

The London School of Economics and Political Science

The Experience of Foreign and Commonwealth Soldiers in The British Army: An Exploration and Methodological Commentary

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Declaration

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Abstract

The British Army is a large complex organisation, characterised by power and authority. Although it is mainly white and male, approximately seven percent of its personnel are from Foreign and Commonwealth (F&C) countries. Most of these personnel are from ethnic minority groups. The study of ethnic and national diversity within British organisations is largely absent from the published organisational psychology literature in the UK. An understanding of the practical and political challenges of doing organisational research and the impact of these on the findings are also absent from the literature. This thesis addresses these deficiencies by exploring the working lives of F&C soldiers in the British Army and commenting on the organisational research experience. Despite their highly visible 'immigrant' status and different cultural background, this is the first such study of F&C personnel within the Army for 16 years since F&C employment began.

A substantial qualitative study of 14 focus groups and 13 interviews was conducted in order to understand the experiences of these personnel and those that work with them. A thematic analysis of 16 documents provided the organisational perspective on F&C personnel.

Building on the theoretical framework of social identity and double consciousness, this thesis draws links between organisational process designed to support hierarchy and their effects on how groups of individuals, foreign to and unfamiliar with these processes experience the organisation. It also combines two theoretical approaches to offer a unique understanding of multiply marginalised groups within organisations.

This research shows that diversity in organisations is influenced by organisational policies as well as intergroup processes. F&C soldiers and British soldiers perceive their ability to control and influence their careers differently. Values and cultural background were key determinants in the social identity of F&C and British

personnel. These groups of soldiers positioned themselves differently within the organisation. In particular, ethnic minority F&C personnel were positioned as a 'problematic' group of soldiers by their white soldier counterparts, whereas white F&C personnel were more readily accepted within the organisation and identified with the values of the organisation. The findings illustrate the need for further exploration, not only of the interaction between ethnicity and nationality at work, but also, the impact of conducting research on sensitive topics within large complex organisations on the production of new knowledge.

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Preface

The study of working life in large British organisations is rarely published in the British organisational psychology literature. The impact of organisational structures, practices and culture on workers' organisational commitment and their social life within the organisation has largely remained unstudied within the social and organisational psychology domain. The growth of political rhetoric in the UK about the merits of employing foreign workers, to bridge skills and knowledge gaps in the employment market is growing. This makes it imperative to understand the effects of employing large groups of overseas workers to work in large British organisations alongside British workers. It is also necessary for researchers endeavouring to undertake this research to understand how research is conducted in large, complex organisations and the associations between the research process and the ability to produce valid and useful data for the research community and policy makers. It is against this background that I have chosen to explore the working lives of Foreign and Commonwealth (F&C) soldiers in the British Army and to examine how the organisational structure and culture affect how they and British soldiers experience the Army.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) is one of the largest employers in the UK. Despite its size and complexity, it largely remains a white, male dominated organisation. It has chronically struggled to recruit British born ethnic minority personnel. It is one of three services, governed by the Ministry of Defence that is undergoing a period of unparalleled change due to the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review. This review set out ambitions for a leaner, more reactive and resource-efficient Army. Part of this change programme is reducing certain parts of the Army, while increasing others. Recruitment is a key part of this change agenda. The Army has historically recruited from current and former commonwealth countries in order to fulfil its resourcing requirement. Prior to 1998, there was a five-year British residency requirement that non-British applicants had to fulfil prior to joining the Army. This was lifted in 1998 and re-introduced in 2013. However, in the context of the

challenging recruitment climate in 2014, the British Army were preparing to, once again, lift the residency requirement. These changes in policy have occurred without an evaluation of their efficacy and indicate that the criterion of British residency is one that can be easily manipulated. It is therefore unclear why this criterion is in place. As a researcher employed by the Ministry of Defence and working for the Army, I conducted this work as an important contribution to the conversation about diversity within the Army and more specifically, about the importance of ethnicity and nationality in the Armed Services. It seeks to provide an understanding of the relative position of F&C personnel in the British Army and those that work with them.

The focus of this research is on the experience of being a migrant (non-British Born) worker in a large, hierarchical organisation. This could not be explored in isolation from an exploration of the experiences of British born workers that also work for the organisation. The question of social identity within the organisation and its impact on team cohesion and organisational dynamics was also considered. As such, it was critical to utilise social identity theory as the framework for understanding the position of groups and the context for group behaviour within the organisation. This research deviated from the predominantly quantitative social identity tradition where measurement and comparison of group behaviour forms the basis for adding to and refining the theory. The social identity theory alone was insufficient to provide an understanding of how the groups of individuals experienced the organisation; therefore the theory of double consciousness was also applied to contextualising the experience and motivations of less powerful groups within a wider society. An understanding of some of the key themes to emerge from this work can support better decision making within the Army and can assist the development of wider policy making in the UK around migrant workers.

In order to complete this work, careful negotiation with the stakeholders was required. In researching sensitive topics such as ethnicity, under-recruitment and decision making in the organisation, there were several methodological assumptions about data collection, access, generalisability and sponsorship that were challenged.

This required the provision of a methodological commentary alongside conducting the research.

The research participants were grouped according to ethnicity and nationality. There were ethnic minority and white personnel from both the UK and F&C countries. These participants were also grouped by rank (soldier and officer). Each group had its own agenda and power status within the organisation. This enabled the creation of a more nuanced picture of the participants' experiences. A selection of organisational documents was also examined in order to understand the organisational perspective with respect to recruiting and employing F&C personnel.

The first chapter of the thesis provides the background to the study and highlights the organisational and research drivers to the study. It provides an overview of the British Army structure, demographic composition and history of F&C recruiting in order to contextualise the research problem and the specific research questions. The rigidity and hierarchical nature of the organisation is described in this chapter with a view to positioning F&C personnel within it and the associated practices which support the current organisational structure and its aims. The rationale for the study is presented and the organisational and socioeconomic factors that contribute to an understanding of the research problem are discussed. I argue in this chapter that the British Army is a hierarchical institution that is imbued with power and doing research in this type of organisation provides a useful case study to comment on the research process. The research aims, objectives and questions are presented in the concluding sections of the chapter.

Chapter two provides an overview and outline of the theoretical framework used within the research. This chapter argues that social identity and its study of groups and group processes, is the most appropriate theory that can be used to explore the experience of groups of personnel in the British Army. The importance of group membership to an individual's self-concept is a key tenet of social identity theory and the importance of studying group membership within an applied organisational setting is emphasised. In this chapter, I argue that individual distinctiveness (which

within this research context is being foreign or from an ethnic minority group) cannot be ignored if we want to understand group formation within an organisational context. The element of distinctiveness within the social identity literature can help to provide an understanding of how networks or patterns of group formation occur and are sustained within the Army. A consideration of power and how it regulates group behaviour in the Army is presented in this chapter. The links between power and Dubois' theory of double consciousness are made. This theory argues that the position of the ethnic minority F&C soldier as a less powerful agent in the organisation allows him the opportunity to straddle both spaces (F&C space and British Army space). This theory adds to the understanding of how groups of soldiers interpret and understand both their and others' position in the Army.

Chapter three outlines the study design and methodology. It presents the rationale for the design, the sources of data and the phases of the research as they occurred. Constraints on obtaining organisational data are explained and the recruitment of participants is highlighted. The ethical considerations and procedures necessary to undertake this research are described in this chapter in order to contextualise the research commentary which will follow in chapter four. Finally in this chapter, a brief discussion of integrating the three sources of data is presented and the methodological limitations are explored.

Chapter four provides a meta-commentary of the process of conducting research within the British Army. This chapter presents my personal experiences and observations as a black female researcher in a predominantly white male organisation and discusses the implications for the research process, data collection and conclusions that can be drawn from the research. In particular, I focus on the implications of the rank structure and the impact of hierarchy on my ability to approach and engage with participants freely. Having military sponsors was critical to the success of this research and for recruiting participants who were senior in rank to me. The role of power was a significant one in this research, particularly positional power. Social identity theory and an understanding of groups also offer an explanation for the dynamics between me and the participants in the organisation. I

also comment on the absence of a discussion within the organisational psychology literature on the process of doing applied research.

Chapters five and six present the findings of the research. Chapter five presents the perspective of the organisation through the organisational agents who produced documents on F&C policy. The documents were produced by both civil servants and military personnel and represent a contrasting approach to decision making within the organisation. A content analysis of 16 documents highlights that civil servants and military personnel have different agendas. Military personnel were more comfortable with assumptions when they created policy or made recommendations. Civil servants avoided decision making unless evidence was available. The documents highlighted that the preservation of organisational identity was a key factor when military personnel wrote documents making decisions about F&C personnel. Subjecting F&C personnel to organisational control appeared to be a significant concern for the organisation and the positional power of the author to influence decision making with regard to F&C personnel was also evident.

Chapter six presents the perspective of the Army personnel. It presents the findings of the focus groups and interviews with soldiers and officers from F&C countries and the UK. This chapter demonstrates that social identity influenced participants' experience of the Army. The chapter identifies that there is a difference in how F&C and British personnel experience the Army. In particular, ethnic minority F&C personnel have a more negative experience of the Army than their white F&C peers. There is a perception of helplessness over the ability to influence career and working life amongst ethnic minority F&C personnel. This sentiment is acknowledged, but not shared, by ethnic minority British personnel in the study. This chapter also identifies the importance of background and the affective component of social identity in being able to form relationships within the organisation and demonstrate commitment to the Army.

Chapter seven discusses the findings and their implications for the theoretical framework and the overall research questions and objectives. The prevalence of the

hierarchical structure and power within the organisation are considered in the context of the problematic relationship between ethnic minority F&C personnel and the Army as an organisation. This chapter argues that the paternalistic expectations held by F&C soldiers in particular are explained by a cultural difference in perceptions of control. The complexity of the F&C officer experience is explored briefly in this chapter, highlighting the importance of their positional power and their ability to more effectively manage their complex social identity. Finally, this chapter argues that triangulation and integration of data are possible as dynamic and iterative processes which can strengthen the quality of the research output.

Chapter eight presents the conclusions and implications of the research. It provides an overview of the global themes and considers their theoretical and practical implications. In this chapter, I reflect on the research process and conclude that there are links to be further explored between how research is conducted, the data that are produced and subsequent conclusions that are drawn. The results indicate that opportunities exist for enhanced decision making within the Army and the need for the Army to review and update their policies relating to F&C personnel using evidence rather than assumptions or anecdotes. The implications for the organisational psychology discipline as a whole are also briefly discussed. This chapter closes with a suggestion that there is scope for further research into diversity and identity, not only within the British Army and Defence, but in other organisations and industries that rely on migrant labour to fill skills gaps.

Chapter 1: Background and Context to Recruitment and Employment of Foreign and Commonwealth Soldiers in the British Army

1.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the structure of the British Regular Army (henceforth referred to as the Army). This structure provides the context within which the experiences of Foreign¹ and Commonwealth² (F&C) personnel are situated and within which the research has been conducted. This chapter provides an introduction to the organisational issues that have influenced the need for an investigation into the lived experiences of F&C personnel. It also discusses the reasons why a reflection on the practitioner-researcher experience of conducting research within the Army is required. The organisational practices which affect soldiers and the research process are described within this chapter, in order that the rationale for the research is clear. The research aims, objectives and questions are presented at the end of the chapter together with a brief overview of the stages of research.

1.2 Background to the Study

The British Army currently employs approximately 7.4% (6750) of its personnel from F&C nations. Prior to 1998, recruits from the Commonwealth who applied to join the Army had to fulfil a residency requirement of 5 years in the UK prior to submitting their application. During the time of these residency restrictions there were approximately 700-800 Commonwealth citizens in the Army. An almost 12% growth in the numbers of soldiers from Foreign and Commonwealth countries over the last 16 years has raised unforeseen issues for the Army in relation to unit cohesion, the perceived identity of the Army, the security and loyalty of serving personnel, potential mercenary activity and acceptance of organisational values by F&C soldiers. These issues are reflected in some of the following media headlines:

¹ As a result of both the Act of Settlement 1700 and the Army Act 1955, foreign nationals recognised by the British Army are those from the Republic of Ireland. Additionally, those soldiers from the Brigade of Gurkhas are categorised as Foreign.

² Commonwealth nationals are those from any of the 53 member states that make up the Commonwealth nations. Zimbabwe, Gambia and Fiji are no longer part of the Commonwealth. However these countries have significant numbers of Soldiers in the British Army.

“Commonwealth Soldier Kicked in the Teeth by Britain” (The Daily Telegraph, 25th July 2012)

“British Foreign Legion Trebles in a Decade” (The Sun, September 2012)

“Illegal immigrant in Trooping the Colour” (The Evening Standard, July 24th 2009)

“Army puts jobless Britons before foreign recruits” (The Daily Mail 30th January 2009)

“Being Black in the Army...sometimes you take it, but it can get too much” (The Times, March 10th 2007).

Due to the current challenging economic climate and growing public support for the Armed Forces, there is an increasing need for the organisation to reflect on these issues and address them with carefully designed policies and intervention. The Army is currently at full strength and undergoing a period of significant organisational change due to the Strategic Defence and Security Review³. This has involved a series of redundancies and rationalisation of both military and civilian support staff. Plans for change involve reducing the full strength of the regular Army from 101,000 to 82,000 by 2020 and increasing the strength of the Army Reservists (formerly known as the Territorial Army) to 30,000 by 2016. The Army is also shifting its focus to the more effective targeting and recruitment of British ethnic minority citizens (who currently make up less than 3% of all Army personnel). At the same time, the then United Kingdom Borders Agency (UKBA)⁴ endorsed a proposal to re-introduce the five year residence requirement for F&C personnel wanting to join the Army. In the context of these transformational changes, it appears puzzling that the Army has changed its policy of recruiting F&C citizens without systematically evaluating their experience of serving in the Army, or the experience of those British citizens serving alongside them.

³ The Strategic Defence and Security Review in 2010, introduced by the coalition government, sees the defence budget cut by £1.72 billion and the Army is to lose approximately 19,500 soldiers.

⁴ Now replaced by the UK Visas and Immigration.

In the absence of any review of F&C personnel⁵ policy in the Army, this research is necessarily exploratory. As well as researching the experiences of F&C personnel, this research will comment on the process of conducting the research in the Army, which is a hierarchical, closed, public sector organisation. The experience of doing research on a sensitive topic, in an organisation constructed on the basis of rank and power, will be presented as a case study in order that lessons may be learnt by future researchers attempting to investigate complex questions within a UK military environment.

1.3 The Organisation of the British Army

1.3.1 Purpose of the Army

The primary task of the British Army is to help defend the national interests of the UK. This may involve service overseas as part of a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Force or any other multi-national deployment. Serving personnel may also be deployed on United Nations (UN) operations and used to help in other emergencies. To meet its aims and perform its varied tasks, the Army requires forces capable of conducting rapid intervention or expeditionary operations, possibly at great distance from their bases for extended periods. It must also be ready to contribute to the defence and resilience of the UK. These tasks require a broad mix of military capabilities, but the key capabilities are those required to conduct major combat and stabilisation operations.

1.3.2 Structure and Demographic Composition of the British Army.

This section outlines the demographic composition of the Army and its associated command structures. These illustrated structures help to frame the context within which research is conducted within the Army and where F&C personnel are located within it. Understanding the rank and organisational structure of the Army is pertinent to understanding the physical management of the organisation. It also assists in placing the participants in the present study in the organisational structure.

⁵ Serving personnel refers to both officers and soldiers serving in the British Army. Where there is a distinction to be made, officers and soldiers will be referred to specifically.

In order to achieve the operational capability stated in 1.3.1 above, the British Army is hierarchical and highly structured, with an autocratic culture of leadership which is primarily suited to a command and control environment. It has two divisions which deploy on operations, each of which is responsible for a number of brigades. Brigades consist of several units, which are regiment or battalion-sized⁶, and which consist of a number of sub-units. Sub-units are generally about 100 personnel strong.

The Army as an organisation is divided into 3 types of units according to the role that they perform:

Combat units. These units spearhead the Army's military capability. They include the Infantry, the Royal Armoured Corps and the Army Air Corps. These are essentially the fighting units.

Combat Support units. These units provide support to the combat units in the combat zone. They include the Royal Artillery, the Royal Engineers, the Royal Signals and the Intelligence Corps.

Combat Service Support units. These units provide essential support services both in combat and in peacetime. They include the Adjutant-General's Corps, the Army Medical Services, the Royal Logistics Corps and the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME).

A disproportionate number of F&C soldiers are situated within the less technical combat units. Within these units and sub-units, soldiers at the very junior ranks are socialised to follow orders and not question authority. This is in preparation for the battlefield, where, when an order is given, it has to be actioned immediately, almost without thought. When trainees come into the Army, the process of transition from civilian to an Army soldier is anecdotally known as 'Beasting'. This involves a de-individuation process which leads to a reliance on peers and superiors.

⁶ See Appendix 1.1 for an outline of the rank and command structures of the Army.

Whilst there are direct attempts by the Army to create a new social identity for recruits through intense group training there are currently several assessment and selection related projects being undertaken in the Army which attempt to recruit individuals with the right qualities. These are designed to evaluate and review the attributes that are required to perform specific roles successfully. The findings of these projects thus far indicate that there is a desire to move soldiers away from an automatic following of orders without thought, to getting them to think about and question orders which may have negative implications for the individuals and the Army. This attribute of moral courage has been identified by the military as the ability to disagree with a senior who it is believed has given an order that is morally wrong or detrimental to the team or organisation, in some way. This attribute is emergent within the organisation and will take some time to establish itself in the organisational culture and recruiting process.

The rank structure is presented in the Table 1.1 below. The NATO rank OF is an abbreviation for 'officer' and OR is an abbreviation for 'other rank', or soldier. There are both commissioned and non-commissioned ranks in the British Army. Commissioned officers enter the Army directly from university and are able to progress up the ranks. These are the middle managers in the Army and tend to lead soldiers. There are also very experienced non-commissioned soldiers who can lead soldiers. These tend to be ranked from Lance Corporal upwards. Private soldiers at OR 2 tend to enter the Army at about 18 years old, whereas Second Lieutenants and Lieutenants are recent university graduates.

Table 1.1 Rank Structure of the British Army

NATO Rank	Full Title	Abbreviation
Commissioned Ranks		
OF9	General	Gen 4*
OF8	Lieutenant General	Lt Gen 3*
OF7	Major General	Maj Gen 2*
OF6	Brigadier	Brig 1*
OF5	Colonel	Col
OF4	Lieutenant Colonel	Lt Col
OF3	Major	Maj
OF2	Captain	Capt
	Lieutenant	Lt
OF1	Second lieutenant	2 Lt
Warrant Officers (WO)		
OR8	Warrant Officer Grade 1	WO1
OR7	Warrant Officer Grade 2	WO2
Senior Non- Commissioned Officers (SNCO)		
OR6	Staff/ Colour Sergeant	SSgt/CSgt
OR5	Sergeant	Sgt
Junior Non-Commissioned Officers (JNCO)		
OR4	Corporal/ Bombardier	Cpl/Bdr
OR3	Lance Corporal/Lance Bombardier	LCpl/LBdr
OR2	Private Soldier/ Trooper/Guardsman/ Rifleman/Signaller/Craftsman	Pte/Tpr/Gdm/Rfn/Rgr/Sig/Cfn
OR1	Recruit	

The typical age range of those in the OR 1- OR4 soldier groups is 17-29 years.

However, the average reading ability of British soldiers in that group is of an 11 year-old (2008 internal training document). Most F&C Personnel are at the OR1-OR3 level.

The OR5-OR6 group ranges from 31-35 years. Those in the OR 7-8 group tend to be in their early or mid-forties and have had a long and established career in the Army. In the officer group, the age range of the OF1-OF3 is typically between 22-35 years. The ranks of OF5 and above are considered senior personnel within the Army in terms of their experience. My rank in the civil service as Principal Psychologist is equivalent to the rank of Colonel (OF5).

1.3.3 Demographic Composition of Foreign and Commonwealth Personnel

Whilst outlining the demographic composition of the Army, this section also acknowledges the difference between race and ethnicity and highlights the difference as they apply to this study and to how the terms will be used throughout this thesis.

Atkinson (2004) has identified that race and ethnicity are often used interchangeably despite having distinctly different meanings, whilst Phinney (1996) advocated combining race and ethnicity into a single construct within psychology due to the wide “disagreement on its meaning and usage for psychology” p918. Another perspective on the interchangeability of the two terms is provided by Helms and Talleyrand (1997). They argue that ethnicity has no real meaning, apart from its status as a proxy for racial classification or immigrant status. These authors advocate that race has a clear meaning as an ascribed racial category or phenotype and is, at least crudely, assessed by means of either researcher-imposed or self-defined racial categorisation. The assertion is that race is a clearer and more specifically defined construct than ethnicity. Additionally, Helms and Talleyrand (1997) maintain that advantageous or disadvantageous treatment occurs primarily according to phenotypic characteristics, such as skin colour, regardless of the culture in which one is socialised. Therefore, they argue that the role which ethnicity plays in society is virtually invisible, whereas the role race plays in society is salient.

The variance in opinion outlined above, points to the societal and contextual roles that need to be considered in discussions of race and ethnicity. Both of these roles assist in the self and social categorisation process. Also, to be acknowledged is the

social norm of using both terms race and ethnicity interchangeably. In the British civil service literature, racial minorities are almost always referred to as ethnic minorities. This points to the difficulty that organisations also have in truly distinguishing between the two terms. As outlined above, differential outcomes and treatment primarily occur to individuals and groups based on what they look like.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the terms are used interchangeably, the socio-cultural element of both race and ethnicity is important to consider within this work as racial groups have, over time and within particular contexts, developed their own unique sets of beliefs and practices. Similarly, in the Army, F&C personnel who are not white (i.e. the minority) have developed a unique experience of the organisation which involves particular beliefs and practices, different to those of the white majority within the organisation.

There is, therefore, a need to look at the traditional construct of social identity through a socioculturally relevant lens. This will allow an appreciation of how sociocultural perspectives, such as race can be applied to our understanding of identity within organisations. Within this research, the theory of double consciousness (Dubois, 1903) has been used to provide that understanding. The theory binds race, and by extension, 'blackness' within a particular set of beliefs that are different to the set of beliefs of the white majority.

Within this research, both of the terms, race and ethnic minority, have been used. Race is used specifically within the context of double consciousness when discussing the overarching categorisation of personnel within the study according to phenotypic characteristics. As there are multiple racial groups within the organisation, the socially accepted term, ethnic minority, has been adopted pragmatically to provide an overarching description of racial minorities within the organisation. This is primarily because, as a group, they have developed a way of understanding the organisation which is largely based on their difference in appearance, culture and beliefs to the white majority of personnel.

This cultural and attitudinal element of group membership is critical for understanding the psychological and behavioural make-up of the group, which ultimately contributes to the lived experiences of F&C personnel within the Army.

Knowledge of the demographic composition of the British Army is critical to understanding where and how F&C soldiers fit in the Army's rank structure. The Army Personnel Statistics⁷ are presented below and represent the composition of the trained (qualified) Army. The statistics do not reflect the numbers of potential soldiers undergoing Phase I and Phase II training. Phase I training is the basic training the soldiers receive, whereas Phase II training is the technical trade training that soldiers undergo, for example when they enter the Royal Engineers.

The trained strength of the Army⁸ is currently 91,040 personnel.

Table 1.2 Composition of the Army by Ethnicity

	F&C		UK		Total	
	Soldier	Officer	Soldier	Officer	Soldier	Officer
White	1010	140	68380	12680	69390	12820
Asian	300		670	70	970	70
Black	4730	10	1000	50	5730	60
Chinese		-	50	10	50	10
Mixed	180	-	1000	160	1180	160
Other	370	10	190	30	560	40
Total	6590	160	71290	13000	77880	13160

The data presented above highlight that F&C personnel make up 7.4% (6570) of the total Army. The majority of these personnel are black, from African, Caribbean countries and from Fiji. They are generally concentrated at the lower ranks. Approximately 71% (4,730) of all F&C soldiers are black, whereas a much smaller percentage (15%, 1,010) is white. Of all F&C officers 87.5% (140) are white, and 6.25% (10) are black.

⁷ The APS report is correct as at January 14th 2014.

⁸ Trained regular soldiers and officers, excluding Ghurkhas and full time reserve personnel

Highlighting the ethnic breakdown of the Army is useful in demonstrating that there is not a universal F&C 'experience'. The data indicate that there may be different experiences for white and black F&C serving personnel depending on their representation within the rank structure of the Army. As a higher proportion of white F&C personnel are officers, they are more likely to receive the privileges associated with that rank and status in the Army. Conversely, less than 1% of black F&C serving personnel are officers. This pattern is the same for British serving personnel. A higher proportion of White British personnel are officers than are ethnic minority British serving personnel. Although it is beyond the scope of this research to identify the root causes for this, the commonalities and differences of both ethnic groups in relation to their experience of working in the British Army will be considered.

1.4 Foreign and Commonwealth Recruiting Process (1998-2013)

The British Army has a long history of recruiting from the Commonwealth. During World War II, there were personnel from India, Fiji, Africa and the Caribbean fighting on behalf of King George VI. The history of having Armies based outside of the UK was strategically important. The ability to deploy troops to various parts of the world and to prevent the British Empire from being attacked was critical to UK political interests. Additionally, the UK could not (at that time) produce sufficient numbers of home-grown men and women to defend its interests. The historical context of protecting sovereign interests provides some understanding of the rationale for the recruitment pool. However, the Army's policy of large-scale post-colonial recruitment began in 1998 due to a shortage of numbers of UK men and women who were willing and able to join the British Army. In order to increase the personnel figures, recruitment was opened to Commonwealth citizens and (for soldier applicants) there was no need to have lived in the UK for a minimum period of time.

Due to the established historical links, citizens of the Commonwealth have a legal entitlement to apply to join the British Army. There are two routes through which F&C personnel can apply to join the Army. One option is to apply remotely from their

country of origin. The second option (if the applicant is already in the UK as a student or visiting with friends and family) is to apply directly to the Army online. Both of these options involve a significant monetary investment. All F&C applicants must provide a valid 5-year passport, be sponsored by a UK national and be able to pay for their return air fare. They must also secure the relevant visa to the UK to attend the selection assessment centre. Should they be successful at the assessment centre there can be a lengthy delay until the beginning of basic training, sometimes as long as two months. Should the initial visa not extend until this time, the F&C applicant is responsible for seeking and securing an extension to that visa. The Army does not provide assistance in any of these matters.

The process for officer entry into the Army is different from that for soldier entry. Officers are required to be resident in the UK for 5 years prior to applying. This could be one possible explanation for the low numbers of F&C officers.

It can be inferred that the processes highlighted above may make the F&C application and recruitment process more challenging than the UK application process where the financial and logistical concerns are comparatively minor. However, it can also be inferred that, in order to follow through with this application process, an F&C applicant must be significantly motivated and determined to join the Army. The dropout rate for F&C soldiers is five times lower than that of a UK applicant (internal email Dec 2009).

Any decision to stop recruiting F&C serving personnel would have to be at a Ministerial level. However, following the Strategic Defence Review (which was part of the Comprehensive Spending Review) in 2010 and the publication of the Army 2020⁹ transformation programme, the government indicated that it intends to make the Armed Forces more streamlined, leaner and more responsive to immediate conflicts. The main implication of this review is a reduction in the number of personnel required in the Army. The redundancy programme being conducted by

⁹ Army 2020 is a government review of the structure of the Army including its fighting Brigades. The proposal is to make the regular Army smaller and more adaptable.

the Army involves reviewing the posts of serving personnel across a spectrum of ranks and grades. However, the media have highlighted a proposal to cut units with high numbers of F&C Personnel as opposed to those with UK personnel (“Battalions with foreign bias face axe in Army Cuts” Daily Telegraph 29th June 2012, “Army Battalions that rely on foreign recruits face the axe when defence cuts are outlined next week” Mail Online 30th June 2012). The Army has denied that such a proposal, in the format reported, exists.

In the 17 years of high volume, post-colonial F&C recruitment in the Army there has been no published systematic review of the F&C recruitment policy. The Army has also been unable to produce evidence that the policy of F&C recruitment is working to diversify the skills and experience amongst its personnel. From the lack of evaluation and review, it appears that the recruitment policy serves solely to boost the Army personnel figures. The current difficult economic climate has seen the Army take hard decisions to cut services and leave posts vacant as opposed to filling them. Additionally, in July 2011, the then Work and Pensions secretary (Iain Duncan Smith) gave notice of the intention to create immigration policies where ‘British Jobs for British workers’ was to be the central focus (Guardian, 2/7/11, BBC 1/7/11).

The Army is not exempt from this socio-political sentiment. The Army Recruiting and Training Division (ARTD), responsible for the recruitment of serving personnel, has committed resources to focus on the recruitment of minority personnel from the UK as opposed to the Commonwealth (internal memo, June 2011). [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It is therefore a requirement of this study to understand how F&C personnel fit into the British Army in this context of change. Reported organisational issues such as the experience of prejudice, racism and systemic discrimination (lack of career progression) have all been identified as areas of concern through surveys and internal meetings with F&C Personnel. Senior leadership within the organisation has commented that they are committed to

understanding these concerns better.¹⁰ This study is therefore necessary to explore these issues in more depth with serving personnel. As a practitioner-researcher working for the Army Headquarters and the ARTD, I have played a central role in persuading the organisation of the need for further and more thorough investigation of these issues. Under these circumstances, both a reflection on the process of conducting the research and the reasons why there has been no substantial research to address the issues raised above within the last 17 years is required (see chapter 4).

1.4.1 Motivation to Join the Army

The 2012 data from the survey of recruits to the Army illustrate that, as a group, F&C soldiers are less likely to report wanting to leave the Army during Phase I training. The data also show that the F&C recruits are less likely to leave basic training during the window of opportunity to do so (after 28 days service within the first 6 months of training). During a presentation at an internal meeting I attended in 2010 a question was raised about the true motivation of the F&C soldier for joining the Army. The debate that followed focused on the appropriateness of raising the issue as it was highlighted that the motivation of the UK recruit was taken at face value and evaluated at the assessment centre.

There is contextual evidence from Corry, Valero and Reenen (2011) to suggest that economic reasons mean that the F&C recruit is highly motivated to join the British Army. This report highlights that, during times of economic growth, migration is and has always been important for filling gaps in the labour market. During the peak period of volume recruitment from F&C countries (1998-2002), there was strong economic growth in the UK. It is speculated by some recruiters that membership of the British Army, the opportunity to command a British salary and to learn a transferable trade provides F&C personnel with an opportunity for social and economic mobility. However, it appears that this theory sits uncomfortably with some of the recruitment stakeholders in the Army as they have identified that

¹⁰ Internal ref AFCAS, 2009 CGS briefing report

anything other than a desire to serve the country through membership of the Army should be considered an ulterior motive.

1.5 Organisational Practices

Kostova (1999) has defined organisational practices as “those practices perceived to be dominant, critical or crucial for achieving the strategic aim of the firm”. The Army has created several organisational practices that it perceives as an efficient and effective way to manage diversity and the F&C personnel that it recruits. These are presented below in order to provide the context within which the current research attempts to investigate how overseas recruits navigate and experience the British Army.

1.5.1 Limiting Choice and Mobility

The Army has capped the number of F&C serving personnel that can enter each Arm or Service. An Arm or Service (also called a ‘cap badge’) is a regiment or corps that performs a specialist occupational function, e.g. the Royal Artillery (responsible for field guns, rockets and defence missiles). A trade group is a vocational specialisation within a cap badge. An example would be the cooks within the Royal Logistics Corps (responsible for supporting front line soldiers). In 2009 the Army introduced a “15% upper limit on the number of F&C nationals for the Armed Forces and that for the Army only; the 15% applies to not just the Army as a whole but to each of the Arms and Services” (internal loose minute, September 2008). The stated rationale for this cap is the promotion of unit cohesion and communication.

The Army has an F&C manning committee which meets monthly to monitor the inflow and outflow of F&C serving personnel in these cap badges and trades. There are currently some cap badges where there are more than 15% of F&C personnel. There have been anecdotal reports that where a unit substantially comprises F&C individuals from the same country, there can at times be a language barrier and a sub-identity in the unit. Unfortunately, there is no available policy documentation to support this capping decision which is based largely on military judgement as

opposed to research evidence. [REDACTED]

1.5.2 Security Checks

At present, the security checks done on F&C applicants are not of the same standard as those done on UK home applicants (internal report 2009). This is largely due to the difficulties in verifying international information. Supporting application documents such as passports, criminal declarations and letters from sponsors produced by F&C applicants during the recruitment process are accepted as they appear and the Army at present does not have the resources required to verify the documents and standardize the process for both UK and overseas applicants. The article referenced in section 1.1 (Illegal Immigrant Trooping the Colour) provides an example of the impact of having a different process for security checking. Internal communications between the then UKBA and the Army have highlighted that the UKBA did not do verification checks on those people entering the UK as part of the visa application process. It was the responsibility of the employer to do these. It is noteworthy that the incident of the soldier who was in the country illegally (section 1.1) has had a national focus. Incidents such as these tend to attract negative media scrutiny. However, similar cases involving British personnel making fraudulent applications tend not to get reported in the press, nor do they get collected by the national recruiting centre (responsible for processing applications to join the Army). The negative media coverage may be a potential contributor to some of the disapproving perceptions held by some British soldiers of their F&C counterparts.

The organisation has recognised that the current difference in the security checks associated with the recruitment process is unsustainable. A security report commissioned in 2009 (internal record of decisions document, July 2009) indicated that the Ministry of Defence Police undertook enhanced checks on applications from Ghana and Nigeria because of previous false identity concerns from these countries. Out of the 110 enhanced security checks done over a period of 7 months into the identities of F&C soldiers from these countries, 40% of applications were found to have contained false information. These enhanced security checks have involved a

significant resource bill, with investigations done in the country of origin and educational establishments in the UK. These findings have provided support for the enhanced checks to be done in a further 10 countries in the future. This policy change, though required and necessary, may serve to put F&C serving personnel under a greater amount of initial scrutiny by their peers as they enter basic training. The recruitment process can be considered as one of the organisational processes contributing to the negative view that others in the Army have of F&C personnel and, indeed, one that they may have of themselves.

1.5.3 Equal Opportunity and Diversity Climate

The Army has been proactive in working with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and identifying appropriate policies to manage equality and opportunity for ethnic groups (Letter from Trevor Phillips EHRC to Directorate of Manning Army 2008). There has been an attempt by various directorates in the Army to implement initiatives that would deal with the growing number of F&C soldiers and any intergroup dynamics which have the potential to impact on unit cohesion. These are described below.

1.5.3.1 Diversity Equal Opportunity Climate Survey

Recognising the need for evidence to support the above strategy, the Army has proposed undertaking an assessment of the equal opportunities climate through the Diversity Equal Opportunities Climate Survey (DEOCS). The DEOCS is an assessment tool developed by the American Army. It measures the equal opportunity climate in a unit before a commanding officer takes over the leadership of a unit. The intention behind this survey is to provide a baseline to the commanding officer in relation to how the unit perceives the equal opportunities climate within the unit (Truhon 2008). This will have implications for cohesion and unit identity. An action plan would then be developed to address any particular issues raised and the survey is done again when a new commanding officer takes over. Whilst the tool has good reliability and validity statistics, it was designed for use in America where the US Army is more multicultural and the economic argument for diversity in the military

has been articulated (Baker 2008). The proposal to use the DEOCS has been implemented with varying degrees of success and rigour within the Army.

1.5.3.2 Diversity Training

A training session outlining the Army's values is given during initial officer and soldier training. Additionally, the Army currently delivers an annual mandatory training package called MATT 6. Soldiers attend a lecture that outlines the values and standards of the Army. It is the responsibility of all unit commanders to ensure that this annual training is delivered to their unit. Due to the mandatory nature of this training, it is met with some degree of resistance by both soldiers and commanding officers.

It is reported by the Assistant Director (AD) for diversity that all recruits are challenged and 're-educated' if they express prejudiced attitudes during those sessions. However the last employee engagement reports (AFCAS report 2012 and 2013) highlight that respondents from ethnic minority groups were more likely to report experiences of bullying and harassment than white respondents. This challenges the assertion that there is an education and re-education process within the Army when an individual is overtly prejudiced. The Values and Standards doctrinal booklet (Dannat, 2008) argues that inculcating and maintaining the Army's values and standards is the responsibility of all commanders and requires more than a single period of instruction (MATT 6) per year. It further articulates that there is a need for commanders to recognise the challenge associated with this and urges that they provide leadership and example. An internal research report on the Values and Standards in the British Army (Kirk, 2011) concluded that lack of both leadership and appropriate examples were influential in a perceived deterioration of values and standards within the British Army. The Army introduced a confidential bullying and harassment helpline which has thus far received a tepid response. The decline in values and standards and continuing problems with bullying and harassment reinforce the view that more work needs to be done in relation to the leadership setting an example as to the values and standards expected in the Army.

1.5.4 Diversity in Organisations: The context for studying SI in organisations

The Home Office has established six strands of diversity to categorise common differences among individuals (Tatli, Ozbilgin, Worman and Price, 2007). These are; Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Religion and Belief and Sexual Orientation. These were established in an attempt to articulate the basis of difference amongst groups within the UK population, to help organisations promote fairness and equality. Whilst all of these are relevant and important to an organisation when promoting equality of opportunity, race is the strand which will form the focus of this research. This is primarily because Army policies and accounts of organisational life show that soldiers from different racial and cultural groups have different experiences of Army life. The plethora of literature on diversity within organisations tends to be located within the human resources (HR) and management body of knowledge. The emphasis within this domain tends to be on the management of differences (Brodbeck, Guillaume and Lee, 2011, Nkomo and Drikus, 2011, Triandis, 2003, Kandola and Fullerton, 1996).

Whilst some existing HR literature on diversity may contribute to an understanding of the Army's current issues relating to overseas recruitment, it is limited in its ability to offer a theoretical understanding of the more complex phenomena of group membership, shifting between groups and power dynamics within organisations. It is therefore important to examine the existing literature on diversity within organisations and identify any implications for diversity practice in the Army as it relates to the recruitment and retention of F&C soldiers.

Kettleborough (2005) asserts that the indigenous white male population of the UK is ageing rapidly and is in numeric decline. This author also argues that the working roles that are now filled by this majority will need to be filled by those from minority groups. Within the management, training and organisational psychology literature, there is much made of the changing demographics of the workplace of the future and the need for organisations to grapple with 'managing diversity' if they are to retain talent. There is, however, very little published research in the UK that has

monitored or evaluated the impact of changing demographics on industries such as Defence, that are male-dominated.

Despite the existence of six strands of diversity, the understanding of what diversity means and represents within the organisation is not consistent within the HR literature. It ranges from identification of differences within the employee population to the practice of diversity, which is intended to change employee behaviour. The term 'managing diversity' has evolved into a specific behavioural competency in some organisations, whilst in others 'valuing diversity' is espoused in mission and values statements. Kochan, et al. (2003) maintain that, although the workforces of many organisations are becoming more diverse, entrenched organisational cultures which remained inhospitable to traditionally underrepresented groups have been slow to change. This theme of slow changing organisational culture is repeated within the diversity literature (Coats, 2005). The method chosen by organisations to overcome these issues has been to provide diversity training within the organisation. Coats suggests that this attempt to inform staff, and potentially change their behaviours, is based on the premise that there is a set of common organisational principles that can be adopted for more effective intergroup interaction. This has not been empirically tested and presented within the diversity literature; however, within the Army, this theme of slow change in relation to diversity is relevant.

Diversity training, according to some authors, has become a routine, procedural exercise for some organisations to give the impression that the interests of minority groups are being served (Hoobler, 2005). Hoobler also maintains that the practice of giving lip service to multiculturalism is a structural phenomenon which means that it is not coincidental that approaches to managing diversity have failed. Research by Richard, Kochan and McMillan-Capehart (2002) lends credence to Hoobler's findings. Their research on the impact of diversity on business performance has shown that there is little empirical research conducted within organisations to evaluate the effectiveness of diversity or diversity management practices on the success of the business. They identified that organisations do very little to link the effectiveness of

diversity policies to an improvement in performance. Hoobler (2005) uses Foucault's (1995) theory of docile bodies to explain that the predictability and conformity central to the traditional view of efficient human resources are at odds with granting power to underrepresented individuals within the organisation, hence the lack of evaluation of these policies. This hypothesis put forward by Hoobler was also identified by Dandekar and Mason (2003) whose work on F&C personnel in the Army suggests that an organisation with a well-established power structure relies on inequality to function efficiently.

Kochan et al. (2003) conducted a seminal research evaluation project on the effects of diversity on business performance in the United States. They found that racial and gender diversity within organisations have more modest effects on performance than those suggested by more optimistic researchers. They did however indicate that they do not necessarily have the negative effect on group processes as warned by those with a more pessimistic view of diversity within organisations. Kochan et al. also maintained that, in general, gender diversity was less problematic than racial diversity as the inclusion of more women in teams tended to be focused on the inclusion of white women, which does not disturb the balance of ethnic homogeneity.

The complexity of ethnic diversity research within organisations is demonstrated by research conducted by Mollica (2003). This research explored how white men reacted to redundancies within a diversity context. In her research, white men tended not to realise that they were the beneficiaries of diversity policies. They also identified less with their racial group than other ethnic groups. However, during times of organisational change, particularly when job security was threatened, they demonstrated a heightened state of social identity and felt that they were unfairly targeted for redundancy. They also tended to demonstrate negative attitudes toward equal opportunity policies. Mollica identified that the "White male backlash" toward diversity policies appears to be a form of in-group bias, arising when the perception by this group is that they are being threatened. Whilst Mollica (2003) has not been explicit in articulating whether this threat is real or perceived,

the study demonstrated that perception was highly relevant to feelings of threat. Diversity in organisations is a complex phenomenon (Cole and Salimath,2013; Pendry, Driscoll and Field 2007) with very little evaluative research as to its effects. The focus of the current research is on the racial strand of diversity within the British Army.

1.6 Racial Diversity in the British Armed Forces

The British armed forces has acknowledged that diversity within Defence will “enable individuals to realise their full potential during their service, provide equality of opportunity irrespective of race, gender or religion and assist them to prepare for subsequent careers” (Strategic Defence Review 1997, Supporting Essay 9, Para 17). The interpretation of diversity here is presented in an egalitarian, inclusive context. The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (2012) describes this as the ethical case for diversity. However, it is argued by Dandekar and Mason (2003) that the Army’s diversity policy has been driven by two sets of considerations; the moral consideration and the more ‘hard-nosed’ material calculations, that widening the pool of recruitment allows an increase in a diverse pool of individuals. This widening would broaden the values and insights of the military, thereby making it more resilient to future threats. Although there is an element of a more opportunistic, organisational driver for diversity, this is not, as Dandekar and Mason advocate, actually a business case for diversity. There is no mention as to how diversity contributes to organisational effectiveness in a business context. There is also no strategic goal of evaluating the quality of the serving personnel and the cost of having a more diverse Army. There is similarly no available evidence to support the case that a more diverse Army is more effective than other more homogenous Armies.

The Army has not evaluated the training costs of F&C personnel, the return on investment for training, their levels of job satisfaction or their length of service in comparison with their white British counterparts. Without definitive performance indicators or markers of effectiveness it is understandable that an organisation could fail to meet more loose and malleable targets around issues of equality and diversity

that do not call for personal or managerial accountability. This has been described as an organisational malaise, and is symptomatic of what Wilkins (2004) calls the 'good idea' of diversity. Whilst the Army might think that diversity is a good idea, Dandekar and Mason (2003) are of the opinion that it is unclear whether diversity is a straightforward concept for military organisations in general and the UK Armed forces in particular, to embrace. Central to this lack of clarity about what diversity means within the military environment, is the influence of conformity and discipline on the functioning of the Army. The above literature suggests that the concept of diversity is about difference and individuality. This is a concept which is not central, or helpful, to the smooth functioning of command-based, hierarchical organisation such as the Army, where leadership is primarily transactional in nature.

1.7 Rationale for the Study

The rationale for this study focuses on the amalgamation of several organisational and socio economic factors that turn the spotlight on overseas recruitment and the demographic composition of the Army ("7,000 foreigners in the British Army" Daily Mail 2007). The current social and economic climate makes it necessary to justify the continued recruiting of F&C personnel at a time when there is high youth unemployment in the UK. The Army is turning its attention to the evidence related to performance of F&C Personnel and the return on investment that they provide.

Corbett (1994) highlights structural issues such as power, opportunity and group representation as key determinants of organisational behaviour. This study seeks to understand the interaction between these organisational factors and individual factors (race, cultural values, and social position) which affect the experience of work by F&C serving personnel in the British Army. Additionally, the organisational systems and practices such as restricting mobility, enhanced security checks and diversity training will also be examined in relation to how they affect the working lives of F&C personnel. Working life in the Army includes the affective or social (peer bonding, job satisfaction) as well as the normative (organisational policies and values) elements of working life. Both of these elements will be explored in this research.

Although the focus of this study lies primarily with the work experiences of F&C serving personnel in the Army, it will also examine the working experiences of British serving personnel from both the ethnic minority and white communities. By including comparative data from other ethnic and national groups there can be an exploration of how these organisational and individual factors affect the experience of being in the British Army.

There is little available information about the methodological issues involved in conducting research with the military. Clegg, Courpasson and Phillips (2006) report that institutions such as the Army, which have total control over their members' everyday lives are difficult to infiltrate or change. The process of conducting research as an outsider within this type of organisational structure has not been examined within the methodology literature. Lundstrom (1987) acknowledges that research in such institutions is fraught with problems and pitfalls rarely discussed in methodology and research design textbooks. By seeking to understand the experiences of F&C personnel within the Army, the opportunity exists to understand the impact of organisational culture on how research questions are answered within the British Army. This study therefore also acts as a case study for examining the process by which research is carried out in a hierarchical institution such as the Army.

1.7.1 Existing Research Conducted Within the Army

Whilst there are some complicated organisational issues surrounding F&C serving personnel, as described above, there appears to be very little published research investigating their place in the British Army. There is also a paucity of published work exploring targeted ethnic minority recruitment and organisational dynamics in the Army, and more widely in Defence, as a sector of employment. Existing research on diversity, commissioned by the Army included a market research project which examined the barriers to ethnic minority recruitment in the British Army. This work outlined the difficulties of recruiting from certain sections of the UK population such as Asian and African communities and has located those difficulties firmly within the

cultural values of those communities which were reported to be at odds with military culture. The paradox of these findings is that those British communities which were identified have all originated from the same post-colonial countries from which the Army recruits its Commonwealth soldiers. It seems unlikely that a shift in cultural values alone can explain the reticence from UK based ethnic minority communities to join the Army. One of the limitations of this research was that it did not separate the ethnic groups by social class and educational attainment, which Conner, Modood and Hillage (2004) argue are significant contributors to decisions to join the uniformed services. Their study on the factors influencing ethnic minorities to join the Police Service indicated that socio economic background was relevant. Their study demonstrated that ethnic minorities from higher socio-economic backgrounds had more options; therefore they tended to focus on careers within established professions such as accountancy, law and medicine.

Another study commissioned by the Army attempted to quantify 'How British is the British Army?' (Dandekar, 2007). This was done from a sociological perspective and did not involve a collection of any primary data, nor did it utilise any peer reviewed work in the area of nationality, ethnicity and organisational culture. The main finding from this work was that there was a perception by some in the Army that it was 'fast becoming a foreign legion'. This report does not make clear who has this perception, nor is this finding substantiated by evidence presented in the report.

As highlighted earlier, the military outsourced market research to investigate both the general barriers to recruitment and the impact of gatekeepers (e.g. parents) on recruitment from ethnic minority groups. However, it has not utilised the data to effect changes to the recruitment of different groups of personnel or enhance the perceptions of working conditions of F&C personnel. Additionally, the reports referred to above were conducted either by ex-military individuals or current serving personnel who do not have a background in research methodology. In light of these issues, it can be asked whether or not the Army is prepared to provide appropriate resources to answer the question of why there are so few ethnic minority recruits joining the Army.

Having briefly identified the limitations of the previous work available in this area and the gaps in application, it is necessary to use these projects as the starting point from which to explore and develop further the concepts in the current research. With the decreasing size of the Army, the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan and a proposed decrease in the numbers of personnel being sent into operational theatre, there is a need to look at the relationships between personnel in the peacetime context and the impact of recruiting from different countries. The potential impact of this project is significant as it will feed into several agencies within the British Army (Directorate of Manning, Directorate of Personnel Services Army Recruiting and Training Division and the Recruiting Partnership Programme). As well as contributing to the Army's understanding of F&C soldiers, it is anticipated that this research has the potential to contribute to the growing body of knowledge surrounding diversity in the workplace and overseas recruitment to the UK.

1.8 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are fivefold. The first is to understand how F&C personnel perceive and engage with the British Army. The second is to investigate the organisational factors that contribute to those experiences. The third objective of this research is to understand the process of multiple group identification within a large, power-based organisation. More specifically, this objective seeks to explore whether there are competing or superordinate identities formed as a result of being in a hierarchical institution such as the Army. A fourth objective is to comment on the methodological complexity of conducting robust research, as a civilian, within the military environment. The fifth objective is to examine whether there is a theoretical framework which explains the consequences of holding multiple out-group memberships, or multiply marginalised, identities.

1.8.1 Research Questions

1. How do F&C serving personnel access and engage with organisational systems and processes within the Army as compared to other groups?
2. What are the organisational practices which affect identity management and negotiation amongst F&C serving personnel?
3. Are there conditions, within the Army which make an individual's social identity more salient to self and others?
4. What are the substantive issues that influence sensitive research inquiry in a large, hierarchical organisation such as the Army?
5. How does linking the concept of double consciousness to social identity enhance the theoretical understanding of multiply marginalised identities of ethnic minority F&C soldiers?

1.9 Methodology and data collection.

This section provides a summary of the proposed methodology and an outline of how the data will be collected. This research intends to investigate the experience of being an F&C individual serving in the British Army. It will focus on the combined effects of individual and category membership within an organisation where self-categorisation is made salient. In order to investigate the research questions above, it is necessary to adopt a qualitative research design. Qualitative methods such as interviewing, allow for a more in-depth understanding of the phenomena being investigated. DeCuir-Gunby and Schutz (2014) have argued that applied psychologists need to increasingly utilise additional research methods beyond traditional quantitative approaches in order to address problems within applied contexts such as organisations and schools. Three methods of data collection will be used. They are focus groups, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Such a design allows for the triangulation of data from various sources and will potentially strengthen the findings of the research.

The access that I, as a researcher, have to serving personnel is indirect and likely to be influenced by the military person assisting me with access. The focus groups and semi-structured interviews will explore the experience of working in the Army for

four groups of serving personnel (F&C ethnic minority, F&C white, UK ethnic minority, UK white). During the focus groups, participants will be asked to participate in an exercise where they outline their social network and report on the frequency of contact and the national origins of people within this network.

It is acknowledged that doing 'real world' research with the military is unlikely to produce clean data. It is anticipated that the data are likely to be affected by the method of collection, therefore accessing multiple data sources will allow me to build a clearer picture of what it is like to live and work in the Army as an F&C serving person.

Policy documents from the recruiting and training group of the Army, the Directorate of Manning and the then F&C secretariat, constitute another source of secondary data which will be analysed as part of this research. Examples of these documents include ministerial statements, notes from the Under Secretary of State for Defence, personal letters from external agencies in relation to F&C soldiers and minutes from internal committee meetings.

The research project will be divided into three phases in order to integrate the findings and build an incremental picture of the work experiences and bicultural organisational life of F&C serving personnel.

1.10 Implications of the present research

There are both theoretical and practical implications of this research. Gaining further understanding of the complexity of social identification, and the context within which it is effectively managed to benefit group members, is one of the associated outcomes of this research. Combining the theories of social identity and double consciousness presents a unique theoretical opportunity to understand the perspective of group members who hold multiple, low status, identities. As highlighted in section 1.7.1, there have been some attempts by the Army to explore certain issues relating to F&C serving personnel. However, these research have not examined the context of work, and how overseas personnel navigate their 'outsider

within' status. The current research will also offer critical insights into how future researchers may also navigate their position within a highly structured and stratified organisation such as the Army which has total control of its employees. It will offer strategies which can be adopted to answer research questions and it will comment on the utility and exploitation of the data that are collected within such organisational constraints.

For the Army, there are potential policy implications of this research with regard to the initial training on equal opportunities given to new recruits and staff officers. There is further scope for the research to contribute to the wider diversity training throughout the Army.

As the UK moves forward with a tiered approach to immigration, where points are awarded to prospective immigrants, it is anticipated that there will continue to be skills gaps within the British economy, including key industries such as health and defence. This research may help to address the question of where the UK will turn to recruit individuals who will fill positions that hold little appeal to UK citizens. This research aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge that is being used to understand the role and experiences of migrant workers in the UK.

Chapter 2: Soldier Identity, Power and Values: The Implications of Social Identity Theory and the Theory of Double Consciousness

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the degree to which the extant theory and literature illuminate the issues that the Army faces in relation to how Foreign and Commonwealth (F&C) personnel experience their working lives. A review of the literature has shaped the theoretical framework which underpins this study. The theoretical framework comprises three complementary areas of literature. The first area focuses on the theory of social identity and the organisational context within which power is enacted within and between groups. The theory of double consciousness is the second body of literature that is reviewed in the framework. This theory relates specifically to race and explores how racial minority groups perceive themselves in relation to the majority group. The third area considers the perspectives on power offered by Goffman and Foucault. These perspectives will be briefly reviewed, in order to contextualise the organisational structure within which the present theoretical framework is applied and the research conducted. The social identity and double consciousness literature presented aims to highlight the complex interplay of shifting between groups and the impact of this on the self and organisational life. Both the opportunities and challenges of drawing these theories together to understand how out-groups with salient and multiple identities experience an organisation will be discussed.

2.2 Social Identity Theory

This section examines social identity theory and its relevance to the present study. It will examine the main concept as identified by Tajfel and Turner in 1979 and review the relevance of this concept and the early minimal group studies to the present research. The theoretical developments within social identity theory, particularly the exploration of multiple identities and crossed categorisation, will also be discussed as they are pertinent to understanding how soldiers within the organisation make sense of their roles. Both the opportunities for further developing the theory

through more contextual research and the gaps in the theory, as they apply to the current research, will be outlined. This section will also present the rationale for using social identity theory and briefly discuss two other theories that were considered relevant to provide an understanding of group processes within the Army, but which were rejected for inclusion in this thesis. It is acknowledged that there are detailed chronological reviews of the development and refinement of social identity theory (see Brown, 2000; Brown and Lunt, 2002, Haslam, Ellemers, Reicher, Reynolds and Schmitt, 2010, Amiot and Aubin, 2013). These reviews were referenced and discussed in order to provide a relevant history and overview of the theory as it relates to the current research,

2.2.1 Overview of Social Identity Theory and Its Relevance to the Present Study

Social identity is arguably the principle social psychological theory that provides an understanding group processes and behaviours within Europe. The theory, developed principally by Tajfel and Turner (around 1978) argues that social identification is a perception of oneness with a group of persons. These researchers posited that this perception and the subsequent identification with a group stems from comparing oneself with other groups of individuals, followed by a cognitive process of categorisation that allows the individual to align themselves with a particular group (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Social identity is characterised by an individual's concept of self, which, the theory argues, is derived from perceived membership of a social group. Hogg and Vaughan (2005) argue that this is an individual-based perception of what defines the 'us' associated with any internalised group membership.

Social identity is a relational theory which allows us to make sense of the social world, through understanding the similarities and differences we have with others. Turner (1999) discusses social identity as the pivot between society and the individual. In the case of the Army, social identity is the pivot between the organisation and the individual. As a theory, it interacts with the socio-political context to explain group behaviour within the organisation. The theory was developed in the shadow of the holocaust, where a richer understanding of how

groups of people could perpetrate significant suffering on other groups was required. This demonstrated a move away from individualism to understanding the motivation of groups. This was one of the critical themes in Tajfel and Turner's development of the theory. The theory examines the role of the group as a collective entity and seeks to explain the implications of collective action. In particular, the Tajfel and Turner model is particularly interested in the means through which a powerless out-group could overcome what they perceive to be subjugation by the dominant in-group.

The early theory focused on the strategies of low status groups and considered whether boundaries between group membership were permeable and the impact of these boundaries on collective and individual action. The theory argues that our social bond with others is the primary one and that we are motivated by the depth and meaning of our groups to society. The Tajfel and Turner model not only sought to understand the permeability of group boundaries, but sought to identify under what conditions particular strategies were used to maintain positive self-esteem and affect in members of the group. This early model highlighted that in order to maintain positive distinctiveness, when group boundaries were permeable and not fixed, then out-group members would seek to move into the high status group. Where group boundaries were impermeable, and group membership was fixed, then out-group members would employ social creativity strategies (such as re-defining the meaning of out-group membership) to maintain positive affect and distinctiveness.

The principal premise of social identity theory is that the social bond with others is primary. It argues that individuals are motivated by the meaning of their groups to society and that self-esteem, efficacy and presentation are functions of the personal self and our identities. The theory also argues that there is a collective self in social identity which makes it possible to come together in shared values as a group.

Reicher, Spears and Haslam (2010) reiterate that there are three conditions important to the creation of group comparison and in-group favouritism in particular. The first is the extent to which individuals identify with their in-group and

value the group membership as part of their self-concept. The second is that the predominant context provides comparison between groups and the third is the perceived relevance of the comparison group. These three conditions exist within the organisational environment in which F&C and British personnel work. Hence, the theory provides a sound basis on which to understand group behaviour within the British Army. The application of the theory to an organisational context, in particular, the Army, is useful to explain intergroup behaviour as it can be argued that serving personnel are motivated by the depth and meaning of their groups to the organisation. An understanding of this motivation and organisational positioning also serves to further develop the application of this theory to real world contexts.

2.2.1.1 : Consideration of other theories to understand group behaviour within organisations

Whilst social identity theory was identified as the most appropriate theory to understand the position of groups within the British Army, other theories of intergroup behaviour were considered. Both the strengths and limitations of social dominance theory and system justification theory in particular, were reviewed in order to determine the theory which best supported this particular research. This section will outline the key concepts of these theories and link their applicability to the research aims and questions identified in section 1.8 above.

This research into intergroup relations in the Army was exploratory. There were no a priori assumptions or theories about the treatment of F&C personnel within the Army. It set out to explore the experience of living and working in the British Army, particularly for F&C personnel, as this hard to reach population had not been researched previously.

Both system justification and social dominance theory have their roots in trying to understand group conflict. These two theories adopt the position that conflict and particular hierarchical inequalities exist between groups in society. They both hold assumptions about the enduring and systemic nature of these structural inequalities, as well as assumptions about the role of groups within society in facilitating these

inequalities. Both of these theories are not about groups and group behaviour per se, they are about the position of groups within society and the ability of these groups to justify and assert their place.

System justification theory, as developed by Jost, Banaji and Nosek (2004) argues that a belief in the legitimacy of the status quo (in-group) is critical to understanding why powerful in-groups are able to dominate a particular political and societal context. The theory suggests that this belief in the legitimacy of a group will be measured and observed by political conservatism, and hence inaction, on the part of less powerful outgroups. Whilst this explanation may go some way to understanding collective action within a particular cultural or societal context, it does not explain intergroup interaction on a more general level. It also does not explain or account for, the individual differences in political motivations and behaviour held by members of the same group. Huddy (2004) describes this “societal quiescence” p952 explanation as flawed, due to its inability to illuminate intergroup behaviour or explain why there are some politically conservative groups that are able to exercise power within organisations and societies. System justification theory, whilst useful for providing a perspective on the position of dominant groups within society, is less well equipped to offer an explanation for the complexity of the individual and group interplay, as well as the experience of multiple memberships and its effect on intergroup interaction.

Social dominance theory, developed by Sidanius and Pratto (1999) argues that the nature of intergroup relations differs according to the groups in question. These researchers purport that group categorisations are predominantly biological in nature. The theory views these differences between groups as static and invariant over time (e.g. men will seek to dominate women, whites will seek to dominate blacks). This particular account of the origins and consequences of inequality between social groups is centred on mutually reinforcing processes at the individual, ideological and institutional levels (Soylu and Sheehy-Skeffington, 2015). In essence, social dominance theory posits that dominant groups exist to seek power over subordinate groups and that individuals express a social dominance orientation

which makes them more likely to belong to certain groups. This lends credence to their research that certain professions attract individuals with particular social dominance orientations (e.g. police officers have been identified to have high social dominance orientations).

Social dominance theory and research is largely quantitative in its focus and is limited in its ability to provide an understanding of the effects of the inequality or the social dominance process on the subordinate and dominant groups. Whilst social dominance theory explains and considers in detail, the role of the individual, it does not explain intergroup relations well at the individual, group, or societal level. Its base in evolutionary psychology (where more powerful groups seek to dominate the less powerful) to account for intergroup differences, focuses on an individual difference approach to intergroup conflict. This thesis sought to explore the nature of the relationship, without making a priori assumptions about the nature of the intergroup interaction within the Army. Social dominance theory was initially considered for use in understanding the position of F&C personnel within the Army, however, due to the exploratory nature of this research and open research questions, social dominance theory was not seen to offer significant explanatory potential.

Social identity was considered the primary theory through which to explore intergroup processes in the Army as it offered a unique perspective on the salience of the groups and allowed a consideration of the context within which group behaviours were being formed within the organisation.

A crucial element of social identity theory is understanding how individuals categorise themselves into particular groups and determining how those groups differ from other groups. Self-categorisation provides an explanation of how the self-system is organised (Reicher et al, 2010) and, arguably broadens the remit of social identity theory through providing an answer to the more mechanistic questions of group formation. It is debateable whether this is a theory in its own right or whether it is an extension of social identity theory; however, it is clear that how we categorise

and position ourselves in relation to groups is an important consideration in that pivot between self and society. Turner (1999) indicates that self-categorisation represented an expansion of the social identity theory (which is continually developing). Self-categorisation is both a dynamic and context dependent process. Earlier research has argued that self-categorisation occurs as a cognitive shortcut to allow individuals to make sense of their world and the position of groups within it. This is done through a process of self-stereotyping and automatic de-individuation (Brewer and Brown, 1998). However, Turner (1999) posited that self-categorisation occurs when there is an attraction to perceived group similarities. The level of identity is influenced by one's motives, values and expectations. The social context within which the comparison takes place is also very important. The depersonalisation that occurs in the categorisation process influences the shared sense of identity and produces group behaviour.

One of the difficulties of this mechanistic approach to categorisation, and ultimately shared identity, is that there is limited choice in naturally occurring identities, such as race and gender, despite a greater degree of fluidity with self categorisation today. Within this research, the organisational context is critical to understanding the categorisation and identification process. The Army is hierarchical and predetermines all F&C personnel into a particular category. Whilst this thesis seeks to further explore how the organisational context contributes to the categorisation process, it is important to note that there is debate within the literature as to how rational and independent the self-categorisation process is. Reicher et al, (2010), Korte (2007) and Brown and Lunt (2002) all suggest that social structures are less rigid than self categorisation and social identity theory acknowledge. These authors assert that society is already categorised and that individuals fit in. Brown and Lunt contest the idea that social identity is developed through the categorisation process, whereas Korte (2007) indicates that individuals evaluate the accessibility of the group and in turn, are also assessed by the group for readiness and fit. It is at this point, they argue, that the depersonalisation needs to happen in order to transition from personal to social identity.

2.2.1.2 Multiple Identities

Whilst self-categorisation theory is critical within the social identity approach to understanding group behaviour, this approach often fails to say much about the issue of multiple identities that individuals hold. Kang and Bodenhausen (2015) assert that the complexity of social categorisation within social identity is often ignored. These authors argue that social categorisation is influenced largely by the social environment and that such environments are dynamically shifting contexts which are often ambiguous. As identified in section 2.2.1.1, social categories are not as independent as outlined in social identity theory; they interact and intersect with the individual to influence perception. This makes both the perception and the actual experience of multiple identities connected in such a way as to provide a unique outcome for the individual.

The concept of nested identities is a parallel perspective within the wider social identity approach to understanding groups and organizations. It is important to provide an acknowledgement of the role that this concept plays in helping to understand how multiple identities in organisations are formed and enacted. Ashforth and Johnson (2001) have discussed that, within organisations, there are different levels and types of identities that nest within each other. They argue that the salience of any given social identity is dependent on the centrality of that identity to the self and its relevance in a particular situational context. These nested identities can be higher, or lower, order identities. Silva and Sias (2010) propose that the organisation is the highest order of identity. A limitation of this argument is the absence of considerable discussion about the role that demographically occurring, core, social identities, such as race and gender, play in interacting with the various levels of nested identities. Whilst the concept of nested identities is helpful in understanding the centrality, or remoteness, of a particular social identity, it is limited in its ability to provide an understanding of the intersectional effects of these multiple identities.

Roccas and Brewer's (2002) research on the complexity of social identity and the coping strategies used to manage multiple identities can be interpreted as building

on Tajfel and Turner's (1979) model of strategies adopted by social groups to mitigate their position within a particular social structure. Roccas and Brewer (2002) indicate that managing multiply marginalized identities can be complex. They address this complexity within an identity management framework. In relation to this thesis, it is important to recognise the contribution of Roccas and Brewer's model to understanding how those with multiple, low status, identities have been theorized. It will also be essential to examine the utility of this perspective within the current research. The model outlines four strategies that tend to be used in intergroup interaction and identification. Using the example of an ethnic minority F&C soldier, Roccas and Brewer's model indicates that the first strategy could be intersection (e.g. ethnic minority F&C only identifies with other ethnic minority F&C personnel). The second is dominance, where the F&C identity is the predominant identity and more central than belonging to a particular racial group. Therefore identification would be with other F&C personnel. The third strategy could be compartmentalisation. This strategy acknowledges the relevance of the context to identification. Within this strategy, the individual would identify with other F&C personnel and other ethnic minority personnel depending on the situation. The final strategy could be merger, where identification is both with other F&C personnel and other ethnic minority personnel.

Shen and Dumani (2013) indicate that the prevalence of each strategy in integrating or managing an identity is unknown. The social identity complexity theory as developed by Roccas and Brewer is an important step in understanding the identification outcomes for those with multiply marginalised identities. It is, however, limited by its exclusion of individual differences. Additionally, the context dependent nature of the model is underdeveloped. This management framework does not go far enough in discussing the psychological issues faced as a result of multiple identity management. Therefore, there is a need within this research to consider an additional theory, such as double consciousness, which can elucidate these effects and outcomes.

The complexity and challenges of multiple identity categorisation have been documented in the literature (Kang and Bodenhausen, 2015). However, the relevance of multiple identities for this thesis is clear. There are both intersecting and shared identities for serving personnel. These have implications for intergroup interactions and wider organisational cohesion. This thesis seeks to understand how groups of F&C soldiers interact with British soldiers. Whilst soldiers are categorised and identified with these two broad groups, the added dimension of race must be acknowledged. The formation of the Army as identified in section 1.3 is such that multiple categorisation and identification is a reality of organisational life. In addition to the trade and corps groups that individuals identify with as part of their job, the rank identification is also critical to their experience of the organisation. Each group has values, perceptions and behaviours that are unique and are embodied by group members. This thesis, therefore presents an ideal opportunity to carefully examine and evaluate the influence of multiple identity on intergroup interaction within the Army.

2.2.2 Early studies of social identity formation – the importance of context

In this section, the classical social identity studies have been referenced to highlight the process of social identity formation. One of the key tenets of early social identity theory is that group members will seek to ensure that their own group remains in the dominant position. This was first demonstrated by the minimal group paradigm studies (Tajfel 1970 cited in Abrams and Hogg, 1990; Tajfel et al. 1971). These studies attempted to identify the minimal conditions that would make members of one group discriminate in favour of the group to which they belonged and against an outgroup. It was demonstrated that placing participants who had previously interacted well together into two groups (on the basis of minimal criteria such as coin tossing and picture preferences) was sufficient to generate intergroup competition and discrimination. From this result, these researchers posited that there was an apparent discontinuity between how people relate to others within an intergroup setting as opposed to how they react to these same others on an individual basis (Abrams and Hogg, 1990; Turner, 1999; Brown and Lunt, 2002). This

'discontinuity' was further investigated by Reicher and Haslam (2006). Their research focussed on the additional dimension of power, which is also crucial to the social identity approach. They identify that power is pertinent when considering the element of perception and comparison of self against others to whom one feels similar.

The original finding that group membership was enough to promote discrimination between groups has been critiqued by researchers such as Ethier and Deaux (1994) and Reicher (2004) who argued that social identity is context-dependent when explaining intergroup behaviour. Haslam, Oakes, Reynolds and Turner (1999) have also highlighted the importance of social context both in the development of social categorisation and in developing social cognition. These researchers contend that an organisation represents a context or structure within which group identification takes place and where the majority group can progress.

What is important to note from the original minimal paradigm studies is that discrimination between groups occurred when group members were devoid of context and did not have an understanding of the issues within the experiment. The negative consequences of continuing research without a genuine context are put forward by Reicher (2004) who urges that trying to generalise group behaviour based on specific events that do not take into account the history or context is a mistake. He argues that the ability to explain when groups enter into conflict, the antecedents to such conflict and the motivations for their actions and their targets is lost, as is, our ability to learn from the conflict, if the context is not considered. Similarly in this research, the contextual importance of the Army policies and events that contribute to the formation of social identities is crucial for determining the conditions that lead to group behaviour within the Army.

Meeusen, Delvaux and Phalet (2014) examined social identity formation in work groups. They identified that the importance associated with groups within an organisational context was contingent, not only on the value attached to belonging to that group but also on individual and group values. They argue that the extent to

which the values of the individual and the group converge, predicts long term group identification and performance in the organisation. The development of the theory to account for the context of organisations is particularly helpful to the present study.

Whilst social identity involves thinking about one's social position and commonality with others it is, ironically, the feeling of being different to another group that allows one to identify closely with the group to which one belongs. Worchel, Morales, Paez and Deschamps, (1998) state that those who have similar positions and common backgrounds will tend to have similar social identities. This reinforces the idea that social identity has, at its core, the concept of similarity. Being in a group where self-categorisation and identification with that group becomes the basis for positive self-regard and psychological well-being leads to the development of a social identity. Social identity can be a function of belonging to a homogenous group based on naturally inherent characteristics, such as ethnicity and gender, if there is value and positive affect attached to those characteristics. Knippenberg, Haslam and Platow (2007) propose that sometimes belonging to a diverse, rather than homogenous group may foster greater group identification if the individual attaches more value to the principle of diversity and belonging to a diverse group. Packer, Chasteen and Kang (2011) underscore this point through their suggestion that not all group memberships form a social identity.

2.2.3 Social identity and self-esteem – the importance of affect

Whilst history and context are important considerations in the development of the social identity tradition, research has also explored the importance of commitment to the group and the self-esteem of group members (Ellemers, Kortekaas and Ouwerkerk, 1999). These factors create an affective component to social identity which has implications for how group members perceive themselves and their motivation to adopt the group values, traditions and behaviour. Abrams and Hogg (1990) reiterate the earlier conclusions of the minimal paradigm social identity studies which highlighted that individuals have a need for and are motivated to

maintain a favourable self-image. One of the ways of sustaining this favourable self-image is by drawing intergroup comparisons that favour one's own group over other groups.

Derks, van Laar and Ellemers (2007) have suggested that the affective component of social identity is dependent on a number of factors. Feeling good about oneself, based on membership of a social group depends on how important the group is for an individual's self-definition and the contextual salience of that identity. These authors contend that being in an educational or employment setting where one's group is devalued or stigmatised affects one's social identity and self-concept. This reinforces Reicher's concern about the importance of context in determining the affective component of social identity. However, it also demonstrates the interdependency of cognition, affect and commitment to the group. Self-concept is especially relevant to members of low status societal groups, such as women and ethnic minorities (Derks et al, 2007). These authors observe that, when confronted with low evaluations and negative stereotypes about their group, these low status groups have their self-concept threatened. This links to the idea of stereotype threat which occurs when an individual feels threatened that a negative stereotype about the group with which they identify is confirmed or is at the risk of being confirmed (Steele and Aronson, 1995). Stereotype threat has been demonstrated to affect performance and motivation for members of negatively stereotyped groups, particularly when they are in the numerical minority (Ryan et al. 2007, Zagefka and Brown, 2005).

Ellemers et al. (1999) in their seminal work on the components of social identity identified that it is necessary and favourable to distinguish between self-categorisation, commitment to the group and self-esteem as related but separate aspects of group members' social identity. Using a factor analytic approach, these researchers have argued that the emotional component of social identity (affective commitment) is the most influential in mediating displays of in-group favouritism. Whilst it can be argued that this research, conducted with a homogenous group of

university students, was devoid of real life context, it provides an indication of the potential for affect to be a strong mediator of group identity. Van Knippenberg, Haslam and Platow (2007) have used the term “subjective value” to describe the effect of the group on how an individual feels about group membership. They highlight that the subjective value of the group reflects on the self and can explain why individuals seek to identify with groups that they perceive to be prestigious and of high status. These authors have less to say, however, about how the subjective value of individuals is affected when they belong to a group comprised of members who are a numerical rarity yet who are highly visible within an organisation.

2.2.4 Distinctiveness and Networks within the Organisation

Whilst affect is certainly relevant to understanding the formation of social identity, salience and standing out due to being a numeric rarity also play a part in how groups are formed within an organisation. The theory of distinctiveness, formulated as a complement to social identity theory, argues that patterns of social identity and friendship are based on numeric rarity (Leonard, Mehra and Katerberg, 2008) and are contextual in nature. It is argued that this creates a contextual salience within a particular moment. The theory posits that minority groups situated within an environment (organisation) consisting of a much larger majority group will tend to form friendships within their own group and be on the fringes of the available social network. This assertion is consistent with the view put forward by social identity and self-categorisation theory that the individual will have to internalise memberships of both the minority and the larger majority groups as part of their self-concept (Reicher and Haslam, 2006).

Studies of networks in organisations (McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook, 2001) have tended to consistently replicate this finding. However, Leonard et al.(2008) argue that it is unclear whether this pattern of networking according to demographic group membership is established within society or is particular to research studies where the situational factors can be more easily manipulated. It is anticipated that distinctiveness theory can contribute to understanding how F&C personnel make sense of themselves within the organisational environment. Distinctiveness theory

draws together the concepts of salience, context and identification to hypothesise that individuals pay attention to characteristics which make them different when they are in an environment with other individuals. The theory does not explicitly refer to social comparison but researchers such as McGuire (1984) have suggested that, when individuals try to make sense of who they are, they rely on perceptual selectivity to manage information overload. The implication is therefore that identity formation requires the ability to select the cues and information from the environment relevant to oneself.

The theory also reinforces the relevance of situational context. F&C soldiers will be 'rare' in the context of an organisation where they make up only 7% of the total personnel. In this context ethnicity and nationality will be salient. However, in a group or organisation composed primarily of F&C personnel, these characteristics may not be salient at all. This is the case in certain regiments. Therefore, there may be times when F&C personnel feel their uniqueness and times when they do not.

Research by Pettit and Lount (2010) has identified that the social position of groups within society can influence the motivation of lower status groups to perform. Within this organisational context, there is value in exploring the social position of F&C personnel within the Army, as it would appear that the distinctiveness research is unclear about the interaction between numerical rarity and social position within the organisation. Within the Army, it does not appear that F&C serving personnel are regarded in the same way as UK serving personnel. However, as highlighted in the previous chapter, within both of these groups (UK and F&C), ethnicity is a relevant consideration when thinking about the relative structural position of F&C soldiers in the Army as this makes them distinctive.

Leonard et al. (2008) reflect on the assertion that "Race is a characteristic that is imbued with independent status value...people widely assume that it is more worthy or valuable to be White than Black" p580. Ely and Thomas (2001) suggest that distinctiveness alone does not tell the whole story of why ethnic minorities in an

organisation may be on the margins of friendship networks and disconnected from influential members of the network. These authors contend that the low status of the group in the wider society has an impact on how individuals are viewed and how choices are made as to their inclusion in social networks. Of note, is that in organisations with a flatter structure and values that are inclusive of ethnic difference, patterns of social identity remain the same as those in organisations with a hierarchical structure (Leonard et al 2008).

Additionally, research into the health of minority workers has identified correlates between the worker's social identity and their health. James, Lovato and Khoo (1994) highlight that the pressure to maintain positive self-esteem and to be continually under the spotlight is linked to stress. They assert that racial identity plays a role in creating social stressors for minority workers. This suggests that a difference in values between groups within the workplace can contribute to making the environment stressful. It has been proposed by James et al. (1994) that, where a difference in values is highlighted, this may lead to a perception that individuals do not fit into the organisation and the dominant social system within it.

Jenkins (2004) concludes that whilst identity is quite a mundane thing it can also be extraordinary. His book on the key ideas in social identity raises the fundamental question of the extent to which it is possible for one to become someone, or something other than oneself. He also poses the question of whether it is possible have a single identity which is impervious to outside influences. These questions are pertinent to the exploration of the social identity of F&C personnel where some degree of identity negotiation is critical to successful integration within the wider organisation. I used Social Identity theory to answer these questions and also to explore the difference between personal identity and identity in relation to others

2.6 Social identity within the organisation

The relevance of social identity theory in seeking to understand organisational dynamics (such as a difference between groups in adopting organisational values) has been raised by researchers such as van Knippenberg (2000), Cornelissen, Haslam

and Balmer (2007) LaTendresse (2000) Haslam (2001) Ashforth and Mael (1989) and Ravasi and Schultz (2006). These researchers have identified that organisations are made up of groups of people who share power within contested spaces. As a result, the formation of in-groups and out-groups contributes to how individuals within the organisation identify with the organisation. This indicates that there are benefits to be derived from greater integration of an individual's organisational identity and their group identity. This interaction can potentially provide solutions to increase motivation, performance and commitment to the organisation based on a better understanding of the requirements of individuals.

An example is demonstrated by LaTendresse (2000) who concluded from his study of social identity within a large hospital that some of the low status groups (nurses) studied maintained a certain social identity which was completely interwoven within their occupation and racial background, while other more high status groups (doctors) appeared much more ambivalent about racial identity. In this study, the low status groups were predominantly from minority ethnic groups whereas the high status groups were white. The confounding factor in this research was that white males are less likely to have race as a salient identifying factor, particularly when they are in a position of power (Mollica, 2003). This piece of work demonstrates the interdependence of demographic factors which form part of an individual's social identity and the social identity of groups within the workplace.

Large organisations within Britain, such as the Army and the National Health Service, are complex communities which reflect the societal dynamics of group interaction. The social facts that play out in the real world context are brought into the organisation and groups can be formed based on characteristics such as race and nationality, despite attempts by organisations to train staff to ignore individual differences within the workplace. This is a crucial point as Ashforth and Mael (1989) have identified that an individual's organisation may assist in defining the self as a member of the organisation. These researchers argue that this makes organisational identity a specific form of social identification imbued with power.

The research highlighted above suggests that there is interplay between organisational factors and an employee's perception of the organisation. However there are particular anomalies within the Army that lead to a distinct organisational identity. This identity involves power and a robust and respected hierarchy. Individuals in the organisation are strongly identified with their cap badge and trade group. It would appear that their personal identity is secondary to their identity as a soldier in the British Army.

This is reinforced by the Army as many personnel are not referred to by their personal names as in civilian organisations, but by their rank, title and regiment. An example of this is 'Col 1 DAPS Para'. This means that the person is a Colonel, in the Directorate of Army Personnel Strategy and is from the Parachute Regiment. This depersonalisation can be interpreted as part of the Army's attempt to encourage serving personnel to identify with their regiment and role.

Social identity theory provides a useful theoretical framework for an exploration of how ethnicity and nationality interact within an organisational context to produce a unique experience of that organisation which may vary for different groups of workers. LaTendresse (2000) indicated that some groups appear to maintain a certain social identity which was completely interwoven within their occupation and racial background. An examination of perceived and actual power within the organisation is useful for contextualising the role that social identity plays in intergroup interaction.

2.7 Power

An exploration of the power relationships within the organisation assists the understanding of how groups within the organisation maintain and form an identity. In order to understand how being in a low status, numerically distinctive group impacts one's experience of an organisation, it is necessary to understand the role that power plays in the design of the organisation and the agency available to individuals within it.

Clegg, Courpasson and Phillips (2006) identify that a professional Army, dedicated to a specific goal and the associated military barracks where the institution surrounds the person at every turn, is a powerful and hierarchical organisation. A feature of the British Army is that it exerts power over its members through the chain of command. This structure facilitates soldiers doing things that they would not normally do in civilian life (such as saluting higher ranks) and taking on identities that they would not otherwise have assumed, had they been in a civilian organisation. Whilst this may be seen as abnormal from the outside, the British Army produces and re-produces a normalcy of life inside the institution through a regimented series of routines, commands and training drills that will enable the efficient functioning of the organisation. Goffman (1961, 1963) posits that the formation of this 'normalcy' is socially constructed through a symbolic interaction [between the individual and the organisation]. This indicates that relationships within the organisation are critical to understanding the practices and norms that govern the organisation and individual behaviour. Clegg et al. (2006) highlight that power is not only a social relationship that has to be seen as embedded in specific social relations of domination, but also a relationship between human beings who are, theoretically, free to act by being in the world and projecting this being onto the world.

Simpson and Macy (2004) discuss that the structural position which groups have in an organisation affects the bargaining power of members of that group. These authors suggest that structure affects how groups are motivated and expected to achieve success within an organisation. For example, membership of more powerful ethnic groups within the Army, such as white South Africans, will mean that members of that group have interpreted the organisational rules and engaged with the organisation in such a way that their self-governing leads to more successful outcomes than those of their black South African counterparts.

The concept of governmentality as identified by Foucault (1997) is relevant to understanding how groups within the Army regulate their behaviour and maintain their structural position within the organisation. Foucault defines government as the conduct of conduct, governing of self or governing of others. Hook (2011) suggests that the interchange between structural tools of influence (such as organisational

practices) and the micropolitics of self can explain how deeply private and personalised practices of self are already political operations linked to the broader objectives of governmentality of the organisation. The tenets of social identity theory posit that groups will self-govern as a result of the shared values and affect.

2.8 Double consciousness

The British Army relies on its members to have a common understanding of its core values and governing processes in order to be successful in campaigns against others who do not hold such values. While social identity can help our understanding of the process through which groups are formed according to common identity, values and beliefs, it is less well equipped as a theory to explain the complexity and enduring nature of multiple identities. This is particularly true in the case of ethnically diverse groups which are increasingly polarised in organisations and are less likely to work well together (Kochan et al. 2003).

The theory of double consciousness was developed by Du Bois (1903) more than a century ago to explain both the alienation and disenfranchisement that African Americans living in a predominantly white society were experiencing. This socio-historical approach to a social psychological phenomenon addressed the reasons for the perception that African Americans were a 'problem' in white America. It continues to have application in the present time. Although relatively little scholarly work has utilised this theory in the UK, many of its principles have been articulated by authors such as Gilroy (2005) and Potter and Phillips (2006) in their discussions of race and multiculturalism in Britain. Werbner (2013) argues that double consciousness represents a 'doubling up' of a subject's sense of belonging and alienation and examines how a sense of belonging to two different cultures engenders a split subject or a fractured reality. One of the concepts of double consciousness is that one is able to judge oneself through the eyes of the other. Throughout this process of judgement, the perceiver is mindful of an expectation of oneself that is central to the values of that other. Du Bois argued that African Americans are only able to do this because they live in a world occupied by a white

majority and are subject to those values and expectations in addition to their own. This is fundamentally different from comparing oneself to other groups in society where all identities are competing for value within a single environment (central to social identity theory). Du Bois also argues that African American self-consciousness is incomplete because of its 'doubleness', and that the white and black communities are explicitly different. Du Bois explained that:

“ It is a peculiar sensation this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, or measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on it in amused contempt and pity” p2.

It is implied that this duality of existence causes the tension and frustration that leads to dysfunction (Balfour 1998). However, some authors such as West (1993) argue that this theory is circular and reinforces rather than challenges the idea that African Americans are a problem group of people.

Whilst previous work on F&C personnel in the Army has not explicitly articulated a need to examine the impact of race on the working lives of serving personnel, it is imperative that this is understood due to the low power and rank status held predominantly by ethnic minority F&C personnel. Rawls (2000) has articulated that “while race is a socially constructed phenomenon, it is very real in its consequences” p250. The previous chapter has illustrated that there are different 'consequences' and outcomes for F&C personnel depending on the racial group to which they belong. The theory of double consciousness can help to explain the process that ethnic minority F&C personnel in the Army, may go through in order to navigate the complex and often uncharted territory of being successful in a predominantly white workplace.

I propose that all F&C personnel are aware of their status as 'other' in the organisation. Additionally, the argument that ethnic minority F&C personnel are aware of their doubly challenged position in the Army, as 'F&C other' and as Black 'other' is worthy of consideration and exploration within this thesis. Therefore, this research suggests that there is a doubling of perspective and outcome for multiply

marginalised groups (ethnic minority and F&C). Organisational rituals and culture make an important contribution to the process of looking at oneself through the eyes of the other. The ensuing conflict that this creates is a feature of the theory of double consciousness. Brannon, Markus and Taylor (2015) outline that the 'two-ness' experienced by African Americans stems from multiple sources and is fuelled by contemporary racial disparities and the ongoing experience of prejudice, discrimination and inequality. The present research seeks to understand the lived experience of F&C personnel. It has identified racial disparities in positioning of some F&C personnel within the organisation and inequality in job roles. These organisational factors contribute to the framing of the lived experience of ethnic minority F&C within a double consciousness schema. Lyubansky (2013) identifies that when DuBois first described the African American experience of double consciousness more than 100 years ago, he clearly articulated how alienation and disenfranchisement blended one identity that seemed inescapable with another that appeared unattainable. This aspect of double consciousness has links with Tajfel and Turner's social identity creativity strategies which look at the permeability of group boundaries. This association is relevant in trying to understand the outcomes for group members who are unable to permeate group boundaries.

In applying the theory of double consciousness to the Army context, one would expect ethnic minority F&C soldiers to be regularly judging themselves through the eyes of their white British counterparts. Implicit in this judgement is an understanding that there are different values and expectations of them by their white British peers which they are not meeting. This is evidenced by the organisational policies (e.g. dispersal, language tests and security checks) designed to bring the values and standards of these F&C soldiers in line with those of the British Army. The theory suggests that ethnic minority F&C soldiers will always be torn in two directions, held accountable to two communities and two sets of values. Gilroy's (1993) discussion on migration and Diaspora, suggests that both race and nationality can engender a split subject and a fractured reality. The ethnic minority F&C soldier and officer must manage both the insider and outsider perspective, simultaneously seeing themselves through the disapproving eyes of their white

British counterparts. Cooppan (2005) asserts that fundamental to the theory of double consciousness is the necessity for the individual to learn to think about both of these scenes of political identification. However, closer examination of the theory suggests that it is necessary for all ethnic minorities to think about the complexity of their social identification. Du Bois poses the question as to whether either side will ever be satisfied with the presentation of (in the case of the majority of F&C soldiers in the Army) the 'black self'.

Lyubansky and Eidelson (2005) have argued that it is of considerable importance to understand how double consciousness has developed within African Americans due to the significant, but incomplete, steps taken toward equal footing with other groups in America. Similarly, in this study, I suggest that it is critical to understand the psychological manifestations of double consciousness within this organisational context. This is particularly pertinent where these multiple identities (ethnic minority and F&C) are likely to be expressed as beliefs about the simultaneous memberships held. Eidelson and Eidelson (2003) have identified five belief domains that are influenced by the effects of double consciousness. These are vulnerability (a belief that one's in-group is more vulnerable than the outgroup), injustice (a belief that one's in-group is a victim of unjust treatment by other groups), distrust (perceived hostility and malicious intent of other groups), superiority (a conviction that the in-group is morally superior or entitled) and helplessness (the belief that one's in-group is unable to favourably influence or control events and their outcomes).

Research by Lyubansky and Eidelson (2005) showed that survey respondents reported lower satisfaction with the circumstances of their racial group than their national group (African American) on all of the five belief domains. What is not made explicit within double consciousness, as a theory, is the marginalised nature of African Americans during the historical context. It is within this context of having a marginalised identity that I have used double consciousness. By linking double consciousness and social identity theory, this research provides an understanding of the effects of holding a multiply marginalised identity within the British Army and an understanding of the type of strategies that may be used by a multiply marginalised

group in order to bolster positive affect for the group.

The theory of double consciousness does not explicitly account for the dynamics of power between groups. The previous F&C research carried out by the Army in 2004 (internal qualitative report) indicated that the F&C soldiers were judging their British counterparts by F&C values and standards which they felt were incompatible with and inferior to theirs (e.g. excessive use of alcohol and inappropriate language) . The basis of the theory is that the minority, less powerful, group self-evaluates against the values of the majority group and strives to demonstrate these, in addition to holding on to their own values, which can produce a sense of inferiority. However the theory makes no mention of a potential outcome where the minority group compares themselves against the more powerful out-group and rather than judging themselves by those standards, judge those others against their standards. Tajfel and Turner's (1979) coping strategies of less powerful groups, assists our understanding of this early finding. Lyubansky and Eidelson (2005) have tested this premise in a large scale survey of African Americans. Similar to Tajfel and Turner's assertions, they identified that the group experiencing double consciousness will tend to believe that they are morally superior to the more powerful out-group. This research seeks to test that premise using the data collected. It will also explore whether there can be a reversal of this proposal where a more powerful group judges itself against the values and standards of a significant minority group, albeit a less powerful one. It can therefore be argued that critical to the application of this theory is the concept of perception and self-concept. .

Du Bois does not acknowledge that power and organisational and political structures facilitate double consciousness in low status groups. This is a limitation of the theory. Additionally, theorizing about race, particularly as it applies to the working lives of individuals and the organisation as a whole, is a complex activity not acknowledged in the theory.

2.8.1 Applying a socio-cultural lens to the social identity construct: Linking double consciousness and social identity theory

Researchers such as Shen and Dumani (2013) call for a multidimensional model of social identity (similar to that provided by Sellers et al 1998). They argue that identity salience, centrality, public and private regard and ideology should be included. They also highlight the need for a more detailed perspective, which looks at the situational and personal factors impacting identity salience. Using the combined lens of double consciousness and social identity allows that comprehensive look. It provides an understanding of the outcomes of racial identity management within a predominantly white and powerful society. It also provides an understanding of the comparative process that individuals use in negotiating and accepting identity.

The application of double consciousness to this study (as discussed in section 2.8) is wider than examining the perspective of ethnic minority F&C personnel specifically. The context within which the theory was developed (in a hierarchical and segregated society) and the similarities with the Army are highlighted within this study. The theory largely seeks to highlight how a minority and marginalised group understand their position within the wider majority context, whilst simultaneously understanding and striving towards those wider majority group values. The theory suggests that minority groups can use this relatively unique position to manage and negotiate identities through enacting strategies that bolster the self-concept. This is not dissimilar to Tajfel and Turner's (1979) interest in how less powerful out-groups could overcome perceived dominance by a more powerful in-group. Social identity acknowledges that there is a desire for affect and belonging to a group. Double consciousness extends this idea, arguing that for individuals with multiple identities, there are conditions which make belonging to one of those groups more salient. Within the particular context of race and (non British) nationality in the British Army, double consciousness allows an understanding of the interaction of these two identities. It considers how they can be somewhat reconciled as they shape perceptions and experiences of the organisation.

2.9 Theoretical Framework: Implications for Research Objectives

Incorporating research and literature from the two intersecting theories reviewed above allows an empirically valid approach to understanding both the process of conducting research in the Army as it relates to the working lives of F&C personnel, as well as understanding the phenomenon itself. The literature presented in this chapter has highlighted that if an individual does not feel a sense of belonging within an organisation, due to their low status and power, then the question as to who they are and where they fit in within the organisation, is likely to remain unanswered. The relevance for the Army (which fosters and thrives on a particularly communal way of working) is that having this gap in belonging allows a significant group of people to feel isolated. More pertinently, it can be theorised that a lack of identification with the values of the organisation and lack of positive self-esteem from belonging to this organisation, creates a weak organisational identity.

My research seeks to understand the gap or potential gap between one's social and organisational identity and its impact. Cornelissen et al. (2007) have urged that there is a need for more research promoting an integrated understanding of the role that collective identity plays in "creating the meaning, the form and indeed the very possibility of organisational life" p2. The implications of the theories reviewed above for the research objectives, highlighted in section 1.8 are presented below:

Objective 1: To understand how F&C soldiers interpret and understand their position within the Army.

The literature presented in section 2.5.4 highlights that social identity is supported by a network of relationships within a particular social environment. The literature strongly suggests that these networks reflect societal group dynamics or are a function of the organisational context where being in a minority group encourages a 'strength in numbers' approach to networking. The theory of double consciousness implies that F&C soldiers, as a collective, will view and assess their own values through the eyes of UK personnel. Additionally, it has been noted that position and

standing in the organisation cannot be isolated from the concept of power and how this is exercised within the Army. Foucault's concept of governmentality implies that the organisation does not necessarily exercise power over its members as they employ a cognitive, self-regulatory process. This research utilises the concept of governmentality within the theory of double consciousness. The self governing and monitoring process is implicit within double consciousness as F&C soldiers will be conscious of their relative position and status in the Army.

Objective 2: To investigate the organisational factors that contribute to the experiences of F&C personnel in the Army.

An application of social identity theory is relevant in the achievement of this research objective. The hierarchical and rigid nature of the Army implies that group membership is also fixed within the organisation. The development of organisational practices and procedures around membership of organisational groups needs to be understood. These practices contribute to how F&C personnel experience the organisation.

Objective 3: To understand the process of multiple group identification within a large, power-based organisation. Specifically to explore whether there are competing or superordinate identities formed as a result of being in a hierarchical institution such as the Army.

The literature review has highlighted that identification with a group is primarily based on an individual's perception of the commonality with others (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). The limitation of social identity theory is its silence on the cognitive process involved in managing multiple identities which are continually shifting within the same context (Reicher, 2004, Ethier and Deux, 1994 and Halsam et al, 1999). The theory suggests that contextual change which increases the salience of a particular group identity leads to a strengthening of that group identity. This research aims to contribute to the literature by outlining the impact of the military context on multiple identity management through the self-categorisation process and the affective significance (see section 2.5.3) associated with categorisation. This will be

done by examining how F&C soldiers feel about being in the Army versus how they feel about being defined as F&C personnel. This research will explore whether the organisational identity impacts on the social identity of F&C serving personnel.

Objective 4: To comment on the methodological complexity of an understanding of the position of an organisational researcher conducting robust research as a civilian in the military

The discussion of power within this chapter indicates that the Army has instituted values and norms. It has control over its members and can regulate their actions as required. This has an impact in some way, on a researcher trying to navigate both the controllers within the organisation and its members. This research will utilise the concept of social identity to demonstrate how the research process was navigated to explore the issue of belonging within the organisation.

Objective 5: To explore whether there is scope for an exploration of a theoretical framework that explains the consequences of holding multiply marginalised identities.

The literature presented in this chapter forms the theoretical basis for understanding the outcome of holding multiply marginalised salient identities within a hierarchical and rigid organisational structure. Social identity theory advocates that social creativity strategies are utilised by group members in order to maintain a positive sense of self (section 2.2.1.). However, within social identity theory, the outcomes for group members who hold membership of multiple groups which are regarded negatively are unclear. This objective is provided to understand the implications of being conscious of what others think and feel about the group to which one belongs, when those group boundaries are rigid and impermeable. This objective seeks to understand whether a combination of the concepts within double consciousness and social identity will be able to explain the effects of this position on group members' ability to navigate the organisation.

2.10 Summary

The processes of categorisation, identification and comparison are critical to the understanding of how groups are formed within the Army. For F&C soldiers in the Army, there is a need to understand this process from their own and others' perspective and how their social identity is managed as a result. This process will be influenced by their relative position of power within the organisation and the structures that are created by the organisation to influence group membership. The use of the combined theories of social identity and double consciousness allows a more holistic approach to examining the complicated issue of multiple identity management and intergroup interaction within the Army

The theory of double consciousness, as with the theory of social identity, requires individuals to do the cognitive work of being mindful and aware of their position within particular organisational and societal structures. It is these cognitive processes that can explain both the formulation of and reaction to group behaviours and identities. The theories can be useful in understanding how group identities affect organisational functioning. For an organisation such as the Army, this is important. Unlike the other armed services (the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force) the Army relies on its people to fight an enemy as opposed to ships or aircrafts. The uniqueness of some of these people is that they are not indigenous to the UK. They are, in effect, foreigners with their own identities who must live and work in an organisation which is predominantly white and male.

In summary, it is asserted in this present study, that both F&C and British personnel will have different ideas about the value and importance of their own and the other group's contribution to the organisation. An exploration of these perspectives will allow an understanding of the social identity formation process and the effects of multiple identity categorisation within an organisational context.

Chapter 3: Study Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

As discussed in chapter one, the aim of this research is to examine the working lives of Foreign and Commonwealth (F&C) personnel within the British Army. Creswell (2007) highlights that understanding the essence of an experience that is shared by several individuals, requires a phenomenological approach to research enquiry. In order to shed light on and understand what it is like to work as an F&C soldier in the British Army, a phenomenological approach was adopted within a mixed research design. This encompassed focus group and interview data as well as a secondary source of data in the form of organisational policy documents.

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methodology used in this research. It will discuss the rationale for selecting the present methodology as well as outline the epistemological and ontological position of the researcher as it applies to the present study. The phases of this research project and their relationship to the research questions are also presented in this chapter with the accompanying methodology used for data collection within each phase. Additionally, an explanation of the ethical considerations associated with this study and the process completed in order to gain access to the study's participants are outlined.

3.2 Research Design: Rationale and Epistemological perspective

Both historical and contemporary studies of social identity have used experimental designs (Tajfel 1981 cited Haslam 2004, Doosje et al. 1995, Jetten et al. 1997, Haslam et al. 1999, Mollica 2003,) to manipulate the salience or context of social identity. This present study, however, is not seeking to attribute causality of variables to the development of social identity nor is it seeking to investigate statistical differences between the strength of social identities of groups of soldiers within the Army.

As mentioned in section 3.1, the phenomenological nature of this study seeks to explore how identities of F&C soldiers are formed and maintained as a result of being in the Army. Therefore, the context within which the study is being conducted and the situated nature of the research is particularly important. Investigating the lived experience of an individual or group is consistent with the phenomenological approach to research. The aim of the phenomenological researcher according to Finlay (2009) is to provide a rich, textured description of lived experience. Implicit in taking a phenomenological approach to a research topic is the need to select a method that will achieve the aims of understanding a range of experiences. The use of more traditional positivist methods such as experiments, or surveys, as a single method would limit the possibility of capturing fully the diversity of views and opinions about an experience within a specific context. This supports the need to use a qualitative method of data collection.

The ontological perspective of critical realism (Guba and Lincoln, 2005) is relevant to this study. Critical realism allows an acceptance that identification and study of a phenomenon is done with “prior understandings and experiences” (Fleetwood, 2005). From this position, I understood the importance of building on the previous work done within the organisation through employee engagement surveys which attempted to explore the values, beliefs and attributes of both the F&C and UK personnel. Acknowledging my prior understanding and experience of the organisation in general and F&C issues in particular is also relevant to this research. However, critical realism also acknowledges that representations of any phenomenon are impacted by culture, language and political interests which are ultimately embedded in social structures such as ethnicity, gender and social class (Ussher, 1999). All of these structures are pertinent to the present study, hence the need to design the study in a way that captures their relevance. It was necessary to utilise a method of inquiry that reflected this position in order to capture a holistic understanding of the phenomenon.

3.2.1 Sources of Data

Three sources of qualitative data were applied to the present study. Consistent with the phenomenological and ontological position adopted, utilising existing and new sources of data from the Army was essential. Existing sources included internal documents that discussed F&C recruitment and policy. It was necessary to interrogate these (existing) data sources prior to identifying any further lines of investigation. Bailey and Hutter (2008) argue that this approach starts the process of triangulation and contextualises further research. New sources of qualitative data were focus groups with soldiers and semi-structured interviews with hard to reach groups (e.g. ethnic minority and F&C officers). The sources of data included in the research design are presented in Figure 3.1

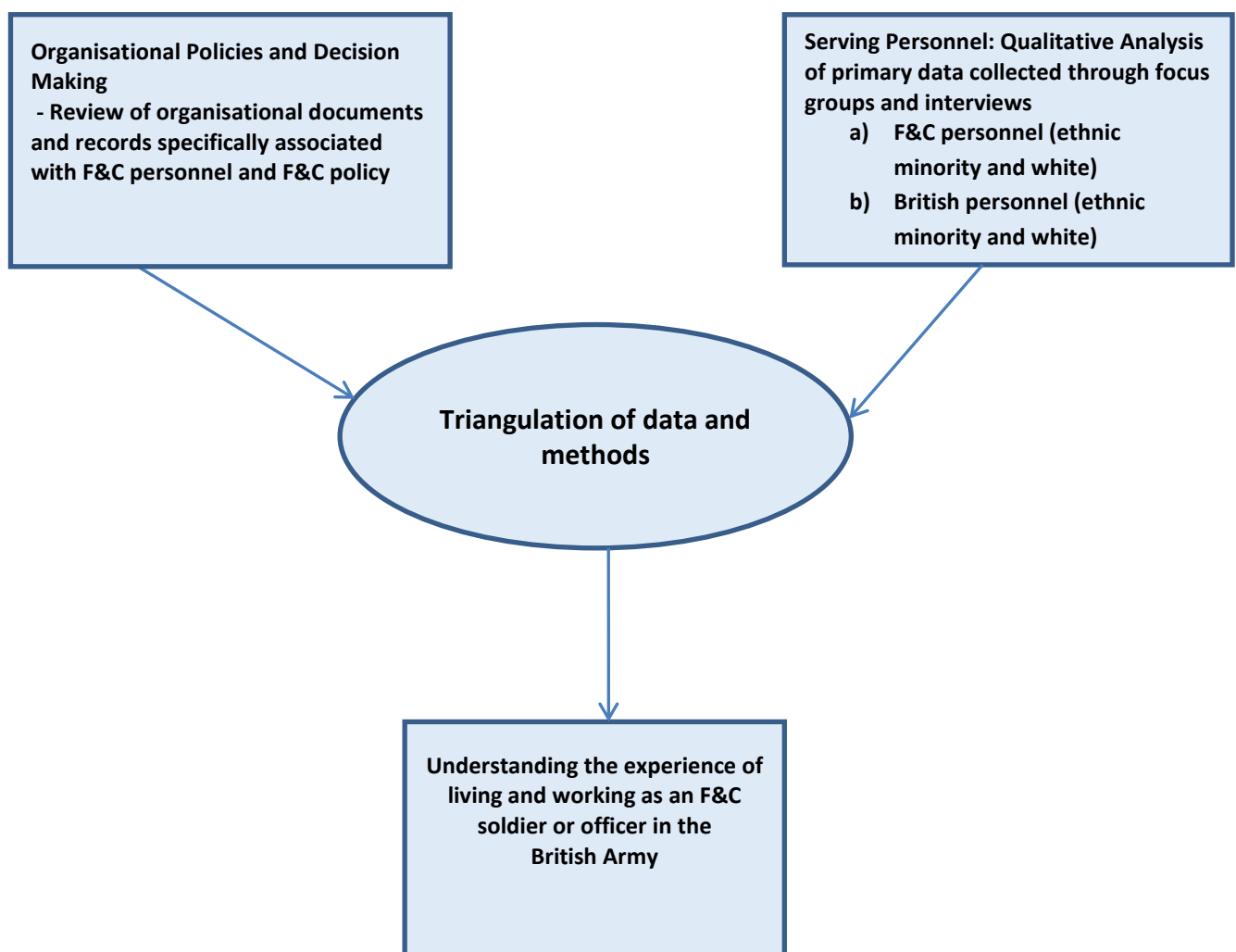


Figure 3.1 Research Design

It is important to acknowledge the philosophical position influencing the methods selected within this study. Whilst critical realism is interested in the objective world, it acknowledges that the study of the empirical in and of itself, is too superficial to create meaning and it disregards the ‘unobservable’, that produces the actual events and empirical phenomena that researchers seek to measure and explain. With this position, it is crucial to identify not only the phenomena but the context and the unobservable that help to shed light on how the phenomena is constructed. Within this study, I have adopted the position that the organisation (as a social structure) determines its members’ behaviour. I am seeking to explore how the Army, which is a hierarchical power-driven organisation, determines this behaviour. Therefore, this necessitates a purely qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. Within the qualitative approach, it is essential to gain a rich and granular understanding of both the experiences of the serving personnel. It is also important to appreciate the organisational position with respect to how the structures which support F&C personnel exist within the organisation. Due to the scale of the study, a phased approach was necessary. These phases are discussed below.

Table 3.1: Phases of Qualitative Research

	Research Questions	Data Collection	Data Analysis
Phase 1	RQ2,3, 4	Review of organisational documents, reports, email correspondence, meeting minutes, policies and research notes.	Thematic analysis of contents. Meta commentary on the research process.
Phase 2	RQ1,2,3,5	Focus groups and semi-structured interviews with serving personnel.	Thematic Analysis of focus group data, manually, to identify codes, then a selection of data analysed using Nvivo to provide a validity check of the manually identified codes.

3.2.1.1 Focus Groups and Interviews

Both focus groups and interviews were used in this research. These two different methods were necessary due to the nature of the participants and organisational

constraints. The rank of the participant, and access to them, influenced whether interviews or focus groups were used. Senior officers and hard to reach ethnic minority officers, who were few in number, could not be gathered in a focus group, therefore interviews were used. Junior soldiers would not be permitted to spend an hour and half each with a researcher, therefore, focus groups were used to gain a collective understanding of their experience in the organisation.

One rationale for using focus groups to explore the lived experiences of F&C personnel was the need to study, in detail, the ways that members of a specific cohort or group discuss their experiences and perceptions of life in the Army. Focus groups are socially organised situations, where participants and moderators enter the setting under shared assumptions of performance (Brannen & Pattman, 2005). As such, accounts generated should be interpreted as constructed within this specific social situation and context. As with many other research methods, focus groups are shaped by the interests of the researcher, the questions that are asked and the participants' interpretations of the questions (Brannen, 2012). Attending to participants' talk about their experiences of the Army in focus groups enables an exploration of shared assumptions of what is normative when it comes to the F&C experience and how these accounts are constructed and contested by other members of the Army.

Focus groups are congruent with exploring the experience of an organisation, as they can serve as a re-enactment of the social groups which already exist within the Army. Powell, Smith and Lloyd (1996) describe the purpose of a focus group as providing an exchange of information between the researcher and the participants based on discussion and comment from personal experience. It differs from a group interview as the interaction between the group on the topic of discussion and the insights from the group conversation form the knowledge that is critical to understanding the phenomenon under investigation. Focus groups can lead to a more open discussion of experiences than open comments within a survey. The use of focus groups is also congruent with the second element of the theoretical framework. Double consciousness is concerned with the perception of self as a

member of a group through the eyes of the 'other'. This was a significant consideration in deciding to conduct part of the research with groups. Focus groups allow a rich understanding of participants' experiences and beliefs (Morgan, 1998). They also permit an exploration of convergent and divergent points of view within a group setting.

Focus groups were used as they are suitable for understanding collective viewpoints. Smithson (2006) highlights that group members can build on each other's accounts. This was particularly pertinent to younger soldiers within the Army who tend to need the support of their peers to be confident in expressing their opinions. Fink (2002) has stated that, as part of a moderated group discussion, focus groups can result in a relatively in-depth portrait of the needs and expectations of a specific population. In the present study, F&C personnel are a 'specific population' under investigation as a result of their under-representation in the organisation.

One of the key aims of the focus group research was to explore the social processes that construct and sustain a particular social identity within the organisation (e.g. the impact of a 15% cap on F&C Personnel). Participants were asked, amongst other things, to identify and rate the importance of social networks within the organisation and the effectiveness of these networks in providing support. This phase investigated whether or not there are specific organisational issues/practices that make membership of these networks more appealing to various groups. Participants also had the opportunity in the focus group discussions to discuss their perception of themselves within the wider Army.

Due to the sensitive nature of the research topic, the groups were homogenous based on ethnicity and nationality in order to allow participants to express their observations in a relatively safe environment. Gunaratnam (2003) discusses the 'messy' work of interviewing across ethnic difference, where issues of social class, status and the 'distance' between the researcher and researched can potentially lead to gaps in information and interpretation. As a black female civilian employee of the Army, these issues were pertinent to my current project. Conducting focus

groups with junior, white soldiers could have potentially resulted in a limited exchange of information. I therefore attempted to minimise these issues. Under my direction, some focus groups were co-facilitated by a younger white female occupational psychologist in order to allow some of the white soldier groups to feel more at ease.

There are some limitations to the use of focus groups when doing qualitative research on sensitive topics. Some personal questions about individual life experiences and expectations will be inappropriate in a group context, for both methodological and ethical reasons. Research has highlighted that focus group analysis can pay attention to the discourses which are constructed within a particular context, rather than just individual comments (Myers, 1998; Puchta & Potter, 2002; Stokoe & Smithson, 2002). However, for this research, a focus group methodology and analysis was particularly useful for exploring themes which were constructed jointly by participants in the group context and how identity is collectively constructed (Munday, 2006).

Focus group discussions range between discussion of personal and collective experiences (Pini, 2002). For the analysis, there is an assumption that attitudes and opinions are not fixed entities, but will be justified differently in particular contexts. Therefore, it is acknowledged that an account of an individual's experiences in the Army may be presented differently in individual interviews and group contexts. The focus group methodology was used to study how F&C soldiers' and White British officers' experiences, opinions and expectations about their individual working life within the Army are formed, elaborated on and responded to in a peer group situation. There may have been social pressures to agree in a group situation, but it was considered that there were also opportunities to negotiate positions, challenge and develop one's own ideas.

3.2.1.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Whilst focus groups were employed to explore and investigate the attitudes and beliefs of soldiers and some junior officers, semi-structured interviews were used to obtain the individual views of F&C officers and British ethnic minority officers. Individual interview methods provide a way of looking at individuals' stories from their own perspectives. It examines their understandings of how their perceptions of living in the Army have been shaped by their own choices and experiences and by external factors. The rationale for a change in data collection method was due to the snowball sampling methodology used to access these officers. F&C and British ethnic minority officers were hard to reach groups. They are few in number within the organisation and also geographically dispersed throughout the country and military bases overseas. It was therefore necessary to rely on introductions and recommendations to access volunteers within this group. A pragmatic solution to collecting data from this cohort was to conduct one-to-one interviews with officers who met the criteria for inclusion in the study, at their place of work or mine, at a time which was convenient to them.

Mason (2006) describes the semi-structured interview as one that has a fluid and flexible structure but which remains focused on a particular topic of enquiry. This flexibility encourages the interviewee's full understanding of the topic. Frey and Oishi (1995) and Wengraf (2001) suggest that the use of semi-structured interviews is pertinent where there is a need to understand the experiences of individuals. Similarly, Mason and Dale (2011) describe the utility of the semi-structured interview in getting detailed accounts of a phenomenon as experienced by individuals. This was also a consideration in choosing to use semi-structured interviews with these hard to reach officers. As they were few in number across the organisation, the opportunity for group insights and shared collective experiences to emerge (as per a focus group) was limited.

Although semi-structured interviews are conversational, they provide a more structured framework for researching participant's experiences than focus group discussions, which can be less directive. This difference was considered and in order

to maintain consistency and comparability across the data, I kept the semi-structured interview and focus group questions the same. The data held (and were treated with) equal status as evidence to the existence of a phenomenon. By treating the data equally, it was my intention to use each source as a means of triangulating information from different levels within the organisation.

Within this phase, I kept a note of all emails and written conversations involving the negotiation of access and the instructions given to both the researcher and the participants by their chain of command in a research diary, in order to reflect on the process of conducting research within the organisation.

3.2.1.3. Review of Organisational Documents

The third phase of the project sought to understand the wider strategic issues within the Army with respect to how organisational systems processes and procedures designed to assist employees are applied. Within the Police Service, Holdaway (1997) has argued that “the work experience of Black and Asian serving officers is racialised...through both particular and mundane processes embedded within the occupational culture” p23. A review of organisational documents pertaining to F&C policy and decision making, sought to examine the processes and procedures that applied specifically to F&C serving personnel and the organisational culture within which decisions were made. This review of documents was conducted under the assumption that they would be either additions to or deviations from, existing policies that affected all serving personnel. However they were uniquely different and ‘particular’ to F&C countries and their personnel.

A critical examination of memos, records of decisions, internal reports, emails and loose minutes allowed an identification of the key policies within the organisation as they related to decisions that affect recruitment and retention strategies, equal opportunity policies and work experience of F&C personnel. Analysis of these documents also provided an insight into how research within the organisation is valued.

3.3 Research Procedure

The process for conducting this research study is described in this section. The Ministry of Defence and Army ethical procedures are outlined, together with the process of recruiting participants. The pilot study that informed the development of the qualitative research materials is also highlighted.

3.3.1 Ethical Issues and Gatekeepers

Ethical considerations were addressed by adhering strictly to the British Psychological Society's (BPS) 2009 code of ethics and conduct. The BPS's four principles of Respect, Competence, Responsibility and Integrity were adhered to. Additionally any guidance offered by the Institute of Social Psychology following submission of the proposal was complied with. Ethical approval was required from the Ministry of Defence Research Ethics Committee (MODREC). However, the research protocol was first reviewed by the Army Scientific Advisory Committee (ASAC) for robustness and relevance to the Army. I completed the comprehensive application form outlining the nature of the project, the study design, methodology, data analysis and ethical considerations (see Appendix 3.1 for an example). The participant information and consent form were also reviewed by ASAC as part of the ethical clearance process. The feedback provided to me by the ASAC and the required revisions to the protocol were undertaken in order to comply with the standard of ethics in research within the Army. Clearance was ultimately granted from the Chair of the MODREC. The clearance letter is also attached at Appendix 3.2

Tindall (1994) and Wiles et al (2005) identified that participants are in a position to give informed consent only when they are fully informed about the research beforehand. An information letter outlining the key elements of the research and its aims was sent to all adjutants (administrative officers) of the units identified to participate in the research with clear instructions to disseminate to all soldiers through the Part One Orders (the unit's informational newsletter) prior to data collection. Due to the command nature of the military and the power of senior personnel to decide how they administrate their units, several of the participants (both soldiers and junior officers) had not been given the letter explaining the study

or the consent form. Additionally, through my introduction at the first focus group, I identified that most of them had been instructed, rather than invited, to attend the focus group.

In order to comply with the BPS code of ethics and to ensure that the participants were attending voluntarily, at each subsequent group I told the participants that if they did not want to attend the focus group, they did not have to do so. I offered the options of remaining in the room and not participating, or leaving the room and returning at the time that the focus group would be completed. I explained that I would not inform their chain of command. I also explained the need for confidentiality and asked all participants not to report the discussions of the focus group to anyone who had not participated. Only one white soldier took the option not to participate in a focus group.

Participants were asked to sign a consent form in order to participate in the research project. . Before beginning any of the focus groups or interviews, I verbally briefed all participants fully about each element of the research in order to gain informed consent. I made it clear to participants that they did not have to answer questions that they were uncomfortable with and that they could withdraw from the focus group or interview at any time they wished to do so.

3.3.2 Access to Participants

This work was sponsored by the Directorate of Personnel Capability (DPersCap), a personnel research and strategy development unit within the Army. As a Senior Psychologist within the organisation, I led on gathering information about the working experiences of the F&C serving personnel on behalf of the Army. My position also allowed me to access the opinions and attitudes of those within the Chain of Command toward conducting this type of research.

Access to participants was through their chain of command. As a civilian researcher, governed by a set of ethical and professional principles (British Psychological Society

guidelines 2009) it was necessary that I work closely with the chain of command to access soldiers.

Although the British Army has bases across the world, the largest bases are in the UK and in Germany. Both of these locations have large numbers of F&C personnel. They were selected as destinations for data collection in accordance with the earlier identification of regiments with large numbers of F&C personnel.

3.3.3 Recruitment of Participants and Corpus Construction

Participants were recruited through the organisational chain of command. As noted in section 3.3.1, civilians (internal or external to the MOD) cannot access military personnel without going through their chain of command. Due to the 24 hour nature of their role and their requirement to serve the needs of the organisation, their chain of command needs to know and authorise the whereabouts of their personnel at all times in order to mitigate against threats to the organisational commitments and responsibilities that they may have. I therefore did not have total control over the recruitment of the soldier group of participants, or the white British officer participants.

A purposive sampling strategy was adopted within this research study. Participants were identified through regiments with a high proportion of F&C and ethnic minority personnel. I first reviewed the Army Manpower Statistics report to identify which regiments had large numbers of F&C personnel (over 10%). This criterion was set as both the F&C and British personnel within these regiments would be able to provide an informed opinion about the topics covered in the research as they have lived and worked amongst each other. Additionally, an Army-wide cap was in place, stipulating that regiments should not consist of more than 15% F&C personnel. Therefore regiments with large numbers (such as the Royal Logistics Corps) were likely to have been subject to organisational adjustments¹¹

¹¹ One of the directorates within the Army (DMA) regularly meets to monitor the influx and outflow of F&C Personnel within Army regiments.

Regiments with no F&C personnel or very small numbers were not targeted as the research set out to understand the lived experiences of F&C soldiers and those who work with them. Having few or no personnel in a regiment would not meet the criterion. After identifying the regiments on paper, I discussed them with an Army officer involved in F&C monitoring (inflows and outflows to and from regiments) in order to verify the location and make-up of the regiments. I wanted to ensure that I was achieving a wide geographic spread of respondents who would have worked in different environmental contexts.

In keeping with the approved research protocol, participants were recruited by sending an email to the office of the then, Commander for Regional Forces (CRF). This office disseminated the information about the study and asked units to respond with nominees. Due to the command structure of the Army, I (being a civilian) was unable to approach and task Army personnel. Although I wrote the original email to the CRF, a Lt Col who worked in my department sent it via his email address.

3.3.3.1 Recruitment of Soldiers

When the CRF office acknowledged the email and agreed that it would support the study, I sent to the adjutant of the units that had been targeted to take part, the participant information sheet and the consent form for distribution in the Part One Orders. Due to the sensitivity of the topic (as discussed in 3.2.1.2) I also asked that the participants be split into ethnically homogenous groups (ethnic minority F&C groups, white F&C groups, ethnic minority British groups and white British groups). The adjutants responded to me with a time and date to hold the focus groups. From the soldier perspective, the recruitment process was relatively simple and straightforward.

3.3.3.2. Recruitment of Officers

I recruited white British officers in the same way as identified in section 3.3.2.1 above, and I had sufficient participants to conduct two focus groups with this group in Germany and in the UK. The recruitment of F&C and ethnic minority British

officers was less straightforward than anticipated. The CRF had advertised that I was looking for officers and soldiers; however, many of the units sent back nil returns for the request to have focus groups with ethnic minority British officers and F&C officers. This was largely because of the scarcity of these officers in the Army – they were often spread throughout the organisation on specific jobs, rather than being attached to a unit.

Whilst a purposive sampling strategy was identified for the focus groups, it became clear to me that I would need to adopt a snowball sampling method to recruit F&C and British ethnic minority officers. It was also clear that due to their scarcity and their locations that I would have to conduct interviews in order to get their experiences. Diefenbach (2009) argues that interviewees are seldom selected based on random objective and representative criteria. Diefenbach maintains that it is often a positive response to research requests or existing links that determines the interview sample. Salganik and Heckathorn (2004) highlight that the snowball sample approach is common in hidden or difficult to access populations (such as officers of ethnic minority and F&C origin). They identify that snowball sampling is a type of purposive sampling where existing participants recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. The use of this sampling technique was also influenced by time and resource considerations such as limited availability of senior officers and pre-deployment training being held overseas.

Initially, the call for ethnic minority officers from the UK and from the F&C countries did not produce any participants. A second approach by another Lt Colonel who worked in the Diversity branch of the Directorate of Manning produced two British ethnic minority participants. From there, a snowball sample, consisting of nine available and willing F&C officers and two more ethnic minority British officers, was referred from amongst the peers of the original two ethnic minority British officers. A full commentary on the process of recruiting and accessing participants is provided in chapter four.

Table 3.2 outlines the numbers of participants, focus groups and interviews in the study. For contextual purposes it is worth noting that the study participant group is reflective of the Army as a whole. There are currently 20 F&C ethnic minority Officers in an Army which has 13,160 Officers¹².

Table 3.2: Number of participants (N) across the groups

F&C Personnel			UK Personnel		
	Ethnic Minority	White	Ethnic Minority	White	Total
Officers	(4) 4 interviews	(5) 5 interviews	(4) 4 interviews	(14) 2 focus groups	27
Soldiers	(35) 6 focus groups	(5) 1 focus group+ 1 interview	(7) 1 focus group	(16) 3 focus groups	63
Total Personnel	39	10	11	30	90

3.4 Development of Focus Group and Interview Topic Guides: Pilot Study

This section outlines how the research materials for the focus groups and the semi-structured interviews were developed as a result of the pilot study and a review of the literature.

The pilot was used to trial the methodology and the focus group question guide, as well as the new remote control devices used to collect the demographic information. These devices were used by the participants for collection of demographic and background information anonymously, such as age range, ethnicity, length of

¹² Army Personnel Statistics Jan 2014.

service, the length of time in the UK and personal status. The demographic questions contained multiple-choice responses and were projected to participants on a large plasma screen or wall. Participants were able to key in their responses to the questions anonymously and remotely from the device to a laptop. I was then able to present the group responses back immediately. The data from this device were downloaded onto an Excel spreadsheet. With these data, I was able to put the focus group discussion and themes in contextual relationship to the makeup of the participants within the focus group. For example, I was able to tell that focus group one consisted of white British soldiers between the ages of 19 to 24. This was the first part of the focus group and was followed by the more open traditional group discussion questions (See Appendix 3.3 for question guide). During the pilot study, this aspect of the focus group received the most positive feedback, particularly from the younger soldiers. The feedback indicated that this method of data collection was 'fun' and similar to the methodology they use for social networking and gaming. This was successful in building rapport with the groups. Due to the positive feedback, this technology was used throughout the main study.

As stated above, the initial intention of the pilot study was to trial the focus group technology and the questions, however, once the process got underway, I realised from the way that the questions were being interpreted and responded to that the process was not in keeping with the intended strategy of the research. Despite briefing participants that the purpose of the pilot was to trial the questions and methodology, the emotiveness that the questions evoked could not be ignored and as a researcher adhering to an ethical code of conduct, it was necessary to acknowledge and record the discussions; however, they were not included in the analysis of the main study. The junior soldiers, particularly, felt that their concerns were being listened to and dealt with by the process of talking to me. The pilot study highlighted to me the potential emotiveness of conducting sensitive research within the Army and the need for such research within the organisation.

The pilot study consisted of four focus groups (27 participants) and was conducted prior to the start of the main study. During the pilot phase and the main study, a

white, female trainee occupational psychologist worked with me to run the focus groups. She functioned in the role of research assistant, in order to assist in the taking of notes and provide inter-rater reliability of the focus group content. Having a trainee to assist in the collection of this information in the pilot phase allowed me to focus my attention on interacting with the participants and getting the appropriate feedback on the materials and the process. It also allowed me to trial whether there were any differences in how participants interacted when the facilitator was of a different racial background.

The focus group discussion questions were developed following reviews of the literature on social identity within organisations, the quantitative results and consideration of the research questions. I was able to identify the main areas for further investigation. Participants in the soldier pilot group provided feedback in relation to the language used in some of the focus group questions. I refined the questions following the feedback from the pilot study, making some of them simpler and using Army specific terminology where applicable. The pilot indicated that the readability of the questions was appropriate to the target audience and they were understandable (after some suggested changes). As an example, one question about career development was split into two as it was interpreted by the group as being too long. Another question asked about the relationship with the immediate 'manager'. This was changed to 'chain of command' as 'manager' was considered too civilian. Soldiers did not understand the question about relationship with 'peers'. After explanation of the word 'peers' they suggested using the term 'work mates' or 'colleagues'. Both of these terms were incorporated into the questions. The relationship exercise was also trialled within the focus group and received positively.

A similar pilot focus group was held with white British officers. The questions were also slightly refined, with an emphasis on terminology and timing of the sessions. They fed back that they did not feel that the relationship exercise added value at their level, as the organisational policy is that officers do not fraternise with soldiers. Both groups have separate living and entertainment quarters. They identified that most officers within the Army interacted socially with other officers. They also

indicated that these interactions were usually within the same regiment, unit and were usually of the same demographic due to the composition of officers in the Army. It was suggested that the exercise not be used with officers. The officer group was also concerned with the initial question about career development. They agreed with the soldiers' suggestion of dividing that questions into two. Following the pilot with the officers, I took the decision that it was not necessary to pilot the semi-structured interview questions as they were the same. Additionally, I was more experienced in conducting semi-structured interviews with senior personnel.

3.5 Saturation

Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) suggest that saturation is reached when the researchers are not getting any new information from the participants. Meaning saturation as discussed by Gaskell (2000) also suggests that a more detailed understanding of the phenomenon being studied would not be achieved through collecting more data.

Despite the administrative efforts involved with gaining access to the appropriate groups of personnel, saturation was reached with both the F&C ethnic minority soldier group and the white UK soldier group by the sixth and third focus groups respectively. As no new insights or views were coming forward, a decision was taken to stop collecting data from the soldier group. Additionally, saturation was reached with the white UK officer group after the second focus group. Meaning saturation was not reached with the other groups (UK ethnic minority soldiers, white F&C soldiers and ethnic minority UK and F&C Officers). However, the timeframes for data collection were closed due to organisational constraints in preparing groups for pre-operational training and mission rehearsal exercises.

3.6. Data Analysis and Integration

As discussed in section 3.1, this study utilised three sources of data. In order to identify a coherent understanding of the working lives of F&C personnel, it was necessary to analyse the data separately and then to triangulate the findings. The aim of the data analysis process was to try to identify what were the key issues

affecting F&C personnel in the Army. The analysis process also sought to examine whether there were interactions between an F&C identity and race, which influenced how the Army was experienced. Both content and thematic analysis were considered and the rationale for selecting a thematic approach to analysis of the data is discussed below.

Whilst there are overlaps between content and thematic analysis, their main difference “lies in the possibility of quantification of data in content analysis by measuring the frequency of different categories and themes which cautiously may stand as a proxy for significance” Vaismoradi et al (2013) p404. Content analysis is generally used for analysing texts. The numerical descriptions of the features of the texts are key to the analysis and reporting. Thematic analysis, however, pays closer attention to both the qualitative aspects of the material analysed and the context within which the data are collected. It is for this reason that I chose to use thematic analysis. It adopted the structured process characteristic of content analysis but permitted an analysis of the meaning of the data within the organisational context. The limited number and nature of the documents was also a consideration in choosing to analyse the documents thematically. This decision was also influenced by the length of some of the documents. As with the focus groups and interview data, this analysis allowed me the opportunity to include the political and organisational context within which the documents were written.

In deciding to use thematic analysis, I considered the overall aims and objectives of the study, the volume of data that were to be collected and the sources of qualitative data that were to be used. I was also influenced by the aim of exploring new links in the data.

Thematic analysis allowed me to draw on the raw information within the focus groups and interviews and also (by following the Attride Sterling, 2001 model) from existing theoretical ideas within social identity and double consciousness. I was able to look at the raw data and use an inductive process to identify initial topics that arose from the data. The subsequent deductive process allowed me to formulate

answers to the research questions and to review the theories that applied to the data. The main purpose of the thematic analysis was to investigate whether the research questions could be answered. This analysis also allowed me to look at the possibilities for new research with unanswered questions. It can be argued that a strength of the thematic analysis technique was being able to use both an inductive and deductive process. The Attride-Sterling (2001) model presented two opportunities. Firstly, it permitted me to identify new areas where there was limited previous research. The second opportunity was the ability for me to refine and develop the themes through returning to the theoretical framework. This ultimately allowed me formulate a new 'theory' of the F&C experience in the Army. However, it is acknowledged that the process was 'messy' and it was only when all the data were read through that I could begin to identify what themes were common to focus groups and to interviews. This process supported the premise by Joffe and Yardley (2004) that this type of analysis was both an emergent and intuitive strategy. Following the principles that underlie the research and the specific questions that I sought to answer, I started with an inductive process of identifying common themes and then followed a deductive process of applying meaning to the themes. The focus groups and interview data were analysed separately but generated similar themes.

3.6.1 Analysis of Qualitative Data

This section outlines the process of thematic analysis advocated by Attride-Stirling (2001). An explanation of how the text was reduced and explored is presented. As the data were initially analysed manually, the reflections of Basit (2003) on the practicalities of manual and electronic thematic analysis have been influential in guiding the process. The focus groups and semi-structured interviews consisted of ten questions which covered three main areas (career development, relationships with others and group belonging). Therefore the data were partially organised prior to the research taking place. This method of data organisation is reflective of the Miles and Huberman approach (Miles, Huberman and Saldana, 2013), where a provisional start list of codes is created prior to doing fieldwork. The provisional start list covered the themes and topic areas (see Appendix 3.4).

3.6.1.1 Transcription of Notes

Focus groups were tape-recorded, where all participants consented, in addition to my handwritten notes. If there was not unanimous consent within the group, the groups were not tape-recorded (only handwritten notes were taken). There were two focus groups where there was not unanimous consent to using a tape recorder. These were therefore not tape recorded. The interviews with officers were not tape recorded, however, I took handwritten notes for all of these interviews. Following each focus group and interview, I typed the notes into a Word document on my laptop. This process of transcription (according to Keats 2009) is already an interpretation of talk and an inductive process of making sense of the information. However, codes were not created at this point of transcription. Full transcription of the tapes was done by a transcription company. The steps taken to analyse the data according to the Attride-Sterling model (data reduction, identifying themes and constructing networks) are presented below.

3.6.1.2. Step 1: Manual Data Reduction and Coding

The qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe thematic analysis as a foundational method for qualitative analysis. They argue that thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool “which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data” p5. The focus group and interview questions were the same, therefore the method of analysing the data was identical for both. I used the Attride-Sterling Model of thematic network analysis to analyse and present the qualitative data. Attride- Sterling maintains that thematic analysis “can be usefully aided by and presented as thematic networks” p1. She highlights that connecting the themes within the qualitative analysis allows for a deeper and more robust understanding of the data. It is argued that this process of data exploration, synthesis and presentation allows a better understanding of social phenomena.

The Attride-Stirling Model of thematic network analysis advocates that the textual data are categorised into basic themes. These are the lowest-order themes or statements of belief. These basic themes are quite simple premises and, on their

own, say little about the text. If basic themes are clustered together, these can be presented as organising themes, which will start to summarise and signify the principal assumptions of the text. They are more informative and indicative of the underlying story associated with the phenomenon being investigated. This model suggests that in order to identify the superordinate theme or 'single conclusion' from the text, there will be a need to re-interpret the organising themes in the context of the basic themes. These will produce the global themes that reflect the main issues that have been derived from an analysis of the qualitative data. I used the principles of this approach to analyse the qualitative data in such a way that I could identify and present the global themes that emerged from the focus groups and interviews.

Ten questions were posed during the focus groups and interviews. These were based on the ten domains that were identified from the literature and existing organisational research reviewed, as areas that influenced the lives of F&C personnel in the Army. Thematic analysis was conducted for each question. This was done for both soldiers and officers across the interviews and focus groups. Once the themes had been identified for each question, the Attride-Sterling model was followed to identify the basic, organising and global themes that arose from that question. All of the global themes were then reviewed against each other to examine whether there were any similarities or relationships.

One of the most detailed focus groups was thematically analysed by me and the other research assistant psychologist independently. A further meeting was necessary to establish inter-rater consistency with respect to the themes identified. As there was a high degree of similarity in the themes that we had identified, I used these themes to code the remaining focus groups. Once all of the focus groups had been coded, I reviewed the framework and considered how the basic themes clustered together. This was an inductive process which took a considerable length of time as there were some codes that were not linked to others, but stood in isolation. From this review, I came up with the organising themes. I reviewed these

for relevance and criticality to the data collected and the overall aim of the analysis process.

In this review process some of these unlinked codes were discarded as they did not contribute to the overall story or give any useful information about the working lives of F&C personnel. I then selected one focus group and one interview to revisit the newly clustered themes to determine whether they accurately summarised the assumptions of the groups of basic themes. I entered these data into NVIVO version 8 in order to test the assumptions that I had made about the organising themes. NVIVO organises the codes hierarchically, so that the researcher is able to see the main themes (what Attride-Sterling would call the organising themes) and the vast array of sub-themes. A review of the NVIVO output allowed me to compare these to the list of organising themes I held prior to collecting the data (the questions and topic areas). I concluded that the electronic coding process in my situation, did not add anything over and above the manual coding process that I had begun, as I had already organised the data according to the questions. In essence, there were ten coding frameworks (one for each question or topic area). This process was repeated for the officer focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The list of initial codes was smaller within the officer cohort than the soldier cohort. An example of the framework is presented in Appendix 3.4. By following the Attride-Sterling model I was able to validate whether this initial list was still applicable as a result of my analysis.

3.7 Document Analysis

In order to answer research questions 2, 3 and 4 (see section 1.8.1) which examine both the organisational impact of social identity and the factors affecting the research process, it was necessary to review relevant organisational documents. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) have indicated that there is a distinction between documents and records, with the latter being created to “attest to some formal transaction”. These authors suggested that documents are more personal in nature and tend to be more accessible. They caution that although documents tend to be taken as ‘factual’, they can be given new meanings that are socially embedded in the

reading of them. They suggest that text can say many different things in different contexts. Despite this distinction, the present study makes use both of documents and some records of decisions from internal meetings. Due to my employment with the organisation and understanding of the organisational culture, I was able to contextualise the documents and thereby counter this problem identified by Denzin and Lincoln (2005).

The choice of data analysis for this study was influenced by its primary aim, which was to explore the lived experience of F&C personnel within the British Army. Phenomenology, discourse analysis and grounded theory were all considered as methods of analysis; however, a grounded theory approach was most suitable.

Starks and Brown Trinidad (2007) argue that interpretive phenomenological analysis seeks to capture the meaning and common features of an experience or event. Rather than providing a description of the experience, the aim of this research was to understand both the experience and the contributors to that experience. I considered that interpretive phenomenological analysis would be more appropriate for looking at a phenomenon from a single perspective (e.g. looking at the experience of being a White F&C officer in the British Army). Using interpretive phenomenological analysis would allow me to identify the descriptions of the phenomenon and develop the 'essence' of the experience. However, as I was seeking to understand the phenomenon from different perspectives, I felt that interpretive phenomenological analysis would be limiting in this regard.

I discounted using discourse analysis for the focus group, interview and document analysis as I was not concerned with the language in use. I did not intend to examine how individuals accomplished personal social and political projects through language or how language practices used by the participants and the writers of the documents shaped and reflected the practices of the organisation.

A strength of the grounded theory approach to thematic analysis, was my ability to develop an explanatory theory of the experience of F&C personnel by making links to

the theoretical framework. It also allowed me to explore, more openly, the totality of the lived experience as I had no a priori hypothesis or assumption. The grounded theory approach also allowed an interpretation of data from different sources. Working within an integrated framework such as this, allowed the core concepts from each of the data sources and contexts to be developed into an explanation or 'theory' of the F&C experience within the Army.

A grounded theory and thematic approach to analysis allowed a constant comparison method of coding and analysing the data, in addition to the opportunity to reassemble the data into groups (Attride-Sterling 2001). This then required selecting themes which were linked to the theoretical framework and provided a coherent explanation of the phenomenon.

I completed a manual interpretation of the documents. This began with an analysis of the content and credibility of the document and the position of the author within the organisation. Identification of the main themes and arguments followed. These were listed in a table. The documents were then examined for consistency and contradictions and the analysis process sought to highlight any claims by the author that needed explaining. For each document, a short summary of these points was produced (see Appendix 3.5). As the documents were short, I also compiled a list of themes from the documents. In reading through the documents and identifying themes I was mindful of the organisational and political context within which they were written. The findings of the documents were compared to the findings of the qualitative research (focus groups and interviews) in order to integrate and make sense of the experience of F&C personnel in the Army.

3.8 Integrating Findings

This section outlines how I integrated the findings of the three data sources. Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003) have made the case that, under certain circumstances, a mixed method or pragmatic approach is superior to single methods of data collection. They have, however, stressed the importance of the researcher identifying the purpose of the research and the research question in making the decision to choose a mixed method over a single approach. However, the model

presented in Table 3.3 below allows a systematic process for integrating both sets of findings.

Table 3.3. Representation of Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie’s Model of Integrating Different Sources of Data

Qualitative Findings	Process	Document Findings
Exploratory thematic analysis and making notes	Data Reduction	Thematic analysis of the documents – using notes and initial codes
Network diagrams of themes from focus group and interviews	Data Display	Tables of themes identified from documents
Comparing interview and focus group themes with document themes for similarities and differences	Data comparison	Comparing document findings with interview and focus group findings for similarities and differences
Linking meaning of two sets of data – using the document themes to interpret and contextualise the focus group and interview findings	Data intertwining	Linking meaning of two sets of data – applying the focus group and interview data to the document findings to understand the implications of the document findings
Making a coherent whole – finalising the themes from the focus group and interviews, having reviewed and assessed the document findings	Data integration	Making a coherent whole – finalising the themes from the documents , based on a review of the focus group and interview findings

Following the collection of the data, the process of making it manageable was done through thematic analysis and coding. During this analysis process, I also prepared network diagrams to provide a visual representation of the organising themes and assess how these were ultimately linked and related the story of the data. In accordance with the data integration model this ‘data display’ process allowed me to have a physical representation of the data and make links between the two sources. However, this was not done as prescribed by the model. Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie do not make explicit whether these stages are to be done sequentially however, this is implied. When I conducted the data correlation process to see what links existed amongst the focus group and interview data and the data from the organisational

documents, I needed to compare the output from the data sources to identify any similarities or trends that were apparent. This also allowed for the generation of new hypotheses and ideas that I had not considered, and was an inductive and iterative process which needed to be done in parallel with the data comparison stage as opposed to sequentially as suggested by the model. This 'back and forth' approach to reviewing and testing the data allowed me to provide a coherent picture of the data. This ultimately required that I return to the theoretical framework and the research questions in order to validate the data analysis process.

3.9 Methodological Limitations

Whilst this thesis provides a metacommentary of the process of doing research in the British Army with its challenges and opportunities, it is pertinent to provide an outline of the methodological limitations of the study within this chapter.

Within qualitative research, the issue of generalisability is a contested one (Horsburgh, 2003; Symon and Cassell, 2006). It is possible that a perceived limitation of this study is its inability to provide empirical generalisability due to its sample size and strategy. Some authors, such as Morse (1999), argue that qualitative research is, and should be, generalisable in order for it to be more useful, powerful, significant, and ultimately more readily funded. Chatrakul Na Ayudhya (2009) contends in her thesis, on exploring the conceptualisations of work life balance in young people, that the aims of the research influence the choice of sampling strategy. This thesis suggests that a purposive, as opposed to a statistical, sampling strategy, has the aim of achieving theoretical generalisability. Theoretical generalisability in qualitative research refers to the degree to which theory developed within one study may be utilised as an explanatory theory for the experiences of other individuals in comparable situations (Sim, 1998; Horsburgh, 2003). Purposive sampling was adopted in this study because of its concern with situational representativeness. This enabled a small number of participants (in this study's case, 90) to be recruited for their ability to provide relevant accounts on the social phenomenon under investigation (Horsburgh, 2003).

Through situational representativeness, it is the goal of this research to understand how other foreign workers in comparable contexts and situations subjectively construct meanings of their experience of living and working within that organisational context.

Based on critical realism's rejection of 'predictive pretensions' (Pilgrim & Rogers, 1997; Ussher, 1999) and the contextualist position that all data are situated accounts, specific to the context in which they occur, this thesis does not attempt to make predictions about these participants' experience of working within another industry or organisation. Sim (1998) suggests, "the meaning of a given statement or account is unique to the situation in which it is uttered, and may have a fundamentally different purpose and meaning if repeated in another situation" p 350. In light of this, claims of statistical representativeness and empirical generalisability are considered irrelevant and inappropriate in the current research.

The construction of focus groups and the identity of the researcher within this study may have had unintended effects on the findings. Focus groups were constructed according to race and national status (British/F&C) in order to encourage full and open participation within homogenous groups. Whilst this may be construed as a limitation, there are valid ethical and methodological reasons for having constructed the focus groups in this way (see 3.2.1.2). The possibility to influence the data collected and the interaction with some of the participant population were key considerations. Gunarathnam (2003) and Kalra (2006) highlight the influence of ethnicity of the researcher on the research process. Both of these authors both highlight that there is a need for the researcher to be mindful of the effects of researcher ethnicity when conducting research that is centred around sensitive topics such as race and ethnicity. Whilst the opportunity to not participate in the study was offered to all participants, it is acknowledged that less forthcoming focus group participants within the white officer and soldier groups may have been uncomfortable discussing the experiences of F&C personnel with someone who was of a different racial group and role within the Army.

As identified in section 3.2, there were different sources of data produced by focus groups and interviews. Whilst the rationale for the selection of the data analysis method in the present study was outlined, it is acknowledged that under different organisational circumstances, opportunities exist to use the same methodology across both groups of participants. Utilising focus groups to collect data from both officers and soldiers would allow an opportunity for the construction of a collective experience of being in the British Army and subsequently provide a single, agreed account of Army life.

The organisational context and the method of access to the participants pose a potential limitation to the data collection and analysis processes. Working within the confines of the Army's organisational structure was a limitation on the number of participants that were accessed. Being unable to access participants directly limited the ability to collect a wider and more divergent, range of opinions and experiences of living and working within the Army as an F&C soldier. Whilst the issue of self-selection amongst participants was significantly reduced, it is not impossible that some participants may not have been forthright and direct about their experiences of working with, and living as, an F&C soldier in the British Army.

Whilst saturation was reached with the white British officer group and the ethnic minority F&C soldier group, saturation was not met with the ethnic minority British and F&C officers due to the population size within the organisation. The organisational structure and the timeframes involved within the study, presented a very limited opportunity to interview all 20 ethnic minority F&C officers. This was a potential limitation in that there were possibly more experiences to explore among ethnic minority British and F&C officers.

A range of physical documents was reviewed in this study. One of the limitations of this process was the uncertainty of their ability to provide the genuine organisational perspective on the expectation of F&C personnel within the organisation. Rather, they may have documented the perspectives of the authors, who were of varying levels of seniority. It is noteworthy that I was constrained by the documents available to me.

The particular methodological limitations of this study are highlighted in relation to research question four (see section 1.8.1). This question looks at the substantive issues impacting research inquiry in the Army. As this was not one of the original research questions, but one that emerged during the course of the enquiry, it might have been appropriate to utilise ethnographic methods, such as observation or maintenance of a research diary for the duration of the research project, to gather data. These data could then have been systematically analysed to answer the question. However, these methods were not within the remit of the research methodology and were outside of the submitted ethical protocol. As this was an important and relevant question, which contributed to the overall understanding of the process of conducting research within the Army, I chose to provide a meta-commentary on my experience of doing this research. This seemed the most appropriate method to demonstrate the practicalities, challenges and opportunities associated with conducting research in a hierarchical and stratified institution such as the Army. This exploratory research into the working lives of F&C Soldiers is being used as a case study to investigate the issues that impact the rigour and validity of research within a large, power-driven, organisation.

3.10 Summary

This chapter has been presented in three main sections. The first section outlined the design of the study and the rationale for using more than one source of data. The second section outlined the process used for the development of the material and the piloting of the focus group schedule, whilst the final section identified the process for analysis of the qualitative data through the use of thematic network analysis, and identified some limitations in the methodology utilised.

Using multiple sources of data allowed me to develop a much clearer picture of the working lives of F&C personnel. It was also imperative to have a systematic process for reviewing and triangulating these data sources. There were limitations on the type of data that I was able to collect and the access that I had to groups of research participants. Textbook integration of the findings and a sequential approach to

analysis did not work in this study. It was necessary to constantly review the output from each of the data sources in an iterative way and pragmatically identify which elements would assist in telling an integrated story of what is like to live and work in the British Army as a F&C soldier. The complications associated with integrating data from the interviews, focus groups and documents were outweighed by the benefits of having multiple sources of data that could provide richness to the overall investigation. This design allowed me to understand better the organisational position with regard to conducting research on sensitive topics in the Army and gain multiple sources of evidence to determine the Army's attitude to F&C personnel.

Chapter 4: Conducting Research in a Hierarchical Public Sector

Organisation: The Case of the British Army

4.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to reflect on my personal experiences and observations as a researcher practitioner working within the British Army. It also seeks to explore the complexities of conducting research therein. A specific focus is on issues of access and being employed full-time within the organisation while being the researcher. The role of organisational gatekeepers and issues of power will also be discussed in relation to the implications of these dynamics for the quality and generalisability of the data collected.

There is a plethora of research studies that have been conducted with the military in the UK. These studies have focussed on technical, medical and personnel areas. However, there is very little available published work about the process of doing these research studies in the military. This appears to be an anomaly, considering that the military, as an international industry, produces its own journals such as *Military Psychology*, *Armed Forces and Society* and *British Army Review*. It also has its own section within the American Psychological Society (Military Psychology).

Whilst there are some general challenges associated with conducting research in organisations, such as access (Laurilla,1997, Robson,2011) patronage (Walker and Hasslet,2002), true independence of the researcher and framing of research questions (Lenzer 2008), there are specific issues that affect the researcher in a military or hierarchical public sector environment. These issues make the challenges more pronounced and severe. The British Army and the Ministry of Defence¹³ (MOD) are two of the largest employers in the UK (CIPD online, accessed Jan 2011). The British Army currently employs 91,000 uniformed personnel. The MOD employs a similar number of civilian personnel (approximately 86,000) working to support the uniformed personnel. The interaction between the two groups of employees is

¹³ The government agency charged with creating and executing national defence policy

discussed in relation to conducting research and accessing information on sensitive topics. These two organisations share similarity with only two other organisations in this country (the Royal Navy (RN) and Royal Air Force (RAF)). It is expected that highlighting the parameters which framed the conduct of this exploratory piece of work will appropriately contextualise the research questions and the data gathered within the organisational setting.

4.2 Background of the Researcher

I joined the MOD, working for the Army Headquarters, in 2009. There are three types of civilian employment status for those conducting research within the Army. One can be engaged as a regular, full-time member of staff, a full-time employee on a temporary assignment (seconded to a project for example) or a part-time researcher/ external consultant. As a chartered occupational psychologist, I am employed on a full-time permanent contract to develop and conduct research programmes that would benefit the present and future personnel strategy within the Army. In my role as a full-time employee with the organisation, I am aware that there is a general perception by serving personnel that the researcher is an outsider to 'their' military organisation. There is a belief that researchers are not operational and are therefore part of the administration – which is ultimately linked to the government and its policies. This potentially makes the perception of the role of a full-time researcher by serving personnel slightly more political than the researcher perceives it to be. One of the solutions that the American and Australian Army psychologists have identified to establish a common identity is for their psychologists to become enlisted officers. This creates a common organisational and social identity as a serving person. However, in the UK, this is viewed by the psychological community as a potential block to the ability to critique the military system. It is commonly believed that, by being civilian employees of the Army, psychologists and researchers are able to work to the ethical and professional standards applied by professional bodies, such as the British Psychological Society.

My past research interests lie in researching diversity within organisations and assisting organisations to review their recruitment and development practices. I have aimed to ensure that they are fair and based on sound evidence. Organisational justice has also been one of my passions and fairness and access to equality of opportunity within the workplace has been the focus of my work¹⁴. When I joined the Army Headquarters my role was to deliver services across the Army. During the course of my work, I observed that most of the ethnic minority military personnel I met were not from the UK. These personnel were always interested in my background and my role within the organisation. I would frequently be questioned at meetings, presentations, or whilst going about doing business on the various Army camps. In these conversations I would tend to relate my background as a British-born black female who grew up in the Caribbean. Further probing would lead to the discussion of my subsequent return to the UK for tertiary education and employment. This would inevitably lead to conversations about their experiences in the Army and how it mirrored my journey in some way. Following such conversations there would tend to be a request for me to try to get further information or to influence some type of policy decision which would ameliorate their perceived negative experience in the Army.

My personal experience of being born in the UK and living in a Commonwealth country for 15 years influenced my initial thoughts about the project. I reflected on my parents' experience of being 'invited immigrants' to the UK in the 1960s to work in the NHS. I considered how such an experience would impact, not only how Commonwealth soldiers were treated, but also how they interacted and identified with the Army as an organisation and those in it.

Prior to commencing the research, I reflected on why a study such as this had not already been done by the organisation or by the other researchers within it who were responsible for analysis of the organisational survey data. I concluded that it

¹⁴ Projects include: Research reports to the Commission for Racial Equality (now Equalities and Human Rights Commission) on the career choice of ethnic minorities in relation to the police; The fair use of psychometrics within the Home Office, Assessor Feedback in relation to the Police Promotion Examinations, monitoring of Adverse Impact on the OSPRE Part I examinations, presentations about the experiences of black female police Officers in the UK.

either was not high on the organisational research agenda or that it had not been considered important or relevant by the other (predominantly white British) researchers. The intersection of my gender and ethnicity has influenced this research. Crenshaw (1989), Hills Collins (2000), and Mirza (2009) have identified the relevance of intersectionality in creating new 'truths' when doing research. Rollock (2013) has discussed the significance of acknowledging the role that being black and female has in the research process.

My experiences as a black female researcher (who has worked solely for white male-dominated organisations; police, consulting, military) have shaped my interaction with the Army. They also influence how I am perceived and positioned by others in the Army. Being highly visible in the organisation and (necessarily) open about my ethnic and cultural background enabled me to persuade the organisation of the benefits of the research and convince gatekeepers that I was genuine about developing a more nuanced understanding of organisational life for F&C and ethnic minority personnel. However, whilst the issues of race, gender, class and intersectionality are not peripheral, a full discussion of these within the black feminist literature and its application to this study are beyond the scope of this thesis.

As part of the scoping process for this study, I analysed existing organisational data and found that, at that time, 8-9% of the Army comprised soldiers from F&C countries. I reviewed the Army attitudinal and personnel data as a way of getting a snapshot of Army life for these personnel, from the perspective of the organisation. A review of the data indicated that there were concerns related to promotion and access to career guidance and development. I approached the Army administration with a proposal to conduct an exploratory piece of research on F&C soldiers' experiences. My head of department supported the proposal as understanding how this group of soldiers viewed organisational life had the potential to maximise the retention and performance of this group of soldiers.

Shortly after agreeing this project, I was approached by the Army's Secretariat for F&C Personnel which had heard that I was leading this project. This department was seeking to find out whether the F&C soldiers were satisfied with Army life. I was also approached by a colleague in the Royal Navy to expand this project to include F&C Naval Personnel. She identified that there was a similar situation in the Navy where not much was known about F&C Naval personnel. However, after careful consideration, I decided to focus on the Army only as F&C personnel in the Navy have a five year UK residency requirement. I considered it likely that this would have shaped their experience of military life. I therefore developed a research proposal in order to address the issue of satisfaction with organisational life specifically for the Army and part of that research proposal encompasses elements of this PhD.

4.3 Conducting Research in the Army

In order to conduct research across the British Army, the researcher needs to access several gatekeepers to the organisation. The first gatekeeper is the ASAC. This is a virtual committee that reviews all research proposals involving Army personnel. A research protocol needs to be submitted by the researcher and it is reviewed by other research professionals or subject experts in the Army's research community. Changes and feedback are provided to the researcher who is asked to re-submit the protocol to reflect the suggestions of the research committee. The researcher can argue against suggested changes, however, an implication of doing this is the additional length of time it takes for the protocol to be cleared. If the re-submission is successful, the researcher is granted permission from the chair of the committee to conduct the research. The average time for a review to take place is three months. However, it is usually longer than this. Therefore, quick and responsive research within this organisation is generally limited. All Army research requires a sponsor from within the Army to ensure that the research is of direct benefit to the Army. Thus, having a military sponsor is critical to conducting research within the Army.

The role of the sponsor is to act as the research champion and to be the point of contact for the researcher in developing the research and accessing participants. This

is necessary as the nature of the organisation is such that serving personnel are very difficult to pinpoint at any location, at a particular time. As indicated earlier, there is a high rate of movement within the organisation across posts. The problem of shifting populations is exacerbated by the fact that there is also much movement across the units according to their function and orders at any particular time period. For example, units and individuals may be preparing to go on training overseas prior to being deployed. It is also possible that they may be moved at short notice, to another part of the organisation/country for a specific duty. Civilians are rarely privy to the movement of units. My experience of working in the organisation dictates that the researcher has to work very closely with the military sponsors and supporters of the research to gain this crucial information. It has not been uncommon to arrive at a pre-arranged meeting and find that none of the participants were available due to last-minute organisational demands. In this organisation, research, understandably, tends to have a lower priority than any operational requirements.

4.4 Implications of Rank Structure for the Research Process

The relevance of rank in securing logistical assistance and access to soldiers was critical in this piece of work. In order to obtain support from the middle ranks, the senior ranks were approached to invite participation. This follows a well-established pattern for conducting research within the Army. For example, in order to ensure that everyone has the chance to participate in any attitudinal surveys, the Lt General writes a letter to all of the commanding officers of the units in the Army, stating the purpose of the surveys and encouraging them to allow their staff to complete them within working time. This illustrates why I needed to use additional military research support in the process, as well as why I was unable to contact participants directly, in the first instance. Civilians have no authority to make demands or requests on serving personnel's working time. In research requests, researchers (regardless of their level of seniority) work in partnership with the military to define their requirements and gain advice as to how to approach individuals.

4.4.1 Promotion in the Army

Promotion in the Army is relevant to this research study as this affects the cohort of personnel that were involved in the study. Soldiers who have served in the Army for a long time and have few or no further promotion prospects operate with a certain amount of de facto autonomy within the Army as their actions will not influence how they progress in the organisation. Non-commissioned ranks are soldiers who have not attended the Sandhurst military training facility where the outcome of the training is to enlist in the Army as a commissioned officer. For these non-commissioned ranks of the Army, progression from Private to Warrant Officer spans an entire Army career and is the expected career progression for non-commissioned officers. However, the majority of soldiers tend to retire from the Army at the Staff Sergeant Level. A Warrant Officer 1 or Warrant Officer 2 is typically at the end of their Army career. They are highly regarded in the Army as a result of their experience and are often held in higher esteem by the soldiers they command than are Captains or Majors (who also command soldiers). Every two to three years, military personnel tend to change posts. Once they have rotated sufficiently within a particular rank and have performed a number of tasks that have been deemed to contribute to the development in a particular area, they are eligible to apply for their promotion boards. The Army also puts some upper age restrictions on certain ranks for promotion. In the present study, the participants in the soldier group were mostly Private soldiers, and from the officer groups, the majority were Captains. However, Warrant Officers were the buffer rank I needed to influence and they were sceptical and sometimes dismissive about the research.

There is a regimented system of rotating serving personnel within the Army and its headquarters. Therefore, there is a constant state of changing agendas within the organisation. This not only has an impact on the organisational and cultural functioning of the organisation, it can also negatively affect the process of doing research. It can be difficult within the organisation to find sponsors who are aligned with your research vision and who have a vested interest in championing the research enough to make it happen. Working closely with a military sponsor can potentially be interpreted by Junior Non-Commissioned Officers or others who do

not support the research as working with 'one of them'. Additionally, working with senior officers to make the research happen also raises questions about who is the client and who is the beneficiary of the research as these senior officers begin to take a dual role (research enabler/ participant representative). If a senior officer asks for the research to be done, there is a certain amount of influence that he or she will have over how it will be conducted. This has the potential to blur the independence of the researcher as he/she is reliant on the officer to access populations and other gatekeepers in the organisation. This approach to conducting research, where the researcher is entirely dependent on the client, has the potential to relegate the researcher to a 'tool' to be used by the organisation.

4.4.2 Military Sponsorship

A Lt Col working in DAPS made the initial request for participants to the Brigade Headquarters which cascaded the requirement to the commanding officers of all the units within the Brigade. The commanding officers then provided contact details of the adjutants (military administrators) of each of these units in order that a list of volunteers could be identified. I was copied into all of the emails and referenced as the main researcher. For the subsequent focus groups (run in February 2011) a Lt Col, working in the employment branch of the Directorate of Manning (DMA), made the second approach to the Division to access further participants for this study. Once the initial request had been made from one military senior to another, again copying me in to all emails, I was able to directly approach the adjutants after they had responded regarding their availability, to give further details and arrange the logistics of the data collection. These military messages tend to hold more value and currency to the group of participants and the middle managers as they are being recruited by a member of their own community.

Researchers external to the Army and the chair of the ASAC tend to be extremely concerned about the issue of potential coercion of participants. This is due to the command structure of the Army and the potential ethical dilemmas associated with this approach to access. However, Army researchers are very careful to discuss issues of coercion with their sponsors. Within this project, I have made it extremely

clear that if participants are coerced into attending, there will be serious implications for the quality and validity of the data that are collected. I explained that this will ultimately have a negative effect on the research and the usefulness of any recommendations. One of the ways that I resolved this issue of command and coercion was to offer all participants the opportunity to leave the research process without it being reported to their commanding officer. Despite these assurances, there appeared to be a shared understanding and an unquestioned assumption by participants that, if their commanding officers and seniors had asked them to participate, it was a worthwhile exercise. This is also the reaction of the commanding officers when another military person makes a request for participants.

4.4.3 Practical Implications of the Organisational Structure for the Research Process

As presented in chapter one, the pyramid structure of the Army presents challenges for access to particular groups of participants. The majority of the F&C personnel in the Army are soldiers, at the junior ranks (below OR4). The Army is spread over 3 main bases, UK (including Northern Ireland), Germany and Cyprus. Training is, however, conducted all over the world, including Commonwealth countries and North America in preparation for operations. The combination of the geographical spread, organisational structure and the promotion system makes it difficult to physically get access to some elements of the sample group. Additionally, there is a marked under-representation of certain groups within my sample. For example, ethnic minority F&C officers are a rarity within the Army. In 2009 (when I was scoping this research project), there were 30 in an Army of almost 13,000 officers. In 2014, this figure has reduced to 20. Some of these officers are based outside of the UK. Through the course of this research process, I relied on senior officers to reflect on their personal network of officer colleagues and refer me to ethnic minority and white F&C officers that I could approach. However, this method proved futile for accessing ethnic minority F&C officers as through the 10 senior white colleagues approached, I was only able to access three ethnic minority F&C officers. Two of these were not in the UK and the other was preparing to go on operations. The only other way to identify the other 17 in the entire organisation was to request this information from the Army personnel database and try to locate them. The database

is reliant on individuals keeping it up to date. Considering the constant movement and spread of individuals, this database has proved highly unreliable in the past and would have proved a futile exercise to pursue.

4.5 The Role of Power in the Organisation

The previous section indicates how power and bureaucracy play a central role in the functioning of the British Army and its headquarters. The purpose of this section is to outline the impact of these factors play and their implications for the research process. It outlines the types of power that exist in organisations and identifies the effects of the organisational control, created by power differentials, on my ability to engage with and influence the sample for the present research.

Raven (1965) and Raven and French (1957) and provided classic research identifying six bases of power within society as they related to communication, influence and leadership. This typology of power has since been further developed by other researchers such as Krausz (1986) who identify that in organisations, power is the ability to influence the actions of others, individuals or groups. The types of power as refined by Krausz are:

Coercive and Reward power, which is based on a transactional dynamic with the ability of the powerful to reward and punish. This is primarily based on fear of punitive acts and consequences associated with not doing what has been asked. Within the Army structure, coercive power may lie with any personnel holding a leadership position. The command structure means that this power can rest with an individual as junior as a Lance Corporal. Those charged with leading others have discretionary power to administer punishments for any acts which are deemed to contravene appropriate military behaviour. These punishments are recorded on the personal performance appraisal system and will potentially affect the career of the soldier. For more extreme acts of disobedience or breaking of military law, soldiers face military court and time in a military correctional facility, if found guilty.

Position power is based on the social network dynamic within the organisation. It is related to the status that a person has in the organisational structure. As noted above, anyone from a Lance Corporal upwards has the ability to exert coercive or reward power on those subordinate to him or her. Within the Army, anyone with coercive power is in a position of authority and therefore also holds position power. This is referred to in the organisational literature as legitimate power. As a result of the position power held at all levels, the rank structure of the Army suggests a positive correlation between position power and coercive and reward power. The more senior one is in the Army, the more access one has to a range of opportunities and options to influence others (including reward and punishment).

Support power is associated with the ability to stimulate the involvement of peers, superiors, subordinates and others in organisational endeavours. This is the ability to motivate others.

Interpersonal Competence or Referent power is associated with interpersonal communication skills, empathy and authenticity. Generally, people with this type of power within organisations are well liked.

Knowledge or Expert power is related to the relevant skills and abilities a person is able to bring to the organisation or job, relative to others. This type of power is based on both the quality and quantity of knowledge or information held about a particular subject or context.

Whilst Krausz (1986) refined the original typology of power within the organisational context and focussed on descriptors to capture the process of interaction between individuals and groups within the organisation, there has been limited discussion in the literature about how these types of power are created and sustained within organisations. A later definition by Cangemi (1992) described power as the individual's capacity to move others, to entice others, to persuade and encourage others to attain specific goals or to engage in specific behaviour. Cangemi argues that power is essentially an individual's capacity to influence and motivate others.

French and Karas (2008) see power as the capacity of an individual or group to affect the outcome of any situation so that access is achieved to scarce resources. They highlight that power is about the potential ability to influence behaviour. These definitions have moved away from the earlier more transactional notions of power involving the imposition of the will of others on individuals and groups. Haslam, Reicher and Platow (2010) go beyond the identification of a power typology to discuss how power is created within organisations by individuals and groups. They also discuss the implications for those who are followers of these 'creators' or leaders. It is acknowledged that not all holders of power within organisations do so formally or are leaders. However, the discussion of power and the implications for this research process will focus on the structural organisation of the Army and my position in it relative to those with leadership positions.

As highlighted in section 4.4.3 above, my rank in the civil service at the time of the research was equivalent to that of a Lt Colonel, therefore amongst junior soldiers and officers, the power of my position and knowledge was recognised to the extent that formal military protocols apply. There were limited attempts by military personnel to establish power differentials within these interactions. Additionally, as a civilian researcher working for the Army, I defer to the 'expert' power that all military personnel have in relation to their knowledge about the organisation. For example, I am unclear as to why an officer's career needs to be structured around his/her date of birth and attendance at staff college; however this is entrenched in the system of promotion and is understood by officers, therefore I defer to Army culture and ways of working. Furthermore, my experience with some commissioned, senior officers has highlighted that my 'expert power' as a chartered occupational psychologist holds little currency in a military organisation where 'military judgement' tends to be the basis for decision making. Deference to my expert knowledge about personnel research and human behaviour at work is not automatic within the military. In new encounters and meetings, it has to be earned through a series of challenges from leaders in those particular situations.

Haslam et al. (2010) have argued that leadership is central to the origins of intergroup hostility. They suggest that conflict against 'them' needs to be understood in terms of who represents 'us'. The use of the social identity lens to analyse the interactional process and subsequent followership by junior soldiers of their commanding officer is helpful in this instance. Haslam et al. (2010) propose that the most successful regimes are those in which followers act willingly because they genuinely believe in what they are doing. As highlighted in chapter one, the basic training phase for all soldiers allows them to gain a common understanding of the mission and values of the Army. Soldiers see themselves as bound by their chain of command. They are part of the Army and are answerable to a senior rank in his or her capacity as a leader with a legitimate right to enforce Army rules. I do not have this legitimacy. In order to get backing for this research, I needed to demonstrate that I was also serving the interests of the Army. If the commanding officers were unable to appreciate this, it was unlikely that they would have publicised and volunteered their units for participation in the research.

In terms of creating power and influence within the organisation by virtue of position, Haslam et al. (2010) discuss the need to be skilful at crafting an identity that others will want to accept. These researchers discuss the notion of creating a compelling vision of identity that is achieved primarily through the use of language. The use of military rhetoric is critical to the creation of a good argument and the ability to persuade. As a psychologist working in a headquarters environment, I am unfamiliar with the everyday language and jargon used by soldiers and their chain of command. Therefore, in conducting this research, it was essential for me to pilot the questions and instructions with groups of soldiers and their chain of command prior to starting any data collection. This allowed me to establish some credibility and positional power within the research context as I was able to say to all subsequent participants and their commanders that the focus groups were tried and tested by some of their own.

4.6 Social and Organisational Identity: The Implications for Conducting Research within the Army

Whilst there was partnership working between the researcher and the senior officers to access relevant participants, it is acknowledged that there were some different working practices that needed negotiation. The social identity framework used to underpin this research (see section 2.2) can be applied to an understanding of the process associated with collecting data within the Army. Lievens, Van Hove and Anseel (2007) suggest that the (Belgian) Army provides a relevant context for studying employer identity because of its prestige, distinctive identity and in-group awareness. Both the military personnel and I (a professional psychologist) belong to two distinct groups that work for the same organisation. These groups, however, operate under different terms and conditions. The context dependent assumption of social identity theory is that both military and civilian personnel are working for the greater good of the Army. Therefore, in times of crisis, the theory assumes that both groups should function more effectively in an interdependent way. However, whilst the context can explain a certain amount of cooperation, each of these groups has a unique identity and way of operating within the organisation. As a researcher I am affiliated with a professional group which holds a set of values and standards. Conversely Nuciari (2006) suggests that there is a progressive de-professionalisation of the military. This author describes attempts by some members of the military to become familiar with non-military knowledge. This has led to the creation of internal experts in non-military matters (such as research, administration and procurement) who do not have professional accreditation and guidance.

Abrams and Hogg (1990) argue that each group will strive to establish and maintain a distinctive identity and place for themselves within the organisation. They identify that belonging to a group provides members with norms, boundaries, goals, purposes and social context. The authors argue that membership of these groups fulfils a cognitive, affective and normative function. In my view, there is a positive distinctiveness between military personnel and civilians that may impact on the research process. Each group has a well-defined identity with value and emotional

significance. As a result there is both a parallel and integrated organisational structure within the headquarters in which these two groups are positioned relative to each other. The Army headquarters is led by a military officer. The role of civilians in the military headquarters is to support the military. There is, therefore, the possibility for a military person to influence the working life and career of civilians within the headquarters. Conversely, due to the support role that civilians have, civilian employees can exert very little influence over the careers of military employees within the headquarters.

There is a fundamental difference between how organisational psychologists and Army personnel do business within the organisation, particularly in their approach to problem solving. Psychologists, as a group, tend to take a reflective and methodical approach to solving organisational problems, from an evidence and ethical base. Findings are typically presented to military personnel in a probabilistic fashion with a range of options. As a group, however, military personnel tend to be more impulsive and risk-taking in relation to solving problems. They take a pragmatic approach to problems and are satisfied with an 85% solution¹⁵ (Defence Academy Doctrine). The Army, as an organisation, demands quick and decisive responses and tends to be very clear-cut in its solutions. There is often a binary, yes or no, answer to questions posed by the organisation. Nuciari (2006) discusses this issue of definitive solutions within the Handbook of the Sociology of the Military. She suggests that, in varying degrees, the military responsibility for combat pre-disposes its personnel toward low tolerance for the ambiguities of internal and international politics which leads to the preoccupation with definitive solutions for politico-military problems. This can create tensions when working as a psychologist within the Army. However, an advantage of being a full-time employee is being afforded the opportunity to work alongside military personnel and educate them as to my ways of working and explain the benefits of my methods. Additionally, I have learned to adopt a pragmatic solution to some problems where there are clear benefits of doing so. I also recognise the benefits to be gained from presenting initial findings to the military in order that

¹⁵ This is a common phrase used with military personnel in relation to the outcome of a project

they can assist in the translation of scientific research findings into practical applications for the organisation.

4.6.1 Organisational Identity of the Researcher

Having worked in the organisation for more than five years means that I have come across stereotyped notions of psychologists by some military personnel. Within Army Headquarters, there are 10 organisational psychologists who are employed to inform the personnel-related policy created by the Army. There are fewer clinical psychologists working for the Army; however, they tend to work more directly with soldiers on critical health and performance issues. It is therefore very likely that encounters between a military person and a psychologist are mainly of a clinical nature (treatment for trauma, or other mental health related issues). In conducting this research, one of the first challenges that I needed to overcome was the perception that all psychologists were treating mental health disorders and were 'pink and fluffy'. This is military colloquial speech for concepts and solutions that are less definitive and require interpretation. For example, in order to combat this perception, the aims of this study were presented in terms of having the ability to impact directly on the recruitment and retention policy for F&C personnel.

The wider issues of organisational culture, behaviour change and the impact of group identity on relationships within the organisation cannot be presented on their own as micro issues. My credibility and status as a researcher within this organisation rests on my ability to translate psychological theory into concrete military issues that are directly and immediately relevant to the organisation. As an example, after my introductory brief in one focus group session, an officer asked me, "can you give me a specific example of 'impacting policy change' that you referred to?". Within a group of his peers, I interpreted this question not only as an attempt to clarify a potentially 'fluffy' generalisation about the impact of the research being carried out, but as an attempt to establish a power dynamic within the focus group.

Working in a research environment such as my department, where individuals belong to two distinct groups, is an example of how both civilians and military

personnel interact with the organisation. Dukerich, Golden and Shortell (2002) have identified that there are two types of organisational identity. Firstly, what members of the organisation perceive the image of the organisation to be and secondly, the extent to which insiders experience the outsider perception of their organisation. This can be positive or negative. The relevance of organisational identity in this context is that I work for the Army headquarters in support of the Army; however, I am considered an outsider by military personnel who work in the field Army (non-headquarters roles). I conducted my research predominantly with field Army personnel, therefore it is possible that I have had two organisational identities in existence (HQ outsider and civilian). It is also possible that these have influenced my relationship and interaction with the middle management that control access to soldiers.

However, on reflection, it is also likely that ethnic identity was a factor in creating the unease that some military personnel feel in being able to have an open conversation about a sensitive issue such as race relations in the Army. A senior white Warrant Officer reflected that, “as intelligent and nice as you are, why would I talk to you (about the issue of race relations in the Army?)” He implied that as a civilian, I would be less likely to understand the reasons for decision making around these issues. Additionally, there was a feeling that I would be critical of the organisation (and by extension military personnel management) as opposed to taking an empathic approach.

Social and organisational identity can explain why and how groups within the organisation show social competition. The impact of this on the research process and the interdependency of both of these groups (military and civilian) in producing sound and reliable research is an area for further exploration. Hence, the reason for using this research into F&C soldiers’ experiences as an opportunity to comment on the possibilities of conducting particular types of research within the Army. The study also considers the implications of drawing conclusions based on the data that are collected as a result of this particular research process.

4.7 Summary

In summary, power exists within the field Army and its headquarters as the basis for interpersonal interaction and daily organisational life. It is a method of control, not only for individuals but for processes that require any change to the status quo. Whilst Krausz (1986) refined a typology of power relevant within the organisational context, there is limited discussion on how those types of power are created. An alternative theory posited by Haslam et al. (2010) has suggested that leaders primarily create and sustain power through their common identity with their followers. Being outside of the military identity and having a civilian identity of my own has impacted the research process and limited my ability to approach my sample firsthand. I have also occupied that unique space of being an outsider within and have reflected on the role that the intersection of my ethnic and gender identity has played in the research process.

Throughout this project I have recognised the limitations and acknowledged the power dynamic between my military colleagues and me. An understanding of this reality has allowed me to negotiate and, necessarily, compromise on elements of this project which are not detrimental to the underlying principles of research. However, despite an ability to work effectively, the separate identity and the lack of political power held by me as a researcher, affect the type of data that I can collect, and how and where I can collect it. This creates certain boundaries that constrain a complete understanding of an organisational problem. This will be further discussed in chapter eight.

Chapter 5: Findings from an Analysis of Army Documents

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present my interpretation of the political, social and organisational context within which the policies for the recruitment and management of Foreign and Commonwealth (F&C) soldiers were conceived and developed. Based on an analysis of organisational documents I will examine whether or not the documents reflect the organisation's public stance in relation to equality of opportunity and career development for this group of soldiers¹⁶.

As pointed out in section 3.7, there is a difference between documents and records. Documents, such as diaries, memos and letters, are prepared for personal reasons. Records are prepared to attest to some formal transaction. Examples of the latter would be bank statements or marriage certificates. These may have local uses that become distant from officially sanctioned meanings. Both documents and records were used in this analysis. The records were minutes of meetings – the officially recorded transactions of the F&C Task Force meetings. The documents were written F&C policy papers, letters to the Army from external agencies and internal reports.

Guba and Lincoln (2005) highlight that there is no true meaning of a text, outside of a specific historical context. My role in the organisation as an occupational psychologist means that I have access to the organisational dynamics and an understanding of the historical context surrounding policy decisions. Being able to interpret the documents within an organisational context serves as an additional source of data that adds to the body of knowledge being created about the position and lived experience of F&C soldiers. It can also serve to add to the understanding of how the Army conducts itself with respect to outsiders and the position that it takes with regard to organisational decision making.

¹⁶ In order to preserve the security of MOD documents, in this chapter, I will be unable to provide page numbers to support quotations or the job titles of the document authors.

5.2 How the Documents and Records were Selected:

Gilbert (2008) indicates that there can be problems with the selection and interpretation of documents. He highlights that it can be difficult to assess the authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning of documents. In order to negate some of these issues, I examined 30 official Army documents and records and evaluated the contribution of each one to the issues being explored in my research. As a result, the final selection of 16 documents and records included in the analysis related specifically to the development of F&C policy. The criteria for inclusion were that the document content and title needed to have specifically focussed on the lived experience of F&C personnel or contained information about decisions and policies that would influence how F&C Soldiers would be treated in the Army. The documents are a combination of emails, letters, memos, minutes of meetings and reports. These are included in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 List of Documents Analysed

Document Content	Type of Document	Year of document	Classification of the document	Position of the author
Ministerial document addressing ethnic minority recruitment	Ministerial statement	2006	Unrestricted	Senior Politician
Report addressing the recruitment of non-British individuals who are not F&C	Report	2007	Unclassified	Senior Army Officer
Survey report on F&C personnel	Report	2008	Unclassified	Senior Army Officer
Paper outlining the Army's rationale for F&C limits	Report	2008	Unclassified	Senior Whitehall Civil Servant
Letter to Army challenging nationality limits	Letter	2008	Unclassified	Chair of Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)
Correspondence to the Army's senior personnel Officer	Email	2008	Personal	Senior Army Civil Servant
Staff Memo briefing the executive committee of the Army Board	Memo	2008	Unclassified	Senior Army Civil Servant

Document Content	Type of Document	Year of document	Classification of the document	Position of the author
Proposal to create an F&C task force	Proposal	2008	Unclassified	Senior Army Civil Servant
Internal note addressing the set-up of the F&C task force	Briefing paper	2008	Unclassified	Senior Army Civil Servant
Internal note addressing a perceived lack of credibility	Briefing Paper	2008	Unclassified	Senior Army Civil Servant
EHRC Response to the military warning of the consequences of imposing nationality limits.	Letter	2008	Unclassified	Director of Enforcement for EHRC
Minutes of meeting to set up Terms of Reference for F&C Task Force.	Minutes	2009	Unclassified	Junior Army Civil Servant
Policy paper addressing how diversity is viewed in the Army	Report	2009	Unclassified	Senior Army Officer
Appendix to the policy paper addressing the historical context of Army ethnic minority recruiting	Report	2009	Unclassified	Senior Army Officer
Records of Decisions from an F&C taskforce meeting	Minutes	2009	Restricted	Junior Army Civil Servant
Minutes of meeting held to discuss security issues surrounding F&C recruitment.	Minutes	2009	Unclassified	Senior Army Civil Servant

5.3 Characteristics of the Documents

This section outlines the description of the documents and the physical context within which the documents exist. The usefulness of applying a systematic review of documents and their characteristics lies in being able to determine quickly the timelines, the spectrum of authors and their position or role within the organisation.

The MOD has a classification system for protecting and accessing documents. Prior to April 1st 2014, all documents were categorised in range from Unrestricted (documents which can be seen by anyone and are not sensitive in nature) to Secret

(documents can only be seen by individuals who have the highest level of security clearance). Secret documents contain sensitive information which may put the MOD at risk. This classification system ensures that both the information and the individual are protected. Only those who need to see certain documents can do so if they are appropriately cleared. The documents included in this analysis ranged from Unclassified to Restricted. Documents that are Unclassified have no protective marking. This could be as a result of author error, however, and they have to be treated with care. Whilst Restricted documents were included in the review and analysed, I am unable to quote directly from them within the body of this chapter.

The documents included in this analysis range from ministerial statements to minutes of internal meetings and memos. This range of authorship allows an observation of the approach to decision making by various parts of the organisation. They are categorised into three main areas; F&C recruiting, developing organisational policy for F&C personnel and understanding the working life of F&C personnel. The documents provide a contextual understanding of the organisation's internal conversation about how it recruits and manages overseas soldiers. The analysis of this secondary source of data also presents an opportunity to understand the context and rationale behind the development of F&C policy within the Army. Analyses of these documents seek to understand the motivations of the authors and their level of influence in organisational decision making.

5.3.1 Timeframes

The documents included in the analysis were restricted to a three year period from 2006 (when the limits on F&C personnel movement were announced) to 2009 when the organisation's internal conversation about diversity and F&C personnel appeared to be at its most intense. More recent documents announcing the cuts to units with significant F&C personnel were not included in this analysis due to the sensitive nature of the transformation programme taking place within the Army at present (see section 1.1)

5.4 Analysis and Interpretation:

After selecting the documents for analysis and reviewing the internal characteristics, I was able to develop a framework for exploring and analysing the documents through the use of thematic analysis. The rationale for doing a thematic analysis of documents was to understand the organisational view of F&C life. The primary data, in the form of focus groups and interviews, captured the first-hand accounts of what it is like to live and work in the Army as an F&C soldier. The documents were a secondary source of data and were used to validate the primary data sources. Bowen (2009) highlights that because documents are context specific, they should be evaluated against other sources of information. Thus, seeking to understand the organisational perspective was critical to understanding the relative position of F&C soldiers in the Army and the structural mechanisms that regulate their existence. These structural mechanisms, as described by the documents, will be juxtaposed with the first-hand accounts in order to demonstrate the evolution of F&C policy development in the Army. Using documents in this way provided a means of triangulation with the other sources of data.

Document analysis was also used due to the sensitive nature of the topic and the difficulties in collecting relevant data within the British Army (as highlighted in chapter four). Stake (1995) writes that the case study approach to understanding a single phenomenon is well supported by an analysis of documents.

Gilbert (2008) argues that documents are socially produced on the basis of certain ideas and theories of commonly accepted or taken for granted principles. There is a suggestion that within a document analysis there is a need to understand the socially accepted basis upon which the documents were created.

Bowen (2009) provides a useful guide to analysing documents. He suggests that “document analysis involves skimming, reading and interpretation”. These three iterative processes were involved in the analysis of the current documents. In order to select the documents for analysis it was necessary to skim read all of them.

However, a more rigorous examination was conducted by thoroughly reading through the selected documents.

The physical review of the documents as presented above was systematically applied using a template developed by the US archives. This template was applied as it provided a framework for the structured delineation of documents. Organisation of the physical characteristics of the documents in an analysis spreadsheet (see Appendix 3.5) allowed me to identify the political and organisational issues related to them at a glance. I was then able to sort these accordingly. This 'first pass' review, according to Bowen allows the researcher to begin the iterative process and the formulation of themes. This is consistent with the Attride-Sterling model (referenced in section 3.7.2.2) that I followed for the analysis of the qualitative data. Due to the limited nature of the documents, I was only able to develop global themes. By applying a thematic analysis to the review of documents, I was able to identify emerging themes that related to the development of policy or decision making. I avoided the use of the pre-defined codes that were used for the qualitative focus group and interview data, as the analysis of documents was not to extend the findings of the qualitative data, but rather to identify the reasons why policies were created and identify the structural mechanisms by which F&C life is governed.

5.5 Findings from the Document Analysis

Most of the documents were intended for internal use, primarily to send messages to other internal departments, agencies, task forces and attendees of meetings. They were also written to state or reason the organisational position. However, this 'organisational position' was often that of the author. This was demonstrated clearly in one document where the title of the document stated an organisational position, but did not make reference to organisational research, evidence or consultation with other groups or the chain of command. This was common in documents written by military personnel. The single document reviewed that did make use of organisational research dismissed its findings. Generally, documents also acknowledged the decisions of meetings, conveyed ideas and expressed feelings toward progress of issues.

In reviewing the documents, there was a clear difference between the writing styles of civilian and military authors. The documents written by military personnel have no extended or current references and tend to make assertions and bold statements that are not supported by evidence. At points within some documents, when there is an acknowledgment that there is no science or evidence to back up an idea or policy, there is no recommendation that such evidence should be sought. This reflects the Army's instinctive approach to decision making. Within these documents, links are therefore not made with the societal context within which the Army operates. For example, one document discusses the Army's failure to attract recruits from the Asian community and officers from the Afro-Caribbean community. Had the authors of these documents looked outside of the Army into the recruitment space and literature (Conner et al 2004), UCAS databases, Association of Graduate Recruiters publications), there would be an understanding that these two demographic groups prefer other types of employment.

Another document proposed a significant change to the recruitment policy to include quotas of minority ethnic groups but made no reference to the Race Relations Amendment Act of 2000 and the Army's requirements in relation to it. Nor did the document highlight the rationale for this policy change. Documents written by military staff tended to omit the complexity involved in developing policy for non-British soldiers.

Conversely, documents written by civilian staff tended to utilise references. They adopted a more empathic approach to the myriad challenges associated with integrating into a new culture and organisation. Civil servants reflected a more considered view of the organisational position and tended to seek more evidence. Their documents revealed an almost personal commitment to solving F&C personnel problems. Some of the documents reflected the political context within the organisation. For example, one document, written by a senior civil servant, tasked to take on significant policy review for F&C personnel, reflected that this role was a figurehead one, without any real agency. Another document by a civilian, external to the organisation, highlighted to a senior officer that the Army was trying to rush

recruitment decisions through without considering due process. Having an overall understanding of the features of the documents allows the analysis and interpretation to be guided by the context within which they were written.

5.6 Themes from the Documents

Whilst the documents were categorised into three main areas (F&C recruiting, developing organisational policy for F&C personnel and understanding the working life of F&C personnel), there were four key themes that arose from the document analyses. These were: preservation of organisational identity, control over personnel, power, and decision making.

5.6.1 Preservation of Organisational Identity.

The need to preserve the identity of the British Army was highlighted by the documents. There are references within the documents to keeping the British Army 'British' and avoiding the influx of both non-European Union and Eastern European nationals (EU). An informal survey report of F&C personnel was titled the 'Non-British component of the Army'. A distinction between British and non-British individuals is made clear in these documents. This is counter to the 'Soldier First' ethos that is covered in the Values and Standards documents. In other documents, F&C soldiers are referred to as "these personnel...who remain invisible". Based on the documents, there appears to be a desire to understand the demographic composition of F&C personnel. A recurrent theme which emerges is a concern about F&C personnel taking up British citizenship and using the Army as a vehicle to do so.

The recruitment documents which discussed armed forces ethnic minority recruiting and the recruitment of 'aliens' into the Army seem to reflect some general anxiety about overseas recruiting, regardless of the countries of origin. In one particular case, a document discussing concerns about EU nationals demonstrated that the Army is prepared to find support and evidence to reinforce its position on overseas recruitment. Currently EU nationals can be recruited in the Army only if they have dual (British and their country of origin) citizenship and can confirm that they are not

required to fulfil national service obligations¹⁷. However, the document very clearly highlighted that in the MOD's 'favour' there was a general lack of application of EU law to defence issues. The implication was that any potential challenge to the recruitment policy would be refuted by the Army as it would be able to make a special case that EU law did not apply. It would appear that the document was written to justify the Army's position in relation to the law and to pre-empt legal challenge.

The documents highlighted that the Army's ethnic minority recruitment policies and F&C recruitment policies were historically rooted in an investigation by the Commission for Racial Equality¹⁸ (CRE). It would appear that the threat of a non-discrimination notice¹⁹ was the reason that the Army started to take a closer look at diversity. One document in the analysis revealed that the Army spent 12.5 million pounds over a period of time on consultancy efforts to increase ethnic minority recruitment with little success. One unanswered question from this document remains whether or not F&C recruiting started just after the threat of notice from the CRE. The annual failure to meet diversity targets from within the British ethnic minority community is an underlying motivation for the recruitment of F&C personnel. Thus, the policy of introducing limits to F&C personnel seems contrary to the organisational aims. One conclusion that can be drawn from this document is that the CRE felt that setting the limits was an arbitrary decision. They further advised that if the Army failed to follow its advice on following due process, a legal challenge could ensue.

One of the documents analysed stated that most of the F&C applicants to the Army apply for a Visitor's visa to the UK (which does not require security checks and lasts for six months). However, later in the document it is acknowledged that the Army provides no support or guidance to the F&C applicants on how to obtain an entry visa to the UK. The minutes of a subsequent task force meeting discuss that a

¹⁷ The employment of EU nationals is prohibited by the Armed Forces Act 2006

¹⁸ now Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

¹⁹ A non-discrimination notice is a notice which is enforceable by the courts, that the commission can apply to an organisation, mandating them to prove that they are not discriminating against individuals or groups

meeting between the then United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA) and the Army highlighted that there is no other visa that the F&C recruit can use to enter the UK, even though they are not 'visitors'. The original paper discussing the security limits was therefore inferring that the F&C personnel were somehow trying to circumvent the official system of entry into the UK, when, in fact, there is no another visa available for this purpose. This attests to the general attitude in the organisation about F&C Personnel, as a group, that their motives are regarded with suspicion. It also serves to reinforce a subordinate group identity amongst F&C personnel and maintain the status quo within the organisation.

5.6.2 Control over Personnel

Analysis of the documents suggests that the imposition of nationality limits within the Armed services was born out of a need to have control over the soldiers in the Army. There was concern expressed that, legally, the Army did not have control over its non-British personnel and that this represented a risk to security and to the identity of the Army. One case highlighted was the dilemma of the South African soldiers who, in retaining their South African nationality, were legally bound by the laws of their government; therefore the problem arose as to how the British Army rules and regulations apply to them. The contents of the documents analysed showed that there was a need to be explicit about the rationale and decision for restricting the movement and career choices of F&C personnel, should there be legal challenge. The documents revealed that most of the discussions about the limits to personnel were based on issues of 'control'. In essence, the Army feels strongly about having total control over its personnel, particularly its F&C personnel, in order to make them do as it wants. A solution is therefore to limit their choices. This seems different to the reason for the limits highlighted in the policy document introducing the limits – that the British Army must be British. The documents show that, in order for the Army to operate at maximum efficiency, there is a need for loyalty amongst serving personnel and this cannot be guaranteed amongst non-British personnel, given the present status quo. In view of the above, it would appear that these nationality limits represent a risk mitigation strategy.

5.6.3 Power

The documents analysed reflect the power and authority associated with the position of the author. This was demonstrated in the tone of the documents. Additionally, it appears from the analysis that more senior military figures and politicians with decision making responsibility would rarely endorse policies and recommendations they did not agree with, despite accompanying logical argument and evidence.

For example, one document outlined how civil servants were trying to progress a policy which would entitle F&C veterans without recourse to public funds to the same terms and conditions as British veterans. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This appears to be a threat and demonstrates that in this rank-oriented organisation, the person with the highest rank has the final authority to enforce his or her political will on the organisation.

The documents also demonstrated that, within the Army, power manifests itself in how those with positional power interpret evidence and information. For example, a military survey was conducted of F&C personnel. However, the ensuing report, written by a senior Army officer appeared to be dismissive of the conclusions that resulted from the findings. Although this report identified that a large proportion of the F&C personnel felt discriminated against, the report's author (a Lt Colonel) highlighted that "perception is the master and for many, perception is the truth". This suggests that whilst personnel may have reported discrimination, it might be their perception and their truth, which is seen as different from the organisational truth or reality.

Apart from the positional power involved in decision making, the need to retain power over the armed forces and its identity was evident in the analysis of documents. The internal organisational dialogue seemed to suggest that the F&C soldiers were perceived as powerless and without agency, thereby needing an organisational champion to advocate on their behalf. However, the documents also demonstrated that those with the positional power to make decisions, which would make organisational life easier for F&C personnel, often did not use it to do so. The response of those with more positional power revealed that support for diversity and F&C issues was low down on the list of organisational priorities.

The documents analysed reflected the power dynamics present within the Army. One document demonstrated that civil servants have little power to influence decision making on F&C issues despite being placed in a team which is responsible for resolving F&C issues. In reviewing the minutes of a quarterly task force meeting, it would appear that decisions or actions discussed in the meeting would remain unimplemented for up to six months. This indicates that the group of civil servants who were 'tasked' to make decisions about the well-being of F&C personnel, in actuality have great difficulty in doing so due to their inability to get a senior person to take action. Invariably there would be more discussion about an issue that arose in the previous quarterly meeting. This organisational decision making process is one of the structural mechanisms that affects the working lives of F&C soldiers.

A review of the task force documents suggests that, as a group, it has great difficulty in exercising real power to achieve change. Consequently, this appears to reduce the task force to a self-selecting group of individuals who meet to discuss F&C matters in which they have a personal interest, but about which they can do little. This is because the ability to make decisions about Army personnel rests solely with the chain of command and the Army senior personnel. The analysis of documents illustrated that civil servants can advise and guide, but cannot implement change. The documents analysed highlight that the chain of command does not follow the recommendations from the civilians they employ if they are counter to the stated organisational position or aspirations.

5.6.4 Evidence-based Decision Making

The analysis of documents demonstrated that, whilst the civil servants seem to request more evidence and information to support the organisation's decisions, their requests are sometimes disregarded. Civil servants' requests for evidence-based policy is a key feature of the documents that they write. One example of this is a request for the department responsible for recruiting F&C personnel to postpone a recruiting trip to one of the Caribbean islands as there was some speculation that the current levels of F&C were over 18% (the limit was 15%). The document suggested that the trip be postponed until there were sufficient data to make an informed decision as to whether there was a need to recruit further. Another document written by a civil servant highlighted to military decision makers in the personnel area, that there needed to be "a baseline of credible data on Foreign and Commonwealth personnel on which to operate over the next few years". This document was stressing the need for some F&C research to be done within the organisation.

An example of a senior person in the organisation not utilising evidence in decision making [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The document then continues to discuss that he was satisfied that he had promoted equality of opportunity within the Armed Forces by endorsing this decision to impose limits. This appears to be a contradiction, and the rationale for this statement and supporting evidence for how equality of opportunity was promoted is not presented or discussed further within the document.

5.7 Limitations of Document Analysis

Whilst there were some global themes that came out of the analysis of documents, there were also many questions that were left unanswered. This section outlines both the procedural and knowledge limitations of using documents as a method of enquiry.

5.7.1 Limitations of the Documents

The unanswered questions highlight the gaps between decision making and development of F&C policy within the Army. The Army appears to have invested significant corporate resources into trying to resolve the issue of making the Army more diverse, but has failed to do so. One document acknowledges “we continue to face challenges in recruiting officers from ethnic minority communities”. The documents reviewed for this project do not address the underlying issue of why there is a continued failure to meet government targets with respect to ethnic minority recruitment.

It is also unclear whether F&C recruiting started after the threat of notice from the EHRC. The documents that outlined the organisational justification for F&C recruiting cannot be sourced. It is unclear whether they do not exist or are inaccessible. The document discussing a recruiting trip to the Caribbean demonstrates that pausing to consider the benefits of routine activity (annual recruiting trips) is not regular practice within the Army. A review of this document appears to present a contradictory position in that a recruiting trip was planned during the time that a cap on the numbers of F&C personnel was being implemented (2008).

The documents reviewed also do not indicate why there are so few senior military personnel on task forces and groups dedicated to F&C personnel policy development. The most senior military personnel on decision making groups have been Lt Colonels. Within a headquarters environment, a Lt Colonel does not have the same decision making status as a Lt Colonel in the field Army. Within the Army Headquarters, a senior military officer at the rank of Colonel or Brigadier is required to action policy decisions.

5.7.2 Limitations of the Document Analysis: Process

For the purposes of this chapter, I thematically analysed the documents. I utilised a grounded theory approach to identify first order themes that arose from the text as I was interested in understanding the context and content involved in decision

making. It is acknowledged that a discourse analysis could have highlighted, in more detail, the issues of power and competing political agendas that were evident within the documents. Although this would have been useful, it was beyond the remit of this chapter, which was to highlight that within the organisation, there are policies which impede the full integration of F&C personnel within the wider Army. Their lived experience is impacted by organisational policies that have been developed within a context of fear, hierarchy and a need for organisational stability.

5.8 Summary

Documents have added context to the organisational decision making process and demonstrated that there are gaps in understanding the rationale behind organisational policies such as F&C recruiting and limits. They have highlighted that issues of identity and power are prominent features of the organisational culture. It has been identified through the analysis that some organisational anxiety about diversity and the pressure to meet government targets are dominant factors in decision making. The document analysis highlights that there is a difference in approach between military and civilian personnel working within the Army HQ in how they consider F&C issues. This difference in approach has the ability to influence how decisions and organisational policy are made and the effectiveness of any policy implementation.

In summary, the documents suggest that the recruitment of F&C personnel into the Army was a policy based on legal and organisational needs as opposed to a genuine desire to make the Army more diverse. This distinction is crucial for understanding the current organisational context within which F&C personnel in the Army live and work. The espoused political direction is to increase representation of ethnic minorities, yet there is an underlying 'fear' about 'aliens' and the non-British component of the Army. The documents indicate that the difficulty in recruiting British born ethnic minorities is being mitigated by using F&C personnel as a surrogate population. This helps to improve the ethnic minority recruitment targets. The documents reviewed highlight that there are competing agendas within the

organisation, with power and position being the key determinants of policy and its implementation.

Chapter 6: Living and Working in the Army: Findings from the focus groups and interviews with Participants

6.1 Introduction

This study had a dual purpose. It sought to investigate the working lives of Foreign and Commonwealth (F&C) serving personnel within the Army. Simultaneously, it sought to comment on and document the process and implications of conducting sensitive research in a large hierarchical organisation such as the Army (see chapter 4). The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings from the participants within this substantial qualitative piece of research.

In order to investigate the working lives of F&C personnel, interviews and focus groups with officers and soldiers were conducted. As stated in section 3.6.2.2, the Attride-Stirling model of thematic analysis was used to generate themes which were relevant to the working lives of F&C personnel. Due to the volume of data that were collected and of the themes that were generated as a result of the thematic analysis, only a selection of the global and organising themes are presented within this chapter. The rationale for the selection of themes for inclusion in this chapter was their organisational and strategic relevance to the overall research questions and the aims of the research.

This chapter will also provide a brief outline of the participants in the qualitative phase of the research in order to contextualise the findings of the focus groups. Because of the small numbers of officers in the semi-structured interview phase of the study, a summary of the group, rather than demographics will be presented, in order to protect their identities.

6.2 Demographics of Soldier Focus Group Participants

A total of 63 soldiers participated in the research. Forty were F&C soldiers and 23 were British. The age band with the largest number of participants was the 25-30 year old group which contained 43% of the participants. Figure 6.1 shows that the

50% of the respondents were single. Respondents who were married and living with their families accounted for 36% of the respondents, whilst 6% of respondents were married but were not living with their families.

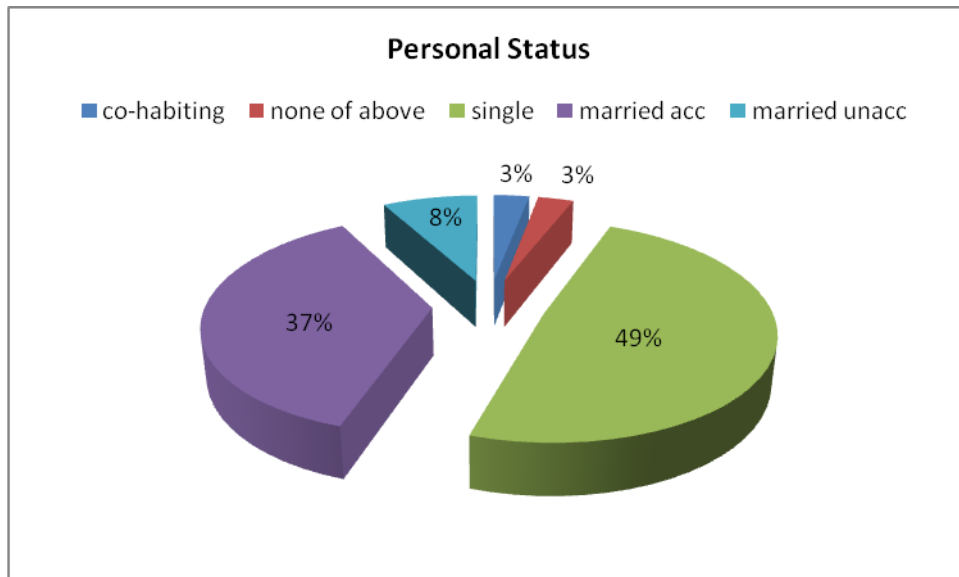


Figure 6.1: Personal status of soldier participants

Length of service for the F&C soldiers in the study ranged from less than two years to more than seven years, whilst 31% of British soldiers who participated in the study had been in the Army for less than three years. This indicated a wider range of experience amongst F&C participants in the study.

Participants were asked to identify the ethnic category to which they felt they belonged. This is illustrated in Figure 6.2. White participants made up one third of participants (21), whilst ethnic minority participants comprised 51% (35) and participants choosing the 'other' ethnic categorisation were 16% (9).

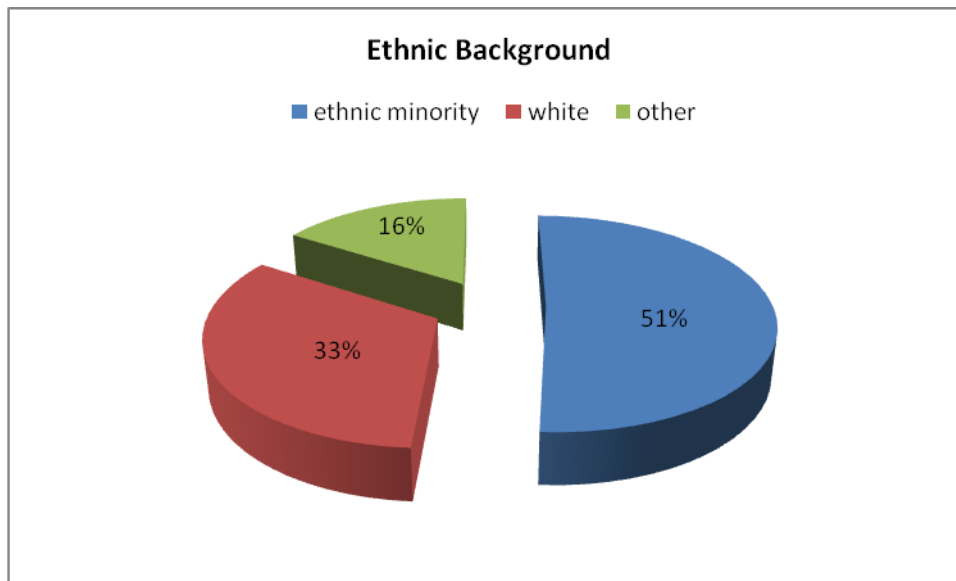


Figure 6.2: Ethnic background of soldier participants

6.2.1 Demographics of Officers

There were a total of 27 officers in the study. Twenty (75%) of those officers were within the Captain or Major rank. Nineteen (70%) officers were white and eight (30%) were ethnic minorities (see Table 3.2). The length of service ranged from 1 to 27 years. Most of the officers (18, 67%) had served between one to five years. Two ethnic minority officers had served in excess of 20 years. They were late commissioned officers. This means that they started their careers as soldiers but later in their career they were commissioned as officers due to their strong performance in the organisation.

6.3 Factors Influencing the Experience of Working Life in the Army: Global and Organising Themes

Braun and Clarke (2006) reiterate that thematic analysis involves searching across a data set to find repeated patterns of meaning, whereas the Attride-Stirling (2001) model provides a way of organising the themes in a way that can make sense to the reader. This section outlines the findings from the qualitative research as four global themes. These themes were formed as a result of identifying a relationship with the organising themes. There were originally five themes (power, organisational structure, background, identity and relationships) however, a final review of them indicated a substantial similarity between the theme of identity and background.

Themes were selected for inclusion based on their significance to the dual aims of the research. Using knowledge of the organisation and the research process, allowed me to give meanings to the themes. Although the themes presented below were common to both officers and soldiers, it is noteworthy that, due to their difference in rank and responsibility they were experienced differently according to the level of seniority of the participant. Where appropriate, quotes from participants are included to illustrate the theme.

6.3.1 Power

Power was one of the main themes identified within this research. It was articulated and understood by participants as the power of an individual to navigate their experience within the Army. They described different types of power that existed within the organisation; the power to action change, power to make decisions and influence the organisation and the power that others had over the participants or that they had over others (hierarchical power).

The findings highlight that the perceived ability to have agency over one's own destiny within the Army was influenced by self-confidence as well as cultural and organisational factors such as rank. Officers tended to understand that they had the ability to influence their career and working life. However, they did acknowledge the political and unspoken influences within the Army that affected their working life. Soldiers presented a mixed picture, with British-born soldiers also reporting that they had the power and ability to influence decision making with reference to their working life in the Army. F&C soldiers, on the other hand, tended to report the organisation as an instrument of dominance over which they had little control. Power manifested itself in several forms within the discussions. These are presented below.

6.3.1.1 Beliefs about the organisation

As discussed in section 6.3.1 above, power to control one's journey in the Army was a key theme. The perceptions of the organisation influenced how individuals reported experiencing it. A significant finding within this research was the difference

in perceptions of the organisation held by ethnic minority personnel and white personnel. Ethnic minority personnel (both British and F&C) believed that there were organisational structures which limited career progression and satisfaction. White personnel (both British and F&C) perceived the organisation as more inclusive and supportive than ethnic minority personnel. They did not perceive any organisational structures that prevented progression.

Amongst ethnic minority personnel, there was a difference between how British and F&C personnel reacted to and interpreted these organisational limitations. Ethnic minority F&C personnel appeared to feel powerless to influence any aspect of their working experience in the Army, whilst ethnic minority British personnel demonstrated an understanding of their ability to manipulate and influence the organisation.

“With an onset of new technology, guys can progress through the ranks. You are laughing, you are getting put on courses. But it’s up to you”. Ethnic minority British soldier.

“I don’t have control”. Ethnic minority F&C soldier

Ethnic minority F&C personnel held little belief that they were able to shape decisions and choices about their future. There was also a belief that they were unable to change (what was for many ethnic minority F&C personnel) a negative relationship with the Army. They reported that they lacked the power to deal with seniors who were able to influence their careers, or the power to advocate for better opportunities for themselves. Whilst these beliefs were not exclusive to this group, they were problematic amongst ethnic minority F&C soldiers due to the structural barriers within the Army that affected them specifically.

“They (Chain of Command) make the choice for you. You never want it to go this way. You should have more input.” Ethnic minority F&C soldier

Ethnic minority F&C soldiers expressed high levels of vulnerability within the organisation and high levels of helplessness. Ethnic minority British personnel recognised these perceptions, and recounted the intersectional effects of race and national status during the focus groups, but they did not hold those views.

“Some commonwealth guys get pushed back a bit” Ethnic minority British soldier

“With commonwealth [personnel] the accent is really thick and people talk about them behind their back” Ethnic minority British soldier

White soldiers who participated in the study believed that the organisational structures in place, such as the promotion system, worked to support their progression. They also perceived an inclusive organisational structure in which there was a sense of belonging and security. This allowed them to work within the confines of their rank to build and develop networks and expertise which enabled them to believe that they had some control and influence in how they experienced the organisation.

Officers were more likely than soldiers, to believe in their ability to influence their working lives in the Army.

“I think I’m in control of my destiny”. White British officer

“I’ve had some say...what you want to put in is what you’ll get out”. Ethnic minority British officer

There was a difference between how ethnic minority and white British officers perceived the organisation with respect to their career development. Ethnic minority British officers tended to report that their career development was a result of their hard work, proactive nature and the meritocracy of the Army as an organisation (which reinforces their perception of ability and effort). White British officers tended to report an implicit belief in the ability of the organisation to determine what was best for their careers. Their trust in the organisational structure was not mirrored by ethnic minority British officers. They reported that they did not receive patronage, mentorship or a significant amount of guidance in their careers. These were

perceived as structures that existed in the organisation, solely for the preserve of white officers.

The findings presented in this section are twofold; firstly, they demonstrate that ethnic minority F&C personnel occupy a multiply marginalised position in the organisation. Secondly, they lend credence to the existence of the psychological effects of double consciousness identified in section 2.8 (perceptions of increased helplessness and vulnerability) when occupying this space. In summary, beliefs about the organisation are influenced by race and the position held within the organisation.

6.3.1.2: Leadership

Within the context of this research, leadership was articulated by participants as both the immediate chain of command that has control or power over the unit within which they served, as well as the (policy) decision makers in the Army. Often within the research, participants would refer to ‘the leadership’ with reference to the body of senior leaders who create and implement policy at both a strategic and local level within the Army.

Leadership was identified as the manifestation of power in the Army and the vehicle with which power was exercised and demonstrated. An underlying theme reported by soldiers was the importance of visibility. Participants discussed that in order to have influence or power over one’s career and future within the Army, there was a requirement to be seen and liked by leaders. They identified that there was a need to be visible to them or be seen to be contributing to the life of the unit – regardless of whether this was only a perception. Soldiers reported a more frustrated relationship with their immediate leadership and “the leadership” in the Army in general than did officers. Soldiers often took the view that their leaders did not show an example that could be followed and saw the necessity to be part of the leadership’s gaze as a negative issue. Leaders were implicated by ethnic minority and white British soldiers as having power to stop courses if they did not see the relevance to the day job. These soldiers also reported that if they were liked they

were put on courses that would develop their career. Conversely, if they were unknown or not liked by their unit's leadership, they were often taken off courses in order to complete work that was identified as priority within the unit. Ethnic minority F&C soldiers and white British soldiers reported this as a negative issue.

White British officers reported frustration with leadership in relation to planning of organisational life and the allocation of resources. They felt that this limited the amount of positional power they had in the eyes of their soldiers. However, they did not implicate leadership negatively in relation to their enjoyment of Army life and their career. They indicated that having a relationship with leaders was not only desirable but an essential part of Army life.

Soldiers reported that leadership by example, was lacking in the Army. There were reports that their immediate leadership was not qualified to tackle diversity issues. Both British and F&C soldiers reported that they did not feel confident reporting to their immediate leaders, bad or unfair treatment related to diversity. Ethnic minority F&C soldiers reported that the process was such that any complaints had to go through the chain of command. They highlighted that the chain of command would either sweep issues under the carpet, or discourage a complaint by highlighting the difficulties and implications of taking a complaint through to the complaints commissioner, for example. White British soldiers felt that the organisation was under pressure to investigate all diversity complaints, irrespective of whether or not they were perceived to be genuine.

"People are struggling; I think people feel that, you know, common sense should prevail. It is a situation where they think, well it's easier not to deal with the issues because the organisation doesn't really support me. They're going to fight for the Commonwealth soldier and I'm going to be the one who's left, because no-one else wants to touch it. I'm the one who's left..." White British soldier

There was a perception by F&C and British ethnic minority soldiers that their immediate leadership was not qualified and skilled enough to deal with diversity issues within the units.

“Who have you got in the unit (to deal with diversity?) These old crusties that don’t have no people skills.” Ethnic minority British soldier.

As an example, I was shown a text message that a soldier had allegedly received from his chain of command about attending the focus group. It was dismissive of the research and suggested that the soldier not cooperate. Another example was another immediate leader telling his soldiers that the purpose of this research was to find out if they were racists. This leader reported to me that he advised them that if they were racists, to tell me so and why. He reassured them that there would be no consequences²⁰.

Ethnic minority British and F&C soldiers reported that the immediate leadership set the tone for race relations in the unit. A theme for all soldiers was that the immediate chain of command perpetuated a personal view of an individual by advising others within the unit not to interact with an individual who was believed to be a troublemaker or had made a complaint against the leadership. They reported that there were implicit consequences for associating with individuals who had made complaints.

“[You are] Tarred with the same brush. The lads can’t talk to him”. Ethnic minority F&C soldier

“You just don’t want to get in trouble...stay away” White British soldier

Whilst all groups in the study reported slightly different perceptions of their leaders’ ability to manage diversity, what was clear was the overarching perception that leaders were not equipped to deal effectively with diversity issues within the units.

²⁰ I was able to brief the soldiers about the true reasons for the research and re-issued the participant information sheet and consent form in the standard briefing which was done before every focus group and interview.

6.3.1.3 Racism

Hoyt (2012) has identified racism as a particular form of prejudice which is defined by preconceived erroneous beliefs about race and members of racial groups. He highlights an erroneous belief to be one that distinguishes members of a purported race to possess characteristics, abilities or special qualities that make it superior or inferior to another. This definition of racism, which excludes the issue of power, is one that will be used to describe what respondents have said about race in the Army. However, it is acknowledged that within the racism discourse, the power to preserve the advantages of the dominant social identity group is a key feature.

All soldiers identified that racism within the Army was present. Both ethnic minority British officers and F&C officers also reported that racism was both prevalent and perpetrated within the British Army. White British officers did not raise racism as an issue. However, there were different opinions from each group about how racism was displayed and its impact on the various ethnic groups in the Army. Ethnic minority F&C soldiers however, acknowledged that over time they had observed an improvement in race relations within the Army.

“Things are definitely getting better since I joined. It’s been about 7 years though”.

Ethnic minority F&C soldier

“You can see that they are trying”. Ethnic minority F&C soldier

White British and F&C soldiers felt that ethnic minority F&C soldiers were playing both the ‘race card’ and ‘the system’ when they challenged duties or had periods of illness. White British soldiers felt that ethnic minority F&C soldiers were the perpetrators of racism and that race was used as a tool to enable them (ethnic minority F&C soldiers) to circumvent rules and responsibilities. White soldiers also felt that the organisation was unsupportive of the immediate chain of command when having to deal with difficult issues surrounding F&C soldiers.

“Someone pulls the race card. It happens a lot. We can’t have a problem with them now”. White F&C soldier

“People look at racism in the Army and that it’s us directing it at the black guys...and they don’t realize that’s them actually being racist towards me. People think the system’s just a one way thing”. White British soldier

“The Caribbean lads and the Africans will actually stand there and argue the case ...I’m telling you to do your job...and that’s when they’ll go to Welfare, they’ll go to the Padre.” White British soldier

British ethnic minority soldiers also identified that there was racism in the Army; however, they felt it was not directed at them. They reported that ethnic minority F&C soldiers experienced this more.

“If you’re from different countries like a Commonwealth country, you don’t get the same opportunities – like adventure training”. Ethnic minority British soldier

White officers within the study were generally dismissive of racism and its existence in the Army. More senior white officers reported that values and standards in the Army existed to root out racism and prejudice and explained that racist behaviour was dealt with quickly. Conversely, ethnic minority officers recounted personal experiences of racist behaviour which ranged from personal beatings by white peers to being passed over for promotion despite being qualified. One of the themes for ethnic minority officers when discussing their career progression was the role that racism played in that journey.

Racism, as prejudice and differential treatment of groups because of race, was identified as existing in the Army. However, different groups within the study had different perceptions of how this was enacted within the Army and its resultant effects.

6.3.2 Organisational Structure

The hierarchical nature of the Army influences the level of satisfaction that one has with one's career in the Army. It also offers a clear pathway in which to progress within the Army. In this research, officers were generally satisfied with the structure of the organisation and their place within it, whilst soldiers were not. This section outlines the role of the organisational structure and policies which affect the careers of respondents.

6.3.2.1 Career Development and Satisfaction

Officers reported being satisfied and content with the organisational structure that is in place to develop their careers. However, there were both national and ethnic differences expressed in how officers experienced their careers and the structures that were in place to support career development. Ethnic minority officers reported that they lacked the necessary patronage which would enhance their career development. They reported having to work very hard to rise up the ranks.

"If you want to progress in your career you have to have the right background. You do find out informally, but it's sometimes too late. It's about patronage; someone who will help you and take you under their wing and take you forward. But I don't remind you [the Chain of Command] of anyone so that hasn't happened." Ethnic minority British officer.

White F&C officers also felt that the Army was meritocratic but felt that their background and personal circumstances contributed to their successful careers in the Army. However, most officers reported that the career development plan was fair and it was largely accepted as a system that worked without challenge.

Soldiers tended to be less happy about their career development options. They reported, more so than officers, the influence that personal relationships, leadership and identity had on their career prospects. Ethnic minority F&C soldiers reported difficulty in understanding why there were limitations to their career options. They reported that their expectations were not managed when they joined the Army.

“When I went for recruitment having produced my certificates...the jobs that I was given were infantry, so I chose from among a list of those. Then I thought there will be channels and opportunities available [to change] ...but these have not been forthcoming two years down the line.” Ethnic minority F&C soldier

One participant recounted a friend being told that he could join the Army to be a chef, however, in actuality he was placed in an infantry battalion. Other similar themes were recounted about being advised to sign up for certain roles with the promise of being able to move later on, when in reality there was never an opportunity for movement to the desired role.

“Perhaps my interest was to get in, see the opportunities that are in there and see what line is best suited for me. The other day I was talking to the chain of command, the only option that was available from the infantry was to be a clerk. That still doesn’t offer the opportunity for my qualifications at all. So... my intention to stay for 12 years which I had when I joined the Army has been crushed completely. I will stay for the minimum possible”. Ethnic minority F&C soldier

Furthermore, F&C soldiers mentioned poor career advice and issues with their qualifications (not being recognised in the UK). They tended to perceive education as important for upward movement in the organisation, and upward social mobility in life generally, whereas British soldiers (regardless of ethnicity) did not discuss education and qualifications as a means of progressing in the Army. However, British officers all highlighted the importance of education in establishing an officer’s career.

F&C soldiers discussed the possibility that other personal factors were influential in the decision making process regarding career development opportunities and type of end of year report that they received. White British and F&C soldiers and British ethnic minority soldiers identified that there was a series of manoeuvres that were necessary to attain a certain position within the Army. They acknowledged that key

strategic appointments and associations with decision makers would influence one's career. British soldiers appeared to have a more proactive approach to building a career, referring to motivation and personal choice as drivers for a satisfying career.

"As long as you can front the right people, in the right time, you can achieve it. If you don't fight for what you want, you won't get it. It's a game of poker". Ethnic minority British soldier

"I got promoted very quickly. I've had some really good seniors. If I wanted to go on a course, I've found out for myself really...you have to be proactive" Ethnic minority British soldier.

The findings illustrate that F&C soldiers tended to report problems with a lack of guidance and direction in relation to their career development.

"[I] Don't feel like they care about your career." Ethnic minority F&C soldier

"Ok [you're not going to be promoted] so just try to relax and wait it out, just follow the system". Ethnic minority F&C soldier

"The thing is with courses, as well, they normally tell you when they've got military courses running, but when we've got civilian courses in my battalion we never get told when there are civilian courses about, if it's just not benefiting the military we don't find out anything about it." Ethnic minority F&C soldier

Several ethnic minority F&C soldiers reported that they were unable to choose which career stream that they went into (though this was the case for all F&C personnel). Additionally, on probing this sentiment within several groups, the respondents highlighted that there were structural barriers that the Army put in place on their arrival into the UK. Respondents discussed the limited choices available for F&C personnel. The findings suggest that ethnic minority F&C soldiers often expected their careers to be managed and their psychological contract with the organisation

to be firmly in place. However, in general, F&C soldiers tended to be less satisfied and reported less control over their career than British soldiers.

6.3.2.2 Diversity Policies

Participants in the study discussed the importance of paying attention to diversity policies within the organisation. Participants highlighted that there appeared to be a lack of consistency in the application of diversity policies within the organisation. Officers pointed to the existence of policies as evidence that the Army was a meritocracy. However, soldiers identified that there was evidence that diversity was not taken seriously and/or was flouted knowingly. They also indicated that there appeared to be some apathy when dealing with diversity issues. Incidents of turning a blind eye to racial incidents and divisions between ethnic groups within a unit were recounted. The existence of policies to restrict movement and involvement in certain trades, or the recruitment of individuals into certain cap badges because of their background were cited as overt organisational structures which impacted the working lives of F&C personnel.

All F&C soldiers identified that they were not able to move as freely as they wished within the organisation. They felt that this policy restricting their movement was not discussed when they joined the Army and that, although this was a policy they could do nothing about, it was a way to target them specifically and deliberately keep them from progressing in the organisation.

“Sometimes you’re worse off than when you joined the Army because you’re no better off and you wonder what all this was for”. White F&C soldier

Officers referred to the existence of diversity policies to highlight the transparency and fairness of organisational culture within the British Army.

“It’s an open system. You have to follow it and there are things in place that make it the same for everyone”. White British officer

However, the soldiers frequently had a different view of these policies and their effectiveness. Both UK and F&C soldiers were cynical of the mandated diversity training (MATT 6) provided by the Army and its ability to reduce the incidence of prejudice within the organisation.

A recurring theme from F&C soldiers was the inability of the Army to meet their specific cultural needs within existing policies and practices. This was also recognised by ethnic minority British soldiers. An example that was cited was that of welfare provision for F&C personnel.

“When you need something from them, you go there, they’re kind of helpless...they need more training for welfare...” Ethnic minority British soldier

As highlighted in section 6.3.1.2 the complaints process is one which requires the complainant to interact with the chain of command. The complaint goes to the complaints commissioner and then it is sent back down to the unit for investigation within a certain timeframe. Soldiers cited this as a policy that did not work but which was inextricably linked with leadership. They suggested that going through the chain of command was not appropriate when, most of the time, the problem was with someone in the command chain. They also highlighted that the chain of command could influence the outcome of the complaint. This was perceived as a negative thing.

“If you have a problem with someone, you go to them and say ‘what’s up’ and you deal with it. Now you have to go through your chain of command and fill in forms and bollocks” White British soldier

“As a company you have to know your blokes. I said ‘good morning sir’ and he looked at me like he didn’t know me. These are the same people you have to go to if you have a problem. You’re supposed to go and talk to them. You can’t... We need more experienced [leaders], good sound people. With people skills.” Ethnic minority British soldier

“There was bullying and lots of other dodgy stuff. Very subtle. [I] reported it, but no one did anything” Ethnic minority British soldier

The diversity policies affecting personnel in the Army were interpreted and understood differently depending on rank and nationality.

6.3.3 Background

Background was identified as an issue that impacted the working life of those in the Army. There was a range of views regarding the importance of background. In the context of this research, background was identified as where an individual came from, their upbringing, their educational achievement and their social class. White soldiers felt that a person’s background did not influence their experience in the Army because the Army as an organisation was an equaliser. They indicated that, with the downturn in the economy, background mattered less as a wider range of people were joining the Army. White officers felt that one’s background was of significance if it were criminal or not congruent with the values and standards of the Army. Ethnic minority (British and F&C) soldiers and officers related the implications of background to working and living in the Army and felt that it was relevant to their success in the Army.

There was a difference in how soldiers and officers believed that background was relevant. There was a consensus amongst all officers that background influenced the type of cap badges that one would select. Additionally, they identified that background prepared one for a career in the Army. White British officers identified associations with certain schools and the links that their families had to the Army. This was in contrast to the responses that they gave when asked directly if they felt that background was important in a having a successful career in the Army, where they felt it was unimportant. It is possible that these officers do not acknowledge the complexity of background and the role that education and privilege play in shaping one’s life circumstances and opportunities.

F&C officers (both ethnic minority and white) were mindful of how their background, education, upbringing and experiences of being a 'foreigner' would impact on their careers and how others in the organisation looked at them – with a view for advancement.

"I'm wondering about how being an F&C still affects me. I am always thinking about it. You don't want to". Ethnic minority F&C officer

All soldiers considered that an individual's background (i.e. education, age, culture, upbringing, values) was relevant to working and living in the British Army. However, there were differences between British and F&C soldiers in terms of how they expressed this. F&C personnel were clearer and more explicit about it compared with British soldiers who were less forthright. Additionally, all soldiers said they needed to change the way they behave to fit in with the Army.

"To do well you have to do that...to get noticed...play the game, it's even at higher ranks. You have to be a master of it" White British soldier

"I think the Army is very much one of those organisations where you know the job before you start it and you know the culture and the kind of things that are expected before you start so you either adapt your behaviour or as such change your behaviour to suit that." White British soldier

Officers were very selective when talking about the importance that background and culture played in their career development and the choices that were open to them in the Army. White F&C officers discussed the importance of values and upbringing as an aspect of background that contributed to their success and understanding of the Army.

"My family was British Colonial; I've served along people with different cultures, backgrounds, religions... There seems to be decay in British Culture...the norms were different to me and I expected to have to adapt to those. The people who realise that

[they need to adapt if their background doesn't fit] *have less of a problem*". White F&C officer

"There are some certain cultures like my own (white South African) that make easy transition into the Army society". White F&C officer

Ethnic minority officers from the UK and from F&C countries identified (their) background and culture as something that they had to work against in the Army. These respondents generally associated their backgrounds and cultures as being inherently different from that required by the Army, but discussed actively working hard to try to fit in:

"I had my identity, if I didn't fit the Army way, I'd toe the line. As a recruit, taking off the hats... little things like that. Don't speak with an accent...I know that I have changed. The system is bigger than one bloke. It's been going on for 100 years."

Ethnic minority British officer

Ethnic minority officers tended to acknowledge, more readily than white officers, that there was an implicit requirement by the Army to change the way an individual behaved and who they socialised with in order to 'get on'. Most of the ethnic minority officers acknowledged that having the right background in the Army did influence career progression.

"A lot of these regiments have ties with Eton and other public schools. You'll fight better and easier with people you know, rather than a bunch of mish mash....I have the public school background, it transcends the African background." Ethnic minority British officer

6.3.3.1 Ethnic and National Culture

Respondents identified that one's background encompasses ethnic and national culture. The culture of one's country of origin was identified as a playing a critical role in how working life in the Army was perceived.

White F&C soldiers and officers tended to identify with British Culture.

“Pretty much the same. No cultural differences – Zimbabwe a former colony, culture was the same”. White F&C soldier

“South Africans [have] the same culture” White F&C officer

White F&C officers also identified with some elements of British culture, including attending public school back in their home country. They felt that this allowed them an opportunity to understand British culture. There was an acknowledgement that attitudes to race were different between white F&C officers and white British officers. For example, white F&C officers, because of their similarity in culture, and values, identified more closely with ethnic minority soldiers from their country than white British officers did with ethnic minority British soldiers.

“In some ways there were people from Africa that I had more in common with than the public school boys here”. White F&C officer

White F&C officers felt that cultural background and behaviour were linked. There was the view that behaviour could be modified according to the environment which one was in.

“When in Rome, behave like the locals. When in Zimbabwe I behave like Zimbabweans when I’m in England, I behave like English...It’s down to an individual”.

White F&C officer

Participants from F&C countries discussed the importance of their value system, which they identified as part of their national culture, and their desire to have this recognised by their leaders. However, as a group, F&C soldiers discussed the consumption of alcohol by British personnel as a problem and highlighted that this was one of the most important methods of forming bonds and being made aware of what was happening in a unit. They felt that they were not a part of this in-group as

they did not drink alcohol. White British personnel, as a group, also identified this was a problem. They reported that F&C soldiers, in particular, were not participating in the life of the unit and the regiment as they did not choose to socialise in the mess or at social functions outside of work. Ethnic minority British personnel demonstrated an ability to provide an insight into the difference in attitude toward socialising around alcohol between British and F&C personnel. They acknowledged the cultural and religious restrictions that some F&C personnel experienced and highlighted the tensions between these restrictions and the desire by white British personnel for them (F&C) to participate fully in the social life of the organisation.

“A lot of the culture revolves around drinking. It’s not fair to them” Ethnic minority British soldier

The findings showed that all soldiers felt that the ‘other’ groups did not understand their national culture and ways of living and working. F&C soldiers did not feel that white British soldiers understood their ways of living and working. This was also true for white British soldiers. Moreover, both groups had different ideas on how to reconcile this difference in understanding.

British ethnic minority soldiers had a view about the issue of national culture being a moderator in the relationships between F&C and British personnel. British ethnic minorities tended to agree that F&C soldiers did not understand British culture. They added that they felt ‘sorry’ for the F&C ethnic minority soldiers and tended to view the issue of national culture and identity as a challenge that was being faced only by F&C personnel.

“F&C soldiers, they don’t understand, they try to adapt to it [but] works both ways”.

Ethnic minority British soldier

“He’s the only F&C in the kitchen, gets asked to do all the extra work. If he tries to say he is busy, he gets bollocks. He is an easy target and his original work suffers. That affects the way you are seen”. Ethnic minority British soldier

White British soldiers tended to take the view that F&C personnel did not understand British culture. This was particularly so in relation to a perceived British work ethic. White British soldiers discussed a perceived unwillingness on the part of F&C personnel to be flexible and work as team players with regard to getting a job done.

"They are good guys but it only takes one of them to be lazy." White British soldier

"I don't think they understand the British work ethos of, you know, get it done, you know, once it's done it's done sort of thing, I think, you know, they question everything, you know, I don't know if it's the way it is in their background" White British soldier

White British officers who were longer in service identified that an appreciation of culture was an abstract and almost irrelevant point as there was a central unifying culture that all personnel needed to understand and adopt in order to be successful in the Army.

"I don't think F&C necessarily need to understand our British Culture because I think when everybody enters into the Army...the Army's got its own culture" White British officer

"The Army itself has its own background and culture so everybody enjoys that..."
White British officer

White officers who were in service for a shorter period of time and who managed F&C personnel directly, identified that there were differences within the F&C cultures and highlighted that there were differences in how readily these cultures were able to understand and adapt to British culture and military discipline. However this was a contested idea amongst the younger white officers as it was felt that white British soldiers also struggled to understand the military culture.

“I would say...particularly, Caribbean soldiers that I have experience of can have a more laid back approach to things and don’t necessarily grasp the command and discipline and the military way of life and that can be quite a challenge for some of them to get to grips with”. White British officer

“They’ve got better things to do, they really can’t be asked. They’re too young, all they think about is just having fun, the last thing you want to be learning is people’s cultures.” White British officer

In summary, the importance of background was appraised differently depending on rank and nationality. Cultural background and values were seen as important factors by all F&C personnel regardless of rank or ethnicity, in progressing an Army career. However, British officers felt that only educational background was relevant to enjoying a successful Army career. Ethnic background was implicated by ethnic minority personnel of all ranks and nationalities (ethnic minority F&C officer and soldiers and ethnic minority British officers and soldiers) in determining the treatment received and potential opportunities for progression within the Army. However, there was general agreement that one’s background played an important role in understanding and working well within the British Army.

6.3.4 Relationships

Within this research, participants were asked about their personal relationships with the chain of command and their peers. All soldiers reported a better relationship with peers compared to the chain of command. However, there were some variations between groups. White British soldiers and officers saw relationship building as opportunity to make friends for life and develop strong bonds.

“If you speak to anyone who’s out of the Army, they miss the blokes they work with.”
White British soldier

“As a general rule that’s [personal relationships] probably one of the best things about this career, you know, you do tend to get a good bunch of people, a good team that you can have a laugh with”. White British officer

British ethnic minority and F&C soldiers viewed their interactions as more practical and professional:

“Well, my particular guys I work with are quite alright lads, I’ll go anywhere with them, I’ll do anything with them, but when it comes to the weekend everyone goes their separate ways” Ethnic minority F&C soldier

When asked about the relationship between F&C and British soldiers both F&C and British personnel reported the relationship between the two groups was neutral. However, on probing the participants, the findings suggest that each group holds a view of the other group which influenced the perception of a ‘neutral’ relationship. F&C soldiers discussed the difficulty they thought British soldiers had in separating social and working life, whilst British soldiers discussed the difficulties associated with the limited group interaction by ethnic minority F&C soldiers.

“The big thing is understanding the English language, it’s a big, a massive thing...”
Ethnic minority F&C soldier.

*“In the cookhouse, Fijians will sit together, Africans will sit together, one, because it’s easier talking to each other, two, they’ve got a lot more in common, I mean I can’t sit there and *** with some Fijians.”* White British soldier

White British soldiers discussed the transactional relationship that they felt ethnic minority F&C soldiers had with the Army.

“...especially the Commonwealth guys, if you ask them to do something, they want something in return for it, like if they had to work tonight, they want the morning off.” White British soldier.

Being able to develop personal relationships outside of one’s ethnic and national group was discussed by British soldiers and officers, as being crucial to success in the Army.

“A guy’s on the course at the minute and he’s obviously F&C and he’s one of the best guys...He’ll come to the white people’s barbeques, he’ll hang around with the white guys. He also hangs around with his own guys, you know. We had a barbeque the other week and he virtually came down and then left, you know, he didn’t drink, had a good chat, he made the effort to socialise, you know, it goes a long way”. White British soldier.

“The CO I’d probably met four times while we’re boxing, but he was quite happy to write a whole paragraph on how he knew me in my career and what kind of person he thought I was and in my eyes that’s crap, that guy’s met me four times”. White British soldier

“If you don’t socialise with them you’re not part of the clique. No matter how professional you are and the hard work you put in, if you don’t socialise with your seniors, you don’t get picked up [for promotion]”. Ethnic minority British soldier

“If you don’t work closely with your hierarchies, you’re just nobody”. Ethnic minority British soldier.

In summary, relationships with peers were identified as being more important and held more value for white personnel than ethnic minority personnel. White personnel felt that positive relationship development was part of the organisational culture, whereas ethnic minority personnel described forming relationships as a requirement to perform the job. The findings suggest that both F&C and British soldiers were sceptical about each other’s motivations. This has implications for true intergroup interaction.

6.4 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to present the findings of the focus groups and interviews. A selection of the key themes that related to the aims of the research was presented in this chapter. The findings of the study demonstrated that power,

the organisational structure, personal relationships and the individual's background all influenced the working lives of F&C soldiers in the Army. Whilst these were recurrent themes for participants, they were experienced differently by officers and soldiers as a result of the hierarchical nature of the Army. There was a difference in how British and F&C personnel experienced similar issues. There was also an interaction between ethnicity and national status with regard to how these themes were experienced. The implications of these findings are presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 7: Discussion of Findings

7.1 Introduction

The discussion of findings within this chapter has two foci. The first focus is an evaluation of the findings in relation to the theoretical framework and the associated limitations. The second is an assessment of the constraints on the research process on the findings. Foreign and Commonwealth (F&C) personnel were not previously studied and the findings indicate that the previous anecdotal generalisations made within the organisation about what it is like to serve in the British Army (it is an honour, personnel are proud and share the values of the organisation) cannot be applied to this group. This is due to the diversity of their backgrounds and the structures put in place by the Army to manage their experience. My experience of the research process highlights the challenges associated with collecting robust data within a military organisation. Whilst the findings of the qualitative data are not surprising, and largely consistent with the theories of social identity and double consciousness, the relationship between the research process and the findings are worthy of comment and discussion.

7.2 Review of the Findings

This research utilised three main sources of data to explore what it is like for F&C personnel to work in the British Army. This section will briefly summarise the main findings in order to discuss the composite picture of Army life that emerged from the data. The focus group research showed that there were different experiences of the Army for F&C and British personnel. However, within the F&C cohort, ethnic minority F&C personnel had a different experience to white F&C personnel with ethnic minorities being more dissatisfied with organisational life. Soldiers' experiences were also more difficult than officers'. The review of the documents highlighted the decision making and lack of evidence based policies which contributed to these experiences.

7.2.1 Overview of Document Findings

A review of 16 documents that dealt with F&C policy highlighted the existence of hierarchical organisational structures which are firmly in place to influence decision making with respect to F&C personnel. Examples of these structures were the junior position of the decision makers, the lack of autonomy of focussed task groups, ministerial discretion and recruitment policies. The documents revealed that preservation of organisational identity is a paramount concern for the Army. The documents discussed the need for the Army to retain British culture and to be seen as being predominantly British. The need for the Army to retain positional power over F&C personnel is evident in the documents. The introduction of limits to the types of jobs F&C personnel are allowed to do and the units that they could join showed that the organisation appears to have concerns over national security and identity. In the documents, the organisation used the need for team cohesion to justify its decision to limit the F&C experience. In the documents reviewed, civil servants tended to be more cautious about decision making and wanted to ensure that decisions were made based on observable evidence. The documents written by military personnel, appeared to have limited empirical evidence to support assertions and decisions made. The document analysis process also highlighted that the Army faces significant difficulty in recruiting British-born ethnic minorities. One possible deduction from this is that F&C personnel are being used as a surrogate population to assist in achieving government targets for increasing ethnic diversity in the Army.

7.2.2 Different Perspectives on Army Life: An Overview of Focus Groups and Interview Findings

Focus groups and interviews were conducted with F&C ethnic minority personnel, F&C white personnel, British ethnic minority personnel and British white personnel. The data from the focus groups and interviews demonstrated that the working life of F&C personnel within the Army is a complex one, and that it is different to their British peers. In particular, ethnic minority F&C soldiers reported having the most difficult experience of the Army. There are several factors that affect their experience of the Army. These were identified through the themes which emerged

from the qualitative data analysis. The theme of power, specifically the effect that perception of the organisation has on the experience of life in the Army, was significant and pervasive. Those groups with less power in the organisation had more negative perceptions. This theme framed the experience of working life for personnel in the Army. For F&C personnel, their ethnicity and national status determined how they perceived power, agency and the ability to navigate their working life. The difference in perception of the Army between British and F&C personnel was accentuated by race. Ethnic minority F&C personnel generally held the view that the organisation had a duty to help and direct them into their career; however, this was not their actual experience. They expected the organisation to be more paternalistic toward them than it was. The effect of this gap between expectations and their actual circumstances is consistent with Lyubansky and Eidelson's (2005) hypothesis that experiencing double consciousness will affect certain belief domains. They argue that these beliefs ultimately affect the willingness of group members to take action on behalf of the group (section 2.8). Therefore, the finding that ethnic minority F&C soldiers in particular, perceived that they had no control or power to influence their career, would appear to have its basis in the experience of double consciousness. This is as a result of occupying a doubly disadvantaged position within a predominantly white organisation. This position comes with an understanding that there are different standards, expectations and opportunities based on their status within the organisation.

The findings lend partial support to Lyubansky and Eidelson's hypothesis that individuals who experience double consciousness as members of racial minorities would report stronger beliefs about their racial group than their national group in regard to belief domains such as injustice, distrust and helplessness. The structure of the focus groups, according to race and nationality, provided a clear opportunity to categorise the opinions of participants and highlight which group membership was more salient. A consistent perception in white focus groups that the organisational structure was set up to enable a successful career and positive experience, suggests a belief that is specific to white participants. Similarly, the findings amongst British and F&C ethnic minorities that there is a gap between the implicit aims of the

organisation to manage and develop careers positively and their experiences of the organisation, indicates that this experience of the organisation is specific to ethnic minorities. However, the negative perceptions of the organisation and theme of helplessness were specific to the ethnic minority F&C group of soldiers.

Whilst these findings suggest that a perception of helplessness and injustice may be influencing ethnic minority F&C soldiers' poor experience of the organisation, the findings of the document analysis indicate that this belief can be supported (section 5.6). The documents identified that there are indeed organisational structures, practices, policies and norms which restrict the ability of the F&C soldier to become upwardly mobile in the organisation and which limit the full integration of F&C personnel, generally, within the Army. However, this particular perception of helplessness was not articulated by white F&C soldiers and therefore suggests that race influences the lived experience of this organisation.

The findings identified that leaders had the potential to influence the frequency and type of interaction between F&C and British soldiers. All soldiers felt that their leaders could do more to demonstrate inclusivity and set a better tone for intergroup relations within their units. F&C soldiers and white British soldiers also felt that their leaders could do more to increase confidence in the complaints reporting system. Particularly, there was a perception by white soldiers (both F&C and British) that leaders were powerless to act against what they saw as spurious equality and diversity complaints by ethnic minority F&C personnel.

The importance of relationship building among seniors, peers and subordinates was a key finding within this research for the majority of white participants but not for ethnic minority participants. For white personnel, relationship building amongst peers was crucial to a positive experience of the Army. British and F&C ethnic minority soldiers acknowledged that being involved in the life of the unit beyond working hours was part of Army life but they did not value this aspect of Army life as much as their white counterparts. Their white British counterparts identified that forming close relationships was a part of Army life and culture. They felt that in order

to build these relationships it was necessary to participate in after-hours Army life. Officers shared a similar view but ethnic minority British and F&C officers acknowledged some challenges with this and the need to transform behaviours and personal style to 'fit in'.

Race relations within the Army were described as complex. Ethnic minority British and ethnic minority F&C soldiers had a differing perception of race relations in the Army than white British soldiers. Ethnic minority F&C soldiers highlighted the impact that being from an ethnic minority group had on how they were viewed by their peers and superiors. They also felt that the organisation could do more to support and encourage ethnic differences in the way that Army life was lived. Ethnic minority F&C soldiers felt that they were often the targets of racist behaviour by white British soldiers and officers, whilst British ethnic minority soldiers discussed racism and prejudice as it affected ethnic minority F&C soldiers, not themselves. Ethnic minority British soldiers in this study did not feel that racism impacted their working life directly but they understood how it affected their ethnic minority F&C colleagues.

British and F&C ethnic minority officers also discussed the impact of racism on their working life. For these officers, racism was complex and subtle and they reported being hyper-vigilant to it. Whilst ethnic minority British personnel (soldiers and officers) were able to acknowledge issues of racism and difficult race relations, it appears that they were better equipped to deal with it than their ethnic minority F&C counterparts. The influence of ethnicity and background on one's career was not discussed by white officers.

In summary, different groups experience the Army differently with race being an important moderator in that experience. White personnel experience the organisation differently to ethnic minority personnel. For white personnel there is less of a compromise to make in terms of trying to fit-in and understand the organisational culture. However national status (being F&C) also interacts with race to produce an experience of the organisation which is uniquely different for ethnic minority F&C personnel. They appear to have the worst experience of the

organisation, reporting poor career satisfaction, low organisational commitment and a lack of person-organisation fit. A limitation of this research is that it did not explore in depth, the reasons behind these experiences specifically.

These findings have clear implications for team cohesion and how the organisation works. The 'train as you fight' ethos is in place to develop strong teams, however ethnic minority F&C soldiers in particular, do not want to be part of the team after hours. They want to train, get qualified and fight whilst having an equal opportunity for success in the organisation as their white peers. They report that achieving this is a problem. True integration of the soldier cohort may never be achieved because of the different experiences that soldiers have in the Army. The policies in place to limit the F&C experience are also at odds with true integration according to skill and ability. Therefore the organisation is also encouraging a superficial integration process where individuals from foreign countries can go where they are told, rather than where they are best suited and are likely to meet and integrate with like-minded individuals. At present, the organisational policies and structures in place may be contributing to the lack of integration and also to the polarisation of ethnic minority F&C and white British soldiers.

7.3 Implications of the findings for the Research Questions, Aims and Objectives

This section explores the findings as they relate to the research questions and objectives. One aim of this research was to understand the gap between an F&C soldier's social identity and his or her organisational identity. It was theorised that the organisation produced a difference in identity by having practices and policies which reinforced and drew attention to different groups of soldiers. A review of the documents (see section 5.1) highlighted how some organisational practices such as the limitation of movement into certain trades, the cap in numbers of preferred F&C personnel, the security checks and the general attitude towards F&C soldiers in the Army, tended to reinforce the F&C soldiers' perspective that there were differences in personal and organisational values. This appeared to influence their view of the organisation. A fundamental premise of social identity theory is that individuals need to belong and to identify with a social group for the affective component to be the

most important and enduring. Thus, if F&C soldiers as a group do not feel that they belong to the British Army; one likely result would be little connection with the espoused and implicit values of the organisation. This could provide an explanation for the reason that closeness and bonding are not relevant to F&C soldiers who are vastly outnumbered in the British Army.

7.3.1: RQ 1: “How do Foreign and Commonwealth Serving Personnel Access and Engage with Organisational Systems and Processes within the Army as Compared to Other Groups?”

This research question sought to understand how F&C personnel engaged with the organisation, and was answered primarily through the qualitative phase of the research. The findings suggest that engagement from F&C soldiers generally tends to be passive. F&C soldiers seem to have the expectation of being passive recipients of career-developing knowledge and strategies. Appreciation of the political dynamics within the organisation and an understanding of the importance of building and sustaining relationships within their units and the wider Army also seemed to be limited. Ethnic minority F&C soldiers were particularly reticent about engaging with organisational practices, such as socialising with others in the mess accommodation, and participating in extracurricular activities, such as sport, within Army. This was viewed quite negatively by white British soldiers who felt that it created a divisive ‘us and them’ environment. However, F&C soldiers felt that there was too much emphasis on their integrating with the British element of the Army and not enough on the British element of the Army understanding their background, culture and contribution to the organisation. These findings support the claims within social identity theory that social comparison and the need for positive identity promote selective attenuation of intergroup differences that favour the in-group. The findings also demonstrate that comparison is robust as a strategy to positively differentiate the out-group. There is a clear understanding by British soldiers (regardless of their ethnicity) that the organisational culture necessitates forming bonds and peer relationships in order to progress within the organisation. However, whilst ethnic minority British soldiers understood the need for agency and the requirement to build bonds, they did not feel that this was something that they were prepared to

do. They cited hard work, knowing recent technological advances and the requirements of their job as the means by which they would progress in the Army. They did, however, seem to empathise with the experiences of their F&C colleagues and they also understood that there was a need for proactivity to push their careers forward.

The negative experience that ethnic minority soldiers have of the organisation, could be explained by the experience of double consciousness and is reflected in ethnic minority F&C soldiers' core beliefs about their racial and national groups. This may have been influenced by the nature of the relationship with the organisation. It would seem that the organisation takes more power away from F&C soldiers at the start of the recruitment process. Many things that they are required to do are different from those for British soldiers. There are extra stages that they need to complete prior to arrival at initial training. Among these are obtaining sponsors, visas and paying large fees to the government to secure the visa necessary to train in the British Army. They are also guided into specific careers which are not always their careers of choice. To them, these additional stages and constraints are indicative of being a subordinate social group. The foregoing can help to explain why the assumption exists among F&C soldiers that the organisation will continue to manage them once they are in the Army. The process of social comparison and differentiation which may lead F&C soldiers to perceive themselves as a less powerful group is also closely aligned with these circumstances.

F&C officers, like F&C soldiers, were aware of their differences from their British counterparts. However, they identified strategies that they had developed to cope positively with these. They felt that disengaging or not assimilating into the much smaller officer cadre was not an option for them. They did acknowledge that they were diligently and silently working to attempt to penetrate a group which was established on different values to the ones they held. Brewer and Pierce (2005) have discussed the social identity complexity theory which acknowledges that "individuals subjectively represent their relationships among their multiple in-group members"

p 428. Ethnic minority F&C officers appear to have a complex social identity due to their acceptance and acknowledgement that they have non-overlapping memberships of multiple groups within the officer structure. Officers expressed a desire to share in the non-military life; however, ethnic minority F&C officers acknowledged the difficulty they would have in truly doing this because of their differences in background and lack of common social experiences. They felt that this would prevent a true penetration of the British Army officer culture, and a combined representation of their identities was more socially desirable and beneficial to their experience in the Army.

7.3.2: RQ 2 “What are the Organisational Practices which Impact Identity Management and Negotiation amongst F&C Serving Personnel?”

This research question was posed to try to understand the relationship between the organisational practices within the Army and the value that F&C personnel attach to belonging to an F&C group and a wider Army group. In order to answer this question, organisational documents were analysed to identify existing organisational practices. During the focus groups and interviews some of the organisational practices were also discussed by participants. Organisational practices encompass both formal and informal processes which support the structure of the organisation. With an organisation such as the British Army, there are several practices which support its hierarchical culture. The Army is dominated by power; therefore there is limited opportunity for the development of new practices which are outside the scope of control of the chain of command.

Some organisational practices, such as socialising after hours, a culture of alcohol consumption, and the administrative process surrounding recruitment for F&C personnel were related to how soldiers identified and grouped themselves. More explicit organisational practices, such as going on parade, and being organised into fighting units according to training, highlight the differences between ethnic minority F&C and White British personnel.

My review of the documents indicated the difficulty in finding the supporting evidence or source data to justify some of the premises which were used to establish certain policy decisions being taken in respect of F&C personnel. Joyce, Pike and Butler (2012) argue that in bureaucratic organisations (such as the Army) the basis for decision making is often constrained by the role of the individual making the decision. They suggest that the general aim when making decisions in these organisations is to follow rules and focus on collective goals. Researchers such as Benkler (2007), Gillespie (2006) and Lehman & Ramanujam (2009) have identified significant constraints upon individual agency within large bureaucratic structures which are organised by rule and role. The Army is one such organisation. One interpretation of the findings is that the organisational practices which may be disadvantaging F&C personnel persist within the organisation because there is little appetite or ability to negotiate or review these practices.

The findings highlighted that organisational identity negotiation amongst soldiers in general was limited due to their lack of positional power within the organisation. For F&C personnel in particular, there were several factors which reinforced that they belonged in the F&C social group. For soldiers, the existence of common recruitment standards, basic qualifications required on entry and standardised initial training means that there is little scope to form multiple identities (for example, based on education and social status) within the Army and within their rank as Soldier. For officers, it appears that their identities and backgrounds are more complex and there is an expectation of them, by the Army, to be able to manage their identities accordingly. A question about the existence and management of multiple identities was not specifically asked in this study; however, officers identified that they belonged to different groups which had different values, which at times, intersected. F&C officers and ethnic minority British officers discussed the challenges associated with this.

7.3.3: RQ 3 “Are there Conditions within the Army which Make One’s Social Identity More Salient to Self and Others”

The research findings highlighted that there are certain conditions where soldiers are aware of their membership of a group. This heightened sense of belonging in a social group appears to exist when personnel are less in number and are highly visible within the organisation. This can lead to feelings of vulnerability and awareness that they are not part of the majority group. Both ethnic minority F&C and white British soldiers reported that when they were on parade they were conscious of their differences from each other (being the only ethnic minority F&C on parade, or being one of a small number of white British soldiers in a unit of mainly ethnic minority F&C soldiers). White British soldiers also identified that they were conscious of when one of their F&C ethnic minority colleagues missed parade. Their absence was noted because of their racial distinctiveness within the organisation or unit. F&C ethnic minority soldiers reported that they stood out within the organisation during targeted activities, such as this research study, when they were asked to participate in-groups according to ethnicity and nationality. The implication of this finding is that when the organisation allows F&C soldiers to be segregated for particular work or social activities there is a tendency to reinforce group membership according to these segregated patterns. This allows the groups to create both formal and informal networks within the organisation on this basis of categorisation. Within distinctiveness theory, which asserts that individuals seek to maintain the optimal balance of inclusion and distinctiveness within and between groups (see section 2.2.5), the basis for network formation within organisations might be as arbitrary as numerical rarity.

The formation of these different networks within the organisation, ironically, serves to have to have the opposite effect to what the organisation desires with regard to team cohesion and integration within the Army. The distinctiveness theory does not discuss whether individuals get affective value from the formation of these networks or whether it is solely a preservation mechanism against being in the out-group as a result of being outnumbered. Vignoles, Chryssochoou and Breakwell (2000) suggest that groups will adopt cognitive or behavioural coping strategies when

distinctiveness needs are threatened. They indicated that this can occur when there is a perception of being different or separate from others.

All participants identified that social activities in the organisation tended to put ethnic minority F&C personnel in the spotlight. In the Army, living and working together is considered an organisational norm. These findings indicate that there are potential implications for mess life and team cohesion when there are two groups who have different experiences of the organisation and who identify themselves with their own group as opposed to the organisation. When there is group activity that goes against the values of ethnic minority F&C personnel, it is unlikely that they will actively participate. They will do the minimum but little more. For example participants discussed cultural days which are held in some parts of the Army, where F&C culture is exposed to the wider Army. F&C soldiers indicated that these days serve to make them stand out, whereas they should be more reciprocal and also include exposure to further aspects of British regional culture. White British soldiers and officers felt that there should be more cultural days and that these were valuable. Ethnic minority F&C soldiers found these less valuable as they learned very little.

There was a specific focus group question about distinctiveness as it was posited to be an important part of the social identity theoretical framework. It transpired during the research that being a numerical minority allowed F&C personnel the opportunity to come together in a specific network. Distinctiveness theory is limited in its ability to discuss how those networks are sustained. What appeared more relevant in this research was the role of background. Questions of identity, origin and organisational fit seemed more pertinent to the discussion of group identity and distinctiveness within the Army. The findings demonstrated that the backgrounds of F&C soldiers made them distinctive and more likely to perceive that they were different and that they stood out. The Army has policies and common procedures which make it easier for someone of a different background to stand out. For example, training in the cold, or conducting adventurous training activities, such as

skiing, puts certain groups of soldiers in an environmental context which makes their identity more prominent.

7.3.4 RQ4: What are the Substantive Issues that Impact Sensitive Research Inquiry in a Large, Hierarchical Organisation Such As the Army?"

This research question considered the process of conducting research within the Army on sensitive topics. The two primary challenges during this research process were my position within the organisation and access to the participants. The meta-commentary contained within Chapter four allowed me to discuss the issues that contextualised the research process. However, the ethnographic experience influenced my interpretation of the findings and the conclusions that I drew as a result.

As discussed in section 4.3, I conducted my research within the organisation while being a full-time employee. I began attempting to coordinate the research activity on my own. However, on the first two occasions, the message had not filtered down to the local chain of command that I was conducting the research on that day, or the focus groups had not been separated as had been requested (e.g. ethnic minority F&C only, white British only). After the second occurrence of this, it was necessary for me to secure a military escort, who made the arrangements and introductions prior to my entering into the room to conduct the research. I occupied the space that Hills Collins (1986,2000) identified as the outsider-within. Although Hills Collins was writing about the position of black women in organisational life and their unique ability to straddle both worlds of the mainstream and marginalised, I leveraged this position to create partnerships with the military gatekeepers in order to begin new dialogues about F&C personnel (Proudford and Thomas 1999, Proudford and Smith 2003). Whilst it was necessary to have research enablers who were white male officers, I utilised these links to access the research population through the chain of command.

The issues faced by practitioner researchers who work in an organisation have been discussed by authors such as Robson (2011) and Swanson and Holton (2005). They

identified that carrying out systematic enquiry which is relevant to the job, in addition to full-time responsibilities, presents some advantages and disadvantages. I benefitted from knowing the organisation and the key decision makers in the area of my research. I was also familiar with the process for conducting research within the Army. I therefore did not need time to become established with the organisation. I was also knowledgeable about the organisational context and background to this research. These factors enabled me to build rapport quickly with the decision makers. Working within the Army and conducting research within it allowed me a certain freedom and flexibility with the participants. I was able to design the research in accordance with the organisational structure and conduct a substantial pilot study. By tailoring the methodology according to rank (focus groups for junior staff and interviews for senior staff), the data collection process was, interpersonally, much smoother. Robson (2011) describes these as 'insider' and 'practitioner' opportunities.

One of the challenges of my position as a practitioner researcher was the 'Insider' problem of having pre-conceptions about the organisation and its hierarchical nature. I had relatively high status when I was researching the views of the soldiers, however, as discussed in section 4. 6, I felt that my status with white officers was that of a civilian researcher. Based on the interaction with this group, I interpreted this as a low power position. This allowed them to challenge me more about the research and its perceived utility. I was able to deal with this by exercising my 'expert power' as a psychologist and by clearly articulating the research aims, objectives and organisational benefits. However, the underlying power difference that I perceived continued throughout the white officer focus groups. I did not experience this perception when I interviewed F&C officers or ethnic minority British officers.

Another challenge that was easier to deal with was that posed by the gatekeepers. Byrne (2005) discusses the difficulties in conducting research as a visiting scientist within a women's prison. She argues that there is a 'culture clash' between the restrictive environment encountered within the hierarchical custody-control-care mission of correctional systems and the open inquiry environment needed in order

to conduct research. Although the Army and the prison environment (or prison) are not the same, there are parallels between the two organisations related to the hierarchical nature and the culture of control. This culture influenced how open the interaction could be with more senior individuals who perceived that they were in a more powerful position than I was. I also experienced further tensions described by Miller, Birch, Mauthner and Jessop (2012) created by taking on the dual role of PhD student researcher and a professional psychologist. Balancing those occupational responsibilities and organisational practicalities with the research ethics guidelines, such as informed consent also presented some tensions.

The Ministry of Defence Research Ethics Committee (MODREC) process and the additional gatekeeping that is required to protect participants can be perceived as a hurdle for the researcher to overcome. Gaining access is an iterative process between the researcher and committee that usually takes in excess of four months to complete. Although the process was set up to protect participants from harm and potentially control the type of information given to researchers, the overly administrative and bureaucratic system of the gatekeepers can potentially have a detrimental effect. Allen (2009) discusses the role of the ethics review committee in directing the behaviour of the researcher. She argues that the discourse used within the committee and its power to prevent the research can paradoxically result in a set of unethical behaviours, whereby researchers adopt a certain research methodology simply to gain access that may not be of true benefit to the research. Whilst this was not the case in my research, Miller et al. (2012) have indicated that the ethical responsibility involved in portraying the lives and experiences of F&C personnel fairly is one that could potentially be jeopardised by the organisational power held by the ethics committee to direct how the study is conducted and which populations could be accessed. Conducting research in the Army, in my experience, was inherently challenging. The dual aims of this project (the need for speed in providing an answer to a specific organisational question and the need to collect data robustly in order to test theoretical assumptions put forward for a PhD thesis) were difficult to separate. My interpretation was that the Army's main priority was for the study to be completed quickly, with minimal disruption to personnel and to deliver

recommendations that were simple. This concern was more pertinent than the need for the study to be well designed, executed and analysed in such a way that the conclusions were meaningful and based on sound evidence.

In summary, I found the research process more difficult than I anticipated, despite being an employee of the organisation. On reflection, this difficulty in conducting empirical research contributes to the paucity of evidence from the British military community. This approach to controlling personnel and highly regulating the activities within the organisation reinforces the Army as a closed organisation, where power is the most influential factor when producing specific types of knowledge. This has a critical negative effect on the data that is produced and its utility within the broader research community.

7.3.5: RQ 5 How does linking the concept of double consciousness to social identity enhance the theoretical understanding of multiple identities of ethnic minority F&C soldiers?

Linking the concepts of double consciousness and social identity enabled a more robust theoretical framework in which to understand the position of multiply marginalised identities. It also underscored the importance of the context within which those marginalised identities exist and allowed a broader application of the theory of double consciousness.

This research question sought to understand the contribution of double consciousness in explaining intergroup relations where groups occupied multiply marginalised identities. The limitations of social identity theory to explain the main and interactive effects of multiple identity occupancy have been highlighted in section 2.2.1.2. Social identity is not well equipped to explain the psychological consequence of holding a multiply marginalised identity, or what strategies, if any at all, are adopted by these particular group members to maintain positive distinctiveness. Therefore, the concepts of double consciousness and social identity were linked in order to understand the implications of social structure and boundaries on multiple identity management amongst multiply marginalised groups.

As a theory, double consciousness was developed to explain the experiences of African Americans within America, during a specific, historically situated, context which involved racial segregation (section 2.8). This was a social structure where boundaries between groups were fixed and impermeable. Societal policies and procedures were also developed and enforced to maintain this rigid structure. The findings of this research have shown that the British Army is also structurally rigid and segregated along racial and national lines. Additionally, the hierarchical nature of the organisation encourages segregation with respect to rank. The findings from the documents identified that within this fixed organisational structure, there are policies and procedures which encourage divisions between British and F&C personnel. However, the focus group and interview data demonstrate that these are enacted differently within the organisation, depending on the race of the F&C personnel.

The construction of the focus groups and interviews, according to race, showed that white F&C personnel expressed similar beliefs and attitudes as their white British counterparts. This was not the case with ethnic minority F&C personnel. In their discussion of the effects of double consciousness, Brannon et al (2015) argue that engagement with two different cultures fosters two different self schemas. One is the schema of the mainstream group (e.g. the white British soldier). The other schema, is context dependent and influenced by the group for which the identity is most salient (e.g. the ethnic minority F&C soldier). The findings of this research also suggest that for multiply marginalised groups, such as ethnic minority F&C personnel, there is an understanding that there needs to be two 'selves'. However, ethnic minority F&C personnel actively choose to reject the mainstream schema, despite acknowledging its existence. This finding is not explained by social identity theory. The impermeable nature of the group boundaries suggests that ethnic minority F&C personnel should adopt a strategy to allow them to justify their position within the organisation. As discussed earlier, the surprising finding was the ability of ethnic minority British personnel to occupy two spaces without reporting negative experiences of the organisation. Ethnic minority British personnel both acknowledge and operate what appears to be a dual schema approach to

understanding the organisation and were able to adopt one of the social creativity and social comparison strategies. Despite holding dual identities, neither of these was marginalised. One part of their identity belonged to the more powerful (British) in-group. This indicates that when identities are impermeable within a rigid organisational structure, positive social creativity strategies cannot be employed.

This combined theoretical framework only partially explains the findings of the study that relate to the perceived helplessness of ethnic minority F&C personnel. However, the double consciousness element of the framework allows an understanding of why ethnic minority F&C personnel have all but withdrawn from organisational life.

Double consciousness suggests that the psychological effect of occupying a multiply marginalised space negatively influences the perspective of those group members. As a result, disengagement with the mainstream group appears to be a strategy used to cope with the negative psychological effects of this position and maintain positive affect.

7.4 Perspective on Army Life: Implications of the Findings for the Theoretical Framework

This thesis has argued for the importance of social identity theory and the relevance of double consciousness in interpreting the relationship between F&C personnel and the Army. The findings presented in section 7.2.2 highlight the complexity of that relationship and the difference in individual perception about the Army across different groups. This section discusses how the theoretical framework identified in chapter two contributes to an understanding of the findings and identifies implications of the findings for the theoretical framework.

7.4.1 Theoretical Framework

A fundamental tenet of social identity theory is that the concept of self is derived from membership of a social group. However, there is limited published discussion within the social identity literature on how the concept of self is built, other than by sharing and reinforcing the group values and identity. The value of double consciousness in the theoretical framework is its ability to explain how the self-evaluation and comparative process affects the view of self. This study has illustrated

the importance of double consciousness through the views of F&C soldiers. The findings support the basic premise of the theory that a member of a less powerful minority group would self-evaluate against the values of the majority group because they occupy the same space as the more powerful group without being members. There was evidence that both soldiers and officers from minority ethnic groups were able to reflect on their careers and experience of being in the Army through the perspective of their white counterparts. Both ethnic minority F&C and British soldiers reported that they were aware of the values and standards of the white British groups, and on occasion used them as a benchmark for interpreting their own behaviour and the behaviour of those in their group. The feeling of “twoness” as described by DuBois (see section 2.8) was articulated by ethnic minority F&C soldiers in relation to background and its perceived influence on their career. Although not reflected in DuBois’ theory, the findings of this study seem to suggest that a group can also evaluate itself against the expectations of another more powerful group as opposed to the suggestion by the theory that comparison is an ‘individual’ activity.

The importance and relevance of one’s background was a contentious issue within the research. The findings demonstrated that background influenced one’s experience of the Army in multiple ways. Ironically, there appeared to be a relationship between the background of the participant and whether or not they perceived background to be important. White officers who went to private schools challenged the notion that background was an important influence in progression of their Army career. These officers felt that education as opposed to background was the important factor. Consistent with DuBois’ theory, it was primarily ethnic minority F&C and British personnel who identified that their backgrounds were not ‘right’, and the potential negative implications for them of not belonging.

The findings of this research have illustrated that, when put in an organisational context, group behaviour is not solely contingent on membership of a social group and the affective commitment held by members of that group. Factors such as the internalisation and understanding of the position or legitimacy of the group are also critical. This would suggest that whilst the theoretical framework applied to this

research assists an understanding of the findings, there are also other identity dimensions, such as power, helplessness and vulnerability, which are important. These contribute a coherent understanding of the experience of F&C soldiers, as a group, in the Army.

What could not be conclusively determined from the research was how multiple identities were managed and prioritised. Social identity theory argues that the affective component of one's social identity is the most enduring (Sidnic and Reicher, 2009). However, this theory is limited in an organisational context where hierarchical power is central to the functioning of the organisation. From this study, it is unclear how those individuals who do not feel valued by the Army or share its values can work for the organisation and profess loyalty to it. This is highlighted by the finding that ethnic minority F&C soldiers (who are multiply marginalised within the organisation) were perceived negatively by white soldiers from the UK and from their own F&C countries. They were in a unique position to understand how they were perceived, based on the values of the wider more powerful out-group. An integration of both double consciousness and social identity theory allowed an understanding of the internalisation process and behavioural outcomes which involved withdrawing from any non-essential work related activity that involved their white counterparts.

The findings suggest that F&C personnel, as a group, have not truly assimilated or integrated into the Army. This is particularly true of ethnic minority F&C soldiers. It would appear that they have a limited desire to assimilate as they perceive a difference in values between themselves and the Army and do not see the benefit of assimilating. This research shows that ethnic minority F&C personnel have limited emotional and value significance attached to belonging to the British Army. This lends support to the coping strategies identified by Roccas and Brewer's (2002) social identity complexity theory for multiple identity management (see section 2.2.1.1). This intersection strategy whereby ethnic minority F&C only integrate with other ethnic minority F&C personnel and have a perspective of the organisation that

is unique to their group, is clear. However, the role that the organisation plays in supporting this strategy needs to be clarified and acknowledged further.

7.5 Triangulation and Limitations of the Research: Quality Assurance

I conducted the research in two stages. The first stage was to conduct an analysis of organisational documents to understand the organisational position on F&C personnel within the Army. The second phase was to conduct focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The use of a qualitative approach in this phase, captured a more considered and in-depth approach to gathering information. Conducting a pilot study of four focus groups with soldiers and officers enabled me to isolate specific issues that were relevant to any of these particular groups. The pilot study indicated that I needed to understand the organisational perspective with regard to F&C policy and decision making. I thought it best to leave this phase (review of organisational documents) until last because it comprised secondary data which was independent of the other two phases. The purpose of this final phase was to contextualise the organisational decision making that led to the creation of policies and procedures that affected F&C personnel in the Army. I felt that the positioning of this phase would strengthen the triangulation process and ultimately the quality of the study.

7.5.1 Quality

Validity and reliability are key concepts within research (Crede et al. 2013, Whitford et al. 2012) and are traditionally used as markers for quality within the production and re-production of knowledge within quantitative methods of data production. Within this framework, data are considered valid when they provide an accurate measurement of a concept. Thus validity takes many forms. Reliability of research constructs, concepts or indicators demonstrates consistency in measurement over time. This is in order to generalise the findings to a wider population than the one studied. However, within qualitative research, the utility of these concepts are less useful and are somewhat difficult to apply as the aim of qualitative research is to create an account of the experience of an individual or group and to ascribe meaning to that experience. Generalisability is not applicable as the function of qualitative

inquiry is to provide a rich understanding of a specific phenomenon, which is bound in a specific time or place with a select group (Golafshani, 2003). These data are rarely quantified and require an exploration of their meaning. Golafshani has highlighted that terms like credibility, confirmability, dependability, transferability, and trustworthiness are more helpful.

Whilst the question of are the data valid and reliable may apply differently to methods that produce qualitative data, the issue of quality indicators within qualitative research is very much pertinent. Gaskell and Bauer (2000) have identified some guiding principles for quality assurance in order to provide guidance for qualitative researchers. These indicators provide a standard for ensuring that the account and subsequent knowledge that is produced about a phenomenon is rigorous and dependable. Within this study, some of these criteria were adopted.

The first criterion is the triangulation of perspectives. Using different sources of data and attempting to triangulate these, has allowed me to begin to produce new information about the experience of working life for F&C personnel as discussed in section 7.4. 'Textbook' triangulation of the data which is based on repeatable patterns or themes which were identified from multiple sources as suggested by Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie, 2003 (see section 3.8) was less useful as a concept when doing action research in the Army as it was an iterative, dynamic process that necessitated going back over data sources collected in previous phases whilst trying to make sense of data from a current phase. This differed from the suggestion by Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie that the phases should all build on each other and the triangulation process should be a sequential one. Mason (2006) argues that meshing or linking data, can be a more helpful process than attempting to perform a triangulation. The iterative and comparative process of evaluating the data sources within this study resembles what Mason calls 'linking'. Nevertheless, the practice of triangulation when conducting research in the Army was extremely important for building confidence in the overall conclusions and understanding the complexity of the F&C experience.

Transparency and procedural clarity are important for instilling confidence in both the researcher, the process and the data collected. Gaskell and Bauer (2000) suggest that this can be achieved by describing the methods of data collection and development of tools clearly and explicitly. The research process has been clearly documented within this thesis together with a reflection on the research process and how doing the research has changed my relationship with the policy makers.

A careful and conscious approach to corpus construction is advocated by Gaskell and Bauer in order to get a diversity of perspectives on a particular phenomenon. Within this research, I have selected not only to get the perspectives of F&C personnel, but also British personnel. Stratifying the sample group by rank also allowed me to achieve true saturation of the data, once no new information was coming forward (see section 3.5)

By providing a thick description of the data, there can be confidence that the conclusions that I have drawn from this research are based on evidence that I have collected. Additionally, by the extensive use of extracts from the data (see chapter 6) other researchers have the potential to provide alternative or confirmatory interpretations.

A final marker of quality for this research as advocated by Gaskell and Bauer is the 'surprise value' that social research often has. The 'surprise' element is a contested one within research and more difficult to specify than some of the other criteria. However, its aim is to contribute to theory and/or common-sense knowledge. This research contains various layers of contribution to theory. As discussed in chapter one, research on F&C personnel within the British Army, and more widely within British society, has remained largely unstudied, despite new policies guiding their recruitment and settlement being developed. Additionally, by making the invisible process of conducting research within a large hierarchical organisation visible, through the metacommentary, this thesis aims to contribute to the development of doing research within the field of organisational psychology.

7.6 Summary

This research utilised focus groups, interviews and documents, to try to understand a previously under-researched phenomenon within the British Army. Due to the methodological challenges associated with this study, the findings are limited. However they present a richly textured picture of working life for F&C personnel in the British Army and those that work with them. They also demonstrate the complexity of the Army and its structure. This case study has shown that whilst there are difficulties with existing sources of data and access to participants, I was able to use my position within the organisation as a practitioner-researcher to reveal the complexity of the F&C experience. I was also able to shed light on wider organisational practices and structures which affect the development and delivery of policy within the Army. The intersection of my race and gender played a critical role in my ability to build the trust of the F&C population being researched and work within the confines of the organisation. The conclusions and implications of the findings are presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and Implications

8.1 Introduction

At the beginning of this research, I characterised the Army as an organisation undergoing transformational change which originated from governmental direction to reform Defence and reduce spending. It is an institution which is hierarchical and structurally rigid. This research has argued that the organisational context cannot be ignored when attempting to investigate how Foreign and Commonwealth (F&C) personnel experience the Army. The rigid and hierarchical structure was also a significant contributor to the way in which my research was conducted, and I used this organisational context to discuss the methodological challenges within this particular project.

There were other organisational issues that contextualised this research. The demographic composition of the Army, including the limited number of senior personnel in the F&C and ethnic minority cohort, was one such issue. The organisational practices and culture which currently influence an understanding of the F&C experience of the Army was another. These issues are considered when developing conclusions from this research and identifying practical implications for policy development and the recruitment of ethnic minority personnel

This final chapter presents the conclusions of my research conducted within the Army to explore the working lives of F&C personnel. In order to do this, I utilised the theories of social identity and double consciousness. These theories will be re-introduced in this chapter, briefly, in order to explain their contribution to the research findings. The chapter provides an outline of the theoretical and applied contribution of this research. It also discusses the limitations of the study and areas for further investigation, which would develop these findings.

8.2 Overview of main conclusions

The research clearly identified differences in the way that F&C personnel within the Army experienced the organisation compared to British personnel. F&C personnel were very aware of their background and how this influenced their organisational life and career. They were mindful of their status as 'foreign' due to their differences in culture, expectations and perceptions of the organisation, which were not shared by their British peers. There were also organisational policies, structures and practices that were put in place to manage F&C personnel that were different to those for British personnel. These structural mechanisms within the organisation serve to reinforce a different social identity, rather than encourage a common 'soldier' social identity. Within the F&C cohort, there were also differences between how ethnic minority and white personnel experienced the organisation. This was moderated by rank, with white F&C officers generally having a positive experience of the Army and being satisfied with their careers. They were able to negotiate more than one social identity, demonstrating the positive element of affect from belonging to both an 'officer' and 'F&C' group. Ethnic minority F&C officers demonstrated less of the positive affective commitment from being an 'officer' than did their white F&C peers and discussed the need to modify behaviours and expectations in order to fit in to this 'officer' group. It is acknowledged however, that this group was very small and further study within this particular population is required in order to fully understand their experience.

Ethnic minority F&C soldiers had a more negative experience of the Army than did their white F&C soldier peers. They were also the most dissatisfied with their career progression and ability to influence decision makers within the organisation. Despite them being a bigger cohort within the Army, they identified more with being F&C than being a soldier, primarily because of the way that they were treated by others in the organisation and the organisational policies and practices which they felt set them apart from both their white British and F&C peers.

The research shows that race and being foreign, influences perception of, and status within, the Army. F&C soldiers felt and were treated, differently from their British

counterparts. However ethnic minority F&C soldiers had a more negative experience of the Army than their white F&C peers, pointing to a multiply marginalised position within the organisation. To an extent, this finding was replicated within the smaller officer cohort and has been found in the double consciousness research as a psychological effect of straddling two identities, both of which are low status (see section 2.8). White F&C officers fit in better to the organisation. They were less concerned about their place within it than ethnic minority F&C officers who clearly articulated the feeling of 'twoness' that DuBois described in his theory of double consciousness. They discussed having to work harder to negotiate their identity and were ever mindful of how they were being perceived by others in the organisation.

These conclusions are influenced by more specific research findings, which are summarised into four key areas:

- Perceptions of the Army
- Perceived organisational fit and participation within the Army
- Compromised decision making and policy creation
- Diversity within the Army

8.2.1 Perceptions of the Army

The findings indicate that the working life of F&C personnel in the British Army is complex. Their cultural backgrounds and values appear to be strong influences on how they interpret the organisation. The findings suggest that there is a different experience of working life for ethnic minority F&C personnel than there is for white F&C personnel. The experience of the Army for ethnic minority F&C soldiers, once they have settled into it, post recruitment and training, is not a positive one. One aspect of the findings that I have explored is the difference that exists in how groups of soldiers and officers interpret and perceive the Army. The difference in beliefs about how groups are treated is linked to the position that personnel in the Army occupy. Limited agency was a theme for all soldiers; however, ethnic minority F&C personnel were more likely to raise this as a key feature in lack of career progression without acknowledging personal initiatives that could assist or support a positive experience of the organisation. This finding was not evident with ethnic minority

British soldiers who were more likely to state that they had control over their careers and cited hard work and knowledge of the organisation as determinants of career success. They also appeared to be able to empathise with ethnic minority F&C personnel about their perception that there were organisational impediments to achieving career satisfaction.

8.2.2 Perceptions of Person-Organisation-Fit and Participation

The findings also suggested that the social identity of all F&C personnel was a contributing factor to how they positioned themselves within the organisation. White F&C officers felt the strongest links with the organisation and as a result reported a better experience of the Army than did their ethnic minority F&C peers. Ethnic minority F&C soldiers had a worse experience of the Army and were less satisfied about their careers than white F&C soldiers. They described being less able to fit in to the organisation because they were at odds with some of the values demonstrated by white British soldiers (respect for elders, money management). Some of the practices within the organisation made them feel that they did not belong (e.g. drinking, after hours socialising). The affective component of the soldier social identity appeared to be missing for ethnic minority F&C soldiers. This seemed to make it difficult for them to participate fully in organisational life. By utilising the supporting theory of double consciousness to interpret these findings, the lack of affective component of social identity can be explained for this group of soldiers. The theory demonstrated that those experiencing double consciousness (such as ethnic minority F&C personnel) can exist within a fractured reality (Gilroy 1993) where they see themselves through the eyes of the inferiorising other. This in turn influences the belief domains associated with double consciousness outlined by Lyubansky and Eidelson (2005). Being an ethnic minority foreigner within a structurally rigid, predominantly white, organisation, influences feelings of vulnerability, injustice, distrust and helplessness.

The responses of ethnic minority F&C soldiers also suggested that they were evaluating their position in the Army in terms of what they thought white British personnel (soldiers and officers) expected of them. However, as a counter-strategy

they positioned their values (e.g. moderate or no alcohol consumption, lack of use of profanity) and backgrounds as superior to those held by British personnel, which also resulted in a lack of connection and commitment to the organisation. This finding lends some support to the theory of double consciousness with respect to understanding the values held by the majority group and judging oneself by those. However, this finding also demonstrates the need for the theory to be developed to consider the relative position of the minority group and the strategies that it employs to mitigate the feeling of 'twoness'.

8.2.3 Decision Making within the Army

Conducting this research exposed a difference in the approach to decision making between civilian and military personnel. An analysis of 16 documents highlighted that military personnel were more prepared to allow assumptions to influence their decision making. Civilian personnel tended not to make decisions until there was sufficient evidence. This difference indicates that for military personnel, robust evidence was unimportant and understanding personnel was not a priority. This mismatch between military and civilian decision makers has clear implications for how F&C policy was created and ultimately how these policy decisions affected the careers of F&C personnel. It suggests that Army policy, which is ultimately ratified and endorsed by military officers, is not neutral. Rather, it is influenced by personal bias and a culturally specific, white male, middle class perspective. This maintains the representation and position of F&C personnel within the Army as different and ethnic minority F&C in particular, as problematic.

8.2.4 Diversity within the Army

This research was exploratory and identified that whilst negative attitudes towards F&C soldiers existed, ethnic minority F&C soldiers, in particular, were viewed as problematic for the organisation (see section 6.4). Cunningham (2005) argues that there are negative aspects of ethnically diverse teams where there is a lack of common in-group identity. This is particularly significant in the military context where personnel are working in dangerous and difficult situations, and are reliant on each other for their safety and the positive outcomes of tasks. The Army's policy

documents also demonstrate a confused approach to achieving a diverse workforce. The documents revealed that there was a need to recruit British ethnic minorities in order to meet government targets; however, none of the documents indicted a coherent long-term strategy to recruit and develop British talent within and outside of the organisation. There was discussion within the documents about understanding the role and purpose of F&C personnel. However, there was limited evidence of any research that had been done in order to develop or advance the policy of either F&C or British ethnic minority recruitment. This points to a confused organisational position where the espoused values of integrating the Army with society and reflecting the society that it serves, are at odds with the actual organisational position of maintaining the status quo.

8.3 Reflections on the Research Process

In 2010, I set out to conduct qualitative research on the lived experiences of F&C personnel in the British Army. This consisted of focus groups, interviews and an analysis of documents. During the process of conducting the research, as I began to encounter challenges in collecting and accessing data within the organisation, it became obvious to me that providing a methodological commentary on the process of conducting research within the Army would be beneficial. The uniqueness of this methodological commentary is its contribution to the 'research methods' body of literature. This commentary is particularly useful in understanding how large organisations that are characterised by power and hierarchy influence the way research is conducted. This includes the data collection process and the subsequent results that are produced and sometimes shared within the peer-review publication process. It has been rare in organisational literature to find comment on how the research was done and the practical challenges of conducting research in large organisations. There are a few texts and comments on the generic process of conducting research in organisations; however, what is unique about this commentary is my ability to reflect as a practitioner-researcher from within the Army.

This research makes the link between the methodology applied to a study and the ability to understand a phenomenon. The distinctiveness of this approach was that my commentary and reflections are bound within the difficult position of the need to collect robust and reliable data as per my 'scientific' training and the reality of organisational life. It is significant that the process of conducting research in organisations and its associated challenges and implications are not discussed more openly within the organisational literature. This lack of commentary is a glaring omission from both postgraduate and research training. A more open discussion about the realities of organisational politics and their effects on the researcher's ability to produce or test knowledge in a real world, organisational setting would better prepare researchers for gaining access and designing appropriate studies. From my experience of conducting research within this organisation, I argue that the outputs of organisational research are dependent on the ability of the researcher to gain support and commitment from the organisation sponsoring the work.

From my original literature search and review it would appear that, within the social identity literature, there are limited studies conducted within organisations that used primary data from that organisation through a qualitative approach. The social identity studies in the organisational literature tend to provide an application of theory to organisational problems and issues rather than empirically testing the theoretical constructs within organisations and refining the theory. The findings of this research have demonstrated the difficulty in empirically developing extant theories and challenging their application in organisations. Most of the work on identity negotiation and the management of multiple identities has taken place within the wider social psychological literature where it would appear that access to the public and communities of interest are easier to negotiate. This research is a contribution to the dialogue that should now begin in the UK about the relevance of identity research in organisations.

8.4 Limitations and Opportunities for Future Research

The process of carrying out this research has been an enjoyable, albeit revealing, one. My position within the organisation facilitated my being able to carry out the

work, notwithstanding the limitations that have been discussed. This type of research has not previously been done in the Army on this scale. Given the methodological difficulties encountered on this project, it has become more understandable why there is limited progress within the organisational psychology literature on researching sensitive topics within organisations. The data presented in this thesis are limited in their ability to provide a complete picture of the F&C experience. However, considering the current organisational process of decision making in the Army, these data may be able to help generate more effective policy decisions. Despite their limitations, use of these data for future policy development on F&C and ethnic minority recruitment would ensure that decisions are more grounded in evidence. I have initiated the start of a research process which I hope will encourage other researchers within the military, police and other uniformed services (where power and hierarchy are central to the organisation) to share their experience of conducting research and begin a dialogue about the limitations experienced.

Some of the challenges in conducting the research within the Army have been documented earlier in this thesis (see chapters 4 & 7). The twin issues of generalisability and validity in qualitative research have been discussed in chapters three and seven. However, I have briefly re-introduced these issues here as my claim in doing this research is not that the findings are valid and generalisable as traditionally understood within a positivist framework. My claim is that I attempted to conduct research on a phenomenon and my articulation of that phenomenon is based on how I, as a researcher, have interpreted those findings. This issue contributes to the challenges associated with true triangulation of data. Implicit in the literature on triangulation is the ability to objectively co-locate multiple sources of data and bring them together in a process-driven way.

This study has developed a theory specific to the experience of F&C personnel in the British Army, which is a hierarchical organisation. Whilst theoretical generalisability was achieved through utilising a purposive sample of F&C personnel (see section 3.9), there are some empirical limitations and a need for further studies to provide a

clearer picture of the application of combining the theories of double consciousness and social identity. A further study examining the intersecting effects of race and gender within the army would provide a much needed refinement of the combined theories. This would allow an understanding of whether double consciousness can be used narrowly to explain the position of racial minorities, or whether it can be applied more widely, to an understanding of all low status groups within a hierarchical organisation.

The findings of this study provide a contribution, in the empirical space, to the understanding of group differences within large complex organisations. They also contribute to the exploration of the position of foreign workers within multinational organisations based in Britain. However, the contextual element of this study could be expanded in future research. Whilst the results are not directly generalisable to other organisations, there are implications for any complex organisation with diverse populations and where there are in-out groups such as the police (uniformed vs. civilians) the NHS (doctors/nurses/auxillary staff) and academia (the position of women).

This study looked at F&C personnel, who are not a homogenous group. Whilst one method of analysing their experience could be according to nationality, it was found that within a single nationality (e.g. South African) there were multiple racial groups. Whilst there is representation from many commonwealth countries, the numbers are unequal with the majority of F&C personnel coming from Fiji, South Africa and Jamaica. The experiences of these soldiers tended to aggregate according to their racial group. Accordingly, examining the experiences of F&C personnel, using nationality as the main factor would have negatively affected the ability of this study to reflect the true experiences of F&C personnel. Exploring the experience of being in the Army by nationality only, would not provide a complete understanding of the phenomenon and would ignore the interactive effects of race and nationality. Future research could refine this study to encompass the most represented nationalities and investigate the effects of differences in nationality on the

experience of living and working in the Army. This further perspective could explore how nationalities of personnel are positioned and valued in the Army.

The literature is not clear on the author's ability to use professional judgement when deciding on which elements of the data to triangulate. The sense-making part of the triangulation literature refers to the author reviewing data against a backdrop of previous or other literature associated with the data collected. I was unable to use the quantitative data as originally planned, due to its unreliability. This limited the triangulation and integration process. Conducting 'real world' research in an organisation such as the British Army, allows me as a researcher to understand the limitations to the triangulation process and the factors involved in such a process.

Due to the constantly changing political direction given to the Army, there has been a change in policy with respect to recruiting F&C soldiers (2014). The government has re-introduced the five-year residency requirement for joining the Army. This has seen a significant reduction in F&C applications to the Army. There is therefore a critical need to understand further the position and experiences of ethnic minority British personnel within the Army, in order that the issues of diversity in recruitment can be addressed seriously and with a firm evidence base.

As indicated previously, there are opportunities for further research within the organisation and within the field of organisational psychology to explore contested social identities and their implications. More work could be done to understand the experience of F&C officers and British ethnic minority personnel specifically. My opinion is that applying social identity theory to these cohorts allows a richer understanding of how multiple identities are managed and the development of the extant social identity complexity theory. The continued use of a qualitative, snowball sample would be appropriate for this organisation and cohort.

8.5 Research Implications and contributions

This research has both theoretical and methodological implications for advancing the practice of applied organisational research, which are outlined in this section.

8.5.1 Unique theoretical contribution to the development of social identity theory

The combination of double consciousness and social identity theory provides a unique perspective on the effects of intergroup interaction within the Army. Whilst it is useful to acknowledge the situated nature and constraints of the research, it is also important to recognise the contribution that this research plays in developing social identity theory to include an understanding of the intersection of multiple identities.

Linking the theories of double consciousness and social identity enabled this study to understand the psychological effects of holding multiply marginalised identities within a hierarchical context. A combination of these two perspectives provides a theoretical framework for explaining the impact of simultaneous membership of low- status, low- power groups on intergroup interactions.

This research offers a race-focused approach to understanding the experience of organisational life within the British Army. Whilst race has historically been utilised within psychology to explain variance within traditional constructs (such as the social identity of ethnic minorities), this research has used a race-focused theoretical framework. Combining double consciousness and social identity assists in the understanding of the specific effects of holding multiply marginalised identities, of which race is salient. It builds on the early developments within social identity theory by Tajfel and Turner (1979) on creative strategies used by in-group members to increase positive affect and esteem. The unique perspective offered by this research shows that within contexts where there is limited scope to permeate group boundaries, ethnic minorities occupying a doubly conscious space will demonstrate self-limiting beliefs. These may impede the group's ability to take action and resolve intergroup conflict.

Uniquely, this research has demonstrated that there are intersectional effects of multiple identities. Ethnic minority F&C personnel appear to have the worst experience of the organisation. The document analysis revealed that the organisational policies and structures contribute to that experience. It is

acknowledged that those policies are created by more powerful individuals within the organisation. Whilst social dominance theory was discounted for use in this research (section 2.2.1.1) future research could build on the findings of the present study and test the a priori assumptions made by social dominance theory about the impact of hierarchical organisations, such as the Army, on low-status groups. Using this theoretical approach would help to further develop the empirical conversation about the work experience of ethnic minority foreign workers within British institutions.

8.5.2 Implications for the Army

Set against a backdrop of continuous transformational change and changing political direction, the Army is an institution that is continuously evolving. The need to reduce from 97,000 to 80,000 (regular and reserve) soldiers means that decisions about the number of individuals employed and how they fight are being made. This research makes a strong case for the need for sustainable policy development and decision making within the Army. However, the research has highlighted that the structural and cultural make-up of the Army makes it difficult to collect robust and reliable qualitative data. This is particularly difficult in the case of small populations such as the F&C cohort. The difference in decision making between the military and civilian staff which support the military, demonstrates that there is less use of evidence in the decision making process by military staff. This raises questions about the long-term future of researchers within the Army and other hierarchical organisations and whether these researchers are in a position to provide evidence to support policy and decision making, or whether they would have limited influence in the process.

This research has identified implications for recruitment of soldiers and officers into the Army. There is a cultural difference between British and F&C soldiers and officers and their engagement with the Army. The interaction between the organisational practices which appear to marginalise F&C soldiers and their belief that the institution should manage their careers, serves to make their experience of living and working in the British Army, a contested one. This research has identified that

there is a lack of understanding amongst policy makers and senior officers about the experience of F&C personnel within the Army and their views on the organisation. The implications for team cohesion as a result of the polarised position of white British soldiers and ethnic minority F&C soldiers are negative and need to be addressed by the command structure of the Army.

As discussed in section 8.2.4 there are implications for diversity policy development and the future composition of the Army. It has been identified in chapter two that the Army is under pressure to meet targets set by the government in relation to ethnic minority recruitment and is under scrutiny by public bodies such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission. Ethnic minority British personnel currently make up less than 3% of the Army. If there is an aspiration to meet the government targets of 6%, there is a need for more work to be done within the organisation with regards to evidence based policy development. The organisation needs to apply lessons learnt from the F&C ethnic minority experience to review current diversity policies. This would begin to refine the structural practices and policies which are currently in place to govern F&C and ethnic minority recruiting within the Army. A positive consequence of stronger policies would be increased team cohesion and fuller integration between ethnic minority and white soldiers. It is also likely, that, as policies are clearer and perceived as fairer, there would be better handling of complaints from personnel.

Ethnic minority British personnel reported an ability to adapt and self-determine their careers in the Army. Their belief that hard work and luck and organisational savvy, were key determinants of a successful career within the Army demonstrated that they appeared to have a strategy for navigating the organisation and progressing within it. They also have some views about the treatment of F&C ethnic minority personnel and their negative experience of working life in the Army. Whilst political decisions have overtaken policy creation within the Army with respect to recruitment of F&C personnel, there is a need for the Army to focus its attention on British born ethnic minority personnel within the organisation, in order to maximise

its chance of creating a diverse workforce and gaining specialist skills (such as foreign languages) from ethnic minority populations.

8.5.3 Contribution to the Organisational Psychology Discipline

Conducting this type of research in the British Army with a metacommentary is unique. I have been unable to source any tangible body of internal work outlining the issues of gatekeepers, power, and decision-makers' lack of interest in research findings and the use of objective data. This absence has made the interpretation of my research more difficult as I have not had a body of work on which to draw. It has, however, also been an opportunity for me to contribute to the organisational psychology discipline. It is also hoped that this research will contribute more broadly to the body of literature on diversity within organisations in the UK.

Briner and Rousseau (2011) discuss the dilemma of evidence-based practice within organisational psychology and argue that there is a need for more refining and critical evaluation of the discipline's basic body of evidence. The current research provides a further contribution to that discussion by highlighting that the way the evidence is collected and created is implicated in what practice organisational psychology develops. Also demonstrated by this research is that questions about the independence of the researcher may result in a lack of confidence in the findings. In comparison with other 'real world' research issues and questions over findings, generally, in organisations, the case of the Army is unique and more intense.

More generally, research in the military tends to be within the field of sociology and psychiatry. There are military sociology and psychiatry departments in universities across Western Europe and the USA (Kings College in the UK, University of Maryland in the USA). The levels of support and funding associated with these institutions attests to the focus that the military, as an industry, currently applies to understanding its people. My research has identified a gap in the field of organisational psychology for understanding such a large complex industry. This research presents an opportunity for organisational psychology to move beyond understanding recruitment and selection in the military environment and contribute

to a broader understanding of the people that work within the military and the complexities associated with diverse populations. There is also an opportunity for the discipline to use its position and resources to conduct relevant real world research and influence decision making and policy creation in the military

8.6 Conclusions

This thesis has sought to provide a deeper understanding of the experiences of F&C personnel within the British Army and the complexities of team cohesion within an organisation characterised by power and hierarchy. Grounding this research within the theoretical framework of social identity and double consciousness has aimed to provide a richer appreciation of the experiences of foreign workers as they relate to indigenous workers and manage their identity within an organisation. This research has indicated that not all F&C personnel have the same experience, nor are they viewed as the same by white British personnel. Ethnic minority F&C personnel tend to have a more difficult experience in the Army due to a number of factors. Ethnic minority F&C soldiers in particular are viewed more negatively than their white F&C counterparts by British soldiers. However, a lack of agency and perceptions of the organisation are critical factors in how ethnic minority F&C soldiers perceive and engage with the Army. White F&C soldiers and officers have a more positive experience of the Army. This indicates that race is a factor in how an individual experiences the Army. Whilst being 'foreign' acts as a career limiter within the Army, it would appear that being foreign and from an ethnic minority group is a double disadvantage for some personnel. At present, the Army is reliant on its ethnic minority F&C population to represent that it is a diverse organisation. The conclusions of this research are therefore vital to future generations of F&C personnel and diversity policy makers.

There is more work to be done on understanding the experience of British ethnic minority personnel, as they will be the focus of future diversity-related recruitment within the Army. More generally, this work has contributed toward a growing body of research regarding the experiences of migrant workers in Britain. This research will add to the very small body of published work that details the experiences of

conducting 'real world' research within organisations and the construction of evidence-based practice within organisations.

This research offers important contributions to the existing public and academic debates about foreign workers in the United Kingdom. It contributes to our understanding of the experiences of foreign workers within complex British organisations. It has also provided a theoretical contribution to our understanding of the development of social identity for low status foreign workers within complex organisational structures in Britain and the psychological effects of that identity negotiation.

By combining social identity theory and the theory of double consciousness to understand the position of ethnic minority F&C workers in the Army, I have created an opportunity to explore the endurance of multiple or nested identities within low status groups. Whilst this is a novel approach, there is scope within future studies, to examine the extent to which the dissonance caused by the comparison process as suggested by the double consciousness theory, supports the strategies for dissonance negation advocated by social identity theory. This research looks at a specific organisational context, where there are clear organisational cues and structures which reinforce the low status nature of a particular group.

It would be useful for future studies to test the theoretical assumptions of both theories. At their core, these theories indicate that social comparison is fundamental to the formation of identity within a particular context. However, both theories suggest different outcomes for low status groups. Within the theory of double consciousness, the social comparison process results in a negative outcome for low status group members who occupy a multiply marginalised position. Social identity theory, on the other hand, indicates that out-group members will adopt socially creative strategies to maintain positive affect about their group membership. A limitation of social identity theory is that it was developed within a cultural context which may not be applicable to doubly disadvantaged ethnic minorities who hold a

fundamentally different position within society or within an organisation. Further exploration of this limitation would be beneficial for the development of the theory.

Finally, this thesis has offered a critical perspective on the experience of a group of foreign workers in the UK. It has demonstrated that being of a different nationality does not necessarily mean that one will have a negative experience of work within a powerful British organisation. However, the interaction of being from a different nationality and ethnicity produces an experience of work that warrants further exploration. This is particularly so as the discourse around immigration in the UK becomes more politicised and the appetite for foreign workers in Britain decreases due to a more stringent points based system becoming embedded within society. This work concludes that certain types of foreign workers feel more welcome and would stand a better chance of success within traditional British organisations.

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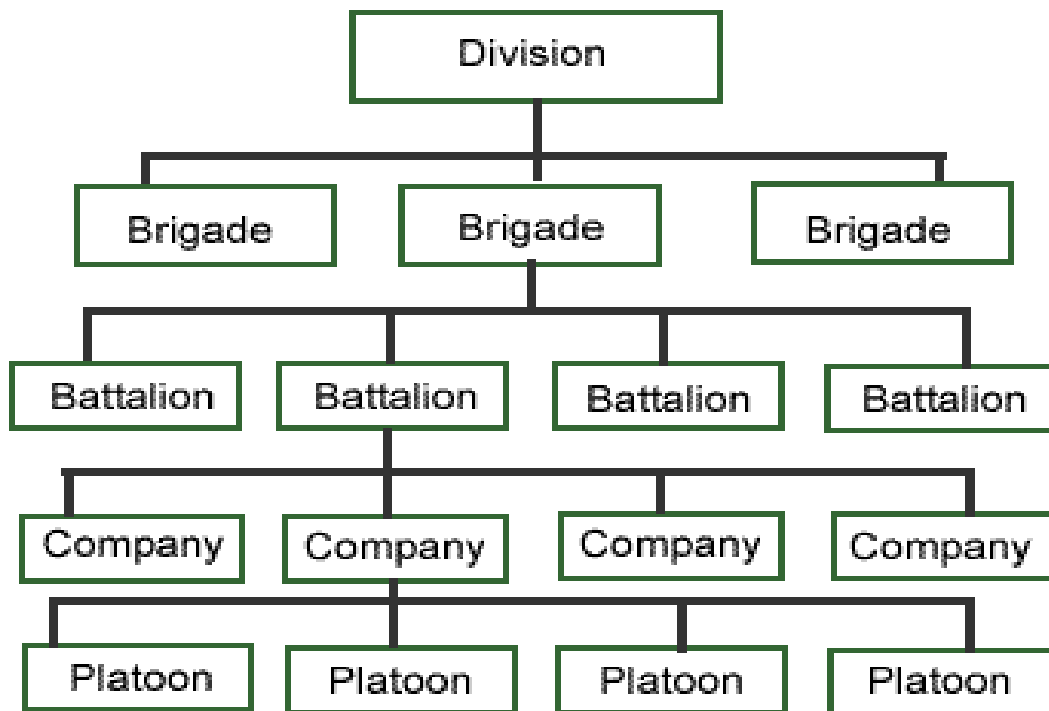
Appendix 1.1 Command Structure of the Army

Logistically, for fighting purposes, the Field Army is divided into groups of different sizes as presented in Table A1.1 below. This form of grouping is primarily in order to manage people according to the tasks that they have to perform. For example, several units will be sent to theatre (war) for 6 months at a time. This pattern is then rotated with other units. While in theatre, a Battlegroup may be positioned in a certain location to provide fighting power. Within the Battlegroup, a Section may be asked to perform a specific task such as to patrol a particular area. The command structure provides an indication of the level of responsibility that is associated with a particular rank.

Table A1.1 Organisation and Command Structure of the Field Army

No. of Personnel	Org Structure	Command Structure
30,000	Formation: Corps	Lieutenant General
15,000	Division (Div)	Major General
5,000	Brigade	Brigadier
1000	Battle Group	Lt Col
500-700	Unit: Battalion/Regiment	Lt Col
100	Sub Unit: Company/ Squadron/Battery	Major
30	Platoon/Troop	Captain/Lieutenant/ Second Lieutenant
8	Section	Corporal

Figure A1.1: Structural Breakdown of Field Army Unit



Appendix 3.1 MODREC Application Form and Participant Information



Ministry of Defence

Application for MoDREC Approval

Research Ethics Committees

MoDREC Protocol No:



Ministry of Defence Research Ethics Committees (MoDREC)

APPLICATION FOR MoDREC APPROVAL

Please read the notes in the MoDREC Application Form Guide (formerly MoDREC Researcher Guide) before completing this form. Enter text in the grey boxes, which will expand automatically to encompass your text. Please e-mail the completed form and any supporting documents to ethics@mod.uk

1. TITLE OF STUDY

An exploration of the interpersonal and organisational factors that affect the working lives of foreign and commonwealth serving personnel.

2. DATE/VERSION

Date 21st March 2010 Version 4.0

3. NATURE OF PROJECT

An exploration of the working lives of foreign and commonwealth serving personnel and those that work with them

4. INVESTIGATORS

4a. Principal Investigator

Name: Balissa Greene

Grade/Rank: C1

Post Title: Senior Psychologist

Department: Directorate of Army Personnel Strategy (Science)

Establishment: Army

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Telephone :

E-mail: Balissa.greene716@mod.uk

4b. Other investigators / collaborators / external consultants

Megan Lawson, Supervisor is Dr Janet Stockdale

4c. Name of the Independent Medical Officer (if applicable)

n/a

5. PREFERRED TIMETABLE

5a. Preferred start date: 15/03/2010

5b. Expected date of project's completion: 31/05/10

6. SPONSOR / OTHER ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED AND FUNDING

6a. Department/Organisation requesting research:

LF Secretariat Foreign and Commonwealth, Directorate of Manning (Army)

6b. If you are receiving funding for the study please provide details here:

n/a

6c. Please declare any competing interests: This work is also being conducted by the Principal investigator as part of a PhD at the London School of Economics and political Science

7. OTHER RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (REC) APPROVAL

Has the proposed study been submitted to any other reviewing body? If so, please provide details:

It will be submitted to the LSE PhD ethics committee

8. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The year 2009 marked the 10th anniversary of post colonial F&C (Foreign and Commonwealth) recruitment. In those 10 years, the Army has been unable to identify a systematic review of the F&C recruitment policy, neither is it able to produce evidence that the policy of F&C recruitment is working other than to boost the Army manning figures . At the moment, however, with the British Economy in recession, there is an appetite for examining whether the F&C recruitment policy is sustainable. Another driver for this study is that there has been anecdotal evidence by some directorates in the organisation to suggest that there are problems with the integration of F&C Serving Personnel within the British Army. Reported organisational issues such as the experience of prejudice, racism and systemic discrimination (lack of career progression) have all been anecdotally identified as areas of concern in the British Army for those from the F&C. There is a need to undertake work that will examine the lived experiences of serving personnel from Foreign and Commonwealth nations. The

rationale for this research is the amalgamation of several organisational and socio economic factors that turn the spotlight on overseas recruitment and the composition of the organisation. The social and economic climate is making it necessary to justify the continued recruiting of F&C personnel over UK personnel. The Army is turning its attention to the evidence related to performance, adjustment and value for money in relation to the F&C Serving Personnel. There is also a growing media interest in this group of Serving Personnel (“7000 foreigners in the British Army” Daily Mail 2007).

Whilst there are some large organisational issues surrounding F&C Serving Personnel as described above, there appears to be a paucity of available published work broadly investigating their place in the British Army. There is also an apparent lack of published work exploring targeted ethnic minority recruitment and organisational dynamics in the Army. More specifically, there is also no readily available published work looking at the social identity of groups within this particular organisational context. There has been some market research work done on examining the barriers to ethnic minority recruitment in the British Army (COI 2008) . The paradox of this work is that it outlines the difficulties of recruiting from certain sections of the population such as Asian and African communities and has based those difficulties firmly within the cultural values of those communities. It is interesting to reflect that those communities in Britain have come from post colonial Commonwealth countries from which the Army is now recruiting. A shift in cultural values alone seems improbable to explain a reticence from UK based ethnic minority communities about joining the Army. These communities, particularly African communities overseas account for a large proportion of the F&C Serving Personnel in the British Army. One of the limitations of that market research was it did not separate the ethnic groups by social class and educational attainment. Previous work done on career choice of ethnic minorities and the Police identified that these factors were significant contributors to decisions to join the Police Service (Modood and Connor 2004).

The purpose of this research is to understand the interaction between the individual and organisational factors which affect the working experience of F&C Serving Personnel in the British Army. The interactive effects of race, cultural values and nationality on the occupational perspectives and behaviour will be explored. Additionally, the organisational systems and practices that contribute to their organisational life will also be examined.

This present research will explore whether race, cultural values and perceived social position in the organisation impact on how F&C Serving Personnel interact with these ‘key determinants’ to produce an experience of working life in the Army that is unique to them. Working life in the Army includes the affective or social elements of working life (peer bonding, job satisfaction) as well as the normative elements of working life (organisational policies and values). Both of these elements will be explored in this research.

Although the focus of this research primarily lies with the work experiences of F&C Serving Personnel in the Army, it will comparatively examine the working experiences of UK Serving Personnel from both the ethnic minority and white communities. By including data from other ethnic and national groups in the analysis, there can be an exploration of whether those groupings (as variables) are relevant to the experience of being a soldier

in the British Army.

The aims of this research are two fold. The first is to reliably explore the experiences of those who are serving from the Foreign and Commonwealth nations in relation to being in the British Army. The second is to investigate the organisational factors that contribute to those experiences. There is interplay between organisational factors and an employee's perception of the organisation, however there are particular anomalies within this organisation that lead to a distinct organisational identity. This research is exploring what (if any) extent the organisational identity impacts on the social identity of those F&C Serving Personnel.

9. STUDY DESIGN, METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

Design and Methodology:

The study is qualitative in nature and will use focus groups and interviews as the method of collecting data from participants. There will be 12 focus groups as highlighted in Table 1

Table 1: Focus group structure

	Ethnicity	
Nationality	EM	White
F&C	3	3
UK	3	3

Of the three focus groups within each of the cells, there will be two groups comprising of Soldiers and one of Officers. This has been designed to replicate the structure of the Army. Most of the serving personnel are at the junior ranks.

In addition to focus groups with the serving personnel, there will be some semi structured interviews with the senior management of the units and the recruiting and career management officers within the organisation.

The focus group questions have been influenced by an examination of the AFCAS data. This data was split according to the ethnic background and nationality of the sample. Frequency analysis examined the perceptions of fairness (discrimination bullying and harassment) and understanding of the values and ethos of the British Army of the sample. The analysis found that there was a difference between the Foreign and Commonwealth group and White UK respondents. However the sample size was too small to do further statistical analysis involving significance testing.

In order to gain the views of these senior ranks that are responsible for the operational and strategic management of all Serving Personnel, it is proposed that they are interviewed by a Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col) who is a fellow senior ranking officer. The researcher will be in the interview taking notes. The researcher will prepare the interview protocol and train the Lt Col. The rationale for conducting the interviews in this way is to make the dialogue easier, more natural and to encourage better information flow. A Psychologist conducting this part of the research is less likely to interpret the military acronyms, processes and structure in relation to the assignment and management of serving personnel. In addition, this approach demonstrates greater face validity (senior military personnel interviewing senior military personnel), The same Lt Col will be involved in all of the CSM interviews. There will be a semi structured interview script which will cover the key areas of administration, relevant to this study. These interviews (approximately 10) will enable the researchers to build a representative picture of the issues involved in managing the units.

There will also be another Lt Col holding approximately 12 semi structured interviews with recruiters and career managers from the Strand office in London which is where the majority of F&C soldiers who arrive in the UK soldiers go prior to starting their Phase I training.

Data Analysis

The data will be analysed using thematic data analysis. The researchers will use the first 4 focus groups (as represented by table 1 above) to develop a coding framework. The codes that are identified will be applied to the focus group transcripts to report on key issues to the organisation.

Subsequent to the thematic analysis, the PI will use Nvivo to further interrogate the focus group and interview data. This qualitative data analysis package will allow further links and a more detailed analysis of the information. It will identify links between statements and the coding framework. It will also present any new potential codes based on the statements from the transcript that are input.

10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The researchers have considered the ethical issues involved in this piece of work such as confidentiality, anonymity, free will of the participants (see section 17) and the appropriateness of the questions (see section 15). The consent forms will be sent to the participants at least a week in advance of the focus groups in order that potential participants have time to digest the information and seek any further advice.

11. PARTICIPANTS TO BE STUDIED

Number of participants: 72-96 focus group participants (between 6-8 in each focus group x12 focus groups) and 22 interviews (6 recruiter/6 Career Manager/10 CSM)

Lower age limit: 18

Upper age limit: n/a

Gender: males and females

Please provide justification for the sample size:

The sample size is based on the principle of optimal focus group size and satiety. It is suggested that between 6-8 participants is an optimal size. Focus groups and interviews will be run until the saturation point is reached and the researchers are not getting any new information from the participants.

There will be different numbers of soldiers and officers because the majority of F&C serving personnel are soldiers. Whilst this is somewhat reflective of the wider Army structure, as a group, F&C are disproportionately reflected in the lower ranks. Whilst qualitative methodology focuses not on random sampling but on the lived experiences of the individual, the sampling strategy has been guided by the F&C Army structure.

12. SELECTION CRITERIA

Participants will be selected if they are foreign, UK or commonwealth nationals and have been serving in the Army for more than 6 months. Management participants will be recruited on the basis that they recruit, provide career advice to or manage F&C nationals. Nepalese nationals will be excluded from this study due to the particular nature of their recruitment and organisation of a separate brigade.

13. RECRUITMENT

13a. Describe how potential participants will be identified:

Potential participants will be identified initially through their unit from the DASA manpower statistics report. Units that have a high proportion of ethnic minority and foreign and commonwealth serving personnel will be approached.

13b. Describe how potential participants will be approached:

See 14a below

13c. Describe how potential participants will be recruited:

See 14a below

14. CONSENT

14a. Please describe the process you will use when seeking and obtaining consent:

The participant information sheet will be distributed to the chain of command and to the units with a high concentration of F&C personnel. The phone number of the principal investigator is on the information sheet and potential participants will be asked to call if they want to participate in the study. A database will be collated with the participants' details then a consent form will be sent out the participants one week before the focus groups are ready to take place. The corps sergeant major, the recruiting officer and the career manager will be recruited to the study in the same way that the participants are - as volunteers. They will receive a participant information sheet and consent form to sign should they wish to take part.

14b. Will the participants be from any of the following groups?

Under 18: No

Subordinates: No

Prisoners: No

Mental Illness: No

Pregnant or nursing mothers: No

Learning disabilities: No

How will you ensure that participants in the groups listed above are competent to consent to take part in this study?

n/a

14c. Are there any special pressures that might make it difficult for people to refuse to take part in the study? How will you address such issues?

There are no known pressures that might make it difficult for people to refuse participation. At the beginning of the focus group and interviews participants will be reminded that they are free to leave or terminate the discussion if they do not wish to participate. They will be told that their chain of command will not be notified

15. PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT: RISKS, REQUIREMENTS AND BENEFITS

15a. What are the potential hazards, risks or adverse effects associated with the study?

There are no known potential hazards, risks or adverse effects associated with the study.

15b. Does your study involve invasive procedures such as blood taking, muscle biopsy or the administration of a medicinal product? /No

15c. Please indicate the experience of the investigators in the use of these procedures:

n/a

15d. If medical devices are to be used on any participant, do they comply with the requirements of the Medical Devices Directives?

n/a

15e. Please name the locations or sites where the work will be done:

Camberley, Deepcut, Worthy Down, Larkhill, Warminster, Camberley, Hohne, Paderborn

15f. Will group or individual interviews / questionnaires discuss any topics or issues that might be sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting? If so, please list these topics and explain how you will prevent, or respond to, volunteer discomfort:

The focus groups may raise the potentially sensitive issues of discrimination, being treated unequally and unfairly. Being away from friends and family may also be potentially upsetting for some of the participants. The facilitators will be available for 30 mins after the focus groups have finished if any of the participants want to raise any issues that they were uncomfortable with raising during the focus group or debrief about any of the issues that were raised in the focus groups. The facilitators will also have the contact details of the unit welfare officer and the numbers of some appropriate help lines which will be available to distribute should participants request this.

15g. Is it possible that criminal or other disclosures requiring action (e.g. evidence

of professional misconduct) could take place during the study? If yes, give details of what procedures will be put in place to deal with these issues:

It is not expected that any disclosures would take place, however if we are made of any criminal activity we will inform the chain of command. This will be explained in the introductory briefing for the focus groups.

15h. Please describe any expected benefits to the research participant:

Two potential benefits to the participants are that they may have an opportunity to voice their concerns about their working life for the first time. It may also be beneficial for participants to understand that they are contributing to research that has the potential to influence future policy. It may be helpful for participants to see that the organisation is making an attempt to listen to their concerns. This may in itself contribute to a better working environment.

15i. Under what circumstances might a participant not continue with the study, or the study be terminated in part or as a whole?

A participant can withdraw from the study at any stage of the study, without any questions, however if it is during the focus group stage, one of the facilitators will explore if withdrawal is due to welfare issues raised. If this is the case, the measures outlined in 15f will be put in place. The entire study may be terminated if the AG has identified that it is not to go ahead due to resource priority.

16. FINANCIAL INCENTIVES, EXPENSES AND COMPENSATION

16a. Will travel expenses be given?

No, as the researchers are travelling to the sites where the participants are working

16b. Is any financial or other reward, apart from travel expenses, to be given to participants? If yes, please give details and justification:

No

16c. If this is a study in collaboration with a pharmaceutical company or an equipment or medical device manufacturer, please give the name of the company:

N/A

17. CONFIDENTIALITY, ANONYMITY AND DATA STORAGE

17a. What steps will be taken to ensure confidentiality (including the confidentiality and physical security of the research data)? Give details of the anonymisation procedures to be used, and at what stage they will be introduced:

Participants will not have access to transcripts due to the fact that the discussions will be composite discussions and not a transcript of an individual person. As the focus group participant would have been in the in the group, allowing them to have the transcript would be to deny the other participants confidentiality.

All transcripts will be password protected and available only to the researchers. No names will be taken or recorded on the transcripts; therefore the possibility of identifying participants will be avoided.

17b. Who will have access to the records and resulting data?

The researchers in DAPS Science will have access to the records

17c. Where, and for how long, do you intend to store the consent forms and other records?

The consent forms and other records will be stored in a secure cabinet in DAPS Science. They will be stored until the report has been distributed and there has been a post project evaluation with the relevant stakeholders.

18. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

The participant information sheet and consent form should be composed according to the guidelines and submitted with this form.

The following, where applicable, are attached to this form (please indicate):

- Participant Information Sheet
- Consent Form
- Letter of other research ethics committee approval or other approvals
- focus group guide
- CVs of named investigators

Please list any other supporting documents:

Comments about form

If you have any suggestions for improving this form please e-mail them to ethics@mod.uk

References

Guest, G, Bunce, A, Johnson, L (2006) How Many Interviews Are Enough?: An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability. *Field Methods*. 18: 59-82

The Daily Mail. (2007) 7000 Foreigners in the British Army.

Conner, H, Tyers, C, Modood, T, Hillage, J (2004). Why the difference? A closer look at Higher Education Minority Ethnic Graduates. Department for Education and skills. Research Report No.552.

COI (2008) Barriers to Ethnic Minority Recruitment in the British Army.

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH STUDIES

Title of Study: An exploration of the working lives of foreign and commonwealth serving personnel.

Ministry of Defence Research Ethics Committee Reference:

- **The nature, aims and risks of the research have been explained to me. I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet and understand what is expected of me. All my questions have been answered fully to my satisfaction.**
- **I understand that if I decide at any time during the research that I no longer wish to participate in this project, I can notify the researchers involved and be withdrawn from it immediately without having to give a reason. I also understand that I may be withdrawn from it at any time, and that in neither case will this be held against me in subsequent dealings with the Ministry of Defence.**
- **I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.**
- **I agree to volunteer as a participant for the study described in the information sheet and give full consent.**
- **This consent is specific to the particular study described in the Participant Information Sheet attached and shall not be taken to imply my consent to participate in any subsequent study or deviation from that detailed here.**

Participant's Statement:

I _____

agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Participant Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Signed

Date

**Study Title 'An Exploration of the Working Lives of Foreign and Commonwealth
Serving Personnel'**

The experience of Army life for Foreign and Commonwealth Serving Personnel and those they serve with.

Invitation to take part

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please read the following information carefully and talk to others about the study if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you want to take part.

What is the purpose of the research?

The aim of this study is to find out what working life is like for Foreign and Commonwealth serving personnel and their colleagues. It will also look to see how any policies and procedures related to Foreign and Commonwealth Serving Personnel play a part in shaping your working life.

Who is doing this research?

The study is being undertaken by Balissa Greene who works for the Directorate for Army Personnel Strategy.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part because you are a Soldier or Officer who is from a unit where there are Foreign and Commonwealth serving personnel.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part in the study is entirely voluntary. The study is described in full in this participant information sheet. If you have any further questions please contact Balissa Greene on 01980 618078. If you decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form to show you have agreed to take part. However, you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason. This will not affect your Service career in any way.

What will I be asked to do?

If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to participate in a group discussion which covers various topics related to your job, the organisation and its impact on your social life. No questions will be directed to you individually, instead, they will be asked of the group as a whole and you are invited to contribute to the discussion that the group is having. You may choose to respond or not at any point during the discussion. Your participation in the discussions will be completely voluntary and will last approximately one hour. We do not anticipate any risks or discomfort to you from being in this study.

What are the benefits of taking part?

One of the benefits of participating in this study is that you will have the opportunity to provide feedback to those who make decisions about FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH recruitment, manning and support.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no disadvantages or risks associated with taking part in the study.

Can I withdraw from the research and what will happen if I don't want to carry on?

You can withdraw at any stage without giving a reason, although telling us why may help the way we conduct research in the future.

Will my taking part or not taking part affect my Service career?

Your decision to take part will have no effect on your career.

Whom do I contact if I have any questions or a complaint?

Please contact the Principal Researcher Balissa Greene on email: balissa.greene716@mod.uk. However, if you do not wish to complain to the Principal Researcher please contact the MoDREC secretariat email: SIT-StrategyCollabISTA2@mod.uk

Will my records be kept confidential?

Any information obtained during this study will remain confidential as to your identity. You may ask the researcher for copies of all papers, reports and other published or presented material. All information will be subject to best practice in principles of research. Your information will only be seen by those who are doing the research. The information that we keep will also comply with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Please be aware that any criminal or other serious disclosures requiring action discovered during the course of the study will be passed to the Chain of Command, depending on the issue.

Data, including paper records and computer files, will be held for 100 years after the end of the study in conditions appropriate for the storage of personal information.

Who is organising the research?

The study is being organized by the Directorate for Army Personnel Strategy

What will happen to the results of this study?

The results of the study will be shared with all of the lead directorates responsible for supporting F&C personnel and used to inform the review the policies affecting F&C personnel and those that they work with. It will also be written up to form a series of papers which will be considered by researchers specialising in this area.

Who has reviewed the study?

All research on MoD/Service personnel is looked at by an independent group of people, called a Research Ethics Committee which has been engaged to protect your safety, rights, well-being and dignity. This study has been reviewed and approved by the MoD Research Ethics Committee.²¹

Further information and contact details.

If you require any further information please contact the Principal Researcher Balissa Greene: balissa.greene716@mod.uk.

²¹ This study complies and at all times will comply with the Declaration of Helsinki⁸ as adopted at the 52nd WMA General Assembly, Edinburgh, October 2000 and with the Additional Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine, concerning Biomedical Research, (Strasbourg 25.1.2005).

Balissa Greene
23/08/10

Appendix 3.2 MODREC Approval Letter



MOD Research Ethics Committee (General)

**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
Level 1, Zone K, Main Building,
Whitehall
London SW1A 2HB**

telephone: 020 8877 9329
e-mail: robert@foxlinton.org
mobile: 07764616756

Miss Balissa Greene
Senior Psychologist
HQLF Trenchard Lines
Upavon
Pewsey
Wiltshire
SN9 6BE

Ref: 132/Gen/10

24th March 2010

Dear Miss Greene,

Re: An exploration of the interpersonal and organisational factors that affect the working lives of foreign and commonwealth serving personnel – version 4 (132/Gen/10)

Thank you for submitting this protocol for ethical review and making minor amendments.

I am happy to give ethical approval for this research and should be grateful if you would send me a copy of your final report on completion of the study. Please would you also send me a brief interim report in one year's time if the study is still ongoing.

This approval is conditional upon adherence to the protocol – please let me know if any amendment becomes necessary. A further condition is that, prior to starting the research, you provide confirmation that your PhD supervisor has approved this version of the protocol.

Yours sincerely,

Chairman MOD Research Ethics Committee (General)

Appendix 3.3 Focus Group and Interview Schedule

A) About your job

1. How satisfied are you with your career development?
2. Do you feel you have control over your career? (What are your opportunities for promotion?)

B) About working life: Relational

1. What is your relationship like with the Chain of Command?
2. What is your relationship like with your colleagues/ work mates?

C). Identity: Social and Organisational

1. In your opinion, what is the relationship like between the F&C and non F&C soldiers in your unit? Do you think this is the same for the Army as a whole?
2. What can the organisation do to influence that relationship in a more positive way?
3. (a) Do you feel that non F&C soldiers understand your culture and ways of living and working? (F&C participants)

(b) Do you feel that F&C soldiers understand your culture and ways of living and working? (British participants)
4. Does the fact that you are from a Foreign and Commonwealth country ever stand out in your unit?

(Follow up) - in what situation does this happen?

5. How relevant is your background to living and working in the British Army?
(Follow up) – do you think it is different for UK personnel

6. Do you feel you have to change the way you behave and who you socialise with to be accepted in the Army?

D) Close down

7. If you had to do it all again, would you choose the Army as a career?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Not sure

Appendix 3.4 Coding Framework and Themes

Balissa Greene
23/08/10

Appendix 3.5 Document Analysis