a uniform, all-male sample.)

The literature therefore points the way forward for the research "to raise the issue of what is success" (Sekaran and Hall 1987) for managers. There remains a need for research which conceptualises managers' personal definitions of career success, taking account of the potential effects of gender and age, and showing the relative importance of internal and external criteria for success for different managers.

The form in which the findings of research into the internal career have been presented indicates one possible means of achieving such a conceptualisation. Writers such as Schein (1978), Driver (1982) and Derr (1986) have used what Bailyn (1989) describes as *orientational categories*, or typologies, to represent "an aggregation of individual data that reflects differences in subjective meanings". Orientational categories, such as Schein's career anchors, "classify people according to individual predispositions that specifically deal with the topic at hand" (Bailyn 1989). What is badly needed in the field of career success theory is a typology based on orientational categories which describes how managers define their own career success, and is derived from research into both men and women and managers of different ages.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH STRATEGY AND METHODS

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This chapter discusses the research strategy and methods which were chosen to carry out the research. Section 3.1 considers the research strategy from both a philosophical and a pragmatic perspective. Section 3.2 examines the research design, including the methods used, the research setting and the selection of the managers interviewed. Section 3.3 outlines the field work process at both stages of the research. Section 3.4 discusses the approach taken to data analysis, including the use of computer software and the development of typological concepts.

3.1 Research strategy

Blaikie (1993) identifies two key influences on the choice of a research strategy: it can be made for pragmatic reasons "to try to match a strategy to the nature of a particular research project and the kind of research questions which have been selected for consideration"; and it can be made because it reflects the "world view" of the researcher, that is their personal preference for a certain philosophical position on the nature of social reality and how knowledge about it can be obtained. The first influence is in a sense secondary to the second: whatever the motive for choosing a research strategy, its choice nonetheless entails "the adoption of a particular set of ontological and epistemological assumptions" (Blaikie 1993).

This research aims to conceptualise managers' personal definitions of career success and investigate differences and similarities which exist between male and female managers, and older and younger managers, in terms of how they conceive their own career success. The strategy adopted for the research is based on a realist methodological approach and the use of qualitative methods as the means of enquiry. The decision to adopt this strategy was indeed influenced by both pragmatism and philosophy: since, as Blaikie says, the reasons for the choice are secondary to the philosophical assumptions the approach taken entails, the philosophical perspective of the research will be discussed first.

3.1.1 Philosophical perspective

Key questions which the management researcher, as a social scientist, must consider before embarking upon a research project are what is the nature of the social reality to be investigated and how can knowledge about that reality be acquired. An

understanding of the ontological and epistemological issues surrounding the proposed research is important for the researcher to feel confident that the methodological approach which they choose is likely to generate findings that add to the body of knowledge in their chosen field of enquiry. As Morgan and Smircich (1980) say, "the choice and adequacy of a method embodies a variety of assumptions regarding the nature of knowledge and the methods through which that knowledge can be obtained, as well as a set of assumptions about the nature of the phenomena to be examined".

Historically, it has often proved convenient, for the purposes of credibility and alleged rigour, to assume that the reality of the social world is ontologically the same as that of the natural world, governed by universal causal laws. If this is the case, it is argued, then "facts" relating to social reality and knowledge of the social world can be acquired through recourse to the methodological strategy traditionally utilised in the natural sciences. This gave rise to a positivist methodological paradigm in the social sciences which entailed the view that knowledge about the social world could only be derived from what was directly observable. An objective social reality consisting of general laws, it was claimed, could be ascertained by observation of phenomena through empirical investigation, typically involving the use of quantitative methods similar to those employed in scientific research.

The positivist tradition in social science has prevailed because of a desire by many researchers to position their findings as akin to the "knowledge" derived by natural scientists about the natural world. Nevertheless, its acceptance that the social world is ontologically the same as the natural world makes it highly problematic, since this acceptance ignores the importance of the perspective of social actors themselves and the meanings they place on the world which they inhabit: unlike the natural world, social reality is in some sense the creation of its inhabitants and, some believe, "already interpreted by the meanings which participants produce and reproduce as a necessary part of their everyday activities together" (Blaikie 1993). Morgan and Smircich (1980), for example, suggest that it is debatable "whether or not human beings can ever achieve any form of knowledge that is independent of their own subjective construction, since they are the agents through which knowledge is perceived or experienced".

The positivists' neglect of social actors' meanings as a vital aspect of social reality led in part to the development of the interpretivist methodological paradigm.

Interpretivism argues that the study of social phenomena "requires an understanding of the social world which people have constructed and which they reproduce through their continuing activities" (Blaikie 1993). For the interpretivist, the social world is not objective at all, but a subjective entity, consisting purely of the perceptions and definitions of social actors: the only way in which it can exist, they maintain, is "as people experience it and give meaning to it" (Neuman 1994).

Knowledge about this subjective social reality is derived from describing and interpreting peoples' definitions of it, generally using qualitative methods such as in-depth interviewing and participant observation: as Morgan and Smircich say (1980), if the social world is entirely subjective, "scientists can no longer remain as external observers, measuring what they see; they must move to investigate from within the subject of study and employ research techniques appropriate to the task". To quote Giddens (1976), for the interpretivist, "generating descriptions of social conduct depends upon the hermeneutic task of penetrating the frames of meaning which lay actors themselves draw upon in constituting and reconstructing the social world".

While interpretivism appears right to argue that the meanings human beings give to their experiences and understanding are in some way an important part of social reality, it is difficult to accept its argument that this precludes the existence of any kind of objective reality at all. As Bhaskar argues (1979), societies are irreducible to people. To quote Layder (1990), the social world may exist objectively "as the product of human activity": of course, if it has an objective reality, it is likely, given the importance of social actors' meanings, that this reality is very different from that of the natural world, and very different from the kind of reality based on universal causal laws positivists suggest exists.

The methodological position which has been chosen for this research, therefore, is realism, because it attacks positivism for its causal ontology and its neglect of social actors' meanings but also disputes interpretivism's argument that there is no such thing as objective social reality. Realism argues that subjective meanings are important, but that there are "real" objective relations which underlie social relations: the fact that social actors' conceptions of reality make up at least part of that reality does not rule out its objectivity: "Even if the building-blocks of social science are 'interpreted' building blocks in a more radical and far-reaching way than are the component parts of natural scientific theory, and even if the structures postulated within the social sciences tend to be presented, for good reasons, in a tentative way,

this does not prevent us asking questions of a realist kind about these structures" (Outhwaite 1978).

Realism suggests that the objective social reality which does exist is much more complex than positivism proposes (Neuman 1994). It describes it in terms of underlying structures and mechanisms, consisting of multiple layers, rather than phenomena and events. Bhaskar (1979), for example, argues that, ontologically speaking, there are three separate domains, *the real*, which is made up of entities and mechanisms, *the actual*, which is made up of events, and *the empirical*, which is made up of experiences. Outhwaite (1987) points out that, while connected, these domains are distinct: "Events can occur without being experienced and, more importantly, causal mechanisms can neutralise one another in such a way that no event takes place."

The objects of enquiry within the realist paradigm therefore are the deep structures and unobservable mechanisms which lie behind what is immediately observable. This is not to say that realism believes that it is easy to capture these structures but rather that it is "meaningful and pragmatically useful to posit the existence of such structures as possible objects of scientific description" (Outhwaite 1987). The realist epistemology thus is one of attempting to find "explanations" which represent the generative mechanisms and structures that comprise reality. According to Outhwaite (1987), "we shall...feel we have a good explanation if the postulated mechanism is capable of explaining the phenomena, (if) we have good reason to believe in its existence, (and if) we cannot think of any equally good alternatives". Realism uses the construction of theoretical models and other similar explanatory devices to explain these "real" underlying structures and mechanisms.

Since realism argues that the nature of the social world is very different from that of the natural world (Neuman 1994), and, like interpretivism, accepts the importance of social actors' meanings, it advocates that different methods may be appropriate for social enquiry from those traditionally used by positivists. In particular, some realists have attacked quantitative methods as "predominantly descriptive and representative generalisations...which lack explanatory depth": "There are problems associated with the investigation of social reality which cannot be settled simply by empirical investigation" (Layder 1990). Morgan and Smircich (1980) agree that any research into the social world which "merely contents itself with the production of narrow,

empirical snapshots of isolated phenomena at fixed points in time" does not do complete justice to the nature of the subject.

In practice, taking a realist approach to research means using methods which seem best suited to producing "knowledge" of the underlying structures and mechanisms which comprise reality. Outhwaite (1987), for example, states that the conception of the object of inquiry will crucially determine the sorts of method which are appropriate to its investigation: "The ethnomethodological approach of conversation analysis will not help us understand the rate of profit in a capitalist economy, nor will the law of value explain how one can terminate a telephone conversation without embarrassment." For social enquiry, qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews will often be the most useful means of investigation since, for the realist, as Outhwaite says, "common sense descriptions of social phenomena can and must be taken as the starting point in social scientific theorising". The pragmatic arguments in favour of qualitative methods for this research will be considered in section 3.1.2.

3.1.2 Pragmatic perspective

While the philosophical perspective necessarily underpins any piece of research, pragmatism is also an important influence on the choice of a research strategy. From a pragmatic point of view, the nature of the research questions being considered and the essence of the subject matter under investigation must both be taken into account in the choice of a research strategy.

The questions which this research aims to answer are:

1. *What do managers conceive career success to be for themselves on their own terms?*
2. *Do women managers have different ideas about what career success is for them from men?*
3. *Do older managers have different ideas about what career success is for them from younger ones?*

The research questions are essentially exploratory in nature: as a research topic, individuals' personal conceptions of success have received scant attention to date (Gattiker and Larwood 1989) and consequently little is currently known about how managers judge their own success. The literature shows that most research into

careers has examined them from an organisational perspective (Herriot et al. 1994) and that career theory lacks a satisfactory conceptualisation of managers' own definitions of career success (Poole et al. 1993). The questions thus attempt to uncover what meanings managers themselves give to the concept of career success.

For an exploratory study of this kind, it is generally accepted that qualitative methods offer the most appropriate means of answering the research questions. Marshall and Rossman (1989), for example, indicate that the kind of research questions most amenable to qualitative methods are exploratory ones which examine "what are the salient themes, patterns, categories in participants' meaning structures?": the questions this research is seeking to answer are quite clearly of this type. Neuman (1994) argues that qualitative methods are frequently used to address exploratory research questions because they tend to be "more open to using a range of evidence and discovering new issues".

Cassell and Symon (1994) agree that qualitative methods are more appropriate for exploratory studies, since "qualitative research is more concerned with emergent themes and ideographic description". Gill and Johnson (1991) also concur that they are "more likely to produce valid findings in an under-researched area".

Using qualitative methods therefore seems to offer the best means of producing data which are deep and rich enough to shed light on the little understood subject of managers' personal definitions of career success. The "thick" description (Geertz 1973) and detailed analysis generated by qualitative research techniques should yield the most accurate conceptualisation of what managers believe career success to be for themselves and thereby answer the research questions.

The nature of the research topic about which the questions are posed is also an important influence on the choice of a research strategy, in that the methods chosen to carry out the research must appear to be those most likely to yield knowledge about it. Outhwaite (1987), for example, suggests that the merits of various approaches to social science research "can only be judged in the practice of these sciences and the extent to which they seem, to social scientists and to the public, to enrich our own understanding of the social world".

This research concerns the meanings individual managers give to the concept of career success. It is widely argued that research which investigates the meanings and

beliefs of individuals can be carried out best with recourse to qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews, rather than using quantitative methods, such as surveys. Easterby-Smith et al. (1991), for instance, suggest that using semi-structured or even unstructured interviews is the most appropriate research method when "it is necessary to understand the constructs that the interviewee uses as a basis for her opinions and beliefs about a particular matter or situation".

Personal conceptions of career success relate to deep-seated values and attitudes held by managers, and any research which investigates them must use methods capable of tapping this depth, rather than merely reporting superficial opinions. Gill and Johnson (1991) believe that employing quantitative methods can impede rather than aid the research process: "Respondents might often be constrained or impelled by the prompts of an interviewer or the rubric of a self-completion questionnaire." They conclude: "This may lead them to make statements which, although fitting into the conceptual and theoretical proforma of the research, give little opportunity for the respondent to articulate the ways in which he or she personally conceptualises and understand the matters of interest."

The view that there are some areas of social reality, such as values and beliefs, which statistics cannot measure, is shared by many writers on social research. As Okely (1994) says, "peoples' beliefs, values and actions are not necessarily revealed by head counting". Silverman (1993) agrees that "quantification can both conceal as well as reveal basic social processes," and points out that qualitative methods may be particularly useful when the participants' views on the research topic could be somewhat unformed. "Do we all have coherent attitudes on any topic which await the researcher's questions?," he asks.

Silverman's opinion is especially pertinent to this research topic, since many managers may not be conscious of what, for them, constitutes career success, even though they act on it all the time subconsciously. Conceptions of career success are likely to fall into the unit of social setting described by Lofland and Lofland (1984) as "inarticulated meanings", that is unrecognised as such by the participants. Inviting managers simply to fill in a questionnaire, as part of a quantitative research project, is unlikely to help them surface their beliefs. Marshall and Rossman (1989) say: "Subjects sometimes do not know their feelings, interactions and behaviours, so they cannot articulate them to respond to a questionnaire." For the purposes of this research, this may be the case not only because managers have not reflected on the

subject of career success but also because the conventional description of career success as hierarchical position and level of pay still dominates organisational life and many undoubtedly feel obliged to pay lip service to it. The use of qualitative methods seems most likely to overcome the problems of exploring "inarticulated meanings".

The area of validity is one where those using quantitative methods often claim the superiority of their research methods. However, Lofland and Lofland (1984) argue that "whatever the barriers to the validity of direct knowledge of others, they are as nothing compared to the difficulties engendered by indirect perception". If one agrees, as the evidence suggests, that there are areas of social reality, such as values and beliefs, which statistics cannot measure, then it can be seen that, while quantitative data may be statistically significant, they are not necessarily valid. As Mintzberg (1979) says: "The field of organisation theory has paid dearly for the obsession with rigour in the choice of methodology."

Much of the previous research examining career success from the individual's perspective has in fact used quantitative methods (e.g. Poole et al. 1993, Larwood and Gattiker 1986 and 1988). It is felt that the enduring (and probably misplaced) popularity of quantitative methods may have undermined efforts to conduct research in this area and could provide one reason for the lack of an adequate conceptualisation of career success from the individual's point of view: the use of qualitative methods appears to offer a far more effective means of achieving such a conceptualisation for the reasons described above.

3.1.3 The choice of a research strategy

Philosophical and pragmatic considerations suggest that this research is best carried out within a realist methodological paradigm, using qualitative methods. The relationship between a realist approach to research and the use of qualitative methods has already been mentioned in section 3.1.1: there is no ineluctable link between any philosophical approach to research and a particular set of methods: what is crucial is how the methods are used, and that depends on the methodological stance of the researcher.

Within a realist paradigm, this research aims to acquire knowledge about managers' personal conceptions of career success, with "common sense descriptions" of the

phenomenon as its starting point (Outhwaite 1987). It employs qualitative methods to elicit these "common sense descriptions", in this case individual managers' definitions of career success, and, in keeping with its realist stance, uses them to build a conceptual model and a typology in order to explain the "reality" of managerial career success, as described in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. This seems to be the most effective way of explaining what career success means to managers, thereby answering the research questions posed in Chapter 1.

3.2 Research design

The methods used to conduct this research will be considered in detail in the subsequent sections. Before the exposition of the research process begins, it is important to discuss a key issue relating to the research design, that is the decision to carry out the research in two discrete stages, the first, as it were, acting as a pilot study, and the second being informed by this and building on its findings.

This decision was taken for a number of reasons. As discussed in section 3.1.2, managers' personal conceptions of career success are an area where little research has been carried out to date. Much of the research which does relate to this topic has used quantitative methods (e.g. Gattiker and Larwood 1986 and 1988, Poole et al. 1993). It was felt that the use of a pilot study would confirm the suitability of the qualitative methods chosen, in an area of research where there were few existing studies to guide the researcher. It would demonstrate whether the methods enabled the research participants to reflect on what career success meant to them, a subject which they might not have previously considered, as discussed in section 3.1.2.

The second group of reasons for choosing to perform the research in two stages concerns the researcher's relative inexperience and a degree of uncertainty about how the research process would proceed. Marshall and Rossman (1989), for example, state that the "use of a pilot can lend credence to the researcher's claim that he (sic) can conduct such a study". In particular, it was hard to gauge how easy or difficult it would be to gather relevant data, and a two-stage approach to the research meant that any problems which might occur in the pilot stage could be ironed out in the second stage. For example, the main method of data collection used was in-depth interviewing, and the two-stage approach provided an opportunity to "tune" the interview schedule if necessary, after the first stage of data analysis was complete.

Despite early caution, in fact it was necessary to make only minor changes to the interview schedule for the second stage of the research (see Appendices 1 and 2), and it was possible to combine the findings of both stages to develop the typology of managerial career success, as described in Chapter 6. The field work process at both stages of the research will be discussed in detail in section 3.3.

3.2.1 Research methods

The qualitative researcher has a choice of methods to draw upon, which can be used individually or in combination. These methods are summarised by Silverman (1993) as follows:

- i) Observation
- ii) Analysing texts and documents
- iii) Interviews
- iv) Recording and transcribing

Using methods i), ii) and iv), the researcher acts as a passive observer of social life, by observing or recording situations relevant to the questions being researched, or through the analysis of relevant texts. Such methods were not considered appropriate for answering the research questions posed here: understanding managers' own conceptions of career success requires a more "interventionist" research method. Conceptions of career success do not tend to surface in every day organisational life: many managers may not often actively reflect on this issue and those managers who are clear about what career success means to them may well wish to keep this private, in case their personal conception of success is at odds with that which their organisation appears to endorse.

Interviewing, on the other hand, allows the development of an active relationship between the researcher and the subjects of the research. As King (1994) says, "the interviewee is seen as a 'participant' in the research, actively shaping the course of the interview rather than passively responding to the interviewer's pre-set questions".

It was decided therefore to use interviewing as the main method of gathering data for this research project. Choosing the most appropriate interview format was important too: it was felt that, whereas structured interviews would restrain interviewees' responses in much the same way as a questionnaire, unstructured interviews would

make it difficult, both for the researcher and the participants, to focus on the subject of career success, where people may not have any "ready-made" definitions or conceptions to impart to the interviewer.

Carrying out semi-structured interviews, incorporating a number of specific prompts and open-ended questions, appeared to be the best way of obviating these problems. This view is supported by writers on qualitative research: Silverman (1993) says: "The aim (of qualitative research) is to gather an 'authentic' understanding of peoples' experiences and it is believed that 'open-ended questions' are the most effective route towards this end."

Notwithstanding the decision to use semi-structured interviews, career success remained a problematic area of research for three reasons: firstly, because the "conventional" idea of career success as hierarchical position and level of pay still prevails both within organisations and without; secondly, because many managers may not have voiced what career success really means to them (even though they act on it subconsciously); and lastly, because it relates closely to research subjects' own deeply held values and therefore could, to some, be construed as a sensitive and personal topic for discussion.

For all of these reasons, the structure of the semi-structured interviews to be used in this research was thought to be crucial: it had to "enable" the subjects to consider their own conception of career success. (The interview schedules used for both stages of the research are discussed in section 3.3.1: copies of both schedules are included in Appendices 1 and 2.) It was also decided that the research process would be aided by giving all the interviewees some kind of preliminary "briefing" in the form of a letter from the researcher outlining the kind of topics which would be raised in the interview, so that they could reflect on them in advance, if they wished.

Whilst interviewing was the main data gathering method to be used, the observation of the subjects, in particular their attitudes and behaviour during the interviews, was also thought to be an important part of the research process. To this end, it was decided to make notes about each participant after each interview, to capture what was "unspoken" in the interviews and clarify interviewees' attitudes and beliefs.

3.2.2 The research setting

This research setting chosen for this research was BT, the UK's leading telecommunications company. The organisation and its recent history will be described in more detail in section 3.2.3.

The decision that the research should be carried out within a single organisation, BT, was made because performing the field work in this setting seemed to offer the best opportunity to gather data most likely to answer the research questions. To quote Lofland and Lofland (1984), the aim of qualitative research is "to collect the richest data possible". To obtain this data, qualitative research uses techniques such as in-depth interviewing with small numbers of people. In the case of this research, it was felt that if a small group of managers was selected from a variety of organisations, there would be a danger that extraneous factors, especially the culture of the different organisations, could distort the findings in a way impossible for the researcher to discern. As Miles and Huberman (1984) say, "social processes have a logic and coherence that random sampling of events or treatments usually reduces to uninterpretable sawdust".

It is accepted that the best solution to this problem is to control the number of research settings. For the purposes of this research, however, it seemed best to limit the setting to just one organisation. The alternative would have been to use two or maybe three settings: given the relatively small number of managers to be interviewed, and the fact that this group must be broken down further by sex and age because of the research questions (this will be explained in more detail in section 3.2.4), the potential problem of "extraneous variation" might have arisen if even two or three settings were used. Furthermore, in practical terms, BT's size and divisional structure, described in section 3.2.3, and the fact that the managers interviewed were drawn from all parts of the company, meant that the research setting chosen was not dissimilar to that which would have been provided by using several smaller organisations.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that, in limiting the number of research settings, the qualitative researcher lays their findings open to the charge of a potential lack of generalisability: to quote Eisenhardt (1989), "selection of an appropriate population controls extraneous variation and helps to define the limits of generalising the findings". Marshall and Rossman (1989) admit that a qualitative study's

transferability or generalisability to other settings may be problematic, even if it has greater claim to validity than quantitative research. In defence, they claim that such "generalisability" is less important than the consistency of qualitative findings with "a body of theory". Bryman (1988) concurs with this view, saying that "the issue should be couched in terms of the generalisability of cases to theoretical propositions, rather than to populations or universes".

Even if one accepts that generalisability poses a dilemma for the qualitative researcher, the impact of the problem may be reduced in the case of this research, since the research questions being asked concern individual managers, not groups within the organisation or the organisation itself: the research participants were drawn from the different divisions of BT and many of the managers interviewed had in fact worked for other organisations too. It seemed likely therefore that a wide perspective of views on career success would be represented within the BT setting.

Two other important issues considered before BT was chosen as the research setting were whether it would provide an environment conducive to answering the research questions and whether prolonged access of the kind required to carry out the research would be forthcoming (Marshall and Rossman 1989).

From the point of view of being an environment conducive to answering the research question, BT had many advantages. Whilst it has undergone radical restructuring and delayering in the past ten years, it is still acknowledged to be a very hierarchical organisation and one which continues to emphasise the "traditional" idea of career success as position and pay. It was thought that an organisation of this kind offered the best backdrop to any investigation of managerial career success, since any deviation from the "traditional" idea of success would be starkly portrayed. Furthermore, compared with many other UK companies, BT has promoted the development of women managers and employs a relatively large number of them. This was thought to be important, since one aim of the research was to examine how women managers' ideas about career success differ from men's; it was felt that the field work would be best carried out in an organisation where there were relatively large numbers of women managers, from which to recruit participants.

Finally, gaining access was an important issue if all the research was to be carried out in one organisation. BT seemed to be more likely to agree to give access for a study of this kind than many other companies, since Cranfield and BT have a long-standing

relationship: Cranfield has run BT's management development courses for women managers for ten years and there are strong links between the two organisations, both in terms of practical work with the organisation's women managers and previous academic research.

In effect, the choice of BT as the research setting fulfils Marshall and Rossman's (1989) four criteria for the ideal site: firstly, entry was possible; secondly, there was a high probability that a rich mix of many of the processes that might be part of the research questions would be present; thirdly the researcher could maintain continuity of presence for as long as possible; and fourthly, data quality and credibility of the study could be reasonably assured by avoiding poor sampling decisions. Choosing a research location to carry out qualitative research inevitably involves some compromise: for this research, selecting BT as its setting was the best compromise available, and therefore this was the strategy chosen.

3.2.3 BT

BT, or British Telecom as it was formerly known, is one of the UK's largest and best known companies. It is the leading provider of telecommunications services in Great Britain, although its strategy is increasingly focused on capturing a share of the telecommunications market world-wide: in 1993 it launched a joint venture with US telecommunications company MCI. The organisation, which employs 128,000 people, achieved a turnover of almost £14.5 billion and profits of over £3 billion in the financial year to March 31st 1996.

BT's origins date back to the last century, when, in 1879, the Post Office obtained the exclusive right to transmit telegrams within the UK because of the level of public dissatisfaction with the service provided by private telegraph companies (Newman 1986). By 1912, the Post Office had assumed responsibility for telephone activity in the vast majority of Great Britain. As part of the Post Office, British Telecom was a Government department until 1969, when it was made a public corporation. This meant that until recently, it enjoyed an organisational culture similar to that of the Civil Service, and as such was perceived as a company which could offer its employees well-structured life-time careers.

Over the past 15 years, BT, as it is now known, has undergone dramatic change. It has moved from the position of being a monolithic corporation with a monopoly on

supplying telecommunications services and an entrenched Civil Service mentality to being a privatised, highly competitive, customer-focused and profit-conscious company. During this period it has shed half its workforce and subjected itself to an almost continuous process of reorganisation and restructuring (Newell and Dopson 1995).

The process of change at BT began in 1981, when the Conservative Government abolished BT's monopoly and freed the organisation from the Post Office (Newman 1986). The abolition of BT's monopoly enabled a rival company, Mercury, to enter the UK telecommunications market. More significantly, it was a precursor to privatisation, which took place in 1984, when 51% of BT's shares were sold, following a massive marketing campaign aimed at the general public. At the time, this was the largest privatisation which the Government had undertaken, and as such was underpinned by the Conservative philosophy of fostering free enterprise, rather than public ownership, and a desire to turn the British into a nation of share owners.

As well as meeting the Government's ideological requirements, the privatisation of BT was also seen as a means of improving its efficiency through exposure to market forces. Restructuring, change programmes and redundancy initiatives which have taken place within the organisation since privatisation have been positioned as important means of gaining such improvements in efficiency. These initiatives served a particular purpose in BT, to make the shift from public utility to privatised company in a competitive market, but they also reflect the kind of changes many other organisations have undergone in the past ten years to improve their competitiveness, as discussed in Chapter 1, sections 1.2 and 1.3.

In 1984, 27 geographical districts were formed to replace the telephone areas which had previously existed (Newell and Dopson 1995). Just six years later, the company was restructured again, under the aegis of Project Sovereign, described as a strategy aimed at making it more competitive (McClelland 1990). This time the geographical districts were abolished and a new divisional structure, based on the markets in which BT operates, introduced. The basic form of this structure still remains in place; the organisation now has five divisions: three customer-facing divisions: Global Communications, National Business Communications and Personal Communications; Network and Systems, which is responsible for the telecommunications infrastructure; and Group headquarters, which includes strategic functions such as finance and personnel.

Project Sovereign also meant a reduction in the number of levels in the managerial hierarchy and the disappearance of between 4,000 and 5,000 managers' jobs (Newell and Dopson 1995): over the past ten years BT has managed to reduce the number of its employees by half through a voluntary redundancy programme to its current level of 128,000 employees.

At the same time as the restructuring and redundancy programmes, BT has introduced a number of large-scale change initiatives aimed at shifting the culture of the organisation, to make it more customer-focused and more competitive. In 1986 it instituted a Total Quality Management programme; in 1992 this was followed by a Leadership Programme which extended to 30,000 managers within the organisation. Project Breakout was launched in 1994, with the aim of "re-engineering" the company's business processes in order, to quote BT, "to maximise the revenue to the business and to reduce the costs, in order to enhance BT's position as a world class provider of telecommunications".

While BT is undoubtedly now a commercial success, the number of change initiatives and the massive redundancy programme it has introduced have left their mark on those still employed by the company. It is privately acknowledged by many within the organisation that levels of morale and motivation are low; the rapid rate at which change has been introduced and the large number of initiatives launched to achieve this have left many staff feeling cynical and sceptical about its real effect. For example, it is generally accepted that BT is still a very hierarchical organisation, which continues to position career success very much in terms of grade and status, despite the changes which have taken place.

Not surprisingly, the widespread job losses and the removal of layers within the management hierarchy mean that many managers now feel insecure about their future with the company and unsure about how their careers will develop. Newell and Dopson (1995), in a study of middle management careers at BT, found that "the feeling that one was lucky to have a job clouded most people's thoughts on careers and BT". They concluded that there was a "a mismatch between the opportunities and constraints faced by middle managers and their personal career hopes and plans". "One effect of this mismatch", they say, "has been a reduction in levels of affective commitment" (Newell and Dopson 1995).

The potential effect of such demoralisation on the managers to be interviewed for this research and their ideas about career success could have militated against the selection of BT as the setting for this research. However, it was thought that, since many UK organisations have undergone similar redundancy and change programmes in recent years, the situation might be the same, wherever the research was carried out. The advantages of choosing BT as the research setting consequently appeared to outweigh this potential disadvantage. In the event, poor morale did not emerge as an important issue during the interviews, and the consistency of the findings with existing theory, discussed in Chapter 7, suggests that it has not affected the outcome of the research to any great extent.

3.2.4 The selection of the research participants

In order to answer the research questions, it was important that the groups of managers interviewed for the pilot and second stages of the research included women and men, and people of different ages. Before the first stage of the research began, therefore, a decision was taken to interview equal numbers of men and women in three different age groups, the twenties, thirties and forties. It was acknowledged that this plan might have to be changed in some way before the second stage of the research, but the success that the pilot stage achieved in eliciting the managers' definitions of career success meant that this was not in fact necessary.

The decision to choose these three age groups as appropriate ones from which to draw the participants was informed by the literature on adult and career development. There is strong evidence that, even though the developmental experiences of the sexes may differ, both women and men pass through some kind of developmental transition at around the ages of 30 and 40, which may affect their ideas about career success (e.g. Levinson 1978, Sheehy 1976 and 1996, O'Connor and Wolfe 1987, Roberts and Morgan 1987). Managers in their forties especially seem to put less emphasis on external criteria for success (e.g. Nicholson and West 1988).

It was decided not to include managers in their fifties. This decision was taken partly because there was less empirical evidence for a later developmental transition at around the age of 50; much research on adult and career development has concentrated on studying younger managers; and partly for pragmatic reasons: including a fourth group of managers in their fifties would have either increased the

sample size considerably or would have meant fewer managers in each age group could be interviewed.

Some consideration was also given to whether managers should be interviewed according to the career stage they were at, as well as how old they were, since there is some evidence that career stage influences conceptions of career success too (e.g. Lynn et al. 1996). It was decided that this would have made the selection of the participants unnecessarily complicated. It is more difficult to discern "career stage" in a managerial career, compared with a professional career, since there is no real equivalent to gaining tenure. Furthermore, managers aspire to reach different levels in the hierarchy, so it is not necessarily helpful to compare them according to a rigid set of pre-determined "stages", which may not represent how they see their own career development.

It was important that the selection criteria for choosing the managers to be interviewed were kept as simple as possible, because it was agreed in advance with BT that it would recruit participants to take part in the research. At both stages of the research, the recruitment was carried out by members of BT's management development team: access to the organisation for the research was negotiated through this department because of its existing links with Cranfield and its potential interest in the nature of the research project. Allowing BT to handle the recruitment process seemed to be the best means of finding participants, given the size of the organisation and the researcher's unfamiliarity with it. It was also believed that BT staff would be more likely to agree to take part in the research, if approached by a fellow BT manager first.

In the event, finding the right number of "suitable" managers willing to be interviewed was far more difficult than had been anticipated, especially in the second stage of the research, so it was fortunate that only gender and age were the main criteria for selection. (The problems experienced in recruiting participants for the second stage of the research will be discussed in section 3.2.6.)

Two further criteria for the selection of the managers were included as well, however. As Nicholson and West (1988) point out, managers are not a homogenous group: as a result, it was felt that the research should not be restricted to managers of a certain grade, and especially not restricted to senior managers, potential high-fliers or graduate entry managers. (Older managers would be less likely to be graduates in

any case.) In addition, while it was not specified which departments or types of work the managers to be interviewed should represent, BT was briefed to ensure that they were drawn from a variety of backgrounds. This again, it was hoped, would generate as wide a range of views on career success as possible. In fact, some recruiter bias in the selection of participants was evident, particularly in the pilot stage. This bias and its potential effects will be discussed in the following sections.

It was decided to begin the research process by interviewing 12 managers for the first stage of the research. Given the necessity for the participants to include men and women in three different age groups, this seemed to be the minimum number that a pilot study could consist of. No firm decision was taken in the early stages of the research about the number of managers who would be interviewed in the second stage: it was thought that it might be necessary to interview a further 24 or even 36, depending on the outcome of the pilot stage. The ultimate decision about the number of research participants was inevitably based on a compromise between the desire to obtain the richest data possible (Lofland and Lofland 1984) and the limited time and resources of the researcher, given that they had to conduct and transcribe in full all the interviews on their own (King 1994). In the event, the first stage of the research went well: it was felt that it was only necessary to interview a further 24 managers for the second stage of the research, and it was possible to combine the findings of both stages, based on the total of 36 interviews, to develop the typology of career success presented in Chapter 6.

3.2.5 The participants in the first stage of the research

For the first stage of the research, the aim was to interview 12 managers: two women and two men in their twenties, two women and two men in their thirties, and two women and two men in their forties. The recruitment of the participants was carried out by a member of BT's management development team at its group headquarters. She was fully briefed about the intention and scope of the research project before she recruited the managers. The managers who agreed to take part in the research were then contacted by the researcher to arrange a time and location for their interview to take place.

The 12 managers chosen fitted the research requirements with one exception. One woman selected for the twenties age group in fact turned out, when interviewed, to be 30. (She was somewhat different from the other younger managers in that she had

not graduated until she was 26 and had only been with BT for four years.) This has been taken into consideration in the analysis of the interview data.

Table 3.1: The participants in the first stage of research

Name	Sex	Age	Grade	Education	Work area
Sam	Female	20s	1	University	Personnel
Alex	Male	20s	1	University	Sales
Kenneth	Male	20s	1	University	Sales
Nicole	Female	30s	1	University	IT
Anne	Female	30s	3	Postgraduate: Sloan MSc	General management
Jeanette	Female	30s	2	University	IT
Phil	Male	30s	4	Postgraduate: MSc	Personnel
Paul	Male	30s	2	Teacher training	Personnel
Susan	Female	40s	3	School; MBA	Personnel
Sarah	Female	40s	4	Postgraduate: MSc	IT
Colin	Male	40s	5	Postgraduate: MBA	General management
Dave S	Male	40s	2	School; BSc	Personnel

Biographical details of the managers which relate particularly to this research and to their careers in general are summarised in Table 3.1. It should be noted that, for the purposes of the research, the complicated BT managerial grade structure has been simplified and represented by a straightforward numerical sequence, grade 1 being the lowest grade and so on. This is intended to expedite comprehension of the findings, as far as they relate to hierarchical grade. The "education" column indicates the level at which the participants' education was completed. Where managers started work when they left school and went onto higher education later, this is shown by the word "school", followed by their graduate or postgraduate qualification.

Apart from the two men in their twenties and one man in his thirties, all of the managers were married or living with a partner. Only three of the managers had young children: one male in his thirties, one male in his forties and one female in her forties. (The other two managers in the forties age group had grown-up children.)

Most of the managers' partners had jobs; the exceptions were the partners of two of the women (one in her thirties, one in her forties), who were currently unemployed. Eight of the managers had spent their entire career since leaving school or university with BT. Four had worked for other organisations as well.

A degree of recruiter bias appears to be evident in the choice of the managers. There was a preponderance of managers who worked in some kind of personnel role (five), which seems to reflect the fact that the selection of the participants was made by a member of staff from this area. Fortunately, analysis of the data and comparison of the findings with existing literature suggest that this had little effect on the outcome of the research. The potential effects of recruiter bias on the findings will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, section 7.5, when the limitations of the findings are considered.

3.2.6 The participants in the second stage of the research

For the second stage of the research, it was specified that participants should be drawn from all five divisions of BT, in order to obtain the widest possible range of views on career success within the organisation. (It did not seem appropriate to do this for the pilot stage, given the small number of managers to be interviewed.) As a result, the participants were recruited by management development staff from the five divisions. Following the success of the first stage of the research, discussed in Chapter 4, it was decided that only another 24 managers would be interviewed in the second stage. BT had been asked to recruit 36 managers, in case 36 were needed: the final selection was therefore made by the researcher from a list supplied by BT, in accord with the desire to include managers from as wide a spread of backgrounds as possible and an assortment of hierarchical grades.

The 24 managers recruited for the second stage of the research included four women and four men in their twenties, four women and four men in their thirties, and four women and four men in their forties. Six worked in Global Communications, seven worked in National Business Communications, three worked in Personal

Communications, four worked in Group headquarters and four worked in Networks and Systems. The managers' biographical background is summarised in the same way as that of the pilot study managers in Table 3.2. It is interesting to note that four of the participants have research degrees themselves, which suggests that people who agree to take part in a research project like this may to some extent be a self-selecting group: people who have research degrees are probably more likely to want to help somebody else who is studying for one!

Fifteen of the managers were married or living with a partner; eight of these had young children, six men and only two women. Ten of the managers had partners who also worked; five, including four men, had partners who did not work. The nine single managers included two men and two women in their twenties, three women in their thirties and two women in their forties, both of whom were separated or divorced. None of the single managers had children. Seventeen of the managers had worked for BT for their entire career; seven had worked elsewhere as well.

It proved much harder to find 24 "suitable" managers to take part in the second stage of the research. This was probably partly due to the larger numbers required and also because, while the recruitment was still co-ordinated by staff on the management development team at BT's group headquarters, they delegated the selection of participants to staff within the individual divisions. One division failed to ask the permission of the employees whose names they had put forward as participants, with the result that some of them were reluctant to take part in the research. Other divisions took little care to check ages before recruiting managers: one manager whom the researcher understood to be in their twenties was actually in their forties! In addition, for some reason which BT never properly managed to explain, it asked far more managers in their twenties than in their thirties to take part in the research.

This meant that, even though 36 managers had been recruited as participants and only 24 were needed, there were several "gaps" which needed to be filled, given the researcher's requirement for equal numbers of men and women in their twenties, thirties and forties. This partly explains why, once again, the group includes more managers who work in personnel than any other discipline: two of these had to be recruited right at the very end of the research process by the management development team at group headquarters. As discussed in connection with the pilot stage, this does not seem to have had an adverse effect on the findings, which are consistent with the findings of the first stage and existing literature on career success.

Table 3.2: The participants in the second stage of the research

Name	Sex	Age	Grade	Education	Work area
Lisa	Female	20s	1	University	Sales
Paula	Female	20s	2	School	Personnel
Sherelle	Female	20s	2	University	Systems engineering
Stella	Female	20s	3	University	Finance
Darren	Male	20s	3	School	General management
Dave H	Male	20s	1	University	IT
John	Male	20s	1	University	IT
Ran	Male	20s	3	University	Sales
Gill	Female	30s	3	University	Strategy
Jane M	Female	30s	3	University	Personnel
Kathryn	Female	30s	4	University	Strategy
Lyssa	Female	30s	3	University	Finance
Adam	Male	30s	5	School	General management
Pravin	Male	30s	3	Postgraduate: PhD	Marketing
Steve	Male	30s	1	School	Personnel
Stuart	Male	30s	6	Postgraduate: MPhil; MBA	General management
Angela	Female	40s	3	Postgraduate: MA	IT
Elsbeth	Female	40s	5	Postgraduate: PhD	General management
Jane S	Female	40s	2	School	Audit
Liz	Female	40s	3	University	Personnel
Alan	Male	40s	2	School	Personnel
Dave C	Male	40s	1	School	General management
David	Male	40s	4	Postgraduate: PhD	Market research
Tony	Male	40s	5	School; BSc	Personnel

As in the first stage of the research, each of the 24 participants eventually chosen was then contacted by telephone by the researcher to arrange a time and a place for the interview to take place.

3.3 Field work

The field work was carried out over a period of approximately eight months, starting at the end of July 1995 and finishing in March 1996. Most of the pilot stage interviews were conducted in August 1995; interviews for the second stage of the research began at the end of November 1995 and finished in March 1996.

3.3.1 Interviewing the participants

The field work process, based on a series of semi-structured interviews, was basically the same for both the pilot and the second stage of the research. The researcher wrote to all the participants approximately a week before they were due to be interviewed, indicating the kind of areas which the interview would cover. It was felt that giving the participants some information about the subject matter of the research would help them to form their own views on what career success meant to them; in the letter, the participants were asked to reflect on issues relating to this topic beforehand, if possible. A copy of the letter and the information about the research sent to the participants is included in Appendix 3.

The participants were reassured about the confidentiality of the interview and given the chance to telephone the interviewer if they had any queries about the research. (No-one in fact chose to do this.) While the information the interviewees were given indicated the general area of the research, they were not told in advance that the research was interested in the effects of gender and age on conceptions of career success, since it was felt that this might prejudice their response.

The interviews took place at a location chosen by the managers to be interviewed, usually in their office or a BT meeting room. (One participant preferred to be interviewed at their home.) Each semi-structured interview took approximately an hour and a half to complete. The basic form of the interviews, the subjects which they covered and the order in which they covered them was the same at both the pilot

and the second stage of the research. For the second stage, however, minor amendments were made to the interview schedule to take account of both the experience gained from doing the pilot interviews and the findings of the first stage of the research. The most important amendments will be discussed below. The interview schedules used for both stages are included in Appendices 1 and 2.

The first section of the interview covered the interviewee's career. Respondents were asked to describe their career to date, picking out points when they had felt most successful and examining what they had wanted from their career at various stages of it. The main purpose of this section was as a "warm-up", to get interviewees thinking about their career and how they felt about it. (Nonetheless, some of the sample did provide unprompted descriptions of how they saw career success at this early stage of the interview.)

The main difference in this section between the first and the second stage of the research was that, for the second stage, interview prompts relating to career satisfaction were not used: at the pilot stage it was found that these prompts did not help draw out the participants' ideas about their careers but instead tended to confuse and mislead them.

The second and third sections of the interview dealt with work values and criteria for career success. The second section sought the interviewees' unprompted views on what was important to them about their career. The prompts used in this section remained the same in both stages of the research. The third section investigated particular criteria which it was thought managers might use as part of their definition of career success through a series of prompts based on knowledge of the literature of career success and managerial values. In the first stage of the research, these criteria were divided into two separate groups: objective external criteria (pay, hierarchical position, promotional opportunities, and fringe benefits) and subjective internal criteria (challenge, sense of accomplishment, intellectual stimulation, personal development and work satisfaction.) The first group of objective criteria was intended to reflect the external aspect of career success, the second group of subjective criteria, the internal aspect of career success (Poole et al. 1993).

In the second stage of the research a group of intangible criteria for success (being an expert, respect, power to influence, leaving one's mark) was included in the third, prompted section of the interview. This reflected the findings of the first stage,

discussed in Chapter 4. The groups of external and internal criteria were also amended to take account of the findings of the pilot stage of the research: status was included in the group of external criteria; sense of achievement, enjoyment, interest, and doing new or different things were included in the internal criteria, whereas intellectual stimulation, work satisfaction and personal development were deleted, either because the managers who took part in the pilot stage of the research did not place as much importance on them as on other criteria or because they were not effective prompts.

After discussing the manager's career and the kind of criteria for success they might favour, in the fourth section of the interview the participants were asked finally to consider how they would define career success for themselves. It was thought that they had been suitably prepared to do so by the previous stages of the interview. (In fact, by the time this point in the interview arrived, many of the interviewees had already described their own conceptions of career success.) The participants were also invited to discuss whether their conception of success had ever changed and whether they could imagine it changing in the future. This section was only amended very slightly in the second stage of the research: prompts relating to satisfaction were again not used, and a discussion about how happy the managers were with the success they had achieved was introduced with the aim of highlighting any dissonance which might exist between their apparent achievements and how successful they actually felt.

In the fifth and final section of the interview, the managers were asked to reflect on whether they saw success in their career as being separate from success in their life as a whole. This was intended to illuminate whether or not the managers could separate these two concepts (Gattiker and Larwood 1986, Powell and Mainiero 1992). Section five remained unchanged in the second stage of the research.

The interviews were taped, with the participants' consent, and transcribed in full as soon as possible after each interview. The tapes were kept as an important source of reference for the analysis process, since meanings are often encapsulated in the tone of voice as well as the words used. In addition to the interview data gathered, basic biographical details about each interviewee were collected. This biographical data included age, marital status, number of children and their ages, partner's occupation, job title, level in hierarchy, key responsibilities, length of time with the company, length of time with other companies, education and career breaks. Details of the

biographical data collected are included in Appendix 4. Some of these details were later stored in a NUD.IST database in order to aid analysis. The use of NUD.IST in the analysis process is explained in section 3.4.2.

In addition to the data collected by the process of interviewing, after the interview had ended observation notes were made about each participant and the impression their interview made on the researcher. These notes were used to shed light on the content of the interviews and help interpret what the interviewees had said, where appropriate. They formed a useful first stage of data analysis, as discussed in more detail in section 3.4.2.

3.3.2 Problems and successes of the interview process

The process of interviewing the participants generally went very smoothly. All the managers were extremely interested in the research topic and keen to take part in the study. They were also anxious to receive any feedback which might be available on the findings: they made it clear that this was a topic which they felt both they and the organisation they worked for would benefit from knowing more about. Few of them set a limit on the time they made available for the interview; many of them had taken the trouble to reflect on the research topic before the interview took place.

Nevertheless, some of the managers found it more difficult to discuss the subject of career success than others. This is not surprising, given the potentially "impenetrable" nature of this topic, considered in sections 3.1.2 and 3.2.1. For those managers who found it harder to define what career success meant to them, considerable patience and persistence was required. While the researcher's previous experience as a journalist was of some help here, the skills required to draw people out were actually quite different from those one would employ as a news reporter. It was particularly important to give participants the time to formulate their own views and the space to air them, rather than prompt them unnecessarily, which it was often tempting to do. The skill of learning when to prompt and when to stay silent was one which was honed as the field work progressed. An improvement was especially noticeable in the second stage of interviews, where analysis revealed that a lot more relevant data had been gathered.

While a few of the managers were hard to draw out, others talked too much about subjects which were not particularly relevant to the research topic. This was chiefly a

problem during the pilot stage of the research, when some of the managers spent up to half the interview on the first section of it describing their career to date in minute detail, but giving very little information about their ideas on career success. In the second stage of the research, this part of the interview was somewhat restructured, and participants were asked to describe their career so far only "briefly". This still worked as an effective "warm-up" device but meant that it became possible to generate a higher proportion of "useful" data from this section of the interview as well.

On the whole, the women were easier to interview than the men. They seemed more articulate, had clearer ideas about career success, and could express them more concisely. Those participants who talked too much and tended to stray away from the research topic were generally male. The fact that the women were "easier" to interview probably reflects the fact that the researcher/interviewer was also female, but possibly also relates to real differences in male and female styles of speaking (Tannen 1991). The implications of the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewees for the research findings will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, section 7.5.

Despite these minor problems, overall the interviews were considered to be a success. All of the managers proved able to formulate their ideas about what career success meant to them. The range and consistency of the concepts generated in the first stage of the research were greater than had been expected; the second stage of the research not only supported the conclusions drawn at the pilot stage but also succeeded in developing and building upon its findings, to the extent that it was possible to construct the typology of managerial career success described in Chapter 6. A sample transcription of one of the interviews is included in Appendix 5.

3.4 Data analysis

As discussed in sections 3.1.3 and 3.2.1, the intention with this research was to build theory abductively (Blaikie 1993) from data gathered in semi-structured interviews: in that sense it is "grounded" theory. However, while in this respect it does follow in the tradition of Glaser and Strauss (Strauss and Corbin 1990), it cannot be claimed that the contribution it makes to knowledge about career success is pure grounded theory: the iterative process of data collection and theory building recommended by Glaser and Strauss has not been followed closely; and the form that this research has

taken has been strongly informed by existing literature on career success in a way not advocated by proponents of grounded research. As Bryman and Burgess (1994a) point out, "there are relatively few genuine cases of grounded theory": "Very often, the term is employed in research publications to denote an approach to data analysis in which theory has emerged from the data. Rarely is there a genuine interweaving of data collection and theorising of the kind advocated by Glaser and Strauss" (Bryman and Burgess 1994a).

3.4.1 The approach to data analysis

It is generally agreed that the basic process of qualitative data analysis is one of abstraction, that is moving from the raw data by means of coding to more general categories, from which are developed higher level theoretical concepts, with which the framework of the theory itself is built (e.g. Miles and Huberman 1984). Ritchie and Spencer (1994) see the analytic process as having five interconnected stages: *familiarisation* with the data, *identifying a thematic framework* or index, *indexing* (or coding), *charting*, where a picture is built up of the data as a whole, and *mapping and interpreting*, where concepts are defined and typologies created.

The approach to data analysis taken with this research was close to that described by Ritchie and Spencer, although in reality it did not feel so amenable to categorisation: as Bryman and Burgess (1994b) observe, in qualitative research there tends to be an overlap between the different stages of analysis: "Analysis in qualitative research is continuous in that it interweaves with other aspects of the research process." Nevertheless, while the progress made in this research from data collection to theory generation did not always seem to take place in clearly defined steps, it is possible to identify different aspects of the process which are similar to the stages delineated by Ritchie and Spencer.

Following a period of *familiarisation* with the data, *identifying a thematic framework*, or the development of an index whereby the interview data could be coded, was the first step taken in analysing the data. In keeping with the views of Okely (1994), index construction took place after interviewing. She claims: "Nothing can be taken for granted nor rigidly prearranged, so the classification is made after, not before, field work" (Okely 1994). Bryman and Burgess (1994b) agree that "the extent to which conceptualisation involves either the application of a priori categories or the derivation of emergent concepts" affects the point at which

the first stages of analysis can take place. In the case of this research, which was concerned with exploring individual managers' definitions of career success, about which there is scant existing theory, there was little to guide the development of a coding system until a certain amount of data had been collected.

After *indexing*, or coding, the next identifiable phase of analysis resembled what Ritchie and Spencer (1994) describe as *charting*: the data as a whole was examined in the context of the themes which emerged from coding. The latter stages of analysis were akin to what Ritchie and Spencer call *mapping and interpreting*: it involved integrating the concepts which emerged from the data in the context of the research questions, firstly to produce a model of career success, based on the criteria which the managers used, which is discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, and secondly, and most importantly, to create a typology of managerial career success, presented in Chapter 6.

The development of this typology was central to the approach taken to data analysis in this research. The use of typologies, schemes which conceptually classify qualitative data according to different "types" which emerge from it, has been widely acknowledged as an expedient means of data analysis, particularly for research which explores the different meanings people place on the phenomenon being explored. Ritchie and Spencer (1994), for example, suggest that the creation of typologies is particularly suitable for qualitative research aimed at "categorising different types of attitudes, behaviours, motivations etc.". Taylor and Bogdan (1984) agree that typologies are "useful aids in identifying themes and developing concepts for theory". Bryman and Burgess (1994a) confirm that the building of typologies and taxonomies can be "an important component of analysis for the qualitative researcher: "Such devices," they say, "can become helpful in the identification of differences in the data and can help with the elucidation of relationships among concepts".

The development of typologies is seen as especially pertinent for research which explores the concept of the career from the individual's point of view. As discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.1.4, much research which has examined the career from the individual's point of view (e.g. Schein 1978, Driver 1982, Derr 1986) has used typologies to categorise the different attitudes which people have towards their career. For example, Schein (1978 and 1993) captures the range of "occupational self-concepts" which people hold about their careers through his career anchors

categorisation: the career anchors he found different individuals held included a *technical and functional competence* anchor, a *managerial competence* anchor, and an *autonomy* anchor. Bailyn (1989) has called for the development of more such typologies or *orientational categories*, which classify people "according to individual predispositions" about their careers. One can best explore the internal career, she suggests, by means of "an aggregation of individual data which reflects difference in subjective meanings".

The aim of data analysis in this research was to build theory abductively from the meanings individual managers ascribed to the concept of career success (Blaikie 1993). Using analytical concepts derived from qualitative data to build theory at a higher level of abstraction is, as Ritchie and Spencer (1994) say, the part of the process of analysis "which is most difficult to describe". This is because it involves a measure of creativity and intuition (Okely 1994), as well as a deep understanding of the data. Nonetheless, it is important to consider how theoretical ideas are formed in qualitative research. Ritchie and Spencer (1994) sum up this stage of the process as follows: "Piecing together the overall picture is not simply a question of aggregating patterns, but of weighing up the salience and dynamics of issues, and searching for a structure, rather than a multiplicity of evidence."

While the salience of issues is crucial, some consideration must also be paid to the relevance of their frequency in the data to the development of theoretical concepts, according to Bryman and Burgess (1994a): "It is still not absolutely clear how issues and ideas emerge in order to end up in the finished written product. The determining factor often seems to be the frequency...if frequency is the critical factor, it is surprising that there are so few counts and percentages in reports of qualitative research."

Others support the call for the value of "counting" in qualitative analysis to be acknowledged. Silverman (1993), for example, says that "simple counting techniques" can offer "a means to survey the whole corpus of data ordinarily lost in intensive, qualitative research". In the generation of theory for this research, the frequency of occurrence of concepts and in particular the frequency of occurrence of particular relationships of concepts was important, as well as their saliency. Therefore, while any attempt to apply statistical analysis to the data would have been inappropriate and meaningless, the results of some simple counting did influence the

theory building process. The consequences of this for the presentation of the research findings in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 will be discussed in section 3.4.3.

To assist the analysis process in this research, in particular the coding stage of it, a qualitative analysis computer software package, QSR NUD.IST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorising) was used. It was felt that there were several advantages in using a computerised system like NUD.IST: it avoided the need for a paper-based filing system to accommodate coding; it facilitated structured coding of the interview data by means of a "tree" index system (Further details on how the index system for the pilot stage of the research was developed are included in section 3.4.2.); it allowed easy and fast cross referencing and searching of the index system.

By providing a "permanent" record of coding decisions and searches, NUD.IST aids the preparation of a "trail of evidence", illustrating the soundness of the analysis of the data. The tree-structured index can help the researcher consider broader categories within which the coded data may fit, and thereby assist the progression of the analysis process towards what Ritchie and Spencer (1994) describe as *charting*, and *mapping and interpreting*. However, it must be stressed that while using NUD.IST does help greatly in the storage and manipulation of data and codes, and the exploration of relationships within the data, a software package cannot replicate the intellectual processes required to develop theoretical concepts. To quote Mason (1994): "Computers can help in the indexing and retrieval functions of qualitative data management....but they cannot perform the creative and intellectual task of devising categories, or of deciding which categories or types of data are relevant to the process being investigated." The use of NUD.IST in this research will be discussed in more detail in section 3.4.2.

3.4.2 The process of data analysis

The process of data analysis was the same for both stages of the research. As discussed in section 3.3.1, it began with the writing of observation notes about each participant after their interview had finished. These notes proved to be a valuable source of ideas and set a precedent for the rest of the analysis process, in that notes, or memos as they are sometimes described (e.g. Bryman and Burgess 1994a), became a vital part of it and emerged as an important aid to theoretical conceptualisation.

Notes were made to record points of interest and analytical possibilities at every stage of the research process from data collection right through to theory building. They were all dated and cross referenced to other relevant ideas which had been recorded previously, in order to make it possible to track the development of ideas and theoretical concepts as the analysis of the data progressed. The value of extensive note taking for qualitative analysis is widely acknowledged (e.g. Lofland and Lofland 1984): as Hughes (1994) says, "the quality of a research project is not only the result of the questions asked or the concepts used, it is also the result of keeping rigorous field notes".

The tape recorded interviews with the participants were transcribed in full by the researcher as soon as possible after the interview had taken place. Making a full transcription ensured that no potentially important data was overlooked; the process of transcription also generated some extremely valuable ideas about how the data might be coded and analysed (Lofland and Lofland 1984), which were recorded as described above. In addition, it encouraged an improvement in interviewing techniques for later interviews, since the most effective means of eliciting valuable information could be identified.

The basic structure of the index to be used to code the interview data was devised after the pilot stage interviews had been completed (Burgess and Bryman 1994a, Okely 1994), following a period of immersion in the transcribed data and reflection on its contents. Familiarisation with the data, and the notes produced about it, made it possible to establish what the most relevant categories would be in order to code the interview data most effectively. The same index structure was used for the second stage of the research, with some minor modifications described below.

Index construction and coding were carried out with the help of the NUD.IST qualitative analysis software package, described in section 3.4.1. With NUD.IST, the codes used to analyse the content of qualitative interviews are stored in a tree-shaped index system: it was found that developing the index system in this way helped frame this early phase of analysis in a way that proved very helpful for later stages of the process, when relationships within the data were being explored, since the format of NUD.IST encouraged the organisation of codes into general categories related to the research questions.

At both the first and second stages of the research, the interview data were coded within the NUD.IST system under one of three general categories: values; success; and attitudes. The "values" category contained all the coding relating to the criteria for career success the interviewees used; the "success" category contained all the coding relating to their views on career success and life success. The "attitudes" category contained coding on attitudes about subjects related to career success. Two further general categories were also used: base data, where the interviews were coded according to the biographical details thought to be important, such as age group and gender; and people, where the individual interviews were stored within the index system.

As the coding of the data took place, the general coding categories were subdivided into more specific categories, which were the actual codes used to index the data. Each code employed in the analysis of the data became a "node" in the NUD.IST system, that is a branch of NUD.IST's tree-shaped index system. Every node had its own NUD.IST "address" in the index system, which meant that specific coding categories could be accessed quickly, and cross-referenced with other coding categories if required.

During the coding of the data during the first stage of the research a total of 113 nodes were created; in the second stage of the research, the index increased in size to 168 nodes. While the basic structure of the index remained the same for the entire research project, it was modified before and during the coding of the second stage interviews, to reflect the experience gained from previous data analysis, the findings of the pilot stage, and new ideas which emerged from the second stage of the research. The main changes made were the expansion of the "success" coding category and the "attitudes" coding category, and the introduction of coding relevant to ways in which criteria for career success were emphasised. The increased number of nodes in the second stage of the research was also partly the result of the larger number of managers interviewed. The final form of the NUD.IST index used for coding data in the second stage of the research is included in Appendix 6.

The construction of the index and the coding of the data were both carried out by the researcher alone. It is accepted that ideally these processes should have involved more than one person in order to give the data analysis the additional support of inter-rater reliability. Unfortunately, given the nature of PhD research, especially the constraints of both time and money which the researcher faced, this was not possible.

The potential effects of this on the research findings are considered in Chapter 7, section 7.5.

NUD.IST aided data analysis in many ways: it encouraged the generation of general categories of ideas within the data whilst the coding index itself was being structured; it helped cross reference index codes and highlight relationships between them. However, as discussed in section 3.4.1, in the later phases of analysis, when analytical concepts were being developed, the computer program only played a support role: it could not compete with conventional intellectual skills in the construction of theory. As Richards and Richards, the developers of NUD.IST, themselves say, "the task of theory discovery remains for the human researchers" (Richards and Richards 1994).

The later phases of analysis involved reference to the codes and the data they contained, the large number of analytical notes which had been made by this point, and the interviews as a whole; it was found to be extremely valuable to re-read the interview transcripts in their entirety, as well as referring to discrete section of them, on several occasions during the analysis process. The generation of theoretical concepts did not proceed in a rational and orderly fashion. Periods of intense reflection about the data were sometimes rewarded by important insights, and sometimes not. The most interesting conceptual ideas often emerged at unexpected and occasionally inconvenient times: a notebook and pen became the researcher's constant companions!

In the pilot stage of the research, the criteria which the managers used to define their own career success and the relationships that emerged between them through analysis of the data were used to build a model of managerial career success, which conceptualised success as a three dimensional construct. The model and its development is described in Chapter 4, section 4.5. In the second stage of the research, data analysis of the second round of interviews supported the pertinence of the model and enabled it to be developed in a way which showed even more clearly how managerial career success should be conceptualised. The reworking of the model is discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.7.

The final phase of data analysis, which drew on and developed the analysis carried out to build the model, was concerned with constructing the typology of managerial career success presented in Chapter 6. As discussed in section 3.4.1, the

development of a typology of career success is in keeping with other research into the career from the individual's point of view: it is considered to be a practical way of presenting research findings related to the kind of questions being asked (Ritchie and Spencer 1994). Nevertheless, the decision to construct the typology was also informed by the process of data analysis itself. A series of analytical patterns and ideas, which emerged while the second stage interview data were being analysed, led the researcher inexorably towards building the typology. Its construction therefore was the inevitable result of the data analysis process, and not just an attempt to follow the example of previous research.

3.4.3 Presentation of the findings

The following three chapters discuss the findings of this research. The way in which they are presented is intended both to illustrate and support the process of data analysis which has taken place. Marshall and Rossman (1989) rightly argue that writing about qualitative data cannot be separated from the analysis process. "In fact, it is central to the process," they say, "for in the choice of particular words to summarise and reflect the complexity of the data, the researcher is engaging in the interpretive act, lending shape and form - meaning - to massive amounts of raw data."

At a macro level, the order and construction of the subsequent chapters is intended to mirror the way in which the analysis was developed during the research project. Chapter 4 considers the findings of the first stage of the research, which represent the first period of analysis; Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the second stage of the research, which are the results of the second spell of analysis; and Chapter 6 introduces of the typology of managerial career success, the culmination of the analysis process which builds on the findings of both the pilot and the second stage of the research. It was felt that presenting the findings in this way would best illustrate the development of theoretical concepts and add thereby weight to their cogency.

At a micro level, the problems involved in reporting the findings were largely related to what Lofland and Lofland (1984) describe as "the agony of omitting". The large amount of data generated by the participants' interviews and the stream of interesting analytical ideas which emerged from them had to be controlled in such a way as to best illustrate findings relevant to the research questions, without being unduly drawn into subsidiary issues. Moreover, to quote Easterby-Smith et al. (1991), "one of the

most difficult problems to overcome in dealing with qualitative data is how to communicate, in a systematic and honest manner, research findings to a readership who may not be very familiar with the detailed context of the research". These two considerations, of using data productively and pertinently, were of paramount importance in the presentation of the findings; the qualitative researcher needs to be able to convey the richness of their findings, but at the same time make the key theoretical points conspicuous and comprehensible.

One further mundane point relates to the presentation of the research findings at a micro level. As discussed in section 3.4.1, some importance was placed on the frequency, as well as the saliency, of issues which emerged during the analysis process. For this reason it seemed appropriate to include some basic numbers in the report of the findings, at points in the analysis where it had been considered right to "count" and where presenting the results of this counting appeared to support the conclusions of the research. Since counting is in no way the sole basis of qualitative analysis, it was not always considered appropriate or relevant to this process: obviously, the managers often did not express straightforward or easily categorisable views. Furthermore, including every possible number in the presentation of the research findings would have detracted from rather than added to their weight. The absence of numbers therefore should not imply any oversight on the part of the researcher, but rather that a positive decision was made about where it was appropriate to include them. (Fewer numbers are included in Chapter 4, which reports the findings of the first stage of the research simply because the small number of managers interviewed often made counting less relevant.)

CHAPTER 4: AN EXPLORATION OF MANAGERIAL CAREER SUCCESS

CHAPTER 4: AN EXPLORATION OF MANAGERIAL CAREER SUCCESS

This chapter reports the findings of the first stage of the research, carried out amongst 12 managers at BT, as described in Chapter 3, sections 3.2 and 3.3. Section 4.1 describes the managers' own criteria for career success, identified by the research. Sections 4.2 and 4.3 consider the differences found between the women and the men, and the older and the younger managers, in terms of how they viewed their own career success. Section 4.4 briefly discusses the findings of the first stage of the research in the light of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Section 4.5 presents a model of managerial career success, based on the managers' criteria for career success.

4.1 What do managers conceive career success to be on their own terms?

As discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.3.2, all of the managers were able to define career success for themselves during the course of their interview. None of their definitions were simple, however: for each manager, career success was a multidimensional concept, consisting of and influenced by a number of criteria. (There was a commonality in the criteria used by the managers, however, which will be discussed in more detail below.) In particular, all the definitions went far beyond the traditional external idea of career success as position in the hierarchy and level of pay. For all of the sample, career success had a subjective internal dimension as well as an objective external dimension, although the degree of emphasis placed on different criteria for career success varied from manager to manager. (Certain patterns of emphasis on particular criteria relating to gender and age will be discussed in more detail in sections 4.2 and 4.3.)

Therefore, while position in the hierarchy and pay were important to many of the managers in terms of their conceptions of career success, so were subjective internal criteria. Internal criteria, as they will be referred to henceforward, were judged to be those which were experienced *internally* by the managers and, as such, cannot be measured objectively in the way that pay and hierarchical level can be. Internal criteria which the managers reported as part of their definitions of success included enjoyment, interest, and a sense of achievement. Alex was typical in this respect. His criteria for career success included personal recognition and hierarchical advancement, but also enjoyment and variety, as illustrated by the following quote:

"In my own personal terms, it would be to try my hand at everything, and get recognised at being good at it, at everything. Obviously, I'd want to rise through the ranks and get recognised that way...and have enough money to think, yeah, I'm comfortably off now...at the end of the day, the one thing running through my life is I want to have a good time, so I would have a good time by just injecting plenty of variation into the work life, by changing things...so, yeah, that would be success." (Alex, 20s man)

The findings of the first stage of the research accordingly show that the traditional external model of managerial career success, based on position in the hierarchy and level of pay, cannot on its own describe adequately what career success means to managers themselves. Anne and Colin's definitions of career success, quoted below, are good examples of the kind of ideas the managers had about how they saw their own career success. As the quotes show, for neither of them was hierarchical position or level of pay foremost in their personal definition of success:

"Achieving whatever or running whatever successfully...it's back to being an expert...running that really well...you know, I'm the best whatever in the country and everyone says well let's go and ask Anne...would be success...(Anne, 30s woman)

"Career success...I think I've got to launch a successful product that changes the way BT thinks about what it is doing...I would feel very successful." (Colin, 40s man)

4.1.1 Internal criteria of career success

As described above, all of the managers used internal criteria to measure their own success, as well as objective external criteria. However, most of the internal criteria which each manager used were not unique; on the contrary, patterns of similarity emerged from the interviews. The study found that certain internal criteria for success were common to many of the managers' definitions of career success. Altogether it identified key five internal criteria, which for many of the managers were an important part of their definition of career success. These were:

- **Enjoyment.** Enjoying work was an important dimension of career success for seven of the managers. These managers did not believe that they would see

themselves as a success unless they enjoyed their work. External criteria for success such as level of pay and position in the hierarchy were seen to be meaningless without the crucial factor of enjoyment:

"If I can look back and think I've actually had some sense of enjoyment from the work, it hasn't just been something I've done to bring the money in, if I can combine the money and the happiness, then that would mean being good at what I'm doing... and I think I would have been successful." (Sam, 20s woman)

"...recognition of the organisation that you're worth something...that's always been relatively important at the back of my mind...but more than anything else it's about doing things that I actually enjoy doing, sort of personal achievement." (Dave S, 40s man)

- **Interest.** Linked to the idea of enjoying work, was the concept of finding it interesting. Five of the managers felt that if they did not find their work interesting, they would not feel successful. (A total of ten of the managers saw either enjoyment or interest, or both, as central to their conception of career success):

"....it really has to be interesting because if I am bored I just...it's misery...if I'm going to have to be here seven hours a day and not do work I'm interested in, it would be just soul-destroying." (Sarah, 40s woman)

"And I would look back and think was I ever bored? Did I make things different? If I could say I was never bored and I made things different, there is something that I changed....." (Anne, 30s woman)

- **Sense of achievement.** Getting a sense of achievement out of what they did at work was an important part of career success for 11 of the managers, almost all of those interviewed. For them, this sense of achievement was often closely related to the idea of challenge, that is a sense of achievement was usually the result of taking on and succeeding at challenging work tasks. For nine of the managers, a sense of personal achievement was at least as important to them in determining whether they felt they had been successful or not, as external criteria such as hierarchical position:

**"...being able to constantly see myself as achieving and bettering my position."
(Kenneth, 20s man)**

"I want to achieve things...I want to say I've achieved this, this and this...I've done this, and I've had my name on this, and I'm responsible for this." (Sam, 20s woman)

- **Sense of accomplishment.** For five of the managers, part of career success was getting a sense of accomplishment from their work, that is feeling that they were extremely competent at the tasks they had to undertake as part of their job. This, for them, was central to their idea of career success:

(Career success) "would be sort of doing well at things, being able to do the job well, knowing it well, having people come and ask you questions because you were the person that knew the information, that sort of thing." (Jeanette, 30s woman)

"I found a degree of success has come the more time I spend in a job, so I'm tempted to say [I felt successful] in the first job that I went into, because I was there for such a long time...you reach a certain standard where you are the expert...I think I did that then." (Sam, 20s woman)

- **Doing new things or doing things in a different way.** For four of the managers, career success to them involved either doing new things or doing things in a different way from the way in which they had been done before:

"...you've been seen to be somebody who's different, who's made a change, who's found new ways for the company to move in, set up new ways of doing things." (Kenneth, 20s man)

"And to do some things first as well...to have actually seen the way the wind was going and delivered some things before they were actually embraced broadly by the business." (Susan, 40s woman)

4.1.2 External criteria of career success

The findings of the first stage of the research established that, despite the importance of subjective internal measures of career success to the managers, external objective measures, such as position in the hierarchy and level of pay, were a part of career success to some degree for most of them too. External criteria for career success used by the managers included hierarchical position, progression through promotion, and level of pay:

"I suppose it's got to have an element of hierarchy...you've got to have moved up the ladder and be seen to be an influential person...and that is delivered to you partly because of where you are in the organisation but also partly because of your reputation." (Phil, 30s man)

"If I join anything I go for a position, I go for a title, I go for some power, I go for higher up the tree where the decisions are made." (Nicole, 30s woman)

"(Career success is) promotion, income and impact." (Paul, 30s man)

4.1.3 Intangible criteria of career success

Criteria like those described in section 4.1.2 were not the only kind of external measures of career success which the managers used. The research identified a separate group of external criteria for career success, very different to the "material" criteria such as hierarchical position and level of pay traditionally used to delineate career success, but extremely important to all the managers. These criteria, whilst external to the managers, were not "tangible" in the same way as pay or promotional prospects. They included being regarded as an expert, being respected and being able to exert an influence. Criteria such as these were often central to the managers' conceptions of career success, despite the fact that, like internal criteria, they are excluded from "traditional" definitions of success, and have not previously been identified as a separate and distinct group of success criteria.

For the purposes of this research, these criteria will henceforward be referred to as intangible criteria, in order to distinguish them from material external criteria such as pay and hierarchical position, which will continue to be referred to as external criteria. The choice of the word "intangible" for this group of success criteria is

intended to reflect their most important aspect, that is, while they are not internal in the way that criteria like sense of achievement and enjoyment are, nor are they tangible or material in the sense that hierarchical position and level of pay can be seen to be. The decision to treat them as a separate group of criteria is an indication both of their importance to the managers' definitions of success and of their distinct nature, when compared with the kind of external criteria traditionally used to define career success.

The first stage of the research identified four intangible criteria in particular which many of the managers described as part of their idea of career success. These were:

- **Being an expert.** To be seen to be the sort of person everybody would look up to as one of the best in their field was a central part of career success for six of the managers, including five of the women. This was not necessarily linked to hierarchical position but was perceived by the managers as a form of personal recognition:

"Being seen to be top of the knowledge tree is equivalent to me to being at the top of the managerial structure." (Nicole, 30s woman)

"Now I want to be a different sort of expert, in a more generalist field, which I suppose is what being a senior manager is...respected because I can run whatever it happens to be, a business unit or my budget..." (Anne, 30s woman)

- **Respect.** Just as Anne describes in the quote above, the idea of being respected was often linked to being seen as an expert. Eight of the managers felt that reaching a certain position in the hierarchy was not sufficient to make them feel successful; they had to have a good reputation and be respected for being good at what they did as well:

"I would have to match the two things together.....if at the same time as I was a director, people thought I was good...and so success would be being considered as good." (Phil, 30s man)

"Generally speaking, I think I'm fairly well respected, and that matters, what people think of you and all that sort of stuff." (Colin, 40s man)

- **Influence.** Eight of the managers saw the ability to influence things at work as a central part of their own career success: they were not interested in power for its own sake, or status power, but the power to influence. For some, this influence was not necessarily connected to their position in the hierarchy but was valued in its own right.

"I suppose what I realise from being in a very hierarchical organisation is sometimes if you want to do something that's really right and help to get something through, it does help to have status.....but I don't want hierarchical status for the sake of it." (Anne, 30s woman)

"The need to be doing something that really makes a difference...I'm not a control freak, but sort of knowing that something that you're doing is really changing things." (Nicole, 30s woman)

- **Leaving one's mark.** Doing something or achieving something at work by which one would be remembered in some way, either in BT or outside it, was a key criterion for career success for five of the managers, including three in their forties. This idea was often expressed as "leaving a mark" on the organisation.

"(Career success is) for me now to be given or to take on something I can see through for the next four or five years, something that has some real, real value added, a major project." (Dave S, 40s man)

"The job I got was buildings investment appraisal...it was different...it was mine and nobody had ever done it before, and I quite like setting things up and starting things, and I can say 'This is mine, I did it'." (Colin, 40s man)

4.1.4 Further evidence for the importance of internal and intangible criteria

The conclusion that managers' personal conceptions of career success are based on internal and intangible criteria, as well as external criteria, by which career success has traditionally been judged, is further supported by evidence of conflicts about their own success which some of the managers evinced.

Two types of conflict emerged in the first stage of the research. Some of the older managers felt a lack of personal success, despite their relatively high position in the

BT hierarchy. (This feeling seemed to apply particularly to two of the most outwardly successful managers interviewed, Colin and Sarah.) To them, their job seemed to be relatively worthless and therefore the "success" they had achieved was not of value:

"This actually doesn't matter a damn...and the achievements you think are so important are just irrelevant in the scheme of things. It's a balance between that knowledge, that I'm wasting my life just making a few extra quid for BT, and my own progression internally in BT, and I guess as I get older I get to see more of the trivial nature of what we are trying to do." (Colin, 40s man)

A second kind of conflict was also observed amongst some of the younger managers. While they were considered successful by their families and peers because of the positions they held and the money they earned, they did not themselves feel successful:

"No, I don't think I've been that successful, although other people would say that I had been...my partner, my parents...they all look at me and say she's doing very well, she's doing very well." (Sam, 20s woman)

It would seem that for managers like this, the "conventional", external idea of career success is not sufficient to describe what they in fact conceive career success to be. Their definitions of success accordingly must include internal or intangible criteria as well as external measures of success.

4.2 The effect of gender on managers' personal conceptions of career success

Whilst all of the managers had conceptions of career success based on internal, intangible and external criteria, there were clear differences between the male and female managers' conceptions of success. The differences can be summed up by saying that for the men, external criteria, such as pay and hierarchical level, were generally a far more important a part of their conception of career success than they were for the women. The women, on the other hand, tended to see career success much more in terms of internal criteria, such as interest and enjoyment, and intangible criteria, such as respect and being regarded as an expert, than the men.

For all the men, their position in the hierarchy and promotional prospects was or had been very important to them.

"I tried to pretend it wasn't important...I tried to convince myself that it wasn't but of course it is, because it's part of the greasy pole stuff. Nobody wants to be left behind." (Colin, 40s man)

"So I have been reasonably grade conscious in the way I've progressed. I like people to still acknowledge that I am a relatively senior manager in BT terms." (Phil, 30s man)

For the women this was far from the case. Three of the women did not see career success in hierarchical terms at all, and those who did aspire to hierarchical advancement wanted to move up the hierarchy because of the things it would allow them to do, not because of the status it endowed.

"I know I'm not expressing it in terms of position, am I? I'm clear that it's not...at this point anyway...it's not about moving up the ladder...the satisfaction comes from things that are much more to do with me." (Susan, 40s woman)

"I get my kicks from doing the work, rather than having the status." (Anne, 30s woman)

"I couldn't care less (about my position in the hierarchy) quite honestly." (Sarah, 40s woman)

Of all the women, position in the hierarchy and promotional opportunities were most important to Sam, the youngest. Nevertheless, she had already set a ceiling on how high she wished to rise within the organisation, unlike her male colleagues, since she perceived that this would enable her to balance her life more easily between work and home.

All the men interviewed talked far more about promotion than the women and used different language to describe how they thought their careers had developed or would develop. They talked of "goals", "steps" and "ladders", whereas the women appeared to have a quite different view of their career development, for example, Anne, the

most overtly ambitious of the women interviewed, saw her career developing in terms of "sets of challenges", rather than a hierarchical progression:

"...always to have the ability to see ahead, in that I have a stepping stone to go somewhere, because I think I'd become very disillusioned very quickly where I couldn't see a way forward, where there were only sort of sideways steps."
(Kenneth, 20s man)

"I would prefer to have the interesting work than to just be in an office, pen-pushing and not enjoy the work, so a lot of the level 3 (higher grade) jobs don't seem to be so interesting." (Jeanette, 30s woman)

There were also large differences between the male and female managers in terms of the kind of importance they placed on pay. For the men, recognition in financial terms was crucial: all of those interviewed mentioned money without prompting from the interviewer, compared with the women, only three of whom did so. While pay was central to all of the men's conceptions of career success, for four of the women it was irrelevant to how they saw their own success (even though they might value it as a means of supporting their lifestyle).

"Early on, I was very ambitious. I set myself salary targets.....I said, right, by that age I want to be earning this, and by that age...and I blew them all out of the water, completely blew them out of the water...I'd set myself 15 grand as a target, and I'd be on 20, 22 or something at that point, so I sort of moved from salary targets to grade targets." (Phil, 30s man)

"I'm starting to come very much more to terms with I get paid for what I'm worth, which has freed me up to make the decision that if the company isn't paying me, I'll go elsewhere." (Dave S, 40s man)

"It would be quite nice to be promoted...would I like to be my boss?...yep...and if I didn't get any more money for that, that's probably fine by me." (Anne, 30s woman)

"Pay is useful but I don't need as much pay as I get, so I could take a pay cut, I could do something with less pay." (Jeanette, 30s woman)

In fact the women who were most interested in the money they earned were interested in it for its utility, rather than its status value, for example, Sarah, whose husband was unemployed. This contrasts with the men, for whom the emphasis on pay was more related to the status it could endow.

On the other hand, some of the internal and intangible criteria of career success were much more important to the women than they were to the men. Many women emphasised the importance of enjoyable, interesting and worthwhile work as part of their conceptions of career success.

"I'd like to enjoy what I'm doing, feel it's worthwhile and have a comfortable lifestyle." (Jeanette, 30s woman)

"I've got myself into a position where I've got an interesting, reasonably well-paid job, that gives me flexibility, the most I can hope for, in terms of the rest of my life which means more to me than my job." (Sarah, 40s woman)

The women were more likely to see career success in terms of being good at what they did and therefore equated it with being regarded as an expert and being respected rather than in terms of their position in the hierarchy and how much they earned. In short, the kind of career success they emphasised was much more related to personal recognition than to recognition in organisational terms. Power, for the women, was very much in terms of the influence it permitted them, rather than the status it conferred on them.

It is interesting to note, in the light of this emphasis on being good at what they did and being seen as an expert, that all of the women who took part in the first stage of the research, except Sam, the only one in her 20s, expressed a lack of confidence in their abilities at work at some stage during their interview. None of the men appeared to feel this way about themselves:

"In my darkest moments I always think I am about to be exposed." (Anne, 30s woman)

The sense of being an expert and gaining respect was central to all but one of the women's conceptions of career success. (The exception was Sarah, the only woman with a young family and the only one who worked part-time. She had a much more

utilitarian attitude to her work than the other women - her partner was unemployed - and expressed deep conflicts about the kind of career success she had achieved and the kind of career success she would ideally have wanted: thus, the idea of career success may no longer have had much importance to her.)

"....so I think it would be that I would have a whole something...she specialises in marketing and there isn't anything about marketing she doesn't know and she manages the marketing for X in BT." (Susan, 40s woman)

"...and you feel that you're respected by them for doing, a very, very good job, and looked on by them as somebody they can go to, if they want something." (Sam, 20s woman)

On the whole, therefore, the male and female managers had quite different ideas about what career success was for them. This is not to say that the same criteria for success did not apply to both men and women. What differed was the degree to which the sexes emphasised them: there were men such as Phil who did relate success to intangible criteria such as being seen as an expert and being respected, but these criteria were less central to their idea of success, just as external material criteria such as money and hierarchical position appeared to be less central to the women's conceptions of success.

Furthermore, the male and female managers appeared to differ in their attitudes to success in their career and success in their life as a whole. The female managers were far more likely to see career success as just a part of the success they wanted to achieve in their lives as a whole, whereas for the men, life success was essentially driven by career success:

"There's just so much more to the rest of my life...but even when I was working full-time, in terms of how I viewed my life, work was still a very small part." (Sarah, 40s woman)

"I think it's part and parcel of the same thing really... because you're doing it so much of the time, you're in the office from half eight to half five, that's a significant proportion of your life, isn't it?...so it's very difficult to divorce your life's ambitions from your career ambitions. (Alex, 20s man)

In addition, all but one of the women expressed an interest in succeeding in other parts of their life as well, something none of the men did. This included their family and personal life, but also time-consuming outside interests, such as counselling and politics. For example, Nicole, whose ambition was to become an MP, saw her job at BT as little more than a day job: her ambition was all concentrated in her life outside work. This suggests that women may have a broader definition of success in their careers and in their lives as a whole than their male counterparts.

4.3 The effect of age on managers' personal conceptions of career success

The managers' conceptions of career success varied according to their age as well as their gender. The younger managers of both sexes were more interested in external material career success than the older managers:

"I mean that's the final measure of success, I suppose, isn't it, in terms of your career, material possessions.....because it's recognition...what you've achieved, how valuable you are to your company, whichever company that might be...they've said that you're worth enough money that we're going to pay you x amount...." (Alex, 20s man)

"(Success) would be...to be in a position in the organisation where you have that responsibility and the rewards, the money...you could say, yes, I've been successful." (Sam, 20s woman)

For the managers in their forties, on the other hand, conceptions of success were much more based on intangible criteria, especially the idea of creating something at work that would be seen as "theirs", by which they would leave their mark on the organisation. Three out of the four managers interviewed in this age group expressed a strong desire to set up their own business in connection with this.

"I describe it really as I want to do work that means I've got my handle on something, it's mine, it's significant to management development.....I just want something that means I can leave my mark, if you like." (Dave S, 40s man)

"(What I want to achieve is) something to look back on and say I did that, I guess." (Colin, 40s man)

"I've got this little dream that if I take my pension at 50, I can actually start to manage myself...the chap across the road is a trainer and I've got a chapel in my garden...he and I have got this idea that we could turn the chapel into training accommodation...I am moving closer and closer, knowing there are some things I can do, some contributions I can make." (Susan, 40s woman)

There are indications from this research that conceptions of success may begin to change in the thirties. Phil, the high-flying manager who set himself regular pay and grade targets when he was younger, was now uncertain about what he wanted to achieve in the future:

"Well you could argue that perhaps the ultimate goal I had when I joined was to become what was called an SMG, and I've got one more step to become what is now that...in terms of me being able to do it, I've got no issue, of course I'll be able to do it if I wanted...but nowadays, 11 years on, I'm not really bothered. I'm certainly less ambitious.....I've stopped thinking in career terms at the moment." (Phil, 30s man)

However, for the males in their thirties and forties who had not reached such high levels within the organisation, career success in terms of hierarchical position and pay was still very important:

"I'd like to feel that financially I'd got to the level which I thought appropriate...and that I'd had the influence that I would like to have...that's part of my frustration...I feel as though I've got a lot of influence, but I don't feel that's backed up by my position really...so I'd like to see those two balanced" (Paul, 30s man)

Many of the managers admitted that their conceptions of career success had changed during the course of their working life. These fell into two separate groups. The first, which was wholly male, had shifted from seeing career success almost entirely in external terms to a position where internal and intangible criteria were important to them as well (although the degree to which they were important did vary):

"It's a different emphasis. The status and money were probably more important previously...and now it's more being recognised as an expert." (Phil, 30s man)

**"Hierarchy was the measure and it isn't the measure now...the measure has changed in that sense...and the success is there for me now, because I would never have thought about running my own company...I know now I can do it."
(Dave, 40s man)**

A second group consisted of mainly younger managers whose initial ideas of career success had dissipated or altered once they had come to terms with the reality of working in a large organisation. (They were all managers who had only worked for BT.) Their conceptions of personal career success had changed to take account of what they felt about their careers in relation to actual work experience, as opposed to impressions formed before or shortly after they started work:

"When you start off in a career, you don't know what you're going to be aiming at, you don't know what the work's going to be like...you think, oh yes, I must get promoted every couple of years." (Jeanette, 30s woman)

"When I was doing my A levels, it was the 80s boom and you saw on TV everybody in the City wandering around in red braces...very well off young people...so you considered that to be success...but then you learned that these people are burned out now, and half of them don't work for the big banks anymore...so I used to think success was money, success was flying around the world in an aeroplane for your company...obviously we'd all like a bit of that, but you get a lot more from a lot of different things as you get older." (Ken, 20s man)

All of the younger managers could also imagine their personal conceptions of career success changing in the future. The form it was felt that this anticipated change would take varied within the group. Some of the women believed that, in the future, external criteria of career success might actually become more important to them than they were at present:

"I think by that time I'd have got so far that I'd want to go all the way...so (success) would be a bit more levelly.....at the moment I suppose I'm seeing it in micro steps, but I imagine that if you get to be managing director of a business unit, you say now I want to be chairman of the company...I suppose as you get more senior, you actually run out of jobs, so you get much more fixated on

wanting that one....at the moment I'm sort of moving onwards and upwards with increasing challenges but one day I'll say I want that job." (Anne, 30s woman)

"I suppose it probably depends on the next area I end up in...whether it's an area where I can get promotion in which case you'd feel I've got to get to be promoted to get the success in this area." (Jeanette, 30s woman)

There was in fact no evidence from this research that women do begin to put more emphasis on external criteria for success as their careers develop and they get older. Interestingly, however, both the men in their twenties anticipated that once they had a family, their career would become less important to them and therefore their conceptions of career success might change, as they tried to balance their work life better with their home life:

"If it comes to the point where...people have young families and they're at a point where the work is not as important as the home, whereas maybe before it was...so their idea of success is now my family, and work is the means by which I aid that success at home.....and therefore ultimately job success will be that I have opportunities to quieten down the pace for an amount of time." (Kenneth 20s man)

"I think at that stage you'll be interested a lot more in what's going on at home and the office will become just 'this is what I have to do to get my money at the end of the month to pay for the nappies and whatever'...so it will become...maybe not so much of your life anymore." (Alex, 20s man)

4.4 Discussion

While the research findings will be discussed fully in the context of existing theory on career success in Chapter 7, it seems valuable to relate the key findings of the first part of the research back to the literature briefly at this stage, since they are the fruits of a separate pilot phase of data collection and analysis. This is in keeping with the aim, described in Chapter 3, section 3.4.3, of presenting the findings in a way which mirrors the developmental aspect of the process of data analysis. Discussing the results of this stage of the research in the light of existing literature demonstrates their

strength and the firm base which they provide from which the second stage of the research was conducted.

The findings of the first stage of the research clearly show that managerial career success is a concept far more complex than many writers on careers have suggested (e.g. O'Reilly and Chatman 1994, Melamed 1995). It cannot simply be represented in the external terms of hierarchical position and level of pay, because this is not how managers themselves see it; in reality they use a far wider range of criteria to define their own career success. This conclusion reflects the assessment of many writers who have examined what career success means to individuals (e.g. Korman et al. 1981, Marshall 1984, Asplund 1988, Gattiker and Larwood 1986, 1988 and 1990, Russo et al. 1991, Poole et al. 1991 and 1993).

The findings support the importance of internal criteria of success for managers' definitions of success, indicated by the research of Gattiker and Larwood (1986 and 1988), Peluchette (1993) and Poole et al. (1991 and 1993). Furthermore, they build on earlier studies to suggest what kind of internal criteria for success managers might include in their definitions of success: the research found that important internal criteria of career success for the managers included *enjoyment*, *interest*, *sense of achievement*, *sense of accomplishment* and *doing new or different things*. The cogency of the internal criteria identified is borne out by the findings of previous research which examined managerial values or looked at what managers wanted from their career: for example, Beutell and Brenner (1986) discovered that values particularly important to women managers were *accomplishment* and *use of knowledge and skills*; Marshall (1984) found that women managers sought to get challenge, interest and growth from their work.

While internal criteria were an extremely important part of the managers' conceptions of career success, external criteria remained "a necessary component" of their career success too (Poole et al. 1993). However, the research showed that external success is itself a more complex concept than previously acknowledged. It found that external success has two distinct aspects, an external material dimension based on criteria such as position in the hierarchy and level of pay, by which organisational success is often judged (e.g. O'Reilly and Chatman 1994), and a non-material and intangible dimension, which includes criteria such as *respect*, *being an expert*, *influence*, and *leaving one's mark*.

Such intangible criteria were a vital element in their definition of career success for most of the managers. The existence of this group of criteria, although hitherto unidentified, does echo the findings of some earlier studies: Derr and Laurent (1989) found that criteria related to *influence* were an important part of managers' personal definitions of career success; Mason (1994) discovered that the value women managers placed most emphasis on was being *treated with respect*.

The importance of intangible criteria such as being regarded as an expert and being respected suggests that recognition in personal terms, rather than organisational terms, may be more important in determining how some managers regard their career success. In addition, such intangible criteria appear to be closely linked to internal criteria of success in some definitions of career success, since those managers who emphasised internal criteria as being very important to them as part of their conception of success were likely to emphasise intangible criteria too.

This was particularly true of the women managers, who had strikingly different personal conceptions of career success from their male counterparts. Their definitions of success were based more on internal and intangible criteria, rather than the external criteria which were central to many of the men's conceptions of success. Being regarded as an expert and being respected were central to most of the women managers' conceptions of success. Interest and enjoyment were also an essential part of career success for many of them. Whilst such criteria were important to some of the men, on the whole they did not have the same significance for them as they had for the women. In contrast, career success for the men was dependent to a far greater extent on what they earned and where they were in the organisational hierarchy.

This finding reflects the assessment of much of the literature which has examined what women managers want from their careers (e.g. Hennig and Jardim 1978, Marshall 1984, Asplund 1988), that women see their own career success in very personal terms. It is also supported by the conclusion drawn by Powell and Mainiero (1992 and 1993) and Poole et al. (1991 and 1993), that internal subjective measures of career success may be more important to women than to men.

Thus a key conclusion to be drawn from the findings of the first stage of the research is that any model of managerial career success must be capable of representing the success favoured by both male and female managers. While they share the same criteria for career success, the emphasis they place on them appears to be very

different. The "traditional" model of career success, based on factors such as hierarchical position and level of pay, is closest to how men perceive success, although it still fails to capture every dimension of career success for any manager. For women, a quite different emphasis on criteria such as respect, being an expert, enjoyment and interest appears to exist. The differences between the male and female managers can be best summed in terms of the kind of recognition they seek within the organisation. For the men in the first stage of the research, organisational recognition, that is in terms of their status within the organisation, largely determined how successful they felt. For the women, personal recognition, that is in terms of how well they were regarded within the organisation, was central to their concept of career success.

Equally important as the differences between the sexes in their conceptions of career success appears to be the way in which these conceptions change over the course of a manager's career. Although a cohort effect cannot entirely be ruled out as a possible explanation for these differences, both men and women seemed to move from an emphasis (to some degree or another) on external criteria for success towards a position in their forties where career success was linked with the intangible criterion of creating something of one's own, often expressed as leaving one's mark on the organisation. For many of the managers interviewed in this age group, this idea was connected with plans to set up their own business.

The likelihood that a cohort effect is responsible for these differences is discussed in detail in Chapter 7, section 7.4. However, the fact that the older managers acknowledged that their conceptions of success had changed in the kind of way described above makes it an unlikely explanation: younger managers too anticipated that their conceptions of success would change as their careers developed, although understandably they were less certain about the form these changes would take.

The finding that external criteria for career success were less important for older managers is supported by literature which has shown that external material criteria for success are less favoured by managers in their forties, possibly as a result of a transition which takes place any time from the mid-thirties to the early forties (e.g. Korman et al. 1981, Evans and Bartolomé 1981, Kalleberg and Losocco 1983, Nicholson and West 1988, O'Connor and Wolfe 1987, Marshall 1995). There is some support for the research's conclusion that leaving one's mark becomes more important for managers as they become older from Nicholson and West (1988), who

found that managers in their forties were more concerned with "opportunities to influence and contribute to their environments".

The changes which influence the way in which career success is defined by older managers, compared with younger ones, can be summed up as a move away from organisational recognition towards a view of success based much more on personal recognition, for personal achievements. Thus the difference between the younger and the older managers in terms of the recognition they seek is similar to that found between the male and female managers, as described above.

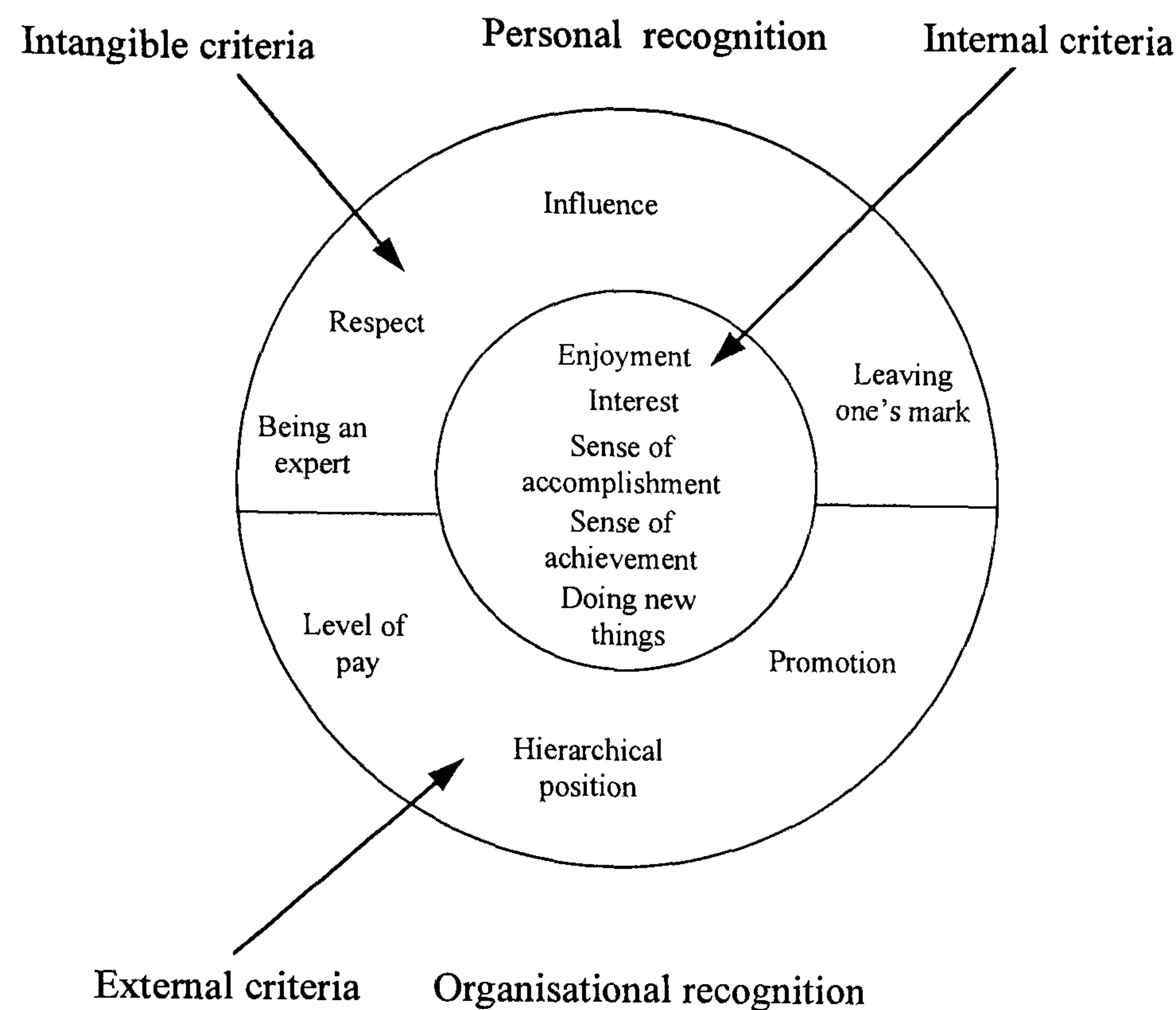
4.5 Conceptualising managerial career success

The findings of the first stage of the research lead one to conclude that a conceptual model of career success must be capable of showing the different kinds of career success male and female managers emphasise at different ages. It should demonstrate that, while the emphasis managers place on particular criteria for career success may be different, they all use the same kind of criteria. It should also highlight organisational recognition and personal recognition as key concepts in terms of how managers perceive their own career success, as shown in Figure 4.1.

The model represents the complex nature of managers' personal conceptions of career success. It shows that there are three basic dimensions of career success: external, intangible and internal. The dimensions are emphasised in different ways by different managers: in particular, in this stage of the research, for women managers, internal and intangible criteria have been found to be most important; for men, external criteria are most central to their view of career success. For older managers, the importance of intangible criteria, in particular the idea of leaving one's mark, is greater than for younger managers and the importance of external criteria is less.

The differences found between male and female managers, and younger and older managers, may be summed up as a distinction between the kind of recognition they seek in their career: as described in section 4.4, women and older managers appeared to see their career success more in terms of personal recognition, rather than in terms of the kind of organisational recognition by which career success has traditionally been judged, that is position in the hierarchy and level of pay. Men and younger managers, on the other hand, were more likely to see their career success in terms of

Figure 4.1: A model of managerial career success



organisational recognition. These two perspectives of personal recognition and organisational recognition, from which career success may be viewed, are therefore included in the model.

The model demonstrates that all criteria for career success are part of the same whole and, while distinct in nature, are interrelated to each other. The differences in terms of how career success is conceived found in the first stage of the research have been differences in degree of emphasis, not differences in actual kind. The model will be explored and developed further in the light of the findings of the second stage of the research, which are presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5: DEVELOPING A MODEL OF MANAGERIAL CAREER SUCCESS

CHAPTER 5: DEVELOPING A MODEL OF MANAGERIAL CAREER SUCCESS

This chapter presents the findings of the second stage of the research, conducted amongst 24 managers at BT, as described in Chapter 3, sections 3.2 and 3.3. The study was informed by and seeks to build on the results of the first stage of the research presented in Chapter 4: Section 5.1 describes the kind of conceptions of career success the managers who took part in the second stage of the research held. Section 5.2 examines the internal criteria for success which they used, section 5.3 discusses their intangible criteria, and section 5.4 their external criteria. Sections 5.5 and 5.6 consider the differences found between the men and the women, and the younger and older managers, in terms of how they saw their own career success. Section 5.7 develops the model of managerial career success introduced in Chapter 4, section 4.5, as an intermediate step towards the creation of a typology of managerial career success, which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

5.1 Managers' personal conceptions of career success

The findings of the first stage of the research presented in Chapter 4 suggest that managerial career success is a complex concept, based on three types of criteria: external criteria, such as hierarchical position and level of pay; intangible criteria, such as respect and influence; and internal criteria, such as enjoyment and sense of accomplishment. The difference found between individual managers in terms of how they conceived career success was one of degree of emphasis placed on the criteria, not one of actual kind.

The results of the full-scale study support this conclusion. For all of the managers interviewed in the second stage of the field work, career success was a complex three dimensional concept, rooted in internal and intangible criteria, as well as the external dimension by which organisational career success has traditionally been viewed. The importance of internal and intangible criteria to the managers' definitions of career success is illustrated by the following quotes:

"It would be looking back and saying, yes, you achieved something in those roles, you were successful on the projects you were on, you were seen by the company or the companies you worked with as a good asset to have...and I enjoyed it...that's the key thing, it has to be enjoyed." (John, 20s man)

"In absolute terms I would say it is not standing still. Success is progression, it gets me closer to the map.....the progression, I've expressed that as almost like recognition...recognition as someone worthy of that...membership is very much the thing behind it." (David, 40s man)

"I suppose I'd know I'd got to where I wanted to be and I loved what I was doing...I was good at what I was doing, and recognised for being good at what I was doing...I suppose everyone else's opinions of me count more than my own personal opinion...I was earning a comfortable amount...and was perceived outside of BT as doing very nicely, thank you." (Lisa, 20s woman)

The findings of the second stage of the research also endorse the conclusions of the first stage that, for some of the managers, internal or intangible aspects of success were far more important than external criteria in their own definitions of career success. This group was mostly female, which again concurs with the findings of the first stage of the research:

"(Career success) is sort of personal satisfaction...being able to balance that with private tensions...being able to achieve things, get to levels or do things that you didn't think you would be able to do...and at the end of the day you've enjoyed it. (Lyssa, 30s woman)

"If I felt that my job was important, and met my criteria for being a good job, that it wasn't a job that was just chasing pieces of paper round and round...and I could do that job well, then to me, that would be my definition of what career success meant...it wouldn't necessarily mean being promoted and getting to the top of the tree." (Jane S, 40s woman)

However, unlike the managers in the first stage of the research, in the second stage there were also some men to whom internal and intangible criteria were most important in their definitions of success. They included Stuart, who will be discussed in more detail in section 5.2.5:

"I would have had to have pointed to something and say I did that...I would have to think I treated everybody like I would like to be treated, and therefore that I was some-one that people looked up to...and that the things that I had

done were actually worthwhile, and life in general was slightly better for me having done them than not having done them." (Stuart, 30s man)

The different kinds of career success favoured by the managers will be explored further in Chapter 6, where the findings of both stages of the research will be combined in order to build a typology of managerial career success. This chapter will concentrate on using the findings of the second stage of the research:

- to explore the three dimensions of career success, internal, intangible and external, in particular in terms of how different managers emphasise them,
- to examine further the important effects of gender and age on managers' perceptions of career success identified in the first stage of the research,
- to develop the model of managerial career success introduced in Chapter 4.

5.2 Internal criteria of career success

Career success for all the managers who took part in the second stage of the research was dependant on criteria internal to themselves to some extent. Of the five key internal criteria for career success identified in Chapter 4, section 4.1.2, *enjoyment*, *interest*, *sense of achievement*, *sense of accomplishment* and *doing new or different things*, the first four emerged as especially important in the second stage of the research. (Doing new things was only important to four of the managers who took part in this stage, a finding which will be discussed in more detail below.)

5.2.1 Sense of accomplishment

A sense of accomplishment, generally described as feeling that one was extremely competent at one's job, was important to all the participants, with the exception of one manager, Pravin. In fact the lack of importance Pravin placed on a sense of accomplishment was the result of a deliberate decision not to value this criterion, because he felt that an over-emphasis on being good at what he did at work in the past was the result of political naivety and had hampered his hierarchical progression in the organisation:

"Being diligent hasn't worked in my favour, they almost counted that against me...so I've had to work on that, I've had to see an outside consultant on that...we were brought up working hard, we weren't brought up working smart...that's why I think my career hasn't moved as quickly as it could have done." (Pravin, 30s man)

Pravin stands out from the other managers in many ways in terms of his confusion about his true work values and his idea of career success and will be discussed in more detail below and in Chapter 6, section 6.6.

While a sense of accomplishment was important to all the managers except Pravin, there were strong differences in the extent to which and reasons why they emphasised it. Seven managers saw a sense of accomplishment as highly important and central to their idea of career success, especially when it was linked to personal recognition of their competence by those whom they worked with, in particular superiors and internal customers. There were five women and two men in this group:

"What is important to me is that I'm good at something...I never want to be bad at anything...I can be average, but I'd rather be good. I suppose then by doing something that is perceived as good, people say: 'Well done, that was good'....I think that is important." (Lisa, 20s woman)

"Being able to do a professional high quality job...and therefore to have the respect of the people I work with and all the managers I support." (Liz, 40s woman)

The second group to whom a sense of accomplishment was very important related being good at what they did to a sense of personal achievement in some way. This group consisted of four women:

"I always want to do things well...I can't do a shoddy job on anything, it really annoys me if I have to do a shoddy job because I'm rushed...and a sense of personal satisfaction...personal satisfaction comes out of that, because you can look at something and say, yes, I did that well, that was a good decision." (Stella, 20s woman)

"I think I would need to feel that I also felt I was doing a good job, because there is a difference, because sometimes people think you are doing a good job, and you don't actually think you've done it very well at all...and so I'm probably more critical of myself than other people are of me." (Angela, 40s woman)

5.2.2 Sense of achievement

Getting a sense of achievement from their work was a very important part of career success for ten of the managers, six women and four men. They were divided almost equally between the three age groups.

Again, there was some variation in the way that the managers emphasised sense of achievement. The largest group of six managers, five women and one man, related career success to a sense of achievement at a very personal level. For all of them, this was an essential part of their definition of career success:

"I think what would be successful is if I'd reached the point in whatever my career may turn out to be, when I thought I had...fulfilled what I thought was probably my highest potential." (Kathryn, 30s woman)

"I think career success for me is something which I get a personal achievement out of." (Stella, 20s woman)

Two managers in their forties, Alan and Angela, related a sense of achievement to leaving their mark in some way on the organisation they worked for:

"I think the criteria (sic) (for career success) would have been achievement...to have actually made a mark on the company and have done something that lives on." (Alan, 40s man)

As the first stage of the research found, gaining a sense of achievement was often closely related to the idea of challenge, in the sense that to the managers, taking on particularly challenging tasks or roles often led to a sense of achievement and feelings of career success. In fact all ten managers to whom a sense of achievement was particularly important also believed that it was essential to find their work challenging in some way:

"Also I think I like to do things which I know are going to be difficult sometimes, and to prove that things can be done..." (Angela, 40s woman)

"I think a lot of it is personal challenge, as opposed to the sort of challenge somebody else has given you...it's more did you think you were capable of doing something, have you been able to prove you were capable of doing it, when you thought it was going to be very difficult and you had to overcome that." (Lyssa, 30s woman)

5.2.3 Enjoyment and interest

Enjoyment and interest were criteria which were important to all the managers, except once again Pravin, who felt that, as with a sense of accomplishment, an over-emphasis on getting enjoyment and interest out of his job had hampered his career development at BT.

However the degree of importance placed by the managers on these two criteria varied considerably. Ten of the managers saw enjoyment as a crucial measure of their own career success, that is they would not feel that they had had a successful career if they did not enjoy their work. This group consisted of six women and four men and was divided roughly equally between the age groups:

"It's part of having success on my own terms...I want to be successful in the corporate culture, but I want to enjoy what I'm doing, I want to have fun at work, I want to look forward to coming in every day." (Elspeth, 40s woman)

"It really has to come down to enjoying what I do, and...just really being successful at what I do, and going for as high as possible in the career structure...it's really enjoying it and trying to do my best really." (John, 20s man)

For five other managers enjoyment was an important part of their definition of career success in that they felt they would not sacrifice a job they enjoyed for hierarchical advancement. Four of these managers were female and all in their thirties and forties:

"I'm happy that I got so far, I would like to get a bit further, but I'd rather do something that I enjoyed and found satisfying." (Gill, 30s woman)

**"Yes, I'd like the further recognition of being able to say I'm a personal contractor, I've got a car that BT have supplied me with, but not at the expense of losing the freedom, the job I enjoy doing, living in the location I live in."
(Jane S, 40s woman)**

Interest was important to 11 managers in total, eight of whom also emphasised enjoyment, confirming the link between the two criteria found in the first stage of the research. Of the group of managers to whom finding their work interesting was important, seven were in their forties and six were woman. To those who valued it particularly highly, it was often more important to them to find their work interesting than to progress up the organisational hierarchy:

"If you could move into another area at the same level, that would be fine...that wouldn't cause me any problems about not going up a grade, because it's still interesting and it's something I want to do." (Lyssa, 30s woman)

In fact, two of the women, Angela and Gill, had actually turned down a promotion because they felt the job they were being offered was not interesting, suggesting that, as in the case of enjoyment, interest was far more important to them than hierarchical progression:

"A couple of years back now, my manager suggested I apply for a job, a promotion it was, that had come up...and I looked into it and in the end I decided not to...the reason behind that was not that I didn't think I could do it, but the job didn't interest me...so the content of the job is as important as the status, and in fact if it comes to it, I would not take a higher level job if I felt it was something I really wouldn't want to do." (Angela, 40s woman)

5.2.4 Identifying sub-groups of internal criteria

Doing new things or doing things in a different way emerged as an important internal criterion for career success for the managers in the first stage of the research. This was not the case in the second stage. Only four managers saw doing things that had not been done before as part of their idea of career success, and for all of them this was related to challenge and getting a sense of achievement from their work, which for them was an important aspect of their career success:

"It's something completely new really, it's a challenge...when I look back to when I started here, I was completely on my own, I didn't know anything about what I was going to be doing...so in 18 months we've actually achieved a lot." (Gill, 30s woman)

Doing new things or doing things in a different way therefore appears to be closely related to sense of achievement rather than a distinct criterion in its own right. Likewise, there are other criteria for success mentioned by the managers which, while they are described as separate criteria, are also closely linked to sense of achievement in a similar way. These include creativity, intellectual stimulation and learning, as well as meeting a challenge, already discussed in section 5.2.2. For example, to four of the managers, learning things and getting a sense of achievement from that related to their ideas about career success:

"I like the learning, I like the challenges that go with that...learning about new things, I guess that's very important to me." (Kathryn, 30s woman)

Similarly, three other managers found the concept of achievement as personal development extremely important:

"Also I think another element which I haven't touched upon is an internal journey...I mean, sometimes people come in with a view, and I did as well, that, right, I've got all these qualifications, here's me...but you don't realise all the baggage you come in with, and to me, making discoveries along the way, being enlightened by that discovery, is a powerful thing." (Pravin, 30s man)

In the way that a group of criteria for career success appear to be related to sense of achievement, so there is another group of criteria similarly linked to the concept of sense of accomplishment. This group includes criteria such as seeing a job through from beginning to end and meeting objectives. The idea of meeting objectives was important to five of the managers:

"I think I measure success in the actual projects I've done...there've been particular projects which I've been in control of...I've had to present or write reports...they've been successful, so I can see within those roles, projects which have gone well." (John, 20s man)

Likewise a third group of criteria important to the managers are related to enjoyment and interest, already linked by the findings of the first stage of the research. These include variety of work and job satisfaction. For seven of the managers, variety either in terms of the type of work they did during their career or in terms of the content of a particular job was essential:

"I would be disappointed, I think, to carry on doing the same sort of job as I'm doing now all the time, so...as long as there are opportunities at the same level to do different things, then I shall be quite happy." (Angela, 40s woman)

"And it gives me a lot of variety...and a lot of interaction with people...that's the sort of enjoyment I have, because that then brings variety with it...I'm never sure what will happen, what will come in." (Paula, 20s woman)

Job satisfaction was very important to nine managers, eight of whom were women, of all ages:

"I think that job satisfaction is quite high for me...I like to enjoy what I do and normally I've always enjoyed it...it's when I don't like my job that I start looking around for something else." (Jane M, 30s woman)

"I think career success...in the definition there will certainly be the theme of enjoyment, personal satisfaction, call it what you want." (Ran, 20s man)

It therefore appears that it may be more useful to view internal criteria for success not at the level of individual criteria but as belonging to distinct and separate sub-groups within the category. Three sub-groups have been identified so far, one closely linked to the concept of sense of achievement, one related to the concept of sense of accomplishment, and one based on the concepts of enjoyment and interest. For the purposes of this research, therefore, these groups will henceforth be referred to as achievement criteria, accomplishment criteria and enjoyment criteria. See Table 5.1 below.

Not all the criteria identified by the managers as important fit these three sub-groups, however. Two further important groups of internal criteria relating to the managers' conceptions of career success emerged from second stage of the research. The first

group of criteria, which can best be described as integrity criteria, relates to the importance of the managers' feelings about their own worth and the worthwhileness of the work they were involved in. The criteria they used as part of their definitions of career success included helping people through their work, putting something back into the business, having good relationships with staff, worthwhile work and integrity. The second group, balance criteria, in fact consists of only one criterion, balance with home life. This relates to the importance placed by some of the managers on having the ability to balance their career with their home life. See Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Internal criteria of career success

<u>Achievement criteria</u>	<u>Accomplishment criteria</u>	<u>Enjoyment criteria</u>	<u>Integrity criteria</u>	<u>Balance criteria</u>
Sense of achievement	Sense of accomplishment	Enjoyment	Integrity	Balance with home life
Meeting a challenge	Seeing a job through	Interest	Good relationships	
Doing new or different things	Meeting objectives	Job satisfaction	Worthwhile work	
Intellectual stimulation		Variety	Helping	
Learning			Putting something back	
Creativity				
Personal development				

5.2.5 Integrity criteria

Integrity criteria were very important to 12 of the managers, seven women and five men, including all the women in their forties and all the men in their thirties. The concept of helping others in some way through what one did at work was important to eight of the managers, and a core part of the idea of career success for five of them:

**"If it was on my own terms, taking away what everyone else perceives to be successful, then I'd say I'm successful because I'm meeting peoples' needs."
(Steve, 30s man)**

"To me, success means helping other people become successful, and so I can become successful..." (Pravin, 30s man)

Feeling that what one did at work was worthwhile was a crucial part of career success for four of the managers, in particular, for Stuart, who, at one level below director, was the most senior manager interviewed for the research. Stuart's philosophy of life was quite different from that of the other managers: during his interview he expressed strong political convictions and described a cherished pipe dream of giving up his career with BT and going to work for the Labour Party, should they win the next election. It seems likely, therefore, that his idea of career success as influence through doing worthwhile things is more the result of strong values rooted in his political convictions, rather than his seniority:

"I don't want to be MD, it's not that kind of thing...(it's in terms of) that I'm a good role model for people, I want to feel that, those kinds of things...to feel as if I made a difference and it was worthwhile, a good for the world in general...it is not exactly missing in BT, but BT is just a company...so I don't know yet what my good is." (Stuart, 30s man)

In fact, for all but one of the senior managers (grade 5 and above, as defined in Chapter 3, section 3.2.5), integrity and having good relationships with the people who worked for them were key.

"...feeling that the people who work for me...I used to say want to work for me...it needs to be more than that now...they need to vote for me...I want to be in a position where people would be prepared to vote for me...it's being seen as their leader." (Adam, 30s man)

5.2.6 Balance criteria

The desire to balance a career with a "successful" home life influenced and tempered many of the managers' ideas about success at work. For four of the managers, all women, Angela, Kathryn, Lyssa and Stella, being able to balance their career with their life outside work effectively was actually an important part of their definition of career success:

"Again it would be am I balancing my private life with my work life and achieving at both of them?...I don't want to be perfect at both of them, but I'd like to be able to balance them both...I think (career success) will be still having a career that's worthwhile in about ten year's time if I choose to have children...I think that would be a definition of career success for me." (Stella, 20s woman).

5.3 Intangible criteria of career success

A key finding of the first stage of the research was the existence of a group of criteria for career success which were external to the managers, but not material in the sense of pay and level in the hierarchy. These intangible criteria, discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.1.3, included *being an expert*, *respect*, *influence* and *leaving one's mark*. The importance of these criteria to managers' conceptions of career success was confirmed in the second stage of the research, which found that all of the managers valued at least one such criterion as part of their idea of career success to some degree or another.

In addition, the second stage of the research showed that, as is the case with internal criteria for success, the intangible criteria important to the managers fall into distinct groups. Two separate groups of intangible criteria were identified. The first is a group of personal recognition criteria, which includes being regarded as an expert and gaining respect, identified in the first stage of the research, as well as other personal recognition criteria identified in the second stage of the research, personal recognition itself, being valued, and reputation. The second is a group of influence criteria, which includes influence itself and leaving one's mark, identified in the first stage of the research, and responsibility, autonomy, and business impact, identified in the second stage of the research. These groups will henceforward be referred to as personal recognition criteria and influence criteria. See Table 5.2:

Table 5.2: Intangible criteria of career success

<u>Influence criteria</u>	<u>Personal recognition criteria</u>
Influence	Personal recognition
Responsibility	Respect
Leaving one's mark	Being an expert
Business impact	Being valued
Autonomy	Reputation

5.3.1 Personal recognition criteria

Whilst not discussed as a separate criterion for success in Chapter 4, in the second stage of the research personal recognition itself emerged as an important criterion for career success for a large group of the managers, 20 in total. Of this group, it was considered to be particularly important to 15 managers, nine women and six men, four in their twenties, five in their thirties and six in their forties.

To those who valued personal recognition highly, it was as important or more important as a criterion for their own career success than organisational recognition in terms of pay or hierarchical promotion. The recognition that the managers sought generally meant being acknowledged as some-one who was a competent and valuable manager:

"I think apart from the material and financial aspect of being successful, other peoples' opinions are very important...and so to be recognised by my team as being very good at what I do, being recognised by my customers, by other people within the organisation, I think is a measure of success." (Dave H, 20s man)

"I think that staying on the theme of recognition, career success is where I go to a network meeting of senior players in the company and I am recognised for what I do and the value I bring to the company." (Tony, 40s man)

This desire for personal recognition as approbation was sometimes taken to an extreme, for example, by Alan:

"What's success is achieving things and being held up as somebody who is really...if I was in a rock band, I'd want to be the singer, I'd want to be the person who wrote the things, I wouldn't want to be the bass player or the drummer." (Alan, 40s man)

For other managers, personal recognition also involved specific feedback in terms of winning awards, being singled out for special attention such as an invitation to attend a prestigious conference, or even simply being thanked. Seven of the managers talked about recognition of this kind, six of whom were women, three in their 20s and three in their 30s. It was particularly important to Lisa, a female manager in her 20s, who admitted that she strongly craved high levels of personal recognition.

"If somebody says to me we'd like you to do this job, that's such a great ego boost for me, purely ego...I will do it...if somebody says to me we want you to do this job because we think you are the right person for it, I've bought it, I'll have two! In an ideal world people will come to me and say you're very good at this, we'll give you this job...I'd say thank you very much.....I suppose my career has been dictated by other people flattering my ego." (Lisa, 20s woman)

The idea of being recognised as an expert, somebody who was considered to be really good at what they did, was a part of career success for 15 of the managers. This group consisted of seven women and eight men, distributed throughout the three age groups. Being regarded as an expert was often described in terms of some-one whose opinions were sought out and valued:

"I feel reasonably successful now...because a lot of people look to me as a kind of expert on quite a few things...around the business...people ring you up and say so and so suggests I talk to you." (Stuart, 30s man)

"It is being recognised for your input...when people say talk to Paula, she'll know, yes, that's important to me...I like it when people will come to me and talk to me and ask my opinion on something." (Paula, 20s woman)

Related to being considered to be an expert at work was the idea of being respected for being really good at one's job. This was important to 17 of the managers, ten women and seven men, distributed throughout the three age groups. (A group of eleven managers, six women and five men, valued all three of the personal recognition criteria discussed so far: personal recognition, being an expert and respect.)

For those who valued respect, it formed a crucial part of their idea of career success. To the managers, respect generally represented an affirmation of their ability to do their job well and as such was closely related to the importance they placed on their own competence, discussed in section 5.2.1 as a sense of accomplishment.

"Obviously to earn a lot of money is successful, but I think that it's equally important to get the respect of people around you to say that you're a successful person." (Dave H, 20s man)

"(Career success) would be things like I get respect from the people I work with, I get a sense of achievement out of my job, I'm doing something which interests me and I'm doing something which I perceive I'm doing well and better than anybody else could." (Stella, 20s woman)

To Stuart, however, the idea of being respected was linked to the importance he placed on his personal integrity as a manager:

"I want to feel when it's finished that people can say, yes, he made a difference, yes, I want to be like him, he's a good example to me...that I'm a good role model for people." (Stuart, 30s man)

Two other personal recognition criteria emerged as being important to some of the managers. Being valued for the contribution one made at work was important to five managers:

"What does make me feel successful is when the line managers I support, my customers, show, recognise that they've taken on board my contribution and valued it, and that it's actually helped them to move things forward..." (Liz, 40s woman)

A separate group of three managers believed that the reputation they had earned was part of their own career success:

"Hierarchy in the sense not of grade or of the physical trappings of status, but in terms of what I'm known for, the teams I'm a member of, what they've achieved, what people think of me, what I can do, what resources I have to deploy." (David, 40s man)

5.3.2 Influence criteria

Influence criteria for career success as defined above were important to all of the managers in the second stage of the research. Being able to influence things at work was valued by everyone to some extent, but was vital to a group of nine managers, for whom it was a crucial part of their concept of career success, far more so than their position in the organisational hierarchy and the status which that endowed. This group consisted of six men and three women, spread throughout the three age groups:

"I think I'm driven by a desire to influence the world I'm in...I want to move further in the company, I am quite ambitious, and I get very frustrated when I feel there's more I could be doing, but I'm not getting the chance to do it." (Elspeth, 40s woman)

David in particular tried to trace the importance he placed on being able to have an influence at work back to his schooldays:

"When I was at school we had the cadet force...they used to have these field days when you'd go off orienteering...it was really hierarchical...when you joined in the fourth form you were always the most junior...I used to hate this...we would go off on this orienteering exercise...all the sixth formers, the sergeants and stuff, they had the map and they knew where we were going...as a poor mug beginner you'd be stuck at the back, no idea where you were going, just following...I think it was then that I realised that what I want is to see the map...and if I have any say, either decide where we go on the map or even draw the map in the first place...so I think that's what I'm shooting for, I think that's what's driving me, is that I want some idea of where the hell we're going...and have a say in where we go and why, and that's at a fundamental level what I

want out of my career, some control and some understanding." (David 40s, man)

Closely linked to being able to influence things at work was the idea of having responsibility, which was particularly important to a group of 11 managers (including five who also valued influence). Two kinds of attitudes to responsibility emerged from the research: One group of six managers aspired to attain greater responsibility in their work roles and therefore saw it as part of career success; they tended to be people who were seeking to move further up the organisational hierarchy:

"I think (career success) is performing a role that has a level of responsibility, that requires you to be the sort of person that can cope with the pressure, is capable of fulfilling whatever you have to do." (Sherelle, 20s woman)

A second group of five managers, four of whom were in their forties and one in their thirties, saw the responsibility a particular work role entailed as being more important than their actual grade in the hierarchy, in terms of how they viewed their own career success. (Their age did not necessarily reflect their hierarchical position in BT: of the five, only one, Tony, could be described as a senior manager.):

"It's more about what you are responsible for than the grade you are to do it." (Gill, 30s woman)

Those managers who saw their career success in terms of influence and responsibility were also likely to value achieving a degree of autonomy at work. Autonomy was important to a group of ten managers, eight of whom also saw influence or responsibility as part of success for them. Six of the managers who valued autonomy were in their forties:

"Its freedom and autonomy really...for me it's not power but it's a degree of independence, autonomy, the ability to make decisions rather than be the victim of decisions." (David, 40s man)

"It's the independence, it's the autonomy really, that you're in control, you're seen as someone who has that responsibility." (Paula, 20s woman)

Two further intangible criteria, leaving a mark and having an impact on the business, are also considered to fall within the group of influence criteria. The idea of leaving a mark at work, that is doing something by which one would be remembered as a manager, was very important to eight of the managers, five of whom were in their forties. Part of their career success was to achieve something for which they would be remembered:

"What you would like to say at the end of your career is that I have actually made a mark...OK, it may not be something where somebody remembers you personally, or you're remembered personally for doing something, but you have had an effect on the organisation." (Angela, 40s woman)

"I suppose there is an element of having done something, having left a mark." (David, 40s man)

Related to the idea of leaving a mark on the organisation was the idea of having an impact on the business, something which was a criterion of success for 12 of the managers, seven men and five women, in all three age groups:

"I would have to be able to make a really good impact, to change things and do things, and move things on." (Alan, 40s man)

"I think the key (criterion) for success would be that I've made a contribution, a personal, positive contribution to the organisation, and that that contribution must have been valuable to the organisation, in the respect that it's added to BT's profits." (Ran, 30s man)

5.4 External criteria of career success

External criteria such as position in the hierarchy and level of pay, by which alone career success is often commonly measured, were a part of career success for most of the managers in the second stage of this research to some degree or another. It is important to note, however, that, as in the first stage of the research, even for the managers who favoured such criteria strongly as part of their conception of career success, they were not sufficient on their own to define their success. At the other extreme, for another group of managers, they were of scarcely any importance at all

in their definition of career success. The significance of such differences in managers' conceptions of career success will be explored further in Chapter 6.

As with internal and intangible criteria, external criteria for career success fall into distinct groupings, those associated with hierarchical position, both present and future, that is hierarchical position itself, promotion and status, which will be described here as grade criteria, and those associated with reward, in particular level of pay, described here as reward criteria. See Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: External criteria of career success

<u>Grade criteria</u>	<u>Reward criteria</u>
Hierarchical position	Level of pay
Promotion	
Status	

5.4.1 Grade criteria

The level of importance placed on grade criteria as part of the managers' conceptions of career success varied enormously from that of a group of three managers at one extreme, Adam, John and Darren, for whom such criteria were at the heart of their definition of success, to that of a group of three managers at the other extreme, Liz, Angela and Jane S, for whom grade criteria were unimportant in terms of how they saw their own career success.

The idea of promotion or progression up through the hierarchy as a part of career success was valued by a larger group of managers (18), than hierarchical position itself, which 14 of the managers saw as a part of their own career success. This is not surprising, since for many of the managers, moving up the organisational hierarchy was not seen as end in itself or valued for the status it endowed, but rather as a means of increasing the influence they had or finding more interesting work.

"Promotion would only bring a fresh challenge, something new, and so in that respect it is important." (Tony, 40s man)

"It depends on how you define promotion...taking on more responsibility and a higher profile to me would be a promotion." (Sherelle, 20s woman)

Of the 14 managers who saw their position in the hierarchy as an important part of their idea of career success, ten were men (four in their twenties, three in their thirties and three in their forties) and four were women (two in their twenties, one in their thirties and one in their forties). There were large differences amongst them in terms of the extent to which hierarchical position was emphasised as part of career success and the reasons for this emphasis. For one group of three men, Adam, Darren and John, all in their twenties or thirties, achieving as high a level as possible in the organisational hierarchy was at the heart of their conception of career success. Career success for them was seen in terms of being a company director, either at BT or elsewhere:

"Well, I want to be a director of a major company, really BT is it." (Adam, 30s man)

"I think at this stage for me to be able to turn round and say that...(career success) is if it's Darren Buckley, director of whatever, BT.....if I got that, it would really be it, it really would be pat on the back time, in terms of what I'd wanted to do, so that has got to be what I consider to be success." (Darren, 20s man)

To a group of four managers, hierarchical position was an important part of career success for them, but more because they felt they had missed out on this dimension of success in their careers so far. This group consisted of three men, Alan and Dave C in their forties and Steve in his thirties, who were still relatively junior managers, and one woman, Jane M, to whom her position in the hierarchy was important because she felt a promotion was overdue. None of this group aspired to the higher echelons of management in the way that the previous group did:

"I've probably been in the wrong place at the wrong time...at my age I think I should have moved on further in terms of rank and grade in the company." (Dave C, 40s man)

"I don't think I would like to leave BT at 50-odd at this level, I think I can leave at a higher level." (Steve, 30s man)

Two managers, Elspeth and David, believed that their hierarchical position was highly important to them, but for the influence it would allow them to have, rather than for the sake of status alone:

"It is quite important because it is a major influence on how well you can do the organisational/political game in BT....it's for the visibility and the fact that it opens doors." (Elspeth, 40s woman)

The group of ten managers to whom hierarchical position was a small or unimportant part of their definition of career success consisted of eight women, two in their twenties, three in their thirties and three in their forties, and two men, one in their thirties and one in their forties:

Six of these managers valued hierarchical position to a limited extent and then only for the influence it gave them and what it allowed them to do. Their attitude was similar to that of Elspeth and David outlined above, although they attached less importance to the idea of hierarchical success:

"It's nice to reach the level of seniority in terms of the grading simply because...people take you more seriously, a lot of people are very grade conscious and hierarchical.....whereas, no, it doesn't matter much to me." (Stuart, 30s man)

"It's important to me in the sense that there are some people you can't get to and some things you just cannot do or any have any impact on if you're not a certain grade." (Kathryn, 30s woman)

To the other four managers, all women, the content of their job was as important or even more important to them than their position in the hierarchy in terms of how they viewed their own career success:

"What the job is about and how I'm feeling about it is much more important than how much does it pay, where does it sit in the hierarchy, in the scheme of things." (Liz, 40s woman)

To 18 of the managers, the idea of progression through the organisational hierarchy or promotion was a part of their idea of career success in some way. Those managers who valued it most highly not surprisingly were the same group as those to whom hierarchical position itself was most important: Adam, John and Darren:

"I'm doing all right...I'm still at that stage where I'm pulling myself out of the pack...I'm a little bit out of it, but my next promotion will, I think, start to identify me more strongly as one of the people that might win the race." (Adam, 30s man)

"I want to be a business manager, and I believe I've got the potential to succeed at the highest level...I'm not sure that BT's geared up to do that...I could be a level 2 in another five years and that really is just too slow." (John, 20s man)

The same group of three older male managers, Dave C, Alan and Steve, who valued hierarchical position strongly, also all saw being promoted as part of their definition of career success, largely because they felt that their careers so far were not a success in hierarchical terms:

"At this point in time, success now for me in the next ten years will be getting promoted.....if I'd achieved what I wanted in a career, I'd have been a couple of levels up from where I am now." (Alan, 40s man)

Six managers, three women and three men, believed that progressing through the hierarchy was a part of their idea of career success but not at any cost: they were not prepared to sacrifice either the content of a job which they enjoyed or their lives outside work in order to get promotion:

"I really don't think I'd be prepared to trade promotion in BT and extra responsibility against having to give up my other interests....it is important because I do want to go on, but a part of wanting success on my own terms is...I say that I'd like to do more for BT, but I'm still going to make time to ride my horse, I'm not going to be working till 11 at night and working at weekends." (Elspeth, 40s woman)

Four managers, Lisa, Paula, Dave H and Jane M, saw promotion as part of their career success, not as an end in itself, but rather in terms of a form of recognition they might deserve for being good at their job. For them, therefore, it was closely linked to the idea of seeing career success in terms of personal recognition:

"That would be the next achievement for me, in terms of actually moving up to the next layer of management...I think it's...the promotion would be a further recognition." (Paula, 20s woman)

To six managers, promotion or being able to progress up the organisational hierarchy was not a part of their conception of career success at all at the present time, although three of them, Kathryn, Lyssa and Stuart, did not rule out the possibility that it might become so in the future. The other three managers, Angela, Liz and Jane S, all in their forties, felt that the content of their job was far more important to them in terms of how they viewed their own career success than the ability to move up the hierarchy:

"I think I can get a lot of interest from doing different roles, and if the opportunity arises to do things at a different level, I shall take it...it doesn't worry me that it may not happen...I shan't feel that my whole career has failed if that doesn't come off." (Angela, 40s woman)

"Some people might say that unless you're continually pushing at developing and moving on and up, then you haven't got a career, but I don't actually see that, because I can move on and develop my career without necessarily getting further up the promotion ladder." (Jane S, 40s woman)

Six of the managers reported that they had actually turned down a promotion at some point in their career. Two of these, Elspeth and John, said that they had done so because they felt that the position they were being offered would not help them further their career. Two of the managers, Angela and Gill, had not been prepared to sacrifice work which they found interesting to move up the hierarchy. Two women, Stella and Jane S, felt that promotion would have disrupted their home life unduly, either in terms of the amount of travel it would involve or the necessity to relocate.

Related to the grade criteria of hierarchical position and progression is the idea of status, which to some of the managers in the second stage of the research was a

criterion for career success. Not surprisingly, those managers to whom status was particularly important were those who also valued hierarchical position and promotion highly: Adam, Darren and John:

"I believe that is what I should be going for, leadership...those are the skills that I really look up to in people...Napoleon sounds a bit obsessive but the fact that he could stand up and all his troops rallied...he came out of exile and, bingo, he's got a 50,000 strong army...it's having that ability that I would really feel was successful." (Adam, 30s man)

For all three of them, the importance of status extended beyond their work lives to their lifestyle at home. John, at 26, already supplemented his income by renting out four houses he had bought, but he was at pains to point out that he would not want to live in them:

"I bought a house in Warrington...it's a terraced house, lovely little house...all decked out, lovely...it's a lovely house, but I wouldn't enjoy living there...lots of people would and lots of people do...I'm seeking something which is bigger, grander scale...I've just got higher ambition." (John, 20s man)

At the other extreme, five managers, four women and one man, Stuart, stressed that they did not value status in the least:

" Status and grade, I'm just not that het up about it...we've got people here who will ask someone's grade before they speak to them...if you're doing a job, the job's important." (Gill, 30s woman)

5.4.2 Reward criteria

Reward criteria, in particular pay, were important to all the managers interviewed to some extent or other, in terms of the necessity to finance their lifestyle. Pay, however, was a central part of career success for only eight of the managers, all of them men. Three were in their twenties, two in their thirties and three in their forties. Once again this group included Adam, Darren and John. For the people in this group, pay was more than just of means of financing their life outside work: it was an important measure of their career success:

"Money and bonuses always make me feel good...I'm a real tart when it comes to (money)." (David, 40s man)

"The next time I really felt like a million dollars was kind of the time I got married...I was 28 years old...I made a couple of monster sales, which netted me...you know I didn't think people paid pay checks like I was getting, I didn't think companies would actually pay me the money...going on our honeymoon and the fact that I could pay for it, no-one had to pay for my wedding, that gave me a massive amount of satisfaction...I really felt that the kind of holiday we had, looking at the other people (there), the other people were all in their retirement years or in their 40s...that gave me...you know, you've done very well." (Adam, 30s man)

For two of the younger managers in this group, Darren and John, their idea of career success depended on their long-term earning potential rather than their current income which they were prepared to sacrifice to some extent in order to develop their careers in such a way as to maximise their income later on:

"I could move to other companies now and get a higher salary, but potentially within BT I've got a lot greater long-term potential in terms of the various things which turn me on in my job, of which quite high in that are grade and money." (Darren, 20s man)

To the other managers, pay was of lesser importance to them in terms of how they perceived their career success than, for example, the enjoyment they derived from their job or the personal recognition they received for what they did at work:

"It just makes so much difference if there are people that are nice that you're working with, and are supportive, and you can have an intelligent conversation with, just somebody you can actually relate to...I think that's so much more important...I'd take a cut in salary to achieve that, and a more rewarding job." (Sherelle, 20s woman)

"It is a part of (career success) because...I guess it's slightly lower down the list...I still want to get promotion, I still want to get paid more, but I don't want to go into a job that pays more and gives me promotion if it's not something I'm going to be happy doing...I think some people can only go for the pay and

promotion, but I think it's got to be something that I think is valuable and worthwhile to do." (Dave H, 20s man)

5.5 The effects of gender on personal conceptions of managerial career success

The findings of the second stage of the research support the conclusion drawn in the first stage, discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.2, that there are differences in terms of how career success is viewed by the male and female managers in that external criteria are far more central to men's conceptions of career success, whereas women see success much more in terms of internal and intangible criteria.

This is not to say that the male and female managers who took part in the second stage of the research fall into clearly demarcated stereotypical groups. There are men to whom internal and intangible criteria are a far more important part of their career success than external criteria, and there are women who value highly external criteria for success. What the second stage of the research shows, however, is that those managers who strongly emphasise external criteria in their definition of career success are more likely to be male, and those managers who favour internal and intangible criteria for success are more likely to be female.

5.5.1 The differences in emphasis on external criteria

The difference between the male and female managers in terms of how they define career success for themselves is particularly marked when external criteria are examined. As discussed in sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2, at one extreme there was a group of male managers, Adam, Darren and John, for whom such criteria were at the heart of their idea of success. While their definitions of career success did include internal and intangible criteria for success too, they placed less emphasis on them than the other managers:

"(Career success) is financial to a degree...I keep going back to that one...in a place like BT, grade...then the importance of the area one works in, how important is what I am doing to the long-term aims of BT?" (Adam, 30s man)

At the other extreme was a group of three female managers, Liz, Jane S, and Angela, for whom external criteria were unimportant in terms of how they saw their own career success:

"(Career success) is doing a good job well...so the first part of that is the good job, so you have to have a job you believe meets your criteria...and then do it well." (Jane S, 40s woman)

Most of the men, ten, believed that the position they attained in the organisational hierarchy was an important measure of their career success, compared with only four of the women. Promotion was also more important to the males in the sample, 11 of whom saw it as part of their idea of career success, compared with seven of the women:

"A measurement of success is how far I've got in the corporate environment.....ideally I'd like to own a company and employ people...so a measure of success would be how big that company was and was it a successful company?...in terms of myself, I would measure how successful I was by how high, if I was a chairman, director or general manager, how far I'd got up...in the career I chose." (John, 20s man)

"Playing in the next league, in the next team, is what it is about...not that there's anything wrong with this league or this team...but it's the next team, the next league up." (David, 40s man)

Some of the women on the other hand were at pains to point out how irrelevant their position in the hierarchy or opportunities to progress were in terms of how they viewed their own career success. For them, the actual content of the job they did was far more important in determining their career success. As described in section 5.2.3, four women, Gill, Jane S, Angela and Liz, felt that they would not sacrifice a job they enjoyed for hierarchical advancement.

"It would depend what the job is really.....I wouldn't go for it just because it was a grade...it would have to be a job which I could see would actually lead me to be where I wanted to be at the end of the day...something I could cope with...something I enjoyed." (Kathryn, 30s woman)

"I wouldn't consider being promoted within the division, because in the division people at the grade above me are audit managers, and I don't want to be an auditor." (Jane S, 40s woman)

Liz in particular was at pains to stress how unimportant her position in the hierarchy was to her and told the story of how she felt about the appointment of her boss, once her junior within the organisation, to illustrate this point:

"My boss at the moment is some-one...a few years ago we worked together as colleagues, and then for a while when I was promoted, I was senior to her...now she's my boss, and when that happened I remember...because I'd been in that position myself with a colleague...I remember how much it meant to me when that colleague came along and saw me and said that it wasn't a problem for him and he was happy to support me in my new role, and I really appreciated that, and I thought I'll ring Jenny because we're old pals and say the same thing, and she was appreciative of it...I didn't know at the time how I was going to feel about working for somebody who had been my equal, even my junior at one stage, who was five or six years younger than me...but I can say now with absolute confidence, having done it for 18 months, that it has not been a problem, in fact it's been one of the happiest times in my working life, because we have a good working relationship...I don't sort of feel bitter and twisted...I'm pleased for her because she's done well...it didn't affect our dealings with each other...so I've got living proof that that doesn't bother me particularly...it didn't spur me on either to think, oh well, if Jenny can get promoted, then I'm going to get promoted." (Liz, 40s woman)

Just one of the men placed no emphasis at all on external criteria in formulating his conception of career success. This was Stuart, who, as described in section 5.2.5, saw success for himself as having a positive influence on the organisation, whilst retaining his personal integrity. He made his attitude to the outward trappings of success many of the other managers craved very clear in his interview:

"We don't have a lavish lifestyle...we've got a fairly decent sized house but like, I'm not fussed about flash cars and stuff...things like a decent car, a decent house I managed to acquire...I don't like status symbols." (Stuart, 30s man)

The contrast between Stuart and the other male managers seems to be related to the set of strong values which he espouses, values which perhaps are closer to those some of the women share.

As in the first stage of the research, strong differences emerged between the men and the women in terms of why they valued grade criteria for career success, as well as differences in terms of the degree of emphasis they gave them. The women who valued hierarchical position and promotion as part of their conception of career success tended to do so not for reasons of status, but either because they associated these criteria with the influence and responsibility they sought to get from their careers, such as Elspeth, or because they saw them as the "just desserts" of the competent manager, like Jane M, who aspired to a promotion which she believed was long overdue:

"At the moment it's important to me to get upgraded to another band...it may not happen...but I want to make the effort...at least to tell them I'm not very happy...so that's come up higher, I suppose, in my personal priorities than it normally is." (Jane M, 30s woman)

The men, on the other hand, saw hierarchical positions much more in terms of the status they endowed and as goals and targets to be aimed for, almost as if work was some kind of competitive game:

"I think achieving a personal contract grade within BT within nine years is quite good...in fact it's rare...the average age of my colleagues is at least 40, so in terms of how high I am in the hierarchy already, I'm proud of it, and other people look on in disbelief at times." (Darren, 20s man)

In fact, the men were much more likely to have set themselves some kind of work oriented goals, compared with the women. The three males with the most external conceptions of career success, Adam, Darren and John, all had detailed goals clearly mapped out for their future careers. Of the women, in contrast, nine admitted to having no work goals of any kind. Seven women, compared with three men, had had no idea what they wanted from a career when they started work. These findings concur with the conclusion made in the first stage of the research that men were much more likely to see their careers in terms such as "goals", "steps" and "ladders".

The use of the language of competition also provided a distinction between how the male and female managers spoke about their careers in the second stage of the research. Seven of the men and two of the women talked in some way about how their competitive instincts influenced their careers. The men in particular discussed

their career advancement in terms of winning a competition or game, or playing "in the big league". Yet again, Adam and Darren were at the extreme of this tendency and both described how intensively competitive they felt about their careers:

"I want to compete with good people, I want to beat good people...so there's satisfaction in playing in a big enough game, so that's what job satisfaction means to me." (Adam, 30s man)

The two women expressed their competitive instincts somewhat differently. To them, it was important not to get left behind, especially if they saw people they did not rate as competent being promoted to a higher level. Their idea of competition, therefore, was more based on the idea of equity, rather than a view of the workplace as a game with winners and losers in the way that the men saw it:

"At the same time I am quite competitive...I think why's that berk over there an R and I'm not...that drives me a bit." (Elspeth, 40s woman)

The group of women to whom grade criteria were most important were in their twenties: all four women in this age group placed a good deal of importance on promotion. This is not surprising, given the findings of the first stage of the research which suggested that external material criteria for career success are more important to younger managers of both sexes (See section 5.6.1). Nevertheless, unlike some of their male colleagues, the young women saw their career progression very much in incremental terms, focusing on the next move up, rather than aiming at an overarching goal. Paula believed that the reason for this in her case was a lack of confidence:

"I don't think I'm capable of it, that's what stops me.....the thought that I'm not clever enough, bright enough, whatever, to progress..." (Paula, 20s woman)

It is also interesting to note that, as described in section 5.4.1, of the six managers who talked about having turned down a promotion, five were women, and for two of them this related to the fact that they had not been prepared to sacrifice the interest and enjoyment they got from work to move up the hierarchy. The only man who talked about turning down a promotion, John, said that he did so, because "it wasn't going anywhere".

In terms of reward criteria, the group to whom level of pay was most important in relation to how they saw their career success consisted of eight men. At the other extreme, there was a group of four women to whom money was relatively unimportant in this regard. This pattern, which concurs with the findings of the first stage of the research, reflects the overall difference between the men and the women in their attitudes to their pay: whilst all the managers agreed that money was important to them in that it helped them to finance their lifestyle, the women generally saw pay as less central to their idea of career success than the men and valued it for its utility rather than its status. This was strongly evoked in the different kinds of stories the men and the women told about money and pay: for the men to whom money was extremely important, increasing their salary was seen as part of the competition for the external material success which they thrived on at work:

"I used to travel around on aeroplanes...it used to irritate me, I was sat in business class - I'd always travel business, that was the company policy - thinking I bet I'm the lowest paid person here in business class, and it just used to annoy me...I had a friend in sales and I could see that sales people earned more, so I thought really that's what I've got to do." (Adam, 30s man)

"If you look at my brother who is a little bit younger than me, he's got a completely different set of values and approach to life, and whilst I was very materialistic in many ways, he was not...and so I suppose I've always had the ambition and the desire to succeed and get the money and all that." (John, 20s man)

Some of the women, like Lisa and Liz, on the other hand, told similar stories about how little they related their own success to what they were paid:

"That's why I didn't make a very good sales person...I wasn't motivated, I wasn't thinking if I sell this, I'll get another £100...it just didn't, you know, for me...what I ended up with in my pay packet, and I didn't even argue with...when I was a sales manager, to start with I was paid nothing for three months and I kept thinking they'll work it out, they'll work it out..." (Lisa, 20s woman)

"There was a stage where at my level of management I was the worst paid in the entire district, and I only thought about that afterwards.....because I was the personnel manager I knew what everybody else was paid, and it never really hit

me until that period of time was over that I was the lowest paid of the lot...it didn't occur to me to go and bang on the boss's door and say hang on a minute!..." (Liz, 40s woman)

It is interesting to consider whether this difference in attitude towards pay between the men and the women may be explained by the fact that the men still occupy the traditional role of bread winner in their family. While this is certainly true for some of the men, such as Adam and Darren, it is also true for many of the women. For example, of the four women in their forties interviewed for the second stage of the research, all could be considered to be the main financial providers in their household. Jane S is the main bread winner in her family, Liz's husband is retired, Angela is divorced and Elspeth has recently separated from a long-term partner. Nevertheless, three of these, Jane S, Liz and Angela, fall into the group of four women who place least importance on money in terms of how they see their career success. This explanation alone, therefore, does not appear to be sufficient to justify the difference between the men and the women in terms of their attitudes towards pay.

5.5.2 The differences in emphasis on internal criteria

While external criteria for career success were more relevant to the majority of the men, the women were more likely to emphasise internal and intangible criteria as part of their definitions of success. Of the internal criteria for career success, accomplishment criteria in particular were more important to the women than the men. Nine women, compared with only two men, saw being really good at what they did as being central to their conception of career success. This was often linked with personal recognition of their accomplishment, in terms of being valued as an expert or respected as some-one who was really good at their job:

**"It's nice to do something well, isn't it? I like doing it for my own self-esteem...I don't like doing a bad job, and if somebody recognises it, that's even better."
(Jane M, 30s woman)**

"A sense of personal satisfaction comes out of that, because you can look at something and say, yeah, I did that well, that was a good decision...I can really go with that, I can hold my head up high, because I did that, that is a tremendous motivation for me...I like recognition as well....I like somebody to

come up to me and say, yeah, that was really good, thank you for that." (Stella, 20s woman)

For the other women who valued accomplishment criteria, it was because they saw their own career success in terms of achievement at a very personal level. Not surprisingly, these female managers also emphasised achievement criteria as a key part of their definition of career success:

"...that I feel that I've achieved something, I've actually been successful at...it is being able to change something, being able to deliver a product on time, something like that." (Lyssa, 30s woman)

The men, on the other hand, were more likely to feel that being good at their job was important only in that their basic self-confidence partly derived from their competence at work; it was not related to their conception of career success in any way:

"I need to know I'm good at my job, I need to really know, I need to believe I'm really good at what I do...it's really me I'm interested in, not anyone else." (Adam, 30s man)

Likewise, the men who valued achievement criteria were also less likely than the women to see them as central to their definition of career success, and more likely to regard achievement as instrumental in their organisational progression.

Enjoyment criteria were important to both the men and women interviewed in the second stage of the research; even those men with a very external material idea of career success, Adam, Darren and John, felt that any career success they achieved would be meaningless if they did not enjoy what they did at work. Nevertheless, enjoyment and interest were considered to be highly important to a larger group of women than men, ten, compared with seven. Job satisfaction too was a far more important criteria for success for the women than it was for the men: of the nine managers who valued it as part of their definition of career success, eight were female.

Of the five managers who felt that the enjoyment and interest they derived from their work were more important to them than their level in the hierarchy, four were

women; two had even been prepared to sacrifice an opportunity for promotion to do work they considered to be more interesting. This endorses the conclusion drawn in Chapter 4, section 4.2, that enjoyment criteria may be generally more central to women managers' ideas of career success than to men's:

"(Career success) would just come down to something really anodyne like continuing to have fun and enjoy what I was doing, and getting some recognition for it." (Elspeth, 40s woman)

"That to me is something to do with success, just enjoying what you're doing." (Kathryn, 30s woman)

Furthermore, women were much more likely to emphasise achieving a balance between career and home life as part of their idea of career success than the men: the four managers who included balance criteria in their definition of success were all female, Angela, Kathryn, Lyssa and Stella:

"I think it's combining several things at once as well, being able to have your career at the same time as have your other personal interests, and manage them altogether...I think if you've achieved all of that without letting anyone down, then you'll feel more successful than people who've concentrated on one." (Lyssa, 30s woman)

5.5.3 The differences in emphasis on intangible criteria

Of the intangible criteria for career success, personal recognition criteria tended to be more central to the women's ideas about their own success than they were to the men's, a conclusion which once again supports the findings of the first stage of the research. An emphasis on personal recognition criteria was often linked to an emphasis on internal accomplishment criteria, as described in section 5.5.2. A group of eight managers, six of whom were women, valued highly all three of the key personal recognition criteria for success, being seen as an expert, being respected and personal recognition itself, as well as accomplishment criteria. For this group of managers, personal recognition criteria were at the heart of their conception of career success:

"(Career success is) being in a role where I'm able to draw on the full range of experience and skills that I've got, and where the contribution I make doing that is recognised and valued and respected, and, yes, being remunerated accordingly, but that is second." (Liz, 40s woman)

Personal recognition criteria were relatively unimportant to six of the managers, four men and two women. When one examines the reason for this an important difference emerges between the men and the women. Three of the men, Adam, Darren and John, all had conceptions of success deeply rooted in external criteria, that is they saw their own success in terms of organisational, rather than personal recognition:

"I like people to know that I'm good at my job, but only because of what one achieves through them knowing that you know what you're talking about..." (Adam, 30s man)

The two women who did not value personal recognition, Angela and Lyssa, had quite a different reason: they were managers who saw career success much more as achievement on their own internal personal terms, rather than through the recognition and acknowledgement of anyone else:

"I do like to feel that what I've done has been useful to somebody...not necessarily to get particular praise for it, but just as an internal thing, to feel that I've helped." (Angela, 40s woman)

The emphasis that certain managers, in particular women, place on personal recognition criteria in terms of how they view their own career success may well relate to a basic lack of confidence in their own abilities, in that they are unable to feel that they are good at what they do or successful in any way unless they are given feedback which confirms this in some way. Although this research project was not directly concerned with this subject, a lack of confidence amongst the women did emerge as an issue in the first stage of the research, as discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.2. This was not as apparent in the second stage: of the managers who emphasised personal recognition as part of career success, one, Paula, talked about her low levels of confidence, as described in section 5.5.1, and two others, Jane M and Steve, alluded to a lack of ambition earlier in their careers.

Influence criteria for success seemed to be rather more important to the men than the women in the second stage of the research. This may reflect the fact that, for many of the men, having influence was inextricably linked with reaching a certain level in the hierarchy. The fact that the women who did value influence as part of their idea of career success saw it as far more important than the status their hierarchical position gave them supports this conclusion:

"It isn't the level that's important to me...I think it's influence, where you feel...you don't have to be at a high level, but if what you're doing is important to something else..." (Lyssa, 30s woman)

One type of influence which was valued more by the women than the men in the second stage of the research was achieving success vicariously. A group of eight managers, five women and three men, saw achieving success for other people as part of their own career success:

"I get much more of a buzz about perhaps sorting things out so that other people can develop their careers or suddenly realise what they need to do to develop their careers, than sometimes even being successful in the day to day job." (Angela, 40s woman)

It is interesting to note that two of the men who believed that achieving success for other people was an important part of their own career success were both Asians by race:

"...to try to put things back into the company, not on a formal basis, on an informal basis, where it's helping people, because I'm an Indian, whether it's helping more junior people within the company if they've got a problem, whatever the case may be, I like to put things back into the company." (Ran, 20s man)

While race is not a main focus of this research, the effects it appears to have had on the managers' personal conceptions of success will be considered briefly in Chapter 6, section 6.7.

5.5.4 Women's "broader" definitions of success

One conclusion drawn in the first stage of the research was that the female managers had a much broader definition of success in their lives as a whole than the men: they were more likely to see career success as just a part of the success in their lives as a whole they wanted to achieve, and therefore more likely than the men to express an interest in succeeding in other parts of their life as well as their careers. In the full-scale study, such a difference did not manifest itself in this way: almost all the managers (20), both men and women, saw career success as just one part of life success.

However, four of the women included the criterion of balancing career and home life in their definition of success, and, of six of the managers who could imagine developing their careers outside a conventional business environment, five were women. The women's ideas about what they might like to do in the future ranged from teaching to running a hotel; the one man, Stuart, was considering a career in politics. While there is considerable overlap between these two groups, the fact that a total of seven out of the 12 women interviewed either included balance in their definition of success or were considering other career options seems to support the suggestion that, for the women in the second stage of the research too, success in their careers was defined more broadly as a part of success in their lives than it was for men.

5.6 The effects of age on personal conceptions of managerial career success

The findings of the second stage of the research concur with the conclusion drawn in Chapter 4, section 4.3, that managers' conceptions of career success vary according to age as well as gender, with younger managers placing more emphasis on external criteria for success and older managers seeing success more in terms of intangible criteria, especially the idea of leaving a mark on their organisation.

5.6.1 The decline in emphasis on external criteria

The second stage of the research found that grade criteria were more central to younger managers' conceptions of career success: position in the hierarchy was a part of career success for six of the managers in their twenties, compared with four of the managers in their forties; the idea of promotion was important to all of the managers

in their twenties, compared with only five of the managers in their forties. The managers in these two age groups who saw hierarchical position as a particularly unimportant part of their view of career success were almost all women, two in their twenties and three in their forties, Angela, Jane S, and Liz, who also placed little value on promotion. (This is not surprising, given the conclusions drawn in section 5.5.1 that grade criteria are generally less important to women managers' conceptions of career success than they are to men's.)

While the difference between the numbers in the two age groups may not seem particularly striking, there is a much bigger variation between the two sets of managers when the reasons why they value grade criteria are considered. The younger managers to whom such criteria were important were much more likely to see them as directly related to career success in terms of their associated status:

"That's where the challenge is for me, to break that very hard barrier of the directorship...a non-directorship executive job within BT is a lot more achievable for me, but I would not then be getting the success I think I can achieve." (Darren, 20s man)

The only managers in their forties, Alan and Dave C, who valued grade criteria for this reason were those who believed that they had not yet achieved the material success which they deserved at work:

"Ten years ago I thought I could have got further than I have done...I haven't got where I wanted to be, so overall success for me would be to move up the tree, to get a better bite of the cherry." (Dave C, 40s man)

The other three managers in their forties who still saw grade criteria as part of their idea of career success did so either because of the increased influence a higher level job would allow them or because of the greater challenges it would pose, not for the status of hierarchical position alone:

"Promotion wouldn't bring me greater responsibility, I don't believe, because I'm already in a job that has a lot of responsibility...what would it bring?...promotion would only bring a fresh challenge, something new, and so in that respect it is important." (Tony, 40s man)

Two of the women in their forties who now saw grade criteria as unimportant, Liz and Jane S, in fact believed that they had been much more important to them when they were younger:

"I've noticed since being the wrong side of 40 a distinct drop in the ambition drive.....I remember for a couple of years in the early nineties almost being eaten up with ambition, I still wanted to make that next move up...and what I feel now is, it didn't happen and I think so what?...I enjoy what I'm doing, and that's more important now." (Liz, 40s woman)

Of the all-male group of managers who valued reward criteria for success highly, there were same number in their forties as in their twenties. Nevertheless, as with grade criteria, they were more central to the younger managers' ideas about career success, in that, for them, they related to status, whereas the older managers saw the amount of money they earned in particular more as a means of maintaining a lifestyle:

"...and finally, career success, if I retire and can look back on my career and say I not only took it to the limits, but it's given me all that I need now for the second half of my life." (Tony, 40s man)

While reward criteria are generally less central to the women's concepts of career success, the three women in their forties to whom grade criteria were unimportant, Angela, Jane S and Liz, also put least emphasis of all on pay, as part of their definition of success, setting a distinct pattern for women in this age group. There was one woman in this age group who did not fit this pattern, Elspeth. She differed from her female peer group in several other respects too. She was a more senior manager who saw her own career success in terms of influence at work, which, for her, could be achieved best by moving up the organisational hierarchy. While reward criteria were not central to her idea of career success, they were more important to her than to the other women of her age because she had recently separated from a long-term partner, which had entailed large expenses such as the purchase of a house.

5.6.2 The increase in importance of intangible criteria

As the first stage of the research suggested, a decline in emphasis on material criteria for career success amongst older managers seems to be accompanied by an increase

in the importance placed on intangible criteria for success, in particular influence criteria. Four out of the nine managers who saw being able to influence things as central to their own career success were in their forties. (They were all also managers, like Elspeth, who still saw promotion as important in that, for them, this was a means of gaining greater influence):

"As a kid I always took my toys to pieces, so that I could understand how they worked, and I think that's what I would like, that I could be involved in something where I understood the entirety of what's going on and had some control over it perhaps, some influence." (David, 40s man)

Related to having influence, autonomy was also a much more important part of the older managers' ideas of career success than it was for their younger counterparts. Of the managers who valued autonomy highly, six were in their forties, compared with two in their thirties and two in their twenties.

One particular influence criterion for success which was especially favoured by managers in their forties was the idea of leaving a mark in some way on the organisation they worked for. Being able to do this was at the heart of the conception of career success for five of the managers in this age group. Leaving a mark was usually seen in terms of doing something worthwhile which would "live on" after the manager had left the company. Unlike the first stage of the research, however, none of the managers in their forties who took part in the second stage of the research saw this in terms of setting up their own business:

"(Career success is) to have actually made a mark on the company and done something that lives on.....to have at least done something that operationally has benefited the company." (Alan, 40s man)

The second stage of the research also suggested that personal recognition criteria for success might become more important to men as they get older. Whilst only one man in his twenties saw personal recognition as part of career success, three men in their forties did. (Personal recognition was equally important to women of all ages.) This may operate as a counterbalance to the tendency for men to put less emphasis on organisational recognition in the form of external criteria for success as they get older. Women, on the other hand tend to emphasise them less in the first place.

5.6.3 The differences in emphasis on internal criteria

There was also evidence that some internal criteria for career success become more important to managers as they get older, in particular, enjoyment criteria. The managers in their forties appeared to place more importance on enjoying their job or finding it interesting than the younger managers did. For example, of the five managers who thought that the enjoyment they derived from their work was more important than material success, three were women in their forties:

"I know that if I moved I could get more money, but at the end of the day I don't know that I would necessarily get the same job satisfaction." (Jane S, 40s woman)

Those managers who believed that finding their work interesting was a part of their career success were far more likely to be in their forties than any other age group: for seven out of the eight managers in this age group, this was the case, compared with one manager in their twenties and three in their thirties:

"I want interesting work and new challenges." (David, 40s man)

"I want to continue to enjoy myself...on the whole I'm happy and I enjoy what I'm doing and I'm interested in it...I think the day it doesn't feel like that anymore, I shall toddle along to my boss and say any chance of an exit package?, I've had enough." (Liz, 40s woman)

In contrast, accomplishment criteria for success seemed to be rather less important to older managers than they were to younger managers: only two managers in their forties valued them highly, compared with four managers in their thirties and four in their twenties. This may reflect an increase in confidence in one's ability to do one's job which comes with age.

5.6.4 Evidence for changes in managers' conceptions of career success

As in the first stage of the research, there were indications that managers' conceptions of career success may begin to change in the thirties, particularly for those managers who have achieved some degree of external success up to that point. Five of the managers who took part in the second stage of the research talked about feeling at

some sort of cross-roads in terms of how they viewed their careers: four of these were in their thirties and one in their early forties. A sixth manager in her thirties had already revised her ideas about career success as part of a wider re-evaluation of her life goals. For all the managers, this process of re-evaluation seemed to stem from a deeper understanding of their personal values and a clearer perception of what a career meant to them at the individual rather than the organisational level. It also related in part to a realisation that work life had to be balanced with home life in some way.

"If you'd asked me five years ago, I would have said it was about...not necessarily being at the top of the company, but I would have said it would be about being a position that influences the person who is at the top.....(now) I realise myself that some of those jobs I might have been describing are not what I want..." (Kathryn, 30s woman)

"Now I'm thinking why is it I want this? Partly it's that I'm just changing what I really want, and other things become more important...it's partly age as well, isn't it?...you look at your life in totality, and you think do I want to go all out to go all the way up?...at what cost?...the costs, I think, are becoming too high." (Gill, 30s woman)

For Pravin, who was trying to reject totally the aspects of career success he had valued in the past, but as yet did not know what he wanted to replace them with, the transition was one of crisis proportions: he was torn between emphasising career success in very external terms and seeing it at a very personal internal level in terms of his own achievement; he yearned for the external success he felt had so far eluded him, yet he was also drawn to a very internal form of career success he saw almost as spiritual enlightenment:

"There's a conflict between what I'm doing and how I see things philosophically, a huge conflict, I'd say." (Pravin, 30s man)

Twelve of the managers in their thirties and forties believed that their ideas about career success had changed in some way as they had got older. The majority of these, eight in total, said that they now put less emphasis on external criteria for career success than they used to:

"As I progressed, as I got older, being happy in what I was doing, enjoying what I was doing became more and more a sort of dominant feature of coming into work." (Tony, 40s man)

For three of the managers, who were all recruited to BT as postgraduates to do highly specialised work, Elspeth, David and Stuart, career success had moved away from wanting to be considered as an expert in an area of work they found extremely interesting to being able to influence things through what they did as managers:

"When I started it was going to be intellectual achievement in my professional specialism of mathematics...that was the only thing that mattered to me." (Elspeth, 40s woman)

Only one of the managers in their thirties and forties, Steve, now believed that he had a more external definition of career success than he had had when he was younger. Steve, 38 years old and still at the most junior level of management in BT, was unlike any of the other managers interviewed for this research. He had very few formal qualifications and, until recently, had had little ambition to progress. The attitudes he expressed throughout his interview were very different from those of his colleagues, and can be best summed up by saying that he appeared to see work much more as a job than a career. In this sense, he is probably not a typical manager, and therefore it is not surprising that his views are not typical either.

Three younger managers had revised their ideas about career success relatively early on in their careers. For two of them, Stella and Ran, this was prompted by marriage: a desire to balance their work lives with their home lives better in the future meant that they did not want to progress up the organisational hierarchy at all costs. The third, Dave H, like some of the young managers who took part in the first stage of the research, had changed his idea of career success to take into account of his own values after basic experience of working. Dave H was in fact the only man in his twenties who had a conception of career success based largely on internal and intangible criteria:

"I think initially when you come in, you look at the organisation, who's at the top...and therefore they're successful...I think maybe I've changed my views from the hierarchical measure of success to feeling happy about myself and what I can achieve." (Dave H, 20s man)

Of the managers in their twenties and thirties, seven could envisage that their conception of career success might change in the future, all of them women. For those of them who could imagine what form this change would take, four managers anticipated that in the future external criteria of success were likely to become even less important to them than they were at the moment. Only one, Lyssa, thought that they might become more important, as her personal financial responsibilities increased.

5.7 Developing a model of managerial career success

The findings of the second stage of the research are consistent with the conclusions drawn in Chapter 4, that managerial career success is a three dimensional concept, based on internal, intangible and external criteria for success. The three dimensions are emphasised in different ways to varying degrees by individual managers: the difference between managers in terms of how they view career success for themselves is therefore one of emphasis, not of actual kind.

The second stage of the research also concurs with the findings of the first stage, in that it demonstrates that particular groups of managers are likely to emphasise particular kinds of career success: women managers tend to favour a conception of career success based on internal and intangible criteria for success, whereas external criteria for success are more central to men's ideas of career success; younger managers tend to put more emphasis on external criteria, whereas older managers see career success more in terms of intangible criteria.

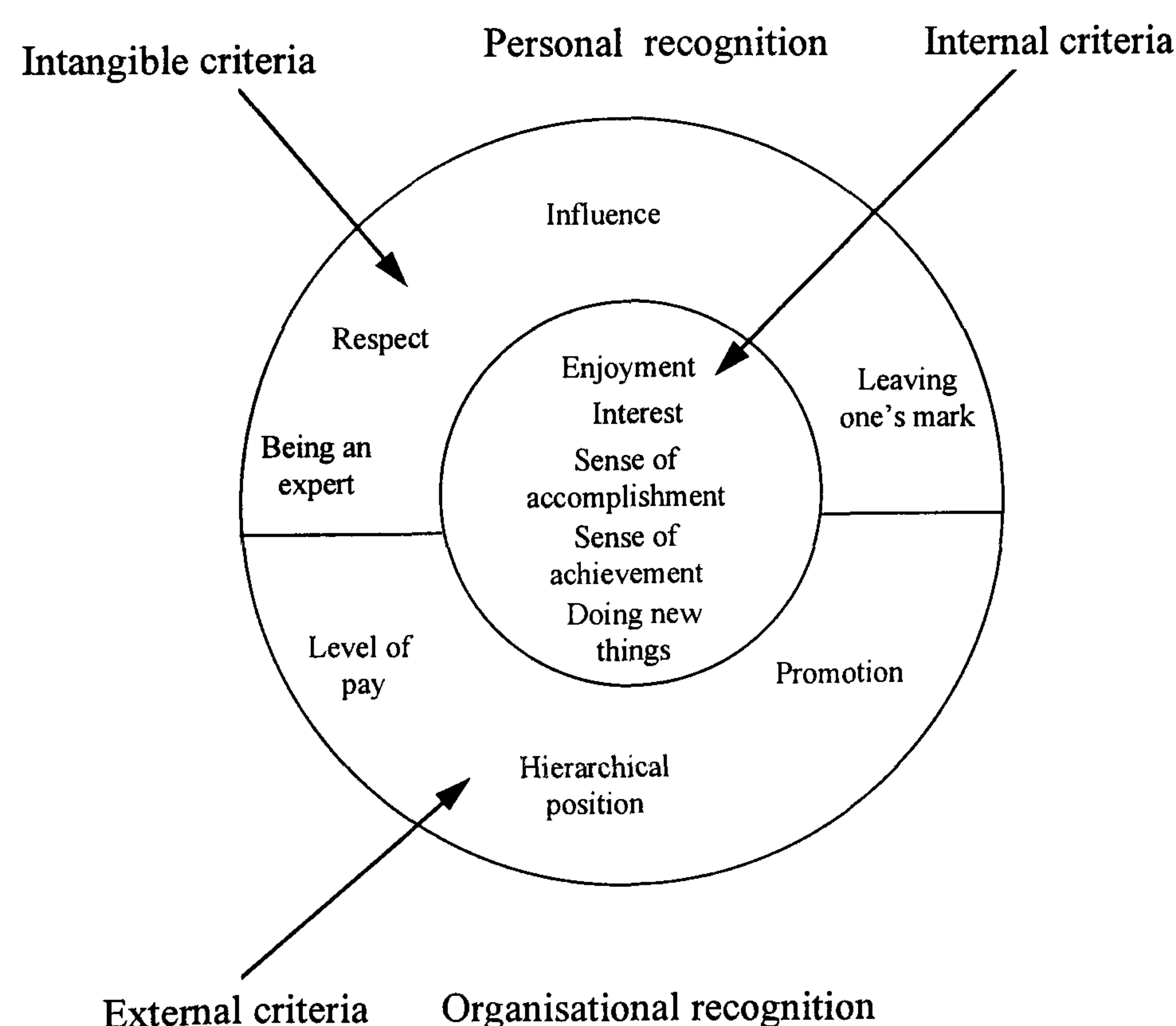
That is not to say that the differences observed between the male and female managers, and the older and younger managers, allow them to be stereotyped in any way. While there are some managers who fit the above patterns perfectly, such as Darren and John, Jane S and Liz, there are others who in fact have personal definitions of success quite different from what one might expect:

- Dave H, the youngest man to be interviewed, sees his own career success very much in terms of being extremely good at his job and getting considerable personal recognition as a result, a view of success which from this research appears to be more "female" than male.

- Stuart, who has already been discussed in detail in section 5.2.5, has a definition of career success based on internal and intangible criteria. This is probably the result of his strong personal values.
- Elspeth, a woman in her forties, is still very keen to progress up the organisational hierarchy, although this is for the influence she hopes to gain, rather than any kind of status which she is seeking.

Such variations in the themes which have emerged in this research only serve to emphasise the personal and distinct nature of managers' own conceptions of success. The differences exhibited by the managers who appear to be at odds with their peer group strengthen rather than detract from the conclusion that career success is a complex concept, grounded in three separate but inter-related dimensions, described here as internal criteria, intangible criteria and external criteria.

Figure 5.1: A model of managerial career success (1)



A key conclusion drawn in the first stage of the research was that any conceptual model of career success must be capable of illustrating the complex wholeness of career success, that is, while managers may have different ideas about success, it is

the degree of emphasis which differs, not the criteria: see Figure 5.1. (It was also suggested in Chapter 4, section 4.5, that a model should highlight organisational recognition and personal recognition as important concepts in terms of how managers perceive their own success. This idea will be considered in more detail later in this section.)

As the model shows, the first stage of the research identified particular criteria for career success common to many of the managers within the separate groupings of internal criteria, intangible criteria and external criteria. For example, it found four key intangible criteria, being an expert, respect, leaving one's mark and influence, and five key internal criteria, enjoyment, interest, sense of accomplishment, sense of achievement and doing new things. The second stage of the research has shown, however, that managers' criteria for career success may be viewed more usefully not at the level of individual criteria but as part of distinct sub-groups within the categories of internal, intangible and external criteria, as shown in Table 5.4:

Table 5.4: Managers' criteria for career success

<u>Internal criteria</u>	<u>Intangible criteria</u>	<u>External criteria</u>
Accomplishment criteria	Influence criteria	Grade criteria
Achievement criteria	Personal recognition criteria	Reward criteria
Enjoyment criteria		
Integrity criteria		
Balance criteria		

Table 5.4 illustrates the sub-groups found within each type of criteria for career success in the second stage of the research, as described in detail in sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4. The usefulness of considering managers' criteria for career success at the sub-group level rather than the level of individual criteria is threefold:

Firstly, it gives greater conceptual integrity to the component parts of managers' conceptions of career success. As described in sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4, many of the

individual criteria by which the managers describe their own career success are in fact variations on distinct themes. This is equally true for internal, intangible and external criteria. For example, career success is commonly seen internally in terms of some form of achievement, but this sense of achievement can be expressed in different ways, including meeting a challenge, doing new or different things, learning and creativity. Likewise, success in terms of personal recognition can be seen as gaining respect, being seen as an expert and being valued as a manager. The cogency of the sub-groups shown in Table 5.4 is borne out by the fact that managers who emphasise one criterion within a sub-group are likely to favour others as well. For example, eleven managers saw all three personal recognition criteria, being an expert, respect and personal recognition itself, as part of their definition of career success.

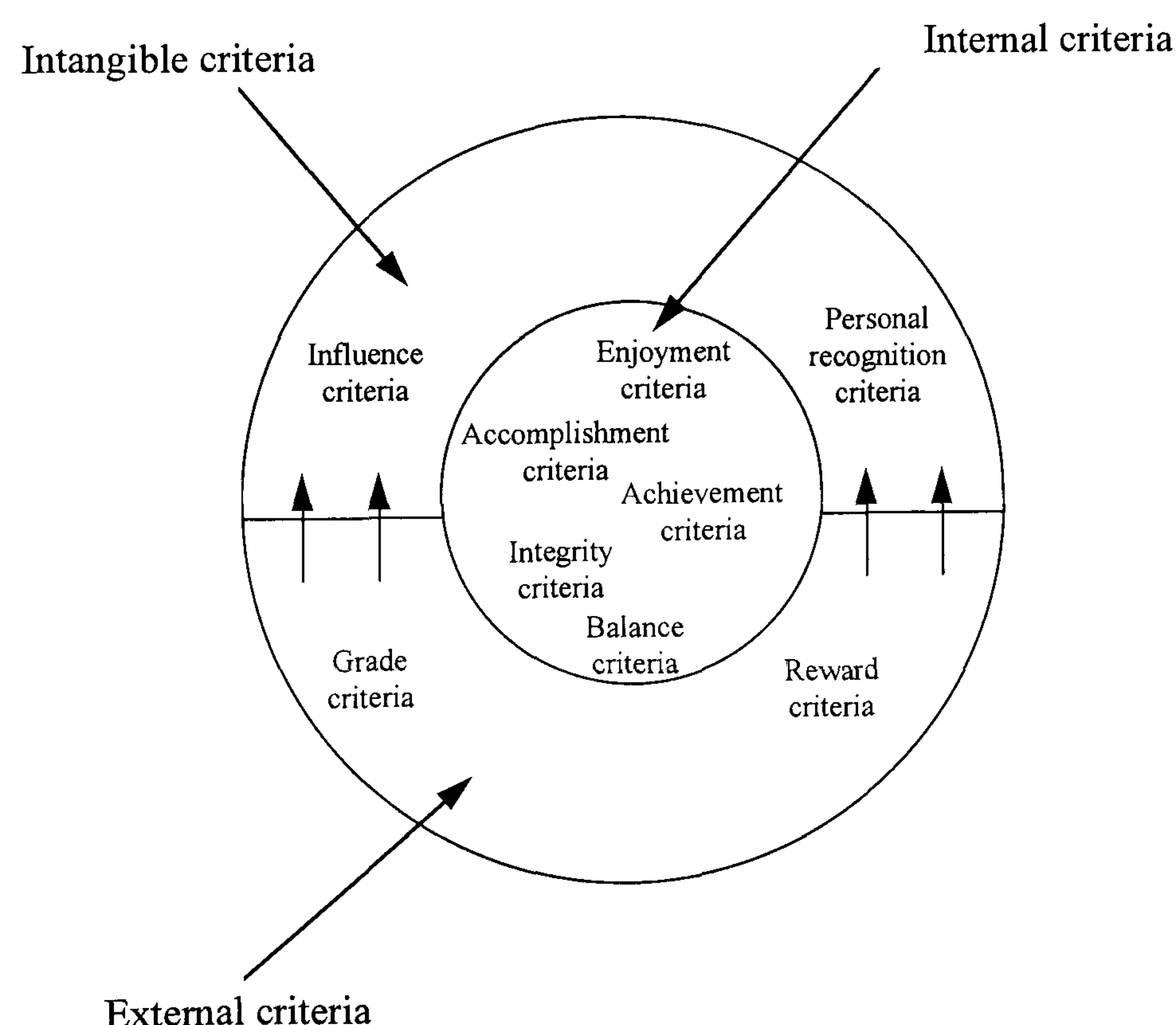
Secondly, it allows a distinction to be made between sub-groups of criteria within each category. When the differences and similarities between the managers are examined, it is apparent that, while some managers may emphasise one sub-group within a criteria category, others emphasise another, with no great overlap between the two sets of managers. For example, within the category of intangible criteria for career success, there are two sub-groups, influence criteria and personal recognition criteria. Of the nine managers to whom being able to influence things at work was extremely important, only four valued personal recognition criteria too. A similar variation is apparent when accomplishment criteria and achievement criteria, both sub-groups of the internal criteria category, are examined. Of the ten managers to whom a sense of achievement was central to their idea of career success, only five valued the idea of a sense of accomplishment too, and four of these were women who related being good at what they did to a sense of personal achievement in some way.

Thirdly, treating criteria for career success as sub-groups enables links to be made across the three types of career success criteria which otherwise would be more difficult to conceptualise. The findings of the pilot study suggested that intangible criteria may be more closely related to internal criteria because many managers emphasised them, as opposed to external criteria, in their definition of success. Using sub-groups in the second stage of the research enabled this relationship to be explored more fully. Many of the managers who saw career success in terms of accomplishment related this to getting personal recognition for their accomplishment. That is, career success for them was rooted in internal and intangible criteria for success, but more particularly in accomplishment criteria and personal recognition criteria. Other similar links also emerged in the full-scale study: for example, the

group of managers for whom grade and reward criteria defined career success also considered enjoyment criteria as part of their definition, even though they had little interest in any other internal criteria for career success.

Thus considering criteria for career success at the level of sub-groups within the three categories of internal, intangible and external criteria seems to offer the best means of illuminating the various kinds of success managers favour. In Chapter 6 this approach will be used to develop a typology which illustrates the kinds of career success important to different groups of managers. In the meantime, the conceptual model for career success shown in Figure 5.1 must be redrawn to include the criteria sub-groups, as shown in Figure 5.2:

Figure 5.2: A model of managerial career success (2)



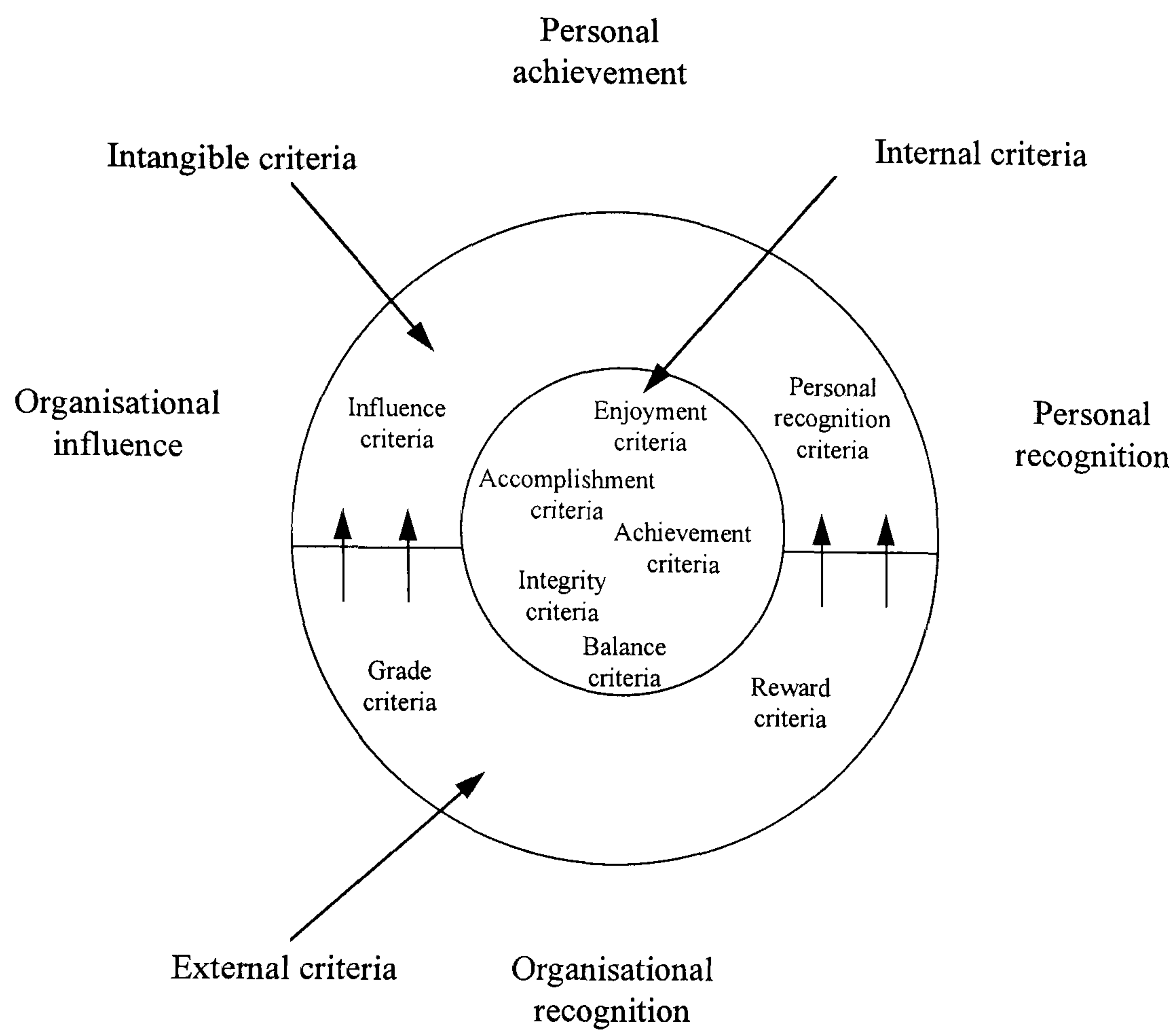
The arrows crossing the boundary from external criteria to intangible criteria have been included to indicate that some managers value external criteria, especially grade criteria, for reasons other than as an end in themselves. For example, those to whom personal recognition is highly important may see success in terms of grade criteria to some extent, in that their level in the hierarchy or promotion represents a further form

of personal recognition, albeit paradoxically in organisational terms. Likewise managers who see success mainly as influence may also see grade criteria as part of their idea of career success because of the additional influence greater seniority within the organisation would give them, not from any desire for recognition.

The first stage of the research suggested that an important distinction between groups of managers may be that some managers, in particular women and older managers, see career success more in terms of personal recognition than in terms of the kinds of organisational recognition by which career success has traditionally been judged, that is position in the hierarchy and level of pay. This distinction was represented in the model of managerial career success introduced in Chapter 4, section 4.5, and reproduced in Figure 5.1. The findings of the second stage indicate, however, that the differences between various groups of managers may in fact be more complex than a simple distinction between seeing career success either as organisational recognition or personal recognition.

There are indeed managers, a predominantly female group, including younger women like Lisa, as well as older women like Liz, who see career success mainly as personal recognition. There are also managers, an all-male group, including Adam, Darren and John, who define career success as organisational recognition. Nonetheless, there are other managers who do not appear to see career success primarily in terms of any kind of recognition at all, either personal or organisational, but rather in terms of their own achievement. These managers appear to fall into two groups: a group, which includes Angela and Kathryn, that sees career success as a kind of personal satisfaction with their own achievement, that is personal achievement, and a group including Elspeth and Stuart which associates their own career success with what they can achieve within the organisation, that is organisational influence. These two new views of career success are added to the model to give four different views of career success in total, as shown in Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3: A model of managerial career success (3)



The four views of career success represented in the model will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6, where they will be used to develop a typology of managerial career success.

CHAPTER 6: BUILDING A TYPOLOGY OF MANAGERIAL CAREER SUCCESS

CHAPTER 6: BUILDING A TYPOLOGY OF MANAGERIAL CAREER SUCCESS

This chapter uses the analysis of the findings of both stages of the research to build a typology of managerial career success. Section 6.1 uses the model presented at the end of Chapter 5 to introduce the typology. Sections 6.2 to 6.5 discuss in detail the four types of manager the research shows exist. Section 6.6 considers the managers whose definitions of career success do not appear to fit the typology. Section 6.7 suggests what kind of manager is likely to see success as each type, with particular reference to gender and age.

6.1 Four types of manager

While this research has established that every manager has a distinct subjective view of how they perceive career success for herself or himself, it has also revealed important areas of commonality between managers in terms of how they see success. There appears to be a finite number of groups of criteria by which they judge career success, internal ones such as accomplishment criteria or enjoyment criteria and intangible ones which include influence criteria and personal recognition criteria, as well the external criteria of grade and reward by which organisational success has traditionally been measured. More importantly, the research has shown there to be distinct clusters of managers who view success in a particular way. Patterns emerged in both stages of the research, which revealed the existence of groups of managers who emphasised certain criteria for career success in a specific manner. For example, in the first stage it emerged that men tended to see their career success in terms of external criteria or organisational recognition, whereas women saw it more in terms of internal and intangible criteria, in particular, personal recognition criteria. In the second stage, the distinction between the sexes was somewhat less clear cut, with some men emphasising what, according to the findings of the pilot stage, had been considered to be a more "female" idea of career success. This suggests, not that distinctive groupings do not exist, but rather that there is no stereotypical division between men and women in terms of how they regard career success. (That is not to say that men are *more likely* to see career success in certain ways and women in others, something which will be discussed in detail in section 6.7.)

Indeed, the larger sample used in the second stage of the research made it easier to discern four particular groupings among the managers in terms of how they viewed their own career success, as outlined briefly in the model at the end of Chapter 5,

when the principal ways in which different types of managers see success were summarised under the headings of four views of career success, that is organisational recognition, personal recognition, organisational influence and personal achievement.

The manager who sees career success in terms of **organisational recognition** is the manager for whom external criteria are an extremely important part of how they judge their own success. The group of three men identified in the second stage of the research, Adam, Darren and John, who saw career success mainly in terms of their level in the hierarchy and the amount of money they earned, is typical of this type of manager.

The manager who equates career success with **personal recognition** is the manager for whom personal recognition criteria are central to their definition of success. A group of women in the second stage of the research, including Liz, Jane S, Paula and Lisa, who judged their own career success by the amount of personal recognition they received for what they did at work, exemplifies this type of manager.

The manager who associates career success with **organisational influence** is the manager for whom influence criteria are the most important part of their definition of success. A group from the second stage of the research which includes Stuart, Elspeth and Alan typifies this kind of manager.

The manager who sees career success in terms of **personal achievement** is the manager for whom achievement criteria are at the heart of their idea of success. A group of women who participated in the second stage of the research, including Angela, Kathryn and Lyssa, is typical of this kind of manager.

(Further analysis of the data gathered in the first stage of the research also showed that there were managers who took part in it who saw career success in terms of organisational influence or personal achievement, as opposed to organisational or personal recognition.)

These four views of career success provide a useful shorthand summary of the definitions of success put forward by most of the managers in both the first and second stage of the research. (There are exceptions, which will be discussed in section 6.6 below.) Yet while these categories offer a valuable means of encapsulating the managers' views on success, their succinctness is in itself a

limitation. More particularly, this approach to conceptualising career success does not give a full picture of the complex nature of career success on managers' own terms: it disregards much of the rich detail the analysis so far has revealed; it ignores criteria for success which may be important to the managers, disregards the relationships between the criteria which are important, and overlooks the significance of those that are not. The richness of the managers' own descriptions of career success is a key finding of this research, and therefore it is vital that success is not presented as a one dimensional concept, but shown to be the complex entity that it is, based on a range of internal, intangible and external criteria. For this reason, the four views of career success will not be used to describe wholly how different managers see their own success but employed as a useful bridge between the model and a profounder and more detailed typology of managerial career success.

A typology consisting of four different types of manager will be used to illustrate the diverse kinds of career success that this research has found managers pursue. Each type is linked to and developed from one of the four views of career success shown in the model. The four types will be introduced briefly here and described in detail in the following sections, together with case illustrations of "typical" managers of each type.

The four types of managers found in this research are as follows:

- **The Climber.** The Climber's primary view of career success is as **organisational recognition**. This type of manager sees their own success very much in terms of the external criteria by which organisational career success has traditionally been judged. They are often very status conscious. Nevertheless their definition of success is not usually wholly based on external criteria: it is likely to include some internal criteria, in particular enjoyment criteria, as an important part of it.
- **The Expert.** The Expert's primary view of career success is as **personal recognition**. This type of manager centres their idea of success on accomplishment criteria and personal recognition criteria: career success for them is feeling that they are really competent at their job and getting a lot of recognition for that fact. They may well see external criteria as important too, but only in that getting promoted or being given a pay rise is for them another form of personal recognition.

- **The Influencer.** The Influencer's primary view of career success is as **organisational influence**. This type of manager sees success in terms of having an important influence on the business they work for. They may seek to do this regardless of their hierarchical position, but if grade criteria are part of their definition of success, they want a more senior position within the organisation for the greater influence it will allow them to have and not for the status they will gain as a result.
- **The Self-Realiser.** The Self-Realiser's primary view of career success is as **personal achievement**. This type of manager sees success very much on their own personal terms: they have a very internal definition of career success, emphasising achievement criteria. They may value personal recognition or organisational influence but their desire for success at an extremely personal level will override this.

Before the four types of manager are described in detail, it is important to note two points. Firstly, because the types have been derived from and are grounded in the research data, most of the managers who took part in the research can be described as one of the four types. However, not surprisingly, given the subjectivity of definitions of career success, there were some exceptions who were less easy to categorise. Generally, this was not because they had a conception of success totally at variance with any of the types, but rather because their view of success appeared to fit more than one category, for example, they saw career success in terms of both personal recognition and achievement. Further detailed analysis revealed that most of these managers in fact had a *primary* definition of career success, one which was likely to dominate their thoughts and actions related to their ideas about success at the expense of any other *secondary* definition of career success. For example, for managers who included personal achievement in their definition of career success, this was likely to override any other ideas which they might have about their own success. For the purposes of this research, it is this *primary* definition of success which is considered to be most important. (There were two managers for whom it was impossible to determine even a primary definition of career success with any certainty; they will be discussed in detail in section 6.6.)

Secondly, since managers' conceptions of success may change as they get older, as discussed in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, the groups into which the managers now fall are not fixed for life. It is possible that any manager could change to emphasise a

different type of success during their career (although particular changes are especially likely - the relationship of age to the typology is discussed in more detail in section 6.7). The second point relates to the first point in that it could offer a partial explanation of why it was impossible to describe two managers as any one of the four types. It may be the case that the managers who do not fit any of the types well are in fact in the process of transition between two of the them.

6.2 The Climber

For the Climber, career success is seen very much in terms of external criteria, that is the grade criteria of hierarchical position and progression through promotion and reward criteria, especially level of pay. The Climber's view of success is thus closest to the "traditional" concept of organisational career success and is often expressed as reaching the most senior levels of management:

"I have ambitions to succeed at the highest level...what that will be I don't know...I don't really want to say what it is, because I don't know...but it's to achieve at a high (level)...either director or general manager, a high level in business, or set my own business up." (John, 20s man)

The name Climber has been chosen to describe this type of manager not just because they aspire to move up the organisational hierarchy but also because they seek the status which they believe this will give them. Seeing career success in terms of some kind of status is an important characteristic of the Climber: having an influence at work is not enough for them to feel successful, they have to achieve a perceived status too. This status can be expressed either in organisational or in social terms. Phil, for example, likes to be acknowledged as "a relatively senior manager in BT terms" and relishes the trappings of this seniority, such as a secretary and his own office. He described in detail how unhappy he had felt when recently obliged to work in an open plan office environment:

"I got myself moved from where I was and given an office because I said I couldn't concentrate.....and I also felt uncomfortable in relation to...being a little status conscious - I don't like that, but it's true, I am, a little.....so I'm uncomfortable about being a little status conscious, but I am, and it partly stems from the idea of setting yourself these targets, and the organisation itself still being very status conscious." (Phil, 30s man)

The Climber's emphasis on a high level of material reward as part of career success is often related to the importance to them of their perceived social status too. Those managers identified as Climbers in this research sometimes talked about what career success would mean for them in terms of the kind of lifestyle they aspired to lead. John was typical in this respect. When asked about how he saw the kind of success he wanted to achieve he said:

"In terms of what's tangible, it does sort of fall out...it would be a nice little farmhouse somewhere, and a host of properties here and abroad, sort of things like that, being able to send your kids to private school, and having a nice car."
(John, 20s man)

The Climber tends to be very goal oriented in terms of their attitude to their career progression. The managers who fall into this category as a rule set themselves regular stretching goals and targets relating to their level of pay and their position in the hierarchy. Kenneth, for example, described what he wants from his career as

"to be able to sort of set myself goals that I can achieve...and set the goals just out of reach, so that I have to really go to achieve them...and just every time I get somewhere to think, well, OK, how much further can I go?...so I have that eternal, ongoing realisation of a goal." (Kenneth, 20s man)

Related to this emphasis on career goals, the Climber often has a strong competitive instinct. Those managers described in Chapter 5, section 5.5.1, who saw work as an intensely competitive game with winners and losers, are all Climbers, such as Darren, who traced his competitiveness back to his childhood:

"I swam to a high standard, did a lot of sport to a very high standard, English national standard...I shot for the cadet force, I was in the Scouts, I'd win competition camp...it didn't matter what it was, I had to be there.....I've always been very, very competitive." (Darren, 20s man)

Climbers are also managers with strong positive feelings about the organisation they work for, perhaps because their own idea of career success is very close to success as the organisation defines it. As Adam summed it up, most of the Climbers in this study were

"intensely proud to work for BT." (Adam, 30s man)

Nevertheless, Climbers do not rely on external criteria alone to define their career success. They need to enjoy their work to feel that they are successful, and enjoyment criteria therefore are an important part of their idea of success. Like John, they feel that any material success they achieve is meaningless if they do not enjoy what they do. However, their goal orientation, their competitive instinct and their positive feelings about the organisation they work for mean that Climbers are highly likely to enjoy working in the corporate environment.

"I believe that ultimately that if it was apparent that earning more money meant you didn't enjoy life, I wouldn't do it...but I've not found that so far...I enjoy being in business." (John, 20s man)

For Climbers, other types of internal and intangible criteria are not important in terms of how they see career success. Accomplishment criteria are only valued by Climbers in that they see competence as a basic requirement to be able to perform their job; achievement is seen in terms of external success and not cherished in its own right. Personal recognition criteria are appreciated merely because being seen to be good at what they do at work should lead to further organisational recognition in the form of promotion or a pay rise. While Climbers may see gaining influence as a part of their success, this is secondary to the importance they place on the external criteria of hierarchical position and level of pay.

This research identified seven Climbers, all men, out of the 36 managers interviewed in total. Five of them, Adam, Darren, John, Kenneth and Phil were classic Climbers as described above. Two of them, Dave C and Paul, were a rather different kind of Climber and will be discussed in more detail below.

Adam, Darren and John in particular emerged as a very distinctive group of managers in the second stage of the research who all put a strong emphasis on external criteria for success and saw achieving at as high a level as possible in the organisational hierarchy as being at the heart of their conceptions of career success. Material rewards, especially money were extremely important to them, as was the status they believed that this would bring, both within the organisation and outside. Darren was typical in this respect:

"I like the idea that people think I'm successful.....another example is, we chose to live in Formby on Merseyside because most people would say Formby is the place to live in the Merseyside area...with a family, Formby is the place because there is a status symbol there...so outside of the business, (there is) the recognition, that people perceive me as successful." (Darren, 20s man)

From the first stage of the research two classic Climbers emerged, Kenneth and Phil. Kenneth had a clear idea of what he wanted to achieve in the future:

"In the longer term I'd like to be a senior manager in BT, as senior as I could be, wherever that is." (Kenneth, 20s man)

Phil on the other hand was not so certain. While his definition of career success was still primarily that of the Climber, he was unclear about his future ambitions. He had been very goal driven in the past, gaining rapid promotion, but could no longer see clearly what he wanted to aim for in the future. When asked what his personal goals were at work he said:

"I think at the moment primarily to enjoy myself...it actually isn't much more than that...I've stopped thinking in career terms at the moment." (Phil, 30s man)

Phil's explanation of this was that he was less work oriented than he had been in the past, because his social life had become a more significant part of his life as a whole. However, unlike the other Climbers, his definition of success also included an element of personal recognition: external criteria were no longer sufficient for him, even though this was still primarily how he saw career success. This suggests that Phil's ideas about success may be in the process of changing, and that he may not define success as a Climber for much longer.

The group of five managers discussed above were all in fact relatively young; Adam was the oldest at 36. That is not to say that all hierarchically ambitious young managers stop being Climbers as they get older; Adam in fact talks about how he has to be successful "in a way that gets stronger and stronger". However, the two oldest Climbers, Paul, who was in his late thirties, and Dave C, who was in his forties, were rather different from the five managers described above.

They were both still relatively junior managers for their age and reflect a trend identified in Chapter 4, section 4.3, and Chapter 5, section 5.6.1, that for men in their thirties and forties who have not achieved hierarchical success, external criteria are often very important in their definitions of career success. For some of them, there is a frustration with their progress, which means that they see career success in terms of this one dimension. Furthermore, unlike the younger Climbers described above, Dave C and Paul did not aspire to reach senior management but saw the promotion which they desired as far more incremental:

"My friends, my wife's family, see me as successful by their standards...but I don't see that as successful at all, not at all...I think ten years ago I had expected myself to have moved much further up the tree." (Dave C, 40s man)

While they may differ from Adam or John, managers such as Dave C or Paul are clearly Climbers in terms of how they define career success. The issue of age and its relationship to the typology of career success outlined in this chapter will be discussed in more detail in section 6.7.

To summarise, the Climber:

- **defines career success primarily in terms of external criteria**
- **is status conscious**
- **is goal oriented and competitive**
- **often includes enjoyment in their definition of success**

Case illustration: Adam

During his interview Adam came over as a confident, outgoing and likeable person, who was able to talk about himself with a frankness and self-awareness that many of the other managers lacked. At 36, he is poised to reach the most senior ranks of management within BT and shows a powerful determination to do so, even though it might be at a high personal cost.

Adam started work at 21 when he dropped out of university because he could no longer see the point of completing his degree. He described his university career not as a period of academic achievement but as an opportunity to make "lots" of money and position himself against his peers. At the time he left university he evaluated himself in terms of the difference between him as a 21 year old and "the guy who was going to end up as managing director of whatever...Shell or something", and decided that there was none. His first job was in a technical post with a telecommunications company, reflecting his educational background, but since his career goals at this point were mainly financial, he switched to a sales role at a hardware manufacturer because he perceived that this was more likely to offer him the kind of rewards he craved.

As a salesman, he was extremely successful in two organisations, at which point he left to set up his own company with two brothers because "I thought the easiest way for me to become a millionaire was to set up my own business". This proved to be a transition point for Adam. While the business was successful, he found that he did not enjoy his job because it lacked the status and power of dealing at a high level within a large organisation. This led him to re-evaluate what he wanted from a career and he decided that, whilst "I did and do want the money, I also want the intellectual stimulation and to be a big fish in a big sea, rather than a medium fish in a tiny sea". The result of this realisation led him to call in a favour from a head hunter acquaintance and get an interview with BT.

Within three days he had procured the sales job he wanted at BT. In the four years since then he has risen "three or four" grades to a position just two levels below that of director, as head of new business generation for BT International Carrier Services. Adam now sees career success in terms of "pulling myself out of the pack" and reaching director level by the time he is 45. "My next promotion will, I think", he says, "start to identify me more strongly as one of the people that might win the race." In fact, he appears to have his own personal route through the race course clearly mapped out in his mind and has already overcome the hurdle of his next promotion, in terms of planning and political manoeuvring, if not in actual fact.

Adam's political skills are clearly one of his key strengths in his personal "race" to reach the top: he realises that "working hard is not enough on its own, you have to work smart as well". He knows that it is not enough for him to please his boss and

his customers, which he obviously does: "I have this view that I have to consider my boss's boss rather than my boss.....I feel, if they're on a desert island and they have to have three people they bring with them, they would pick me as one of those three people....when I say on a desert island, I don't mean because I'd be great fun to be with, although hopefully I would...I mean that if you want to get off the desert island, you want someone that you know is going to pull their weight."

Adam's determination to reach the top has not diminished his interest in measuring success through the amount of money he earns, although since the experience of owning his own business this is no longer his sole criterion; he now wants status, position and power as well. During his interview he was keen to talk about what he had earned in the past and what he expected to earn in the future with a breathtaking openness, given the usual reticence of British managers on the subject of remuneration. He has set himself financial as well as grade goals, namely to have £1m in liquifiable assets by the time he is 45.

Adam attributes a lot of the success he has achieved so far to a basic security about himself as a person which makes him extremely confident. This he traces back to his childhood, and strong relationships with parents, grandparents and siblings, both of whom are younger than him. His upbringing gave him firm moral standards which he believes prevents him from seeking to achieve the success he desires by any unscrupulous means. (Adam's secure personality and integrity also led him to work as a Samaritan in the past, and he regrets that he no longer has the time to pursue this alternative "career".)

Nevertheless, the career success which Adam wants so badly may not be attainable without personal cost. Adam is married with three small children and he admits that his wife, who does not work, finds it difficult to tolerate the long working hours and frequent absences from home his job entails: "I'm not really proud of what I do for Caroline," he says. He sees his next promotion, which will mean a move abroad, as giving something back to her too, but whether his desire to hold onto a balanced life is as strong as his determination to win the organisational race remains to be seen.

6.3 The Expert

For the Expert, success is seen in terms of achieving a high level of competency at their job and being recognised personally for being good at what they do, be it in

terms of being seen to be an expert or winning the respect of the people they work with, in particular superiors or internal customers. The Expert's conception of success is therefore grounded in both internal accomplishment and intangible personal recognition criteria:

"I want to be good at what I'm doing and recognised as being good, and have that feedback." (Sam, 20s woman)

This affirmation of their accomplishment is central to Experts' perception of career success. It can take many forms. Like Sam, Experts may need to be given positive feedback that they are doing well at work in order to feel successful. Like Lisa, being thanked for their efforts may be crucial:

"I suppose I believe that if I'm doing something that's good and working hard, I like someone to say well done...I don't actually ask for a lot...I've got three pieces of written thank you since I've been at BT and I've got them all because I think they're all really important." (Lisa, 20s woman)

External criteria are far less important in terms of how Experts conceive career success than internal and intangible criteria. For many Experts, such as Jane S and Liz, grade criteria for career success are not part of their definition of success at all:

"I see people like the guy in the Bristol office who's younger than me and moving in a different direction to me, and that's up in terms of the promotion ladder, but I don't see that that will necessarily in my view make him any more successful than I am." (Jane S, 40s woman)

Other Experts, especially younger ones, do include external criteria in their definition of career success, but only because they see them as another form of personal recognition, rather than because they value them in absolute terms in the way that Climbers do. Getting a promotion or a pay rise is seen by Experts as a kind of validation of their good performance:

"I think it all ties in with peoples' perceptions of you and your achievement...ideally my deputy director would come up to me and say I've heard really great things about you, I want you to do this job...that would be like a really important job." (Lisa, 20s woman)

However, Experts do not set themselves work-related goals in the way that Climbers do. They often appear puzzled when questioned about this subject, perhaps because they are aware that they differ from other managers in this respect:

"The problem I have is...and talking to other people as well...is they say do you have a career plan?...where in two years I want to be doing this, then in three years I want to be doing that...I don't really have that...it worries me a little bit."
(Paula, 20s woman)

In fact, the Expert is likely to be the kind of manager who has few tangible ideas about what they want from their career when they start work. Liz, in her forties, described feeling as if she is "still waiting to find out what I want to do when I grow up!". If they have work goals at all, they relate them to getting more personal recognition, like Sam:

"It's being respected by other people for what you do, being in a team where you feel at ease with the people that you're with, and you feel at ease with the people working for you and the people that you work to, and you feel that you're respected by them for doing a very, very good job, and looked on by them as somebody they can go to if they want something." (Sam, 20s woman)

To Experts, the content of the job they do is more important than their position in the hierarchy or their status within the organisation. For this reason, they value enjoyment criteria for success highly, especially job satisfaction:

"Job satisfaction is important to me, so I tend to work quite long hours when I'm doing something I enjoy and put a lot of effort into it." (Jane M, 30s woman)

Indeed Experts often are not prepared to sacrifice a job they enjoy doing for advancement within the organisation. This can pose a dilemma for them because they perceive that promotional progression is how organisational success is recognised and therefore they can have difficulty in justifying their own position on this matter:

"Recognition is more important, the self satisfaction I get from the job is very important, the fact that I've got a lot of responsibility...is very important...so those things are more important than getting a PCG (higher grade) job that might take all those things away from me." (Jane S, 40s woman)

While Experts do not necessarily desire high levels of influence at work, many of them, particularly older Experts, see the influence criteria of responsibility and autonomy as part of their idea of career success. For them, being given greater responsibility or autonomy at work allows them to gain an even greater sense of accomplishment from what they do:

"Being allowed responsibility and freedom is important to me...I sometimes think, oh wouldn't it be nice to just come into one office every day and sit with a team of people, working with a team of people?...but I don't know that I would necessarily like that, because my job does give me a degree of freedom." (Jane S, 40s woman)

This research identified nine managers who could be described as Experts, seven women, Jane M, Jane S, Jeanette, Lisa, Liz, Paula and Sam, and two men, Dave H and Steve. For all of them, at the heart of their definition of career success was the idea of being really good at what they did and being seen to be so.

Since seeing career success in terms of personal recognition was identified as typical of the women managers in the pilot stage of the research, it is not surprising that this group is largely female. The women in the group of Experts included three of the five women in their twenties who took part in the research, Lisa, Paula and Sam, plus others drawn from across the age range, Jane M and Jeanette in their 30s, and Jane S and Liz in their 40s. This suggests that for some managers at least being an Expert in terms of how one sees career success may be more fixed than being a Climber or a Self-Realiser (see below). There were differences between the older and the younger female managers: not surprisingly, the younger women Experts were more likely to see external criteria for success as important than the older ones. Indeed, both the Experts in their forties, Jane S and Liz, admitted that external criteria for success, while never the central part of their definition of career success, had been more important to them when they were younger:

"I enjoy what I'm doing and that's more important now...than this sort of overpowering obsession with I want to be this grade or that grade...I don't know whether that's common in middle aged ladies, or whether I've just come to terms with I am where I am, and I might as well enjoy it, which I do, rather than eat myself up striving for something which may never happen." (Liz, 40s woman)

The fact that there were two men, Dave H and Steve, who were Experts too confirms that, while men may more likely to emphasise certain kinds of career success and women others, they cannot be stereotyped. Dave H did see success partially in terms of moving up the hierarchy and earning more money, but for him his primary definition of career success was that of an Expert:

"(To be good at what you do) is probably the most important thing...If you don't feel happy within yourself, a lot of other things aren't going to...nobody will respect you if you don't respect yourself...if you don't feel happy with what you do, you're not going to have the confidence then to go on and try and influence people and bring them round to your way of thinking." (Dave H, 20s man)

38 year old Steve, who was still at the most junior level of management, whilst he saw career success primarily as an Expert, paradoxically believed that he now had a more external definition of success than he had had when he was younger and that his level of ambition was higher. In fact he and Dave H appeared to be the least confident of the men interviewed during the research: this could help provide an explanation of why some managers are Experts in terms of how they see career success.

It may be that their perception of success as being really good at their job and getting recognition for this is linked to a basic lack of confidence which leads Experts to seek high levels of personal affirmation. In fact, some of the Experts talked openly about the effect a lack of confidence had on their behaviour at work, like Paula in her explanation of why personal recognition made her feel successful:

"I think it's the fact that you're respected and other people recognise your skills...they've actually thought about you and they've thought this person can cope with the job, is capable...because, as I say, I don't have much confidence in

myself...but obviously other people do...you think, oh yes, they obviously respect me and think I'm capable." (Paula, 20s woman)

To summarise, the Expert:

- **defines career success in terms of accomplishment and personal recognition**
- **does not value external criteria or regards them as another form of personal recognition**
- **is not goal oriented**
- **values the content of their job more than its status**

Case illustration: Jeanette

First appearances suggested that Jeanette might be a hard manager to interview. While interested in the subject matter of the research and eager to oblige, she seemed very confused about her own career, and especially uncertain about the future path it might take. She wanted a career not just a job, she said, but she appeared unsure about what this actually meant to her. As the interview progressed, it became clear that this doubt was less related to actual uncertainty and more the result of Jeanette's values which were often at odds with those that the organisation she worked for promoted. Not surprisingly, her conception of career success was also far removed from the traditional organisational definition based on external criteria.

Jeanette joined BT as a graduate nine years ago. At the time, she had little idea about what she wanted from a career, or even what kind of work she wanted to do. Her decision to apply to BT was the result of a belief that working for large organisation would allow her some flexibility in her career and the fact that her boyfriend was already working there. (He has since been made redundant.) Jeanette began her career at BT in computing, partly because she felt there was a link with her university maths degree, which she had enjoyed, and partly because the other option open to her, to become an accountant, would have meant "years more study", which she did not relish.

Since she joined, Jeanette's career has developed very much as that of the "specialist" manager. She is proud of the skills she has gained as a programmer/analyst and described in detail the training she had received to work on the various computer systems BT uses. Where that training had been lacking for whatever reason, she felt she was "at a bit of a disadvantage": "It does make you feel a bit inadequate, particularly when you are doing a maintenance job, because you've got people ringing up with questions, and you don't really understand the answers." Knowing that she is really accomplished at what she does is thus an essential part of Jeanette's idea of career success. She also appreciates the opportunity to see a piece of work through from beginning to end, even though she admits that this rarely happens. While she is currently contemplating a move to another area within BT because of a perceived lack of opportunities to progress in the field of IT at present, Jeanette sees any change she might make very much in terms of gaining a new specialism, "to move into a different area and feel that I'm doing that well", rather than developing her career as a more "generalist" manager.

During her career at BT, Jeanette has been promoted once and also given responsibility for certain key projects within her department. A particular achievement for her was being made team leader of BT's light user scheme project at its inception. This allowed her to gain a valued expertise in a particular area: "I felt I was in control and people would come to me and ask me questions, and I would be able to confidently give them answers." The recognition of her personal skills that the promotion and the extra responsibility represented is extremely important to Jeanette, who relates all her feelings of success at work to occasions when she was "doing something well and it seemed to be recognised".

Jeanette sets a high value on finding her work interesting, enjoyable and worthwhile, and this influences her views on promotion and pay, which she does not see as being particularly important to her. She would prefer to have an interesting job than to seek promotion for the sake of it. In fact, she believes that a lot of higher level jobs at BT would not involve the kind of task-related work she enjoys doing and which makes her feel successful: "A lot of the level three jobs don't seem to be so interesting....it just seems to be meetings all the time, dealing with documentation and things, so I'd need to know a lot more about the job to determine whether it would be worth getting the promotion."

Related to that is Jeanette's attitude to pay. She does not judge her success by the amount of money she earns at all and indeed would be quite prepared to take a pay cut to move to another area which she found more interesting or worthwhile. This is despite the fact that her partner is currently unemployed and she is the sole bread winner in the household. One of the career paths she is considering embarking upon at present involves developing her interests outside work into a job, perhaps on a voluntary basis: "Maybe a move to part-time work would be a useful thing to do...and then I could have the ordinary work which brought in the main money and some things which I enjoyed working at, which might not pay very much."

This ties in with the growing importance of her out-of-work activities to Jeanette, who can imagine what she values about work changing in the future because "certainly I value my leisure time more". She is an enthusiastic vegetarian, who, when she was interviewed for this research, was about to take a course in public speaking about vegetarianism. She is also an active and committed member of BT's women's network, who was keen to discuss the "problems" for women managers at BT. Perhaps it will be through developing her expertise in one of these areas that she will achieve personal recognition which she really values and thereby attain true career success on her own terms.

6.4 The Influencer

To the Influencer, career success means being able to do things at work which have a tangible and positive effect on the organisation they work for, regardless of their position in the hierarchy. The Influencer's idea of career success is thus grounded in influence criteria for success such as leaving a mark or having an impact on the business:

"If I was in a job where I couldn't influence the stuff I felt mattered, I'd go barking mad...I accept certain political realities, because the art of negotiation is knowing what you can change and what you can't, but my idea of hell is being in a job where I'm just there to carry out orders." (Elspeth, 40s woman)

The way in which Influencers perceive they may achieve influence varies, although all of those classified here as Influencers saw several of the influence criteria identified in Chapter 5, section 5.3.2, as central to their idea of career success. For older Influencers in particular, the idea of leaving a mark on their organisation is

extremely important, and is often linked to gaining autonomy at work, particularly for those managers who have not reached senior levels in the managerial hierarchy:

"I also want the sort of job where I can earn sufficient respect and trust to take it in my direction...so I want to stamp me." (Susan, 40s woman)

For younger Influencers, or those who wish to progress up the hierarchy, influence is frequently seen as attaining a level of responsibility within the organisation, and, as such, something to aspire to as their career develops:

"To me I like to feel that I'm still progressing and going forward, for me a reflection of that is what grade I am at the moment...associated with that is the level of responsibility that you have.....so I'm looking for...a more responsible role is probably more appropriate than promotion." (Sherelle, 20s woman)

Influence is also often described in terms of having an impact on the business by Influencers of all ages. Alan has tried to achieve this throughout his career by getting involved in activities outside the normal remit of his job, which have allowed him to gain greater levels of influence than his actual grade would have permitted him:

"I think making an impact is important to me, and making an impact not just by producing personnel guidance, but by having an impact on the business more." (Alan, 40s man)

While some Influencers, like Alan, seek influence regardless of their hierarchical grade, many, like Elspeth and Anne, are keen to progress up the hierarchy because they perceive that the higher they are, the greater the level of influence they will be able to exert:

"I think I'm now into success that's a bit more quantifiable....it probably crudely relates with status...no, not status...but it crudely relates with a level of responsibility." (Anne, 30s woman)

Anne's reference to status illustrates well how the Influencer differs from the Climber in terms of why they value hierarchical position. The Influencer may believe that their grade in the hierarchy is important, but this is for the influence it allows them, rather than for the status it gives them. In fact, many of the Influencers were at pains

to point out how much they abhorred the idea of status, like Colin, who took his fight against it to extreme lengths:

"I've got to the point where I can do something about it. We're meeting here (the canteen) because I don't have an office, although I should have an office by rights. I've formed a small team to do what we're doing and we've got a corner of a room and we all sit together.....this caused all sorts of problems internally...I should be in one of the offices with a secretary next door." (Colin, 40s man)

Internal criteria for career success are important to Influencers too, in particular achievement criteria for success. Influencers value achievement criteria because to them career success relates to what they can achieve within the organisation, rather than the position which they reach. For Influencers, status is in terms of organisational achievement, not rank. As a result it is often crucial for them to find their work challenging or difficult - the harder the task, the greater the achievement and the greater the level of organisational influence which will be attained if they succeed:

"I want to feel occasionally, oh Christ, I've done it this time, because that's what gives me the buzz, that being on the line where there is a possibility of failing but there's a possibility of being successful." (Susan, 40s woman)

For many Influencers, enjoying their work or finding it interesting is also a measure of their success. For some, related to this is the idea that gaining an influence allows them to enjoy their job, particularly if it is achieved by using their creative skills:

"Things that end up with people thinking, wow, that was a good idea and he's put it over in a really interesting way, that's important, people coming up to you and saying, God, that was really different, it was original, I like it..." (Stuart, 30s man)

While influence criteria for success are central to Influencers' conceptions of success, they may see personal recognition criteria as a secondary part of their view of success too, because they like their influence and achievement to be recognised at a personal level, and because having a good reputation will allow them to gain more influence in the long run:

"I want a job that's going to give me enough of a feeling of something to achieve, something to unravel and problems to fix, to keep my interest...I also want, if I'm doing a good job, to be in a position where there is recognition for doing that job." (Tony, 40s man)

Influencers formed the largest group of managers in this research, 11 in total, six men, Alan, Colin, Dave S, David, Stuart and Tony, and five women, Anne, Elspeth, Nicole, Sherelle and Susan. Of the group, the largest number, seven, were in their forties, including all the men except Stuart. Three were in their thirties, including two women, Anne and Nicole, and one, Sherelle, was in her twenties.

It is not surprising that a majority of the older managers (seven out of 12) were Influencers, since one of the findings of the first stage of the research, discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.3, was that the managers in their forties often described career success in terms of leaving a mark in some way on the organisation they worked for, recognised in Chapter 5, section 5.3.2, as one of the main influence criteria for success. Some of the older Influencers may well have seen success in a different way when they were younger. The way that Dave S and Tony talked about what they wanted from their careers in the past suggested, for example, that they were both Climbers in their twenties and thirties:

"At 35 (career success) was about going up the hierarchy, that was about getting as far up the tree as I could.....(career success) for me now (is) to be given or to take on something I can see through for the next four or five years, and it has some real value added...a major project within management development." (Dave S, 40s man)

Three of the managers, David, Elspeth and Stuart, all in their thirties or forties, had started their careers at BT as highly qualified specialists, all with postgraduate degrees. As their careers developed, they had moved away from their highly specialist roles to become more generalist managers: not surprisingly, their conception of career success had changed too, probably from that of the Expert (although Experts are not necessarily managers in specialist roles, something which will be discussed in section 6.7 below):

"When I joined being good at what I did was the most important thing...I never really thought about power and influence.....when we started (career success)

was going to be intellectual achievement in my professional specialism of mathematics." (Elspeth, 40s woman)

Some managers, however, remain Influencers for all of their career: there was no evidence in their interviews that Alan or Colin had ever had a different idea of what constituted career success for them. In fact Alan's conception of success had recently begun to focus more on grade and reward criteria, because at 41 he had started to perceive that he had missed out on hierarchical success in some way and that his influence was reduced as a result:

"I think I'd want to be more in a position of influence, where I can change things...at the moment I don't feel I...I do it on a lower level...but I'd like to be able to do it on a higher level." (Alan, 40s man)

The youngest Influencers were all women, Anne, Nicole and Sherelle. Anne and Sherelle were keen to move up the hierarchy and gain high levels of influence; Nicole wanted to achieve influence in the political field. While none of them valued status for its own sake, all three of them saw success as being related in some way to becoming famous for what they achieved in their career. This interest in a rather extreme form of personal recognition implied that it was important to them for their influence to be acknowledged in a very public way:

"(Career success for me) probably (is) being famous...isn't that frightful?" (Anne, 30s woman)

To summarise, the Influencer:

- **defines career success in terms of organisational influence**
- **may seek hierarchical advancement to gain greater influence**
- **when younger seeks responsibility; when older wants to leave their mark**
- **values organisational achievement as a means of increasing influence**

Case illustration: Stuart

Stuart was an intriguing manager to interview: at one grade below director level, he was the most senior manager to take part in this research, yet his ideas about career success were far removed from those of the Climbers described in section 6.2. His approach to his career was founded upon strong moral values rooted in left-wing political convictions and a deep desire to balance his work life with his home life, themes which underpinned everything he said.

Stuart joined BT as a statistician after a highly successful academic career, during which he gained a BA in maths at Cambridge University and an MPhil in statistics at Yale University in the USA. Before he joined BT, Stuart had been uncertain whether he wanted to remain an academic or to embark upon a career in business. The position he was appointed to at BT was an ideal compromise in that it gave him an opportunity to continue working on statistics in a business environment.

For the first nine years of his career with BT, Stuart was an internal consultant, at first in a management science consultancy unit and latterly in BT's organisational unit. Over this period he moved away from mathematical analysis to deal more with "softer" organisational issues. His desire to make this switch coincided with another period of study, this time for an MBA. At various points in his consultancy career Stuart was offered the chance to take a more "mainstream" job in BT. On each occasion he rejected this opportunity because he preferred to remain an influential outsider, rather than being drawn into what he saw as the organisation's "morass".

Towards the end of his career as an internal consultant, Stuart was heavily involved in shaping a major reorganisation at BT, Project Sovereign. After that he continued to work on high level projects, which brought him into contact with some of the most senior managers in the company. At this time two people above him in the organisational unit both left, leaving Stuart in charge. He looks back on this period as a time when he felt particularly successful: "We were doing some stuff about how you might want to run the global sales and global service organisation...and taking that to very senior people, and them listening and really taking on board what you were saying, managing directors and stuff like that...that was quite nice."

Stuart's decision to remain a consultant early on was driven by a desire to be involved in interesting and challenging work. As his career developed he also became

concerned with being able to influence the way BT operated, and getting recognition for being "the guy on stage doing it". "I'm not a particularly good backroom person," he explains. This means that he often tries to use novel and highly creative means to achieve his ends, doing "things that end up with people thinking, wow, that was a good idea and he's put it over in a really interesting way".

During the period when he was a consultant, Stuart was promoted rapidly, reaching his current senior level in his early thirties. Despite this hierarchical success, he maintains that he has never seen his own career success in terms of status, which he dislikes, and is adamant that he did not press for promotion. "It just kind of came along," he explains. "I'm not fussed about hierarchy. I want to feel I want to come to work, I want to feel when it's finished people can say yes he made a difference.....I don't see it in terms of...I don't want to be managing director".

Stuart's definition of career success as making a difference and his lack of interest in organisational status meant that he was ideally suited to his role as an internal consultant. Nevertheless, he eventually decided that he wanted to move outside that environment and seek a general management job. This decision was made in order to develop his career, which he perceived would reach a position of stalemate if he remained a consultant much longer. As a result, Stuart left the organisational unit to become head of carrier pricing, dealing with the issue of what BT charges rival companies for using its network. In the past three years he believes he has helped bring "order and far better quality thinking to BT" in the way it sets its interconnect prices, and relishes the fact that the influence he has now means that he is regarded as something of an industry expert.

However Stuart is uncertain about the future direction he wants his career to take. It is extremely important to him to balance his life, especially since he has a 15-month old daughter. Even though he has a 50 mile journey to get to and from work each day, he still manages to be home by 7.30 every evening. He realises that if he becomes a director of BT, it may not be possible to achieve the balance he seeks, and for this reason he is considering leaving the company to work nearer home: "I've reached the point in my career where I devote as much of my time and life to BT as I want to," he says.

Stuart's dilemma about his future is compounded further by his deep values and his interest in politics. It is very important to him to feel that what he achieves in his

career not only "makes a difference" but is worthwhile too, "a good for the world in general", in a way that he does not perceive working for BT to be. This is linked to a desire to be seen as a good role model and a manager of integrity. As a result, Stuart is contemplating whether or not he should take a job with the Labour Party, should they win the next election, perhaps in some kind of advisory role: "Whatever kind of think tanks (Tony Blair) has, I could see myself doing that." It may be, therefore, that he will decide career success for him is to "make a difference" in a wider and more important arena than BT could ever offer him.

6.5 The Self-Realiser

For the Self-Realiser, career success is very much an internal concept, based on the idea of achievement at a very personal level, sometimes in a way which means little to other people. As a result internal criteria for success, especially achievement criteria, are most important to the Self-Realiser. They may value other criteria for success, such as personal recognition or influence, but their desire to achieve on their own terms will override the value they place on them in their conception of career success. The Self-Realiser's idea of success is thus as far removed from external managerial success as possible and closest to the notion of personal fulfilment:

"If you've been able to express your best ability, and you've enjoyed yourself, then I think you've got a successful career...without both of those it wouldn't be successful." (Ran, 20s man)

Accomplishment criteria for success may also be valued by the Self-Realiser, since they sometimes obtain a sense of achievement from being good at what they do at work. However, while success for the Self-Realiser can be the result of specific job-related achievements, like Stella they may have difficulty in describing their very personal idea of career success in organisational terms at all:

"I cannot point to something and say, yes, when I am a financial controller, or when I am this, or when I am that, that I would define as career success for me." (Stella, 20s woman)

Getting the sense of achievement that the Self-Realiser sees as career success may relate to meeting personal challenges which they find difficult. For this reason, Self-Realisers often find it essential that their work is challenging at a personal level in

some way. Meeting a challenge not only adds to their sense of achievement but helps them develop as managers, something which many Self-Realisers value. Lyssa, for example, sees her own career success in terms of meeting sets of personal challenges:

"If you've accomplished things you didn't think you could do or you've got to a level that initially you hadn't thought of getting to...that you'd been challenged as well at a different sort of managerial level.....they are the measures (of career success)." (Lyssa, 30s woman)

Other Self-Realisers associate feelings of success with learning new skills or working in new areas, like Gill:

"Part of what moves you on is you get to the point where you think I can do this now, there's nothing new here, whereas it was really difficult at the beginning." (Gill, 30s woman)

For Self-Realisers, a vital part of their idea of career success is achieving a balance between their work life and their home life; they are usually managers to whom it matters that they succeed in both spheres of their life on their own personal terms. This may be because they have family responsibilities, like Kathryn and Sarah, who both work part-time, or it may be because, like Angela and Gill, they believe that there is a lot more to life than their day job:

"I would like to feel that I had a full work life and a full life out of work, to be able to do the things I wanted to do...and I would like to feel that I had actually achieved something within the sphere I was working in." (Angela, 40s woman)

Perhaps because they see success in terms of their own personal achievement Self-Realisers often find it easier than other managers to imagine changing the direction of their career completely and doing something totally different, such as running their own business. Stella described her own pipe dream as follows:

"When Richard gets to be a partner and I have enough income, perhaps I'd like to do something else.....I'm one of those people who thinks I'd really like to own a hotel, I'd really like to do that, because I love entertaining people in my personal life." (Stella, 20s woman)

Enjoyment criteria for success can be a component of the Self-Realiser's definition of career success, especially interest and job satisfaction. Finding their job interesting is usually far more important to them than their position in the hierarchy, perhaps because it is not possible to gain any satisfaction or sense of achievement in a job which has no intrinsic interest. Sarah has always valued having an interesting job as part of her idea of career success:

"Given that I've got to work, then having a job which is well-paid, interesting and flexible is, I suppose, the best I can hope for." (Sarah, 40s woman)

While Sarah especially values the amount of money she is paid because her husband is unemployed, to most Self-Realisers, external criteria for success are unimportant with respect to how they see their own career success. In particular, Self-Realisers do not judge success in terms of the grade they reach in the organisational hierarchy or the status which this might give them, but rather in terms of their individual personal achievement. If they set career goals, these are likely to relate to personal achievements rather than organisational landmarks:

"Career success is an individual thing...I don't think you can say career success is being managing director of ICI paints or whatever...people may have a career in designing clothes or whatever the case may be...so in terms of your own career, everyone's got their own ability in terms of the skills they've got, and if you've exploited those to the best of your ability and taken advantage of all the opportunities that have come your way, you've been successful." (Ran, 20s man)

Like Experts, Self-Realisers may turn down a promotion because they perceive it will give them less of what they want from a career than they would otherwise have. Stella turned down a promotion because the job it entailed would have made it extremely difficult for her to balance her life. Both Angela and Gill have rejected higher level jobs because they believed that they were not sufficiently interesting and challenging:

"I was offered promotion and I turned it down.....because I didn't think it was going to be any different, I'd just be doing the same job at a higher level, and I wanted to do something different, more interesting." (Gill, 30s woman)

Self-Realisers may value highly intangible criteria for success, such as personal recognition and influence. However, in their definition of career success they will always put greater emphasis on succeeding on their own personal terms than being recognised as successful or having an impact on the organisation they work for. Ran, for example, felt that at present he was more of a success organisationally than he was personally:

"I know that I've got a lot more to give yet...I've got a lot more ground to cover yet, not in terms of my career changing but in terms of my own development as well." (Ran, 20s man)

Seven managers emerged as Self-Realisers in this research, six women, Angela, Gill, Kathryn, Lyssa, Sarah and Stella, and one man, Ran. The managers are drawn from all three age groups, with Angela and Sarah in their forties, Gill, Kathryn and Lyssa in their thirties and Stella and Ran in their twenties.

Since it has already been identified in Chapters 4, section 4.2, and Chapter 5, section 5.5, that women are more likely than men to base their conceptions of career success on internal and intangible criteria, it is not surprising that, like Experts, most of the Self-Realisers are women. However, unlike the Expert, the Self-Realiser is more likely to have moved towards their idea of success after a period of transition than to have held it from the beginning of their career. Many of the Self-Realisers in this study talked about how they had had a different idea of career success in the past. Angela and Stella had moved from seeing success more as Experts earlier in their careers:

"I don't think in the early days of my career I'd even thought about what was career success...I always wanted to do a good job, and I've always wanted to enjoy the job...some of these other aspects came later, I suppose, when you get a bit more experience and knowledge about what business and careers are about." (Angela, 40s woman)

Gill, Kathryn and Ran had all had a more external idea of career success in the past:

"I'm thinking I'm getting a reasonable salary and I'm managing the job, and I'm managing to have a life outside, which is important to me...how much further do I want to go?" (Gill, 30s woman)

What the Self-Realisers all share is an understanding that what matters to them is career success on their own personal terms and an appreciation of the value of personal achievement. Since balance is often also a part of their idea of success, their definition may be one which they have arrived at after a period of reflection about what they want from their life as a whole, prompted by a life change such as marriage or having a family, or as a result of doubt about their career direction. For example, the group of Self-Realisers included the two women who took part in the research who worked part-time in order to combine their career with bringing up their family, Kathryn and Sarah, two young managers, Ran and Stella, who had married in their twenties and were in the process of deliberating how they could best continue to combine career and family life, and Lyssa, who was about to marry a partner who lived abroad. It also included Gill, who was currently considering whether or not to take her career in a totally different direction because she was not getting the sense of achievement she desired from her career at present. What these Self-Realisers had in common was that they had all at some point examined carefully what it was that they wanted from a career. Kathryn gave the following explanation when asked why her idea of career success had changed:

"Because I realise myself that some of those jobs I might have been describing are not what I want...I don't know whether or not I could do them, but I don't actually want what goes with them...the lifestyle, I think, and the responsibility...I just don't want that...I think I have focused a bit more on myself, what I need and what I'd enjoy." (Kathryn, 30s woman)

Ran, the only man in the group, accepted that he had changed his definition of career success from that of a Climber since his marriage. However, that was not the full explanation of the shift in his views. Ran was a devout Sikh and his religion had begun to play a bigger and bigger part in his life. It appeared that it was the effect of this, as much as the change in his life circumstances, which had brought about a re-evaluation of what he wanted from his career and made him a Self-Realiser:

"I think because I am religious, yes, the kind of success I want in my life has influenced the kind of success I want at work...because if I wasn't, maybe I'd be very cut-throat. I'd be there as a stockbroker, driving a Porsche...but to me, I don't want to be someone like that." (Ran, 20s man)

To summarise, a Self-Realiser

- **defines career success in terms of personal achievement**
- **values personal challenge, self-development and learning**
- **wants to achieve balance**
- **can often imagine changing the direction of their career completely**

Case illustration: Kathryn

The impression that Kathryn gave during her interview was that, although she was very open-minded about the direction she wanted her career to take, her conception of career success was firmly fixed. Self-assured and articulate, she had a deep understanding of herself and a clear perception that, for her, success was fulfilling her highest potential as she herself chose to define it.

After studying electrical engineering at university, Kathryn decided not to pursue this as a career because she couldn't see "where that would go". Instead she became a management consultant almost by default, believing that this would expose her to a wide range of industries, which she hoped would give her a clearer idea of what she really wanted to do.

Kathryn enjoyed the work at the consultancy because it was highly challenging and meant that she was on an almost constant learning curve: seeking challenge and learning opportunities is a constant theme throughout her career. However, while she found the job very stimulating, she eventually decided that the long hours which were expected of her were too much of a strain at a time in her life when balance was becoming more important: she had recently married and moved out of London.

At this point she chose to leave the consultancy and take a corporate strategy job at BT. This move was prompted partly by her husband who was already working in BT. After her time in the management consultancy, Kathryn saw corporate strategy as her career niche in BT, because she perceived that the job would be similar to the enjoyable one she had just left: "I wanted to be a strategy person, strategy was the

place I was going to stay, and that was going to be my career." However, what she has struggled to come to terms with since is that, within BT, corporate strategy is not perceived as a specialist career in its own right, but as a career step for generalist managers.

Her career has developed somewhat reluctantly therefore and she is still unclear whether she would prefer to continue in some kind of specialist role or become a more generalist manager. She has changed jobs not for any positive reason but more as the strategy function itself has changed, to the point where she is now working in a marketing department: "I've never actually applied for a different job since I joined BT," she explains. "I moved with the organisation, things have moved around me, and my job is dramatically different.....I've sort of gone with the flow." Nevertheless, she has continued to find challenge and a sense of accomplishment in the projects she has worked on, and has had a good deal of personal recognition for her achievements: "There are various awards and things that come round...which I've been nominated for or have got." This personal recognition for what she does has become increasingly important to her.

Kathryn has been promoted twice as her career at BT has unfolded. She describes neither promotion in particularly positive terms; they were both based largely "on the fact that the job I was doing was already at the grade above", she says. Nor would she consider taking a further promotion "just because it was a grade": it would have to be a job she found enjoyable, which "would actually lead me where I wanted to be at the end of the day", and which allowed her to balance her life. As a manager, Kathryn sets little store on the status of her grade, which she values only for what it permits her to do at work.

Balance has become a critical issue for Kathryn since she had her daughter two years ago. She now works part-time and struggles to continue to be taken seriously as a manager in an environment which does not encourage managers at her level to choose this pattern of working. Her family is a vital consideration for her when she contemplates her future career: "I think I would have to put my life in general, not just my job, in the basket...I'm faced now with a number of trade-offs I have to make."

Having a child is doubtless one of the reasons which prompted Kathryn to reflect deeply on what for her is true career success. Nonetheless, there were other factors

involved too. Having seen success much more in organisational terms when she was younger, "not necessarily being the top of the company, but I would have said it would be about being in a position that influences the person who is at the top", she began to realise that perhaps this was not the kind of career success she really desired. While she still wished to realise her full potential at work, she became aware that she wanted to reserve the right to define what form that might take, given her own abilities and interests, and her desire to balance her life.

While Kathryn has now arrived at her own very internal idea of career success, "fulfilling what I thought was probably my highest potential, and still be coping with it", she is still uncertain what this might mean in terms of her actual career. "I wouldn't like to say what it is I will be in ten years, 20 years time...but I'm fairly certain I'll have a job of some description, and I want it to be something that...brings some of the things I have today." She may even decide to leave the business world: she is considering studying for a postgraduate degree and taking up a new career, perhaps as a teacher. Whatever she chooses to do will be based on the deeper understanding of herself she feels she now has: "Anything I do in the future will be very much built on the experience I've gained, and hopefully a balanced knowledge of my strengths and weakness...and I'm only finding them out now."

6.6 Problematic managers

While most of the managers who took part in this research are one of the four types described above, according to how they define career success for themselves, not all of them could be classified in this way. Two of the men, Pravin and Alex, did not correspond well to any of the types as described above. It is important, therefore, to consider why they fail to fit the typology and whether this failure to correspond affects its conceptual robustness in any way.

Pravin has already been discussed in Chapter 5, because of his conscious rejection of aspects of career success which he had valued in the past. In particular, he no longer felt he could value the idea of enjoying his work, becoming very good at what he did, and getting personal recognition as a result, because he believed that an overemphasis on these criteria in the past had impeded his career development. The real dilemma he faced, however, was that he was unsure what he wished to put in their place, with the result that, when he was interviewed, Pravin had no coherent conception of what for him was career success. He was torn between seeing success much more in

external terms, which on one level he felt might help him achieve the organisational success he still craved, or in deeply personal, almost spiritual terms, as a journey of personal discovery. For this reason it was impossible to describe him as any one of the four types.

Pravin's dilemma was partly due to a dissatisfaction with the progress he had made so far in his business career. After a successful academic career, culminating in a PhD at Cambridge, he had assumed that success at BT would be attainable equally easily with the same approach. Thus he had diligently acquired an impressive series of business qualifications, worked tremendously hard and waited for promotion to follow. He now realised ruefully that this approach was misguided: "I joined with a view to have a career, but to have a career you don't simply have qualifications as I have, you don't simply work hard as I have, but you do a lot of other things, you manage yourself, being able to influence people, moving in the right circles, being able to network, being ruthless about it."

However, his lack of clarity was largely the result of an ongoing reappraisal of what he wanted more generally from his life and from his career. At 34 Pravin was conscious of a desire both to balance his work and home lives better and to provide financial security for himself and his family: "The money, where I live, what I do, the balanced life, having a healthy perspective on things, become more important." That managers' conceptions of career success may go through a transition while they are in their thirties has already been discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.6.4. It is likely, therefore, that Pravin's view of career success was going through such a period of change, from the ideas that he had held earlier in his career at BT, which were probably closest to those of the Expert, to a future and as yet unknown conception of career success: there were elements both of the Influencer and the Self-Realiser in what he said about success; it is probable that he will eventually come to define success in one of these two ways.

The difficulty in describing Pravin as any one of the four types at the moment does not undermine the typology therefore but rather exemplifies how some managers' conceptions of career success undergo a period of transition in their thirties. During this time, they may be at a loss to define what is career success for them in any coherent way, and this is the stage which Pravin appears to be at.

Alex was equally problematic to align with any one of the four types but for quite different reasons than Pravin. His conception of career success veered from a definition based on very internal criteria, such as feeling that he was really good at what he did, which he described as being "able to shine", being happy, and achieving his maximum potential, to one based on the external criteria of grade and reward which some of the other young men emphasised.

At 23, Alex had only worked for BT for two years and still had very little idea about what he was looking for from a career. This lack of understanding about what a career meant to him seems to offer one explanation for his very mixed ideas about career success. The first stage of the research found that some the managers went through a transitional period at the beginning of their working life, when their ideas about careers and career success developed and changed; interestingly, Alex was the youngest manager interviewed in this study, and it is therefore conceivable that he was going through such a phase.

Alex had joined BT after being sponsored by the company to take an electronic engineering degree: his one criterion for his first job was that it was not a technical post, and while it fulfilled this, it was clear that relying on this criterion alone was not sufficient to guarantee him job satisfaction. Alex did not particularly enjoy his job as a systems engineer: "It's not really a stressful job, but the very fact that you have to come into work every morning, you know you're going to have customers ringing you up and they've got problems...and dealing with people that you don't actually like...you still have to smile at them and be pleasant to them...it's all, not grinding me down, but it's something that if I had a choice I would try and escape from." This was unfortunate, because the most important part of his definition of career success was "to have a good time".

In reality, he seemed very uncertain about whether it would be possible for him to achieve this at BT at all: the theme of "escaping" from the organisation was one which recurred throughout his interview. He seemed less committed to and interested in his career as a manager than his contemporaries. He had no career goals that he wanted to strive towards, which might have made his job tolerable in the short term. The other explanation for the failure of Alex's ideas about career success to correspond to any of the four types, therefore, is that he was not interested in or suited to the career as a manager at BT which he had chosen and as a result found it hard to envisage achieving any kind of career success at all in that job. If this is the case,

then it is not surprising that he does not fit any of the four types described in this chapter.

6.7 Climber, Expert, Influencer and Self-Realiser: what kind of manager is likely to see success as each type?

The differences between male and female managers, and younger and older managers, in terms of the criteria they use to define career success for themselves have been discussed in detail in Chapters 4 and 5. To summarise the findings presented there, it appears that men are more likely to see their own career success in terms of external criteria, whereas women perceive theirs more in terms of internal and intangible criteria; younger managers favour external criteria for success more than older managers, whereas older managers themselves are more likely to view career success in terms of intangible criteria, especially influence criteria.

The potential effects of these differences on the kind of manager who might be expected to see success as each type, according to the typology outlined above, are therefore as follows: the Climber sees career success primarily in terms of external criteria and therefore this group of managers can be expected to be largely male; the Expert defines career success in terms of internal accomplishment and intangible personal recognition criteria, and thus this group of managers is likely to be predominantly female; the Influencer relates career success primarily to intangible influence criteria, and therefore this group of managers is probably older rather than younger; the Self-Realiser sees career success in terms of internal achievement criteria and so this group of managers can be expected to be mainly female.

The composition of the groups of managers who fall within each type in this research, as described above, is generally consistent with the potential effects of gender and age identified here: the group of Climbers is all male; the group of Experts is predominantly female; there is a preponderance of older managers in the group of Influencers; and the group of Self-Realisers contains only one man.

While this research is not concerned directly with the effects of factors other than gender and age on managers' conceptions of career success, it is necessary to consider briefly other possible influences in order to explore fully differences according to gender and age and to build a picture of the kind of manager who is likely to define career success in each of the four ways. Based on the differences found according to

gender and age, an attempt will be made to pinpoint some of the common traits of the managers who define career success in each of the four ways. The other factors which will be considered are grade* within the BT hierarchy, educational background, work area and race. They were chosen because they are considered to be particularly relevant to the issue of what kind of manager might define career success as each type does.

*The grading structure used in this Chapter is a simplified version of the one in use in BT, as described in Chapter 3, section 3.2.5.

The composition of the four groups of managers in this research, according to the type of career success they favoured, is as follows:

Table 6.1: The Climbers

Name	Sex	Age	Grade	Education	Work area
Adam	Male	30s	5	School	General management
Darren	Male	20s	3	School	General management
Dave C	Male	40s	1	School	General management
John	Male	20s	1	University	IT
Kenneth	Male	20s	1	University	Sales
Paul	Male	30s	2	Teacher training	Personnel
Phil	Male	30s	4	Postgraduate: MSc	Personnel

Table 6.2: The Experts

Name	Sex	Age	Grade	Education	Work area
Dave H	Male	20s	1	University	IT
Jeanette	Female	30s	2	University	IT
Jane M	Female	30s	3	University	Personnel
Jane S	Female	40s	2	School	Audit
Lisa	Female	20s	1	University	Sales
Liz	Female	40s	3	University	Personnel
Paula	Female	20s	2	School	Personnel
Sam	Female	20s	1	University	Personnel
Steve	Male	30s	1	School	Personnel

Table 6.3: The Influencers

Name	Sex	Age	Grade	Education	Work area
Alan	Male	40s	2	School	Personnel
Anne	Female	30s	3	Postgraduate: Sloan MSc	General management
Colin	Male	40s	5	Postgraduate: MBA	General management
Dave S	Male	40s	2	School; BSc	Personnel
David	Male	40s	4	Postgraduate: PhD	Market research
Elsbeth	Female	40s	5	Postgraduate: PhD	General management
Nicole	Female	30s	1	University	IT
Sherelle	Female	20s	2	University	Systems engineering
Susan	Female	40s	3	School; MBA	Personnel
Stuart	Male	30s	6	Postgraduate: MPhil; MBA	General management
Tony	Male	40s	5	School; BSc	Personnel

Table 6.4: The Self-Realisers

Name	Sex	Age	Grade	Education	Work area
Angela	Female	40s	3	Postgraduate: MA	IT
Gill	Female	30s	3	University	Strategy
Kathryn	Female	30s	4	University	Strategy
Lyssa	Female	30s	3	University	Finance
Ran	Male	20s	3	University	Sales
Sarah	Female	40s	4	Postgraduate: MSc	IT
Stella	Female	20s	3	University	Finance

The most distinctive feature of the composition of the groups is that three of them are dominated by a single sex, as described above. While the Influencers consist of equal groups of men and women, the Climbers are all men, and the Experts and Self-Realisers are predominantly women. It has already been noted that this division reflects one of the key findings of this research, that women do not tend to view their career success as being based on the external grade and reward criteria by which it has traditionally been defined within organisations. Women in general therefore seem far more likely to be Experts or Self-Realisers than men and as such much less inclined to define their own career success in terms of any kind of organisational status or influence; men on the other hand are far more likely to be Climbers or Influencers, who see their career success more in terms of organisational status or organisational influence, than Experts or Self-Realisers, who do not.

This should not be taken to mean, however, that male and female managers can be stereotyped along these lines: this research has found two male Experts and one male Self-Realiser, and the fact that half of the group of Influencers are female indicates that some men and women have very similar ideas about career success. While seeing career success as a Climber would not be typical of a woman manager, it is still conceivable that there are some women who define their own success in this way.

As already acknowledged, age also is a crucial factor in determining which type of career success a manager favours. In this research, most of the managers who see success as Climbers are relatively young, which is consistent with the conclusion that external criteria are more important to younger managers. It has been suggested that many of them will change, choosing to emphasise external criteria for success less and intangible criteria more as they grow older: the large proportion of men in their forties (five out of six), who are Influencers bears this out. Given that managers do not usually reach the most senior positions within organisations until they are in their forties or fifties, it is conceivable that some managers will remain Climbers for most of their careers; however, this research indicates that older managers who are Climbers are often still at lower grades within the organisation and thus have yet to achieve the hierarchical success which they seek. This was discussed in detail in Chapters 4, section 4.3, and Chapter 5, section 5.6.1.

As noted above, the Influencers are predominantly an older group than the others, supporting the suggestion that influence criteria for success, especially leaving a mark on the organisation and autonomy, are particularly important to managers in their forties. Four of the group, however, including three women, are still in their twenties or thirties. One explanation of this may be that the younger Influencer is the kind of manager who has similar high levels of ambition to those of the younger Climber, but sees their own success much more in terms of influence rather than status or material reward. This explanation would account for the presence of three women in this subgroup, since women do not tend to define their career success in external terms.

The group of Experts includes three of the five women in their twenties who took part in the research, suggesting that young women may be more inclined to define career success for themselves in this way. One factor which has already been discussed in Chapters 4, section 4.2, and Chapter 5, section 5.5.3, which may explain this is that women appear to be more likely to lack confidence at work than men; they may therefore need to seek constant affirmation of their performance. If this is particularly true of women at the beginning of their career, when they could be especially concerned about their ability to do their job well, this might lead them to see their own success in terms of getting large amounts of personal recognition until they become more confident about their competence. (However, the group of Experts also includes women in their thirties and their forties, which does suggest

that, for some women, seeing career success as an Expert may be permanent, rather than temporary.)

Thus the research findings show that younger men are most likely to be Climbers, and older men Influencers, whereas younger women are most likely to be Experts, and older women Experts, Self-Realisers or Influencers. This endorses the suggestion that managers tend to emphasise intangible criteria for success more and external criteria less as they get older. This appears to be especially true of the male managers, since the women put less emphasis on external criteria in the first place.

When the managers' grade is taken into account as well, however, the picture is more complex. The Experts are at relatively lower grades, regardless of their age, compared with the other groups. It is beyond the scope of this research to speculate here whether this reflects their vision of career success or causes it - it may again be connected to the issue of confidence - but it is interesting to note the contrast with the group of Self-Realisers: there are no junior managers in this group. It has already been acknowledged that becoming a Self-Realiser often appears to be the result of some kind of transition experienced by the manager, perhaps as a result of life changes. It may be that this process is partly triggered by reaching a career stage as well as a life stage.

Grade appears to be less of a factor in determining whether a manager is an Influencer. This may seem a little paradoxical, because it can be seen that some of the most senior managers who took part in this research belong to the group of Influencers. However, it is not only managers with high levels of influence who see career success in this way. Four of the Influencers are still at one of the two most junior management grades, including two men in their forties. The large number of very senior Influencers present in this group seems to indicate both that some highly ambitious managers never see the success they seek just in terms of grade or reward, and that others may change from being Climbers to become Influencers as they get older.

When one examines the work areas of the managers who took part in the research, it is interesting to note that the seven managers who work in general management roles are all either Climbers or Influencers. In contrast, all of the Experts and Self-Realisers are in specialist positions within the organisation: the number of Experts who work in personnel (five) is particularly noticeable. It is easy to see why those

who have an inclination towards seeing success as an Expert, that is in terms of being good at what they do and getting personal recognition for it, may find personnel a suitable area to work in: they will often be in a position to offer "expert" advice to line managers, for which presumably they will receive some kind of personal recognition. Nonetheless, being attracted to a job like personnel work does not guarantee that a manager will see success in this way: this research also shows that there are managers working in personnel who are Climbers and Influencers. The group of Self-Realisers, on the other hand, includes the only managers interviewed for the research who work in finance and strategy. One possible explanation of this may be that these are areas which can involve large amounts of formal and informal learning, and thereby provide Self-Realisers with opportunities for the particular kinds of personal challenge they thrive on.

There are also apparent differences between the four groups of managers in terms of their educational background. On the whole, the Climbers seem to have received the least amount of formal education; only three of them have a university degree, and only one of these has attained any kind of postgraduate qualification. In contrast, the Influencers appear to be the best educated managers. Not only does this group contain three of the four managers interviewed with research degrees, (the fourth, Pravin, was impossible to describe as any of the four types), but it also includes all the managers who have postgraduate business qualifications, three MBAs and one Sloan MSc. (It is worth noting in addition that three Influencers who started work straight from school have since gained university degrees. None of the school leavers in the other groups have achieved this.) All of the Self-Realisers have had a university education, whereas a third (three) of the Experts have not.

Finally, whilst race is not a main focus of this research, it is necessary to comment briefly on the effects it may have had on how the managers who took part in the research see career success. Three of the research participants were Asian, Lyssa, Pravin and Ran. The two men talked about how they felt their race had affected their careers at BT: Ran in particular felt that he wanted to succeed within the organisation in order to act as a good role model for other young Asians; Pravin was more negative about the effects of his race on his career, especially because he felt that being brought up as an Asian had made him politically naive: "I was never brought up with a particularly ruthless streak, I wasn't brought up with understanding how to market yourself and promote yourself, getting yourself in all the right circles, all that sort of stuff...I was brought up to work hard, keep your nose clean." Lyssa did not

mention the subject of her race at all during her interview: for her, the main issue in her life was her forthcoming marriage to a fiancé who lived in India, in that she did not know whether she would be able to continue her career at BT at all.

Both Lyssa and Ran were Self-Realisers, Ran being the only man in this group. Whilst he shared many of the Climbers' values, his idea of career success superseded those for him to see career success as achievement very much on his own personal terms. As described in section 6.5, the reason for this was largely the effect of his Sikh religion on his life and values: "In terms of my religion, I do believe in destiny...if it's in my destiny, I will get there."

Pravin, one of the managers who was impossible to place in one of the four groups, did not overtly discuss his religion in the same way as Ran, but did allude to how part of his somewhat confused view of success was as "spiritual enlightenment" and "inner peace and balance", suggesting at least some closeness to the position of the Self-Realiser, possibly for the same reasons as Ran. For the two male Asians at least, race and religion appear to have a strong effect on their conceptions of career success, in that they seemed less eager than their white male contemporaries to see success in primarily external material terms.

To conclude, in this research the main characteristics of the managers who fall into each of the four groups can be summarised as follows:

Climbers:

- are male
- tend to be younger, or less hierarchically successful older managers
- are the group least likely to have a university degree
- may work in a general management position

Experts:

- are mainly women
- tend to be younger or in lower grade positions
- may or may not have a university degree
- work in specialist roles

Influencers:

- may be men or women
- are likely to be older, especially men, and could be in very senior positions
- tend to be highly qualified academically
- work in general management or specialist roles

Self-Realisers:

- are predominantly women
- tend to be middle to senior managers
- have university degrees
- work in specialist roles

In the Chapter 7 the typology of managerial career success and the differences found between managers in terms of how they define career success for themselves which are linked to gender and age will be related back to the theory on career success discussed in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter relates the key findings of this research back to career success theory and demonstrates the contribution which they make to it. Section 7.1 summarises the research findings. Section 7.2 shows how the career success typology, which conceptualises how different managers define their own success, expands our knowledge of managerial career success. Sections 7.3 and 7.4 link the differences found in the research between men and women and younger and older managers in terms of how they view career success to existing literature in these fields. Section 7.5 considers the limitations of the findings; section 7.6 makes suggestions for future research which would build on the findings presented here.

7.1 A summary of the research findings

The purpose of this research was to answer the following questions:

1. *What do managers conceive career success to be for themselves on their own terms?*
2. *Do women managers have different ideas about what career success is for them from men?*
3. *Do older managers have different ideas about what career success is for them from younger ones?*

It has shown that, while each manager has their own subjective definition of career success, there are recognisable patterns of similarity in how particular groups of managers view career success. Using these patterns, the research has developed a series of orientational categories (Bailyn 1989) to form a typology of managerial career success, which describes what career success means to different managers.

The typology identifies four different types of manager in terms of how they see career success, which can be summarised briefly as follows: the *Climber* sees success chiefly in terms of the level of organisational seniority and pay they achieve, but also often wants to combine this material success with enjoyment; the *Expert* defines success primarily as being good at what they do and getting personal recognition for this accomplishment; the *Influencer* associates their success with the amount of organisational influence they achieve; and the *Self-Realiser* defines success in terms

of their achievement at a very personal level, which usually involves personal challenge and self-development.

The research has shown that, although it is not possible to stereotype individual managers, women tend to see career success in a different way from men. They are more likely to be Experts and Self-Realisers, and less likely to be Climbers. Men, conversely, are more likely to be Climbers and Influencers than Experts and Self-Realisers.

It also suggests that age affects managers' definitions of career success too. For example, older managers, especially men, are more likely to be Influencers; younger men are most likely to be Climbers, and younger women Experts.

In sections 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4, the particular contributions the research makes will be discussed in detail and related back to relevant literature in the field of career success.

7.2 What career success means to managers

While career success has traditionally been seen purely in the external, organisational terms of hierarchical seniority and salary level (O'Reilly and Chatman 1994, Melamed 1995), widespread evidence suggests, firstly, that this is not how managers themselves perceive it (e.g. Korman et al. 1981, Nicholson and West 1988), and secondly, that if the concept of career success is to be of any value at all both to individual managers and to organisations, then it is how managers define success for themselves which matters most, not an external perception of success based solely on objectively measurable criteria (Poole et al., 1993, Herriot et al. 1994). As Gattiker and Larwood (1986) say: "Any understanding of career paths and effective personnel management is substantially reduced if the subjective side of career success is ignored."

This research therefore responds to calls for studies which examine the concept of career success from the manager's point of view, rather than the organisation's (e.g. Herriot et al. 1994, Sekaran and Hall 1989). According to Gattiker and Larwood (1990), "the examination of individual perceptions of achievement, which are important because they might reveal that individuals feel differently about their accomplishments than an outsider might expect, has unfortunately not been a popular subject, so there is less research in this area". Poole et al. (1993) concur that "one of

the major shortcomings in the career success literature has been an adequate conceptualisation of what career success means".

One reason for this "shortcoming" appears to be the ease of use wholly external definitions of success afford those researching careers and career development (e.g. O'Reilly and Chatman 1994, Melamed 1995). As Bailyn (1989) notes, "on the whole it is easiest to assume that external definitions coincide with internal ones. It is instructive, for example, to note how readily one falls into the presumption that upwardly mobile careers are experienced as successful". The aim of this research was to attempt to overcome such presumptions and fill a clearly identified gap in career success theory, that is, examine how managers define career success for themselves. In doing so, it pays heed to Bailyn's call for research into the internal career, to produce "an aggregation of individual data that reflects differences in subjective meanings" (Bailyn 1989).

Thus, this research explores managers' personal definitions of career success and categorises them according to patterns of similarities which emerged from the data. In total, it identifies four different types of manager, each of whom regards their own career success in a distinctive way. The four types are *Climber*, *Expert*, *Influencer* and *Self-Realiser*, as described in section 7.1 and in detail in Chapter 6.

Of the four types identified, only one, the Climber, has a view of career success which in any way resembles the "conventional" idea of organisational success as it has traditionally been defined by position in the hierarchy and salary level (e.g. Rosenbaum 1979, O'Reilly and Chatman 1994). Only seven of the 36 managers interviewed for this research could be categorised as Climbers; the vast majority (29) of the managers, therefore, had a personal definition of career success which was far removed from the "traditional" idea of success within organisations. Even the Climbers' definition of success was somewhat broader than the narrow criteria of hierarchical position and pay: it was common for Climbers to believe that they would not see themselves as a success if they did not enjoy their job, regardless of what they earned or where they were in the organisational hierarchy.

The findings of the research accordingly support the view expressed in the career literature that describing managerial career success wholly in the external material terms of hierarchical position and pay does not represent what managers feel about their own success, despite the common assumption that it should. This conclusion is

exemplified by Korman et al.'s research (1981) which showed that many hierarchically successful managers did not in fact feel that they were a success, and studies by Keys (1985) and Subich et al. (1986) which demonstrated on the other hand that individuals who were not hierarchically successful could still feel that they had achieved career success.

The main contribution of this research, however, is that it illustrates what kind of criteria managers actually do use to define their own career success (as opposed to those which they don't use). While the typological categorisation it employs is new, it is interesting to note that some of the characteristics of the four types of managers which it describes do relate to previous research findings in this field. This suggests that, although innovative, the typology has roots in existing career theory, a further endorsement of its soundness.

As discussed above, the Climber's conception of career success is closest to the idea of organisational success as it has traditionally been described in terms of level in the hierarchy and rate of pay (e.g. Rosenbaum 1979 and 1989, Gould and Penley 1984, O'Reilly and Chatman 1994, Melamed 1995). All of the Climbers in this research were men, so it is perhaps not surprising that the "traditional" model of career success has been identified as representing a typically "masculine" idea of success, reflecting male psychological values based on individuation and separation (e.g. Gilligan 1982, Marshall 1989, Gallos 1989). The managers who are Climbers in terms of how they see their own success tend to be highly competitive and goal-oriented, and as such have an approach to planning their career described by Marshall (1989, 1995) as "agentic", that is, "forward-looking, goal-directed, pursuing external ideals, often against time scales" (Marshall 1995). This approach to a career has often been said to entail a "traditional" "male" idea of what success is, much as the Climber sees it (e.g. Powell and Mainiero 1992).

In contrast, a key characteristic of the Expert is that, unlike the Climber, they do not have work-related goals. In this respect they correspond to the other dimension of Marshall's model of career planning, "communion-based" career planning (Marshall 1989, 1995). Communion-based career planning is not forward-looking but focuses "largely on jobs" and is "open to opportunities, listening to the next inner need without concern about longer term consequences" (Marshall 1989); it is an approach to a career which is seen as typically "female". In fact, the group of Experts identified in this study was largely female: the differences found between the male

and female managers in terms of how they saw career success will be discussed in greater detail in section 7.3.

The main criteria for career success which the Expert uses, accomplishment and personal recognition, reflect the findings of earlier research, again in particular studies which compared what men and women wanted from a career. For example, Beutell and Brenner (1986) found that women rated accomplishment and use of knowledge more highly than income and advancement. Mason (1994) discovered that women managers particularly valued the idea of being treated with respect and White et al. concluded (1992) that one of the outcomes that the "successful" women who took part in their study were seeking from their careers was personal recognition of their achievement. There may also be a connection between managers who are Experts in terms of how they see career success and those with a technical/functional career anchor as identified by Schein (1993). Schein says that such individuals "build a sense of identity around the content of their work" and value "the recognition of his or her professional peers more than uninformed rewards from members of management" (1993). All of the managers who were classified as Experts in this research were indeed in specialist roles, but the kind of position an individual occupies does not seem to be sufficient on its own to determine how they define their own career success: managers working in similar specialist positions were also Climbers, Influencers and Self-Realisers.

The largest group to emerge in this research was that of the Influencers, suggesting that, for many managers, being able to have a real influence on the organisation they work for is an extremely important part of their idea of career success. This finding reflects a quantitative study of personal definitions of career success carried out by Derr and Laurent (1989), which found that, of a list of 36 items which might determine career success, the three ranked most highly all related to the amount of influence a manager could exercise. The importance of influence to some managers was also noted by White et al. (1992), who discovered that many of the women they interviewed valued influence and autonomy highly.

This research showed influence and autonomy to be closely linked, particularly for older managers, who were especially likely to be Influencers. This supports O'Connor and Wolfe's claim (1987) that managers' need for autonomy may increase as a result of some kind of mid-life crisis. The variations in ideas of career success found in managers of different ages will be discussed in section 7.4. The fact that

some of the most senior managers who took part in the research were Influencers, not Climbers, further endorses the conclusion that hierarchically successful managers may not in fact see their own career success in hierarchical terms (e.g. Korman et al. 1981), and suggests that many managers wish to move up the organisational hierarchy to increase their influence rather than their status. There may be a link between both Climbers and Influencers, and those managers Schein identifies as having a general management career anchor: as he describes it, "the most important forms of recognition for managerially anchored people are promotions to positions of higher responsibility" (Schein 1993). In fact, all of those interviewed for the research who were working in general management roles were either Climbers or Influencers. Once again, however, it is clear that any relationship between the career anchor classification and the career success typology is not straightforward: this research has shown there to be some managers who do not "view specialisation as a trap" (Schein 1993) and have remained in specialist positions, yet who see their own career success either as a Climber or as an Influencer.

Rather like the Expert, the characteristics typifying the Self-Realiser's definition of career success, personal achievement, challenge and self-development, concur with some of the attributes identified as being typically "female" by research investigating what women managers want from their careers. (Again, like the Experts, the group of Self-Realisers which emerged in this research was largely female: the differences found between the men and the women will be explored further in section 7.3.)

A number of studies (e.g. Hennig and Jardim 1978, Donnell and Hall 1980, Marshall 1984, Asplund 1988, Alban-Metcalf 1989) have indicated that women see career success more in terms of personal growth and challenge than advancement and remuneration. For example, Hennig and Jardim (1978) conclude that women managers see achieving success in their careers almost as a process of internal growth "towards an intensely personal goal which the individual alone can judge whether she has achieved". Asplund (1988) found that women were "more likely to be motivated by psychological factors and a desire for self-realisation".

An important attribute of the Self-Realiser is a desire to balance successfully their career with their home life. This finding endorses literature which proposes that an interest in balancing success in a career with success at home is increasingly affecting managers' conceptions of career success (e.g. Scase and Goffee 1989, Kimmel 1993, Herriot and Pemberton 1995). Scase and Goffee (1989), for example, believe that for

many managers, "conceptions of personal success have become more broadly defined in that they incorporate non-work criteria according to which the costs and benefits of career success are measured". Other writers (e.g. Marshall 1989 and 1995, Gallos 1989, Powell and Mainiero 1992 and 1993) have suggested that balance has always been an important part of women managers' definitions of career success, in that, for them, as Gallos (1989) says, "the boundaries between professional work and everything else in life are more permeable".

The research consequently demonstrates that the criteria managers use to define their own career success diverge widely from the criteria such as hierarchical position and salary level by which it has traditionally been measured. It also shows that there is a qualitative difference as well as a wide divergence in the kind of criteria employed to define success. While criteria such as position and pay are external to the manager and as such can be objectively assessed, many of the criteria by which the managers judge their own success are internal and subjective: like the career itself, career success has an internal as well as an external dimension (Hall 1976, Schein 1978, Gunz 1989).

The kind of subjective internal criteria which the managers use to measure their own career success include getting a sense of accomplishment from their work, particularly important to the Expert, getting a sense of achievement from what they do, central to the Self-Realiser's conception of success, and enjoyment, which many Climbers see as crucial for their own feelings of success. In all, the research identified five separate groups of internal success criteria, which formed a crucial part of many of the managers' conceptions of career success: accomplishment criteria, achievement criteria, enjoyment criteria, integrity criteria and balance criteria.

While the contribution the research has made in identifying the kind of internal criteria for success managers employ is new, the importance of the internal dimension of career success is acknowledged by existing theory in this field (e.g. Gattiker and Larwood, 1986, 1988 and 1990, Poole et al. 1991 and 1993, Peluchette 1993). Gattiker and Larwood, for example, conclude (1986) that "a person's own assessment of his/her success may be strongly influenced by subjective internal career concepts". Poole et al. (1993) go further to suggest that subjective internal measures of career success are an even more vital determinant of career success than objective criteria, especially for women. Their view is endorsed by the findings of this research, in that women managers emerged as most likely to be those types of manager who put

greatest emphasis on internal criteria for career success, that is the Expert and the Self-Realiser.

Although external criteria for success were not on their own sufficient to define how any of the managers who took part in this research saw their own career success, for some, notably Climbers, they were a central part of their idea of success. This finding supports Poole et al.'s conclusion (1993) that, despite the importance of internal measures of career success, objective external criteria remain a "necessary component" of career success.

A far more interesting finding made by this research, however, is that a second type of external success criteria exists, not previously identified in the career success literature. These criteria, while external to the managers, are not material or tangible in the same way as hierarchical position or salary level. Such criteria include getting personal recognition, perhaps in the form of positive feedback for achievements, crucial to the Expert's idea of career success, and being able to have a real influence at work, central to success as defined by the Influencer. There appears to be a clear and important difference in kind between the two types of external criteria: managers who see success in terms of personal recognition, for example, do not necessarily also see it in terms of organisational recognition as manifested in hierarchical level or pay. Success criteria of this kind have therefore been named *intangible* criteria to distinguish them from material external criteria for success, such as pay or position: two groups of intangible criteria were identified, personal recognition criteria and influence criteria.

It is clear that the three types of criteria managers use to define their own career success are inextricably linked to each other: managers' conceptions of success are seamless and do not necessarily distinguish between the different nature of the criteria they use (Gattiker and Larwood, 1986 and 1988, Poole et al. 1993). As Poole et al. (1993) observe, the interaction between objective external and subjective internal measures of success is very complex. In consequence, any model which seeks to conceptualise managerial career success must be capable of showing the relationship between particular kinds of internal, intangible and external criteria, since they are emphasised in different ways to different degrees by the Climber, the Expert, the Influencer and the Self-Realiser. As discussed in chapters 4 and 5, criteria for career success are all part of the same whole, which means that the differences in terms of how managers conceive career success are differences of

emphasis, not differences in actual kind. Conceptualising career success holistically with different dimensions reflects the notion of the career as a concept which entails a "dynamic interaction" (Derr and Laurent 1989) between an internal and external perspective (e.g. Hall 1976, Schein 1978, Gunz 1989, Derr and Laurent 1989.)

7.3 The differences between male and female managers' ideas of career success

This research identifies some important differences between men and women in terms of how they define their own career success. It shows that women are more likely to be Experts and Self-Realisers, and less likely to be Climbers than men. Men, on the other hand, are far more likely to see success as Climbers or Influencers than as Experts or Self-Realisers. As Experts, women see career success in terms of accomplishment and personal recognition, as Self-Realisers, personal achievement. As Climbers, men see success primarily in terms of hierarchical and financial achievement, as Influencers, organisational influence.

The distinction between male and female managers' conceptions of career success can therefore be summed up as follows: women are far less inclined than men to measure their own success by the external criteria of hierarchical position and level of pay, traditionally equated with career success, and far more inclined to base their own success on internal criteria, such as achievement and accomplishment, and intangible criteria, such as personal recognition and, to a lesser extent, influence. If men do judge their success by internal or intangible criteria, the ones they use are most likely to be related to influence, not to accomplishment, achievement or personal recognition. Thus, for men, career success is usually seen in organisational terms, either through organisational recognition or through influence; for women, success in a career is generally much more intimately conceived, and defined in terms of personal recognition and achievement.

The difference between the male and female managers' views of success which the research has found reflects the suggestion made by both Powell and Mainiero (1992 and 1993) and Poole et al. (1991 and 1993) that women's perceptions of career success may be more dependent on internal measures of success than men's, a claim which Poole et al. (1991 and 1993) attempted but failed to corroborate in their research.

Women managers' lack of comfort with a "traditional" model of career success based on hierarchical position and salary level has also been widely noted in the literature, which shows that men rate income and advancement more highly than women: Nicholson and West (1988), for example, conclude that women managers are less concerned with material rewards and more concerned with fulfilling a "need for growth" than men. Beutell and Brenner (1986), Alban-Metcalf (1989), McGowan and Hart (1992) and Mason (1994) all found that men valued external criteria for success more than women. Conversely, Subich et al. (1986), Keys (1985) and Russo et al. (1991) showed that women who were not hierarchically "successful" did in fact feel that they had achieved career success, suggesting that the criteria they used to measure their own success were not related to their position in the hierarchy.

This research supports such findings, in that it showed that women were not only less inclined to define career success primarily in hierarchical terms, like the Climber, but also were actually more likely than men to have turned down a promotion in favour of a job they enjoyed at a lower grade. Furthermore, the women who were found to put some emphasis on external criteria for success did not do so because they saw success in terms of advancement for the sake of status; either they viewed promotion as the "just dessert" of the competent manager or they were Influencers who wished to progress up the organisational hierarchy to gain greater influence, and thereby provide themselves with a more interesting and enjoyable job. This finding adds weight to Asplund's statement (1988), that women "are not so ready to talk about careers in terms of status and power". It also provides a contrast with the attitude of male Climbers, who saw the status they achieved by means of their position in the hierarchy as a measure of their career success.

Similarly, while the research showed women to be interested in the amount they earned as a means of supporting their lifestyle, it indicated that they valued their salary level for this utility, not as a status-oriented measure of success, in the way that some of the men did. This endorses McGowan and Hart's assessment (1992), that women are more likely to choose a job because it is consistent with their values than because it pays well, and Mason's conclusion (1994), that men value wages/benefits most highly, whereas women place most importance on respect.

The implication that, for women managers, the content of the job they do is more important than the status which it endows also finds support in the literature: Hennig and Jardim (1978) suggest that women regard the jobs they do as a source of

satisfaction in their own right, rather than a means to develop their career. Marshall's research (1984) showed that women were most interested in the potential challenge, interest and growth within an individual job, and only thought about moving on to a new position when they felt that this source of interest had been exhausted. Asplund (1988) intimates that "men want a career, women want to do something interesting".

One of the central contributions of this research, however, is that not only does it describe how women managers' conceptions of career success differ from men's, it also demonstrates the variety of ways in which women define their own success, based on internal and intangible criteria. As described in section 7.2, aspects of the Expert's and Self-Realiser's definitions of career success reflect the findings of earlier studies which investigated what female managers wanted from their careers.

The Self-Realiser's conception of success, based on the idea of achievement at a very personal level, in particular echoes much of this earlier research, which showed that women managers wanted challenge and personal growth from their careers, rather than external material success (e.g. Hennig and Jardim 1978, Donnell and Hall 1980, Marshall 1984, Asplund 1988, Nicholson and West 1988, Alban-Metcalf 1989, White et al. 1992). The literature concludes, as Marshall (1984) says, that "challenge and satisfaction in a particular job" are of more importance to women than "recurrent promotion for its own sake".

While this may give the impression that women's conceptions of success are as stereotypical as the "traditional" organisational model of career success men are supposed to favour, the findings of this research demonstrate clearly that this is not the case. They show that women managers are more likely to see success in terms of internal and intangible criteria than men, but they also indicate that the criteria women use are not always related to personal achievement, as some of the literature might suggest.

Indeed, the largest group of women found in this study was that of the Experts, who did not see their career success in terms of personal achievement at all, but viewed it rather as accomplishment and personal recognition. While less has been written about the importance of these criteria for success, there are indications in the literature of the value some managers place on them: Hennig and Jardim (1978) claim that women treat each job as an opportunity to show that they can perform well; Beutell and Brenner (1986) found that they valued accomplishment and use of knowledge

more highly than men. Mason (1994), Alban-Metcalf (1989) and Kaufman and Feters (1980) all suggest that getting some kind of personal recognition is very important to women, a view endorsed by White et al. (1992) who concluded that being given feedback and recognition for their achievement was crucial for a number of the women who took part in their research.

This research has also shown that, while men were more likely to see their success in organisational terms, the number of women who were Influencers was in fact almost equal to the number of female Self-Realisers and Experts, suggesting that there are some men and women who have very similar ideas about success. Indeed, White et al. (1992) found that influence and autonomy were seen as desirable career outcomes by their sample of "successful" women. It is not surprising, however, that the group of Climbers is exclusively male, since the definition of career success in the external terms which the Climbers primarily use has, as described in section 7.2, been described as typically "masculine" by writers such as Gallos (1989) and Powell and Mainiero (1992).

The issue of goal-setting and competition in a career emerged from the research as an area where differences between male and female managers were notably apparent, especially when the attitudes of the Climbers and the Experts are compared. Men, in particular Climbers, were far more likely than women to set themselves work-oriented goals and to view the work place as a competitive arena where success has to be "fought" for; women, especially Experts, were unlikely to have any work goals at all. The "male" attitude that a career is a kind of competition, with winners and losers, reflects the traditional concept of career development where "success" equates with reaching the top of the organisational hierarchy (e.g. Gould and Penley 1984, O'Reilly and Chatman 1994, Melamed 1995). Rosenbaum (1979) for example, actually depicts career development as a "tournament", with early "winners" being more likely to achieve "success" later in their careers. The contrast between careers driven by goals and careers without goals is described by Marshall (1989 and 1995) as the difference between "agentic" and "communion-based" career planning, which she believes is largely a difference between male and female attitudes to careers, as discussed in section 7.2.

However, the findings of the research give less obvious support to the notion that women managers may be more inclined than men to see career success as just a part of a wider success they want to achieve in their life as a whole (e.g. Gallos 1989, Bell

and Nkomo 1992, Powell and Mainiero 1992 and 1993). In the pilot stage of the research, there was some evidence that this might be the case: it emerged that the women did see their career success as just one part of a wider concept of life success, whereas the men perceived career success as something which generally determined how successful they felt in their life as a whole. It was not easy to discern a similar difference in the second stage of the research, where most of the managers interviewed saw career success as simply one part of life success, and there was no clear distinction between the men and the women in this respect.

The conclusion which should be drawn from this is not that writers such as Gallos are wrong in their attempts to depict women's attitudes to career success - the research in fact endorses their opinion and shows that women managers do see career success as just one part of a bigger picture representing life success - but that men are more like women than they suggest, in that they too tend to see career success as part of life success. This finding concurs with the work of Sekaran and Hall (1989), Herriot and Pemberton (1995) and Scase and Goffee (1989), who claim that all managers are now more than ever drawn to their personal lives as a source of satisfaction and as a result are less likely to sacrifice success in their life outside work for career success. Hall (1990) and Kimmel (1993) also suggest that men who achieve success on "traditional" terms often feel that something is missing from their lives.

Yet this research does provide some evidence that success in areas of life other than work remains more important for women than men and is more likely to affect their definitions of career success. Of the seven Self-Realisers, five of the women saw balancing their career with their home life as a vital part of their definition of career success, and the other two, one woman and one man, believed that a desire for balance tempered their idea of success; it is interesting to note that this desire for balance does not just relate to the practicalities of bringing up a family, since only two of the Self-Realisers had children. This reflects the belief discussed in section 7.2 that, for women, a career "is not as distinct an entity...as it is for men" (Gallos 1989).

Furthermore, the women who took part in the research were much more likely than the men to be able to imagine totally changing the direction of their career and doing something completely different, outside a conventional business environment. This also appears to support Marshall's suggestion (1995) that "many women have more

open senses of career than do many men", and that "women may make decisions as life choices rather than simply as career choices".

It is interesting to consider why men's and women's conceptions of career success appear to be so dissimilar: it is likely that the divergent ways in which they perceive success relate both to the process of socialisation of men and women and to their organisational experiences:

It is recognised that the psychological development of males and females is different. As Gilligan (1980 and 1982) describes, the development of women's gender identity is linked to attachment and connection with others, whereas men's is tied to separation and individuation. As a consequence, men are more likely to see their own career success in terms of competitive achievement, much as the "traditional" model of organisational success describes it (e.g. Rosenbaum 1979, Chatman and O'Reilly 1994, Melamed 1995). Women, on the other hand, will find it hard to associate with a notion of success which emphasises a degree of competition that they have not been brought up to value (Marshall 1989, Gallos 1989).

As discussed above, the research showed that men, especially Climbers, were much more inclined to view their career development as some sort of competitive game, with winners and losers, which, if they were "successful", offered them a chance to play "in the big league". They also often mapped out goals and targets to help them achieve the competitive "success" they craved. Women, on the other hand, were less likely to have had any clear idea at all about what they wanted from a career when they started work. This finding reflects Marshall's conclusion (1995) that many of the women she studied had "unclear" starts to their careers. It also endorses research which has tried to compare women's adult development with the "male" model developed by Levinson (1978) (e.g. Bardwick 1980, Barnett and Baruch 1980). Roberts and Morgan (1987), for example, found that, rather than forming a Dream concerned with their future occupation in their twenties, women's Dreams were split between work and relationships.

The process of psychological development for females seems to explain the greater emphasis the women managers in the research were found to place on achieving a balance between their career and other aspects of their lives too: as Gilligan says (1980), women define their identity "in the context of relationships and judged by a standard of responsibility and care". It may also account for the fact that, for some

women, success experienced vicariously through others, was as important to them as their own success.

The effect of the process of psychological development on the conceptions of career success male and female managers hold is doubtless heightened by the very different career development experiences they enjoy in the workplace. Women managers have to operate within a poorer structure of opportunity at work (Astin 1984) than men, with management still being perceived to be a "masculine" career and bias against women as a result persisting (Powell 1993, Mills 1992). There are far fewer women managers, usually in less senior, more specialist positions, and often earning less than their male counterparts (e.g. Davidson and Cooper 1992, Larwood and Gattiker 1987, Morgan et al. 1993, Stroh 1992, Cox and Harquail 1991).

In this research, while a deliberate attempt was made to interview managers across the range of grades, of those who were in the most senior positions (defined here as grades 5 and 6), four were men and only one was a woman. There were also more men than women in general management jobs, generally acknowledged to be of higher status (Davidson and Cooper 1992). While it was not the subject of this research, some of the women who were interviewed were anxious to talk about what they perceived to be the "problems" for women managers within BT.

The fact that the women tended to occupy specialist roles may partially explain why they were more likely to see career success as Experts; the connection between being an Expert and having a technical/functional career anchor (Schein 1993) has already been discussed in section 7.2. It is interesting to note, however, that the Self-Realisers found in this research were also all in specialist roles: type of position alone clearly does not determine how success is viewed.

It may be, as some writers have argued (e.g. Cox and Harquail 1991), that women managers adjust their ideas about what they believe is career success for them to match the kind of "rewards" they believe organisations can offer them. Thus they do not see it in terms of hierarchical seniority because they do not perceive that this is achievable for them. It is also conceivable that if the nature of women's psychological development means that they do not see career success in terms of hierarchical progression and salary growth in the first place, they will never be driven to achieve in this way. Nonetheless, in all likelihood there is no single explanation for the differences between male and female managers' definitions of career success:

they are the result of the relationship of complicated reciprocity which exists between their psychology and the pattern of their career development.

For example, women's managers' more "open" sense of career (Marshall 1995) can be linked both to their psychological development and the pattern their careers follow. The emphasis they place on relationships and their lack of competitive instinct (Gilligan 1982) means that it is more important for them to balance their work with the rest of their lives, and easier for them to imagine changing the direction of their career completely. The relative lack of opportunities they encounter at work is likely to reinforce these tendencies: as Schneer and Reitman (1994 and 1995) demonstrate, by mid-career women are likely to be less satisfied at work than they were earlier in their careers.

The apparent lack of confidence of some women, found in this research particularly amongst the women who took part in the first stage, may also be partly the result of their psychological development, which makes them uncomfortable with the idea of "competitive" organisational success, and partly the result of their organisational experiences: at work they may have to contend with "an often painful new awareness of oneself as a woman in a man's world" (Marshall 1984) and are less likely than their male colleagues to have their suitability for future organisational "success" endorsed. Lack of confidence is one factor which may make a manager see success like an Expert, in that they need the reinforcement of their competence and ability that personal recognition in the form of positive feedback gives them to feel successful. This may explain why young women, who enter the work place less well equipped psychologically than young men to countenance the idea of success as a competition (Rosenbaum 1979), are most likely to be Experts. The differences between older and younger managers in terms of how they perceive career success will be discussed in detail in section 7.4.

7.4 The effect of age on managers' conceptions of career success

This research has shown that managers appear to hold different ideas about career success at different ages: older managers, especially men, are likely to be Influencers. More variation was found amongst older women, who were Influencers, Self-Realisers and Experts; younger men tended to be Climbers, whereas younger women were inclined to be Experts. This suggests that, unless a strong cohort effect is in operation, the possibility of which will be discussed below, managers' conceptions of

career success change as they grow older. Older managers, especially men, are less likely to emphasise external criteria for success and more likely to base their definitions of success on intangible criteria, chiefly those related to organisational influence.

There is considerable support from the literature for the idea that external success criteria, such as hierarchical position and salary level, become less important to managers as they grow older, particularly once they are in their forties (e.g. Kalleberg and Losocco 1983, O'Connor and Wolfe 1987, Lynn et al. 1996, Clark et al. 1996). Korman et al. (1981) demonstrated that achieving career success in external organisational terms was insufficient to make many middle-aged (male) managers feel successful; Evans and Bartolomé (1981) found that (male) managers showed "some degree of career disengagement" after the age of 40. Nicholson and West (1988) concluded that the period of "young middle-age" was a watershed for managers, after which their need for growth and need for rewards from work declined.

Less has been written about how managers conceptualise success when external criteria cease to be of value to them: Nicholson and West (1988) suggest that managers "nearing the end of their career" are "more relaxed, fulfilled, and less ambitious and are less concerned with material rewards"; instead, they are more concerned with "opportunities to influence and contribute to their environment". O'Connor and Wolfe (1987) suggest that managers' need for autonomy increases, as a result of a mid-life transition.

This supports the conclusions of this research, in that it found that an interest in external criteria was replaced by a tendency to see career success more in terms of intangible criteria, especially influence. In particular, managers in their forties often related success to achieving something at work which would "outlive" them: most of them were very concerned with finding an opportunity to undertake a task or a role that would enable them to leave their mark on an organisation in some way; some, notably the managers who took part in the first stage of the research, saw this in terms of setting up their own business. Managers in this age group were also more likely than younger managers to associate career success with having a degree of autonomy, as O'Connor and Wolfe (1987) suggest.

The research findings likewise indicated that managers in their forties placed more importance on internal criteria for career success, especially enjoyment criteria, such as finding their work interesting. Furthermore, personal recognition appeared to become a more important measure of success for older men. This may reflect the view of some writers (e.g. Nicholson and West 1988, Scase and Goffee 1989, Clark et al. 1996) that, as managers' careers develop, they alter their needs to suit what they perceive organisations have to offer them, changing their ideas about career success as a result. This is likely to mean a reduction in the emphasis put on external criteria for success and an increase in the importance assigned to other criteria. For example, say Nicholson and West (1988), older managers, who perceive that there are no longer opportunities for high earnings and advancement, "make adjustments in the value they place on these factors and so they continue to be fulfilled".

An interesting subsidiary finding of the research was the existence of small group of managers, consisting of men in their late thirties or forties, whose ideas about career success did not follow the general pattern as described above. They were managers who had not actually achieved much hierarchical or financial "success" in their careers to date; presumably for this reason, they had not made the kind of transition described above, and either still saw career success as Climbers, or placed a greater emphasis on external criteria for success than other managers of their age. The existence of this group is consistent with O'Connor and Wolfe's conclusion (1987) that, for managers who are less successful hierarchically, concerns about "stagnation and security" may be more important in mid-life than a desire for autonomy.

The research also showed that the pattern of changes in women managers' ideas about career success was not the same as the "typical" male transition from Climber to Influencer. This is not surprising, given that female managers' conceptions of success tended to be different from men's in the first place, as discussed in section 7.3.

As described in section 7.3, young women managers were most likely to be Experts, seeing their own success in terms of accomplishment and personal recognition. It has been suggested that an emphasis on these particular criteria for success could relate to a lack of confidence. If this were the case, then it might mean that women discarded this idea of success when their confidence levels improved as a result of increased accomplishment and a certain amount of approbation for their "success". Marshall (1984), for example, agrees that achievement at work can be "the foundation for a base of personal confidence" for women; in her later research (1995), she found that

"self-confidence came later" for some of the women she studied. This conclusion is endorsed by evidence from the research which showed that accomplishment criteria for success were less important for older managers than they were for younger ones, and that, by the time they were in their forties, women were as likely to be Influencers and Self-Realisers as they were Experts. It is interesting to note that the idea of leaving a mark on the organisation was as potent for the women in their forties as it was for men, whether or not their primary view of career success was that of the Influencer.

Some of the women in their thirties and forties talked about how their confidence and ambition had increased as they got older. Their attitude adds weight to O'Connor and Wolfe's (1987) conclusion that women invest more in their careers during and after a mid-life transition than they do before. On the other hand, the poorer structure of opportunity women face at work (Astin 1984), as described in section 7.3, undoubtedly also affects women's ideas about success as they grow older. Several of the women interviewed who were in their late thirties and forties doubted that they could move further up the organisational hierarchy, even if they wanted to. This may relate to Schneer and Reitman's assertion (1994 and 1995) that women's levels of satisfaction at work drop as they get older, and Bishop and Solomon's conclusion (1989) that women in mid-career have an external locus of control, compared with women earlier in their career, whose locus of control is internal.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the pattern of changes in women's ideas about career success which emerged was much less clear than the pattern for men. Nevertheless, while external criteria for success were generally less important for women than they were for men in the first place, the oldest women interviewed were the least interested in them and often reported having been more interested in them when they were younger. This suggests that in this respect, the women managers were similar to the men, in that they emphasised external criteria for success less as they got older, albeit from a starting point where they placed less emphasis on them in the first place.

As discussed above, one possible explanation for the differences in managers' conceptions of career success according to age which the research has found may be that, as their careers develop, managers alter their needs to suit what they believe the organisation has to offer them (Nicholson and West 1988). However, the differences

can also be elucidated by reference to adult development theory and career development theory:

Levinson (1978) and Sheehy (1976 and 1996) both propose that adults pass through periods of transition in their lives, in particular at around the age of 30 and the age of 40. These transitional periods allow individuals to evaluate their life as it is and restructure it, if necessary. The transition at 30 can be a time of flux during which a person evaluates "the flaws and limitations of the first adult life structure" (Levinson 1978). The transition at 40, described by some writers (e.g. O'Connor and Wolfe 1987, Schein 1993) as a mid-life or mid-career crisis, is seen as particularly significant, because, as Levinson (1978) says "if a man (sic) at 40 has failed to realise his most cherished dreams, he must begin to come to terms with the failure and arrive at a new set of choices around which to rebuild his life". Sheehy (1996) claims that the age 40 transition entails "throwing off new stereotypes, letting go of outgrown priorities, and developing real clarity about what is most relevant...for the future".

Schein (1993) alludes to a period of transition as the career develops which he designates as a stage of "mid-career crisis and reassessment". During this stage, he says, the key tasks for the individual are to evaluate whether they are in the right career, whether their career has lived up to their expectations, and how well it fits in with the rest of their life. This reassessment may result in "a determination to climb the ladder as far as possible" or a "levelling off". Marshall (1995) provides evidence for a similar mid-career "review" affecting women's conceptions of career success, which she believes often results in women becoming more in tune with their own inner needs and less concerned with organisational values.

This research did yield evidence that some managers, especially those in their thirties, were aware that they were passing through or had already passed through some kind of transitional process during which they re-evaluated what they wanted from their life and their career; the process generally involved a reformulation of their ideas about career success. The kind of changes they described usually related to becoming more aware of what was most important to them at a deep personal level and placing less emphasis on external success than they had in the past. Other managers talked about how their attitudes to their own success had changed later on, in their forties.

It is clearly not possible to describe the development of every individual and their career in the same way: theories of adult development and career development have

been rightly attacked for not taking account of the dissimilarities of women (e.g. Roberts and Morgan 1987) and the discontinuities and difficulties of their career development (e.g. Astin 1984, Larwood and Gattiker 1987). In fact, the research findings suggest that an important reassessment of what women want from their career may actually occur earlier than in mid-career: the Self-Realisers, who had an extremely internally focused idea of career success and were most concerned with achieving balance in their lives, tended to have arrived at their conception of success after a period of deep reflection triggered by an event such as marriage or doubts about their career direction in their early thirties or even their late twenties. This may relate to Powell and Mainiero's assertion (1992) that balancing success in a career and success in one's personal life remains more important to women than it is to men.

It is of course conceivable that the attitudes to career success held by managers at different ages may be at least partly the result of cohort effects within the group. For example, levels of pay could be more central to the conceptions of success held by young managers today, because, unlike their predecessors, they all leave university with large debts and student loans to repay. Furthermore, a number of the managers in their forties talked about how they had struggled to view their work as a career, not just a job; this was not mentioned by any of the younger managers, who all saw their work as a career. Given the evidence described above for managers' awareness of periods of transition, however, cohort effects do not seem capable of providing a complete explanation for the variations found in how managers of different ages conceive their own career success.

There is also undoubtedly a hygiene factor effect (Herzberg 1968) which may influence managers' ideas about career success, in that for some people, once they have achieved a particular position in the organisational hierarchy and a certain salary level, they have no desire to progress beyond them. This may explain why older managers who have not achieved hierarchical and financial success still place importance on such external criteria in their definitions of success. Nevertheless, the literature on adult development and career development (e.g. Levinson 1978, Schein 1993) suggests that this cannot provide a complete explanation for the differences found in ideas about career success according to age: there is strong evidence for the existence of some kind of mid-life or mid-career transition which influences managers' perceptions of what career success means to them (e.g. O'Connor and Wolfe 1987). One must conclude, therefore, that it is the interwoven process of adult and career development, combined with a sensitivity to the reality of what the

organisation may be able to offer the individual, which underpins the variation in attitudes men and women hold about their career success at different ages.

7.5 The research findings in a wider context

As well as linking the findings to earlier research concerning career success, it is important to consider them from a broader organisational and social perspective too. Managers' ideas about career success do not arise in isolation but should be set within the wider political, organisational and socio-historical context in which they exist. In particular, this section considers the findings in the light of the kind of organisational changes which were discussed in Chapter 1, sections 1.2 and 1.3, and the "new" psychological contract between organisations and employees which has arisen as a result, and the position of women in organisations. It also explores questions and complexities arising from the research which it was not able to answer.

7.5.1 Organisational change and the "new" psychological contract

As discussed in Chapter 1, sections 1.2 and 1.3, the organisational context in which managerial careers must develop has changed considerably over the past ten years. Many businesses have "delayed" by flattening their managerial hierarchy, in particular removing middle management grades. The ostensible reason for this has been to improve communication and speed up decision making, but undoubtedly these changes have also been driven by a desire to cut costs. In BT, for example, where this research was carried out, there are now just six levels in the management hierarchy (Herriot and Pemberton 1995), compared with 12 before the restructurings described in Chapter 3, section 3.2.3; at the same time the company has reduced the number of its employees by half - between four and five thousand managers' jobs disappeared in the Project Sovereign reorganisation alone (Newell and Dopson 1995).

Clearly this means that, for the managers who remain in organisations, there are far more limited opportunities for hierarchical advancement and thus less chance to achieve success in the external terms by which it has historically been defined (O'Reilly and Chatman 1994). Far fewer of those who start their careers as ambitious young graduates today will be able to scale the hierarchy to anywhere near the same extent as their predecessors could. For those currently trapped in lower and middle

management positions, the outlook is, in terms of their potential progression through the hierarchy, equally bleak.

In addition, other aspects of the changes which have taken place in organisations serve to exacerbate further the demise of the traditional hierarchical career. Not only do managerial careers today offer less opportunities for progression, they are also far more precarious. The future appears to be one where companies will employ just a small core of permanent staff, with others being brought in on a temporary basis, as and when required (Handy 1989). Managers who have survived redundancy programmes not surprisingly see their own future as very insecure, whilst having to cope with an increasing workload (Herriot and Pemberton 1995). The career is now seen as a "boundaryless" entity, independent of organisational boundaries (Arthur 1994); as such, responsibility for its development rests not with the organisation, but with the individual, who will have to acquire the right mix of skills and competencies to survive in this new "freelance" environment (Kanter 1989).

In consequence, there has been a profound shift in the psychological contract between the manager and the organisation. In the past organisations offered managers in their employment, amongst other things, job security, promotion prospects, and training and development; in return managers offered them loyalty, commitment and trust (Herriot and Pemberton 1995). The psychological contract between organisation and manager today is much more likely to be one where the organisation is prepared to offer no more than a well-paid job, for which in return the employee is expected to offer long hours, additional responsibility, a wider range of skills, and tolerance of change and ambiguity (Herriot and Pemberton 1995).

The effect of these changes on how managers might define their own career success is potentially huge. Many of the success criteria which the managers who took part in this study used could be seen as a response to the context of organisational delayering and the "new" psychological contract between organisation and employee. For example, some of the managers emphasised the idea of a sense of accomplishment as an important part of their idea of career success. As a measure of success, accomplishment may be more important to managers who perceive their career to be "boundaryless", in that it is acknowledged (Kanter 1989) that those managers who succeed in this environment will need to be extremely competent at what they do. The idea of seeing career success in terms of being an expert may also be closely related to this.

Likewise, it is possible that getting a sense of achievement from what one does at work, a criterion which many of the managers used to define their own career success, may become the only thing by which success can truly be judged in an environment where the boundaryless career is the norm and career success cannot be computed in organisational terms at all.

Equally, other success criteria which the managers used could be perceived as "alternatives" to the traditional criteria of career success based on hierarchical advancement: it may be that they choose to emphasise these in their definitions of career success because they realise, consciously or subconsciously, that hierarchical success is no longer available to them (Nicholson and West 1988). If this is the case, then changes in definitions of career success may be the result of a re-conceptualisation resulting from shifts in the organisational context, as well as the process of adult and career development.

Examples of criteria which might be seen by the managers as "acceptable" alternatives to the traditional criteria of career success include personal recognition, respect, influence and autonomy. It is likely that many managers need to believe that their achievements at work will be recognised in some way for them to feel successful: seeing success in terms of personal recognition and respect might therefore reflect an awareness by some that in the current organisational climate they are unlikely to achieve organisational recognition of their achievement, as represented by progression through the organisational hierarchy; as a result they place greater emphasis on getting the kind of recognition they know is still within their grasp, that is recognition in personal terms, such as winning awards, being invited to attend prestigious conferences and being given feedback about achievements.

Viewing career success in terms of intangible criteria like influence, responsibility and autonomy may operate in a similar way. It is feasible that "success" in organisations is likely to become increasingly equated with criteria of influence in a context where managers operate in a "flattened" hierarchy with little opportunity for progression. It is interesting to note, for example, that ambitious younger managers, especially women, often represented their advancement within the organisational context as an increase in responsibility, rather than status. Likewise for the managers who emphasised internal and intangible criteria for success at the expense of external ones, autonomy was frequently seen as an important dimension of career success,

perhaps because they realised that achieving the level in the hierarchy which traditionally would have given managers greater autonomy by right was no longer a possibility.

This was particularly true of the older managers, for whom internal and intangible criteria for career success were generally more important than external criteria, especially influence criteria such as autonomy and leaving a mark. This may be because they have greater awareness of and sensitivity to the organisational context in which their careers are set, thanks to their age and experience; it may also, as discussed in section 7.4, reflect the fact that, whatever the prevailing organisational climate, managers alter their needs as their careers develop to suit what they perceive they are likely to be offered (Nicholson and West 1988). (Of course women managers too were more likely to emphasise internal and intangible criteria for career success; the wider social and organisational context which may influence this will be discussed in detail in the next section.)

If the organisational context of layering and the "new" psychological contract lead managers to emphasise internal and intangible criteria for success, rather than external ones, this may go some way to explain why three of the four types of managers identified in this research, the Expert, the Influencer and the Self-Realiser, had conceptions of career success far removed from the traditional model of success as level of pay and position in the hierarchy, and why only seven of the 36 managers interviewed saw success in predominantly external terms, as Climbers.

The kind of success the Expert espouses may reflect what career success means in a boundaryless career, where, as described above, it focuses very much on the individual's skills and competencies, recognition of which will probably be in personal, not organisational terms. Likewise, the conception of career success held by the Self-Realiser, as achievement at a very personal level involving personal challenge and self-development, is also in keeping with the context of a career where organisational success is unattainable or means very little. Career success as the Influencer describes it in terms of the amount of organisational influence they can achieve is suited to an organisational environment where there is little opportunity to move up an organisational hierarchy but every chance to succeed through extending one's sphere of influence in a flatter organisational structure.

Yet there are indications that it is necessary to proceed with caution when discussing the extent of the effect of the organisational context on how managers conceive their own career success. Although it is acknowledged that managers can achieve career success in terms of salary level within the "new" psychological contract (Herriot and Pemberton 1995), relatively few of the managers who took part in this research saw the amount of money they earned as a measure of their career success. This is in strong contrast to the fact that level of pay has traditionally been seen as part of organisational success (O'Reilly and Chatman 1994).

Furthermore, the research showed that some managers continued to value and expect hierarchical advancement, despite the current organisational climate. There were indications that older male managers who had not achieved success in external terms were particularly anxious to do so, despite the apparent lack of opportunities to progress further up the hierarchy; this was borne out by the existence of two older Climbers in the study. In addition, other managers, who were Experts or Influencers, valued hierarchical success too, because they saw it as a further form of personal recognition or a means of gaining greater influence, not for reasons of status in the way that the Climbers did.

These findings, taken together with the work of earlier researchers, such as Korman et al. (1981) and the distinct differences found between men and women managers in this study in terms of how they conceived success, suggest that the organisational context of layering and the "new" psychological contract may influence but probably does not wholly explain the various ways in which managers define career success for themselves.

7.5.2 Women in organisations

While changes in the organisational environment in which managerial careers develop may have affected the way in which managers conceive career success, as described above, women's ideas about career success have always been formed against the backdrop of quite a different organisational and social context from that which their male colleagues experience. Just as the current climate of organisational change may lead managers to re conceptualise what career success means to them, so the particular context in which women's careers operate may mean that they come to define success in ways unlike the conventional notion of it as level of pay and position in the hierarchy.

As discussed in Chapter 2, sections 2.2.4 and 2.2.5, the structure of opportunity which women managers must contend with at work is quite distinct from that which men enjoy. Management has traditionally been perceived to be a "male" career (Schein 1973) and stereotypes about the masculinity of the profession continue to persist (Powell 1993), despite the best intentions of organisational equal opportunity programmes and the like. This is borne out by the fact that in most countries women still occupy only a minority of managerial positions, especially ones at a senior level: in the UK, 12.3% of managers and just 3.3% of directors are female (Institute of Management 1996). It has been argued that a "glass ceiling", which prevents women from rising above a senior level, still exists in a majority of organisations (Davidson and Cooper 1992).

It is acknowledged that the persistence of stereotypes about the masculinity of management as a profession and the continuing male dominance of senior positions within organisations mean that men are likely to be regarded more favourably for promotion, particularly when key positions need to be filled (Kanter 1993, Burton 1992); in addition, they have better access to organisational networks and mentoring relationships, considered to be essential for successful career development (Powell and Mainiero 1992). It is not surprising, therefore, to discover that, compared with their male colleagues, women managers enjoy fewer "meaningful" promotions, occupy less influential positions and earn less throughout their careers (Larwood and Gattiker 1987, Morgan et al. 1993, Stroh et al. 1992, Cox and Harquail 1991). Thus the organisational context in which women managers' careers develop is very different to that of their male counterparts.

It is not difficult to imagine how this might affect the way in which women arrive at their own definitions of career success. If they perceive that the traditional model of success, based on hierarchical position and level of pay, is not readily available to them in organisations, then they might choose to refocus their ideas of what success means to them on other less tangible and more internal criteria, such as accomplishment, achievement and personal recognition, which they believe to be more easily attainable, for much the same reason as some suggest older managers do (Nicholson and West 1988); people alter their needs in terms of what they conceive success to be in order to match what they believe organisations can offer them, with the aim of ensuring a degree of psychological fulfilment. Cox and Harquail (1991), for example, argue that women come to have different expectations about salary

levels, which leads them to accept lower salary offers than men would accept, both at the start of and during the course of their careers.

The effect of the organisational context in which women's careers develop could therefore provide at least a partial explanation of the key differences found in this research between the men and women in terms of how they conceived their own career success, discussed in section 7.3: the women were far less inclined than the men to measure their own success by the external criteria of hierarchical position and level of pay, and far more likely to base their definitions of success on internal criteria, such as achievement and accomplishment, and intangible criteria, such as personal recognition and, to a lesser extent, influence. The fact that the youngest women put more emphasis on external criteria than the older ones suggests that full awareness of the restrictions the limited structure of opportunity they have to contend with at work places upon them comes with greater experience of the organisational environment.

The organisational context of women's careers may give them little option but to define their own success in personal rather than organisational terms. Thus within the structure of the typology of managerial career success developed by this research, women managers were more likely than men to see their own career success as an Expert or a Self-Realiser, whose criteria for success are primarily internal and intangible, and less likely to view it as a Climber, whose criteria for success are closest to the external model of career success traditionally endorsed within organisations (Melamed 1994).

Moreover, the effects of the poorer structure of opportunity women have to contend with at work has historically been compounded by the wider social context in which they develop as adults. As discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.2.3, women's psychological development has traditionally been very different from that of men. Women's gender identity is defined through attachment and connection with others, whereas men's is tied to separation and individuation (Chodorow 1974, Gilligan 1982). Consequently, it is more difficult for women to see their own success in terms of the competitive achievement men favour, which is represented in the organisational context by hierarchical advancement, as epitomised by Rosenbaum's description of career development as a "tournament", with early "winners" being more likely to achieve "success" later in their careers.

The effect of the social context in which women develop is likely to mean that they might be inclined to view competitive, hierarchical success as "unfeminine" and beyond their grasp as women. One can see how this could reinforce the effect of the poor structure of opportunity women managers have to contend with at work, in that, even before they become aware that hierarchical and financial success are not as easily available to them as they are to their male colleagues, as women they are less inclined to embrace this model of success in the first place.

The research findings appear to endorse this conclusion, in that the men were much more likely than the women to view the workplace as a competitive arena, where success has to be "fought" for, with hierarchical positions as "goals" which one aims at in order to develop one's career, as discussed in section 7.3. The idea of success held by the Climbers, primarily as hierarchical position and level of pay, was underpinned by the notion of the career as some kind of competition: it is interesting to note that no female Climbers emerged from this research, a finding which would seem to reinforce the strong effect of the social and organisational contexts in which women's ideas about career success develop.

The complex relationship between these social and organisational contexts is well illustrated by the complex conundrum of women's self confidence and its potential effect on their definitions of success, an issue which has already been discussed briefly in section 7.3. It has been suggested that one of the reasons why young women in particular see success as Experts, that is in terms of accomplishment and personal recognition, may be that they lack confidence when they embark upon their organisational careers. This lack of confidence at the start of a career, previously identified by Marshall (1995), is likely to be the result of the social context in which women's ideas about careers and career success develop: the socialisation process for young women which, as described above, does not equip them to deal with the kind of goal oriented, competitive careers organisations imbued with masculine values support.

An emphasis on success as personal recognition could be a response to this lack of confidence, in that, as discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.5.3, young women might be unable to feel that they are good at what they do or successful in any way unless they are given feedback that confirms this. Experience of working appears to help boost women's self-confidence in some way as they grow older (Marshall 1995): the women in their forties who took part in this research were as likely to be Self-

Realisers and Influencers as they were Experts, and, as such, were less inclined to see their own success in terms of some kind of personal recognition of their accomplishment.

Yet, paradoxically, while organisational experience may go some way to overcome the effects of women's socialisation, there is also counter evidence that a growing awareness of the unfavourable organisational context women must contend with at work may undermine their confidence further and lead them, as their careers develop, to a view of career success even further removed from the external criteria of hierarchical position and level of pay than the one which they held early in their career. This view is supported by earlier research: Schneer and Reitman (1994 and 1995), for example, found that, by mid-career, women reported reduced levels of career satisfaction; Bishop and Solomon (1989) discovered a tendency for women's locus of control to switch from being internal to becoming external as their careers developed.

In this research, there was evidence that younger women were more inclined to include external criteria in their definition of success than older ones: the group of managers who put least emphasis on pay and position as criteria for success were all women in their forties. While some of the women in their thirties and forties talked about how their confidence had grown as they got older, as discussed in section 7.3, several doubted that they could move further up the organisational hierarchy, even if they wanted to, perhaps suggesting a lack of confidence of a different kind, not in their ability to perform well at work, but in their ability to achieve hierarchical progression on the same terms as men, as suggested by Schneer and Reitman (1994 and 1995) and Bishop and Solomon (1989). This might have led them to lessen further the emphasis they placed on external criteria and define their own career success even more in internal and intangible terms. Thus it can be seen that the social and organisational contexts in which women's ideas about career success develop intertwine to reinforce the consequences they engender.

7.5.3 Areas of further questioning

Not surprisingly, the process of conducting the research surfaced numerous ideas and areas of questioning not directly connected to the task of answering the research questions posed in Chapter 1, section 1.5, but intriguing in their own right. It is of value to highlight some of these themes and complexities, as well suspicions about

the research findings, in order to add a further dimension to the context of the study and its findings.

While the research has successfully conceptualised what career success means to managers, some interesting nuances and puzzlements related to the idea of success remain to be explored. The research proceeded on the basis that every manager interviewed would have a conception of what success meant to them at a personal level, but, to some, there was also a sense in which success was more broadly conceived. When asked to describe occasions when they had felt particularly successful, they saw this "success" in organisational, rather than personal terms, that is what made them feel especially successful was when what they did benefited or contributed to the organisation in some way, not necessarily when they achieved personal benefit. It is interesting to note that those managers who talked about success of this kind tended to be Experts and Self-Realisers, rather than Influencers or Climbers, suggesting perhaps that managers who see career success in more internal terms may have an "unselfish" vision of success. A good example of this was Steve, who saw his own career success very much in terms of meeting other peoples' needs.

Related to this is the idea of vicarious success, discussed briefly in section 5.5.3. The idea of achieving success through other peoples' achievements was important to a group of managers which was mainly female, but did include some men. This concept of vicarious success sometimes meant coaching and developing subordinates so that they could fulfil their full potential - one manager talked about the success he felt he had achieved from "nursing" one of his staff through a crisis at the start of their career in that department to the point where they were now one of its most effective contributors - and on other occasions meant achieving success through teams, rather than individually. The managers who valued vicarious success did not see it as a substitute for their own success but as something which enhanced and enriched it. This group included Influencers, Experts and Self-Realisers, but none of the Climbers, implying once again that the Climber's highly external vision of career success may at some level be more "selfish" than other ways of defining success.

The relationship between internal, intangible and external criteria for success for the four types of managers the research found existed has been explored in some detail in Chapters 4, and 5 and 6. It was not germane to the conceptualisation developed in those chapters to discuss exactly how Climbers did regard internal and intangible

criteria, which, with the exception of enjoyment, were not a part of their idea of career success at all. However, it is interesting to note here that, for many of the Climbers, internal and intangible criteria appeared to operate almost as hygiene factors, that is to say, the managers who were Climbers did not value them in their own right, but felt that they would be concerned if they were missing. Adam, for example, did not in the least see respect as part of his idea of career success, but said that he became "very angry" if he did not get it at work. This seems to be related to the sense in which Climbers see accomplishment too, as a matter for concern only if it is lacking.

While Chapter 6, section 6.7, examined the findings in the light of key demographic factors apart from gender and age, other potential influences on the managers' definitions of career success emerged from the research which have not so far been discussed in any detail. While it is not possible to quantify the effect these influences may have, their existence poses some intriguing questions. Some of the managers broached the issue of social class and its possible effect on their attitudes to their careers and what success meant to them. These were generally managers who felt that their social background had not prepared them to embark upon a "career"; this, they believed, had made it more difficult for them to envisage what a career meant and how success within it could be defined. (This did not necessarily relate to their educational background as well: one of the managers who raised this issue in fact had a Cambridge degree.) The influence of social class and family background was seen as such that, if members of one's family did not have "professional" careers, it was more difficult as a young adult to adjust to idea of having one and come to terms with related career development issues. This raises interesting questions about the source of ideas about careers and career success.

The second important potential influence relates to what might be described as the managers' "moral" stance. A group of managers, often for reasons of religion or possibly politics, underpinned their definition of career success with high ethical standards. This often meant that they valued integrity criteria highly, and wanted in some way to be seen as "good" managers in the moral as well as the practical sense of the word. The apparent effect of this was to temper rather than dominate their definition of career success. This was often expressed as putting something back into the organisation, as well as taking something from it in terms of their own personal success.

While this issue was partially raised in Chapter 6, section 6.7, in relation to the race of some of the research participants, the group of managers for whom morality appeared to influence ideas about career success strongly was larger and more diverse than the managers discussed there. Once again, it is fascinating to note that the group includes Influencers, Experts and Self-Realisers, but no Climbers, and intriguing to speculate about how and to what extent a person's moral philosophy influences their ideas about career success. Some of the issues this raises are also doubtless related to the idea of "selfish" and "unselfish" success discussed above.

Finally, in addition to drawing attention to potential influences on how ideas about career success are formed, there are interesting insights to be gained by viewing the data with suspicion and considering what hidden motives might lead managers to define career success in a particular way. The airing of these "suspicions" is not intended to undermine the typology which has been created by this research, but rather to allow it to be viewed in its wider context.

It is not inconceivable that some managers are unwilling to admit that they espouse a very external idea of career success because they feel that it would be crassly materialistic or politically inept to do so. They therefore adopt a definition of success closer to that of the Influencer, or perhaps even the Expert, than that of the Climber, for outward appearances at any rate. If this is the case, then of course the criteria on which they act in terms of their own career may be very different from those which they claim to embrace.

It is also possible that managers who have achieved "success" in external terms fail to see the importance which they place or have placed on such measures of career success, taking the external aspect of their success for granted, as it were. Suspicions of this kind about definitions of success might be particularly justified in the case of the Influencers, especially those who were in senior positions in BT. They tended to dismiss status and hierarchical position as unimportant, yet it is intriguing to speculate whether their view of these success criteria would be different, had they not already largely "achieved" them. The same doubt may even be cast, although to a lesser extent, on the ideas about success held by some of the Self-Realisers.

7.6 Limitations of the research findings

The research has greatly increased knowledge about how managers conceive their own career success. Nevertheless, it is important to note a number of limitations which may impinge upon its findings.

Most of the limitations relate to the methods used to carry out the research and as such have already been considered in detail in Chapter 3. The choice made to carry out all the field work within one organisation, namely BT, may impose some limitations on the findings in that it is conceivable the results are strongly influenced by the prevailing culture at BT. This seems unlikely given the fact that the research findings clearly build on, rather than contradict, existing literature in the field of career success, as indicated in this chapter. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.2.2, the interviewees were drawn from all parts of BT and many had worked for other organisations too. It is also important to note that this research is an exploratory study: it produced a typology of managerial career success which could be explored and developed further by carrying out more research in other organisations in the future.

The selection of the interviewees to take part in the research may involve its own limitations, an issue which was considered in Chapter 3, sections 3.2.5 and 3.2.6. The choice was made by BT employees, and as such may incorporate their own biases and prejudices. For example, particularly in the pilot stage of the research, a large number of managers working in the personnel function were selected. This form of "prejudice" in the choice of participants could affect the nature of the findings. Once again, the strong links between the findings and existing literature suggest that this has not been the case to any significant extent. This view is supported by the fact that, while managers in specialist roles may tend to have particular attitudes to their career (Schein 1993), there was no perfect "fit" between the type of position a manager held and the way in which they saw career success.

The findings may be limited by the fact that only one person, the researcher, carried out the data analysis, a consideration which was discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.4.2. Suffice it to say here that, while it is accepted that this may not be ideal, the exigencies of the PhD process made it unavoidable. In compensation, the researcher has sought out every possible opportunity for the analysis of the data and its

conclusions to be challenged by academic colleagues, and has given the incidence of "negative instances" full consideration, as demonstrated in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Other potential limitations of the research concern the complexities of the relationship between the researcher and the interviewee. As King (1994) says, "there can be no such thing as a 'relationship-free' interview". The researcher may be so different from the interviewees that they "throw up barriers to the acquisition of rich data" (Lofland and Lofland 1984); they may be so similar that they make inappropriate assumptions about the research data.

As discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.3.2, at the time the interviews took place, the researcher was aware that it felt "easier" to interview the women than the men. Reflection on this and examination of the interview transcripts during the process of data analysis seemed to indicate that, although all the interviews took the same form, the interviews with the men had tended to produce different kind of data from the interviews with the women. The men were more inclined to talk about the "facts" of their career, when they had appointed to specific jobs, how long they had stayed in them, and how their careers had developed, than to discuss their feelings about their careers. The women, on the other hand, were more likely to talk about their feelings. This could relate to differences in male and female styles of speaking identified by Tannen (1991), but may also reflect the fact that the men might have felt less comfortable talking about their feelings to a female researcher.

As a university educated woman in her late thirties living in London, I was also conscious that I was very similar in terms of my background to many of the managers I interviewed. Many of them had a lifestyle rather like mine and moved in similar social circles: they were often keen to find out about my career as well as discuss their own, especially my motivations to carry out doctoral research. This similarity appeared to me to be both a strength and a weakness. As a strength, it helped create a rapport between myself and the research participants, because we tended to "speak the same language"; as a weakness it could have been limiting in that it might have meant that I made too many assumptions about what they thought about career success during the interview process and whilst analysing the data.

Finally, the impenetrability of the topic being researched, discussed in Chapter 3, may itself place limitations on the research findings. It is acknowledged in the literature (e.g. Gattiker and Larwood 1990) that looking at career success from the individual's

point of view has not been an easy or popular subject for research. The process of eliciting definitions of career success during the interview process was sometimes difficult. Whilst all of the managers were able to form their own ideas about what career success meant to them, some struggled at times to formulate their views either through problems of articulacy or because of a lack of personal awareness. It is possible that, for whatever reason, some managers would not or could not articulate about what career success meant to them. Nevertheless, the strength of the patterns and concepts which emerged from the research and the relationship of these theoretical concepts to the existing literature suggests that the process of eliciting definitions of career success was generally successful.

7.7 Suggestions for future research

The most obvious avenue for future research is to repeat the study described here with other similar groups of managers in different organisations. The research has shown that managers' conceptions of their own career success can be best represented by a typology which includes four different kinds of managers in terms of how they see success: it found that there are four main ways in which career success can be viewed. However, it is conceivable that other, less common types of managers who see success in ways which are distinct from those identified in the study do exist: for example, it was not possible to describe two of the managers who took part in the research as any one of the four types. To carry out similar studies in other organisations would not only endorse the generalisability of this research's findings but would also hopefully identify any further types of manager in terms of how they see career success.

In addition, the research has indicated that gender and age both have an effect on managers' conceptions of career success. While the effect of gender emerged clearly, the effect of age was in some respects rather less obvious, especially for the women managers. The way in which these two factors affect ideas about success is complex, something which was particularly apparent when the effects of age were examined: while older managers' ideas about career success differ from those held by younger managers, the kind of change that they appear to undergo is not the same for men and women. To extend the research to include greater numbers of managers may illuminate patterns which in this study were not easy to see, especially when the older women were compared with the younger women. Further research could include managers in their fifties, which may illuminate even more how conceptions of

success change after a mid-life crisis. The most effective way to observe the effects of age on conceptions of career success, however, would be to turn this research into a longitudinal study, the possibility of which is currently under consideration.

Chapter 6, section 6.7, identified some of the factors, apart from gender and age, which appeared to have an effect on managers' ideas of success. These included race, hierarchical grade and educational background. Further research is needed to discover how important the influence they have on managers' conceptions of success really is. This study also indicated that, for many managers, career success is seen as just a part of life success. Little is as yet understood about the relationship between life success and career success: future research could usefully elucidate the nature of this relationship too.

Other directions future research could take would be to try to repeat the study in other countries, to determine whether the typology has international applicability or whether the effects of national culture on attitudes to the career (Derr and Laurent 1989) mean that it is only appropriate in a British context. Research is likewise needed to establish whether what is currently a typology of managerial career success can be extended to include other groups of professionals, such as doctors, lawyers and teachers.

Finally, while this study has expounded how managers define career success for themselves, it has been beyond its scope to give a full explanation of why different managers see success in different ways. Knowledge about careers and career success would be augmented considerably by research which looked at why such differences exist; in particular, our understanding of the position of women managers in organisations and the problems they face at work would undoubtedly be advanced by closer examination of the reasons why they see career success in a different way from men.

CHAPTER 8: POSTSCRIPT

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This chapter examines the findings in the context of the reasons for carrying out the research discussed at the beginning of Chapter 1. Section 8.1 explains why such a postscript is necessary. Section 8.2 examines the significance of the research findings for organisations; section 8.3 considers their significance for individual managers; section 8.4 discusses the personal significance of the findings for the researcher.

8.1 The necessity for a postscript

This research has answered the questions it set out to investigate and thereby added to knowledge about the concept of career success for managers: as discussed in the previous chapters, the different ways in which managers view their own career success can best be represented by a typology containing four types of manager, the Climber, the Expert, the Influencer and the Self-Realiser. The research has also shown that women managers tend to have different ideas about career success from men, and that older managers are likely to see success in a different way from their younger counterparts.

In Chapter 1, the reasons for carrying out the research were considered from a theoretical perspective, but also from the point of view of the researcher, of individual managers, and of organisations. Chapter 7 has discussed the contribution the research has made to career success theory; the final task therefore must be to reflect briefly on the significance of the findings to the researcher, to individual managers and to organisations. In order to mirror the discussion which took place in Chapter 1, these issues will be considered in reverse order, starting with the importance of the research findings to organisations.

8.2 The significance of the research findings for organisations

The research has shown most managers' conceptions of career success to be far removed from the traditional notion of organisational success as hierarchical position and level of pay. Organisations thus need to rethink their attitude to what career success means at an organisational level, if they wish to take the views of individual managers on this important subject into consideration. There are two crucial reasons why they must do so:

Firstly, in order to be effective, human resource management practices should reflect where possible the prevailing views and opinions of the employees whose working lives they are intended to direct (Gattiker and Larwood 1988, Peluchette 1993). As long as human resource management policies continue to assume that career success can only be judged according to a narrow range of external criteria, such as pay and hierarchical position, organisations are failing to respond to what the majority of their managers really want from their careers, especially women and older managers. The implications of this for the success or failure of a range of HRM practices relating to motivation, reward and especially career development are potentially enormous.

Organisations should not assume that managers are a homogeneous group, with a single set of wants and needs related to their career. In particular, strategies aimed at increasing the number of women in management positions and developing women managers' careers are likely to be undermined unless organisations aim to understand better how women actually perceive their own career success.

Secondly, the kind of changes which many companies have been going through in recent years, described in Chapter 1, sections 1.2 and 1.3, mean that it is no longer possible for organisations to offer the kind of hierarchical success that they readily promoted in the past. Flatter organisations and disappearing layers of management have meant that organisational hierarchies are harder and slower to climb; indeed, many believe that "climbing" is no longer an appropriate way of describing career progression at all (e.g. Kanter 1989, Handy 1989).

The concepts of "career" and "career success" as they have traditionally been known are consequently under threat. Yet organisations are still struggling to discover what they might replace them with and how they can best develop the careers of their managers in the future. The findings of this research, which indicate that most managers do not see success primarily in terms of hierarchical advancement, provide some suggestions for possible alternative focuses of career development, and may even allow the disappearance of the hierarchical career to be seen as a positive move, which reflects managers' own views on career success, and not as the negative phenomenon it is currently perceived to be.

8.2 The significance of the research findings for individual managers

The value of the research findings to individual managers chiefly relates to the fact that they have shown that it is possible for them to define career success in a number of ways. In the past, careers have generally been viewed from the point of view of the organisation (Herriot et al. 1994) and success was judged accordingly in external, organisational terms. Because little attempt was made to ascertain how individuals actually viewed their own career success, the model of success based on hierarchical position and level of pay was allowed to prevail. It dominated the language and mechanics of career "progression" and determined how managers' careers were developed. Since it suited organisations until recently to perpetuate this model, it was rarely questioned.

The research has indicated that no such narrow definition of career success exists from the point of view of the individual. Managers have different ideas about what career success means to them, illustrated here by the typology of career success which the research has developed. It shows that managers' views on career success not only need not be in accord with the traditional organisational definition, but also are not homogeneous at all. It is just as possible for a manager to see career success in terms of extremely personal achievement involving a degree of challenge and self-development, like the Self-Realiser does, as it is for them to see it primarily in terms of organisational seniority and pay, like the Climber: each definition of success as described in the typology is equally valid.

This conclusion is of particular importance, since certain groups of managers, namely women and older managers, are less likely than others, especially younger men, to see success in the terms which organisations have traditionally used to define it. The development of the typology allows the "different" views of success certain groups may hold to be legitimised. (It should be noted, nevertheless, that managers of both sexes were found in three of the four types identified, and managers of all ages were found in all four types. This suggests that, while certain groups may be more likely to favour certain kinds of career success, there are also no good grounds for stereotyping any individual manager, according to how they might see career success.)

The "traditional" model of career success has been identified as reflecting a typically masculine conception of success (e.g. Gilligan 1982, Marshall 1989, Gallos 1989).

An appreciation that career success is not a homogeneous concept founded on the criteria of pay and position alone therefore may prove beneficial for women managers' self-awareness and self-esteem; their unease with facets of organisational life based on male values is widely acknowledged (e.g. Davidson and Cooper 1992, Pemberton 1992). It may also encourage male managers, who we are told are less "psychologically immersed" in their work roles than their predecessors were (Scase and Goffee 1989), to voice more broadly defined conceptions of success. For older managers, a better comprehension of what career success means to them could allow them to make a more valuable contribution to organisations in the later years of their career, as well as obtain the kind of career "rewards" which they truly value.

It is timely for managers as well as organisations to gain a better understanding of the different ways in which career success might be defined, given the kind of changes companies are experiencing, as described above. The knowledge that, for many people, success means much more than pay and hierarchical advancement could help lessen the feelings of insecurity and instability which many managers are currently enduring, and enable them to feel more confident about pursuing success on their own terms, which this research suggests may not relate to pay and advancement at all.

8.3 The personal significance of the research findings.

The discussion of this research began in section 1.1 of Chapter 1 with an exploration of its value to me, the researcher, at a very personal level, and for this reason I believe that examining its outcome from my own personal perspective is the most appropriate place for it to end.

It is gratifying that the research findings have value to me at a personal level, as well as at an academic level, since my reasons for embarking upon the research in the first place were so personal. As described in Chapter 1, section 1.1, a fundamental reason for deciding to undertake the research was my strong personal interest in the subject matter to which it pertains, in particular women's careers. My interest in the research questions on which I eventually decided to focus grew, rather than declined, as I conducted the research; its findings have more than satisfied my initial curiosity. Indeed, the research process has opened up whole new areas of interest for me, and given me innumerable ideas for future research projects. In many ways, completing this research feels like just the beginning, not the end of the process.

The research findings have meaning for me intuitively as well as intellectually. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, one of the outcomes of carrying out the research was that I gained a deeper understanding of the importance I place upon the integrity of the individual, as well as achieving a fuller knowledge of how individual managers defined career success for themselves. At an intellectual level, the research findings lead me to believe that organisations are foolish to assume that all managers share the same narrow definition of career success; at an intuitive level, they have helped me appreciate how significant an influence a belief in the integrity of the individual has been and continues to be on my outlook on life.

As well as the formal learning I have acquired by carrying out this research, the research process has inevitably proved to be a period of intense personal development for me. Not surprisingly, it has made me question many things about my own career, both the form that it has taken in the past and the possible ways in which it might develop in the future. It has enabled me to make better sense of my own previous organisational experiences, which I hope will help me in the rest of my career.

Inevitably, conducting the research has encouraged me to form some ideas about how I might define career success for myself, a topic which in the past I think I chose not to consider, probably because it was hard to make sense of it in the light of a dissonance between what I believed was expected of me and how I actually felt. At the very least, I now have a much better understanding of this contradiction: at best, the self-awareness which I have gained will mean that my own future career is much more in tune with who I am and what I value.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE USED FOR THE FIRST STAGE OF THE RESEARCH

1. The respondent's career

Tell me about your career.....Where did you start work?.....What did you do next.....Why?.....etc.....

(Elicit a chronological description of the respondent's career, filling out the details already gathered in the biographical data section and examining the reasons why it has developed as it has.)

What did you want from your career at the beginning? Have you achieved this? How would you sum up your achievements at work? At what points in your career have you felt particularly successful? Why? How satisfied are you? Why? At what points in your career so far have you felt most satisfied? Why? What do you want to achieve in the future?

2. Work values

Now I want to talk to you about how you feel about your career. What is most important to you about your work? What do you want from your career? What would you describe as your personal goals at work? What motivates you?

3. External success/Internal success

I want to talk more about how important particular aspects of your work and your career are to you. (This section will be linked to what the respondents say in Section 2 and, with prompts where appropriate, will cover the objective criteria of external career success:)

- Pay
 - Hierarchical position
 - Promotional opportunities
 - Fringe benefits
- (and the subjective criteria of internal career success)
- Challenge

- Sense of accomplishment
- Intellectual stimulation
- Personal development
- Work satisfaction

Which are most important to you? Why? Has this changed during the course of your career? Can you imagine it changing in the future?

4. Conceptions of career success

What do you want to achieve from your working life? What would make you feel satisfied with your career at work? Why? What would make you feel successful? Why? I now want you to consider how you would describe career success for you in your own terms. (Prompt and redefine, if necessary.) What would your criteria be? Have these changed during your career? Can you ever imagine them changing? Do you think you are a success in your own terms? Do you think you are a success in your organisation's terms? To what do you attribute this success/lack of success, firstly in your own terms and secondly in your organisation's terms?

5. Career success/Life success

Can you separate success in your career from success in your life as a whole? (Explain if necessary.) Why?/Why not? Is what you want to achieve in your life as a whole an influence on the kind of success you want to achieve at work? To what extent? How does this influence work? Has the influence from the rest of your life on your career always been as strong/weak as it is now? Do you think it will change in the future? What gives you most satisfaction in your life?

APPENDIX 2: THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE USED FOR THE SECOND STAGE OF THE RESEARCH

1. The respondent's career

Tell me about your career.....Where did you start work?.....What did you do next?.....Why?.....etc.....

(Elicit a chronological description of the respondent's career, filling out the details already gathered in the biographical data section and examining the reasons why it has developed as it has.) Why do you think your career has developed as it has? What did you want from your career at the beginning? Have you achieved this? Has this changed? How would you sum up your achievements at work? At what points in your career have you felt particularly successful? Why? What do you want to achieve in the future? Why?

2. Work values

Now I want to talk to you about how you feel about your career. What is most important to you about your work? What do you want from your career? What would you describe as your personal goals at work? What motivates you?

3. External success/Internal success

I want to talk more about how important particular aspects of your work and your career are to you. (This section will be linked to what the respondents say in Section 2 and, with prompts where appropriate, will cover the criteria of external material career success:)

- Pay
 - Hierarchical position
 - Promotional opportunities
 - Fringe benefits
 - Status
- (the criteria of external intangible career success)
- Being an expert

- Respect
 - Power to influence
 - Leaving one's mark
- (and the criteria of internal career success)
- Challenge
 - Sense of accomplishment
 - Sense of achievement
 - Enjoyment
 - Interest
 - Doing new or different things

Which are most important to you? Why? Has this changed during the course of your career? Can you imagine it changing in the future?

4. Conceptions of career success

What would make you feel successful at work on your own terms? Why? I now want you to consider how you would define career success for yourself in your own terms. (Prompt and redefine, if necessary.) What would your criteria be? Have these changed during your career? Can you ever imagine them changing? Do you think you are a success in your own terms? Do you think you are a success in your organisation's terms? How happy are you with what you've achieved?

5. Career success/Life success

Can you separate success in your career from success in your life as a whole? (Explain if necessary.) Why?/Why not? Is what you want to achieve in your life as a whole an influence on the kind of success you want to achieve at work? To what extent? How does this influence work? Has the influence from the rest of your life on your career always been as strong/weak as it is now? Do you think it will change in the future? What gives you most satisfaction in your life?

**APPENDIX 3: A COPY OF THE LETTER AND INFORMATION SENT OUT TO THE
RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS BEFORE THEIR INTERVIEW**

XXXX XXXXXXXX
PP XXXX
Redwing House
BT Training Centre
Timbold Drive
Milton Keynes MK7 6TT

January XX 1996

Dear XXXX,

Thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed for my research project on career success. This project, which is being carried out within BT, will form an important part of my PhD research at Cranfield School of Management.

I hope that you too will find the interview interesting and helpful, in that it may allow you to reflect on some aspects of your career which you may not have considered in depth before.

I anticipate that the interview will take around an hour and a half. The enclosed sheet contains some further information about its format and contents.

I look forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Sturges

Career success research project

The research project's objective is to investigate what career success means to managers. The interview will include questions and discussion in several areas related to this subject. These include:

- a general discussion about your career to date
- how you feel about your career
- what you want from your career
- what you would like to achieve at work
- how important particular aspects of your work and your career are to you
- what career success means to you
- what life success means to you

If you have time, it would be helpful if you could reflect generally on some of these subjects before the interview.

The interviews will be totally confidential. Any subsequent analysis of them will be such that their contents remain completely non-attributable. However, if you would like some feedback on my general findings, I will be happy to supply you with it.

If you have any questions about the project and your interview, please call me on 0171-274 7589.

Jane Sturges, Cranfield School of Management, January 1996.

APPENDIX 4: THE BIOGRAPHICAL DATA COLLECTED ABOUT EACH PARTICIPANT

Biographical data checklist

Name:

Age:

Status:

Number of children:

Ages of children:

Partner's occupation:

Job title:

Hierarchical level:

Key responsibilities:

Length of time with company:

Length of time with previous company:
(Deal with all periods of employment.)

Education: School

 University/College

 Postgraduate

Career breaks:

Nature of career breaks:

APPENDIX 5: SAMPLE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Name: Liz

Date of interview: 22/1/96

Age: 44

Grade: PCGU (Level 3)

1. The respondent's career

(Talk me through your career so far...)

I joined as a graduate entrant...at what was then the first level of management....joined a headquarters group, and spent some years there, got my first promotion there to the next level of management, then I moved into the personnel function again in a headquarters environment, and in the late 80s I moved out to an operational unit.....and I've stayed in roughly that sort of work since then.....

The group I joined [when I first joined BT]...in those days there was actually a unit whose whole raison d'être was to define standards of accommodation: the amount of space and type of furniture people had was dependent on what grade they were.....that was in 1975...soon after that you started to detect the first signs of change as we moved towards privatisation...it was quite exciting to be part of starting to shift this huge monolith.....that was quite interesting...and I moved across to the personnel function because the unit I'd been was clearly past its sell-by date...I had been part of making that happen...as one does, you spot that it's time to move on...so I moved into a personnel policy function because that was fairly closely related...that was, I suppose, about 1983...I spent four years in a policy function and then as a development move really I moved out into an operational unit in north London, where I really...that was a huge culture shock from working with the almost quite cerebral policy type issues to suddenly be plunged into the operational unit with the engineering line managers.....I thoroughly enjoyed it...that's why I've stayed in that milieu ever since, I guess...I was promoted again there in, I think it was 1988.....the company went through a massive reorganisation in 1991, Project Sovereign, and all these geographical units disappeared. I then worked in what was known as personal communications, London...and for a while my role was functionalised...the area I supported managers with was focused principally on performance management issues.....I hated being functionalised, I just felt that I wasn't doing what my experience and skills equipped me to do...an awful lot of people felt that way...most personnel teams in the company now are organised the way we are, which...NBC personnel is led on having people at the front end of the line managers and the people who work for us who act as a general consultancy type of service, with various functional experts backing us up.....I certainly prefer it that way...after Sovereign and being in the personal communications division, I moved to this particular part of the

world in October 93...so since that time I've supported roughly the same customer base as I'm supporting now.....

(Looking back, have you got any idea why your career has developed as it has?)

I suppose my background being a non-technical background...and I've never had any inclination to convert to a technical background.....so I guess it was probably background and inclination...and really it's only the last four or five years the company has got serious about development plans for individuals...anything that happened before then was almost fortuitous really...and the moves I have made along the way have been because I've identified the need...rather than being part of any plan that I'd sat and discussed with my line manager...it was it feels like about the right time to do x, so I would go off and phone people, knock on their doors, make the contacts, to try and get the next move.....it's not been part of a structured plan as such, it's been circumstances at the time...the last big move I made in 1993 was because where I was working I was very unhappy with the environment...all sorts of reasons...I just put out the word on the jungle drums that I was looking for a move, and the chap who ran the unit at the time rang me and said when would you like to come and join us?...so that was how it happened.

(What was it about personnel that attracted you?)

Well...at the time...the work I had been doing in this strange antiquated unit had been related to peoples' environment, and we sort of moved that forward to being much more line manager owned.....so it was moving into an area where I could bring that experience to bear, and where the learning curve wouldn't be too steep, and again it was about contacts...I knew...I'd met senior managers in that particular part of the forest, and I made it known that I was interested in a move, and again the person in question was prepared to give me the opportunity...

(So it wasn't so much you thinking you desperately wanted to do it, but it was a good fit with what you'd done and who you knew?)

That's right...no, I'm still waiting to find out what I want to do when I grow up!
(laughs)...

(What do you think you wanted from your career when you started work?)

Oh I should think money...back in those days I suppose, like most students, I had debts to pay...so I was after job security...it was the Post Office in those days and you couldn't get much more secure than that...I don't think I really knew, to be honest...I was realistic enough to think that I wasn't going to find anything...in the business commercial world where I could apply the degree I'd done directly...and teaching and the academic world didn't appeal to me particularly, so it was a case of...going to the careers office, going to presentations...just looking at best fit really...where could I use the skills that I'd got.....

(How has what you wanted from your career changed since you've been at work?)

The emphasis in the early years...just force of circumstance...just out of university, you've got no money...my first marriage...I got married at 24... you're trying to put a home together...and the priorities were financial more than anything else, more than job satisfaction...but that's shifted...

(Can you tell me a bit about what has changed?)

I don't think I could pinpoint a date...it's just something I've realised as the years have gone by, that what the job is about and how I'm feeling about it is much more important than...obviously the money is important, it's nice to have money, than how much does it pay, where does it sit in the hierarchy, in the scheme of things...and I've particularly noticed since being the wrong side of 40 a distinct drop in the ambition drive...there was a point when I was in my late 30s...I'm convinced the company reorganised just to spite me (laughs)...where had the organisation not moved I was sort of poised for the next grade up, the next move up...and then the whole world turned upside down...that didn't happen...and I remember for a couple of years in the early 90s almost being eaten up with ambition...I still wanted to make that next move up, and what I feel now is...it didn't happen, and I think so what?...I enjoy what I'm doing, and that's more important now...this sort of overpowering obsession with I want to be this grade or that grade...I don't know whether that's common in middle aged ladies, or whether I've just come to terms with I am where I am, and I might as well enjoy it, which I do, rather than eat myself up striving for something which may never happen.

(You think that's quite a recent thing?)

In the last three to four years...

(And before that things like what your grade was much more important to you?)

Yeah...I felt that passionately that I wanted to be...I wanted to go up again, and operate at one level senior...I think what's probably happened in reality is that the way I operate now, the way my counterparts operate at this particular grade, gives me what I need...I operate across a wide range of issues and the people I have dealings with are senior themselves, and I feel intellectually challenged by the issues that they're putting on the table in front of me, and so my needs are met in that sense...I'm paid very well compared with the outside world in personnel so...whilst more money's always nice I'm not sort of driven in that way...

(Was it more that what you were looking for from the higher level job was the things it would give you to do and now you're doing those things anyway?)

Yeah, yeah...

(So you were not chasing the grade for the status as much as...?)

No, no, the content and the responsibility level really...and the...I don't know if autonomy is the right word...but....what I was looking for was being in a position where my opinion, my judgement was valued more than anything, and would be the definitive one, not sort of constantly checking back.....

(You feel you've got that anyway in this job?)

Yeah...and so what I'm looking for now...I mean I've been supporting this group of managers since last June and just before Christmas I sat down with my line manager and we talked about the future, and the fact that the director is probably going to reorganise in the next three or four months, and how we could capitalise on that in order to develop my role, and what I'm looking for is an even wider role with maybe a different set of line managers whose issues are a bit different...

(A fresh challenge really?)

Yeah, yeah...so it's much more...when I think of my development, it's much more in that direction rather than what do I have to do to get promoted.....

(How would you sum up your achievements at work so far?)

If I look back and I break it into the first ten years and the last ten years, I think the first ten years from 75 to 85 was being part of the start of the movement of change, one voice amongst many others coming into the company and saying why don't you do it this way?.....there were all sorts of policies around then...when I moved into the personnel world, promotion policies...that went back, again nothing had really changed for 40 years, I felt that I contributed to the thinking that started to change all that, and then the last ten years it's been putting that into practice in the operational world, and taking it forward as well...I would say most recently that my contribution has been in gaining the street cred with the line managers for the personnel function...the managers I support I know from customer satisfaction surveys that they respect my judgement, value my opinion, look upon me as a virtual team member of their operational teams, and that my thinking contributes to the way they manage their units.....I think that's what I would say I was most pleased about...although it sounds a bit of a negative thing...I guess all of us who had anything to do with managing the redundancy programmes...I feel we can take a pride in having managed that...we haven't had a single compulsory redundancy in the company.....

(At what points in your career so far have you felt most successful?)

Well, I suppose the points when I got a formal promotion I felt successful...I felt successful at various...I felt particularly successful, I guess, in the year before the company reorganised when we were in our little geographical districts...one was very much queen of one's castle...I was the head of personnel there...the general manager managed the district operationally and he relied totally and utterly on me and my

team to manage the whole shooting match from recruiting people to dismissing them if need be, to paying them, the whole lot...it was a very enclosed world and it was tremendous fun...I enjoyed that, I felt successful, I felt good at it...and I've regained that feeling in the last two years...even though we work across a much bigger matrix now...but I've regained that feeling of satisfaction or confidence that I know what I'm talking about...and as I said earlier the different managers that I work with respect and seek my contribution.

(So those are quite similar, aren't they?)

Yes

(What is it about them that has made you feel successful?)

Well I think it's those words...it's being respected and being valued for my professionalism that's important to me.

(What do you think you want to achieve in the future?)

Again I would say it's not to do with status and money...I'm not going to object if somebody wants to pay me a whole load more money, that would be fine, but I want to continue to enjoy myself...on the whole I'm happy and I enjoy what I'm doing and I'm interested in it...I think the day it doesn't feel like that anymore I shall toddle along to my boss and say any chance of an exit package, I've had enough.....quite modest really, that's what I want out of it...I'm very fortunate in not having huge financial drivers...I haven't got kids at school, I haven't got an enormous mortgage...the only financial drivers are my own tendencies to go out and spend huge amounts of money (laughs)...I think that frees you up to enjoy the job much more as well.....

2. Work values

(What is most important to you about your work?)

Being able to do a professional, high quality job...the corollary to that is all the things I've talked about...and therefore to have the respect of the people I work with and all the managers I support...

(What do you think you want from your career?)

I don't have a specific aim in mind, that I want to be in this job or that job, in x amount of time...at the moment in the next six months I would like to broaden my role.....the managers that I'm supporting, the areas they are in are high profile and their issues are unique to them, and I feel I need to balance that with a bit more of the pile it high, sell it cheap type of unit, big battalions, and to have the stimulation of building some new client relationships, because I think that just keeps you on your toes.....it's always nice and challenging to build a relationship with someone new, and

start to get them believing in you...it can be a bit too easy with someone who knows you...so that's my short term plan...I don't know whether it's to do with getting older but I don't really think beyond six months at a time.

(In general terms of what you want from your career, would that reflect back on what we were saying in the previous section, things like enjoying it, finding it interesting?)

Oh yes...and being valued for what I do, having respect for what I do...those are the things that mean more to me than I want to be a particular grade, I want to have x thousand pounds a year more...

(What do you think motivates you?)

It's again all around those areas of professionalism, integrity...delivering a high quality service to the people I support...I really don't believe...I like money, I like spending money...I really don't believe that it's the salary I'm paid or the bonus I get once a year that motivates me...I know it's not because there was a stage in that geographic organisation where at my level of management I was the worst paid in the entire district, and I only thought about that afterwards...

(It wasn't an issue at the time?)

No...because I was the personnel manager I knew what everybody else was paid and it never really hit me until that period of time was over that I was the lowest paid of the lot...it didn't occur to me to go and bang on the boss's door and say hand on a minute (laughs)...it definitely wasn't the money motivating me then...it was the desire to do a professional job...and certainly the thought that once a year I might get an amount of money as a bonus doesn't drive me to work any harder than I do normally.....

3. External success/Internal success

(How important is pay to you?)

Well again when my salary is reviewed once a year it's more a question of honour and professional pride rather than, god, I desperately need a few thousand more this year because otherwise I can't pay my bills...it's more if my boss said to me you're not getting a salary increase this year Liz because actually you've not met your objectives, my pride wouldn't let me get into that position...so that's the emphasis, the emphasis is on having achieved what I set out to achieve and that being recognised, rather than the amount of money itself...

(How important is your position in the hierarchy?)

Again it doesn't fuss me a great deal.....it's not something...it doesn't drive me particularly...my boss at the moment is someone...a few years ago we worked together as colleagues, and then for a while when I was promoted I was senior to

her...now she's my boss, and when that happened I remember...because I'd been in that position myself with a colleague...I remember how much it meant to me when that colleague came along and saw me and said that it wasn't a problem for him and he was happy to support me in my new role, and I really appreciated that, and I thought I'll ring Jenny because we're old pals and say the same thing, and she was appreciative of it, and it...I didn't know at the time how I was going to feel about working for somebody who had been my equal, even my junior at one stage, who was five or six years younger than me....but I can say now with absolute confidence having done it for 18 months that has not been a problem, in fact it's been one of the happiest times in my working life, because we have a good working relationship....I don't sort of feel bitter and twisted...I'm pleased for her because she's done well...it didn't affect our dealings with each other.....so I've got living proof that that doesn't bother me particularly...it didn't spur me on either to think, oh well, if Jenny can get promoted then I'm going to get promoted...

(How important are promotional opportunities to you?)

I guess I'm too much...the way I tend to approach things is, if there isn't a realistic possibility of something happening, it's not worth getting wound up over....I seem to have a mental trigger somewhere that says if it's not going to happen, then I'm not going to waste energy on it...and I suppose I feel like that about promotion opportunities...there wouldn't be any point in it being desperately important to me because we're in a much flatter organisation and realistically it doesn't happen very often, the opportunity to be promoted, so I won't let that be important to me...I haven't seen a job come along where I thought, yeah, that's me, that's got my name on it and I really want that...that would have to be the way round for me, it would have to be the job, rather than in absolute terms I want to be promoted...

(What about fringe benefits, like a car?)

I enjoy having them...and I suppose I would feel miffed if everyone else had them and I didn't have them, because there would be a status thing there...I enjoy the convenience of not having to worry if [the company car] breaks down or needs work doing to it...what it is, as long as it goes, doesn't particularly worry me...it's the practical benefits of it.....

(How important is it to you that you are considered to be a bit of an expert at what you do?)

Very important...yeah...because it's back to the being valued and respected.

(The next thing on my list is respect. How important is that to you?)

Extremely important...my integrity...I often say it tongue in cheek...call me what you like, question my grandmother's morals but don't question my professional integrity, nothing upsets me more, that's terribly important to me.

(What about being able to influence what's going on?)

That's important as well...

(Is that to do with the autonomy you talked about?...)

It is and it is related to the value bit, because if I wasn't influencing what the line managers do and the way they run their units, then I would feel marginalised, I would feel they put no value on my contribution...so that's an important area...

(What about doing things that leave your mark on the company?)

Um...not so much, again simply from the practical point of view...if that was my aspiration the chances are I'd be disappointed because this is a huge company...but if I look back and think yeah I have...it's needed lots of people like me to make the changes that the company has made...all of us are the company together...the way that I've contributed to the thinking or implemented things operationally has been a collective making the mark, as it were.....not to go away thinking I was the one who discovered optic fibres, because it's highly unlikely I personally would think of or do something that was going to be that fundamental...or any one person really.

(How important is to you to find your work challenging?)

That's fairly important, yeah...if I reach a point in a job where I feel as if I could do it in my sleep, then I know it's time to move on, or add to the role, or do something with it...you're sort of cruising on two cylinders...

(What about feeling that you're really good at what you do?)

Yes, yes...again that's back to the value thing and being respected, because if I wasn't the managers I deal with would very soon let me know...they would let me know by ignoring me...and they don't.

(Is it important to you to get a personal sense of achievement out of what you do?)

I'd be crazy if I said no it wasn't, but I guess the nature of the work I do is often I get my buzz from somebody else's achievement...but that has come about because of the way I have advised or supported them...the line manager's achieved something in their unit, it's kind of a vicarious sense of achievement, because I've been guiding them in their thinking, or whatever...anything I do, I get a sense of achievement, if I think I've done a quality job on it, done it well...

(You mentioned that it's important for you to enjoy what you do...)

Oh yeah...yeah, there's no point otherwise.

(What about finding it interesting?)

Yes, they go together...the intellectual stimulation really.....so that's very important, enjoying it.

(What about doing things people haven't done before?)

Not necessarily, no...I'm cautious by nature...probably also to do with being very pragmatic...I don't necessarily want to be the one who blazes a trail...if somebody's going to do something terribly ground breaking, possibly go to a highly publicised industrial tribunal, I'd rather it wasn't me.....it's nice occasionally to do something that hasn't been done before but I wouldn't say it was dreadfully important...perhaps a better way to put it for me would be I do enjoy being able to bring a fresh approach, rather than do something fundamentally different.....

(Which of these criteria is most important to you?)

The latter...

(Enjoyment and interest?)

Yes...

(Not the one with respect?)

Well I couldn't have one without the other...I would be enjoying myself if I wasn't getting the value...

(So it's both of those two?)

Yeah, yeah...

(Has that changed since you've been at work?)

I don't think it has really...I think maybe the balance has changed in that perhaps when my personal drivers were different...money was the bigger driver...I would probably have been more prepared to put up with a situation where I wasn't particularly happy, and getting those things from it, and just bear with it until I could make a move...being within a large organisation I've been able to make those moves within the company...

(That was back at the beginning of your career?)

Yes, for the first half I would guess...but basically I would say no, they haven't changed...

(Can you imagine them changing in the future?)

Not realistically, no...something pretty cataclysmic would have to happen...no, no I can't...

4. Conceptions of career success

(What would make you feel successful at work on your own terms?)

Well I suppose it all links back to the things I've been talking about really...what does make me feel successful is when the line managers I support, my customers show, recognise that they've taken on board my contribution and valued it, and that it's actually helped them to move things forward, do something that they needed to do, or wanted to do, in their unit...and then I feel I've contributed something and I've been successful...that's how I judge it really.

(How would you define career success for yourself on your own terms?)

Being in a role where I'm able to draw on the full range of experience and skills that I've got, and where the contribution I make doing that is recognised and valued and respected, and, yes, being remunerated accordingly...but that is second...but then I'm in the fortunate position of being in a company that pays above the odds...and if that was taken away from me, of course I would be unhappy about it, or if it was vastly reduced or something...

(It sounds like from what you've said earlier on that pay isn't a particular issue for you anyway...)

No it's not a big issue...I know that my salary, my total package is very, very good.

(Has your definition of career success ever changed at all?)

Not fundamentally, no, it hasn't...

(What about it changing in the future?)

No, I can't.

(Do you think you are a success in your own terms?)

Um...yeah, I suppose against the criteria I've talked about, yes, I'm reasonably successful.

(Do you think you are a success in BT's terms?)

Um...I don't know what BT's terms are...if we make an assumption that BT's criteria for success are...we pay Liz x amount of money, do we get value for that?, answer

yes...then yes...someone else might look at it and say good heavens she's been around for 20 years and she's reached the middle part of the management structure, that's middling to average career progression, therefore middling to average success...I think there's an issue about how BT define our success criteria.

(And that's not clear?)

No it's not and we still all of us tend to look at people and judge them by where they are in the hierarchy, who do they work for, that sort of thing...we've still got a long way to go from being a pyramid-type organisation to a flatter matrix type organisation...

(How happy are you with what you've achieved?)

I'm quite happy, yeah.....

5. Career success/life success

(Do you think you can separate success in your career from success in your life as a whole?)

I don't think I could now because it is my life...my life isn't just what I do at the weekends...so no I don't think I could separate it...now if I were thoroughly miserable in my working life, my private life would be miserable as well...no, I can't separate them out.

(Does what you want to achieve in your life as a whole influence the kind of success you want to achieve a work?)

Well I suppose the same criteria apply really...my private aspirations go along similar lines really...they're around enjoying life, they're around being satisfied with...having a stable marriage...it's around that sort of area, rather than oh I must have an eight bedroomed Georgian mansion kind of thing, otherwise I will be miserable...that's not to say I don't like material things because I do, I like to be warm and comfortable, and have nice things to eat and so as much as the next person, but...it tends to be around that sort of area in private life...so I think there's an analogy there with my working life as well.

(What gives you most satisfaction in your life?)

Doing things well...I get angry with myself if I do something and I don't do it well...so I then choose not to do it...you will never find me struggling to play squash or tennis or do any sports because I've been any good at sports, so I choose not to do, I can't do it well, so I'm not going to bother...I suppose that applies in my working life as well...I wouldn't have plunged myself into trying to be an engineering line manager, because I wouldn't have been good at it...I suppose being able to do things well and enjoy them.

APPENDIX 6: THE FINAL FORM OF THE NUD.IST INDEX USED FOR CODING DATA IN THE SECOND STAGE OF THE RESEARCH

Q.S.R. NUD.IST Power version, revision 3.0.4 GUI.

Licensee: Jane Sturges.

PROJECT: SUCCESS2, User Jane Sturges, 10:29 am, Nov 27, 1996.

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