



# UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

## The Burden of Being the ‘*Token*’: The Exploration of Ethnicity, Professional Identity, and Career Navigation amongst Ethnic Minority Managers in Sweden.

Master Thesis in Strategic HRM and Labour relations

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# ABSTRACT

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**Purpose:** This study aims to explore how ethnicity shapes navigation as a career practice for ethnic minority managers in the Swedish organization.

**Theoretical framework:** The theoretical framework for this study is based on the following understandings. Firstly, that navigation is seen and described as a career practice. Secondly, that this form of career practice is influenced by ethnicity, of which we maintain is also a socially constructed phenomenon. Thirdly, we highlight the concepts of tokenism and meritocracy and their interplay between ethnic identity, professional identity, and navigation. Lastly, we employ the well-established concepts of the Glass Ceiling, the Glass Cliff, and the Labyrinth, to explore and explain the different stages and barriers in the careers of ethnic minority managers in Sweden.

**Methodology:** Qualitative study with semi-structured in-depth interviews.

**Results:** Results of this study revealed that ethnicity had an impact on navigation as a career practice for ethnic minority managers in Sweden. The influence of ethnicity, or more precisely, belonging to an ethnic minority group, appeared in the form of tokenism. The implications of tokenism were mainly described as barriers by interviewees in various ways. Data illustrated the appearance of these barriers at the different junctures of the interviewees' career trajectories, and seemed to force the interviewees' to consciously and unconsciously react, test, and eliminate different methods and strategies. These methods were both tokenistic and meritocratic in nature and were employed as a way to balance home/work expectations, compensate, or even overcompensate, for a lack of informal influence, and avoid all of the negative implications associated with being a token. Moreover, they strongly suggest a correlation between the Glass Ceiling, Glass Cliff, and Labyrinth when used as theories, as well as an interconnectedness and inter-reliance between the effects of the barriers and the methods employed to navigate past them.

**Key words:** Career navigation, professional identity, ethnic identity, ethnic minorities, management, career barriers, the glass ceiling, the glass cliff, the labyrinth, tokenism, and meritocracy.

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# I. INTRODUCTION

Is a *career* something that we *have*, or is it something that we *do*? Should it be viewed as a *noun*, or practiced as a *verb*? A career can be defined as '*the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time*' (Arthur et al, 1989:8). This definitions' referral to a career as an *evolving sequence of experiences*, strongly implies that a career is in its very nature fluid, rather than something static or fixed. Its fluidity is defined by the activities that constitute these *work experiences*, and like all activity-based practices, these work experiences are shaped, understood, and reproduced by society (Nagel, 1994). An example of an activity-based practice in connection with careers, is that of *navigation*. Navigation, or to navigate, in regards to careers, is to see, foresee and to find one's way on, in, or across any given labour market activity including education, unemployment, paid/non paid work, and on/off the job training. Moreover, we will argue that navigation can be viewed as one of many *career practices*, that when placed in sequence, shape and define a person's work experiences over time. By assuming that *navigation as a career practice* is something that *one does*, we can also assume that there exists variables that effect *how one does it*, and perhaps more importantly, *why one does it*. An example of such a variable is *ethnicity*. The negative relationship between ethnicity and careers is well represented in research (Campbell, 1967; Chung-Herrera & Lankau, 2005; Cook & Glass, 2014). Studies have revealed that this negative relationship has taken on the forms of organizational discriminatory barriers to the careers of ethnic minorities. These discriminatory career barriers have been causally linked to higher ethnic minority unemployment, lower job tenures, and an underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in management positions (Statistics Sweden, 2013; Alden & Hammarstedt, 2014). Despite the overwhelming evidence highlighting the difficulties ethnic minorities' face in their attempts to break into both the labour market and managerial positions, there is a small percentage of ethnic

minorities whom have had success (Alden & Hammarstedt, 2014). A clear example is that of the ethnic minority manager. Although incredibly underrepresented, the success of ethnic minority managers challenges the underlying assumptions of much research and statistics (OECD Indicators of Immigrant Integration, 2012; Eagly & Chin, 2010). Their success also suggests the employment of an arguably more effective career navigation strategy. We argue that this phenomenon is heavily underrepresented in research, both in Sweden and internationally. More specifically, we argue that there exists little research addressing the effects of ethnicity on the strategically coordinated *activities* that shape the career practice of navigation for ethnic minorities as a whole, and even less research exploring the effect ethnicity has on the career navigation of ethnic minorities who have successfully penetrated into a managerial position (Wyatt & Silvester, 2015). We argue that this *gap* in research has had various negative implications. Firstly, this gap in research has led to uninformed policies, procedures, and strategies that fail to address the challenges associated with discrimination and equal opportunity. Secondly, it has resulted in underdeveloped diversity efforts within organizations and a restricted understanding of career development in regards to ethnic minorities. Thirdly, it has served to undermine the efforts of those managing diverse professionals, such as HRM specialists by rendering them blind to how much work really must be done in order to create an environment where equal opportunity, in accordance with Swedish legislation (Discrimination Act 2008:567), is standard. Lastly, it has led to the absence of both culture and training programs that can help in the reduction of stereotyping, as well as talent retention initiatives geared towards ethnic minority professionals in senior positions.

In light of this gap in research and its implications, we argue that in order to effectively understand how ethnic minority managers navigate in their careers, it is vital to obtain a holistic understanding

of the effects ethnicity has on navigation as a career practice. This understanding can then be conceptualized in both its entirety, as well as in its' individual stages.

This report draws attention to this significant gap in research and discusses its wider implications by developing understandings into some of the complexities ethnicity brings to navigation as a career practice in organizations in Sweden. In doing so, this study can open up avenues for the creation of solutions that can serve to remedy the above stated implications of this gap. These aspirations are reflected in the following purpose and research question:

***Purpose*** – To explore how *ethnicity* shapes *navigation as a career practice* for ethnic minority managers in the Swedish organization.

***Research Question*** – How do ethnic minority managers in Sweden navigate past barriers in their careers?



## 1.2 DISPOSITION

This report will start by providing an introduction to the labour market situation for ethnic minorities in Sweden, highlighting the difficulties they face breaking into both the labour market and managerial positions. It will then present earlier studies and draw from international research, categorize, as well as chronologically map the major themes, assumptions, and implications that have helped to shape the academic discussion around *ethnicity* and *navigation as a career practice*. It will then present the theoretical foundation of which the analysis is based on, highlighting navigation as a career practice, ethnicity as a social construct, and the concepts of the *Glass Ceiling*, *Glass Cliff*, and the *Labyrinth*. In addition we will employ these concepts as theories, and then describe their limitations. In continuation, this report will illustrate the research methodology that has been employed, explaining and rationalizing the choices of methods, participant selection, data collection, interview process, and data interpretation. Furthermore, we will draw attention to data quality concerns, limitations and ethical issues. We will then present the empirical findings and analysis, and provide a summarized conclusion of results. Lastly, we will discuss the limitations of this study, provide suggestions for future research, as well as address the potential implications for Human Resource Management and organizations.

### 1.3 LABOUR MARKET & MANAGEMENT SITUATION FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES IN SWEDEN

This study explores how ethnicity shapes the career navigation of ethnic minorities in Sweden. It is therefore critical to obtain an understanding of the current career labour market situation in Sweden for ethnic minorities.

As of 2013, there were approximately 1 500 000 foreign-born in Sweden, accounting for more than 15 percent of the total population. Swedish integration statistics illustrate the difficulties foreign-born face when attempting to enter the labour market, generally having a lower employment rate than those that are Swedish-born (Alden & Hammarstedt, 2014). In 2009-10, Sweden had the largest gap between native and immigrant employment rates amid OECD countries (OECD Indicators of Immigrant Integration, 2012).

Studies show that young migrants have a much weaker position on the Swedish labour market than do young people from the majority population (Lundqvist, 2010). The combination of being young and having a 'migrant background' is particularly critical, due to discrimination, having parents with a low education level, and the fact that young migrants tend to look for jobs at younger ages than young 'Swedes' (Behtoui, 2007). Research highlighting the difficulties facing young ethnic minorities in their career navigation has pointed to the negative effects of the 'first in - last out' principle (IFAU, 2003; 1982:80, Employment Protection Act). This principle, although negotiable (1976:580 Co-Determination Act § 11-13; 1982:80 Employment Protection Act, § 2 st 3), allows organizations to arrange lay-offs that deteriorate the positions of ethnic groups in the labour market. This is due to the difficulties ethnic minorities' face in penetrating the labour market, resulting in less accumulation of employment tenure as well as the need to navigate past barriers during periods

of organizational restructuring (IFAU, 2003:4), where this principle potentially serves as a mechanism of institutional discrimination (see Sampson, 2008).

Statistics reveal that new arrivals suffer from the highest rate of unemployment, and that the chances for employment as a foreign-born increases the longer one has lived in Sweden (Statistics Sweden, 2013; Integration Office 2004: 134). Previous research has shown that ethnic minorities in Sweden often take on positions below their qualifications out of necessity (Bjurling, 2004), and statistics illustrate that the most common jobs for foreign-born are care assistants, personal assistants, assistant nurses, hotel cleaners and office cleaning personnel (Statistics Sweden, 2013).

When turning to managerial positions, approximately 8 percent of Swedish-born men and 4 percent of Swedish-born women have positions of management, and the same statistics can also be found amongst immigrants from the other Nordic countries (Alden & Hammarstedt, 2014). Previous research has also highlighted this, revealing the existence of an implicit status hierarchy among countries of origin, with immigrants from other Nordic countries rarely being considered as foreigners. The closer the immigrants' country of origin is to Sweden, and the greater economic and cultural influence this country has, the more an immigrant is perceived as 'Swedish' (National Board of Health and Welfare 1999:9).

Employed managers from non-European countries are heavily underrepresented. For example, among employed males from Africa, only 1.6 percent were employed as managers and amongst African females the number is below 1 percent. Despite the positive impact length of stay has a on both employment in general and employment as manager, statistics reveal that amongst men of

non-European origin that have stayed in Sweden between 11-20 years, the number of managers is less than 3 percent. For females with non-European origin employed as managers, the number is less than 2 percent (Alden & Hammarstedt, 2014).

To explain these vast differences between Swedish-born and non-Swedish-born in the labour market and amongst managers, researchers highlight several areas such as human capital (See Becker, 1993), social network, language, cultural knowledge and skills, discrimination, normative assumptions about migrants, a foreign sounding name (Khosravi, 2012), and blatant racism (Alden & Hammarstedt, 2014; Lundqvist, 2010). Further support of this is shown in a survey of Swedish managers made in 2005, exposing that managers themselves saw education and personal contacts as the key success factors for reaching a management position. This survey also reported, that to reach a top position, a person needs a long period of accumulation of field-specific knowledge, to learn the internal power game and the invisible rules, and to make connections (Göransson 2005).

## II. LINKS TO PREVIOUS RESEARCH

This section will draw from international research, categorize, as well as chronologically map the major themes, assumptions, and implications that have helped to shape the academic discussion around ethnicity and career navigation.

Research exploring the effects of ethnicity on navigation as a career practice has its historical roots in the US and UK. During the 1960's the majority of academic research developed from the study of race, stereotypes, and the perceptions of group differences amongst blacks' and whites in the workplace (Campbell, 1967; Kanter, 1977). Findings from previous research during this period strongly suggested that the stigmatized view of blacks' by whites' in the workplace served as a major barrier to the career progression of blacks' (Nakanishi, 1989; Milliken & Martins, 1996). The major actors highlighted in this academic discussion were typically whites', society, and the organization. These findings are confirmed and expanded on by modern research that describe and reveal the existence of stereotypes (Chung-Herrera & Lankau, 2005), categorization, and negative perceptions of ethnic minorities by the dominant groups in the organization (Rosette et al, 2008; Livingston et al, 2012). Furthermore, research from Sampson (2008) highlights the manifestation of stereotypes, categorizing, and negative perceptions in institutions, referring to the notion of *institutional discrimination* or *institutional racism*. This notion refers to the negative or unfair treatment that takes place at, or is performed by, an institution as a result of the structure, organization, or practices of that institution that effect the opportunities of particular groups of people (Henkel, Dovidio, & Gaertner, 2006).

Expanding on research from the 1960's, in the 1970's and 1980's we see a turn in focus to the interplay between ethnicity, professional identity (Crocker & Major, 1989), and careers (Astin, 1984; Isaijw, 1974, Dormon 1979, & Yinger, 1985). This interplay is a cornerstone of Identity theory and is rooted in the theory of Symbolic Interactionism. According to Identity theory, ethnic identity is viewed as one of the many identities contained within the self (Shibutani & Kwan, 1965; Haas & Shaffir, 1978; Brinkerhoff & MacKie, 1984). Results from previous research strongly suggest that ones' interaction with symbols contributes to the construction of ones' identity (Stryker, 1985; Burke, 1980). Previous research also reveals that ethnic minorities who show more commitment to their own ethnic identity are more likely to fall prey to, and be the subject of, ethnic organizational stereotypes than those ethnic minorities that show less commitment. These negative stereotypes can serve as labels of inferiority pushed down from the dominant identity group, causing the stereotyped group to slowly take on the identity represented by these stereotypes (Atewologun & Singh, 2010). Research has linked this phenomenon to the concept of professional identity construction, which refers to one's professional self-concept built on qualities, principles, values, motives, and experiences (Ibarra, 1999; Schein, 1978). In addition, previous research points out that the creation of these self-identities is often used as a method to segregate different identity groups from one another (White & Burke, 1987) and this self-reinforcing homo-sociality seems to intensify higher up the hierarchy (Kanter, 1977; Tharenou, Latimer & Conroy, 1994). Research links these negative implications describing them as attributes of the solo status that many ethnic or gender groups acquire in the organization (Kandola, 2004). This solo status has been referred to as *tokenism*, and research has revealed that the perceptions of stigmatized groups concerning their high visibility as a token, had a negative effect on job satisfaction resulting in performance pressures, isolation, intense scrutiny, and negative performance evaluations (Niemann & Dovidio, 1998; Kanter, 1977; Thompson & Sekaquaptewa, 2002). These negative ramifications of token or

solo status are enhanced when negative racial or gender stereotypes are relevant to performance expectations, as with managerial roles (Thompson & Sekaquaptewa, 2002; Eagly & Chin, 2010).

Ethnic grouping was the predominant rhetoric from the late 1980's and moving into the 1990's, laying the foundation for a stream of research relevant to the topic of career progression in the organization (Phoenix, 2006). These new themes focused on the negative relationship between ethnicity, gender, and career progression (Brah & Phoenix, 2013), while addressing the significant underrepresentation of ethnic minorities and females in management and leadership roles (Bush, Glover, & Sood, 2006). These themes spurred the creation of theories and concepts such as the *Glass Ceiling*, *Glass Cliff*, and *Intersectionality*.

The *Glass Ceiling* argues that women and ethnic minorities can only climb so high in the organization until they reach an unbreakable barrier (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986). The implications of this phenomenon are highlighted in research produced between the Glass Ceiling's creation and up to the present. According to several studies, implications of the Glass Ceiling include the manifestation of workforce disadvantages for ethnic minorities that appear in the form of unfavorable organizational practices and cultures that develop into group stereotypes and perceptions about the abilities and effectiveness of minority employees (Thompson & Sekaquaptewa, 2002; Hosoda, Nguyen, & Stone-Romero, 2011). In doing so it endorses 'ideal prototypes' - where people unconsciously have an inbuilt view of what a leader should look like and thus believing they are acting equitably when appointing new leaders (Shah & Shaikh, 2010; Ryan, Haslam, Hersby, & Bongiorno, 2007). Research also points out that despite the presence of some expectations regarding considerate and supportive qualities, most managerial roles are strongly infused with cultural masculinity, especially as these roles are interpreted by men (e.g.,

Atwater, Brett, Waldman, DiMare, & Hayden, 2004; Schein, 2001). Given the commonness of such stereotypes and their propensity to function below conscious awareness, fully qualified individuals from “outsider” groups often appear to lack the “right stuff” for management (Heilman & Eagly, 2008; Leslie, King, Bradley, & Hebl, 2008). As a consequence, previous Glass Ceiling research clearly indicates that these patterns serve to reduce the ethnic minorities desire to achieve success in the organization (Ragins et al., 1998). Furthermore, research suggests that these negative perceptions held by ethnic minorities have a mediating effect on the relationship between career interests and career objectives, as well as a negative relationship between ability and actual occupational achievement (Arbona, 1990; Lent et al., 1994). In addition, and as a result, implications highlighted in previous research indicate a pattern of smaller amounts of minorities in the training pipeline as well as lower on the job tenures (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995; Ragins et al., 1998; Jackson, 2001; Sonnert & Holton, 2006).

Another concept emerging in the late 90’s was that of *intersectionality*. Intersectionality assumes that there exists an overlapping of inequalities where the intersection off two minority categories (i.e. black and woman) constitute a distinct social position (black woman) that produces unique forms of disadvantage which cannot be accounted for by adding together the single categories (Crenshaw, 1991; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). Largely linked to identity studies, previous research has indicated that this situation of ‘double jeopardy’ has a direct negative effect on the identity construction, conceptualization, and operationalization, forcing the individual to attempt to divide or suppress (Sartore & Cunningham, 2006) one of these identities in order to fit into the norms of the organization (Parent et al., 2013; Corlett & Marvin, 2014). Furthermore, results from research investigating regimes of inequality have expanded on the findings revealed from intersectionality research underscoring the additional variable of class (Acker, 2006). Following



the theme of gender and careers, Williams (1992) expands on the academic discussions of gender, glass ceilings, and intersectionality by introducing the concept of the Glass Escalator, which refers to how men in women dominated industries advance to managerial positions faster than women.

Between the years 2000 and 2010, and parallel to the evolution of concepts such as the Glass Ceiling, the study of the relationship between ethnicity and organizational careers largely focused on the mechanisms of exclusion and how ethnic minorities experience them in the organizational context (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Fearful & Kamenou, 2006). In 2005 we see the emergence of the *Glass Cliff*, an extension of the Glass Ceiling, that rests on the assumption that even when ethnic minorities successfully break through the ceiling of glass they are often placed in precarious positions of leadership where their position is continually threatened and in question (Ryan & Haslam 2005). Implications uncovered in previous research shows that ethnic minorities, like women, in these positions are set up to fail by being given unmanageable workloads, high risk assignments, and projects that are less desirable (Hewlett et al, 2008; Bruckmuller et al, 2014) In addition to this, research shows that ethnic minority managers may also experience hostility, resistance, and challenges to their authority by firm insiders (Heilman, Block, Martell, 1995; Kanter, 1977). As a result, previous research illustrates a pattern of deteriorating attitudes, loss of hope, mounting frustration, and stress developed by studied ethnic minority leaders, all having a direct negative effect on their performance and engagement in the organization (Mackay & Etienne, 2006; Caver & Livers, 2002).

All be it few, previous studies have explored the experiences of ethnic minorities and their perceptions of both the barriers and facilitators to their career progression and professional development in comparison to their white counterparts (Wyatt & Silvester, 2015; Stanley, 2009).

Expanding on this theme, we see previous research employing concepts such as the Firewall, referring to a wall of which one can pass through with the right password (Bendl & Schmidt, 2010), as well as the *Labyrinth*, which highlights the intricate maze that individuals must navigate through in order to reach a position of management (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Previous Labyrinth research reveals that the strategies used by ethnic minority leaders to navigate their paths to leadership were heavily based on the utilization of formal methods, such as focusing on working longer and harder in their roles, learning how to pass formal promotion assessments, participating in formal networks, and development and mentoring schemes in order to progress. In contrast, white managers treated formal and informal routes as equally legitimate ways to progress their careers. Furthermore, results from previous Labyrinth research illustrates that ethnic minority managers perceived themselves to have less influence over informal behaviors, such as using self-promotion to develop network contacts and access informal support (Wyatt & Silvester, 2015; Stanley, 2009). Social psychology research on leader–member exchanges has also pointed out that ethnically different members received less support, fewer resources, and less autonomy and discretion at work from their managers (Greenhaus et al., 1990; Schaffer & Riordan, 2013). Research studying the success factors of managers in Sweden, points to personal contacts as a key factor (Göransson, 2005). Despite reports showing that ethnic minorities in certain situations may have had similar access to mentoring relationships (Ragins, 2010), there is substantial evidence proving that ethnic minorities are less likely to find influential mentors who are racially similar (Blickle et al., 2009; Dreher & Cox, 1996). As a result, ethnic minorities have fewer possibilities to create quality relationships with individuals who are able and willing to share information about the more hidden aspects of organizational operations that is often vital to advance to higher level positions (Blass et al., 2007). In addition, research shows that ethnic minority managers often find it necessary to tone down

aspects of their cultural identity in order to assimilate themselves more effectively into organizational networks (Davidson, 1997; Dawson, 2006; Fearfull & Kamenou, 2006).

### III. THEORY

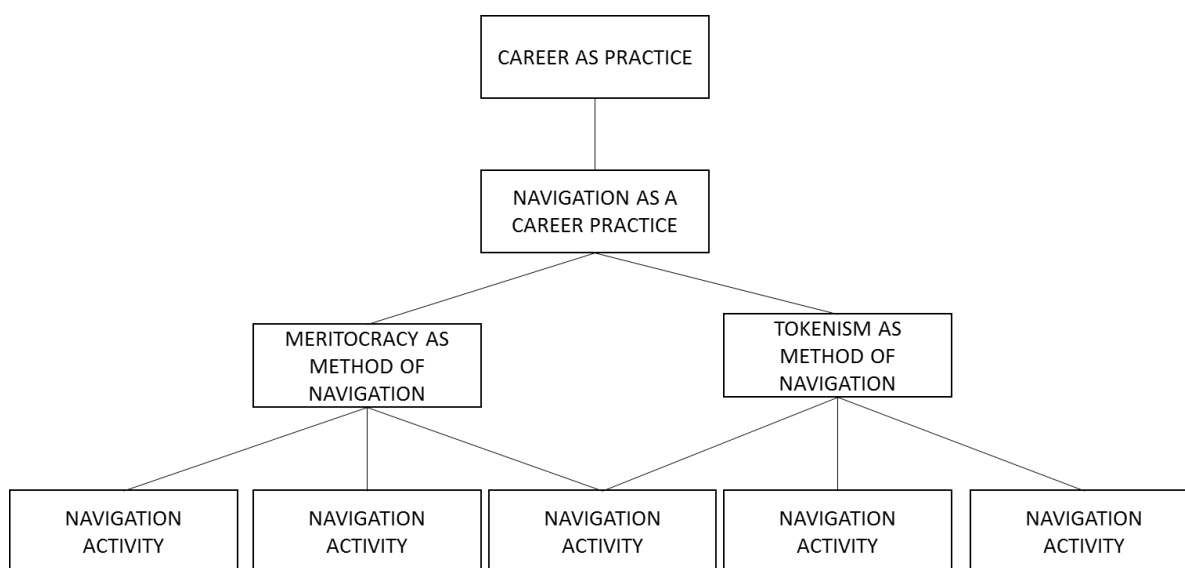
The purpose of this study is to obtain a deeper qualitative understanding of the way(s) *ethnicity* shapes how ethnic minority managers in Sweden *navigate* in their careers. In order for this to be achieved, it is imperative to establish this reports theoretical understandings of *navigation* and *ethnicity*. In regards to navigation, this study will focus on its employment as a career practice. In regards to ethnicity, we are referring to its' function as a barrier to navigation. Further, we argue that in order to establish a theoretical understanding of these concepts, a categorization of the methods of navigation and barriers created by ethnicity, is required. We maintain that this categorization calls for a theoretical framework consisting of relevant concepts of career progression. These concepts, when applied as theories, must be capable of addressing the contextual relationship between ethnicity and navigation, and capable of providing a language that can be embraced to better communicate and conceptualize the different junctures where these barriers exist.

This section will present navigation as a career practice, it will present the concepts of meritocracy and tokenism as the two major categories for the different methods that define navigation, and it will present ethnicity as a social construct that manifest itself in the form of barriers. It is the view of the researchers that the concepts of meritocracy and tokenism can be used as tools to categorize both the barriers and the methods of navigation, and will therefore also be applied as tools to categorize the barriers that appear due to ethnicity. Lastly, the section will present the concepts of the *Glass Ceiling*, *Glass Cliff*, and *Labyrinth* as theories, and as tools to talk to the different junctures where these barriers to navigation exist.

### 3.1 NAVIGATION AS A CAREER PRACTICE

In this research report, *navigation* is defined in terms of its role as a career practice. The activities that define navigation as a practice include seeing, foreseeing and to find one's way on, in, or across any given labour market activity, including paid/non paid work, education, unemployment, and on/off the job training. Activities also encompass all coordinated activities employed to identify, overcome, and avoid barriers in one's career trajectory. A *practice* can theoretically be seen as a series of synchronised activities with a purpose of obtaining some form of socially established goal or worth (Bourdieu, 1990). These activities are repeated and employed in different combinations, aiding in the reaching of these socially established goals (Giddens, 1984), and can often take place on an unconscious level (Nicolini, 2012). Successful navigation is largely dependent on the barriers one faces and the methods one employs to defeat them. Methods of navigation past barriers in this study took on variations of one of the following two forms: *Meritocracy* and or *Tokenism*. The researchers in this study view these concepts as connected as illustrated below in Figure 1.

Figure 1. NAVIGATION AS A CAREER PRACTICE



## MERITOCRACY & TOKENISM AS FORMS OF NAVIGATION

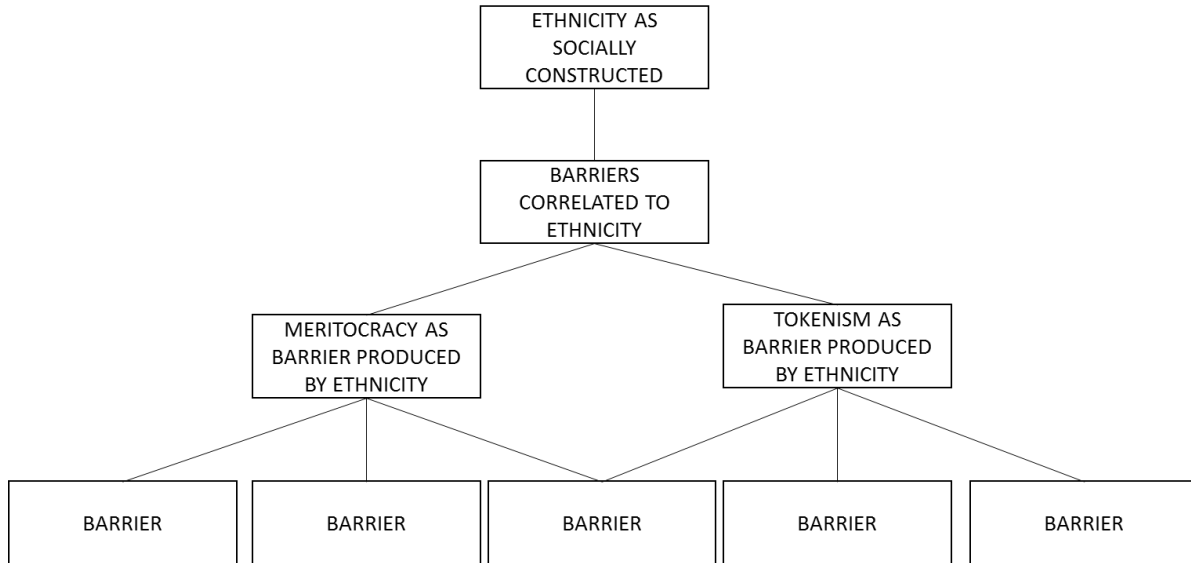
In regards to navigation, meritocratic methods of navigation are heavily based on the attributes of a system in which “*merit or talent is the basis for sorting people into positions and distributing rewards*” (Scully, 1997: 413). In this system, everyone has equal chances for advancement and obtain rewards solely based on one’s individual merit efforts, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, class, or other non-merit factors (Castilla & Benard, 2010). In contrast to meritocratic methods of navigation, tokenistic methods of navigation reflect the attributes of the numerical underrepresentation of minority group members in an organization (Kanter, 1977), while the member of the underrepresented group is referred to as a *token*. This study links tokenism as a form of navigation to the concept of *boundary permeability* – which refers to the extent to which members of stigmatized groups can, by using individual effort and ability, travel from their stigmatized group into a more advantaged position or group (Wright, 1997). This link has helped to expand the definition of tokenism as illustrated in the following citation - “*any intergroup context in which the boundaries between the advantaged and disadvantaged groups are not entirely closed, but where there exists severe restrictions on access to advantaged positions on the basis of group membership*” (Wright, 2001, p. 224). Furthermore, and in regards to the methods of navigation of ethnic minorities, this study views tokenism (boundary permeability) and *professional identity construction* (Ibarra, 1999; Schein, 1978) as highly correlated, often serving as practical extensions of each other. Professional identity construction refers to one’s professional self-concept built on qualities, principles, values, motives, and experiences (Ibarra, 1999; Schein, 1978). The notion of professional identity is embedded in the concept of personal identity. Membership in a profession influences self-definition and shapes how others think about an individual (Ibarra, 1999). How the individual views herself is shaped in three ways. First, professional identity is the product of the socialization process where one is provided with

information regarding the meanings associated with a profession (Fine, 1996). Second, individuals modify and acclimate their professional identity during periods of career transition (Ibarra, 1999; Nicholson, 1984). Finally, life as well as work experiences influence professional identity by clarifying one's priorities and self-understanding (Schein, 1978).

### 3.2 ETHNICITY

*Ethnicity* refers to the ways in which ethnic borders, identities, and cultures, are assigned, defined, as well as fashioned, by social interaction both within and outside ethnic communities (Moerman, 1965). The source, narrative, and shape of ethnicity reflect the imaginative choices of individuals and groups as they understand themselves and others in ethnic ways. Through the activities and labels of ethnic groups, their opponents, political authorities, and economic interest groups, boundaries of ethnicity are constructed isolating some populations and unifying others (Barth, 1969). Through the construction of culture and identity, individuals and groups try to understand the complexities of ethnic boundaries and meaning (Moerman, 1974). The creation of identity and culture is due to the interplay between structure and agency. This interplay is acted out by ethnic groups and the larger society on one side, as they form and reform their definition of themselves and their culture (Nagel, 1994), and external social, economic, and political actors and activities that form and reform ethnic groups and definitions on another. Examples of the negative impact of this interplay between structure and agency can be seen in the organization in the forms of meritocracy (Castilla & Benard, 2010) and tokenism (Kanter, 1977). We argue that these concepts are interconnected as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. ETHNICITY'S CORRELATION TO CAREER BARRIERS



#### MERITOCRACY & TOKENISM AS BARRIERS PRODUCED BY ETHNICITY

Barriers that appear with meritocratic roots can manifest in formal organizational process such as performance evaluations and performance incentives, which can be heavily biased with discriminatory judgements occurring at several stages (Castilla, 2008; Dench, 2006). Moreover, managers in organizations that promote meritocracy are more likely to show bias in favour of men over equally performing women, when converting employee performance evaluations into payments and other key career outcomes. This has been referred to as the “paradox of meritocracy” (Castilla & Benard, 2010). Barriers that are tokenistic in nature have been argued to be more subtle. Although it is arguable that organizations no longer overtly exclude stigmatized groups, there does exist possible explanations for the continual disparities. Some (see Eagly, 2004; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005) argue that the once overt exclusion has taken on more subtle forms of prejudice and have led to practices and situations that help to preserve group-based inequality in the organization (Richard & Wright, 2010). One of these practices is tokenism, and can be viewed as



a socially constructed and negotiated product of the negative effects of ethnicity (Kanter, 1977). We argue that one of these effects of tokenism is the construction of a *stigmatized cultural identity* (Goffman, 1963). A stigmatized cultural identity is one in which members of a group are presumed to be contaminated or mediocre, resulting in a stained identity that prevents easy inclusion in society and labour market. This notion of inferiority by members of society can potentially result in interpersonal discrimination (Crocker & Major, 1989) and this stigmatization can marginalize individuals by decreasing their identity to one-dimensional characteristics (Prasad et al., 2007). Despite the argument that professional roles are prestigious and provide the role holder with autonomy (Benveniste, 1987) and, often, a degree of privilege, stigmatized individuals are often accorded little prestige and/or privilege because their identities are tainted (Slay & Smith, 2011). Moreover, due to the nature of this study, which included both men and women, we must address the *intersectionality* (Crenshaw, 1991) between gender and ethnicity, and of being the token. Intersectionality refers to the double-disadvantages produced by belonging to two stigmatized groups simultaneously (Crenshaw, 1991) such as being an ethnic minority and being a women. The theory of intersectionality assumes that these double disadvantages cannot be accounted for by adding together the single categories and have a negative effect on the identity construction of the individual. Hence, forcing the individual to divide or suppress one of these identities to fit into the organizational norms (Parent et al, 2013).

### 3.3 ARGUMENT FOR THE USE OF CAREER PROGRESSION METAPHORS

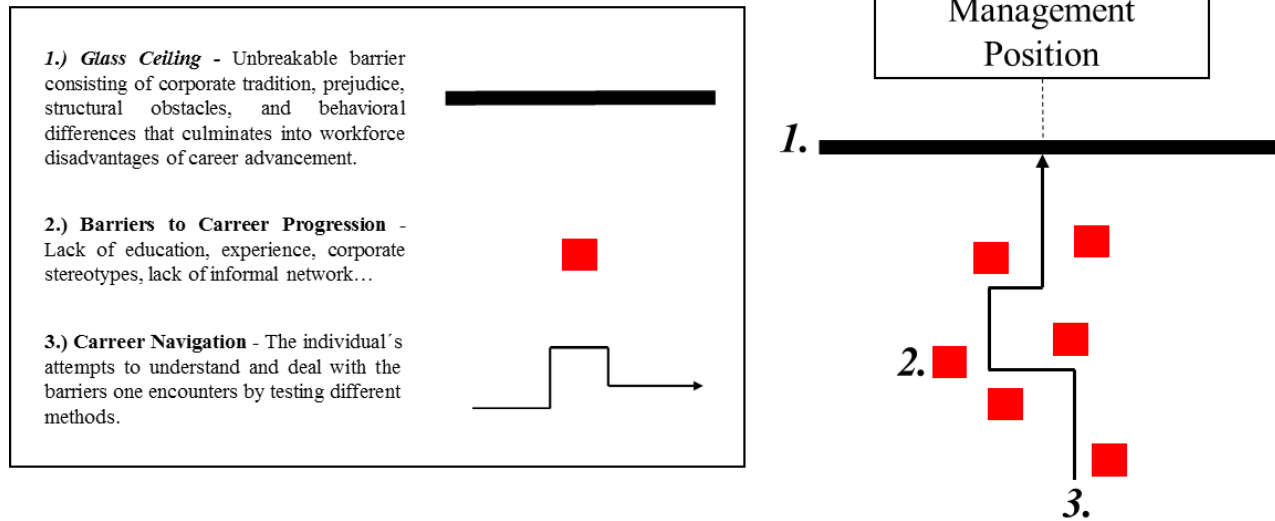
Based on the barriers produced by ethnicity, and on some occasion's gender, we argue that a theoretical framing of these barriers, in relation to the described experiences of the interviewees', is essential to the understanding of the ways *ethnicity* shapes how ethnic minorities *navigate* in their careers. We argue that a theoretical framework must consist of relevant and established theories of career progression that are capable of addressing the contextual relationship between ethnicity and careers as practice. More importantly, these theories must be capable of providing a language that can be embraced to better communicate and conceptualize the different junctures where these barriers exist. It is for this reason that this study has employed the concepts of the *Glass Ceiling*, *Glass Cliff*, and *Labyrinth* as theories to aid in the analysis of the data collected. These concepts have all enjoyed significant rhetorical success (Bruckkuller, Ryan, Haslam, & Peters, 2013) but are not without critic, of which will be addressed at the end of each concept.

Lastly, and in fulfilling the purpose of this study, in addition to providing the foundational theoretical framework for analysis, these theories and the barriers characterized by them, will help us to conceptually map how ethnicity shapes the career navigation of ethnic minority managers in Sweden, in its entirety.

### 3.4 THE GLASS CEILING

In regards to the navigation of one's career, different terms have been used to characterize the barriers to career advancement facing women and ethnic minorities. Some have referred to this barrier as a *Glass Ceiling* (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986; Jackson 2001) while others highlight barriers also posed by racism and sexism that especially women of color encounter, using terms such as 'concrete' wall or 'sticky floor' (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Betters- Reed & Moore, 1995). The phrase Glass Ceiling was made popular in a special report printed in the Wall Street Journal in 1986 (Hymowitz & Schellhardt). The phrase was introduced to depict a world where some in their attempt to navigate to top positions were blocked by corporate tradition and prejudice (Jackson, 2001). The unseen barriers that occur for women and minorities are recognized by scholars to come in multiple forms, particularly prominent near key promotion junctures. Whether they are institutional or occupational, policies or practices, the ceilings manifest when women and minority groups endure struggles to obtain equal access and opportunity (Jackson, 2001). Sonnert and Holton (2006) argue that Glass Ceilings rests on intertwined pillars comprised of structural obstacles and behavioral differences that culminates into workforce disadvantages of career advancement.

Figure 3. THE GLASS CEILING



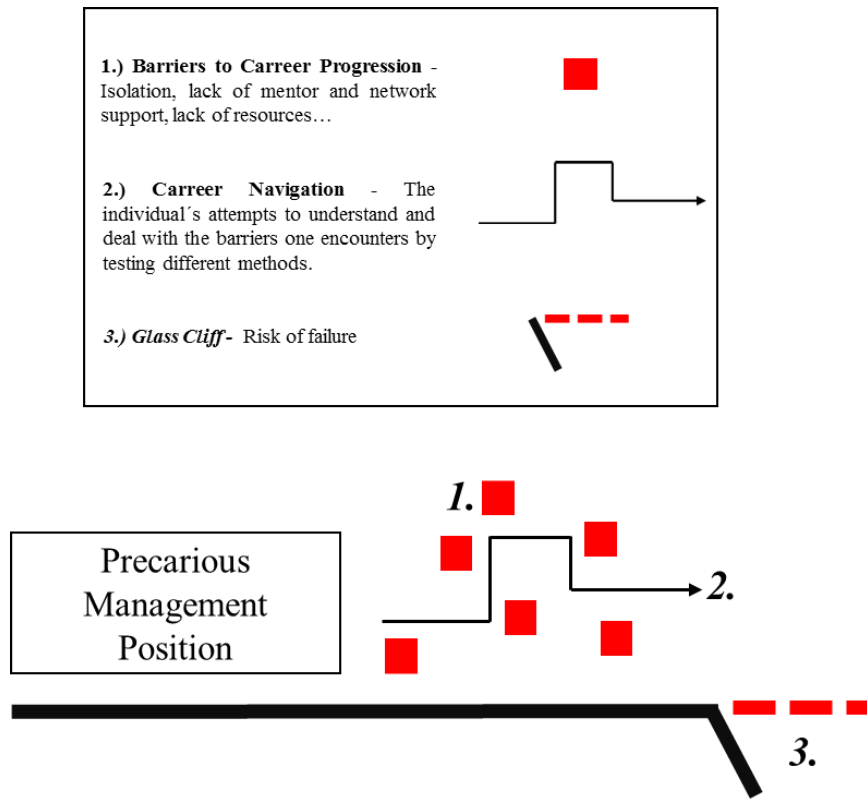
### THE GLASS CEILING CRITIQUED

The concept of the Glass Ceiling was originally developed, and still is dedicated, to explain the barrier facing women when attempting to navigate to management positions (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986) but it is not without critique. Firstly, it fails in addressing the complexity of the situation women and ethnic minority managers encounter in the practice of navigating their careers and implies that men and women have equal access to lower levels of management assuming that these ceilings appear only near top positions (Bendl & Schmidt, 2010; Eagly & Carli, 2007). In addition, research based on this metaphor has insinuated that women or ethnic minority managers, on occasion, are forced to bare all of the responsivity by adapting to a leadership style that make male managers more comfortable, hence having a stigmatizing effect (Bruckuller, Ryan, Haslam, & Peters, 2013).

### 3.5 THE GLASS CLIFF

Extending on the metaphor of the Glass Ceiling and its link to career navigation, Ryan and Haslam were the first to evoke the notion of the *Glass Cliff* in the 2005 article “*The Glass Cliff: Evidence that Women are Over-Represented in Precarious Leadership Positions.*” This concept suggests that barriers do not disappear for women or ethnic minorities after they reach managerial positions. The term describes a phenomenon where especially women executives are likelier than men to be put in leadership roles during periods of crisis or downturn, when the chance of failure is highest (Ryan & Haslam 2005; Cook & Glass, 2014). A key aspect of the Glass Cliff is that once individuals of a minority group break through the Glass Ceiling and take on positions of leadership they can have different experiences from their white counterparts. More specifically, women and ethnic minorities will occupy positions that are more precarious and thus have a higher risk of failure — either because they are appointed to lead organizations (or organizational units) that are in crisis or because they are not given the resources and support needed for success (Ryan & Haslam, 2005; Bruckmuller et al, 2014). This metaphor also suggests that once appointed leader, women and ethnic minorities are, in comparison to their white counterparts, more isolated, without mentors and a network of support and are less able to garner the help they might need when facing extraordinary challenges (Hewlett et al, 2008).

Figure 4. THE GLASS CLIFF



### THE GLASS CLIFF CRITIQUED

The majority of research studying the Glass Cliff has been predominantly quantitative in nature focusing on gender and failing to address the attributions of women and ethnic minorities, suggesting an underlying naivety among successful women (Sloan et al, 2014). When turning to research of the Glass Cliff, contradictory results have been revealed. For example, Adams, Gupta and Leeth (2009), found no evidence of this concept in their archival study of CEO appointments in the US and Hunt-Earle (2012) emphasizes the need for extended research within this area. Furthermore, several experimental research studies have asked their subjects to predict the gender of leaders who would be appointed to management positions. However, the results of these studies

may well reveal more about the attributions of the experimental subjects than about gender, leadership, and Glass Cliffs (Sloan et al, 2014).

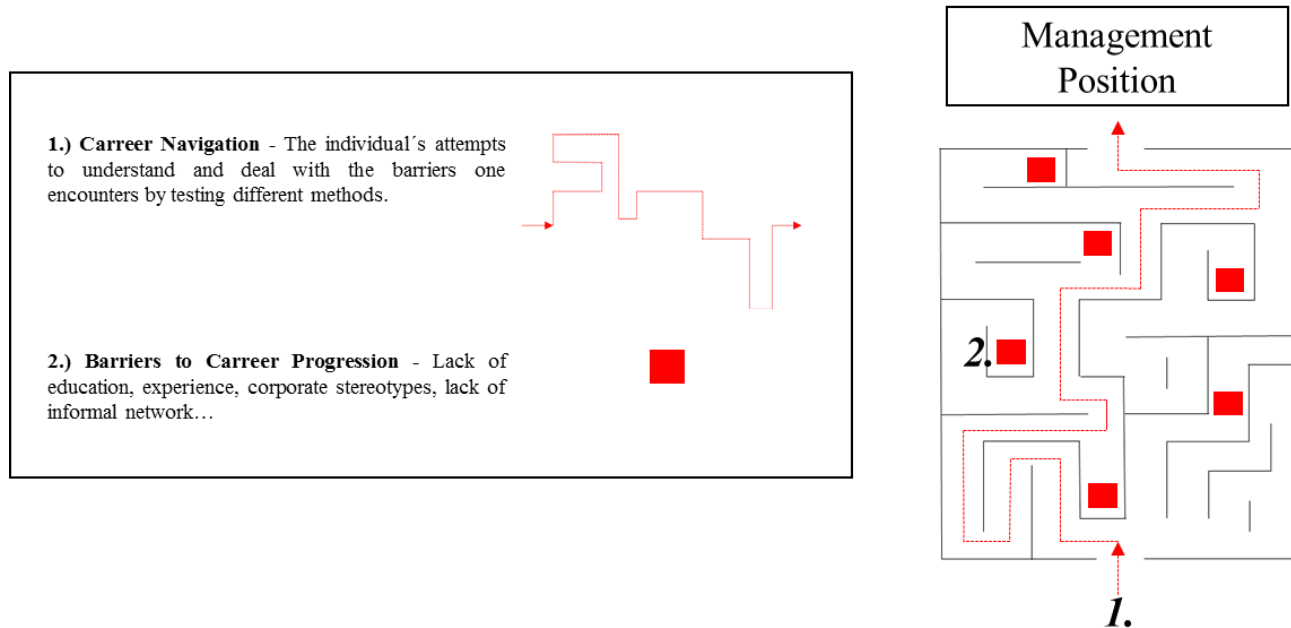
### 3.6 THE LABYRINTH

In 2007, Eagly and Carli presented and argued for the concept of *the Leadership Labyrinth*, more commonly referred to as the *Labyrinth* (Wyatt & Silvester, 2015), claiming it might be a better metaphor than the Glass Ceiling for what women confront in their leadership pursuits and while navigating their careers.

The Labyrinth can be used to describe the intricate maze that individuals must navigate through in order to reach a management role. As stated by Eagly and Carli, “*passage through a labyrinth is not simple or direct, but requires persistence, awareness of one’s progress, and a careful analysis of the puzzles that lie ahead*” (Eagly & Carli, 2007: 63). When viewed as a modern-day symbol, it expresses the idea of a multifaceted journey toward an objective worth endeavouring. In addition, as labyrinths may have several feasible paths to management, each individual’s experience of navigating the complex routes will be unique. Much like a labyrinth, the journey through is filled with twists and turns, that are both expected and unexpected. It is filled with paths that seem like they are going to lead you out of the labyrinth, but only lead to a dead end, forcing one to back-track and try a new path. Like the journey through a labyrinth, one can feel confused and powerless, frustrated and angry, or tired and unmotivated (Eagly & Carli, 2007). This is potentially a result of the individual’s attempts to understand and deal with the barriers one encounters by testing different methods. These routes involve diverse challenges, indirect forays, and ventures into foreign territory rather than following a straight line to the top, where barriers only appear close to

certain managerial levels in organizations. Figure 5. provides a visual representation of the *Labyrinth*.

Figure 5. THE LABYRINTH



### THE LABYRINTH CRITIQUED

Although the Labyrinth successfully draws attention to the complexities adherent to the transition into a management position, and despite the underrepresented research produced, theoretically, it fails to address the barriers women of colour and other ethnic groups encounter. It addresses the topic of stereotypes as a barrier but fails to address how women themselves have internalized these stereotypes that impede their own chances of becoming leaders (Cocchio, 2009). Furthermore, this metaphor is arguably too broad, being easily applied to almost any situation in any given career (Bruckkuller et al, 2013). Lastly, it suggests a continuation of academic rhetoric regarding barriers suggesting no significant platform for lasting change (Cocchio 2009).



## IV. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 RATIONALE BEHIND CHOSEN METHODOLOGY

In order to adequately capture how ethnicity shapes navigation as a career practice amongst ethnic minorities in Sweden, we chose to employ a qualitative research design. An abstract unit of analysis such as navigation, requires a tool capable of capturing the rich data emanating from experiences, thoughts, feelings, assumptions, and dreams of the future. Qualitative research has emerged in recent years as a major methodological perspective within career progression studies, and we argue, in line with Blustein et al (2005), that it is particularly suitable since it offers considerable insights into the experiences of socially constructed phenomenon's, as well as important implications for both practice and assessment. Yet, this method is not without criticism (Hammersley, 2013) which we will return to in the limitations section.

### 4.2 PARTICIPANT SELECTION

Fourteen participants were recruited for this study. In line with Kvale (2000), we maintain that this study benefited from such a limited amount of interviewees and that an eventual addition of more interviews would not positively impact data quality. Rather, our strategy of focusing on interview preparation and the analysis of data or evidence seemed more suitable than the number of interviewees.

The evidence collected in this thesis is derived from the perspectives and experiences of people employed in Sweden's private business sector. With the focus in this study on ethnicity and navigation, participants were selected based on being an ethnic minority and having a managerial position, hence having successfully navigated to their current positions. Participants were contacted

via LinkedIn, telephone and email. The selection criteria included a representative spread in terms of the following: Middle managers with foreign (non-Swedish) background who have held their managerial position for a minimum of 6 months. In regards to foreign background, we are referring to persons who have immigrated to Sweden themselves, but also, Swedish-born, who have two foreign-born parents. The selection criteria regarding tenure is relevant in order to capture the experiences that adhere to management, such as performing under pressure and balancing scarce resources. All participants had a minimum of four employees they were responsible for. This was in order to enable the collection of data including experiences of leadership and barriers associated with sub-ordinates. Age was not a selection criteria but gender was addressed with a 50/50 ratio between interviewees (7 were male and 7 female) in order to analyze whether there exists an interplay between gender, ethnicity and navigation. Industries represented included marketing & sales, business administration, IT, consumer goods, engineering, and human resources and participants belonged to different business units including sales, IT, accounting, human resources, and production. For a detailed description of participants see Appendix B.

### 4.3. DATA COLLECTION

With a strong emphasis on evidence, the majority of time allotted to the research of this report was devoted to the preparation and analysis of the evidence collected. In regards to preparation, the focus was laid on reading relevant scientific journals and developing the interview-guide. When turning to the analysis, we employed previous research, theories, and concepts as tools to understand and explain the findings.

During the data collection process we focused on two types of evidence. Firstly, evidence that challenged theoretical assumptions or contradicted previous research regarding the effects ethnicity has on career navigation and secondly, evidence that confirmed them. In addition, we used primary data that was obtained from the interviewees, and we referred to books, articles, business magazines, and scientific journals which helped form our theoretical frameworks. Moreover, they provided us with prior research within the topic area. This facilitated the formulation of the research question, since we gained a sounder understanding of what was already known and what was not.

### INTERVIEW PROCESS

Turning to our primary data sources, we employed a semi-structured interview design, which combines the elements of control and spontaneity (Hakim, 2009). Fourteen in-depth interviews were conducted in areas that allowed for confidentiality and a low risk for disturbances, such as private offices at the interviewees places of work. The interviews were also conducted with only one respondent at a time and took on average one and a half hours. The first five to ten minutes were designated to allowing the interviewee to speak freely with the aim of making him/her feel comfortable. The following hour was allotted to the interview-guide that started with questions that were general in nature. The final fifteen minutes focused on summarization and allowance for additional comments and questions. All interviews were conducted in Swedish. The interviews took place during the months of February and March 2015.

### THE INTERVIEW-GUIDE

During the creation of the interview-guide particular attention was paid to designing questions that were distinct from each other. It was our view that this would, in turn, ensure for a broader spectrum of responses, creating a richer pool of data. This significantly aids in the task of content analysis.

The interview-guide starts with general information and questions addressing the earliest stages in one's career and the navigation to their first managerial position. The following questions focused on the strategies employed in navigating their current position of management. The final section of questions were devoted to highlighting their plans of navigation into future positions. The questions used were of supplementary character and helped facilitate control, which is essential to realize the purpose of any research study (Gillham, 2001). Moreover, these questions allowed for a certain degree of interview standardization. This enabled the comparability of interview answers, which is vital for the content analysis (Hammersley, 2013). The design of the interviewee guide is illustrated in appendix A.

#### DATA INTERPRETATION

In order to process the interview responses, all interviews were taped. The interviews were conducted in Swedish and then translated to English by both researchers, following suggestions from Sutrisno et al (2014). The transcripts built the foundation for a subsequent content analysis, with the aim of organizing the substantive content of the interview (Gillham, 2001). This was achieved by inductive reasoning, filtering key points, and organizing these into appropriate main categories. As a result, the data was reduced to tightly edited written text that was conceptualized in line with our theoretical framework for further analysis according to recommendations by Wolcott (1994) and Hammersley (2013).

## 4.4 DATA QUALITY CONCERNS

### TRUSTWORTHINESS

To address the issue of data quality, we chose to employ the approach of trustworthiness highlighted by Bryman and Bell (2007) and Sinkovics, Penz, and Ghauri (2008). This approach consists of four aspects that need to be considered. These include transferability, creditability, dependability, and conformability. These four aspects were considered in this study in order to create an authentic and trustworthy report.

We acknowledge the difficulties in repeating and generalizing qualitative research. Transferability refers to the ability to duplicate the results of a study. This report explores how ethnicity shapes career navigation for ethnic minority managers in Sweden and draws from a relatively small sample making its transferability difficult. Creditability refers to the consistency between a study's observations and its results. In order to increase the creditability of this study, the interviews were recorded and transcribed. They were then coded and organized according to the respondent. Quotes were given a number (i.e. Interviewee 1) and used in the analysis to strengthen credibility. The extent to which both transferability and creditability are achieved define this study's level of dependability. Conformability is linked to the objectivity of the study and illustrates to what extent the findings correspond to the respondents' answers, while addressing researcher bias. In the attempt to limit researcher bias in this study, its limitations were acknowledged and the method of analysis has been described in detail in this section (Bryman & Bell, 2007).

## 4.5 LIMITATIONS

The sample size was limited as a result of four factors: A lack of manpower, a time limitation of 4 months, as well as the strategic decision made by the researchers to focus on preparation and analysis instead of number of interviews. Moreover, and in regards to number of interviewees, the limited amount of respondents was also due to what we perceive as an underrepresentation of ethnic minority managers in Sweden, which made it difficult to find participants and posed one of the major risks in this study. Although we acknowledge the difficulty of generalization in qualitative research, some form of generalizing was necessary in relation to theory. Risks included, as previously mentioned, not finding enough participants from each desired group to take the time out of their days for an interview, and participants not answering truthfully. Interviews were conducted in Swedish and then translated into English leaving room for possible mistranslation. Another limitation curtailed to the decision of not addressing, nor analysing, the implicit status hierarchy of country of origin among interviewees. Due to the limited number of respondents, we were unable to address this hierarchy in a credible way. An additional credibility concern was the subjective nature of the future accounts given by respondents.

## 4.6 ETHICAL ISSUES

All participants were informed of their rights to anonymity and confidentiality in regards to all information obtained. Interviews were recorded with the full consent of all participants. Interviews were transcribed and approved by the participants before they were used in the study. Those participants who requested a copy of the transcribed conversation received it via email. The respondents' participation was completely voluntary with the choice to leave the interview at any time if they felt uncomfortable. Moreover, it was also acknowledged that this study may potentially

raise challenging questions concerning the public or political responsibility of researchers when ethnicity is used as a variable (Hammersley, 2013). This refers to being conscious of the dangers involved with the labeling of a group of people as representative of ethnicity.

## V. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

The following section will consist of both the description and analysis of the data collected. The journey ethnic minority managers reported in this study can be viewed in three sections and four stages. The first sections, *Navigation into a Management Position*, will entail two stages. Firstly it will present what interviewees described as barriers associated with their ethnicity, when entering into the labour market, and then into their managerial positions. We will then present how ethnicity shaped the methods employed by the interviewees to navigate past these barriers. The second section, *Navigation in a Management Position*, will describe and analyze how interviewees' reported experiencing their ethnicity as a barrier in their current positions and will be followed by how ethnicity shaped their strategies of navigation past these barriers. The last section, *Navigation to a Future Management Position*, will address interviewees' reported strategic plans to navigate up the organizational ladder to a higher position, while revealing what they perceived as potential barriers and methods, based on their ethnicity. In each section, both the barriers and methods will be categorized as meritocratic or tokenistic.

### 5.1 NAVIGATION TO A MANAGEMENT POSITION

#### ETHNICITY AS A BARRIER TO NAVIGATION

In accordance with several studies (Göransson, 2005; Behtoui, 2007; Lundqvist, 2010) and OECD Statistics (2013), interviewees' reported experiencing long-term unemployment as well as difficulties entering the labour market in Sweden. In addition, interviewees expressed feelings of anxiety over keeping their first jobs and making it past their probation periods. Only one interviewee reported being laid-off due to restructuring, but others reported being worried about the possibility. Interviewees' reports strongly suggest a relationship between ethnicity and career



navigation that correlates with previous research which has shown that belonging to an ethnic minority group increases the likelihood of meeting barriers (Acker, 2006; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). We argue that these barriers emanate from tokenism and include the implications of stigmatization, stereotyping, categorization, and negative perceptions based on the interviewees' ethnicity by the dominant groups in their organizations, of which are also highlighted in research produced by Livingston et al (2012) and Milliken and Martins (1996).

Data revealed that ethnicity, or more precise, belonging to an ethnic minority group, led to barriers highly correlated to being the *token* (see Kanter, 1977). For example, we argue that the barriers of tokenism were revealed by the reported feelings of being different. This was exposed in our collected data and is represented in the following quotes:

*"I am well aware that my being "different" made it more difficult for me to break into the labour market but I tried not to let it deter me. I just prepared myself and stuck to my plan..."* (Interviewee 4)

*"It is obvious, just look how many foreign-born managers there are. Not being Swedish is definitely a disadvantage but one just has to be creative..."* (Interviewee 5)

Arguably representative of the perceived barriers associated with tokenism reported by interviewees, was the disadvantage of having a foreign-sounding name. One interviewee reported going so far as to change his name, while several interviewees identified their names as barriers:

*"I decided to change my name. It felt like I had no other choice..."* (Interviewee 7)

*“I believe that my name was a large barrier for me when I was looking for my first job. If it was not for a colleague that I work with now I would not have found my way into this company either. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I think that many people become suspicious when they hear it”* (Interviewee 3)

This barrier is also identified in a study done by Khosravi (2012), of which explores the phenomenon of name changing amongst ethnic minorities in Sweden, highlighting foreign-sounding names as a barrier to entrance into society and the labour market.

Data collected suggest further examples of the implications of tokenism, exposed in interviewees reporting feelings of low self-confidence. Low self-confidence in relation to tokenism is also supported by previous research (Niemann & Dovidio, 1998; Kanter, 1977; Thompson & Sekaquaptewa, 2002) and is illustrated in the following quote:

*“I remember feeling pretty low at times. I was looking for so long I really began to believe that there was no place for me in a Swedish company (...) when I finally did get a job I was always worried about being judged differently because I was the only non-Swede in the office....”* (Interviewee 9)

In line with the above quote, and the experiences it represents, research has shown that perceived barriers can reduce ethnic minorities’ aspirations to achieve success in the organization (Ragins et al., 1998). Likewise, research points out that the experience of facing barriers can lead to the discouraging of ethnic minorities, having a mediating impact on the relationship between career interests and career objectives, as well as a negative relationship between ability and actual occupational achievement (Arbona, 1990; Lent et al., 1994). In continuation, the implications that this quote represents are also consistent with results found in earlier research (Kandola, 2004) that, once again, highlight the negative effect of being the token in the organization and its effect on a

person's attitude and confidence. Research points out that perceptions of stigmatized groups concerning their high visibility as a token, had a negative effect on job satisfaction, resulting in performance pressures, isolation, intense scrutiny, and negative performance evaluations (Niemann & Dovidio, 1998; Thompson & Sekaquaptewa, 2002).

As yet another result of all of the barriers associated with tokenism, was the reported lack of social network, which was also highlighted as significant to the career navigation among interviewees':

*"I remember it being really hard to break into those networks one needed to get into the 'good' companies like Volvo, Astra Zeneca, and Ericsson. I came from a small town from the middle of nowhere and I did not have a way into to those groups. I guess being an outsider both in regards to my appearance and my hometown made it even more difficult. At least that is how it felt."* (Interviewee 13)

Previous research has confirmed this as a barrier (Fearfull & Kamenou, 2006), and was illustrated in interviewee accounts, reporting that they often felt excluded from organizational networks. We argue that this feeling of exclusion can be viewed as an organizational mechanism that omitted the interviewees based on their ethnicity. This is also relevant due to findings presented in earlier research that reveal that ethnic minorities often are forced to rely solely on formal organizational networks of support (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Stanley, 2009).

## HOW ETHNICITY SHAPED NAVIGATION

Also present in our findings are methods of navigation past barriers of ethnicity, somewhat underrepresented in research (Wyatt & Silvester, 2015). The data collected in this study strongly indicates that interviewees employed both tokenistic and meritocratic methods of career navigation.

To navigate past the initial barriers associated with their ethnicity that appeared, interviewees reported consciously employing a variation of different strategies. Tokenistic strategies included; *adapting to the Swedish organizational norms, enhancement of their informal social networks, the development of their professional identity, and tenure*. Meritocratic activities included; *changing jobs and positions* as well as *performance and recognition*. We view the previously mentioned strategies as strategic methods for the interviewees to gain entrance into the labour market and in to their first positions of management.

Firstly, reports indicated a need to adapt to the Swedish organizational norms in order not to be viewed as different. We maintain that the following quote represents a tokenistic practice:

*“I have to tone down my personality a bit. I like to speak loud and use my hands to make gestures to get my point across. I believe it is a cultural thing. I need to tone down my cultural way of expressing myself. As a manager in Sweden, you cannot just act anyway you would like. It is kind of like acting...It is like you are standing on stage every day. There is the private me and then there is the professional me. I have to work on the professional me if I am going to advance to Regional manager. I could not have come this far if I kept the old me at work.”* (Interviewee 8)

In correlation with Tharenou, Latimer and Conroy (1994), this interviewee’s’ report strongly suggests a self-reinforcing *homo-sociality* with this respondent showing less commitment to her/his ethnic identity and strategically navigating away from the risk of being subject to negative ethnic stereotyping (Atewologun & Singh, 2010). This has been further confirmed in previous research that has underlined the necessity for ethnic minorities to tone down aspects of their cultural identity in order to assimilate into organizational networks (Davidson, 1997; Dawson, 2006; Fearfull & Kamenou, 2006).

*“Networking was key for me in the beginning of my career...” (Interviewee 2)*

The practice of tokenism as a form of navigation was also indicated when interviewees reported the necessity to enhance their informal social networks. By doing so, we argue that the interviewees might proactively avoid all of the negative barriers associated with their ethnicity, gain more influence over informal behaviours and self-promotion, and gain access to informal support or mentoring (Wyatt & Silvester, 2015; Stanley, 2009) of which are critical success factors in reaching the first level of management (Davidson, 1997; Dawson, 2006).

Although not explicitly stated, interviewees consistently expressed the desire to be viewed as worthy professional members of the organization. This was also described as an important strategic method in their navigation past barriers in their careers. Drive, passion, and a positive attitude were emphasized and while some of the interviewee’s placed the responsibility for their success on themselves, they did not believe in making excuses:

*“I think it is all about ones perspective on life and values. I believe in working hard and that you need to have passion for what you are working with.” (Interviewee 12)*

The emphasis placed by interviewees on personality-traits in combination with their acknowledgement of the existence of barriers imposed by their ethnicity, arguably suggest a clear compensation-mechanism at play. We argue that this mechanism manifest itself in the interviewees proactive development of their professional identities (see Stryker, 1985), rather than their ethnic identities, of which we argue is a form of a tokenistic navigational practice. This mechanism can

potentially be a result of the necessity to navigate past all the barriers associated with being different.

In continuation, data strongly suggests that tenure, long time employment at one company, in order to overcome barriers associated with ethnicity, was also used as a tokenistic method of navigation:

*“For everybody here I am not a foreigner. Here they see me for who I am and not just my background”*

(Interviewee 8)

*“A large part of me getting this position had to do with the fact that everyone here knows who I am. I am a real person here despite the fact that I am not born in Sweden, look different, and are a Muslim. I don’t think most of my colleagues think about my ethnicity anymore...”* (Interviewee 5)

This is further confirmed by our data where the majority of interviewees reported receiving their first management position by way of an internal recruitment process. This is also in line with earlier research performed by Kanter (1977) as well as Bell and Nkomo (2001), who showed that occupational minorities might be subject to heightened group stereotypes in the organization. Moreover, these findings arguably suggest the interviewees’ awareness of the barriers of their ethnicity associated with being the token and that they took strategic measures to avoid them.

Based on the description of interviewees, we view the activity of changing jobs and positions on numerous occasions as a form of navigation and a meritocratic navigation practice. Interviewees reported attempting to best align their competencies with available positions at companies that would provide them with the most potential for career advancement. In addition, interviewees

reported taking positions that were beneath their education and experience in order to break into a *specific company* that would provide this potential:

*“After my bachelor degree I took a job as an assistant at the company I am at now. I knew it was beneath my qualifications but I saw it as a long term plan to move up the ranks in an international company...”*

(Interviewee 4)

This unique phenomenon, where interviewees were consciously eliminating companies in which they would not advance due to their ethnicity, is not represented in the previous research section of this study. However, previous research has shown that ethnic minorities either take on positions below their qualifications out of necessity (Bjurling, 2004), or because they are forced to modify their own career ambitions (Ragins et al., 1998). This is illustrated in the following quote:

*“My plan was to find a job in my profession when I came to Sweden but it was harder than I thought. Instead I took a job in manual labour to pay the bills.”* (Interviewee 14)

Further, data collected included the need to work harder than their Swedish counterparts, perform better, as well as the need to seek and gain recognition from a formal superior. This infers an additional example of meritocratic navigation, as illustrated in the following citations:

*“Seeing where am now, and looking at my colleagues, I feel like I have had to prove myself twice as much, if not more in certain situations...”* (Interviewee 10)

*“I attribute my success to my performance. On the other hand, it all depends on if you are acknowledged for your hard work by your boss...”* (Interviewee 8)

These quotes suggest deliberate actions taken to overcome barriers shaped by their ethnicity and the negative perceptions of their ability and performance that are associated to it. This is also in line with previous research that illustrates the prevalence of negative perceptions of the stigmatized group held by the dominant group that act as career barriers for ethnic minorities (Hosonda, Nguyen & Stone-Romero, 2011). By actively seeking recognition amongst their superiors, interviewees might also potentially avoid being negatively categorized and fall into the “outsider-group”, as well as avoid being viewed as lacking the “right stuff” for management (Heilman & Eagly, 2008; Leslie et al, 2008). In addition, previous research reveals that formal strategies such as utilization of hard work and performance assessments are more common within ethnic minority managerial groups than their white counterparts, who treated formal and informal routes as equally legitimate ways to progress their careers (Wyatt & Silvester, 2015).

We debate that the tokenistic and meritocratic barriers produced by ethnicity in this section, reveal strong correlations to the barriers adherent to the Glass Ceiling (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986), meanwhile interviewee data suggests the existence of a precarious labour market situation once interviewees broke through this ceiling, into the labour market. We argue that this precarious situation shares characteristics of the Glass Cliff (Ryan & Haslam, 2005). Lastly, data suggests that the ways ethnicity has shaped navigation as a career practice for the interviewees is highly comparable to the form of navigation stressed by the Labyrinth (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

The Glass Ceiling metaphor argues that barriers that occur for minorities can come in multiple forms, particularly at key junctures (Jackson, 2001). Our data has revealed that breaking into the labour market for the interviewees was expressed as a key juncture that is overlooked by, but still consistent with, the Glass Ceiling’s core notions. At the same time, and as characterized by the



Glass Ceiling, interviewees reported feeling forced to endure struggles to obtain equal access and opportunity when attempting to enter into both the labour market and their current managerial positions (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986). As stated earlier, low-self-confidence was reported by interviewees and was discussed as a potential effect of the Glass Ceiling (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986).

According to the Glass Cliff, despite this concepts focus on management positions, interviewees expressed feelings of the threat of losing their jobs and falling out of the labour market. We debate that these reported feelings suggests precarious situation for those interviewed, and point to a potential glass cliff situation (Ryan & Haslam, 2005).

The core notion of the Labyrinth, is that the path for both women and ethnic minorities to management resembles a maze that is neither simple nor direct. It is our view that the practice of career navigation for the interviewees' was shaped by the testing and re-testing of different paths or routes past the barriers created by their ethnicity, into the labour market, and eventually into a management position. Much like a Labyrinth, interviewee reports of changing jobs illustrates that the interviewees' paths were not simple nor direct, while their emphasis on performing well and utilizing positive personality traits illustrates the presence of the required persistence emphasized by the Labyrinth (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Further, a lack of social network is regarded as a barrier according to the concept of the Labyrinth, and viewed as essential to be navigated past, in order to successfully reach a position of management (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Interviewees' reported strategy of increasing their informal social networks reveals their acknowledgement of its necessity, as well as illustrates "*a careful analysis of the puzzles that lie ahead*" (Eagly & Carli, 2007: 63) of which is considered as another key to successful career navigation according to the Labyrinth.

## 5.2 NAVIGATION IN A MANAGEMENT POSITION

### ETHNICITY AS A BARRIER TO NAVIGATION

When turning to the barriers of career navigation associated with ethnicity in interviewees current positions, we acknowledge Eagly & Carli's (2007) argument, that it might be easier for individuals to describe past barriers, rather than to see and describe them in the present. However, our data reveals patterns that suggest that our interviewees find themselves in precarious leadership positions since data collected, once again, exposed the existence of barriers. These barriers included *being different, isolation, and lack of social network*, which we argue, are linked to *tokenism* (Kanter, 1977). Furthermore, and in addition to tokenism, were barriers associated with *gender*, such as childrearing responsibilities and cultural masculinity within managerial groups.

Several studies have revealed that minorities in managerial positions are often given unmanageable workloads, high-risk assignments, and projects that are less desirable (Hewlett et al, 2008; Bruckmuller et al, 2010). An example of this in this study is exposed in the following quote:

*“Three years ago I was assigned a project that no one else wanted. I constantly feel that I get tougher assignments than my colleagues due to the fact that I am different.”* (Interviewee 1)

This quote suggest that this interviewee felt that because of existing stereotypes and a negative perception associated with her ethnicity, that she was treated unfairly. This quote confirms previous research and highlights feelings and barriers concomitant to the effects of being the token, such as isolation and stereotyping (Chung-Herrera & Lankau, 2005; Fearful & Kamenou, 2006). By also experiencing isolation and insufficient support, the precariousness in those managers' situations

seemed ever so obvious. Hence, by being members of minority groups, or tokens, interviewees reported that they were not given the resources needed for success and that they were more isolated than their Swedish counterparts. In addition, they seemed to lack mentors and a social network of support. This is in line with both Hewlett et al (2008) as well as Wyatt and Silvester (2015), who showed that minorities in organizations can find themselves isolated and without an informal network of support. Swedish research confirms this, highlighting the necessity of personal contacts as a key factor of organizational success (Göransson, 2005). Furthermore, our data suggests that the interviewees relied on only traditional forms of social networking for career advancement, such as networking with colleagues and superiors, solely in group work and or projects.

If we look to the additional barriers associated with *gender*, its effects were reported by interviewees based on the disproportionate amount of childrearing responsibility they were forced to bare. For some female interviewees, being forced to take most of the parental leave while balancing work and home duties was reported as an expected barrier:

*“Maybe it will be difficult when I have children. It is something that is difficult to plan for.”* (Interviewee 10)

*“I guess being both a foreigner and a woman makes my progress in the organization impossible for some not to see and recognize. Whether it will pose a problem or not? Well, it might...”* (Interviewee 6)

These above quotes strongly suggest the appearance and intersection of multiple barriers and the double disadvantages created by them (see Crenshaw, 1991), making career navigation for female ethnic minority managers ever more difficult. This is also confirmed in previous research done by Sanchez-Hucles and Davis (2010) as well as Sartore and Cunningham (2006) whose results point out that there exist an overlapping of inequalities for ethnic minority women that produce a unique

form of double disadvantage. In addition, although not included as a variable in this report, arguments presented by Acker (2006) illustrate the potential existence of a triple disadvantage for ethnic minority women when including the variable of class.

Previous research has also illustrated a pattern of deteriorating attitudes, loss of hope, stress and mounting frustration amongst ethnic minority managers, experiencing hostility, resistance, and when challenged by firm insiders (Kanter, 1977; Mackay & Etienne, 2006). This though, is not confirmed by our data.

#### HOW ETHNICITY SHAPED NAVIGATION

When turning to how ethnicity shaped the methods of navigation in the present, interviewees reported the need to enhance their *informal social networks*, to *adapt to the Swedish organizational norms*, and to develop their *professional identities*. We argue, that these methods reflect evidence that tokenistic strategies were also used to navigate past barriers. Moreover, interviewees also reported on meritocratic methods of navigation in their careers, such as the need to *perform well*.

To interviewees, enhancement of their informal social network seemed essential to navigation in their careers. This is highlighted in the following interviewee quote:

*“I have worked for a while now and understand the necessity of making the right friends in the organization. Certain contacts have definitely made my job easier while others have really challenged my daily work. It is obvious that I have more eyes looking at me, so it is vital that I maintain good relations with all actors in the company....I have seen the effects of not doing this....”* (Interviewee 1)

Research has revealed a tendency to rely solely on the employment of formal social networking as a facilitator to the navigation of ethnic minority's careers (Wyatt & Silvester, 2015) due to their lack of access to influential informal social networks (Niemann & Dovidio, 1998). This absence of informal influence on the interviewees' career navigation could also lead to a reduced desire to achieve success in the organization (Ragins et al, 1998), and potentially constitute an additional barrier in itself (Sonnert & Holton, 2006). We maintain that this is a tokenistic method, where interviewees are trying to 'blend in' when they are aspiring to expand their informal social networks.

Additional evidence of how ethnicity shaped interviewee career navigation, is debatably directly linked to being the token. The reported need to adapt to both Swedish organizational norms, and male norms is represented in the following interviewee citation:

*"Most of my colleagues are white Swedish men, but they seem to acknowledge me and value my contributions, at the same time, I feel I have to show qualities that are associated with Swedish male leadership."*

(Interviewee 9)

Not only does this quote highlight the avoidance of the previously mentioned barriers from the last section, it is also in line with previous research that has revealed that management is strongly infused with cultural masculinity (Atwater et al, 2004; Schein, 2001). In addition, research has also addressed the necessity to downplay aspects of one's cultural identity in order to assimilate into organizational networks and managerial roles (Davidson, 1997; Dawson, 2006).

An additional example of a tokenistic method of navigation, which was linked to the need to develop their professional identities, is illustrated by the following interviewee quote:

*“I have never been one to give excuses. I believe that my drive, passion, and willingness to go the extra mile has and will continue to be key to reaching my goals.”* (Interviewee 12)

This quote is in line with previous studies that have revealed that the use of personality-traits to develop a professional identity can combat the potential negative stereotypes facing ethnic minorities (Atewologun & Singh, 2010; Burke, 1980). This has also been shown as relevant to the performance expectations associated with managerial roles (Thompson & Sekaquaptewa, 2002; Eagly & Chin, 2010). We argue that the need to perform well is a meritocratic method of career navigation. This was also reported by interviewees as this quote emphasizes:

*“Performance has always been a key to my success...I don’t see any difference now. If I don’t perform I would run the risk of losing my position.”* (Interviewee 13)

Heavily linked to feeling the need to perform well, and as a result of the barriers associated with tokenism, interviewees also reported feeling the necessity to do more than their share, arguably also a meritocratic navigation method, which was expressed in the following quote:

*“I feel I have to give a lot more than others have to. I feel like I have to give 150% all the time, I have to work harder, and I have to perform better than my Swedish colleagues”* (Interviewee 2)

When we address how interviewees reported experiencing barriers and methods they employed in order to overcome them, data strongly suggest correlations to the Glass Cliff (Ryan & Haslam, 2005) and Labyrinth (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

The barriers reported were either based on their ethnicity, their ethnicity and gender, and or the tokens they represented. In correlation to the Glass Cliff theory, and research based on it (Niemann & Dovidio, 1998; Dawson, 2006), our study reveals barriers adherent to ethnicity that may present themselves in a variety of ways. Firstly, by not being given the resources needed for success, secondly, by feeling more isolated than their counterparts, and lastly, the absence of mentors and a social network of support. Furthermore, this study, like others before it (Atwater et al, 2004), exposes the double-disadvantage of belonging to an ethnic minority group and at the same time being female. These double-disadvantages in turn, make the navigation for female ethnic minority managers through the Labyrinth ever more difficult (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

When turning to how ethnicity shaped the navigation as a career practice for the interviewees in their current positions, results clearly indicate a comparability to how one navigates in a Labyrinth (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Ethnicity seemed to shape the methods of career navigation in two distinct ways. Firstly, interviewees seemed to navigate past barriers by being aware that they were the token, hence employing tokenistic methods in their efforts of navigation as they adopted to the Swedish organizational norms and enhanced their informal social networks. These methods have also been highlighted as important to navigation in the Labyrinth and in research based on it (Wyatt & Silvester, 2015). Secondly, interviewees seemed to rely on meritocratic methods of navigation in their careers, highlighting the importance of performance and the capitalization on their positive

personality-traits, such as drive, and ambition. Still, these methods are not noted as key in the Labyrinth theory, neither in the previous research that this study is based on.

### 5.3 NAVIGATION TO A FUTURE MANAGEMENT POSITION

Interviewee plans for career advancement included ‘moving up’ in their current organization, or moving to a company that was larger, but staying in the same role. Other plans included moving up one level, from manager of an office to manager of a region, or even, advancing two levels, from a management position to a director position. In addition to these career plan objectives, was the plan of starting up their own company:

*“I think that my next goal is to be warehouse manager but at a larger warehouse. But that would mean I have to change my employer. This company is a little too small for me to advance in it.”* (Interviewee 4)

*“I have written a plan and have decided to leave my job and start my own company”* (Interviewee 13)

In contrast, there were interviewees who reported having no ambition of career advancement whom reported being content in their current positions:

*“I am happy where I am today actually. I like my job and I like the company that I work for. I have decided to work one day at a time these days. The most important thing is that one feels good when one goes to work.”*  
(Interviewee 5)



## ETHNICITY AS A BARRIER TO NAVIGATION

Similar to the previous stages in the interviewee's careers, ethnicity appeared to shape how the interviewees' planned to navigate their future careers. Interviewees expressed feelings of how difficult it would be to actually 'climb the ladder', addressing the likelihood of meeting barriers associated with tokenism. Research has revealed that barriers associated with tokenism might serve to reduce the desire to achieve success in the organization for ethnic minorities (Arbona, 1990; Ragins et al., 1998). In addition, we argue that the reported perceived barriers stressed a connection to the implications associated with facing double-barriers, based on the intersection of ethnicity and gender. The presence of barriers in this stage of the interviewees' careers appeared to have deterred interviewees' significantly, as illustrated in the following quote:

*"I think it would be exciting to advance to regional manager one day but I think the way there is really difficult. I don't really think I would be able to get that type of a job in this company. The entire upper management team is made of Swedish men. If I had changed to the governmental organization where there are policies for equality, maybe it could be a bit easier. Many of those managers don't have the educational background that I have and many don't have any relevant education at all."* (Interviewee 8)

Included in these barriers and deeply entrenched in being a token (Kanter, 1977) was the lack of social network, of which was reported as the major obstacle to be navigated. Lack of social network as a barrier has been highlighted in many other studies including Göransson (2005) as well as Wyatt and Silvester (2015). However, we argue that this phenomenon can be seen as being two-fold. Firstly, a lack of social network is a barrier in itself, and secondly, it is proliferated by barriers of isolation, lack of recognition, and being viewed as different, as described by interviewees, and exposed in research where double disadvantages may emanate from the intersection (Crenshaw, 1991) of gender and ethnicity, and the triple disadvantage of gender, ethnicity and class (Acker,

2006). These intersecting barriers all impact the ability for one to create organizational social networks, especially since research suggest the existence of a self-reinforcing homo-sociality within managerial groups (Tharenou, Latimer, & Conroy, 1994), making it difficult for minorities to acquire organizational social networks.

Turning to yet another interviewee report that illustrates the impact of ethnicity on career navigation:

*“I am sure that my ethnic background may stop me in the future. Although I have come this far, nobody knows what the future might have in store for me. Sometimes it seems like no one wants to have a ‘blatte’\* as a colleague unless you work in a nightclub. Sometimes it looks like certain managerial positions are for ‘them’ and others are for me.”* (Interviewee 3) \*Blatte - Derogatory name for immigrant or darker person in Sweden. (Vikström, 2000).

This impact is highlighted and confirmed by research done by Chung-Herrera and Lankau (2005) and Rosette et al (2008) whose results reveal that the stereotypes, categorization, and negative perceptions of ethnic minorities by the dominant group might manifest in workforce disadvantages for ethnic minorities in the organization. These stereotypes often focus on the lack of abilities and effectiveness of minority leaders (Thompson & Sekaquaptewa, 2002; Hosoda, Nguyen, & Stone-Romero, 2011).

## HOW ETHNICITY SHAPED NAVIGATION

Turning our attention to how ethnicity shaped the career navigation for interviewees’ future careers, interviewees’ reported the necessity of various methods for their successful navigation up the organizational ladder. Interviewees reported both tokenistic and meritocratic methods of

navigation. The tokenistic methods included: the need to *be the token*, the need to *adapt to the Swedish organizational norms*, the need to *enhance their informal social networks*, the need to *employ tenure as a strategy*, and the need to *develop their professional identities*. The meritocratic methods described included: the need to *perform well*, and to *gain acknowledgement from superiors*.

Contradictory to the negative perceptions associated with it, being the token was reported, by some, as a method for success rather than a hindrance. One interviewee report challenged underlying assumptions of us as researchers, contradicted a plethora of research results (Kanter, 1977; Acker 2006; Brah & Phoenix, 2013), and disputed theoretical conventions. Being a token, was reported not as a barrier to navigation, but as an advantage, as illustrated in the following quote:

*“You are either a victim or you see your ethnicity as an advantage and take advantage of it. I think if I looked different it would have been easier for me, but people remembered me. Although I have seen much racism out there I have never taken any of it personally”* (Interviewee 12)

The above quote suggests that this interviewee, aware of the power of his ethnicity as a barrier, strategically, both consciously and unconsciously, adopted an attitude towards it that would nullify it as a barrier. It is arguable that the use of tokenism as a facilitator in this situation, although unique, is incomplete without being combined with the enabler of positive personality-traits of which we will address later in this section.

Our second example of a tokenistic method of navigation included the need to adapt to Swedish organizational and societal norms:

*“I have become pretty good at adapting the way I manage to the Swedish style of leadership and I am sure that I will have to continue this in order to advance to the next level...”* (Interviewee 6)

We argue that adapting to the norms of any given context is not rare, as most people tend to adapt to the context they are presently in, and is more often than not an unconscious process (Niemann & Dovidio, 1998). However, this special form of adaptation the interviewees reported, is deeply rooted in the difficulties of being a token (see Kanter, 1977), and this homo-social process (Tharenou, Latimer & Conroy, 1994) did not seem unconscious at all. On the contrary, interviewees expressed adaptation as a strategy in itself for further career advancement. Hence, these interviewees would, according to previous research, be less subject to ethnic organizational stereotyping than those ethnic minorities that showed more commitment to their ethnicity (Atewologun & Singh, 2010).

As a result of the interviewees’ lack of social networks, the need to enhance their informal social networks was reported as an essential requirement of their further career navigation:

*“I feel that I must work hard and network. I have to learn to get to know people. All of my earlier jobs I have gotten through contacts and I expect it to be the same in the future.”* (Interviewee 1)

By proactively planning to utilize networking as a method, this interviewee’s quote suggests that this method was both necessary and successful in the past. This quote also suggest an awareness or acceptance of the risk in not having a network. Furthermore, by acknowledging the barrier with a solution imminent, the interviewee might avoid additional barriers, such as categorization, isolations, and negative perceptions, when navigating to a future managerial position.

Another necessity interviewees reported on was associated with tenure. This tokenistic method was illustrated by interviewees strategically deciding to stay at the same company for a long duration, allowing their coworkers to get to know them:

*“What can help me here, as opposed to if I were to leave and go to another company, is that everyone here knows who I am and that I have always received great reviews in regards to performance. If I were to change company now, I would have to start over, and I would probably be viewed as a foreigner again with a foreign sounding name”* (Interviewee 2)

This use of tenure exposes a clear awareness of the various barriers involved in career navigation, and it could be argued, that taking measures to not be viewed as `different` was a method to avoid being labeled as a token (Kanter, 1977; Kandola, 2004). By employing this tactic, interviewees might avoid falling into the ‘outsider’ group, of which previous research has identified as associated with the stigmatized view of minorities held by the dominant group in the organization (Nakanishi, 1989, Milliken & Martins, 1996). This usage of tenure as a method to eventually blend in over time would potentially, according to additional research (Niemann & Dovidio; Thompson & Sekaquaptewa, 2002), decrease the possibility of experiencing the implications of being the token which can include isolation, scrutiny, and negative performance evaluations. Moreover, and in addition, this would also help to minimize the potential of being the subject of stereotyping, and of negative perceptions from co-workers regarding ones abilities and effectiveness.

An additional tokenistic method reported, was, once again, the implicit desire to develop their professional identities:

*“I could reach my goal if I become very good at what I do now.”* (Interviewee 7)

*“What matters is if I have a positive attitude and that I act professionally”* (Interviewee 10)

The emphasis on having a positive attitude implied by these quotes, suggests that interviewees’ felt the need to be in control of their destinies. It was these interviewees who placed the responsibility for their advancement on themselves and themselves alone, reflecting their drive, and ambition. We debate that the emphasis interviewees put on positive personality-traits, strongly implies the desire to develop a fitting professional identity, which was not only a product of their proactive attempts to navigate their careers, it was also co-constructed by the barriers characterized by tokenism (Stryker, 1985; Burke, 1980).

*“It all comes down to how well I perform...”* (Interviewee 7)

The above quote illustrates the reported focus on performing well, and it suggests an awareness of the barriers that lie ahead, where performance is employed as a tool to overcome them. We argue that the reported strategic use of performance by interviewees as a method for career navigation was purely meritocratic in nature and manifested itself in performance reviews, working long hours, and promotion assessments. This is in correlation with the results revealed from previous research such as Wyatt and Silvester (2015) as well as Stanley (2009) that illustrate that the navigation of ethnic minorities to management positions was highly based on the use of solely formal methods. Furthermore, interviewee focus on performance as a facilitator to their success also exposes an absence of informal facilitators, such as self-promotion, that could potentially help them to access career advancing informal networks and support (Wyatt & Silvester, 2015; Stanley, 2009).

Furthermore, and correlated to performance, interviewees' included the need to gain recognition from those in the organization who could help them advance in their careers:

*“One has to show that one really wants it. It also has a lot to do with ‘clicking’ with the right person who has influence.” (Interviewee 9)*

Lastly, and like performance, the meritocratic nature of the use of gaining recognition, suggests the absence of access to informal avenues of career advancement. By identifying recognition as a key facilitator, and drawing their superiors' attention to their performance, the interviewees might potentially avoid getting overlooked when managerial appointments are made in the future. As previous research as shown, getting overlooked is easier when one is perceived as an “outsider” or token (Heilman et al, 2008; Kanter, 1977).

Once again, the reported tokenistic and meritocratic barriers and methods suggest strong correlations to the Glass Ceiling (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986), Glass Cliff (Ryan & Haslam, 2005) and Labyrinth (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Firstly, based on the interviewee descriptions of the potential future barriers that they might face, it is apparent that there is an existence of an additional Glass Ceiling. The barriers that constitute this ceiling, much like in other stages of their careers, appears to have taken on multiple simultaneous forms. For example, the double-barriers emanating from the combination of ethnicity and gender suggest an ever thicker ceiling of glass to be penetrated, of which is reinforced by barriers of tokenism. This was revealed by interviewees' reports of lacking access to informal networks, which is argued by the concepts of the Glass Ceiling (Hymowitz & Schellhardt, 1986)

and Glass Cliff as one of the barriers associated with ethnicity and gender. Secondly, by acknowledging barriers to both their present and future career advancement, and by planning to utilize methods such as tenure and performance, interviewees might also avoid losing their positions, and hence, avoid falling of the Glass Cliff (Ryan & Haslam, 2005). Lastly, interviewee acknowledgements of barriers, past, present, and future, in combination with their methods to overcome them, clearly makes the Labyrinth (Eagly & Carli, 2007) an appropriate metaphor for the conceptualization of the interviewees' career trajectories.

## 5.4 CONCLUSION

To conclude the findings, results revealed that ethnicity shaped the practice of career navigation for ethnic minority managers in Sweden in various ways. To elaborate further, the implications of ethnicity, and or the intersection between ethnicity and gender, appeared predominantly in the form of barriers related to tokenism. The negative implications of being the token were expressed as barriers in various ways during the different stages of the interviewees' career trajectories (See Table 1). Examples of reported barriers included: being different, having a different name, low self-confidence, and lack of social network. We argue that these expressed barriers forced interviewees to employ two different methods of navigation. These methods were either tokenistic or meritocratic in nature. Examples of tokenistic methods of navigation include: the need to adapt to the Swedish organizational norms, the need to enhance informal social networks, tenure, and the need to develop their professional identities (See Table 1). Examples of meritocratic methods include: The need to change jobs and positions, the need to perform well, and the need to gain recognition. Moreover, these barriers and methods strongly suggest a correlation with the Glass Ceiling, Glass Cliff, and Labyrinth. In contrast to how these metaphors address barriers at different



junctures, results indicate a clear overlapping of barriers having a combined effect on how the interviews navigated as a career practice. The different stages in interviewee's career trajectories comprised individually of at least two of the above mentioned theories (See Table 1). This strongly suggests an interconnectedness and inter-reliance between the effects of the barriers and the methods employed to navigate past them. In addition, the barriers that appeared seemed to force the interviewees' to consciously and unconsciously react, test, and eliminate different methods and strategies. These strategies were employed as a way to balance home/work expectations, compensate, or even overcompensate, for a lack of informal influence, and avoid all of the negative implications associated with being a token. By doing so, ethnicity, although not apparently obvious, had a more augmenting effect than the interviewees accounted for themselves. The following table (Table 1.) illustrates and summarizes how ethnicity shaped the career navigation of the ethnic minority managers interviewed, at different stages in their careers.

**Table 1.** (T) – Tokenistic Barrier/Method (M) – Meritocratic Barrier/Method

Career Stage	Ethnicity as a Barrier to Navigation	How Ethnicity Shaped Navigation	Applicable Career Progression Concepts
Navigation to a Management Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being Different (T)</li> <li>• Having a Different Name (T)</li> <li>• Low Self-Confidence (T)</li> <li>• Lack of Social Network (T)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Need to Adapt to the Swedish Organizational Norms (T)</li> <li>• The Need to Enhance Informal Social Networks (T)</li> <li>• Tenure (T)</li> <li>• Need to Develop Their Professional Identities (T)</li> <li>• The Need to Change Jobs and Positions (M)</li> <li>• The Need to Perform Well (M)</li> <li>• The Need to Gain Recognition (M)</li> </ul>	<p>The Glass Ceiling Glass Cliff The Labyrinth</p>
Navigation in a Management Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being Different (T)</li> <li>• Isolation (T)</li> <li>• Lack of Social Network (T)</li> <li>• Double-Barriers Gender/Ethnicity (T)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Need to Enhance Informal Social Networks (T)</li> <li>• The Need to Adapt to the Swedish Organizational Norms (T)</li> <li>• Need to Develop Their Professional Identities (T)</li> <li>• The Need to Perform Well (M)</li> </ul>	<p>The Glass Cliff The Labyrinth</p>
Navigation to a Future Management Position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Double-Barriers Gender/Ethnicity (T)</li> <li>• Lack of Social Network (T)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being the Token (T)</li> <li>• The Need to Adapt to the Swedish Organizational Norms (T)</li> <li>• The Need to Enhance Informal Social Networks (T)</li> <li>• Tenure (T)</li> <li>• Need to Develop Their Professional Identities (T)</li> <li>• The Need to Perform Well (M)</li> <li>• The Need to Gain Recognition (M)</li> </ul>	<p>Glass Ceiling Glass Cliff The Labyrinth</p>

## VI. DISCUSSION

This reports final section will firstly, debate the concepts of the Glass Ceiling, Glass Cliff, and Labyrinth's limitations as theories of analysis for the empirical data presented. Through the highlighting of these limitations we set the stage for the presentation of a heuristic to simplify and communicate our understanding of the ways ethnicity shaped how the interviewees navigated their careers, in its entirety. Secondly, it will provide a more profound exploration into the empirical data & analysis by exercising a more argumentative interpretation. The aim of this approach is to dig deeper into the experiences provided by the interviewees, along with the meanings that potentially lie behind them. We will then discuss, what we argue as, additional limitations to the concepts, theories, and this to this research report. Lastly, we will provide recommendations for further research and provide some solutions that organizations and HRM professionals could potentially employ to address, understand, and avoid some of the implications that ethnicity brings to the career navigation of ethnic minorities in Sweden.

### 6.1 THE LIMITATIONS OF THE GLASS CEILING, GLASS CLIFF, AND LABYRINTH AS THEORIES OF ANALYSIS.

Despite the Glass Ceiling, Glass Cliff, and Labyrinth being highly applicable as theories for the explanation and understanding of many of the barriers created by the respondents' ethnicities, we did notice some shortcomings in regards to how these concepts have been applied in the past. Firstly, in regards to the metaphor of the Glass Ceiling, which has been used mainly to understand the barriers one faces at key promotion junctures, we argue that this, when viewed as a theory, can also be employed to describe the barriers affecting ethnic minorities when attempting to penetrate the labour market. Interviewees consistently reported experiencing great difficulties breaking into

the job market due to reported barriers that included their names, their lack of informal social network, and inability to fit into the Swedish organizational norms. Data suggests that, for the ethnic minorities in this study, structural, cultural, and systematic barriers exist when trying to break this first ceiling of glass.

Secondly, by assuming that a Glass Cliff situation exists only for those in managerial positions, we argue that research based on this metaphor fails to address elements of the Swedish context in regards to the 'first in - last out' principle (1982:80, Employment Protection Act). This principle allows organizations to arrange lay-offs in a fashion that creates a Glass Cliff-situation for those hired last. Research has revealed that, due to their difficulties in successfully penetrating the labour market, ethnic minorities often fall into this category, being forced to navigate past this cliff during periods of organizational restructuring (IFAU, 2003:4). The interviewees in this study reported long periods of unemployment and difficulties breaking into the labour market. Many expressed feelings of anxiety over keeping their first jobs and making it past their probation periods. Only one interviewee reported being laid-off due to restructuring, but others reported being worried about the possibility.

Thirdly, we contend that when the metaphor of the Labyrinth is utilized as theory, it is suitable to the understanding of the navigation upwards and sideways in one's career, but it fails to acknowledge that there is an alternative way out of the Labyrinth which resembles the characteristics of the Glass Cliff (See Ryan & Haslam, 2005). Interviewees' reported feelings of isolation, of unfair workloads, and of getting the worse assignments, all of which suggests precarious management positions. Their tokenistic and meritocratic methods for navigating through this precariousness, we argue, were proactive attempts to avoid falling out of the labyrinth

created by their ethnicity. This proactive awareness of the barriers that lie ahead, strongly implies an acknowledgement of the possibility of losing their jobs or positions.

Lastly, we stress that the use of any of these concepts as theories individually, fails to provide a holistic understanding of how ethnicity shapes career navigation through all stages of one's career trajectory. Experiences reported by interviewees in this study, illustrate a clear pattern that we argue can be viewed in stages. Together, these stages constitute the accumulation of one's work experiences over time. Interviewees reported applying both meritocratic and tokenistic methods to navigate past barriers they face now, and will face in the future, that have been proven successful in earlier stages of their careers. Hence, the barriers and methods of navigation from stages in the past have a direct effect on the current and future stages, as well as the perceived barriers that apply. In short, we strongly argue that in order to understand how ethnicity shapes career navigation at a specific juncture or stage, it is vital to understand how ethnicity has shaped the career navigation for that individual in prior stages. It is for this reason that we as researchers recommend the use of a wider analytical lens when looking at the career trajectories for ethnic minorities, allowing one to magnify the view to analyze the details of only one stage at a time, or expand the view to analyze the career navigation in its entirety.

## 6.2 THE DIFFERENT STAGES IN THE CAREER NAVIGATION OF ETHNIC MINORITY MANAGERS IN SWEDEN

Our data revealed that the ethnic minority managers interviewed were forced to actively navigate through four different stages in their career trajectories. These stages included: breaking into the labour market, breaking into a managerial role, navigating in their managerial role, and potentially breaking into a higher position of management. Based on our data, we view these different stages

in the career trajectories of ethnic minority managers in Sweden as similar to a multi-level house or apartment building where the ceiling of the level below becomes the floor of the current level, taking on completely different characteristics once one has entered. Hence, once breached, the ceiling of glass becomes a cliff that ethnic minorities, management or not, are forced to navigate away from. At the same time, while navigating through the barriers and challenges characterized by the Glass Cliff, strategic decisions must be made whether to continue in the current position or attempt to climb to the next stage (See Figure 6.). Whatever choice was made, interviewee reports indicated that there were often new sets of barriers to be faced. Interviewees reported experiencing barriers both when deciding to stay at the same level as well as when attempting to climb the organizational ladder. Regardless of the stage, interviewees' reported having to navigate past multiple barriers due to their ethnicity at the same time. These barriers manifested themselves in the form of tokenism and were strongly correlated to those highlighted in the Glass Ceiling, Glass Cliff, and Labyrinth. For example, in the first stage, breaking into the labour market, data revealed barriers such as their names, their lack of informal social network, and inability to fit into the Swedish organizational norms, all of which correlate with the barriers produced by the Glass Ceiling. Moreover, the methods used to navigate past these barriers reported, strongly resemble the characteristics of the Labyrinth. The presence of barriers adherent to multiple career progression metaphors was consistent throughout all reported stages (See Figure 6). We argue that this strongly suggests an interconnectedness or intersection between these concepts. This intersection is grounded in our data, which clearly indicated the experience of barriers associated with all three metaphors, both sequentially and combined, during the different stages of their journeys in the organization.

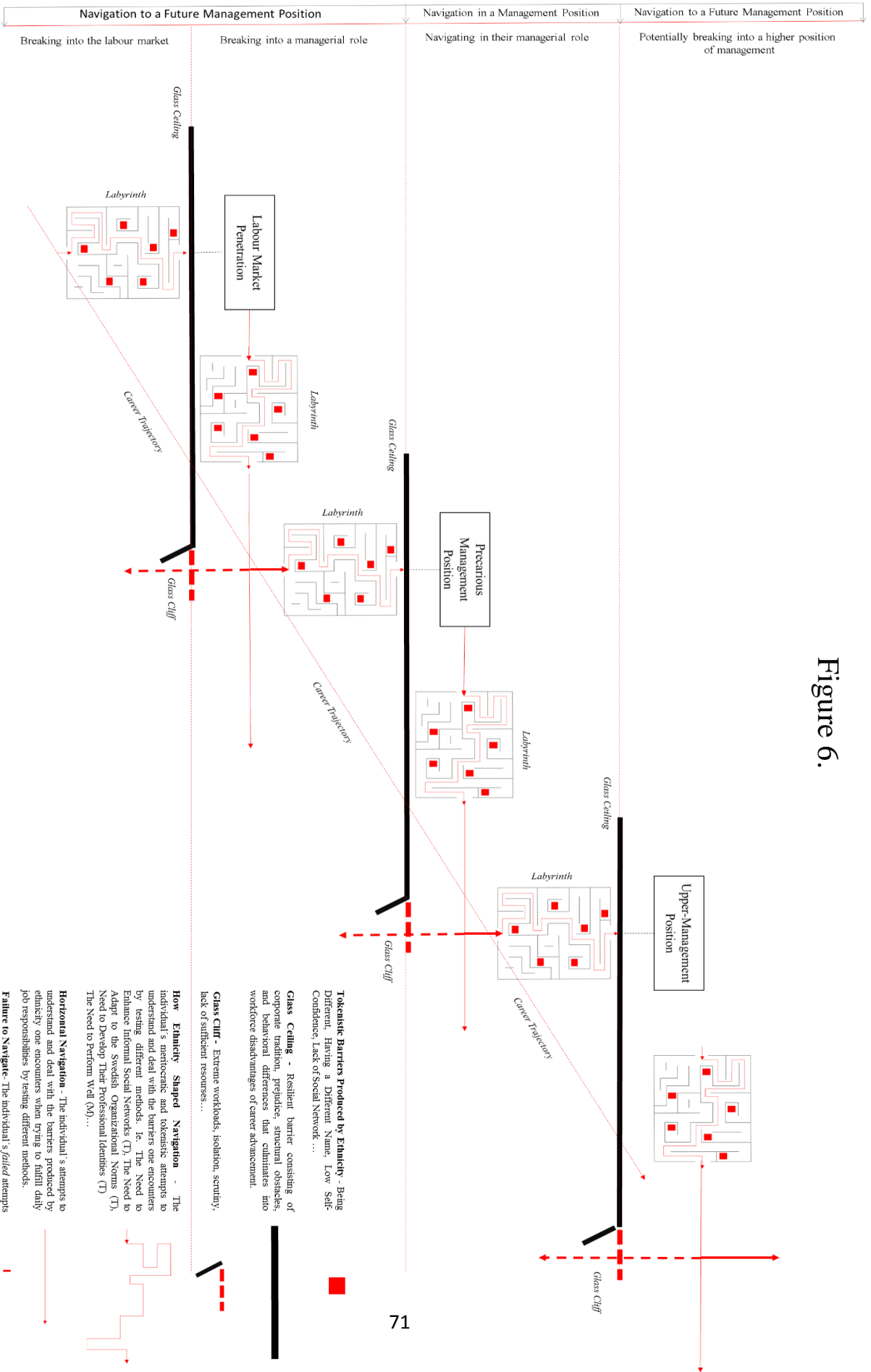


Figure 6.

Our data strongly suggests that the implications of ethnicity on career navigation resulted in an overlapping of disadvantages and barriers characterized with being the token, where the intersection of barriers adherent to all three previously mentioned concepts (see Table 1.), created a situation where interviewees faced multiple barriers simultaneously. These simultaneous barriers produce unique forms of disadvantages, which cannot be accounted for by adding together the single categories. In short, according to our data, in order for ethnic minority managers in Sweden to break into a managerial position, they must be prepared to endure and navigate past many barriers simultaneously. These barriers manifest themselves institutionally, structurally, as well as culturally. With that being stated, the next question our findings lead us to ask was...how is it that ethnic minority managers in Sweden can endure such obstacles? Is it survival of the fittest? Are the majority of ethnic minorities in Sweden who do not make it into a managerial position, let alone the job market, just lazy people with bad attitudes? How does an ethnic minority feel okay working for an organization that clearly does not prioritize diversity? These, and many other questions have yet to be addressed in this study and we argue they may have a lot to do with the interconnected relationship between tokenism, professional identity construction, and navigation.

### 6.3 ETHNIC MINORITY MANAGERS IN SWEDEN, TOKENISM, PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION, AND NAVIGATION

If we take another look at the data collected, it is in our view, that it reveals the existence of three antagonistic relationships; that between Tokenism (as a product of the interviewees' ethnicities) and meritocracy, that between the interviewees' professional identities and stigmatized identities, and lastly, between the interviewees past methods of navigation and their future methods of navigation. Moreover, we maintain that these three relationships are interconnected and that this interconnectedness can potentially serve as means to move from a stigmatized group to a



professional group for ethnic minorities in the organization, and function as tools of discrimination and control for the organization over its ethnic minority employees.

### TOKENISM VS. MERITOCRACY

Data collected strongly implies the existence of a continual negotiation between tokenistic and meritocratic barriers, as well as between tokenistic and meritocratic methods of navigation, for interviewees. Due to the variable of ethnicity, and at times gender, our data clearly illustrates that the dominant actor in the competing relationship between tokenistic and meritocratic barriers, was that of tokenism. Interviewee reports of barriers directly linked to their ethnicity; such as name, lack of social network, and being different; we argue are all tokenistic in nature. This also suggests that the negative effects of the interviewees' ethnicities overshadowed any meritocratic barriers that may have existed. As for the competitive relationship between tokenistic and meritocratic methods of navigation, the majority of navigational methods reported by interviewees' were also tokenistic in nature. We argue that this is potentially due to interviewees' shaping their navigation practices to fit the perceived barriers they expect to face in the future after those they have faced in the past. In short, in the case of our interviewees, tokenistic barriers seen in the past led to the implementation of tokenistic methods of navigation in their current positions, as well as created the perceived need for tokenistic methods of navigation for their future careers.

### PAST NAVIGATION VS. FUTURE NAVIGATION

As previously stated, the results of this study arguably revealed that our interviewees described the navigation of their career trajectories that can be viewed as consisting of different stages (see Figure 6.). These different stages embodied different combinations of barriers linked to the interviewees' ethnicities. Interviewees consistently rationalized and explained their methods of navigation for

their current and future positions by refereeing to the barriers they experienced in earlier stages of their careers. We argue that this implied a continual negotiation between the interviewees past perceived barriers/methods of navigation and perceived future barriers/methods of navigation. This was made very apparent in our study by interviewees continually referring rhetorically to past events when addressing current and future events. In some cases, interviewees expressed an inner struggle between past tokenistic barriers and necessary methods of navigation, and the meritocratic barriers and methods of navigation they hope will be necessary in the future. Despite a very clear acknowledgement by almost all interviewees' of the past, present, and future existence of tokenistic barriers linked to their ethnicity, the need to develop meritocratic methods of navigation for the future, was reported by almost all interviewees in some shape or form. Furthermore, there were interviewees' who described a career past that was solely meritocratic in nature and described their future career activities in the same manner.

#### PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY VS. STIGMATIZED IDENTITY

Lastly, we argue that the proactive attempts of the interviewees to tone-down aspects of their own culture and gender to 'fit' into Swedish organizational norms, implies an attempt to construct their professional identities and suppress or hide their ethnic/gender identities. Ethnic, or gender, identities are viewed as two of the many identities contained within the self (Shibutani & Kwan, 1965; Haas & Shaffir, 1978; Brinkerhoff & MacKie, 1984). In line with the career narrative of this report, and its view of ethnicity as barrier to career navigation, we argue that it is more appropriate to refer to the concept of stigmatized identity as a replacement for ethnic identity. We argue that interviewee data suggest that it was not their ethnicity, nor its intersection with gender, that was highlighted, but rather the contextual tokenistic barriers they created. In line with previous research (Stryker, 1985; Burke, 1980), we argue that our results strongly suggest that the tokenistic method

of constructing professional identities, and the suppression of their stigmatized identities, by interviewees, was a product of their proactive attempts to navigate past the tokenistic barriers linked to their ethnicity and or gender. It is our view that these tokenistic barriers may have represented unconscious symbols that when interacted with, shaped and developed the professional identities of interviewees, to the extent where these new identities could be strategically employed as effective tokenistic tools for career navigation. We argue that interviewees employed the method of professional identity development as tool for boundary permeability. As mentioned in the theory section of this report, boundary permeability is rooted in tokenism and refers to the extent to which members of stigmatized groups can, by using individual effort and ability, travel from their stigmatized group into a more advantaged position or group (Wright, 1997).

In the case of the interviewees in this study, the professional identities mirrored the work values, culture, and norms required to gain acceptance into Swedish organizational informal networks and groups. Consistent reports from interviewees heavily downplaying the corrupting effects of proven previous experienced career barriers, along with an overemphasis on performance and positive personality traits as key requirements to their navigational success, suggests the existence of very integrated and active professional identities in the interviewees. These professional identities are both consciously and subconsciously conditioned over time to internalize the Swedish organizational (male) norms, to oppress a competing stigmatized identity, and dull the fact that one is in a clear situation of tokenism were one is the token. We argue that, if co-constructed effectively, the professional identity can also condition ethnic minorities in management positions to ignore the by-products of them being the token. By-products of tokenism include the proliferation and support of subtle practices and situations that, while fulfilling a growing demand for diversity and social responsibility, preserve group-based inequality in organizations.

Furthermore, we argue that the construction of professional identities by interviewees served firstly, as a method for them to avoid having to face negative stereotypes, hence further developing their stigmatized identities; secondly, it is potentially a way for the dominant groups of their organizations to systematically stigmatize those who fail to create a ‘fitting’ professional identity; lastly, by latently forcing interviewees to conform to Swedish organizational norms, it might serve as a method for the dominant groups of the interviewees’ organizations to systematically control those who *do* create a ‘fitting’ professional identity.

## 6.4 LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

### LIMITATIONS

We acknowledge that there are limitations to this study. The study is to serve as a launching pad for further research and we therefore welcome critique and further testing of the concepts and arguments presented. We acknowledge the two following major limitations: 1.) The number of interviewees; and 2.) the study’s Swedish context. We understand that both make the results of this study difficult to generalize. Moreover, the interview-guide had questions that could possibly be developed and or expanded on to gain a deeper understanding of interviewee experiences.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Our suggestions for further research include addressing the relevance of the implicit status hierarchy amongst countries of origin for ethnic minorities, however controversial that might be. We also welcome the compliment of a quantitative study that potentially contradict or confirm our findings. In addition, we would also welcome a long-term study following ethnic minorities throughout their entire careers, potentially providing a more detailed and holistic description of

career trajectories within this group. Furthermore, an international cross-country study within this topic area would serve as a valuable contrast to this study. In addition to the above suggestions for further research, and after having analyzed the results of this study, various practical suggestions to help address the challenging implications that ethnicity brings to career navigation, become apparent.

### SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

Our recommendations though are not directed at ethnic minorities in Sweden, since it has been argued in research that such recommendations can have a stigmatizing effect (Bruckkuller, Ryan, Haslam, & Peters, 2013). Instead, we direct our suggestions at the organizations. Firstly, we recommend the development of informed policies, procedures, and strategies that address the challenges associated with discrimination and equal opportunity in the organization. Secondly, we believe there is a need for better developed diversity efforts within organizations and a better understanding of career navigation in regards to ethnic minorities. Thirdly, HRM specialists need to be educated in how much work really must be done in order to create an environment where equal opportunity is a standard. Lastly, we see a need for both culture and training programs that can help in the reduction of stereotyping, as well as an investment in talent retention initiatives geared towards ethnic minority professionals in senior positions.

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# APPENDIX

## APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW GUIDE

Age:

Gender:

Tenure:

Years as a manager (Current position/In total):

Position/title:

Internal/external recruitment:

Total employees in the company:

Industry:

Number of people reporting to you (Blue collar/white collar):

Education:

Job description:

Tell me how you got to where you are today?

What was your career ambition when you first started working?

Did you have a plan or goal? What kind of plan or goal was it?

Where you ever forced to change your plans or goals? If so, why?

How has your career journey looked up until now?

What do you think were the most difficult and easiest aspects during your journey to your current position?

Do you think you have had a successful career so far? If so, why?

What do you attribute to your success, or lack of success?

What do think hindered you?

What do you think helped you or made your career journey easier?

If you could have the chance to do something different, what would it be? Do you think you would look at your career in the same way as you do now?

Do you think that you have achieved your goals or executed your plan?

How has the career journey looked for your colleagues? What kind of education do they have in comparison to your own?

Tell me about how you became a manager?

Do you think that diversity belongs in the workplace?

How does your company view diversity? Is it something that your company works with actively?  
How do you define diversity? How does your company define diversity?

How do you feel your co-workers feel about diversity in the workplace?

How do you think the way your company works with diversity is going to influence your future career? (Positive/ negative)

Do you feel comfortable standing up for diversity in the office?

What do you have for future career goals?

What do you think is required to have a successful career in your organization?

Do you feel that your co-workers are required to take the same steps?

What do you think will potentially hinder you in reaching your future career goals?

What do you think is going to help you to reach your future career goals?

## APPENDIX B. INTERVIEWEE DATA

Interviewee	Age	Sex	Years as Manager	Position Title	Recruitment type. Internal/External	Total Employees	Industry	Employees under management - White Collar/Blue Collar	Education
1	39	F	6		Internal	22600	Health Care	26 White	Social Work/Leadership
2	47	M	10		Internal	1000	Consumer Goods	28 Blue	Highschool
3	42	M	11		External	1000	Consumer Goods	30 Blue	Highschool
4	36	M	2		Internal	80	Warehouse & Logistics	14 Blue	Bachelor of Finance
5	51	M	5		Internal	1000	Consumer Goods	35 Blue	Highschool
6	49	F	17		External	70	IT	5 White	Bachelor of Finance/Marketing
7	30	M	1		External	2000	Telecom	6 White	Bachelor HR/Leadership
8	42	F	12		Internal	2000	Retail	30 White	Fashion School
9	42	F	4		Internal	2200	Telecom	20 White	1 year masters in Finance
10	27	F	1		Internal	30	Recruiting	40 White/Blue	Bachelor HR
11	22	F	1		Internal	8	Consulting	7 White	Bachelor in Business
12	40	M	7		Internal	75	IT/Computer Hardware	75 White	Highschool
13	42	F	6		Internal	20000	Retail	35 White	Law
14	50	M	4		External	500	Human Resources	50 White/Blue	Master Degree