

CHAPTER 2

Entering the Field: Three Empirical Teaching Cases Leading the Way

2.1. Introduction

This chapter functions as a bridge between the previous theoretical introduction and the subsequent chapters composed of one conceptual chapter and two empirical chapters. By presenting three teaching cases based on empirical data collected throughout my PhD-trajectory, but which have not been used in the subsequent empirical chapters, I present a first glance on how the previously introduced theoretical concepts, such as careers, ethnicity, social capital, identity, and organizational practices may be important in understanding potential inequalities in dominant ethnic and minority ethnic professionals' careers. Furthermore, these teaching cases help to illustrate why these theoretical concepts need to be considered in relation to each other, and why it is insufficient to study them separately. In addition, these teaching cases can be used in order to bridge the gap between theory and practice, as they can be used as empirical material for teaching in classrooms and organizational settings.

As a means to prepare students for the questions and challenges of the real world, Harvard Law School began to use cases as a teaching method in 1870, followed by Harvard Business School in 1920, and Harvard Medical School in 1985 (Garvin, 2003). The premise for adopting business cases in the programs was that they should present existing challenges in business, providing students with the opportunity to practice real situations and to finally come to well-informed decisions and subsequent actions (Garvin, 2003). As such, cases should not include any definite answers to the described problems, but they should provide enough relevant and irrelevant information to support the student's own problem-solving process (Garvin, 2003). Nowadays, cases are still frequently used in MBA and executive teaching (Garvin, 2007) as a

means to bridge theory and practice through applying theoretical knowledge to real-life problems. Contemporary cases used in various settings still follow the same fundamental characteristics of the traditional cases (Garvin, 2003).

Within this thesis, the three empirical teaching cases lead the way to leave the theoretical arena of ethnic diversity and careers in organization towards *entering the field* of the professionals' lives in the Dutch organizational context: I selected both quantitative and qualitative empirical data, which I feel illustrate particularly well how some of the previously introduced theoretical concepts come to life in the everyday organizational environment. Considering the teaching cases in relation to each other both highlights and problematizes the interplay between the theoretical concepts of ethnicity, identity, social capital and active network development as an organizational practice, in the context of professional or managerial careers in the Netherlands. Notwithstanding the theoretical complexity of these concepts, I also intent to highlight that, in everyday organizational life, "it is in the small things", as one of my interviewees put it once. By making room for presenting everyday situations, which did not find a place in the subsequent chapters, these teaching cases offer the opportunity for "small" everyday situations to take center stage. The fact that these "small" incidents may be overlooked by many may make them even more critical for those who do notice them. With these teaching cases, I want to sensitize the reader to the meaning and potential consequences of "the small things" dominant ethnic and minority ethnic men and women experience throughout their professional careers in the Dutch organizational context.

Next to the descriptive and introductory purpose the teaching cases serve in this dissertation, these teaching cases can also be used to literally *enter the field*. All three teaching cases are designed in a way that allows both academics and practitioners to use them in either a

classroom or in an organizational setting as a means of raising awareness for or thinking about manners to practically approach organizational questions related to specifically ethnic diversity and careers. Since the data for the teaching cases are based on critical incidents in professional organizations, the teaching cases reflect realistic situations in Dutch organizations. Bringing to the fore individual experiences many might interpret as “rather small” or wipe away with a simple “this is just how it goes here”, will hopefully draw both students’ as well as practitioners’ attention to the need for personal awareness, sensitivity, and persistence when entering the field of ethnic diversity and careers in organizations.

After giving a short overview of the particular focus of the three teaching cases in this introduction, each teaching case will be presented, accompanied by additional teaching notes. These teaching notes will provide a short synopsis of the teaching case, particularly focusing on the background, the content, and the target audience. Furthermore, the learning objectives are specified, together with suggestions for additional literature and possible assignment and discussion questions. The design of the teaching notes follows examples of common practice in case-based teaching (e.g. “Writing case studies”, n.d.). The particular design of the teaching cases intends to raise implicit and explicit questions regarding the presented critical incident. In that, I follow the main purpose of the case-based teaching approach to present a critical situation offering a playground for exploration and discussion of a particular topic for readers, students, and practitioners (Garvin, 2003). As a consequence, the teaching cases will not provide answers to the questions they address. In this sense, the teaching notes have to be understood as a means to give additional insight in the origin and the added value of the teaching case, mainly in terms of their particular function in this chapter of the dissertation. To support the use of the teaching cases in practice, the teaching notes may serve as a guideline for instructors intending to use one

of the teaching cases in the classroom or in an organizational setting. The teaching cases, together with the teaching notes, may but do not have to be used in the consecutive order in which they are presented here. Each teaching case can stand alone.

The first teaching case, “Careers in numbers”, is designed around a set of quantitative data collected at a large professional service firm in the Netherlands. This teaching case presents the numbers illustrating the actual inequality between dominant ethnic and minority ethnic professionals in terms of objective career measures, such as salary, promotion, and evaluation scores. While both acknowledging as well as strongly relying on the power of numbers in sketching a convincing picture, which is hard to ignore, this teaching case also touches upon the question, if quantitative data is sufficient in order to capture and understand the entire complexity of the subject matter.

The second teaching case, “ ‘(You are) who you are’ – And what does this mean?”, is based on qualitative data collected at a large professional service firm in the Netherlands. By presenting a selection of dominant ethnic and minority ethnic professionals’ career experiences, this teaching case introduces the role an individual’s acclaimed and/or assigned ethnic group membership can play in terms of their ethnic identity salience in everyday organizational life. On a more abstract level, the example of the commonly shared definition and acceptance of prototypical characteristics and behavior of a successful employee raises awareness to the role organizational practices and processes might play in either restricting or allowing room for both organizations and individuals to explore, support, and benefit from ethnic diversity.

The third teaching case, “To b(orrel) or not to b(orrel): that is the question”, zooms in on one particular organizational practice, which appears to be closely related to the Dutch context: The *borrel*. The English translation of the term *borrel* would be “company drinks”. This teaching

case is based on qualitative data collected at one of the large urban municipalities in the Netherlands. This teaching case is designed in order to illustrate how particular organizational practices can be closely related to and even reflect particular cultural preferences. The gist of this teaching case highlights how the organizational practice of the *borrel*, intended to create the opportunity for informal interaction among colleagues, appears to be inclusive only for some while being exclusive for others. Since the *borrel* is generally known as *the* place to build, maintain, and use interpersonal contacts with colleagues of all functional levels, the selected quotes challenge the reader to (re)interpret this “market place for social capital” in light of ethnic diversity and to think about potential (un)intended consequences of organizational practices in terms of career opportunities.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: Firstly, teaching case 1 “Careers in Numbers” is presented, followed by the teaching notes. Secondly, teaching case 2 “‘(You are) who you are’ – And what does this mean?” is presented, followed by the accompanying teaching notes. Thirdly, teaching case 3 “To b(orrel) or not to b(orrel): that is the question”, is presented, together with the relevant teaching notes. This chapter will end with a final section dedicated to “Some Final Words” corresponding to each of the presented teaching cases.

2.1.1. References introduction.

- Garvin, D.A. (2003). Making the case: Professional education for the world of practice. *Harvard Magazine*, 106(1), 56-65, 107.
- Garvin, D.A. (2007). Teaching executives and teaching MBAs: Reflections on the case method. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 6(3), 364-374. doi: 10.5465/AMLE.2007.26361626
- Writing case studies, (n.d.). In *Writing case studies: Manual*. Retrieved from <http://www.gttp.org/docs/HowToWriteAGoodCase.pdf>

2.2. Teaching Case 1: Careers in Numbers

On an ordinary Saturday morning in the beginning of February 2014, one of the big newspapers in the Netherlands headlined: “Nauwelijks allochtonen in de top van ‘BV Nederland’” (Volkskrant, 2014). Literally translated, this title means “Hardly any minority ethnics in the top of the ‘Netherlands Inc.’”. Presenting facts and figures about the current representation of minority ethnics in Dutch organizations, the article sketched quite a clear picture of the senior management of Dutch organizations as being mostly dominant ethnic.

In fact, both the facts and figures, as well as the message of the article should not be new to organizations in the Netherlands. Many organizations notice differences in career development for members of particular social groups within the organization. For instance, one particular professional service firm (ABCD) in the Netherlands was struck by the outcomes of an internal study showing that particular career outcomes differed in favor of men compared to women. Due to the alarming results of the first study, ABCD decided to conduct a larger, second study in order to further investigate careers for different social groups of professionals, with a specific focus on the comparison between dominant ethnic and minority ethnic professionals.

The presentation of the quantitative results of this second study to a selected group of employees (participants in the second study and the responsible members of ABCD’s diversity board), provoked overwhelming reactions of astonishment and disbelief: Being confronted with the fact that, for instance, dominant ethnic professionals have a larger salary increase throughout their careers compared to minority ethnics, it suddenly was a plain truth that could not easily be brushed aside anymore. In the blink of an eye, these numbers and figures convinced every one of the existence of inequalities in the careers of dominant ethnic and minority ethnic professionals – certainly in a work environment in which interpreting and relying on numbers is second nature to

the professionals, as it is the case in many professional service firms. At the same time, these numbers led to a wave of follow-up questions about the “why’s” and the “how’s”. However, the numbers and figures were unable to answer these questions satisfactorily.

For the subsequent illustration of careers of professionals with different ethnic backgrounds at ABCD, the results of the quantitative data of the second study will be the basis. What is your reaction to the presented numbers? Do you share the astonishment and disbelief? What are your questions (which may stay unanswered) after taking a look at the figures?

2.2.1. Careers in professional service firms. The way to achieve and maintain career success in professional service firms, such as law firms, financial service providers, or management consultancies, is often clearly defined in a strict up-or-out career system. In other words, each professional at one of these firms knows which developmental steps to take in which restricted time frame in order to achieve the aspired results in terms of career outcomes. These firms have a clear structure of functional levels with the partner level as the highest possible level. Usually, employees enter the organization right after obtaining their higher educational degree and continue to strive towards the next functional level until they reach partner-level, which should be accomplished within 12 to 15 years of employment.

The evaluation processes within professional service firms are intended to be merit-based, with a strong performance-oriented focus when making career decisions. For instance, many of these firms have identified a number of key competences each professional needs to display to a certain extent in order to be considered successful. Performance assessments on these competences are usually done by the individual professional development manager based on prior evaluation reports of others, who have worked together with the particular professional (for an example of an evaluation report potentially used by a professional development manager,

please see Appendix 2.2.6). After these individual evaluations by the professional development manager, so-called *talent reviews* are organized, in which a group of professional development managers discusses the evaluations of their professionals in order to come to career decisions (e.g. salary, year end reviews, promotions) for a particular cohort of professionals. Career decisions based on such evaluation systems should guarantee for transparency and equal career opportunities for every professional. It has to be noted, however, that in practice evaluators' formal aim for a normal distribution of evaluations and career decisions is often guiding and potentially influencing the whole evaluation process.

Careers at ABCD. The illustration of careers at ABCD is based on quantitative data collected in 2010 as part of a larger research project at a professional service firm (ABCD) in the Netherlands. The objective of the project was to investigate the career development of professionals with different ethnic backgrounds (dominant ethnics and (non-western) minority ethnics).

2.2.2. Data collection and participants. The quantitative analyses are based on information from the organization's Personnel Information System, which provided data on career outcomes, such as the participants' salary, promotion steps, Year End Reviews and evaluations given by the professional development manager (such as scores on individual key competences and a general evaluation score). The available data start at the date each participant entered the organization, up until the moment of data collection, which was at the end of ABCD's booking-year of 2010.

The population of this sample consists of 130 professionals (68 men and 62 women; 65 dominant ethnics and 65 minority ethnics, of which 50 minority ethnics fall into the category of non-western professionals). Out of the pool of potential, voluntary participants, each minority

ethnic participant was “matched” in a pair with a dominant ethnic participant in order to guarantee for as much similarity as possible between the dominant ethnic and the (non-western) minority ethnic groups. The matching-process was done according to the following characteristics: Date of organizational entry, specific function when entering the organization, gender, level of education, and the location of the office within the Netherlands.

Furthermore, a difference was made in terms of the comparison between dominant ethnics and minority ethnics, and between dominant ethnics and non-western minority ethnics. In the first comparison, all pairs were included in the analysis (n=65), whereas in the second comparison, only the pairs with a non-western minority ethnic professional were included (n=50). In the subsequent presentation of the results, it will be clearly indicated, whether the results concern the general group of dominant ethnics (n=65) and minority ethnics (n=65), or the specific group of dominant ethnics (n=50) matched with non-western minority ethnics (n=50). Any significant interaction-effects between ethnic group membership and gender will also be illustrated.

The following six dependent variables are considered: Development of salary (average and range entire group), opportunity to advance in career (across all functional levels), Year End Review, performance evaluation by professional development manager, performance evaluation of the competence “(inter)personal competence” by the professional development manager, time spent at functional level 5 (for more details on the definitions and calculations of the variables used for the quantitative analyses, please see Appendix 2.2.6, Table 2.2.1).

Subsequently, the statistically significant findings will be presented, in order to give an overview of indicators of the career development of dominant ethnic and (non-western) minority ethnic professionals at ABCD (for more details on additional descriptive statistics, please see

Appendix 2.2.6, Table 2.2.2). Significant effects (with a p-value < .05) of ethnicity on different indicators of career outcomes will be illustrated. Also, marginally significant effects (p-value between .10 and .05) will be mentioned. In relatively small samples such as this one, marginally significant results give an indication of a trend, which most likely would be significant in case of a larger sample. This has to be kept in mind when looking at the subsequent findings.

2.2.3. Results. The first three dependent variables (development of salary; opportunity to advance in career (through all functional levels), time spent at functional level 5) show of how careers of dominant ethnic and minority ethnic professionals at ABCD develop in terms of measurements of objective career success. The last three dependent variables compare evaluations (year end review; performance evaluation by professional development manager; performance evaluation of the competence “(inter)personal competence” by the professional development manager) of dominant ethnic and minority ethnic men and women professionals. While the first three dependent variables can be understood as indicators for the objective career development of professionals, the last three dependent variables can be understood as indicators of individual performance evaluation. Thus, following the course of events in the evaluation process at the professional service firm, the results should have been presented the other way around, starting at the individual evaluation, which leads to matching objective career outcomes, such as salary and career advancement. However, turning the presentation of the findings around serves the purpose of presenting detected differences in careers of dominant ethnic and minority ethnic men and women professionals first, and then asking the question of where this might come from. Following the presentation of the numbers, the question remaining is: Do we know enough?

Development of salary. Looking at the development of salary throughout the professionals' careers up until 2010, ethnicity has a significant effect ($p = .037$): Dominant ethnic professionals have a larger development of salary compared to minority ethnic professionals (€ 3528,73 and € 3144,31, respectively) throughout their careers. The specific comparison between dominant ethnic professionals and non-western minority ethnic professionals also shows a marginally significant difference between the groups ($p = .073$): Dominant ethnic professionals have a larger development of salary compared to their non-western counterparts (€ 3494,84 and € 3226,78, respectively).

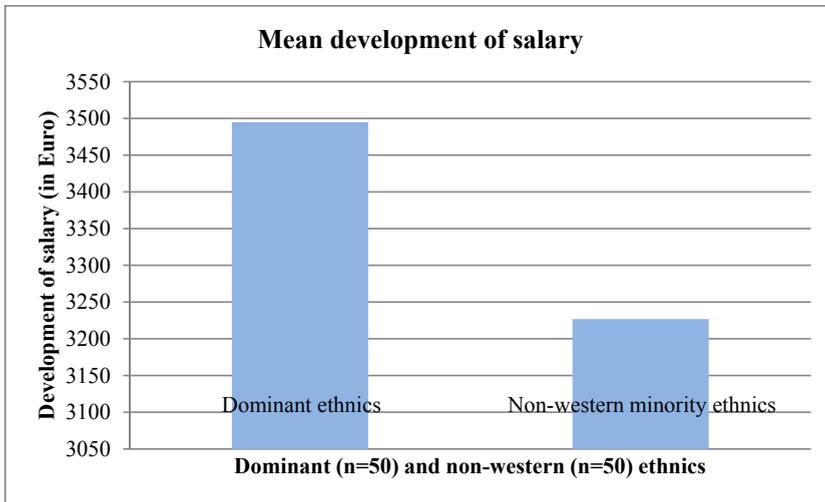


Figure 2.2.1: Mean development of salary for dominant ethnics (n=50) and non-western minority ethnics (n=50).

Opportunity to advance in career (across all functional levels). A significant effect of ethnicity has been found on the opportunity to advance in career ($p = 010$): Dominant ethnic professionals are more likely to advance in their careers from one functional level to the other compared to minority ethnic professionals (24,9% and 20%, respectively).

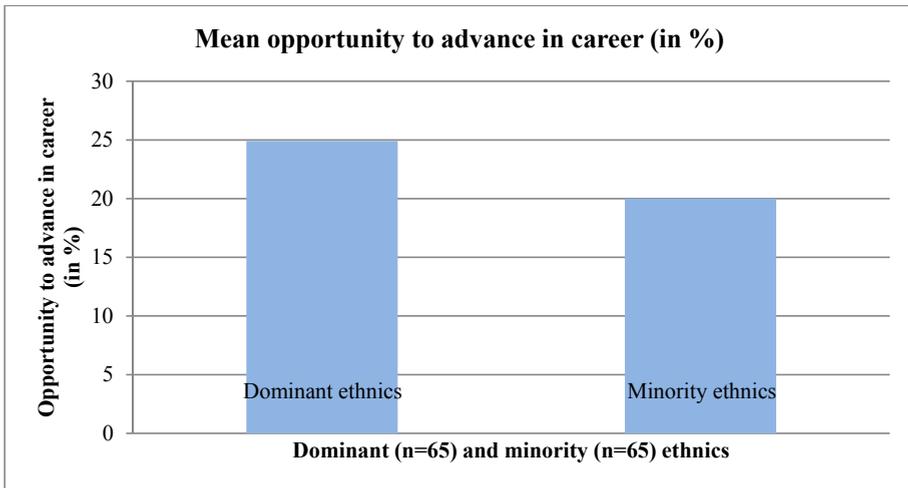


Figure 2.2.2: Mean opportunity to advance in career (in %) for dominant ethnics (n=65) and minority ethnics (n=65).

The specific comparison between dominant ethnics and non-western minority ethnics shows a marginally significant interaction with gender ($p = .075$). The graph (see Figure 2.2.3) shows that the difference in opportunity to advance in the career is especially prominent when looking at dominant ethnic and non-western minority ethnic women: Dominant ethnic women are more likely to advance in their careers compared to non-western minority women (27,7% and 19,8%, respectively).

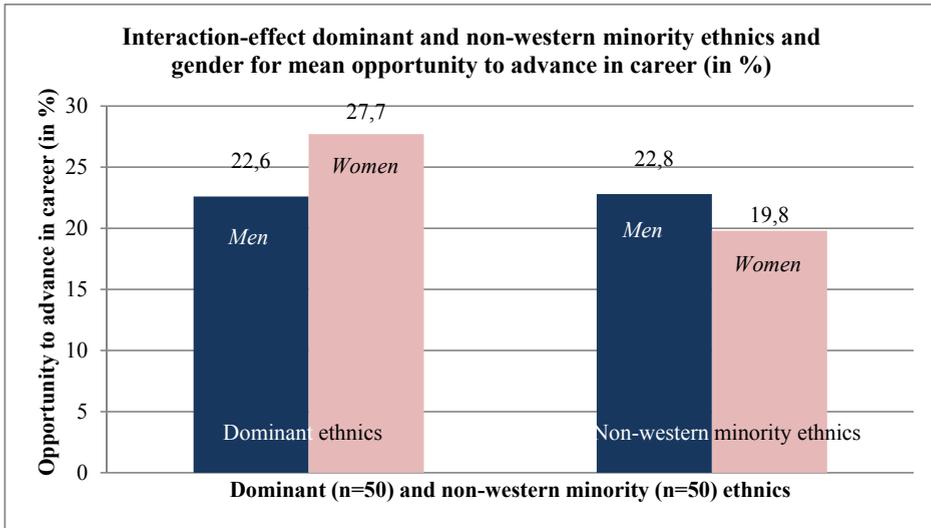


Figure 2.2.3: Interaction-effect of dominant ethnics (n=50) and non-western minority ethnics (n=50) and gender for mean opportunity to advance in career (in %).

Time spent at functional level 5. Notably, the group of participating professionals who ever reached functional level 5 (the second highest functional level in the organization) is rather small: Within this sample, this particular group consists of 15 professionals. However, a significant difference with respect to the time spent at functional level 5 was found between dominant ethnic professionals and minority ethnic professionals ($p = .016$): Dominant ethnic professionals spent less time at functional level 5 compared to minority ethnic professionals (2 years and 3,38 years, respectively). A similar significant effect was found for gender ($p = .007$): Men spent less time at functional level 5 compared to women (1,86 years and 3,5 years). In addition, a significant interaction effect of ethnicity and gender was found ($p = .007$). Figure 2.2.4 indicates that the gender difference is only significant among minority ethnic professionals, and that it is absent for the group of dominant ethnic professionals. It has to be noted that these analyses are not related to career advancement – this (small) group includes both professionals

who were at functional level 5 at the moment of data collection, and professionals who had been at functional level 5 and had moved to functional level 6 prior to the moment of data collection.

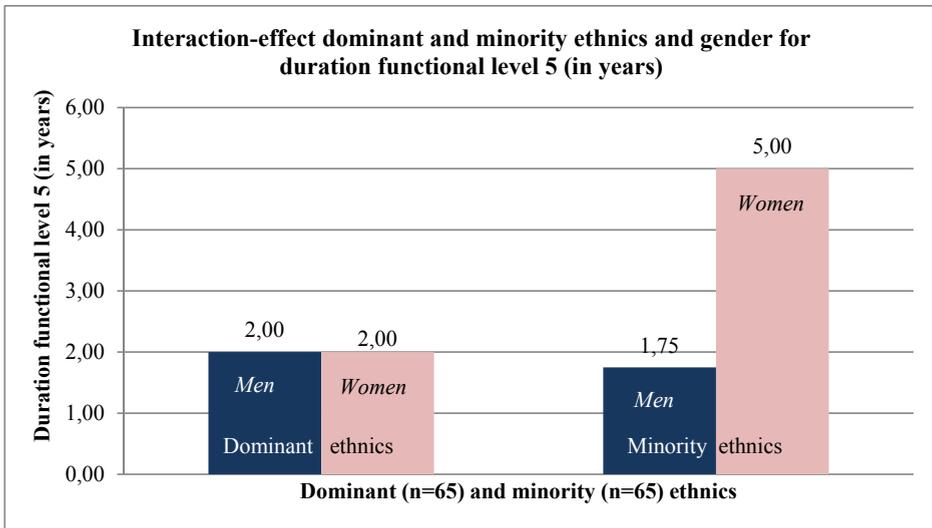


Figure 2.2.4: Interaction-effect of dominant ethnics (n=65) and minority ethnics (n=65) and gender for duration of functional level 5 (in years).

Year End Review. For the Year End Review, there was a marginally significant effect of ethnicity ($p = .053$): Dominant ethnic professionals receive higher scores on the Year End Review compared to minority ethnic professionals (3,51 and 3,25, respectively). Specifically looking at dominant ethnic professionals compared to non-western minority ethnic professionals, there is a significant difference in terms of Year End Review ($p = .021$). Dominant ethnic professionals receive higher scores on the Year End Review compared to non-western minority ethnic professionals (3,53 and 3,23, respectively).

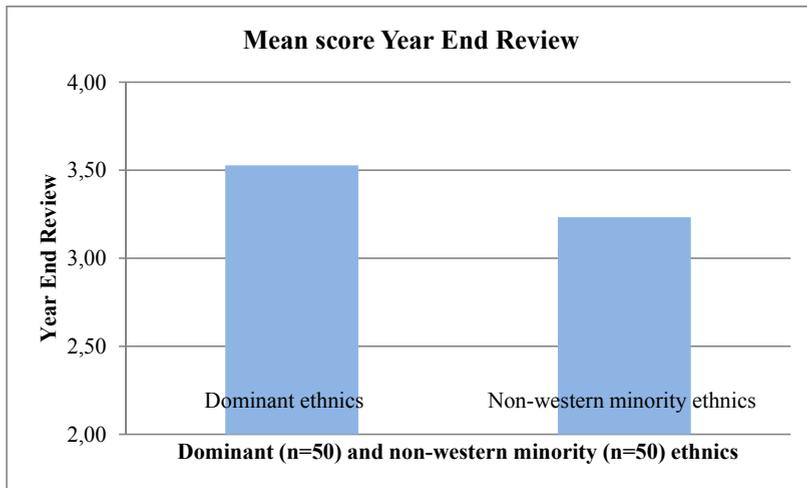


Figure 2.2.5: Mean score Year End Review for dominant ethnics (n=50) and non-western minority ethnics (n=50).

Performance evaluation by professional development manager. Looking at the general evaluation by the professional development manager, there was a marginally significant effect of ethnicity ($p = .099$). Dominant ethnic professionals receive a slightly higher general evaluation by their supervisor compared to minority ethnic professionals (3,51 and 3,31, respectively). The specific comparison between dominant ethnic professionals and non-western minority ethnic professionals also shows a marginally significant difference between the groups ($p = .087$): Dominant ethnic professionals receive slightly higher general evaluations by their professional development manager compared to non-western minority ethnic professionals (3,5 and 3,27, respectively).

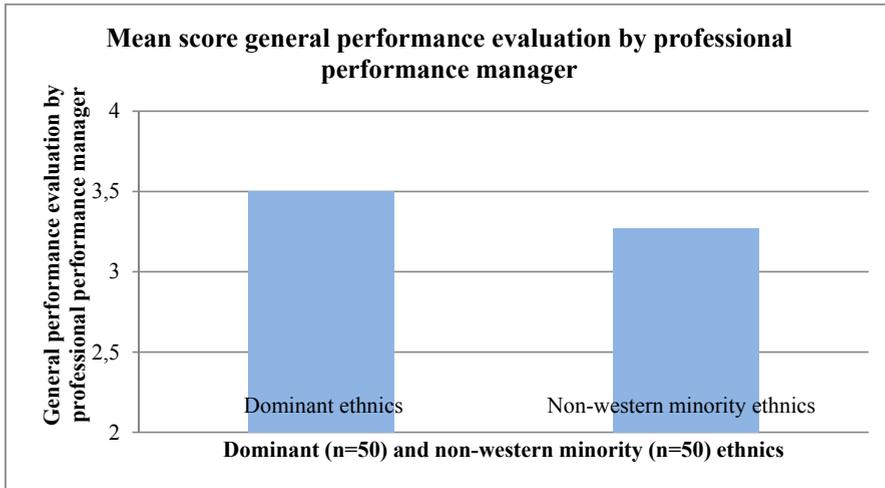


Figure 2.2.6: Mean score general performance evaluation by professional performance manager for dominant ethnics (n=50) and non-western minority ethnics (n=50).

Performance evaluation of the competence “(inter)personal competence” by professional development manager. For the competence “(Inter)personal competence”, which combines the scores of three separate competences, the only marginally significant difference was found between dominant ethnic professionals and non-western minority ethnic professionals ($p = .091$). Dominant ethnic professionals receive higher scores on the “(Inter)personal competence” by their professional development manager compared to non-western minority ethnic professionals (2,27 and 2,2, respectively).

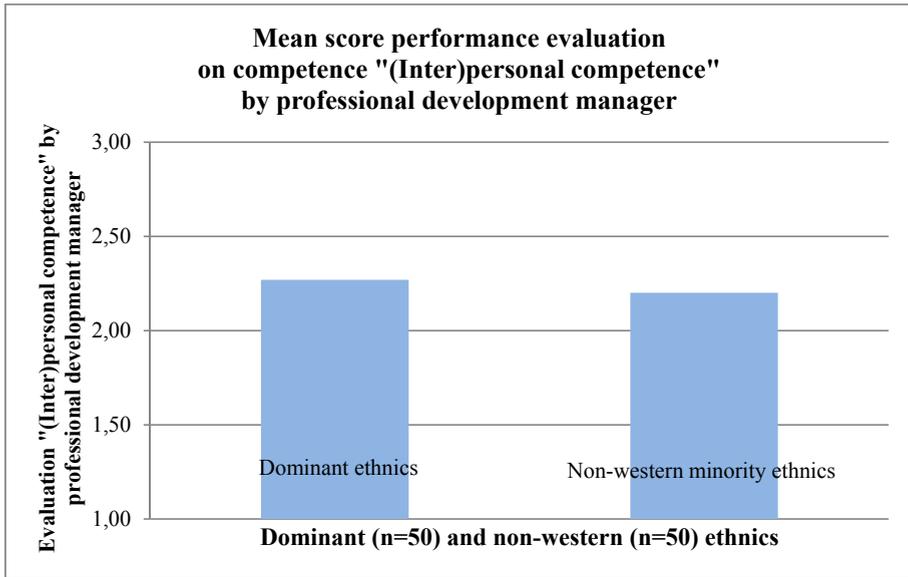


Figure 2.2.7: Mean score performance evaluation on competence “(Inter)personal competence” by professional performance manager for dominant ethnics (n=50) and non-western minority ethnics (n=50).

No other significant differences were found between the groups for any of the other two competences (Quality and Market), which are also combined out of several other separate competences.

2.2.4. Food for thought. After presenting careers based on quantitative data, the question is, what do we know now? And, do we know enough? Do we agree with the following quote, which, if taken literally, suggests that *numbers* can make or break a person’s reputation or success by apparently revealing the only information that counts? “The invisible thing that is called a Good Name is made up of the breath of numbers that speak well of you” (Edward F. Halifax, British Conservative Statesman, 1881-1959). However, if taken as a figure of speech, this quote indicates that a person’s reputation or success depends on the persistence of a sufficient amount of relevant others who positively evaluate the person’s character or

performance and also share this affirmative evaluation. Whichever meaning Edward F. Halifax had in mind with this expression, each of them is relevant to this teaching case in its own way, either in terms of paying attention to the actual numbers understood in terms of key performance indicators, or in terms of numbers of relevant sponsors positively affecting a person's image and visibility within the organization in general, and in the evaluation process, in particular.

Specifically this teaching case, which is solely based on quantitative data, demonstrates the challenges of the “number-game”: On the one hand, numbers can illuminate inevitable facts. Therefore, numbers are certainly valuable in research and in practice – without presenting the numbers to our participants, they would probably not have recognized the various inequalities in careers of dominant ethnic and minority ethnic professionals. On the other hand, however, numbers can leave us with a lot of unanswered questions. When we presented the numbers of the quantitative results at ABCD, as described in the introduction of this teaching case, the audience of the session learned about this stretch between the blessing and the curse of numbers the hard way. While being confronted with the blatant reality of inequality in career development and performance evaluations for dominant ethnic and minority ethnic men and women professionals, the audience clearly did not know enough in terms of potential reasons for this inequality by looking at the numbers only.

A life in numbers... Do we know enough? As we have seen previously, organizations strive to capture (organizational) life in numbers. Often, organizations implement practices and processes based on numbers in order to create an “objective”, “exact”, and “reliable” basis for necessary decision making. Numbers are collected and analyzed to evaluate individual professionals and thus to determine their “Good Name” in terms of career outcomes. However, as illustrated by the teaching case, the question remaining is: Do we know enough?

Not only organizations, but also people and society seem to fall for numbers. Since numbers are believed to be objective, exact, and reliable, there seems to be a general desire to express almost anything in numbers. Even at the end of a person's life, often only two dates survive (Stämpfli, 2013), at least in many (western) societies: Nicely carved in stone, these numbers are the only visible information remaining about a human being. But what about memories and shared experiences others may remember far more clearly, maybe long after forgetting the person's exact date of birth, for instance?

Thus, even though the claim that numbers constitute an important part of society and people's lives is not farfetched, the question arising is: Do we know enough?

2.2.5. References teaching case 1.

Stämpfli, R. (2013). *Die Vermessung der Frau: Von Botox, Hormonen und anderem Irrsinn*. Güthersloh: Güthersloher Verlagshaus.

Volkskrant, D. (2014). Nauwelijks allochtonen in de top van "BV Nederland". Retrieved 01.02.2014, from <http://www.volkskrant.nl/vk/nl/2680/Economie/article/detail/3567665/2013/12/27/Nauwelijks-allochtonen-in-de-top-van-BV-Nederland.dhtml>

2.2.6. Appendix: Additional information on statistics for teaching case 1.

This appendix provides additional information on teaching case 1. The following figure (Figure 2.2.8) shows an example of a potential evaluation form used in a yearly evaluation meeting at a professional service firms such as ABCD. This illustration has to be considered as an example based on the quantitative and qualitative data collected at ABCD. This example does not represent the actual evaluation form used at ABCD. The original format of the evaluation form is not part of the data collected at the professional service firm. The subsequent tables further described the used variables in the quantitative analyses in teaching case 1 are based on. The first table (Table 2.2.1) gives an overview of the variables and their definitions and respective calculations. The second table (Table 2.2.2) gives an overview of the relevant descriptive statistics.

ABCD

Yearly Evaluation Form

Personal information of professional

Name: _____

Department: _____

Position: _____

Functional level: _____

Start of employment: _____

Start salary: _____

Actual salary: _____

Evaluation key competences

(To be filled in by the professional development manager prior to the float show)

Competence	Evaluation Score*				
	A	B	C	X	Y
Technical Skills					
Competence 1a					
Competence 1b					
Competence 1c					
Business Skills					
Competence 2d					
Competence 2e					
Competence 2f					
(Inter)personal Skills					
Competence 3g					
Competence 3h					
Competence 3i					

General evaluation score of key competences

(To be filled in by the professional development manager prior to the talent review)

_____ (A, B, C, X, Y)*

Year End Review

(To be filled in by the professional development manager after the talent review)

_____ (1 – 6)**

Promotion

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, new position: _____

New functional level: _____

Salary Increase

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, how much: _____ Euro

New monthly salary: _____ Euro

Date: _____

Signature professional development manager: _____

***Explanation of evaluation scores for key competences:**

A = Exceeds Expectations
B = Meets Expectations
C = Below Expectations
X = Not Observed
Y = Not Applicable

****Explanation of evaluation scores for Year End Review:**

1 = Above expectations
2 = Meets expectations
3 = Below expectations
4 = Individual agreement of not increasing salary, but developing according to price index
5 = Employed too recently for YER
6 = Absent/Sick for too long

Figure 2.2.8: Example of a potential evaluation form used in a yearly evaluation meeting at a professional service firm such as ABCD.

Table 2.2.1: Definitions and calculations of variables used for quantitative analyses teaching case 1.

Variables	Definition and calculations of variables
Ethnicity	Dominant ethnic, minority ethnic (n=65 matched pairs)
Bicultural category	Dominant ethnic, non-western minority ethnic (n=50 matched pairs)
Gender	Man, woman
Age	In years.
Tenure	In years.
Development of salary from salary at organizational entry till salary in 2010	Calculated based on the difference in salary between 2010 and the salary in year of organizational entry: If someone earned 1000 Euro in 200x and 1500 Euro in 2010, then this person's development of salary was 500 Euro.
Opportunity to advance in career	Opportunity to advance in career (year of organizational entry - 2010), calculated based on the duration of stay at each particular functional level throughout the career: If A always stays at a specific functional level compared to B, then A's opportunity to advance in the career was higher compared to B's within the particular time frame.
Year End Review (YER)	Mean score of Year End Review (2007 – 2010)
Mean performance evaluation by the Performance Development Manager (MPE-PDM)	Mean score of general performance evaluation by performance development manager
Technical competence by Professional development Manager (Tc-PDM)	Mean score of competence-values "Technical competence" (2007 – 2010) by the performance development manager 101
(Inter)personal competence by Professional development Manager (Ic-PDM)	Mean score of competence-values "(Inter)personal competence" (2007 – 2010) by the performance development manager 101
Business competence by Professional development Manager (Bc-PDM)	Mean score of competence-value "Business competence" (2007 – 2010) by the performance development manager 101
Duration functional level 1	Calculated based on number of years a person stayed at functional level 1.
Duration functional level 2	Calculated based on number of years a person stayed at functional level 2.
Duration functional level 3	Calculated based on number of years a person stayed at functional level 3.
Duration functional level 4	Calculated based on number of years a person stayed at functional level 4.
Duration functional level 5	Calculated based on number of years a person stayed at functional level 5.

Opportunity to reach functional level 2	Across the whole period of available data (year of organizational entry of the person holding the longest tenure) was calculated how many employees had reached functional level 2, or higher. This way, the percentage (and thereby the opportunity) of the number of employees (ever) reaching a particular functional level (and potentially further advanced in their careers thereafter) is calculated.
Opportunity to reach functional level 3	Across the whole period of available data (year of organizational entry of the person holding the longest tenure) was calculated how many employees had reached functional level 3, or higher. This way, the percentage (and thereby the opportunity) of the number of employees (ever) reaching a particular functional level (and potentially further advanced in their careers thereafter) is calculated.
Opportunity to reach functional level 4	Across the whole period of available data (year of organizational entry of the person holding the longest tenure) was calculated how many employees had reached functional level 4, or higher. This way, the percentage (and thereby the opportunity) of the number of employees (ever) reaching a particular functional level (and potentially further advanced in their careers thereafter) is calculated.
Opportunity to reach functional level 5	Across the whole period of available data (year of organizational entry of the person holding the longest tenure) was calculated how many employees had reached functional level 5, or higher. This way, the percentage (and thereby the opportunity) of the number of employees (ever) reaching a particular functional level (and potentially further advanced in their careers thereafter) is calculated.

Table 2.2.2: Descriptive statistics of variables used for quantitative analyses teaching case 1.

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age (in years)	130	24,00	49,00	32,09	4,71
Tenure (in years)	130	,50	13,42	5,28	2,5
Development of salary from salary at organizational entry till salary in 2010	130	-878,61	7582,55	3336,52	1419,57
Opportunity to advance in career	130	,0	,7	,23	,13
Year End Review (YER)	110	2,00	5,00	3,39	,62
Mean performance evaluation by the Performance Development Manager (MPE-PDM)	101	2,00	5,00	3,41	,62
Technical competence by Professional development Manager (Tc-PDM)	101	1,60	2,80	2,26	,24
(Inter)personal competence by Professional development Manager (Ic-PDM)	101	1,33	3,00	2,25	,25
Business competence by Professional development Manager (Bc-PDM)	101	1,67	2,83	2,26	,24
Duration functional level 1	77	1,00	7,00	3,49	1,02
Duration functional level 2	96	1,00	7,00	2,04	,94
Duration functional level 3	82	1,00	5,00	2,12	,99
Duration functional level 4	35	1,00	4,00	2,03	1,07
Duration functional level 5	14	1,00	5,00	2,21	1,25
Opportunity to reach functional level 2	130	,00	1,00	,94	,24
Opportunity to reach functional level 3	130	,00	1,00	,73	,45
Opportunity to reach functional level 4	130	,00	1,00	,33	,47
Opportunity to reach functional level 5	130	,00	1,00	,16	,32

2.3. Teaching Notes: Teaching Case 1 - Careers in Numbers

2.3.1. Synopsis. The following synopsis focuses on the background, the content, and the target audience of teaching case 1.

Background. The data this teaching case is based on was collected as a part of a research project on career development of employees with different ethnic backgrounds at a large professional service firm (ABCD) in the Netherlands. The decision to initiate this project was inspired by an earlier exploration of career possibilities and career obstacles for men and women working for the organization. This mostly quantitative study had revealed some inequalities between men and women in terms of career development in favor of the first compared to the latter. Consequently, the organization was curious to explore similar questions around career development concerning employees' ethnic background.

Although the focus of the project was specifically the employees' ethnic background, gender was also taken into consideration, both when recruiting the participants, as well as when analyzing the data. The project had both a quantitative (longitudinal data from the Personnel Information System up until their booking-year 2012) as well as a qualitative (data from about 80 semi-structured interviews with dominant ethnic and minority ethnic professional men and women) part. This teaching case is solely based on the quantitative data up until the booking-year 2010, due to too many drop-outs in the course of the following two years. Teaching case 2 is based on the qualitative data.

Information on how the group of participants was composed, and about the "matching" of the (non-western) minority ethnic with the dominant ethnic participants in pairs can be found in the teaching case itself. Linear Mixed Model analyses were conducted in order to analyze whether ethnic background had an effect on career outcomes. All analyses have been controlled

for the fact that the sample consisted of “matched pairs”. Thereby, all findings related to the ethnic background can be considered “pure” effects and cannot be explained by differences in gender or time of employment, for instance.

Content. The longitudinal quantitative data used in this teaching case presents examples of performance measures and career outcomes based on the Personnel Information System of ABCD. As a professional service firm, careers at ABCD follow a strictly predetermined path based on objective performance evaluations. Comparing dominant ethnics’ and minority ethnics’ general career outcomes, such as salary, promotions, and performance evaluations on the group level, several intriguing aspects can be found in the data: The analysis of the data does not only illustrate differences in career outcomes and performance evaluations of professionals with different ethnic backgrounds, but it also raises questions about how these numerical “facts and figures” come about and which role they ultimately play in the decision making processes at ABCD.

General career outcomes, such as the development of salary, opportunity to advance the career, the score on the Year End Review, and the time spent in functional level 5, show differences between dominant ethnic and minority ethnic professionals, in which dominant ethnic professionals generally earn more, have greater chances of being promoted, receive a better score on their Year End Review, and spend less time at functional level 5 (which is an indicator for a quicker promotion to functional level 6) compared to minority ethnic professionals.

Findings related to the general performance evaluations by the professional development managers, show that dominant ethnic professionals generally receive better general performance evaluations by their professional development managers than minority ethnic professionals.

These findings are intriguing, since when looking at the evaluations by the professional development manager of the specific competencies, no relevant differences between the two groups are found, except for the “(Inter)personal competences”, which are related to building relationships with others, (individual) learning, and developing others. In itself, this is also an interesting finding: Even prior to the actual evaluation of an individual’s performance in relation to particular competences, bias caused by lack of stereotype fit may affect the evaluator’s perception of the ratee’s performance (Heilman, 2001). Especially these “(Inter)personal competences” may be sensitive to stereotypical perceptions of professionals belonging to different social groups, suggesting either divergence from or congruence with legitimized dominant convention and standards with matching consequences for evaluations.

When looking at the numbers of this teaching case, an interesting paradox comes to the fore, revealing more questions instead of providing answers: Even though almost no difference has been found between dominant ethnics and minority ethnics in terms of evaluations of particular competences by their professional development manager, clear differences in terms of career outcomes, such as salary and promotion, and even in terms of the general overall evaluation of the professional development manager have been found in favor of dominant ethnics. Obviously, something happens in the process of evaluation and promotion decision-making. However, this question cannot be answered by numbers only. Thus, this teaching case not only leads to further questions concerning the topic. In methodological terms, this teaching case is also a practical example supporting the plea for looking beyond numbers by also telling stories and listening to people’s experiences – in other words, to also make room for the added value of qualitative data.

Target audience. This teaching case was written for practitioners or higher education students, who are interested in the topic of (ethnic) diversity and careers in organizations. The presented findings can be used to introduce the readers of the teaching case to the topic in general by presenting some examples of how career outcomes and performance evaluations can differ for dominant ethnic professionals compared to minority ethnic professionals. Taking these findings at face value can already be an eye-opener for an audience new to this field. In the case of an audience, which is more familiar with the field already, the teaching case can also form the basis for further questioning evaluation practices and processes by anticipating on potential consequences of the numbers presented. Thereby, the bigger picture of the pros and cons of strict upward mobility systems in organizations can be discussed in the context of an increasingly diverse workforce.

Thus, this teaching case can be used at the very beginning or further down the road of a (series of) classes or workshops. Since this teaching case is solely based on quantitative information, it is a way of setting a “solid” basis for further discussions, which may lead to the understanding that numbers are not everything. Readers may come to the conclusion that incorporating more qualitative data based on individual experiences may help to get a deeper understanding of complex questions like this.

2.3.2. Learning objectives. This teaching case is suitable for two situations, depending on the audience’s degree of familiarity with the topic.

First, this teaching case can be used as an introduction to ethnic diversity and careers in organizations for an audience new to the field. In this context, the teaching case:

- Gives a brief introduction to up-or-out career systems, which usually determine career advancement in professional service firms. The conventions of these up-or-out career systems build the context for subsequent interpretations.
- Indicates the existence of differences in career outcomes between dominant ethnics and minority ethnics, by providing quantitative information based on a comparison of salary and promotion outcomes of dominant ethnic and minority ethnic professionals.
- Presents the opportunity to detect the following paradox in performance evaluations by the professional development manager: While general performance evaluations by professional development managers show differences between dominant ethnic and minority ethnic professionals, competence specific evaluations by the professional development manager show differences only on one group of competences, namely the group of “(Inter)personal competences”. The groups of “Quality competences” and “Market competences” do not show differences in performance evaluation by the professional development manager between the two groups
- Provides the opportunity to relate the findings on career outcomes and the findings on performance evaluations to each other. Thereby, the question arises to what extent differences in career outcomes may (or may not) be explained by performance evaluations of the professional development manager. In more abstract terms, this can lead to awareness of the (mutual?) dependence of organizational practices and processes and career outcomes in strict upward mobility systems situated in an increasingly diverse workforce.

Second, for an audience more familiar with this field, this teaching case can be used as a solid basis for questioning the adequacy of organizational practices and processes maintaining

strict career systems in an increasingly diverse workforce. In addition to the learning objectives described previously, in this particular context, the teaching case:

- Challenges the legitimization of strict organizational practices and processes, by clearly showing career consequences of conventions, which may allow no or only little room for variety.
- Imposes the question, if numbers are sufficient in order to really understand which aspects count for career decision-making in organizations. Presenting quantitative findings, which actually invoke additional questions instead of straightforward answers, this teaching case demonstrates that there is more to it than simple adherence to numbers. Both for practitioners as well as for students, this is an important learning experience, since the added value of rich qualitative data (c.q. talking to each other and taking the time to really listen to and understand the perspective of the other) is often underestimated, both in practice as well as in the classroom.

2.3.3. Additional readings.

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- Roberson, G., Galvin, B.M., & Charles, A.C. (2007). When group identities matter: Bias in performance appraisal. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 1(1), 617-650. doi: 10.1080/078559818
- Vinkenburg, C.J., Jansen, P.G.W., Dries, N., & Pepermans, R. (2014). Arena: A critical conceptual framework of top management selection, *Group & Organization Management*, 39(1), 33-68. doi: 10.1177/1059601113492846
- Von Nordenflycht, A. (2010). What is a professional service firm? Toward a theory and taxonomy of knowledge-intensive firms. *Academy of Management Review*, 35(1), 155-174. doi: 10.5465/amr.2010.45577926

2.3.4. Possible assignment or discussion questions.

1. Analyze the presented quantitative information. What is the general impression you get concerning the career development of different ethnic groups at this particular organization?
2. How do you interpret your analysis in the context of the additional information about the up-or-out career system at professional service firms? Do you see any peculiarities? If so, which ones strike you and why?
3. If you were an external consultant, what would be your advice to the organization in terms of providing a more transparent and consistent evaluation process, which is closely related to career decision making?
4. If you were part of the board of directors of the organization, what would speak for and what would speak against the implementation of the advice you (in the role of external consultant) gave as an answer to the previous questions. Here, you are asked not only to

think in “politically correct” terms, but also out of self-interest and according to the traditional organizational conventions. Please let us take a look behind the scenes.

5. Considering the *numbers* presented in this teaching case, how do you evaluate the information these numbers provide? Do you think it is sufficient to get a clear picture of the situation? If not, what other kind of information would you like to have? How could you retrieve this kind of information? What does this mean for both practice and research?

2.3.5. References teaching notes teaching case 1.

Heilmann, M.E. (2001). Description and prescription: How gender stereotypes prevent women's ascent up the organizational ladder. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(4), 657-674. doi: 10.1111/0022-4537.00234

2.4. Teaching Case 2: “(You Are) Who You Are” – And What Does This Mean?

In the last months of the year 2010, together with an external consultant and one of my Master students, I conducted about 80 interviews among dominant ethnic and minority ethnic, men and women professionals at a professional service firm (ABCD) in the Netherlands. On behalf of the diversity board of ABCD and the board of the inter-organizational “multi-cultural network”, ABCD’s diversity manager asked us to investigate the career development of dominant ethnic versus minority ethnic employees. In each interview, we discussed the interviewees’ career experiences so far, asking about situations or encounters, which either supported or hindered their personal career development. While not directly addressing aspects concerning their ethnic background and gender throughout the interview, we asked each interviewee at the end of our conversation whether or not they were aware of their ethnic background and/or their gender when entering the office building or when being at work.

2.4.1. One question, various answers. We received many answers to this last question. Two of the answers specifically related to the interviewees’ awareness of their ethnic identity set the stage for the coming teaching case. One answer is from Marjolijn, a dominant ethnic woman and the other one is from Felicia, a minority ethnic woman.

Marjolijn: “Well, I am not consciously thinking about it [being a dominant ethnic]. (...) I mean, it is simply, you are who you are and I am not really consciously thinking about this.”

Felicia: “Does this [the fact that her parents were not born in the Netherlands, thus Felicia’s ethnic background] play a role for me? Yes, of course, it always plays a role, of course, because, well, it is also simply a part of who you are.”

Marjolijn and Felicia agree that their ethnic identity is part of who they are. However, based on their explanations, the expression “who you are” seems to have a different meaning to

each of them: For Marjolijn, “being who you are” in terms of her ethnic background is an unquestioned given, whereas Felicia is continuously aware of her ethnic identity.

Following her explanation, Felicia told us that she is convinced that her ethnic background, or her salient ethnic identity *does not matter* within ABCD. Certainly, she is not alone with this opinion. Especially dominant ethnics share Felicia’s point of view of equal opportunities for those working hard enough, independent of an employees’ ethnic background. However, numerous others, mainly minority ethnics and women, told us about “not feeling at home” or always feeling “different” compared to the “standard ABCD-er”. At the same time, we also heard stories told by or told about dominant ethnic men and women, who found themselves in interactions with minority ethnic or women colleagues in which differences in ethnic backgrounds or gender became salient and meaning or value was attached to them.

To further illustrate this observation, I would first like to introduce you to Template, to give you an impression of how employees describe and reflect upon the image of the standard successful employee at ABCD. Template’s characteristics, competencies, and behaviors are generally believed to be the formula to success within the organization. Thereafter, I would like you to meet Rachid and Monisha, who will share situations they encountered at work in which the expression of “who you are” may be considered more a question rather than a fact.

2.4.2. Meet Template. When talking to professionals at ABCD, most of them used terms similar to those Maartje (dominant ethnic woman) chose, when describing Template and similar peers, who are perceived as prototypical employees at ABCD:

Maartje: “... those people, who are really successful at ABCD, that is quite a small, homogeneous group. (...) Namely, a man of 45 with an autochtonous [i.e. dominant ethnic] background.”

Thanks to the mostly congruent descriptions of *his* colleagues (some of them only differed in terms of the actual age - some took *him* for a little older, but there was no doubt about Template's gender and ethnic background), we all know now that Template is a middle-aged, dominant ethnic man. Nevertheless, opinions are divided whether or not ethnic background or gender really play a role in determining individual success within ABCD, as the next two quotes from Chang (minority ethnic man) and Maartje (dominant ethnic woman) will show.

Chang: "Do they [minority ethnics] get the same opportunities [as dominant ethnics]? No, they do not get the same opportunities. Here, it is more difficult for someone with a different ethnic background, with a Moroccan or Turkish background."

Maartje: "Well, I think that you... uhm... uhm... diversity in terms of uhm, backgrounds, beliefs, whatever... I think that this is not an issue. (...) But I do think that uhm... well, you need to meet certain core-competences or specific characteristics, if you want to get ahead."

Indeed, the majority of our interviewees agreed on the relevance of the subsequently described characteristics, thanks to which Template stays on track and continuously goes *up* ABCD's career ladder rather than *out*. Colleagues describe Template as a driven, assertive, individualistic, hard-working, and commercial professional. Some colleagues revealed that Template is generally not very sociable and not very interested in others' personal affairs.

Since Template is known so well in the whole organization, many interviewees compared themselves to those promising key-characteristics he embodies. Some of his colleagues, such as Milou (minority ethnic woman) and Petra (dominant ethnic woman), face the question of how to handle the fact that their answer to "who you are" is not "a middle-aged, dominant ethnic man" showing all of the previously described key-characteristics.

Milou: "Well, I was more of a shy kind of person, let's say, how shall I explain it, the modest, shy person, who transforms from modesty to assertiveness, yeah, that was an obstacle for me. (...) That I had to be more visible for the department and for your team

and so forth (...) But this is something personal, it is not that ABCD can do anything about it.”

Petra: “Well I, it is important that you, if you get higher within ABCD, that you make explicit who you are and what you do and to show yourself and that’s what I call positioning. Sometimes, this is a... I think it is also something natural, which is closely related to a high position. I do not think that we will ever be able to avoid that. But to me, this was not a normal way of ... working. I had to teach it to myself. And, this also means that every once in a while, I have to say: Look how well I performed and look at what I have achieved; to show off and thus not to be modest about it. Well, that is difficult. I found that difficult.”

Now that you have met Template and heard how others respond to him, I would like you to meet Rachid.

2.4.3. Meet Rachid. Just as most of his colleagues, Rachid (minority ethnic man) started his employment at ABCD as a trainee after successfully finishing his higher education. At the time of the interview, he had been working for the organization for about six years and he had just received promotion to the third functional level. Rachid was born in the Netherlands, about ten years after his father had moved there as a migrant worker, followed by Rachid’s mother and oldest brother a couple of years later.

Eye-opener. During the interview, Rachid told us about a situation, which he himself described as an eye-opener. During an evaluation meeting, his professional development manager asked Rachid to explain, why he himself thought that he was excelling on the competency of *accountability*, which refers to “a feeling of responsibility and self-reliance” according to Rachid.

Rachid: “Well, I said that it is true that I have a feeling of responsibility and that I do not really know where this is coming from. And then, he [Rachid’s professional development manager] came with a potential theory: He said, could it be related to the fact that you come from a family of guest labor migrants?”

Rachid interpreted his professional development manager's question in a way that related his family background to the general belief that children of migrant workers need to become self-relied very early on in life, since they often need to do a lot of paper work for their parents.

Rachid: "In general, I did not think that this was a negative comment or something like that, but it *did* show me that he saw me as the child of two guest labor migrants. Well, yeah. In any case, this showed me that he was also conscious about it. And it was also remarkable, even though it was a positive aspect of my development, that he explained it [Rachid's excellent score on the competency accountability] by that fact. (...) It was just an eye-opener at that moment, that there will be people, who do not see you as a... who might think in terms of, well, let's say "standard ABCD'ers" and a group with a special background. That there might be ABCD'ers, who think like this. And for me, this means like, be aware of this: It can turn out positively and it can turn out negatively."

Automatic click. Talking about the general low representation of minority ethnics at the top functional levels of ABCD, Rachid shared the following with us:

Rachid: "...I think that it is always pleasant that there is someone in the position which you aspire... it is nice to see that someone with a different ethnic background was able to perform well [in that position]. Because then it is ok, it is not impossible, it has been done before, so why not? Yes, such a role model is nice."

Next to the function of a particular role model, Rachid also considers the general (in)formal company of colleagues with the same ethnic background as important:

Rachid: "Yes, I think this is important uhm... Yes, nice, I think it is very nice. Uhm... It demonstrates that this can also be ABCD. Well, this gives me, let's say, the feeling of being at home... well, you find each other every once in a while to talk about things. It is some kind of an automatic click or something. (...) No, [we do not talk about] no other things, but maybe in a more open manner. Or yes, maybe other things in fact, maybe... (...) Because I think that they [colleagues with the same ethnic background], if they are there at all, that they might face the same obstacles. Well, I think that ... that people with my ethnic background and cultural background might also be less familiar with the culture of "selling yourself" within the organization and uhm... well, in general, that they are in a similar situation as I was in my first year at ABCD."

"Who you are". As I did with all our other interviewees, I also asked Rachid at the end of the interview, if he was aware of his ethnic background when entering the organization and when he was at work. Similar to Felicia's reply, he answered:

Rachid: “Poehh, difficult questions. Yes, but not necessarily when I enter the office. As soon as I step out of my front door at home, I have it already, I think. (...) But I think it has also become more, due to all the developments in society, in the media, you know. You are constantly made to face the facts, hey, that you are no regular Dutchman, to put it that way. It is like, you are so often confronted with it, that I do not even know anymore, if I have the feeling at all that I am simply a Dutch person. I think it is the feeling like, I am a Dutch person with a [Rachid mentions his ethnic background literally] background, I think I have this feeling all the time. Yes. (...) Well, sometimes I think about how people would feel, if you are, ... when I go on vacation to [the country where his parents were born], I have the same feeling, but just the other way around... Thus, sometimes, you ask yourself, what it would feel like to be ... one of the crowd, let’s say. Like: I am nothing special. And you get the closest to this feeling maybe, when I am in fact with guys of my generation, who were also born in the Netherlands, but who also have [Rachid mentions his ethnic background literally], you know, these might basically be the people who are the closest to me with regards to sharing this particular feeling, you know.”

After giving this detailed and very personal answer, I immediately asked the same question, only related to Rachid’s gender, thus, if he was aware of the fact that he was a man when entering the office building and when being at work. This is all Rachid replied to this last question:

Rachid: “Okay, whether I feel different then... (...) We talk about it sometimes, yes, men always have to walk around all suited up and women are a lot more flexible, of course. No, no, not really. Only that I am not a woman.”

After talking to Rachid for more than one and a half hours, I was intrigued by his answers to my last two questions. What does it do to you?

As a last person in this teaching case, I would like to introduce you to Monisha. From the interview with her, I will only select one excerpt, which will show another perspective on, and reaction to, the expression “who you are”.

2.4.4. Meet Monisha. Starting to work for ABCD five years prior to the interview, Monisha has been very successful throughout these years. Monisha was born in the Netherlands, after her parents, who were both born in the same non-western country, had moved to the

Netherlands some time before. Starting to work for ABCD at the second functional level, Monisha had been promoted to the fourth functional level at the time of the interview.

Balancing act. As Monisha told us, she is very ambitious in her work and she enjoys her assignments and the constant challenges very much. At the same time, her ethnic background and the related cultural traditions are very important to her. Sometimes she finds herself in situations in which she has to choose one over the other. As she told us, she personally does not see this as a big problem. Just as she is very committed to her work and works long hours at the expense of her private life, she also takes the liberty to set boundaries with respect to work commitments after working hours, for instance, when this is conflicting with cultural festivities she wants to celebrate with her family. However, Monisha also told us about a scenario she experienced about half a year prior to the interview.

Schizophrenia or categorization? Monisha told us that, while abroad on an assignment together for about six weeks, a partner of the organization said to her at some point:

Monisha: “‘Sometimes I think that you are a little bit schizophrenic.’ And I ask him: ‘Why do you think so?’ ‘Well,’ he says, ‘on the one hand, I think that you are a top businesswoman. You stand in front of the supervisory board without batting an eye, you are doing it well here, you lead people well. But on the other hand, I see a girl who is the daughter of her father, who is simply ok with cooking at home every day, who...’ Well, all these things, which I was brought up with at home based on my culture. Then I said: ‘Am I schizophrenic, or do you categorize?’ Thus, I say, why could I not be a woman, who is a top woman in the office, a businesswoman, and who might be creative? I think it is lovely to cook for a man. And I do not do this, because I am oppressed or something like that, haha, I do this because I like it, because I am also brought up this way.”

2.4.5. Food for thought. Meeting people like Marjolijn, Felicia, Template, Maartje, Chang, Milou, Petra, Rachid, and Monisha introduced me to a multitude of facets and consequences of not only diverse *understandings of*, but also diverse *meanings attached to* “who you are”, and how this is true for every one of us, as well as for others we interact with. Especially in this teaching case, Richard David Precht’s book title “Wer bin ich – und wenn ja,

wie viele?“ (2007; English translation: “Who am I – And if so, how many?”) makes a lot of sense, don’t you think?

2.4.6. References teaching case 2.

Precht, R.D. (2007). *Wer bin ich – und wenn ja wieviele? Eine philosophische Reise*. München: Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag.

2.5. Teaching Notes: Teaching Case 2 - “(You Are) Who You Are”- And What Does This Mean?

2.5.1. Synopsis. This synopsis summarizes the background, the content, and the target audience of teaching case 2.

Background. This teaching case is based on data I collected with an external consultant and one of my Master students for a research project on career development of employees with different ethnic backgrounds at a large professional service firm (ABCD) in the Netherlands in 2010. The decision to initiate this project was inspired by an earlier exploration of career possibilities and career obstacles for men and women working for this organization. This mostly quantitative study had revealed some inequalities between men and women in terms of career development in favor of the first compared to the latter. Consequently, the organization was curious to explore similar questions around career development concerning employees’ ethnic background.

The specific focus of our project was the role of the employees’ ethnic background during their career development. However, we also took gender into consideration, both when recruiting our interviewees, as well as when analyzing the data. The project had both a quantitative part (data from the Personnel Information System up until their booking-year 2012) as well as a qualitative part (data from about 80 semi-structured interviews with dominant ethnic and minority ethnic professional men and women). This teaching case is solely based on the qualitative data. Teaching case 1 is based on the quantitative data.

Prior to each interview, we guaranteed confidentiality and asked for each interviewee’s explicit consent to audio-record the interviews. At the end of each interview, the interviewee was debriefed and thanked for participation. The audio-recordings of the interviews were transcribed

verbatim by several student assistants according to strict instructions. All interviews we conducted for this research project were conducted in Dutch. The original version of the quotes (i.e. in the Dutch language) used in this teaching case may be obtained from the author as supplementary material.

As briefly mentioned in the teaching case itself, the interviews focused on the interviewees' career experiences in terms of situations or encounters the interviewees qualified as either supporting or hindering their individual career development. The researchers did not specifically ask for or mention ethnic identity in the interview; only the last question posed at the end of each interview asked whether or not the interviewees were aware of their ethnic identity or their gender when in the organizational context. While conducting the interviews and reading the transcripts, however, it struck me that expressions or whole stories including incidents of identity salience and identity work were either explicitly present or notably absent in many of the interviews. The fact that ethnic identity emerged from the empirical data as an important concept, while the focus of the interviews was initially directed towards the experience of career obstacles and facilitators, strengthened rather than weakened my impression that ethnic identity matters in professional career experiences.

Content. With the help of the chosen quotes, this teaching case illustrates the multiplicity of identity at work from different perspectives. The first two quotes by Marjolijn and Felicia show, how “who you are” can either be experienced as a given fact one does not have to think about, or how it can be a piece of oneself which one is constantly aware of. In my view, the latter implies that this piece of oneself is constantly either challenged or confirmed, but certainly not taken for granted as in the first case.

Meeting Template gives a description of the looks of the prototypical and successful employee at ABCD, both in terms of demographics and more personal characteristics. The two subsequent quotes by Chang and Maartje also highlight the fact that even though this image of the prototypical and successful employee has a gender and a dominant ethnic background, opinions differ in terms of the relevance of demographic characteristics potentially related to achieving career success. Milou's and Petra's quotes illustrate the potential challenges employees who do not completely fit the organizational prototype might be confronted with. Last but not least, the fact that Rachid alludes to this description when contrasting "the standard ABCD'er" to "employees with a special background", clearly shows that the generally accepted template of the prototypical and successful employee may fit some better than others.

Furthermore, Rachid's stories provide examples of different situations of identity salience, identity construction and related consequences in terms of career experiences. On the one hand, Rachid's very nuanced account about his awareness of his ethnic background, and on the other hand, his unawareness of being a man in the organizational context, is an example of how context-dependent identity salience and/or identity construction are: The individual's experience of a particular identity salience and/or identity construction seems to go hand in hand with the individual's feeling of being a member of either the dominant or the minority social group within this particular context.

Finally, comparing Rachid's and Monisha's stories about others actually breaching the "issue" of their ethnic identity in a particular way, illustrates how these incidents may elicit different reactions: Rachid learns his personal lesson from the incident without explicitly addressing it in the very situation, whereas Monisha confronts the other with his expression by means of posing a new identity-question.

Target audience. This teaching case has been written for readers interested in learning about diversity in organizations, particularly in the career context. These readers can be either students at higher education institutions, or practitioners who are already actively participating in the field. In order to understand the complex dynamics and various dependencies when dealing with diversity in organizations, sensitivity to identity matters within the particular context is essential. The quotes and stories used in this teaching case provide a solid illustration of the multiplicity and complexity of identity matters and their consequences in career experiences.

2.5.2. Learning objectives. This teaching case introduces the reader to the concepts of identity salience and identity construction at work by giving examples of situations in which employees are aware of, or confronted with, their own or other's ethnic identity in the work environment (on the individual, the interactional, or the organizational level). In particular, this teaching case:

- Sensitizes the reader for the complexity of identity questions, by showing that “who you are” may mean different things for members of different social groups, depending on the specific context.
- Shows the reader the variety of triggers initiating identity salience and identity construction by providing examples of
 - The consequences of a collectively constructed and legitimized template of the prototypical and successful employee.
 - Different incidents of identity salience and identity construction.
- Makes the reader aware of the possibility, that “who *you* think you are” might a) not be “who *others* think you are”, and b) might lead to “discussions” with yourself and/or with others about “who you (*really?*) are”.

- Introduces the reader to the potential stretch between the professional and non-work identities some employees might experience or might be confronted with by others.
- Presents different reactions of individuals to incidents initiating identity salience or identity construction and thereby triggers the reader to think about the meaning and potential consequences of these diverging reactions.

All in all, this teaching case guides the reader to a better awareness and understanding of ethnic identity matters at work by providing excerpts from real-life stories illustrating the interplay of ethnic identity construction and career experiences.

2.5.3. Additional readings.

- Alvesson, M., Ashcraft, K. L., & Thomas, R. (2008). Identity matters: Reflections on the construction of identity scholarship in organization studies. *Organization*, 15(1), 5-28. doi: 10.1177/1350508407084426.
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- Boogaard, B., & Roggeband, C. (2010) Paradoxes of intersectionality: Theorizing inequality in the Dutch police force through structure and agency. *Organization* 17: 53-75. doi: 10.1177/1350508409350042
- Ibarra, H. (1999). Provisional selves: Experimenting with image and identity in professional adaptation. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44(4), 764-791. doi: 10.2307/2667055
- Johnston, R., & Kyriacou, O. (2011). Exploring inclusion, exclusion and ethnicities in the institutional structures of UK accountancy. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 30(6), 482-497. doi: 10.1108/02610151111157701
- McInnes, P., & Corlett, S. (2012). Conversational identity work in everyday interaction. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 28(1), 27-38. doi: 10.1016/j.scaman.2011.12.004
- Slay, H. S., & Smith, D. A. (2011). Professional identity construction: Using narrative to understand the negotiation of professional and stigmatized cultural identities. *Human Relations*, 64(1), 85-107. doi: 10.1177/0018726710384290
- Traustadóttir, R. (2001). Research with others: Reflections on representation, difference and othering. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 3(2), 9-28. doi: 10.1080/15017410109510773
- Van Laer, K., & Janssens, M. (2014). Between the devil and the deep blue sea: Exploring the hybrid identity narratives of ethnic minority professionals. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 30(2), 186-196. doi: 10.1016/j.scaman.2013.08.004

2.5.4. Possible assignment or discussion questions.

1. Based on the quotes presented in the teaching case, how would you describe the difference between identity salience and identity construction? Give examples.
2. Looking at the examples in the teaching case, what do you think may be considered potential triggers of identity salience and/or identity construction?
3. Considering the variety of potential triggers for ethnic identity salience in general, and ethnic identity construction, in particular, in how far do you think that participating in the interviews played a role in the interviewees' identity construction? Why (or why not)?
4. Do you see/expect any differences in the role the interviews may have played for members of different social groups? Why, or why not?
5. Do you think that the collective construction of Template's identity plays a role in the other employees' identity construction? If so, in what way?
6. What does working on this teaching case mean for your own (ethnic) identity salience and (ethnic) identity construction?

2.6. Teaching Case 3: To *B(orrel)* Or Not To *B(orrel)*: That Is The Question

Traditionally, “[a] borrel is an informal term for a standard glass of strong alcohol, mostly “young” jenever. (...)” Nowadays, “[a] borrel is mostly a term for an informal, social gathering of a specific group of people with alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks and often snacks. In contrast to a reception, a borrel does not have to be organized in relation to a festive occasion and it has a voluntary character with people joining and leaving as they please. Often, a borrel is organized as a means of closing of an earlier event, such as a meeting, a speech, or a symposium. (...) In many organizations, a borrel is organized on a Friday afternoon to close of the week; this is the so-called “vrijmibo” or “vrिमibo” [in Dutch, this is an abbreviation for “Friday afternoon drinks”].” (Wikipedia, 2014), (translated from Dutch Wikipedia)

Most people, who have ever lived in the Netherlands for some time, will have their very personal experiences, ideas, and perceptions of the *borrel*: Most people I talked to either love it, or hate it. There seems to be no “in between”. However, most people seem to recognize the crucial impact that participation in *borrels* can have on an individual’s (future) career: The *borrel* seems to be the place par excellence to (sometimes strategically) establish informal contacts with colleagues, who may play a significant role in an individual’s career. Those people, who have never experienced a *borrel* in the Netherlands before, may be lost in translation right now. Nevertheless, I will continue using this Dutch term throughout this teaching case, because to me, no English translation I am aware of actually comes close to the concept of the *borrel* as it takes place in the Netherlands:

(...) Dutch people like to stand in a pub with a little cube of cheese and having a beer, and a really large group of people at our organization really does not like to stand in a pub; they do not drink beer in a pub and they do not eat little cubes of cheese. Thus, there is a very large difference between [these groups] (...) (P5, dominant ethnic man)

This excerpt is taken from a set of qualitative data collected at one of the large urban municipalities in the Netherlands, which serves as the empirical basis for this teaching case (see “Data collection and participants” for details). Acknowledging the importance of social capital (often derived from informal contacts with others in the work environment) in relation to career

opportunities, the question arises as to what happens to those in the Netherlands who do not like to stand in a pub, drinking beer and eating cheese sliced in little cubes?

2.6.1. Why getting closer to the *borrel*? In the spring of 2012, together with one of my Master students, I conducted interviews on the role of social capital and ethnic identity in young professionals' career development at a large urban municipality in the Netherlands. Our questions focused on the young professionals' career experiences in the past; the people they knew at the municipality; how they had met them, which role particularly important people had played in their career; if they were aware of their ethnicity and/or gender in the organizational context, and if so in what ways specifically; which role they think ethnicity and gender play for acquiring social capital and career opportunities etc.

Already while talking to the young professionals, and certainly when analyzing the data, the phenomenon of the *borrel* seemed to claim center-stage in terms of acquiring social capital and career opportunities, as well as triggering salience of ethnic identity, resulting in specific behavior and sensemaking for both dominant ethnic and minority ethnic employees. Without actively asking for it, talking about the way of and the reason for establishing social contacts at work stimulated many interviewees to mention the *borrel* in a variety of ways. In addition, both dominant ethnic and minority ethnic young professionals discussed matters of ethnic identity in relation to the *borrel*.

In the following, you will find various interview-excerpts arranged around various central questions concerning the why, the when, the what, the who, the who-not, and the what-happens-if-you-don't in relation to the phenomenon of the *borrel* as an occasion to establish interpersonal contacts and relationships. These "mosaics" of quotes will result in an illustration of experiences and perceptions surrounding the phenomenon of the *borrel* among the young professionals at the

municipality. When reading the mosaics, please keep in mind that, in the original research, the interviewees brought up the concept of the *borrel* in relation to social capital, ethnic identity and career opportunities themselves, and that the particular context of the *borrel* was not introduced by the researchers. Also, the questions serving as the guiding principles of the data-presentation in this teaching case were not part of the interview-protocol: While analyzing the data, we realized that the interview-excerpts formed particular clusters, which could be interpreted as answers to these a posteriori formulated questions.

2.6.2. Data collection and participants. In total, my Master student and I conducted interviews with 26 young professionals at the large urban municipality in the Netherlands. Seventeen of the 26 interviewees had been part of the municipality's traineeship program, while the others had been employed by the municipality in traditional functions. Therefore, in some of the accounts you may find a reference to the trainee pool or trainee program. Both the trainee group and the non-trainee group were comparable in terms of age, tenure, and level of education. Please find details on their demographic characteristics (gender and ethnic background by (trainee) status) in the Appendix 2.6.6.

2.6.3. Results. Now, let us try to understand the phenomenon of the *borrel* through the eyes of the diverse interviewees. Let them tell us why and when we should participate in a *borrel*, what we can expect to eat and drink, whom we can expect (not) to meet, and what the consequences could be for our personal careers if we do not participate in the *borrel*.

Why do we participate in borrels?

“(…) I am a person who joins these things [informal gatherings, *borrels*]. I think that it is part of the game and also enjoyable, let’s put it like this. Yeah, thus also [enjoyable], it is a combination. To me, it is very self-evident (…).” (P1, dominant ethnic woman)

“Once you are in [the organization], then you find in the work environment and you have these little networks and *borrel* events for young public servants for example. There, you meet people who work at other departments, and this way you again get access to others.” (P12, dominant ethnic man)

“And how does it work? Well, probably I once talked to A [the particular person who linked him to the relevant manager] sometime during a *borrel* or a project meeting (…). And A created the connection like: internal communication [is] B [himself] and C [the relevant manager] is the manager, maybe we can tie them together? Do you want to call each other sometime? Yes, yes, enthusiastic and then, you email your CV and your LinkedIn account and then you go for drinks at some point, chat a bit.” (P5, dominant ethnic man)

Why do we participate in *borrels*?

“In the end, they expect that you really present yourself, also, for example, at *borrels*. You have to... Well, to me it is difficult to express [these things]. You need to literally really put yourself into the front. You really need to create visibility for yourself; you have to share everything you know. On the one hand, this is a good thing. I learned to make myself visible, but on the other hand, I also think it is tiring, because not everything I say is interesting per se. But in specific organizations, that does not matter, it is up to the person in front of you to decide, well, I think it is or it is not interesting and then he has to walk away.” (P23, minority ethnic woman)

“Ja, D [another interviewee] had not emailed myself and B [another interviewee], if, he... He knows us from having a beer together and not from anything else. I have never done anything work-related with D. (...) Thus, with respect to this, whom do you know? And whom do you think about first? And then, this [participation in the interview] is not, well, I don't know yet, but this is not per se important to my career, but it does make a difference. (...) And in this respect I think that it can help you indirectly somehow, that people know you and this also for your career eventually.” (P8, dominant ethnic woman)

When do borrels happen?

“(…) the *borrel*-culture fits CityA [the city where the municipality is based] well, I think. (...) The young public servants’ network is a large network, let’s say. And in CityA [at the municipality], a lot of time is allowed for conferences, including a lot of time for network-*borrels* afterwards.”
(P8, dominant ethnic woman)

“There, of course you have professional contacts and there you also have a conference every once in a while and then you chat a bit, than you go to a *borrel* and then you talk a bit more and yeah... well, that’s how I do it.”
(P33, minority ethnic man)

When do *borrels* happen?

“(…) because, again, you had the *borrel* every Thursday and often [we] went for lunch together.”
(P17, minority ethnic woman)

“But I don’t go every Friday uhm... afternoon uhm... *borrelen* [having a drink] with all those departments or, for instance, if there is a party or uhm... in these instances, I usually don’t go.” (P31, minority ethnic woman)

What will we eat and drink, and whom will we meet at borrels?

“(…) Dutch people like to stand in a pub with a little cube of cheese and having a beer(…)” (P5, dominant ethnic man)

What will we eat and drink, and whom will we meet at *borrels*?

“(…) [It is] White young public servants who you meet at the *borrels*.” (P15, dominant ethnic woman)

“(…) Look, in this environment we are not in contact with people from the city frequently, thus mostly, we are facing “beer and nuts”.” (P25, dominant ethnic man)

“Then uhm... It is all men plus all women who enjoy drinking beer.” (P8, dominant ethnic woman)

Whom will we not meet at borrels?

"(...) in the [trainee]pool, there were people who kept themselves apart [from the group]. People who never joined group activities, who never joined a *borrel*. Those were, by chance or not by chance, people with a diverse ethnic background, to put it this way (...)." (P4, dominant ethnic woman)

"(...) a great common denominator was, hey, our trainee pool was very diverse, but there was a great common denominator and that was that we like to have a *borrel* after working hours. And in trainee pool A [the trainee pool that started one year after his], the dominant ethnics did like it, and the minority ethnics did not [like it], of course. Of course not, because not all of them drink [alcohol], I do understand that." (P12, dominant ethnic man)

"(...) the minority ethnic part, yeah, it is important, indeed, but we also have a life at home and I also want [to go] to my family and uhm... And uhm... they [minority ethnics] were less, let's say, therein uhm... less task-driven, they engaged a lot more in the social part which they have after work. And you also realized that at *borrels*, for example. It was primarily uhm... the dominant ethnic part joined the *borrels*. It was very difficult to take this group [minority ethnics] along, because of this." (P7, minority ethnic man)

Whom will we not meet at borrels?

"Well, in the beginning we did have a *borrel* every once in a while and 10 out of 25 people attended the *borrel*. And then I think by myself, what a pity, why do the others not attend? I also want to get to know them, because at a *borrel* you get to know each other outside of work, you have a beer, extremely enjoyable. But well, if there is a group which has an Islamic background and which does not drink any alcohol, (...) [and] a really large group of people at our organization really does not like it to stand in a pub; they do not drink beer in a pub and they do not eat little cubes of cheese. Thus, there is a very large difference between [these groups] (...)" (P5, dominant ethnic man)

"(...) maybe the way of upbringing, the way you look at life. Working is not everything and uhm ... (...) Family and friends are also very important. (...) Hey, I think a *borrel* once is fine, but I rather go home to have a quick bite and to do something with friends, let's say. I have never seen it [the trainee pool] as a group of friends, let's say. And for me, this divide is very clear. Between work and private life. And this was... And the hard core also tried... to build a group of friends out of it [the trainee pool]. (...) Yeah, it is just not... it is just not my organizational culture, at least, it is not something where I feel good." (P27, minority ethnic man)

What does it mean, if you do not attend borrels?

“It sounds very plain, but the meeting in the pub is really the most important difference and a couple of people have issues with it, who do not drink alcohol, who have a minority ethnic background, who are Islamic, who you get to know less, get to know in a different manner.”
(P8, dominant ethnic woman)

What does it mean, if we do not attend borrels?

“Yeah, it was not really an issue or something that someone was a minority ethnic or not. However, mostly it was the case that people who were not minority ethnic, and who were at the *borrels* and really went for it. (...) But it does stand out. (...) Yeah, it makes sense and I also get it... because some people do not drink alcohol for their religious beliefs, thus I understand all the obstacles. (...) But they are not really, but they are not really ambitious. And the question is, what do you want? Do you want people with ambition, or people who do their job and ... - X: And what is “ambition” in this account? – That you are willing to invest more and, in fact, that you go to *borrels* (...).” (P15, dominant ethnic woman)

“Well, I have talked to colleagues who are frustrated, like: I am doing all I can and I am very committed, but who do not go to *borrels* or meetings or not say themselves like: I want to set a next step, maybe out of modesty.” (P15, dominant ethnic woman)

Food for thought: Beyond the borrel...

“You could ask yourself: if the working culture of the municipality fits with the culture of uhm... this kind of groups [minority ethnics]. It is not a *borrel*-culture for example, you know? And yeah...” (P7, minority ethnic man)

“(...) there is always someone somewhere, who you know and with whom you’ve had a *borrel* in the pub. Thus, someone who you can call very easily to ask for information or to quickly check how they do it. Yeah, and it is very good for your network (...). (P8, dominant ethnic woman)

Food for thought: Beyond the *borrel*...

“Well, when you had a meeting, there was always a group staying, which remained talking and networking-like. And a group, which did that a lot less, like: I am tired and I go home or something. I think that the alcohol-thing also plays a role therein or something. (...) It was ok that people who do not drink, there was a group that said, well, if you do not want to drink, then you just don’t drink and there was a group that said, let’s do it without [alcohol] or something. But in the end there has never been chosen for a good compromise or something.” (P17, minority ethnic woman)

“(...) That they [minority ethnics] feel that they do not belong to the dominant group. Yeah... In any case, they are aware that this is the case, or something. Which song is being sung, what kind of paintings are hanging on the wall, what is served at the *borrel*.” (P5, dominant ethnic man)

2.6.4. Food for thought. Not only in this particular project, but in many of the other interviews I conducted on careers (mainly) in light of ethnic diversity at different organizations in both the public and the private sector, interviewees told me about the crucial role of the *borrel* as the platform to get connected to others. As we have seen in the reflection on the *borrel*, these relationships built in this particular context can be beneficial in terms of career opportunities later on in the professionals' working lives.

However, the importance of informally connecting to people at a *borrel* in terms of career opportunities is not the only aspect that fascinates me about the *borrel* as it is lived and enacted in the Dutch organizational context. I am also intrigued by the fact that even though it seems to be recognized here and there that not all employees appear to feel comfortable with attending *borrels* for various reasons, the quotes reflect that it seems quite a challenge for organizations, to react upon this observation. On top of the organizations' inability to find an adequate alternative for the *borrel*, some interviewees even recognize the *borrel* as a potential reason why some employees might feel "different" in comparison to the dominant organizational group: These interviewees describe the *borrel* as a manifestation of the dominant ethnic culture within the organization.

After hearing all these different stories about the phenomenon of the *borrel* in the organizational environment, I am glad that I had the chance to present it to you through the eyes of one of my groups of interviewees. No matter how you think about the *borrel* yourself, I hope that illuminating the general phenomenon of the *borrel*, generally recognized as an opportunity to acquire social capital in the particular context of career opportunities in light of ethnic identity will challenge you to (re)interpret your own perceptions and experiences. Maybe you will even find yourself discussing your thoughts with those *close to you* at the next *borrel*.

2.6.6. Appendix: Additional demographic information on interviewees teaching case 2.

Table 2.6.1: Overview demographic information interviewees (ethnic background, gender, trainee status)

Trainee Non-trainee	Man	Woman
Dominant ethnic	5 0	6 5
Minority ethnic	3 2	3 2

2.7. Teaching Notes: Teaching Case 3 - To B(orrel) Or Not To B(orrel): That Is The Question

2.7.1. Synopsis. The following synopsis describes the background, the content, and the target audience of teaching case 3.

Background. This teaching case is based on data one of my Master students and I collected in the spring of 2012. We interviewed 26 young professionals at a large urban municipality in the Netherlands with the focus on social capital, ethnic identity, and career experiences. Out of the 26 interviewees, 17 had been part of the municipality's traineeship program, while the others had been employed by the municipality in traditional functions. A selection of cohorts of (former) trainees at the municipality was approached by email to ask for voluntary participation in a research project on diversity and career development of young professionals within the municipality. We started with this group of trainees, because we received their contact details from the trainee coordinator. Using this group as our basis, we approached additional (non-) trainees via snowball-sampling by asking interviewees at the end of each interview, if they knew (non-) trainee colleagues who would be willing to participate in the research project. When saturation was achieved, we did not further ask interviewees to refer us to colleagues.

All interviews were conducted in Dutch. The original version of the quotes (i.e. in the Dutch language) used in this teaching case may be obtained from the author as supplementary material. After guaranteeing confidentiality and asking for each interviewee's explicit consent, the interviews were audio-recorded. At the end of each interview, the interviewee was debriefed and thanked for participation. All audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim by two Master students according to strict instructions.

Content. The data used in this teaching case is an outcome of a research project on the role of social capital and ethnic identity in relation to career opportunities among young professionals at a large urban municipality in the Netherlands. When analyzing the data, the *borrel* was mentioned regularly as an important opportunity to acquire social capital, which has been shown to be useful in terms of career opportunities. A *borrel* generally stands for semi-formal company drinks after working hours or after specific work-related events (Wikipedia, 2014). However, literally taken, a *borrel* is also an informal term for a standard glass of strong alcohol (Wikipedia, 2014). Whether or not coincidentally, at most organizational *borrels*, alcohol consumption is more a rule than an exception. While most of the interviewees acknowledged the crucial role of the *borrel* in relation to individual career experiences and opportunities, at the same time the enactment of the *borrel* within the particular Dutch organizational context seems to appeal more to some, than to others. While the first group experiences *borrels* as enjoyable (in Dutch, “gezellig”) and as an easy way to connect to colleagues informally in a pleasant environment with food and drinks they like, the latter may not feel at ease at these occasions for various reasons. If we believe in the definition of the term *borrel* as a manner to informally get together to close off a formal meeting or the working week, the *borrel* is implemented as a way to stimulate interaction among all employees. This could also be understood as an initiative to foster inclusion and a feeling of belonging among employees. However, as previous research has illustrated, members of various social groups might have different preferences of establishing and maintaining (in)formal contacts with colleagues, such as members of different ethnic groups (Ibarra, 1993, 1995; Parks-Yancy, 2006; Parks-Yancy, DiTomaso, & Post, 2006), or men and women (Bevelander & Page, 2011; Ibarra, 1992, 1993, 1997; Van den Brink & Benschop, 2014).

Since the data on social capital, ethnic identity, and career opportunities featured many references to the importance of attending and participating in the *borrel*, it was a nice opportunity to getting closer to the *borrel* as a particular phenomenon in the organizational context. Originally understood as a means to stimulate and reinforce (in)formal relationships among all colleagues, the data suggests that despite the initial intention of enhancing inclusion, the organizational practice of the *borrel* may also have an adverse effect of (unintentional) exclusion of some to whom this particular organizational practice does not appeal. Interestingly, this paradox of simultaneous inclusion and exclusion (and potential consequences in terms of creating inequality in career experiences and opportunities for different social groups) does not seem to be equally apparent to everyone. The data illustrates how ingrained the *borrel* is in the Dutch organizational culture, making this phenomenon an interesting example to illustrate and discuss aspects of organizational practices and related (un)intended consequences in light of (ethnic) diversity.

Target audience. This teaching case is either targeted towards readers who study diversity at higher education institutions, or towards practitioners who experience questions around diversity in their everyday organizational life. Reading and thinking about various organizational members' perceptions and experiences of an organizational practice, such as the *borrel*, might help to make readers sensitive to the normalization of such organizational practices at many organizations. Furthermore, including accounts of both dominant ethnic and minority ethnic young professionals of the municipality, this teaching case illustrates potential (un)intended consequences of such organizational practices in terms of career experiences and opportunities for members of different ethnic groups.

2.7.2. Learning objectives. By presenting the data of both dominant ethnic and minority ethnic young professionals as answers to specific questions concerning the phenomenon of the *borrel*, we intent to sketch an “objective” picture of what a *borrel* looks like in the organizational context in the Netherlands. We intent to show various perceptions for each of the questions to ideally provide all readers with new insights in how others might experience this event. In addition, we want to challenge the reader to take a step back and to (re)consider the *borrel* as a normalized organizational practice within the Dutch organizational context. Across the different questions, this teaching case:

- Provides the reader with various perceptions and experiences of diverse young professionals of the municipality. The reader may hear stories, which sound very familiar, and stories, which may be new, and possibly (re)interpret personal experiences in light of this new knowledge.
- Presents various pieces of information, which suggest that the *borrel* as a phenomenon can be understood as an organizational practice implemented to increase interaction among employees and thereby, inclusivity among colleagues.
- Presents a different set of information suggesting that the organizational practice of the *borrel* may have (un)intended consequences, due to which some may feel included more than others. Put differently, the data gives the opportunity to discover the paradox of inclusivity versus exclusivity when implementing or adhering to an organizational practice, by taking the *borrel* as an example.
- Creates awareness for potential consequences of (re)producing rather than reducing inequality by implementing or fostering certain organizational practices, by taking the *borrel* as an example.

- Shows how the normalization of a particular organizational practice can exacerbate attempts to find alternatives, even though this particular practice has been identified as at least making (dis)similarity amongst organizational members salient, if not enhancing it.

2.7.3. Additional readings.

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2.7.4. Possible assignment or discussion questions.

- Prior to handing out the teaching case:
 1. Please describe your own experiences related to company drinks within the organizational context.
 2. Which role do company drinks play in your own career experiences and opportunities? Why do you think they are (not) important for your own career?
- After handing out the teaching case:
 3. Based on the interviewees' accounts, please give an answer to the five questions asked in the teaching case:
 - a. Why do we participate in *borrels*?
 - b. When do *borrels* take place?
 - c. What will we eat and drink, and whom will we meet at *borrels*?
 - d. Whom will we not meet at *borrels*?
 - e. What does it mean, if we do not attend *borrels*?
 4. Comparing your own experiences at *borrels* with the accounts of the interviewees: With whom do you agree, and why. With whom do you not agree, and why not?
 5. Based on the presented quotes, how would you describe the function of the *borrel* within both an organization, in general, and an individual's career, in particular?

6. Thinking about *borrels* in terms of particularly ethnic diversity: Does this change your description of the function of the *borrel* within both an organization and an individual's career? If so, why, and to what extent?
7. If you were asked to promote an alternative organizational practice with the aim of increasing interaction and inclusivity between employees within the organization, based on the presented information,
 - a. How would you go about it?
 - b. What would be your suggestions? Please briefly explain your choices.

2.7.5. References teaching notes teaching case 3.

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2.8. Some Final Words

As indicated previously, the three teaching cases just presented are intended to build a bridge from the theoretical introduction to the conceptual and empirical part of this dissertation. At this point, I would like to take the opportunity to relate the teaching cases to the following chapters as a means of completing the intended bridging between theory and practice and thereby to further accommodate the reader when entering the field.

2.8.1. Teaching case 1: Careers in numbers. Writing this first quantitative teaching case turned out a little different than initially intended. At first, I wanted to show the reader quite plainly that careers of professionals belonging to different social groups (based on ethnicity or gender, for instance) develop differently by means of using the quantitative data collected at the large professional service firm in the Netherlands (ABCD). Since the data appeared to also lend itself well for questioning certain career systems often implemented in large organizations to guarantee objectivity and equal opportunities, I additionally included this aspect in the teaching case. However, when taking a closer look at the relation between the quantitative data and the particular characteristics of the career system in place at ABCD, a number of inconsistencies, paradoxes, or “mysteries” came to the fore. In this respect, it became obvious that numbers alone will always owe us an explanation: Numbers helped us to detect the mysteries, but numbers did not help us enough to fully understand these mysteries. Questions like “What happened?”, “Where does this mystery come from?”, “What can we do about it?” arise, but stay unanswered when only counting on numbers.

Arriving at a similar stage in the actual research process was the starting point of searching for potential explanations for the apparent mystery. As part of the larger project, we had also conducted interviews with dominant ethnic and minority ethnic professionals. When

conducting and analyzing these interviews, the concept of (ethnic) identity emerged from the data as an important aspect of career experiences, for instance. Thus, by actually listening to and analyzing the professionals' experiences of organizational life and careers, we came a little closer to illuminating the mystery of career experiences of ethnic diverse professionals at ABCD than relying on numbers alone could have possibly taken us.

As it turns out, the *phenomenon of numbers* in itself has guided me when writing this first teaching case. Using both qualitative and quantitative data for my own research situated in two environments ("my" departments at the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration) in which the first is clearly qualitatively and the second is traditionally more quantitatively oriented, I felt the urge to create space for discussing both the blessings and the curses of both approaches. I believe that the quantitative data presented in this teaching case and the story evolving from it set the stage for this discussion.

2.8.2. Teaching case 2: "(You are) who you are" – And what does this mean? As described previously, experiences like the ones presented in the second teaching case have inspired me to consider (ethnic) identity as one of the main concepts in my research. I was fascinated how incidents like the ones presented in the teaching case took place in the organizational environment, often without any particular reaction of the professionals involved. Many of the dominant ethnic and minority ethnic employees just go on with their organizational lives without ever addressing such incidents in any way, as it seemed to me. As a consequence, considering the (ethnic) identity question in the organizational and the career context may reveal additional questions: Which role do particular organizational cultures, practices, and processes play in a) creating an environment for such incidents, and b) legitimizing both the occurrence of and the non-reaction to such incidents? I became particularly curious about how the different

facets, perspectives, and experiences of ethnic identity matter in creating and shaping dominant and minority ethnics' career experiences, for instance in the particular context of the professional service firm in the Netherlands. This curiosity finally guided me towards writing the empirical Chapter 4 (“Ethnic identity positioning at work: Understanding professional career experiences”).

2.8.3. Teaching case 3: To b(orrel) or not to b(orrel): that is the question.

Throughout all the interviews I conducted both in the public and the private sector, when talking about careers and career experiences in Dutch organizations, the phenomenon of the *borrel* continuously reoccurred. Even though I myself was getting used to the fact that almost every work-related event is closed off by a *borrel* (except for our paper-sessions at the Faculty of Social Sciences, after which we usually go out for dinner instead), I was struck by the prominent role that was ascribed to the *borrel* in relation to careers by both dominant and minority ethnic professionals. As a consequence, I began to consider the *borrel* not only as an organizational phenomenon implemented and maintained by most organizational units throughout different organizational sectors, but I began to consider it as an organizational practice. Unfortunately, while working on the empirical chapters, there was no possibility to incorporate these thoughts about the *borrel* in a meaningful way. However, the phenomenon of the *borrel* immediately came to my mind when thinking about writing a teaching case of a generally accepted, or even normalized (?), organizational practice potentially leading towards inequalities in career experiences between dominant ethnic and minority ethnic professionals. Since a *borrel* can be considered a “market place for social capital”, its importance for an individual’s career development and opportunities through connecting to relevant others becomes even more important. In this sense, this teaching case can also be considered relevant as an introduction to

the conceptual Chapter 3 (“Ethnic diversity and social capital in upward mobility systems: Problematizing boundaries to career attainment”) and the empirical Chapter 5 (“Enlaced in a network of inequalities? How an organizational practice plays out in diverse trainees’ social capital”). The last one of the central questions in this third teaching case (“What does it mean, if we do not attend *borrels*?”) can be understood as a stepping stone to both conceptually, as well as empirically consider the relationship between social capital and individual careers in light of ethnic group membership.

All in all, it was a great pleasure to think about and to actually write these three teaching cases. It would be wonderful, if they fulfilled their purpose not only in guiding the reader of this thesis to enter the field, but also in their potential to be used as practical material in the classroom or in an organizational setting

