

Career Mentoring in Higher Education: Exploring Mentoring and Employability Gains Across Different Social Groups

PhD in Education

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Declaration: I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Tania Lyden

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Abstract

Investing in undergraduate career mentoring in UK Higher Education (HE) requires evidence that it develops employability. This research evaluated the differences, if any, in the perceived short-term benefits (or otherwise) of career mentoring for mentees from different socioeconomic backgrounds who were participating in a mentoring scheme. The research explored what facilitates or inhibits the perceived success of career mentoring of the dyad by combining Social Reproduction and Self-efficacy as two opposing, but jointly elucidating, theories. Wraparound surveys of participants in an Institution's year-long scheme, gathered perceived changes to six aspects of employability and multiple linear regression calculated whether socioeconomic status (SES) predicted any differences, with the model combining SES, gender and ethnicity. Semi-structured interviews with 12 purposively sampled mentors and mentees were thematically analysed to explore diverse influences. Results showed that tangible gains in labour market knowledge, work exposure and ease of professional interaction were comparable across social groups. However, low SES mentees gained more self-belief in their ability to gain graduate level employment, with SES explaining 11.5% of the difference, suggesting additional forces at play. Mean rank differences in career clarity gains were also statistically significant to the benefit of low SES mentees. Interviews suggested that SES influences mentoring in various ways. Similarity seems important in most but not all, highly successful relationships, by supporting identification which enables career identity refinement. This confirms that mentor-mentee similarity is not essential to increase self-efficacy. Interviews indicate that similarity is not necessarily based on demographics. Habitus seems to loosely constrain the degree of intended social mobility through partial identification, heightened by feelings of inauthenticity and unease. Social capital seems effective across social groups but may rely on shared interests in the reputation of the '*alma mater*'. A model of career mentoring in HE supports pragmatic generalisation for scheme organisers with policy and practice recommendations informed by an awareness that optimisation and mentoring conceptualisation requires a balanced focus across individual, interpersonal, institutional and societal influences.

Key words: Mentoring, Higher Education, socioeconomic status, employability, social reproduction, social capital, self-efficacy, identification, mixed-methods

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Career mentoring of undergraduates by professionals within Higher Education (HE) has expanded in the last two decades, easing the transition of degree students from HE into work. It has become a mainstay of a suite of interventions targeted at boosting student social mobility, typically funded by Government investment through the Office for Students (OfS) Access programme. This research project focuses on the role of social background within career mentoring in HE and asks whether mentoring increases the employability of mentees regardless of their social status. If it does, logically, this should increase the rate of social mobility for those mentees from lower social classes in particular, although there are several other influences on graduate career trajectories to also consider. The first section within the introduction provides an overview of the social mobility and social inequality context upon which this research rests and introduces the initial stimulus for the research. It also explores the particular problems the UK is facing in terms of stalling social mobility and inequality and focuses in on this picture for graduates including the potential causes of this. It considers how career mentoring might tackle imbalances in forms of capital, identifies the practical need for this research and concludes by outlining its broad aim. Following on from this the gap that this research is set to begin to fill is presented and, in particular, the lack of research into this kind of mentoring in HE and a lack of interest in social diversity in relation to this context are both highlighted. Once this research gap is presented, the chapter then delivers the two key research questions that direct this research. Next, this section explains precisely what this research hopes to contribute to the conceptualisation of mentoring, the body of research on mentoring and diversity and, in particular, social diversity and its potential to contribute to views on Social Reproduction and Self-efficacy Theory from exploring mentoring and social diversity within this new context. Finally, the structure of the thesis is described.

What role does social background have in the career mentoring process?

Does social diversity interfere with mentoring mechanisms? Does it influence outcomes and if so why? Are career mentoring schemes in HE effective at developing the employability of undergraduates from different social backgrounds? Should these schemes attract future investment? Should they be considered an important ‘cog’ in the machinery of interventions that improve employability and therefore, potentially social mobility?

1.1 Context, Focus and Overarching Aims

Career mentoring in HE aims to help students refine and achieve their career goals through enhanced employability. For Higher Education institutions (HEIs) the goal seems to be to beat competitors, achieve better Graduate Outcomes and top university rankings. Subsequently, they can attract more employable students, secure support from more affluent, influential alumni and manage risks so they thrive in teaching and research. However, such idealism invites questions. Is it really that simple? Is HE institutionally meritocratic and is society meritocratic for students? If it is, then why has social mobility in this society stalled? This research focuses on the career mentoring of undergraduates as an intervention that could improve employability and potentially contribute to improved social mobility and this section asks why it should be improved, whether HEIs are achieving this and the role career mentoring might play.

Through analysis of career mentoring in one HEI and exploring the value of other schemes, the researcher noticed students, from apparently contrasting social backgrounds, responding differently to mentoring. Some with high status mentors, seemed intimidated and uneasy. One scheme seemed to have low income students benefiting less than their wealthier peers. Such schemes were being invested in, despite a lack of evidence of scheme effectiveness. The researcher wanted to better understand mentoring processes

and outcomes to feel more certain about whether mentoring could help improve social mobility.

Social mobility rests upon the concept of class. The class hierarchy established in 1911 by the Register General's Office divided society into five groups from professional to unskilled manual, informed by decades of urbanisation, population growth, increased poverty and crime (Savage, 2015). Previously, notions of class hung on morality. This new schema challenged heredity arguments, suggesting that abhorrent living conditions might be at fault. Culture also emerged as a factor as morality became associated with group behaviour rather than income. Class had an enduring focus on the working/middle-class divide but post-war introduced the challenges of gender and immigration (Savage, 2015). Most class analysis after this relied on the National Statistics Socioeconomic Classification (NS-SEC) which did not assimilate intersectionality. The NS-SEC focused on economics due to its reliance on occupation. Subsequently, the focus drifted towards the robustness of the elite and increasing wealth differentials challenged the relative importance of income to class (Savage, 2015). Researchers view class differently: some see history as fundamental to the concept, built by families passing economic capital between generation, whilst also transmitting cultural and social capital, leading to intransigence across generations (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979).

Government interest in graduate social mobility reveals concerns that elite occupations rigidly repel the middle-classes

We have moved towards a class order which is more hierarchical in differentiating the top (which we call 'the wealth elite') from the bottom (which we call 'the precariat' which consists of people who struggle to get by on a daily basis) but which is more fuzzy and complex in its middle layers. (Savage, 2015, p. 4).

Government measures such as first in family to attend university, embrace notions of social capital. Employability models have also evolved to explicitly incorporate forms of capital (Tomlinson, 2017). Class analysis has been known to incorporate geographical, income and wealth considerations too.

Social mobility is moving class within one's lifetime, or moving classes compared to previous generations but why is this important? Economically, inequality and low social mobility, if too extreme, seems damaging (The All Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility, 2012). Health and moral arguments also support greater equality (The Equality Trust, 2015). Yet inequality can be argued as motivating, overcoming stagnation. Limiting inequality seems important for a flourishing society and yet inequality of income and wealth is evident in England and Wales, including problems with fair access and stalling social mobility (ONS, 2014). Despite severe inequalities, the UK strives for meritocracy and equality of opportunity, not equality per se and yet elite sectors (law, parliament, high level media and journalism, government and medicine) remain dominated by privately educated (Kirby, 2016).

Greater HE access should logically increase social mobility, however, studies suggest that it has not (Savage, 2015) with the Gini Coefficient stubbornly hovering at 0.36 approximately between 2001-2018 making it the 6th unequal Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) country in 2018 (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2021). With educational achievement held equal, earnings secured by privately schooled are significantly higher (Green et al., 2019) with what and where students study most important (Walker & Zhu, 2018). HE has not levelled the playing field for students (Macmillan, Tyler, & Vignoles, 2013). There is evidence that non educational characteristics can be influential and should be explored (Bukodi & Goldthorpe, 2011; Devine & Li, 2013). Existence of these other factors sought by employers, resonate with class complexity. HEIs produce Access Plans to equalise

student access, academic progression and destinations in return for funding. The GO measure, underpinned by standard occupational classifications (SOCs), gathers destinations data for graduates 15 months after graduation, supports university rankings and affects institutional reputation. The OfS is now ensuring that institutions base investment decisions about widening participation interventions on robust research evidence to secure funding.

Research has uncovered the importance of identity capital in enabling graduates to seek roles with a sense of belonging. Awareness of the need to play the employability development game is not the same as having internalised and hence automatically applying this ability without the psychic and social pressures of discomfort when exploring unfamiliar careers (Bathmaker, 2021; Bathmaker et al, 2013)

The question remains whether HEIs can realistically achieve social mobility for society, is it influential enough to make a difference? If other forms of capital give some students an edge, can HEIs moderate capital differences? Can career mentoring help? Career mentoring, in most HEIs, aims to develop employability, which logically should help to facilitate social mobility.

This research, therefore, aims to better understand the role of social background in career mentoring processes and outcomes in HE. Does social background interfere with mentoring mechanisms and prevent mentees benefiting similarly from the intervention? If so, what is happening and why? Do schemes develop the employability of students from lower social backgrounds? Was the investment decision wise? This mentoring research ventures into relatively new territory embarking on a new, rich seam of research at the crossroads of mentoring, employability, HE and social diversity.

1.2 The Research Need

The pragmatic need for this research has been established above and is based on the demands that HEIs base investment decisions relating to social mobility interventions on robust research evidence in order to secure funding and the need to feel reassured such interventions are indeed effective. However, it is important to demonstrate that there is a significant gap in the research literature that this work would contribute to filling.

From the literature review, it becomes clear that the main reason mentoring is not so well conceptualised is due, amongst other things, to the varied context and purpose of its application. Mentoring research also spans both formal and informal schemes which seem to provide differing research results and researchers report significant variations in the level of success achieved through mentoring, challenging agreement on aspects of function and process (Allen & Eby, 2010). This research focuses on career mentoring of undergraduates by professionals with no supervisory or employment connections, and is interested in this variation in success and discovering whether social background might go some way towards explaining it. The literature suggests that various forms of diverse mentoring relationships, may promote more psychosocial mentoring outcomes rather than tangible career development outcomes (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004) but it is important to stress that the studies focusing on diversity are not from a HE context and those that do exist present relatively inconsistent results. Only two research papers were found exploring this form of mentoring in HE at all (Gannon & Maher, 2012; Spence & Hyams-Ssekasi, 2015) and both of the research found focused on the benefits of mentoring rather than exploring diversity issues. An additional article focused on the gains made through entrepreneurial mentoring, again with no social diversity focus (Nabi, Walmsley, & Akhtar, 2019). Finally, studies relating to social diversity seemed restricted to youth mentoring and mentoring within business and again

provided different results with the blame for the inconsistency suggested as the varied contexts and levels in the organisational hierarchy. (Blickle, Witzki, & Schneider, 2009).

There is also scope, within this research, to explore theoretical arguments around Social Reproduction Theory and whether habitus and social capital will prevent low SES mentees from achieving as much success from mentoring as their peers and how far similarity has a part to play in this. It also opens up the option to explore how far Self-efficacy Theory and the vicarious learning it often relies on, might be undermined by mentor and mentee coming from different social backgrounds. Looking at mentoring through these two theoretical lenses, in this context, is a new endeavour.

Adding all these arguments together provides a significant and wide research gap where the researcher can identify and explore any differences in mentoring gains in this type of scheme, within HE and at this age level for students in socially diverse relationships. The pragmatic and theoretical rationale for doing this research are substantial and convincing.

As a result of identifying this research gap the following research questions were established:

- 1) What differences are there, if any, in the perceived short-term benefits (or otherwise) of career mentoring for mentees from different socioeconomic backgrounds?
- 2) What is it that facilitates or inhibits the perceived success of the mentoring dyad?

Between them, these two questions explore any differences in perceived gains that might be explained, at least in part, by social background and also explore the breadth of influences that might provide the alternative explanations for any differences, whilst exploring the rich experiences of mentees and how social background and other influences have affected that experience.

1.3 Research Importance and Contribution

Through some form of measurement of the perceived shifts in employability of mentees, the researcher hopes to identify whether there are significant differences, or not, in the perceived short-term benefits (or otherwise) of career mentoring between mentees from different social backgrounds. The results of this analysis will add to the body of knowledge that relates to mentoring and social diversity and will provide further evidence about whether social background influences mentoring outcomes and whether this is for the better or worse for low SES mentees in terms of perceived success levels. Most importantly, it will provide this evidence from within the context of career mentoring in HE, where no evidence exists at present. By focusing on one scheme, to demonstrate the impact of social diversity on this form of career mentoring in the broad context of HE, further schemes will need to undergo similar research to build a fuller picture. This is important because prior research results on social diversity seem inconsistent because of differences in the level of the hierarchy focused upon and the organisational context, which the researcher suspects may be due to the types of sectors involved and how important cultural versus economic capital might have been within them. Therefore, it is expected that there is the potential for different results for elite institutions, for example, where social diversity between mentor and mentee may have the potential to be more extreme and entry to more elite sectors, with heavier reliance on cultural capital, may be sought.

Through exploring the experiences of mentors and mentees the researcher hopes to discover what they believe are the key inhibitors and facilitators to the perceived success of career mentoring and to find out more about how social background might influence career mentoring mechanisms, if at all, including the importance and nature of similarity. It is anticipated that this approach will also generate potential explanations other than social diversity, not identified in the literature review, should any significant differences be found. This should create two vantage points from which the issue of social

diversity in career mentoring in HE can be analysed and explored. This research will be the first to explore how social diversity might impact perceived mentoring outcomes for this type of scheme in HE. It will generate alternative suggestions for any differences seen and provide further insights into the mechanisms involved in career mentoring in this environment.

This research is expected to provide further evidence to support or challenge the existing conceptualisation of mentoring, which broadly rests at present on mentoring in a range of contexts but not particularly on mentoring of this kind within HE. In particular, it is expected to consider whether the mentee is the primary beneficiary as opposed to the institution or other societal group, whether the duration of mentoring identified as typical is indeed several years, or whether success can occur within shorter relationships of less than a year. It will also provide further insights into the role of bonding and intimacy in mentoring and their importance to the concept and whether this seems to rest upon similarity or not and what the nature of this similarity might be.

This research takes the theories of Social Reproduction (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) and Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) and applies them to mentoring in this new context in a way that hasn't been done before. Exploring this form of mentoring using Social Reproduction Theory should shed light on whether habitus, and limits to social capital being provided across different social groups, constrain intended social mobility and the ability to learn how to 'play the game'. If this is found to be the case, then this research could provide evidence to elaborate aspects of Bourdieu's arguments. Similarly, through using the lens of Self-efficacy Theory, it is expected that this research may go some way to endorsing how mastery can be achieved through this form of mentoring in this context and whether similarity was important for the vicarious learning required and upon what basis similarity was perceived. This coupling of these theories allows more dimensions of exploration than typically adopted which brings its own originality.

Practically, it is expected that this research should be able to confirm the effectiveness, or otherwise, of this scheme to its investors and go on to be one piece in the jigsaw puzzle that confirms effectiveness or otherwise, across the range of schemes in the HE sector. If, on average, students benefit enough, with low SES mentees, on average, benefiting most if there are differences, then investors are likely to be well reassured. If some form of intended trajectory towards social mobility of low SES mentees can be evidenced, then this will also endorse investment. In addition, with a thorough exploration of the different influences on the perceived success of career mentoring in HE it should, through pragmatic generalisation, provide a range of influences for scheme organisers to explore and potentially leverage to optimise their schemes. This exploration of mentee experiences, in particular any evidence of habitus constraining aspirations or any evidence of the potential damage to the habitus, will provide some basis to explore ethical dilemmas that the, not always analogous, social mobility interests of mentees and the institution may produce.

Results relating to findings about habitus, self-efficacy and affect, should provide organisers of similar schemes and those organisers of scheme with low SES mentees, a greater insight into the processes at play and any potential damage that may occur by stepping onto a socially mobile trajectory. It may also identify how and to what extent habitus might restrict such movement. It will hopefully provide a better understanding of how emotions influence mentoring and its perceived effectiveness and enable scheme organisers, mentors and mentees to consider how affect needs to be supported within and beyond dyads.

To conclude the contribution of this research includes the opportunity to contribute to the small body of research exploring the influence of social diversity on mentoring and in particular, it will be the first to explore this in a HE context for this type of scheme. It will present an overview of the many forces at play that seem to facilitate or

inhibit the perceived success of mentoring and propose a model of career mentoring in HE providing alternative explanations for differences in social background and creating a better understanding of this form of mentoring in this context. It will endorse or challenge various aspects of the mentoring conceptualisation as well as adding insights into views on Social Reproduction Theory and Self-efficacy Theory through exploring career mentoring in this context by coupling and looking through each of these theoretical lenses. From a practical point of view, it will aim to help build a picture of how successful career mentoring in HE is with respect to developing employability as a precursor to helping boost social mobility. Through pragmatic generalisation it will inform other organisers of similar schemes of the potential leverage points to optimise scheme effectiveness. This research is set to provide an interesting and novel contribution.

1.4 Thesis Structure

The thesis falls into six chapters; introduction, literature review, methodology, results, discussion and conclusion. The introduction provides an overview of the thesis. The literature review examines the key concepts of mentoring, SES and employability and then explores the relevant theories of Social Reproduction and Self-efficacy Theory as well as exploring the body of research about diverse relationships in mentoring. The methodology outlines the context, research design, methodology, ethics, data gathering, analysing and reporting of results and issues around reliability and validity. It explains the pragmatic nature of the research design. The first results chapter introduces the research participants, details the survey participants specifically and then explores the quantitative results focusing on identifying any differences in employability shifts between different socioeconomic groups. The second results chapter provides detailed information on the interview participants, gives a series of vignettes to tell the holistic story of each mentee's journey through mentoring before presenting the results of the systematic thematic analysis of the interviews. This chapter also presents some further survey findings

to triangulate between the interview findings and the survey data. The discussion chapter presents a brief summary of the results and findings and discusses them in relation to the literature and theories explored before the power, contribution and limitations of the research is conveyed and implications and recommendations outlined.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

The introduction confirmed how ad hoc evidence of different experiences of mentoring for students from apparently different social backgrounds, and basic scheme evaluations, seemed to show that higher SES peers might gain more from mentoring. This gave the researcher the impetus to explore how social diversity influenced the mentoring experiences and outcomes of undergraduates in HE for more robust answers.

The rationale for exploring career mentoring for undergraduates comes from concerns about stagnating social mobility and problems with inequality in the UK. There is an intransigence of the elite and upper middle-classes in high status occupations and lower classes in lower status roles, leaving a more incoherent centre ground (Savage, 2015). The importance placed on the role of history in passing various forms of capital from one generation to the next (Bourdieu, 1986) resonates with this research, emphasising social reproduction and connecting with the stalling social mobility the UK experiences. The Government has looked to HE to facilitate social mobility. Funding follows this expectation and HEIs are tasked with equalising access, retention and progress of its students both whilst at university and in their Graduate Outcomes in the labour market or further study, although the work so far has not managed to make significant inroads into the problem. Investments by HEIs into relevant interventions need to be made on the basis of robust evidence. Career mentoring schemes are one intervention that HEIs believe could have an impact on the social mobility problem, through enhancing student employability.

A number of theoretical works came to the fore to shed light on the research questions in this project. One that surfaced, as referred to above, was Bourdieu's Social Reproduction Theory, which "Constitutes the most significant and successful attempt to make sense of the relationship between objective social structures and everyday practices." (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002, p. 1). When considering whether career mentoring

might help to level the playing field for students from poorer backgrounds relative to their wealthier peers and what the potential influences might be, exploring both the internal and external forces and constraints on a person's behaviour, when it comes to choosing and securing a career, seem important. Bourdieu focused on both social structures and individual practices which resonates with the conceptualisation of mentoring, which can be viewed at different levels and relies on the actions and perceptions of the mentor and mentee including how these have been shaped (Swartz, 1997). Given mentoring relies upon learning from another person, Social Learning Theory also resonates with this research topic, potentially providing a route to better understanding the mechanisms and levers involved on an interpersonal and individual basis through the concept of self-efficacy.

This chapter starts by describing the research aim and questions for this research and the potential it has to make a difference. It moves on to consider the key literature that clarifies the concepts at the heart of this research. It then analyses the theories of Social Reproduction and Self-efficacy and explores their relevance. It finally considers and critiques the literature relating to what influences mentoring relationships, including the performance of diverse mentoring relationships, before concluding with a more considered research focus and how it can contribute to the literature.

2.1 Research Aims, Research Questions and Potential to Make a Difference

When playing its part in improving the employability of undergraduates, career mentoring, for many HEIs, is designed to influence various forms of capital evident in models of employability. If attempting to increase mentee employability in the short-term, then logically it should improve their chances of securing a graduate level job upon graduation. Although, results may vary depending on the employability model applied in its design and the nature and clarity of the career aspirations of the mentee.

This research focuses on the career mentoring of undergraduates in HE by workplace professionals who are not supervising them. It attempts to discover whether students from different social backgrounds similarly achieve the outcomes expected from career mentoring. The two research questions are:

1. What differences are there, if any, in the perceived short-term benefits (or otherwise) of career mentoring for mentees from different socioeconomic backgrounds?
2. What is it that facilitates or inhibits the perceived success of the mentoring dyad?

These questions combine to measure who, if anyone, might benefit the most from this intervention but also to identify what influences the process should they not benefit similarly. The research, therefore, hopes to provide the following contribution to knowledge:

- To show whether career mentoring in HE is perceived as beneficial and in what ways. Although another study of career mentoring in HE reported benefits, this was not statistically analysed. This research should create a tool to inform future HE based research.
- To begin to confirm whether career mentoring benefits in HE relate to SES or not, something not studied in this context before.
- To better understand the processes that underpin the career mentoring of an undergraduate by an unconnected professional and what might influence these processes, including whether SES is one such influence. Although findings may endorse process discoveries from other contexts, this will be the first study focusing on career mentoring undergraduates in HE without a supervisory role blurring the mentoring concept. As a result it should contribute to the conceptualisation of mentoring. This may lead those managing career mentoring schemes to reflect on

their designs as potential, nuanced influences are highlighted. A proposed model of the process of career mentoring in HE is anticipated.

- A potential contribution to evidence for stakeholders in the form of a theory of change that HEIs can use so such mentoring might confidently be invested in and optimised. This research can begin the creation of this evidence base.

This research will focus on one career mentoring scheme in a HEI, which questions how far the results might be generalised. However, the researcher firmly believes, particularly given the early stage of career mentoring research in HE, that some pragmatic generalisation will be possible, depending on the interested institution and scheme, and that the research outcomes should provide a useful foundation for further research.

2.2 Conceptualising the Research

The key concepts involved in this research include mentoring, SES and employability. The focus on mentoring as a potential vehicle for developing employability and in turn helping facilitate social mobility means that its concept needs careful consideration at the outset. The conceptualisation of mentoring creates transparency about what is being studied whilst also offering the potential to underpin any measures of mentoring gains within this research. Such research requires the ability to section mentees and mentors into socioeconomic groups and, therefore, an exploration of this concept is also key. Finally, a burgeoning area of research of graduate employability provides another alternative way of measuring mentee gains from career mentoring that will need definition and consideration.

2.2.1 Mentoring and Career Mentoring in Higher Education

The conceptualisation of mentoring has been pursued heavily over the last few decades but is currently agreed as somewhat ill-defined (Allen et al., 2004; Scanlon, 2009). This situation has arisen partly due to the range of purposes and different contexts that mentoring has been applied to, the varied success of mentoring relationships (in particular in the level of intimacy reached) and the differing characteristics of formal mentoring schemes versus informal mentoring. Formality can alter scheme duration, purpose and context and introduces institutional and societal stakeholders. A focus on function and, to a lesser extent, on process has developed conceptual bias and a preoccupation at the individualistic and interpersonal levels has limited conceptual growth relating to other stakeholders and beneficiaries.

This section discusses the origins of mentoring and presents various definitions before describing the key theories and research underpinning the progression of the why, what, how, when and who of its conceptualisation. This includes attempts to operationalise the concept and meta-analyses that have helped crystallise key features that appear commonly agreed upon but also ongoing areas of disagreement. It then briefly explores the implications of the challenges of conceptualisation for mentoring research generally and for this research in particular.

Origins, Definitions, Key Theories and Research. Originating from Greek mythology, from Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus puts his son, Telemachus, in the trust of his adviser Mentor while he is at war, hoping he will be guided successfully into adulthood (Homer, 1919). This origin shows the longevity of mentoring, although it was the 1960s/1970s before more intensive research into mentoring began.

Mentoring has been applied to many contexts, such as business, education and community settings and for many reasons. In 1991, 15 definitions of mentoring across

educational, psychology and management literature were identified (Jacobi, 1991). This included

Ideally, a professor takes an undergraduate or graduate student under his or her wing, helps the student set goals and develop skills, and facilitates the student's successful entry into academic and professional circles. (Higher Education: (Moses, 1989, p. 10))

And

...a relationship between a young adult and an older, more experienced adult that helps the younger individual learn to navigate in the adult world and the world of work. A mentor supports, guides and counsels the young adult as he or she accomplishes this important task. (Management: (Kram, 1985, p. 2))

And finally

The term 'mentor', is generally used in a much narrower sense, to mean teacher, adviser, or sponsor. As we use the term, it means all these things, and more...

Mentoring is defined not in terms of formal roles but in terms of the character of the relationship and the functions it serves. (Psychology: (Levinson, Kelin, Levinson, & McKee, 1978, pp. 97-98)).

These quotes together begin to exemplify the conceptual complexity of mentoring.

The Why? This section asks about the purpose that mentoring is put to. One meta-analysis, reflected on the range of applications "Mentoring is discussed as a way to help reduce school dropout rates, increase academic achievement, promote self-identity and positive self-image, reduce risky behaviours and facilitate career development." (Allen, Rhodes, & Allen, 2010, p. 7).

A series of life stories highlighted the value of mentoring, describing it as “facilitating the realisation of the dream.” for the mentee (Levinson et al. 1978, p. 98). Others noted the importance of mentors to those who were highly successful in business and society more broadly (Kanter, 1977; Vaillant, 1977; Roche, 1979) and to those needing a mentor to guide them into adulthood (Ainsworth, 1989) or to keep them on the right side of the law (Caplan, 1964; Williams & Konblum, 1985; Rutter, 1987).

Kram (1985) undertook the first in depth study into business mentoring, by analysing 18 dyads and identifying two main mentoring functions: career development (aiding career advancement) and psychosocial (aiding a sense of competence, clarity of identity and managerial effectiveness).

A review of the literature (Keller, 2010) claimed three typical purposes of youth mentoring; preventing or containing problem behaviour, developing individual competencies to support positive adjustments and community integration but the overlap between family and community in youth mentoring has challenged its development.

Alongside this growing body of research, it has been identified how students who interacted with academic staff tended to be more academically successful (Chickering, 1969). In terms of student-faculty mentoring, one piece of research was based on this definition

...when a professional person serves as a resource, sponsor, and transitional figure for another person (usually but not necessarily younger), who is entering that same profession. Effective mentors provide mentees with knowledge, advice, challenge, and support as mentees pursue the acquisition of professional competence and identity. The mentor welcomes the less experienced person into the profession and represents the values, skills, and success that the neophyte professional person intends to acquire someday. (O'Neill & Wrightsman, 2001, p. 113).

This highlights, as Johnson (2006) did, the purpose of mentee identity transformation into feeling as though they were like an academic was at the core of this HE mentoring and suggests influencing the mentee's career identity so they become an academic or pursue graduate study. Career identity has been defined as "... a structure of meanings in which the individual links his own motivation, interests and competencies with acceptable career roles." (Meijers & Lengelle, 2012). Although it has been found that doctoral students receiving mentoring from academic staff had increased self-efficacy relating to academia but no evidence of increased commitment was found (Paglis, Green, & Bauert, 2006).

Very few studies have explored the career mentoring of undergraduates by mentors from the world of work (whether business based or in academia). These studies are important as they have no supervisory relationships in them to confuse the relationship (as there might be for doctoral researchers or trainee teachers for instance). Such studies typically have low participant numbers, are from specific degree disciplines and have focused on scheme outcomes, feeding into the 'why'. One study in HE highlighted the beneficial development of students' employability skills, increases in self-confidence and enhanced networks (Spence & Hyams-Ssekasi, 2015). Another study identified gains of self-awareness of skills, increases in industry knowledge and opportunities, higher confidence, increased external careers support, more reflection about career goals, the opportunity to observe managers at work and an enhanced professional network (Gannon & Maher, 2012). Mentoring of undergraduates to facilitate entrepreneurship revealed a range of gains including: career path, business and entrepreneurial knowledge development, entrepreneurial identity awareness, role modelling running a business, emotional support and moving beyond ideas to action (Nabi, Walmsley, & Akhtar, 2019). Although different contexts, these gains reveal both career development and psychosocial purposes and link to the concept of employability.

Kram's duality of mentoring functions highlights the purpose of mentoring in the workplace: career and psychosocial development (Kram, 1985). Various researchers have tested Kram's thinking, with several suggestions resulting. 'Political behaviour' was added into mentoring functions (Pollock, 1995). An additional function discussed is that of socialisation, becoming more familiar with, or gaining a sense of belonging to, a sector, organisation or level within an organisation (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 1992) which may connect with Kram's reference to the idea of acceptance of the mentee in that context. It has been argued that role-modelling should sit alongside Kram's dual functions, rather than under 'psychosocial', although role-modelling logically seems more like a process and a function offered rather than a purpose (Scandura, 1992). Finally, one researcher identified a third function: networking (making professional connections) to add to the career development and psychosocial functions of Kram (Tenenbaum, Crosby, & Gliner, 2001). This seems like a mentoring purpose but could logically sit as a career development gain in Kram's model. Despite these challenges, Kram's dual purposes of mentoring seem quite well established and broadly received support when operationalising Kram's work (Noe, 1988; Ragins & McFarlin, 1990; Pollock, 1995). Other researchers who explored mentoring benefits seem not to contradict this duality either. Psychosocial benefits were identified in terms of career satisfaction (Noe, 1988; Kammayer-Mueller & Judge, 2008; Blickle et al., 2009), job satisfaction (Blickle et al., 2009), career commitment (Bachman and Gregory, 1993 cited in Ragins, 1997, p. 502), decrease in turnover intention (Scandura & Viator, 1994) and management of job stress (Ford & Wells, 1985). It has been discovered that mentoring can evoke an enhanced sense of belonging similar to socialisation (Liu, McGrath-Champ & Fletcher, 2014). Mentees appear to experience emotional connections (Allen & Poteet, 2011) and loyalty (Oglensky, 2008).

Supporting Kram's 'career achievement' purpose are various studies focused on extrinsic gains. These include careers success where studies have typically

identified gains in terms of promotions, increased salary and performance (Kram, 1985; Noe, 1988; Fagenson, 1989; Dreher & Ash, 1990; Whitely, Dougherty & Dreher, 1991; Chao et al., 1992; Scandura, 1992; Orpen, 1995; Allen et al., 2004; Niehoff, Chenoweth & Rutti, 2005; Blickle et al., 2009;). Networking has also been identified as a positive outcome (Blickle et al., 2009; Spence & Hyams-Ssekasi, 2015). Development of employability skills (Spence & Hyams-Ssekasi, 2015) and knowledge gains (Beech & Brockbank, 1999) were identified as key outcomes, providing qualitative support for similar findings by (Mullen, 1994). Finally, studies have highlighted ‘mentor endorsement’ and its influence on career development, known as ‘reflected power’ (Kanter, 1977).

What seems central to all these studies is mentee development and yet focusing conceptualisation at the individual and interpersonal levels overlooked the idea that the purpose of mentoring can sometimes be hidden: acting to benefit the institution it is embedded in, particular societal groups or society as a whole, sometimes to the detriment of the mentee.

Research has identified that mentors whose careers may have peaked talk about experiencing ‘generativity’: a sense of giving back to future generations (Erikson, 1974). Mentors can also gain personal satisfaction from community giving (Gannon & Maher, 2012). Extrinsic benefits have been confirmed, including skill development such as patience (Gannon & Maher, 2012) and interpersonal skills. Critical approaches have also highlighted psychodynamic benefits where mentors can ‘play out’ unfinished relationships: not always to the benefit of the mentee (Beech & Brockbank, 1999).

Refocusing beyond the individual and interpersonal reveals more politicised or self-serving motives and potentially negative outcomes for some, including social control (Friedman, 2016; Gulham & Zulfikar, 1998, both cited in (Colley, 2001, p. 191). The literature discusses Greek and Christian models of mentoring, where the former led the

mentee to a happy, autonomous life but the latter sought to maintain a dominant, controlling hierarchy (Townley, 1994). The idea of 'organisational citizenship' argues that dominant societal groups aim to preserve the status quo and exclude people different to themselves from power (Moberg & Velasquez, 2004). 'Social dominance orientation' describes where individuals tend to protect the existing diversity of an organisational hierarchy: the antithesis of the social mobility aims of many HE schemes (Martin & Bok, 2015). These studies adjust the concept of mentoring as an intervention which socialises mentees not just into career paths and organisations but also into dominant discourses: maintaining power relations and the status quo. They cast doubts about the stated goals and outcomes sought from mentoring and when the benefits of mentoring for different types of mentee is explored later on, this will be considered further.

Hidden motives may not be detrimental to mentees, arguably depending on who the mentee is and whether they challenge existing diversity or not. However, Allen et al.'s (2004) meta-analysis of the benefits of mentoring found a definite benefit to being mentored but although significant, gains were not substantial and the most consistent benefits were affective responses to the workplace and career path, rather than career development gains. It can, however, take time for mentoring benefits to accrue and when to measure benefits is debatable (Brown, 2004; Allen & Poteet, 2011). As mentioned above socialisation has been argued as a third key function (or purpose) of mentoring (Chao et al., 1992). Increasing organisational commitment seems a reasonable goal for employers, resulting in more contented employees but there is a cost advantage to offering affective gains in lieu of promotion and pay. This suggests trade-offs between benefits for different stakeholders and questions who mentoring most benefits, what the true purposes are and challenges whether the prime focus is mentee development (Ragins, 1997).

Mentoring motives have been questioned

Given increasing levels of economic and social polarisation in Britain over the last two decades, there is a need to recognise the political economy of mentoring rather than accepting ‘the apolitical world that contemporary mentoring initiatives seem to inhabit’. (Colley, 2001, p. 179).

Purpose is an important part of the mentoring concept. Studies reveal a breadth of purposes and on the surface mentee development seems a priority but this development may vary depending on the context and the problem it needs to solve. Development seems to be about extrinsic and intrinsic gains but often these gains benefit another stakeholder: the mentor, the owner of a formal scheme or certain societal groups, potentially to either the detriment of the mentee or by potentially moderating those gains. Less obvious purposes that benefit organisations and societal groups seem to exist alongside those more traditionally focused upon such as the mentee, revealing, for both informal mentoring and for formal schemes, the potentially more political aspects of mentoring and the often hidden power-play within society. This begs the question whether mentee development is indeed the primary goal of mentoring.

The What? Kram’s seminal work on mentoring functions sought to identify what activity mentoring involved. Kram identified several sub-categories underneath the two main functions listed in Table 1 (Kram, 1985). These activities are typically offered during mentoring but were somewhat contextualised to the workplace.

Table 1*Kram's Mentoring Functions*

Career functions (Enhance career advancement)	Psychosocial functions (Enhance sense of competence, clarity of identity and effectiveness in the managerial role)
Sponsorship	Role-modelling
Exposure and visibility	Acceptance and confirmation
Coaching	Counselling
Protection	Friendship
Challenging assignments	

With sponsorship, the mentor provides assurances about mentee credibility to others which may lead to extrinsic benefits. Exposure and visibility give the mentee opportunities to demonstrate their worth to powerful staff and may lead to extrinsic benefits, rather like offering challenging assignments which also facilitates skill development. Protection ensures the mentee avoids reputational damage that may limit progress and coaching enables the mentee to plan and make career progress.

With role-modelling, the mentee observes mentor behaviour appropriate to their role and status, which allows the mentee to reflect and adjust theirs in order to succeed. It provides knowledge and increases familiarity with that way of being enabling the mentee to want, and feel more capable of, the role. Acceptance and confirmation makes the mentee feel accepted into that group and confirms they could be a successful member in the future. Counselling provides a listening ear and emotional support in relation to work and other matters that might impact a mentee's progress and friendship provides the mentee with a trusting relationship they feel they can rely on and open up within.

Research has largely supported and adjusted Kram's mentoring functions.

Owners of formal schemes in a business have wanted to demonstrate their schemes' value through proving these functions exist, which has led to functional arguments dominating.

Regarding the workplace, various studies, some already mentioned above, have sought to operationalise Kram's mentoring functions. Mentoring functions have been operationalised using the 'Mentoring Functions Scale' which supported them almost completely but suggested coaching was more associated with the psychosocial role, perhaps as the notion of coaching has become more idealised as a facilitative, non-directive process (Noe, 1988). A third dimension of 'role-modelling', separate to the psychosocial category where Kram had placed it, has been proposed, although it would seem likely that role-modelling might provide both career development and psychosocial benefits: questioning where best to place it (Scandura, 1992). Kram's functions were also operationalised using the 'Mentoring Role Instrument', adding 'social' and 'parent' to the psychosocial list (Ragins & McFarlin, 1990). This seems to feed into the notion of friendship, intimacy and trust but also provides network exposure, which might straddle Kram's categories. The idea of 'parent' might also allude to protection, emotional support and accountability by an older person. These functions often seem quite interdependent.

In addition to 'political behaviour', 'stimulation/challenge' was suggested as an addition to these functions (Pollock, 1995). Adding 'political behaviour' could relate to protection or exposure for the mentee, mentor benefits, or both: re-introducing the question of who is benefiting. Stimulation/challenge may again prove complex when they are about sharing knowledge and developing skills through exposure to challenging opportunities. These suggestions seem to overlap somewhat with Kram's suggestions.

For workplace mentoring particularly, Kram's approach seems fairly well-established, although has experienced some refinement and a more recent study also

endorsed the traditional career development: psychosocial functional split (Ridhi & Santosh, 2017) Whether all mentees experience all activities is questionable and could be connected to factors such as degree of engagement, mentor skills, scheme structure and formality (including duration and interaction frequency), personality and level of intimacy achieved. More will be said on these suggested sources of variation later as they relate closely to this project's research questions.

Research has explored which activities are offered during the different mentoring phases to discover the processes underpinning the unfolding of these functions. Much of this is explored in the 'how' section. Mutuality has been found to be important for establishing a close personal bond (Lester et al., 2019) and that self-disclosure is an important ingredient in achieving trust (Dutton, 2018). It has been argued that trust and mutuality rise as the relationship moves through its phases and subsides as the relationship is renegotiated and that it was the dynamic nature of the mentoring relationship which opened up more mentoring functions (Kram, 1983). This casts doubt over whether what is offered is consistent across relationships and schemes. This potential for inconsistency in what is offered frustrates progress towards an agreed concept and serves to highlight the uniqueness of each mentoring relationship.

Moving into student-faculty mentoring, O'Neill and Wrightsman's (2001) definition, mentioned above, reveals their view on what is provided, including providing knowledge and advice, challenging the mentee and giving support in acquiring professional competence and subsequently, an academic identity and includes role-modelling.

As mentioned above, research suggests HE career mentoring schemes develop aspects of employability (Gannon & Maher, 2012; Spence & Hyams-Ssekasi, 2015; Nabi, Walmsley and Akhtar, 2019). Dimensions of popular employability models

map well onto Kram's mentoring functions and are both tangible and affective. However, they are more outcome focused than activity oriented.

When exploring what is happening in mentoring relationships, beyond Kram, much is not well defined or tested enough. Conceptual differences appear to be justified. What is suggested is a natural variation in mentoring dependent on who is taking part and why.

The How? This section explores the processes that may be taking place in a mentoring relationship to enable the activities and outcomes to occur. There are suggestions of increasing degrees of intimacy identified by various researchers which they suggest trigger certain mentoring functions to be offered. How well tested these suggestions are, however, is questionable.

Kram (1983) proposed four key phases in mentoring; initiation, cultivation, separation and redefinition. Initiation lasted for the first year, where the mentee's positive expectations about mentor assistance start being tested and begin to become more concrete. Then the cultivation phase which, Kram suggested, lasts 2-5 years and is where expectations of the provision of mentoring functions continue to be tested and peak, realising the true relationship value. Kram argued that career development functions typically emerge first, followed by psychosocial functions as the bond deepened and that this intimacy led to providing further functions such as counselling and friendship. Career development functions relied on mentor status and power and psychosocial functions on intimacy and mutuality (empathy, vulnerability and responsiveness between people). They argued that during cultivation, mentor satisfaction emerged alongside positive mentee outcomes but without witnessing positive outcomes, they may experience disappointment. Beyond cultivation came separation: seen as critical to development and provoked by changes in mentoring functions. Relationship value is reassessed resulting in some anxiety

due to relationship disruption. Finally, redefinition involves a new relationship, often with more equal status, and for others the relationship ends, with discomfort either way.

Considering processes brought new features to the mentoring concept: Kram's research was impactful but based on just 18 in-depth interviews.

Other research has identified six stages to mentoring in teaching including; deciding to enter a mentoring relationship, building mutual trust, taking risks, developing teaching skills, learning about professional standards and dissolving/changing the relationship (O'Neill, 1981). Although context specific and based on formal mentoring, the phases somewhat mirror Kram's. However, this research stressed that interaction and communication were key to navigating the impact of relationship and individual changes.

A further study of managers and executives identified five phases; 'introductory point', 'mutual attraction', 'development', 'disillusionment and parting' and 'transformation' (Phillips-Jones, 1982). Further research into the phases of mentoring in a teaching setting outlined the contribution of each member (Gray & Gray, 1985). The mentor set up the relationship and provided advice/information so the mentee could function in their new environment. As the mentee gains knowledge and experience the relationship becomes more equal. This again, shows a similar progression to Kram's phases but feels more mentor dominated towards the start, perhaps because of scheme formality.

Exploration of mentoring in a doctoral training context (Mullen, 1994) endorsed Kram's phases too but argued that phases were fluid and overlapping rather than serial and procedural. Kochan and Trimble (2000) also proposed a more layered process but based on just one case. They identified the phases of 'groundwork' where the mentee identifies their development status, goals and potential mentors; 'warm up' where potential mentors are approached and establish a framework for collaboration; 'working' where

important issues are tackled and skills are practiced in a more trusting atmosphere, and finally, 'long-term status' where the relationship status is reviewed and adjusted. This also mirrors Kram's process, bar the layering argument.

These findings primarily evolved from qualitative research and needed further testing on a larger scale. Kram's phases have been explored across education and the workplace and across informal and formal schemes, with a focus on trust and identification (Bouquillon, Sosik, & Lee, 2005) and found that the length of each mentoring phase mirrored Kram's suggestions and that trust and identification had an upward trend throughout the relationship but that differences between the stages were not statistically significant. This challenged Kram's view that trust grows during the relationship. However, closer analysis showed that those in education found trust was highest at the redefinition phase but not so in the hi-tech sector, suggesting context is important. They also found that mentoring functions differed across the relationship phases with career development functions being higher in the first three phases and psychosocial highest in the redefinition phase which partly supports Kram (1983). They did not find a peak in mentoring functions at the cultivation phase, as Kram proposed, and that much was offered at the initiation phase. This challenged most researchers' views that mentoring functions are lower initially. They also did not find a tailing off of mentoring functions at the redefinition phase like Kram did but did find that relationships move towards a peer status. These findings are useful for formal schemes in HE that are typically shorter.

Trust and identification have been identified as processes that underpin successful mentoring (Orpen, 1997; Ragins, 1997). Trust and identification suggest that quality mentoring is taking place: allowing members to be more vulnerable and open. This seems to rest on how far the members' self-images overlap, perhaps enhancing the predictability of members' behaviours and judgments.

The ‘how’ of mentoring has been dominated by Kram’s four phase process which has secured much qualitative research support but with some questioning the peak of mentoring functions being offered as trust grows. However, a process of trust formation and increased intimacy seem to play a part in how successful mentoring is and is backed by various research. This section seems to suggest that further quantitative testing is needed for firmer conclusions to be drawn and certainly needs more exploration in different contexts and with different degrees of scheme structure and formality, which could strengthen the ‘how’ elements of the mentoring concept.

The When? Temporal elements also contribute to conceptualisation.

Considerations include duration and what varies this figure, such as whether part of a formal scheme or not, mentor/mentee characteristics, how duration influences relationship quality and vice-versa, and the subsequent impact on the mentoring functions offered and intimacy reached.

It has been argued that “The stages of a mentoring relationship are inextricably tied with the issue of relationship duration.” (Allen & Eby, 2010, p. 404). The conclusion presented is that a relationship exists between ‘belongingness’ and the course of a relationship and without a feeling of relatedness, the relationship is unlikely to move beyond the first stage.

Kram (1983) saw mentoring relationships lasting between 5 and 8 years and (Phillips-Jones, 1982) 3-5 years. Although research into phases is limited, the outcome was uncertainty about whether mentoring stages connect to particular timeframes. When considering formal schemes, organisations can aim to control duration and frequency but may be unsure whether guidelines are adhered to. It has been questioned whether dyad members would fully invest in short schemes, whether their accelerated nature may undermine bonding and whether a premature relationship closure may be detrimental

(Allen & Eby, 2010). Scheme organisers who make such decisions need awareness of the potential impact. It has been discovered that formal mentoring is associated with shorter relationships relative to informal schemes (Ragins, Cotton & Miller, 2000). Cross race and minority-to-minority mentoring as well as female gendered dyads also were found to have tended to have shorter duration (Ragins et al., 2000). Membership seems to influence duration.

Duration is not an issue unless it impacts relationship quality and subsequently realised benefits and yet small, significantly positive associations between duration and outcomes such as career and organisational commitment, organisational based self-esteem and significant, negative relationships with intention to resign have been identified (Ragins et al., 2000). Research into school based mentoring has shown that relationship quality, goal setting and feedback oriented activity influence outcomes positively (Lyons, McQuillin, & Henderson, 2019)

Research has shown that short, prematurely closed relationships reduce the self-worth and academic competence of youth mentees (Rhodes, 2002) but that one year relationships in youth schemes, provided the greatest development for mentees (Rhodes, Grossman, & Roffman, 2002). However, some have found no relationship between outcomes and duration (Dubois, Holloway, Valentine, & Cooper, 2002). Finally, as mentioned, empirical research regarding mentoring stages has brought mixed results, leaving evidence that longer relationships provide greater outcomes as scant. However, researchers argue, broadly speaking, that longer relationships are considered more fruitful, especially when considering qualitative research.

The Who? Considering the ‘who’, regarding mentoring, seems very context dependent. Youth mentoring typically involves older, more experienced, respected adults in the mentee’s wider family or community with younger mentees struggling with the

transition to being a responsible, ‘successful’, adult. Academic mentoring involves a more experienced researcher mentoring undergraduates, masters’ students or doctoral students considering academia as a career. Schemes spanning work and education use those who have successfully started a career to mentor those who have not, be this highly vocational i.e. teaching, nursing, or not. Workplace schemes rely on more experienced, often more senior and typically older, work colleagues to mentor less experienced mentees who aspire to higher status roles or are new to an organisation. What all these descriptions have in common is that the mentor is more experienced and successful than the mentee relative to a particular developmental goal.

It is worth reemphasising that mentoring moves beyond mentors and mentees and can be about the mentor/mentee’s societal groups based on ethnicity, gender, age, class and disability, the organisation they are a part of and the society they live in. It has been proposed that

Mentoring relationships can be examined from four different levels of analysis, representing different contexts: individual, dyadic, setting and society... different levels are more or less relevant for some types of mentorships than others (Allen & Eby, 2010, p. 407).

Research into a Higher Education alumni mentoring programme found benefits to students, alumni and the university with improvements in university engagement identified (Dollinger, Arkoudis, & Marangell, 2019)

This suggests that there are always more than the mentor and mentee involved in mentoring, be it a formal or informal mentoring relationship. Research, touched on earlier, suggests that these influences may vary in transparency within the relationship and can be unconsciously channelled by either member.

Areas of Agreement. It is evident that some areas of common ground have emerged from the literature although further empirical research is required. Allen, Rhodes, & Allen (2010, p. 10) refer to the following points of agreement. Mentoring is:

- a unique relationship that changes and evolves over time;
- involving knowledge acquisition;
- where members experience a process within a reciprocal but asymmetrical relationship regarding benefit and power, and
- with a primary goal of mentee development.

This framework has much to commend it, although its apolitical stance should be challenged. It perhaps focuses too much on mentee development to its detriment without enough acknowledgement of all the potential beneficiaries. The framework also seems idealised by overestimating the progression a mentoring relationship may typically experience but they acknowledge that level of intimacy is disputed. Additionally, references to benefits and power should not simply be accepted across all contexts. Mentees typically seems less powerful than mentors, e.g. a worker in their workplace, mentored by a senior manager. However, undergraduate mentees in HE may feel freer, with little fear of damage to reputation or long-standing relationships: empowering the mentee.

Along with intimacy disputes, common areas of conceptual dispute remain regarding age differences of the mentor/mentee, duration and mentoring functions offered (Allen & Eby, 2010). However, age seems less relevant than experience and how it relates to development aims, so perhaps age is a misnomer. Duration disputes seem strongly related to scheme formality and relationship quality, which itself seems influenced by a

range of things. Finally, mentoring functions are disputed, again, perhaps due to the goals of the mentoring and the context.

There seems to be considerable common ground in the concept of ‘mentoring’ and valid reasons, primarily context and formality based, for most of the differences. Therefore, the proposed conceptual framework for mentoring for this project is:

- a unique relationship;
- that evolves, via a process, into a closer relationship over time, to varying degrees, dependent on individual, interpersonal, institutional and societal factors;
- involving knowledge exchange;
- based on a reciprocal but often asymmetrical relationship in terms of benefit and power, moderated by context;
- by a more experienced mentor relative to the mentee in terms of the broad developmental goal, and
- with the goal of mentee development designed to subsequently benefit an organisation, institution, societal group and/or society.

Implications for Mentoring Research. Conceptual disagreements mean that research results have been based on schemes from different contexts, with different levels of formality, using mentors and mentees with different characteristics, different degrees of similarity, with different mentoring skills applied and different levels of intimacy reached. Such variations produce varied outcomes for mentees, mentors and other stakeholders as the processes involved are harnessed to differing degrees. The issue of when to measure in an evolving relationship poses another dilemma. The implication of this is whether researchers are comparing like with like? This approaches an

epistemological argument about whether research should be focused on control and experimentation rather than exploration, richness and research transparency. With severe methodological and ethical doubts cast over whether research design that controls the many variables involved is feasible, transparency and heightened care about results interpretation may be the best option.

Issues for this Research. This research aims to discover whether the SES of a mentee has an influence on the degree to which they benefit, if at all, from HE career mentoring and what the various influences on the perceived benefits might be. Having explored the conceptualisation of mentoring, a range of issues have arisen.

Limited HE based career mentoring research (where a professional mentors an undergraduate, with no supervisory relationship) leaves the researcher reliant on research findings from other contexts that may or may not transfer well to this research. This makes the research approach more open and exploratory, given the early stage of research in this context.

Career mentoring in HE also typically has subtly different purposes to youth, academic and business mentoring, given its focus on aspects of graduate employability. Although the outcomes may have broad overlaps, this leaves the researcher needing to generate a way of more precisely measuring them. Being reliant on the concept of employability also brings with it challenges given its rapid evolution. Within the concept of employability typically sits the notion of career identity and the variation of how well formed this is amongst undergraduates, how vocational their degrees are and hence their investment in their mentor's sectors, are issues that may need consideration.

The typical formality of such schemes in HE, including matching methods, shorter durations, attempts to regularise and accelerate interaction and managed closure processes may impact on how similar mentor and mentee are and possibly the trust and

intimacy that might be expected to develop. This may or may not impact on the mentoring functions offered, given the uncertainty around the research in this area. Looking to see how relationships and intimacy evolves and the potential impact seems important. The differences in power relations relative to most business schemes also needs to be accounted for as students have less commitment to their mentor's organisations relative to typical business schemes. Even issues around the method of mentoring, whether face-to-face, video call or via email, for instance may influence intimacy.

Finally, issues of other beneficiaries may need to be taken into consideration. In business mentoring, the nested influences of the power interests of the mentor, their societal groups, their organisation and society, more broadly, seem relatively simple compared to the many stakeholders in HE schemes. These include mentors, their societal groups, their employers, the university itself and its goals and the Government via the OfS which are influenced by the prevailing power dynamics of society. This research needs to factor in other potential beneficiaries beyond the mentee and to remain open to looking beyond the level of the individual or interpersonal.

Limited HE based research of this kind of mentoring, subtle differences in purpose, scheme formality and the degree to which relationships can evolve, alongside power differences and a wider range of stakeholders and beneficiaries all add to the challenge and interest of this research and should enable this research to establish solid learning to make progress from in the context of HE.

2.2.2 Socioeconomic Status of Undergraduates and Professionals/Alumni

This research relies on the concept of SES to differentiate between those from lower and higher social backgrounds, so any differences in the impact of career mentoring can be calculated. This section builds on the earlier discussion about class and defines SES, considers the key arguments around operationalising it, outlines the key

challenges, considers composite versus univariate measures, discusses the use of proxies, outlines the need for pragmatism and broadly concludes the likely choice of measures for this study.

SES indicates position in the social hierarchy. It has been defined as “...differential access (realized and potential) to desired resources.” (Oakes & Rossi, 2003, p. 775). There are many kinds of resources, so SES is multifaceted and constructs operationalising the concept should reflect this. Although there is no one agreed conceptualisation of SES, there is some common ground, embedded in the theory behind the concept of social stratification and class. Concepts draw on conflict (Marxist) and functionalist arguments around social stratification (Mueller & Parcel, 1981). It has been argued that, for students, the focus should be on measuring; parental income, parental education and parental occupation (Duncan, Featherman, & Duncan, 1974). Researchers debate whether wealth, ethnicity, health and geographical location should also be included, given shifts in these in UK society over time. However, a meta-analytic review of research using SES in relation to academic achievement, endorsed the use of the three factors concluded by Duncan et al. (Sirin, 2005).

Operationalising SES seems fraught with difficulty. If using income measures, not everyone has a job. Income varies over time and measures require honesty and openness for such a private subject. Should the family be the unit of focus or the individual? What about single-parent families (Mueller & Parcel, 1981) or families where the female has the most prestigious career (Haug, 1973). Wealth has great potential as a measure but is hard to access and calculate. Although some relationship exists between geographical location and HE participation, it has been found not to correlate highly with personal SES (Geronimus, Bound, & Neidert, 1995). However, it has been suggested that there is a strong logic for links between choice of residence and SES (Bishop, 2008). The

operationalisation of SES varies, making comparative research difficult as different measures produce different results (Marks, 2011).

A debate also exists around whether composite or univariate measures should be used. Composite measures cover more conceptual elements but can be complex and impractical whereas univariate measures can fail to achieve conceptual coverage.

Much UK social mobility research has relied on the NS-SEC composite measure (Goldthorpe, 1980), although proxies are often used such as; parental income, geographical location, free school meals, income, wealth and educational attainment. Proxy measures can often be dichotomous: not allowing graduated SES. Pragmatism is advocated when measuring SES: what is collectable, what conceptual dimensions are reflected in the research questions and which constructs are typically used in that seam of research? Some researchers have used highly subjective measures such as the ‘MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status’: made visual by an ‘SES ladder’ (Goodman, et al., 2001). Participants select a rung to place themselves on relative to others in the country they live in, with those with the most money, respected jobs and education at the top and those with the least at the bottom. The main criticisms of this approach is making participants judge the weighting of each facet rather than basing it on rigorous research. However, research has suggested an imperfect but significant positive correlation between this and other SES measures (Goodman, et al., 2001).

Research into student social mobility uses many proxy measures alongside use of parental income. Income is practical to gather as it is needed for HE funding applications. Free school meals status has also often been used as an indication of low income. Being the first in the family to go to university has been used as a reflection of social capital and parental education. Postcodes and low HE participation neighbourhoods (LPN) have captured geographical variation.

For students, gathering data across parental income, parental education and parental occupation would be ideal. However, accurate undergraduate identification of their parent's occupation and education seems doubtful. Family wealth would seem very challenging for an undergraduate to report. What seems practical to gather is parental income but viewed in isolation may not be enough. Geographical location, school types, whether the first in their family to attend university or not and whether they had free school meals at any point all seem reportable. Therefore, a composite measure, incorporating parental income, seemed most likely for this research for allocating SES level.

Mentors would be answering questions about themselves, although scheme organisers might worry which questions are appropriate to ask mentors. The most common operationalisation of SES for workers is the NS-SEC (Goldthorpe & McKnight, 2006), which could avoid income questions and yet capture an element of it along with job security. Mentoring matching requires detailed occupational information, which could be categorised using SOC and then NS-SEC. Similarly, educational information is also gathered from mentors and can be used.

The concept of SES is challenging to operationalise with many limitations and flaws. Despite debates, income, education and occupation seem key elements with other aspects less proven. Wealth would be valuable to include but seems fraught with problems. Pragmatic reflection regarding typical measures for this seam of research suggests recommended mentor SES measurement would be achievable, whereas student SES measurement could rely on parental income, with added proxy measures to ensure enough of the SES concept is covered. It is important, however, to capture SES in a way that is relevant to the focus of this research and in particular the measures that are able to be easily reported by mentees and are suitable to ask of mentors.

2.2.3 Graduate Employability

This section explores the concept of employability and how it has evolved over time. It considers why employability is pertinent to this study. Employability has been defined as “A set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.” (Yorke, 2006, p. 8). It reveals how far the concept of employability has evolved and become more multi-faceted over time.

Originally, educational credentials were assumed to drive whether someone secured and sustain their preferred employment. However, with closer scrutiny, the term employability flourished to incorporate the gaining of experience of the workplace (The National Committee of Enquiry into Higher Education, 1997) the possession of a series of transferable skills and specific attitudes (Roberts, 2002) (CBI, 2009) alongside various dispositions and psychosocial dimensions such as resilience and self-efficacy (Knight & Yorke, 2002; Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007). Latter models included career planning as a factor (Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007; Bridgstock, 2009). Many have placed reflection as a key feature as individuals use their experiences to reflect on their development needs, including the nurturing of their career identities (Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007). Career identity is seen as something whose meaning is constructed through narrative opportunities such that mentoring might provide. Latterly, the Graduate Capital Model (Tomlinson, 2017) has provided, amongst other aspects, a reminder of the more sociological aspects of employability, such as cultural and social capital, and shows again how far the focus for employability has shifted away from the original obsession with educational credentials to other, non-institutionally ratified components and how influences on employability exist beyond the level of the individual.

Alongside these changes, research suggests a weakened association between origins and education and origins and destinations over time (Devine & Li, 2013) and that although the effects of SES are still seen as mainly transmitted via educational achievement, widening access to HE has not been enough to increase social mobility (Macmillan & Vignoles, 2013). As highlighted earlier, some argue that non-cognitive characteristics used by recruiters typically mapped onto middle-class characteristics (Bukodi & Goldthorpe, 2011). Top recruiters of graduates are reported as defining talent as “drive, resilience, strong communication skills and above all confidence and ‘polish’ which participants in the research acknowledge can be mapped onto middle-class status and socialisation.” (SM&CPC, 2015, p. 6) Evidence supports the rationale for introducing a cultural capital dimension into the Graduate Capital Model (Tomlinson, 2017). The SM&CPC also report top recruiters focusing only on top universities biased towards high SES students and using non-transparent recruitment criteria based on upper middle-class cultural capital. Including social capital in any model of employability seems vital, due to class bias in recruiters’ recruitment and selection methods.

The progression of these models seem to show: how employability is multifaceted and, in particular, is not just reliant on educational achievement; that it manifests itself in an individual but that this manifestation can be influenced by being part of particular societal groups, displaying certain group tastes and behaviours and having particular social connections. Employability is about the potential to contribute to the labour market and society, not simply having a job: showing that the importance of the ability to navigate the changing labour market is vital, not just seeing ‘career’ as a destination.

Clear common factors emerge from the evolving concept of employability.

They are:

- educational credentials
- generic and subject specific skills (connected to cultural capital)
- self and career management skills (directed by career identity)
- meta-cognitive features such as reflection and beliefs about the self (including career identity formation)
- underpinning traits and dispositions
- knowledge and experience of the workplace
- social group membership with associated behaviours and related networks.

Some of these elements of employability seem less relevant to measuring employability shifts in career mentoring. These elements include educational credentials. When looking at career mentoring outcomes alongside conceptualisation of employability, issues such as exploring skill development seem complex, particularly as these are likely to vary hugely from one individual to another. What might prove a better focus is how far someone develops a clearer career identity/direction, development of their knowledge and experience of the workplace, issues around social networks and networking including the ability to communicate with professionals and also the idea of self-belief or self-efficacy about their career aspirations and adjustments to them. Reflexivity seems important but it is unclear whether reflexivity should be measured as an outcome, or simply explored to see its relationship with career mentoring and its nature.

Many of these components could feed into a framework measuring and comparing any changes to these features between mentees from different SES groups

through career mentoring. Focusing on employability rather than employment, is necessary in this research because the timeline means that measuring mentee graduate destinations will not be possible for most mentees. The focus needs to be on the short to medium-term.

This section explored the nature of employability as a concept and how it has changed overtime into a multifaceted framework useful for calculating how mentees may gain, or otherwise, from career mentoring. Although the goal may not be to measure ‘employment’ as an outcome, if it does happen, it could be construed as an excellent outcome depending on the nature of that employment. Undertaking research in the context of HE, as described above, makes a focus on employability obvious but needs considering alongside the outcomes identified through mentoring research and the ideas that the theories of Social Reproduction and Self-efficacy promote.

2.3 Can Career Mentoring Facilitate Employability and hence Social Mobility?

This section outlines Bourdieu’s thinking, and those of his critics and considers what these debates might reveal about the research in hand. It applies their thinking to the issue of whether mentees from different socioeconomic backgrounds might benefit similarly from career mentoring, or not, and what might facilitate or inhibit its perceived success and at which levels. It also incorporates the career mentoring research findings to see which theoretical arguments they support, including linking back to several introduced earlier in this chapter. This section will also question whether career mentoring can boost mentee employability and summarise the key learning from the literature review that can be taken forward into the design of this research.

2.3.1 Social Reproduction Theory

The ‘Field’. Social Reproduction Theory argues that any action taken in any interaction with others is grounded in self-interest and is an attempt to gain power (Navarro, 2006). For this theory a ‘field’ is a place where agents are based, with their

positions of power dependent upon the interaction between; the rules of the field, agent habitus and the agent's capital (social, cultural and economic) (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu argued that fields interact and are ultimately hierarchical. This notion can apply to the labour market and its respective sectors, which is not just split into graduate level and non-graduate level roles but also demarcates the highly influential and powerful roles in society typically held by the elite (SM&CPC, 2012). It could also apply to HE which the Russell Group dominates, within which Oxbridge harbours the elite (The Russell Group, 2016). A certain field position entitles someone to particular knowledge and perspective on that field, and a habitus allowing a 'feel for the game' in terms of successful behaviour, with the subsequent advantages or disadvantages this bestows. This theory argues that cultural capital is effectively a weapon that will enable those possessing it to remain in competitive sectors and organisations in the labour market, and in society, with others that value the type of cultural capital possessed, combining this with social capital makes certain sectors hard to penetrate (Bourdieu, 1986).

Forms of Capital. 'Capital' refers to all things (whether material or symbolic) that appear rare and sought after in a particular society (Harker, 1990). Social Reproduction Theory references social, cultural and symbolic capital which sit alongside economic capital. Economic capital is the ability to access financial resources and wealth. Being in power in a particular 'field' enables authorisation of what is considered capital. Bourdieu based much of his thinking on these various capitals and argued that one form can transform into another, providing strength, adaptability and durability across generations.

Social capital is one instrumental factor in social reproduction and is "...the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition." (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 21)

This form of group membership entitles members to the backing of the collective capital of that group. Social Reproduction Theory points to the practical state of social capital in terms of material and symbolic exchanges but also the use of a common name such as a particular school, family or class. In HE this might involve being an alumnus of a prestigious university. Exchanges strengthen the social, physical and economic proximity of the network, which is described as ‘an endless effort at institution’ (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 22). The ability to mobilise a network and its size provides an estimate of an individual’s social capital. For Bourdieu boundaries are established around particular groups to create solidarity but occasionally group identity is made vulnerable through carefully managed membership changes. Fields force particular types of ‘struggle’ onto agents and by having a ‘feel for the game’ one can be successful, however, fields vary depending on the types and amounts of capital, making them more or less appropriate to different agents (Swartz, 1997). Forces maintain exclusivity, definition and group boundaries, to the benefit of members and the detriment of non-members.

These ideas connect with mentoring, with concerns about whether it could be a gateway into an occupation/sector depending on whether mentors seek to maintain current organisational diversity. Social capital in Social Reproduction Theory identifies “benefits derived from association with a rare, prestigious group” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 22) which suggests relatively closed membership, and yet (Kanter, 1977) refers to the notion of ‘reflected power’ when someone outside this group associates with someone within it. This element of Social Reproduction Theory is described as “a nasty exclusionary device” (Gauntlett, 2011, p. 3).

A cultural field combines institutional rules, rituals, conventions, categories, designations, appointments and titles which make up, what is experienced as, an ‘objective’ hierarchy which produces and authorises certain discourses and activities (Webb et al., 2002). These cultural fields are dynamic as each individual attempts to

determine what is considered ‘capital’ there. For example, educational institutions are structurally aligned with the cultural capital of the elite and to succeed in education, dominated individuals must develop the cultural capital and habitus of the dominant group “...the schools, by naturalising the culture of the dominant group, immediately place at a disadvantage all those children from groups other than that whose habitus is embodied in the school.” (Harker, 1990, p. 89).

This leads to reproduction of the status quo in terms of power. What becomes denoted as desirable, and hence preferable, in society happens through binary judgements, setting what is preferred against what is abhorred, and these preferred characteristics and objects become what is called ‘symbolic capital’

There is not a single practice or property (in the sense of appropriated object) characteristic of a particular manner of living that cannot be given a distinctive value as a function of a socially determined principle of pertinence and thereby express a social position. (Bourdieu, 2013, p. 297)

These various capitals, amongst others, are identified in the Graduate Capital Model of Employability (Tomlinson, 2017), forging links between concepts of capital and potential career mentoring outcomes.

Habitus. ‘Habitus’ is an industrious mechanism in Social Reproduction Theory and describes the values and dispositions accrued from cultural experience (Bourdieu, 1990). It is the embodiment of social structure, allowing an agent to act and engage with fields. It argues that culture shapes and influences attitudes, values and ways of behaving brought to bear in the fields people operate in. Habitus was formed through a kind of socialisation, through the child’s experiences in the family and the inherited experiences of their care-givers manifest in their present behaviour. Habitus is brought to bear when individuals tackle problems or choices, of which career choice and the actions

to become employable, are examples. It is suggested that people make career decisions within their ‘horizons for action’, generated from internal habitus combined with the opportunity structures of the labour market (Moore, 1988 cited in Hodkinson, 1999, pp. 262-263). Habitus is a “system of durable, transposable dispositions” (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977, p. 72) and is either mainly or completely pre-reflexive making it largely unconscious and historically informed. Habitus suits a particular field position, where that person feels most at ease. Being in a different field position or field altogether, can leave people feeling uncomfortable and inauthentic, without a ‘feel for the game’ although their ability to improvise can moderate this (Bourdieu, 1990).

The literature debates quite how deterministic habitus is (Jenkins, 1992). Critics argue that habitus is no more than determinism by another route, with others seeing it as simply mediating or scaffolding behaviour (Harker, 1990; Calhoun, LiPuma, & Postone, 1993) “What does exist is a protensional field, or perspective, that contextualizes all situations, setting the pre-objective framework for practice, without any express rules or codes that automatically and mechanically ‘tell’ us what to do.” (Ostrow, 2000, p. 318).

Social Reproduction Theory believed dispositions were productive, arguing that they opened up numerous potential actions relatively hard to predict but limited in diversity. Habitus, it is argued, enables an autonomous response to situations but limits the range. In fact, social reproduction aimed to show how the objective and agentic subjective could co-exist: incorporating invention and improvisation.

Critics of Bourdieu’s work highlighted, particularly earlier in his career, that he saw habitus as durable, perhaps due to his focus on social reproduction rather than social mobility. However, later in his career Bourdieu’s attention shifted to how habitus might evolve beyond childhood. When exploring major societal crises such as the Algerian War of Independence, he identified ‘hysteresis’ when there was a mismatch between the

individual's habitus and that needed to function successfully in a new field. Those applying inappropriate behavioural practices in a field are likely to receive negative responses or penalties with subsequent psychological implications (Bourdieu, 2004). Latter reflections on his own social mobility led him to conclude that there could be a 'dislocation' of habitus and field and that this could lead to a fragmented self "doomed to a kind of double perception of self, to successive allegiances and multiple identities" (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 511). Habitus was a source of psychological stability "Through the systematic 'choices' it makes, the habitus tends to protect itself from crises by providing itself with a milieu to which it is as pre-adapted as possible" (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 61) facilitating individuals towards situations and positions that would preserve their mental health and away from those that challenged it: constraining social mobility. This proposed tendency suggests a potential influence on an individual's response to the opportunities career mentoring presents. The notion that habitus is durable arguably contradicted Bourdieu's lived experience, and yet his primary habitus endured alongside the newly developing one, sustaining a need to return to his peasant roots at the height of his success. This exemplified a 'habitus clivé': his habitus torn by internal divisions, delivering the 'hidden injuries' of social mobility (Sennet & Cobb, 1973). What seems to emerge from this is that social mobility is not necessarily positive for the individual and that habitus acts to protect individuals from psychological hurt but is not always successful.

Social Reproduction Theory acknowledges that a degree of social mobility is in fact normal within a limited range of trajectories resting on the amount of inherited capital an individual possesses (Friedman, 2016) and based on the ability of the habitus to improvise and be creative. The habitus would remain unthreatened by slow, short range movements (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 57) "the dispositional architecture of the habitus was subject to change, according to both 'new experiences' (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 161) and also via conscious, intentional self-fashioning or pedagogic effort" (Friedman, 2016, pp. 5-6)

but within the constraints of the primary habitus. This argument is supported by an exploration of social mobility which showed the socially mobile as content and by no means damaged when supported by other socially mobile individuals, who helped preserve their primary habitus (Goldthorpe, 1974). Contradictory evidence remains, however, in the form of gender studies on social mobility (Skeggs, 1997). Friedman's own research concluded that

The mutability of the habitus is heavily dependent on a person's mobility trajectory. However, by trajectory I refer not just to the range of upward mobility but also by the speed and direction of movement through social space, as well as the person's particular combination of class, gender and ethnicity. (Friedman, 2016, p. 34).

A series of 39 life-course interviews, showed that slow transitions for short distances into economically dominated fields were likely to be smoother than faster, longer distances into culturally dominated fields (Friedman, 2016). This suggests that Bourdieu's later beliefs that the habitus can adapt may well have been correct but that he perhaps underestimated how frequently field movement occurred (Sweetman, 2003).

Habitus, therefore, accepting the evolving views of Bourdieu, can adapt but only in response to crises and changes in field relative to primary habitus and that smaller changes, if taken slowly in a supported way, can lead to an adapted habitus without psychological damage. If faster, extensive and unsupported it can result in 'hysteresis' and a divided habitus, creating individuals with emotional challenges.

2.3.2 Bourdieu and Career Mentoring

Social Reproduction Theory would likely argue then that career choice is where players compete in the graduate labour market 'field' to secure the most powerful positions. However, "people come to want, and to value, what is objectively allotted to them, which Bourdieu has called 'making a virtue out of necessity'." (Harker, 1990, p. 91)

and the habitus will act to constrain social mobility to that which will bend and not break it. This suggests that students will choose the career paths that seem appropriate for them and their habitus but not rule out aspiration somewhat beyond that appropriate field position. Bourdieu's approach does seem to lie, on balance, at the more deterministic end of the scale, however, it seems to allow an agent to test different fields and respond by returning to safer ones, slowing down change, seeking support for moving forward or continue with the subsequent psychological effects. This may be an embodied response to the affect felt during these encounters, or it may be due to reflexivity or a combination of the two but Bourdieu has argued that habitus is pre-reflexive but conversely that it can be adjusted through effortful self-adjustment (Adams, 2006). This inconsistency is puzzling and will be revisited.

What this may impress upon scheme organisers, and mentors, is an ethical quandary of the need to support intended social mobility but also to consider the duty of care it owes its mentees who may end up with psychological damage if their trajectory is too steep, rapid or unsupported. Conversely, it may suggest that an individual's habitus will likely constrain intended social mobility for most. These arguments about bounded social mobility infer that these limits may well influence lower SES mentees more by constraining their upward career trajectory. Career mentoring would need to support:

- Mentee exploration of career trajectories within and beyond their bounds of mobility through provision of better views of the field(s) they are considering.
- Avoidance of exclusionary social capital, which may relate to mentor/mentee demographic similarity/alignment and the diversity of the mentor's organisation.
- Mentees achieving a better 'feel for the game' in their target roles/sectors.
- Mentee innovation and improvisation to allow the mentee's habitus to adapt when moving into new field positions or new fields.

- The mentee by providing like-minded individuals to support them to enable them to preserve and continue to connect with their primary habitus whilst venturing into any new fields.

This list resonates with several prior strands of thinking regarding mentor/mentee identity similarity and trust and also the actions Self-efficacy Theory suggests to support mentees during the social mobility journey, relating to self-efficacy and mastery which will be explored shortly.

However, Social Reproduction Theory would leave career mentoring as contributing to working primarily in the margins of short-range social mobility and limited, superficial habitus adjustments for most but with some potential to support long-range mobility. Supporting a mentee's habitus would rely on an element of reflexivity and mentees needing to be open about their sense of self and related emotional responses.

Would Social Reproduction Theory, and its view of social capital, see mentors as consciously free to facilitate mentee employability development such that they can secure graduate destinations beyond what might be considered appropriate to their class and habitus? Will they act in the interests of their own social groups or that of their mentee? Friedman's findings encourages consideration of the sector involved and how crucial economic or cultural capital is within it and the effect this may have on potential social mobility and support by mentors for related employability development (Friedman, 2016). Although whether for many sectors the class ceiling operates at this entry level, or further up the hierarchy, or not is a pertinent question. Let us now consider how critics of Social Reproduction Theory might challenge this and potentially open up the scope for mentoring to help deliver greater social change.

2.3.3 The Trouble with Social Reproduction Theory

The Importance of Capitals Beyond Economic. One key criticism waged at this theory surrounds how capitals, other than economic capital, are also placed centre stage. As such, critics have rebuffed the relative value this theory places on cultural compared to economic capital (Goldthorpe & Jackson, 2007). Economic capital is “capital in the form of material wealth – “accumulated labour” – that is institutionalised in property rights and that then yields monetary returns, or profits, to its owners, allowing for further accumulation.” (Goldthorpe, 2007, p. 4)

Cultural capital is central to the theory of social reproduction, promoted as “the best hidden and socially most determinant educational investment” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 17) highlighting that those with extensive economic capital expose their offspring to cultural capital. Bourdieu argued that the effects of cultural capital were most obvious in the educational system, where those who presented in ways most valued by society thrived, and others floundered, destined for lower academic, and ultimately career, trajectories (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Those in power based academic success criteria on the dominant classes, institutionalising the bias and making qualifications a formal cultural signifier. This paradigmatic perspective on cultural capital is described as Bourdieu ‘wild’ (Goldthorpe, 2007). Cultural capital inculcated in someone by their family during their formative years would be conducive to varying degrees to their educational experience and would to a large extent determine their social status and their power in society.

This reasoning is challenged, arguing that if correct there would be no or absolutely minimal educational mobility (Goldthorpe, 2007). Referencing that lower and middle-class families, over the twentieth century, experienced a significant increase in educational mobility between generations when over two thirds of those surveyed who attended secondary school were first generation attendees relative to their parents, with

most achieving some form of qualification was an important argument (Halsey, Heath, & Ridge, 1980). This suggested that many working class pupils were productively gaining qualifications (cultural capital) in what Social Reproduction Theory would suggest as being an alien environment. If educational success required specific cultural capital, how could lower class pupils have achieved these qualifications?

Various points cast doubt over this argument. Firstly, creating wealth in a global economy, relied on education and innovation with many British lower middle-class and working class workers moving from manual to non-manual routine work as the service sector expanded: was this labour market adjustment? Did those families/individuals make relative gains in income, wealth and security compared to the elite? Was it a rise in the general standard of living or fairer wealth distribution? Secondly, increasing globalisation of the world economy, analysing social mobility nationally may be inappropriate as developed economies exploited less developed countries and the balance of trade gave nations advantage and power, creating wider inequality between nations (Wallerstein, 1974). Goldthorpe's arguments also presented Bourdieu as very dualistic, where cultural capital leads to either educational success or failure when in reality it seems to make education challenging to varying degrees, dependent upon the cultural capital generated by the unique field position of the pupil and their family. Also, these arguments rely on a homogeneous education system, when in the UK there are divisions between private, grammar and comprehensive school education. Even within comprehensives students are allocated to different sets and follow different exam pathways. Privately schooled people dominate Russell Group Universities (The Sutton Trust, 2011), postgraduate study (Walker & Zhu, 2010) and the elite professions (The All Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility, 2017), suggesting that education evolves and is adjusted, however, imperfectly, so appropriate qualifications are achieved to sustain wealth production of the elite and yet still limit social mobility. Visible aspects of power battles seem unlikely to be static even if

underlying mechanisms persist. Social reproduction however, does seem based on a homogeneous educational system, and yet, the consequences for the most disadvantaged families, is typically relative academic failure (Sirin, 2005). This suggests that broadly speaking, Bourdieu's explanations have conveyed too simplistic an understanding of his theory, particularly early on in his career, with perhaps more nuanced thinking emerging later. Regardless, these points still question the strength of Goldthorpe's arguments.

'Bourdieu-domesticated' involved viewing the concept of cultural capital in simpler terms and arguing that those researchers aiming to ratify Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital unintentionally undermined his position (Goldthorpe, 2007). Sullivan explored the effects of cultural capital on educational achievement to define it more precisely and test its effect (Sullivan, 2001). Cultural capital was defined as; reading, TV watching, music playing and listening, participating in public/formal cultural activities, cultural knowledge and language. It was found that cultural capital was indeed bestowed at home and significantly influenced GCSE performance, which supports the role of cultural capital. However, when cultural capital was controlled for, there was still a significant effect of social class on attainment, suggesting other forces at play, imprecise activity definitions or both. Cultural capital went some way to explaining differences in educational attainment between social classes but grammar or private schools were not included and issues of wealth were not considered. Similarly, that GCSEs are the only predictor of one's life trajectory seems naïve. Surely the social capital developed within educational settings also plays a part as does the ability to play the educational and career choice 'game' might all influence this process too, over time. Many of these effects seem embedded in the notion of cultural capital, with the seeds sown predominantly in childhood and reinforced during schooling and into adulthood by ongoing experience as the agent and their habitus frequents fields that suit it. Just because some aspects that Sullivan studied were not influential then, did not mean they would not be in the future.

Too Deterministic? Social Reproduction Theory is viewed by many as too deterministic, not allowing for individual agency. The section above shows how an extreme interpretation of a durable habitus and its consequences of ‘social reproduction’ leaves little room for successful long-range social mobility and potentially contradicts research into educational mobility, the expansion of HE to lower income students (Halsey et al., 1980) and other analysis of social mobility in the UK (Savage, 2015).

Social Reproduction Theory is often portrayed, as arguing that habitus, various capitals and social structures combine to determine individual behaviour but the above section on habitus shows how Bourdieu’s later thinking allowed for short-range mobility whilst retaining primary habitus and longer range mobility with damaged habitus if not supported, through ‘hysteresis’ or a ‘habitus clivé’ (Bourdieu, 1999). This sits at the heart of his argument of the habitus being structured and structuring: the question is the degree of each force and over what period. So, habitus is loose enough to more typically limit outcomes within a range but also enable individuals to move beyond this range, suggesting it is not fully determining.

Individual behaviour has been argued as more readily predicted through the assumption of individually generated rational actions, unclear whether this is biologically determined and if so, whether it is agentic or not (Goldthorpe, 1998). Rational action is defined as

...action of an ‘outcome-oriented’ kind in which certain requirements are met regarding the nature of, and the relations among, actor’s goals, their beliefs relevant to the pursuit of these goals and the course of action which in given circumstances, they can follow. (Goldthorpe, 1998, p. 169)

This focus on individual action and how this builds to create typical trends in actions by larger groups, or society, is at odds with Social Reproduction Theory which

focused on multiple levels but may convey an agentic quality, depending on the basis for the agent's motives. Rational action requires that predicting behaviour involves focusing on the 'central tendency' of that behaviour and assuming rationality. However, different kinds of rational action have been proposed, for example, 'rational man' did not equal 'economic man' as economists assumed, historically, that information was perfectly available and used optimally to inform decisions. Some argued for more subjective rationality, where the aim, is to be rational but relied on imperfect agent knowledge. 'Bounded rationality' identifies an agent's need, when faced with complex scenarios, to satisfice instead, i.e. make decisions based on selected criteria (Simon, 1982). This suggests that humans are rational but often lack information or capacity to process complex decisions. The 'cognitivist model', argues that agents typically act short of rational, due to mistaken beliefs about situations without sacrificing rationality (Boudon, 1996). This resonates with aspects of Bourdieu's thinking: his belief that human behaviour is driven by a need to sustain/increase power, implying rationality and his use of habitus, field position, cultural and social capital resulting in imperfect information for some, with full sight of the field rare and that mistaken, situated beliefs influence the choice process. 'Habitus' is a pattern of reasoning based upon both personal, individual and historical family experiences, providing a shortcut for choices to be made. These theories sit closer than first imagined. These arguments are incorporating objective structures into the equation through knowledge deficiency. If access to knowledge differs depending on your social groupings, this looks a lot like introducing class based, societally determining factors.

Various attempts have been made to assess how determined and determining habitus really is. Suggesting that the answer lies in the interplay of identity, reflexivity and choice (Adams, 2006). 'Practical consciousness' and 'habitus' are compared, with practical consciousness seeming not so socially determined and more

individualistic (Adams, 2006). Reflexivity is built into the habitus for some, and a cultural requirement of particular fields such as academia: determining success therein. However, there are also fleeting periods of reflection, which emerge from periods of crisis, where the habitus is unsuited to the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Whether such reflexive capacity suggests agency, however, is questioned:

What appears to be reflexivity is in fact part of the repertoire of habitus, not, in any sense, an autonomous or chosen process or... an illusion, insofar, as the principle of its operation are constrained by and derive from the habitus. (Jenkins, 1992, p. 77).

However, just because reflexivity is part of the habitus, does not deny its ability to develop beyond one's already established identity and arguably allows some innovative agentic properties. Gender studies, however, argue that field and habitus cannot fully explain how successful movement across different fields can be moderated by gender (McNay, 1999). Habitus with inherent reflexive dispositions is argued as increasingly common due to major cultural and social changes (McNay, 1999; Sweetman, 2003), "Bourdieu's scenario of reflexive awareness emerging in crises becomes endemic in post-traditional settings, as individual movement between fields is increased, the boundaries between them blurred, and fields themselves become subject to 'rapid, pervasive and ongoing changes'." (Adams, 2006, p. 520)

Increased reflexivity has been accelerated by labour market changes, the rise of consumerism demanding self-improvement through ownership of goods, the breakdown of social ties, increased globalisation and improved visibility via media changes (Sweetman, 2003). This disconnection between habitus and field seems to be becoming normalised and that what for Bourdieu was an exception has become the rule.

Reflexivity is portrayed by employability models as something valuable, however, reflexivity can be perceived as dangerous, suggesting that as it is embedded in

the habitus, it helps some win and others lose (Lash, 1994). Habitus is portrayed as something hidden but at the same time, contains “hidden processes of self-regulation at work, self-surveillance and nervous self-scrutiny” (Adams, 2006, p. 521). The concern is not whether one is reflective or not, nor if it is part of the habitus but what the person decides to do post-reflection. Recognising one’s situation does not mean anything can be done about it, evident from how students from working class backgrounds fail to build employability because of their lack of economic capital, not a lack of awareness (Burke, 2015). This argument has the potential to reduce this process down to structural determinism. Freedom of action is available to some more than others post reflection. Reflexive losers lose because the social structure empowers the reflexivity of others (Lash, 1994). This suggests that most are reflexive but for those at the bottom of society reflexivity is unhelpful and demoralising, demanding resilience and support from others, particularly for those from poorer backgrounds.

Some employability models place reflexivity centre stage in developing career identity and employability, however, Bourdieu places it within habitus and also on the rare occasions where field and habitus have some form of disjuncture. Some argue that Bourdieu underestimated the reflexivity of the habitus in contemporary society (Sweetman, 2003; Adams, 2006). However, what supports Bourdieu’s incorporation of reflexivity as a disposition within the habitus is the nature of it as a potentially constraining influence creating unease in those not in their natural ‘field’ (Lash, 1994), whilst others concentrate on the lack of ability for many to do anything about what they become aware of. So, it is unclear if reflexivity alone can help those from poorer backgrounds, although being reflexive seems at least the first step towards social change. So, supporting reflexivity and anticipating constraints on mentee intentions may be important, along with then helping them shift the barriers they face such as a lack of capital.

The Facilitating Power of Social Capital? Social Reproduction Theory's

understanding of social capital is also challenged, with others arguing that it does not allow enough room for individual agency. (Coleman, 1988; Jenkins, 1992). It is clear that pure Rational Action Theory does not accommodate social influences and yet sociological arguments seem heavily deterministic (Coleman, 1988). Coleman argued that social capital is not owned by individuals, rather it is available to them but only via mobilising trusting relationships in families or communities which takes effort and commitment to develop. Contrary to Social Reproduction Theory, he believed most people access social capital in the groups and communities they belonged to, that it held communities together and were sources of norms and rules managing behaviour. Most positively, he suggested that human capital came from social capital as networks passed on skills, confidence and a secure self-identity, which increased the chance of future success. Parenting, for example, demonstrates how social capital must be actively mobilised, requiring altruism, as individuals support others. Coleman struggles, however, to conclude how altruism and rationality sit comfortably together and, instead of identifying helping others as a long-term rational strategy (or gaining credit as Bourdieu might argue) based on self-interest, or acknowledging that altruism can provide positive affect for the giver, Coleman resorts to an economic argument of social capital being a bi-product of other activity. This is his main criticism.

There is a lack of attention to affect in both Bourdieu's and Coleman's approaches to social capital. Mentoring is often viewed as an altruistic activity, deriving satisfaction but also a reciprocal one where mentors gain skills, insights and various benefits. Mentors in university schemes are often alumni or recruiters joining university social groups as 'partners'. What is unclear is how far mentors benefit from this community of mentors and how rational or self-serving mentoring might be. Sadly "...because the benefits of action that bring social capital into being are largely

experienced by persons other than the actor, it is often not in his interests to bring it into being.” (Coleman, 1988, p. 118).

This focus seems to be on social capital as a homogenous entity, however, others have conceptualised it differently. It has been argued that there is more than one type of social capital: bonding and bridging (Putnam, 2000). Bonding involved ‘getting by’ by mobilising support from within one’s community, built on similarity (often in terms of demographics and values) and exclusivity, closeness and trust. Bridging involved ‘getting ahead’ by gaining support beyond one’s community, based on difference but inclusivity, links rather than integration and shallower levels of trust. The concept of strong and weak ties was also advanced, arguing that strong ties had value but that weak ties should not be confused with a lack of necessity (Grantovetter, 1973). Weak ties provided links between groups, allowed acceptance of norm and rule variation, were functional and enabled collaboration between groups with similar interests but different identities. Weak ties allow connections to be broken without causing offence and enabled society to remain connected so different groups can access the power, information and resources of other groups (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Trust is a vital part of all social capital, with bridging and bonding distinguished by the depth of trust and closeness of relationships and identities. A third term, ‘linking’, represented a subset of bridging to describe those group associations in society between those with more or less power. It has been proposed that systems of social capital work across society and provide balances and checks to the use of power therein (Woolcock, 1998). It has been advocated that a balance of power across groups and mobilisation of community level social capital should be able to resist over-dominant actions of society’s most powerful groups if the balance is right (Woolcock, 1998). It is suggested that balances were often missing in under-developed societies, creating heavy inequality and low productivity. This cast doubts over Bourdieu’s arguments that social capital will inevitably support social reproduction, that social capital is the exclusive right

of those in power and that it cannot provide positive outcomes and more balanced power sharing (Grantovetter, 1973; Woolcock, 1998). However, none of these social capital theorists suggest large amounts of social mobility is taking place, nor that this limited social mobility might not be advantageous to the most powerful. For mentoring, this offers a potentially more positive view of social capital as non-excluding but still asks how those dominant in society might benefit. Discovering these win-win scenarios for mentors and mentees may help scheme organisers.

The concept of social capital is not without problems however. Are different types of social capital mutually exclusive (Healy, 2002)? People can be partly similar, partly different, questioning whether bonding and bridging are binary or a continuum. Mentoring has been identified as ‘linking’ social capital due to power differences (Schneider, 2006). However, as discussed in chapter 1, power difference may be compromised when the student is not employed by the mentor’s organisation. So, is the social capital connection in undergraduate career mentoring in HE by professionals linking, bridging, or even bonding? This remains unclear. Yet again, mentoring may be based on trust and reciprocity and, if linking, allow for identity, behavioural and demographic differences, leaving the importance and nature of the role of similarity in mentoring relationships unclear.

It is clear that these relationships may need time to form. Tie strength is seen as connected to relationship duration and a history of reciprocity and trust. This mirrors much of chapter 1’s conclusions that engagement, trust and overall mentoring outcomes could be linked. It seems obvious that mentoring is likely to provide some development of social capital if even moderately successful. This may lead to signalling, exposure, visibility, sponsorship, protection, coaching and information sharing (Ramaswani & Dreher, 2010). The question is whether the mentee’s identity would alter from their original group to that of the mentor and whether this is necessary to enable

movement into that mentor's career? Will a mentee with different demographic characteristics and low alignment to their mentor's group only 'link' with them, whereas those with better alignment bond and gain more? Can unfamiliar mentors and mentees, matched on a relatively brief, formal mentoring scheme, form enough trust to be effective and will alignment make the difference?

All of these arguments suggest that Bourdieu's concept of social capital as an excluding device is too deterministic and unrealistic. For instance, how far might a mentor's organisational diversity take priority over their membership of the university field in terms of what guides their behaviour? Some authors have identified negative outcomes from social networks (Portes & Landolt, 1996). Negatives include encouraging behaviour that may lead to worse economic outcomes or the creation of obstacles to social inclusion and social mobility (Aldridge, Halpern, & Fitzpatrick, 2002). So, social capital can create paradoxical outcomes where some benefit and others lose out. Coleman fails to conclude convincingly why individuals reach out altruistically to others but there could be other incentives at play, bringing the discussion back to Bourdieu's arguments around exclusion, boundaries and deterministic qualities.

Different social capital theorists focus on different perspectives and different levels of influences. Some focus on individual and interpersonal transactions and others on how social capital can aid a nation's economic development, or even sustain power differences. These varied approaches to the notion of social capital causes conceptual problems and difficulties relying on research results. However, the notion of social capital clearly connects with the concept of career mentoring and the mechanisms discussed could be helpful to reflect on when considering the questions at the centre of this research.

Affect, Mobility and Mentoring. Quietly underlying the discussion so far has been the notion of affect. It is of note that Social Reproduction Theory rarely mentions affect and that the closest it came to it was the sense of ‘unease’, or being a ‘fish out of water’, when not in a place conducive to one’s habitus (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127). The arguments above suggest that contemporary British society has developed more liberal values that sit paradoxically against the impetus to self-reflect and self-improve. This, arguably, has increased attempts to move between fields and to feel ill at ease and risk the negative penalties of lacking a ‘feel for the game’ in those fields. Some argue that fields have become more distinctive and further apart, only adding to this risk (Adams, 2006). This suggests the prevalence and normalisation of anxiety and reflexivity more generally in everyday individual practices (Adams, 2006) and a search for support for those experiencing these feelings. This is where career mentoring could step in, as support for those venturing into new, unfamiliar, aspirational career paths.

Alongside unease and potential negative sanctions Social Reproduction Theory references, in almost psychodynamic terms, a splitting of the self with the concept of ‘habitus clivé’ (Reay, 2015). Mentoring may provide a smoother, more mindful transition that limits damage to the habitus. Sustained reflexivity and reassurance about the mentee’s primary habitus may enable a positive, dualistic existence where the habitus of the field entrant and incumbents are valued. The mentor could support the mentee in this bridging work, dealing with the arising affect and encouraging mutual respect of self and new peers. Framed like this, self-awareness, trust and communication are fundamental.

Social Learning Theory and Self-efficacy Theory may shed light on mentor potential to fulfil this role (Bandura, 1977). Social Learning Theory posited that behaviour was not simply controlled by its immediate consequences and argued that a stimulus had a predictive significance for a person “People process and synthesize feedback information from sequences of events over long intervals about the situational circumstances and the patterns and rates of actions that are necessary to produce outcomes.” (Bandura, 1977, p. 192)

One example might be predicting the chances of successfully securing a particular graduate role in a particular organisation. The behaviour and emotional arousal were considered independent co-effects that resulted from that stimulus. Is the lack of self-belief in this scenario the unease that Bourdieu references or just part thereof? To a degree, this feels like habitus but with the source and timing of formative experiences unspecified. This suggests that beliefs about the likely outcome of pursuing a particular career path are an important influence. Self-efficacy Theory argues that self-efficacy is central to leveraging change when it comes to avoidance behaviour (Bandura, 1977). It argues that the expectations of role mastery and the strength of these will influence decisions to apply personal coping mechanisms. An assessment of their coping skills effects this too.

This theory does not suggest that self-efficacy is the only force at play but it may be one that mentoring could influence. The theory highlighted several environmental and self-sourced influences on self-efficacy and suggested that low expectations of success led to higher emotional arousal and more defensive/avoidant behaviour (Bandura, 1977).

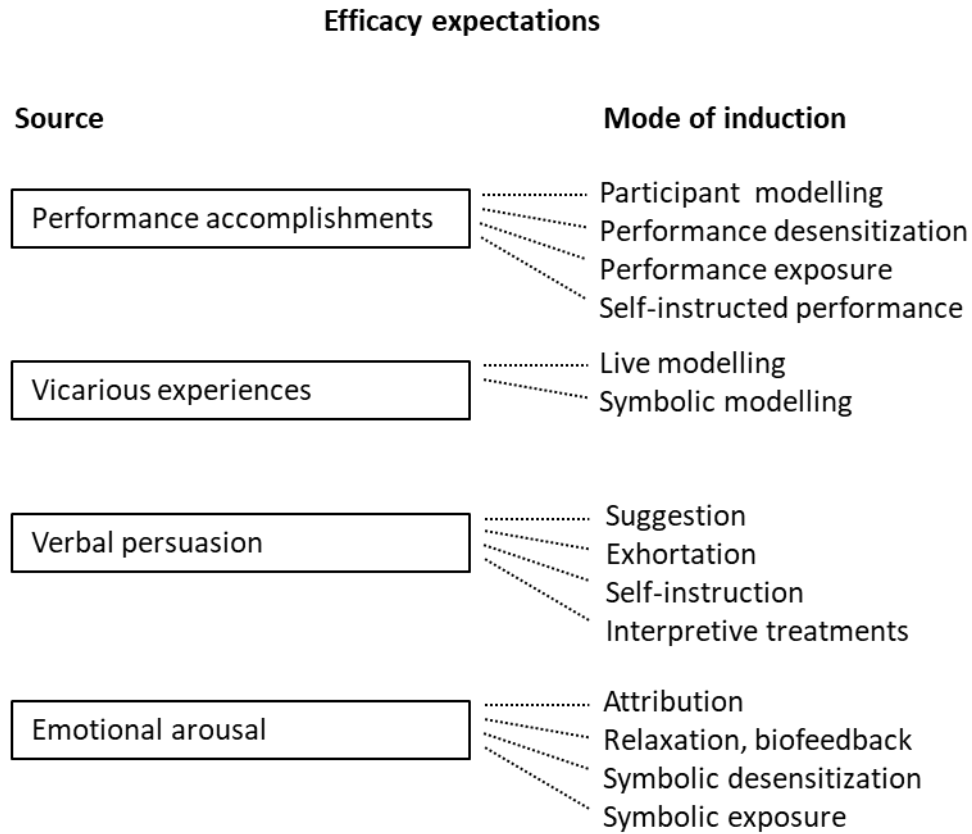
Four main sources of ‘mastery’ were identified and are show in Figure 1. Performance accomplishments, the theory states, were most effective as they involved personal mastery experiences, including successful task completion and repetition. Failures reduced self-efficacy until more consistent success sustained it. Application of coping

mechanisms helped, as did self-observation and fine-tuning of actions. Self-efficacy Theory suggests that self-efficacy could generalise to other events but most predictability to similar ones. Performance desensitisation and exposure involves facing fears head on via rapid exposure or graduated exposure. A goal of full unsupported exposure was key so the person could apportion success to themselves. This work was often teamed with relaxation techniques to retrain stimulus related emotional arousal.

Within mentoring, exposure might include work experience or undertaking representative work tasks and relates well to Kram's 'exposure' career development activity within mentoring (Kram, 1985). Vicarious experience was another source, involving deriving expectations about success from others who have succeeded in the same situation. In mentoring, this might include listening to a mentor's career transition narrative or work shadowing. In this source, outcomes must be genuine and unambiguous and role-model similarity is important to enhance person relevance (Kazdin, 1974) to increase the effectiveness of symbolic modelling. However, seeing many different people succeed can be useful too. In mentoring, this suggests a need for mentor/mentee similarity but alternatively introductions to varied contacts in the mentor's network who have also been successful. Verbal persuasion was a third source but was less influential and includes suggestions of likely success and combines well with performance experiences and modelling. Emotional arousal is the last source. It would be logical to expect a higher chance of success if not feeling stressed, due to its debilitating effects on performance. Anxiety diminishes with performance mastery and modelling. Again, short spells of work experience or shadowing exemplify this.

Figure 1

Major Sources of Efficacy Information and the Principal Sources through which Different Modes of Treatment Operate (Bandura, 1977, p.80)



All these means of growing self-efficacy could potentially be delivered via career mentoring. Although actual exposure to tasks may not be straightforward or possible in some circumstances, limiting development potential in this context.

This theory suggests that there are social, situational and temporal factors at play too. Long-term, low self-efficacy can be hard to overcome which resonates with the propensity for habitus durability that Social Reproduction Theory advances (Bandura, 1977). This may suggest that low SES mentees with no professional exposure, may not have enough exposure to professionals during a short formal scheme to empower them enough to apply to an unfamiliar professional career. They also may attribute success to

their mentor's assistance and still doubt their chances of success. Task exposure may vary considerably in difficulty and extent and may not be able to be graduated, although work visits, individual work activities/projects, shadowing and work experience with a mentor or support for work experience applications provide some scope. Bandura warns how important exposure is, as avoiding challenges proves to an individual that they have avoided failure, without them knowing if they ever might have succeeded.

Harnessing Self-efficacy Theory may usefully complement and enrich Social Reproduction Theory's vague approach to affect when it comes to supporting career choice and transitions via mentoring. It could provide an understanding of how a mentor could help mentees to bridge from HE into aspirational graduate roles they may be fearful of, especially those with little professional exposure, typically from poorer social backgrounds. Self-efficacy Theory would suggest that:

- Exposure to work (career development outcomes) within mentoring are key to raising self-efficacy.
- Supported, graduated exposure teamed with emotion arousal management can help create success and rationalise failure.
- Vicarious modelling may be enhanced if the mentor and mentee have similarities or the mentor can call on their network to demonstrate that people like the mentee, or many different types of people, can be successful in that career path. This similarity seems determined by mentee perception.
- Self-efficacy Theory provides a toolkit of mechanisms, by which self-efficacy could be raised if mentors are trained to use and combine them effectively.
- Fear has a clear role to play for some in this scenario if they are looking to explore careers that they may not fully believe that they are capable of. Open discussion in

the mentoring relationship of these fears and the accompanying thoughts seems important to building self-efficacy, hence the need for trust.

There are common themes arising here in these arguments. Similarity underpins vicarious modelling of career success for mentees, although the nature of this similarity is unclear. Trust is key for private and sensitive discussions. Exposure is an important learning tool that could potentially add considerable value, if managed and supported correctly.

2.4 Mentoring and Employability

So, will mentoring provide positively perceived short-term employability outcomes for mentees? The concept of employability was reviewed earlier in this chapter and concluded a particular set of characteristics including; educational credentials, generic and subject specific skills (including elements of cultural capital), self and career management skills (directed by career identity), meta cognitive skills including reflection (to refine career identity), various underpinning traits such as resilience, self-efficacy, knowledge and experience of the workplace and networking behaviour and networks (social capital).

The introduction summarised the state of social mobility in the UK graduate labour market. The conclusions were that social mobility was focused mainly on movement within the middle-classes and that social mobility was stagnating and meritocracy was in question. The powerful roles in society remained dominated by the upper and upper middle-classes (The All Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility, 2017) and the type of school and HEI attended had considerable impact on social mobility (Walker & Zhu, 2010) with those attending private schools and the Russell Group, most successful. This suggests that the chances of extensively developing mentee employability

from poorer social backgrounds may prove challenging. Bourdieu, presented simply, might point to the intransigence of the class system as limiting mentoring potential.

The ‘why’ of mentoring suggested, through the work of Kram and others, that career development outcomes and a sense of competence and clarity of identity are achievable with mentoring. Kram’s sub-categories had been well researched across contexts but most commonly in business, revealing typical, yet modest, gains. Research specifically into career mentoring of undergraduates by professionals in HE also suggest positive career development and psychosocial outcomes (employability benefits) in the form of increased reflexivity and self-awareness and enhanced networks, work experience, work observation and work knowledge (Gannon & Maher, 2012; Spence & Hyams-Ssekasi, 2015). These studies were based on the self-reports of students on specific, often highly vocational degrees and were quite exploratory in nature. A university entrepreneurship mentoring scheme also identified both career development and psychosocial gains (Nabi, Walmsley, & Akhtar, 2019). This section also confirmed that the mentee was not the only beneficiary, making us reflect on the goals of mentoring. This provides some encouragement for mentoring developing the employability of undergraduates in HE, although a wary eye must be kept on who might really be benefiting and ways of optimising modest gains. The subsequent sections on what, how, when and who, suggest that whether employability is enhanced by mentoring or not depends on several issues, at the centre of which lies relationship quality in terms of building trust and intimacy over time, which appears based on some level of similarity. It is the inconsistent coming together of mentor and mentee, the unique relationship, which challenges whether sweeping statements about all mentees benefiting from mentoring can be made and mirrors the ongoing inconsistency in the conceptualisation of mentoring and the focus of this research.

It is challenging to conclude what Bourdieu's stance on the potential for career mentoring to enhance employability might be. When viewed simplistically, through the eyes of his greatest critics, an individual's unique combination of constraining habitus, field and capital, would prevent any intended social mobility and suggest that mentoring could not make a difference. However, a more sensitive and generous reading of Bourdieu's full work over time would suggest that not only is movement into different parts of the field (social mobility) typical within the constraints of habitus, movement beyond those limits may be possible too, either with damage to the habitus, or via careful support of the primary habitus, if undertaken gradually and carefully with support of like-minded individuals and/or a mentor (Goldthorpe, 1980). This may avoid a 'habitus clivé' for those moving into fields without the typical habitus to support them there. However, Social Reproduction Theory might suggest that even this mobility might be precluded in sectors most reliant on cultural as opposed to economic capital: typically those most powerful in society. So, perhaps Bourdieu would see some potential for mentoring but also see its limits in terms of range, pace and sector type. The theory might argue that a mentor could enhance an individual's ability to 'play the game' by giving them new vantage points on the field and introduce them to the correct ways of behaving to get ahead. He would argue that these could possibly be learned but most likely at a cost to the individual's emotional life and sense of self. Mentors could provide the emotional support and scaffolding of the primary habitus needed, if trained to. Social Reproduction Theory might claim, however, that network solidarity might lead to suspicion of mentor motives and exclusion. Schemes would need to carefully monitor attempts to exclude, which could prove challenging. What seems clear here, however, is that the natural action of habitus is to constrain intended social mobility and the natural action of mentors may be to contribute to limiting the social mobility of some mentees. So, according to Bourdieu, mentoring may be working against the natural order. Schemes would need to promote higher awareness of

these forces and to support mentors and mentees on building the trust and intimacy required to confront such natural tendencies. To resist encouraging only those who appear similar to the dominant hierarchy in one's organisation and to push through the inclination to settle for something comfortable or withdraw from opportunities where one may initially feel less at ease. This brings trust and intimacy to the fore again along with similarity and difference.

These natural forces seem more likely to limit mentees from backgrounds most different from the dominant classes within those sectors, to those mentees who feel ill at ease, perhaps in all professional/graduate roles due to having a 'non-professional' habitus. What is not clear is whether lower SES mentees will benefit less well due to the constraints of their habitus, or whether, with support, they have much more potential to gain compared to their higher SES peers. Regardless, both mentor and mentee reflexivity seem crucial. Bourdieu argued that habitus was pre-reflexive but that it could incorporate reflexive traits. He also argued reflexivity could be borne from 'hysteresis': a jarring between field and habitus in a crisis. Commentators suggest that, for Bourdieu, reflection may not be agentic but can help evolve the individual (Adams, 2006). It is also argued that reflexivity within the habitus is becoming normalised due to societal change but with varying outcomes depending on the structural constraints on that individual, and in this case, issues of recruitment criteria and the particular sector's reliance on cultural capital.

When considering social capital in this chapter, we have seen theories argue that social capital is not necessarily about exclusion but can be about forming alliances across and between hierarchical levels where common interests are found. Connections depended on good quality relationships and trust. Bonding required high similarity but bridging allowed for differences. Trust again, relied on a degree of predictability in the behaviour of the other, suggesting familiarity/similarity can support anticipation. Win-win outcomes could be achieved between mentor, mentee and the scheme's institution,

acknowledging other motives but enabling employability development, if all achieve positive outcomes. Scheme organisers would need to attend to mentor needs. The trust and collaboration between social groups in most societies are not perfectly balanced. Whether the UK's social networks are conducive to supporting win-win outcomes for career mentoring of undergraduates in all institutions is unclear.

Issues of affect highlight how emotion can enhance the ability of habitus to constrain mobility and encourage withdrawal from situations that evoke 'hysteresis'. By harnessing self-efficacy, mentoring could tackle affect via the mastery sources relating to emotional arousal and verbal persuasion, combined with providing opportunities for first-hand and vicarious experiences. This could allow some mastery of aspirational career goals and boost employability enough to both allow an individual to believe they can be successful in their aspired career but also impart the skill and knowledge development to achieve it. What it might not do is remove all structural obstacles. Even when considering affect, the role-modelling requirements of Social Learning Theory are present, again underlining the part similarity and trust may have to play. Yet again, it is not clear what the nature of similarity might be.

In conclusion, the theories and research explored so far indicate that, within certain constraints, employability development, through mentoring, may well be possible but that there are many influences working against social mobility intentions that suggests that mentees need support to develop an awareness of their fears and anxieties to make more informed decisions about their behaviour regarding whether they continue to develop their employability and likely become socially mobile, or not, at that time. This requires skilled, aware mentors and astute scheme organisers who can monitor and identify any socially constraining behaviours of mentors. It also seems to require some degree of similarity, intimacy and trust, although the nature of this similarity seems unclear given the research so far. What theoretically seems likely is that lower SES mentees may be more

constrained by their habitus and field position than higher SES mentees but that what wins out when weighing up the scope for more employability gains versus the likelihood of reduced relative similarity, potential for any constraining behaviour of mentors and societal constraints is unclear. The question is whether research more specifically into mentoring can reveal any clearer understanding of what the nature of this similarity might look like and whether class difference between mentor and mentee is important.

2.5 Mentors, Mentees and Similarity

Similarity and the potential this has for creating intimacy and trust as well as the likelihood of excluding behaviour by mentors, has arisen as a key issue for the conceptualisation of mentoring and is central to this research. Literature suggests many influences on the perceived success of mentoring including many relating to similarity including demographic traits and deeper level factors. This section summarises these influences including a closer look at SES.

2.5.1 Demographics and Similarity

Research into demographic factors has included; age, race, gender, marital status and SES, however, most studies have largely focused on race and gender (Ragins, 1997). How similar or dissimilar mentor and mentee are in each of these categories seems to be at the centre of findings which researchers suggest may link to the processes of role-modelling (Deschamps, 1982) and identification (Erikson, 1963).

Regarding age, older mentees were typically perceived as lower performers and that those mentees younger, less educated and less experienced than their mentors tended to achieve more favourable outcomes (Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989). Mentors have also been identified as more effective in the maintenance and decline phase of their career (Noe, 1988). Perhaps age relates to power dynamics, moderating the need for self-interest.

When considering ethnicity, same ethnicity bias has been found in how mentors perceive their mentees' performance (Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989). For doctoral mentoring, race similarity related to perception of mentoring received which endured regardless of relationship duration: pairs who perceived themselves as similar seemed to do better on career development mentoring outcomes relative to those who perceived themselves as dissimilar (Turban, Dougherty, & Lee, 2002). It was also found that racial and ethnic similarity in the dyad in youth mentoring predicted longer match duration (Raposa, Ben-Eliyahu, & Olsho, 2019). A summary of research into diversified mentoring in organisations suggested that cross-race relationships had distinct differences in the processes applied (more psychosocial) and benefits experienced (Ragins, 1997). These research findings suggest that dyad racial mix could influence both perceived and actual mentoring benefits.

Gender seems to influence mentoring in various ways. Gender similarity seemed to indirectly influence the perceived success of mentoring due to ease of relating (Allen, Day, & Lentz, 2005) and female mentees made more use of their mentor than males (Noe, 1988). Cross-gender relationships restricted role-modelling and social interaction (Ragins & McFarlin, 1990), perhaps due to potential risks around sexual relationships (Thomas, 1989) and seem to use different mentoring processes and achieve different benefits (Ragins, 1997). Interestingly, it has been found that mentors presented more career enhancing behaviours if their female mentees were single and male mentees were married (Olian, Carroll, & Giannantonio, 1993). It was also discovered that women mentored by senior males in an organisation gained greater career development benefits than male mentees (Ramaswani, Dreher, Bretz, & Wiethoff, 2010), perhaps due to 'reflected power' (Kanter, 1977). Conversely, however, gender, for one study, was found to be unrelated directly to mentorship effectiveness (Allen & Eby, 2003). Another study focused on masculinity and femininity instead of gender and found that those with

masculine identities sought and valued career development style mentoring, whereas those with feminine identities sought and valued psychosocial style mentoring (Ortiz-Walters, Eddleston, & Simione, 2010). This is particularly interesting given findings that in western cultures women need to be more masculine towards mentors to gain career development benefits (Ramaswani, Huang, & Dreher, 2014). This focus on femininity/masculinity versus gender, and cultural difference relating to gender, may account for inconsistent findings. Regardless of varied contexts and results, gender does seem to be a demographic influence worth exploring. The demographics of whoever is dominant in an organisation/sector seems to play out in these relationships. Whether this is due to habitus differences for women meaning they need more psychosocial support than men due to the male dominated nature of roles in certain sectors, or whether this is a gender preference, is unclear. Women may simply need more psychosocial support to seek out career development opportunities in male dominated environments, conversely, they may need reassurance and emotional support as a substitute when mentors avoid providing tangible gains that help them gain power.

Diversified mentoring relationships using different mentoring processes may not be concerning if each process led to similar benefits, however, some research suggests otherwise (Orpen, 1995). Allen, et al.'s (2004) meta-analysis found that both career development and psychosocial mentoring positively related to career benefits and found only mixed support for the idea that career development mainly led to extrinsic outcomes and psychosocial to intrinsic ones. But they found a stronger relationship between all mentoring benefits and career development mentoring activities, suggesting those preferring psychosocial mentoring may ultimately make smaller gains. So, those who feel more at ease and relate to the dominant culture may more readily bond, trust and move onto career development gains fairly rapidly. Those with an over-extended habitus may need more time and support and progress more slowly towards career development gains.

This implies a deficit model for those not part of a sector's dominant group but not a lack of potential, rather a lack of ease.

Social background relates most closely to the research questions for this study. Throughout the literature review, the researcher found no studies of alumni/employer undergraduate career mentoring in HE that considers how benefits may differ across different groups of students. It is clear that both research into mentoring relating to SES and research of career mentoring within HE are neglected areas of research. So, through necessity, the literature review has explored beyond HE to gain insights.

It has been found that the relationships between career mentoring and promotion rate were much stronger for those from a higher SES background compared to those from a lower SES background, despite similar amounts of mentoring (Whitely et al., 1991). This study suggested that mentor/mentee similarity could be key and that relationship quality needed investigating. Older, deprived children with a high SES mentor resulted in higher physical self-efficacy, HE aspirations and a greater likelihood of travelling (Meyer & Bouchey, 2010). Poorer mentoring benefits have also been identified for more experienced but low SES mentees in senior management in a German utility company (Hartmann & Kopp, 2001). Conversely, however, no SES effect was found when focusing on early employees in an organisation and the researchers suggested that the SES effect could relate to organisational level (Blickle et al., 2009). Further business-based research found non-significant relationships between mentoring benefits and SES (Dreher & Ash, 1990). These results present mixed findings but suggest variations could be due to context, sector and organisational levels under scrutiny.

One interesting question about SES is visibility. It has been argued that homogeneous relationships provide more psychosocial support through identification and

role-modelling (Erikson, 1963); Kram (1985) but the above research does not consistently confirm this. Which demographic characteristics are most important? What about intersectionality? Some have argued that superficial demographic characteristics seem less important as deeper characteristics are revealed (Duck, 1977). So, for SES how important is initial perceived similarity relative to deeper similarities? How might this change over time and are the two related? Is SES given away in the habitus, in visible behaviour or underlying values, beliefs and life experiences? The complexity of similarity needs further exploration.

2.5.2 Deeper Level Similarity

Positive relationships were found between extraversion and Type 'A' personality and mentoring received (Aryee, Lo, & Kang, 1999). Mentors have been discovered as most likely to be extraverts, open, agreeable and conscientious but not neurotic (Bozionelos, 2004). Mentees not connecting with, or also having, these characteristics may experience more distant, less satisfying mentoring relationships. Pairings with perceived deep level similarity tend to produce better career development benefits (Turban et al., 2002) suggesting personality is important. This suggests that closeness enhances the quality of the developmental relationship (Bozionelos, 2004). Increased perceived similarity between therapist and client in counselling relationships have been found to help establish rapport and trust which has been enhanced by therapist self-disclosure (Hill, Knox, & Pinto-Coelho, 2018). However, personality can impact upon career outcomes outside of the scope of the dyad too (Bozionelos, 2004). Analytical mentors have been found to enhance mentee perception of both psychosocial and career development mentoring functions: it seems the effects of perceived similarity can be mediated by cognitive style (Armstrong, Allinson, & Hayes, 2002). Eby, et al.'s (2013) meta-analysis, covering youth, workplace and academic mentoring, discovered that deep level similarity was a strong predictor of psychosocial mentoring, career development

mentoring and satisfaction with one's mentor. In entrepreneurship mentoring, it has been found that a high level of perceived similarity (based on interests, values and personality) can facilitate upwards social comparison with the mentor and enable mentees to improve their entrepreneurial self-efficacy (St-Jean, Radu-Lefebvre, & Mathieu, 2018). Also, mentors in work based schemes who perceived their values to be like their mentor's had more mentoring success (Illies & Reiter-Palmon, 2018). So evidence suggests that deep level similarity based on personality traits, cognitive styles and values, attitudes and beliefs can create closer relationships and improved mentee benefits. The question is whether more obvious demographic differences, might prevent mentor and mentee engaging enough to find these deeper similarities. Although it is important to remember that not all close relationships are positive ones (Beech & Brockbank, 1999; Oglensky, 2008) as sometimes they can lead to the playing out of previous negative relationships the mentor, or mentee has had. Power is also an issue. These mentors may have less influence over their mentee given the mentee does not work for them, although some sectors that are small and highly differentiated in terms of member identity, may still wield power of access through close networks that stretch beyond organisations across the sector making undergraduate reputation important, demanding appropriate mentee behaviour.

A common theme is that homogeneous mentoring relationships, on the whole seem, to produce more benefits to mentees, assuming they are not dysfunctional. Research points out that minority group members are more likely to experience diversified mentoring relationships (Ragins, 1997). Issues such as age and SES difference may be more prevalent in HE career mentoring schemes as mentees are typically considerably younger than many mentors and, the widening of university participation in the last few decades, may result in disproportionately higher SES mentors, mentoring a greater social mix of mentees. Lower SES mentees are highly likely to be in socially and age diverse relationships and may experience less cognitive overlap with their mentor, unless deeper

similarities emerge. This suggests that, again, lower SES mentees may be more constrained in how far they can develop their employability but conversely may have plenty of gains that they could make. A lower chance of demographic similarity in terms of age and SES may reduce the quality of their relationships in the first instance, reducing the chance for deeper level similarities to emerge. The balance of these potential forces is too complex to predict whether lower or higher SES students might gain more employability. However, it may be possible, given the reflections above, to expect that undergraduates are at such low levels in terms of the labour market (i.e. at the pre-entry or entry point) that any excluding tactics by mentors seem unlikely.

2.5.3 Influences Beyond Similarity

Similarity is only one potential influence on the perceived success of career mentoring, others include scheme and organisational policies and procedures and other organisational and societal influences. This section briefly explores these in more depth.

A formal mentoring scheme's duration, matching and mentor and mentee recruitment and selection, monitoring and closure mechanisms seem to impact mentoring benefits. This chapter discussed the temporal issues relating to mentoring and concluded the quality of the relationship was paramount and that this seemed to be connected to relationship duration. Evidence around how far trust, intimacy and bonding relate to duration is unclear. Most argue that time is necessary for mentor and mentee to bond, however, research suggests trust does not necessarily rise over the course of the relationship, for all contexts. Trust might emerge quite quickly with the right pairing but more slowly, or not at all, for others. Regardless, it seems logical to suggest that some time is required for a bond to form, and evidence suggests that a relationship between outcomes and duration (Ragins et al., 2000) but whether this is 5-8 years (Kram, 1983) or 3-5 years (Phillips-Jones, 1982) or a shorter period, is unclear. As mentioned in chapter 1, scheme

organisers have some power to start, stop and intensify interaction on schemes which may help or hinder bonding be it through premature closure or rushing a bonding process that may not want to be rushed. This is likely to influence member perception of success through ease of interaction and likely outcomes. Duration can also flag how seriously mentors and mentees should view their relationship and how far to invest in it. However, mentors and mentees may well adjust interaction frequency and duration independently to suit themselves. Research into mentoring duration is complex.

It has been argued that informal mentoring is more effective than formal mentoring (Chao et al., 1992), perhaps due to closer mentor/mentee bonding (Fagenson-Eland, Marks, & Amendola, 1997; Ragins et al., 2000) having based selections on a pre-existing relationship. Although, not all research supports this and the formal/informal distinction may not be so stark. Many formal schemes give mentors and mentees choice in their matching or allow mentors and mentees to meet and build rapport so scheme organisers can assess suitability pre-matching. These approaches often occur in undergraduate career mentoring schemes. Differences in formality seem to make a marginal difference but the distinction is not straightforward.

Those receiving career development mentoring seem to achieve slightly more mentoring benefits compared to just psychosocial mentoring, so if a scheme explicitly encourages mentors to provide career development mentoring, this may have an impact depending on whether mentors adhere to the request.

Mentor/mentee recruitment and selection plays a part as well. Mentees with more prior mentoring experience (Fagenson-Eland et al., 1997) and who are more skilled at listening and communication (Kram, 1985) seem to benefit more. Mentor quality (Meyer & Bouchey, 2010), skills (Kram, 1985), knowledge (Beech & Brockbank, 1999) and experience (Fagenson-Eland et al., 1997) all positively influence mentoring benefits.

More powerful mentors led to a higher predictor of careers success for the mentee (Blickle et al., 2009). Research suggests good screening of mentors as just the presence of a mentor does not guarantee perceived success (Ragins, et al., 2000). Some mentee characteristics and behaviours have been found to influence career development gains including networking propensity which has been found to have a mediating effect on mentoring (Blickle et al., 2009) leading to greater career development. Schemes need to prepare mentees and mentors, through induction and training, to work at their relationships (Gannon & Maher, 2012; Liu et al., 2014). Without these conscious actions benefits and perceived success could vary significantly.

In addition, various studies already mentioned, allude to the influence of stakeholders beyond the mentoring dyad “Power is defined here as the influence of one person over others, stemming from an individual characteristic, an interpersonal relationship, a position in an organisation, or from membership in a societal group.” (Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989, p. 51)

Glimpses of power play can be seen through individual interaction in the form of social dominance orientation for example (Martin & Bok, 2015). There is also evidence from power-distance theory, when in the USA, women who adopted the male characteristics of the dominant group were more likely to be perceived as ready to manage by mentors, although in Taiwan it was deemed unacceptable for women to show masculine traits (Ramaswani et al., 2014). Who the dominant group is in an organisation/sector/ society, can seem to influence whether, how and how much mentees gain from mentoring.

Organisational diversity has been found to influence the mentoring benefits of minority group members (Ramaswani et al., 2010) with women in a male dominated organisation, with a senior male mentor, receiving greater extrinsic career development benefits than male mentees. This demonstrates the heightened visibility of females in an

organisational level dominated by males and the power of ‘signalling’ when a powerful mentor’s endorsement can identify a good calibre worker despite their group identity. Conversely, however, it was those most like the dominant group who received more mentoring and minorities experienced glass ceilings at various organisational levels (Athey, Avery, & Zemsky, 2000). Social Reproduction Theory might argue that the ‘goal’ would be to preserve the dominant majority, higher up the hierarchy, as opposed to excluding minority members at all levels. Although the complex power struggles in organisations between majority and minority members relies on a degree of self-containment, will schemes spanning business and HE have a similar degree of power struggle or is there a weakening effect on power interests? Perhaps this depends on the business sector and HEI involved? Research suggests that organisational level may be important too with junior entries incurring less resistance.

2.6 Concluding Remarks: What Does this Mean for this Research?

This section summarises the learning from the literature review that needs to be taken forward into this research. It seeks to establish views on the research questions and to inform the nature of the research approach. Each research question will be considered in turn and methodological implications reviewed with subsequent conclusions drawn.

2.6.1 Career Mentoring Benefits and Social Background

The research question asks what differences are there, if any, in the short-term benefits (or otherwise) of career mentoring for mentees from different socioeconomic backgrounds? Although access to HE has widened in recent decades, inequality in the UK is worsening and privately schooled, Russell Group educated graduates dominate the elite professions (The All Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility, 2017). Social mobility happens but is limited and progress of its increase has stalled, especially at society’s

extremes. This suggests that undergraduates from poorer social backgrounds are facing barriers to social mobility and a degree is not enough. Does this mean, however, that they will gain less from a career mentoring scheme than their wealthier peers?

From addressing the conceptualisation of mentoring earlier in this chapter, it can be seen that mentee development is considered a key focus of mentoring but that homogeneous relationships, broadly, do slightly better in terms of gains and that the reason for this may be the intimacy, trust and identification/role-modelling created through the similarity of mentor and mentee. This intimacy seems to facilitate engagement and arguably, the mentoring activities offered, especially more tangible career development outcomes. What is unclear, however, is whether similarity is about surface, demographics or deeper characteristics like personality and other traits and whether social background creates connections between some of these surface demographics and deeper characteristics. Regardless, immediate and longer-term perceptions, if the mentoring dyad continues, are both likely to effect relationship duration and quality. Mentees from poorer social backgrounds, due to recent widening of access to HE, are more likely to find themselves in socially diverse relationships, particularly if the mentor cohort are older and more experienced university alumni and recruiters who graduated when access was more limited.

Beyond mentee development goals, it seems other motives may be at play. Mentors, plus those who dominate their social groups, organisational hierarchies and sectors, and whether economic or cultural capital dictate their membership, and finally the institutional make up regarding the social groups dominating their staff and student populations may all influence the dyad's progress. Social structures may be embedded into mentor perceptions and mentors may communicate organisational and sector recruiter expectations, also created by social structures. Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction suggests that habitus may inhibit the ease by which an undergraduate from a poorer social

background moves to new field positions in the labour market unfamiliar to them and their families. Mentors need to be very skilled to support any stretching of a mentee's habitus, or support preservation of their primary habitus, if it is in danger of 'habitus clivé'. These risks seem higher for poorer and less professionally connected mentees and may inhibit gains relative to wealthier peers. Our review of social capital, however, suggests that mentors, if they have common interests with mentees or scheme organisers, and are skilled enough, may well provide the necessary support. Bandura's work on self-efficacy and actions building mastery (employability development) connect well with the intrinsic and extrinsic outputs from career mentoring showing how a mentor could provide this support, however, these mechanisms also seem to rely, to a degree on role-modelling and identification, which seem less likely and certainly to a lesser degree compared to their more professionally connected counterparts. What again, is unclear is whether identification will rely on social demographics or other features that relate less closely to social background and experiences. Self-efficacy Theory also shows how direct mastery opportunities are important but only offered after trust and intimacy form, these also may be less forthcoming for lower SES mentees (Bandura, 1977). These mastery experiences are the employability development mentees need and must be fed into employability measures. Social capital theories suggest that similarity is less important if the agenda is similar but the above summary shows how forces are operating in different directions, making any speculation about the precise answers to these questions difficult to gauge.

If mentees from poorer backgrounds benefit more, it seems likely to be because mentors are highly skilled, supportive, see no reason to exclude and bond enough to offer the mentoring activities they can potentially offer. Mentees with few professional contacts and experience will have plenty of scope to make gains if they stick with the mentoring partnership, are aware of their unease if their habitus becomes challenged and are willing to share these concerns with their mentor. Note again that awareness of unease

and communication of this ‘hysteresis’ seems important. The balance of these forces is hard to predict but exciting to discover.

2.6.2 What Might Facilitate or Inhibit Perceived Success?

The second research question asks what is it that facilitates or inhibits the perceived success of the mentoring dyad? The question is what has the literature review revealed about this research question? Table 2 provides a summary of the influences raised by the literature review which is based on both theoretical stances of interest and research findings.

Both theory and research suggest multi-level influences at play: individual, interpersonal, institutional and societal so any research undertaken should remain alert to these wider influences during this research. It is also important to recognise that minimal research has been undertaken into the types of career mentoring schemes of interest to the researcher, which are schemes where undergraduate mentees are mentored by professionals in a range of careers, with no employment contract involved that might influence dyad behaviour. No research, focused on social diversity, has been undertaken of this kind of scheme. So, the summary of influences in Table 2 may or may not hold for the context in question and an exploratory approach will be necessary.

This literature review has confirmed that mentoring is certainly based on a unique relationship where two individuals, and their unique mix of traits and characteristics, come together to create a particularly complex mentoring compound. These traits and characteristics are multifarious and would make a positivist approach improbable.

Research suggests that this unique interpersonal amalgam creates a scenario with a higher or lower propensity to succeed, depending on which processes are awakened during the interaction. The key ingredients to this awakening of deeper processes appear to

be about similarity and difference of dyad members which build to create an atmosphere of closeness, trust, and potentially, identification. Within this, there seems to be a role for emotional arousal and self-efficacy, both in terms of how the dyad members feel about each other and the relationship but also how the mentee feels about how they ‘fit’ with their career aspiration or how they feel about making an initial career choice and what is required to make that transition.

Table 2

Summary of Potential Influences on Perceived Success of Mentoring Dyad Identified in Literature Review

Individual influences
Demographics: Age, class, gender, race, marital status. Mentor power/status. Propensity for mentor to exclude mentee depending on demographics.
Social background: Educational background: secondary and tertiary. Economic capital. Nature of social capital including exposure to professionals and type of professionals. Horizons for action. Labour market field position: work experience, mastery, self-efficacy. Breadth of mentor’s professional network regarding types of people. Family background (habitus). Typical patterns of relating in prior relationships. Cultural capital/signifiers: values, attitudes, behaviour, dress, etiquette. Life experiences beyond childhood (cultural capital and habitus influences). Prior experience of ‘hysteresis’, success and failure. Mentee support beyond the dyad (similar others) during challenges. Experience of mentoring.
Career identity: How far formed mentee career identity is. Degree choice, vocational nature of it. Career aspiration and relationship to habitus. Mentee’s self-efficacy relating to career aspirations and employability activities.
Traits/characteristics:

Reflexivity. | Resilience. | Preferred/typical mentoring styles: psychosocial and career development | Mentor generativity. | Mentoring functions available to offer: psychosocial and career development, personal or vicarious activities. | Skills: communication, counselling, reassurance, persuasion, listening, networking.

Other:

Motives, agenda and expectations about mentoring. | Emotional arousal. | Pace of field transition.

Interpersonal influences

Process:

Rapport, intimacy, 'belongingness' (relationship and career/sector). | Mutuality | Duration, engagement, commitment/dedication. | Trust, honesty (about affect). | Identification and role-modelling. | Strength of tie: bonding, bridging, linking. | Feedback loop of dyad. | Emotional arousal.

Activity:

Mentoring functions offered/received. | Style of mentoring.

Similarity/difference:

Cognitive overlap. | Combined demographics: age, class, gender, race. | Power difference. | Personality: extroversion, cognitive tendencies e.g. extroversion, analytical. | Quality of communication.

Outcomes:

Mentoring outcomes.

Other:

Communication method.

Institutional/group influences

Stakeholder agenda:

Institution and scheme goals and purpose and its effects on: recruitment and selection, training, matching, pace, duration, monitoring, closure and financing. |

Mentors' employers' agendas. | Identification of and provision of win-wins for mentors and mentees. | Agenda of dominant groups in mentor's organisation/sector.

Sector traits:

Mentor's sector/mentee's aspired sector traits: trust, competitiveness, size/intimacy, distinctiveness. | Sector reliance on economic versus cultural capital. | Level of entry in the hierarchy and hierarchy traits.

Institutional traits:

Labour market profile of institution (subjects offered/alumni/supporters). | Scheme organiser quality.

Societal influences

Political agenda:

OfS policies, investments and parameters.

Societal equality traits:

Social mobility rates. | Social power of key stakeholder groups: gender, race, class, age, marital status, etc. | Culture in relation to key groups: gender, race, class, age, marital status, etc. | Relative power of fields in society: sector, university. | Labour market constraints including recruitment criteria.

Moderating factors also seem at play and include personal traits such as resilience, reflexivity and stage of career identity formation but also mentor skills and the quality of communication between dyad members. These seem to represent the levels where formal scheme organisers may have opportunities to consciously influence the process.

Other moderating influences may include the agendas of key stakeholders and the groups they are a part of. This can include traits of the HEI in question, the parts of the labour market involved, societal power groups of dyad members and the dominant groups in their organisations and societal culture. These may directly or indirectly influence experiences and potential outcomes. Several questions remain, therefore, that seem of importance beneath this main question of what might inhibit or facilitate the perceived success of the mentoring dyad.

Firstly, how important is similarity in undergraduate career mentoring in HE by professionals? What traits are important and do demographic similarities, social background in particular, feature, or is deeper similarity key? These questions will be crucial for scheme organisers to be aware of, particularly those running formal schemes seeking social mobility of minority groups. Issues such as recruitment and selection of mentors, matching mechanisms, supporting resources, training, monitoring and closure of comparable schemes will all need to be considered in light of any findings.

The second question is how important trust and identification are as processes in mentoring in this research context? What effect do they have in terms of the mentoring offered or sought? Again, monitoring, training and supporting resources may all need reconsidering depending on the answer.

The third question regards habitus. How far is a person's habitus a factor in the perceived success of career mentoring? Does mentoring support changes to the habitus and hence career identity (assuming a relationship between the two)? If mentoring has the power to support an individual in creating or adjusting their career identity and employability to enable some form of social mobility intentions to occur, this is important to be aware of given the purpose of most HE schemes being about raising graduate level destinations.

Next it is worth reflecting on how far the labour market field position of dyad members is important. This might be about the professional exposure of mentees or the stage of their career identity formation given this exposure, or it may be about the part of the labour market the mentor comes from and whether any excluding tactics may appear whether indirectly via recruitment criteria for work experience, for example, or directly through mentor judgements and feedback to the mentee about their suitability for that profession. It will be interesting to see how far broader societal and institutional agendas

will manifest themselves in these relationships either directly via the social constraints the dyad has to deal with or indirectly via mentor opinion and knowledge.

Finally, there has been a definite role here for affect as having a part to play in bolstering or diminishing behaviours, both in terms of negative or positive experiences and in terms of self-belief. This may be one process by which mentoring acts upon mentee habitus.

2.6.3 Learning Points for the Methodology

In terms of methodology, several learning points have been revealed. Firstly, for question one there seems to be a need to pin down how far social background has an influence on the short-term outcomes of career mentoring. Exploring diverse and homogenous relationships and measuring carefully the differences in perceived shifts in employability seems a sensible approach. This suggests a post-positivist approach relying on data gathering and statistical analysis, harnessing the individual perceptions of how employability has altered. There seems to be a need to explore outcomes over the journey of the relationship too, considering both before-and-after perceptions of employability. Perceptions are a necessary factor here as self-belief is not outwardly observable, although neither is work experience, for example, given that each piece of work experience gained is highly variable and has different impacts on different people, given their experiences to date. The mentoring research into social background has shown how important context is, so a focus on a specific scheme will be important, as will be the transparency of the details of this case and the approach taken to promote potential pragmatic generalisation.

Conversely, the lack of research into this kind of mentoring in HE, alongside the vast array of potential influences identified and the clear findings that context seems important, suggests that a deeper, richer exploration of the first hand experiences of mentees and mentors in one scheme, covering their full mentoring journey, seems

important to set a stage for further research to take place. This will allow some initial assessment of how far certain influences seem to be at play in this context. This too will be heavily reliant on participant perspective but suggests a different ontology and epistemology to the first question where understanding of their experiences is constructed with them. Overall, this suggests a reliance on participant insights. The intersection of employability models, mentoring gains research, sources of mastery and adjustments to 'field' and 'habitus' is where the basis for measuring the shifts in employability sit.

This summary of learning from the literature view focuses our minds down onto similarity, closeness, trust and identification, the potential for habitus change, exploring whether broader social forces are at play within the relationship, what the moderating influences might be and the role of affect and self-belief. The early stage of research in this context encourages exploration and the internal and subjective nature of much of the development expected encourages a social constructionist approach but the importance of understanding how much of an influence social background has pushes the researcher to a more post positivist approach for this research question and will lead to a pragmatic research design applied to a specific research context. The next chapter will explore the research design and methodology in greater depth.

Chapter 3 Methodology

Discovering whether career mentoring helped develop employability and hence helped facilitate social mobility was the focus of this research. Ad hoc concerns about low SES mentees engaging and benefiting less on a particular scheme, galvanised the researcher to embark on a more robust exploration. This chapter summarises the research design and choice of mixed-methods approach including sampling, design and testing of tools, ethics, data gathering, analysis and reporting and a brief overview of the expected strengths and limitations of the research as well as discussing issues of reliability and validity.

3.1 Research Design and Influences

3.1.1 Literature Review Findings

The literature review informed the research design and relies on the acceptance that the data used will be made up of mentee and mentor perceptions. Research calculating mentoring gains typically measured mentee perceptions of gains but sought to measure them with detachment and a degree of objectivity. Mentoring research, such as Kram's (1983), has typically used qualitative interviews: relying on social constructionist approaches. Limited mentoring research in the HE context suggested taking on an approach from which further research could be built upon. Perceived similarity emerged as a key potential influence, from mentoring research relating to diversity, social capital theories and role-modelling within Self-efficacy Theory. This again suggested reliance on perception and the joint construction of rich meanings. Subjectivity would be valued in this research, acknowledging the influence of mentee/mentor beliefs, the dynamic nature of mentoring relationships and the need to explore the shifting nature of those beliefs and the effects they have on mentoring. Research also highlighted the dimensions of both function and process. The subconscious nature of habitus was challenged in the literature review. It

concluded that if accompanied by reflexivity, jointly constructing meaning with participants could reveal the effects of habitus. With research results into diverse relationships often contradictory, context was identified as influential, introducing a perspective beyond the personal or interpersonal. Research into diverse relationships did not advance clear, consistent hypotheses about the influence of demographics. These findings suggest acceptance of perceptions as data but also the need to socially construct knowledge suggesting mixed research methods.

3.1.2 Research Questions

The first research question: ‘what differences are there, if any, in the short-term benefits (or otherwise) of career mentoring for mentees from different socioeconomic backgrounds?’ sought to identify how much of a difference there might be. It also anticipated a yes/no answer and a search for an ‘objective’ assessment for the cohort concerned, despite being based on individual perceptions. Exploring such a complex, experiential intervention, would make deliberate, variable manipulation ineffective. An ‘ex post facto’ approach, where gathering data about potentially significant variables that had varied naturally, was deemed appropriate for this question, alongside subsequent statistical analysis.

The second research question ‘What is it that facilitates or inhibits the perceived success of the mentoring dyad?’ sought to discover a breadth of influences and relied on describing, understanding and interpreting individuals’ lived experiences. The researcher would be immersed in the richness and complexity of different mentoring relationships. The view that perception influences behaviour is fundamental to the design and the construction of meaning with a participant. These contrasting research questions required a pragmatic world-view (Creswell, 2013).

3.1.3 Researcher Perspective

Social constructionists argue that research design decisions are, in themselves, socially constructed. The researcher had a strong ‘positivist’ influence from scientific family occupations: early exposure to exciting, large scale, Government funded science projects and an interest in mathematics. Conversely, two social science degrees and experience in career counselling had encouraged an interest in interpretivism/social constructionism and created a multi-level approach, embracing the individual, interpersonal, group and societal levels. The researcher suited a pragmatic ‘world-view’ (Creswell, 2013), however, congruent this was with research questions and literature review influences. Importantly, the researcher was skilled in one-to-one discussions with students and employers and had strengths in questioning, listening and rapport-building. Being an experienced reflective practitioner in careers bode well for the craft needed for aspects of this research, although required style adjustments. Additionally, the researcher had established mentoring schemes and was knowledgeable about mentoring of undergraduates in an HE environment. Despite this, she felt convinced that mentoring should only be sustained if schemes added value to mentees and their institutions, leading to a genuine openness to the research outcomes.

3.1.4 Combining Methods

This research would combine multiple methods. Different starting points for mentees required more objective, before-and-after measurements of perceived gains, comparison of mean shifts between social groups and further statistical analysis. Exploring and encouraging participant reflection on the influences on the perceived success of career mentoring had the potential to influence perceived gain so any measurement needed to be undertaken first. Although it was accepted that measuring perceived gains might encourage deeper reflection than might be typical, it was viewed as less disruptive this way around.

The combining of research elements did not represent a well-established pragmatic research design but created two vantage points from which to consider how far social background influenced the perceived success of mentoring.

3.1.5 Choice of Research Methods: Mixed Methods

This approach centred on the practical functioning of career mentoring in HE, requiring a more quantitative method for the first question and a more qualitative method for the second. Mentoring outcomes would be measured for large numbers of mentees, so statistical significance could be assessed. Online surveys were concluded as most effective, providing efficient administration, detachment from the researcher and reducing self-conscious feelings when providing sensitive data. Few mentees would secure a job during the study, so only short-term gains could be measured. To explore potential influences on the perceived success of mentoring, both function and process, different levels of influence (individual, interpersonal, institutional and societal) and theory, required a loose enough approach to explore prior findings but allow new influences to emerge. Observation would disrupt normal process and authenticity, as would questioning mentor and mentee together or keeping a reflective diary. Semi-structured, face-to-face, one-to-one interviews would meet the aims and overcome most constraints, accepting joint construction of meaning. Survey data would support interview sampling. Interviews would occur after mentoring and measuring employability shifts. Survey questions would help inform interview questions. The survey could sense check interview interpretation. Running the interviews shortly after mentoring, meant participants would have recent memories. This created two vantage points from which to consider the broad issue of social background and career mentoring in HE.

3.2 Research Context

3.2.1 *The Institution*

The HEI involved wanted to understand the effectiveness of its formal, structured, established undergraduate career mentoring scheme. It recruited 250 students from its population which had a good mix of social backgrounds in 2016/17. The scheme ran independently from other interventions such as placements. The HEI was ranked between ten and 50 in The Times Good University Guide 2016, with no major bias towards privately educated students. Scheme mentees were over 18 but included vulnerable adults who would be chaperoned. The Institution had a breadth of subjects/disciplines with graduate-level jobs secured across a breadth of sectors, removing any bias towards elite sectors and varying mentee career readiness. The Institution wanted to improve student employability and would provide access to demographic and other data given ethical requirements were met. The scheme's processes could facilitate data gathering. Significant mentor loyalty supported a longitudinal approach. This conveys the key characteristics of the Institution involved.

3.2.2 *Choice of Data Sources: the Participants*

Prior scheme size and lack of researcher input ruled out use of historical scheme data. The researcher believed the mentor and mentee were the primary actors, and that despite possible structural influences, influences should be explored through the perceptions and behaviours of those involved. With similarity key, examining how mentor and mentee coalesced seemed important requiring an individual/interpersonal focus. The population would be mentors/mentees engaged in the 2016/17 scheme. The HEI had slightly lower numbers of state school students and students from NS-SEC categories 4, 5, 6 or 7 and from lower participation neighbourhoods relative to the UK average for full-time undergraduates but significant numbers of undergraduates from low income families

(below £25k) creating potential for statistically significant results if differences in gains were found (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2015). The scheme sought even recruitment across subjects, so a good mix of sectors sought and stage of career choice was likely. Mentors were from 24 to retirement age and from a range of sectors, although, with improved access to HE over several decades, mentor social backgrounds might be higher than for mentees.

3.3 Sampling Decisions

3.3.1 Mentee Sampling

Sampling decisions were influenced by the normal scheme flows. The population were partnerships engaging significantly at least once. With a focus on one-to-one mentoring, pairs requiring a chaperone were excluded. Only after Survey 2, that measured dyad engagement, would the full population be known.

Sample group 1 were those opting to share data during Survey 1. Sample group 2 had opted to share their data, had answered both surveys and significantly engaged at least once with their partner. This group had their employability shifts measured and should be representative of the population to enable scheme generalisation. Initially, analysis of outcomes would focus on four participant groups based on different mixes of SES of mentor and mentee. Analysis revealed all but six mentors were from NS-SEC 1 and 2, with only five of these answering Survey 2 and none were interview volunteers. So, the two comparison groups, ultimately, included mentors with mentees reporting low SES indicator(s) and mentors with mentees who did not.

Sample group 3 were those purposively sampled from interview volunteers in sample group 2. Initially, interviewing both members of a dyad was preferred but in reality this was not possible. Purposive sampling equally split low and non-low SES mentees and low, medium and high engagers, based on mentee/mentor perceived

engagement. The literature review revealed potentially confounding variables of gender, ethnicity and engagement level, so the researcher aimed for a breadth of these plus varied subjects and school type as these characteristics might relate to elite sectors and social background. Table 3 shows population numbers, sample size and demographics for each sample. For the interviews, an even gender split was not possible. Where a 'tie' occurred selection would be randomised. This approach should facilitate a broad exploration of influences. Research into mentor/mentee age was limited. Personality and deep level similarity seemed unrealistic to measure due to survey length constraints and was anticipated to emerge from interviews if it was an influence. Focusing on one scheme allowed institutional and scheme influences to remain constant to a degree, although individuals might experience them differently. Societal factors seemed impossible to measure meaningfully and could manifest themselves in interviews.

Sample 1 was highly representative of the population, the largest difference being ethnicity. Sample 2 was representative of the population for gender and fairly representative for ethnicity. Those reporting low SES were representative of the population with those not reporting low SES indicators considerably overrepresented. The population data had a fair amount of missing SES data.

Table 3

Mentee Population and Sample Sizes by Demographic Characteristics

Group	Total	Male	Female	Gender Missing Data	White	Non white	Ethnicity Missing Data	Non low SES	Low SES	SES Missing Data
Population	212	68	143	1	152	53	7	70	114	28
Sample 1	183	62	120	1	135	46	2	62	99	22
Sample 2	64	20	43	1	49	14	1	29	35	0
Sample 3	6	4	2	0	3	3	0	3	3	0
Percentages	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Population	100.00	32.08	67.45	0.47	71.70	25.00	3.30	33.02	53.77	13.21
Sample 1	86.32	33.88	65.57	0.55	73.77	25.14	1.09	33.88	54.10	12.02
Difference	13.68	1.80	-1.88	0.07	2.07	0.14	2.21	0.86	0.33	-1.19
Sample 2	30.19	31.25	67.19	1.56	76.56	21.88	1.56	45.31	54.69	0.00
Difference	-69.81	-0.83	-0.26	1.09	4.86	-3.12	-1.74	12.29	0.91	-13.21

Table 4 lists the interview volunteers, of which some had mentors not completing Survey 2 but who had agreed to share data. For these 12 mentees, it was assumed that engagement perception matched the mentee rating. The six low SES mentee volunteers were paired dependent on similarity in perceived engagement rating (see Figure 2). One in each pair would be targeted, securing varied genders, ethnicity, age, subject and schooling. Two did not respond, so the alternative was approached and those asterisked in Figure 2 and shaded in Table 4 were selected. This resulted in a varied group of three interviewees. For non-low SES mentees, a similar approach was taken. Figure 3 presents non-low SES mentees in terms of perceived engagement. The researcher invited the bottom two engagers to interview and both agreed. One was selected from the top cluster based on maximum variety as before. Those asterisked in Figure 3 and shaded in Table 4 were interviewed. Mentee participants 185L and 55N became interview testers. They had different SES backgrounds and perceived engagement levels.

Table 4*Mentee Interview Volunteers and Participants*

No.	Engagement perception		Mentee characteristics					
	Mentee	Mentor	SES	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Degree subject	Secondary schooling
23L	7	9	Low	Male	Non white	21-25	Law	State comp.
47L	6	3	Low	Female	White	18-20	English	State comp.
98L	7	8	Low	Female	White	18-20	Psychology	State grammar
157L	4	4	Low	Male	White	18-20	Biology	State comp.
185L*	3	3	Low	Female	White	18-20	Geography	State comp.
197L	5	7	Low	Female	Non white	21-25	Pharmacy	State comp.
53N*	3	3	Non low	Female	White	18-20	Education	Private
55N*	8	8	Non low	Female	White	18-20	Zoology	State comp.
128N*	8	8	Non low	Male	White	18-20	Geography	State comp.
140N*	9	9	Non low	Female	No data	18-20	Politics	Private
160N*	5	5	Non low	Male	Non white	18-20	Law	Private overseas
172N	7	7	Non low	Male	White	21-25	Politics	State comp.

Note: SES is socioeconomic status. Comp. means comprehensive. Shaded lines represent interview participants selected. * Indicates mentor engagement rating assumed same as mentee rating.

Figure 2

Low Socioeconomic Status Mentee Interview Volunteers by Mentor and Mentee Perceived Engagement Rating

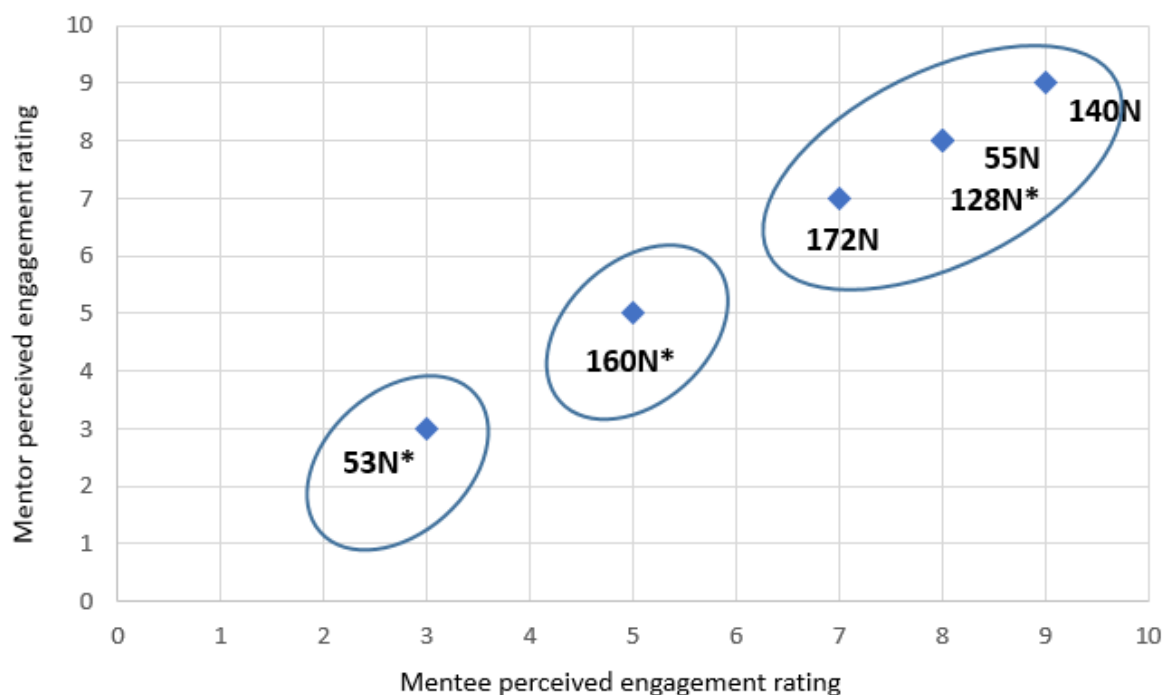


Note: Numbers such as 23L signify mentee number of which L is low socioeconomic status. Circles indicate three groupings of mentee volunteer based on engagement levels.

* Indicates mentee interview participant.

Figure 3

Non-low Socioeconomic Status Mentee Interview Volunteers by Mentor and Mentee Perceived Engagement Rating



Notes: Numbers such as 140N signify mentee number of which N is non-low socioeconomic status. Circles indicate three groupings of volunteer based on engagement levels. * Indicates mentee interview participants.

3.3.2 Mentor Sampling

Data gathered in Surveys 1 and 2 enabled purposive mentor interview sampling, ensuring varied engagement levels, ethnicity, gender, age and sector. Table 5 below shows the mentor population including any trained, matched mentor who had engaged significantly, at least once, with their mentee (excluding chaperoned mentees). Group 1 was the percentage of the mentor population sharing their data at Survey 1. Group 2 were mentors from Group 1 who had also answered Survey 2. Group 3 were those from Group 2 volunteering for interviews, from which six were purposively sampled. Percentages demonstrate how representative each data group was, with how representative

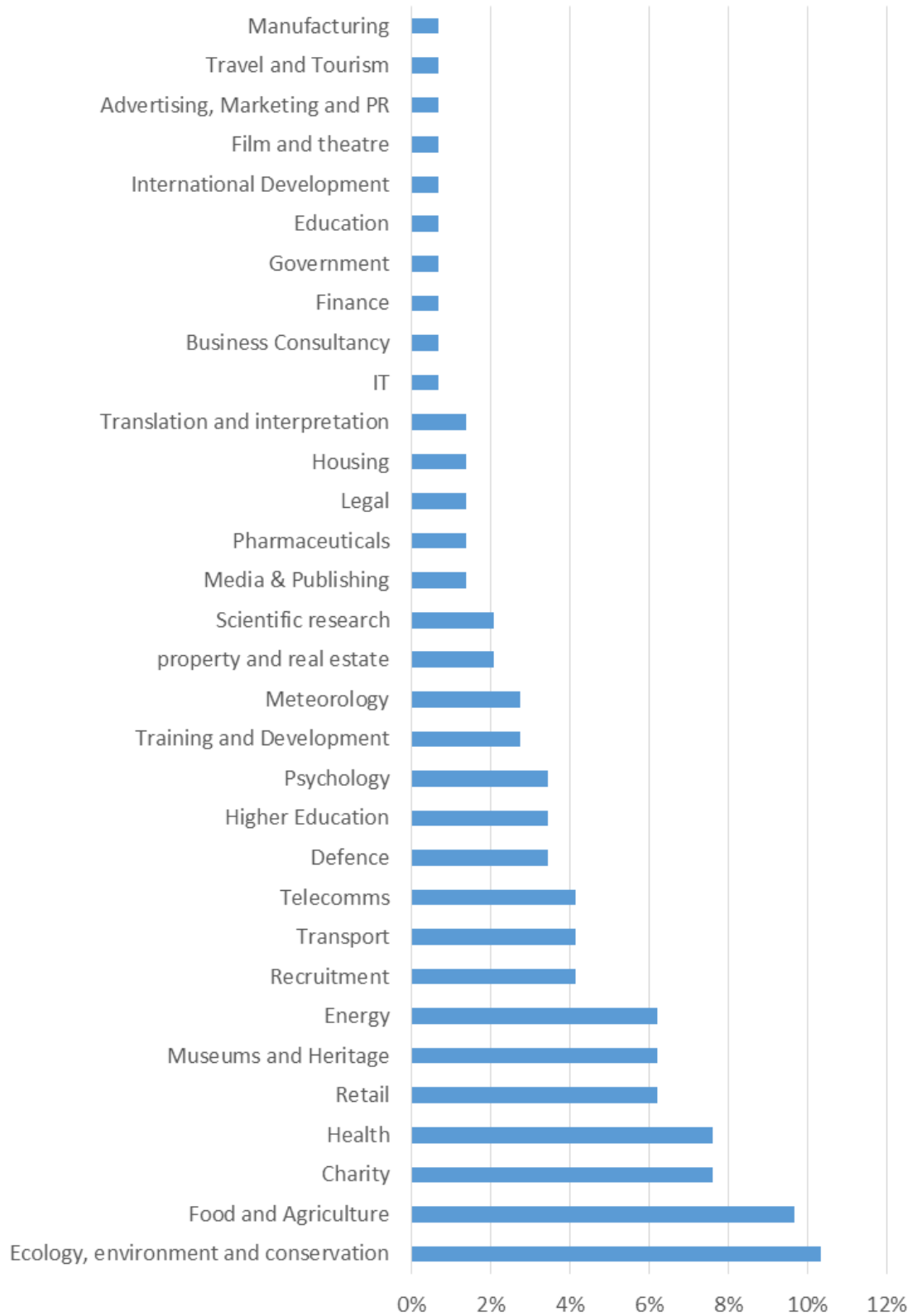
the sample was based on mentee characteristics. Organisational sectors of mentors agreeing to share data in Survey 1 (Group 1) are shown in Figure 4 and confirm a large range.

Table 5

Mentor Population and Sample Sizes by Demographic Characteristics

Group	Total	Socioeconomic status				Gender		Ethnicity				Age					
		1,2,3	4+	MD	Male	Female	MD	White	Non white	MD	21-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-66	67+	MD
Population	182	162	6	17	89	76	17	135	27	20	13	58	42	33	17	2	17
% Population	100%	89%	3%	9%	49%	42%	9%	74%	15%	11%	7%	32%	23%	18%	9%	1%	9%
Group 1	145	139	6	0	80	65	0	124	20	1	11	53	32	31	17	1	0
% Group 1	80%	96%	4%	0%	55%	45%	0%	86%	14%	1%	8%	37%	22%	21%	12%	1%	0%
Difference	-20	7	1	-9	6	3	-9	11	-1	-1	0	5	-1	3	2	0	-9
Group 2	77	72	5	0	45	32	0	67	9	1	4	23	22	16	11	1	0
% Group 2	42%	94%	6%	0%	58%	42%	0%	87%	12%	1%	5%	30%	29%	21%	14%	1%	0%
Difference	-58	4	3	-9	10	0	-9	13	-3	-10	-2	-2	5	3	5	0	-9
Group 3	18	18	0	0	11	7	0	13	4	1	1	4	4	6	3	0	0

Notes: MD indicates missing data. 1,2,3, 4+ indicate the NS-SEC categories.

Figure 4*Distribution of Mentor Organisational Sectors*

Of the 18 mentors in Group 3, only 16 could be allocated an SES category from which 6 would be sampled. Their characteristics are listed in Table 6.

The aim was to purposively sample 6 interviewees: three who had mentored low SES mentees and three who had mentored non-low SES mentees. However, some mentored multiple mentees, some from both SES groups. Purposive sampling was based on mentee SES and perceived engagement. For mentors with more than one mentee, average engagement from mentees sharing data was taken. Thereafter, the researcher aimed for varied genders, ethnicity, ages and sectors. This gave a 50% SES, gender and ethnicity split, ages across six different categories and varied job sectors. Notably, mentors gave higher engagement ratings relative to mentees, however, when combined with mentee ratings, provided a reasonable spread, although ratings below 4/9 were not represented.

Table 6*Mentor Interview Volunteers and Participants*

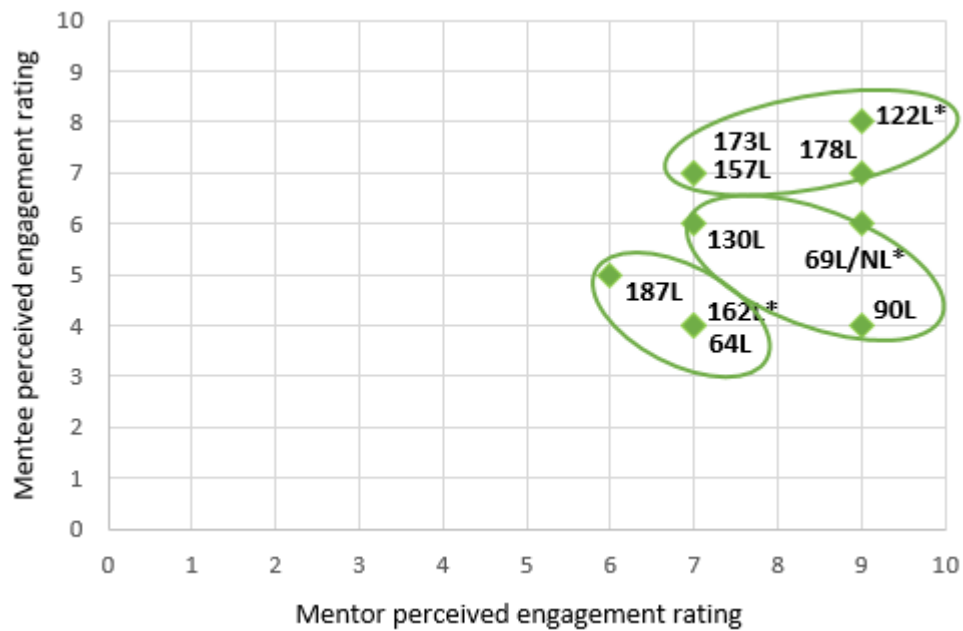
Mentor No.	<i>Perceived engagement</i>		Mentee SES	<i>Mentor characteristics</i>			
	Mentor	Mentee		Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Sector
173	7	7	Low	Male	MD	21-25	Transport
130*	7	6	Low	Male	White	26-35	Media
122	9	8	Low	Male	Non White	26-35	Higher Education
178	9	7	Low	Male	White	36-45	Health Sector
162	7	4	Low	Female	White	46-55	Scientific Research
157	7	7	Low	Male	White	46-55	Environmental Science
64*	7	4	Low	Female	White	46-55	Higher Education
187	6	5	Low	Female	Non White	46-55	International Development
90	9	4	Low	Male	White	56-66	Higher Education
69	9	6.5	Low & 2 Non Low	Male	White	56-66	Law
155	6	5	Non Low	Female	Non White	26-35	Media
84	9	7	Non Low	Male	Non White	26-35	Property Investment
160	7	9	Non Low	Male	White	36-45	IT
183	6	8	Non Low	Female	White	36-45	Conservation
133	9	8	Non Low	Female	White	36-45	Charity
17	8.5	7.5	Non Low and MD	Female	White	56-66	Ecology

Note: SES is socioeconomic status. * indicates interview testers. Shaded lines represent interview participants selected. MD indicates missing data.

Figure 5 and Figure 6 show mentor volunteers by mentor and mentee perceived engagement, showing three target groups each for low SES and non-low SES. Mentors 64 and 130 were interview testers with different genders, job sectors and ages but the same ethnicity and mentee SES. If a mentor did not respond, a further mentor was selected based on diversity contribution.

Figure 5

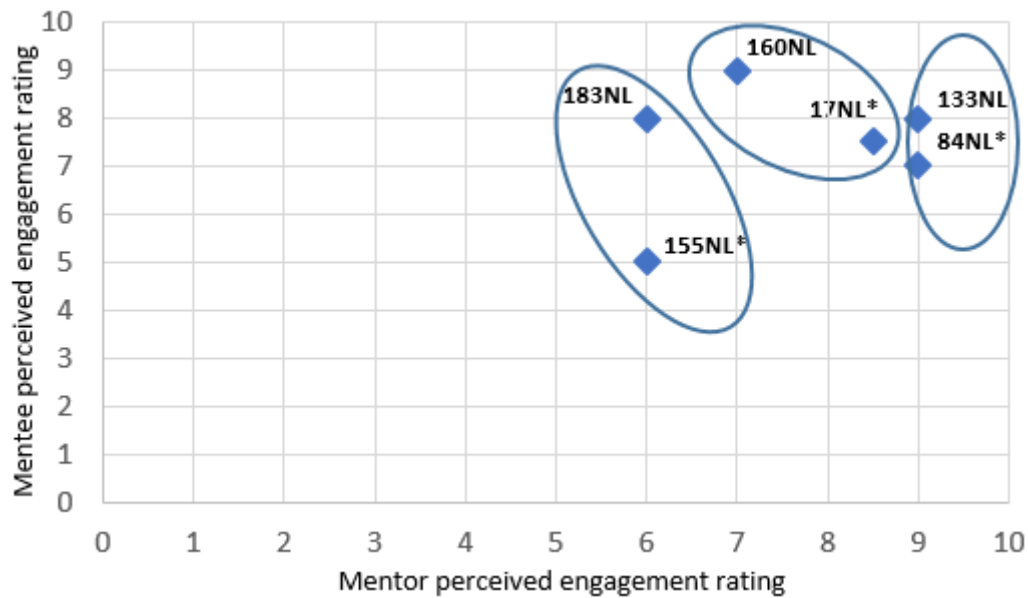
Mentor Interview Volunteers with Low Socioeconomic Status Mentees by Mentor and Mentee Perceived Engagement Rating.



Notes: Numbers such as 122L signify mentee number of which L is low socioeconomic status, NL is non-low socioeconomic status. Circles indicate three groupings of volunteer based on engagement levels. *Indicates mentor interview participants.

Figure 6

Mentor Interview Volunteers with Non-low Socioeconomic Status Mentees by Mentor and Mentee perceived Engagement Rating.



Notes: Numbers such as 133NL signify mentee number of which NL is non-low socioeconomic status. Circles indicate three groupings of volunteer based on engagement levels. *Indicates mentor interview participants.

3.4 Research Design in Practice

Scheme organisers allowed the researcher to adjust and supplement mentor/mentee scheme sign-up and evaluation forms and had final approval. Surveys were sent as per the scheme schedule in Table 7. Scheme organisers provided the researcher with consenting, eligible mentor/mentee data, with a participant unique identifier and only shared name/contact details if they had requested debriefing or were an interview volunteer and even those people could still maintain contact via the scheme if preferred.

Table 7*Survey Schedule*

	Sign-up - Survey 1	Evaluation - Survey 2
Mentors	July-September 2016	August to October 2017
Mentees	October to December 2016	August to October 2017

Survey 1 provided the demographic data to assess sample representation and enable interview purposive sampling alongside qualitative, open text questions to help inform interview design. Survey 2 re-identified participants so scheme organisers could match the two surveys and identify mentor/mentee matches allowing reflection back on other qualitative questions. Survey 2 collected engagement data to support interview sampling and invited participants to interview and asked for contact details for this purpose. After thematic analysis of the qualitative, open text survey data, interview questions were constructed and interviews took place.

3.5 The Design of Data Gathering Tools

This section outlines how the surveys (see Appendices A, B, C and D) and interviews (see Appendices E and F) were designed. The surveys identified participants and met ethical requirements relating to informed consent, measured and compared perceived employability shifts by social background, gathered data to inform the interview questions, allowed sample representation checks and aided purposive interview participant sampling. The interviews were designed to explore the various inhibitors and facilitators of career mentoring, including, possibly, social background and to better understand the function and process of career mentoring in this new context, including the role and basis

of similarity, closeness, trust and identification as concluded in the literature review and their relationships with concepts such as habitus, field position, social capital, affect and self-efficacy.

3.5.1 The Surveys

Survey content met the functional requirements. Certain questions existed to meet ethical requirements and are explained further in the ethics section. Each section is explored in more detail here.

Identity. Scheme organisers needed to identify prospective mentors/mentees and requested full name, and for mentees, student identifier. Each participant was given a unique identifier, which the researcher used in lieu of names unless participants gave express permission to share identities e.g. for debriefing or to make interview arrangements.

Demographics.

Mentees. Splitting mentees into two social groups suggested a binary approach. HEIs were practiced at reporting demographic details to Government. Students would be likely to report household income category (needed for university funding applications), prior free school meal entitlement, postcodes (for low participation neighbourhoods (LPNs)) and if first in their immediate family to attend university. This appropriately captured income and a sense of social capital. In practice, there was too much missing LPN data. Consequently, to be considered low SES a mentee needed to report having had at least one of the following: income low enough to secure a bursary, free school meals or the first in their immediate family to go to university. Other data such as parental education/occupation seemed harder to accurately attain. Further demographic data was sought (gender, disability, age, nationality, ethnicity, school type and qualification route) using Office for National Statistics categories wherever available.

Mentors. The researcher suspected that HE expansion, would skew mentor SES towards higher NS-SEC categories. Intra and inter-generational social mobility caused problems for the consistent measurement of SES across career stages. Income, occupation and education were suggested as a good composite measure, however, income questions were too sensitive for scheme organisers, so income data gathering was abandoned. Instead qualification and education data were used, assessing each mentor against the SOC system and NS-SEC, deemed an income/occupation composite. All but five of the participating mentor SOC codes fell into the highest two NS-SEC categories. All mentors were graduates and many postgraduates. Just two groupings were concluded upon based on mentee SES only. Other demographic data was gathered as appropriate, with ages in bands to facilitate disclosure.

Engagement. Engagement was a potential influence on the perceived success of mentoring. With a focus on perception, mentors and mentees rated perceived engagement on a 1-9 scale (1 - not very and 9 – very). Engagement estimates (number, duration) were also requested as a consistency check but ultimately engagement perception was used.

Data to Support Formation of Interview Questions.

Mentees. ‘Before’ survey questions gathered mentee expectations and hopes around mentoring, likes and dislikes of potential mentors and their concept of mentoring and aspects of affect. Their leaning towards psychosocial versus career development functions was assessed by adapting Kram’s workplace mentoring functions to suit HE (Kram, 1985). Mentees were asked about their main aim for after graduation, experience of work so far, career interests and aspirations and everyday interests to provide interview context and help scheme organisers. The post-mentoring survey reflected back on these questions, exploring if hopes and expectations had been met, whether concepts had altered

and asked whether the experience had been comfortable, the match satisfactory and whether they would recommend the scheme to others. Finally, they were asked to reflect on mentoring functions received.

Mentors. Mentors were asked about their motivations for mentoring, their concept of mentoring and what they hoped to gain. They described how they planned to help a mentee, to reveal their understanding of mentoring. Mentors also ranked the adapted version of Kram's mentoring functions to anticipate their preferred mentoring style. Scheme organisers also gathered prior mentoring experience and qualifications to gauge skill. After, they ranked interaction comfort, match satisfaction and if they would recommend mentoring to others. They reflected on the mentoring functions provided, whether hopes had been borne out and if their concept of mentoring had altered.

Measuring Employability Shifts and Outcomes. Employability measures evolved from employability, mentoring and career identity concepts, adapted for undergraduates in HE and focused on immediate outcomes during and shortly after mentoring. The dimensions of employability considered valid from the literature review were; labour market knowledge, self-knowledge, career commitment/clarity, professional networks and networking propensity, workplace exposure, employability skills development, and increased self-efficacy about graduate level work. These straddled psychosocial and career development gains and Kram's HE adapted mentoring functions. Time constraints and the number of questions allowed in the already extensive surveys were limited, reducing the ability to ask multiple questions targeting the same employability gains. Mentees ranked each of their six perceived employability levels before mentoring and in Survey 2 both before-and-after mentoring. Mentors ranked before-and-after levels just in Survey 2. Each employability measure is explored further below with each self-assessed on a scale of 1 (not well developed) to 9 (well developed).

‘Exposure to graduate level work’ gauged participant perception of their amount of exposure to graduate level work, relative to their undergraduate peers in that year. Whereas mentees within the workplace, according to Kram (1985) would be experiencing ‘exposure’, ‘sponsorship’ and ‘challenging work’, it was felt that undergraduates would experience work visits, work shadowing, work experience, internships, placements and possibly early graduate job offers.

‘Clarity of career direction’ tried to capture the clarity and certainty of the mentee’s future career direction. A lack of focus can limit progress and exists as a factor in various employability models (Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007; Bridgstock, 2009). This also connects with Kram’s notion of ‘acceptance’ of one’s employer/career path.

‘Self-belief in ability to secure graduate level work for after degree’ also connects with various employability models (Dacre-Pool & Sewell, 2007), psychosocial mentoring functions (Kram, 1985) and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). The focus would be on graduate level work, key to university’s performance.

‘Sector, job and organisational knowledge’ reflects the idea that career choice relies on information about career options and that increasing such knowledge can better facilitate refinement of career suitability judgements. Interviewees must convince recruiters that they understand the job and are committed, so labour market knowledge seems vital.

‘Ease of interaction with professionals’ attempts to measure how comfortable the mentee feels interacting with professionals in graduate level roles. This measure taps into the cultural capital required to communicate with ease in a professional environment and connects with an important skill that underpins employability often so fundamental to recruitment processes.

‘The likelihood of asking for help with career decisions and job search issues from others (networking)’ is recognised as a key skill for employability and measures how far a mentee is likely to use a social network to improve their employability: their networking propensity. Leveraging connections is important in employability concepts (Tomlinson, 2017) and was considered more important than network size as it identified propensity.

Aspects of employability not measured include self-awareness and employability skills. The researcher felt that career clarity encompassed self-awareness: built on self and career identity. The development of broader skills through mentoring were not well defined in prior research or by employability models and were believed to be too multifarious to capture in these measures. These six measures seemed to broadly capture likely employability shift, covered career development and psychosocial gains, resonated with employability model progression and connected with Kram’s mentoring functions. They were a starting point from which progress and refinement could occur.

Researcher/Scheme Organiser’s Survey Input. The surveys needed to meet the requirements of both the researcher and scheme organisers. Table 8 shows the survey categories with sections in *italic* designed by scheme organisers with limited elements shared with the researcher and other parts designed by and shared with the researcher (given participant permission was granted). This led to some compromises to manage survey length and ensure clarity for participants about what would be shared with the researcher.

Table 8

Sections of Survey Specifying Which Elements Accessible to the Researcher

Mentee survey 1	Mentor survey 1	Mentee survey 2	Mentor survey 2
Introduction/ briefing	Introduction/ briefing	Introduction/ briefing	Introduction/ briefing
<i>Contact/eligibility</i>	<i>Contact/eligibility</i>	<i>Identification</i>	<i>Identification</i>
Motivation/ preferences and aspirations	Motivations and expectations	Reflections on motivations, preferences and aspirations	Reflections on motivations and expectations
Development needs	Skills and experience	Development perceived	Development perceived of mentee and self
Personal details	Personal details		
<i>Mentoring commitment statement</i>	<i>Mentoring commitment statement</i>	<i>Scheme organiser assessment</i>	<i>Scheme organiser assessment</i>
Doctoral permission	Doctoral permission	Doctoral permission	Doctoral permission
<i>Thanks</i>	<i>Thanks</i>	<i>Thanks</i>	<i>Thanks</i>

Notes: Topics in italic not accessible to the researcher.

Survey Testing and Learning. Mentor surveys were tested by two prospective mentors. Survey 1 and Survey 2 for mentees was tested by one previous mentee with Survey 1 also tested by a prospective mentee. The full surveys (scheme and researcher elements) were tested for functionality. Sections were checked for phrasing and understanding, acceptability and ability to respond. Tester demographics were not very varied. Mentee testers included one male, one female with different ethnicities, from different subjects. Mentors included one male, one female, were different ages and from different sectors but were both white-British.

The instructions/briefing were improved regarding data handling and the scheme/research relationship. It was further emphasised that opting out of the research

would in no way influence the ability to mentor, whilst encouraging participation.

Separating research and scheme data sections made the survey too long and complex, so it was decided to provide anonymity and that participants could also specify not to share any data they chose. Permission to share was discussed at the start but repeated and sought at the end after seeing the questions. Questions around motivation, preferences, expectations and aspirations for mentees, and on motivations and expectations for mentors, appeared consistent and accurate. Those focused on development needs and gains, again, seemed to be understood accurately, although mentors needed a 'don't know' adding when assessing mentee employability before-and-after mentoring, as some aspects were too hard to judge. The definition of networking was refined. The researcher ensured employability categories were distinct from one another. One or two demographic questions, although tested by the ONS, needed clearer definition for mentees e.g. school type. Mentor age was altered to broad categories, to encourage completion and 'prefer not to say' was an option for all demographic questions to give complete participant control on sensitive data. Overall, the testing showed questions were easily understood.

3.5.2 The Interviews

The interview questions were designed to explore the richness and diversity of experience of the varied mentees/mentors and to better understand the many influences on the perceived success (or otherwise) of career mentoring. Key potential influences included ethnicity, gender, social background, personality, deeper similarities and relationship evolution. Clear hypotheses were not possible so remaining open to alternatives was key. Semi-structured interviews provided the opportunity to explore theory and remain open to the unexpected, with a focus on the question of 'how'. Interviews would involve co-production with participants and challenges where appropriate, relying on the researcher feeling comfortable and skilled enough in questioning and listening, to focus more precisely on what and how it is said. Reflection

and probing was led more by the interviewee's agenda but also by the theory and prior research. Operating intuitively with a focus on the research question was key. This makes the researcher a traveller with the participant, producing knowledge together and acting flexibly to respond (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). A 'push forward' approach was adopted, by using summarising and interpreting questions and checking the researcher's understanding so as to establish shared meaning firmly to support later interpretation and analysis. Initial questions were open, indirect and easy to answer with light probing but with light challenging where necessary.

Survey Questions Informing Interview Design. Each survey contained qualitative questions to inform mentee/mentor interview questions. This section outlines the learning and its influence on interview design.

For mentees extrinsic/tangible outcomes appeared most valued but increased career clarity seemed important too and connected with confidence about the future. Mentees sought precise sector/job role mentor matches. Comfortable interaction seemed important also, often couched in terms of mentor personality, attitude and skill and potential mentee ease. Needing mentor personality to allow conversation to flow was flagged by many, also the need for mentors to listen. Being open and non-judgemental and not rude or arrogant was frequently highlighted. Relationships, personalities and attitudes would need unpacking. Any disappointments raised in Survey 2 seemed to focus on mentor commitment or interaction discomfort. The search for similar personalities, interests, degree disciplines, career interests and demographics suggested that mentor/mentee comparisons could prove fruitful. Honesty, trust, practical, location and communication issues were also highlighted.

Mentor motivation focused on altruism, often because they had been supported themselves, gained from university life, or simply enjoyed helping. Others had

found career transition hard, so felt empathy for students and wanted to help them avoid their own experience. Mentors wanted to share knowledge and experiences to help mentees reach their potential. Gains typically focused on tangible, extrinsic gains, although a few responses did reference increasing motivation, confidence, power and resilience. Some wanted to develop from the experience and a handful of mentors hoped to facilitate graduates into their sector/industry. Mentors needed to exercise their altruism, so having a mentee with similar needs or at least an opportunity to see them benefit, should provide mentors with a positive perception. Mentor visibility of mentees benefiting seemed important. Exploring similarities and differences between mentees to see how far identification underpinned mentoring processes was important. Exploring outcomes and their influence was also key. Exploring the relative importance of tangible and intangible gains would be illuminating. Identifying if societal/institutional influences manifest themselves would also prove interesting “Conversational analysis reads in each discourse not solely the contingent structures of the interaction as a transaction but also the invisible structures that organize it.” (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 618)

Interview Testing and Learning. Two mentee interview volunteers tested the interview questions. Some questions were amended to increase effectiveness. The first question was altered to encourage discussion of the full journey to university from earliest memories. Space was given for the participant to talk about the role of family rather than specific probing. Question two was altered to close friends to better approximate self-description. The third question had fewer follow up questions to retain openness. As matching methods varied, this question was also reworded. Testers struggled with one follow up question due to some career interests not being well matched, so wording was adjusted. Test mentees enjoyed being interviewed but one felt concerned about how their feedback could influence the scheme, leading to increased reassurance of participants. Questions were readily understood, suggesting clear language and structure. Mentor tester

choice was limited and although varied demographically, their perceived engagement was similar. Mentors were surprised when asked about their own career journeys. This was the first question and was expected to be easy to answer but their reaction questioned this. The order was maintained but emphasising interest in what both parties brought to the relationship in the briefing was expected to help bridge to this question and worked well in practice. Mentors needed encouragement to cover their formative years in answering question one. Mentors typically discussed their career journeys at length, demanding researcher management. It was observed also that one tester referenced mentees prior to that year, throwing up ethical issues, given those mentees had not given permission to share data. The researcher thereafter directed mentors to just speak of mentees who had agreed to share data that year. This, alongside anonymity and not publishing full transcripts, ensured ethics were upheld. When comparing this mentoring to other mentoring experiences, this was also handled carefully so only broad statements were reported. Mentors also demonstrated more limited insight into how mentees gained/felt. First impressions were often via email for mentors and so probing was necessary to learn about their first face-to-face meeting. Asking mentors what role they felt their mentee would pursue and whether they might follow their own career path, was reworded and needed careful handling, given some mismatched career interests. One mentor hadn't seen their mentee for some time and struggled recalling the detail. Both mentors stressed uncertainty about what questions to expect but had enjoyed it. One test mentor sought reassurance about their mentoring, so the researcher was primed to refer interviewees to scheme organisers. Overall, interview questions felt well tested and were amended slightly to optimise effectiveness.

Other Issues. Equipment and documentation, locations, what to wear, how to sit, what refreshments to provide, interview length, voice tone and atmosphere were also considered and tested. Regarding equipment, a digital voice recording device was used.

Manner/tone between the interview and chat afterwards was observed and only varied slightly in most cases suggesting minimal interference. Introducing the briefing note, giving time for the interviewee to read it, asking them to sign and providing a copy worked well. The mentee interview test was in a quiet, semi-public area often used by students. The other was in a small teaching room on campus. Using a venue familiar to students put them at ease. Mentors were interviewed privately in their workplace, on campus or a quiet public location ensuring privacy and they appeared at ease. Whilst aiming for quiet, controlled environments, not all were in practice. Work venues seemed to make some mentors appear in 'work mode', requiring further probing. The interviewer dressed to approximately mirror the interviewee but remained authentic to herself, she adopted a relaxed open manner and sat in a non-confrontational way. Testers were offered tea/coffee and water but participants used them sparingly. Participants were given chocolates afterwards to say thank you for their time. These arrangements seemed appropriate. Test interviews varied from 35 to 47 minutes, so allowing "approximately one hour", including briefing and debriefing, seemed accurate. Rapport was built as the interviewee arrived and the pace was slowed to encourage sharing and reflection. Language was straightforward but formality was slightly higher with mentors relative to mentees. The interviewer showed interest, concern and empathy as appropriate. Use of silence encouraged sharing. Note taking was unobtrusive. This approach seemed to work well in the test interviews. Probing style was deliberately soft and non-confrontational. Although openness was valued, it was accepted that any interaction was constructed between the two participants with perceptions of one another having a bearing. These perceptions could be based on interaction but also their relative embodiment. The test interviews went smoothly but were interrupted in reality by a phone call during one and a fire alarm/evacuation in a nearby building during another. These got back on track quickly afterwards. A pro forma captured interviewer reflections immediately after interviews which supported interpretations.

3.6 Triangulation Across the Research Design

The mixed methods approach enabled certain consistency checking to enhance the design. Rankings of dyad engagement levels by mentors and mentees provided useful cross checks to support interviewee sampling judgements. Estimated interaction also provided a check. With mentees scoring employability before-and-after mentoring, comparison with mentor rankings was helpful even if they were expected to slightly differ. Comments on gains in interviews could also be checked against employability shifts. Broad ratings around dyad comfort, match quality, engagement and potential scheme recommendation could also sense check interview data about interaction. Data regarding expectations, hopes and fears and preferences for mentor characteristics provided a backdrop for interviews and subsequent interpretations. When analysing interviews, researcher interpretations could be supported, by the ‘push forward’ questioning that took place. Cross-checks may give confidence to, or potentially challenge, interpretations. Comparisons between individual survey responses and interview data would not be unproblematic, as the relative freedom of the interview meant that interview data may not map neatly onto survey questions. Some successful triangulation could be employed.

3.7 Ethics and Data Handling

In May 2016, ethical approval was sought using the Institute’s ‘Ethical approval form A’. A statement about the approval received can be found in Appendix G. This section focuses on ethical considerations including related documents, who the participants are and their rights, including the nature of study participation, ability to opt out, consent, participant privacy/anonymity protection from potential harm and debriefing. Data protection is outlined including types of data, storage and disposal. Use of language in surveys and interviews is reviewed as is referencing, sensitivity in data gathering and

decisions regarding data choices and presentation. Finally, objectivity in the research analysis and presentation of findings is described.

3.7.1 Participant Entitlements

The online survey linked to a ‘survey participation information web page’ (Appendix H) which prospective participants were invited to read and met all necessary ethical requirements with a similar web page for prospective interviewees, both approved by the project supervisor. Survey 1 included a consent question at the end. Interview consent was given by signing a consent form (Appendix I) and the participant was given a copy. These provided a freedom of choice to opt in or out with encouragement but not pressure. Right to withdraw at any point was clearly conveyed. No groups drawing special ethical concerns were included. Benefits were shared with prospective participants including gaining a deeper insight into mentoring processes, deeper reflection, plus the minimal costs of interview time. Surveys were online and posed no risk. The interviews were carried out sensitively when emotional topics arose. Interviewees were given their transcript to review and amend. The researcher had concerns that a mentee might share data about a mentor who had not given consent. This was not a problem for Survey 1 but could be for Survey 2. The researcher concluded that to use Survey 2 responses, both dyad members should have consented at Survey 1, however, some may not have completed Survey 2. Data reporting would be anonymous and typically aggregated with interview results anonymised with specific detail removed from potentially identifying quotes.

Data security and results reporting were carefully managed, informed by relevant training. The General Data Protection Regulations (2016) were implemented in May 2018 during this project. Some documentation was created beforehand but care was taken to pre-empt new legislation where possible. Data security issues were conveyed to participants as required. Unique identifiers were used as described previously. Survey 1’s

introduction clarified the scheme organiser's data sharing which enabled them to provide aggregate, anonymous population data statistics to researchers, to judge representation.

Briefing notes confirmed the gathering of private, demographic data: vital to the research. Prior to this research, mentor ethnicity and age was not collected. Having consulted scheme organisers it was concluded this data would be useful to the scheme to analyse mentor diversity and so ethically both the organisers and the researcher could gather and see such data. Interview data had been judged as personal only but in reality was occasionally sensitive. Allowing interviewees to review and approve transcripts and consulting on sharing sensitive data was important but only two mentors asked for minor, specific, non-sensitive, factual alterations.

The survey was produced on 'Online Surveys'. The University had a standard contract with this provider ensuring GDPR requirements were met. This platform and all files were held on password protected (encrypted) documents in private networks. Audio files were immediately downloaded and deleted from recording devices. Data would be held up to 5 years after PhD completion and then destroyed.

3.7.2 Data Gathering, Analysis and Reporting

This section outlines the ethical consideration during data gathering, analysis and reporting. It considers participant selection, interview management and debriefing, survey design, transcribing, systems and approach for data analysis and data reporting dilemmas.

Participant selection was objective. Dyads without chaperones interacting significantly at least once were used. Interviews were purposively sampled to ensure variety demographically and by engagement level. This purposive approach seemed fair and justified given the search for variety.

When constructing shared meaning in interviews, subjectivity is inevitable. Research questions guided choices about data inclusion and enabled continual self-challenge by the researcher. Similarly, literature review findings and theory also focused attention. Pauses were taken to stand back and consider alternative perspectives including discussions with the project supervisor. For more quantitative data, it was important to consider elements that both supported the theoretical lens of interest in terms of likely results but also to analyse contradictory data.

When interviewing, the researcher self-monitored internal reactions and consciously deliberated where to probe. More open probing ‘for any other influences’ was preferred, however, some specific issues arose that did need clear clarification but were left to later in the interview to limit the influence of closed questions. A post interview reflective template enabled the researcher to capture impressions about the interview to refer to during analysis.

Survey participants were offered a telephone debrief after the research and/or a summary of the research findings. Interview participants were asked a debrief question at the end of the interview, providing the opportunity to share feelings or concerns arising and ensured they were not distressed. They were provided with a copy of the transcript.

Survey and interview questions were respectful with personal questions offering a ‘prefer not to say’ option. Probing in interviews was done with care and meaning summarised using the interviewee’s language. Emotional responses to sensitive conversations were carefully managed. Interviewees were reassured that spoken language, when transcribed, was typically unpolished, whilst providing an opportunity to review. The very occasional sentence, demonstrating particularly poor grammar, was adjusted (so as not to change the meaning) to manage participant reputation.

Quantitative data analysis involved the use of Excel spreadsheets and SPSS.

Some survey data and all the interview data used NVIVO to thematically analyse it. The researcher had considered the potential for scheme reputation damage, but, having seen prior positive evaluation results for cohorts, concluded this risk was low. The reporting of shifts in employability gains would ensure participant identity was protected. A lack of statistically significant differences, or otherwise, between different SES groups was unlikely to damage career mentoring's reputation, if the cohort broadly benefited. The goal was scheme optimisation by deepening understanding of key influences. Interviewee labels, such as 'Mentee 1', would secure anonymity alongside avoiding use of identity revealing information.

Survey and interview coding was reviewed at least three times to ensure data consistency: reviewing the codes data were allocated to and ensuring codes were representative of its content on NVIVO. For quantitative data the original spreadsheet was retained in order for a final check before uploading to SPSS and NVIVO. This ensured accuracy after data cleaning and spreadsheet manipulations. Accurate reporting of broad findings were also checked to ensure appropriate scheme representation. Coding was shared and reviewed with the project supervisor.

Overall, the handling of data gathering, analysis and reporting was considered to have met ethical guidelines.

3.8 Data Gathering

3.8.1 Surveys

Survey 1 was provided as a link to prospective mentees/mentors which directed them to a web page hosting the online survey. This webpage was promoted via the University's alumni publications and other recruitment publicity. Mentees saw scheme publicity during autumn term and completed the sign-up form independently. After match

confirmation, they were trained and then contacted their mentor. Mentors, independently volunteered via the sign-up form (Survey 1), were trained, informed by organisers when matched and then contacted by their mentee. Then, for most, mentoring took place. The following July, mentors and mentees were sent a link to Survey 2, the scheme evaluation survey and asked to complete it and were chased two/three times by scheme organisers. Within Survey 1 they read research participant information for the surveys and decided whether to opt in or out. Not all mentors and mentees responded. Within Survey 2, interview participant information was provided and mentors/mentees were asked to volunteer. In practice all interview volunteers shared their name/contact details with the researcher. Scheme organisers collated surveys, worked out matches and kept records of dyad engagement. Certain data was then passed to the researcher in excel, if permission had been given. A few mentors, reluctant to complete the form, gave answers to organisers by phone: they were removed for ethical and reliability reasons.

3.8.2 Interviews

Mentees/mentors were approached in December 2017 and January 2018 via email by the researcher, reminding them they had volunteered, confirming what this would involve and requesting an interview date/time. If unresponsive, the researcher tried two more times, weekly, via email, if responsive, arrangements were made. Participants were advised no preparation was necessary. Interviews were recorded and interviewees signed to agree to this. The Dictaphone was switched on after the interviewee's initial questions had been answered. The device recorded until the final question had been asked and answered. After immediately backing up the recording it was deleted from the device.

Questions were asked in the planned order. Where interview participants volunteered material early that was relevant to later questions, they were given a second chance to add to earlier comments at that later point. Probing was flexibly applied,

depending on what seemed to be intuitively correct to pursue, given the research questions and prior knowledge of the researcher but were led by prior information volunteered by the interviewee. Not every probe was pursued. Interviewees were given space to speak very openly and encouraged to give exhaustive answers. The researcher regularly summarised the meaning constructed so the interviewee could agree or correct the summary. The researcher allowed interviewees to stray from topics for a reasonable time, to allow other material to emerge.

Building rapport allowed participants to relax, with only two mentees seeming more reserved, which compared well to mentor comments. The researcher provided an interview participant information sheet and time to read it, asked if they had any questions and answered them. One or two were concerned about how the research would impact on the scheme and the researcher reassured them about scheme anonymity and the research intentions. Participants then read/signed the interview consent form (Appendix I) and were given a copy. Interview locations were chosen to promote ease and familiarity. The researcher subtly took brief notes of what caught their attention, or points to return to.

Best practice on questioning was adopted. Earlier questions were straight forward to answer with more challenging ones later. Almost all questions were open with only one or two closed to clarify meaning. Both how and what was said was observed, especially when considering whether influences were positive or negative. The researcher actively protected their role. Some mentors felt unsure of their mentoring relationships and the researcher referred concerns to scheme organisers with mentor permission. Mentees needing careers guidance were also referred. Post interview the researcher debriefed interviewees and dealt with questions, no worrying issues were raised.

Researcher reflexivity was important. The researcher felt aware of different participant personalities. Most were open and forthcoming with two mentees more introverted who may have had less mentoring interaction to discuss. The researcher felt aware of relevant literature and theories when comments contradicted them but rather than dwelling on them excessively, checked understanding and moved forward as appropriate. Some interviewees' characteristics resonated with the researcher personally, which they privately acknowledged and briefly reflected on before moving forward. Stereotypical responses also diverted the researcher. Location also had a bearing with one mentor seeming in 'work mode' when interviewed at their work, however, they appeared quite candid too but the researcher reflected and remained aware of it. Some facts also needed checking with interviewees, e.g. details of educational systems overseas. Also, two mentors and one mentee had undertaken qualitative research themselves, which appeared to give them higher degrees of analysis and reflexivity. These points made significant impacts on the interviews.

3.9 Data Analysis

3.9.1 Surveys

Differences in Employability Shifts. From the literature review, it was clear that ambiguous results regarding the influence of SES, gender and ethnicity on mentoring outcomes, made forming a clear hypothesis impossible. However, it was anticipated that social background, gender, ethnicity and level of engagement might form the model of influences to be tested. A pragmatic model suggested that SES, gender and ethnicity may combine to predict differences in each employability measure. This analysis was undertaken using IBM SPSS Statistics 24. The employability rankings from Surveys 1 and 2 were matched up for each participant (by scheme organisers) and measured and the shift calculated, checked and then uploaded to SPSS by the researcher.

Firstly, it would be identified whether the data distribution of the outcome variables were normally distributed or not using norm tests and through examining P-plots. Both Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests were considered. Given the sample size was not large, the Shapiro-Wilk test was applied (Field, 2018). Subsequently, any differences in mean or median shifts would be analysed for statistical significance using *t*-tests or Mann-Whitney U tests, as appropriate. The independent *t*-test would be used because there were two conditions (SES (low SES) and non SES (non-low SES)) to compare and the participants were different for each group. The independent *t*-test would calculate how far the differences in the mean shifts were due to chance as opposed to the difference in the independent variable, in this case SES. The larger the mean difference the more confident the researcher could be that the difference was due to the variation in the independent variable and not chance. These calculations would be undertaken by comparing real differences to those expected due to chance. The effect size for this test is r (which is the square root of t^2 divided by t^2 plus the degrees of freedom). The Mann-Whitney U test would compare the sum of the actual rankings of data to the sum of the rankings that assumed no differences between the two groups being compared. In the latter, the sums of ranks would be equal but perhaps not in the former. Scores would be put in rank order and then allocated a rank (even if they were the same, they were given a different potential rank – or tied rank: the average of the two ranks they would have been given). This would then be compared to the sum of ranks if there were no differences between groups. This would provide the test statistic Z . The effect size was calculated by the square root of Z divided by the square root of N . If statistically significant differences were found, then there would be further analysis of these outcome variables.

Multiple linear regression explores the relationships between more than one independent variable and a dependent variable. It would enable the researcher to predict the value of the outcome variable when the values of the predictor variables such as SES,

gender and ethnicity are known. The ability to use this mechanism would provide an indication of whether this combination of variables might predict various employability gains. Before adopting this statistical technique, checks would be made to ensure the data met all the conditions for multiple linear regression. Once these checks were made, if met, the researcher would proceed to multiple linear regression. They would include:

- Checking the predictor variables were nominal or continuous.
- Ensuring the standard residuals had no extreme outliers via a case wise analysis.
- Checking multi-collinearity between the predictor variables was not a concern, by analysing the collinearity statistics of Tolerance and VIF (variance influence factor).
- Confirming that observations were collected independently which was expected but would formally be reviewed by ensuring the Durbin Watson statistic lay between 1 and 3.
- Ensuring that standardised residuals had normally distributed errors through observation of the relevant histograms and P-P plots.
- Reviewing whether the assumption of homogeneity of variance and linearity had been met through looking at the scatterplot of standardised residuals.
- Frequency statistics could also show if the data met the assumption of non-zero variances.

When undertaking the multiple linear regression, data would be entered so if ethnicity rose by one unit, the number of mentees from a non-white ethnicity increased. For gender, an increase in one unit would increase the number of female mentees. For SES an increase in one unit would increase the number of low SES mentees.

A model combining all predictor variables would be explored and then combinations of these, as appropriate, depending on the results. The regression would take place using the 'enter method'. The ambiguous nature of the literature review research on

diversity in mentoring led to little clarity on which variables might have most power of prediction. This method would assess each predictor as if it was applied after the other predictor variables to assess what it offered beyond the other variables in the model. F scores would be analysed to see the model predicted statistically significant differences in the outcome variable and the size of the effect would be calculated using R^2 . Exploring R^2 would enable some judgement around whether other potential predictors had been missed that may be identified in the interviews. Changes in models would be analysed using F Change significance to see if adding a variable made them more efficient until the most efficient model was identified.

Analysis of Survey Data to Support Interview Questions. These questions were thematically analysed using NVIVO with a summary of the findings relayed earlier in this section.

3.9.2 Interview Data Analysis

As exploratory interviews, analysis would be data driven, with questions structured to enable prior research result themes and theories of interest to be explored alongside the emergence of alternative ideas and explanations. This section outlines data preparation through to coding, inspection for themes and unique insights and further data interpretation.

Data Preparation. Interview audio recordings were transcribed by the researcher, remaining as faithful as possible to the original audio recording, with a few exceptions such as removing names of people, places and other unique, identifying facts. Also, if the reputation of interviewees might be jeopardised by very ‘poor’ language use, attempts would be made to avoid quoting such text. Occurrences of this were rare.

Transcripts (see Appendix J) would be produced using ‘I’ for interviewer or ‘P’ for participant on a fresh line. Brief interjections mid-sentence, would be placed in

square brackets on the same line, e.g. [mmm]. Identifying terms would be replaced with a generic term in curly brackets e.g. {scheme name}. Curly brackets also indicated noticeable emotion and pauses e.g. {both laughed}. Sensitive text for omission would be highlighted before the draft transcript was sent to each participant to review for sensitivities or discrepancies regarding meaning “The objects of a social study should be allowed to be interested, active, disobedient, fully involved in what is said about themselves by others.” (Latour, 2000, p. 116). A ‘push-forward’ analysis during the interview, would provide significant shared meaning that participants could check for accuracy.

Analysis. The researcher prepared by reviewing the interview reflections and then reading the transcript with the research questions and theory in mind but also an alertness for other emerging issues, because “Our bodies may know things that our more reflective intellects are unaware of, and little unpleasant feelings that linger after an interview may be embodied signs that something deserves to be addressed.” (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 117). Issues arising were marked initially in the transcript margin. Transcripts were uploaded to NVIVO and the mark ups were turned into codes. Short code titles were developed to condense them into one umbrella theme, or ‘node’ for the quotes therein. Additional descriptions elaborated the node title to aid coding decisions. Codes started out primarily at one level and were subsequently grouped into two levels as patterns emerged. During this process, the researcher repeatedly reflected ‘does this seem to either facilitate or inhibit how the participant perceived the success, or otherwise, of the mentoring experience?’ This conscious reflection aided coding consistency and accuracy and alongside supervisor discussions/reflection helped to minimise bias.

Once all coded, the researcher paused to reflect and identified complexity requiring deeper consideration. Firstly, an overlap between engagement and bonding coding emerged, making boundary identification challenging. Secondly, the coding of a

pre-existing mentor/mentee characteristic that influenced engagement/bonding needed extra thought to code and were ultimately kept separate to those that may only be problematic during dyad interaction. Some were conscious, self-managed, potentially negative traits. Thirdly, the theme of power arose across nodes and were coded separately to avoid conflation. Coding was revisited and refined several times. Nodes were reviewed to consider second level groupings and whether the node description accurately summarised the evidence it contained. Engagement/bonding, in particular, altered to show different levels of behaviours and process. A final research review involved asking: 1) Did the quote evidence an influence over the perceived success, or otherwise, of the career mentoring experience? 2) Might the factor being raised not have influenced this perception given how it was conveyed. 3) Did the node/sub-node title/description reflect the content accurately? 4) Did any nodes/sub nodes definitions need adjustment? 5) Were there any alternative groupings of the nodes/sub-nodes that made more logical sense? The code book levels are presented in Table 9.

Table 9*NVIVO Code Book for Interview Analysis*

Name	Description	Refs
N1 Antecedents	These are the influences on the process and degree of the formation of a cognitive overlap, or level of identification within the mentoring partnership	0
N1A Individual	These are the individual characteristics and experiences brought by the individual to the relationship that influence the degree of cognitive overlap and identification	0
N1AA Field position	Evidence of where the participant sits within the field of education and the graduate labour market	96
N1AB Economic capital	The pressures or lack of pressure from your financial situation	29
N1AC Social capital	Evidence of drawing on support from beyond the immediate family into wider family and schools for instance	25
N1AD Cultural capital	Evidence of impact and tastes that may provide evidence of a certain social position in society	80
N1AE Employability aware	Evidence of an awareness of the need to develop employability through your decisions and actions	15
N1AF Self-identity	Evidence around formation of, aspects of or strength of self-identity	75
N1AG Career identity formation	Evidence of career identity being actively formed via various activities	49
N1AH Career choice style	Evidence of a particular approach to career decision making	6
N1AI Concept of career	Evidence that a new understanding has formed about what career is. This may take the form of issues around understanding career is more than just your job, that a job is not for life, that career is a journey and so on.	3
N1AJ Personal attributes	Evidence of aspects of personality or other attributes that may influence how well the mentorship works including wanting Career development of psychosocial style mentoring	78
N1AK Demographics	Anything clearly related to age, gender, class, ethnicity that may influence the success or otherwise of the partnership	17
N1AL Mentor skills	Characteristics of the mentor that may influence mentoring skills	27

Name	Description	Refs
N1B Relative - interpersonal	These are the relative, interpersonal characteristics or experiences that influence the cognitive overlap and identification	0
N1BA Engaging personalities	Needing mentor to be engaging to sustain relationship	4
N1BB Demographics	Relative demographics, class, age, gender, between mentor and mentee	5
N1BC Balance of power	Whether there is joint control or not in relationship	8
N1BD Field position difference	Difference in field positions relative to labour market/society	6
N1BE Communication formality	How formal communications are	6
N1BF Empathy	Ability to empathise with each other	2
N1BG Intermediary	Use of an intermediary to bridge distance in field positions	1
N1BH Commitment to mentoring	Commitment to the mentorship	2
N1BI Role confusion	When roles in relationship vary from mentor to supervisor to other roles and cause issues	3
N1BJ Mentor assumptions or expectations	Assumptions or expectations mentor brings to relationship	3
N1C Scheme, institutional level	These are the antecedents that are characteristics and experiences of the scheme and the institution that influence the cognitive overlap or identification	0
N1CA School role-models	Teachers or others at school that inspired the mentee and gave them someone to aspire to be like	2
N1CB Multiple mentees	When a mentor has more than one mentee which creates an influential dynamic on the mentoring relationship	5
N1CC Employer stakeholders	Influence of the employer of the mentor in some way on the relationship	1
N1CD Match quality	Perception of match quality and process	9

Name	Description	Refs
N1CE International mentoring	Where the mentoring relationship has been influenced by its international nature	11
N1CF Communication methods	Where ways of communicating effect the perception of the mentorship	7
N1CG Workplace university demands	When work or university demands effect perceived quality of mentorship	13
N1CH Access to wider mentoring network	How mentees gain from interacting with other mentors	2
N1CI Scheme organisational support	How support from scheme organisers positively influence the perception of being mentored.	1
N1CJ Scope of mentoring purpose	How far the support offered by the mentor is managed by the established scheme purpose	3
N1CK Influence of mentor training on mentor behaviour	How far mentor training influences the behaviour in the relationship and affects the perceived success of mentoring	4
N1D Graduate labour market – societal	These are the antecedents sourced in the graduate labour market or society that influence the degree to which a cognitive overlap or identification takes place	0
N1DA Memorable societal events	Big events that have happened that had an impact on society widely including our mentees and mentors	4
N1DB Lack of placement or jobs in labour market	Lack of temporary or longer term opportunities in the area of the labour market of interest to the mentee	2
N1DC Lack of government investment	Job of interest not available due to lack of government investment	2
N2 Evidence of behaviour underpinning relationship	This is the behaviour of the mentor and mentee that leads to initiation and cultivation and ultimately separation of the relationship	0
N2A Initiation	Behaviour demonstrating that the relationship is being initiated through spending time together, sharing and trivial recognition	30

Name	Description	Refs
N2B Cultivation	This is behaviour that shows that the relationship is being cultivated through noticing similarities even more and recognising deeper similarities	48
N2C Separation	Evidence of behaviours relating to separation of mentor and mentee	8
N3 Evidence of processes leading to cognitive overlap	These are examples that show some form of cognitive overlap between the mentor and mentee's selves	0
N3A Projection	Evidence that the mentor or mentee is creating views about their partner to fill knowledge gaps	15
N3B Recognition	Evidence that the mentor or mentee are recognising aspects of the self in the other	59
N3C Integration	Evidence that the mentee or mentor is changing their views of their 'self' to integrate characteristics of 'the other'	16
N4 Evidence of relationship productivity	This is evidence of the relationship delivering or not delivering outcomes	0
N4A Traditional	Evidence of mentoring outcomes that fit the traditional mentoring relationship e.g. basic career development and psychosocial support	100
N4B Relational	Evidence that there are outcomes showing learning and growth, potentially mutual and career development	23
N4C Dysfunctional	Evidence of outcomes from the relationship that show it is dysfunctional, such as bullying, sabotage, over-identification	21

Developing case summaries enabled the researcher to see how individual quotes fitted into participant mentoring journeys. Where there was contradiction between individual quotes and the broad experience of the mentee, the researcher tried to disentangle this and make sense of it by using their own interpretation of the interview and judging the likely dynamic of these influences.

Interpretations would be compared to survey data too, including using overall ratings of engagement, match quality and comfort in the relationship to help assess whether influences had been positive or negative. This also enabled comparisons to whether participants would recommend the scheme and outcome ratings across the six employability measures. This provided useful triangulation to appropriately guide interpretations.

3.10 Data Reporting

3.10.1 The Survey

Reporting of the survey results centred on the tests used to find out how far the predictor variables predicted the shifts in the employability outcome variables, aiming to be clear and provide complete transparency regarding the processes followed, tests used and results found. This focused on the mean and mean rank differences and their statistical significance and also the multiple linear regression analysis results to see if the model combining SES, gender and ethnicity, or combinations thereof, were efficient predictors of the outcome variable.

Other survey results were reported including the demographics of each mentee interview participant, their degree subjects and school type. Mentor interview participants also had demographic details reported alongside occupation and the SES of their mentee. Perceived engagement ranking and estimated engagement for both mentor and mentee (where possible) were also shared. This survey data provided a useful backdrop for the interviews and rationalised sampling decisions. Further survey data was shared in the form of employability shifts to enable triangulation to the interviews. Match quality and comfort of interaction ratings were also referenced in the qualitative data sections, again to triangulate when analysing interview data. This helped readers better understand the participants who constructed meaning with the researcher.

3.10.2 The Interviews

The qualitative results emerged during coding into an insightful pattern of influences on the perceived success of career mentoring. This pattern was presented as a potential ‘model of career mentoring in HE’ in the discussion chapter and helped inform the result reporting structure. Before exploring the results from the thematic analysis, interview participant details would be shared along with vignettes to holistically capture each mentee’s unique journey with their mentor. This chapter focused on the mentee experience and the joint understanding constructed with them. Qualitative patterns formed during the thematic analysis would be narrated, incorporating pertinent exemplar quotes to provide supporting evidence. The movement from vignettes to the narrative sharing of the themes allows the reader to experience and connect with the participants’ meanings for themselves. Rarely, more emotive or antagonistic evidence was not presented as a quote to manage impact and protect those involved but this did not prevent the true meanings being shared. All schemes have mentoring relationships with issues that need resolving on occasion, so revealing some of these anonymously would not damage scheme reputation. Decisions were taken, mindful of not creating misleading conclusions. This reporting approached a ‘systems approach’ in terms of the final model presented.

With the potential to influence other scheme organisers, the researcher aimed to convey results clearly to avoid misunderstandings and believed some results may impact practice. Any potential pragmatic generalisation needed careful explanation. Similarly, results showing the potential limitations of mentoring for employability development and hence contribute to the potential for social mobility may make investors question funding. It seems realistic that social mobility is a challenge, whatever intervention is applied but better understanding of the nature of that challenge would prove a positive contribution to knowledge.

Qualitative analysis of survey questions that fed into interview question design were analysed and presented in the interview design section above, as it was a precursor to the main data gathering through the interviews.

3.10.3 Potential Strengths and Limitations of Approach.

This mixed methods research project had the potential to harness the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research. The survey would focus on researching whether students from different social backgrounds benefited from career mentoring in HE similarly, or not. It focused on one real life scheme to manage context and on the perceived levels of employability and how these changed from before to after mentoring. It would require an ‘ex post facto’ approach, analysing authentic mentoring. The approach took a longitudinal perspective, before-and-after a year of mentoring, something considered lacking by researchers in the field. The quantitative analysis achieved high response rates by embedding surveys into the normal scheme cycle.

The newly created set of measures of employability gain for mentees was tailored to the HE environment and based on the conceptualisation of employability and how this related to the concept of mentoring and would operationalise employability gain in this specific context. Focusing on mentee perception would take on the strengths of tapping into their self-perception which would be assumed to influence behaviour going forward, and yet allowed for quantification. However, the number of questions that could be posed for each aspect of employability was constrained by survey length and time.

The semi-structured interviews would provide complementary qualitative data to the quantitative data. The richness of information would provide detail about the complexity of mentoring interactions and the many influences at play at different levels. Interviews would be artful, using the listening, questioning, rapport building, summarising, reflexivity and one-to-one experience of the researcher, enabling them to focus more on the

research questions, rather than interview technique. The same researcher undertook all the interviews, transcribing and coding/analysis, which meant that, alongside reflection with the project supervisor and multiple checking and self-challenge on interpretation, provided consistency and quality.

Transparency of approach was sought within ethical constraints. For interview findings, the ability to generalise was never sought. They were expected to have intrinsic value to see the mechanisms at play for different individuals in particular situations, the power to show how complex these influences can be and the power to challenge the assumptions of scheme organisers. Some pragmatic generalisation might be argued, if interview themes revealed broader insights. Those extracting learning would need to consider scheme and institutional similarities and differences, and even mentor/mentee dyad traits. Research of career mentoring in HE is limited and one power of these interview results would be the provision of a potential model to explore and test going forward.

In terms of limitations, the measures created to quantify employability might require further refinement going forward. Before-and-after measures have their strengths and weaknesses and might suffer from a shift in knowledge about what employability gains are possible and could be based on multiple questions for each aspect. Mentees from different social backgrounds may well have different perceptions of high versus low employability. This could be explored further prior to study replication. To be able to generalise from the research sample confidently to the scheme as a whole, the survey sample needed to be representative. Using an 'ex post facto' design made this challenging. Offering the option to withhold demographic information led to considerable missing data. Focusing on one specific institution, would inevitably prevent full generalisability but might allow a level of pragmatic generalisation as enough institutional and scheme detail are provided. The strength of the model advocated was questioned given

the inconclusiveness of much mentoring research reviewed. Not including a personality measure seemed potentially detrimental. However, the mixed methods approach helps here as the interviews would reveal further influences to test in future regression models. Finally, relying on Survey 2 to quantify perceived engagement levels, would mean that how representative the sample was in terms of dyad perceived engagement level was impossible to know.

The interviews also had some limitations. Being a career counsellor, a prior mentoring scheme organiser and psychologist, the researcher worked to stick to the researcher role and be reflective about how much to focus on emotional aspects of dyad encounters. The consistency of having one researcher do everything left the study more open to bias, although the researcher worked hard to self-challenge coding/interpretations, was vigilant and self-reflective and discussed analysis at length with the Project Supervisor. Probing was inconsistent, following leads laid down by the interview but consistency was not the overall goal. This interviewee centred approach led to richer results, based on interviewee offerings interpreted by the researcher into shared, constructed meaning.

Any research design contains potential strengths and weaknesses, often due to ontological and epistemological choices. The focus here would be on interview craft and interpretation alongside analysis of survey data in a specific institutional context which would provide a starting point for future research in mentoring in HE.

3.10.4 The Power of the Mixed-Methods Approach

The rich learning from the semi-structured interviews of a small but varied range of mentees and mentors, combined with the clear-cut results based on numerous participants ranking their perceived employability shifts, should create more useful outcomes. The approach enables triangulation between each part of the study, allowing a

check on some interview interpretations using individual survey responses, if well aligned. The survey would assist with interview design, using high samples from the scheme population. The interviews would explore the wide range of potential influences, including social background, and pave the way to present a ‘model of career mentoring in HE’ for future testing. If the model to be tested turns out to be weaker than hoped, the interviews would suggest further variables to test and move the understanding of mentoring and social diversity in HE forward.

3.11 Reliability and Validity

3.11.1 Reliability

Surveys. Surveys sought to close down and discover the answers to specific questions such as differences in employability shifts but also to explore the range of thinking amongst mentors and mentees. This led to a varied approach to the reliability of the survey.

Several questions were explored in multiple ways, such as engagement. Mentors and mentees ranked their perception of engagement and estimated the number and duration of meetings, for instance. There was considerable checking and testing of briefing notes and question text to ensure relatively consistent interpretation of meaning by participants. This included ensuring basic, precise language use with more complex language defined using supporting information. Testing by more people with more varied characteristics would have been desirable.

Interpretation of qualitative questions using NVIVO, underwent several coding checks and reflective discussions with the Project Supervisor. One researcher undertook all coding and analysis.

Demographics questions used well tested ONS questions and categories.

Exploration of psychosocial versus career development styles, used questions adapted for this context from Kram's mentoring functions and two other instruments (Kram, 1985; Noe, 1988; Scandura, 1992)

Employability measure scales, and several other measures such as engagement, used a 1-9 scale providing a central point. Wording of scale limits encouraged full use of the scale. No points along it were defined to approximate consistent spacing between scale points. Guidance on comparison groups were provided to enabled scale scores to be selected. The 'before' employability measures were taken both before-and-after mentoring to enable test/retest analysis but in retrospect the time lapse seemed too big. Best practice encourages scales to be reversed at times, however, with only 6 items in a row, the researcher opted to maintain one direction to minimise participant error. There was no evidence of a problem with repetitive marking of the same rank by individuals.

Survey administration was consistent with all mentees/mentors accessing it remotely via a web link accompanied by a briefing note. This lack of personal contact was hoped to facilitate sensitive data sharing. Of course, the precise circumstances for each participant when completing the survey could not be controlled.

At Survey 1 most mentors and all mentees had little scheme loyalty but perhaps had more so for Survey 2. This may have influenced responses for the second survey, however, participants were heavily encouraged to be honest and open and were reassured of the intentions of optimising scheme effectiveness in the interests of mentees and the institution longer term.

Interviews. The concept of reliability emerged from the positivist world view of experiments which focuses on consistency and replication. For the interviews, reliability is reconceptualised to take on a more social constructionist perspective which

seeks to assure those reading the research of researcher quality and morality alongside elements of consistency and rigour. When interviewing participants, there is a natural tension between consistent questioning versus respecting each participant as an individual and constructing meaning jointly and uniquely in narrative with the researcher. This creates a juxtaposition between consistency and knowing when to follow instinct to pursue, probe and reveal more about the individual in relation to the research questions.

Consistency is important but should not suffocate interviewer creativity. The researcher created questions for each interview section with bullet points for potential probing. She asked every main question in order but did not close down the participant if they strayed into a later topic but instead returned to that topic in the set order so participants could add more. Follow-up questions and probing varied by participant. This gave the interviews relative consistency but a degree of tailoring and creativity. The questions framed the discussion with topics concluded from the literature review but with questions that were relatively open to enable the participant to share what they felt was relevant. The researcher encouraged each participant to be exhaustive on each topic but recognised that even the questions would be partly directive.

The researcher used summarising extensively in a ‘push forward’ approach so shared meaning constructed in the interview was systematically verified by the participant. This could be seen as ‘leading’ the participant but care was taken to accurately summarise using the participant’s language. Also, the participant had been briefed to be open and honest and reminded that it was a deeper understanding of their experiences alone that could help optimise the scheme. Indeed, the dialogue enabled these summaries to be refined and challenged. This, alongside anonymity, ability to withdraw and control over the transcript was hoped to create a relatively ‘honest’ sharing of beliefs.

Consistency was achieved in this study in several ways. The researcher was the only person involved in interviewing, transcribing and interpreting and so inter-

subjective reliability was not relevant. Consistency was supported through always asking the main questions, alongside some variation in probing. Interviews took place in similar locations with the same refreshments, recording equipment, clothing and friendly approach. Transcribing rules were consistently applied including exhaustive, verbatim transcription, using correct punctuation. Repeated checks were undertaken at all stages to ensure consistency including when coding themes.

Questions used to interrogate data when analysing for themes were extensively and repeatedly returned to. The morality of the researcher was demonstrated by embracing the exploration of unusual subjects which did not provide results that fitted with expected themes.

The timing of the research interviews was designed to ensure in depth reflection did not interfere with the surveys, and recognised mentoring as a dynamic process. Relationship phases were expected to evoke different emotions and views at different times, so looking back across the entire relationship and exploring these changes was deliberate. This acknowledges a consensus view of interviews with the shared meaning constructed as only a stage in a discussion rather than a destination in itself (Lyotard, 1984, in Brinkmann and Kvale, 2015).

The idea of reliability as trust and morality as well as consistency is also the reason why sharing important information about both the researcher and the participants is so important, so those reading the research can better understand how the shared meaning was constructed between them.

So when considering the reliability of the interviews, consistency was sought where appropriate and morally justified decisions were taken throughout the research whilst endeavouring to transparently construct shared meaning with participants about the topics outlined but not to suffocate the uniqueness and differences found in that

shared meaning. The skills of the researcher were supported by consistent application of rules where appropriate and extensive checking. This created results that could be trusted.

3.11.2 Validity

Surveys. Survey validity was supported in various ways. As mentioned above, surveys used the standard questions from the ONS for demographics, enjoying the testing they had received. Mentoring styles questions were also based on prior surveys as mentioned above. Employability measures had been constructed based on a careful examination of employability conceptualisation, prior research in HE and also research into mentoring gains and so had strong theoretical underpinnings. The employability measures used multiple items to measure shifts in employability but time pressures of mentor/mentee recruitment phases and limits on survey length meant that using multiple items for each sub-level of employability and testing/analysing them for validity with a large group of mentors/mentees was not possible. The surveys were tested on prospective mentors and mentees but a larger, more varied set of testers would have been desirable. Questions were made as simplistic as possible and understanding of question meaning was tested. Extra information provided definitions for less simplistic terms. Interpretations of survey results were checked and challenged several times to avoid bias and were discussed with the project supervisor. Survey validity rested heavily on use of theoretical underpinnings, good language use, testing and checks and challenges on interpretation.

Interviews. Traditionally validity is about the end product of research being ‘correct’ and that what the researcher intended to explore has in fact been explored and relies on the idea of ‘truth’ and a focus on outputs. For qualitative research, the reconceptualisation of validity as about the quality of the craft employed permeating every stage of a research project and advocates that if all the inputs are of high quality, then the output will be too (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). This focus is on a seven-stage process

(Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Beyond ‘thematizing’ (ensuring the research is reliant on sound assumptions) and ‘designing’ (selecting an appropriate research design and methods) which have been covered already, the following stages are highlighted.

‘Interviewing’ references how far participant responses can be trusted and interview quality. After interview testing, attempts were made through the briefing notes and interview introductions, to reassure participants that the research wouldn’t damage the scheme but rather aimed to optimise it through honest analysis of experiences. This, alongside anonymity, encouraged participants to be open with their perceptions of their experiences. The order of the questions placed straight forward questions first to enable participants to warm up and open up. However, within the social constructionist approach, it was accepted that who the interviewer was and the institution would influence how the participant constructed that meaning with the interviewer. Interview style was neither overly formal nor overly relaxed in line to reflect the anticipated participant-interviewer relationship. Questions were asked and followed up/probed with one eye on the research questions and literature review findings and the other with an open mind. When answers did not fit literature review findings, they were embraced. A balance was struck between being led wholly by the participant and addressing topics of interest. Some mental checks on consistency across the interview and survey findings took place, to gain a deeper understanding of the nuances of the participant’s beliefs. Challenges were made, often to ask ‘what else’ to ensure all views were shared. Patience and a measured pace encouraged this and participant pauses, interruptions and disagreements were welcomed as helping to achieve a thorough, detailed understanding. The ‘push forward’ approach, again, enabled continual checking and refinement of shared meaning to occur. The focus was on understanding what their current point of view was now mentoring had finished and why they had that view.

‘Transcribing’ focuses on accurate, consistent conversion from audio to text, including the approach selected. The researcher aimed to transcribe text verbatim and inserted punctuation accurately along with any emotional or physical responses that took place. The audio recordings were very clear, making transcribing straightforward, the repeated playing of some passages secured a high level of accuracy, along with checking.

‘Analysing’ challenges whether the questions used to interrogate data are valid and logically interpreted. In this study, the researcher used the research questions and subsidiary questions to fully explore the interview data. Repeatedly interrogating the data with questions such as ‘Did this experience influence the perception of mentoring?’, ‘Was the influence inhibiting or facilitating?’ and “Does this relate to social background?”, for example, was important when initially identifying passages in the text to explore further, discussing those interpretations with the project supervisor and coding them. Analysing codes and defining them to ensure quotations were well represented involved extensive checking. Re-evaluating the relationships of the codes was undertaken three times to ensure the coding hierarchy reflected emerging findings. Reflecting on coding structures with the project supervisor supported validation.

These ‘validation processes’ were selected to fit the social constructionist approach. Transparency was valued, bias was challenged through methodical and rigorous self-challenge and reflection alongside the project supervisor and multiple checks were undertaken at every stage. This process accepted the subjective nature of the researcher and the goal of communicative validity but aimed to optimise the quality and integrity of data gathering and interpretation.

‘Reporting’ on the data captured the key results but also embraced and represented the more surprising findings. Reporting acknowledged that different readers had different interests and assumptions. Transparency about the researcher, research design

and methods enabled this. This approach reflected the researcher's view that investing in HE interventions should be done with the true impact and cost of that intervention and the implications and outcomes for both the individual and the institution in mind, acknowledging the mentee as one of many beneficiaries. This motivation, as a prior mentoring scheme organiser, would work towards enabling schemes to be optimised and their true nature revealed so mentees, mentors and HEIs can enter into them knowledgeably, morally and decisively.

3.12 Research Methods Triangulation

This research design brought the option of combining two research methods. This meant that when interpreting the interviews, in particular, the survey provided a useful resource for supporting validity. The researcher explored the mentor/mentee interview participant's survey responses before interviews for context. Similarly, when interpreting/thematising the interviews, the researcher looked to survey responses where appropriate, to aid interpretation. Questions such as the employability shifts, broad scheme assessment such as match quality, engagement and scheme recommendation all contributed. The two methods, unsurprisingly, did not always align, ratifying the genuine relative freedom of interview participants. The final interpretations of the results across the methods employed allowed the researcher to feel more confident in their conclusions. This was not without complexity and a need for care in how they were combined but did add value to the rigour of the work.

3.13 Conclusion

The research design for this study accepted participant perceptions as real. Its dual focus of comparing the outcomes of two social groups and exploring what influenced the perceived success (or otherwise) of mentoring led to a pragmatic world-view (Creswell, 2013) and a mixed methods approach. This provided two unique

standpoints from which to explore career mentoring in this relatively new context. The researcher shared their ease with this pragmatic design but also their openness to honestly exploring the value of career mentoring in HE.

Surveys and semi-structured interviews were selected to reflect the approach broadly suited to each research question leading to a tighter search for the ‘truth’ for outcomes for each social group and a deeper exploration for the richness of experiences of mentoring and the influences on perceptions of its success or otherwise. With only one researcher only online surveys were practical and limited to 12 interviews.

The study focused on one HEI and took an ‘ex-post-facto’ approach. Eligible participants sharing data and completing both surveys were included with interviewees purposively sampled from those giving interview consent in this sample. The survey sample was representative of gender and close to representative of ethnicity but those not reporting low SES indicators were overrepresented and 13% of income data was missing. Purposive sampling of six mentee and six mentor interviewees led to a good mix by engagement level, ethnicity, gender, age and SES with varied occupational sectors for mentors and varied subjects and school types for mentees.

Surveys were sent before-and-after mentoring with interviews shortly after. Surveys were designed carefully to gather participant identities and demographics, engagement data, to gather data to inform interview questions as well as measure employability shifts. There was time pressure to launch Survey 1 and limitations on length given the researcher was supplementing scheme sign up and evaluation forms. Semi-structured interviews relied on the co-production of meaning by the researcher travelling with the participants. Questioning was consistent across interviews but follow up and probing varied based on participant answers and researcher intuition. A ‘push-forward’ approach was taken to check meaning. Both survey and interviews were tested with

learning implemented. Interview context was also deliberated on and planned. The approach allowed for triangulation across the two research methods especially for consistency checks and support for interview interpretation. Ethical approval was sought and given, participant entitlements were carefully met, including careful consideration for any potential to damage participant and scheme reputations.

Data gathering processes were outlined including the online approach to surveys and face-to-face interviewing. Data preparation involved checking and cleansing of data prior to statistical analysis using SPSS and verbatim transcriptions of interview recordings.

Data analysis pursued close statistical analysis of employability shifts using SPSS *t*-tests and Mann-Whitney U tests as appropriate following by the testing of models incorporating gender, ethnicity and SES as a predictor of employability shifts using multiple linear regression after ensuring conditions had been met. The most efficient model would then be concluded upon. Analysis of qualitative survey data and interviews were through thematic analysis using NVIVO. Data coding revealed thematic relationships to be discussed.

Data reporting focused on how far predictor variables explained any employability outcome differences between the two social groups and the breadth and categories of influences on the perceived success, or otherwise, of mentoring. Mentee vignettes conveyed the holistic mentoring journey for mentees and a model of career mentoring in HE is presented.

The strength of the design was in the power to triangulate the methods. Also, the focus on one scheme to embrace the importance of context. Use of actor perception and its assumed influence on behaviour was also vital, whilst still attempting to calculate differences in outcomes. The rich interview data allowed a better understanding

of why differences may have occurred, illuminating the experience for mentees and mentors. Transparency of approach would assist pragmatic generalisation

Limitations of the design were the lack of sample control for the surveys and use of one question for each sub-level of employability measured. However, this provided a base from which future measures could evolve. A focus on one HEI inevitably doesn't allow full generalisation which was as expected. Not including a personality measure, due to the length of the survey, also limited the potential power of the model analysed. The interviews were not designed to be generalisable but gave great insight into influences in this underexplored context for mentoring.

Considerable efforts were made to support reliability and validity of the study, however, interview validity focused on quality of input and the interview craft. Changing nuances of views were accepted as normal and objective truth was not sought, the construction of shared meaning was the goal. The 'push-forward' approach supported validity and issues of trust and morality of the interview were paramount. Throughout the survey and interview, checks and challenges were made of interpretations as well as researcher-supervisor discussion and reflection.

Data shared sought to share whether social groups benefitted similarly but also to represent the breadth of findings discovered about those influences to the perceived success of mentoring whilst sharing the holistic experiences of the mentee journey.

Chapter 4 Survey Results: Perceived Gains by Socioeconomic Status

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the quantitative results that aimed to understand whether mentees reporting low SES indicators had different sized shifts in employability over the period of mentoring, compared to those mentees not reporting low SES indicators. The perceived employability measures, the outcome variables defined earlier are; work exposure, career clarity, self-belief, labour market knowledge, interaction ease and networking propensity. Perceived engagement was also included, as it was considered a potential confounding variable. Predictor variables of interest were primarily SES but also gender and ethnicity, which were combined to create test models. Outcome variables were considered continuous due to the 1-9 point scale used. Predictor variables were categorical.

This chapter firstly provides a brief overview of the research participants before focusing down on the survey participants. Interview participant details are provided in chapter five. Thereafter, it outlines the quantitative analysis of the survey results. It identifies whether the data distribution of the outcome variables were normally distributed or not. Parametric and non-parametric descriptive data are presented. Subsequently, any differences in mean or median shifts are analysed for statistical significance using the appropriate independent *t*-tests or Mann-Whitney U tests with the results provided. It was anticipated that multiple linear regression could analyse whether SES, gender and ethnicity predicted differences in perceived employability. The data was checked to ensure it met the conditions for using multiple linear regression. The results of these checks are presented and show these conditions were met. The next section presents and explores the multiple linear regression results to identify which models of prediction were considered statistically significant and the explanatory power of those models. These results are then brought together in the final summary.

4.2 Participant Information

The research participants were part two undergraduates being mentored by alumni mentors from one UK HEI in 2016/17. Mentees represented different social backgrounds and engagement levels to explore a diverse range of experiences having engaged significantly at least once to consider themselves to have experienced mentoring. Mentors must have had at least one significant interaction with an eligible mentee. This defines the eligible population for the ‘before’ survey and interview participant details are outlined in chapter 5.

4.2.1 Survey Participants

There were 214 eligible mentees eligible for the survey and 184 agreed to share data, of which 70 responded to both surveys. There were 161 eligible mentors for the survey and 126 shared data at Survey 1 of which 66 also responded at Survey 2 with some mentoring multiple mentees. This provided good response rates.

4.3 Quantitative Results

4.3.1 Testing for Normal Distribution

To present appropriate descriptive statistics, it was important to ascertain whether these results were normally distributed or not. This involved using the Shapiro-Wilk test statistic to detect differences from normality. A non-statistically significant result confirmed a normal distribution and the results are shown in Table 10. These results suggest normal distributions for self-belief $p = .74$ (non-low SES), $p = .24$ (low SES), $p < .05$ and ease of interaction and $p = .183$ (non-low SES) and $p = .40$ (low SES), $p < .05$. The remaining outcome variables had either mixed or statistically significant results.

Table 10

Tests of Normality for Perceived Shifts in Employability Measures and Perceived Engagement by Mentees

Employability shifts/ perceived engagement	Socioeconomic status	Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.
Perceived engagement	Non-low SES	.925	29	.042
	Low SES	.895	35	.003
Work exposure	Non-low SES	.918	29	.027
	Low SES	.974	35	.564
Career clarity	Non-low SES	.929	29	.051
	Low SES	.931	35	.030
Self-belief	Non-low SES	.976	29	.743
	Low SES	.961	35	.242
Labour market knowledge	Non-low SES	.962	29	.376
	Low SES	.919	35	.013
Ease of interaction	Non-low SES	.950	29	.183
	Low SES	.968	35	.395
Networking propensity	Non-low SES	.918	29	.027
	Low SES	.922	35	.016

Notes: SES means socioeconomic status

4.3.2 Descriptive Statistics

The means and standard deviations provided for the outcome variables self-belief and ease of interaction are presented in Table 11. The median ranks are presented for the remaining non-parametric outcome variables in Table 12.

What is noticeable across Tables 11 and 12 is that the mean or median shift for those mentees reporting low SES indicators are, on average, larger for all outcome variables apart from ease of interaction where it is marginally, .06, smaller and work exposure and networking propensity where the median shifts were the same for both SES groups, at 3 and 0 respectively. This suggests that these mentees, regardless of social background are achieving, on average, substantial increases in work exposure and yet no major gains in propensity to network through this career mentoring scheme. Having substantial work exposure gains, on average, is a positive result for mentoring scheme organisers and is notably a tangible career development outcome. Perhaps reaching out to a mentor suggests that all those mentees involved were already willing to seek support from others to build employability and so it may not be surprising that the networking propensity figure has not changed.

Another important result is that for self-belief, those reporting low SES indicators had, on average, an increase of 1.6 points more than those not reporting low SES ($M = 1.43$, $SD = 1.899$) and that those not reporting low SES indicators actually showed an average marginal drop in self-belief ($M = -.17$, $SD = 2.406$). This might suggest that when faced with the reality of the labour market via mentoring, the self-belief of those whose immediate family went to university and had reasonable levels of income have their self-belief, on average marginally tempered but those whose immediate family did not go to university and had struggled with low incomes or even needed free school meals, found their self-belief, on average, rising.

Table 11

Frequency Tables Showing Mean and Standard Deviation for Mentee Perceived Employability Shifts in Self-belief and Ease of Interaction

Employability shift	Statistic	Non-low SES (n=29)	Low SES (n=35)
Self-belief	Mean	-.17	1.43
	Standard deviation	2.406	1.899
Ease of interaction	Mean	.17	.09
	Standard deviation	1.965	2.254

Notes: SES means socioeconomic status

Table 12

Median Ranks for Mentee Perceived Shifts in Employability Measures without Normal Distributions

Employability shift/ perceived engagement	SES	Median rank	n
Mentee perceived engagement	Non-low	6	29
	Low	7	35
Work exposure	Non-low	3	29
	Low	3	35
Career clarity	Non-low	0	29
	Low	2	35
Labour market knowledge	Non-low	1	29
	Low	2	35
Networking propensity	Non-low	0	29
	Low	0	35

Notes: SES means socioeconomic status. n = number of participants

Mentees reporting low SES indicators also appear to typically engage slightly more (low SES *Mdn* = 7, non-low SES *Mdn* = 6). They also seem to gain more, typically, in terms of career clarity (low SES *Mdn* = 2, non-low SES *Mdn* = 0) suggesting that the low SES mentees may have had more to gain in terms of defining their career identity compared to non-low SES mentees who may, typically, have had clearer career identities already given their exposure to graduates roles and graduates via their immediate family. Low SES mentees, on average, also reported higher gains in labour market knowledge (low SES *Mdn* = 2 non-low SES *Mdn* = 1) perhaps suggesting that low SES mentees may have had more to learn and less prior exposure to the graduate labour market relative to their higher SES peers.

Interestingly, the areas where low SES mentees had comparable gains, typically, compared to those not reporting low SES indicators seem to be career development based, whereas those where they typically gained more, tend to be more psychosocial. Perhaps they are more likely to be experiencing challenges to their assumptions about graduate roles and their identity. Considering whether these differences were statistically significant was the next crucial step.

4.3.3 Looking for Statistically Significant Differences

T tests checked for differences in shifts between SES groups for self-belief and ease of interaction and Mann-Whitney U tests for the remaining non-parametric data. In terms of the results of the independent *t* tests, Table 13 shows that Levene's test for equality of variances is not statistically significant at $p = .44$ for self-belief and $p = .44$ for ease of interaction, where $p < .05$, so equal variances can be assumed and the results from the top lines can be used.

Independent Samples Test for Mentee Differences in Shifts in Perceived Self Belief and Ease of Interaction

Employability shift	Variance assumption	Levene's test for equality of variances				t = test for equality of means				95% confidence interval of the difference
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)	Mean difference	Std. error difference	Lower	Upper
Self belief	Equal variances assumed	.611	.438	-2.975	62	.004	-1.601	.538	-2.677	-.525
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.910	52.773	.005	-1.601	.550	-2.705	-.497
Ease of interaction	Equal variances assumed	.617	.436	.162	62	.872	.087	.534	-.982	1.155
	Equal variances not assumed			.164	61.820	.870	.087	.528	-.968	1.141

Table 13

Participants reporting low SES indicators, on average, achieved a higher shift in self-belief in their ability to secure graduate level work on graduation ($M = 1.43$, $SE = .321$) relative to those not reporting low SES indicators ($M = -0.17$, $SE = 0.447$). This difference, 1.601 (BCa 95%, CI -2.677 to -0.525) was significant $t(62) = -2.975$, $p = 0.004$, which represents a moderate effect ($r = 0.35$).

As mentioned above, this may well be because when faced with the reality of graduate roles, particularly alongside substantial gains in work exposure, that assumptions about graduate level work and personal capability were more readily challenged. This may have resulted in higher self-belief for low SES mentees compared to those who may have started out with higher self-belief before facing a more detailed ‘reality check’ from those not necessarily in their immediate family and networks which may have moderated more positive previous outlooks. Differences in the perceived shifts of ease of interaction were minor and not statistically significant.

Regarding the Mann-Whitney U tests (see Table 14) the assumptions of non-parametric data, the need for ordinal or continuous data variables, having independent variables in two independent groups were all met. However, the shape of distributions were not similar enough for the two SES groups to explore the median shifts and, therefore, mean ranks were reported.

This result suggested that the experience of mentoring for mentees in this scheme reporting low SES indicators was that the clarity of their career direction typically increased significantly more than those not reporting low SES indicators, which might suggest that their career identities were less well formed, on average, compared to their peers prior to mentoring.

It was discovered that the perceived shift in career clarity for mentees reporting low SES indicators (Mean rank = 36.87) were higher than for mentees not reporting low SES indicators (Mean Rank = 27.22). A Mann-Whitney U test indicated that this difference was statistically significant $U (N_{\text{low SES}} = 35, N_{\text{non-low SES}} = 29) = 354.500$, $Z = -2.092, p < .036$.

It was noted also that the differences in the engagement levels between the two SES groups were not statistically significant and were, therefore, not taken forward as a potentially confounding variable.

Given these differences have been discovered, the researcher moved forward to create models combining SES, gender and ethnicity (given their importance in the literature) to explore the power of these variables in predicting these differences in the perceived employability shifts for self-belief and career clarity.

Mann Whitney U Test Results Comparing the Median Rank of each Socioeconomic Status group for Shifts in Mentee Perceived Engagement and other Employability Measures

Employability measure	Engagement	Work exposure	Socioeconomic status category						LM knowledge	Networking propensity
			Statistic		Non low		Low			
			Non low	Low	Non low	Low	Non low	Low	Non low	Low
n	29	35	29	35	29	35	29	35	29	35
Mean rank	29.36	35.10	32.40	32.59	27.22	36.87	28.31	35.97	31.79	33.09
Mann-Whitney U	416.500	504.500	354.500	386.000	487.000					
Z	-1.243	-.041	-2.092	-1.676	-.281					
Asymptotic significance (2-tailed)	.214	.967	.036	.094	.779					

Notes: LM = labour market

Table 14

4.3.4 Meeting the Conditions for Multiple Linear Regression

These data needed to be analysed to ensure it met the necessary conditions for multiple linear regression. The results are presented here.

Nature of Outcome and Predictor Variables. In the first instance, outcome variables needed to be considered continuous and predictor variables nominal or continuous. Both these requirements were considered to be met by the data.

Outliers. An analysis of standard residuals was carried out exploring any observation which showed that the data contained outliers. Table 15 shows that only mild outliers were identified for self-belief and career clarity (Std. Residual Min = -2.736, Std. Residual Max = 2.306). As a result this condition was met.

Table 15

Case Wise Analysis Checking for Significant Outliers for Perceived Shifts in Career Clarity and Self-belief

	Outlier case no.	More extreme values	Between +3 and -3?
Career clarity	42	-2.287	Yes
Self-belief	1,23	2.306, -2.736	Yes

Collinearity. Tests to see if the data met the assumption of collinearity indicated that multicollinearity was not a concern (SES, Tolerance = .99, VIF = 1.01; Gender, Tolerance = 1.00, VIF = 1.00, Ethnicity, Tolerance = .99, VIF = 1.00). These results are shown in Table 16.

Table 16

Model Coefficients and Collinearity Statistics for Self Belief and Career Clarity

Employability measures	Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		t	Sig.	Collinearity statistics	
		B	Std. error	Beta				Tolerance	VIF
Self belief	1 (Constant)	-.207	.567	–		-.366	.716	–	–
	SES (0 - non low, 1 - low)	1.412	.554	.305		2.549	.013	.992	1.008
	Gender (0 - male, 1 - female)	.093	.583	.019		.160	.873	1.000	1.000
	Ethnicity (0 - white, 1 - non white)	-.036	.668	-.006		-.053	.958	.992	1.008
	1 (Constant)	.524	.489	–		1.071	.288	–	–
Career clarity	SES (0 - non low, 1 - low)	1.362	.478	.336		2.851	.006	.992	1.008
	Gender (0 - male, 1 - female)	-.091	.503	0.021		-.182	.856	1.000	1.000
	Ethnicity (0 - white, 1 - non white)	.119	.576	.024		.207	.836	.992	1.008

Notes: SES means socioeconomic status

Independence of Observations/ Independence of Residuals. As

observations were collected independently, there was no reason to suspect a lack of independence. The Durbin Watson statistic for each of the independent variables shows that the data met the assumption of independent errors (Durbin Watson value for self-belief = 1.89 and for career clarity = 2.64).

Random Normally Distributed Errors, Homoscedasticity and Linearity.

The histogram of standardised residuals indicated that the data contained approximately normally distributed errors, as did the normal P-P plot of standardised residuals, which showed points that were not completely on the line but very close to it. The scatterplot of standardised residuals showed that the data met the assumptions of homogeneity of variance and linearity. The data (see Table 17) also met the assumption of non-zero variances (Self-belief_{non-low SES}, Variance = 5.79, Mean = -.17, Self-belief_{low SES}, Variance = 3.605, Mean = 1.43), Career clarity_{non-low SES}, Variance = 3.027, Mean = .79, Career clarity_{low SES}, Variance = 4.563, Mean = 1.71).

Table 17

Descriptive Statistics showing Frequency Statistics for Self-belief and Career Clarity by Socioeconomic Status Category

Statistics	Self-belief		Career clarity	
	Non-low SES	Low SES	Non-low SES	Low SES
N	29	35	29	35
Mean	-.17	1.43	.79	1.71
Median	.00	1.00	.00	2.00
Standard deviation	2.406	1.899	1.740	2.136
Variance	5.791	3.605	3.027	4.563

Notes: SES means socioeconomic status

4.3.5 Multiple Linear Regression Results

Gender and ethnicity were included in the regression models due to the literature review suggesting that from past research both gender and ethnicity seemed to have some relationship with mentoring outcomes but the results varied and were inconclusive regarding positive or negative relationships. Data was entered so that if ethnicity rose by one unit, the number of mentees from a non-white ethnicity increased. For gender this meant that the number of female mentees increased and for SES the number of mentees reporting a low SES indicator increased. Model 1 combined gender and ethnicity to see whether these predictor variables would have an impact on the differences in perceived employability gains relative to when SES was also introduced in Model 2.

A multiple regression was conducted to see if gender and ethnicity combined and then gender, ethnicity and SES combined predicted the shift in self-belief by mentees taking part in mentoring via this scheme. The results are presented fully in Tables 18, 19 and 20 and reveal that none of the models explained a significant amount of the variance in the shift of self-belief or career clarity experienced by mentees. However, it was noted that within the results relating to self-belief, the combined model of gender, ethnicity and SES was close to being statistically significant, and that SES was the only significant predictor within this model. It seemed to warrant further exploration via exploring further combinations to see whether any of these models might provide a statistically significant prediction for differences in shifts in self-belief. The results for these analyses are presented in Tables 21, 22 and 23 with the resulting statistics about the value of the models presented in Table 24.

Gender and SES, ethnicity and SES both emerged as statistically significant. However, when the F change significance was analysed to see if adding gender or ethnicity

added significantly to the model beyond simply using SES, the F change was not statistically significant (see Table 24).

Using the enter method it was found that SES explained a significant amount of the variance in the shift of self-belief experienced by mentees ($F(1, 62) = 8.852, p < .05, R^2 = .125, R^2_{\text{adjusted}} = .111$).

The analysis shows that gender and race did not significantly predict the perceived shift in self-belief experienced by mentees ($\text{Beta}_{\text{gender}} = .02, t(61) = .17, \text{ns}$) and ($\text{Beta}_{\text{ethnicity}} = .02, t(62) = -.17, \text{ns}$).

Table 18

Multiple Linear Regression Results for Models Predicting Perceived Shifts in Self Belief and Career Clarity

Employability measure	Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	Durbin Watson
Self belief	1 Ethnicity, gender	.036	.001	-.032	2.300	1.646
	2 Ethnicity, gender, SES	.342	.117	.072	2.182	1.892
Career clarity	1 Ethnicity, gender	.063	.004	-.029	2.051	2.508
	2 Ethnicity, gender, SES	.238	.057	.009	2.012	2.636

Notes: SES means socioeconomic status

Table 19

Multiple Linear Regression Results for Models Predicting Perceived Shifts in Self Belief and Career Clarity

Employability measure	Model	Regression/ Residual	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Self belief	1 Ethnicity, gender	Regression	.411	2	.206	.039	.962
		Residual Total	317.525	60	5.292		
			317.937	62			
	2 Ethnicity, gender, SES	Regression	37.123	3	12.374	2.600	.061
		Residual Total	280.814	59	4.760		
			317.937	62			
Career clarity	1 Ethnicity, gender	Regression	.966	2	.498	.118	.888
		Residual Total	252.273	60	4.205		
			253.270	62			
	2 Ethnicity, gender, SES	Regression	14.377	3	4.792	1.184	.324
		Residual Total	238.893	59	4.049		
			253.270	62			

Notes: SES means socioeconomic status

Coefficients for the Enter Method Multiple Linear Regression for Predictors of Ethnicity, Gender and Socioeconomic Status for Perceived Shifts in Self Belief and Career Clarity

Employability measure	Model	Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients		t	Sig.	Collinearity statistics	
		B	Std. error	Beta					
1	Constant	.641	.514	–	1.246	.217	–	–	–
	Ethnicity,	-.020	.681	-.004	-.030	.976	1.000	1.000	1.000
	gender	.169	.608	.036	.278	.782	1.000	1.000	1.000
	Constant	-.178	.570	–	-.312	.756	–	–	–
	Ethnicity,	-.109	.646	-.021	-.169	.866	.997	1.003	1.003
	gender, SES	.146	.577	.031	.254	.800	.999	1.001	1.001
2	SES	1.538	.554	.340	2.777	.007	.997	1.003	1.003
	Constant	1.424	.458	–	3.107	.003	–	–	–
	Ethnicity,	.134	.607	.028	.221	.826	1.000	1.000	1.000
	gender	-.237	.542	-.056	-.438	.663	1.000	1.000	1.000
	Constant	.930	.526	–	1.769	.082	–	–	–
	Ethnicity,	.08	.596	.017	.135	.893	.997	1.003	1.003
3	Gender,	-.251	.532	-.060	-.471	.639	.999	1.001	1.001
	SES	.929	.511	.230	1.818	.074	.997	1.003	1.003

Notes: SES means socioeconomic status

Table 20

Table 21*Multiple Linear Regression Results for Models Predicting Perceived Changes in Self Belief*

Employability measure	Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate	Durbin Watson
Self belief	3 SES	.353	.125	.111	2.143	
	4 SES, gender	.354	.125	.097	2.160	1.847
	5 SES	.340	.115	.101	2.147	
	6 SES, ethnicity	.340	.116	.086	2.165	1.882

Notes: SES means socioeconomic status

Table 22*Multiple Linear Regression Results for Models Predicting Perceived Shifts in Self-belief*

Employability measure	Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Self-belief	3 SES	Regression	40.650	1	40.650	8.852	.004
		Residual	284,709	62	4.592		
		Total	325.359	63			
	4 SES, gender	Regression	40.798	2	20.395	4.372	.017
		Residual	284.570	61	4.665		
		Total	325.359	63			
	5 SES	Regression	36.687	1	36.687	7.957	.006
		Residual	281.250	61	4.611		
		Total	317.937	62			
	6 SES, ethnicity	Regression	36.816	2	18.408	3.929	.025
		Residual	281.121	60	4.685		
		Total	317.937	62			

Notes: SES means socioeconomic status

Coefficients for the Enter Method Linear Regression for Predictors of Socioeconomic Status, Gender and Ethnicity for Perceived Shifts in Self Belief.

Employability measure	Model	Unstandardised coefficients	Standardised coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity statistics
		B	Std. error	Beta		Tolerance VIF
Self belief	3 SES	Constant	-.172	.398	-.433	.666
		SES	1.601	.538	.353	2.975
	4 SES, gender	Constant	-.237	.547	-.433	.667
		SES	1.601	.542	.353	2.952
	5 SES	Gender	.098	.568	.021	.173
		SES	1.536	.544	.340	2.821
Perceived shifts in self belief	6 SES, ethnicity	Constant	-.107	.406	-.264	.793
		SES	1.540	.550	.341	2.803
	7 SES, gender, ethnicity	Constant	-.084	.432	-.195	.846
		SES	1.540	.550	.341	2.803
	8 SES, gender, ethnicity, self belief	Gender	.098	.568	.021	.173
		SES	1.536	.544	.340	2.821

Notes: SES means socioeconomic status

Table 23

Table 24

Linear Regression Model Results for Socioeconomic Status, Gender and Ethnicity for Perceived Shifts in Self Belief

	Model	F change	Sig. F change
Self belief	3 SES	8.852	.004
	4 SES, gender	.030	-.863
	5 SES	7.957	.006
	6 SES, ethnicity	.028	.869

Notes: SES means socioeconomic status

4.3.6 Quantitative Results Conclusion

These results seem to suggest that the ownership of low SES indicators seems to help explain differences in the perceived shift in self-belief in the ability to secure graduate level work on graduation amongst mentees on this particular scheme. However, it is important to stress that for this scheme, these results seem to suggest low SES indicators explain only 11.5% of the difference, inferring that there are other predictors not yet identified. What also seems clear is that ethnicity and gender do not appear to be predictors of this difference in the perceived shift in self-belief.

There were statistically significant differences also in career clarity between those reporting low SES indicators and those not, in favour of low SES mentees, however, once embarking on multiple linear regression for career clarity, SES no longer retained its statistical significance as a predictor. This suggests there may be some differences in the typical gains in career clarity between the low SES and non-low SES groups but that this difference is perhaps more marginal.

The clear message of both groups of mentees securing comparable strong positive shifts in work exposure is of note alongside smaller, comparable positive shifts in labour market knowledge and ease of interaction. This suggests that the tangible, career development gains made by mentees is, on average, the same for each social group. So the measures that showed statistically significant differences are the psychosocial measures. It is also of note that engagement differences between SES groups were not statistically significant. This represents important findings that these participants, regardless of social group, on average, secure the same career development gains, but that low SES mentees secure more psychosocial gains in the form of career clarity and more appreciably, self-belief in their ability to secure graduate level employment on graduation.

Chapter 5 Interview Results: the Mentoring Experience

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research results primarily associated with the interviews which serve to better understand the mentoring experience and to answer the research question about what it is that facilitates or inhibits the perceived success of the mentoring dyad. The focus is broad, but within this, there is special attention paid to whether the perceptions and experiences of the mentee vary by social status.

Brief information is initially provided about the interview participants, including selected data associated with each participant extracted for the survey to provide context. This is followed by vignettes of the six mentees interviewed in order to show the personal journey of each mentee before the results are presented in a descriptive, yet systematic way to evidence each theme identified. This will enable the reader to understand the varied journeys of each participant in conjunction with their stories, as well as the more conceptual analysis of the interviews as a body of data.

Amidst the above presentation of results, there is some triangulation between the interview analysis and the survey results. The interview results evolved from the NVIVO analysis undertaken to thematically code them with a clear pattern of influences emerging grouped into outcomes, interaction and influences pre-existing mentoring (brought by the mentor, mentee and the mentoring context). This provided rich detail about what appeared to facilitate or inhibit the perceived success of career mentoring. Finally, there is a brief summary of the key qualitative results before embarking on the discussion chapter.

5.2 Interview Participants and the Mentees' Journeys

5.2.1 Interview Participants

When considering selection, mentee interview participants were purposively sampled to represent a breadth of engagement levels and SES and are presented in Table 10 with relevant demographic information to confirm participant variation. Both perceived engagement, marked between 1 and 9, and an engagement estimate of significant meetings were given by mentors/mentees in the survey.

All participating mentors were rated level 1 or 2 on the NS-SEC scale: the top two classes, so ultimately, purposively sampling was based on whether they were partnered with a low SES mentee or not and their perceived engagement levels. Some mentors had multiple mentees, sometimes from different SES categories. Purposive sampling sought to optimise the range of job roles/sectors mentors were in and their age, ethnicity and gender. It was harder to achieve a range of perceived engagement levels for mentors. Only one mentoring pair were both selected: Mentee 6 and Mentor 5. These and further characteristics of these mentor interview participants are provided in Table 11.

Table 25*Demographic and Engagement Data of Mentee Interview Participants*

No.	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Degree subject	SES indicators	School type	Mentee Perceived Engagement rating ¹ (Estimated times 'met') ²
1	Female	Black, Asian	21-25	Pharmacy	<£16k family income First in Family	State comp.	5/9 (5 times)
2	Female	White, British	18-20	Education	None	Private	3/9 (15 times)
3	Male	White, British	18-20	Biological Science	First in Family	State comp.	4/9 (1 time)
4	Male	Other ethnic group	18-20	Law	None	Private overseas	5/9 (7 times)
5	Male	White, British	18-20	Geography	None	State comp.	8/9 (10 times)
6	Male	Black, British	21-25	Law	<£16k family income Free school meals First in family	State Comp.	7/9 (10 times)

Notes: ¹ Rating scale 1-9 where 9 is highest. ² Times estimated by Mentee. Comp. means comprehensive.

Table 26*Mentor Interview Participants with Pertinent Demographic and Survey Data*

No.	Gender	Ethnicity	Age	Occupation	Sector	Mentee SES	Mentor Perceived engagement ¹ (Estimated times met ²)
1	Male	Mixed/ Multiple ethnic	26-35	Academic researcher	Higher Education	Low	9/9 (8 times)
2	Female	White, British	46-55	Clinical Research Leader	Clinical Research	Low	7/9 (2 times)
3	Female	Mixed/ Multiple ethnic	26-35	Project Manager	Media	Non-low	6/9 (10 times)
4	Male	Asian/ Asian	26-35	Surveyor	Construction	Non-low	9/9 (6 times)
5	Male	White, British	56-66	Partner	Legal	Low	9/9 (>20 times)
6	Female	White, British	56-66	Ecologist	Public Sector/ Retired	Non-low	9/9 (16 times)

Notes: ¹ Rating scale 1-9 where 9 is highest. ² Times estimated by Mentor. SES means socioeconomic status.

5.2.2 The Mentees' Journeys

This section provides the reader with an insight into the perceived journeys undertaken by mentee interview participants in order to provide a connected overview of their personal experiences. This will provide a personal perspective in contrast to the thematic analysis of the interviews that follows. Each mentee has a vignette which brings the themes identified in the interviews more broadly together and includes their poignant pre mentoring characteristics, commentary on the processes they experienced, including identification and an insight into the perceived outcomes of mentoring for them. It seeks to emphasise that mentoring is a unique and personal experience for those involved.

Figure 7*Vignette Mentee One*

Mentee 1 was an Asian, British, female studying pharmacy. Despite being the first in her immediate family to go to university and from a low income background, her extended family worked primarily in healthcare including an Uncle who owned a Pharmacy, and this informed her career interests “I was intrigued about drugs from a young age... all I remember is people being given out a bag of drugs and like here’s your medication and what do they do?” As a strong extrovert who craved variety, her personality felt at odds with her ambition to be a pharmacy teacher practitioner. She also had a ‘job for life’ mentality which exacerbated these concerns “So do I want to be doing this every single day?”

Mentee 1’s interaction with her mentor was short-lived and failed to deepen: not helped by a task rather than relationship focused approach. She experienced negative emotions and uncertainty about why her mentor stopped engaging “The way my relationship with my mentor, kind of ended, wasn’t the nicest...”

Her key outcome was realising you could actively manage your career “and so it kind of opened my eyes to like, you’re not stuck just being, working in the NHS and then you have to start all over again.” She reconciled her extended family’s healthcare ‘tradition’ with her need for variety and change by concluding that being a Pharmacy Teacher Practitioner could work “Cos I’m the kind of person who’d get bored with the same thing every day so I guess it’s made me feel more optimistic.”

Figure 8*Vignette Mentee Two*

This mentee was a white, British, female with no low SES indicators. Her parents were professionals and her immediate family all had postgraduate qualifications. Her peer group at home automatically went on to university. Mentee 2's mother had been ill as the mentee grew up creating a close maternal bond. Her mother had been a teacher and the mentee's Catholic upbringing and her mother's health had led her to volunteer to help people with special needs. Her teaching network was extensive but perhaps dated. The mentee described herself as a control freak and perfectionist "I famously cried when I got 65 in my first essay."

Mentee 2 wanted to teach in a specialist area of education but had reservations about the status of teaching and had a 'job for life' perspective "I kinda had a crisis of, is this really what I wanna do? Like I signed up at 18 to be a teacher at 21 for the rest, 40 years of my life."

Mentee 2's interaction with her mentor was complex. They bonded over considerable, unusual common ground "I found a lot of similarities with her, in that she'd had a very sick mother growing up" but confusing role-shifts during work experience and the mentee's reservations about a career that undermined work-life balance, challenged the relationship which began to falter as they as each sought control.

Through work experience and mentoring, Mentee 2 emotively questioned her teaching commitment and shifted towards Educational Psychology instead: more closely aligned to her family status.

Figure 9*Vignette Mentee Three*

Mentee 3 was a white, British, male and the first in his immediate family and in his friendship group to go to university where he was studying biology. He had studied a BTEC Diploma rather than A' levels. Neither of his parents were professionals, although his mother had worked in a primary school and invested time in his education at an early stage and he developed an interest in learning. He would watch nature programmes with his mother "... my mum's into nature and things like that, so we used to watch David Attenborough and all the nature shows together." His mother described him as "the scientist of the family" and the "golden child."

His friends from home saw him as clever but his friends at university saw him as nice but sarcastic with a dry sense of humour. He revealed that he needs clarity, a plan and is risk averse. His interest in doing a PhD seems formed around his self-identity as intelligent and his passion for ecology. He seemed task rather than relationship focused.

His interaction with his mentor was very limited. Her accomplishments both intimidated and excited him and they lacked common ground beyond research interests. Her being overseas, a dislike of skype, her formal emails and English not being her first language all seemed to undermine the ability to bond.

Capitalising on work experience offered was prevented by exams and limited finances. He said mentoring reassured him about his ability to become an academic but not enough to commit with certainty.

Figure 10*Vignette Mentee Four*

Mentee 4 studied law and was privately educated overseas. He was male, non-British, from an 'other ethnic group' and had no low SES indicators, although he shared how financially challenging it had been for his family to pay for him to study for a degree in the UK. His family had experienced an all-consuming legal case whilst he was growing up. His childhood, in a poor country, meant his education was only secure because his grandfather was a teacher. His childhood experiences and upbringing in a country with a corrupt government had informed his career interests in law and this had been heavily reinforced by his grandfather "He motivated me basically he used to make me sit and watch these judgements in like higher courts [oh right] or in parliament." He felt an obligation "Even though they don't express it, I feel it on my own. There is a burden on me." So his goal was "...to have a better life than {his father} did basically."

Mentee 4's apparent self-doubt, introversion and feeling unworthy of his mentor's time, and their lack of common ground, seemed to limit his ability to bond. Inertia also seemed evident as he worried about his academic performance and potential to secure his and his family's goal of practicing law.

He experienced limited outcomes from mentoring but valued gaining a clearer understanding of alternative routes to qualifying as a solicitor or barrister which relieved him of a certain amount of pressure. He also realised gaining work experience would be important.

Figure 11*Vignette Mentee Five*

This mentee was a white, British, male with no low SES indicators, although he had reported financial challenges during his degree and no real exposure to professional careers via family or work until university.

He was easy to talk to but seemed a little nervous and self-deprecating, although very self-aware, resilient and accountable. He saw mentoring as two-way.

Growing up he had had a real passion for the Olympics and it was from this, and a school teacher, that his love of Geography and travel grew. He had been to Iceland just prior to mentoring, as had his mentor.

Career-wise, his mother had encouraged him to gather experience and build skills and be opportunistic. He had a vague interest in property with little real knowledge. He wanted to work near his family and refused to compromise his self-identity for a job. He described himself as "...a bit dippy at times" and "with no filter on my mouth". He said he needed a career where he could be himself.

He and his mentor had much common ground, apart from his mentor's polish. As he said "He's very good at being able to say what he thinks and everything but in a professional way... So I guess I didn't know if I was completely fitted for the role." Their interaction was extensive and they built trust and partial identification.

His outcomes included; career knowledge, a social network, professional work experience, career clarity, belief in his ability to be a town planner, tactical application/selection knowledge and he eventually secured a town planning job, close to home but not in his mentor's organisation.

Figure 12*Vignette Mentee Six*

Mentee 6 was a mature, black, British, male law undergraduate. He was the first in his family to go to university and had illiterate parents "I'm not really ashamed but they are illiterate." He had had free school meals, was from a low income family and was a refugee from a country at civil war. He began his entire education in England aged 14/15. This extreme start in life had given this mentee a fear of professionals and low confidence in professional environments "Because I had that fear with people... who are in the professional sector, that you're not supposed to talk to them but rather listen." He had a lower level of English language, in particular written English. His parents and experiences had developed strong ambition, resilience and perseverance in him and a faith that education was the path to success "...they did set us a principle that if you put anything into your mind you could achieve it and an education is the key toward any success."

These factors impacted on interaction with his mentor but over time, familiarity enabled him to take advantage of mentoring. His mentor remained very mentee-centred and referred him to develop his written English which enabled his expected degree class to rise two classes. He gained work experience and built his knowledge and conviction in his career goal to be a practicing lawyer and potential partner in a firm, although it was still uncertain if he would meet the exacting standards of corporate law recruiters.

These vignettes show the lived experiences of each mentee interviewed and serves to show how individual each of them are and how the social structures and agentic qualities play out in each of their mentoring experiences.

5.3 Qualitative Results

5.3.1 Career Mentoring Outcomes

Why are outcomes important when considering the perception of career mentoring? If the anticipated outcomes of career mentoring are manifest, this should positively influence the perception of mentoring. Conversely, a lack of hoped for outcomes may negatively influence perception. Exploring outcomes with interviewees produced certain findings. The vast majority of mentees and mentors interviewed reported positive career development outcomes for mentees from career mentoring but the extent varied. Reports of mentee outcomes by mentors seemed less certain, particularly if lacking a reliable, long-term feedback loop from the mentee. This led the researcher to question what limits there might be on mentors reporting less tangible outcomes for mentees. How outcomes were revealed by mentees and mentors in the interviews showed the variety of outcomes and their apparent value, demonstrating the differing number and extent of outcomes reported. Furthermore, outcomes appeared to interact and progress from one another and emerge from scheme structures. Reported mentor outcomes from the interviews are also presented.

Type of Career Mentoring Outcome. Mentees and mentors interviewed reported a range of outcomes including boosting career knowledge, building networks and networking, gaining experience of work, increased confidence, changes to future career identity, increased clarity of career direction, changes to individual conceptualisation of career, gains in employability awareness, and knowledge of selection processes. These are described below along with comments on survey - interview consistency. Table 12

summarises the before-and-after survey shifts for the mentees who were interviewed and researcher judgement on their consistency with the interviews.

Table 27

Survey Reported Shifts for Interviewees in Mentee Perceptions of Each Measure of Employability, from Before to After Career Mentoring

Mentee	Knowledge shift/ consistency?	Interaction shift/ consistency?	Work exposure shift/ consistency?	Belief shift/ consistency?	Clarity shift/ consistency?
1	+1/ Yes	+2/ Yes	0 / Yes	+1 / Yes	+1 / Yes
2	-2 /Unclear	-1/ Yes	+3 / Yes	-2 / Yes	-2 / Yes
3	0 / No	-3/ Yes	+1 / Yes	0 / Yes	0 / Yes
4	+1 / Yes	-1/ Yes	+1 / Yes	-1 / Yes	-1 / Yes
5	+2 / Yes	-1 / Yes	+2 / Yes	-3 / No	+2 / Yes
6	+2 / Yes ¹	+2 / Yes	-1 / No	+4 / Yes	+2 / Yes

Note: Based on a 1-9 rating scale. ¹Not mentioned in interview but consistent with mentor interview.

Career Knowledge. Almost all mentees interviewed reported increased career knowledge through career mentoring and almost all mentors agreed. The interviews revealed differences in knowledge accrual: the amount acquired, the level of detail sought and the type of knowledge focused on. Mentee 5, for example, reported wholesale shifts in his sector and occupational knowledge with all prior experience being at non-graduate level, he had a significant knowledge gap filled “I sort of learnt what real estate and planning was for starters.” Conversely, Mentee 2’s mother had been a teacher and her focus was on the nuances of the reality of the career “I think, it gave me the reality of what

someone within her job role has, and like stresses within it...” This suggested unequal gains, with mentees ready to absorb different levels and amounts of career knowledge. Type of knowledge sought seemed to reveal prior knowledge, contacts and stage of career choice. Mentee 3 “Um, so that was very good, to hear from someone who’d been here and done it.” and 4 “But the pathway until doing Bars if I decide to, that is clear to me.” chose to focus on qualifying in their chosen career areas of academia and law respectively, rather than the career thereafter. When turning to the survey, participants ranked their sector, job and organisational knowledge and the majority of mentee responses seemed consistent with their interview data. Of the six interviewed, one shift was hard to see if consistent or not and one other, Mentee 3, appeared inconsistent, despite limited engagement. The vast majority of interviewees positively expressed increased career knowledge in themselves or their mentees. Some moved from basic knowledge after limited prior exposure to professional work whilst others with prior knowledge from family and/or vocational degrees sought deeper detail. Two mentees who were first in their family to go to university, focused only on qualifying pathways. The survey broadly supported the interview findings. So, with comprehensive gains in career knowledge by mentees, differences in the level, amount and type of knowledge accrued were evident, often revealing the starting point of the mentee and how naïve they were about the labour market.

Building Networks and Networking. Half of interviewees described the benefits of building networks and networking with variation in size and effect for mentees. Some developed independent networking ability, others felt more able to talk to professionals but networking was a negative experience for one. Mentee 5 developed extensive property contacts “...but I’ve got such a wide network now, which also includes people that was part of his network, it’s quite weird that.” Mentor 1 also described extending his mentee’s network “So I told him in life you have to meet people, introduce

yourself, so I'm going to give you a list of, I think I gave him about eight different people that I know in different places." Mentor 3's mentee was introduced to media and broadcasting contacts: a difficult area to penetrate, when asked about gains she said "...definitely exposure to different people in the industry in different jobs." Although Mentee 2 and Mentee 4 only gained their mentor as a contact, Mentee 2 already had educational contacts and Mentee 4 did not have expanding his network on his agenda. The extent of network expansion varied: some with few relevant prior contacts made great strides forward but others appeared naïve to their value. The outcomes from networking varied too with Mentee 5's contacts facilitating work experience despite his limited professional exposure and finances, suggesting that a lack of professional contacts constrains employability gain whoever you are "I actually gained contacts which led towards work experience placement." Mentee 5 and Mentee 6 developed networking as a skill. Mentee 5 felt more motivated to network "...there was also the indirect impact which gave me the motivation to build my own contacts." Mentee 6 felt more at ease with professionals which opened up future opportunities such as work experience "Because I started to speak with professionals and, therefore, and that's, that's one of the main things I learnt." Most spoke of networking positively, however, as Mentee 3 had hoped for work experience but couldn't capitalise on what was offered, and so had negative feelings "He did have something he said I could have worked on with {species name}, which is like monitor lizards and stuff but it was in May and I had exams and so..." The survey and interview data on this issue were highly consistent with the shift in ease of interaction with professionals, with no alternative comparisons available. A good number benefited from networks with variation in the size and impact of networks developed. Some developed networking ability but experiences were not positive for everyone.

Gaining Experience of Work. Work experience enabled students to gain real life experience of a job, provided evidence of skills and raised employability. Four of

the six mentees interviewed reported securing work experience, with one unable to take it up. Of the remaining two, one had sought experience in a highly competitive, regulated labour market (hospital pharmacy), the other had not expressed an interest. Gaining work experience was an aspiration for many prospective mentees and both mentees and mentors valued it, including Mentor 3's mentee "He absolutely loved when he got to be with the technical team, backstage, running a live TV broadcast" and Mentee 6 "um so when I was there, I think I was ... completely different like the way I interacted with people and, therefore, and so forth I think it was the impact that I had with {mentor name}." Of those interviewed, half reported seeking work experience in the survey with two of the remaining three mentioning a desire for work experience in their interviews. Securing work experience seemed likely to positively influence the perception of career mentoring. How work experience was secured varied. Mentee 2, 5 and 6 as well as Mentor 3, 4 and 6's mentees gained experience directly with their mentor or their mentor's employer, as Mentor 4 shared "Um, I'd like to think that she, as a result of the mentoring, she gained her first-hand experience of the workplace, which is now gonna steer her into where she feels comfortable going." Mentor 3 also confirmed "He got to shadow people in live professional media environments [mmm] so that's brilliant to say you've done work experience in {name of organisation}..." However, many had either only, or additionally, gained experience elsewhere with mentor support and had been successful, including Mentee 3 and 6 and Mentor 1 and 2's mentees. Mentee 6 stated "Yeah, and I will add I actually had an experience just after I had experience with {mentor name} I went to work experience with another legal department which was actually the council, umm, in my local borough..." The impact of work experience was palpable. It enabled Mentee 5 to realise he was good enough to work in town planning "So I guess I didn't know if I was completed fitted for the role. But I guess all the work experience and everything sort of confirmed that I actually was good for it." It also helped Mentee 6 consolidate his career

aspirations. These mentees seemed to develop their self-belief in doing the job. Not all mentees perceived work experience positively though as Mentee 3's offer clashed with exams and needed expensive flights he couldn't afford "...obviously the ideal outcome would have been some kind of placement or something like that but, that never happened due to constraints." Mentee 2's classroom experience gave her realistic exposure to the work but increased her career uncertainty as she refocused on an alternative career she was less familiar with "I don't know if I could do it all the time." "It's really sad but I think it did just gave me that reality check of, you now, think of the wider picture don't just think of it, as you know, a 9-5 thing, because for one it isn't." Her career identity was further refined but her negative feelings reflected the upheaval.

The surveys asked mentees to rank their exposure to graduate level work on a scale of 1 to 9 and broadly showed positive shifts. Mentee 2's shift felt lower than what she reported at interview and two of the three who did not secure experience still felt their work exposure had grown, perhaps through mentoring conversations and visits. Despite this, survey ratings seemed reasonably consistent with the interviews. Work experience was valued but how it was secured varied. The impact of it was high but not always positively reported. The interviews and surveys were reasonably consistent. So most

Increased Confidence. The survey showed that almost all mentees interviewed revealed positive shifts in confidence, with only Mentee 1 and Mentor 2's mentee reporting no change. Confidence seemed to emerge from different mentoring experiences. For some it arose from mentor reassurance and confirmatory judgements on potential as for Mentee 3, "But she helped sort of talk me through it and say that I'd, I'd probably be fine at PhD at that point and that I had all the qualities to say that I'd cope fine, like with the stress of the workload and the expectation. Um, so that was quite helpful I think as well." For Mentee 6 it was familiarity with professionals "...because I started to

speak with professionals and, therefore, and that's, that's one of the main things I learnt. So, not to be afraid and also speak and listen." Mentee 4 increased in confidence with the consistent non-judgemental nature of his mentor "I keep telling him that I wake up really late and I go to sleep at 2 or 3 in the night but he was always like 'it's ok'. He was always supportive of it, he was like if you keep trying you will get it into a proper timetable. I mean he never like made me feel like I was being judged or anything." Mentee 2 reported confidence gains through shifts in understanding of career decision making "Even though it didn't give me that sort of definite 'this is what I'm going to do for the next 40 years'. It told me it's ok not to have that, and it gave me the confidence to actually consider an alternative." Others raised confidence through using new skills or increasing knowledge such as Mentee 5's networking "So gave me the confidence to go out there and actually put myself out there and say I want work experience with these people".

The interview data did not map well onto the survey questions about 'self-belief in the ability to secure graduate level employment' as it was context specific. Although the ratings seem quite close to the interview data for most, using this data to check consistency was problematic. Confidence seemed contextualised and specific: the better understanding of and likelihood of concluding their future career identity, experience of using the professional skills to function at work and knowledge of career pathways.

Changes to Future Career Identity. Mentoring seemed to influence career identity: whether reconciliation, refinement, challenge or disruption and most found this positive. Table 17 shows some related evidence from the interviews. Mentee 1's career identity seemed difficult to implement as her desire to be a pharmacist clashed with her personality's need for variety "So I was like, oh. Cos I'm the person who's get bored with the same thing every day so I guess it's made me feel more optimistic." but through beginning to see career as a journey, she reconciled her career and self-identity "So it's shown me that I can do so many different things with my degree..." Mentee 6 shared more

certainty about becoming a law professional “Umm I think I’m still ambitious now. I think it is possible to do what I’m thinking to own a law firm at one point... but in a sense it just confirmed or firmed itself...” Conversely, career identity challenges, or disruption, seemed less positively perceived, perhaps by shining a light on sensitive areas of self-identity. Mentee 5 strongly developed his career identity and secured a job as a Graduate Town planner through mentoring but when choosing where to work, he experienced challenging emotions, perhaps because he couldn’t adjust his self-identity to completely fit with the polished, highly professional career identity of his mentor

To be fair, I’ve already told {name of future employer} I’m not the, I’m not polished, like you know what I think is what I say and all of this, it’s just me as a person. I can’t, I can be professional of course, there’s a professionalism but I sort of said, I can’t go where I just lose me, so...

Mentee 2 also experienced challenging emotions whilst adjusting her future career identity to better suit her sense of self and proposing to explore Educational Psychology

...so even though I loved what she was doing, I think it made me realise that the reality perhaps isn’t what I wanted to do and so I want to go more down the theoretical route...So I have to do by law a year of mainstream teaching to be given QTS then basically I’m a proper teacher, um and then I’m hoping to go onto an access psychology post cert course which will get me onto the Psychology masters.

The status of teaching appeared to have fallen since her mother had taught “Teaching is often looked down on quite like it’s an easy degree...” and she incurred an emotional cost and mentor/ mentee relationship damage. This suggests that career identity shifts, may taint the mentoring experience, despite them being productive, transformative processes. Mentor discussions of career identity shifts focused tentatively on inputs, and relied on mentee feedback. Mentor 4 believed his mentee better understood her future career despite limited

feedback due to her cultural reserve. Mentee 2 and Mentee 5 above show how shifting even partially from the mentor's career identity, can make communication awkward, suggesting matching based on career identity, may bring benefits as well as challenges. Comparing the shifts in perceived clarity of career direction with the interviews revealed remarkable consistency and confirmed that disruptions to career identity can leave a mentee feeling negative despite its benefits. To conclude, mentoring seemed to influence career identity: whether reconciliation, refinement, challenge or disruption but most found this positive unless their adjustment moved them away from their mentor's career identity or made them feel less certain again.

Changes to Individual Conceptualisation of Career. Most mentees who heard their mentor's detailed career journey, reported re-evaluating their own concept of 'career' and subsequently adjusted their approach and emotional response. Mentee 1 reported nerves about selecting a 'job for life' but learned career was a journey to be managed "I didn't realise you could like stop one job role and then start another one, and so it kind of opened my eyes like, you're not stuck just being, working in the NHS and then you have to start all over again." Mentee 4 felt relieved about having alternative routes to succeeding in law for his family "Yes, it was kind of a relief [oh, ok] that yeah I can do something else if this doesn't work out for me or if I feel that this isn't for me." Mentee 2 felt committed to teaching for life but eventually felt free to explore alternatives when she realised career is more than just a job "It's really sad but I think it did just gave me that reality check of, you know, think of the wider picture don't just think of it, as, you know, a 9-5 thing because for one it isn't [mmm, mmm] and also the long-term scale of it – like she had done." Re-evaluating 'career' seemed to release pressure "it's really comforting to know that I don't have to sign on the dotted line at 21." Hearing mentor career journeys refined personal career concepts.

Gains in Awareness of Employability and Selection Processes. Some mentees better understood what increases employability, including better understanding of selection processes. Table 19 provides a sample of the evidence. Mentor 4 helped his mentee secure experience “We helped her with her CV, direction as to how to attain her goal which was to secure an internship or work experience and she achieved that...” Mentee 5’s mentor also helped him develop his CV “And he also umm helped me to, to organise my CV at the beginning and he was helpf... he sent my CV to the HR department.” Mentee 4 eventually recognised the importance of work experience “...if I want a career in law then I should get experience.” Mentor 5 helped Mentee 6 develop his written communication skills significantly raising his recruitment chances “...his course work went up dramatically {mmm}. He was looking around third/2.2 and now he’s looking at 2.1s.” Increased employability positively led to more work experience, tactical knowledge and professional networks. So, mentoring both increased awareness of employability for some and prepared others for graduate selection which mentees appeared to value.

The Extent of Career Mentoring Outcomes and their Interaction. The interviews showed that the extent of mentee gains varied and that outcomes often led to further outcomes. Mentee 5 and Mentee 1 exemplify this. As Mentee 5 gained sector knowledge and town planning experience he felt reassured of his suitability. He expanded his professional network, improved his selection process knowledge which also developed his confidence and led to securing a graduate town planning job. Mentee 5 did not report low SES indicators but wasn’t well off and lacked professional contacts. Having lacked his mentor’s polish, he chose a smaller regional firm better suited him. Despite a successful mentoring experience, Mentee 5’s social mobility was compromised through an inability to fully identify with his mentor’s ‘polish’ but his gains were extensive

It had a massive impact on my opportunities for a graduate scheme. I went from not knowing what I wanted to do to all of a sudden having the advice of, what do they look for in a planner, getting that experience being able to successfully start getting to these days and I guess which did lead to a job outcome [yes]. I would sort of say, I think if I didn't do the {name of mentoring scheme} scheme, I don't know where I would quite be without it...

In contrast, Mentee 1 revealed limited gains but re-evaluated her concept of 'career' realising she could navigate her career journey and marry her family history in healthcare with her need for variety. She expanded her network but did not secure work experience due to regulation of experience in that sector. Her career dilemma and poor match to a mentor overseas seemed to stall the relationship and limit gains Both reported positive shifts via the surveys but Mentee 5's were higher, in line with the interviews.

Interviews suggested that positive gains facilitated further outcomes.

Mentee 6 was a great example of this. Arriving in the UK, only learning English as a teenager and ticking every low SES indicator, he felt nervous of professionals. He persevered, familiarity grew so he felt more at ease. He work-shadowed his mentor, built knowledge, gained feedback on his written work, was referred for English support and improved his grades. He was coached to apply for work experience which he secured and his belief in his ability to become a solicitor grew. Mentee 6's relationship endured perhaps due to his determination or the great value it provided. Mentee 3's partnership, did not gain momentum with his overseas mentor. He secured insights into studying a PhD but struggled to warm to her. His limited scope of exploration and the inability to convert offers of work experience due to exams and financial challenges provided barriers closing down the relationship and creating a sense of disappointment "I don't think it necessarily worked for me to the extent it can for other students".

The extent of gains from mentoring did seem to vary considerably. For some positive outcomes fed further gains but for others, barriers proved too much and relationships stalled.

Mentor Gains. Mentors also reported how they gained from the experience. Some developed skills, some met altruistic goals and some felt a range of emotions, somewhat dependent on the mentee-mentor feedback loop. A small number of mentors reported improved skills. Mentor 1 became more patient, facilitative and adaptable

I think I learned to wait and not to try to solve things for people. I tried, I learned to be patient and not directly give advice, rather help people to explore their options on their own...It's understanding that people learn in different ways and that people behave in different ways and that everyone has a different style of approach to a problem.

Mentor 4 improved his ability to set goals for and interact with his staff

Um, I think the most beneficial outcome was my personal mentoring, interaction skills which have massively assisted with dealing with people underneath me. It's a massive help to that in terms of drawing up goals to help them develop, having achieved that taking a step back and look at things and maybe analyse it.

Mentors primarily claimed fulfilment of their altruistic goals with Mentor 3 sharing immense satisfaction "No, absolutely, I definitely get satisfaction from seeing the change and the development in the students that I work with..." Mentor 6 describing how she valued helping others "Um, it makes me feel good about myself if I'm helping people." Emotional responses, both positive and negative were evident for some as Mentor 6 shared her enjoyment at spending time with her mentees "I think we had a good fun day...And engaging with young people is great, I love it." and sadness when mentees were less committed "...so perhaps I haven't done as much for {mentee B}." Mentor 1 reported frustration when his mentee did not make the most of his opportunities "I could become a

bit frustrated, especially in the end...they say I'm very busy, I'm revising but it's not that they are revising 24 hours a day."

Mentee-mentor feedback about outcomes was important. Mentor 3 kept in touch with her mentees for this exact purpose "...and that's why I like to keep an ear to the ground on what they're doing now" but Mentor 4 felt unclear about his mentee's eventual outcomes leaving him somewhat dissatisfied "I'm not sure, may be that's all she wanted to get out of it. She achieved what she wanted to." Mentor 5 spoke warmly about Mentee 6's gratitude "{Mentee 6} was very much, started off as seeing me as a mate, ended up really grateful for what had happened and feeling that he really had achieved something in that year." Good communication between mentee and mentor about outcomes helped mentor positivity. So, outcomes for mentors included skill development for a few, altruistic fulfilment for most and emotional responses for many. Feedback from mentees helped mentors benefit.

Conclusions on Outcomes. The vast majority of interviewed mentees secured outcomes from career mentoring, even those engaging only briefly. However, gains varied considerably. Engagement and outcomes did not appear to have a strong relationship, but interviews did suggest that extensive gains came to those who had engaged extensively.

Various outcomes were reported in the interviews, some career developmental and others psychosocial. Most gained career knowledge but the amount, focus, level of detail and type varied, appearing to reflect the level and type of prior knowledge and professional exposure. Viewing career as more than just a job also emerged, along with observation of the sobering reality of work. Half built professional networks with differing consequences. Those unable to leverage contacts felt negative, those who did gained considerable knowledge, confidence, professional familiarity, work experience and networking skill. Some added just their mentor to their network, others

more. Some did not comment, having extensive networks already. Work experience was valued highly by almost all, as they secured work experience with their mentor or with their help. Limited opportunities, limited finances and exams prevented two securing theirs. Work experience was a taste of reality which seemed to reassure the career identity of some and emotively challenge it for others.

Almost all mentees appeared more confident in relation to; the likelihood of achieving one's aspirations, their sense of career identity and their ability to use professional skills: reducing or managing uncertainty. Almost all mentees adjusted their future career identity with reinforcement and refinement generally well received but with challenges and disruptions less so. Many mentees re-evaluated their conceptualisation of 'career' releasing them from pursuing a 'job for life', following set vocational pathways or needing to make life-long career choices now. Finally, almost all mentees positively gained employability awareness and selection process knowledge: increasing employability or their awareness of needing to.

It seemed evident that outcomes helped to produce further outcomes. This positive momentum occurred for some but for others closed down, due to various barriers.

Mentors gained from mentoring themselves but less so than mentees. A few developed new skills and perspectives, many felt their need to be altruistic had been satisfied and some were not immune from emotional responses; joy, sadness and frustration.

5.3.2 Interaction

Interview data emerged suggesting interaction facilitated or inhibited the perceived success of career mentoring: adding a process perspective. Initial relationship formation, perception of this and whether it stimulated further interaction or not, the quality of communication, whether the relationship deepened, what enabled this

deepening, its impact on outcomes and how separation occurred, if it occurred, were identified as impactful. Interaction was reported on regularly throughout the interviews and seemed emotive. Emergent data about interaction confirmed that functional explanations may not be sufficient to fully account for perceived mentoring success (or otherwise). This section presents evidence of dyads displaying differing degrees and patterns of relationship building alongside the communication problems certain dyads incurred. Connections between degree of relationship building and outcomes achieved are expounded. Mentee and mentor survey ratings regarding comfort and satisfaction with their match are presented in Table 22 and Table 23 respectively and are referenced alongside interview data.

Table 28*Mentee Survey Ratings/Quotes of Comfort and Satisfaction with Mentoring Match*

Mentee	Comfort comment	Satisfaction comment
Mentee 1 Comfort 6/9 Satisfaction 5/9	The mentor was very welcoming and assured me that I could ask any question, even if it sounded silly	The mentor has a background of working in the NHS, which was helpful as it I could relate aspects of her work to my degree
Mentee 2 Comfort 5/9 Satisfaction 9/9	I felt like she had unrealistic expectations of the amount of time I could commit to	Perfect in terms of career and profession
Mentee 3	Comfort 6/9	Satisfaction 7/9
Mentee 4	Comfort 6/9	Satisfaction 6/9
Mentee 5 Comfort 8/9 Satisfaction 9/9	Easy to get along with when first met at the meet and greet event. Had a good mixture in terms of communication with email, facetime and meeting face-to-face	Linked well in terms of career interests. Signed up as had an interest in gaining an insight into property which my mentor has vast experience and knowledge of. Also having similar interests such as travelling and both being from {location} made it easier to get along. Being from similar areas also helped with when approaching companies for work experience
Mentee 6 Comfort 8/9 Satisfaction 8/9	My mentor was very relax and easy to speak to	No comment

Notes: Ranked 1-9 marks with 9 highest.

Table 29*Mentor Survey Ratings/Quotes of Comfort and Satisfaction with Mentoring Match*

Mentor	Comments
Mentor 1 Comfort 9/9 Satisfaction 9/9	The interactions were longer and more detailed at the beginning of the academic year. As the time progressed, they became shorter but I think this is because the mentee found what he wanted to do
Mentor 2	Comfort 9/9 Satisfaction 9/9 No comments
Mentor 3 Comfort 9/9 Satisfaction 7/9	Due to various factors on both sides - a job move then an accident for myself - and for my mentee being away in the {location} for the whole summer on the {name of programme} meant we had a limited time this summer where he could have come into my new place of employment for an insight day/work experience
Mentor 4 Comfort 7/9 Satisfaction 8/9	I think cultural expectations played a part in potentially limiting the amount, and depth of interactions. For instance, my mentee seemed to be reticent to contact me, or limit interactions, with the perception that this would essentially be a burden on my time
Mentor 5	Comfort 9/9 Satisfaction 9/9 No comments
Mentor 6 Comfort 7/9 Satisfaction 8/9	A good first meeting in {place name}. Then skyping a bit stilted at first but got better. Spent a whole day out with {mentee name} carrying out grassland survey in July - which I arranged for him as paid work experience. The relationship developed well

Notes: Ranked 1-9 marks with 9 highest.

The Building of a Mentoring Relationship. For mentee interview participants, relationship depth seemed to vary considerably and include various processes. Interview data suggested that quality of interaction seemed to influence outcomes. The sections below explore surface, deeper and moderate level relationships and conclude that all mentee interviewee relationships seemed productive, that ‘surface level’ and ‘deeper’ relationships seemed to trigger emotions more than moderate ones and that typically but not exclusively so, deeper relationships seemed to produce more extensive outcomes than shallower ones. Recognition and identification seemed important processes that helped sustain relationships. Relationship building certainly seemed to vary in depth.

Surface Level Relationships. Some interactions seemed shallow. Mentee 1’s initiation occurred sharing information with her overseas mentor who “...knew that I was lost in terms of what I wanted to do once I graduated...” and positively reflected on her mentor’s commitment “I think it started out as if we were both like, we both were invested.” She described their limited similarities “...because she was a teacher as well, she led a group of people so she had some similarity with what I wanted to do.” “She worked for the NHS as well before so I would probably end up working for the NHS.” These limited similarities seemed valued by the mentee but she felt a lack of relationship progression “Umm, I think because we did not interact as much so it was difficult to become close to someone.” “It kind of started and then it fizzled out.”

Mentee 1 rated comfort and match satisfaction mid-scale, however, this and other scheme networking opportunities taught her that few people had a ‘job for life’ with most experiencing a career journey “Because she did explain how she did change from fields to fields and how she ended up where she is.” She continued “I did not realise you could like stop one job role and start another one, and so it kind of opened my eyes to like, you’re not stuck just being, working in the NHS and then you have to start all over again.” This helped her see that a Pharmacy career could include variety and change which

produced a positive perception of mentoring and suggests even shallower relationships can create positive outcomes. As she revealed “It’s opened my eyes in ways I didn’t think I, it could but I think it has been beneficial, even if it didn’t um, meet my goals at the start.”

Mentee 4 also rated comfort and match quality mid-scale. Gaining deeper insights proved challenging as he found stating how his mentor might describe him difficult “Mmm, that’s tough, ‘cause basically we’ve had a really formal relationship.” He experienced little progression “I think, no, most of the, throughout the time it was on one scale.” There was only one limited area of common ground “He’s done the same degree [mmm] so he might be able to give me advice on the course and how I should approach it after I’m done.”

Mentee 4’s outcomes seemed limited. Seeing options for routes to qualify in law seemed to reduce the pressure on him, albeit briefly until academic worries resumed. It seems that less engaged relationships with limited recognition, in this context, leads to limited relationship progression and more limited gains.

Surface level relationships appeared potentially emotive. Mentee 1’s mentor’s disengagement provoked speculation “I kind of knew, like ok she is busy, so maybe I’ll give her another week or two.” And “Yeah, so it can’t have been me. Maybe it was her life, something had happened in her life may be that led her to stop.” This defensiveness seemed prompted by her uncertainty about the relationship “Yeah, I think it was just because of the way my relationship with my mentor, kind of ended wasn’t the nicest...” This abrupt end seemed to damaged her perception of mentoring despite her recognising some gains. It was the nature of the interaction in these surface level relationships which seemingly created negative affect.

Deeper Relationships. The interviews also revealed evidence of deeper relationships that progressed beyond initiation, suggesting that common ground, be it typical or unusual factors, could help sustain relationships. Mentee 5 described wanting to

help his relationship develop. Similarity of interests seemed to support the effective initiation

Cos like I thought we need to just, need to think of an icebreaker. Um, we actually, cause I knew he actually went to Iceland like the week before, and I'd been to Iceland as well so I'd sort of seen in his interests he enjoyed travelling I said I am as well by the way.

He then said "I mean even if it was just from this point we just talk about careers, then we're gonna talk ok..." revealing prior concerns. The interview suggested a deepening of the relationship, reflected by their communication "...even the emails it was like 'Dear {mentor name}. Yours sincerely'. It was all very formal but then it sort of turned into a, the 'hi' and then cheers how you doing and everything." Mentee 5 shared considerable common ground with his mentor "There's been a bit more common ground than people might probably expect... I think that, like with any partnership, it will build over time where you sort of come to trust them a bit more." This recognition covered degree subject, university, career interests, sport and travel interests and experiences of needing financial support. This similarity seemed valuable to the mentee, strengthening their relationship. Mentee 2 developed a good initial rapport with her mentor "It's quite nice having that rapport I think [yeah] cause we did umm we met for coffee before the original meeting and it was like three hours long it was really nice just talking about all walks of life." When asked about mentor choice, she stated "So, I was, like, that's exactly what I wanted to be." In terms of relationship progress similarities were noticed

...I found a lot of similarities with her, in that she'd had a very sick mother growing up. She'd kind of been in a situation like me, she'd done a PGCE to be a primary school teacher and she started and she started teaching but she hated it...she had quite an academic family and I think I was very much, um like I identified with her

because my brother goes to {elite university} and I have quite an academic family in that regard.

She had been surprised by her mentor's dynamism which seemed to enable them to connect "She was just a very modern person, like her outlook on things was really fresh which was really nice". This common ground evidences their relationship initiation and progression but also shows how common ground can involve quite unusual, highly personal experiences that resonate strongly.

Trust seemed important in instigating openness. Mentor 5's relationship evolved as he opened up more

I think as time went along with applications and everything I was a bit more happy to open up and say actually I'm really nervous about all this ... I became open about the whole money side of things [mmm] so as time went along we became a lot more comfortable in sort of opening up.

His mentor sharing his prior financial support from an employer seemed to help Mentee 5 to realise he would no longer judge him for being poor

Yeah, I think trust to be fair. I didn't, I think my fear was, I didn't want to say, I'm not really able to go funding all of this different stuff, if they're not really understanding but the minute he sort of said, 'oh yeah, my masters was actually funded through {name of employer} when I was working there, um I used to have a part time job'. The minute he said it I thought he might be a bit more understanding to my position.

The mentee worried that his mentor saw him as 'flaky' and 'erratic' because he alternated from internship to paid job hunting. Opening up about financial pressures

seemed to allow authenticity. Anticipating mentor understanding seemed important. So, trust seemed to underpin the further deepening and productivity of relationships.

Also, mentees seemed to compare themselves to their mentors, which promoted self-awareness, and seemingly more extensive outcomes. Mentee 5 seemed to make the most career choice progress during mentoring having moved from an initial interest in property, to securing a graduate job. This choice seemed to grow from building knowledge and experience that convinced him he could do it, but he still revealed reservations about working alongside his mentor. It seemed that whilst testing his career identity against that of his mentor's he believed he had fallen short

You know, he's got, he's sort of very, yeah, I don't want to say Mr Corporate but there's this like corporate edge to it all and with me I'm a bit more yeah, I don't have a filter on my mouth at times.

The job he eventually accepted was with a smaller, regional organisation near home, where he felt he had the potential to feel at ease with help

To be fair, I've already told {organisation name} I'm not the, I'm not the polished, like, you know, what I think is what I say and all of this, it's just me as a person. I can't, I can be professional of course, there's professionalism but I sort of said, I can't go where I just lose me...

This seemed to be a choice of a smaller organisation, probably with fewer prospects for money and influence, resulting from him identifying clear differences between himself and his mentor in terms of 'polish'. Deeper relationships seem to highlight both similarities and differences that influence career choice. The institution might have preferred a more socially mobile outcome.

Mentee 2 seemed to also show partial identification with her mentor and concluded that she enjoyed her mentor's role but it made her question the practical nature of teaching. Mentoring helped her realise that she needed a family friendly role, contrary to her mentor's experiences

And it kind of made me realise that actually that's not fair, like I don't want that kind of life [mmm] and so even though I loved what she was doing, I think it made me realise that the reality perhaps isn't what I want to do and so I want to go more down the theoretical route.

The underfunding of education also seemed an influence "and I mean if you're working for local councils and things like that, education isn't something they're investing in sadly." Her mentor shared her career management "She hit a point with her job where she said I don't want to do this anymore and I want to do this part of it and fortunately she was able to do that." She also learned how all-consuming work can be "...the reality also of having like a prolonged, like an actual life..." These realisations helped the mentee adjust her concept of 'career' away from that of her mentor and inspired her to explore alternatives

Even though it didn't give me that sort of definite, 'this is what I'm going to do for the next 40 years' it told me its ok not to have that, and it gave me the confidence to actually consider an alternative.

So although Mentee 2 decided not to pursue her mentor's career, partial identification seemed to provide a clear view of the differences in their career identities and seemed to prompt guilt

It's really sad but I think it did just give me that reality check of, you know, think of the wider picture don't just think of it as, you know, a 9-5 thing because for one it isn't [mmm, mmm] and also the long-term scale of it like she had done.

Mentee 2's realisation seemed to parallel the deterioration of their relationship. Practical constraints such as mentee educational placements, exams and travel time obstructed interaction

I said but I can't drive so I can't get there and also I don't have this time, I just can't get up and go in the same way and so by the end of it she probably thought I was a bit flaky.

Were these excuses for the mentee feeling that the relationship had run its course, or were the barriers genuine? This was unclear.

Both mentees revealed some negative emotions from these deeper relationships. Mentee 5 shared feeling uncomfortable opting for a company other than his mentor's. Mentee 2 felt guilt about letting the mentor down "...it's very difficult sometimes when you do lose that when you sort of stop, like oh, um, let someone down..." She referred to being a perfectionist and preferring control but reported her mentor as a little controlling "No she sent me back a slightly angry email, um, twice entitled hey, hello stranger which never sets someone off in a good mood...um I think at that point it kind of broke down a bit more." Did this suggest similar, clashing personalities or mentee projection of her own perfectionism onto her mentor? She said "I felt slightly judged, almost because that expectation was there I think it made me kind of retract a little bit inside myself when with her." She also reflected "But it did kind of always feel a bit like a sort of teacher telling me what to do and what they think." The mentee seemed to step back but the mentor seemed to cling on. What seemed to be missing was honest communication about their changing relationship. Renegotiation may have avoided guilt and negativity. Partial identification seemed to help Mentee 2 spot differences between her career concept and the lived one of her mentor. It seemed to create emotional barriers and yet important learning for the mentee. It seems problematic that mentees comparing their anticipated

career identity with the lived reality of their mentor creates affect if rejecting a mentor's career identity. To manage this, trust seems important.

Moderate Relationships. Some moderately developed relationships also existed with initiation, minor bonding and very limited identification or integration.

Mentee 3 saw similarities with his mentor on paper

It's just very closely aligned to what I was interested in, so most of her work is from an ecological point of view, which relates to Zoology and then the level at which she was educated had gone onto do teaching and research was very close to what I wanted to go in to.

He stated an awareness of their similarities "Um, I suppose, well she seemed quite similar to me in terms of what would fuel her career interests and what interested her in terms of research and teaching and things like that, so that's probably the reason." He confirmed that he could identify with her "And I found it quite and I found her very relatable in that sense [mmm] I think that's probably the reason." He eventually described how similarity helped him feel more convinced about academia "Yeah. Why, why would I not get to that level and enjoy it as well so." However, engagement levels were very low and he started the relationship with specific needs to hear about doing a PhD "Um, so that was good, to hear from someone who'd been here and done it. You feel like it is more genuine the experience that I would've had." and to get research experience. Once the former had been achieved and money, distance and finance ruled out the latter, the relationship seemed futile. His overseas mentor had an inconsistent communication style: informal on skype and more formal by email "So her emails were like very um, sort of to the point, straight to the point and when you're talking to someone who is very academically advanced and you get those emails you sometimes, that can be quite intimidating." She was also not a native English speaker "English isn't her first language

sometimes over email I'm not sure whether she conveyed the, like, impression she meant to." A lack of bonding was revealed when explaining how his mentor would describe him "Possibly wouldn't know me well enough to be a good judge of character." He confirms their limited contact "Our contact was quite limited so we um spoke quite a lot at first, but, at, over time it degraded a little bit..." Mentee 3 did not rate his mentoring experience highly. So, moderate relationships can form with limited engagement but seem to reveal minor recognition and limited traction for mentee/mentor comparison.

Some relationships achieved only moderate depth, despite high engagement. Mentee 6 was initially quiet with his mentor "I think at the beginning, I was very quiet. And I think he also shares this with me which is that I did change, I started to speak." He described their initial meeting alongside another mentee "...whenever he asked a question I wasn't answering it..." He then described how familiarity with professionals improved this

Intimidated yeah, absolutely, absolutely, intimidated. But then when you speak to them, then you feel relaxed. You listen to them one or two and they are... they have a social life and they don't work all the time and so when you do see that perspective, then that fear or intimidation breaks down.

The survey suggested extensive engagement but despite prolific interaction, there seemed limited bonding revealed by limited relationship progression beyond Mentee 6 overcoming his fear of professionals "But that one, the main [that was the one for you] turning point yeah when we first met it was just him speaking, I was a listener...but that was the main turning point." Although limited identification seemed apparent, when the mentor revealed initial uncertainty of his career direction "So that similarity, I think he was even, even when he left to the law school he wasn't sure which sector he wanted to do..." He continued

I'm not very different from the people who are so professional, like when you take the first steps you're not meant to know what you want to do exactly 100% but rather to take the opportunity whatever comes and try to discover more.

This similarity seemed important to the mentee. When asked how close he felt to his mentor, he said "I did feel like very close to him and I could, you know, ask him whenever I want and send him emails and, therefore, I will be very assured that a response will be received." This description inferred his mentor as committed, reliable and student-centred rather than them being emotionally close. Limited recognition seemed to restrict certain relationships at the moderate rather than deeper level. Despite this, continued investment in the relationship by both mentor and mentee mean trust did seem to form: the mentee knew his mentor would deliver.

Conclusions on Interaction. The evidence around whether interaction facilitates or inhibits the perceived success of career mentoring is complex. Certain conclusions stand out such as the variety of relationship depth and that degree of similarity appeared to aid relationship endurance, progression and depth. For some, demographic characteristics seemed part of these similarities but others relied on unusual, personal common ground. Similarity seemed to enable mentees to anticipate mentor empathy and open mindedness, which seemed to facilitate trust. Having the same degree and university seemed to provide a baseline of similarity. Low engagement, however, appeared to limit relationship progression and familiarity seemed to reduce false preconceptions and stereotypes. Paradoxically, a dyad could engage extensively but not experience a deep relationship. The mentee's perceived return on investment, seemed to impact perceived success and at times led to relationship inertia or decline. Communication formality also seemed important. Some relationships deepened, mirrored by relaxation of communication, with others never progressing beyond the formal stage. Others experienced inconsistent formality, either due to communication method or inconsistent roles when undertaking

work experience. Mentees seemed to find distant mentoring limited bonding and commitment relative to those who had met face-to-face. Also, when native language or cultural background differed, bonding seemed to disrupt by limiting openness and creating confused signals about the level of bonding achieved. Relationships seemed to magnify similarities and differences between mentor and mentee. Only two of the twelve relationships seemed to truly deepen, with partial identification making it challenging for them to 'reject' aspects of their mentors' career identities. Honesty accompanied guilt or was withheld to save mentor feelings. Reduced honesty led to uncertainty and communication voids filled by speculation. Mentee 2 shifted through mentoring phases, with friction when not on the same page, leading to power shifts and doubt.

Emotion seemed to enter shallow relationships too, to rationalise low engagement or depersonalise rejection. Moderate relationships appeared to experience low emotional impact perhaps due to the lack of upheaval caused by identification. Even 'surface' relationships brought aspects of perceived success, although deeper relationship did seem to yield the most outcomes. Finally, it seemed that some interactions could be high impact but not feel positive and, therefore, undermine the perceived success of the intervention. Partial identification may lead to guilt and discomfort.

Analysis of interaction was not always straightforward. Low engagers had difficulty reporting details of their interaction, perhaps because relationships ended sooner or had less impact. Closeness and depth is hard to gauge from just one of the dyad. These results are still not the full story. There are still more influences to consider and these are the many characteristics in place prior to the relationships commencing.

5.3.3 Antecedents

Interviews evidenced that many pre-existing features of mentors, mentees and institutional/societal features appeared to influence interaction and subsequently

perceived success. This section reveals certain insights; the complexity of anticipating the likely success of two unique people coming together, the evolving nature of the mentoring relationship and how perception varies over time. Evidence suggests the mentor, mentee and context combine to create a propensity for perceived success with qualities amplifying, moderating or compensating for others. Similarities and differences of mentor and mentee also seem important, typically helping but occasionally hindering. Barriers to the anticipated potential to understand/empathise with the other also seemed significant, seemingly aided by reflexivity, openness and accountability. This summary of learning about pre-existing features is presented below and includes; personality and perception of mentoring, relative wealth, mentor skills and approach, common experiences/interests, relative location, career identity issues, scheme characteristics, mentor employer characteristics and society-wide features such as the graduate labour market, conflict, education and cultural differences.

Personality and Perception of Mentoring. Interviewees' personality traits did seem to influence their relationships and, therefore, the perceived success of mentoring. Traits that stood out included: extroversion and introversion; whether task or relationship focused; how much control an individual needed; whether they strove for perfection; their risk aversion; and their personal drive and accountability. Finally, resilience, self-awareness and empathy all seemed to have a bearing. The question was how such traits combined to create a sustaining or debilitating force. This section explores these traits using interview evidence, however, the degree of effect was difficult to assess, with direction suggested but typically hard to judge whether the effect was pivotal or not.

Various mentees and mentors discussed extraversion/introversion traits, which seemed to influence interaction and relationship perception. Mentee 1's extraversion "I'm like engaged but bubbly..." seemed to potentially contradict her chosen career path "I was like, OK, this is what a pharmacist does every day, so do I want to be doing this every

single day? So it was like the repetitiveness of the profession.” This extraversion helped her network with other scheme mentors when her mentor stopped “Even though I did my core mentoring, I still had another mentors typically.” Mentor 6 discussed feeling too extrovert on meeting her mentee, with one appearing unphased and the other overawed “Well, yes I think perhaps {mentee name} was a bit overawed and that {name of other mentee} kind of took it in his stride [mmm].” The mentor stated “I felt a lot more satisfied with the relationship with {other mentee name}.” suggesting this trait may have inhibited their interaction. Mentor 3 suggested she was introverted, however, her job role relied heavily on people interaction “... in the media sector ... you have a lot of different personalities that you’re managing...” she declared high energy levels “People are always telling me I’ve got a lot of energy.” and many acquaintances “I don’t really have lots of very close friends, relationships, I’ve got such a broad demographic that I’m constantly interacting with...” suggesting extraversion. Mentor 3 described her mentee as introverted with lower confidence and she seemed frustrated by her mentee’s inaction “So, first impressions, may be sort of slightly lost in what he wanted to do and may be having lots of ideas about it but not putting anything into action.” She challenged him to take action and build experience but his approach suggested introversion or low confidence “He’s not fully thrown himself into it, no.” She believed her mentee would be better suited to particular roles commonly held by introverts and gave him exposure to those. The question is whether this might have led to success or not, it is hard to conclude. Finally, Mentee 4 found his introversion and deference with his mentor may have limited their bonding “I was hesitant contacting him if I had an issue. I waited until we met, and then by the time we met I’d forgotten about it.” Extroversion and introversion seemed to create a mix of influences quite hard to unravel.

Being task focused emerged as a potentially influential trait for Mentee 3. He couldn’t communicate his mentor’s perspective and experienced limited engagement

via skype and email. Their relationship seemed to generate some limited identification, but lacked evidence of closeness, in fact affect seemed absent from the interview beyond his minor disappointment with the outcomes. There was an extended period between the relationship ending and the interview. This, combined with the mentee's risk aversion and need to plan, seemed to leave him needing still more reassurance about a career in academia. Perhaps working at the relationship might have helped his conviction grow

I sort of, the classic science student I don't like getting myself into anything without doing a lot of research on it and understanding it so it was definitely the same with the Ph..., I mean I'll still do a load more research on PhDs, it's a long, long way away, [mmm] But I like to think early [yeah] and I like to I like to have a plan..

Need for control and perfectionism also emerged as influential. Mentee 2 described herself as a control freak and perfectionist "I famously cried when I got 65 in my first essay." However, her relationship seemed to demonstrate the dynamism of mentoring relationships. Their similar need to control situations worked well initially. The mentor presented clear opportunities for informal chats and work experience. The mentee's need to control her career direction led her to make the most of her mentor's offer. The mentee realised that her mentor's role was not right for her and the relationship stalled. The mentee felt her mentor 'demand' stronger commitment than she could deliver. She speculated anxiously about her mentor's opinion of her "I can help them to do this and they've achieved all this with my help, so you do not have any of these issues, so then why can't you be this?" Mentee 2 seemed to 'project' both her frustrations about not taking full advantage of the opportunities on offer and her upheaval to explore a new career having settled for a specialist teaching role previously. This suggests that similar personalities do not always aid success "I felt slightly judged almost because that expectation was there I think it made me kind of retract a little bit inside myself when with her."

Accountability, drive and resilience all emerged as helpful personality traits.

Mentee 5 brought these traits to his relationship. He had worked hard to afford to travel “...cause I’ve been working from such a young age, I’ve always had my own money.” and described how his friends viewed him “yeah, very, they sort of say I’m tough skinned actually. Like I’m a lot more like as years have gone along, I’ve become a lot more tough skinned.” He also reflected on surviving recruitment rejection “I had to regroup so many times it was just, it was just a nightmare.” This resilience and personal accountability, coupled with self-reflection seemed to boost his investment in mentoring, aided by his mentor’s other mentee’s clear career direction “I was sort of lagging with no experience, I hadn’t really emailed him, it was a bit of a, ‘you’re not really doing very well!’” which fortunately spurred him on

I felt that maybe I wasn’t really sort of pushing more for, ‘cause he was just doing what he could to be fair. And I sort of thought actually maybe I just needed to, because he can check cover letters, he can do all of this stuff but I just need to try and maybe push more what I wanted so...

Mentor 6 also showed resilience, determination and commitment. He said his friends described him as ambitious, driven and hardworking

I think my closer friends would also think I am very determined and committed to whatever I put my mind into, umm, especially the friends I know from school. Cos they know that I would struggle to come to school and then do A levels and also at university. Umm, so committed would be a key work here. Ambitious as well.

His parents instilled in him a particular approach to life “They did set us a principle that if you put anything into your mind you could achieve it and an education is the key to any success.” This seemed evident in his mentoring relationship where he felt fearful of professionals “but you feel they are so intelligent and so superior to whoever

they meet” but persisted to overcome this fear, suggesting that he was used to stepping out of his comfort zone and open to the impossible being possible: perhaps not surprising given the mentee had moved from a war-torn country to a peaceful one and been given a radically new opportunity to succeed. A combination of drive, resilience and personal accountability, alongside self-awareness and reflection, seemed strong factors in producing a positive mentoring experience.

The interviews seemed to provide evidence of how personality traits influenced mentoring success but confirmed how complex and dynamic a picture this creates. Traits seem to sometimes help, sometimes hinder, may lead to stereotypical assumptions about career options, altering their potential career trajectory. It is clear such traits have an influence as they are brought to bear in the relationship.

Wealth. Finance was an issue for various mentees whether reporting low SES indicators or not. For some finance precluded acceptance of tangible offers from mentors. For others finances affected behaviour and trust. Wealth seemed to be a continuum with financial constraints for some not reporting low SES indicators as well.

Lacking finances seemed to directly impact on the perception of career mentoring. Mentee 3, a low SES mentee, could not take up overseas work experience offered by his mentor’s network due to finances “Um, the difficulty was he was also based in {overseas country} so it would have been quite expensive for me to fly out.” This influenced the mentee’s perceived success of the scheme. For Mentee 4, wealth impacted him differently as he described his father’s struggle to pay for his education “And it was really tough for him to put me here. Because he was having financial difficulties as well.” He described growing up during a stressful legal case that consumed his family for years and a resulting obligation to succeed in his degree and career “Even though they don’t express it, I feel it on my own. There is a burden on me.” he continued “...he always wanted me to have a better life than he did basically.” These pressures seemed to establish

an uncomfortable rigidity to his career identity and limit his identification with his mentor. Mentee 5 did not report low SES indicators but discussed the impact of financial pressures on his behaviour. It limited his mentor interaction "...sometimes it's quite hard to meet up with me cos I'll be working." He believed he appeared inconsistent

Yeah, I had to keep switching tactics. Because it was like, if I don't, if I don't get that professional placement, then I'm going to have to go back to the farm shop over the summer to work... it was a real severe balancing act.

But ultimately, this underpinned increased trust, when he realised his mentor had been in a similar situation

Yeah, I think trust to be fair. I didn't, I think my fear was, I didn't want to say, I'm not really able to go funding all of this different stuff, if they're not really understanding but the minute he sort of said, 'oh yeah, my masters was actually funded through {name of employer} when I was working there, um I used to have a part time job', the minute he said it I thought he might be a bit more understanding to my position.

So wealth seemed to impact the perceived success of mentoring for our interview participants. It seemed to directly influence engagement, limited the take-up of opportunities and influenced trust. Additionally, finance seemed to create obligation, challenging the authenticity of career goals and creating incongruence in students and influencing bonding. Wealth may have influenced the experiences and professional exposure of mentees/mentors during childhood. This influence emerges in other sections.

Mentor Skills and Approach. It seemed likely a mentor's skills and how they approached the mentoring partnership, may well have influenced the interaction, outcomes and hence the perceived success of the relationship. A range of positive skills

and approaches emerged from the interviews which appeared to be grounded in, antecedents.

One of these features was the friendliness and approachability of the mentor, as described by the mentee or by the mentor themselves. This enabled a mentee to initially relax and feel unthreatened and fed into the initiation and bonding process suggesting it is an important quality for the mentor as Mentor 3 described “Because you can see when someone’s personality changes when they relax with you [mmm, mmm] and I feel that that’s definitely something with {name of prior mentee}.” Mentee 1 also showed how she valued this “She was lovely, she was friendly...I think she was quite helpful, she was a people person...Approachable. Um.” Giving reassurance was also seen as important and positive, helping Mentee 3 feel more certain he could do a PhD as mentioned earlier. Reaffirming mentees dealing with the unknown during the transition to work and keeping them on track was also reassuring as Mentor 6 shared “You know, try and say, don’t make the decision, you don’t have to make a decision now about what you’re going to do with the rest of your life, it doesn’t turn out like that anyway, just take it one step at a time.”. Four mentee interviews cited reassurance positively. Being non-judgemental was also valued by some. Mentee 4’s mentor felt unthreatening because of this trait “That’s what I liked about him. He kept supporting me even though I felt, he didn’t express any sort of, he didn’t make me feel like he was upset, even if I didn’t do what we’d said.” Mentor 4, despite his girlfriend describing him as being critical, “she says to me sometimes you’re quite harsh...”, deliberately withheld this trait from his mentoring relationship recognising the potential negative influence. Reflexivity and self-awareness also seemed important. Mentor 1 described reflecting and working on getting the communication right with his mentee so was not too authoritative despite confessing to being quite obsessive and a perfectionist “Aah, I think {mentee name} would say I’m easy to communicate to. Because we always interactive in a very informal setting...Yes, I would call it self-monitoring

myself, definitely.”. This reflection moderated traits that may have had a negative impact on the relationship. Being student-centred was also valued. Mentee 5 felt his mentor continue to believe in him as he applied for jobs “We’d go and look at covering letters or practice some interview stuff and I would just sort of say that ... I’m not going to be able to get it. So, half of it would be spent building my confidence, the other half would be actually practicing and stuff, so...” Mentee 6 also felt his mentor was fully focused on him “So it was more like a broad agenda supervision and not just focused on his law firm.” Being focused on seemed to help mentees believe they could succeed. Also, in contrast to Mentee 1’s experiences, shared in the interaction section, Mentee 6 voiced the importance of his mentor’s commitment “Especially from the beginning, that the way he organised the days, he was very responsive to the emails. So, he had an effort. He came in to see me in to the university a few times as well so he did put effort in.” Excessive expectations of mentors of their mentees seemed to have a negative effect. Mentor 1 felt, but hid, his frustration about his mentee’s low mentoring interaction during revision periods, revealing perhaps impatience and negative affect “I would become a bit frustrated, especially in the end. He would say he was very busy but that is something I find with lots of undergraduates. That especially in revision periods, they say I’m very busy, I’m revising but it’s not that they are revising 24 hours a day...”. As mentioned already, Mentee 2 suggested that her mentor expected too much when her course commitments limited their interaction. Her mentor tried to take control just as her mentee began to create distance. Whether mentors were facilitative or directive also arose as an influence. Mentee 2’s mentor’s directive approach may have created distance between them

She was also quite, she did have that motherliness about her.” “But it did kind of always feel a bit like a sort of teacher telling me what to do and what to think.”

“She was the one who said just google it, be proactive with it because I didn’t think I could do this and it turns out I can.

However, Mentor 6 showed how being a little directive on re-organising cancelled meeting helped maintain her relationships for one mentee but not the other

You know but I'd try to engage with them to say, you know, when are you free?
I'm free next Wednesday and Thursday, which is best for you?...{Mentee name}
would always engage and set another date immediately. Whereas with {another
mentee name}, it tended to drift.

Being overly directive seemed to negatively influence the relationship so some sensitivity to the mentee, and an ability to read the situation and adapt accordingly, seemed helpful. Facilitating but giving a mentee ownership is a real skill and the interviews showed it was a challenge to maintain the balance. Mentor 1 admitted to being a little directive at times "Maybe there were some points I was strict on the same topic on trying to get him to put some structure into his life." Mentee 2 described her mentor's motherliness at the start but her telling her what to do, like a teacher, at the end. However, she had pushed Mentee 2 into wider career exploration, which had been beneficial. The balance of power in this relationship seemed to provide tension as time went by but positive outcomes too. Being directive seemed to require balance and judgement and could be helpful if not too overpowering but if it was, caused negative perceptions of the mentoring experience. Empathy and understanding also seemed valued by mentees. Mentor 3 shared her empathy with her mentee's lack of confidence and employability awareness encouraging her to help him develop in these areas "And I think it resonates with me because I didn't get when I was going through what they're going through now. I was just focused on getting my second year essays done, then starting to look at my dissertation." Mentee 5 saw anticipated empathy as crucial to trust "Oh yeah, my masters was actually funded through {name of employer} when I was working there, un I used to have a part time job. The minute he said it I thought he might be a bit more understanding to my position." Finally, listening seemed taken for granted by mentees but for Mentee 4 was valued as it seemed to

make him feel valued by his mentor “he was a good listener, he listened to what I had to say [mmm] and then he gave me his answer in a well thought out manner.” These skills and approaches seemed important relationship influences, often subtle but always needing careful management and with a role to play in mentoring success.

The various mentor skills and approaches seemed to influence the perceived success of the mentoring relationship: friendliness and approachability fed initiation and bonding; reassurance eased mentee uncertainty; being non-judgemental allowed trust to evolve; being student-centred made mentees feel valued and gave them ownership; commitment provided security and a feeling of importance; balancing being directive and facilitative and mentor expectations retained a balance of power and being reflexive enabled adjustments to interaction as required, suggesting a need for mentor agility.

Common Experiences and Interests. Mentor/mentee interests, on coming together, seemed to impact strongly on their ability to initiate and deepen relationships. Ultimately trust seemed to rest on positive regard and an anticipation of understanding and empathy due to their having had similar experiences or backgrounds.

This common ground demanded common demographics however, in some cases appeared to be based on more unusual characteristics. Mentee 2 initially reflected on the great match “So I was, like, that’s exactly what I wanted to be.” Her expectation of an older ‘mumsy’ character was not borne out, making her more relatable “She was just a very modern person, like her outlook on things was really fresh, which was really nice.” She noted unusual, unique experiences they had in common

When I met her in person I think I found a lot of similarities with her, in that she’d had a very sick mother growing up. She’d kind of been in a situation like me she’d done a PGCE to be a primary school teacher and she started and she started teaching and she hated it...

They also shared academic families “She had quite an academic family and I think I was very much um like I identified with her because my brother goes to {elite university} and I have quite an academic family in that regard.” These personal, often emotive, connections seemed to support rapport building and partial identification, helping her reassess her career identity. This identification led to negative emotion ultimately but a refinement of her career identity. Change in long-term career direction and subsequent job aspiration seemed undeniable. Mentee 5 also had common ground with his mentor and seemed a good match due to the mentee’s interest in property and their common degree and university background. The coincidence of their having recently travelled to Iceland helped initiate their relationship “...I knew he actually went to Iceland like the week before, and I’d been to Iceland as well so I’d sort of seen in his interests he enjoyed travelling I said I am as well by the way.” Mentee 5 reflected

There’s been a bit more common ground that people might probably expect [yeah]. But I think it sort of, I guess sort of you don’t know how it’ll go down but then I think so then I think that’s like with any partnership, it will build over time where you just sort of come to trust them a bit more.

As already mentioned, common ground over financial support further built this trust. So, it seems that common ground is important so individuals form positive feelings from interaction and relax, it promotes communication and engagement and can underpin trust and learning about career identity.

Limited common interests/experiences seemed a common factor in shallow relationships. Mentee 1 and Mentee 3’s very limited common ground appeared to exacerbate bonding problems already created by geographical distance, language, culture and communication formality issues. Mentee 4 and Mentee 6, although quite well matched in terms of career identity, seemed wildly different based on demographics, social

background, life experiences, personality and more. Whereas the former seemed overwrought with concerns for his academic progress and perhaps lacked the extroversion to drive the relationship; the grit and ambition of Mentee 6 appears to help provide the glue of the relationship when similarity was missing. These differences, however, seemed to limit how deep each relationship was, especially for Mentee 4. Common interests and experiences can usefully create a sense of common identity and without them, relationships appear less robust, relying on other influences to secure them.

Relative Location. The relative location of mentor and mentee did seem to effect the relationship, most noticeably for Mentees 1, 2, 3 and 5. Those with overseas mentors, a lack of face-to-face contact (more so than skype) and technology hassle seemed to create barriers that limited bonding and created uncertainty from inconsistent formality. Mentee 3 shared “So her emails were like very um, sort of to the point, straight to the point and when you’re talking to someone who is very academically advanced and you get those emails, you sometimes that can be quite intimidating”. Opportunities were harder to exploit as Mentee 3 discovered with overseas work experience. Distance also created time constraints as Mentee 2 shared “Realistically I wasn’t able to allocate that time because it wasn’t just the 40 minutes watching her lesson, [yes] it was the three hour round trip.” Preferences for work also featured as Mentee 5 accepted a job offer closer to home than one at his mentor’s employer in the City “Yeah [oh no] but to be fair the offer they were giving me I wouldn’t have taken anyway, it was the wrong office, it was {location} and I wanted {location}. So, there, it wasn’t gonna...”

A relatively distant location seemed to negatively influence relationships and exacerbated other issues such as limited finances, other commitments, communication quality and career identity constraints. However, all those interviewed sought roles within the UK rather than overseas, which may have proved valuable to those aspiring to international careers.

Career Identity Issues. Mentees presented with particular career identities at the outset which seemed to influence their experience and perception of career mentoring. Connections between notions of self and understanding prospective careers varied. Clarity, certainty and congruence of self and career identity all seemed influential. Career identity was multi-faceted involving role, location, organisation and how a career evolved over time. For mentees it seemed that; social networks, labour market knowledge, self-identity, key life experiences, demographic characteristics and concept of career interacted to establish the pre-mentoring career identity and how well-formed it was which seemed to either inhibit or facilitate their perception of career mentoring. This section discusses the combining of these forces for various mentees.

Mentee 1's career identity began conflicted. Her extended family networks were dominated by health professionals "...from a young age I had an uncle who owned a pharmacy so I had experience in that field..." She continued

I knew someone who was a pharmacist. I knew someone who was an optometrist. I knew someone who was a doctor, so it was like you could speak to all of them and kind of they would help me or steer me into the right direction...

From her extended family connections she had adopted a 'job for life' expectation and a view of pharmacy as repetitive. This clashed with her self-identity as someone needing variety and change. Any mentor needed to help resolve this incongruence. Her mentor, a teacher practitioner in the health sector, briefly role-modelled the reality of career as a journey "Because she did explain how she did change from fields to fields and how she ended up where she is." Mentee 1 reflected and said

I didn't realise you could like stop one job role and then start another one, and so it kind of opened my eyes to like, you're not stuck just being, working in the NHS and then you have to start all over again.

Her brief engagement with her mentor began a process of resolution, continued with other scheme mentors

So it's showed me that I can do so many different things with my degree. Just not being like a pharmacist. I can go into industry, I can be a lecturer, or even if I build networks, people know people then you can kind of if another opportunity does arise you can get it.

Her relating to people who had not had a 'job for life' was key. Mentee 1's career identity was rooted in childhood which built interests and assumptions about 'career'. This shows how an internally conflicted career identity can be resolved by mentoring but also how experiences can limit the scope.

Mentee 2's presenting career identity was also internally conflicted, committed emotionally to teaching due to a close bond with her mother who had been a teacher "I'm very attached to my Mum, very, very much a primary attachment more so than lots of my other friends." Her specialist teaching interests seemed to spring from helping care for her mother

I supported a lot at home [yes, yeah] with things like, umm, helping her with helping her, she's got sugar in her blood and going to the hospital with her and things like that and it was very normalised from a young age I think. And so that's probably quite an influence.

However, she doubted the profession's status "Teaching is often looked down on quite like it's an easy degree" and whether, as a teacher, she could equal her middle-class peer group

I come from... a very middle-class family, all of my parents and their friends have gone to university and a lot of them had done postgraduate studies, both my parents

had like later in life. And I think that kind of desperate need not to be the sort of lesser, like to not have that level of aca... umm of education I think really did strive me.

She had considered psychology “But I also loved psychology and I didn’t really want to give that up.” But had concluded, incorrectly, that it was too competitive to secure a prestigious enough university “Actually I got to university and realised I had better grades than the people on the psychology course...” Seeing the reality of poor Government investment in her mentor’s profession and society’s diminishing respect for teaching, alongside her interest in using more theory than practice, led her to re-assess her career direction. Mentoring helped her progress by deciding to explore educational psychology but was tempered by negative emotions from perhaps rejecting her mother’s, and/or her mentor’s, career identity and re-introducing career uncertainty. Mentee 2’s progress was impressive. A good match revealed the role’s reality producing a career identity shift with an ensuing deterioration of the relationship as it lost value to the mentee. Again, career identity seems evidently complex and rooted in class, family bonds and networks and its adjustment is bitter-sweet.

Mentee 3, was the first in his family to go to university “Yeah, the first in my immediate family, so, I’ve great Aunts that did but of my mum, dad, nans etc, I’m the first to go to university.” His career identity was created from being intelligent “... so she’d taught me to read and tell the time and all of that sort of stuff before we did it at school.” He felt different to his peer group

Um, well my close friends from home would all say I’m really smart and I don’t think that’s because I am, I think that’s just because none of them, were that interested as school. So, I’m the only one from my immediate friendship group at home to come to university.

His career identity was also underpinned by a maternal bond through watching nature programmes

I mean, in terms of what I chose to study, it was probably how I was, my upbringing, so. Umm, my mum's very into nature and things like that, so we used to watch David Attenborough and all the nature shows together.

Combining intelligence and ecology led Mentee 3 to academia but he lacked familiarity with, and knowledge of, academic research

At the time I didn't know any PhD, I know a few PhD students now but at the time I didn't have anyone to ask, mm, what's it like doing a PhD without going onto google or something like that? So it was nice to hear from someone who had actually done one at {university name}.

But he never seemed completely convinced "I mean I'll still do a load more research on PhDs, it's a long, long way away, [mmm] But I like to think early [yeah] and I like to, I like to have a plan."

Without a close bond, the mentee may not have identified enough with the mentor to consolidate his future plan. His final statement suggested he was still persuading himself to do it "Yeah. Why, why would I not get to that level and enjoy it as well so..." Bringing an insecure career identity into the mentoring relationship seemed to require identification with the mentor to solidify it. Demographics, self-identity and limited social networks and knowledge of research/academia forged this insecure career identity.

Mentee 4's life experiences had led to his career identity being embedded in the law and an assumed obligation to succeed. He grew up in a corrupt country with his father embroiled in a long-term, debilitating legal suit. Mentee 4 explained his grandfather's role in creating his career identity

And my grandfather actually had a lot, a big influence on my life. [Oh, OK.] He actually brought the idea of being, studying law, because in my country corruption and everything is really bad. ... He motivated me basically he used to make me sit and watch these judgments in like higher courts [oh right] or in parliament.

His family had struggled to pay for his university education “And it was really tough for him to put me, to put me here.” These unique and challenging childhood experiences, and seemingly limited notion of self, led the researcher to question his complete ownership over his career aspirations. This career identity was also challenged by academic worries “Although to be honest it is really hard for me now because law is really tough. Second year’s a big leap from first, [yeah] so it’s, I’m feeling the pressure.” The combined pressure seemed to create career inertia for him: uncertain he could achieve his family’s dreams “Even though they don’t express it, I feel it on my own. There is a burden on me.” “... he always wanted me to have a better life than he did basically.” Broadly this builds a picture of lower employability for this mentee, extended by naivety about gaining work experience and exploring beyond qualifying. This complex career identity created a challenging inertia for his mentor.

Mentee 5’s career identity felt vague prior to mentoring. With no low SES indicators reported, he revealed some financial constraints and no exposure to professional roles beyond his teachers. He wanted a geography related role, as suggested by his geography teacher “...he’s always said that if you’re going to go and do a geography degree make sure you actually go away and do something that you really want to.” He recognised work experience as important but only non-professional experience had limited his employability development “Yeah, I worked as a part-time cleaner in a pub from the age of 14 to about 16 then I went to become a retail assistant in a farm shop from 16 to mid-year 12 and I’ve continually gone back there.”

His mum encouraged him in ‘doing what you love’. He embarked on mentoring with an unexplored interest in property “I was interested in town, I was interested in property to be fair. And I didn’t know anything about it, to be fair I didn’t even know what real estate was as a degree to be fair though.” His career identity needs aligned well with what his mentor could offer: knowledge, contacts and experience in town planning. However, Mentee 5 had a clear sense of himself as not ‘polished’ in contrast to his mentor. He eventually opted for a smaller regional business within his comfort zone

To be fair, I’ve already told {organisation name} I’m not the, I’m not the polished, like, you know, what I think is what I say and all of this, It’s just me as a persona. I can’t, I can be professional of course, there’s professionalism but I sort of said, I can’t go where I just lose me.

Despite proving he could do the job, Mentee 5 was strongly committed to his self-identity as someone who was ‘a bit dippy at times’ and ‘with no filter on my mouth’ and this seemed to limit his career choices. His sense of self and social background seemed to strongly influence his career identity which eventually led him away from his mentor’s City-based role.

Mentee 6’s upbringing contrasted greatly with most other participants

...so I had no primary education, formal primary education. And I started secondary education at the age of, straight away to do my GCSEs, so I began to do my GCSEs and I entered the school at year 10 or 11...

He shared that his parents had no real education. This mentee had an extremely limited view of the UK and its labour market. He struggled relating to professional people “Because I wouldn’t say you don’t see them smile but you feel they are so intelligent and so superior to whoever they meet.” He also revealed his ignorance of his current career aspiration “I studied law, with no understanding whatsoever of what law

is...So I came to the class and I just, actually the teacher explained what the word ‘court’ to me.” Paradoxically, his parents instilled certain beliefs that education would be the key to his success.

Leaving a war-torn country for a peaceful, prosperous one, seemed to make him believe that anything is possible, that hope is key, which provided resilience “...whenever I find it difficult, have difficulty in doing any of my work, I just remember how lucky I am and I can do it if you put your mind into it.” Mentee 6’s initial career identity was to become a partner in a legal firm which was limited by his restricted labour market knowledge and contacts, and low employability in terms of English communication skills and nervousness of professionals. What was unclear was whether mentoring would serve as a challenging reality check or an employability boost. His student-centred mentor, Mentor 5, did the latter, implicitly applying his knowledge of the legal sector to develop his mentee. Subsequently, the mentee’s career identity seemed as strong as ever at the end. The mentor saw Mentee 6 as moving into a niche area of law where his English Language ability wouldn’t constrain him and his refugee experiences could be put to good use “I can see {mentee name} working as an immigration lawyer in the centre of, some part of {name of city} where he’s currently living.” When asked about commercial law changes he stated “I think he would find it difficult to get people to spend the time with him that he would need to show what he could do and he was more interested in wanting to help people [yeah] with that side of things.”

The mentee was less specific but maintained the optimism and ambition to eventually work as a partner in his own law firm. His ambitious nature endured “I think it is possible to do what I’m thinking to own a law firm at one point...” being somewhat naive of labour market barriers may have aided perseverance, where those familiar may have deselected themselves.

In summary, someone's initial career identity seemed to influence the agenda and productivity of that relationship. Sometimes, problematic or fragile career identities seemed to limit progress for the mentoring relationship, some undeveloped career identities appeared ripe for development making huge progress. Career identities seemed to have formed from life experiences, demographics which led to particular social networks and labour market knowledge, a sense of self and a personal concept of 'career' formed through observation of family careers and parental advice. Alignment of mentee needs and mentor support seemed important which seemed embedded in the skills, qualities and match quality. The initial presentation of career identity of mentees seemed to influence the mentoring experience and consequently the perceived success of it.

A Note on Mentors. There is much interweaved above about how mentors approached their mentoring experience. They too brought their own upbringings to the relationship which seemed to help shape them.

Mentor 1 was privately educated overseas and had strong parental and extended family role-models who were all scientists. This contrasted greatly to his mentee who was the first in his family to go to university and produced a general sense of positive regard in the mentor who could see how vital his upbringing was to his own career. This encouraged the mentor's commitment but not enough perhaps to quell some frustration with his mentee focusing on revision rather than their relationship. Mentor 2 was of mixed ethnicity, had a particularly strong role-model in her high achieving mother who was a nurse but had regretted her lack of employability awareness and networks at University and did all she could to provide these for her mentee. Although to his advantage, this fuelled some frustration when he did not take full advantage of the situation. Mentor 4's background was part Indian, part British and gave him some insight into his mentee's Chinese upbringing. This led him to work on helping her to open up and ask more questions but they only partly overcame cultural barriers and did not become close and

interview reflection seemed to help him realise this. Mentor 5's upbringing involved different locations and schools creating a flexible, non-judgemental and tolerant person. This was perfect for his mentee who was from a war-torn country and needed serious support to build the basics of his employability in terms of professional interaction and English. Finally, Mentor 6 had had a private education but was somewhat restricted in her career choices as a female going to university in the 1950s. She seemed to value enabling her mentees to explore. She was positive, supportive, and down-to-earth and revealed the true breadth and reality of their career options.

These mentors were products of their upbringing and seemed to gel with their mentees in ways that connected with their outlooks and what they felt they lacked when on their career journeys. These responses seemed consistently to the advantage of mentees.

Structural Antecedents. The interviews also revealed various structural characteristics that seemed to influence the perceived success of mentoring. These included scheme and institutional characteristics, the labour market and society more broadly. This section describes these influences .

The Scheme. The nature of the mentoring scheme under scrutiny emerged in the interviews as having some influence on the perceived success of career mentoring. These effects ranged from the impact of match quality, allowing mentoring at a distance, engagement checking and training, closure processes, role confusion, allowing mentors to have multiple mentees and mentors involving work colleagues in the process.

In terms of match quality, Mentee 1 applied late and secured an overseas healthcare worker who wasn't a pharmacist but had NHS experience. This seemed to limit potential for work experience and the value of mentoring however the scheme structure meant she could seek reassurance and support from other mentors "...he gave us his email

and then we had a skype conversation with six other people who worked in different parts of the NHS... Even though I did my core mentoring, I still had another mentoring typically.”. Similarly, Mentee 4 felt confused about his mentor’s role and uncertain of the match quality “I had like two options I think, because I was pretty late... But when I found that out I was ok, this is not what I expected. I thought he’d be a lawyer, so that would be more helpful for me. But then it wasn’t - he was actually really helpful [yeah].” Mentee 2 and 3 were happy initially, although Mentee 2 found their similar personalities problematic later on as referred to under ‘interaction’

She came up and she just ticked every box....So she, she was saying this will be the end... so, like her last thing was, you know, umm, this will be the official end of our mentoring from this point, and I was like this is, this is very strange to have, that kind of you’ve gone from like talking communicatively to just, to sort of support one another to, this is like a contract now.

Mentee 3 was well matched regarding career aspiration but location and communication style, less so “I didn’t really know how to work skype to be honest, I never use it.”

No mentors raised the issue of match quality, perhaps because it was not in their control.

Dyads not close to each other seemed to have more limited communication, bonding and potential for tangible outcomes. Mentee 2 stopped work shadowing due to travel time and Mentee 3 couldn’t undertake work experience overseas partly due to the cost. Mentee 1 also felt distance undermined their relationship. There was a sense that distance undermined commitment and created obstacles via technology and limited finances.

The scheme’s process of engagement checking was valued by Mentee 1 “In terms of making sure I was in contact with my mentor, like the team was quite good as

well.” and by Mentor 1 “This is way more structured, [yeah] but also, I think, it achieved more. Both because of the length and because of the structure of it. There is more guidance and nudging from time to time.” This reassured them if contact dipped but for Mentor 1 it helped sustain it too and guide them in how long to continue collaborating. The scheme training also seemed positive in providing structure as Mentee 4 noted how his mentor helped him create objectives to move forward “We set up meetings and then we met and he kept track of my progress.” This structuring of closure, conversely, was perceived negatively by Mentee 2 as noted above. Such a structured ending seemed incongruent with the bonding they had achieved and undermined the relationship. Mentee 2 also reacted negatively to confusing signals about her mentoring relationship as she moved regularly from mentee to formal supervisee in a work experience scenario. A lack of briefing and debriefing to manage this seemed to be missing. This mirrored Mentee 3’s confusion around relationship bonding as they moved from email to skype and differing levels of formality.

Having a mentor with multiple mentees also seemed to influence perception of the success of their mentoring. Mentee 5 compared himself to his mentor’s other mentee and found himself lacking which encouraged him to take accountability, be more proactive and ultimately helped him gain more

...she knew what she wanted. Whilst with me I was a bit really like, I don’t know what is involved {laughed} with property and I just thought property would be quite a cool thing and I didn’t really know what I wanted so we were at very different stages I think... I was sort of lagging with no experience, I hadn’t really emailed him, it was a bit of a, you know ‘you’re not really doing very well!’ And {other mentee’s name} has already got her experience with {mentor company name}...

His personality and attributes contributed to spur him on, however, a different personality might have led to a different outcome. Conversely, Mentor 6's mentees (as mentioned earlier) revealed contrasting commitment, leading to some relationship dissatisfaction with the less engaged mentee. Mentee 6's experience of multiple mentees reduced the attention on him providing him with much needed breathing space to familiarise himself with professionals "He spoke this stage and the interview lasted for perhaps one hour or may be longer. Although I was with someone else and whenever he asked a question I wasn't answering it..." What seemed clear was that the issue of multiple mentees may need monitoring to ensure a positive influence.

Mentor 5 tactically involved other work colleagues to manage his own time and involve someone who, in his view, was more approachable to students "So I always pick a day when {work colleague's name} is available ... she's that much younger than me and I think that makes it less daunting when they come in and see some smiling young lady greets them downstairs and takes them to the office itself." Mentee 6, his mentee, acknowledged this as a positive move, enabling him to conquer nerves and acclimatise to a professional space. This feature may, however, challenge the purity of this experience as mentoring.

This range of scheme features intruded into the interviews as evidence of influences on the perceived success of career mentoring for mentors and mentees, most positive, some negative. All seem to need a wary eye due to the inability to reliably predict their likely effects.

The Institution. Various effects also appeared to emanate from the institution and the nature and structure of studying a degree and the other commitments involved. These effects included exams, revision and placements intruding on the relationships and academic pressures.

Various mentees and some mentors saw exams, revision or placements as disruptive to mentoring. Mentee 1 gave up on her failing relationship due to impending exams, : “And by then it was March time and my exams were gonna start so I completely just left it to the side (yeah)... Cos once exams finished I had a placement so it was just like busy from therein onwards...” as did Mentee 2 “And then when the deadlines started coming in.” Mentee 3 couldn’t capitalise on work experience partly due to a clash with his exam timetable “He did have something he said I could have worked on with {species name}, which is like monitor lizards and stuff but it was in May and I had exams and so...” Mentor 1 felt frustrated when his mentee was single minded about revision rather than juggling it alongside mentoring, as already mentioned. Mentee 2 felt she had let her mentor down as her teaching placements left her too tired to take advantage of her mentor’s offer of various opportunities “Umm I did say to her I’m going to have to draw back from going to these sort of every other week things cos I just I can’t fit it in.” Mentor 1 also referred to his mentee, as mentioned already, heading off to his placement overseas which clearly delayed relationship closure.

Academic pressure was cited by Mentee 4 as a significant barrier to mentoring “Sometimes I just feel like giving up.” “I am sceptical now, I mean now there’s so much pressure the degree, on the course.” His apparent insecurity about his course performance impacted the certainty of his career identity and created an emotionally charged situation for him.

These institutional impacts on the mentoring partnerships felt fairly limited, although mentees may not feel fully aware of such influences at this level in their day to day experiences of career mentoring. Where the institution has had an influence, however, it seemed disruptive to the scheme as they were heavily institutionalised and immovable e.g. exams.

The Labour Market. The influence of the labour market was evident in several ways: the membership of mentors to particular employers with their related sector characteristics; the application processes for employers, the workload of mentors in that sector; the availability of work experience opportunities in that area of the labour market; recruitment criteria and job status.

Employer influence was hardly visible in the interviews. Mentors were typically alumni which may account for this. Although they seemed to have a bearing via job applications and insights into mentor workloads. A job offer by his mentor's organisation, not located where he wanted, caused Mentee 5 embarrassment and guilt but their good communication and his strong self-identity enabled him to make, in his view, the right decision for him. Mentee 5 was aware the graduate recruiters in his mentor's organisations might be frustrated with him which created additional pressure, all of which weighed somewhat negatively on the mentee's perception of the experience "He was not [yeah] I mean the people who worked there were absolutely cool with it. I think it was just, maybe it was sort of like the graduate recruitment officer and also maybe the head of national planning was a bit..." This arose in Mentee 2's view of her mentor's workload which helped her to see career choice as a life choice where she wanted time for family "So she was in a rush and I appreciate that and so she did have yeah a lot on her mind I'm sure [mmm], because there were always loads of um pressures and stresses and so on around the workplace." Mentee 4 came across as feeling undeserving of his mentor's time, exacerbated by his mentor being so busy and holding back on asking questions "He seemed like a busy person. Because he was always travelling, in fact he was travelling all the time."

More broadly, a lack of work experience in certain sectors served to undermine the initial rationale for Mentee 1 joining the scheme, which was moderated somewhat by her low expectations of securing it "Well I was looking to get experience,

like in the NHS as a whole... yes it was difficult because you can't really get placements in ... cos it's quite competitive. But if it was offered it was there. It's not really like, like, it's a part negative."

Mentor 3 also shared the challenge of gaining media exposure and how valuable mentoring was to her mentee as mentioned earlier.

Recruitment criteria seemed present in the minds of various mentors acting as a conduit for mentees to better understand these hurdles. Mentor 5 was aware that Mentee 6's lower confidence and less developed English ability created barriers to securing a commercial training contract. He worked hard to help him overcome such barriers but it is unclear whether he fully shared these constraints with the mentee

His course work went up dramatically [mmm]. He was looking around the third/2.2 area and now he's looking at 2.1s....It's his, it's his confidence and communication issues. [Mmm, mmm] I think he would find it difficult to get people to spend the time with him that he would need to show what he could do and he was more interested in wanting to help people [yeah] with that side of things.

Mentor 6 reported how she told her mentees that to be a ranger meant engaging with the public rather than living in isolation "{Other mentee name} what he wants, what he really wanted to do was become a ranger and hide in a wood and look after nature [mmm] and I suppose I had to disabuse him because there's very few jobs like that." It is unclear how this information was received and the effect on their relationships but we know engagement was limited. Mentee 4's academic worries made his career identity fragile as he was unsure if his degree class would prevent him securing the training required longer term.

The status of particular roles seemed an issue for Mentee 2. Before and throughout her relationship she doubted whether teaching provided the status equivalent to

that of her parents, siblings and childhood peers. The calibre of her mentor strengthened her belief in the status of teaching but the lack of investment and prevailing conditions in teaching made her refocus on something more highly esteemed: educational psychology “And, I mean if you’re working for local councils and things like that, education isn’t something they’re investing in, sadly.” Although status may not fully explain this, it did seem to have an influence and led to greater progress but short-term negativity.

These influences from the labour market manifest themselves in a range of ways in the mentoring dyad, influencing interaction, the activity involved and challenging career identity.

The Society. At a societal level there were a few complex issues perceived as influencing mentoring relationships. These relate to societal conflict, experiences of education and cultural differences.

Societal conflict had had a profound effect on Mentee 6, who was from a war-torn country and had secured asylum in the UK. This, as discussed above, had had a profound impact on his education, his English ability but had increased his resilience, hope and ambition

We had no means we had no money to fund the schools at the time because I was a {name of country} national who’d run from, refuge I was a refugee family, who’d gone to {name of country} during the Civil War in {name of country}. So, we stayed in a refugee camp in {name of country}.

This provided Mentor 5 with an unusual mentee but to his credit, his skills and approach enabled him to focus on him and recognise that referral, for further university assistance that involved English Language support, was required. Yet, inevitably some of his educational, language and confidence issues were perceived by his mentor as likely to influence his career trajectory.

Being educated outside of the UK, combined with different social backgrounds, also seemed to influence relationships for Mentor 1 who had high positive regard for his mentee partly because of the mentee being the first in his family to go to university “Yeah. Especially because I was telling you that his family they had not many professionals. He’s the first one to go to university, so he doesn’t have a point of reference.” This seemed influenced by his experiences of education in his home country, his professional parents and private education. This complex set of factors helped sustain the relationship.

Cultural differences seemed evident for Mentor 4 who felt his female, Chinese mentee’s cultural background limited their bonding but not her commitment. She remained somewhat closed off which may have been different if their genders and ages had been more similar

... it was difficult at first. I think there was a bit of a cultural barrier. I had to kind of say to her listen, I can help you with anything, what do you want to achieve?... Yeah. Having loosely read up on far-eastern culture, um, whereby those more inexperience people tend to find themselves as there to be more subservient, there to learn and listen and not ask questions.

The impact of the Olympics on Mentor 5 was quite significant for his career: “I don't know I guess I'm really like I'm really into my Olympics... I guess when you're so young you want to do something, they say you want to have a job that you enjoy and I sort of thought I'd love to go and do all of that when I was younger.”

These societal influences were subtle in some places, more pronounced in others but were rarely volunteered by interviewees, suggesting they are not necessarily at the forefront of their minds.

Conclusion on Antecedents. Exploring various pre-existing features of the mentoring relationships suggested that factors can come together to influence the perceived success of career mentoring. Some appeared to limit potential gains, some spurred relationships on through the complex, often unique combinations of influences. For these mentees, a lack of labour market knowledge and professional networks, caused by social background, made mentoring relationships fundamental for developing career identity and employability. These needs can stimulate engagement and commitment as the mentee sees potential returns. However, other things seemed to facilitate or inhibit the impetus to satisfy this need including wealth and wealth differences, lack of common interests, certain personality traits, fear from earlier life experiences, clear self-identity that limited identification with the mentor as well as unique, personal constructs of ‘mentoring’ and ‘career’. Structural antecedents seemed to help some and hinder others including; location, communication methods, time constraints, other commitments, scheme rules and training. Vigilance, reflexivity and good, open communication appeared helpful as was the need for mentor agility, skill and sensitivity.

5.3.4 Qualitative Results Conclusion

It is clear that mentoring relationships are a complex and unique coming together of two different people. Antecedents represent certain traits, starting points and assumptions and the interaction of these seem to lead to different depths of bonding but with most mentees seeming to benefit to some degree. Those not bonding so closely still seemed to be able to make significant gains through the existence of certain moderating factors such as good mentor skills and reflexivity and mentee attributes such as resilience, determination and reflexivity. Some moderating factors were positive, some negative, depending on the dyad. Some presenting factors appeared to limit potential progress. This unique cauldron of influences is important. Interactions seemed to be hindered by distance, cultural differences, less preferred communication methods and language differences. The

ideal process seemed to be engage, bond, identify but this did not seem to happen for all for various reasons, of which social background seemed to play a part. Common ground seemed the key to support bonding but people from all backgrounds can benefit with evidence to suggest that this common ground can relate to unusual features and not simply common demographics. Good moderating characteristics such as mentor skills were seen to bridge when bonding fell short, allowing less close relationships to be highly productive. For those who bonded deeply, identification seemed to be about providing the mentee with a yardstick where the reality of the mentor's career was compared to the potential of the mentee's future career identity in a particular area of the labour market. Full identification wasn't necessary, in fact partial identification and spotting differences helped refinement of career identity. However, partial identification was shown to produce awkwardness. Emotions seemed at play for shallow and uncertain relationships and also for deep, invested relationships. This seemed to make openness, communication and reflexivity useful tools to keep relationships functioning well or allow it to move to a new status. Moderating factors enabled schemes to improve potential gains and positive perceptions of career mentoring. Institutional and societal influences are faintly at play. This concludes the qualitative results chapter and next the discussion chapter will begin with a summary of how these two sets of results come together.

Chapter 6 Discussion

This research started out with two key research questions:

- 1) What differences are there, if any, in the perceived short-term benefits (or otherwise) of career mentoring for mentees from different SES backgrounds?
- 2) What is it that facilitates or inhibits the perceived success of career mentoring?

From these and the literature review a series of questions emerged. Does SES impact career mentoring? If so how? How important is mentor/mentee similarity and what is it based on? How important is trust and identification? What other influences might inhibit or facilitate the relationship? What might mitigate against these influences and what evidence is there of this? Do social structures have an influence and what evidence is there? How does mentee and mentor upbringing impact career mentoring? How does the childhood development of mentee labour market knowledge impact on career mentoring? What role does affect play? This discussion will explore these questions in order to answer the two research questions, reflecting back on critical evidence from the quantitative and qualitative research to evidence this. It will consider how far these results support or challenge the key theories and research from the literature review, including the conceptualisation of mentoring, theories of social reproduction (including notions of capital), social networking and social learning. Finally it will summarise the value that this research has added.

6.1 Key Findings

This section provides an overview of the key qualitative findings and quantitative results to take forward and explore in relation to the research questions and the initial literature review. The findings are shaped to relate to the role of SES in the career mentoring of undergraduates, the employability shifts and any differences in these. Findings in relation to similarity, the importance of relationship depth and evidence

relating to identification and trust and its bearing on relationships alongside the importance of interaction quality are summarised. Influences identified on the perceived success of career mentoring, including the notion of moderating influences are highlighted. Societal and institutional effects are relayed that have invaded the relationship as well as the influence of upbringing. Finally, it summarises the findings related to the role of affect in the mentoring experience revealed by the interviews.

These results seem to confirm that for these mentees on this scheme, there were differences in the perceived short-term benefits of career mentoring for mentees from different SES backgrounds and that these differences are restricted to experiencing higher, typically psychosocial, gains of self-belief and career clarity for those reporting low SES indicators. When considering what facilitates or inhibits the perceived success of career mentoring, SES appears to be one influence but there are others documented below.

Beyond self-belief and career clarity, all other differences in employability shifts measured, including work exposure, labour market knowledge, interaction ease and networking propensity, were confirmed as not statistically significant and in fact, the differences were minimal and sometimes non-existent. Work experience incurred the highest positive shifts for both social groups, with networking propensity not increasing on average, for either group. A key finding, therefore, is that there are notable career development gains of work experience, labour market knowledge and ease of interaction with professionals, made by mentees from different social backgrounds and that the extent of these gains are highly comparable. However, it was concluded that SES was a predictor of self-belief in the ability to secure a graduate job on graduating, explaining 11.5% of the difference, confirming that SES was not the only force at play.

The confirmation that SES was not the only force at play was further endorsed by the interview results. Gender and ethnicity were ruled out as influences to

explain the discovered differences in shifts in self-belief and career clarity when applying multiple linear regression. However, the interviews showed that SES manifested itself in the mentoring relationship in a range of ways. Most of those reporting low SES indicators recognised a need for employability development and valued mentoring and yet often had a more precarious or less complete 'graduate' career identity, seemingly based on more abstract notions of what the job involves, due no realistic work insights. They reported a lack of familiarity with professionals that could undermine low SES mentee confidence and challenge their willingness to interact with them, although the strategies of involving other lower status staff seemed to help. This potential for reduced interaction may limit the chance to build common ground to support bonding. SES differences may result in limited identification with the mentor, reducing the opportunity for higher levels of trust, openness and career identity refinement. Limited recognition seemed to stall some relationships but for some, moderating influences helped. Identification had its limits with interviews showing how spotting differences seemed to refine mentee career identity and trigger career choice re-evaluation.

Some communication issues appeared to have resulted from social status differences, creating feelings of intimidation. Mentors, on occasions, channelled class biased sector recruitment criteria, whilst supporting their mentees to meet them. This could have discouraged a low SES mentee but in reality seemed to improve chances of success and yet led one to moderate his ambition. Low finances impacted opportunity conversion. Important mentor traits such as openness and acceptance seemed influenced by the breadth of exposure to people from social backgrounds during childhood. Resilience and determination were evident in those mentees surviving challenging social unrest and deprivation. These traits were seen to moderate relationships that lacked similarity and identification so high outcomes were achieved. SES seemed to influence mentoring relationships at different levels and in various ways.

In terms of societal influences, structural barriers encountered via mentoring seemed to be based in Law, and to a lesser extent, in Property/Planning. Structural barriers to lower classes seemed to be projected through the dyad to the mentee. SES appears to have a range of effects on the perceived success of the mentoring relationship from mentor/mentee behaviour and interaction and from external institutional/societal structures but does not necessarily reduce perceived success for mentees with low SES indicators despite potentially moderating ambition for one.

Similarity seemed to have a role to play but was not necessarily based primarily on SES or other demographics. Similarity seemed to create a basis for initiation, engagement and recognition of oneself in the other. Having common ground to talk about helped mentees and mentors bond. Those with limited recognition did not seem to deepen the relationship as much, which was reflected by sustained formality. For some, as differences were dismissed, trust formed and relationships became more open, based on a more accurate picture of 'the other'. Gains were made by those in both deeper and shallower relationships but those interviewed who evidenced deeper relationships seemed to gain most. Those most trusting relationships incorporating identification, enabled a refinement of career identity, whereas others showed little signs of this.

The basis of similarity varied, often based on quirky experiences and yet potentially indirectly related to SES. Dyads needed common interests and a basis for empathy and mentees needed to feel they would be understood. Anticipation of understanding seemed to rise with similarity and openness seemed to improve with trust, elevating understanding even further. Mentees needed a relatable benchmark to judge how they might fare in an occupation, organisation and sector. Close comparison enabled a proxy for evaluation of career identity and 'fit'. The bases for similarity also included career interests, degree subject, location, age/dynamism and personality, challenging career choice journeys or cultural backgrounds. Unusual similarities seemed to produce stronger

recognition than common demographics because they often connected emotionally and provided a rarer opportunity for mutual understanding. Similarity did sometimes lead to clashes, however, but broadly seemed to drive deeper relationships.

In terms of influences, the quality of interaction seemed to influence the perceived success of career mentoring and created positive and negative emotive responses for some. This included issues of location, communication methods and cultural background, some of which were moderated by scheme interventions. Gender differences only emerged once when age and cultural differences combined to limit bonding. Ethnicity emerged in the shape of a biased network of extended family in professional health careers for one mentee. Personality similarity was another influence that enabled harmonious working and the occasional clash. Mentor skill and approach seemed evident as moderating influences that enabled some relationships to secure higher outcomes. Mentee resilience and determination and the ability to reflect seemed to sustain relationships or engender perseverance or aid closure when mentoring lost value. A 'faulty' concept of 'career' or 'employability' could inhibit outcomes by limiting the mentee's agenda and yet could produce a re-evaluation of career goals through concept development. Structural antecedents such as scheme characteristics facilitated positive experiences of mentoring but could inhibit at times. Influences inhibiting or facilitating the perceived success of career mentoring were multifarious, spanning personal antecedents brought to the relationships and scheme characteristics and through the interpersonal interaction/relationship as well as positive influence of gains feeding back into the relationship. These influences were rarely all positive or all negative, endorsing the complexity and uniqueness of the match.

Social and institutional structures seemed to have some influence on the perceived success of career mentoring but these were only glimpsed in relationships. Scheme influences included the closeness of career interests of the match, whether mentor

and mentee were far away from one another, seemed to affect accountability, commitment, communication and bonding as well as creating obstacles to converting opportunities. Engagement checks and training were seen as scheme enhancers. Allowing multiple mentees for mentors seemed helpful, but not exclusively so. Institutionally exams, revision, academic pressure and year-long placements constrained mentee engagement. These seemed inhibitive and unavoidable. Employers of mentors were rarely visible, although a clash of mentoring and recruitment agendas seemed evident and mentor workloads influenced mentees so they backed off and gave their mentor space and some made them reassess their career direction. The graduate labour market was evident through scarcity of work experience and middle-class biased recruitment criteria which adjusted mentoring activities to try to overcome them but also encouraged one to moderate their choice of organisation. The falling status of teaching encouraged one mentee to re-evaluate her career direction. At the societal level, conflict and trauma seemed to breed resilience, hope and ambition. Overseas childhoods seemed to limit perception of employability in the UK for two mentees. Cultural difference combined with gender and age differences limited the bonding of one dyad. The social background of one mentor resulted in cultural capital limiting identification for one dyad. So, societal influences seemed to have the capacity to both facilitate and inhibit the perceived success of career mentoring, suggesting that mentoring is not immune from societal influences. The mentor responses, however, were to support and develop their mentees, rather than exclude them, perhaps as they have common interests in developing their '*alma mater's*' reputation via the success of their mentee.

The findings indicate that a mentee's upbringing, to an extent, seemed to, constrain full social mobility potential and was evident when mentees felt uncomfortable and inauthentic in relation to one's true self and family. This act of constraint did not seem to eliminate social mobility between generations given several students aimed to, or indeed

secured a job to become, the professionals their parents never were. Limited labour market knowledge and initial career identities also seemed to influence outcomes but again, not entirely constrain them, however, the effects are evident as forces pull a mentee towards options that have some sense of familiarity.

The interviews were scattered with clues of the emotional state of the mentee or mentor. Refinement of career identity in deeper relationships seemed to provoke emotional responses of frustration or anxiety. Shifts in career identity could disrupt relationships and create friction and emotional responses. Leaps of faith as trust built led to nervousness and vulnerability. Guilt followed as some mentees rejected aspects of their mentor's career identity. A lack of mentor commitment or mixed bonding signals created insecurity for some which led to rationalisation of a mentor's actions to self-soothe. Faulty conceptualisation of 'career' caused stress. Interaction itself caused fear for some due to negative stereotypes of professionals or lower self-worth. Strong self-awareness was evident in some mentees who reflected and adjusted behaviour to improve their approach which led to better outcomes and others recognised their unease about their current career plans and re-evaluated their career direction. Self-reflection enabled recognition of negative emotions and triggered actions to bring them back towards balance. Work experience demonstrated mentee capability and suitability alongside mentor reassurance. Affect supported the intuition of several mentees leading them to avoid overstretching themselves in roles or organisations they anticipated not feeling right in. This self-restraint seemed less evident in mentees who had experienced extreme life circumstances, perhaps due to them being used to feeling uneasy during their lives. Reflecting and building self-awareness enabled mentees to believe in themselves, whether facing positive endorsement of their career identity or enduring the challenge of refining it. Emotional responses seemed important as apparently rational moves were challenged by doubt. Reflexivity seemed to highlight affect, whilst work experience and mentoring provided reassurance to

boost self-belief and facilitate some degree of social mobility intention, if not to the fullest extent possible. Acting, in some way, authentically, according to one's self and career identity, seems to have an influence over mentoring outcomes for those mentees straying from career identities that feel in some way familiar.

These findings are captured in a proposed model of undergraduate career mentoring by professionals which outlines the system of effects discovered from the research into this scheme and from within the literature review. This model is presented below.

6.1.1 Towards a Model of Undergraduate Career Mentoring in Higher Education

This thesis tentatively proposes that career mentoring in HE between undergraduates and professionals with no supervisory relationships or contractual connections may experience the following process.

A mentor and mentee bring their own set of characteristics to the mentoring relationships, including their demographic traits; their childhood and other life experiences; their career and self-identities; their personalities; their skills and metacognitive traits and their physical impact, including cultural signifiers. The two individuals interact and trigger a unique and dynamic pattern of relating which rests on a process of recognition of one's self in the other in order to anticipate if there is potential for understanding and empathy. This creates a process of engagement, bonding and identification. How far the dyad progresses through these processes depends largely on similarity and trust but the basis for this similarity and trust is itself complex and varied. Relationship success seems to be able to be moderated by outstanding skills or traits of the mentor and/or mentee such as mentoring skills, mentee determination and resilience and excellent communication and reflexivity. This means that mentees can achieve much higher or lower level goals than similarity would typically enable, should these moderating

factors be particularly positive or negative. This means that a lack of similarity can still result in high level outcomes if trust exists but may still exclude the ability to identify with the other and the chance to experience career identity refinement. The progression towards bonding and identification is mirrored by increased trust, mutual understanding, openness and a lessening of formality. The process within mentoring at the highest level, seems to involve an intense comparison between mentor and mentee and must rest on similarity for it to be worthwhile. The object of this comparison is about using the relationship as a proxy to judge labour market 'fit' and to sharpen career identity before further career decisions are made. Scheme characteristics can also help sustain relationships but can be clumsy and cause negative effects if not attuned to the tone of the relationship. Emotions act to encourage reflection for some and to guide behaviour, with reflection providing an opportunity for mentor intervention if shared or noticed.

Mentoring gains feedback into the process to encourage further engagement until no further value can be gained. Career development outcomes seem to come early to most who seek them and appear to provide increases in self-belief about future career for most. Experiences such as exposure to work (mentoring outcomes themselves) bolster this and together build self-belief about securing graduate level work upon graduation.

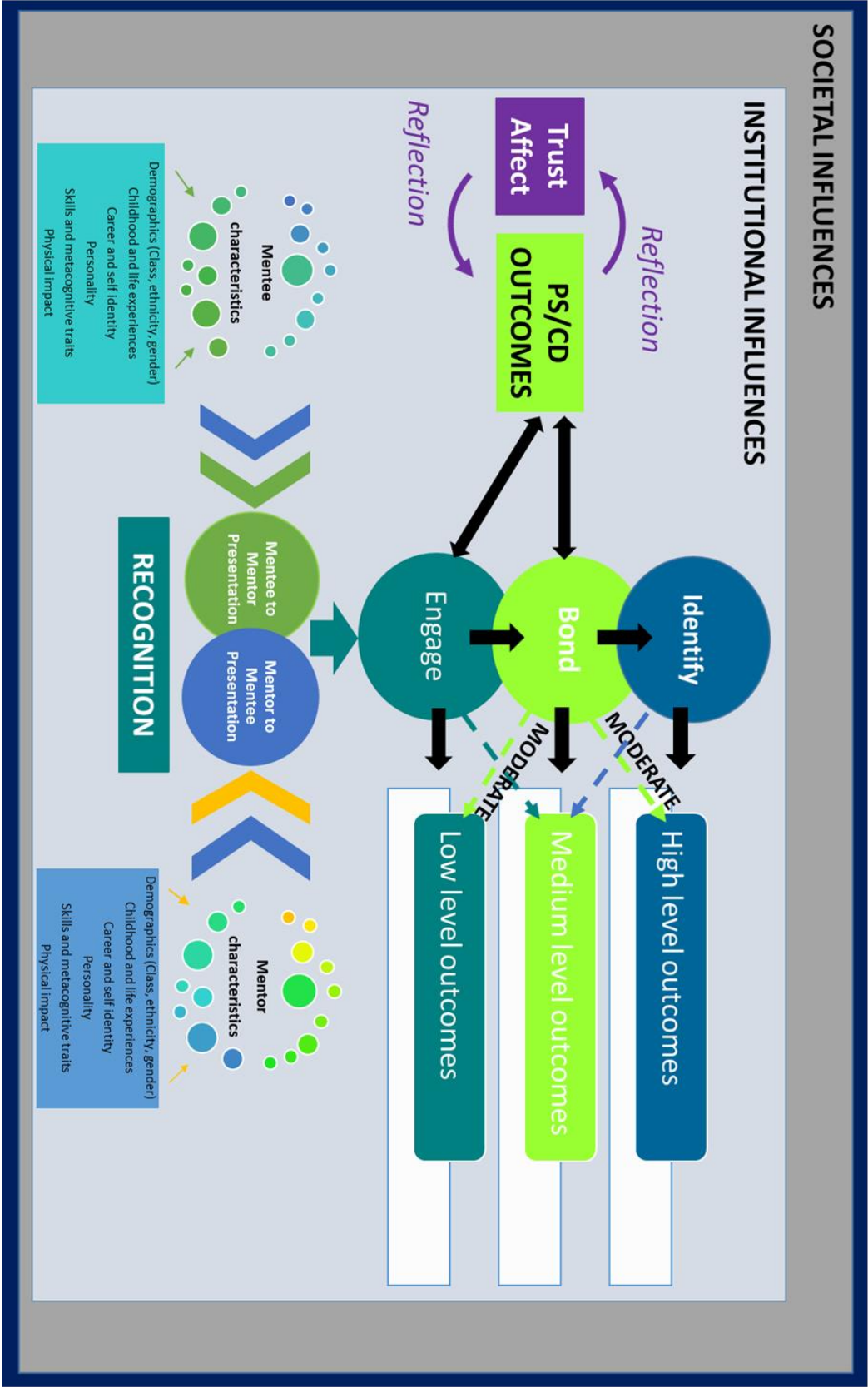
Institutional and societal influences encroach subtly on the mentoring relationship by framing the class-biased job criteria mentees and mentors work on to overcome, by providing rules of operation and barriers to engagement through providing competing activities and by projecting 'ways of behaving' for the role and organisation being considered to live up to. Societal influences also encroach via the childhood and life experiences of the mentors and mentees too. Figure 13 shows a diagrammatic representation of this process.

So to conclude, in this study, results indicated that low SES mentees typically gained more in self-belief and, if considering shifts in mean rank, career clarity also but not in more tangible areas of employability. Neither low SES, nor non-low SES, on average, particularly gained in networking propensity but similar gains were made in work exposure, labour market knowledge and ease of interaction with professionals of which work exposure gains were highest. So, although psychosocial gains were higher for low SES mentees, career development gains were comparable. Mentors appeared to be happy to support the agenda of developing mentee employability, with no evidence of mentee exclusion, and evidence to the contrary other than some channelling of structural barriers in the form of recruitment criteria/cultural capital. With 11.5% of the differences in shift in self-belief explained by differences in SES, other forces were also at play and the interviews suggested these were multifarious, at different levels (individual, interpersonal, institutional, societal) and inconsistent often in their effect with antecedents and interpersonal influences being most evident. These findings have led to the development of a tentative working model for career mentoring of undergraduates in HE (see Figure 13). This model deliberately displays all levels of perspective and encourages researchers and scheme organisers to acknowledge them all in their designs and deliberations going forward, if they want to evaluate schemes accurately, as they should be in the conceptualisation of mentoring too.

Next, consideration will be given to what these results mean in terms of the concept of career mentoring for undergraduates in their pre-professional careers and explore what light these results may shine on some of the research and theories explored in the literature review. How do these results confirm or challenge the conceptualisation of mentoring and what do they say about Social Reproduction, social capital theories and Social Learning Theory?

Figure 13

A Model of the Process of Higher Education based Career Mentoring of Undergraduates by Professionals



6.2 Further Exploration of the Research Findings

To further explore the meaning of these research findings, there appear to be five key questions to explore. To what extent have these findings altered the shared understanding of the conceptualisation of mentoring? How far do these results endorse Bourdieu's thinking on Social Reproduction, including the concepts of field position, habitus and reflexivity? Which social capital theories do these results appear to support? What roles for affect are revealed by these results and how does this relate to Bourdieu's and Bandura's thinking? How important is the concept of Self-efficacy and Social Learning Theory as far as these results are concerned? What role does similarity, trust and identification play?

6.2.1 *Conceptualising Mentoring*

In the literature review there were broad conclusions drawn about the concept of mentoring that had emerged from the highlighted studies. Mentoring had the primary purpose of mentee development but it was suspected that there were other stakeholders securing positive outcomes, moderating such gains, and that not all outcomes might be positive. The gains identified by Kram (1985) included career development gains focused on gaining career advancement and psychosocial gains providing a sense of competence, clarity of identity and managerial effectiveness, with social and parent added later to the list (Ragins & McFarlin, 1990). Although role-modelling (Scandura, 1992) and political behaviour (Pollock, 1995) were introduced by others, Kram's division between career development and psychosocial functions gained respect and broad research support, with some minor adjustments. Kram's (1983) process suggested four phases of initiation, cultivation, separation and redefinition. Trust and identification were expected to evolve over time with career development functions being offered before psychosocial functions with most offered after initiation. One key study queried this growth of trust across phases (Bouquillon et al., 2005) but most studies endorsed the importance of trust and mutuality

or identification that relied on similarity and delivery of hoped for outcomes (Orpen, 1995; Ragins, 1997; Lester et al., 2019; Hill et al., 2018; St Jean et al., 2018). Timescales identified by Kram and others were quite long and doubt was cast over whether formal mentoring schemes in HE were long enough for such trust to form (Phillips-Jones, 1982; Kram, 1983).

The results that emerged went some way to supporting these findings but subtly challenged others. Firstly, in terms of the primary purpose of mentoring, the average and mean rank shifts in employability show that for this scheme, the outcomes typically produced gains in perceived mentee employability. This was also supported by the interviews where even the lowest and shallowest engagers reported some form of employability outcome. In addition, some mentor benefits were reported in the shape of altruistic tendencies being fulfilled and some skills being developed by those mentors interviewed. Although not necessarily measured in this research. from an institutional perspective, employability development was also an interest of the HEI paying for the scheme and the Government department funding the work. This meant that any potential for social mobility or any potential for increases in the likelihood of securing graduate level employment would likely benefit the reputation of that institution too. Although interviews and employability shifts showed a general average move in the right direction and most interviewees reported solid career development gains, as well as one reporting actually securing a job that made him socially mobile compared to the previous generation, there was no measurement, within this research, of the HEI benefiting longer term, i.e. the percentage of the cohort securing graduate level jobs. Of course employability increases do not necessarily guarantee social mobility, although in this research it is hoped and assumed that it in some way increases its potential, despite other structural barriers existing. The all-important question seems to be whose need wins out, the institution or the individual? Where does the balance lie? The *raison d'être* of the scheme was to improve the Graduate

Outcomes of all, regardless of social status. There were indeed some instances of negative mentoring experiences in the interviews but these were fairly minor and seemed to be caused either by a lack of commitment by a mentor, a minor clash of personalities and agendas, being unable to capitalise on offers of experience and guilt felt when not taking up a job with a mentor's employer. These examples seem to represent, to some extent, the natural outcomes from a scheme where mentor commitments vary, mentor skills and personalities vary and outcomes are not always as 'neat' as they could be, as opposed to mentors acting out the psychodynamics of prior relationships for instance (Colley, 2001).

So, broadly speaking this research is supportive of mentees being at the centre of development but the interviews and simple logic confirm that there are others that gain, including the institution and mentors and that occasionally these outcomes may feel negative if expectations are not met or other fairly natural friction occurs in the dyads through relationships and the scheme not being perfect. It seems clear that if the scheme was not assumed beneficial to the institution, it would not continue to be invested in, particularly given the theory of change agenda attached to OfS funding. The more concerning underbelly of mentors wanting to exclude mentees from sectors and job roles to protect their own organisational and societal standing, did not seem to be evident, although arguably middle-class biased criteria did appear within the dyads and did influence activities in order to help them meet such criteria (Gauntlett, 2011). The transmission of judgements about accepted cultural capital into one dyad and the partial identification that existed between them, put off one mentee from working for his mentor's organisation and so did perhaps serve the power group in that sector, leaving the legal sector to decide whether Mentee 6, who had not been put off, to decide at a later stage if he met the criteria or not. This suggests that in this specific scheme and perhaps similar schemes in similar HEIs, with a similar range of sectors and mentee mix, that social dominance orientation (Martin & Bok, 2015) and organisational citizenship (Moberg & Velasquez, 2004) might

not be that evident, and when it is, may not appear to be personally ‘owned’ by the mentors involved as such, just passed on factually as something to be overcome (which in itself may be off putting). The question is why these actions were not more evident. This may be because such activity is not occurring much, but, given other studies finding evidence of such activity at more senior levels in particular sectors (Blickle et al., 2009), it suggests that maybe the career stage of the mentee, the range of sectors included in the research interviews and the lack of a current employment contract between the mentee and an organisation in the sector as well as the recruitment of alumni mentors onto a scheme with specific employability and hence social mobility goals, may have led to limited activity of this kind taking place. It would be quite possible that such activity might be more evident in more elite institutions where the social distance between mentors and some mentees may be larger and the sectors and organisations represented, more elite and more reliant on middle class cultural capital. This suggests the need for researchers and scheme organisers to be aware of and evaluate the sectors their mentors come from, not just the individuals themselves and the relationship, but to focus on the institutional and societal dimensions too.

In pursuit of measuring the perceived shifts in employability of different social groups of mentees, a range of both career development and psychosocial shifts were identified by mentees. Those measured and identified included work exposure, labour market knowledge and ease of interaction which all were defined in a way that suggested career development gains, whereas networking propensity was not, on average, perceived as a positive shift for mentees regardless of social background. Self-belief in ability to secure a graduate level job on graduation, and career clarity, were perceived typically as positive shifts for those reporting low SES indicators, although those not reporting low SES indicators had a perceived shift that tended to zero for shifts in career clarity, with shifts in self-belief being very slightly negative on average. This shows that psychosocial

benefits were typically gained by low SES mentees, with more of a mixed picture for those not reporting low SES indicators, as far as psychosocial benefits were concerned. This seems to resonate with research that identified diverse racial relationships as securing more psychosocial benefits (Ragins, 1997) and yet seems to disagree with research which suggests mentoring benefits self-efficacy for all mentees (St-Jean, et al., 2018). This leads towards a deficit argument where a lack of knowledge and familiarity with graduate level work of those mentees reporting low SES indicators, needs to be increased in order for that mentee to feel more familiar with it and more knowledgeable about it and, therefore, to feel the move may suit them and be of a lower risk to them. Interestingly, closer inspection of the mean ranks and means for non-low SES mentees shows that some of the perceived average shifts in the psychosocial measure self-belief was slightly negative and the median rank for career clarity was zero, either suggesting that these aspects of employability were relatively high already with little or less room for development, or that mentoring was ineffective in developing employability for them in this way. It would seem logical that those brought up in professional families would feel more at ease with professionals and have more self-belief in their ability to become one, but that the reality of developing into a professional is still a challenge for anyone, perhaps making non-low SES face the reality of it in some detail.

The interviews were broadly supportive regarding career development gains, although two mentees, one from each social group, perceived only very low career development gains. Of those mentees reporting more developed career identity in the interviews, neither had reported low SES indicators (although one had financial constraints and just one, one-year older sibling at university) and another non-low SES mentee seemed to report very limited psychosocial outcomes in the interview. Role-modelling (through the revelation of at least partial identification) was clearly evident in two of the six mentee interviews, supporting the view that role-modelling is an important ingredient of deeper

mentoring relationships. The interviews revealed that this sat well under Kram's view of it being a psychosocial outcome (as opposed to Scandura's (1992) view) given that it seemed to enable mentees to sharpen their career identity and increase their self-belief. Political behaviour seemed lacking in the results, other than the channelling of arguably class biased recruitment criteria and cultural capital expectations within the dyad for some which appeared more of a concern for the mentee to overcome than a deliberate personal act to prevent a mentee progressing. However, it must be noted that the mentors were typically relatively senior members of their professional groups, and in one instance at least, moderated social mobility intentions. So, this could be deemed as political behaviour, even if the mentors were unaware of the indirect nature of their actions. From Kram's (1985) mentoring functions, interviews endorsed the existence of sponsorship (with some supported into work experience), exposure and visibility (where some met part of their mentor's networks), protection (from recruitment processes they clearly would have not been successful at if they had not adjusted their impact, academic ability or style of communication), coaching (again to secure work experience and develop particular skills), and challenging assignments in the shape of work experience. Psychosocial functions spotted in interviews included role-modelling (as mentioned above), acceptance and confirmation for some (but a need for 'moulding to be suitable' for others), some counselling to manage emotions for some but 'social' or 'parenting' were conspicuously absent, perhaps due to mentees being at a stage that meant they were breaking away from parental control but sufficiently younger than most mentors to not particularly value having a social life with them. Noe (1988) argued that coaching sat better in the psychosocial section of the scale, however, the presentation of coaching, as evidenced by the interviews, seemed to suggest it could sit in both sides as it was used to help mentees develop skills such as coping with selection techniques as well as reassurance and development of self-belief. This suggests that the research measures on shifts of employability broadly

supported the career development/psychosocial split in terms of gains, although aspects such as coaching straddled both. Later additions such as ‘political’, ‘parenting’ or ‘social’ were not particularly identified, unless unwittingly channelling biased recruitment criteria is included, so Kram’s original mentoring functions seem fairly well endorsed, even if the split was not quite as binary as proposed in some cases and not all sub-activities were evident and those that were needed adapting to the context. This research identified the range of employability gains in HE Career Mentoring and tailored this to Kram’s mentoring functions, a useful product for future schemes. What is interesting, however, is that Kram’s body of work and role modelling in particular, belies the social injustice that partial identification can deliver, again showing how Kram’s body of work focuses so strongly on the personal and interpersonal without explicitly recognising the institutional or societal influences.

Kram’s linear mentoring process took several years to complete. Initiation was described as where expectations are tested, cultivation where mentoring function provision peaks and relationships reveal their true value (Kram, 1983). Separation involved reassessing the relationship and could cause some anxiety and disruption and redefinition led to a more equal status. Trust was meant to rise as the relationship continued. Kram saw career development outcomes as appearing first followed by psychosocial. Other researchers have argued that these processes are not necessarily linear (Mullen, 1994; Kochan & Trimble, 2000), that trust does not always increase statistically significantly over time (Bouquillon et al., 2005) and that the peak offering of mentoring functions during cultivation is not consistent. The interviews in this research suggested that these phases were quite common, although some stalled at initiation if expectations were not being met and deeper trust was not forming. Two relationships that reached the cultivation phase did seem to develop considerable trust and identification. This did seem to trigger more psychosocial gains, however, one relationship persevered and gained both career

development and psychosocial gains in terms of higher self-belief but without the identification experienced by the other two. Two relationships experienced redefinition but this was not expressed in detail. Two areas of disagreement with Kram seem to be on timescales, as mentees on this formal scheme showed trust development in less than 9 months but also that the majority did not reach this stage and yet still gained from the experience. The types of gains did seem to start with career development ones and then move into psychosocial but there did appear to be cycles of these, particularly for Mentee 6 and Mentee 5 for example, who were both coached to secure work experience, were reassured about their abilities and felt higher self-belief to pursue further experience. Also, it seems evident that cultivation and 'closeness' did seem to wax and wane in some relationships, particularly when communication methods alternated and the nature of relationships altered from mentor/mentee to supervisor/trainee if work experience was undertaken with the mentor. This endorses Mullen's findings that stages of mentoring are more overlapping and fluid and suggests that some forward and backward shifts may occur (Mullen, 1994) which implies that relationships can be up and down and need support by scheme organisers throughout. It has been argued that successful mentoring relationships are based on trust and identification and this research endorses this, to some extent (Orpen, 1997; Ragins, 1997; St Jean et al., 2018). The deepest relationships were identified as those with trust and identification within them, where career identity was refined, however, some less deep relationships did secure increases in self-belief and extensive career development outcomes with some trust but little identification. This suggests that other facilitating influences such as seeing clear outcomes (so belief in the value of the relationship is endorsed), mentor skill and mentee perseverance, and reflexivity of both parties, can help maintain relationships where identification is lacking. These relationships were still valued by the mentees and enabled them to gain in employability, if not particularly in career identity. It seems also that the trust that evolved that did seem to rest on similarity, was not

necessarily purely demographically based and could rely on alternative antecedents such as life experiences and personality for example. This is supportive of findings focusing on similarity caused by common values, interests and personality (St-Jean, et al., 2018). Some of these could be indirectly influenced by social background but this potentially indirect influence was hard to decipher fully in this research. The interviews suggested that even with increased time, that identification seemed unlikely to emerge for some dyads, suggesting this was more to do with the characteristics of who was in the dyad and how similar they were rather than the length of time they were together, although full trust did not emerge immediately for those dyads who did build trust. All of these findings seemed to endorse one key characteristic of the conceptualisation of mentoring; that each relationship is indeed unique and from the perspective of the conceptualisation of mentoring, this research offers some interesting findings as well as reiterating that there is more than just dyad member perseverance at play in order to generate trust, again this shows that the societal and institutional elements are lacking from Kram's thinking.

In this new research context for mentoring, it has been identified for this scheme that the primary purpose of mentoring was developing mentee employability but that mentors made gains too and the HEI involved had vested reputational interests in mentee employability gains and the potential knock on effects for social mobility. Although longer term gains were not measured, one example of an interviewee being socially mobile was an exemplar of this. There were examples of experiences of negative affect but this was mainly due to scheme friction when relationship type or communications were disrupted or mentee/mentor/scheme interests clashed but these clashes did seem to resolve to suit the mentee, from an individual perspective, in terms of institutional and social context, even if they may be financially worse off, they would be in a role and/or environment they felt relatively at ease in. There did not seem to be evidence of personally motivated, conscious, active, institutionalised exclusion of low SES mentees

from higher status roles, beyond the explicit channelling of biased recruitment criteria and cultural capital expectations by two mentors, which reflected the reality of the labour market and the structural constraints therein and could inadvertently protect their status. It could be argued that those HEIs where the social distance between mentor and mentee is larger and more elite sectors/institutions/organisations are involved, this may appear more visibly, overtly and extensively. Structural barriers may come later in recruitment processes or at higher levels within organisations confirming that career mentoring in HEIs can only do so much.

Both career development and psychosocial gains were identified across both social groups. But certain psychosocial gains such as career clarity and self-belief were, on average, limited to low SES mentees. This result may support a deficit argument with low SES mentees lagging behind on career clarity and basic graduate labour market insight to gauge their abilities against and appears quite logical in the circumstances. Identification was evident in two relationships and endorsed the importance of this process. Most of Kram's mentoring functions were witnessed in forms suitable to this career stage but social, friend and parent mentoring functions seemed conspicuously absent, perhaps due to the considerable age gaps for most mentors and mentees and their lack of common areas to socialise (Kram, 1985). Kram's phases were broadly endorsed but some relationships stalled at initiation or very early stages of cultivation (Kram, 1983). Some were never redefined, perhaps due to a lack of pressure to if not in the same company. Kram's body of work was well supported by this research, but her lack of an institutional or societal perspective was of note.

Importantly, this study confirmed that shorter year-long formal schemes could develop trust and deeper relationships, although any stalling seemed to be due to a lack of common ground or fulfilment of expectations rather than time, highlighting the importance of relationships being treated as a proxy for working in that job role in that

sector in the future. Psychosocial and career development gains seemed to feed off of each other for the interviewees rather than having a linear relationship, with more than one cycle experienced by some. Closeness and trust appeared to wax and wane for some as relationships were disrupted by either communications issues or changes in relationship type. Successful relationships required a level of trust but could be successful without extensive trust and identification if the mentee didn't see unease as a problem and therefore persevered despite it.

With identification seemed to come a refinement of career identity not achieved where it seemed absent. Influences other than identification seemed capable of facilitating a successful relationship. Trust and identification did seem to be built on similarity primarily and the basis for similarity varied and were not necessarily demographically based, although delivering positive outcomes helped too. This seems to support the unique nature of dyad relationships and suggest there is more than one route to a successful mentoring relationship.

This study has supported a range of the literature review characteristics of the career mentoring concept within this new research area but challenged others. These challenges, in some cases have been based on the shifts in employability measures, supported by statistical analysis, and in other cases, challenged through the nuanced examples of the experiences of those interviewed. However, it is clear that this scheme appears to be adding value and seems to be a worthwhile investment because it is delivering, on average, positive perceived shifts in a number of areas of employability for both social groups and seems to be supporting mentees in acclimatising to the potential for a socially mobile career trajectory. Mentoring can bring great gains, but can only do so much and it remains unclear whether these gains are enough to overcome the structural barriers mentees may face further down the line. One question remains is about how socially diverse these dyads may in fact be and whether this would be the same in all

institutions. It also sheds further light on the rationale for matching mentors and mentees, demonstrating that a good match seems to be based on many facets of similarity and not just purely demographic traits. It seems that relationships need to be perceived as potentially valuable to mentees for them to continue to engage or alternatively for the mentee to feel they have nothing much to lose by continuing. Mentors and mentees who invest in their relationships, so trust and identification can flourish, seem to do better and scheme formality seems to broadly support mentoring processes. Acknowledging the importance of mentee perseverance and mentoring skills and the reflexivity and openness of both dyad partners is valuable. Again, it is clear that mentees from higher SES backgrounds are not gaining so much psychosocially from these schemes and being aware of this and adjusting expectations along these lines could be helpful. Also, the results show that whilst many mentees make extensive gains, this won't be the same for everyone, for a number of reasons and understanding these inhibiting factors can also be helpful in order to take steps to optimise relationships of which the societal and institutional dimensions are included. This research has developed a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the experiences of mentoring in this HE scheme.

6.2.2 Rethinking Theory

Bourdieu's Theory of Social Reproduction seemed to argue that field position and habitus were fairly deterministic in their ability to constrain intended and actual social mobility (Jenkins, 1992). A lack of knowledge of the labour market, a lack of a 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1990) when tackling selection tests and interacting with professionals in their careers of interest would limit success, as would the habitus itself by constraining oneself to desire what is within one's sphere of familiarity. Various limitations on social capital (networks) that may limit knowledge gains and prevent access to other field perspectives beyond someone's normal reach, economic capital (money), cultural capital (academic achievements, ways of behaving and cultural experiences) could

all act to constrain mentees to unambitious career paths. However, Bourdieu's softening of his thinking over time to incorporate a looser role for habitus, which allowed it to stretch through reflexivity (also embedded in the habitus) alongside active self-work, allowed for some degree of social mobility (Bourdieu, 2004). Extensive social mobility may be available to some with the right levels of reflexivity and support but those acting too rapidly who ignored the messages of unease their habitus sent them, may be heading towards a 'habitus clivé', if unsupported. These alterations may have resulted in what appears to be a softening of the level of determinism in his theories but on closer inspection may have not, given the sources of reflexivity (Adams, 2006) but this did suggest that interventions such as mentoring may be able to influence employability and hence the potential for social mobility for the individual concerned.

The results of this research provided some useful insights into Bourdieu's thinking. It seems clear that, on average, those provided with a mentor, increased their labour market knowledge and work exposure, regardless of social background. However, on average, those reporting low SES indicators secured a higher mean rank for perceived shifts in labour market knowledge, although it wasn't statistically significantly different. This suggests that, regardless of social background, mentoring is altering the understanding of the field for mentees through supporting them gaining direct exposure and familiarity and through the vicarious learning via sharing of experiences by the mentor. Self-belief was statistically significantly higher for low SES mentees, suggesting that something had changed in their mindsets about how they felt about their ability to secure a graduate level role on graduating and that role in particular. This may well be evidence of habitus stretching for those mentees participating in the scheme and in particular for those reporting low SES indicators. This seems to suggest that habitus may indeed adjust and alter and develop beyond childhood. People's mindsets seem to be altering during career

mentoring and their habitus becoming disrupted and their potential/desired career trajectories becoming based on reality rather than abstract notions.

The interviews revealed highly varied field positions of mentees both within and between social groups with some mentees with low SES indicators having extensive, but perhaps biased professional networks in their extended families and others having had no professional contacts at all. Some mentees not reporting low SES indicators reported ‘out of touch’ professional contacts or a lack of contacts in particular sectors. This challenges a binary approach to SES and encourages consideration of at least intersectionality (and perhaps beyond) and embraces the idea that everyone has a unique relationship with the labour market, based on a range of factors, again bringing societal and individual dimensions together. The career clarity mean rank, was statistically significantly higher for low SES mentees compared to non-low SES mentees, suggesting that increases in labour market knowledge and work exposure may have helped the development of career identity and self-belief, particularly for low SES mentees. The interviews also revealed that the level of labour market knowledge sought varied and showed a self-limiting agenda for some, whilst others looked for more nuanced information: perhaps another symptom of field position. The career identity of lower SES mentees appeared a little more precarious, perhaps due to a lack of direct or even vicarious exposure to professional work over their lives so far, but provides evidence of them valuing a role away from their families’ traditional field positions.

Cultural capital revealed itself in the effects of a lack of exposure to professionals. The impact of this was felt heavily by one mentee, led to shyness, observance of status differences, feelings of inadequacy regarding impact and intimidation for other mentees. The interviews revealed a need to develop the impact of some mentees and to resolve ‘non middle-class’ written and oral communication issues and to secure higher qualification grades to adhere to strict recruitment criteria in the legal sector. The

cultural signifier of ‘polish’ exemplified by one mentor seemed to help their mentee’s habitus constrain ambition and prevent the undertaking of a chosen career path amongst more ‘city’ based employers where more cultural capital seemed to be required. This also seemed to fit with findings about graduates seeking employment where they felt they belonged or ‘fitted in’, based on work undertaken to better understand their identity capital (Bathmaker, 2021). What appears obvious now is the need to gain self-efficacy both for the role but also for the organisational culture. However, there was plenty of evidence of low SES mentees, and others also reporting financial constraints, still aiming for professional roles that, if secured, would exemplify social mobility. Five of the six mentees had ambitions beyond the level of work their parents had reached, with one adjusting their ambition to a higher level more commensurate with that of their family, suggesting habitus was limiting any downward movement in the hierarchy too. Evidence of an extended family network of professionals in health care, seemed to show how habitus and ethnicity might work for some by constraining them to ethnically dense sectors and professional roles. All of this suggests that habitus constrains but does not prevent actual or intended social mobility completely, which supports Bourdieu’s argument of habitus as a loose framework (Bourdieu, 1990). It also suggests each mentee has a unique field position not just grouped into a particular class, but including aspects of gender, ethnicity, personality and other characteristics too.

The role of reflection seems important here. The affect that seemed to result from a mentee being put in a prospective field position, not well-suited to their habitus, seemed to trigger some kind of reflexivity and a subsequent desire to act in order to reduce any unease felt. Perhaps this is the moment that mentors could seize upon to raise further awareness in their mentees so they can make a more conscious response to this unease with the help of their mentor. Reflection seemed to enable mentees to push through discomfort and to limit the degree to which a mentee pursues the career path of their mentor and to

review its suitability given their habitus. The question is how far mentees might listen to or challenge the affect that has arisen. There was no evidence of any mentees reaching the point of ‘habitus clivé’ although, comments around not wanting to be somewhere where authenticity was not possible, seems to reveal tremendous foresight of what might have been if that particular mentee had pushed further out of their comfort zone for their first job. Whether this might be more evident in HEIs with wider social differences between mentors and mentees is still unclear.

Bourdieu argues that reflexivity is embedded in the habitus (Sweetman, 2003). This study seems to suggest that it exists as a monitoring device but also is stimulated more when the internal and external structures within and without a person do not match and friction occurs. As a result, reflexivity attempts to deal with the discrepancies between an individual’s internal and external life: the embodied social structures and external social structures. What is important here is that mentoring could enable the mentee to recognise the validity of this unease and the importance of ‘staying with it’ as they increase familiarity with the role and sector under investigation, with a view to that unease reducing, rather than rapidly deciding against the career option completely. This does, therefore, seem to support Bourdieu’s later thinking on reflexivity. If trained, mentors may be able to provide mentees with a more conscious pathway to suspending the decision about the subsequent reactions to their unease and to explore it more thoroughly. This may enable a mentee to actively decide whether to endure these internal barriers in the form of unease and to seek to overcome potential external structural barriers with the assistance of their mentor and avoid becoming a ‘reflexive loser’ (Lash, 1994; Lash & Urry, 1994). This research has highlighted the potential of mentoring in this respect. The challenge of this is that to do this, relationships need enough trust and openness which is not always achieved in a short, formal scheme.

Regarding the notion of social capital, there was clear variation in the development of social capital of mentees with mentors improving their mentee's networks extensively for some and less so for others. Mentors provided a 'feel for the game' for some as some mentees were coached to enhance their impact and others were taught how to handle recruitment and selection processes. This helped some mentees have a chance of overcoming arguably biased recruitment criteria and opened up doors to opportunities that appeared to transform career clarity, self-belief and employability more generally. Most importantly here, there seemed to be no real evidence of Bourdieu's social capital operating as a 'nasty exclusionary device' (Gauntlett, 2011, p. 3) and yet, the channelling of arguably middle-class recruitment criteria into the dyad does provide evidence that regardless of reflexivity, there are solid constraints to progress out there that reflexivity may not necessarily be able to overcome and that mentors are willing to channel these, perhaps unaware that they may put off mentees and politically benefit themselves. The notion of the reflexive loser seems evident in decisions taken to acknowledge a lack of suitability for working in certain organisations in certain locations but a reflexive winner who decides to refocus on a higher status role (Lash & Urry, 1994). Of course, it is impossible, within the realms of this study, to predict how far this initial boost in employability will move mentees onto a different career trajectory longer term before other social structures potentially intervene.

Similarity also emerges as important in this research. For instance, interviews have shown differences in finances, and eventually the discovery of similarity in this respect, holds back and then supports the building of trust and mutual understanding, endorsing prior findings (Dutton, 2018). Overall, it was hard to judge how far SES really informed perceived similarity as it had impacts both directly and indirectly through likely having fewer chances of finding common ground, feeling ill at ease, reducing identification via differences in impact and behaviour and the slowing down or

limiting of deep trust development. This all manifests itself in the quality of the mentoring match.

This section seems to show a fairly consistent endorsement of Bourdieu's Theory of Social Reproduction but only if viewed when habitus is seen as a reasonably loose constraint that still allows some actual or intended social mobility to occur between generations. Fleeting glimpses of the effects of differences in economic, social and cultural capital were witnessed in interviews and there seemed to be evidence of habitus constraining and stretching or adapting out of childhood, aided by reflexivity, potentially contradicting Bourdieu's earlier work. Again, however, the career stage of mentees in this research and how connected both the HEI and mentor are to elite sectors heavily imbued with cultural capital is questionable confirming that societal and institutional perspectives are essential to include in mentoring research. This research provides evidence that undergraduate career mentoring, at this early stage of career, sits within a system of forces operating at different levels; from the personal and interpersonal to the institutional and societal. What it cannot evidence is whether larger social distances between mentors and mentees, and a higher prevalence of involvement of mentors from elite sectors more dependent on cultural capital expectations, might result in a higher chance of an more visible and intentional form of social exclusion occurring. It does not seem to explain how scheme organisers can extend or adapt this ability to stretch the habitus. Nor does it predict how far labour market forces beyond graduation may undermine any progress made through career mentoring in HE. The complexity of the notion of field positions suggests issues with imperfect information and that this happens to many mentees, including those not on low incomes who do have some good professional connections. So this suggests a need to look beyond the individual to how the individual and the societal interact for some of the answers being sought and to consider not just class, but intersectionality and beyond to the unique individual as well.

6.2.3 Social Capital Theories

Other theories, such as social capital, explored in the literature review, left the researcher unsure whether behaviour by mentors would result in facilitation of employability development or some excluding behaviour. These theories seemed to suggest this might depend on mentor/mentee similarity (Putnam, 2000). However, the concept of strong and weak ties meant that social capital could facilitate mentee gains if some trust was formed even though the mentor and mentee were not alike (Grantovetter, 1973). Woolcock (1998) argued that there was a need for some common interests/agenda to allow trust to form, whilst simultaneously allowing different ways of behaving to continue. The literature review left the researcher uncertain what the nature of these mentoring relationships might be, whether excluding behaviours might be seen in some relationships and whether the facilitation of mentee development would remain the central focus for dyads and mentors.

In reality, the results appeared to reveal that mentors did not personally or deliberately attempt to exclude and, in fact seemed to facilitate employability development in their mentees despite channelling biased middle-classed recruitment criteria and judging cultural capital in their mentees. The findings that support this have already been shared above, in this chapter, and show that if there is deliberate, conscious effort in social networks to exclude people from particular sectors or job roles, that this was not particularly evident in either the quantitative results relating to employability shifts, nor the interviews themselves. What can be identified is an awareness by mentors when mentees do not appear to meet the typical requirements of a sector or employer and that several of those who have spotted these difference have attempted to support mentee development so those requirements can be met by them, whether they felt they succeeded or not. This suggests a complicit action of upholding unfair criteria, contradicted by actions to help mentees overcome them. What this also serves is a sobering reminder of the probable

limits of career mentoring. The theories on social networking discuss the issue of similarity and how this can influence trust and the likelihood of giving support to that contact. There is also the concept of being able to behave differently should those networking have the same agenda or interests. In this case, it seems clear that mentors and mentees in the interviews who were quite different have been supported but that this support has also been offered at times when mentor and mentee have been quite similar too. There are examples of mentors who, despite some common interests, had important differences relating to cultural capital. These results suggest that although similarity may have a part to play in the bonding process and pave the way to greater trust, the delivery of positive gains also seems to enable some trust to develop and for gains to continue. Also, a formal scheme such as this seems to provide a set of expectations for how mentors are expected to behave, which may not be as formalised in spontaneous relationships, and indeed may attract mentors who want to do just.

So although similarity helps, as long as trust begins to form to a degree, perhaps through delivery of mentoring gains, then the advantages of social capital seem to be forthcoming in this research study for most interview participants. However, relationships with limited gains did not demonstrate much in the way of similarity, beyond overlap in university, degree and career interests. This doesn't confirm that those mentors were withholding support as each of these cases seemed to have other issues that may have constrained and complicated their interaction. These don't appear to have failed due to a deliberate withholding of support, more perhaps because the relationship never took off due to issues such as location, student concerns with their degree performance and a conflicted career identity. These findings seem to support the notion of 'weak ties' being something that can be capitalised on in career mentoring of undergraduates (Grantovetter, 1973). This realisation is interesting. On the one hand, mentees were put off from working for mentee's organisations due to judgements about cultural capital by the mentor and

mentee, suggesting transmission of these structural barriers by the mentor to the mentee and via the partial identification in their relationship. This shows again how important it is to focus not only on the individual and interpersonal, but also the institutional and societal forces at play in this situation.

The issue of contacts needing a common agenda is a significant one. The key benefit of a formal scheme is the idea that mentors often feel the need to give back and be altruistic, be it to another individual or the university that helped them. The better the performance of the mentees and their university, the better the reputation of the mentor's '*alma mater*'. It is not clear whether this common agenda was enough to counteract a tendency to exclude but this research suggests that the formality and alumni status of mentors may have helped open up social capital resources to mentees, whether this is in fact the case or not is not easy to conclude given the research results. These findings seem broadly to support the concept of social capital being open to people from different social backgrounds in the context of this scheme but whether it is the common agenda that exists as an alumnus of the university or whether the formality of the scheme and disconnect between it and the mentor's workplace are critical in asserting a common agenda is left unproven. It is reassuring to know that for this scheme, whether similar or different, mentors on average, and specifically for most of these interviewees, mentors tended to give access to their social capital. This has important implications for mentor recruitment and suggests scheme organisers can do more to raise the profile, tastefully and diplomatically, of having a common agenda and to be aware of sharing biased recruitment criteria without being jointly reflective about it.

6.2.4 The Role of Affect

The literature review also concluded a central role for affect within career mentoring suggesting that unease and a lack of familiarity in prospective roles may lead to negative emotions for low SES mentees. This also raised the question of whether

challenging low SES mentees to fully optimise social mobility using only rational choices might be ethically sound. As mentioned above, Bourdieu speaks of unease, anxiety and potentially a ‘habitus clivé’ (Reay, 2015). Conversely, there is talk of a search for a sense of belonging that resonates with these findings (Bathmaker, 2021).

The research results showed considerable evidence of emotion being embroiled in the mentoring process. Interviews showed how partial identification prompted emotions that led to refinement of career identity with a career choice that steered mentees to organisations where some sense of familiarity, belonging and ease could be felt with the type of cultural capital there. Once bonding occurred, mentees often seemed to feel guilty for not fully identifying with their mentor as if it were a personal rejection of them or their lifestyle. Those shifting their career identities to new roles felt frustration and uncertainty about the upheaval and felt they had taken a backward step, despite it leading to higher status options for some. Some poor communication or low commitment led to insecurities and bond disruption. Being mentored by much higher status individuals led to some feeling intimidated and fearful. It may make sense for mentors to reassure mentees that choosing options dissimilar in smaller or larger ways to their own careers is perfectly valid, as are the uncomfortable feelings that go with it.

Affect, in all these cases, seems to be about moving the mentee away from a sense of unease or uncertainty, to one where they felt more in balance: where they belonged. Seeing the differences between the mentee’s career identity and that of their mentor, as well as responding to relationship disruptions, produced emotions that mentees work on to reduce through analysing the situation. These emotions seem to provoke reflection, which effectively lead to the creation of a space to moderate the degree of intended social mobility.

What this seems to infer is that Bourdieu's arguments about unease being produced by the stretching of a fairly loose habitus seem evident in this research (Bourdieu, 1990). The interviews reveal some constraining forces created by a mentee's close community but to one that at least, in some way, reflects that upbringing and creates a sense of belonging. For some it is about taking on roles requiring the top qualifications similar to that of the family or staying in a role and organisations out of 'the city' requiring different kinds of cultural capital. The literature review talks about how more liberal values in British society has led to an increase in attempts to move across fields and to feel ill at ease as a result (Sweetman, 2003). What seems clear is that for many, and in particular for low SES mentees, mentoring provokes unease which can lead to reflexivity about that unease and eventually a greater sense of one's career identity.

No participants gave evidence of the likelihood of a 'habitus clivé'. The closest to this might be one who suffered strong emotional challenges interacting with professionals but whose reflections, prior struggles and resilience, led to perseverance with mentoring. This mentee's experience of feeling unease consistently for some time, may have led him to accept the feeling as normal and to continue, where others felt compelled to make more effort to manage the affect felt. It seems that exposing a mentee to a diverse range of work colleagues, alongside other mentees and supporting them to develop their cultural capital to communicate in that environment helped to sustain mentee ambition. Whether this would work for all low SES mentees though is uncertain and whether all sectors have varied enough staff and are therefore in a position to do this is unclear.

It seems evident from this research that mentees experience a range of emotions during their mentoring experiences. Many seem to occur when relationships are disrupted or partial identification leaves them uneasy, questioning their career identities, reliant on reflection to adapt their cognitions and taking action to quell their emotional response. This sense of unease, uncertainty and vulnerability all seem in harmony with

Bourdieu's later thinking on the loose influence of habitus on individuals attempting to be socially mobile and the effects of feeling like a 'fish out of water' when in a situation where one's habitus is ill suited to the environment (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). This research suggests that this may well be the case in other similar schemes but welcomes the idea that such constraints may indeed be loose enough for some social mobility (real or intended) to occur. Whether these interview participants will experience 'habitus clivé' at some point, is unclear and this serves as a reminder of the relatively short term nature of this research.

6.2.5 Relevance of Social Learning Theory, Self-efficacy and Undergraduate Career Mentoring

Social Learning Theory was explored in the literature review as a potential means of filling a gap created by Bourdieu's focus on society to the detriment of explaining interpersonal processes in detail. Bandura's theory places social learning and self-efficacy centre stage exploring how it can be developed by performance exposure, live modelling and symbolic modelling, verbal persuasion and management of emotional arousal, to name but a few (Bandura, 1977). Modelling in this instance, relies, to a degree, on similarity and identification, unless a wide variety of role-models are presented to support vicarious learning. Within Bandura's theory, fear also has a role to play, endorsing the influence of affect on self-efficacy and introducing the notion of desensitisation, enabling the reduction of fear. The question is whether Social Learning Theory can partly explain the interpersonal processes taking place in undergraduate career mentoring or not. Also, whether there is evidence in this research of self-efficacy being developed or influenced by performance exposure and the other influences defined by Bandura and whether this relies on similarity or not. A further question is whether fear does indeed have a role to play in mentoring and whether it is provoked by a lack of self-efficacy in relation to certain careers or the graduate labour market as a whole. Can Bandura's theory take over

where 'habitus' stops as a means to complement and facilitate the overcoming of unease as opposed to the more instinctive avoidance of it?

The research results seemed to shed considerable light on the role of Social Learning Theory and self-efficacy in career mentoring. It is clear that several of the interviewees felt uneasy and even fearful about their aspired to careers. Whether they simply had low belief in their ability to do the jobs effectively is questionable, it seems more likely from this research that they simply were uncertain about it due to a lack of knowledge or familiarity or evidence of seeing those similar to themselves do well in the role. This seems clear from the contrasting degrees of emotion felt by those undertaking work experience, with some fairly at ease and others in distress about the prospect. Interestingly this unease feels quite like habitus alerting the mentee to the risk of punishment for not being in the appropriate field and that this risk is judged as higher for some and lower for others. One concern is whether these insights are accurate or not and whether the mentoring relationship is an accurate portrayal of the likely feelings the mentee would feel in the job role and organisation. Bandura argued that lower expectations of success produced higher emotional arousal. There were exceptions, however, as some did not reveal their doubts about their ability to secure the role they aspired to but at the same time may have been used to feeling fearful and having to suppress such emotions and push forward in spite of them, due to having extremely challenging life experiences in the past. This resonates with the suggestion of the normalization of anxiety due to crossing fields that are becoming more distinctive and further apart (Adams, 2006). Mentees who have already crossed social boundaries to attend University may be experiencing unease already and therefore may be expecting a degree of unease in their future career transitions, but perhaps within certain acceptable limits.

It seems evident across those mentees gaining work experience (a clear performance mastery experience) for most this had a profound impact on their convictions

about whether they could do the job. Practicing interviews also seemed to bring some self-efficacy in the ability to secure the role. Mentor reassurance and acceptance also seemed to play a role. Those mentees who did not engage in work experience seemed to incur lower career development outcomes overall. However, much of these performance mastery experiences tend to be primarily job role focused as interns are often protected from the full political and cultural atmosphere of a business, particularly at lower levels.

Bandura's concept of desensitisation seemed evident, especially for mentees whose emotions ran high about integrating with professionals. Exposure to the source of fear was moderated through the moral support of other mentees and other staff more like them in the mentor's workplace but this led to unsupported work exposure afterwards, demonstrating the progress made. Familiarity through desensitisation seemed crucial here.

Symbolic modelling could be reliant on similarity if it was to raise self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Choosing something more familiar compared to the role/organisation of a mentee's mentor seemed to demonstrate the tension between habitus and increasing self-efficacy about the ability to do a particular job role. Doing that same job role but in a more suitable location and organisational culture where the mentee wouldn't feel so out of place seemed to create the necessary compromise to succeed. It is hard to consider whether Bandura or Bourdieu is right here, or whether they both are. Some of the issues around similarity are implicit in Bourdieu's work. In a particular field position people are likely to be similar, with a similar habitus, cultural capital and 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1990). This feels like Bandura arguing that symbolic modelling requires a degree of similarity (Bandura, 1977). Yet again we see this influence of similarity have some effect but not the full effect, which perhaps shows the strength of Bandura's belief in multiple sources of self-efficacy. This is evident again when mentees who feel fearful of their higher status mentors find that exposure to a range of staff in their mentor's organisation of different ages, genders and social statuses, can show how that role can be

undertaken by a range of people and perhaps lead to more ease about the idea of taking that role on. Similarity doesn't seem entirely essential, which fits with Bandura's mastery options that he presented but equally, what type of similarity is required? These interviews revealed that social status may be just one element, personality and more personal and unusual factors may also feature, but this common ground must ideally create a sense of mutual understanding.

Mentoring revealed that those who did not gain work experience during the process, still made some self-efficacy gains regarding the role that interested them. Mentees stressed that discussions with mentors boosted their career knowledge somewhat, which in turn helped them feel more confident. Interestingly there were no examples of work experience failure revealed in the interviews, so the idea of negative experiences undermining self-efficacy went untested, although Mentee 5's decision to choose a different organisation to work in closer to his cultural capital where he would feel more authentic and at ease, may be an example of this.

What is revealed by these interviews is that fear and unease is at the heart of mentoring for those who are very or fairly unfamiliar with the roles they aspire to pursue or with the mentors (and their organisations) who are assisting them. This suggests again that matching (from varied perspectives and levels) is important to provide the basis for bonding and trust development so open discussions about affect are more likely and that will involve looking beyond obvious demographics to other unique life experiences, personality, degree background and career interests. Performance exposure opportunities seem particularly helpful along with discussing/reflecting on any emotional responses to these.

It seems there are some important parallels between Bourdieu's notion of habitus and field and the unease felt when facing risk in an unfamiliar place and Bandura's

self-efficacy incorporating a sense of fear when self-efficacy is low. They seem to differ in their potential for a positive outlook in relation to mentoring, however, when comparing the traditional view of Bourdieu's 'unease' and social mobility limiting habitus, Bandura's approach seems to provide hope and maps onto mentoring well by demonstrating how, through providing opportunities for mastery, self-efficacy can be lifted in those entering unfamiliar territory. Bandura also reveals avenues that make similarity unnecessary but it relies heavily on mentees seeing a range of role-models and gaining positive exposure to the workplace, which of course cannot be guaranteed. Of course, when similarity is important in Social Learning Theory, research suggests that it may not just be about social status but that it plays a part alongside cultural capital differences and other influences such as personality and life experiences. Bandura's approach brings in the flexibility that this research evidence seems to need to explain how the interpersonal activity is working in the mentoring relationship and provides a more positive and flexible extension to Bourdieu's assertions, despite there being many parallels too. Again, trust and bonding seem to sit at the heart of these theories for them to be effective in a mentoring scenario but this, evidence suggests, can be achieved to a degree through the mentor committing to the relationship and delivering the career mentoring functions expected, although similarity does seem to build trust in a slightly different way, bringing in more identification and making other mastery tools more likely to be effective. Relying on one similar role-model seems much easier than sourcing many different role-models to show that anyone can succeed in a mentee's aspired to career. The full extent of Bandura's concept of self-efficacy was not tested by this research but key elements of it seemed evident and that as a tool it could be useful for mentors, mentees and scheme organisers.

Bourdieu's habitus loosely constrains a person's ability to 'play the game' in unfamiliar fields which leads to unease and a sense of imbalance. A mentee, during career mentoring can feel this as they step out of their comfort zone when they closely

compare themselves to their mentor and realise they differ and that they therefore may not have what it takes to succeed, or to feel as at ease in the job and organisation as the mentor does. The mentor's most vital role seems to be in enabling the mentee to suspend judgement and to immerse themselves in this uncomfortable place. Without intervention, most may instinctively pull back, endorsing Bourdieu's view, but with support, via Bandura's Social Learning and Self-efficacy Theories, mentors can provide a challenging and sustained exposure to desensitise them from these feelings to enable them to overcome or make this unease more bearable, allowing them to pursue the role and organisation in hand. Bandura does not suggest that this process is straightforward or easy, but possible,. Self-efficacy theory seems to provide the psychological support and processes necessary to stretch habitus and allow a degree of social mobility or intended social mobility to occur. Whether the mentee ever feels truly at ease is the question. Bourdieu poses the problem of loose habitus constraint arguing that change is extremely difficult and Bandura provides a potential solution to further stretch habitus and reduce unease: not simple or easy, but feasible with effort. Are they essentially making the same point?

6.3 Going Beyond the Individual and the Interpersonal

The proposed mentoring conceptual framework was criticised earlier in this thesis, for its lack of balance in terms of exposing the lower profile motives and alternative beneficiaries for mentoring, including others at individual, interpersonal, institutional and societal levels (Allen, Rhodes, & Allen, 2010). What this seemed to amount to was a focus on the individual and interpersonal levels to the detriment of the institutional and societal perspective. It seems apparent from the results from each side of this mixed methods study, that focusing on the individual and interpersonal at the expense of the institutional and

societal levels and vice versa may be problematic for the conceptualisation and practical and ethical success of career mentoring in Higher Education.

The measures of socioeconomic status in the survey seem to work well when measuring perceived employability gains, however, the interviews revealed the full complexity of socioeconomic status in this context. Income seemed a blunt tool in revealing the rich complexity of a person's socioeconomic status although adding first in family to go to University provided a useful dimension. What was notable was the variation in social and cultural capital both between and within each social group used to measure employability shifts with some mentees falling into the non-low SES category purely because they had a sibling a year older than them at University (Mentee 5), whereas others fell into the lower SES category with a very wide extended family in professional status careers, despite none in their immediate family (Mentee 1). This reveals the inadequacy of focusing solely on societal groups or just the individual and that it is the coming together of the social and the individual that needs to be focused on for this topic in this post-modern research age. Of course income is important, but a closer look at the processes going on in career mentoring, through the interviews, makes it quite clear that economic capital is just one influence on its success.

The concept of employability, as it has evolved through various models, has gradually become more balanced between societal and individual elements (Tomlinson, 2017), however these are still presented from the individual's perspective than that of an institutional or society. This seems to limit the progress that can be made towards a more socially just labour market and makes the individual responsible for social mobility and societal change, perhaps with some support from their HEI.

In mentoring, it seems that an individual, through various mastery experiences, can become more knowledgeable and more experienced and can therefore

develop their self-efficacy in the context of the chances of being able to successfully do the job role they aspire to. Mentee 5 began to believe he could become a town planner through work experience, knowledge gains and reassurance from his mentor. However, job self-efficacy is one thing, cultural self-efficacy is another. Being successful in a work environment is about culturally navigating the members and groups within that organisation and feeling capable of being successful at this longer term at different organisational levels.

What career choice, and in fact intended social mobility amounts to in this context, is a rational judgement about the potential risk of working in that role, on that career trajectory and in that organisational culture, which is unlikely to be based on perfect information and will be assessed from a situated position. Experiencing doing a 'good job' is one thing, but being accepted, valued and promoted as opposed to questioned, doubted not understood and not fully trusted in an organisational culture is another. Mentee 5 clearly decided he could do his mentor's job, but not necessarily in his mentor's organisational culture. The mentoring dyad seemed to be the 'crucible' in which this judgement was made. This suggests that if a mentee believes they can do their mentor's job, can build a close, trusting relationship with them and can identify with them to a large extent, they may be able to positively endorse that career choice and that organisational culture as right for them. But if there are important differences, and identification is much more limited, either the certainty about job choice or organisational choice may diminish. In essence, rationally, if the mentee doesn't believe the organisation will understand and value them, then the risk involved in that career move may be too much, the anxiety associated with it too high and the self-efficacy relating to it too low.

So, what is the answer to ensure the 'correct' decision is made? 'Correct' from a societally motivated perspective might be achieving a more socially diverse workforce in all organisations and at all levels within them. However, 'correct' from an individual

perspective might be about allowing people to make a rational choice about working where they believe they stand the best chance to be successful as an individual which may well be where they are authentic and at ease but their salary and prospects are slightly lower but more certain. Societally motivated actions may force a greater degree of social mobility, but may not anticipate the potential social structures, or even ‘habitus clivé’, that may prevent the long term success of both the individuals involved and the diversification of workforces in particular sectors. The more individually motivated approach may simply support mentees settling for more risk averse options that may produce some social mobility, but perhaps not in the organisations that are more homogeneously populated by the upper and upper middle classes. This feels similar to the situation the UK finds itself in at present, with certain sectors dominated by upper and upper middle class workers and experiencing little diversity, whilst others have a more fluid, competitive and meritocratic environment.

If individuals feel uncomfortable breaking into sectors where they lack self-efficacy because the work force is too homogeneous and unlike them and the risk of failure is too high, then by definition, meritocracy does not exist in those sectors. It is clear that effort and skill may not be enough to penetrate them and that there are limits to how much the individual can and should change their sense of self to do so and bear the full responsibility. This argument is quite ironic, in that as an individualistic culture, we not only place the responsibility on individuals to succeed in the labour market, but we also blame them when they do not. Standing back it is clear that this is simply not the case. In more societally driven cultures, individuals may feel more sense of ease being socially mobile because the pride it gives their families may be part of their own value systems. The UK is a highly individualist culture and so this ease from achieving social success and providing a family with pride could leave them not accepted in either ‘class’. So how can career mentoring help to optimise UK social mobility?

Universities can only do so much to promote social mobility. In this research it seems abundantly clear that either internalised social structures (Mentee 2 and Mentee 5) or externalised social structures (Mentee 4 and Mentee 6) are likely to limit the social mobility of mentees at some point. It seems that only because students like Mentee 4 and Mentee 6 have had so little exposure to UK culture and perhaps have had little to lose and everything to gain by taking risks and are maybe used to feeling uneasy, that they have stopped listening to their habitus when making decisions about their future. The important change here is for scheme organisers and researchers to continue their work by looking at societal and institutional factors in conjunction with the individual and interpersonal. This acknowledgement of the four levels of factors involved in understanding how perceived mentoring success differs may untangle the discrepancies in mentoring research and improve its conceptualisation. An example is better understanding how different HEIs with different mixes of social statuses of mentees and mentors and different labour market connections might witness different mentoring outcomes for different social groups. Scheme organisers may need to rethink how they match from using purely demographic approaches to ones where more detailed analysis of the individuals involved and their similarity (interpersonal) but also the diversity of the part of the labour market the mentor works in and which types of people are dominant there. Bandura provides a solution that suggests that role modelling can work for low SES mentees if they have either a similar mentor or have exposure to a range of people who are succeeding at their aspired to occupation. Scheme organisers need an awareness of this in order to ensure they are not setting up their mentees to fail. They also need to train mentees and mentors to expect habitus responses and to 'sit with them' and reflect on them openly with each other. This involves working hard on trust formation, regardless of similarity and recognising when more is needed for the mentee's aspirations to be supported. What this really means is that the role of scheme organisers is to make sure the 'crucible' of the mentoring relationship

and how the mentor is representing their part of the labour market is an accurate representation and that if diversification of the labour force in that sector is sought after, that those less typical workers are made more visible to mentees to supplement the mentor's work. This is about trying to provide 'perfect' information to the mentee to support a rational decision about their career. Partial identification may put the mentee off needlessly. This of course will only work where sectors have at least some diversity in their workforces. For those without diversity, the challenge is out of the realms of influence of the HEI and scheme organisers and needs to be looked at politically.

This seems to suggest that meritocracy seems only to work within certain margins in certain areas of the labour market and in the middle areas of the class structure as opposed to the extremes. If this is the case, the only option is to make societal and political changes to tackle those problems that individual action cannot.

This study shows that through mentoring where bonding, trust and, for some, identification takes place, mentoring facilitates employability gains, both career developmental and psychosocial, which puts mentees in a better position to secure roles that are of a higher status than those of their parents. It shows that social capital used in the form of mentoring can help students stretch their habituses and allow them to at least aspire and aim for higher social status careers. The study showed glimmers of both internal limits imposed by habitus on the degree of habitus stretch (both upward and downward) and signs of external constraints in the guise of middle class biased selection criteria and cultural capital norms being communicated to mentees. What seems important is the optimisation of formal mentoring schemes and an ethical accountability for actions taken to encourage potential social mobility. The rest of the challenges may be up to the government and the wider society to tackle ensuring that individual, interpersonal, institutional and societal factors become the focus moving forward.

Social Reproduction Theory brings the social structures into this research, by showing how they exist within the field and the habitus and providing an historical dimension deeply rooted in generations of life experience. These social structures, whether embodied or not, seek to confine social mobility by alerting mentees to risk. Societal change increasingly pushes people into new situations, new field positions where they feel unease and then reflect. It is this window of reflexivity that exists for mentoring to work on, but Bourdieu does not provide the psychological tools to respond, in fact for most of his earlier theoretical posturing he argued such tools would be ineffective. Bandura, on the other hand, through social learning, disagrees with Bourdieu about the potential for a ‘cure’ for a ‘phobia’ against settling in an ‘alien’ career or organisation can complement his work and potentially provide the psychological solution to the problem, by, through mentoring, providing mastery opportunities and a range of role models which increase familiarity, desensitise and provide the best information to make a sound decision about the risk involved. Both say this work isn’t easy, perhaps Bourdieu and Bandura are not so far apart after all with one the pessimist and the other the optimist. Despite scant role models in some sectors that mentees can fully relate to, the key seems to be optimising such schemes, developing the employability of mentees and hence doing all HE can to contribute to the UK’s social mobility problem. The rest is up to the politicians and society.

6.4 Summary

This chapter has restated the research questions, summarised the research findings and reflected on these in the light of the learning from the literature review and the key research papers, theories and concepts within it. It is the first to explore the effects of social diversity on mentoring processes and outcomes in this specific context.

There are many areas where this research supports the mentoring framework stated in the literature review and the common areas of agreement therein but there are some important parts where exploring mentoring in this next context has challenged the agreed thinking. It agrees that those in diverse mentoring relationships often secure higher psychosocial gains but importantly, in this study, the career development gains secured are substantial and comparable across social groups. It reveals, in this scheme, how social diversity impacts mentoring processes and outcomes but also identifies many other influences at a range of levels. It identifies similarity, trust and identification as important processes that influence the perceived success of mentoring that can be generated in the short periods found in HE career mentoring. However, it also suggests that moderating influences such as mentor skills, mentee perseverance and the reflexivity of both can compensate for a lack of similarity and identification but may limit the amount of career identity refinement possible. Similarity was not necessarily demographically based with common unusual life experiences and personality traits also helping. Mentoring relationships were certainly endorsed as unique and complex, but evidence of institutional and societal influences stress the importance of viewing mentoring from the full range of levels available in order to achieve secure conclusions and home in on a more robust conceptualisation of career mentoring that acknowledges these factors.

The research also shone a light on theoretical works and broadly supported Social Reproduction and Social Learning Theories, suggesting that they worked usefully together. Whereas Social Reproduction Theory focuses on the problem and predicts a likely outcome of habitus constraint, Self-efficacy Theory seemed to provide a possible solution where the naturally constraining habitus could be worked on: not simple, but possible: by adopting both theories, different levels of influence are evaluated including the individual and interpersonal for Bandura and the predominantly institutional and social for Bourdieu. Social Reproduction Theory was only supported if habitus was seen as a

relatively loose constraining force on the potential for social mobility for mentees. In what seems to be a society with considerably more change occurring, unease and feelings of inauthenticity are rife for low SES mentees (who already feel uneasy in HE without attempting to move into graduate level work) and these feelings seem to signpost this habitus stretching. Friction between the inner self and the outer world seem to create a cycle of affect and reflexivity which stimulate each other. It may be these feelings and the ensuing reflexivity that provide the potential for mentors to suspend mentee decisions long enough for a degree of desensitisation to occur regarding feelings of familiarity for higher status roles and environments, just as anyone overcoming psychological phobias may. This is not as straightforward as providing work exposure and labour market knowledge however, and seems to have its limits perhaps through recognising a need for self-efficacy for both the job role and organisational culture. For Bourdieu, reflexivity is part of the habitus, which seems to draw mentees back to their actions being heavily, and yet complexly determined through the coming together of internalised and external social structures. However, this limited agency does not seem to fully prevent employability development and the generation of real or intended social mobility from taking place through mentoring and provides the space to resist these internalised social structures and to disrupt the full influence of habitus. The question is whether this is to the advantage of the individual or society and where scheme organisers should sit ethically regarding this dilemma.

In terms of capital, social capital in this study seems more complex than Bourdieu suggests, with cooperation between social groups being evidenced in this scheme. However, it is unclear if this is based on a common agenda of enhancing the reputation of the '*alma mater*' through improved mentee employability or a lack of pressure on the status quo in the mentor's organisation through a lack of a threat at this low level in the hierarchy. In another institution, with different sectors involved, creating

greater mentor/mentee social diversity, the results may have differed acknowledging the importance of considering the societal and institutional factors in the research context. Cultural capital emerges as influencing the inability of some mentees to meet class biased recruitment criteria, and also by undermining the ability to fully identify with mentors if their cultural signifiers suggest they are different and put them off their mentor's organisational culture, leading the researcher to question whether the elite areas of the labour market could be considered meritocratic and whether the individual and even the institution can be held responsible the lack of social mobility therein.

Affect seems to have a key role in mentoring. It highlights a need to take action to bring the emotions back into balance. These emotions provoke reflection and seem to be the moment that mentors need to spot to sustain social mobility intentions. It is this unease and subsequent reflection which enables the movement towards a greater sense of one's career identity but also provides the scope to question and develop it. Whether more serious consequences, such as 'habitus clivé' occur longer term seems beyond the scope of this work, but may be more likely the further a mentee's habitus is stretched.

As already summarised, Bandura offers the potential to further stretch habitus through desensitisation which Social Reproduction Theory argues is extremely hard to achieve, especially when identification and role-modelling are not taking place due to a lack of similarity. This theory sets fear centre stage and connects with the idea of unease. Mentoring seems to be able to at least partially desensitise and reduce fear and potentially delivers the habitus adaption and adjustment required to increase the potential for social mobility. This desensitisation, however, may be more easily provided by someone similar to the mentee but could be achieved by providing a range of role-models and through working harder with less relatable models and more performance exposure. Social Learning Theory bodes well as a potential tool for schemes and mentors to investigate. This desensitisation, however, only works on the embodied societal structures

and not the external barriers within society, so whether it enables social mobility for all and whether this is sustained beyond a mentee's employability development and initial job role, only more longitudinal studies can say, in the meanwhile, all HEIs can do is optimise their career mentoring schemes within the bounds of what is considered ethical.

The next chapter concludes this thesis and amongst other things, reports the overall significance of this study, any study limitations, and identifies a range of implications and recommendations emerging from it.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

This chapter crystalises the key findings of this research project in relation to the aim and research questions. It highlights the research limitations to enable an accurate understanding of the findings. It concludes the overall contribution to knowledge of the study and discusses the implications of this research, outlining recommendations for both policy and practice. It concludes how research should progress from here to continue developing a deeper understanding of career mentoring in this context and therefore a better conceptualisation of it.

7.1 Research Aims and Questions

This research aimed to better understand the role of social background within career mentoring processes and outcomes within HE. Does social background interfere with mentoring mechanisms and influence the ability for mentees to benefit from the intervention if in socially diverse relationships and if so, what happens and why? Do such schemes develop low SES mentees and therefore, is investment in such schemes, as a means of helping to improve employability and potentially social mobility, considered effective? More specifically, it sought to discover, within a particular scheme, whether the perceived short-term benefits (or otherwise) of career mentoring were the same for mentees from different social backgrounds or not and what the varied influences were on the perceived success of career mentoring. Was social background an influence and if so how did it influence the mentoring experience? Through exploring these questions, this research provided a valuable contribution to knowledge in a relatively new context for mentoring research.

7.2 Summary of Key Findings

The main findings confirm that there are differences in the perceived short-term gains of career mentoring for mentees from different SES backgrounds but that these

differences are restricted to lower SES mentees achieving higher psychosocial gains in self-belief in their ability to secure graduate level work and career clarity. This suggests that social background is one influence on the perceived success of career mentoring but the interviews identified many others.

Beyond self-belief and career clarity, it is of note that other average perceived gains in employability were comparable, including work exposure, labour market knowledge, interaction ease with professionals and networking propensity. SES was found to be a predictor of changes in self-belief in the ability to secure graduate level work on graduation but explained only 11.5% of the difference. Including gender and/or ethnicity in the model tested did not statistically significantly improve its effectiveness.

The interviews showed that SES manifested itself in mentoring in various ways; through enabling low SES mentees to recognise a need for, and therefore value, mentoring but also through apparently less well formed career identities, a lack of familiarity and confidence in dealing with professionals and less potential to find common ground with them. SES seemed to inhibit identification with the mentor, limiting the potential for higher levels of trust, openness and career identity refinement. Some communication differences also seemed rooted in social difference. Mentors seemed content to support mentee employability development with no evidence of exclusion from roles/sectors and evidence to the contrary, suggesting similar agendas and that mentee career stage created little risk to the status quo of the mentor's organisation/sector or that social capital operates across social groups. However, biased recruitment criteria were channelled into discussions and judgements about and modelling of cultural capital put one mentee off of working in his mentor's organisation longer term. Finances directly inhibited the ability to capitalise on opportunities offered. Characteristics, such as mentor supportiveness and being non-judgemental and mentee resilience and determination and the reflexivity of both, facilitated the perceived success of mentoring even when similarity

and identification were limited. Scheme formality maintained participants focus on working at the relationship and towards the scheme goals and were typically beneficial.

Similarity seemed to have a role to play but wasn't necessarily demographically based and shallower relationships benefitted from mentoring too. However, deeper relationships did seem to produce more extensive gains, either through identification and/or expert mentor skills and extraordinary mentee qualities. Similarity seemed to aid bonding but also created clashes at times in the same relationships, creating a complex picture.

Interaction quality seemed to influence the perceived success of mentoring, including issues of location, communication methods and cultural background. The effects of these seemed moderated by scheme interventions.

Other influences that arose included gender (when combined with age and cultural difference which inhibited closeness), ethnicity in the form of biased professional networks, personality differences, mentor skills, mentee resilience and determination, problems with career conceptualisation and scheme processes. Influences spanned pre-existing mentor, mentee and scheme characteristics, interpersonal interaction and the snowball effect created by initial mentoring gains. Some were positive and some negative influences, sometimes moderating the effects of others but often inconsistently so, supporting the idea that mentoring relationships are indeed unique and complex.

Glimpses of societal and institutional influences were seen in interviews suggesting that scheme structures do influence mentoring success (or otherwise) and that it is not protected from the outside world. These influences seemed to encourage mentors to help mentees to overcome them but whether this was altruism, or boosting the reputation of their '*alma mater*' through creating more employable students, was unclear. The effects of channelling social barriers did put some mentee's off and this finding suggest how

important it is that scheme organisers and researchers take account of institutional and societal influences in their research and planning.

The findings suggest that a mentee's upbringing did partly constrain the extent of their social mobility intentions, evident from the feelings of inauthenticity generated by the aspired to role/sector compared to their sense of self and that of their family. However, habitus did not eliminate employability gains or the intentions of a socially mobile career trajectory. Limited labour market knowledge and initial career identities seemed to constrain outcomes but mentees seemed to need some limited familiarity, in the career they ultimately chose, to cling to. Emotions exposed seemingly rational moves through the creation of doubt, discomfort and inauthenticity which led the individual to an outcome better for them in terms of unease, but perhaps with lower risk and more economic certainty. Reflexivity seemed to be triggered by the emotion which shone a light on the situation, providing an opportunity for the self (and if shared/perceived) the mentor to reassure mentees, desensitise them and boost their self-belief. This need to act authentically in line with one's self and one's career identity, seemed to support Bourdieu's later, looser concept of habitus and is best captured by one mentee when reflecting on their new graduate level job

To be fair, I've already told {new employer's name} I'm not the, I'm not the polished, like, you know, what I think is what I say and all of this, it's just me as a person I can't, I can be professional of course, there's professionalism but I sort of said, I can't go where I just lose me...

This research also shows how whereas Social Reproduction Theory argues that constraints exist on the potential for social mobility through the unease created by habitus, self-efficacy, like the opposition in a tug of war, becomes the process by which unease, may through great efforts, be overcome, through identification or other routes to

boosting self-efficacy that do not necessarily need full identification. This endorses Self-efficacy Theory as a tool scheme organisers can exploit, particularly when sustaining the potential for mentee social mobility when identification is not possible or limited.

Bourdieu brings the societal and institutional emphasis, whereas Bandura brings the interpersonal and individual: they complement each other and perhaps may both be arguing that acting against one's habitus to a large degree is difficult and requires considerable work and support to happen, which is why for Bourdieu so many hold back and for Bandura, why people have to work so hard to fight their fears and to choose to overcome them.

Findings supported elements of the current conceptual framework for mentoring but challenged others. They endorsed relationship uniqueness, the importance of similarity (alongside realisation of outcomes) for trust formation and provided evidence of at least partial identification playing a role in the most successful relationships but that identification did not seem essential and did not necessarily rest on solely on demographics. It also provided examples of how bonding can occur without obvious identification through moderating factors such as mentor skills/approach and mentee qualities. It challenged notions of power as interviews showed some mentees controlling relationship duration. It also suggested relationships of less than a year could be productive and that relationship phases were not necessarily linear given some dyads took steps forward and backwards whilst bonding, whereas some never bonded at all and yet still made limited gains. It confirmed the myriad of more and less visible forces upon dyads and also emphasised how important it was for the conceptualisation of mentoring for evaluations to take place from several levels, not just the individual and interpersonal or the institutional and societal. If researchers and scheme organisers embrace all of these levels they will achieve better research outcomes and more effective decisions about their

schemes. Finally, it showed how formal schemes inevitably have nested goals that benefit both the mentee, mentor, institution and society.

7.3 Contribution to Knowledge

Research into undergraduate career mentoring in HE, by institutional alumni, with no employment contract or supervisory relationship, is rare. Past researchers on this topic have focused on the benefits and/or challenges of such schemes (Gannon & Maher, 2012; Spence & Hyams-Ssekasi, 2015; Nabi, Walmsley and Akhtar, 2019). This research has sought to quantitatively measure the employability benefits and use qualitative research to deeply explore what facilitates or inhibits relationships from both functional and process perspectives with a particular interest in social status.

Uniquely, this research has explored a scheme from a social diversity angle and added considerable value by highlighting social diversity influences just as a university student is beginning their transition into work. Other studies focusing on dyad social diversity are scarce, limited to business or youth schemes and have varied contexts (Dreher & Ash, 1990; Whitely et al., 1991; Hartmann & Kopp, 2001; Blickle et al., 2009; Meyer & Bouche, 2010). With an extensive Governmental HE social mobility agenda, considering scheme impact and potential is important. Whilst recognising that it is just one weapon in the armoury against stagnating social mobility, working on embodied social structures, but not necessarily breaking down society's structural barriers that exist external to the mentee.

This research shows that mentees reporting low SES indicators, seem, on average, to make similar career development gains in terms of work exposure, labour market knowledge and ease of interaction with professionals from this form of mentoring to their higher SES peers. However, they also seem, on average, to gain more psychosocially than non-low SES mentees, in terms of self-belief in their ability to secure graduate level work on graduation and career clarity. This comparable gain regardless of

social background is noteworthy and a new contribution that shouldn't be underestimated. This suggests that mentees reporting low SES indicators are increasing their self-efficacy relating to their transition into graduate level work and feeling clearer about their career paths as well as tangibly improving their chances of success. This is an important finding that, although not fully generalisable, suggests that this and similar schemes in similar institutions are worth investing in and can add value, on average, to all those involved.

These findings also clarify that mentees from poor social backgrounds do not simply lack confidence, if anything they lack familiarity with, knowledge of and exposure to graduate level roles and broadly speaking, as these gaps are filled, they steadily gain, within limits, a level of self-belief and career clarity that boosts their employability and enables them to aim for a socially mobile career trajectory, relative to the previous generations of their families.

The results also both challenge and endorse aspects of the current conceptualisation of mentoring. HE mentoring schemes have multiplied in recent years and most are less than a year duration. So, discovering that dyads produce well-developed bonding, trust and identification, suggests that deeper relationships can develop in shorter timescales and still boost employability and refine mentee career identity which contradicts prior findings (Kram, 1983; Phillips-Jones, 1982). Even shallow and moderately deep relationships typically reported employability gains, presenting no evidence of mentors excluding mentees from their sectors, however some social barriers were channelled into dyad interactions, although mentors may have inadvertently benefited from putting some people off their role and organisation, preserving its power groups, mentors seemed unaware of this and sought to help mentees. Nevertheless, this effect of inadvertent, partial exclusion was observed and also endorses the idea that mentoring research must bridge the various levels involved to produce consistent conceptualisation. The findings also challenge the idea of mentoring having linear phases, with more fluidity evident for those

interviewed suggesting the need for ongoing dyad support. Given Government funding and HEIs as the organisers, it was unsurprising to see mentee development as the focus but this was whilst the institution's and the Government's interests regarding social mobility were also being met, suggesting HEI schemes are not a-political and again should be analysed at multiple levels and reflected in the conceptualisation of formal mentoring schemes. The research also endorsed mentoring as a dynamic, evolving, two-way, unique relationship with a more experienced mentor. Although the lack of employment contract, involvement of typically less elite sectors and the distance from the sources of power with organisations/sectors seemed to better balance power relations and reduced mentor risk of supporting their mentee, revealing important differences to business mentoring. This research highlights subtle differences for mentoring in this context and reveals how most theorists seem to have focused mostly on the individual and interpersonal to the detriment of the other levels creating a biased conceptualisation. The proposed model for undergraduate career mentoring in HE which encompasses influences at all levels, therefore provides a basis for scheme organisers to reflect on their programmes and should continue to be tested.

These findings raise ethical questions for mentoring. Some interviews endorsed a loose version of Bourdieu's Social Reproduction Theory, suggesting that habitus partly constrains aspired to socially mobility, but also showed how Self-efficacy Theory helped achieve some desensitisation from the fear of less familiar careers. Whether or not scheme organisers can influence how far mentees stretch their habitus through mentoring, they may need to consider potential longer-term damage. Encouraging mentors to scaffold mentee reflection, assist them to adapt their internalised structural barriers and improve their ability to 'play the game', could still lead to a 'habitus clivé'. Bourdieu provides what he describes as a loose framework of constraint, but it does appear to endure to a degree.

This research, by allowing Social Reproduction theory and Self-efficacy theory to act in a ‘tug of war’ action pulling the potential for habitus stretching back and forth via reflexivity and desensitisation activity exemplifies the need, in this post-modern period of research, to pragmatically use potentially opposing careers to test the boundaries of what is possible and to recognise that regardless of which level research focuses on, in reality all levels are likely to have an effect and that ignoring the societal and institutional in favour of the individual and interpersonal (which is so often the case in mentoring research) or vice versa, is not so productive and that embracing them all will surely lead to a better conceptualisation of mentoring.

7.4 Research Limitations

To fully understanding its contribution, the limitations of this research need confirming. These include the nature of the employability measures (including the short-term focus), sample representativeness, the focus on one scheme, the strength of the regression model, the use of one researcher, being led by interviewees, low engagers drawing on more distant memories and the reliance on a small but varied number of interviewees to propose a model of undergraduate career mentoring in HE.

The employability measures were logically extrapolated from employability models and mentoring research and tested by mentees and mentors to ensure their meanings were clear, however, further testing would have been beneficial. Before-and-after measures do not allow for a mentee’s understanding of employability to extend and that this potential to extend understanding itself may vary by social background. The potential effect is hard to predict however, given university employability education and peer group exposure. No control group was used, so no changes in employability levels that may have happened anyway were allowed for, however, the research compared two groups of mentees and most of the alternative factors, such as work experience, would also

have been experienced by mentees due to mentor support and were measured also and found to be comparable. Despite this it is important to note the measurement of employability gains and not long term employment for the vast majority. This study measures internal social mobility potential through increased employability not social mobility per se and without a long term study and an understanding of whether external structural barriers had an impact the true effect on social mobility is outside the realms of this research.

The before-and-after samples used the exact same participants, however, the ex post facto approach limited how representative this sample was of scheme mentors and mentees as a whole. Participants classing their ethnicity as white were slightly overrepresented and non-white slightly underrepresented, those not reporting low SES indicators were overrepresented, which was possibly due to missing information preventing SES group allocation. Finally, there were doubts whether low engagers were represented enough but this was impossible to judge and engagement levels were shown not to explain differences in employability shifts.

Focusing on just one HEI scheme limited generalisation, but the literature review suggested that context was important which was further endorsed as the research unfolded. Exploration in different institutions is encouraged to explore the importance of institutional and societal influences further. However, combining quantitative and qualitative analysis, alongside transparent reporting on the nature of the scheme and participants, leaves the researcher expecting that pragmatic generalisation to other similar schemes in similar HEIs is possible and that this serves as an exploratory piece of research upon which to base further research. It is considered essential and a strength to have focused on one specific institution for research in other institutions to be compared against.

When considering the regression model itself, it was expected that several variables would contribute to explain the differences noted, however, this was not found to be the case with SES becoming the primary explanation. Incorporating a personality measure into the survey, perhaps relating to extraversion and introversion, would have been ideal, however, scheme organisers limited the survey length. This may have increased the model's explanatory power.

The researcher in this study undertook all the analysis, suggesting great consistency but a potential for bias. However, the researcher worked hard to self-challenge coding interpretations, undertook numerous checks and countered interpretations, were vigilant and self-reflective, including discussion analysis with their research supervisor.

Interviews were relatively participant-centric with the interviewer led by the participant, however, this inevitably created some unevenness in probing, to maintain interview length. This approach had advantages and disadvantages. In the interviews, some early mentor completers' memories seemed more faded than those whose relationships endured. Of course, as expected, these interview results are not generalisable. Participants were deliberately selected to provide variety, however, and the findings are expected to provide evidence to encourage scheme organisers to further explore their systems and underlying assumptions.

Using SES as a binary measure is also challenged. For mentors, measuring SES in a way that suited those at both the start and end of their careers proved difficult. A better solution may need to be found. Similarly, the interviews revealed the bluntness of using SES indicators such as first in family to go to university and low income to ascribe mentees to two social groups. It is hard to determine whether a better binary or non-binary measure could have been developed, the strengths of one research method often reveals the weaknesses of the other.

This research leaned towards a pragmatic, post-positivist ontology and did not aspire to be a positivist experiment. It sought to capture the changes brought about by a mentoring scheme under natural circumstances, to gather perceived changes in employability and capture the richness of the experience via interviews. The ex post facto sample represents a wide range of different ethnicities, genders and social backgrounds. It suggested that the perceived employability shifts were comparable for different social backgrounds, apart from two key psychosocial indicators and the researcher believes this result is hugely useful, although with only pragmatic generalisation to similar schemes and similar HEIs. The full value is in the questions it raises and the model it advances for further testing. Rather than being concerned about pre-determinants not considered, it gathers them up to identify what facilitates or inhibits what are often messy and unique mentoring relationships. These pre-determinants are important for scheme organisers to identify and acknowledge when predicting relationship success and most notably are based on influences from the individual, interpersonal, institutional and societal levels. This research challenges the traditional impetus to match using demographic data such as ethnicity and gender as opposed to more unusual areas of life experiences, personality as a basis for mutual understanding. It also re-emphasises the need to judge relationships in a dynamic way. It encourages scheme stakeholders to put communication, relationship processes and reflexivity at the heart of mentoring, encouraging everyone to actively work towards a state of honesty, openness and non-judgemental acceptance. It also encourages stakeholders to take risks by sharing personal concerns and reflections and to be vulnerable. This is not easy to achieve. Finally, exploring the perceived short-term shifts achieved by mentoring will preclude exploration of longer term impacts on the habitus and whether ‘habitus clivé’ is a likely product of this form of mentoring cannot be concluded here. The focus here is employability as creating the potential for social mobility and any the removing of external structural barriers is seen as beyond the reach and responsibility

of those individuals trying to embark on more socially mobile career trajectories and beyond the scope of the institutions supporting them, despite the individualistic nature of our culture.

7.5 Recommendations

This research produces recommendations for stakeholders and researchers in terms of policy and practice, before suggesting avenues for further research.

7.5.1 Policy

Investors should feel positive that on average, mentees from a range of different backgrounds seem to gain career development benefits from mentoring. Those investing to improve employability, and potentially social mobility, should feel satisfied that low SES mentees are achieving comparable career development gains to their non-low SES peers, as all social groups, on average, seem to have the potential to develop tangible aspects of employability, giving them more potential for social mobility within the limits of what the labour market will allow them to achieve. The additional psychosocial gains identified for low SES mentees could be recognised as signs of the habitus stretching or desensitisation from the fear of the aspired to career, supplying greater potential for social mobility and hopefully limiting emotional damage. Great mobility may be attractive but ethically may be contentious if the emotional life of the mentee is too compromised. Without a control group, the interview experiences go a long way to evidencing how the mentoring experience informed these shifts and to further mastery experiences which may have been less likely without a mentor. Investors may want scheme organiser to explore the inhibiting or facilitating influences identified to optimise their schemes. They may also want to consider the importance of a scheme organiser's talents in various mentoring processes and fund this work appropriately to ensure schemes operate effectively. The OfS, reliant on theory of change approaches, should consider funding further research of other,

more varied schemes in different social settings, to get a fuller picture of career mentoring effectiveness across the HE sector. Investors will then be better placed to judge scheme performance and invest accordingly. It seems sensible that this funding should focus on HEIs with schemes quite different to this one, perhaps with more extreme social diversity and different labour market relationships that take them to more and less elite locations with difference in cultural capital, relative to each other and the HEI studied here.

7.5.2 Recommendations to Practice Using the New Career Mentoring in HE Model

Review Schemes at All Levels Using the Model. Revisiting the ‘Model of the Process of Higher Education based Career Mentoring of Undergraduates by Professionals’ put forward in the discussion chapter leads to a range of considerations for the practice of career mentoring practitioners. The model itself indicates that firstly, practitioners should be reflecting upon and analysing their schemes from a range of different levels: from the level of society, the institutions, the interpersonal and individual and the sometimes competing influences each has on a scheme. Secondly, it requires practitioners to concentrate more efforts on fully understanding the relationship between the mentor and mentee and to build more focused resources to support the building and support of that relationship. Thirdly, it asks practitioners to become more aware of the many varied influences on their scheme beyond those, sometimes falsely assumed. Finally, it bestows on them the ethical responsibility of considering the longer term outcomes of the scheme. These points of learning will need to be fed into each and every aspect of mentoring and potentially expand the focus of attention for these practitioners.

Recruit and Monitor for Communication, Trust and Identification. This research suggests that mentor skills and approach are very important and that they should be assessed during recruitment and scheme monitoring. Given the importance and varied bases for similarity and trust and the many ways in which different individual traits can influence the success of the dyad, more information may need to be gathered about

mentors to support matching. Selecting university alumni from a similar subject to the mentee provides an immediate degree of common ground not be underestimated. Believing a mentor can provide value is important too, which may relate to career identity.

Prospective mentees may also need to assess their readiness to be mentored with any barriers, such as academic performance concerns, being recognised and shared with mentors to fully equip them. Most importantly, practitioners will need to think about the social status of mentors and mentees and the influence that this can have on mentoring. This will involve thinking more broadly about each mentor and mentee and the social groups they come from and what this might mean for the dyad. Closer monitoring of the relationship with an eye on potential bonding limitations, trust issues and concerns around unease and lack of identification should become the norm. Whereas relationship quality was considered important before, this research provides pragmatic guidance on why and what can be done.

Gear Matching to Perceived Similarity. This research challenges a reliance on demographics for matching. Exploring recognition and cognitive overlap in a broader way, incorporating other (sometimes personally resonant) experiences, characteristics and personality, may produce more enduring, trusting relationships. Although ongoing supervision could help when similarities cause clashes or a shortfall in common ground to produce identification occurs. Smaller schemes who observe mentees and mentors together and trial relationships may have an advantage here but larger schemes must explore ways of automating or enabling more sophisticated matching to occur. This may involve simply gathering and sharing more information about mentors and mentees. Allowing mentees to pick their mentors and educating them to look for common ground in a sophisticated way may help here. The model lists a wide range of individual traits that may inhibit or facilitate the perceived success of mentoring which provides a default list for practitioners to consider.

Expectations, and the need to fulfil or manage them, also seem important in matching. Not all mentors seem to provide what mentees seek and this needs to be addressed early to ensure the relationship is perceived as worthwhile.

Build Training and Resources Around Trust, Identification, Reflexivity and Self-efficacy. Mentor and mentee training could benefit from these findings and the dyad needs to be trained to:

- Seek common ground and generate trust and openness.
- Regularly and openly review the value of continuing the relationship.
- Reflect on communication styles/relationship signalling to avoid mixed messages about the relationship status, particularly during disruptive periods such as exams, changes in communication methods and when mentors supervise during work experience.
- Explore affect with regard to mentee feelings of inauthenticity and unease. To reflect on how strong identification is in the dyad and where there are gaps, to openly discuss these. Accept that rejecting at least elements of the mentor's career identity is normal.
- Explore how effective a symbolic model the mentor is for the mentee and whether others need to be drawn in to assist with the building of self-efficacy.
- Explore the dyad's 'self-efficacy toolkit' by identifying what performance accomplishments or vicarious experiences can be offered and barriers to them.

Activities will include work place visits, work shadowing, one to one discussions about work tasks, work experience, placements, discussions about how far the mentee meets the requirements of the job and how capable they are of navigating selection processes. Again, reflection on 'affect' is important here to signal the provision of reassurance and further support by the mentor to the mentee.

- Further develop mentor and mentee facilitating influences such as being non-judgemental, listening, building rapport, thinking deeply about goals and moving

towards them, being resilient and highly reflective. This will involve scaffolding, reflecting and dealing with affect.

- More resources and tools need to be design by practitioners to support mentees and mentors as they navigate their relationships and these need to be aligned to supporting bonding, trust and identification formation as well as encouraging reflexivity and open discussion. Tools also need to be built to encourage the optimisation of master experiences in the dyad as far as possible and reflection on these.

Refocus Supervision Around Value, Communication, Trust,

Identification and Barriers Relating to Capital, the Institution and Society. This research suggests a checklist for practitioners faced with ‘failing’ relationships (see Figure 14), which suggest how best to nurture them. Educating mentors and mentees about what facilitates and inhibits a mentoring relationship could produce tangible differences. Traditionally supervision has focused on mentee or mentor shortcomings, this would shift to an analysis at all levels, but in particular to readjust from purely the individual or interpersonal to include other important levels such as the institutions and organisational features of those involved and societal characteristics associated with the dyad members.

Figure 14*Mentoring Relationship Checklist*

- ✓ Is the mentor delivering what the mentee wants/needs? Is there still value in the relationship for the mentee?
- ✓ Is finance preventing the mentee taking on opportunities?
- ✓ How is the dyad communicating and what degree of informality is there?
- ✓ How much common ground is there?
- ✓ How close are their career identities?
- ✓ Are their personalities very different, how so and what might this mean?
- ✓ Is the dyad open, reflexive and dealing with emotions that arise?
- ✓ Has the relationship changed or been disrupted?
- ✓ Is the mentor exhibiting strong listening and rapport building skills, being mentee centred and avoiding being judgemental?
- ✓ Are there distracting structural intrusions? What social groups are members a part of? Which groups dominate the HEI/ Mentor's organisation/sector?
- ✓ Are there strong cultural capital differences in the dyad?
- ✓ Is identification occurring, to what extent and is this causing disruption?

Broaden Evaluation for Long Term Effects and Ethics. This research provides organisers with comparable employability measures that could reach across institutions and provide benchmarks for evaluation results, particularly when comparing mentees from different social backgrounds. Knowing that mentoring may not boost self-belief in securing graduate level employment for higher SES mentees and the knowledge that looking at roles close up may reduce self-efficacy for some short-term, is important.

Scheme organisers will need to begin to look longer term at what actually happens to mentees in terms of social mobility. This is important to extend the measurement of schemes beyond employability gains to whether they go on to actually secure graduate level roles that deliver social mobility for that mentee. Beyond this, ethically, some assessment of the emotional impact on mentees longer term should be

explored, not only to feedback learning into scheme design, but to identify whether stretching the habitus of the mentee through mentoring is indeed effective from both a societal, institutional and individual perspective. Looking at all of these levels is important.

Combined, these recommendations will provide some tools by which scheme organisers can develop scheme effectiveness year-on-year through encouraging facilitating effects and countering inhibitory ones. This in turn could feed into strategic planning.

7.5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

This section explores the different ways in which future research could be pursued to shed more light on the issues explored in this thesis.

Incorporating Personality Traits into the Model.

Further research could include extending the variables measured and included in the regression model to include a measure of personality. Exploration of the impact of traits such as extroversion/introversion or locus on control could be useful. Tools such as the extroversion related questions from a short form EPI or PEN questionnaire could be adopted (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1964) and/or a short form versions of a Locus of Control questionnaire, perhaps adapted from work focused versions (Spectre, 1998). This could involve a mixed methods study whereby the participants could undertake the above questionnaires and be assigned an extrovert or introvert and/or an internal or external locus of control identifier. Then outcomes could be measured for those mentors and mentees who have similar or different personality types to see what differences this made, if any, in terms of mentoring outcomes. If socioeconomic status is measured too, this could then confirm whether adding these measures to a regression model would improve it's performance. The challenge would be to secure enough participants in order to secure a large enough sample and so work across more than one HEI may be necessary. This would

be useful to pursue to calculate how far particular already noticed elements of personality were explanatory influences on career mentoring outcomes.

Exploring HEIs at the Extremes of Cultural Capital.

Undertaking similar research in schemes in very different HEIs is important, particularly those institutions considered more elite, where the social distance between mentors and mentees could be much larger and the types of organisations that lower social status mentees were trying to join might possess higher levels of cultural capital and display more extreme cultural signifiers. This could confirm whether social dominance orientation, cultural capital differences, social capital barriers and/or structural barriers become more evident and whether career development gains and psychosocial gains still appear comparable, on average, for those from different social backgrounds and those seeking to enter sectors more reliant on cultural capital. Some initial analysis of the Graduate Outcomes data for an HEI could be undertaken to identify the pattern of destinations. If these showed a high level of students joining elite organisations in areas such as Investment Banking, Journalism, Civil Service and other notably more socially homogeneous organisations, then they could be selected. Exploring the highest performing Russell Group Universities with formal mentoring schemes would be a sensible first step and then approaching them to find out if they would like to participate. Then a similar study to this would take place, but with certain adaptations in relation to any weaknesses identified in this thesis. Further testing and refinement of the employability measures used, including the use of multiple questions relating to the five sub-levels of employability identified as benefiting from mentoring would increase robustness and would be important to address.

Do Employability Gains Lead to Long Term Social Mobility?

A longer term analysis of the participants in this study would be useful to discover whether they had indeed achieved some form of social mobility and what the implications were for them from both an economic and emotional perspective. Given the limited numbers of interview participants and the need to understand their story about their career so far and their perceptions of it, it would make sense if this also took the form of a semi-structured interview. The focus of it would involve the transition from university into work and the reflections they have of their job and career satisfaction and views of themselves as a part of the organisation they are in. Questions could also be asked in relation to the incumbent dominant groups in the organisation, comparing and contrasting between the interviewee and those they work with, including their manager to tap any issues of cultural capital. Also exploring their progress, their emotional state in terms of authenticity and anxiety and also their future aspirations. Some reflection back over how their views of career may have altered since being mentored would be useful as well as their perceptions about the ongoing value of their previous mentoring. This would enable a judgement about whether the mentee had been socially mobile or not at that point and whether they had paid significant costs or not in terms of emotional challenge in terms of inauthenticity, unease, anxiety or even a 'habitus clivé'. It would also allow the researcher to consider, via discussions with the mentee, whether career/life satisfaction and whether the self-belief developed by the scheme has had a more lasting effect. Looking at interviews 5 years after this research interviews, and perhaps ten years after, would

hopefully provide enough opportunity to follow mentees a few steps up the hierarchy if they have been able to gain promotion.

Exploring Reflexivity in Career Mentoring in Higher Education.

Further exploration of the role of reflexivity within mentoring and how this could enhance social mobility intentions, could also prove fruitful. This could follow a participatory action research approach by working with willing and appropriate dyads on a scheme. The level of unease and anxiety of willing mentees could be assessed on a monthly using a 9 point scale and three questions that ask mentees about mentee/mentor similarity and how comfortable they feel about pursuing their aspired to career. This is to identify those beginning to feel a sense of unease as their habitus begins to stretch. This is the point where a selection of the dyads would be provided with some 'tools' that allow them to reflect more on the current status of the dyad and the mentee's affect and career identity informed by Self-efficacy Theory. This would be followed by a discussion and latterly with further assessments about similarity comfort about pursuing their career aspiration. reflective interview with both mentor and mentee to see how the intervention might have influenced the relationship. Of course, this would be a richer, qualitative approach, but may start to identify whether reflective interventions might help the process of habitus stretching and facilitate greater potential for employability gains and in turn the potential for social mobility.

7.6 Conclusion

This research is the first of its kind in the field of HE that questions whether mentoring schemes focused on enhancing employability and hence social mobility

potential are effective, seeking to better understand how social diversity influences both the mechanisms and functions of career mentoring in this space.

The results indicate that regardless of social background, the perceived shifts in the tangible areas of employability measured are comparable between social groups, but that those with low SES indicators appear to benefit more in terms of career clarity and in their self-belief in being able to secure a graduate level role on graduation. This study provides further evidence that social diversity can influence both mentoring mechanisms and mentoring outcomes but that other forces are also at play. Similarity seems to play an important role but is not necessarily just based on demographics, and that identification seems to allow mentee career identity refinement to take place. These results give affect a central role to play in career mentoring for low SES mentees and suggest that fear sits at the heart of those seeking social mobility as they struggle with feelings of unease and inauthenticity as their habitus stretches and loosely constrains their perceptions of potential social mobility. Self-efficacy, and the varied routes to mastery, show how mentoring can assist these mentees to feel more capable and desensitise them from the roles they aspire to be in but this road appears challenging, especially without significant similarity between mentor and mentee. By combining Social Reproduction and Social Learning Theory, this provides a theoretical lens from different levels, one more institutional and societal and one more individual and interpersonal, on the issue which both endorses Bourdieu's argument that habitus substantially endures, but also Bandura who through considerable targeted effort, can evoke self-efficacy and some personal change and open up more potential for social mobility.

Looking forward, this research reassures policy makers that investing in similar schemes, in similar institutions may be wise, but recognises that career mentoring is only one influence amongst many on the potential for social mobility. Further research in more elite institutions will provide even more clarity given only pragmatic

generalisation is on offer in this research. Adding personality traits as variables to the regression model, taking a closer look at reflexivity in mentoring dyads at poignant moments and looking at the longer term effects of mentoring with longer term studies could all extend these findings and shed more light on the conceptualisation of mentoring which continues to be refined.

In terms of practice it provides suggestions and a model that scheme providers can explore to leverage better performance from their schemes, It suggests exploring how reflecting jointly as mentor and mentee during feelings of unease and inauthenticity, may pave the way for greater potential for social mobility but may also raise issues of duty of care if the longer term effects of this are not explored. Tracking how far long term social mobility is influenced and whether it is enough to surmount any later social barriers seems important.

This research is an important first step towards confirming that investment in career mentoring schemes of this type in HE is worthwhile. Through the unusual marrying of the two meta theories of Social Reproduction and Social Learning, it highlights areas of practice for scheme providers to reflect on and improve and it challenges the current conceptualisation of mentoring in a number of ways by exploring mentoring in this under-researched context.

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Appendices

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Appendix A

Mentee Sign Up Form (Survey 1)

Questions in italic were unavailable to the researcher and required an answer unless marked *optional. Sections were made available in stages to manage impact.

Mentee sign up 2016-17

Section 1: Introduction

This section thanked applicants for their interest, explained the process regards application administration, explained the survey structure and likely duration. It also explained the privacy policy regarding scheme organiser actions. It then broadly introduced the existence of mentoring research and stressed decisions to share data had no bearing on scheme membership, and confirmed the scheme's support of it. It then said:

“Doctoral Research Project

This project is trying to ascertain whether undergraduates experience and benefit from mentoring in similar or different ways. This research project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University of XXXXX Research and Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurance in place.

The link below will tell you more about the study, including how your data will be carefully protected, please read it now and it is sincerely hoped that you will choose to support this important research. We will ask if you would like to take part towards the end of the survey. Agreeing to take part in the research will mean that the responses you give, (not including your name and contact details) will be shared with the Researcher. Towards the end of the survey, we will also provide a space for you to stipulate any particularly responses that you would prefer not to share with the Researcher, so please consider this as you complete the form.

Please link [here](#) (link to project participant brief) for more information and then select next.”

Section 2: Contact details and eligibility

This section was designed to gather contact details and ascertain eligibility, confirm whether they were due to take a placement year or year abroad, their school/department and their tutor. Only subject information was shared with the researcher.

Section 3: Your motivations, preferences and aspirations

- What motivated you to apply to have a Career Mentor for the next year? *Open text field*
- Currently what is your main aim for after completion of your bachelor's degree? *Select one*
 - Pursue a graduate level role relevant to your degree
 - Pursue a graduate level role not particularly relevant to your degree
 - To take a gap year travelling
 - To undertake a vocational taught postgraduate course (e.g. a PGCE, Law Conversion)
 - To undertake a non-vocational taught postgraduate course
 - To undertake a postgraduate research qualification (PhD)
 - To move into a non-graduate level job
 - Unsure
 - Other
- If you selected other, please specify. *Open text field*
- Please describe what you expect to gain from being mentored. *Open text field.*
- Please describe the ideal mentor for you to be matched with. *Open text field.*
- What characteristics would you least like in your mentor? *Open text field.*
- To what extent would you prefer or not prefer the following forms of mentoring support from your mentor? Ranking on scale of 1(not at all prefer) to 9 (strongly prefer) (*select one score per form of mentoring*)
 - Being given introductions to their network
 - Having someone to trust or confide in
 - Being exposed to influential sector contacts
 - Being given support and encouragement
 - Being given opportunities to develop new skills
 - Having a father/mother figure
 - Being given a workplace tour/visits
 - Having a role-model

- Developing sector/organisational knowledge
- Having a sounding board for your ideas
- Being given personal/professional development guidance
- Being helped to develop strategies to reach career aspirations
- Being given work shadowing, work experiences or placements
- Being believed in

Students were warned, that the next three questions would form a profile to be shared with the mentor. Honesty and accuracy was encouraged and that a lack of work experience would not impact their chances of securing a mentor.

- Please describe here, in less than 200 words, all the experience you have of work so far (which sectors, organisations and roles and whether graduate level or more casual employment) *Open text field*
- Please indicate, in less than 200 words, any particular career interests or aspirations that you currently have, how certain or uncertain you feel about them and how they relate to your subject interests if at all. *Open text field*
- Please indicate in less than 200 words, your key interests and activities that you are involved in away from your degree and from any work you do. *Open text field*

The next question related to matching and is excluded to ensure scheme anonymity.

Section 4: Your development needs

This section encouraged honesty and reconfirmed survey intentions to identify student development needs and enable scheme organisers to measure scheme effectiveness.

- Please indicate how developed you feel you are in the following areas. 1(not so well developed), 9 (well developed)
 - Your exposure to graduate level work
 - The clarity of your career direction
 - Your belief in your ability to secure graduate level work for after your degree
 - Your sector, job role and organisational knowledge
 - The ease with which you can interact with professionals
 - Your likelihood of asking for help with career decisions and job search issues from others (networking)
- Do you have any other career or employability development needs that you would like to share with us? *Open text field. *optional*

Section 5: Your personal details

- I identify my gender as: female, male, other, please state, prefer not to say.
 - If you selected other, please specify
- Do you have a disability? Yes, no, prefer not to say
 - If you selected yes, please specify your disability here
 - Is there any particular support or specific requirements you will need to have met in order to participate fully in the scheme?
- Please indicate your age category: 17 or below, 18-20, 21-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-66, 67 and over, prefer not to say.
- Are you from: The UK, The EU, Overseas (i.e. non UK and non EU)
- Which best describes your ethnic background?
 - Asian or Asian British
 - Please specify: Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Any other Asian background, Prefer not to say.
 - Black or Black British
 - Caribbean, African, Other Black or Black British groups, Prefer not to say
 - Chinese
 - Mixed or Multiple ethnic group
 - White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Any other mixed background, Prefer not to say.
 - White
 - Other ethnic group
 - Prefer not to say
- Does your family income amount to: Less than £16,000, More than £16,000 and less than £25,000, £25,000 or more, I do not know, I would prefer not to say. *Select one.*
 - If you do not know the answer to this question, would you be happy for the University to share with us which of the above categories your family income falls into? Yes, No.
- Have you ever been entitled to free school meals at school? Yes at primary school only, Yes at secondary school only, Yes at both primary and secondary school, No (free school meals were not available in the country I was schooled in), No (I was schooled in the UK and not entitled to free school meals), I don't know. *Select one.*
- Please confirm whether your secondary school was a state comprehensive, state grammar or private school. If you are from overseas, please make your best

approximation for the school you studied in. State comprehensive (including academies), state grammar, Private *Select one*.

- Did you study A' levels or an alternative course to access your degree course? A' Levels, Alternative Course. *Select one*
 - If you studied A' levels, list all of your grades here. *Open text field*.
 - If you studied an alternative course, please indicate the title and grade you achieved. *Open text field*.
- Please provide the postcode for your main residence when you were taking your GCSE examinations or equivalent. *Open text field*.
- Are you the first in your family to go to University? Yes, no. *Select one*

Section 6: Your commitment

This section held two statements students were asked to commit to, to take part in the scheme..

Section 7: The Doctoral Research Project

- Please confirm that you have read the research project information linked earlier in this questionnaire (you can re-read it [here](#) (*link to project brief*) if you wish) and whether you are happy to share your anonymous data (which won't include your name and contact details unless you have requested a debrief or a copy of the research results) with the researcher as part of her Doctoral Research project? Yes, No, Yes but I would prefer not to share some specific responses. *Select one*.
 - If you have agreed to share your data, would you like a short telephone debrief with the researcher after the research has been completed? Yes, No. *Select one*.
 - If your answer is yes, please confirm here that you are happy for the {scheme name} to provide the researcher with your name, email and telephone number. Yes, No. *Select one*.
 - If you have agreed to share your data, would you like to receive a summary of the findings of the research once it is completed? Yes, No. *Select one*.
 - If your answer is yes, please confirm here that you are happy for the {scheme name} to provide the researcher with your name, email and telephone number. Yes, No. *Select one*.
 - Please list below any specific responses that you would prefer not to share with the Researcher. *Open text field*.

Section 8: Thank you

This section thanked students for completing the form and that those sharing data with the researcher would be contacted as appropriate.

Appendix B

Mentor Sign Up (Survey 1)

Questions in italic were not shared with the researcher. Questions marked * were optional. Each section was available one at a time to manage impact.

Mentor sign up 2016-17

Section 1: Introduction

This section thanked applicants for their interest, explained the administrative process, explained the survey structure and duration. It explained the privacy policy regarding scheme organiser actions. It introduced the existence of the mentoring research and its relationship to the scheme – stressing sharing data had no bearing on scheme membership, and confirmed the scheme’s support of it. It then said:

“Doctoral Research Project

This project is trying to ascertain whether undergraduates experience and benefit from mentoring in similar or different ways. This research project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University of XXXXX Research and Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurance in place.

The link below will tell you more about the study, including how your data will be carefully protected, please read it now and it is sincerely hoped that you will choose to support this important research. Once you have read more about the study you will complete the signup form as normal. We will ask if you would like to take part towards the end of the survey. Agreeing to take part in the research will mean that the responses you give, (not including your name and contact details) will be shared with the Researcher. Towards the end of the survey, we will also provide a space for you to stipulate any particularly responses that you would prefer *not* to share with the Researcher, so please consider this as you complete the form.

Please link [here](#) (*link to project participant brief*) for more information and then select next.”

Section 2: Contact details and eligibility

This section gathered contact details and ascertained eligibility of the professional and sign up for social media with scheme organisers, their qualifications background and which schools best represented their prior studies as well as their occupational information. Only parts of this section was shared with the researcher:

- Are you an employee or are you unemployed? Employee, Self-employed, I am currently not working. *Select one.*
 - Please state the name of the organisation you work for. *Open text field.*
 - Please state the name of the organisation you run. *Open text field.*
 - If you are self-employed, please indicate the number of staff in your organisation including yourself. 1, 2-24, 35+ *Select one.*
- If you are not currently working, please provide us with further information about your work intentions, or information about how your networks, volunteering or other work related activities will enable you to undertake the mentoring role.
- Please provide your job title. *Open text field.*
 - If your job title is not self-explanatory, please provide an alternative for use with students *Optional *Open text field.*

It was explained that the questions below would form a profile for their mentee to view.

- Please provide a brief, less than 150 word, description of your career history, including sector experience, organisations worked for and expertise developed. *Open text field.*
- Please provide a brief, less than 150 word, description of interest and activities you are involved in outside of work. *Open text field.*

Section 3: Your motivations and expectations

- Please describe what motivated you to become a mentor. *Open text field.*
- Please describe what you hope to gain, if anything, from becoming a mentor. *Open text field.*
- Please describe the main ways in which you think you will be able to help a mentee. *Open text field.*
- How far do you think the following activities will be a typical part of your approach to mentoring (assuming your mentee values these activities)? Ranking on scale of 1(not at all typical) to 9 (extremely typical) (*select one score per form of mentoring*)
 - Providing introductions to my network
 - Being someone to trust or confide in

- Providing exposure to influential sector contacts
- Providing support and encouragement
- Providing opportunities to develop new skills
- Acting like a father/mother figure
- Offering a workplace tour/visits
- Being a role-model
- Helping develop sector/organisational knowledge
- Acting a sounding board for ideas
- Providing personal/professional development guidance
- Helping develop strategies to reach career aspirations
- Offering work shadowing, work experiences or placements
- Believing in my mentee

Finally, there were questions about mentee preferences and any other activities they might want to get involved I, not shared with the researcher.

Section 4: Your skills and experience

This section focused on the prior mentoring experience and training of the professional, , English language ability, self-reflection /ratings of their mentoring skills and mentor training arrangements. Only information on prior mentor training was shared with the researcher.

Section 5: Personal details

- I identify my gender as: female, male, other, please state, prefer not to say.
 - If you selected other, please specify
- Do you have a disability? Yes, no, prefer not to say
 - If you selected yes, please specify your disability here
 - Is there any particular support or specific requirements you will need to have met in order to participate in the scheme?
- Please indicate your age category: 21-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-66, 67 and over, prefer not to say.
- Which best describes your ethnic background?
 - Asian or Asian British
 - Please specify: Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Any other Asian background, Prefer not to say.
 - Black or Black British

- Caribbean, African, Other Black or Black British groups, Prefer not to say
- Chinese
- Mixed or Multiple ethnic group
 - White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Any other mixed background, Prefer not to say.
- White
- Other ethnic group
- Prefer not to say
- Please indicate the highest level of qualification you have completed. (There is more guidance under ‘+more info’ including where professional qualifications sit)
 - Masters level or above
 - Bachelor level
 - Post-secondary below bachelor’s level
 - University entry qualifications
 - Upper secondary qualifications without secondary access
 - Lower secondary qualifications
 - Other (including overseas qualifications below degree level)
 - No formal qualifications
 - Don’t know.

Section 6: Your commitment

This section asked professionals to commit to a statement to allow them to take part in the scheme.

Section 7: The Doctoral Research Project

- Please confirm that you have read the research project information linked earlier in this questionnaire (you can re-read it [here](#) (*link to project brief*) if you wish) and whether you are happy to share your anonymous data (which won't include your name and contact details unless you have requested a debrief or a copy of the research results) with the researcher as part of her Doctoral Research project? Yes, No, Yes but I would prefer not to share some specific responses. *Select one.*
 - If you have agreed to share your data, would you like a short telephone debrief with the researcher after the research has been completed? Yes, No. *Select one.*
 - If your answer is yes, please confirm here that you are happy for the {scheme name} to provide the researcher with your name, email and telephone number. Yes, No. *Select one.*
 - If you have agreed to share your data, would you like to receive a summary of the findings of the research once it is completed? Yes, No. *Select one.*
 - If your answer is yes, please confirm here that you are happy for the {scheme name} to provide the researcher with your name, email and telephone number. Yes, No. *Select one.*
 - Please list below any specific responses that you would prefer not to share with the Researcher. *Open text field.*

Section 8: Thank you

This section thanked professionals for completing the form and confirmed that those sharing data with the researcher would be contacted as appropriate.

Appendix C

Mentee Evaluation (Survey 2)

Italic questions were unavailable to the researcher. Questions marked * were optional.

Each section was available one at a time to manage impact.

Mentee Evaluation Survey 2016-17

Section 1: Introduction

This section outlined questionnaire purpose and duration for the scheme organisers and encouraged even low engagers to respond. It encouraged openness and honesty to enable scheme improvement. Data protection rules were clarified. The mentoring research was introduced which stressed the scheme organiser's support, that they could still join if not and that data would not be shared if they decided not to take part and that they should read the research brief.

“The Doctoral Research project

If you gave permission in the original sign up form to share your data then the information in this survey will also be shared with the Doctoral Researcher. If you would like a reminder about the nature of the survey please click on this link [here](#). {link to participant briefing note at Appendix H}

If you decide you no longer wish to take part in the research then please email {researcher's email} to withdraw and she, with the help of the Career Mentoring Team, will ensure all of your data is removed from her research data files. This will in no way impact on your involvement with the {name of scheme} scheme.

One-to-one interviews

The second phase of the Doctoral Research will involve some survey participants taking part in a one-to-one interview. Later on in this survey, we will ask you to decide if you would like to take part and if you say yes, ask for your contact details so we can organise an appointment with you and provide you with further information.”

Section 2: identification

This section requested full name, student number, mentor full name and was unavailable to the researcher.

Section 3: Engagement and interaction Part one

This section asked if the mentee had had at least one significant mentoring interaction and diverted those answering 'no' to the final stages of the form.

Section 3: Engagement and interaction Part two

- Approximately how many times have you been in significant contact with your mentor (N.B. this can be via any communication method but must constitute more than a very brief email for instance)? *Select one* – numbers 1 to 20 were presented as well as 'More than 20 times' *as individual options to select.*
 - If your answer was 'more than 20 times' please stipulate the number of times you have interacted. *Free text box provided restricted to integers below 100.*
- Typically how long, on average, do you tend to interact with your mentor each time you communicate? 0-30minutes, 31-60 minutes, more than 60 minutes.
- Which of the following methods of communication have you used to communicate with your mentor? *Select all that apply.* Face-to-Face (not on skype or similar), Skype (or similar), email, telephone, social media (e.g. twitter, LinkedIn, Whatsapp).
- How many times have you met face-to-face or via skype (or similar) *Free text box provided restricted to integers less than 100.*

Questions asked about student part-time work and hours worked, not shared with the researcher.

- Please rank your relationship with your mentor
 - Overall how comfortable did you feel when interacting with your mentor?
 - Overall how satisfied were you with your mentor match?
 - Overall how engaged were you as a pair?
 - *Each of the above questions were answered on a 1-9 point scale with 1 labelled as not very and 9 labelled as very. Only one rating could be selected per question.*
 - Please provide any comments to help us understand your ranking relating to feelings of comfort. *Optional.*
 - Please provide any comments to help us understand your ranking relating to satisfaction with your match. *Optional.*
- To what extent did you receive each of the following forms of mentoring support from your mentor? Ranking on scale of 1(not at all) to 9 (Very much so) *(select one score per form of mentoring)*

- Being given introductions to their network
- Having someone to trust or confide in
- Being exposed to influential sector contacts
- Being given support and encouragement
- Being given opportunities to develop new skills
- Having a father/mother figure
- Being given a workplace tour/visits
- Having a role-model
- Developing sector/organisational knowledge
- Having a sounding board for your ideas
- Being given personal/professional development guidance
- Being helped to develop strategies to reach career aspirations
- Being given work shadowing, work experiences or placements
- Being believed in
- Please provide any final comments about your engagement and the nature of the interaction you had with your mentor. *Optional*

Section 4: Reflecting on motivations and aspirations

- Has your experience of being mentored lived up to your expectations? Yes, No.
 - Please provide further information to help us understanding your answer *Open text field*.
- Have your views about mentoring changed in anyway as a result of your experience on the scheme? Yes, No
 - Please provide further information to help us understanding your answer. *Open text field*.
- Have your career aspirations altered in anyway as a result of being mentored?
 - Yes, I aspire to less challenging or lower status jobs now.
 - No, the level of my aspirations remains unchanged.
 - Yes, I aspire to more challenging or higher status jobs now.
- Describe your career interests or aspirations as they are now. *Open text field*.
 - Please describe, if at all, what caused your aspirations to change.

Questions were asked about goals set and achieved, not shared with the researcher.

Section 5: Your development

- Please rank your level of each characteristic directly BEFORE you started on the {name of scheme} mentoring scheme. Scale 1-9 offered with 1 labelled (not well developed) and 9 labelled (well developed).
 - Your exposure to graduate level work
 - The clarity of your career direction
 - Your belief in your ability to secure graduate level work for after your degree
 - Your sector, job role and organisational knowledge
 - The ease with which you can interact with professionals
 - Your likelihood of asking for help with career decisions and job search issues from others (networking)
- Please rank your level of each characteristic directly AFTER THE END OF the {name of scheme} mentoring scheme. Scale 1-9 offered with 1 labelled (not well developed) and 9 labelled (well developed).
 - Your exposure to graduate level work
 - The clarity of your career direction
 - Your belief in your ability to secure graduate level work for after your degree
 - Your sector, job role and organisational knowledge
 - The ease with which you can interact with professionals
 - Your likelihood of asking for help with career decisions and job search issues from others (networking)

A question asked how far development was attributed to mentoring (unshared).

- Please answer the following questions about your experiences of graduate level work over the period of the career mentoring in terms of whether it was offered, by who and whether you took up the offer or not. You will need to tick one or two boxes for each row. (Boxes were labelled: Not offered or taken up, I was offered this type of experience but not as a result of career mentoring, I was offered this type of experience as a direct or indirect result of career mentoring, I have taken up or will be taking up this type of experience.
 - A discussion about a specific piece of graduate level work/project
 - A visit to a workplace/a workplace tour
 - Work shadowing (observing someone in graduate level work)
 - Work experience/internship (undertaking graduate level work for a few days/weeks)
 - A graduate level placement (a longer typically 6 to 12 month placement)

- Being offered a permanent graduate level job
- Please add any additional comments that will help us further understand the graduate level work exposure you have experienced. *Optional.*
- Please provide information about any other career or employability development that you feel you have achieved that is not covered in the questions above. *Optional.*

Section 6: The Career Mentoring Team

This section asked eight questions about scheme organiser performance. Only one question was shared with the researcher:

- Would you recommend becoming a {scheme name} mentee to other eligible students?
Yes, No.

Section 7: The Doctoral Research Project

- We are looking for participants who would like to take part in a face-to-face, one hour, confidential discussion about their experiences of being a mentee with the Doctoral Researcher between December 2017 and February 2018. We are looking for participants regardless of whether they have engaged extensively with their mentor or not. To find out more about taking part, read this [link](#) {participant brief linked at Appendix I}. Once you have read this information you can answer the question about taking part. This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University of {name of University} Research and Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurance in place. Also, bear in mind that due to sampling requirements not all volunteers are likely to be interviewed. Please indicate here if you would like to participate in this follow up interview. Yes, No.

If yes, please provide your name, email and telephone number below so that the researcher can contact you to organise an appointment for the discussion. *Open text field.*

- *The final page thanked mentees for completing the survey.*

Appendix D

Mentor Evaluation (Survey 2)

Italicised questions were not shared with the researcher. Questions marked * were optional. Each section was released separately to manage impact.

Mentor Evaluation Survey 2016-17

Section one: Introduction

The questionnaire purpose and duration was described and even low engagers encouraged to complete it openly and honestly to improve the scheme. The Scheme's privacy policy was outlined and the mentoring research re-introduced, the scheme's support of it reiterated and a reminder stressed that not sharing in no way affected scheme involvement. They were encouraged to read the brief.

“The Doctoral Research project

If you gave permission in the original sign up form to share your data, then the information in this survey will also be shared with the Doctoral Researcher. If you would like a reminder about the nature of the survey please click on this [link](#) {link to participant brief at Appendix H}.

If you decide you no longer want to take part in the research then please email {researcher's email} to withdraw and, with the assistance of the Career Mentoring Team she will ensure all of your data is located and removed from her research data files. This will in no way impact on your involvement in the {name of scheme} mentoring scheme.

One-to-one interviews

The second phase of the Doctoral Research will involve some survey participants taking part in a one-to-one interview. Later on in this survey we will ask you to decide if you would like to take part in an interview and if you say yes, ask for your contact details so we can organise an appointment with your and provide you further information.”

Section 2: identification

This section asked for the full name of the mentor and was not shared with the researcher.

Section 3: Engagement, interaction and development Mentee 1 part 1

The engagement, interaction and development for mentors was repeated for each mentee mentored that year but is presented only once below. This first part asked for mentee name

and that they had had at least one significant interaction. If 'no', they moved to the next mentee. If no engagement they were taken to the final survey section on scheme organiser performance only. Those who had engaged were asked:

Section 4: Engagement, interaction and development part 2.

- Approximately how many times have you been in significant contact with your mentee (N.B. this can be via any communication method but must constitute more than a very brief email for instance)? *Select one* – numbers 1 to 20 were presented as well as 'More than 20 times' *as individual options to select.*
 - If your answer was 'more than 20 times' please stipulate the number of times you have interacted. *Free text box provided restricted to integers below 100.*
- Typically how long, on average, do you tend to interact with your mentee each time you communicate? 0-30minutes, 31-60 minutes, more than 60 minutes.
- Which of the following methods of communication have you used to communicate with your mentee? *Select all that apply.* Face-to-Face (not on skype or similar), Skype (or similar), email, telephone, social media (e.g. twitter, LinkedIn, Whatsapp).
- How many times have you met face-to-face or via skype (or similar) *Free text box provided restricted to integers less than 100.*
- Please rank your relationship with your mentee
 - Overall how comfortable did you feel when interacting with your mentee?
 - Overall how satisfied were you with your mentee match?
 - Overall how engaged were you as a pair?
 - *Each of the above questions were answered on a 1-9 point scale with 1 labelled as not very and 9 labelled as very. Only one rating could be selected per question.*
 - Please provide any comments that help us understand your rankings above about comfort, match, satisfaction and/or engagement. *Open field text.*

Optional.
- To what extent did you provide the following forms of mentoring support to this mentee? Ranking on scale of 1(not at all) to 9 (Very much so) (*select one score per form of mentoring*)
 - Providing introductions to my network
 - Being someone to trust or confide in
 - Providing exposure to influential sector contacts
 - Providing support and encouragement

- Providing opportunities to develop new skills
- Acting like a father/mother figure
- Offering a workplace tour/visits
- Being a role-model
- Helping develop sector/organisational knowledge
- Acting a sounding board for ideas
- Providing personal/professional development guidance
- Helping develop strategies to reach career aspirations
- Offering work shadowing, work experiences or placements
- Believing in my mentee
- For this mentee, please rank their level of each characteristic AT THE START of the {name of scheme} mentoring scheme. Scale 1-9 offered with 1 labelled (not well developed) and 9 labelled (well developed), plus an option of 'Don't know'.
 - Their exposure to graduate level work
 - The clarity of their career direction
 - Their belief in their ability to secure graduate level work for after their degree
 - Their sector, job role and organisational knowledge
 - Their ease with which they can interact with professionals
 - Their likelihood of asking for help with career decisions and job search issues from others (networking)
- For this mentee please rank their level of each characteristic AT THE END OF the {name of scheme} mentoring scheme. Scale 1-9 offered with 1 labelled (not well developed) and 9 labelled (well developed), plus an option of 'Don't know'.
 - Their exposure to graduate level work
 - The clarity of their career direction
 - Their belief in their ability to secure graduate level work for after their degree
 - Their sector, job role and organisational knowledge
 - Their ease with which they can interact with professionals
 - Their likelihood of asking for help with career decisions and job search issues from others (networking)
- Please indicate which of the following areas of development you would attribute to your mentee's experience of being mentored (either directly or indirectly). Select all that apply
 - Their exposure to graduate level work
 - The clarity of their career direction

- Their belief in their ability to secure graduate level work for after their degree
- Their sector, job role and organisational knowledge
- Their ease with which they can interact with professionals
- Their likelihood of asking for help with career decisions and job search issues from others (networking)
- Please indicate if you offered any of the following to your mentee.
 - A discussion about a specific piece of graduate level work/project
 - A visit to a workplace/a workplace tour
 - Work shadowing (observing someone in graduate level work)
 - Work experience/internship (undertaking graduate level work for a few days/weeks)
 - A graduate level placement (a longer typically 6 to 12 month placement)
 - A permanent graduate level job
 - None of the above.
- Please can you confirm if they took you up on your offers? *Select one*
 - Yes, all the opportunities
 - Yes, some of the opportunities
 - No they didn't take up the opportunities
 - No, I didn't offer any
 - Please add any comments to support your above answer *Open field text.*

Mentors were asked whether mentees set goals and if they had met them. They were asked whether their mentee could secure graduate level work in their career sector and why, and if not how they might change their mentee. These responses were not shared.

Section 5: Your development

- Were your hopes about what you might gain from being a mentor borne out by the experience? Yes, no.
 - Please add any comments that you would like to help us understand your response. *Open text field.*
 - Please describe what you believe you gained from being a mentor this year. *Open text field.*
- Have your feelings about mentoring changed over the last year as a result of the experience? Yes, No.
 - If yes, please describe in what way they have changed. *Open text field.*

Section 6: The Career Mentoring Team

This section asked eight questions about scheme organisation and the only question shared was:

- Would you recommend becoming a {scheme name} mentor to others? Yes, No.

Section 7: The Doctoral Research Project

- We are looking for participants who would like to take part in a face-to-face, one-to-one, one hour, confidential discussion about your experiences of being a mentor with the Doctoral Researcher between December 2017 and February 2018. We are looking for participants regardless of whether they have engaged extensively with their mentee or not. To find out more about taking part, please read the information in this [link](#) {link to participant brief at Appendix I}. Once you have read this information you can answer the question below about taking part. This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University of XXXXX Research and Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurance in place. Also, bear in mind that due to sampling requirements, not all volunteers are likely to be interviewed. Please indicate here if you would like to take part in this follow up interview. Yes, No.
 - If yes, please, please provide your name, email and telephone number below so the researcher can contact you to organise an appointment for the discussion. *Open text field.*
- *The final page thanked mentors for completing the survey.*

Appendix E

Mentee Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your journey from when you were younger all the way through to University and your current situation.
 - a. What, if anything, influenced your journey so far?
 - b. Probe: decisions made, turning points, feelings, what their family was like and what they did and family environment.
2. How do you think your close friends on the course would describe you?
 - a. How do you think your mentor would describe you?
 - b. Do you agree or disagree with these views?
 - c. What were your first impressions of your mentor?
 - d. Can you describe your mentor?
 - e. Probe: compare and contrast, detail around embodiment of cultural capital, interests, feelings.
3. Did you choose your mentor? If so, how did you go about making that choice, or, did you have expectations about what your mentor would be like?
 - a. How did your expectations compare with the reality of your experience
 - b. Can you talk me through your relationship with your mentor?
 - c. How did the relationship change over the full length of the scheme, if at all?
 - d. Probe: judgements about mentor, what caused positive or negative things to happen, engagement, trust, turning points, feelings.
4. Looking back over your mentoring experience on the scheme, what were the outcomes for you, if any?
 - a. Could you see yourself working in your mentor's role and/or the sector that your mentor is in? (Remind about both parts of questions if needed.)
 - b. What led you to this view?
 - c. Probe: level/sector, type of role, positive and negative outcomes, internal and external outcomes, psychosocial and career developmental outcomes and reasoning on judgement of fit.
5. Is there anything else you would like to share before we finish about the mentoring experience
6. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience of this interview?

Appendix F

Mentor Interview Questions


1. Please can you describe your journey from when you were young to where you are now in your career?
 - a. What were the major influences, if any, on your career to date?
 - b. Probe turning points, emotions, family influences, habitus and social and cultural capital.
2. So, how do you think your friends would describe you?
 - a. How do you think your mentees would describe you? How far do you agree or disagree?
 - b. What were your first impressions of your mentee?
 - c. NB: Reminder to focus on 2016/17 mentees.
 - d. Probe: compare and contrast, embodiment of cultural capital, interests, feelings.
3. How would you describe your relationship with your mentee and how you interacted?
 - a. Did you see any change over time at all?
 - b. How does this compare to other mentoring experiences you may have had?
 - a. Probe feelings, turning points, judgements about mentee, causes of positive or negative things to happen, engagement and trust..
4. Looking back over your mentoring experience on the scheme, what do you think the outcomes, if any, were for you?
 - a. What gains do you think your mentees got out of it, if any?
 - b. What roles could you see them in? Could you see them following a similar path to you, or not, in the future?
 - c. Probe: level/sector, type of role and reasoning on judgement of fit, positive and negative outcomes, psychosocial and career developmental outcomes.
5. Is there anything else you would like to share before we finish about the mentoring experience
6. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience of this interview?

Appendix G

Ethics Application Statement

This is a copy of the original ethics statement which had been signed electronically and now manually. The PhD Supervisor ratifies that this research has been ethically approved according to the necessary process.

University of Reading
Institute of Education
Ethical Approval Form A (version May 2015)

 University of Reading

Tick one:

☐ Staff project
☒ PhD
☐ EdD

Name of applicant (s): Tania Lyden

Title of project: Career mentoring of undergraduates by university alumni: do socially diversified dyads produce different outcomes, and if so why?

Name of supervisor (for student projects): Dr Carol Fuller

Please complete the form below including relevant sections overleaf.

	YES	NO
Have you prepared an Information Sheet for participants and/or their parents/carers that:		
a) explains the purpose(s) of the project	✓	
b) explains how they have been selected as potential participants	✓	
c) gives a full, fair and clear account of what will be asked of them and how the information that they provide will be used	✓	
d) makes clear that participation in the project is voluntary	✓	
e) explains the arrangements to allow participants to withdraw at any stage if they wish	✓	
f) explains the arrangements to ensure the confidentiality of any material collected during the project, including secure arrangements for its storage, retention and disposal	✓	
g) explains the arrangements for publishing the research results and, if confidentiality might be affected, for obtaining written consent for this	✓	
h) explains the arrangements for providing participants with the research results if they wish to have them	✓	
i) gives the name and designation of the member of staff with responsibility for the project together with contact details, including email. If any of the project investigators are students at the IoE, then this information must be included and their name provided	✓	
k) explains, where applicable, the arrangements for expenses and other payments to be made to the participants	✓	
j) includes a standard statement indicating the process of ethical review at the University undergone by the project, as follows: "This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct".	✓	
k) includes a standard statement regarding insurance: "The University has the appropriate insurances in place. Full details are available on request".	✓	
Please answer the following questions		
1) Will you provide participants involved in your research with all the information necessary to ensure that they are fully informed and not in any way deceived or misled as to the purpose(s) and nature of the research? (Please use the subheadings used in the example information sheets on blackboard to ensure this).	✓	
2) Will you seek written or other formal consent from all participants, if they are able to provide it, in addition to (1)?	✓	
3) Is there any risk that participants may experience physical or psychological distress in taking part in your research?		✓
4) Have you taken the online training modules in data protection and information security (which can be found here: http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/imps/Staffpages/imps-training.aspx)?	✓	
5) Have you read the Health and Safety booklet (available on Blackboard) and completed a Risk Assessment Form to be included with this ethics application?	✓	
6) Does your research comply with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research?	✓	
	YES	NO
7) If your research is taking place in a school, have you prepared an information sheet and consent form to gain the permission in writing of the head teacher or other relevant supervisory professional?		
		N.A.
		✓

8) Has the data collector obtained satisfactory DBS clearance?				✓
9) If your research involves working with children under the age of 16 (or those whose special educational needs mean they are unable to give informed consent), have you prepared an information sheet and consent form for parents/carers to seek permission in writing, or to give parents/carers the opportunity to decline consent?				✓
10) If your research involves processing sensitive personal data ¹ , or if it involves audio/video recordings, have you obtained the explicit consent of participants/parents?	✓			
11) If you are using a data processor to subcontract any part of your research, have you got a written contract with that contractor which (a) specifies that the contractor is required to act only on your instructions, and (b) provides for appropriate technical and organisational security measures to protect the data?	✓			
12a) Does your research involve data collection outside the UK?			✓	
12b) If the answer to question 12a is "yes", does your research comply with the legal and ethical requirements for doing research in that country?			✓	
13a) Does your research involve collecting data in a language other than English?				✓
13b) If the answer to question 13a is "yes", please confirm that information sheets, consent forms, and research instruments, where appropriate, have been directly translated from the English versions submitted with this application.		✓		
14a. Does the proposed research involve children under the age of 5?				✓
14b. If the answer to question 14a is "yes": My Head of School (or authorised Head of Department) has given details of the proposed research to the University's insurance officer, and the research will not proceed until I have confirmation that insurance cover is in place.				
If you have answered YES to Question 3, please complete Section B below				

Please complete **either** Section A **or** Section B and provide the details required in support of your application. Sign the form (Section C) then submit it with all relevant attachments (e.g. information sheets, consent forms, tests, questionnaires, interview schedules) to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration. Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.

A: My research goes beyond the 'accepted custom and practice of teaching' but I consider that this project has no significant ethical implications. (Please tick the box.)	✓
Please state the total number of participants that will be involved in the project and give a breakdown of how many there are in each category e.g. teachers, parents, pupils etc.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey: Approx. 225 mentees and 165 mentors. Semi-structured interviews: between 6 and 10 mentors and between 6 and 10 mentees. 	
Give a brief description of the aims and the methods (participants, instruments and procedures) of the project in up to 200 words noting:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. title of project 2. purpose of project and its academic rationale 3. brief description of methods and measurements 4. participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria 5. consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing (attach forms where necessary) 6. a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with them. 7. estimated start date and duration of project 	
Career Mentoring of undergraduates by university alumni: do socially diversified dyads produce different outcomes, and if so why?	
Purpose and academic rationale	
This research will develop our understanding of whether undergraduates from different socio-economic backgrounds experience and benefit from alumni career mentoring schemes in the same way. If not, knowing why may enable steps to be taken to rectify or improve equity in a Higher Education environment increasingly focused on equity.	
Methods and measurements	
This mixed methods research project will:	

¹ Sensitive personal data consists of information relating to the racial or ethnic origin of a data subject, their political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, sexual life, physical or mental health or condition, or criminal offences or record.

C: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:

Note: a signature is required. Typed names are not acceptable.

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm that ethical good practice will be followed within the project.

 Recoverable Signature

X Tania Lyden

Tania Lyden
Postgraduate Researcher
Signed by: Tania Lyden

X

Dr C L Fuller
Associate Professor of Education

X

Prof. A Kempe
Ethics Committee

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE ETHICS COMMITTEE

This project has been agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed: .. Print Name... DR KAREN JONES Date... 9/1/20
(IoE Research Ethics Committee representative)*

* A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which students/investigators must themselves have for these matters. Approval is granted on the basis of the information declared by the applicant.

Appendix H

Survey Participant Briefing Note

Researcher: Ms Tania Lyden

Supervisor: Dr Carol Fuller

Research Project: Do all students experience and benefit from alumni career mentoring in the same way?

Survey Participant Information Web Page

What is the project and why take part? This research project will explore whether or not mentees involved in the {scheme name} Career Mentoring Scheme all benefit equally from, and experience mentoring processes in, the same way. Career mentoring has the capacity to provide students with many of the tools they need to fulfil their career potential, so exploring whether such schemes achieve their goals, for all types of mentees, is key. As a research participant you will gain further insights into mentor/mentee interactions, potentially help improve this and similar schemes and contribute towards enabling the researcher, to achieve a Doctorate. Participants will need to complete the sign up form and a follow up evaluation questionnaire as part of the scheme anyway, so sharing your responses with the researcher will not take up any more of your time, however, each form/questionnaire should take no more than 15-20 minutes.

Why have I been chosen and do I have to take part?

You have been chosen to take part because you are a mentor or mentee in the 2016/17 {scheme name} Career Mentoring scheme. Mentees or mentors (and their respective partners) who have declared a disability or mental health condition that typically may impact upon mentoring benefits and/or interaction will not be included as the data may add an additional level of complexity to the research. The research questions are included in the online sign up form and evaluation survey in the hope that as many eligible {scheme name} mentors and mentees agree to share their responses with the researcher. From those agreeing to share their responses a sample will be taken that ensure the range of social backgrounds of mentor and mentee pairings and different levels of engagement are represented.

If you are selected to take part in the research your data will be held, handled and reported on anonymously by giving it a unique number. Only the scheme organisers will hold, and have access to the confidential list of participant names and numbers, unless you have specifically given permission to share your name/contact details so that the researcher can contact you directly. All data will be held and handled securely as stipulated in the Data Protection Act 1998. We will be asking you for some private, demographic data which are vital to this research. Participant data held by the researcher will be on password protected systems and encrypted files only accessible to the researcher and will be held, as is typically the case, for five years after completion of the PhD and then securely destroyed.

Taking part in the research project is optional and will in no way impact on your experience of the mentoring scheme if you decide not to take part. You can indicate your willingness to take part at the appropriate question in the online {scheme name} sign up form. If you no longer wish to participate in the research project you are entitled to withdraw at any time by emailing . Please note that withdrawal from taking part in the research is not the same as withdrawing from being a mentor or mentee in {scheme name}. If you withdraw from the research, the data held by the researcher will be disposed of confidentially but your data will continue to be held by those running the {scheme name} Scheme as per their data management policy.

What will happen if I take part?

If you decide to take part you will be agreeing to release the data from the sign up form, and the follow up survey data in autumn 2017, to the researcher. These questions will ask about your expectations, experiences and outcomes of the scheme and about your relationships with your mentor/mentee. Once you have completed the surveys, you will be offered an optional telephone debrief regarding the research taking place. Also, in the first survey, you can confirm whether you would like to receive a copy of the anonymously reported research results, when they are complete.

Who has reviewed the study?

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurance in place. Full details are available on request.

Should any problems arise during this research you can contact the project supervisor Dr Carol Fuller. Further information about this research project is available from the researcher Tania Lyden who can answer any questions you may have.

Signed: *Tania Lyden*

Name: Tania Lyden (Researcher)

Appendix I

Interview Participant Briefing Note and Consent Form

Research project: Do all students experience and benefit from alumni career mentoring in the same way?

Researcher: Mrs Tania Lyden

Supervisor: Dr Carol Fuller

Interview participant consent form

What is the project and why take part?

This research project will explore whether or not mentees involved in the Career Mentoring Scheme all benefit equally from and experience mentoring processes in the same way. Career mentoring has the capacity to provide students with many of the tools they need to fulfil their career potential, so exploring whether such schemes achieve their goals, for all types of mentees, is key. As a research participant, taking part in a face-to-face interview, you will gain further insights into your interactions with your mentor/mentee, potentially help to improve this and similar schemes and contribute towards enabling Tania Lyden, to achieve a Doctorate. Interviewees will, however, need to spare approximately 45 minutes to one hour to be interviewed, which can take place on the {name of university and location} or at your workplace or agreed public location, whichever is most convenient. Unfortunately there are no expenses paid, although tea/coffee will be provided.

Why have I been chosen and do I have to take part?

You have been to take part because you are a mentor or mentee in the 2016/17 Career Mentoring scheme. Mentees or mentors (and their respective partners) who have declared a disability or mental health condition that typically may impact upon mentoring benefits and/or interaction are not included as the data may add an unhelpful level of complexity to the research. From those agreeing to be interviewed, a sample will be taken to ensure that the range of social backgrounds and different levels of engagement are represented.

If you are selected to take part in the research your interview will be recorded using a Dictaphone and then transcribed. Your data will be held, handled and reported on anonymously by giving it a unique number and in the research write up, a false name/identifier. Only the scheme organisers will hold and have access to the confidential list of participant real names and numbers. All data will be held and handled securely as stipulated in the Data Protection Act 1998. Participant data held by the researcher will be on password protected systems and encrypted files only accessible to the researcher and will be held, as is typically the case, for five years after completion of the PhD and then securely destroyed.

Taking part in the research project is optional and you will have indicated your decision in the sign up survey. If you no longer wish to participate in the research project you are

entitled to withdraw at any time by emailing . Please note that withdrawal from taking part in the research is not the same as withdrawing from being a mentor or mentee in {name of scheme}. If you withdraw from the research, the data held by the researcher will be disposed of confidentially but your data will continue to be held by those running the Scheme as per their data management policy.

What will happen if I take part?

If you decide to take part you will be agreeing to a face-to-face, one-to-one interview between the beginning of December 2017 and the end of March/April 2018 with Tania Lyden, the researcher. Before this takes place you will be asked to complete a written consent form and given a copy of this information sheet. Once you have been interviewed, you will be offered an optional debrief regarding the research taking place. Also, you can confirm whether you would like to receive a copy of the transcript of your interview and/or the anonymously reported research results, when they are complete.

Who has reviewed the study?

This project has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct. The University has the appropriate insurance in place. Full details are available on request.

Should any problems arise during the research you can contact the project supervisor Dr Carol Fuller. Further information about this research project is available from the researcher Tania Lyden who can answer any questions you may have.

Signed: *Tania Lyden*

Name: Tania Lyden (Researcher)

Interview Participant Consent:

I have read the interview participant information above and have had the opportunity to ask Tania Lyden any questions and to have any detail explained to me regarding this project. This information has provided me with an explanation of the purposes of the research project and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to the arrangements described on the interview information sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the project at any time, without giving a reason and without repercussions.

I acknowledge that I have been given a copy of this consent response and the accompanying interview participant information sheet by the researcher.

I consent to being interviewed (Please tick):	YES	NO
I consent to my interview being audio recorded (Please tick):	YES	NO
I confirm that any questions I have asked have been answered satisfactorily (Please tick):	YES	NO

Participant's signature: _____

Participant's name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix J

Sample Interview Transcript

- Square brackets [] indicate non-verbal cues, emotions or interjections.
- Curly brackets { } denote information removal to protect anonymity.
- I = interviewer, P = participant/interviewee

Mentee 128N Transcript (Page 6 out of 24.)

I: Go and explore and [yeah]. Interesting, ok. How do you think your mentor would describe you?

P: I think it would describe me as a, as a bit unpredictable at times [oh]. He probably didn't know what he was letting himself in for. I think he'd definitely say hard-working, the same attribute that my friends would say. But I think you would say I'm predictable in the sense that we could be trying to work on one thing and then all of a sudden I would divert, and say right I'm going to go to this. So, I guess that's like unpredictability that you don't quite know what I'm aiming for. And I think also probably a confidence thing, because going into, cos of course, we'd go and look at my cover letters or practice some interview stuff and I would just sort of say 'that I'm not going to do it I'm not going to be able to get it' so half of it would be spent building my confidence, the other half would be actually practicing and stuff, so...

I: Ok, so they would say, so when you say 'you said I'm unpredictable' is that...

P: I think not completely unpredictable, more in a sense like that, I think it might be a slightly strong word but I think maybe like, it's a good example you know we were trying to gain work experience placements and then all of a sudden I'd come out and said oh yeah by the way I'm applying for internships and your {name of research scheme} placements and it was complete It was almost like I threw a spanner in the works In that sense. Guess just that slight unpredictability of you don't know I mean {mentor name} would Say 'You're not, never quite sure what you're going to hear from me'. Mmmm. Even to the point where I got rejected originally by {name of research scheme] and internships and he said 'like we'll try and find some work experience placements', I'm just off a week abroad, I'll speak to you when I come back And then all of a sudden it's like I've set up another

interview for an internship. And it was just that you didn't know quite where you were going with me at times. [Yeah]

I: So what caused that do you think?

P: I just think it was, I think money was a motivator because I always have to work over the summer to try to build up my funds. I can't just rely on, I couldn't go a whole summer without getting paid, getting a paid opportunity. I think it's quite hard to sort of do all of the work experience and everything I sort of needed the money to be able to do it [exhibiting mild stress]. It was almost like I wanted to push for professional experience but at the same time get paid for it. So, I guess that was a motivator and also I guess sort of, it just depends on what you are aiming for again. Cause the more I guess I think you begin with hesitation. The more you sort of get into it, the more you want, I guess you want to just get the best out of it possible. [Yeah]. So...

I: It sounds like your trying to almost optimise the experience versus making the money.

P: Yeah.

I: Is that right, you're having to balance the two.

P: Yeah. I have to get a severe balancing act. It's quite tough to be fair but I think I got it perfect by the end but it was...