The lived career experiences of Black and Minoritised Ethnic female academic leaders in higher education at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores the experiences of eight Black and Minoritised Ethnic (BME) women in academic leadership in higher education (HE). Using intersectionality as key and theoretical perspectives that keep race at the centre, this study explores their lived career experiences in HE leadership at the intersections of their multiple identities of race, gender, ethnicity, and social class. Using an intersectional feminist methodology of narrative inquiry and the life history method, the BME women participated by completing an adapted career grid and two semi-structured interviews. Through these, they told stories of their lived career experiences that identified challenges and sources of personal and professional support to help them overcome and navigate their leadership journey. The findings of the study show that structural inequalities cause workplace racial inequality, discrimination, and marginalisation for BME women because of their intersecting multiple identities. Institutional racism encompassing white privilege renders them invisible as leaders and discriminatory racial microaggressions cause distress. Despite the challenges encountered, BME women want to engage with academic leadership and draw on their personal identity, social, ethnic and cultural capitals to enact their leadership practice. Furthermore, they add to their professional, resistant and navigational capitals through the acquisition of professional and institutional resources and sources of support. Acculturation, bicultural competence, white sanction, and the accumulation of social capital were strategies adopted to enable them to fit into the organisation and navigate institutional racism and intersectionality between races. Their leadership practice has a critical race perspective which is influenced by their personal values and their lived experiences. It is ethical, relational, and has a focus on social justice. Implications for institutional policy, practice, and research in educational: leadership, management, human resources, and research are discussed and suggested.

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Together, we will continue to raise consciousness and when required become hell raisers too, for the promotion of social justice in higher education.

Chapter 1: Introduction to the research study

1.0 Introduction

This chapter contextualises my research study in relation to current public discourse about structural inequality and discrimination, outlines its relevance to my personal and professional identity and my interest in this arena of social justice, and highlights the under-representation of Black and Minoritised Ethnic (BME) women as academic leaders in Higher Education (HE).

An overview of the research study is presented with chapter content outlined to show progression. Furthermore, key terms are explained, including the rationale for the use of the term BME within this study and why I have chosen to prioritise the multiple identities as race, gender, ethnicity, and social class.

1.1 Contextualising my research study

This research study is located within the socio-political and historical times of the first two decades of the 21st century and seeks to understand the experiences of an underrepresented group of Black and Minoritised Ethnic (BME) women as academic leaders in Higher Education (HE), where BME is a UK specific term for minoritised ethnic groups (Stockfelt, 2017: 4). Using an intersectional lens with race at the centre, I wanted to examine the lived career experiences of BME female academic leaders at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class.

My interest appears perfectly timed, within the context of the wider public discourse relating to the Windrush scandal, Black Lives Matter (BLM), the Covid-19 pandemic and publication of the Report from the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (2021). Participant interviews were conducted during Windrush and BLM which is significant in relation to their thinking at the time.

Despite calls from various #Decolonise and #Must fall movements, key performance measures outlined by the Office for Students, the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) inquiry into racial harassment in public funded universities in the UK (2020) and the Advance HE Race Equality Charter (REC) mark, racial

inequality has been normalised and embedded into the fabric and processes of UK universities (Thomas and Wilson, 2020).

Prior to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry (1999) very little attention was paid to race and ethnicity in relation to HE in the UK (Pilkington, 2011). Universities remained relatively insulated and detached with regards to challenging racism and promoting ethnic and cultural diversity until the advent of the Labour government in 1997 and the subsequent publication of the Macpherson report (Law, 2003:519). It gave renewed impetus to equality initiatives and the limitations of equality policies in generating cultural change and combating racial disadvantage.

The middle of the first decade of the new millennium, 2005, under a Labour government (1997-2010), represented the universities' high point in terms of addressing race equality. Since then, external pressure from government has inevitably declined (Fieldman, 2012). Although governments continue to speak of race and gender equality, and ethnic diversity, other government agendas prompted by concerns over increasing net migration, disorder and acts of terrorism subsequently marginalised one concerned with race equality. This is evident in relation to the way new legislation introduced by the Labour government in 2010 has been subsequently implemented (Pilkington, 2018). Over time, there has been erosion of the requirements embodied in legislation (Equality Act, 2010) for an equality action plan. Equality impact assessments have been replaced by guidance, to publish limited data and set one or more objectives. At the same time, the red tape challenge, and the significant cut in funding to the EHRC, signal that equality is sliding down the government's agenda (Pilkington, 2018: 34).

The most important recent policy development regarding race equity is the Race Equality Charter (Advance HE, 2017) with its focus on improving representation, progress and success of minority ethnic staff and students in HE. Yet, the evidence shows that the majority of universities in the UK are actively choosing not to engage with the REC or have developed their own strategies for addressing racism (Thomas and Wilson, 2020).

Alongside this, over the past 15 years, we have witnessed a revolution in the marketisation of the knowledge economy, culminating in the 2017 Higher Education

and Research Act, where universities are expected to behave like business enterprises operating in a highly regulated but competitive commercial marketplace. In the commodified global industry of HE, the challenge for our HE institutions is to move beyond the entrenched equalities discourse, where institutional diversity is seen as good business sense achieved through targeting BME staff and students to get them into the institution. This complete neoliberal transformation of the Academy has huge implications for BME students and academic and professional services staff, given the already exclusionary racist institutional practices that remain at the sector's core. In this 'brave new world' of profit and privilege, brutal metrics of both the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) cause BME early career academics to find themselves in a position where they are increasingly casualised, deskilled and disposable (Mirza, 2018: 21).

Contextualising this research further in contemporary times, the Covid-19 pandemic has drawn our attention to the structural inequalities faced by BME communities, which include poor socio-economic environments, poor housing, precarious employment, financial disadvantage and racism. The unsurprising consequence of the pandemic has seemingly accentuated inequalities that are already present in society. The disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on the lives of BME people is an ordinary consequence of our welfare state and of the priorities that inform the provision of healthcare, employment and education. Bhopal (2020) argues that this is no accident, but rather an extension of the perpetuation of structural and institutional racism in our society.

However, more recently, the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (2021) released their highly controversial findings. Covered widely in the national media, the Commission's final report has been widely criticised by campaigners and anti-racist organisations such as Black Lives Matter UK, the Race Equality Foundation, and the Runnymede Trust (2021). The report concluded that structural and systemic racism does not exist within the UK, and although the UK is not yet a post-racial country, its success in removing race-based disparity in education and, to a lesser extent, the economy, should be regarded as a 'beacon to the rest of Europe and the world' (Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021).

It is against this background of structural inequality and discrimination that I developed my research interest in the experiences of BME female leaders at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class, which relates to my professional work within HE.

1.1.2 Personal and professional context

My personal and professional experiences as a BME Asian–Indian female leader within HE, with a keen interest in social justice and awareness of the under-representation of BME women in academic leadership in HE, has further increased my interest.

I wanted the knowledge and insights generated, to add to the body of knowledge of influence of intersecting multiple identities in academic leadership; inform my own leadership practice; and provide insight and encouragement to other BME women aspiring to academic leadership. I anticipate that my research will contribute to discussion, debate and action on equity and social justice, for those within organisational resource management and educational leadership and research within HE.

Furthermore, my interest in this area has been shaped by my own leadership experiences as an Associate Pro Vice Chancellor and Executive Dean, within three post-1992 universities in London. I identify as Asian, female, Indian, nurse, senior academic, of middle-class origin. I have questioned my own progression in academic leadership in relation to my multiple identities of race, gender, ethnicity and social class and am unsure about to the extent to which my multiple identities influence the perceptions of the students and staff I work with. I know my Indian background and upbringing, which includes my schooling and education, have influenced the way I present in my professional life and leadership, and coupled with my British use of English continue to influence my personal relationships. The above personal context is what gave me the impetus to question and commit to exploring this further through the medium of my research study. Furthermore, I am aware of BME female colleagues who perceive that the intersection of their race, gender, ethnicity and social class has disadvantaged their progression in academic leadership.

I anticipated that this exploratory study, the reflexive nature of this research and the insider position that I chose to adopt would give me enhanced understanding of the lived career experiences of BME women in academic leadership, including the challenges faced and how these are navigated. This understanding also had the further potential to allow me to support and encourage other BME women who aspired to academic leadership, whilst becoming a voice for social equity and justice, both locally and in the wider arena of HE.

1.2 The current gap in academic leadership in HE

The under-representation of BME women in positions of academic leadership within HE shows a policy–practice divide in relation to equality and diversity within universities (Arday and Mirza, 2018). There is a gap between the rhetoric of promoting diversity and inclusion and the reality of practice. This is reflected in positions of power in universities across the UK, where out of 130 vice-chancellors (VC) in the UK, we have two BME male VCs and two BME female leaders (ECU, 2017). The picture is dismal further down the management chain. Of full professors in the UK, 66.3% are white male; 7.7% are BME male; 23.6% are white female; and 2.4% are BME female.

Furthermore, the 2.4% of female BME professors equates to 345 British BME women of whom 30 are Black British, 10 British Pakistani and 5 British Bangladeshi, with those of British Indian and British Chinese heritage topping the race to the bottom at 80 and 75 respectively (Advance HE, 2019). The remaining BME women (from the 345 above) are from other ethnic backgrounds. This appears to show little positive change from previous years, for example, 2.1% female BME professors in 2017 (Advance HE, 2017).

The literature shows a body of knowledge in relation to structural inequalities, in which oppressions associated with the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class continue to affect the progression of BME female academics into leadership roles in HE institutions (Arday and Mirza, 2018).

However, I approached this research study with optimism that we are striving for change through the continuing focus on and practise of social justice in HE. My research study attempts to contribute to the slowly amassing body of knowledge that

builds an evidence base relating to the under representation of BME women and advocates for social justice, diversity and action in HE.

1.3 Overview of the research study

I explore the lived career experiences of eight BME women in academic leadership at the intersections of multiple identities of race, gender, ethnicity and social class to include challenges they faced and how they negotiated these to navigate their leadership practice. The context of this study and review of the literatures helped me formulate the overarching research question and sub-questions required to support the aim of the study as follows:

Research question

What are the experiences for BME female leaders in HE at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class?

Sub-questions

1. How do race, gender, ethnicity and social class intersect to shape BME women's leadership?
2. What do BME women perceive to be the challenges and resources/sources of support in their career?
3. How do BME women perceive their career histories in relation to their role of academic leadership within HE?
4. How do BME women negotiate the challenges they face to develop professional relationships within their team(s) in HE?

The research study is supported by a theoretical framework, discussed in Chapter 2, that keeps race at the centre and intersectionality as key. It explains the overlapping categories of race, gender, ethnicity and social class, which result in discrimination and exclusions for the individual, because of race and gender or any other combination (Crenshaw, 1991) which relates to the career experiences of the participants in this study. Furthermore, I draw upon Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017), Black Feminism (BF) (Collins, 2000), Black British Feminism (BBF) (Mirza,

2009) and Postcolonial Feminism (PF) (Mirza, 2009) as theoretical perspectives that keep race at the centre. These have influenced my review of selected literature; the methodology and design of the research project; and my analysis and interpretation of the data. In addition, identity is theorised (Hall, 2000) and culture discussed in relation to ethnicity (Shah, 2010) and class (Yosso, 2005), which influence experiences for the women in this study.

Chapter 3 reviews the literature in relation to the experiences for BME female leaders in HE, at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class.

The literature review shows structural inequalities cause racial inequality, marginalisation and discrimination for BME women (Ahmed, 2007, 2009; Mirza, 2016) and institutional racism, which encompasses white privilege and racial micro-aggression as disadvantageous to BME women in academic leadership (Arday and Mirza, 2018; Rollock, 2018; Eddo-lodge, 2018). This contradicts equality and diversity policies and processes in HE (Mirza, 2018). Despite these challenges, the literatures highlight that BME women are enabled by personal influences and professional sources of support, which they use to negotiate and navigate their leadership journey and practice. Educational leadership perspectives are analysed, which show personal identity being used in leadership practice (Shields, 2010; Ncube, 2010; Horsford, 2012; Santamaria and Santamaria, 2012, 2016).

The methodology and design in Chapter 4 is underpinned by an intersectional lens and theoretical perspectives which keep race at the centre. The qualitative feminist methodology is framed as a narrative inquiry using the life-history method to conduct the research study with eight BME women leaders (Appendix 1). The data were generated from an adapted career grid (Appendix 2) and two sets of face-to-face, semi- structured interviews (Appendix 3) which allowed the participants to share their experiences of what it means to be a BME female academic leader in HE. The data were analysed using thematic analysis which included generating initial codes and searching for emerging themes through a comprehensive, inclusive and iterative process (Barun and Clarke, 2006).

The findings are presented and discussed in Chapter 5. There is a focus on the three key themes that emerge from the analysis of the narratives obtained, which are:

Key Theme One: BME female academic leaders and intersecting identities of race, gender, ethnicity and social class

Key Theme Two: Becoming a leader

Key Theme Three: Doing leadership

The key themes are further divided into six sub-themes which structure the analysis and discussion.

Chapter 6 concludes the research study and summarises the findings in relation to the overarching research question and the sub-questions used to elicit the data. It identifies new and incremental knowledge gained that contributes to the field alongside the implications for policy, practice and future research. Furthermore, it includes a critical evaluation of my professional learning gained from doing this research study.

1.4 Key terms used in this research study

To support my thesis and engage the reader, the key terms used in my research are explained below. These include:

Black and Minoritised Ethnic (BME), Race, Gender, Ethnicity, Social Class and Academic Leader.

I have chosen to prioritise multiple identities in this study as they relate to race, gender, ethnicity and social class. As is evident in the transcribed interviews, this is the hierarchy that my participants used to discuss their experiences at the intersections of their multiple identities. Most scholarly readings that I engaged with refer to race and gender first, for example, Black woman (Rollock, 2002; Brah and Phoenix, 2004; Ahmed, 2007; Mirza, 2018;) before they speak of ethnicity or any other identity. Hence, the rationale for the prioritisation is evident in this research study.

(i) Black and Minoritised Ethnic (BME)

A wide range of terminology is used, often interchangeably, to describe the minority ethnic group as members of a whole population. The term 'Black' has engendered much discussion about its meaning, appropriateness and consequences of its usage and has been a contested term (Maylor, 2009). It has at times been used to identify those who experience structural and institutional discrimination because of their skin colour, namely people from African, African Caribbean and South Asian origin (Maylor, ibid; Mirza, 1997). However, it is felt it has become imprecise when used as a collective term for different groups perceived to share common ethnic attributes (Maylor, 2009:370). Its use has been further questioned in research, in relation to its meaning, appropriateness and consequences of its usage. Aspinall (2002) claims that the category 'Black', while having a precise meaning for individuals as a self-identifier, becomes imprecise when 'used as a collective term for groups perceived to share some common ethnic attributes' (ibid: 810). He maintains that when black is employed as term of self-identity, it sets it apart from the collective meaning of the term to encompass all minority ethnic groups (ibid).

Likewise, Black and Minoritised Ethnic (BME) as a generic term includes African, African Caribbean, those from the Indian sub-continent, Chinese and Vietnamese, acknowledging that members of such groups may not share such feelings of solidarity and consequently, even oppose the use of the term for themselves (Lander, 2014).

The terms 'ethnic minority' or 'minority ethnic' have always been contentious and are increasingly being contested as irrelevant or at least inaccurate in describing these groups (Campbell-Stephens, 2009: 353). This has become even more significant in the current Covid-19 pandemic, with a call to change this to 'people of colour'. This is because it is seen to encompass a number of dimensions, which serve to contribute to the whole notion of what is meant by ethnicity. In short, ethnicity encompasses common elements which people use to differentiate themselves into a particular group (Lander, 2014: 49). Within the UK, Mason (2000) argues that the term is understood to refer to 'visible' minority groups rather than ethnic minority groups as a whole, hence, ignoring significant communities who have their own cultural traditions for example, Indian, Pakistani, Polish, etc. The Race Disparity Unit (Bunglawala,

2019) emphasises the many different ways to refer to people from ethnic minorities. It also acknowledges that the term ‘minority ethnic’ does not include white ethnic minorities such as Roma, Gypsy and Travellers of Irish heritage. Furthermore, the recent Report from the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (2021) recommends the disaggregation of the term Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) so as to better focus on understanding disparities and outcomes for specific ethnic groups.

‘Minority ethnic’ is sometimes used in its place as its grammatical construction more accurately conveys the idea that ethnicity is something we all possess. However, it is mainly used to refer to visible minority ethnic groups (Kenny and Briner, 2010: 3).

My thesis recognises that the experiences of BME people is not homogenous and varies according to ethnicity and subcultures. However, in this study the term BME is used to refer to women who are of African, African-Caribbean or Asian descent and I have chosen to use this term, rather than minority ethnic, throughout, to acknowledge some of the contentions above. It is also a term all my participants and myself were comfortable with, despite the tensions inherent within it.

Whilst the term might be politically open to critique, most scholarly readings in the review of the literature I have undertaken use the term BME when discussing their research (for example, Mirza, 2009; Showumni et al, 2016). Some scholars may also refer to their sample in other terms, for example, women with postcolonial histories (Mirza, 2009) or brown (Ahmed, 2009), however, the term BME appears to be one that is still frequently used.

Importantly, all the women in my sample, as seen in the transcribed interviews, self-identified at the outset as a Black woman or as a BME woman, rather than any other identity in relation to race. I too comfortably identify as a BME woman hence, I have purposefully chosen to use the term BME in this research study.

(ii) Race and Ethnicity

It is suggested that you do not come into this world African or Asian or European, this world comes into you, and you are not born with race in the same way you are born with fingers, eyes and hair. Fingers and hair are natural features, whereas race is a social fabrication (Gillborn, 2008). Race is a system of socially constructed and enforced categories that are constantly recreated and modified through human interaction, and it is highly problematic because of its association with a person's skin colour and the meanings that people attach to colour or physical characteristics as they go about their everyday lives (Gillborn, 2008). Scholars have approached the definition of race in a critical way as it differently affects the life chances of differently racialised people. It is still being used politically and socially as a construct and remains a popular term (Ramji, 2009).

However, it is important to reflect on the terms of race and ethnicity as they are often used synonymously. Ethnicity is seen as a social, political or cultural construct, a product of socially negotiated definitions or socio-political processes, rather than a natural categorisation of biological ancestry and/or socio-cultural practice (Smart et al, 2008). It is a key part of an individual's identity, and the term ethnicity is often used to denote populations who have common ancestry, common 'cultural heritage' and who are considered by others to be from the same or similar grouping (Kenny and Briner, 2010:3).

Race intersecting with ethnicity is important to this study to enable understanding of the influence of these identities on the career experiences of BME female academic leaders in HE.

(iii) Gender

The assumption that biology produces two categories of different people, 'females' and 'males', and that it is inevitable that societies will be divided along the lines of the two categories, is a popular 20th-century construct (Bell and Nkomo, 2001). Gender is described as a social construction with 'rules', which originate in cultural messages of appropriate behaviour for women and men, and that those rules do not inhere in nature. That is, they do not originate from within our bodies, but they are generated and mandated by social participation (Lorber, 2000:92).

While race, social class and sexual divisions have been significantly challenged, the belief that gender divisions are bred into our genes is still an underlying frame for modern social life. Most people find it hard to believe that gender is constantly created and recreated out of human interaction, out of social life, and is the texture and order of that social life (Lorber, 2000).

An understanding of how gender is constructed and perceived may help to explain to what extent the BME women leaders in this study ascribe to the social order constructs that hold individuals to strongly gendered norms, and if this has impacted on their career journeys into leadership. Whilst there is an increasing recognition of trans and non-binary genders, each research participant identified as a woman.

(iv) Social Class

Social class can be defined as 'an individual's rank vis-à-vis others in society in terms of wealth, occupational prestige and education, and characterise upper class individuals as having abundant resources and elevated rank' (Piff et al, 2014:32). This definition contains two primary bases of hierarchical rank, power and status. Where power has asymmetrical control over resources in social relationships, status is respect and admiration in the eyes of others (Magee and Galinsky, 2008). Thus, social class is also a fundamental means by which individuals are ranked on the social ladder of society. Being at the top (or bottom) of the social hierarchy shapes manners, tastes for arts, music and culture. It influences the social and economic opportunities people have across their lives and even the length of life itself (Race and Lander, 2014).

The literature suggests that little is known about the views, values and identities of the minority ethnic middle classes in Britain (Archer, 2011). Black middle-class identifiers tended to accept the label of middle class by making factual reference to income, size of their home, occupation, hobbies and pastimes. However, for those who were 'middle class ambivalent', this was attributed to the context of the relative newness of the Black middle classes and working-class trajectories, alongside ongoing experiences of racism within a society that privileges and gives legitimacy to a dominant white, middle-class norm (Rollock et al, 2012:259).

Studying the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class will help understand the leadership experiences of the BME women in this study and how they influence their progression in the institution.

(v) Academic Leader

The concept of management has been joined or superseded by the language of leadership, but the activities undertaken by senior staff in contemporary practice resist such labels. The term ‘academic leader’ within the arena of HE refers to a member of the University’s senior team who may hold a senior academic position such as Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Pro Vice Chancellor, Associate Pro Vice Chancellor, Dean, Head of School or Professor. From personal and professional experience, an academic leader is formally appointed to a senior academic leadership team and will typically work together with members of the senior management group to create and drive the institutional vision, goals, values, policies and processes, which influence and affect all the activities undertaken within an education institution.

1.5 Chapter summary

This chapter contextualises the research study and offers explanation for its purpose and direction. It argues for the significance of this research in contemporary higher education where the under representation of BME female academic leaders is apparent. The research process that has been undertaken is signposted though an outline of the various chapters that make up the thesis. Furthermore, the chapter clarifies the use of relevant terminology within this research study with rationales for their use, so as to support the understanding and engagement of the reader.

The next chapter describes and discusses the theoretical framework used to support this research study.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

2.0 Introduction to the theoretical framework

The following chapter explicates the theoretical framework that underpins my research study, which seeks to understand the lived experiences of the career journeys of Black and Minoritised Ethnic (BME) female academic leaders in Higher Education (HE) at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class.

I have used Intersectionality as a theoretical lens to help frame and understand their experiences and draw upon the theoretical perspectives within critical race theory (CRT); Black feminism (BF); postcolonial feminism (PF); and Black British feminism (BBF) which keep race at the centre and in which intersectionality is a key concept. These theoretical perspectives help demonstrate the significance of the intersection of multiple identities, whose overlap and interaction with race help explain the lived career experiences of BME women leaders in HE.

The theoretical framework has informed my reading of the literatures, underpinning methodology, and informed the research design, analysis and interpretation of the findings in this research study.

I begin by explaining how Intersectionality Theory has developed.

2.1 Intersectionality Theory

Intersectionality, as a concept, derives from the activists' critiques of Black women in the USA and UK made popular in the 1970s and '80s, about overtly homogenous political discourse in which 'all women are white, and all the blacks are men' (Brah and Phoenix, 2004: 75).

The term Intersectionality, emphasising structural intersections of inequalities as adding, multiplying and reinforcing particular hierarchies in specific locations, was coined by Crenshaw (1991) from her interests in the lived experiences of African American women.

When Crenshaw (1991) coined the term, she described the ways in which nobody is ever located in just one category and that the overlapping categories of discrimination cause individuals to suffer exclusion on the basis of the intersection of race and gender, or any other combinations, for example, ethnicity and social class, which are included in my study. According to this approach, the unity of two or more minority or marginalised traits constitutes a distinct single-minority entity, giving rise to unique forms of position and disadvantage that can neither be accounted for by race or gender alone, nor by adding one to the other. This is supported by Ali et al (2010:650), 'we are all always multiply located and the different categories to which we belong de-centre each other, but always operate together, so that no one is ever one gender position, one racialised position and so on'.

This theorisation has been very influential, leading to an interest in the production of data for policy research and practice, which recognises the specificity of the discrimination experienced by racialised women, who have suffered from intersectional invisibility (Crenshaw, 1991, 2000). The four identities of intersectionality identified for this research study include race, gender, ethnicity and social class, because BME women's multiple identities cannot be understood singularly, but must be conceptualised in relation to all these other identities. The rationale for focusing on these four identities and how they intersect to explore BME women's experiences of academic leadership is explained below.

Phoenix and Pattynama (2006) explain that the concept of intersectionality, which aims to reveal the importance of the multiple identities of Black and minoritised women, provides a complex ontology of really useful knowledge, signalling a move away from the additive models of double or triple jeopardy and from the hierarchies of multiple, additive social positions and identities. The original debate claimed that Black women suffered from three different oppressions, namely as Black people, women and members of the working class. In her view, Yuval-Davis (2006: 195) states the main objection to triple oppression was because there was no such thing as suffering from oppression 'as Black', 'as a woman', 'as a working-class person'. Each social division has a different ontological basis, which is irreducible to other social divisions. Thus, multiple identities intersect with each other to influence lived experiences (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Furthermore, the intersections of race, gender and social class can be conceptualised as simultaneous processes of identity and institutional and social practice, and this can support new theory making, research and practice, especially in the study of organisations (Holvino, 2010). Whilst additive models still exist, intersectionality theory signals a shift away from these models. Indeed, 'intersectionality as a concept signifies how the complex, irreducible, varied, and variable effects ensue, when multiple axes of differentiation, such as economic, political, cultural, social, experiential, intersect in historically specific contexts' (Brah and Phoenix, 2004: 76). This is particularly significant given the timing of this research study and the public discourse surrounding Windrush, the EU referendum and the Black Lives Matter movement. My participants were interviewed during the period of these discourses.

Intersectionality also allows for addressing race across races (Capper, 2015). Exploring CRT in educational leadership, Capper (ibid: 819) defines intersectionality based on the extent to which scholars address race across races and the extent to which scholars address racism as part of a project of addressing social justice across differences (Solórzano,1998), i.e., a CRT scholar cannot address the intersectionality of race with other identities if other identities, in addition to race and across races, are not acknowledged. The intersectionality between races is an important consideration in this study that focuses on women from different minoritised ethnic groups.

The scholarly work on intersectionality that I have reviewed reassures me that there are many women in educational leadership all over the globe very much engaged in the antiracist, antisexist, postcolonial struggle for equity and social justice in the world. Intersectionality has been key to the focus of my research and has informed the methodology and design of this research study to elicit the narratives, which help to understand the career experiences in relation to academic leadership for the BME women in this study.

Theoretical perspectives relating to CRT, BF, PF and BBF are discussed next, with intersectionality theory being key to each of these. Together with identity theory and culture as a social construct, they form the overall theoretical framework.

2.2 Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) is advocated for use when research is based on race and gender outside of the white male experience and is seen as enabling to go beyond the individual level to examine racial discrimination, inequality and racism in our society (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017).

CRT, which originated in critical legal studies in the US, is concerned with racism, discrimination and racial subordination and is associated with the writings of Derrick Bell in the 1960s. It provides a framework for contextualising the epistemological world view of a group of people that have experienced racism, discrimination and marginalisation (Ladson-Billings, 2000). Other critical race scholars have since emerged who highlight the socially constructed nature of race, racism and its intersections with other forms of oppression (Crenshaw, 2000; Delgado and Stefancic, 2017).

Intersectionality is considered a key tenet of CRT developed from a particular legacy of racism in the US as a result of institutionalised slavery (Fuller, in press) and highlights the interconnection of race and gender and demonstrates a multifaced connection between race, gender, class and other systems that work together to oppress while allowing privilege.

CRT explains other forms of subordination, especially given the social construction of race, gender and class. Overall, CRT contends that people occupying the highest levels of multiple social categories disproportionately enjoy power, privilege and wealth. As such, CRT not only provides a counterargument to racism, but also challenges any other forms of oppression in society.

Through the five components of CRT briefly discussed below, i.e., counter-storytelling; permanence of racism; whiteness as a property; interest convergence; and critique of liberalism, the experience of those who have been minoritised is validated, and researchers can authentically explore the effects of racism, sexism and class from their perspective (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017).

‘**Counter-storytelling’** is an essential tenet of CRT. It is defined as a method of narration that ‘aims to cast doubt on the validity of accepted premises or myths,

especially ones held by the majority' (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017: 41). This allows privileged discourses, discourses of the majority, to be challenged, thus, giving voice to marginalised groups

One of the basic premises of CRT is the notion of '**the permanence of racism'** in society, where 'racism is a permanent component of American life and plays a dominant role in American society' (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017: 43). This requires a realisation that racist hierarchical structures govern all political, social and economic domains, which allow whites privileges, to the disadvantage of others in all arenas of life.

Patton et al (2015: 287) argue that due to the history of race and racism the notion of '**Whiteness can be considered as a property interest'**. Property functions on three levels: the right of possession; the right to use; and the right to the disposal of. Furthermore, the right to transfer; the right of use and enjoyment; and the right of exclusion are essential attributes associated with property. The author suggests that these attributes and functions of property historically have been deployed in the service of establishing whiteness as a form of property.

An interpretation of '**Interest Convergence'** within the context of CRT means that early civil rights legislation provided only the basic rights for African Americans, rights that had been enjoyed by whites for centuries. Furthermore, these very basic rights came only in as much as they converged with the self-interests of whites (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017).

The **'critique of liberalism'** is the last tenet of CRT with three basic notions embraced by liberal ideology: colour blindness; neutrality of the law; and incremental change. CRT scholars are critical of these notions as the notion of colour blindness fails to take into consideration the persistence and permanence of racism and the construction of people of colour as 'other'. Difference in the colour-blind discourse almost always refers to people of colour because being white is considered 'normal'. Under the notion of incremental change, gains for marginalised groups comes at a slow pace determined by and palatable for those in power. In this discourse, it is equality rather than equity that is sought. The processes, structure and ideologies that justify inequity are not addressed and dismantled. Remedies based on equality assume that all

citizens have the same opportunity and experiences. Race, and experiences based on race, are not equal, thus, the experiences that people of colour have with respect to race and racism create an unequal situation. Incremental change that addresses equality benefits those who are not adversely affected by the social, economic and educational inequity that comes from racism and racist practices.

The CRT framework lends itself to my research methodology, where race is kept at the centre, intersectionality is key as it connects race, gender, class to highlight racial inequality, social inequity and privilege, and where my female participants can share their stories in their own voice, which lends understanding to their potentially complex lives and struggles. CRT allows me to amplify the voices of the BME women in my research study through the narratives that relate to their encounters and experiences at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class, that supported or challenged them along their career journeys in HE. The theoretical concepts within BF are discussed next, helping to explain race and its intersections with other identities in relation to women of African American origin.

2.3 Black Feminism

Black Feminism (BF) predates intersectionality theory and has its origins in the US. It arose because Black women of African American origin, who were brought over to the US as slaves, saw themselves as an oppressed group. Its overarching purpose was to resist oppressions where Black women must negotiate several identities, and 'as long as Black women's subordination within intersecting oppressions of race, class, gender, sexuality and nation persists, BF as an activist response to those oppressions will remain needed' (Collins, 2000: 41).

Black feminist scholars sought to establish an oppositional critical social theory for political empowerment and social justice (Crenshaw, 1991; Collins, 2000). I use BF as it keeps intersectionality and experiences at the intersections of race, gender and class at the forefront. It highlights where structural inequality at macro and micro levels causes racial inequality and discrimination on a regular basis (Crenshaw, 2000). The relationship between intersectionality and BF has also allowed me to review the literature that uses BF, for this study.

This dialectic of oppression and activism, the tension between the suppression of African American women's ideas and their intellectual activism in the face of that suppression, constitutes the politics of US Black feminism and Black-feminist thought. Like intersectionality, BF addresses the invisibility of Black women where race, gender, ethnicity and social class are constructed separately: in a racial discourse the subject is assumed to be male; in a gendered discussion the subject is assumed to be white; in a class discourse race and gender are not considered.

BF has an Afrocentric feminist epistemology with four central tenets, which I found useful in my research methodology and design (Collins, 2000). Firstly, the '**use of concrete experience as a criterion of meaning'**, with practical images as its symbolic vehicle, is a fundamental epistemological tenet in African American thought systems. Stories, narratives and Bible principles are selected for their applicability to the lived experiences of African Americans and become symbolic of a whole wealth of experience. BF asserts that whilst white women may value lived experience, they cannot feel or explain what it is to be a Black woman and live the lives they have done and continue to do. Moreover, whilst Black men participate in the institutions of Black society, they cannot feel or explain what it is to be a Black woman, they cannot experience the connectedness of Black women, use it as a primary and shared way of knowing (Collins, 2000: 47). This influenced my feminist methodology, which was framed as narrative inquiry and the life history method, to elicit the lived experiences of the career journeys of the BME women in academic leadership in HE.

A primary epistemological assumption underlying **'the use of dialogue in knowledge and in assessing knowledge claims'** is that connectedness rather than separation is an essential component of the knowledge validation process (Collins, 2000:49). This belief in connectedness and the use of dialogue as one of its criteria for methodological adequacy has African roots. Composed of spontaneous verbal and non-verbal interaction between speaker and listener in which all the speaker's statements (calls) are punctuated by expressions (responses) from the listener, this allows for an interactive dialogue. This Black discourse mode pervades African American culture. Black women's centrality in families, churches and other community organisations provides African American women with a high degree of support for invoking dialogue as a dimension of Black feminist epistemology, where

‘women tend to ground their epistemological premises in metaphors suggesting finding a voice, speaking and listening’ (ibid: 50). The adapted career grid and semi-structured interviews to elicit data were designed to enable dialogue and amplify the voices of the BME women in my research study (see Chapter 4).

‘The ethics of caring’ is the third tenet of BF, which suggests that expressiveness, emotions and empathy are central to the knowledge validation process for African American women. There is an emphasis on individual uniqueness; appropriateness of emotions in dialogue; and developing the capacity for empathy to form the interrelated components of the ethics of caring. These reappear in varying combinations throughout Black civil society. Collins (2000) gives a brilliant example of the interactive nature of the importance of dialogue and the ethic of caring in assessing knowledge claims. This is seen in the call and response discourse that occurs in many Black church services. Voice rhythm and vocal inflection convey meaning; the sound of what is being said is as important as what is actually said, a sense, a dialogue of reason and emotion. The emphasis placed on individual uniqueness, personal expressiveness and empathy in African American communities resembles the importance that some feminist analyses place on women’s ‘inner voice’ (Collins, 2000). The convergence of African-influenced and feminist principles in the ethic of caring seems particularly acute. White women may have access to women’s experiences that encourage expression and emotion, but few white controlled social institutions, except the family, validate this way of knowing (Collins, 2000). This has influenced the way in which I conducted my research and the care I have paid to the whole interview process conducted with the BME women in my study.

‘An ethic of personal accountability’ also characterises Black feminist epistemology (Collins, 2000: 48). Not only must individuals develop their knowledge claims through dialogue and present them in a style proving their concern for their ideas, but people are also expected to be accountable for their knowledge claims. In this alternative epistemology, values lie at the heart of the knowledge validation process such that inquiry always has an ethical aim. This is reflected in the ethical principles I applied when conducting my research study.

Collins (2000: 52) asserts that when these four dimensions become politicised and attached to a social justice project, they can form a framework for Black feminist thought and practice. Furthermore, Collins (2000) perceives the Black female researcher in a unique insider/outsider position, which allows her to identify aspects of the research which those from a dominant culture would not consider to be important or relevant. I found this a useful concept which I adopted within my methodology (Chapter 4).

Whilst considering the theoretical concepts of BF significant, its emphasis on African American thought systems is limited for the inclusion of ethnicity in this study. Hence, BBF is included as part of this theoretical framework. Given the relationship between PF and BBF, the theoretical perspectives of both are considered next.

2.4 Postcolonial Feminism

Postcolonial Feminism (PF) is a theory that is embedded within a collective struggle against inequality and for social justice, and its scholarship is located in the political, social and economic terrain of contemporary postcolonial nation states. Whilst BF sought to establish a critical social theory for political empowerment and social justice in the US (Collins, 1998), PF was differently located and drew attention to the tensions within knowledge production of postcolonial societies such as Britain, Canada, Caribbean and the Indian subcontinent, where Black and Indigenous women scholars highlighted the limitations of white feminist theorising and a male, race and multicultural discourse that did not incorporate gendered diversity and difference (Mirza, 1997). For postcolonial feminists, it is about explaining their everyday national and postcolonial struggles of resistance against poverty, religion, patriarchy and class, where power is centralised, secure and authoritative as it always has been (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Like CRT and BF, PF advocates for an understanding of the value of an intersectional analysis where intersectionality is key to explain how power, ideology and identity intersect and the way in which patterns of inequality and discrimination are maintained. These are reflected in the specific and varied patterns of inequality and discrimination seen in Black women's lives (Brah and Phoenix, 2004).

PF, and the approaches therein, is a conscious meaningful act of self-identification that enables black/othered women to situate the power of colonial times as it appears and disappears in the production and reproduction of marginalised, racialised and gendered others in new, contemporary times of the 21st century (Mirza, 2009). This evoked through the counter memories of BME women, for example, through storytelling, giving perspectives on multiple identity, diaspora, culture, religion and sexuality. Together, BME women engage in a process of quilting a genealogical narrative of 'other ways of knowing', where 'quilting is the art of stitching together pieces of cloth, fragments of memory, linking the past to the present and making it whole' (Mirza, 2009: 2). This has a powerful meaning for women across cultures and time, and their hidden stories are considered legitimised knowledge and theory, in a world of whiteness that dominates. It is the cultural and historic specificity of inequality that postcolonial feminists stress as important in developing a more holistic intersectional approach to mainstream feminist analysis of women's social disadvantage, in which social divisions are constructed and interlock with each other in specific historical situations.

This is important given many of the BME women in this research study came from postcolonial backgrounds which influenced their career journeys in academic leadership.

2.5 Black British Feminism

Black British feminism (BBF) as a critical social force, as a theoretical and intellectual movement, had its birth over 50 years ago in the activism and struggles of Black women migrants and those with diasporic histories, from the postcolonial Caribbean, Africa and Indian sub-continent.

BBF is related to BF but is different in being shaped by migration, nationalism, racism, popular culture and media in which Black British women, from multiple positions of difference, reveal the distorted ways in which the dominant groups construct their assumptions (Ali et al, 2010). It emphasises 'the significance of consideration of the everyday lives of black and postcolonial women of different ethnicities, who are simultaneously positioned in multiple structures of dominance

and power, according to race, gender, ethnicity, class and sexualized others' (Mirza (2009: 7).

Like the other theories in this framework, intersectionality is a key feature of BBF but is associated with colonialism, decolonisation and postcolonialism. It provides 'useful knowledge' which has been used to systemically reveal the importance of the multiple identities of women interacting in various ways, to shape the multiple dimensions of the everyday lived experiences. This aspect allows for a focus on ethnicity as a category, which I use in this research study. Using an intersectional framework has enabled Black feminists in the US and Black British feminists to analyse how oppressions such as race, gender, class and sexuality work together to produce injustices (Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006).

BBF is described as 'a space that black women inhabit, which overlaps the margins of race, gender, and class, and occupies the empty spaces in between'. It is a meaningful act of identification, where black feminism allows black women a space to 'name' us and to have a 'valid' identity of our own (Mirza, 1997: 4). Furthermore, BBF is seen as a space to invoke agency, to speak of difference seen and felt, to highlight uniqueness and otherness (Young, 2000). The struggle for Black women to claim a space within the modernist western feminist discourse has indeed been a central force BBF since its inception.

Strategic multiplicity and contingency are a hallmark of BBF that demonstrates that you can have difference within a conscious construction of sameness (Mirza, 1997: 21). She further argues that BBF is concerned with more than accessing rights and services. It plays a central role in challenging the fundamental core of British identity. As she explains, Black British feminists are 'a privileged interlocutor of the similarities and differences that constitute post-imperial Englishness' (ibid: 30). By challenging the racial subtext of British majority and minority identities, BME women are engaged in the very radical project of refining who exactly is British in the nation. This has come from our shared British history of colonialism, and our postcolonial histories and postcolonial struggles in Britain, where we have been in so-called minorities, a notion that appears to be specific to the UK and hence, BBF.

2.6 Theorisation of identity

My research study acknowledges that each participant's identity formation has been influenced and shaped by their history and ancestry, social structures, social interactions and multiple subjectivities related to race, and its intersection with other identities such as gender, ethnicity and social class as is in this study. Identity is also shaped by the perceptions of others and one's interactions with them, which produce intersectional experiences (Lumby, 2009). Within the context of this research study, identity, viewed through an intersectional lens, plays a significant role in how the BME female participants recounted stories of their career journeys as academic leaders at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class.

The disciplines of sociology and psychology recognise three distinct usages of the term identity (Tooms et al, 2010). The first is the use of identity in reference to a shared culture falling along the lines of CRT (hooks, 1991). The second is in reference to a common culture that connects participants (hooks, 1991). The third is as a reference to parts of a self that are composed of meanings attached to the roles people play in society (Stryker and Burke, 2000; Tooms et al, ibid). Such roles are fluid and exist on a continuum in our lives because we generally ignore the context that creates one's identity outside of the one with which we interact.

Furthermore, identity can be seen as self and socially constructed to achieve a sense of coherence, worth and belonging, primarily through ongoing narratives and relationships (Lumby and English, 2009). This includes subjectivity in capturing the quality of the social interaction itself. This implies the contest and struggle over identity, the ways in which our selves are unstable, shifting and constructed through both the dominant conceptions and resistance to those conceptions that suggest the incomplete and sometimes contradictory quality of our lives. Therefore, identity constitutes a particular form of social representation that represents the relationship between the individual and others.

Hall (2000) explains the concept of identity as not essentialist but as positional. Identity does not signal a stable core of the self, never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and opposing discourses, practices and positions. They are constantly in the process of change and transformation influenced by history and ancestry. Hall (ibid:17) further explains identity formation

as being produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, articulated as such. Moreover, they emerge within the interplay of modes of power and thus are more the product of the marking of difference, contradictions and exclusion than they are the sign of an identical naturally constituted unity, where identity in its traditional meaning is an all-inclusive sameness, seamless and without internal differentiation (ibid: 18). Identities are thus constructed through difference which means it is only through the relation with the 'other', the relation to what it is not, that identity can be constructed (ibid: 18). Throughout the lifespan, identities can function as points of identification and attachment only because of their capacity to exclude.

Identity theory challenges us to consider the intersectional experiences of each individual who uniquely comprises multiple identities, related to one's history, as personal and professional selves. Identity may not be congruent in the eyes of the individual or those whom the individual comes into contact with, with this incongruity driving change. Bauman (2004) asserts that the degree of control over identity is related to the resources held by individuals, including their status, and also the financial resource to create a different identity through the symbolic adoption of a particular lifestyle or workplace setting. Those who have less power are less able to resist their identity being defined by others and the negative or limiting consequences of imposition.

This has implications for the BME women in this research study where identity development is influenced by personal and professional resources that lead them to academic leadership and its practice. The theoretical perspectives discussed also appear relevant to how the participants in my study ascribed to their identity.

Culture and its significance within ethnicity and class as part of identity is discussed next.

2.7 Culture, ethnicity and acquisition of capitals

Culture, since it is linked to ethnicity, plays an important part of the identity construction of the BME women in this research study. When viewed through an intersectional lens and at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class, as is the case in this study, it allows for understanding how aspects of identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege.

Cultural expression emerges as a significant social construct within the context of expressing one's ethnicity as a form of identity and is an expression of values, beliefs, ideologies, behaviours and conventions within a social system (Shah, 2010). However, Hall (1993) argues that cultural identities come from somewhere and they have histories, and like everything historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being fixed, they are subject to the continuous play of history, culture, power, 'it is the name we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves, within the narratives of the past' (ibid: 394).

Weber (1963) explicates relationships between systems such as culture and social institutions (for example, educational leadership as is relevant to this research study). The cultural system, for example, religion, determines social action within a community; at an individual level it influences belief, individual attitudes and values, and moulds and directs the content of social action. This cultural system has a role in shaping and controlling human conceptualisations and practices within the context of social institutions (Shah, 2010).

Culture is further explained by Yosso (2005) as behaviours and values that are learned, shared and exhibited by a group of people, also evidenced in material and non-material productions of a people.

Looking at culture through a CRT lens, Yosso (2005) explains her concept of community cultural wealth as 'an array of knowledge, skills, abilities and contacts possessed and utilized by Communities of Colour to survive and resist macro and micro forms of oppression' (ibid: 77). The use of CRT allows Communities of Colour to nurture their community cultural wealth through at least six forms of capital such as 'aspirational, navigational, social, linguistic, familial, and resistant capital' (ibid:

78), which are legitimate sources of positive influence that are corroborated both in the UK and US.

Community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) nurtured through the six capitals is briefly outlined below:

Aspirational capital gives the ability to hold on to hopes and dreams in the face of real and perceived barriers and requires resilience which is nurtured and developed within social and familial contexts, often through storytelling and advice that offers ways to challenge oppression.

Linguistic capital includes the social and intellectual skills attained through communication in more than one language and style. Furthermore, it means engagement with storytelling, recounting oral histories and the ability to communicate via the medium of art, poetry and music.

Familial capital is nurtured among families and cultural knowledge comes from history, memory, heritage and cultural intuition. This form of cultural wealth engages a commitment to community wellbeing and expands the concept of family to include a broader understanding of kinship, which acknowledges race, gender and class that comprise traditional understanding of family. From this extended family, kinship ties are nurtured and developed to enable the wellbeing of the community and its resources. Kinship also informs one's 'consciousness' (ibid: 80) through caring, coping and providing, for example, education and sport, religious gatherings.

Social capital is understood as networks of people and community resources, which encompass social and peer contacts. These are significant to be able to navigate society and provide the emotional support to do this successfully.

Navigational capital refers to the skills of being able to manoeuvre through social institutions. It acknowledges individual agency within the constraints presented by institutional workings, but it also connects to social networks that facilitate navigation through places such as schools, jobs, healthcare, etc.

Resistant capital refers to skills and knowledge developed and nurtured through resistant behaviours that challenge inequality. Maintaining and passing on multiple

dimensions of community cultural wealth is also part of the knowledge base that forms resistant capital. However, if there is a recognition of structural inequalities and the motivation to work towards racial and social justice, this resistant capital can become 'transformative resistant capital' (ibid: 81) which includes cultural knowledge of the structures of racism and motivation to transform such oppression (Solorzano and Yosso, 2002).

Furthermore, these various forms of capital are not mutually exclusive or static, but rather are dynamic processes that build on one another as part of community cultural wealth. This explanation for acquisition of capitals through culture is of great significance where social class plays a significant role, as is the case in this research study where it influences the experiences of BME women in their journey in academic leadership, at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class.

The theoretical perspectives discussed, which keep intersectionality as key and race as central to this research study, have influenced my reading of the literature, methodology and design, and my analysis and interpretation of the data discussed in subsequent chapters.

2.8 Summary of theoretical perspectives and their relationship to intersectionality theory

Prior to summarising the chapter, I have included the main concept and location of each theory and how these keep intersectionality central to their perspectives. This is to ease the understanding and engagement of the reader in relation to the theoretical framework for this study.

Critical Race Theory (CRT): originated in critical legal studies in the US and is concerned with racism, discrimination and racial subordination. It is used when research is based on race and gender outside of the white male experience.	Intersectionality is considered a key tenet of CRT and is developed from a legacy of racism in the US as a result of institutionalised slavery. It highlights the interconnection of race and gender and race and demonstrates a multifaced connection between race, gender, class

Its five components keep race at the centre and allow for marginalised voices to be heard through counter-storytelling.	and other systems that work together to oppress, while allowing privilege.
Black Feminism (BF): has an Afrocentric feminist epistemology and has its origins in the US as a result of institutionalised slavery. BF scholars sought to establish an oppositional critical social theory for political empowerment and social justice, where the invisibility of Black women could be addressed in relation to race, gender and class. Its four central tenets allow for amplification of voice of Black women and, like CRT, using stories to tell their lived experiences within an ethical and accountable framework. It does not account for culture/ethnicity.	Although its pre-dates intersectionality, using an intersectional lens allows for the highlighting of structural inequality at macro and micro levels at the intersections of race, gender and class, which causes racial inequality and discrimination on a regular basis.
Postcolonial Feminism (PF): a theory that is embedded within a collective struggle against inequality and for social justice, located within postcolonial societies. It is a conscious meaningful act of self-identification which enables black/othered women to situate the power of colonial times as it appears and disappears in the production and reproduction of marginalised, racialised and gendered others in new, contemporary times of the 21st century. Like CRT, it does this through	Like CRT and BF, PF advocates for an understanding of the value of an intersectional analysis where intersectionality is key to explain how power, ideology and identity intersect, and the way in which patterns of inequality and discrimination are maintained.

storytelling and includes perspectives of multiple identities, history and diaspora. It allows for consideration of culture and historic specificity.	
Black British Feminism (BBF): a critical social force with its history located in the activism and struggles of Black women migrants and those with diasporic histories from postcolonial countries. BBF is a part of BF but is different in that it is shaped by migration, racism, nationalism, culture and ethnicity, and how these intersect to create experiences for Black British women in their everyday lives.	Intersectionality is central and allows Black British feminists to analyse how oppressions at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and class work together to produce inequalities and injustice.
Theorisation of Identity: identity formation is influenced by history, social structures and social interactions related to race, and its intersection with other identities such as gender, ethnicity, social class and other multiple subjectivities. This is similar to theoretical perspectives shared in PF and BBF. Identity is also created from shared culture, common culture and from the roles people play in society and the meanings attached to these. Furthermore, identity can be seen as self and socially constructed to achieve a sense of coherence, worth and	Intersectionality within identity theory means that it allows for the consideration of identity which is also shaped by the perceptions of others and one's interactions with them, which in turn produces intersectional experiences. These are at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class.

belonging, primarily through ongoing narratives and relationships.	
Culture, ethnicity and acquisition of capitals: Culture is linked to ethnicity and has a history, and its expression emerges as a significant social construct within the context of expressing one's ethnicity as a form of identity and as an expression of values, beliefs, ideologies, behaviours, norms and conventions within a particular social system. Cultural identities are subject to the continuous play of history, culture, power and is our link to our past. Culture, through a CRT lens, is seen as community cultural wealth which includes knowledge, skills and abilities, and is possessed and used by communities of colour to overcome various forms of oppressions. This is through the acquisition of at least six forms of capital which are legitimate sources of positive influence corroborated both in the UK and US. Cultural wealth is also associated with social class.	When viewed through an intersectional lens and at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class, as is the case in this study, it allows for understanding how aspects of identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege.

2.9 Chapter Summary

Intersectionality and the theoretical perspectives discussed, which keep race central and use an intersectional lens to support understanding that we are multiply located, and the different categories of race, gender, ethnicity and class to which BME women belong, also overlap and operate together to cause discrimination and marginalisation.

Intersectionality theory is key and is central to this study in the understanding of the experiences of BME women in academic leadership at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class. The theoretical perspectives within CRT, BF, PF and BBF keep race at the centre and draw on intersectionality as key to explain the racial inequalities and discrimination at the intersections of multiple identities. Furthermore, identity is theorised using an intersectional lens to show how multiple identities intersect and influence how the BME women in this study are perceived by others and what this means for their experiences as academic leaders in HE. Culture is also explained in relation to the significance of cultural identity, ethnicity and acquisition of capitals which have a direct relationship with social class. They are significant influences at the intersections of multiple identities within the educational leadership practice of the women in this research study.

Intersectional theorising provides the link between the various theoretical perspectives, which keep race at the centre, focus on racial inequality, social inequity and discrimination, and advocate for activism for social justice. Furthermore, I have drawn on identity and culture theorisation to further develop my conceptualisation of intersectionality.

The use of an intersectional lens has framed the research questions; influenced my reading of the literature; underpinned my research methodology; informed the research design; and formed the analytical framework and the interpretation of the data.

The literature reviewed are discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.0 Introduction

In relation to the experiences of Black and Minoritised Ethnic (BME) women academic leaders in higher education (HE) institutions, at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class, the literature examined in this chapter focus on scholarly readings and some empirical studies that focus on intersectionality. Specifically, they are underpinned by theories relating to intersectionality such as Critical Race Theory (CRT); Black Feminism (BF); Black British Feminism (BBF); Postcolonial Feminism (PF); and identity, culture, and capitals, which keep race at the centre and use intersectionality as an analytical framework and for discussion (see Chapter 2).

Literature search

The literature was reviewed using databases such as Academic Search Elite; Google Scholar; data.gov.uk; JSTOR; SAGE Journals Online; Scopus; Taylor and Francis Education Collection; UKRI-Advance HE; Wiley Online Library (Journals).

It included a variety of texts such as scholarly articles and research papers from peer reviewed journals, data from policy documents, articles about HE issues and policy reviews reported in the media, available through *Times Higher Education* and Equality, and about inclusion via Advance HE.

Key words/phrases used to conduct the literature review were:

- Social constructivism; identity; Black identity; Black female identity.
- Black and Minority/minoritised Ethnic, female, academic leader; higher education; intersectionality; race, gender, ethnicity, social class.
- Critical race theory and intersectionality; experiences - intersectional; Black feminism; Black British feminism; Postcolonial feminism.
- Narrative inquiry; life history method.

- Ethnic capital; social capital, cultural capital, professional capital; culture and spirituality; education and social class.

- Institutional racism in HE; whiteness, racial microaggressions; institutional racism; BME female academic leadership.

- Mentoring and academic leaders; BME networks in HE.

- Educational leadership; transformative leadership in HE; Applied Critical Leadership.

Selected studies, mainly located in HE, were qualitative; had a feminist methodology such as narrative inquiry; had intersectionality as an analytical framework and kept race at the centre; focused on experiences at the intersections of multiple identities, especially race, gender, ethnicity and social class; and were underpinned by components of the intersectionality theoretical framework described in Chapter 2.

I reviewed scholarly articles that addressed the research question of this study *'What are the experiences for Black and Minoritised Ethnic female leaders in higher education, at the intersection of race, gender, ethnicity and social class?'* and the sub-questions that asked about personal and professional influences, sources of support and how educational leadership was practised by BME women in HE.

Following an account of the literature search, this chapter is divided into sections relating to the themes that emerged:

- Identity construction

- Personal and professional experiences at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class

- Institutional racism in HE

- Negotiating the challenges: personal, professional and institutional resources and sources of support

- Models of educational leadership for BME female academic leaders in HE

The chapter ends by summarising what the literature review found in relation to the themes described above.

3.1 Identity construction

To illustrate the social construction of identity formation for the BME women in this study, Lumby and English (2009) assert that identity is self and socially constructed to achieve a sense of coherence, worth and belonging, primarily through ongoing narratives and relationships.

3.1.1 The social construction of identity

BME women have formed an individual identity surrounded by multi-layered identities influenced by multiple subjectivities; it is a social product negotiated through time and space, constructed within the hierarchies of power (Bhavnani and Phoenix, 1994).

Life histories within the Black diasporas explain the complex ways in which some 'Black identities' have evolved in Britain (Rassool, 1997: 188). Underlying this is the first view that Black identities are not linear constructions but rather a tapestry of interwoven life experiences with their origins in different socio-historical periods. Secondly, socio-cultural and political displacement, affected by slavery and colonialism, indelibly mark the experiences of those with postcolonial histories, in contemporary societies. The shaping of Black identities in British societies therefore arises out of historically specific material conditions. Thirdly, human beings are not one dimensional. The ways in which they experience the world is derived directly and indirectly from their socio-historical experiences (Rassool, 1997).

Postcolonial feminist theorists assert that the agency/structure dyad through which identities are forged and negotiated does not sufficiently account for the unequal power relations that lie not only in personal agency, but also in institutionalised structures that perpetuate white male supremacy. The 'other' identity that surrounds and encloses non-white ex-colonial immigrant women does not require, or allow, her to acknowledge the imaginary spaces and meanings that have been assigned for her occupation (Mirza, 1997). The seeming coherence of this enclosure, a racialised and

sexualised space where a BME woman is homogenised through popular stereotyping, hides the diverse structures that operate beneath these notions. This identity enclosure to which the BME woman is confined is primarily a product of dominant-imperialist imagination over which she has little control (Spivak, 1993).

An intersectional framework to examine the experiences for BME women from their race, gender, ethnicity and social class assumes these social identities work together to define people's experiences. It affects the way they see themselves and how they are seen by others. Collins (2004) explains that the social construction of identity emerges from negotiations between those imposed and chosen meanings derived from the intersections of multiple identities such as race, gender, ethnicity and social class. For example, they stem from controlling images of BME containing cultural contradictions that make it difficult, if not untenable, to perceive BME women in their professional lives, in roles of senior leadership in HE institutions.

Likewise, Atewologun and Sealy (2014) use an intersectional analysis to explain that intersections draw attention to both the positioning of individuals, where position refers to the multiple categories with which one is identified, and positioning that refers to drawing on multiple identities to construct oneself and engage with others. Personal identity influences professional identity, and BME women in this study may face being outsiders to the environment that white women inhabit, and outsiders in terms of the intersection of their multiple identities (Fitzgerald, 2014).

However, Bakare-Yusuf (1997) warns against over emphasis on commonalities that bind us together in terms of identity. For example, Black commonalities, at least in the political and to an extent in the cultural fields, neglect intra-racial differences which constitute the complex nature of postcolonial Black British experiences. 'Points of connection, disconnection, cross connections among Black people get subsumed under the limited code of race, which impedes critical reflection' (ibid, 1997).

Identity, which is heavily influenced by one's ethnicity and related culture, contributes to the beliefs, motives and experiences in terms of which people define themselves in a professional role. Cultural histories, although transmuted over time, continue to influence people at different levels with meanings that evolve dialogically in relation to society, culture and the individual. This means that although we recall past

experiences individually, we do so in relation to the social world, and it is ultimately in terms of that social world that we can understand and name our individual experiences.

Thus, there is an interplay between personal, cultural and social identities through which lived intersectional experiences for BME women construct a professional and leadership identity. I move on to consider professional identity.

3.1.2 Professional identity of BME female academic leaders in HE

Professional identity can be defined as a set of attributes imposed upon BME female academic leaders in HE by outsiders or members of the academic community. That shared set of attributes and values enables the differentiation of one group from another (Coldron and Smith, 1999).

Acknowledgement of multiple identities and the notion of agency as academics and leaders becoming active in the process of constructing their own professional development is thought to be significant in the construction of professional identity formation. However, multiple identities provide a perpetual challenge to perceivers that leads to the activation of multiple, potentially conflicting, stereotypes and prejudices (Fitzgerald, 2014). This may cause Black women in leadership to not only conform to the organisational culture and practice, but also to societal expectations about gendered leadership behaviour, which could be internalised on the basis of the 'other's' experiences, particularly where a Black woman's identity is perceived as incompatible with a senior leadership identity (Gabriel, 2017).

The literature shows that BME female academics felt their professional identities were shaped by the particular desires and stereotypes insisted upon them by white colleagues (Ellemers et al, 2012). BME women felt that to negotiate their professional roles as academic leaders, they had to exhibit a particular persona typified by high levels of professionalism. If they failed to exhibit such attributes and did not exceed the expectations placed upon white female colleagues, they were viewed as failing to demonstrate their commitment and sufficiently high levels of professionalism.

Capper (2015) allows for an understanding of the experience of intersectionality of race across races and race intersecting with other identities, which influences

professional identity and the way BME women are perceived by each other in their leadership careers. Weekes (1997) adds to the debate on defining Black womanhood, and personal and professional identities in HE leadership. She suggests ‘shades of Blackness’ (ibid: 122) play a part; at one extreme there is a rejection of the European ideas of womanhood, related to skin colour and hair texture, and at the other end an assumption that these qualities are desired, seen through hair straightening and lighter skin colour in Black women. Hair and skin are used as physical signifiers for the purpose of judging how Black a person is and used to indicate how near or far a Black person is from whiteness. ‘The differences between darker skinned and lighter skinned Black women can cause bitter dialogue between Black women’ (Weekes: ibid:124).

In the context of this study, BME women leaders belong to multiple social categories determined by race, gender, ethnicity and social class. Their experiences at the intersection of these categories combine with their professional identity as academic leaders in HE. These experiences are reviewed in the next section.

3.2 Personal and professional experiences at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class

The following section examines BME female academic leaders’ experiences at the intersections of multiple identities of race, gender, ethnicity and social class and the associated challenges.

3.2.1 Race and gender

Theorising the intersection of race and gender that leads to marginalisation and discrimination for BME women through BF, Mirza (2016:1) explores the notion of ‘embodied intersectionality’. She makes sense of Black and ‘othered’ women’s symbolic and narrative experiences in education where ‘othering’ is a way of letting Black women know that they don’t belong. In a culture in which women who are racially minoritised are increasingly entering spaces in the public realm traditionally occupied by white men, cultures of exclusion operate within contested spaces such as universities.

Mirza (2016) cites many occasions when she has been mistaken for the coffee lady and the amazed look she is given when she takes her seat at the Board table. She describes the 'infantilisation' of pigeon-holing as the resident expert on race, but who is also seen as a subordinate and someone less capable of holding authority (ibid: 4). Understood as lacking, BME women are pressured to work twice as hard to be accepted, aware that any mistakes they make are viewed as expressive of their gender or race. Gendered and racialised subjects thus bear a burden of representation, as well as a burden of doubt within professional spaces. Common place behaviours, such as lack of eye contact when having a conversation, failure to reply to emails and/or acknowledgement on campus, are reported by BME women who hold positions of leadership in HE. This process of 'othering' (Wilson, 2017: 117) is a way of letting Black women know that whatever their position of power in the academy, they still don't belong (ibid, 2017).

The seminal work of Puwar (2004) and the notion of the space invader adeptly encapsulates the notion of a body that is out of place. Puwar (ibid) suggests that Black academics' bodies do not fit into the institutional space in which they appear and inhabit because HE is traditionally a white space and largely seen as the preserve of white, middle-class males. Black females are minoritised because of their ethnicity when they do not represent the racial norm within white institutions. This is expressed as double take/surprise and confusion when a BME female walks into the room. The dominant group behaves as if she should not be there, given she is not considered the naturally expected occupant of the role. Lander and Santoro (2017) further explain that BME women are positioned as both hyper-visible yet invisible in terms of their professional status and competence where their knowledge and cultural perspectives are not valued.

Mirza (2013) cites her experiences of being one of the first Black professors in the UK. She was hyper-accountable with more attention on her than reserved for others. The intense level of scrutiny was an irony of heightened visibility for the 'invisible' BME women within the institution (Mirza, ibid: 4). Ironically, while invisibility is a key dimension of experiences cited by BME women in HE, hyper-visibility and being over-scrutinised in academia is equally problematic (Jones, 2006; Wright et al, 2007).

This provokes a new ‘politics of containment’ as explained by Hill-Collins (2000: 38), which entails surveillance strategies, significant when middle-class BME women are engaged in HE. Using BF, she argues that Black women are watched in desegregated work environments to ensure they remain ‘unraced’ and assimilated (ibid: 38). Being seen to assimilate is important, as standing out can invoke deep feelings of need, rejection and anxiety within the ‘white other’ (Ahmed, 2018 :332). To be unassimilated invites surveillance that appears benign but can be deeply distressing for BME women.

Addressing racial and gender discrimination within British HE and drawing on both CRT and BF, Stockfelt (2018) found experiences of racism/discrimination came from a negatively perceived view of Black women’s ability as being ‘less than’ based on their status as Black and female (Stockfelt, ibid:10). The Black women in her study felt there was a hierarchy of perception with respect to their marginalised positioning as Black and woman. This ranking of race, then gender, included ascription to their ability, culture and/or inclusion in relevant academic discourses. In this literature, the narratives were unified by a clear acknowledgement that ‘being Black impacted on their experience more than being women’ (Stockfelt, ibid: 12). Black women’s racial identity was rated more important than their gender identity (Settles, 2006). However, whilst Black women placed equal importance on their race and gender, the participants rated Black women’s intersectional identity as more important than either Black or woman identities (ibid: 2006).

In addition, the literature drawing attention to intersectionality between races can cause disadvantage to some BME women from other BME women (see 3.1.2) (Bakare-Yusuf, 1997; Weekes, 1997; Capper, 2015).

The literature shows that the intersection of race and gender leads to disadvantage and marginalisation for BME women academic leaders. This is seen as a sense of not belonging and both being treated as invisible and scrutinised through hyper-visibility associated with their race and gender. Race as a category was seen to define an individual more than gender. Intersectionality between races can cause discrimination between BME women. This discrimination and marginalisation continues when ethnicity is viewed as intersecting with race and gender.

3.2.2 Race, gender and ethnicity

The study of race, gender and ethnicity has been undertaken by Black and postcolonial feminist scholars with a focus on migration and other socio-political struggles inherently associated with ethnicity and associated cultures. Ethnicity seen as culture incorporates common ancestry and cultural heritage that contribute to the individual intersectional identity of minoritised women (Ahmed, 2009; Mirza, 2016).

Culture could be viewed as some type of 'social glue' which holds people together and makes people perceive and define themselves (despite all other variations) as a cultural group in opposition to another cultural group or a perceived member of another group, and which determines their interactional codes and patterns of behaviours (Shah, 2004: 555). Culture gives meaning and significance to both individual and collective identity. Hence, ethnicity with its associated culture is an important identity to be considered when looking at the experiences of BME women in roles of academic leadership (Phinney,1990).

The literature reviewed concerning the intersections of race, gender and ethnicity in HE leadership programmes (Dopson et al, 2016) suggests that there is less emphasis in UK HE institutions with regard to ethnicity and leadership, including an understanding of factors undermining progression of BME women (Miller, 2016; Maylor, 2018), strategies for success (Bhopal et al, 2016) and/or the value of diverse leadership in universities where diversity is characterised by race, gender and culture (Walumbwa et al, 2008). This is despite the fact that education institutions in England have received funding from Government (HEFCE) to address the lack of diversity in their leadership teams and governing bodies (Jarboe, 2016).

In sharing her experiences of discrimination and disadvantage at the intersections of her race, gender and culture as a Black British female academic of African Caribbean origin, Richards (2017) feels that it affects the experiences of individuals and plays a further role in the positioning of individuals, to exclude and privilege certain groups (Showunmi et al, 2016).

These experiences are particularly highlighted within the context of the increased marketisation and managerialism within HE, which serves to regulate BF (Ali et al, 2010). BME women in the UK are considered the embodiment of diversity within the

academy, despite not fitting into the normative identity of an academic (Ahmed, 2009, 2018). Drawing on BF, Ahmed (2018) postulates that BME women symbolise progress within an institution in relation to the diversity and inclusivity agenda, 'yet this is the same institution we are excluded from' (Ahmed, 2018: 331). This coincides with the marketisation of HE, and the imposition of the role via workload fits in with the managerialism of HE. However, Ahmed (2018: 331) points out that diversity work is also the work BME women have to do when 'we do not quite inhabit the norms of the institution'. Doing equality and diversity creates the appearance of transforming an institution (Ahmed, 2018). However, in reality, this translates as an additive numbers game, for example, increasing the numbers of BME women in the institution, yet the culture of the institution, which is the problem, remains unchanged. Women of colour and a cultural heritage that is different from the normative whiteness of the institution doing diversity are seen as 'a happy symbol of diversity' (Ibid: 335), which can be very hard work, especially if their experiences of the institution are not happy ones. 'The smile you provide, masks more than organisational failure; it can also mask your own experience of that failure' (ibid: 335). It is for this reason that Ahmed calls on BME women to 'reclaim the figure of the angry Black feminist' (Ahmed, 2009: 41).

Ahmed (2018: 347) advocates for BME women to engage and 'rock the boat'. She sees this work as a way of navigating institutions 'whose hostility is masked by diversity' who want BME women as representatives of diversity insofar as they are accommodating. Whilst the literatures reviewed do not describe doing diversity work as an opportunity for progression for BME female academic leaders, for Ahmed (ibid) as a Black feminist, doing diversity work can be seen as offering resistance within the institution to whiteness and its privilege.

Drawing on CRT and Black feminist theory, Jones (2006) studied the intersectional experiences of race, gender and ethnicity for BME women academics. She suggests they suffer levels of racism, disadvantage and discrimination, where 'Black women academics represent the most marginalised and disadvantaged social group within the sector, and this despite the existence of gender and racial equality legislation' (ibid: 147). Gender is still seen as a white woman's issue, whilst it is taken for granted that race is a Black male issue. 'Black and minoritized ethnic women fall into

the cracks between the two' (ibid: 148). She further asserts that whilst some Black women academics appear to have gained an intellectual voice, Black female voices allowed to be heard within this space are invariably African American (Collins, 2000). The intellectual voices of Black British, Caribbean, African or other non-Western, non-white women, remain largely ignored. Thus 'whilst some BME voices become legitimised, others still remain silenced on the margins' (Jones, 2006:154).

The literature in the UK suggests that institutional culture significantly contributes to discrimination for BME female leaders, and white male leadership was found to be a profound barrier to progression for BME women (Wright et al, 2007; Jean-Marie et al, 2009; Eddo-Lodge, 2018). BME women felt they had to leave their cultural beliefs and values at the door in order to fit into the organisation's culture, which is predominantly white, male and middle-class, to advance within their organisation' (Showumni et al, 2016).

For many BME women, the pressure to conform to what is perceived as the norm for a white society leads to feelings of loss of respect for one's identity and marginalisation within the context of what a successful leader should look like. To be 'acculturated', lose your cultural markers, to learn to 'act white' and 'fit in' is important for people who are BME as 'standing out' can invoke deep feelings of need, rejection and anxiety within the 'white other'. (Mirza, 2018:180-181). The Black feminist, Williams (1991: 74), explains, as a Black person you can so easily 'lose a piece of yourself' when navigating the traumatic everyday incursions into your selfhood on the journey into 'the heart of whiteness'.

Black academics felt that entering the organisation as Black professionals represented an identity challenge (Atewologun and Singh, 2010). Their study showed that Black academics had to draw on 'ethnic capital' to fit into the work environment, where ethnic capital was seen as a 'sense of belonging to one's ethnic group and recognition of parental investment in building this ethnic environment' (ibid, p: 337). They used their personal values and beliefs generated through their ethnicity and culture, which included strong work ethic, professional excellence derived from education, to negotiate their workplace environment and reflexively managing tensions therein (ibid: 334). Their cultural capital (Yosso, 2005) was

significant to them. Furthermore, they felt that their white counterparts had no need of this in the workplace.

Despite the challenges faced, there is a persistent expression of educational desire, aspiration and optimism among BME women (Mirza, 2009). This is because BME women challenge systematic and institutionalised discriminatory practices. They do this by offering resistance through their cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) which includes aspirational, navigational and resistant capital (Yosso, 2005) to promote collective agency and desire for social transformation through educational opportunities and educational change (ibid: 245). Drawing on BF and PF, Mirza and Reay (2000) highlighted how African Caribbean teachers in Black supplementary schools showed the women worked quietly and in covert ways to keep alive the Black community's collective desire for self-knowledge and their belief in the power of schooling to militate against racial barriers. 'Black and minoritized ethnic women occupy a 'third space' that members of subordinate social groups invent and articulate counter discourses that in turn permit them to challenge interpretations of their identities, interests, and their needs' (ibid: 60).

The literature shows that experiences at the intersections of race, gender and ethnicity cause marginalisation, exclusion and isolation for BME women academic leaders in HE, where the institutional culture of whiteness makes them feel they don't belong. The diversity and inclusivity agenda, associated with the marketisation of HE, renders them hyper-visible in roles assigned to them because of their race, gender and ethnicity. However, their ethnicity and associated cultural beliefs and values gives them collective agency and contributes to their personal identity which they use to offer resistance and focus on social transformation in their work.

The next section looks at the experiences at the intersection of multiple identities that include social class.

3.2.3 Race, gender, ethnicity and social class

This section of the review examines the experiences for BME women at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class. It shows that where organisational hierarchies remain 'raced' (white), 'gendered' (male), ethnically

‘cultured’ (British) and socially ‘classed’ (middle-class), this accounts for a lack of BME women at higher levels of academic leadership (Acker, 2006).

Class is a more salient category of difference in the UK compared to the US, and social class often links closely with minoritised ethnicity (Eddo-Lodge, 2018). By virtue of being working class ‘you are not the norm in academia – you are the unexpected – the ‘other’ in an elitist, rarefied world where people like you are few and far between’ (Morley, 2018: 1). Furthermore, academics from working-class backgrounds can be problematically located in so far as they can be disconnected from their own communities and not fully accepted or acknowledged in middle-class academic cultures (ibid).

Yet, little is known about the views, values, identity and practices of the BME middle class in Britain (Reay, 1998). Whilst we cannot presume a fixed, homogenous Black identity upon which class is imposed, there is no straightforward way to be Black and middle class. (Reay, 1998). However, Black women who identified as working or middle class were the least ambivalent about their class identity. Early formative experiences of racism, combined with social class transition, enabled middle-class blacks to signal class membership, minimising the probability of racial discrimination (Rollock et al, 2013).

Drawing on BF and an intersectional analysis, Kwalhi (2017: 5) writes that ‘academic success in HE and the future careers that it enables, is not necessarily linked to intellectual ability or merit, it is a manifestation of deeply entrenched class, gender, and ethnic inequalities. Furthermore, universities are communities within themselves, privileged by tradition and framed by a historical context of elitism and social advantage. Temporary or permanent contracts are not always subject to open recruitment, and doctorates and teaching qualifications are required for some positions, while staff in the same subject area who have neither can have an identical job title or higher salary grade and not others. Exclusion could be covert – based on lack of invitations to networks, committees, and influential positions in the academic community – or more overt, with discussion about how accents still seal people into class identities. As a result, and regardless of their intellectual achievements, capability or potential, working-class staff and students are side lined or often feel that they have to overwork to prove their value (Larcombe, 2016).

Eddo-Lodge (2018), as a Black feminist, suggests that unlike race and racism, it is generally accepted in Britain that your class can either positively or negatively affect your lot in life. But race is rarely brought into the analysis. Instead, when we are encouraged to think about inequality, we are encouraged to think about race and social class as distinct and separate, 'they're not, existing race inequalities are compounded rather than erased by class inequalities' (ibid: 194).

Kwalhi (2017) draws attention to her schooling and education to speak of when her teachers lacked sensitivity, interest and insight into the realities of a child growing up Black, female in the postcolonial era (ibid: 8). For her, the influence of schooling and socialisation does not stand apart from what is carried into HE. This means a complex interplay at the intersections of race, gender and class and the subtle manner in which Black women are silenced and mediated through white women's feminist discourse, white men's domination of class and Black men's of race epistemology (Crenshaw, 1991). Experiences of identity (white) gender (male) and class (middle-class) arrogance that privilege academic status above all else is highlighted and negates the intellectual contribution and interests of BME staff (Kwalhi, 2017: 8).

Furthermore, Bhopal (2018), using BF and a case study approach, examines how being a Black, middle-class woman means one does not share ways of being, doing and knowing that her white, middle-class colleagues shared. She found that for the BME woman, access to vital knowledge which would contribute to a successful career trajectory in the academy remains missing, and places the BME, female, middle-class academic at a disadvantage. The shared identity of whiteness enables white colleagues to support each other, and the identity of whiteness works to perpetuate and reinforce white privilege to maintain the academy as a white space, where this privilege is afforded to white colleagues of both middle- and working-class origins.

Given the challenges posed by race, gender, ethnicity and social class, the processes of survival in elite universities for BME students and staff is examined by Reay (2017). Survival is achieved by navigation of the hostilities of HE through reflexively incorporating dominant white middle-class academic dispositions into working-class ones. This allows for cultural and academic capital necessary to pass

‘into the heart of whiteness’ (Reay, 2017: 87) where passing depends on a series of markers, both visible and conversational, and when visible markers like skin colour, anglicised names, ethnic dress removed or hidden, the non-white person can move into the institutional culture of normative whiteness.

With reference to Asian women, Bhopal (2012) draws attention to the fact that as they achieve greater social mobility through their acquisition of HE and subsequently socio-economic status, they are increasingly able to negotiate their identities. There is no longer the either/or choices about identity available to these women, instead they have the option of combining differing identities. ‘Asian women manifest complex affiliations with both British and Asian cultures and in this sense their identities are constantly changing and constantly being negotiated’ (ibid: 37). Education and social mobility allow them the reworking of their cultural practices to negotiate with and fit into the organisation.

Furthermore, Gabriel (2017: 34) draws attention to the notion of ‘bicultural competence’, a term articulated by Alfred (2001), where BME women access their bicultural life structures to overcome the discrimination and marginalisation at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class. It can be defined as ‘the nucleus from which people of colour evoke the power to contest the terrain of differences that contribute to their marginal positions in white dominated organisations’ (Alfred: ibid: 123). Within the hegemonic culture of the institution, it helps promotes agency, through which Black women develop successful strategies for navigating culturally dominant organisational environments (Gabriel, 2017).

Class discrimination remains a significant barrier in women’s academic progress, often tightly bound up with other inequalities, including race, gender and ethnicity to inform and influence everyday practice.

3.3 Institutional racism in higher education

The centrality of racism within higher education (HE) endures (Arday, 2018). Academic success is not necessarily linked to intellectual ability or merit, but is a

manifestation of deeply entrenched class, gender and ethnic inequalities (EHRC, 2010; Kwalhi, 2018). It is attributed to institutional racism, described as,

> 'The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people' (Macpherson, 1999: para 6.34).

Institutional racism manifests itself as white privilege and microaggressions (Arday and Mirza, 2018).

3.3.1 White privilege

White privilege is 'the expression of whiteness through the maintenance of power, resources, accolades and systems of support through formal and informal structures and procedures' (Bhopal, 2018:9). It does not refer to white people per se, but indicates the positioning of whiteness as normative, where all others are 'ranked and categorised in relation to this norm' (Ladson-Billings, 2004: 51).

Informed by CRT and whiteness, Lander and Santoro (2017) postulate that whiteness privileges those who are white and maintains the interests of white groups. Furthermore, it is maintained often through a lack of cultural sensitivity or a broad categorisation of people of colour. It manifests itself in people's actions and existing structural procedures, which create unequal outcomes for people. The power and privilege associated with whiteness highlights the paradoxical position of whiteness where contradictions are accepted. For example, the rhetoric of colour blindness is used on the one hand to negate the ethnic identity of the 'other' and at times it is used to make the 'other' hyper-visible in order to normalise whiteness (Lander and Santoro, ibid: 1012). Furthermore, a colour-blind stance that fails to acknowledge how colour shapes lived experience can also mean the effects of racism go unacknowledged.

Racism within the institution thrives on inequitable cultures which typically occur at the expense of BME academics (Ahmed, 2009). To be a woman of colour within mainly white institutions 'is to occupy an identity which is diametrically distinct from

the white male leaders who make the decisions within those spaces' (Rollock, ibid: 315). This facilitates a typically white male leadership hierarchy in HE, which goes unchallenged, consequently reinforcing a perpetual cycle of hegemony and discrimination which centres whiteness (Pilkington, 2013; Mirza, 2017). The concept of 'dysconscious racism' (Maylor, 2018: 351) is cited as one of the reasons why racism is not challenged by white educators in the institution and is 'a form of racism that tacitly accepts white norms and privileges. It is an impaired consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race as compared to, for example, critical consciousness' (King, 2007: 243).

When whiteness is viewed through an intersectional lens, interlocking privileges of race and other categories such as gender, ethnicity and class are shown as creating disadvantage for women of colour. BME women are the most disadvantaged groups in HE. They are less likely to be professors or senior leaders and face greater challenges to promotion compared with their white peers. They are more likely to be ruled out for promotion and feel they need to be twice as good as their white colleagues (Bhopal et al, 2016; Eddo-Lodge, 2018). They are assigned huge workloads burdened by greater scrutiny in comparison to their white colleagues. This type of workload and responsibility places academics of colour, especially women, at greater risk, who alongside keeping up with new needs and demands, must endure embedded practices of racism and gendered racism (Ahmed, 2007; Mirza, 2018). For women of colour, this is a space which is often surreal, frustrating and exhausting (Ahmed, 2009; Maylor, 2010). Given such evidence, it is unsurprising that UK faculty of colour are more likely, when compared to their white colleagues, to consider leaving the country to work at overseas institutions (Bhopal et al, 2016).

Yet, policymaking on inclusion and equity in the UK appears to paint a positive picture on reading the work of the Equality Charter Unit (Advance HE, 2017) designed to further the advancement of equality in further and higher education. If one looks at BME academics in HE, the statistics paint a picture where policy concerning inclusivity and diversity in relation to gender has been positive, but at the expense of intersectional identities. Pilkington (2013) supports this in relation to positive action taken in relation to gender. However, this is not reflected in inclusive policymaking related to race, where the whiteness of senior staff is taken for granted.

The successes around gender refer to the experiences of those women who share the backgrounds of the traditional academic elites (Jones, 2006). Consequently, BME women are disadvantaged because 'the experiences of Black women academics are structured by racialised practices, from which white women may derive benefit' (ibid: 159).

The presence of institutional racism which sees whiteness as the norm and the white, male middle class as the portrayal of leadership in the institution has been discussed. This presents a significant challenge to BME women, in terms of acceptance and legitimacy, due to the workings of white privilege. There is a gap between the rhetoric and reality of equality and diversity, with increasing pressure for BME women to fit in or be excluded.

Institutional racism also manifests itself as racial microaggressions which is discussed next.

3.3.2 Racial microaggressions

One of the ways in which whiteness manifests is through acts of 'racial microaggression' that are a form of systemic, everyday racism (Rollock, 2012: 518). Modern racism is indirect, ambiguous and much more difficult to detect, with 42% of Asian people and 60% of Black people having experienced racism at work (Binna, 2020). However, this takes the form of micro-incivilities and is described as 'the exchange of seemingly inconsequential words and deeds that violate conventional norms of workplace conduct' (Porath and Pearson, 2009: 21).

The micro-incivilities, such as not acknowledging someone's contribution; constantly criticising and not offering praise; rolling one's eyes; making derogatory comments; and ignoring or insulting colleagues, are the kind of daily commonplace behaviours or aspects of an environment that signal wittingly, or unwittingly, to members of BME groups that they do not belong or are not welcome (Rollock, 2012). This also happens, albeit more subtly, for BME women who are senior leaders in the institution (Rollock, 2020). Invisibility and the normalisation of discriminative acts are increasingly oppressive. Microaggressions are micro in name only, and given their prevalence, produce a cumulative threat to the well-being of people of colour (Rollock, 2012). The trivialisation of racism within the sector has undermined

accounts of discrimination, which are often not taken seriously by universities (Ahmed, 2012).

Examining whiteness as power reveals the ideological foundations that justify racial microaggressions, and in turn, racial microaggressions mediated by institutional racism act to reinforce those very ideological foundations (Johnson and Joseph-Salisbury, 2018). It is obfuscation of this relationship that allows microaggressions to seem relatively inoffensive and mild. As racism manifests itself in increasingly normalised and subtle forms, the concept of racial microaggressions allows us to move beyond ‘a narrow and unsophisticated version of racism which is seen to exist only in overt forms’ (Rollock, 2012: 517). Racial microaggressions do not occur in abstraction from white supremacist racial structures which promote institutional racism, they are inextricably linked to them (Rollock, ibid).

Furthermore, Rollock (2018) illuminates exactly how these bureaucratic racist technologies of concealment operate. Using CRT, she writes that she is seldom the author of her own destiny on the academic stage; real power remains the privileged domain of white male and female academics who police and control academic spaces. Much of this power lies in the subtlety of everyday racial microaggressions. Using the counter-narrative element of CRT, her research demonstrates that traditional, commonplace understandings and portrayals of racism are limited and flawed, incorrectly serving to position white members of society as innocent bystanders to the racist acts of the deviant few. She shows that racism is ‘complex and nuanced, remaining more deeply embedded in the subconscious presence of the everyday than is usually imagined in public and political discourse’ (Rollock, 2012: 528).

The invisible feature of racial microaggression in a Black woman scholar’s experience in the academy can be difficult to identify, and even more difficult to challenge (Bernard, 2017). Alienation, isolation and marginalisation put her in what could be termed a very ‘chilly climate’, where microaggressions are regular occurrences in HE (ibid: 81). She describes her ‘outsider-within status’, to call attention to the difficult experiences faced by Black female scholars in reconciling personal experiences and perspectives with those that dominate academia as a metaphor to capture these incidents of misrecognition (ibid: 82). This misrecognition

clearly positions Bernard as an outsider. She describes the commonplace verbal and behavioural racial slights that marked her as other, subtly communicated that she did not belong and relegated her to a subordinate status, causing distress and a loss of confidence. ‘I am reminded of the numerous occasions during my career that I have been mistaken for a student, secretary, or administrator’ (ibid: 84).

Furthermore, the experiences of racial microaggressions linked to institutional racism and encountered by academics working in British universities are also examined by Sian (2017). The conceptual position she uses is underpinned by both CRT and a postcolonial framework which allows analyses of the lived experiences through the life history method, to highlight structural dimensions of power operating within HE. Her analysis allows for a critical insight into the ways in which performance and practice in HE are both enacted and conditioned by structures of race, ethnicity and gender. Microaggressions and institutional racism entwined with covert, institutional practices of racism are central to the production of the invisibility syndrome, which develops the long-term accumulation of stress, emotional abuse and psychological trauma linked to racism. Subtle forms of racism are more likely to be encountered and are more challenging because they operate against the common sense understanding of racism as easily identifiable and do not fall into the remit of ‘clear intentionality’ (Sian, 2017: 5). She found that in the white academy, insults are replaced with a politics of exclusion, which works to situate the body of colour firmly on the outside. There is a sense of invisible forms of bias done by assumptions, double-takes, and the English middle-class discomfort around diversity. BME women are made to question their own practices and actions, rather than the other way around. Everyday interactions attempt to demonstrate that the said individual is ‘presumed incompetent’ as one’s identity appears to clash with the racial prejudices and expectations of her white colleagues (Sian, ibid: 7).

A key problem linked to microaggressions is internalised racism, whereby people of colour start to believe in their own subordination and accept negative attitudes (Bernard, 2017; Sian; 2017; Rollock, 2018).

The above discussion shows that institutional racism operates through racial microaggressions that prevail within the organisation. It is not just a disempowerment for those affected negatively by it, but an empowerment for those who are not. It

causes alienation, distress and a lack of self-esteem and confidence for BME female academic leaders or those aspiring to leadership. It appears to further bolster white people's life chances and is designed to maintain a quiet dominance over those of BME origin.

Yet, BME women attempt to negotiate the challenges posed above to navigate the academic terrain of leadership. This is discussed in the next section.

3.4: Negotiating the challenges through personal, professional and institutional resources and sources of support

The following section examines some of the resources and sources of support that have encouraged and enabled BME women in their trajectory towards academic leadership. At the personal level they include family, community, culture and religion linked to community cultural wealth and acquisition of various capitals (Yosso, 2005). At a professional level, this includes mentoring, access to formal and informal networks and training, and at an institutional level, policy and legislation which reflects the multilevel intersectionality of identity, institutional and social practice (Holvino, 2010).

3.4.1: Personal influences that support BME female academic leadership development

The literature suggests that familial values and beliefs; cultural influences associated with ethnicity such as religion; social class through educational aspiration; and schooling and education influence the development of personal identity of BME women. It includes professional aspiration for educational leadership.

3.4.1.1 Family influences and values

Parents and significant relatives of BME people share ambitions for themselves and their children to achieve social mobility, especially through achieving higher education, and work hard to ensure they convey this message to their children, who to a large degree internalise it and develop ambitions and priorities consistent with those of their parents. Even in cultures that until recently have been portrayed as opposed to the higher education of and employment of women, seem to be

producing growing cohorts of highly motivated minoritised ethnic women (Ahmad et al, 2003).

Modood (2010), on the basis of a literature review, suggests this is achieved through close familial relationships, transmission of aspiration and attitudes, and focused efforts to attain the goals for success. Parents' social class, through social connections and lifestyle, directly impacts on the aspirations their children have. There is intergenerational influence in passing on ambition, as well as community influences such as the existence of successful role models, religious motivations and 'ethnic organisations' as agents for inspiring students to pursue qualifications and prioritise their education (Modood, 2010: 93).

Fook and Nath (2019) found British Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) leaders have a strong sense of familial values which promoted positive self-belief and confidence. Their qualitative study, using narrative analysis, showed 'persistence' and 'courage' taught by family ideals and values were words used by participants when asked how BAME people in leadership coped with experiences of failure or personal slights in their career journeys (ibid: 7). Furthermore, participants highlighted the importance of living by role-modelled familial values such as working hard and the value of education in seeking social improvement, and family aspiration for success was emphasised.

Family support in the form of parental support for education and moral support is rated very highly by BME women in relation to their achievement (Redmond et al, 2016).

The next section looks at cultural influences which encompasses religion and spirituality and how this influences BME female leaders in their practices.

3.4.1.2 Cultural influences including religion

Cultural identity is significant in relation to cultural ethnicity, cultural capital and the experiences of Black women's navigation of their lives in the face of challenges to their racial identity (Bakare-Yusuf, 1997). The values and beliefs inherent in the ethnicity and cultures of BME women influence their leadership constructions, self-definitions and leadership enactment (Atewologun and Singh, 2010; Shah, 2010; Showunmi et al, 2016).

Walker and Dimmock (2002) argue that the notion of educational leadership is formed against the backdrop of the values, patterns of behaviour and ideologies of a community's culture. Ideology and culture create a network of relationships that is complex and challenging in its impact on roles and practices of women educational leaders.

Cultural influences are also seen in the great value that is placed on community support in 'sister' relationships. Drawing on BF, Gabriel (2017) postulates that 'it is through identifying as Black women, self-empowerment is promoted, humanity is reclaimed, which in itself is considered political and active' (Gabriel, ibid: 35). Self-definition and self-value are supported by values present in social relationships, such as community networks, family and Black women's culture, 'sisterhood: the interpersonal relationships that Black women share with each other' based on common experiences of oppression (Gabriel, ibid: 34). These promote a sense of 'solidarity and a sense of community and connection' (Oyewumi, 2003:8). This connectedness with each other helps further to organise and nurture Black communities that build common interests and inspire community activism. This support and encouragement of sister-friends is thought to be a vital component of survival for many BME women in their academic journey (Gabriel, 2017: 37).

Drawing on BF and intersectionality, Curtis (2017) discusses the relationship between Black women senior leaders and religion, where spirituality forms a strong theme which foregrounds career journeys in academic leadership and the experiences of this. Religion has played a defining role for Black women leaders, providing assurances that 'in the midst of fear and confusion, amidst turmoil and uncertainty, appropriate actions and responses will somehow be revealed' (ibid: 96). It gives them agency and confidence in their leadership practice.

Women's social justice, moral or servant leadership has been examined by Grogan and Shakeshaft (2009). They discuss how African American women extend the ministerial aspect of their leadership and include a spiritual dimension; the importance of their spirituality to their success; and ability to push forward, often in conflicting and difficult situations. Drawing on BF theory and using narratives, Bass (2012) highlights that among African American women, spirituality was a strong tradition within their community. Religious backgrounds and beliefs were part of what

had motivated them to care in their leadership practices and had offered them resilience in their career journeys and the ability to navigate and function within a system they perceived as unjust and challenging to their leadership.

Furthermore, Wright et al (2017: 158), drawing on CRT and BF, found that women's religious backgrounds provided them with 'the strength and healing power to cope with the hyper-scrutiny and intensity of the gaze in the racialised and marginalised space that had been created for them'.

Writing about the embodied experience of being a British Muslim woman 'out of place', Mirza (2018: 186) asserts that for a Muslim woman, her religion is a crucial aspect of her sense of self and ethnic belonging. It is through her religious disposition that she expresses her embodied gendered religious agency. Many Muslim women express their faith 'as a private transcendental spiritual space from which they derive inner strength' (ibid: 187).

Examining how female college heads in Pakistan did leadership within the context of a Muslim society dominated by Islam, Shah (2009) found that the women were seen to have a nurturing responsibility toward the family, where men are seen to be the maintainers. The women leaders in this qualitative study were seen to be vulnerable in the professional domain, made so by the relationships and obligations in the family, yet tried to be successful leaders in the face of responsibilities to family and the extended family, as mothers and as women, as demanded in a feudal, patriarchal, segregated society centred around the Muslim faith (Shah, ibid:134). However, these women reinvented the site of public activity, such as educational leadership, as 'family' and relocated it within the domestic, thus making the college a family, an extended family. This meant that the head had to manage the same way as a family head, treating each one in this family according to one's positioning. By constructing their college as family, the women head teachers who felt excluded and segregated in their own communities were able to move into a discourse where they could lay claims to power and authority as mothers, sanctified by religion. 'What educational leadership means for Muslim women leaders cannot be de-linked from their Muslim-ness and associated culture' (Shah, 2010: 40). Their culture and religion create significant capital for them which is used in their leadership.

The next section looks at schooling and education and its relationship to social class and social capital, which is considered an influence for BME female academic leaders in their leadership journeys.

3.4.1.3 Schooling and education

Modood (2010) examines schooling and educational achievement in conjunction with social capital and ethnicity to explain the trajectories of 'second generation' migrants in the UK (ibid: 87). Among British South Asian and Chinese communities, overcoming of disadvantage lies in the internalisation of high educational ambitions and enforcement of appropriate behaviour. Not only did many families value education, but they also saw it as a part of reversing the initial downward social mobility associated with immigration and connected with race, ethnicity and culture, especially in the lives of their children.

For most British sociologists, class is the best explanation of educational outcomes (Modood, 2010). An understanding of this is that it requires the possibility of significant intergenerational social mobility in which HE has a critical role. Those from more advantaged class backgrounds pursue strategies and opportunities to engage with good schooling and HE with the backing of superior resources such as community cultural wealth which nurtures familial, social, aspirational capital (Yosso, 2005), alongside economic capital. However, there will be factors distinctive to particular minorities or to the condition of being a minority in Britain today, such as racialised exclusion that can mitigate or exacerbate class disadvantage (Modood, 2010: 91).

Ethnic minorities in general, and Asians in particular, were seen to have a strong drive towards educational qualifications (Ahmad et al, 2003; Modood, 2010). This can be explained through the following causal sequence.

Firstly, parents, family and community members share durable ambitions to achieve upward social mobility for themselves and especially for their children and believe that HE is important in achieving those ambitions. Hence, HE is prioritised. Secondly, they are successfully able to convey this message to their children who internalise it and even where they may not fully share it, they develop ambitions that are consistent with their parents. Thirdly, the parents' authority and power over their

children, suitably reinforced by culture and upbringing, ensures that children do whatever is necessary at a particular stage for its progression and realisation (Modood, 2010).

This triad of familial-adult relationships, transmission of aspiration and attitudes, and enforcement of these norms appears to be highly pertinent to academic success (Modood: ibid: 100). Schooling, HE, socio-cultural capital and social class appear interconnected and are significant for BME people in progressing their ambitions.

The influences discussed in 3.4.1.1 and 3.4.1.2 above support the development of community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) and the nurturing of various types of capitals such as familial and social, which is considered useful in developing navigational and resistant capitals (Yosso, 2005) in BME women's academic leadership journeys.

3.4.1.4 Acquisition of capitals to support BME female academic leadership

In examining how BME women overcome challenges from the experiences at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class, the acquisition of various capitals (Reay, 1998; Yosso, 2005) is examined and how this might support BME women in navigating their leadership journeys.

The various types of capital acquired through 'community cultural wealth' (Yosso, 2005: 77), which is discussed in Chapter 2.7., is possessed by people from minoritised ethnic groups which empowers them, and which gives them strength in the struggle to advance in their lives. These capitals are central in the discussion about BME women's aspirations and ambitions in relation to their academic leadership. Aspirational capital (ibid), which is nurtured and developed through culture and within social and familial contexts, is often through stories that are recounted, and advice based on experiences that offers ways to challenge. It builds resilience and helps navigate the way through marginalisation and oppression. Familial capital nurtured among families and cultural knowledge comes from their history and heritage, and acknowledges race, gender and ethnicity within the circle of kinship allowing for extended ties and resources to be used by the community and its people. This engenders social capital for BME women, through their cultural contexts, which encompasses networks of people, social contacts and resources

gained by belonging to a cultural community; this in turn supports the development of navigational capital, considered significant to navigate the institutional culture that inhibits academic leadership progression for BME women and provides them with the emotional support through their networks of people and community of resources to do this successfully (Yosso, 2005). This cultural and social capital intersecting with race and gender has the potential to influence career experiences of BME female leaders in HE.

Nevertheless, the capitals acquired as described above are not necessarily valued in institutions. Instead, 'women and minorities have been granted access to management positions, but they do not have sufficient capital (economic, social, political and symbolic) to force a redefinition of the implicit – that is, White male-requirements of the field' (Corsun and Costen, 2001: 18). The white male capital is the one valued within the institution.

Schooling and education are seen to generate social capital valuable to BME women in academic leadership (Modood, 2010) (Chapter 3.4.1.4 above). In addition, social capital within the context of education can be seen as 'the quality and quantity of interactions and social relationships that the educator is exposed to and engages with, between their colleagues and significant others' (Nolan and Molla, 2016: 11). Teachers' social capital plays a critical role in building the talent and competence of individuals and highlights the importance of networks, connections, trust and reciprocity amongst teachers (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012).

Ethnic capital and its significance to BME women has been discussed in Chapter 3.2.2 (Atewologun and Singh, 2010). Furthermore, Modood (2010) postulates that ethnicity means resources, especially when the economic motivation of migrants, the desire for social mobility is acknowledged. Here, ethnicity cuts across economic aspects of social class, and shared ethnicity can lead to accessing resources (ibid: 93).

Furthermore, faith related capital (Shah, 2009) attached to culture and ethnicity also forms part of the capitals considered valuable to BME women academic leaders (Chapter 3.4.1.2).

A consideration of professional capital, alongside other forms of cultural capital, is useful for BME women academic leaders, with respect to their knowledge acquisition, sources of support and resources, confidence, and their agency to be able to offer resistance and navigate their academic journeys.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) discuss the development professional capital, in school teachers, emphasising the importance of (a) the knowledge base of teaching as a profession and understanding the diverse and cultural backgrounds that students come from, having the emotional capability to empathise with diverse groups of children and adults in a school setting (human capital); (b) access to continuing support and collaboration such as networks, dialogue, building trust and confidence (social capital); and (c) professional agency which is the capacity and freedom to make sound judgements in their practices (decisional capital). Professional capital highlights the importance of the individual and collective assets of teachers that underpin effective professional performance and build confidence in what they need to do (ibid: 5). Furthermore, Nolan and Lolla (2016) state that 'confidence' animates and constitutes these three aspects of professional capital (ibid: 11).

The discussion demonstrates that personal resources in the form of family values, culture as ethnicity and its associated values and beliefs, inform familial, aspirational and social capital that help to develop identity and agency via navigational and resistant capital, which support BME women in their leadership journey.

The professional sources of support, which are discussed next, form a significant body of literature in relation to how BME women negotiate some of the challenges they face in their leadership experiences.

3.4.2 Professional resources and sources of support

The literature suggests that mentoring relationships, access to networks and leadership training have supported and influenced BME women in their educational leadership journeys in HE.

3.4.2.1 Mentoring and the mentoring relationship

Mentoring has been defined in various ways. It can be described as a pairing between a senior, more experienced person, with a junior, less experienced person, for the purpose of guidance and advice, for primarily professional, but sometimes also personal development (Clutterbuck et al, 2017).

In examining the mentoring relationship for BME women, mentoring for BME people is advocated as a form of resistance, as it nurtures emotional resources and helps maintain a positive view of oneself in an environment where self-esteem is continually undermined (Opara, 2020).

Mentoring relationships set the frame to understand salient issues and support in giving the mentee thinking space to identify, recognise and disentangle what Bhopal et al (2016) refer to as the covert, subtle and nuanced racism in the White space of the academy. Secondly, it allows women the tools to work creatively with what are referred to as 'invisible injuries' that Black people experience in workplace environments (Bernard, ibid: 83). Creation of a safe space, such as in the mentoring relationship, allows for authentic expression of oneself and to be able to speak of the fatigue that is felt due to racial discrimination and inequality. It allows for an enhancement of voice 'to make sense of the subtle and covert signifiers for the 'other' in the academy' (Bernard, ibid: 84). Furthermore, 'reverse mentoring' for equality diversity and inclusion is also advocated for BME academics, which includes mentoring of senior leaders by more junior BME academics as a strategy to help understand the challenges faced by BME academics in HE and raise awareness and action amongst the leadership team (Johnson, 2020).

Opara (2020) discusses the value of mentoring for Black middle-class women in the science academy, whose experiences were 'pernicious, anger, frustration, disappointment and isolation' (ibid: 42). She advocates a Black-woman-to-Black woman mentor-mentee relationship as a way of understanding how the role of the mentor through the lens of intersectionality of race, gender and social class could be used as an act of resistance to break down the challenges inherent in the academy. The Black-woman-to Black-woman relationship was invaluable as it allowed them to 'affirm one another's humanity, specialness, and the right to exist' (Opara, 2020: 113). The resistance developed through mentoring was felt to give the Black women

tools to protect themselves and to challenge attempts to undermine and isolate them. The opportunities for defining and giving value to oneself in the mentoring relationship were primarily because the mentoring experiences provide safe spaces that give a voice to both mentor and mentee and allows for a personal and professional richness gained by both mentor and mentee. It helped build resistant capital (Yosso, 2005).

Mentoring relationships give access to wider networks and 'can help achieve a solidarity through a sisterhood: a strong, robust and resilient sisterhood that is not influenced by the hegemonic dominance of white males and their slow to change attitudes towards gender and race' (Opara, ibid: 45). Furthermore, Hill-Collins (2009: 107) purports that a network formed from mentor-mentee relationships 'convinces me that this sisterhood must be built on our commonality and learning from and about our diversity and uniqueness'. This type of network is considered significant and invaluable in helping BME women to adopt strategies and acts of resistance to break down the challenges that affect them at institutional level.

Bernard (2017) speaks of carving a space to develop the tools needed to navigate the intricate and complex racialised and gendered encounters she faced in her academic development. Whilst there was very little chance of finding a mentor of the same gender/race (as she was the only Black academic in her faculty), it took her a long time to approach her institution to fund the employment of a Black mentor, external to the academy. This does mean successful mentorship is difficult to come by for BME women starting their journey into leadership, but it needs to be strongly advocated for women who wish to succeed in the academic environment that is at times indifferent or hostile. It supports the development of professional, resistance and navigational capital considered necessary to negotiate academic career journeys for BME women (Yosso, 2005; Bernard, 2017; Opara, 2020).

Mentoring is reported to facilitate higher career satisfaction and expedite career progress (Bass and Bass, 2009), as is access to networks.

3.4.2.2 Networking

The significance of others in fast tracking one's leadership paths is recognised by BME women in some of the studies reviewed (Jones et al, 2006; Wright et al, 2007).

The major difference between majority and minority ethic women's experiences on how relationships facilitate career progression concerned their access to networks. The former described access to informal and official networks, whilst the latter reported restricted access to the informal organisational networks, which directly impacted promotion prospects and their path to visible leadership roles (Showumni et al, 2016). Limited access to informal networks of influence attributed to a raced, gendered, classed institutional culture may help explain why few Black women advance to higher levels, where these networks are often vital to career progression (Abdalla, 2018).

A lack of formal mentoring systems and female role models can lead to difficulties in women accessing significant social networks at work (Abdalla, 2018). What the literature appears to suggest is that both mentoring and informal networking enable Black women senior leaders to thrive in their roles and secure higher levels of confidence and job satisfaction, due to the social interaction that both approaches offer.

To negotiate the 'labyrinth' of leadership in any organisation, women are required to demonstrate both 'agentic and communal skills as well as create social capital used in one's professional life' (Eagly and Carli, 2007: 8). Networking with both men and women was considered essential if leadership is the prize goal, alongside mentoring. Mentoring and networking were considered to be essential to the leadership journey of the principals and superintendents in Brown's (2014) study, especially in terms of how to approach challenges and conflict resolution. Underpinned by BF, the study showed that had it not been for their mentors providing them with opportunities for growth and learning in their leadership experiences, their career path may have been very different.

Brewis et al (2020) advise other BME women in relation to the power of networks from a position of BF: 'For women of colour to exist in the white academy is to resist the white academy and not put our bodies in harm's way on a daily basis for the lofty and unrealistic aims to valiantly overthrow white capitalist patriarchies once and for all' (Ibid: 32). Furthermore, Pow (2018: 238) postulates in relation to the power of networks that the radical heart of anti-racist work 'is being exactly who we are while

knowing that those who we are, transgresses the racialized systems of creating value in British higher education'.

Drawing on whiteness theory and social identity theory, Miller (2016) explains the white sanction required for BME colleagues to access mentors and networks and progress in their careers in the institution. A white colleague acts as a kind of broker, providing a note of verbal and/or written recommendation that says to other white colleagues, especially, that this person has an acceptable personality and is therefore with a desirable work colleague. Furthermore, such practices raise important questions in relation to the power of networks – in particular, white networks, whether formal or informal and how access to them further affects progression for BME female academic leaders.

3.4.2.3 Leadership training

There is a paucity of targeted leadership programmes for BME women attempting to navigate a path in HE leadership (Mirza, 2017). The occupancy of leadership positions in education provides a suitable point of departure to consider the relevance of social justice in advancing educational leadership for BME women and the implications for the institution in facilitating diverse and equitable leadership opportunities in education.

The tailoring of leadership development programmes for women of colour as one cohort is advocated by Showunmi et al (2016). The rationale for this is the creation of identity-safe spaces for women to discuss how gender, ethnic, religious and class intersections may influence career progression, leadership beliefs and behaviours. Identity-safe spaces are thought to facilitate connections across boundaries and openness to difficult feedback, conditions that enable learning and development. This gives scope for women of colour to engage in collaborative dialogue with each other and reflect on their positions to challenge and change universally held leadership assumptions in organisations.

'When women of colour strive to learn with and about one another we take responsibility for building sisterhood. To experience solidarity, we must have a community of interests, shared beliefs, and goals to unite, to build Sisterhood.'

(bell hooks, 2014: 64)

This is a way to ensure empowerment for BME women in the institution which supports their leadership aspiration.

Capper (2015) conducted a literature review of CRT in educational leadership and directs our attention to leadership preparation focusing on intersectionality and centred on one identity, such as race (Gooden and Dantley, 2012). Race and how it intersects with other identities beyond gender is also recommended, to include language, ethnicity and sexual/gender identity. This recommendation is suggested so that leaders can further develop an anti-racist identity for themselves and learn how to develop such an identity with their staff and students (Gooden and Dantley, 2012). This anti-racist identity occurs as a result of leaders being committed to life-long work on their own racist assumptions and beliefs, via professional development, critical reading, media, authentic relationships with BME individuals and other related experiences (Capper, 2015: 802)

The provision of a customised BME leadership programmes is one of the measures employed to address the under representation of teachers and school leaders from minoritised ethnic backgrounds (Ogunbawo, 2012). The BME leadership programmes were found to offer a supportive, understanding community in which participants were able to identify the leadership qualities they brought from their cultures, backgrounds and life experiences (Ogunbawo, 2012: 170). The programme brought participants much-needed Continuing Professional Development opportunities; involvement in a professional network with other BME school leaders with similar experiences; mentoring and coaching from BME role models from whom the participants learned valuable skills of turning obstacles into opportunities; as well as the skills of identifying, recognising and maximising available and existing opportunities. Such a programme is transferable into HE and would be of value to BME female academic leaders.

This discussion highlights the significance of mentoring, access to networks and culturally sensitive leadership training in overcoming the challenges for BME female academic leaders in HE.

3.4.3 Institutional policy that supports equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) for BME women

Chapter 1 provided an account of the socio-political context that surrounds the development of this research study. It focuses on the public sector, including universities' responsibility to implement cultural and organisational change to create inclusive spaces that embrace greater diversification and ethnic difference (Arday, 2018: 195), through equalities and anti-discrimination legislation (2010) and the Public Sector Equality Duty (2012). In an attempt to change the landscape of inequality, universities have implemented diversity agendas, which aim to advance recommendations that profess a commitment to equal access and inclusivity. However, there is also the issue of interest convergence regarding marketisation in HE that may have prompted these changes.

Arday (2018) uses narrative analysis to illuminate the challenges that saturate the institution concerning leadership opportunities. He suggests that while universities concern themselves with developing tokenistic equality and diversity widening participation interventions, 'the spiral of inequality which pervades continues to disadvantage potential BME leaders who continue to experience a paucity of leadership opportunities available to them' (ibid: 192).

UK Government attempts to address the imbalance of BME career progression within the sector and wider society, such as the Race Relations Act (1976) and the Equality Act (2010), have often become submersed in stories of rhetoric rather than specific policy-driven action (Bhopal and Pitkin, 2020). Although interventions such as ECU's Race Equality Charter (Advance HE, 2017) and Athena SWAN Charter (Advance HE, 2018) aim to address and challenge the status quo, the emphasis to implement penetrative change is still at the behest of the institution themselves (Arday, 2018), with more senior leaders in HE institutions needing to engage with their own equality practices as there is often a disconnection between actions and words (Bhopal and Pitkin, 2020).

Recent research shows there have been interventions to evaluate and identify patterns of BME leadership within the sector (ECU, 2017), yet institutions continue to be unaccountable for not actively diversifying senior leadership teams within HE (Arday, 2018). A significant factor that has facilitated the spiral of racial

discrimination is unconscious bias (Jarboe, 2016; Rollock, 2016), which persistently impacts on aspects of racial inequality regarding the disparity in BME leadership appointments within HE (Arday, 2018). Although few individuals set out to consciously discriminate, all people develop unconscious biases and preferences that influence one's judgements and decision making. This becomes a powerful indicator of how senior stakeholders within universities appoint and promote candidates or colleagues who manifest tenets of their own cultural, gender, class or racial identity (Jarboe, 2016). The caveat to this particular narrative is that often many of these circumstances are situated within a dominant white male leadership hierarchy that has traditionally marginalised minoritised ethnic groups and women (Jarboe, 2016; Kwalhi, 2017).

Bhopal et al (2016) advocate for unconscious bias training, including training about being an active bystander. The training itself needs to be done with care and in a nuanced way, 'so that there is an understanding of bias inherent in us all' which needs teasing out through self-reflection if unconscious bias is to be mitigated for (Loke, 2018: 386). This approach encourages more critical reflection by academic staff and may help mitigate for misrecognition and help challenge the assumptions of whiteness as the norm. Addressing the knowledge gives rise to BME people being included and supports the sense of belonging (Loke, 2018).

In looking at the experiences of BME women, at the intersections of their multiple identities, the focus on gender 'only serves to highlight the lack of progress on the race/ethnicity front' (Jones, 2006: 148). The argument is further supported, in that positive action taken in relation to gender is not reflected in inclusive policymaking related to race, where the whiteness of senior staff is taken for granted (Pilkington, 2013). Furthermore, the gender experiences refer to the experiences of those 'women who share the backgrounds of the traditional academic elites' (Bhopal, 2014: 3). Consequently, BME women are disadvantaged because 'the experiences of Black women academics are structured by racialised practices, from which white women may derive benefit' (Jones, 2006: 159).

This discussion highlights that greater change is required in UK HE institutions in relation to application of discrimination legislation and policy to ensure equal opportunities for BME women in HE to progress in academic leadership.

The following section progresses to review literature about how BME women do leadership and navigate the challenges they face to their leadership practice from the intersection of their multiple identities.

3.5 Models of educational leadership for BME female academic leaders in HE

This section explores different leadership perspectives including transformative leadership (Shields, 2010); Ubuntu as a transformative leadership philosophy (Ncube, 2010); servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1970); applied critical leadership (Santamaría and Santamaría 2012); and bridge leadership (Horsford, 2012) in education contexts.

To fully understand the educational context in which BME women leaders work, it needs to be understood that the context of their leadership practice is socially constructed, and intersects with their identity which is influenced by their race, gender and other multiple identities; there are collective (cultural or educational) assumptions of the work that BME women do, and the value placed on their work is affected by a diverse range of societal factors (e.g. social) and power relations (e.g. political) (Eacott, 2011).

The majority of literature about educational leadership practice by BME educational leaders is set within schools which has been reviewed alongside the literature specific to HE contexts.

3.5.1 Transformative leadership

Transformative leadership is advocated for guiding the practice of educational leaders who want to affect both educational and broader social change. It begins with questions of justice and democracy and a critique of inequitable practices, whilst offering the promise of not only greater individual achievement but of a better life lived in common with others (Shields, 2010: 559). Transformative leadership links leadership practice with leadership for inclusive and socially just learning environments and is thus grounded in an activist agenda; one that focuses on the individual's right to be treated with respect and dignity, with a social justice theory of

ethics that takes these rights into society. Furthermore, it emphasises the socially constructed nature of society and acknowledges the fact that power resides with a few people, which inevitably means that others get excluded from decision making.

A key characteristic of transformative leaders is that they work to become change agents who facilitate meaningful discourse that is meant to give voice to the arguments of social justice and to cause one to question assumptions made of race, gender and other multiple identities (Quantz et al, 1991).

Johnson and Thomas (2012: 158) explore the social and cultural contexts that drive Black women's leadership in HE. Using BF and Black feminist thought as a conceptual framework, they showed how Black women's 'ways of knowing' and their embodiment influence their leadership practice. They found that Black women balance their own ideals, aspirations, models and behaviours as leaders, based on their experiences in their relevant work environments. In educational environments, where white and male norms persist, Black women formulate their own ideals regarding what demonstrates effective leadership which emphasises collaboration and participation, as well as caring (Bass, 2012). The Black women sought to achieve a leadership identity that affirmed the existence of their own voice and sought to enable the voices of women in the future. They employed a particular consciousness that is directly associated with their interpretation of their embodied situation and adapted to this. Johnson and Thomas (2012: 167) conclude that the Black women studied 'learned in their leadership journeys, to reconcile what the world made of them with what they indeed desired to make of themselves'.

3.5.2 Ubuntu as a transformative leadership philosophy

Ubuntu is a term derived from the Bantu Nguni languages of Zulu, Xhosa, Swati and Ndeble. It can be described as a social philosophy (Ncube, 2010). Ubuntu is considered distinct on various levels from Western philosophies that have been in existence for many decades. Ubuntu is basically a cultural value system; it is Indigenous and Afrocentric. It offers a different approach to understanding leadership, invoking traditional cultural perspectives of leadership, and balances the past (by learning from it), the present (by examining immediate and pressing concerns), and the future (by providing a vision). Lastly, as a postcolonial paradigm

of leadership, Ubuntu holds promise for a more inclusive discourse that embraces historically misinterpreted and marginalised non-Western traditions (Ncube, ibid).

The Ubuntu leadership philosophy framework (Ncube, ibid: 81) holds the importance of human beings, regardless of background, at its core and advocates for leadership. This is through role modelling; a shared vision allowing for diversity of perspectives; change and transformation through openness and transparency; building an interconnectedness and interdependency which strengthens others; collectivism that encourages teamwork and builds solidarity in an organisation; and through continuous integrated development, where Ubuntu allows people to be empowered and to grow.

Portelli and Campbell-Stephens (2009) use the concept of 'servant leadership' credited to Greenleaf (1970), which puts service before leadership and prioritises the people/community and their needs that the leader aims to serve (Portelli and Campbell-Stephens, 2009: 47). The emphasis is on 'servant leadership, underpinned by a commitment to pursuing/achieving equity and to create a space for the human being to be, in the spirit of the Ubuntu' (ibid: 54). It is argued that Back and global majority people are predisposed to servant leadership because of their cultural backgrounds/upbringing and experiences of racial domination through colonialism and imperialism. It is about a collegiate way of working, building communal capacity, much more about seeing oneself as a leader within the community rather than in one part of the community. The emphasis is placed on shared leadership rather than domination (Maylor, 2018: 356). This could also be viewed as a collective resistance to oppressions faced.

Ubuntu leadership has been described by Showunmi et al (2016) who used an intersectional lens to examine the leadership experiences of BME and white women in senior management positions, including in UK HE, arising from multiple identities of race, gender and ethnicity. They found that the BME women in their study self-defined leadership to include a simultaneous internal and external orientation that was grounded in their ethno-cultural identities. There was an orientation to be diversity centric which suggested another orientation that paralleled the Ubuntu model of leadership (ibid: 928). At the core of this philosophy is respect, dignity and care for individuals and groups. Connection with the collective parallels the minority

ethnic women's external orientation of leadership, an apparent outcome of their experiences as minoritised individuals.

3.5.3 Applied Critical Leadership

In calling for a transformative and servant leadership to address issues of social justice at every level in the education community, Santamaría and Santamaría (2012) draw on CRT and cultural responsiveness to advocate for 'culturally responsive leadership in higher education' (Ibid:4). It can be defined as 'theory and educational leadership practices (for example, influence, management, administration) that take into consideration multiple identities of race, ethnicity, culture and gender' (Santamaría and Santamaría, 2016: 6). Culturally responsive leadership is advocated to enable individual leaders to use cultural responsiveness and informed purposeful facilitation to address inequities and gaps that perpetuate education systems.

Applied Critical Leadership (ACL) is defined as 'a strengths-based model of leadership practice where educational leaders consider the social context of their educational communities and empower individual members of these communities based on the educational leaders' identities (i.e., race, gender, class, subjectivity, biases, assumptions and traditions) as perceived through a critical race theory (CRT) or other critical lens (for example, queer, feminist)' (Santamaría and Santamaría 2012: 5). They assert that one's identity and experiences of diverse educational leaders' impact on their leadership practice. The hypothesis created, and that still remains, is that leaders of colour, otherwise marginalised individuals or those who may choose to practice leadership through a CRT lens, draw upon the positive attributes of their identities and lived experiences within their societal sphere, when making leadership decisions (Santamaría and Santamaría, 2012, 2016).

Critical leadership is about choosing change as opposed to choosing to change (Santamaría, 2012: 20). Choosing change means to elect to work for change on a societal level, fully aware that the issues are rooted in institutions. In contrast, choosing to change means individuals conform or assimilate to match the majority because it is 'either the path of least resistance' (Santamaría, ibid: 20) or they are unaware that issues even exist. Critical leaders are individuals who recognise and fully understand critical issues; they convince others that the issues are significant

issues, and they create a safe space for reflections, conversations and actions to occur (Santamaría and Santamaría, 2012:7).

In summary, the characteristics of ACL as described by Fuller (in press), cited by Santamaría and Santamaría (2012: 141-143), are:

- *Critical race perspectives:* which use a CRT perspective and are conscious of subjectivity, bias and stereotyping
- *Critical leadership practices:* which use a consensus approach to decision making; leaders lead by example to meet an educational challenge and are considered transformative, servant leaders who serve the good of all their members, with a focus on social justice
- *Critical leadership knowledge production:* which makes empirical contributions, thus adding to the evidence base for academic discourse regarding diverse, marginalised groups

3.5.4 Bridge leadership

Horsford (2012) in the US brings attention to bridge leadership as a model for educational leaders in 21st century schools, to describe how the intersection of race and gender as experienced by Black women has not only shaped their leadership philosophy and approach, but also 'their ability to serve as bridges across for others, to others and between others in oppressive and discriminatory contexts over time' (ibid: 13). Framed by a discussion of Black feminisms, Horsford (ibid) centres the intersectionality of race and gender identities alongside important indicators in the development of leadership philosophies, epistemologies and practice. It is located within a conceptualisation of leadership for diversity, equity and social justice in education.

Bridge leadership is best understood as a grass-roots leadership approach which is embedded in democratic practice, community work and social change to improve the lives of the disadvantaged. It encompasses leadership ability that must negotiate difference, primarily race, gender and class divide, and commit to addressing social injustice which severely impacts on the life chances of Black and disadvantaged minorities in schools. Horsford (2012: 19) suggests that as a model for educational

leaders, ‘bridge leadership can serve as a conceptual and practical guide for bridging both racial and gender divides through culturally relevant, responsive, and conscious policies and practices, as grounded in a lived experience that theorises that until racism, sexism and class oppression are dismantled, no one is free’.

Whilst Horsford’s (2012) scholarly work allows us to expand our knowledge of how educational leadership can and should be done for diversity, equity and social justice, she asserts that there is still limited research on how the lived experiences, dispositions and standpoints of leaders who are neither white nor male must be extended in ways that improve leadership practice in the field of education. Examining the intersectional identities and bridge leadership of Black women allows expansion of knowledge of how leadership can and should lead for diversity, equity and social justice. Horsford concludes by saying that ‘perhaps the most important trait of bridge leadership and social justice leadership in education is self-awareness and knowing and being a bridge to one’s true self’ (Horsford 2012: 17).

This section has reviewed different types of leadership practice that focus on social justice in bringing about educational and broader social change. It acknowledges that race, gender, ethnicity, language and culture must be recognised and negotiated to ensure a leadership practice that makes a difference for BME persons in educational contexts. The literature also shows that despite experiences of inequality, gendered racism and discrimination, the driving force for BME women appears to be about making a difference and influencing change through the enactment of their leadership.

3.6 Chapter summary

This literature review examined the experiences of BME female academic leaders in HE, at the intersections of their multiple identities of race, ethnicity, gender and social class.

Personal identity, which is heavily influenced by one’s ethnicity and related culture, contributes to how people define themselves in a professional role. Keeping race at the centre, the literature reviewed show how structural inequalities cause inequality,

discrimination and marginalisation for BME women, at the intersection of their multiple identities of race, gender, ethnicity and social class.

The experiences at the intersections of race, gender and ethnicity cause exclusion and isolation for BME women academic leaders in HE, where the institutional culture of whiteness makes them feel they don't belong. Their ethnicity renders them hyper-visible in diversity roles assigned to them because of their identities. However, their ethnicity and associated cultural beliefs and values also gives them collective agency. Class discrimination remains a significant barrier in women's academic progress, intersecting with race, gender and ethnicity to inform and influence everyday practice.

Institutional racism, encompassing white privilege and microaggressions in HE, poses challenges to BME female academic leaders. White male leadership dominates, rendering BME women invisible and stereotyped as lacking credibility for leadership because of their race and gender. Racial microaggressions cause distress, frustration and exhaustion for BME female academic leaders. Furthermore, the intersectionality between races can cause disadvantage to BME women in the academy. Some BME women acculturate and develop bicultural competence in order to survive the institutional culture that causes inequality and discrimination.

Despite these challenges, BME women want to engage with academic leadership. They do so by using their personal identities to inform their professional identities of academic leadership, to overcome and navigate the challenges they face. Personal influences such as family influences, and ethno-cultural beliefs which include religion and schooling and education, support the development of familial, social, cultural and ethnic capital which influence values and their professional work. Professional, resistant, and navigational capital is developed through access to professional mentorship, formal and informal networks, leadership training and legislative policies, which are all seen as sources of institutional support and required for progression of careers in academic leadership. However, the literature suggests that more is needed in relation to culturally sensitive leadership training, and leadership policies need more application in relation to anti-discriminatory practice to ensure equal opportunities for BME women in the institution.

BME female academic leadership is reflective of personal values and the intersection of multiple identities of race, gender, ethnicity and social class, which is seen in inclusive, relational, ethical, respectful, caring leadership with social justice at the core.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Research Design

4.0 Introduction

The following chapter describes the methodology and design of this research study which is developed within the socio-political context of racism, ethnicity and inequalities experienced in UK higher education (HE) (Chapter 1; 1.0) and is underpinned by the theoretical framework (Chapter 2). Together, these preceding chapters help to explain the decisions made and subsequent activities that were undertaken in relation to my research study.

Firstly, my philosophical approach outlining my ontology and epistemology is considered, where my Black and Minoritised Ethnic (BME) identity influences my reality, experiences, and social construction of knowledge. Drawing on my theoretical framework informed by intersectionality theory, as it relates to Critical Race Theory (CRT), Black Feminism (BF), Black British Feminism (BBF), Postcolonial Feminism (PF) and theories of identity and culture, I seek to understand how race, gender, ethnicity and social class intersect with each other to shape the participants' lived career experiences in academic leadership in HE.

An intersectional, qualitative, feminist methodological approach has been adopted, using narrative inquiry and the life history method to explore the lived experiences of the BME female leaders. It focuses on their career histories in HE, where the use of narrative enquiry in feminist research paradigms is considered a significant epistemological tool for understanding human experience (Polkinghorne, 2007: 481). Furthermore, the life history method allows the participants to tell their stories in their own voices. I position myself as an insider in this research and this is discussed further (Minkler, 2004).

I chose to use the life history method to explore career histories as this would elicit the rich data required for this study and make it manageable within the time frames of this research study.

The ethical issues arising from the research method used are also discussed in this chapter (Appendix 4). Moreover, I adopted a subjective approach as the researcher to explore the career histories of the BME women leaders in my study.

The data collection tools included an adapted career grid (Appendix 2) and two face-to-face, semi-structured interviews for each participant which are detailed below (Appendix 3). The process of data collection with consideration of issues such as access, trustworthiness and reliability are also considered.

The rationale for the choice of sampling methods is discussed in this chapter along with participant information and the interview schedules (Appendix 1). I piloted the semi-structured interview with two BME academic leaders and I have included an account of this.

I also discuss some of the challenges experienced that are associated with the research study and an evaluation of the research methods used.

Finally, the process of analysing the data is explained with an outline of the themes that emerged from the data.

4.1 Aims of the research study and the research questions

Framed as an inquiry, the overall aim of the research study was to explore the lived career experiences of eight BME female academic leaders, to gain knowledge and understanding relating to their under-representation in the sector. Hence, the research aimed to identify the influences on their career aspirations, understand the challenges posed, alongside the sources of support and resources which enabled them to navigate their leadership journey.

To support the aim of this study, the overarching research question and sub-questions (Appendix 3) used to explore the career histories of BME women in roles of academic leadership in HE are re-stated below:

Research question: What are the experiences for BME female leaders in HE, at the intersection of race, gender, ethnicity and social class?

Sub-questions:

1. How do race, gender, ethnicity and social class intersect to shape BME women's leadership?
2. What do BME women perceive to be the resources/sources of support and/or challenges to their career?
3. How do BME women perceive their career histories in relation to their role of academic leadership within HE?
4. How do BME women negotiate the challenges they face to develop professional relationships within their team(s) in HE?

4.2 Philosophical approach

Research questions need to be articulated within a framework of ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives (Punch, 2014).

4.2.1 My ontology

Ontological beliefs can be situated on a continuum with social reality as a construct which is external to individuals at one end and social reality as the product of the individual at the other (Punch, 2014). My own ontological positioning refers to assumptions of reality rooted in my experience and understanding of the world. I identify as an Asian Indian British woman self-assessed as having a middle-class upbringing, raised in different parts of the Indian sub-continent, and grown to womanhood in Britain. I believe that my life events, such as birth, death, schooling, education, migration, marriage, having children, employment and my personal relationships with others, have had a huge impact on my assumptions of reality as a BME woman. These are influenced by the intersection of my multiple identities of race, gender, ethnicity and social class amongst others.

4.2.2 My epistemology

In reflecting on my epistemological stance, I see knowledge construction as a process that is shaped by one's values, own experiences and understanding of the world. It is also influenced by other individuals, groups and their interactions and

engagement with each other. For me, knowledge and reality are subjective and are constructed within individuals. This is viewed as 'social constructivism', a perspective that believes that a great deal of human life exists as it does due to social and interpersonal influences (Gergen,1985: 5). Although genetically inherited factors and social factors are at work at the same time, social constructivism does not deny the influence of genetic inheritance but concentrates on investigating the social influences on communal and individual life. Indeed, social constructivism is particularly interested in phenomena that are contingent upon human culture and human decisions, contingent upon the theories, texts, conventions, actions, practices of individuals and groups of people, places and times (Gergen: ibid). So, knowledge is inextricably linked to, and emerges as a product of, activity and purpose.

My ontological beliefs and epistemological stance are linked. I believe that we each have our own truth and that knowledge is socially constructed and influenced by our identities and the intersection of multiple identities such as race, gender, ethnicity and social class to produce experiences. I have been less interested in developing research which has universal meaning and am more concerned with research that generates meanings which are contextual and specific to a set of people and circumstances. Hence, the social constructivist paradigm is appropriate for my study, where I believe that knowledge is produced through the interactions between researcher and participants in this research study. This epistemology has guided my research methodology and helped elucidate the unique perceptions and constructions of reality, for the BME women who are academic leaders in my research study.

4.3 Methodology

Linked to my ontological and epistemological position and ideologies, which keep race at the centre and intersectionality as a central tenet, it was essential to select an appropriate feminist methodology to carry out research investigations into the career histories of BME female academic leaders in HE.

The theoretical framework (Chapter 2) lends itself to a qualitative feminist methodology where BME women can, through counter-narrative (CRT), share their

stories in their own voices (BF), which supports understanding of their potentially complex lives and career journeys experienced at the intersection of multiple identities such as race, ethnicity, gender and social class across their culture (theories of identity and culture; BBF) and history (PF). Hence, I use an intersectional lens as central to the design and analysis of my study, to focus on how multiple identities intersect to produce oppressions.

4.3.1 Narrative inquiry

'Narrative inquiry is both phenomenon and methodology for understanding experience'; narrative inquiry can be itself 'a practice of social justice' (Caine et al, 2017:133).

Our attention is drawn to understanding narrative inquiry as a practice for social justice, where identifying problems without attending to the lives of people first can result in silencing of participants in narrative inquiry. Caine et al (2017) advocate that our participants should not necessarily be a representation of a social justice problem but as people composing a life. Thus, engaging in narrative inquiry and its analysis means the researcher is listening carefully for the social justice issues that are named during and as part of the inquiry, which supports a shift away from a descriptive account of experience to show how social justice issues are lived, understood and told by participants and researchers. Whilst there are multiple visions and ideas of social justice, for the narrative inquirer, these are grounded in experience.

The reflections that were collected as part of this thesis are narratives that provide a means to give voice to the participants and allow for critical examination of experiences at the intersections of multiple identities within leadership journeys. That is not to say that the BME women in this study are assumed to be marginalised and do not have power within senior leadership positions. However, they need to share their experiences of academic leadership as a way of illuminating BME women academic leaders' successes and challenges that would inform those who lead change in our HE institutions. There is also an assumption that some BME women may fail to overcome the challenges to academic leadership and this needs to be shared too.

The interconnectedness of narrative and human experience means that professional experience cannot be captured just through empirical methods, summarising the experience and issues surrounding it through statistical methods. The trustworthiness of narrative where the participants trust the researcher with their story is more closely associated with meaningful analysis than with consequences, and reliability is not the stability of the measurement, but rather the trustworthiness of the notes or transcripts and the process as a whole (Polkinghorne, 2007).

For this research study, a research methodology that sees reality as coming from human experiences was necessary. This is because each participant attributes different meanings to the reasons for their experiences, based on their multiple realities. This includes how individuals create a sense of self and exercise agency within wider structuring processes, which fits with an ontology of a qualitative paradigm that values and recognises personal experience of the nature of truth. Within this paradigm, the truth can vary between individuals. However, each one contributes to what it is like to be a BME woman in a position of academic leadership within HE.

One of the key epistemological and methodological assumptions in my research study was that BME women leaders could provide a window to discursive practices, in which the BME women locate themselves, and how these in turn may reveal the differences in the discourses of academic leadership in HE. The choice of research methods, discussed below, focus on the most efficient and effective means of collecting the data in a systematic way and within the constraints of time and limited resources. Secondly, I also focused on the best methods to analyse the data, allowing for criticality, and challenging my thinking, to enable new knowledge to emerge.

4.3.2 Researching lived experiences: the life history method

I am genuinely interested in the stories of other people's lives and am curious about the experiences and influences that have shaped them into the individuals they have become or aspire to be. Given my intersectional feminist methodology, I anticipated that the use of the life history method would enable a deeper understanding of the lived career experiences of the BME women at the intersections of their multiple identities, by hearing their stories told in their own voice. As described in 4.0 above, I

adapted life history to mean career history of the participants, as an account of career history was relevant and appropriate to my research question. It would elicit rich data that would also be manageable within the parameters of this research study.

I also wanted to use my own lived experiences as a self-identified BME woman and academic leader in HE, to write myself into the research. My research sought to create positive relationships with participants, by acknowledging shared life experiences, a shared vision of leadership practice, in order to gather the rich data produced. As a feminist researcher, I am conscious of the issues of gender and power and ethics that govern the research process. Feminist researchers have been particularly vocal of their support of the life history approach, mainly due to the way in which it can be used to give expression and voice to the sort of lives women live, which could be hidden or silenced lives, lives lived privately and without public accomplishment (Young and Skrla, 2012). It is within the context set above that I chose the life history method for my research study.

Drawing on BBF and PF, I positioned myself as an Asian Indian British feminist researcher amplifying the voices of BME women academic leaders in HE. I was not proposing to speak for them as they were more than able to do this themselves. My role within was to channel and present participants' experiences as individual career histories, and identify links between them, which might form shared threads, which might then form a collective story familiar to others beyond the scope of this research. I was aware that the participants were not necessarily members of a particularly disadvantaged group in terms of wider society. They might be seen as well-educated, well-remunerated leaders in education. Nevertheless, they might be in a relatively disempowered or disadvantaged position if experiencing structural and systematic racism, potentially excluding them from discourses which influence those institutional policies supporting the career progression of BME women in the institution.

Life history methodology is offered as a narrative inquiry approach and 'is probably the only authentic means of understanding how motives and practices reflect the intimate intersection of institutional and individual experiences in the postmodern world' (Dhunpath, 2000: 544). Life history research operates with principles,

advantages and pitfalls, which are discussed below alongside a rationale as to why I chose this methodology for my study. I felt it offered a way of exploring the relationship between the culture, the social structure and the individual lives.

Kelchtermans (1993: 444) characterises life history as having five general features: 'narrative, constructivistic, contexualistic, interactionistic and dynamic.' The 'narrative' element refers to the subjective, narrative form in which the participant presents their career experiences. The focus is the meaning it has for the respondent rather than the factual accuracy of the story constructed. In this respect, the approach is also 'constructivistic', since the story is a composition of construed meanings and self-representations (Kelchtermans, ibid: 444). Narratives emphasise personal stories and the intensely individual nature of each person's experience. However, Hargreaves (1996) warns of the dangers of becoming so overly focused on the individual's story and narratives of the personal practical, to the exclusion of issues and experiences that are deeply embedded in a world that is also social, political and historical. It was crucial that the career histories of the participants in my study be situated in a larger tapestry of individual, community and institutional enquiry – a social context. This helped give focus to the intersection of life in relation to history, social science, education, feminist and minority perspectives. The 'context' then refers to the physical and institutional environment, alongside social, cultural and interpersonal environment which includes parents, peers, mentors, colleagues. The interpersonal context provides both powerful positive and negative influences that shape one's educational career and practice, whilst the institutional context, which manifests itself through the organisational structure roles and relationships, significantly influences an educator's practice and career phases (Huberman, 1993). Clandinin and Connelly (1994) argue that human behaviour always results from a meaningful interaction with the social and cultural environment and with other people. Hence, life history methodology can also be seen to be 'interactionistic'.

The exploration of career histories of the women in my study, through the life history methodology, gives an insight into how they experience the world. Kelchtermans (1993) further explains the 'dynamic' element, which is another core dimension of this approach, the temporal dimension and developmental dynamic, where the recounting of their career histories allows the participants the rich opportunity to re-

examine and reconstruct their own perceptions of personal experience. This demonstrates that 'life history methodology has its own sophisticated organising principles, which enables the researcher to preserve his/her credibility, without constraining the fertile imagination from discovering its limits' (Dhunpath, 2000: 546).

Focusing on my underpinning theoretical framework and the use of narrative inquiry, I tried to ensure that by using the life history method I maintained respect for the individual's voice and focused on developing an understanding of the relationship between my participants' life experiences and backgrounds to the practice of their academic leadership. I felt this method would ensure I kept the leadership experiences at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class of the BME women at the forefront of my thinking and analysis.

4.3.3 Positioning myself as the researcher

Given my theoretical underpinnings and philosophical approach, it was important to locate and position myself in this research study.

My study, which adopts a social constructivist epistemology, highlights the inter-subjective nature of inquiry as opposed to an accurate representation of objective reality. The success of the qualitative research, as seen in this study, is the relationship between the researcher and participant and the inter-subjective nature of this type of research. This can lead to the participant–researcher relationship being reciprocal, a relationship in which each contributes something the other person requires or desires (Trainor and Bouchard, 2013).

I wanted to form deep relationships that would allow me understanding of the participant's world, in a non-judgemental way. I was also aware that the researcher–participant relationship would have a direct bearing on the trustworthiness of the qualitative research being carried out. Furthermore, having access to the group of participants in this study meant access to information about some of the complex issues involved, but it was also very important to ask the right questions about the boundaries that needed to be co-constructed to ensure the ethical aspects of the research.

Issues around power relations require a reflective approach in order to be aware of its influence and encourage authenticity between researcher and participant. At

times, I felt as much a participant as the participants, as my story was shared with them. In this way my research allowed me, as a new researcher, to take what I could from my past and present experiences, adopt what fit the circumstances best, and adapt and reject irrelevant aspects. I used critical reflection, used throughout my career as a practitioner, to help me challenge my assumptions, beliefs and values, question my actions, accept claims/truths, and make me consider alternative explanations and ways of analysing situations (Schon, 1987).

Within this context, there are several issues I pondered in relation to developing the research instruments in this study. Firstly, the methods of data collection were designed to enable the participants to identify significant influences/experiences in their career journeys. I completed my own career grid, and in doing so enabled critical reflection.

It was also important to ensure that the interview questions asked, alongside career grid completion, provided a basis for participants to answer the research questions. Throughout, I was remained aware that the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, and social class might have different meanings to different participants. It was important to adopt a subjective stance as the researcher, in order to accurately record each participant's experiences, yet remain mindful of unequal power relations and the need to promote equal relationships with all participants.

4.3.4 Insider-outsider issues and my perspectives as a BME female academic leader

Drawing on my intersectional feminist methodology meant my multiple identities allowed me to situate myself as an insider within my study by the very fact of being a BME senior academic leader and peer. Yet, I remained an outsider in some respects as a researcher. In this study, there are notions of insider and outsider (in research), constructions of difference and sameness, and the assumptions about positionality. Alexander et al (2007) advocate that notions of a community should be regarded as fluid, ongoing, social and cultural constructions. Caution is advocated about who is representing and speaking for the community as these voices may only reflect voices, rather than the whole. Subsequently, I translated this to be mindful that the BME women in this study were not to be seen as exclusively representing all BME

women academic leaders in HE, or as the overarching voice of an ethnic group or the voice of Black women academic leaders.

It was not possible to predict how I would be placed by participants, how our perceived commonality as Black female academic leaders in HE and differences would be constructed, interpreted, or experienced. Certainly, the data generated by a BME female researcher who may share perceived common identities as Black female academic leaders in HE (for example, in relation to white privilege; institutional racism and culture; familial and cultural influences) with the research participants, cannot be simply assumed to be more richly or deeply immersed in the research, simply based on that assumed commonality.

From my position, as a relatively well-known academic leader within the local health care sector, I assumed that there would be a connectedness and element of trust between the participants and myself. I adopted the position of an insider, because all participants had willingly and enthusiastically responded to my request to take part in my research; we constituted a heterogenous group of women who had self-identified as BME academic leaders in HE and who were likely to have similar perceptions and real lived career experiences at the intersections of our multiple identities. This reciprocity was also felt when participants shared their stories and asked me if it was the same for me – especially in relation to childhood upbringing, cultural nuances, the significance of what is considered a good education in our lives, and whether I had experienced institutional racism or unjust practices in my career journey. I felt this was an acceptance of my insider position in this research study.

However, I also felt acutely aware that some of the answers from a participant appeared slightly rehearsed in places. It made me reflect on what the participants might feel about being interviewed by someone who indirectly knew them or knew their peers and how this could lead participants to have concerns about being judged by a peer. Despite my assurances of confidentiality, there may have been a worry about issues of confidentiality and local conversations. I was able to conclude that there are a range of cultural and institutional factors that contribute to the complex construction of the researcher–participant relationship and therefore the way in which knowledge is produced.

Some of the participants were known to me directly and some indirectly; one was a colleague in my institution but not from within my own faculty. Drake (2010) asserts that this potentially does present a set of difficulties that can be recognised in conducting research within one's own institution, in terms of my status within the institution and what I, as the researcher, represent to other participants. Drake (ibid) further suggests that with professional doctorates comes the practical concerns facing insider researchers, particularly when researching one's own practice. Moreover, research of this nature and in the workplace is likely to be on a small scale, involving few people, and the researcher must live with the consequences, if any, of such a project.

In addition, with this type of research comes privileged access to participants. This type of closeness may seem to compromise the researcher's ability to engage critically with the data. I kept notes following each interview to retain the trustworthiness of the data elicited from each participant interview. Specific considerations for feminist researchers may include ethical issues that arise as a result of the power relations between researcher and participants: the foregrounding of participants' viewpoints; a commitment to the group being researched; an aim of using the research to improve women's lives; and an awareness of the different relation to the production of knowledge. I remained very aware that I might occupy different views and have different agendas to the participants in my research study and it might be that our interests were, at times, in competition with each other. Hence, there was a need for continuous reflexivity throughout the research process, including the expectations I had as the researcher, of the analysis and the agendas I was working towards. This reflection on insider-outsider issues helped me establish the set of principles by which my research was conducted.

4.4 Ethical considerations

Research with respect to sensitive issues 'is a matter of protecting the rights of the participants: maintaining privacy, anonymity, confidentiality, and avoiding harm, betrayal, and deception' (Cohen et al, 2013: 50). In identifying ethical considerations for my research project, I followed the ethical guidelines provided by University of Nottingham (UoN) (V6, 2016).

I adopted a reflexive approach and considered the ethical considerations of conducting qualitative research and my relationship with each participant. My research strategies included ensuring that all participants understood the process of my research; ensuring informed consent was obtained in an open and honest manner; and reminding participants of the right to withdraw at any time. In addition, in line with the UoN (V6, 2016) guidelines, I informed and respected each participant's right to anonymity and was reflective and aware of power relations in the participant–researcher relationship.

The proposed study was subject to approval by the UoN Code for Research Conduct and Ethics (V6, 2016). The application for approval included an explanation of the design and methodology (Appendix 3), and the conduct of the interviews sought to re-dress unequal power relationships between me as the researcher and respondents, for example, by allowing the participant to choose the location and time of the interview, as discussed previously. The semi-structured interview schedule allowed the participant some control of the conversation, and this is evident in the transcripts. Ethical reflexivity is because power relations are present in all research settings, as different patterns of power and positioning can sometimes produce unexpected and somewhat contradictory outcomes (Cohen et al, 2013). To reduce researcher bias, it was essential to be reflexive and aware of the effects of my own bias and subjectivity on participants' behaviour and responses and the impact of my own responses during the interview.

Finch (1993) warns that the act of sharing information in interviews about personal events can sometimes bring about a personal crisis in the participant, exposing their emotions and vulnerability. Hence, the interviews were conducted empathetically, with the option to pause or discontinue the encounter, should the participant wish to do so, and ensuring support for the participant as required. Whilst I did not encounter this during the entire interview process in the main study, this came to bear in one of the pilot interviews, where the questions evoked powerful and significant memories for one participant, leading to very distressed emotions. I paused the interview, supported the participant, and resumed, at her request, when she felt able to. She requested that I did not keep a record of that part of the interview, hence, it was discarded, and those notes destroyed. It was an experience that took me by surprise

despite the above, but I was glad to have handled it well. I discussed this at my supervision session which further allowed for reflection on this experience.

Participants were made fully aware of confidentiality and its protection, with all responses anonymised as soon as possible after data generation had been completed, and pseudonyms used in reports of the findings. Great care has been taken to ensure that the place of employment cannot be identified. Data has been stored on a private, password-protected computer with One Drive storage facilities. Once my thesis is submitted, data will continue to be stored securely using University of Nottingham facilities, ensuring GDPR (2018) and the UoN Code for Research Conduct and Ethics (V6, 2016) and subsequent requirements are adhered to. The data will continue to be password protected and stored for seven years from the final publication of findings. I anticipate the data being used to support publication in academic and professional journals and used in scholarly activity.

Having made the decision to use interviews as a method of data collection, it was important to consider the trustworthiness of the data in relation to the data collection process. Despite criticisms of qualitative research and its lack of scientific rigour, qualitative researchers counter claim that their research reflects subjectivity by demonstrating the trustworthiness of their findings. This by identifying an audit trail as a technique for establishing trustworthiness, or to help in assessing the degree of trustworthiness of a naturalistic inquiry which involves the systematic recording and representation of information about the material gathered and the processes involved in a qualitative research project (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Furthermore, qualitative researchers who frame their inquiry in an interpretative paradigm, as is the case in this research study, focus on trustworthiness as opposed to the conventional positivistic criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity.

4.4.1 Informed consent

Informed consent was sought from each BME female academic leader prior to the first interview. The participant information sheet with consent form was sent in advance of the interviews to the participants, giving details about the study, the research design and processes, to allow them to make a reasoned judgement to participate or not (Appendix 4). This set out the purpose and stages of the research

and the participants' right to anonymity, with the right to withdraw at any time without question. Respondents were informed that they were able to view and amend the transcript of their digitally recorded interview sent within ten days of the interview and changes completed as requested. My role as the researcher during the interview was emphasised with assurance that all the data and information collected was only to be used for the purpose of the research. All the signed consent forms were filed alongside interview transcripts in accordance with the ethical approval process.

4.5 Data generating methods

The remainder of this chapter focuses on the data collection methods and their implementation with attention to the ethical considerations within this research study. The data collection methods proposed for this research study comprised completion of an adapted 'career history' grid (Appendix 2) and two face-face, semi-structured interviews using an interview guide developed specifically for this study (Appendix 3).

4.5.1 Searching for authenticity

'Authenticity' describes the way a piece of research stands up to the scrutiny of others, within a feminist research paradigm, and is significant as research paradigms in the social sciences have been the subject of debate for many decades, with the credibility of some research methods coming under criticism (Wilsher et al, 2017).

This research study comprised a small sample of eight participants (Appendix 1). Framed as a narrative inquiry and using the life history method, I wrote myself into the research and shared lived experiences of my career, which meant that some aspects of authenticity might be compromised; for example, the extent to which the steps or processes of a study can be repeated in a study (reliability). However, validity which lies in its ability to represent the participant's subjective reality and the extent to which the research shows what it set out to do was more significant to me (Wilsher et al, 2017).

Instead of the term 'reliability', which is associated with positivism, I decided the term 'trustworthiness' was a better suited alternative since it acknowledges the human

element of the life history method and allows for this feature in the methodological analysis. In using interviews as the key source of information, the life historian knows that reliability cannot be guaranteed and is probably not desirable for validity. 'Respondent validation', where the interview summary was sent back to each participant for checking and verification in relation to accuracy of data/information collected, formed the triangulation for this study which gives more confidence to the accuracy of the data (Dhunpath, 2000). Changes requested to the transcribed interviews were accurately implemented and participants informed of this.

4.5.2 Career history grid

The career history grid I used to generate data (Appendix 2) was adapted from the life history grid advocated by Parry et al (1999) and adapted by Fuller (2020).

Parry et al (1999) assert that the life grid method helps in the life course data collection and gives insight into life events that influence career pathways, identifying key transition and turning points. Through the grid, it is anticipated one can get more precise data and support the interview process that will follow. The visualisation of events that may have influenced one's career can aid the association of certain life situations with events and help to make sense of longitudinal patterns. It is thus a method that is sensitive to the individual's life circumstances as well as a process for constructing and reflecting for the researcher and participant.

For my study, I adapted the life history grid into a career grid (Appendix 2) using it as a heuristic device (Fuller, 2020) to chart events/experiences that had influenced or impacted upon the participant's career. I specifically chose seven-year intervals as I felt the data elicited from those timeframes might answer the overall research question and sub-questions. It would allow for appropriate reflection and identification of resources and sources of support as well as limiting influences, experiences and challenges seen to contribute to or hinder careers in academic leadership.

The seven-year interval was adapted from a UK television series charting the lives of fourteen children from the age of 7 in 1963, at seven yearly intervals, recently having reached *63Up* (Granada Television, 1999; ITV, 2019). The adapted career grid provided the participants with a framework to record their reflections relating to their

personal influences, challenges and career histories from secondary to tertiary education (14–21), postgraduate study, influences, personal events, families and start of academic and research careers in HE (21–28; 28–35), life events, career pathways, professional relationships, promotions, and challenges in HE (35–42; 42–49; 49–56; 56–63). None of the participants were beyond the age of 63.

I piloted the career grid with two BME female colleagues within my institution. The age at which the career grid commenced, and the seven-year gap, prompted critical reviews amongst the pilot participants. One participant in my pilot (n=2) felt that I should have scaled the age back to 7, as in her culture decisions regarding the significance of education and potential career trajectory are made when one first starts school at the age of 5. She also felt that a five-year gap would have helped further focus the participants on relation to their career journeys. The other participant in the pilot felt the starting point year (14–21) and the seven-year gap was the right one, as she felt she could not have said much more about the questions being asked prior to this period. This was attributed to her personal recollections rather than a cultural one. I decided that the seven-year interval felt appropriate, given that it did not deter both pilot participants from completing the career grid reasonably well.

Of the eight participants, six completed the career grid in advance of the interview. All participants who completed the grid found it to be useful in relation to recollections and being able to contribute to the research questions being asked. The two participants who did not complete the grid stated reasons of not having the time to do so but felt comfortable and confident that they could address the questions asked of them during the interview process and for the questions in the career grid to be drawn into their interviews.

4.5.3 Interviews

Drawing on my intersectional qualitative feminist methodology and use of the life history method to understand the experiences of BME women in academic leadership, I chose the interview method as a data collection method. Interviews are appropriate for research conducted against the backdrop of the conceptual framework I used, allowing for expression of feelings and emotion associated with race and intersections of multiple identities as described above (Rollock, 2012). I felt

the interview would enable participants to discuss the interpretations of the world they lived in, and in their own voice, and express how they regarded situations from their own point of view, with a focus on the social situatedness of the research data (Dhunpath, 2000).

In qualitative research, which is cross cultural, interviewing is perceived as a participative activity to generate knowledge, a two-way learning process, where the subjectivities of the research participants influence data collection and the process of 'making meaning' (Shah, 2004: 549-550). Cultural differences have significance for both phases. The interview is seen as a social event and displays 'cultural particulars' and is determined by discursive relations and situatedness. The interviewer and the participant participate in this knowledge-building activity, informed by a knowledge of social subsystems operative in that culture, and by constant adaptations of the interview to suit each individual situation in awareness of the participants' subjectivities. Objectivity is not possible, nor necessarily considered desirable on the part of the researcher and participant (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Both respond to specific perceived subjectivities. Shah (ibid) further warns of the possibilities of misunderstanding, error and bias in every situation, which increase with variants such as culture. Interviewing as a method of data collection fits well within a cross-cultural context, as in my study, due to its ontological and epistemological relevance to the nature of cross-cultural inquiries.

As the career experiences at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class for BME women was a fundamental part of my research, attention was paid to the methodologies around interviewing women. A feminist model of interviewing, facilitating engagement and openness, and the development of a potentially long-lasting relationship, was considered. I shared information with individual participants with a notion of reciprocal sharing of experiences and building a rapport through these shared experiences, adding to the richness of the data collected.

This research study followed overarching principles in relation to data collection (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). These identified as: establishing a positive and trusting relationship between the researcher and the participants; emphasising the subjective experiences of each participant; ensuring the voices of the female academic leaders are the centre of the study which could encompass the use of extended quotations;

and acknowledging the importance of career history on the practice of academic leadership.

The interview design encompassed a face-to-face, semi-structured interview schedule to cover the key research questions (Appendix 3). The goal, as articulated in the life history method chosen, was to generate detailed accounts rather than brief answers or general statements, adding to the depth of the data being generated. Additional prompts were included to facilitate further clarification and exploration of any points that participants made during the interview (Appendix 3). I piloted the interview questions with the same two female colleagues who participated in the initial pilot and no subsequent changes were required to be made to the questions or the interview schedule.

4.5.4 Semi-structured interviews

The use of the semi-structured interview method was felt to align with my research questions and allow the participants to speak in their own voice. It also aligned with my intersectional qualitative feminist research design. A second deciding factor in my choice was that the notion of semi-structured interviews is synonymous with the principles of feminist research because such interviews seek to be appreciative of the position of women. In addition, the degree of flexibility that semi-structured interviews offer allows the researcher to respond to the direction in which the interviewee takes the interview. It also provides opportunity for rich, detailed answers and for the overall point of view and perceptions of the interviewee. Thus, the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: 'it is part of life itself; its human embeddedness is inescapable' (Cohen et al, 2013: 267). In addition, it allowed me to use an interview schedule which acted as a check list for the topics that were to be covered, along with the order of the questions which supported the flow of the interview (Appendix 3).

I piloted the interview questions with both participants in my pilot, commenting on the ease felt during the interview and the flow of conversation that the questions elicited, with an obvious flexibility to move around from one question to another and back again.

4.5.5 Sampling and selection

The target group for my research study was a group of women who self-identified as BME. They also identified as African, Nigerian, Zimbabwean, African-Caribbean and Pakistani. They were all in a role of academic leadership in HE, including Pro Vice-Chancellor, Dean, Professor and Head of Department (Appendix 1).

BME as a generic term is said to include people from Africa, the Caribbean, Asia and China, whilst acknowledging that these groups may oppose the use of the term for themselves (Chapter 1.4). I had this in mind when I requested participation and enabled participants to self-identify at the very start of interview one (Appendix 3).

Sampling in social research is geared towards identifying a manageable population when it is impractical to survey the entire population to which the research relates (Cohen et al, 2013). I was aware that the mode of sampling would impact the type of data that is achieved and the confidence with which conclusions may be drawn from the resulting analyses. The use of a well-selected sample population that is representative of the group in question can minimise the unavoidable margin of error (ibid). Hence, to achieve this, I decided to use purposive and snowball approaches to select participants.

Noy (2007) suggests that snowball sampling is arguably the most widely employed method of sampling in qualitative research in various disciplines across the social sciences. In snowball sampling, researchers identify a small number of individuals who have the characteristics in which they are interested. In this research study, these were BME women who were in roles of academic leadership in HE or had served in such roles within the past two years. This sampling procedure may be defined as snowball sampling when the researcher accesses participants through contact information that is provided by other participants. This process is, by necessity, repetitive: contacts and potential participants refer the researcher to others, who are contacted by the researcher, and then refer her to yet other potential participants and so on. Hence the evolving 'snowball' effect, captured in a metaphor that touches on the central quality of this sampling procedure: its accumulative (diachronic and dynamic) dimension (Noy, 2007: 330). Purposive and snowball sampling can be highly prone to researcher bias (Cohen et al, 2013). The idea that a purposive sample has been created on one's personal judgement is not a good

defence when it comes to alleviating possible researcher biases. However, this judgemental component of purposive sampling is only a major disadvantage when the judgements have not been based on clear criteria (ibid, 2013).

My sample of eight BME women participants working in HE in the London area was accessed through existing local and professional networks. They met the criteria of self-identifying as a BME woman and academic leader in HE within the previous two years of being interviewed. The sample included three women of African descent; four women of African-Caribbean descent; one woman of Asian descent; seven current senior leaders in HE; and one that had left HE four months prior to interview one. The London influence was chosen for pragmatic reasons of resource management, access and time which accompanies the narrative inquiry and the life history method. The sample size was in keeping with the life history methodology, where the aim of the sample was to ensure that the participants' stories were heard, and some tentative explanations produced. However, the basis on which this sampling was undertaken in this research was so that the research questions highlighted previously could be effectively explored with the participants. Thus, the choice of participants was driven by a conceptual question, not necessarily by a concern for representativeness or seeking to represent a wider population.

Throughout the interview process, from sample construction to post-interview transcribing and reflections, the various relationships were managed in such a way as to ensure that the participants were aware of how their stories would be used to inform the research study. This was appreciated by all the participants.

Once the research sample had been identified, the next challenge was to ensure that the research tools to be used (adapted career grid and interview schedule) were appropriate so that I could elicit the data required to answer the research questions. I did this by piloting the career grid and interview questions with two BME female colleagues within my institution. This has been discussed previously in 4.5.2.

4.5.6 Implementation of the interviews

Gaining ethical approval was the first step taken in implementing this research study (Appendix 4). The proposed study was subject to approval by UoN Code for Research Conduct and Ethics (V6, 2016). The application for approval included an

explanation of the methodology and design, and detailed the recruitment strategies, data collection tools, data analysis and transcribing. The proposal was approved with no revisions (Appendix 4).

I used a two-stage interview process where I used interview two to pursue lines of questioning for data that emerged from the analysis of the first interview, and for further clarification or depth as required (Appendix 3).

The first stage interviews took place September 2018 – January 2019 (Appendix 1). A list of questions was asked of all participants in order to gain an understanding of the career journeys of BME women in roles of academic leadership in HE; the influences on their career; experiences of academic leadership; challenges encountered; and support gained within their leadership. A question that had not been originally planned but was raised in the first interview with my first participant, was around ‘advice and guidance that would be given by the participants to those BME women seeking to become leaders in HE’. This question was included in subsequent interviews, as it might provide further insight into how the participants navigated challenges in the workplace and did their leadership practice. Furthermore, it indicated that the BME women leaders were keen to ensure succession for other BME women into academic leadership and thus address the under-representation of BME women in academic leadership. This was an important part of the research located within a social justice paradigm.

The first stage interviews were conducted to plan. Most interviews lasted on average 40–45 minutes (Appendix 1) and my research study was accepted with enthusiasm prior to the recorded interview. This eased the process and drew out further reflections, emotion and thought in most participants.

The second interviews took place between October and December 2019. They were used to clarify understandings on and to explore further any themes that had arisen from the initial analysis of the data. It also allowed participants to reflect, expand and discuss more fully any points raised in the first interview. I did not use different questions for interview two but focused on areas of questioning that were unclear or needed clarification from the transcription of interview one (see Appendix 3 for examples).

At the stage of interview two, one of the participants failed to respond despite three attempts to contact her by email and phone over a period of six weeks. Hence, this participant provided data from interview one only.

The career grid was sent to the participants approximately four weeks in advance of the interview. All participants who used the career grid referred to it during the interview without my prompting. For the two who did not complete the career grid, I asked questions in relation to the grid to give me a full set of data for each participant.

4.5.7 Capturing the audio-recorded interviews

All the interviews were audio recorded using a hand-held audio recorder. This approach was successful in capturing the participants' stories. Cohen et al (2013) argue that there is an issue of how to record the interview as it proceeds. For example, an audio recorder might be unobtrusive, but might constrain the respondent. However, Seidman (2013) asserts that audio recording preserves the words of the participants, allowing the researcher to return to the source and check for accuracy, giving participants the confidence that their words will be treated responsibly (see Appendix 5 for a transcript excerpt). Moreover, the notes made during each interview helped capture expressions, emotions and other non-verbal cues of the participants during each interview, which I used in my analysis of the data, thereby supplementing the audio recordings.

The participants were asked at the beginning of each interview if they needed any more information about the research and about their right to withdraw from the interview at any time. They were reminded the interview was being audio recorded, would be transcribed word for word and they would see a copy of the transcript, allowing them to make amendments as they saw fit. This is in line with UoN code of research ethics (2016) in ensuring no harm is caused during the research process and recognising the words belonged to the participants (Appendix 3).

I deleted the audio recordings from the audio recorder prior to embarking on the next interview. All files will be destroyed seven years after the final publication of findings from my theses. In addition, all anonymised transcripts were securely filed along with notes made from each interview; thus, avoiding harm, whilst showing a moral

obligation to others and taking responsibility to protect the participants' identities during the research process (UoN, V6, 2016).

Fifteen interviews were conducted in total: eight in the first round of interviews and seven in the second (Appendix 1).

4.5.8 Managing the interviews

I scheduled the interviews for approximately 60 minutes each. In addition, I let participants decide the length of the interview, by asking them if there was anything else they wished to share or felt had not been explored adequately. Most participants spoke for 40–55 minutes at interview one and 22–28 minutes at interview two.

I felt my semi-structured and face-to-face approach allowed participants to focus and reflect and gave them the freedom to express themselves in sharing their experiences. This was consistent with the methodology adopted for this research study and empowered participants to share their stories. I had to interview one participant at the second interview via Skype, to suit the participant's convenience. I did not use the Skype recording facility given it was on a desktop and could have been accessed by others. Instead, I used my hand-held audio recorder device, as agreed with the participant, and deleted the interview as per the process described previously. I ensured I was in a room with the door shut and no one was present. There were no issues noted, and on checking with my participant, neither of us felt it had detracted from the emotional/social aspect of the encounter. However, I was very aware of the use of Skype and how this could impact on the perceptions of privacy as the participant might have felt they were exposed to a more public domain, resulting in a stifled form of communication. I gathered enough data to be able to answer the research questions. I gained permission from the UoN ethics committee for this change (Appendix 3).

Using interview guidance advocated by Arksey and Knight (1999), I ensured I appeared interested and non-judgemental throughout; gave due care and attention to the way the questions were asked and understood; and kept to the interview schedule as planned. This helped me elicit the data required and support participants to engage comfortably prior to, during and after the interview was completed.

Reflecting on the interviews, I felt my participants appeared relaxed and comfortable in participating in relatively long meetings, on tight and busy schedules. I attributed this to two factors: firstly, their individual passion for the subject being discussed and secondly my insider position within this research study. I felt they could relate to and share their experiences with another BME woman who shared their common experiences and spaces.

4.5.9 Post-interview actions

I used an external and reliable transcription service for verbatim transcription of my interviews. Given this was a third party transcribing the interviews, the service I used is the one used by my own institution within the graduate school for PhD and professional doctoral research studies. As such, I considered it secure in terms of reliability and confidentiality, destroying the interviews securely and safely post transcription, and meeting the ethical demands of my research study.

I went through all the word-for-word transcribed interviews and checked them against the audio recording on file for accuracy. I anonymised all the interviews by allocating pseudonyms to each participant and noted very minor issues with accuracy. I revisited notes made during the interviews and added these at the bottom of each transcript. Reflections on the interviews took the form of additional notes made after each interview. In addition, any possible themes that had emerged during the interview were noted, identifying any initial findings which were related back to the research questions. This helped to support the process of reflection so that the interview notes could be evaluated, providing some thoughts for data analysis. Respondents were sent the transcript within ten days of me receiving it, with a reminder they could amend the transcript of their interview, before returning to me. Of the fifteen interviews, one respondent asked for the name of a person she had used to be removed. Another felt she had said too much about her institution in relation to racial inequalities experienced. Despite anonymity, the participant requested this was removed. For me, this showed the inherent power felt by the participant in her institution, where institutional racism and discrimination continue to prevail.

4.5.10 Challenges encountered

Relatively inexperienced researchers can lose additional data because opportunities to probe are not pursued. On reflection, I experienced this in some of my interviews at stage one. In one case, I felt it was due to my inexperience with research interviews, alongside the feeling that the participant was unwilling to expand on their answers. This led me to conclude that some of the responses were rehearsed. It did make me question the participant's motives for agreeing to participate in my research. Nonetheless, I accepted it at that stage, but pursued some of the responses elicited at the second interview. I felt a much better engagement at the second interview, where I thought I got some depth to some of the questions asked during the first. On reflection, this could have been attributed to my confidence with the interview process as I progressed from interview one to interview two and the participant building a rapport with me over the duration of the two interviews. There was a notion that, mostly, the BME women who participated found satisfaction in sharing their career stories with a sympathetic listener, which I believe they found in me.

I was disappointed that one participant did not respond to my invitation for interview two. I felt there was more depth to be elicited to some of her responses, and given her seniority and position in her institution, she would have had more insight into some of the resources and support available to BME women leaders in HE. On consultation with my supervisor, it was felt that despite this, it would be best to continue with fifteen interviews for which data had been collected so that it did not affect proceeding with my study in a timely manner.

Given my full engagement with the research process and sound understanding of it, underpinned by my lived experiences as a BME female academic, I felt able to deal with issues encountered, reflect on these and accumulate the knowledge generated from these for future use/support of other researchers.

4.6 Evaluation of the methodology and research design

The overall strength of this research project was its intersectional feminist methodology and design that kept race at the centre and used an intersectional lens (Crenshaw, 1991) to explore the career experiences of eight BME women academic leaders in HE.

The use of narrative inquiry and the life history method, discussed in Chapter 4.3.1–4.3.2, is considered a further strength, which allowed a depth of understanding of the lived career experiences of the participants who told their stories in their own voice (Dhunpath, 2000). This methodology allowed for an interconnectedness of the reality of human experience and professional experience, the collection of rich data, and the development of a valid knowledge base, which helps to inform the development of academic leadership in HE and is relatable to the experience of others. It also allowed me the positioning as an insider in this research study with a connectedness and position of trust between the participants and myself that supported a meaningful analysis, allowing for recommendations for future practice and contributed knowledge to the field (Chapter 6).

Ethical reflexivity throughout this research project was maintained, which enabled the trustworthiness of the data in relation to the data collection process (Finch, 1993). Using UoN Code for Research Conduct and Ethics (V6, 2017) and the requirements of GDPR (2018) helped ensure this.

Using an adapted life history grid is considered highly valuable (Chapter 4.5.2) within this study, as it highlighted key childhood and education experiences which were then drawn into the narratives of all the BME women and formed Key Theme Two. This significant data might not have been captured had the career grid not been used as a data collection tool.

The decision to use purposeful and snowball sampling through my existing professional networks (Chapter 4.5.5) helped me overcome the challenge in gaining access to eight BME academic leaders in the London area with the characteristics I was interested in.

I acknowledge that there were some limitations with the chosen methodology and design. Firstly, this research study explored the career experiences of eight BME women academic leaders in the London region. Therefore, the findings are not generalisable to an entire population; however, they do illuminate and address the key challenges faced by the BME women in this study and how these challenges were overcome through navigation of the leadership terrain. Hence, despite the small sample, the data generated presents some useful insights that can be transferred to BME women who aspire to academic leadership, and to institutions to change the position of under-representation.

Secondly, this research study was conducted in the London region, and inclusion of other regions in the UK and a larger sample may reveal different results. Thirdly, as a qualitative researcher, complete objectivity and neutrality are impossible to achieve (Alexander et al, 2007), and I am aware that at times, my values as a researcher and those of the participants became integral.

4.7 Data analysis

I used narrative analysis by assembling the individual career histories and creating a collective story from which themes emerge. The use of narrative analysis is advocated by Rassool (1997), where listening to the different voices articulating different experiences and exploring interconnections holds out the possibility of synthesising what may appear as otherwise discrete experiences. In the process of doing this, it is anticipated that the narratives of the BME women may perhaps yield a different, multi-faceted and multi-layered understanding of the construction of BME identities and how this influences their career experiences as academic leaders.

Linked to the research question and sub-questions (4.1) and through the methodology and design of the research study, which uses narrative inquiry and the life history method through a career grid and semi-structured interviews, the data were obtained and subsequently analysed. In analysing the data, I used thematic analysis to enable themes to emerge from the narratives of the participants (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Keeping the intersection of multiple identities of race, ethnicity, gender and social class at the forefront, the analysis also focused on the

experiences of the BME female leaders at the intersections of their multiple identities incorporated in this study.

Thematic analysis is a widely used method with benefits of flexibility for narrative analysis and can be applied across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches (Braun and Clarke, 2006). I have applied Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase guide to the narrative data generated in this research study.

Firstly, I familiarised myself with the data by analysing the completed career grid and the transcribed narratives of both interviews for each participant on a line-by-line basis. I highlighted words and phrases in the narratives in relation to my overarching research question '*What are the experiences for Black and Minoritized Ethnic female leaders in higher education, at the intersection of race, gender, ethnicity and social class?*'. I undertook several readings to familiarise myself further with the emerging data and jotted down initial ideas of meanings (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Hence, words and phrases and interesting features of the narratives were noted (Appendix 5) in a systematic fashion which included noting these across the whole data set for interview one, followed by the whole data set for interview two. I collated these words/phrases for interviews one and two for each of the participants to refine what was emerging as a process of generating codes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). For example, words/phrases that described or referred to race, gender, ethnicity and social class, and the way they intersect with each other in the participants' career journey of academic leadership in HE, was an initial consideration (Appendix 5).

Words/phrases that emerged at the initial stage were, for example, inequalities in HE; aspiration; discriminatory practice; ethnic influences on outcomes; white privilege in HE; and white privilege in the institution through policy.

This search for themes as individual words/phrases led to finding patterns, which allowed me to create several tentative themes (Appendix 5). For example, race intersecting with gender and ethnicity causes inequity for BME women in HE; race intersecting with gender and (middle) social class could be an advantage; but race is always prioritised as an identity (Braun and Clarke, 2006*).*

These small potential themes that were emerging were reviewed against the words/phrases/extracts highlighted at the initial stages and across the whole data set for interview one, then interview two and then across interviews one and two for each participant, to generate a thematic map of the analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). For example, experiences at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class in academic leadership, and institutional racism as a challenge to academic leadership.

I kept refining, defining the specifics and naming each theme through an ongoing analysis, which began to reveal the overall story. This also allowed me to begin to knit the analysis, give cohesion and meaning to what was being said, which then led to creation of big themes, for example, Theme One: '*BME female academic leaders and intersecting identities of race, gender, ethnicity and social class'* (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

The emergent patterns were informed by the research question and sub-questions, underpinned by the theoretical framework and literatures reviewed, that developed across the analysis of the narratives and were categorised into three key themes and sub-themes, which are discussed in the next chapter (Stage 6*. Producing the report* - Braun and Clarke, 2006). These are:

Theme One: BME female academic leaders and intersecting identities of race, gender, ethnicity and social class

Theme Two: Becoming a leader

Theme Three: Doing leadership

Table 1 shows the relationship between the research question and sub-questions, the three key themes and six sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis.

Research question: What are the experiences for BME female leaders in HE, at the intersection of race, gender, ethnicity, and social class?

Table 1: Relationship between the research questions and themes

Research Sub-questions	Key Themes	Sub-themes
Sub-question 1 How do race, gender, ethnicity and social class intersect to shape BME women's leadership? **Sub-question 2** What do BME women perceive to be the resources/sources of support and/or challenges to their career?	Key Theme One: **BME female academic leaders and intersecting identities of race, gender, ethnicity and social class**	1. Experiences at the intersection of race, gender, ethnicity and social class in academic leadership 2. Institutional racism as a challenge to academic leadership 3. BME women and Equality Diversity and Inclusion – oppression and opportunity 4. Limited access to professional sources of support for leadership
Sub-question 3 How do BME women perceive their career histories in relation to their role of academic leadership within HE?	Key Theme Two: **Becoming a leader**	Influences on personal and professional identity formation
Sub-question 4 How do BME women negotiate the challenges they face to develop professional relationships within their team(s) in HE?	Key Theme Three: **Doing leadership**	Using personal and professional identity in leadership practice

4.8 Chapter summary

In summary, this chapter has presented an intersectional qualitative feminist methodology using the life history method, to explore the lived experiences of BME female academic leaders in HE at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class. Life history narratives were used to frame the participants' career experiences and how they interpreted their past in the context of these stories.

In keeping with the methodology, participants were enabled to tell their own stories through the use of a career grid and two semi-structured interviews, which helped to amplify the voices of the BME women in my sample.

The importance of trustworthiness and ethical considerations through all stages of the research process were discussed with recognition of the ethical principles that must guide any research study.

The sample of eight BME female academic leaders was obtained through purposive and snowball sampling methods and the data collection tools included an adapted career grid and two semi-structured, face-to-face interviews to help my participants explore and reflect their thoughts on the four overarching questions of my research study.

Evaluation of the methods used highlights the strengths of the methodology with acknowledgement of issues relating to generalisability of findings.

The process of data analysis is described which shows how the three key themes emerged from the data generated from the career grid and narratives in the participant interviews. These are further presented and discussed in the next chapter.

The research process, and adherence to it, gave me the structure and confidence to conduct my research study in a systematic, yet thoughtful and reflexive way, to achieve its overall aims.

The following chapter presents and discusses the findings of this study.

Chapter 5: Presentation and discussion of the findings

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings from the narratives of eight Black and minoritised ethnic (BME) female academic leaders in higher education (HE) generated to address the overall aims and research questions, which are:

Research question: What are the experiences for BME female leaders in HE, at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class?

Sub-questions:

1. How do their race, gender, ethnicity and social class intersect to shape BME women's leadership?
2. What do BME women perceive to be the resources/sources of support and/or challenges to their career?
3. How do BME women perceive their career histories in relation to their role of academic leadership within HE?
4. How do BME women negotiate the challenges they face to develop professional relationships within their team(s) in HE?

The data were generated from a career grid, and two sets of face-to-face, semi-structured interviews (Chapter 4.5.2–4.5.4 and Appendix 3).

A narrative analysis approach using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006) (Chapter 4.7) enabled themes to emerge from the responses given by the participants. The rich data were obtained, analysed and interpreted as a result of readings that informed the theoretical framework, literature review, choice of methodology and design.

The emergent patterns that developed across the analysis of the narratives were categorised into three key themes, highlighted below, as advocated by Braun and Clark (2006).

Key Theme One: BME female academic leaders and intersecting identities of race, gender, ethnicity and social class

Key Theme Two: Becoming a leader

Key Theme Three: Doing leadership

The key themes were further divided into six sub-themes, which directly link with the research question and research sub-questions underpinning this research study. Table 4.7 provides an overview of the three key themes, six sub-themes and their relationship to the research questions.

In presenting the data, I use extended quotations from the transcripts in their original form to illustrate a certain point or discuss a certain theme or sub-theme. This gives the reader a powerful sense of the individual participant and their voice. The use of extended quotations is intended to create rapport between the participant, researcher and reader. It helped resist the atomisation of data, keeping what the participants said in context. However, to provide an analytical discussion of the narrative and extrapolate the key themes, I limited the use of direct quotation. I had to make choices over which quotations best illustrated a particular point or exemplified the responses in relation to a theme. Analysis was carried out on the entire transcripts from which the selected quotations were presented. A sample transcript is presented in Appendix 4.

5.1 Participant profiles

In the following sections I present participant profiles in the form of eight pen portraits. Hackman (2002) describes pen portraits as ‘biographical accounts that reveal, rather that iron out, inconsistencies, contradictions and puzzles found in the stories people tell about themselves’ (ibid: 52:). Using the biographical information provided by the participants, I created a portrait as a depiction of each participant

and used this as an introduction of the participants to the reader. Each pen portrait highlights the context of the BME women's lives and provides understanding of the factors that have influenced and contributed to their career journeys in leadership in HE. The pen portraits are presented chronologically by order of interview (Appendix 1).

5.1.1 Pen portraits of the BME female leaders

In keeping with ethical principles in this research, I used pseudonyms to protect the identity of my participants. Each participant approved their use. I present:

Odella

Victoria

Manushka

Omolara

Verity

Mercy

Irene

Amina

Odella

Odella**,** a bubbly mature woman in her early 50s, self-identified as Black British African Caribbean with multiple identities. These included being female, a senior academic in HE, sister, aunt and friend. Odella was raised and living in London, with strong family roots and ties in the Caribbean. She is single and lives in her own home. She considered herself to be from a close knit, working-class background. In her personal life, she was the main carer for her elderly parents whom she felt raised her to be proud of her heritage and never let her race and gender get in the way of her ambition. Her father was spoken of as a key influencing figure in her life. Her parents instilled in her and her siblings the ethic of hard work and education which is

linked to success in life. She was raised as the middle child with two brothers and felt the influences on her career journey were both personal and cultural. Odella was very proud of her achievements which include membership of external local and national groups of significance including government bodies, related to her discipline.

Odella's schooling was described as unexceptional, in a school comprising mainly white working-class pupils, and BME students were very much a minority. Teachers had low expectations of her and her fellow BME peers and there was an expectation that only white pupils went to university.

Odella's motivation to succeed and develop a career in HE came from a notion that she wanted to be viewed as positive rather than different because of her skin colour, hair, food she ate, dense Caribbean accent (Odella's description) and the lifestyles of her family members. She considered herself working class.

Odella described herself professionally as a research active, learning and teaching senior academic. She was overtly passionate about the subject of race and the intersection of multiple identities which included gender, ethnicity and social class. She had a strong voice in relation to discrimination against BME people caused by experiences at the intersection of their multiple identities and was passionate about social justice. Odella was very involved in work relating to BME student attainment and expressed a powerful voice on this within her university. Her experiences included being asked to take on tasks and roles because of her colour and gender. Whilst she resented the idea of being called upon to be an expert because of her colour and gender, she felt this had also opened opportunities for her. She thought she was adaptable in her leadership practice.

At the time of writing, Odella very sadly passed away following an illness during the pandemic. I am indebted to her for her enthusiastic and supportive input. We became friends during this process, and I will remember her as a source of strong support for completing this thesis.

Victoria

Victoria is a recently retired Deputy Dean of a large faculty, and identified as a Black Caribbean female, who was also an educator and clinical professional of which she was particularly proud.

Victoria was born in the Caribbean of African Caribbean parents and moved to the UK with her family at age 10. Victoria held family as very dear to her and her father was considered the anchor in the family, who emphasised the value of a good education and hard work to ensure success. Victoria's grammar school education in London was considered a distinct advantage by her and included a few pupils from the Caribbean. Her perception was that the African Caribbean girls worked very hard with a desire to succeed. Victoria's teachers, who were white in the main, were a strong influence on her. Furthermore, her clinical nurse tutor had a positive influence on her, enabling her completion of her clinical training and the pursuit of higher levels of study. Victoria's husband was supportive during her career and helped with family responsibilities so she could work.

Victoria considered herself to be middle class and related this to her good schooling and education. She believed that her social class had positively influenced her peers' perception of her, and this perception is important in leadership progression. Religion and the Christian church were significant in Victoria's life alongside her family and the friends she had through the church.

Victoria's determination to succeed in her career came from her own self-motivation and from seeing very few BME staff in senior positions in the institution. She was the only Black member of senior faculty for her career and felt that she was regularly assigned roles/tasks that related to her race, which also got her noticed by senior academic staff in the institution. She considered her colleagues to be helpful but not supportive and self-sought her opportunities and professional networks to further her career.

Victoria did not feel that her African Caribbean culture and ethnicity have been a barrier to her academic progression as a leader, yet she cited how after serving as temporary Dean she was not offered the substantial post and thought this might have because she was a Black female.

Victoria appeared very reluctant throughout our interactions to discuss the issues underlying race, gender and ethnicity, and when asked probing questions thought that these might have on occasion influenced her career progression. However, she did acknowledge at interview two that it had made her think about race and gender in HE leadership.

Manushka

Manushka is a mature woman in her late 50s and is a senior academic in HE, which gives her immense pride as she believes senior academic positions are difficult to achieve for women of BME origin.

Manushka identifies with a Black African family, born under apartheid rule. She grew up in a loving, middle-class, wealthy family and considers herself as having had a very good education, which meant she felt a minimal impact of apartheid. She spoke of there being no 'class' system in Africa and she adopted being middle class when she came to study and live in the UK at the age of 19.

Manushka was educated at a Catholic single-sex boarding school from the age of 5 until 18 in Africa, run by nuns and priests. Catholicism continues to exert an everyday influence on her and she draws strength and support to overcome challenges faced in her personal and professional life through her religion, faith and her church.

Her parents encouraged her to 'aspire to achieve greatness' despite colour (her description) and gender, which she feels she has adopted in her career journey. She considers herself to be an optimistic and self-satisfied person. She has a very strong work ethic which has motivated her to pursue her ambition and succeed in her academic career.

She has got multiple degrees, has worked in the NHS and now works in HE. Her educational qualifications made her feel awkward with white peers who negatively viewed her for this. It was her doctoral supervisor who gave her confidence and self-belief, encouraging her journey in HE.

Manushka is immensely proud of her research and its relationship to the curriculum. Her self-sought networks are within her discipline. She feels her accent and inability to articulate in English as well as some of her peers do has caused her disadvantage, and has held her back in terms of career progression.

Manushka feels race, ethnicity and social class have a bearing on achieving success as a leader in HE. She did not write or speak of her marital status or children.

She showed great enthusiasm for the nature of my research and felt it was much needed. Manushka has a real concern in relation to confidentiality, as she felt if what she had said became known, it would impact on her career and current post. I reiterated I would always maintain confidentiality and ensure her participation remained unknown.

Omolara

Omolara, a mature woman in her early 50s, self-identified as Black African-Nigerian and Ibo, the tribe that lost the civil war in Nigeria (her description). She also identified as a scientist, daughter, sister, an aunt, a devout Catholic and a Londoner. She was with a partner, had no children, and belonged to a closely knit family circle of mother, father and two brothers. Omolara expressed familial values, beliefs and religion as creating self-motivation, self-belief and ambition despite race, gender and ethnicity. Omolara described her culture as a Nigerian Ibo as positively influencing her identity and her agency. She describes the Ibo culture as respecting the eldest daughter in the family yet being very patriarchal.

Omolara's motivation and ambition began in school, with the heightened self-awareness of being Black and female and feeling a need to succeed despite her colour which she saw as a disadvantage. This alongside a strong work ethic inherited from her parents. She went to a grammar school and was teased on occasion for being 'posh'. Her family placed great emphasis on good schooling which she feels allowed her to succeed in HE at a prestigious university in the UK. Schooling and education are thought to have added to her socio-cultural capital which further contributed to her confidence and gave her a sense of agency. She considered her middle-class background and upbringing as very positive and important for success in life.

Omolara works as a senior academic in a London university and was highly dissatisfied with her progression because of gendered racism and white privilege as she saw it. This despite her education, competence and ability for leadership. Parts of her career experiences have impacted her emotional well-being, causing stress and anger in an environment where she considered there was no social justice.

Omolara was quietly spoken, and highly articulate and passionate about race and what it means for Black female scholars. She was very keen to be part of this research study as she felt we need to keep talking about race and its intersections with multiple identities within the context of HE if we are to change the landscape as she currently sees it.

Omolara engaged with the career grid and interviews with great passion. At the time of writing, Omolara had successfully gained promotion at a different university.

Verity

Verity is a mature woman in her late 50s, who identified as a middle-aged, Black woman, a nursing academic with a doctorate. She is married to a white British man and has two daughters whom she felt appreciated the impact of race and gender on the ability to succeed in one's career. Verity felt that social class is a far more significant identity than culture related to ethnicity, when considering the impact on academic leadership progression for BME women.

Her early influences are attributed to her dad who passed away just after she got her doctorate and Verity was very emotional about this aspect, yet delighted he got to call her 'Doctor'. Her paternal influences taught her to forge ahead with ambition despite race and gender. Her grammar school education, where she was the only Black girl at the school, was seen as influencing self-belief, confidence and heightening awareness of race, gender and social class.

Verity saw a good education as being very important for success, especially when you are a Black female. This has translated as influencing her daughters to pursue HE and achieve higher degrees since this influences an individual's career choices and success. Verity's experiences in nursing led her to pursue a career in teaching within a university, supported by a good nurse mentor.

Her recent motivators have included being a good role model to her daughters and wanting to show her white mother-in- law what she was capable of despite being Black. She had recently become a grandmother and was determined that her daughter would not be held back by issues such as childcare (which she feels affected her career progression) in her career journey.

Verity feels she has managed her own career expectations, and she had never been offered any mentorship or access to formal networks. She is very aware of the absence of Black women in the leadership team in her institution and considers her current position and life experiences as giving her the confidence to speak out more recently within her institution. This has encompassed views about whiteness as an advantage; ethnicity and language as a barrier to people of BME origin; and the under-representation of BME women at senior levels because of the disadvantage to them at the intersections of race, gender and social class.

Verity demonstrated passion and sadness, and expressed a hope that my thesis would make some difference in the arena of social justice.

Mercy

Mercy, a passionate and knowledgeable participant, is a single parent and proud mum to a teenage daughter who was raised and continues to live in London. She identified as a Black woman and an academic leader in HE who was passionate about social justice, race equality and ethnicity, especially in relation to outcomes for students.

She described herself as a ‘disruptor’ because she felt there were so many inequalities that exist within HE at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class. Mercy considered herself to have strong working-class values and was enthusiastic about her working-class heritage form her parents.

She was very proud of her recently deceased parents who were immigrants from the Caribbean and came to the UK in search of work and a better life. She described her ‘incredible’ parents as having an ‘incredible work ethic’ that was passed on to her and her brother. Her father was a huge influence on her in her childhood and younger adult days. Her family instilled values of good education and success

despite race and gender. Mercy describes her schooling as unexceptional and was aware of racial disadvantage in her school years. She felt growing up in London as a Black female with African Caribbean heritage was particularly difficult for her, both within her school and work environment too. However, this also motivated her, alongside parental encouragement, to show others what she was capable of and that she would not be defeated by racism.

Mercy has worked in HE in the UK and abroad and said the issues of race and gender prevailed in both countries. She stated her appearance (dreadlocks) was not conducive to the appearance of academics in HE and feels appearance has had a huge impact on the way people of colour are perceived. She felt that social class is moveable and can be acquired through education, employment and socio-economic capital.

Her experiences included being the Black female who was asked to take on tasks and roles because of her colour, yet she felt this could have also been an advantage as it has opened up career opportunities for her. Mentorship and networks were self-sought and helped to plan her career.

At the time of the first interview, Mercy was working at a senior academic level in HE. At the time of the second, she had just been promoted to a senior position within her institution with a remit for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and was awaiting to take up post.

Mercy was very passionate and enthusiastic about this research study.

Irene

Irene is a senior academic in HE, who identified as a Black woman, a senior academic in a specialised field, a company director and a teacher.

Her grammar school education in the UK was thought to be unexceptional with no aspiration for ambition other than finding a job. Ambitions for a university education were only spoken of in relation to her white peers. However, encouragement from her primary school teachers, especially in her ability to write, helped develop her confidence.

Yet, it was all change for Irene, when at the age of 13 her Nigerian parents moved the family back to Nigeria. Irene says this was the turning point for her and ignited her motivation and ambition. She observed Black people at all levels and from the same/similar middle-class background as hers achieving in Nigeria. She realised success for her was possible and thus began her career journey into leadership in HE.

Nigeria presented her with a real challenge in the form of her female gender and being from the Ibo tribe. However, she felt it was her solid middle-class family and good education that helped her negotiate the challenges faced. Irene felt that social class related to a good education was very important for her success and progression in academic leadership in HE.

Returning to the UK as a single mum with four children exposed Irene to both poverty and a career in HE in the UK. Her PhD supervisor and university colleagues were predominantly white and were thought to be influencers and sources of support in her life. She felt she has created her own journey with her own networks, despite being Black and female.

Irene was actively involved at a very senior level in race and anti-racism through her institutional work in relation to the Race Equality Charter. However, she had to fight for this role and negotiate with colleagues to be given the opportunity. She is as proud of this work as she is with her professional work in her specialised subject.

Amina

Amina, a mature woman in her early 50s, identified as a strong, independent mother who values knowledge. She also identified as a British Pakistani woman, with working-class parents, yet she considered herself to be middle class due to her HE at a prestigious university, which gave her socio-cultural capital, expanded her interests and brought opportunities for career progression (her description).

Amina emphasised her Britishness throughout the interviews. She felt that her peers/friends saw her as British first and then as Pakistani. She said she did not like being asked about her heritage as feels it is British, given that she was born here.

Her parents were born in Pakistan and migrated to Britain before she was born. She had siblings but just the one brother.

Amina came from a patriarchal family where education and opportunities were seen the domain of the male in the family. She felt her Pakistani Muslim culture had created a barrier for her in her leadership journey in HE. Amina did not find her family and their influences on her particularly enabling, especially in relation to her academic ambitions and her career. She considered her mother's lack of education and attitude towards it for females in the family as her own driving force to succeed. Her brother went to Oxford University which motivated her to think of her own education ambition despite parental protests. Amina was very determined to achieve a significant level of independence and professional recognition in her early 20s to 30s as she was also being pressurised to enter into an arranged marriage with a Pakistani Muslim. Amina clearly felt that her culture put her at a distinct disadvantage in British society.

Amina is very proud of her HE at a prestigious university in the UK and her post-doctoral work which allowed her opportunities to showcase her subject knowledge and general ability. Her partner was very supportive of her career aspirations by encouraging her to engage with a PhD.

Despite great difficulty in being able to conceive a child, Amina was very proud of being mother to her teenage son and wants him to be privately educated and be part of the middle class. Amina was clear that she did not want her son to be held back by culture and religion as she was, as she feels her son is British. Her partner is white and not British in origin. He had been supportive of her career plans and ambitions until recently, where she felt her current seniority outranks his and has caused some tension at times between them.

For Amina, being an equal within the home and the academy was very important to her; she did not wish to be seen differently because of her colour, gender and ethnic background. At the time of the interviews, she was in a senior academic post in the institution and despite not wanting to be defined by her ethnicity and culture, she felt that BME women were under-represented at senior level within the university, and this needed to be corrected.

Amina described herself as an experienced academic who felt her race and ethnicity causing inequality for her at work is not something she had thought of or noticed. However, Amina had recently started to become more interested in issues surrounding race especially in relation to the student (BME) attainment gap. Amina said that participating in this study had made her think more deeply about how the intersectional experiences of race, gender, ethnicity and social class can cause disadvantage for BME women in leadership. Amina felt more aware of social justice issues within the organisation, especially since her career was advancing rapidly.

The pen portraits bring to life eight BME women who told stories of their career journeys in academic leadership in HE. Three key themes emerged from these stories. In the sections below, I present and discuss the data as it relates to the themes.

5.2 Theme 1: BME female academic leaders and intersecting identities of race, gender, ethnicity and social class

This key theme is linked to sub-questions (SQ) one and two:

SQ 1: *How do race, gender, ethnicity and social class intersect to shape BME women's leadership?*

SQ 2: *What do BME women perceive to be the resources/sources of support and/or challenges to their career?*

The theme is divided into four sub-themes, each of which is structured as an integrated presentation and discussion.

The narratives relating to this theme tell stories of structural, racial and other associated inequalities that lead to discrimination and marginalisation within the context of institutional culture presented as institutional racism (Arday and Mirza, 2018). This encompasses white privilege (Ahmed, 2007; Bhopal, 2018) and experiences of racial microaggressions (Rollock, 2018, 2019).

The four sub-themes are:

1. Experiences at the intersection of race, gender, ethnicity and social class in academic leadership

2. Institutional racism as a challenge to academic leadership

3. BME women and EQI - oppression and opportunity

4. Limited accessibility to professional sources of support for leadership compared to white peers.

5.2.1 Experiences at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class in academic leadership

The narratives of the BME women in this study highlight inequalities encountered from childhood at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class (Brah,1996; Puwar, 2004; Mirza, 2016; Bhopal, 2018).

The career grids and narratives show that the intersection of race and gender is recalled in terms of raced and gendered experiences from a very young age:

'It was hard, growing up in the UK in the 70s and 80s, being Black and people making assumptions about you based on the colour of your skin and you were a girl. I always knew I was going to have to work ten times harder than the white girl sitting next to me' (Omolara).

This discrimination was carried into adulthood, throughout their professional lives and work:

'A classic example, I have been on interview panels where the candidates have spoken to me as though I'm there to make the tea, rather than to interview them. I think it is a juxtaposition between the race and the gender. A, there is an expectation that it is likely to be a man who is the leader, a white man and B, it's certainly less likely to be a Black woman' (Odella – looks bemused).

The physicality of race and gender becomes the focus of discrimination and distress:

'it's not just the skin colour and the culture, it was the body shape and type - just commented upon. They used to touch my hair at school, I hate it when people touch my hair, because it was another marker of difference. As a Black woman you always had those markers of difference' (Odella).

There was pressure to conform rather than demonstrate difference in physical appearance:

'*Black women like me are under pressure to look professional, this could include the use of skin lightening creams, have their hair in a weave, straightened so that you fit in better* (Mercy raises her eyebrows at this). *You can't wear dreadlocks, you can't have braids as it is deemed so far from the mould of what success looks like, which is based on the European white ideal'* (Mercy – appears angry).

Race intersecting with ethnicity also becomes the focus of discrimination:

'*English is not my mother tongue, so the level of confidence that one has to express oneself is different you know. If English was my mother tongue, I think I would have probably been a vice chancellor by now. It is difficult as I feel people don't think of me as well educated as they are, because of my accent and lack of English. We don't have BME women at the top because we're not born in this country'* (Manushka – sighs).

Yet when race and gender intersect with middle-class identity, this might be considered advantageous:

'so, the darker your skin the more pushed away you are from the white male norm or the white backdrop. Black African is further down the line from African Caribbean, but if you are highly aristocratic, or from a wealthy family, that may tip you on side, because the class status tips over the visual elements' (Odella).

The narratives highlight racial inequality and gendered discrimination for BME women from a young age, shaping their social categorisation that marginalises and stereotypes them (Ahmed, 2007; Fitzgerald, 2014; Mirza, 2016).

The experiences of BME women in HE, at the intersections of their multiple identities, created a notion of someone made to feel different, exposed (Ahmed, 2007), like an outsider (Puwar, 2004). Within the norm that is whiteness in society and white, male, middle-class dominated academic leadership, the outcome is that BME women are rendered invisible (Mirza, 1997, 2009), and excluded from the power located in academic leadership (Landers and Santoro, 2017). They have to work harder than their white counterparts (Bernard, 2017). This implies there is less opportunity presented to BME women for promotion and progression in academic leadership.

The physicality of race and gender becomes a marker of diversity and difference and aligns with the notion of embodiment (Mirza, 2016). The attention drawn to embodiment could be interpreted as an invasion of privacy, and lack of respect and recognition of the person as an individual. This type of racial microaggression can intentionally or unintentionally cause distress in a person of colour, negatively impacting on their feelings and the way they see themselves, and contributing to issues with self-esteem and identity as they progress in life (Sian, 2017; Rollock, 2018).

This suggests the pressure to conform, in terms of physical appearance to what is considered the norm in a white society, can lead to loss of respect for one's identity and marginalisation within the context of what a successful leader should look like (Mirza, 2009, 2016, 2018). Failure to acknowledge diversity highlights a reality that lightness of skin colour in relation to Blackness may give some BME women the option of avoiding the disadvantages that their colour and culture could potentially bring for them, within the institution. Acculturation or erasure of aspects of one's identity in relation to skin colour is a strategy to fit into the institution (Ahmed, 2007; Mirza 2009, 2016). The pressure to aspire to lightness of skin colour for BME women could be seen as an example of gaining power and advantage through lightness, despite the price paid of identity erasure for the BME women concerned (Butler, 2003; Reay, 2017).

It is an example of the intersectionality of raced identities (Capper, 2015) where a lighter skin tone or a changed identity are favourable in terms of social class and

associated socio-cultural capital. These are considered advantageous in academic leadership (Bhopal, 2012).

The narratives highlight disadvantage arising from speaking English with an accented speech pattern that showcases one's ethnicity. A lack of fluency with the English language and an accented speech pattern can lead to stereotyping of BME women, in terms of being working class with consequential misrecognition for academic achievements and ability (Bush et al, 2006). This means they must work harder than others to prove their knowledge and capability because of the association with being working class (Reay, 2017; Bhopal, 2018; Rollock, 2018). This can be seen as another example of the institutionalisation of whiteness that produces likeness in its members, in this case, in the use of the English language and the accent with which it is spoken. When the difference is marked and audible, it causes discomfort and distress to those entering such white spaces (Ahmed, 2007).

Five BME women in this study spoke English fluently with an English accent considered to be the norm within the institution. This was considered an advantage and important for their career progression. It is associated with being middle class which is advantageous in academic leadership (Rollock, 2018). Thus, their narratives suggest that these BME women were not marked as unfavourably different compared to BME women whose accent was associated with their minoritised ethnicity and social class. Whilst there was no sense of whether these BME women had purposefully changed their accents, it is possible that many successful professionals who have strong accents fight themselves, in a sense – to dampen down natural speaking voices in the assumption that it will help them get on, fit in, regardless of the talent they may have (Davies, 2006). This could also be explained as bicultural competence (Alfred, 2001), as a strategy for navigating culturally dominant organisational environments (Gabriel, 2017) and serve to diminish the sense of othering felt by these women in relation to their multiple identities.

Institutional racism, including white privilege and racial microaggressions, was also highlighted as a challenge for BME women in academic leadership. This is discussed next.

5.2.2 Institutional racism and BME academic leadership

The narratives show the women's awareness that institutional culture, which includes institutional racism, tends to keep race at the centre (Lander and Santoro, 2017); whiteness is pervasive, which causes disadvantage to BME women in academic leadership (Bhopal, 2018). Furthermore, the narratives suggest that this situation is compounded by subtle racism in the form of racial microaggressions and is identified as an outcome of institutional racism by the BME women in this study (Bernard, 2017; Rollock, 2018, 2019). Furthermore, the narratives show that BME women are called upon to lead on race, diversity and inclusion issues within the institution as experts on the subject. This hyper-visibility is a paradox of both oppression (Mirza, 2017) and opportunity for BME women.

5.2.2.1 White privilege and racial microaggressions

The BME women tell stories of institutional cultures where whiteness is privileged above other identities within the institution:

*'Whiteness affords privilege to those who are racialised as white in this society and therefore, it means the oppression of those who are not' (*Mercy).

The composition of senior leadership is described as follows:

'*It is like a pint of Guinness'* (Mercy).

'they're stacked up to favour a white middle-class male norm' (Odella).

The most influential positions are dominated by white middle-class males:

'success doesn't look like me, it doesn't look like a Black woman, it is a standard white middle-class male dressed in a certain way, behaves in a certain way and the further you are away from what the standard looks like, I think the more likely it is that people do not see you as a leader or a person who is successful' (Mercy – looks frustrated).

In terms of misrecognition of ability and leadership capability, Manushka says:

'*Well, they (White colleagues) couldn't believe that Black woman, a nurse, could do a PhD. What is a Black woman doing a PhD for?*' (Manushka).

‘*All these white men making these decisions as to who they feel would make a really good head of school. I met all the criteria including the professorship and my name doesn’t get mentioned in there once. I was angry, very hurt, very upset and didn’t want to believe what was staring me right in the face. That they didn’t see me in a leadership role because I was Black and a woman’* (Omolara – looks tearful).

Furthermore, there is a notion of racial inequality and discrimination being further compounded by racism from other BME people in the institution:

‘*Some Black people have grown up very, very privileged, very privileged in their hometown or wherever they come from and identify more with whiteness. Black people can be anti-Black as well because it does not fit with the model of success of leadership. People (Black) want to disassociate themselves from that narrative that accompanies Black. Those (Black) individuals can become the gatekeepers; they relish the fact that they are the only Black person in a position of power and it’s in their interest to keep you out’* (Mercy).

Yet, for some of the BME women in this study the whiteness of the institution was not an issue:

‘*I had a meeting with the VC, and he said I hope you don’t take this the wrong way, but I don’t see you as non-white. When I see you and interact with you, I never see you as non-white … I’m not offended at all as for me it is a good thing. That’s how I hope people would see me. When people make me feel non-white, it’s not a good thing because they’re seeing me as a colour and not just as another person’* (Amina).

The narratives also suggest that racial microaggressions exist within the institution and are more subtle than overt racism:

‘*It is a flicker of the eyebrow; you can see something in their body language whilst they’re trying to retain their surprise. When you lay on other things, they’re more and more shocked, because they do not expect BME women in certain roles, doing certain things. It is frustrating and upsetting for sure’* (Omolara – is angry and upset).

‘*the notion of microaggression, I don’t think they are meaning to be racist or sexist or classist. It’s just like, aren’t we over this? Why is this even coming out of your mouth? Like you have said something wrong’* (Odella).

Furthermore, racial microaggressions can cause loss of confidence in one’s competence and capability for BME women academic leaders:

‘*I am now re-interpreting some of what I thought as being rude as plain microaggressions. From things I have seen or felt, there is an assumption that white is dominant, is the leader, is natural and it’s what I’ve said before, you have to actively put the notion of a Black leader into their heads. It is so challenging and makes you lose confidence’* (Verity – looks angry and frustrated).

Through these narratives, whiteness is seen as a privilege which serves to define white academics as … in the institution and Black academics as the other (Bhopal, 2018; Eddo-Lodge, 2018). This was captured well in Mercy’s description of leadership like a pint of Guinness, especially in regions such as London, where BME students study in large numbers across most universities, and BME staff are well represented in roles other than academic leadership. This appearance of academic leadership could be explained as whiteness which privileges and permeates the senior levels of HE leadership, still linking with the leadership stereotypes that are white, male, middle-class attributes (Landers and Santoro, 2017). It can also be suggested that BME women are seen as diametrically distinct from the white male leaders who make the decisions in the spaces of the institution, hence they are not even considered as being eligible for consideration for academic leadership (Eddo-Lodge, 2018; Rollock, 2018, 2019).

Omolara’s narrative highlights her distress and upset at not even being considered for promotion despite having the credibility for the job. It can be implied that for BME women there is a higher threshold than there is for their white counterparts and meritocracy is not given due consideration (Bhopal, 2018). Hence, it is unsurprising that BME academics in HE want to leave the institution (Bhopal and Jackson, 2016). This is one explanation for the under-representation of BME women in academic leadership in HE.

However, Amina's narrative shows that, for some BME women in academic leadership, white identity was considered the norm and was acceptable. This acculturation or bicultural competence has been discussed in this chapter, in 5.2.1 above, and could be seen as a strategy to resist being marked as different or the other (Alfred, 2001; Ahmed, 2007; Mirza, 2009, 2016). This may be relevant and important for BME women who want to progress in academic leadership in the institution. Amina has a very senior position in the institution and perhaps this strategy could also be seen as resistance and having created a space for herself to speak, survive the institution and navigate her leadership journey. It also demonstrates the power of whiteness in the institution, which could be further seen as the required identity for academic leadership in the institution (Eddo-Lodge, 2018). Yet, there are varying degrees of (dis)comfort associated with acculturation among the BME women in this study as seen in Mercy's narrative above.

The narratives relating to BME women facing discrimination from other BME colleagues highlights, yet again, the intersectionality of raced identities (Capper, 2015) looked upon as racism within races, by the BME academics affected by it. This further suggests that for some people of BME background, distancing themselves from Black and minoritised people, who may/may not identify similarly, could be a strategy to fit in to the institution and navigate their leadership journey. Like white privilege, it could also further compound the under-representation of BME women in leadership in HE.

The narratives highlight that racial microaggressions that are insidious and covert tell us something about the institutional structures and leadership within the institution. These structures demonstrate that whiteness is the norm, and privileges and makes BME people feel different and less than their white colleagues (Sian, 2017; Rollock, 2018). Furthermore, it can be postulated that the dominance of whiteness of the institution goes relatively unchecked, thus highlighting that the white institution further perpetuates racial microaggressions (Johnson and Joseph-Salisbury, 2018).

The narratives suggest that racial microaggressions are not considered by white academic colleagues in the way this is defined (Alexander and Arday, 2015). For most academics, if asked, the language of racism is located somewhere out there and not within the realms of HE, where most academics would consider themselves

educated and genteel folk. Odella's narrative suggests a naivety or ignorance of the aggressor or equally a position of assumed superiority due to whiteness. These microaggressions do not fall into the remit of clear intentionality, yet they cause a disempowerment for those affected by it, with an empowerment for those who are not (Ahmed, 2009; Sian, 2017). It also raises the question about the efficacy of implementation and use of legislative frameworks and policies designed to support racial equality within the institution.

The narratives suggest an emotional cost to BME women in the institution through anger, frustration and distress caused by white privilege that is institutional racism (Jones, 2006; Ahmed, 2007). For some women, there was a process of recognising racial microaggression and a process of it being streamed into their consciousness. This was associated with frustration, anger and distress in the re-telling of this (Rollock, 2012; Sian, 2017). The narratives further suggest that for most of the women in this study, this type of racial discrimination endures at senior levels within the institution and to continuously challenge and offer resistance comes at some emotional cost to BME female academic leaders and those who want to aspire to leadership (Rollock, 2019). This might further contribute to the under-representation of BME women in leadership roles in the institution.

Despite the experiences of racial discrimination and marginalisation, BME women engage in diversity work within the institution which is presented and discussed next.

5.2.3 BME women and Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy – opportunity and oppression

The narratives show that the BME women in this study were involved in EDI tasks and processes because of their ethnic identity. This stereotyping of BME academics, especially women, is discussed as hyper-visibility through diversity work (Ahmed, 2007; Mirza, 2017):

'*It was like my race and my culture constantly being reinscribed, it was like I could speak for all Black people and minority ethnic people everywhere. There was like you embody ethnic difference for everyone everywhere, so we can ask you a question and you can answer it on behalf a particular group' (Odella).*

This assigned role was sometimes a burden for BME women:

'I can't tell you the number of times I've been to congresses, conferences, high profile meetings, and I am the only Black female face in the room. Then trying to get a dialogue around those issues is exhausting as you are in the minority. The needs of the whole group are bigger because they are represented' (Mercy).

Whilst the consequence of historical and structural equalities is not straightforward, the narratives suggest that in some instances they can also be beneficial at an individual level:

'It is a mixed blessing being Black and being a woman, it presents with many opportunities related to EDI' (Mercy).

There appears to be a simplification of the BME experience. In crude terms, it appears that if you are from a BME background, this is almost interchangeable in terms of experience and solutions. Diversity roles appear to be assigned to BME women based on the embodiment of their race and ethnic difference (Rollock, 2018, 2019). This work and the hyper-visibility, as a consequence, is not something white colleagues have to think about. It is work with emotional labour attached to it. It is an extra responsibility that BME women in senior positions in the institution undertake (Ahmed, 2012). The BME women representing the institution at senior levels found the work of accessing professional environments, where whiteness is the majority, is not the end of the story. The weight of whiteness means a lack of equity in agenda that matters to all. Based on the evidence presented, it felt like a lonely place to be within one's professional life adding to frustration and exhaustion discussed by Ahmed (2018).

BME women being given the very task of transforming these institutional norms by attending committees and groups dealing with issues related to EDI allows the institution to claim it is being inclusive and concerned with equality (Pilkington, 2013; Ahmed, 2018).

Odella's narrative shows being the symbol of diversity is hard work (Mirza, 2016). Whilst her narratives suggest she was happy within her organisation, the degree of challenge and use of voice discussed above show a powerful resistance and resilience (Rollock, 2019). Furthermore, the narratives suggest that BME women do diversity work as a way of encouraging and building collective activism and

developing institutional knowledge to challenge and overcome whiteness (Mohanty, 2003; Mirza, 2016).

Over half the BME women were identified for key leadership roles relating to EDI within the institution which included the Race Equality Charter and Athena Swan, within their respective institutions. This EDI work, as part of the institution's strategy, was felt by the participants to have brought them recognition and an opportunity to speak out and be heard at senior levels within the institution. It was seen as an opportunity for career progression for them. Furthermore, this work added to their socio-cultural, professional, resistance and navigational capital and was felt to be supporting their access to academic leadership opportunities (Yosso, 2005).

The narratives suggest that the diversity work, which included EDI work at senior level, is paradoxical in creating both oppression and opportunity for BME women academic leaders in HE.

Professional resources and sources of support that help BME female academic leaders navigate the challenges faced is discussed next.

5.2.4 Limited accessibility to professional sources of support for leadership

The narratives suggest that professional resources and sources of support for BME female academic leaders are seen to provide professional, resistance and navigational capital for the BME women (Yosso, 2005). Whilst these are not accessed equally by all women in the institution (Jones et al, 2006; Abdalla, 2018), they are highly valued by BME women and considered highly significant in helping them overcome the challenges they faced. These include mentorship, access to formal and informal networks and leadership training.

5.2.4.1 Mentorship and access to formal and informal networks

Over half of the participants in this study were offered formal mentoring opportunities within the organisation and the narrative below speaks of the value assigned to this by the participants:

'*mentorship allowed me to channel my frustration and anger at the injustice of not even being given the opportunity to do the job that I was well placed to do based on*

my experience in the department. It went to a white male colleague. If it was not for my mentor, I think I would have left HE at that point' (Omolara).

Odella highlights the significance of a BME female mentor in her career journey in leadership who she self-sought:

'Women bring much more of the emotional labour that is sometimes required in mentoring. I think the value of a BME woman as a mentor is about having someone you can connect with and someone who understands your experience, your identities, as well as somebody who can help you navigate through systems and processes' (Odella – looks excited).

However, Amina's experience of organisation facilitated mentorship that did not let aspects of identity define the mentorship was considered an enabler:

'I don't think my colleagues see my colour or ethnicity and that is important to me. To be honest, as far as I can remember, I don't think people have seen me as a Pakistani and it has always been that they see me as one of them. My mentors have been male and female and white' (Amina).

For Irene, mentorship was highly valued with a white male mentor:

'*I guess I am quite ambitious. Right from doing my PhD, I've had a very supportive supervisor who was my mentor. I think if you have people like this around you, who are quite happy to support your ambition, then life's a little bit easier I would say. My* supervisor *and mentor was a white male. He was great'* (Irene).

All the women's involvement with informal or formal networks was self-sought and considered significant:

'The quality of the relationships. People you can talk to, people whom you can blow off steam with, and people who, like I say, I don't have to box my identity off to be around. They are really good quality relationships that every professional needs.' (Odella)

Such a self-sought network of women with postcolonial backgrounds brought Omolara recognition as a contemporary author into a close network of BME academics who helped her through her leadership journey:

'*my network gave me the courage to speak about my experiences in HE as a BME academic. I have been profoundly affected by my involvement with this work, through the network. Whether or not it will affect my career progression is yet to be seen but I cannot help but be optimistic' (Omolara).*

The narratives highlight that the BME women used the mentoring relationship in various ways. Mentoring relationships were seen as offering guidance and advice to overcome challenges faced; navigate the academic leadership landscape in HE; and expedite career progression (Bass and Bass, 2009). Furthermore, the narratives suggest that mentorship was used as a form of resistance, allowing the nurturing of emotional resources and maintenance of a positive self-perception in an environment where ability and self-esteem had been undermined (Opara, 2020). Omolara's narratives suggest that her mentor encouraged her not to downplay the significance of her scholarship and allowed her to consider how to stop an unsupportive environment from holding her back (Bernard, 2017). Furthermore, mentorship appears to give a space to express her anger and vulnerabilities, speak with authenticity, and harness internal coping mechanisms and emotional responses to the difficulties encountered within the institution. Here, mentorship can be seen to enable the use of key facets of cultural capital to navigate and negotiate the academic milieu (Yosso, 2005; Bernard, 2017).

Furthermore, most of the women who accessed mentorship as a professional resource of support were particularly drawn to a BME woman as a mentor (Opara, 2020). There was a feeling that the mentor could help the mentee recognise the value they brought from their multiple identities, associate them to culture and life experiences, and help harness these to show them they have a place in leadership in the academy (hooks, 1994; Yosso, 2005). There is an implication that a BME woman as a mentor offers solidarity, a connection through race, gender and cultural identity that is not influenced by the dominance of whiteness or maleness and their attitudes to race and gender (Opara, 2020). This relationship is akin to the sisterhood between BME women discussed by Gabriel (2017).

However, Amina's narrative shows that some BME women's identities did not prevent access to professional resources and support offered at institutional level. Amina's narratives show she identifies as British Pakistani. Her accent, use of the English language, dress and appearance could be considered influenced by a white British culture rather than a Pakistani culture. This means for some BME women, who were born in the UK yet raised in a different culture, have chosen to become acculturated and have deliberately erased various aspects of their identity, or have achieved bicultural competence to integrate with and fit expectations within HE in the UK (Alfred, 2001; Mirza, 2009; Gabriel, 2017). Amina's social mobility, gained through her education and socio-economic status, may have allowed her to adapt and negotiate her identity, including choosing to combine differing identities (Bhopal, 2012; Gabriel, 2017). This in turn may have allowed her to fit into the institution and progress her career in leadership.

Amina and Irene's narratives demonstrate a white mentor's endorsement provides BME academics with a form of legitimacy not readily available through their BME peer networks. It is possible to infer that white approval, described as white sanction, is required as a basis for legitimacy for BME academics to progress (Miller, 2016). This undermines the notion of meritocracy and the authenticity of the potential benefits to be derived by anyone, regardless of status, from working hard (Eddo-Lodge, 2018). This explains the under-representation of BME women in HE leadership.

Networks were highly valued as they allowed a connection with other professionals who acknowledged multiple identities and allowed for voice and professional relationships to be developed, which in turn supported leadership journeys for BME women. They appeared to be used as a form of resistance by BME women in academic leadership (Hill-Collins, 2009).

Most of the participants' narratives demonstrated that there were no formal networking opportunities for them within the institution (Abdalla, 2018). Yet, they saw these offered to white colleagues and felt this to be the outcome of institutional racism and the power of whiteness (Jones et al, 2006). To ensure they gained navigational capital valuable in their own career, they self-sought external professional networking opportunities, with colleagues with similar disciplinary,

scholarly and research interests, where they felt they had something to offer network partners too (Miller, 2016).

The relationship within self-sought networks indicates an intention of wanting to share experiences and knowledge and a sense of giving to those in the network to support them in their own professional development. It also suggests a resistance to whiteness in the institution (Opara, 2020). Omolara's network acknowledged her multiple identities, allowed her voice to make visible race, gender and class and use this to promote her career. Her narrative suggests that she added to her socio-cultural, resistant and navigational capitals, through development of confidence and agency and a friendship with like-minded professional women who shared cultural values and beliefs (Yosso, 2005). Her narrative offers a sense of intrinsic value of this type of network that may or may not convert into something extrinsically valuable yet is considered worthy of pursuit in the leadership journey for BME women. It also demonstrates that BME women use networks as a form of resistance and as a means of acquiring navigational capital required for BME women in their academic leadership journey (Yosso, 2005; Gabriel, 2017).

This highlights a gap for BME women within the institution and the disadvantage for those who do not have access to such professional resources, which helps further develop socio-cultural, professional, resistance and navigational capitals considered significant for academic leadership.

5.2.4.2 Leadership training

The narratives below show that for some of the BME women in my study, the value of leadership training in realising their leadership aspirations was significant.

Omolara and Amina were the only two women in my study offered the opportunity to access an accredited external leadership programme, from an appraisal discussion and agreement.

Omolara's narrative suggests that she really enjoyed her leadership training, which was sensitive to race (Stellar HE, 2020):

‘*it was* a *more forthright form of leadership and created a recognition for me that I as a Black female will have to be very mindful of my career journey which I will have to navigate’* (Omolara).

Yet Odella’s narrative highlights her leadership training, which did not consider her multiple identities and the experiences at the intersections of these:

‘I’ve received formal training in the institution, but it’s neutral. It’s just leadership and management training. It doesn’t reflect if you are a female manager, or if you’re Black. If you are asking me, have I been supported as Black African-Caribbean female leader, then not at all’ (Odella – appears indignant at this).

Discussing the narratives, Omolara and Amina each described a significant external leadership training programme recognised in the sector that acted as a qualification and was used on one’s CV for career and academic leadership progression (Modood, 2010).

Omolara’s Stellar leadership training (Stellar HE, 2020) was race and ethnicity specific. It added to her professional and navigational capital through acquisition of knowledge and skills, to allow for different ways of thinking about her career, and gave her the confidence to refocus on her leadership aspirations as a BME woman. Culturally sensitive leadership training was considered valuable for BME women in academic leadership alongside the acquisition of a recognised educational qualification (Modood, 2010). Here, race and its challenges to leadership appear central, with acquisition of socio-cultural capital seen as one way of overcoming them.

Yet Odella highlights the inadequacy of her leadership training and advocates for a culturally sensitive leadership programme that accounts for the multiple identities of race and gender. It suggests that BME female academic leaders could be supported through developing leadership training in HE for women of colour, which could address and help overcome the challenges they face (Showunmi et al, 2016). The lack of attention to the significance of multiple identities in a training course could be viewed as a missed opportunity to develop those agentic skills and social capital required by BME women in leadership in HE, and the lack of this type of professional

support could be another explanation for under-representation of BME women at senior levels in HE.

However, Amina's narratives suggest that her leadership training programme, which was not BME or gender specific, was deemed appropriate for her leadership needs. Her preference not to be defined by her racial and ethnic identities, her acculturation and bicultural competence have been discussed previously in this chapter in 5.2.1, 5.2.2 and 5.2.4.

Professional resources and sources of support were considered significant to advancing one's career in HE but might be lacking in their accessibility and opportunity for BME women in academic leadership in HE (Gabriel, 2017).

5.2.5 Theme summary

This theme developed from stories of structural and racial inequality and discrimination for BME women in academic leadership in HE.

Experiences of discrimination and marginalisation in relation to embodiment of race and gender in childhood were carried through into their professional lives and professional work. Institutional culture, where race is central, privileges whiteness and allows for racial microaggressions on a regular basis. This was seen as institutional racism by BME women working within the institution, causing discrimination and emotional distress for them.

The embodiment of race and ethnic difference is highlighted for BME women academic leaders who are chosen to do diversity work within the institution. It is paradoxical in creating oppression in making them hyper-visible, yet presenting opportunity in relation to progression in academic leadership.

The significance and value of accessing professional resources such as mentoring, networks and leadership training is highlighted in the acquisition of socio-cultural, professional, resistant and navigational capital. Despite the paucity of opportunity to mentorship and networks, access to formal and informal networks was self-sought. With leadership training, these are highly valued by BME women aspiring to leadership.

5.3 Theme 2: Becoming a leader

The theme ‘Becoming a leader’ is linked to research SQ 3: How do BME women perceive their career histories in relation to their role of academic leadership within HE?

The findings are integrated with a discussion: ‘Influences on personal and professional identity’.

5.3.1: Influences on personal and professional identity

The narratives tell stories that highlight the influence of family values (Fook and Nath, 2019); ethnic capital (Atewologun and Singh, 2010), including cultural beliefs, religion and faith (Shah, 2009); and socio-cultural capital through schooling and education (Modood, 2010) on the development of their personal identity from childhood and their youth into adulthood. In turn, these influence their professional identity, acquisition of professional, resistance and navigational capitals and their leadership aspirations.

5.3.1.1 Family values and influences

Parental and family values and aspirations for their children appear to have had a powerful impact on the success of the BME women from childhood through to adulthood and influenced the development of their personal identity:

‘*my parents, my dad could see what he wanted for us. The idea of being 21, getting on a boat with a bunch of strangers, coming to this country and seeing these signs, ‘no blacks’, ‘no dogs’, ‘no Jews’, and managing to get where he did as a manager, having gone to night school! He was aware of ethnicity and race, he couldn’t live in this country and not be, but he did not want it to be my defining feature. He said, you have to work twice as hard to get half as far you get to where you are, and you will, because you are good at what you do’* (Mercy).

Mercy’s father’s experiences, whilst pointing out the reality of racism and discrimination, conveyed his determination for her to succeed. This was conveyed to Mercy through supporting her educational trajectory. It gave her the confidence to pursue her journey into leadership in HE.

The emphasis, particularly on paternal support, emerged quite strongly for six of the women and may have been a consequence of the strong patriarchal societies into which many of the women in my sample were born and socialised (Cubillo and Brown, 2003).

For Amina, who identified as Pakistani, the hegemony exerted by the males in her family caused her distress as education was only considered important for boys. Furthermore, Amina's career grid speaks of being born into a patriarchal Pakistani Muslim family where gender is positioned in favour of males and her family obstructed her leadership aspirations:

'In my family [Muslim] we are three sisters and one brother. Because he was the boy, he wasn't even allowed to make his own cup of tea in the house. He is not as successful as I have been. Yet I don't feel I can tell him about my success. When I became a full professor and told him, he did not even react … My mother who was uneducated could not read or write, she just wanted me to have an arranged marriage, education was only important for boys, a career was not seen as important for me. I hated that' (Amina – looks angry and upset).

Overcoming the disadvantage in relation to race and ethnicity appears to lie in postcolonial and migrant parents getting their children to internalise ambition and recognise the value of hard work, schooling and HE (Fook and Nath, 2019). Family values and beliefs included enforcing appropriate behaviours to realise these ambitions (Modood, 2010). The family appears to share ambitions to achieve upward mobility themselves and especially for their children, which is seen through the value and priority placed on schooling and HE. Educational qualifications gained are translated into socio-cultural capital. A connection here between HE, educational qualifications and upward social mobility is seen as essential for success by BME families (Modood, ibid).

The work ethic conveyed through parental role modelling further conveys a message to children to develop ambitions for success (Fook and Nath, 2019). Parents also offered their emotional and moral support for education and HE which was key to achieving success for BME women (Redmond et al, 2016).

Whilst the participants spoke of parental influence in varying degrees, for seven out of the eight BME women in this study, it was their father who particularly influenced their drive and ambition in pursuit of a career in leadership. This could be a consequence of the postcolonial, patriarchal societies (African, Asian) or families (African Caribbean) in which the BME women were raised.

Amina's narrative tells the story of girls and women in the Pakistani Muslim family raised in a patriarchal society that favourably positions the male gender, with females not being considered for employment other than unpaid domesticity. However, her narrative demonstrates resistance, as it was this very assumption made for her by her parents which then prompted her to pursue and succeed in her studies in HE, without the support of her family and community. She built resistant capital which could be used to overcome challenges in one's life, in this case in Amina's leadership journey in HE (Yosso, 2005).

Besides family influences, drawing on ethnic capital, which is gained from culture, religion and faith, is considered important in developing personal identity.

5.3.1.2 Ethnic capital – culture, religion and faith

The narratives suggest that ethnic capital, which includes culture, religion and faith, were an enabling influence forming an important part of the development of their personal identity (Shah, 2009; Atewologun and Singh, 2010). The ethnic capital derived supported the BME women to fit into school or organisations, overcome the challenges they faced and progress through their leadership journeys in HE.

Omolara describes her ethnic influences:

*'The work ethic comes from being Igbo, who are very driven. You know we lost the war and are a defeated people. Generally, Igbos have felt side lined because we're defeated, people say, don't let those people (Igbos) get a grasp, a stranglehold on anything because they'll take over the world! So, we have become very resourceful, and my parents have inculcated that in us, growing up. It was really mainly my parents and their work ethic which they got from being Igbo, which I inherited, but also their drive for us, me and my two brothers to succeed' (*Omolara).

The narratives illustrate how participants drew on their ethnic capital, which included a strong work ethic, a drive to succeed, perseverance and being guided by the elders in their family. They enjoyed good family relationships and there was transmission of aspirations and attitudes from parents to child/adult, enforced by the father/parents/family, underpinned by a determination to succeed through schooling and education (Modood, 2010).

However, in some cultures, such as that of Pakistani Muslims, the traditions, as described in Amina's narrative previously, were limiting for women aspiring to leadership in HE.

Amina's family life was influenced by the dominant traditions and culture of her Pakistani family, and at individual level she was influenced by the expectation of her family for dutiful compliance to socialisation within the Muslim religion and the societal norms for women in a Pakistani Muslim culture, despite being raised in the UK (Cubillo and Brown, 2003). Amina's narratives further tell a story where challenge to culture has not been easy and resulted in estrangement:

'I felt oppressed by being part of a Muslim community and the expectations that carried' (Amina).

The explanation her narrative offers is that by achieving leadership, she has pushed the boundaries set for her by her family, culture and religion and that, in her case, choices were limited. Yet, she broke out of the narrow confines of the roles prescribed by her culture and religion. Either she remained within the parameters of permissible behaviour, or she transgressed and risked becoming isolated in her own family and community (Shah, 2009). She chose the latter.

Religion and faith as part of ethnic capital were significant influences on the development of personal identity for other BME women (Atewologun and Singh, 2010):

'*I was educated by priests and nuns [in Africa] and to this day I am a practising Catholic. My faith determines every interaction, everything that I do, the way I interact, the way I manage people, my career my success'* (Manushka).

‘*my religion [Christian] is my anchor and has seen me and continues to see me through my personal and professional life’* (Victoria).

Religion and faith emerge from the narratives as core elements of support, assurance and guidance for more than half of the BME women in my study (Curtis, 2017). This form of ethnic capital becomes embedded in their ethical and spiritual leadership behaviours and values, and transcends their personal and professional life, giving them confidence in their leadership careers (Pollard, 2006). Furthermore, it suggests that spirituality in the leadership of BME women creates a self-awareness of a sense of connectedness that exists between their inner selves and the world, which influences their personal and professional world and guides their leadership practice (Grogan and Shakeshaft, 2009; Bass, 2012). This spirituality associated with religion could also be explained because of a colonial relationship, where religion was embedded into colonial society, hence, became significant for women from postcolonial backgrounds (Shah, 2009), which applies to half the women in this study.

However, unlike Mirza’s (2009) discussion in relation to Muslim women and the strength they sought and got from their religion (Chapter 3), Amina’s narrative suggests that this did not give her the inner strength to meet her ambitions and aspirations for academic leadership in HE. It is resistance of her religion and culture that is seen as helping her meet her career ambitions. Again, this resistant capital developed (Yosso, 2005) could be a consequence of being a Muslim female within a British society, with access to some aspects of cultural capital and influences other than her own, through schooling, friendships from and with those from other cultures and other contacts. In Amina’s case she appears to have used her resistant capital to progress her career in academic leadership.

In addition to ethnic capital, socio-cultural capital and social class were also considered significant to progressing leadership for the BME women.

5.3.1.3 Socio-cultural capital and social class

The narratives of all the women in this study demonstrate connectedness between their schooling, educational qualifications and acquisition of socio-cultural capital (Modood, 2010). Membership of a particular social class was felt to bring

opportunities considered an advantage in relation to leadership aspirations (Kenny and Briner, 2010).

'I was the first one to go to university in my family. There is a notion here of social mobility which was made possible by going to grammar school where I was the only Black person in my class, and then again by going to university. It is part of success' (Verity).

For Amina:

'Going to Oxford to do my degree exposed me to a completely different degree of independence, experience outside of my own Muslim culture, opened my eyes to privilege and entitlement that exists. I mixed with people who had a different upbringing to me. It showed me what was possible' (Amina).

Both Manushka and Irene linked financial capital to being able to access schooling and education, especially in cultures, such as those in Africa, where access to education and HE were dependent on the availability of economic resources:

'In Africa there is no class system, you're either educated or you're not. But normally people who are wealthy, are also educated in Africa. They are also the successful people. My family would consider us being middle class' (Manushka).

Yet, there was some uneasiness in locating social class in some cases:

'Social class impacts upon your leadership experiences, and you know that it does. I have the money to dress well, attend concerts, socialise. But the thing is people see a Black woman and that has meaning, whereas people don't see or hear your class because that can change throughout one's lifetime, your blackness doesn't. For me, it is my blackness that kind of overrides all the other intersecting areas of my life' (Mercy – speaks with passion).

However, race and gender as the central determinants of identity were highlighted:

'When it comes to social class, they (the organisation) have been comfortable with me and I with them. But, when I have what some people would call, attempted push above my weight, that's the way they see it, then no! I feel like I have made the

mistake of underestimating that fact that I am still different, I'm still Black and a woman. So, my class has helped me to get to a certain place, but when I have tried to push forward, it's all about my colour, my ethnicity, my gender' (Omolara – looks upset).

Irene's self-identification with the middle class is attributed to success, despite her race, gender and ethnicity:

'My university education has allowed me to pursue the academic work of publishing articles and speak with the voice of authority in relation to my subject. It is about education and the associated social class' (Irene).

The narratives of the BME women in this study demonstrate that they recognised the relationship between their socio-cultural capital and social class (Bhopal, 2012). Most of the women self-identified as middle class and all the participants described a strong drive for achievement of educational qualifications through schooling and HE, which was linked to social and cultural capital (Modood, 2010). Their narratives suggest that being middle class is highly valued and linked to success for career progression in academic leadership (Piff et al, 2012), as it enables BME women to fit into what is perceived as acceptable for leadership in the institution (Rollock et al, 2013).

For societies that emerged from a colonial background (e.g. Africa), the narratives demonstrate that economic capital is considered essential to access schooling and education. The driver here was to acquire socio-cultural capital which becomes financial resource; this can then be converted into educational qualifications and then back again (Modood, 2010). This then gives access to the privilege and opportunities associated with social capital and social class, and acquisition of skills considered essential for progress in leadership (Bakare-Yusuf, 1997).

All of the BME women in this study conveyed aspirations within their family home, with support and motivation to engage with HE (Yosso, 2005; Modood, 2010). This gave them access to opportunities seen to contribute to their socio-cultural capital and the confidence to participate in this social field of leadership. Situated thus, they were able to amass other forms of capital necessary for their success in their career journeys. This might lead the reader to conclude that, given the fact that all the BME

women in this study could access this capital, legitimacy is given to the falsehood that the Black presence in such a setting is race and gender neutral. Furthermore, analysing the significance of amassing socio-cultural capital in leadership highlights the corresponding disadvantage for those BME women without the necessary capital to begin with (Kwalhi, 2017). They would be effectively removed from benefitting and participating in the social, cultural web of interrelated networks that is university education. Being a BME professional requires additional work to fit into the social fabric of the workplace.

Some of the narratives discuss social class as moveable and dependent on educational qualification, resulting employment and associated salary, allowing acquisition of cultural capital backed up by economic capital and access to goods and services as needed. The narratives on race intersecting with social class imply that for most of the BME women in this study, moving or changing class was viewed as inviting, and belonging to the right social class in the institution facilitated leadership for BME women (Kenny and Briner, 2010; Rollock et al, 2013).

However, the narratives also highlight that the intersection of race with social class defines all experiences for BME females in academic leadership and is associated with discriminatory practice (Bhopal, 2018). Despite the acquisition of socio- cultural and economic capital, race and gender are considered the central determinants of self-identity which become daily markers of difference, especially when white, middle-class cultures and particular kinds of masculinities are represented as universal and the norm within the institution (Eddo-Lodge, 2018).

Amina and Irene's narratives draw attention to the intersectionality between races and show that BME people are not a homogenous group who may experience racism differently according to their race and minority ethnic group (Bakare-Yusuf, 1997; Capper, 2015). Furthermore, the race and minoritised ethnic group with which one identifies can affect professional identity (Bakare-Yusuf, 1997). Both Amina and Irene pointed out significant successes in their academic career despite race, gender and ethnicity. Here, the intersection of their racial identity with social class is seen as an advantage positively affecting their professional identity, despite oppressions associated with multiple other identities. Their acculturation (Mirza, 2009) and strategies to fit into the organisation relating to choosing identities that enhance

career progression has been discussed in 5.2.1.1 (Bhopal, 2012; Gabriel, 2017). This also reiterates that race inequalities would be compounded rather than erased by social class (Rollock, 2018).

I would suggest that all the BME women in my study were aware of the material reality that separates them from other BME women. They recognised points of connection and similarity with other BME and white women. They also recognised the distance between them and the white women because they were lacking in racial capital (Rassool,1997). Many of the BME women in my study spoke of friendships and professional relationships with other BME women and men of the same race, status, aspiration, leisure interests, access to cultural capital. At least three participants spoke particularly of social class in relation to friendships and mentors (like-minded people) that were not necessarily of the same race. Socio-cultural capital associated with social class was a bond that united them in terms of friendships and professional relationships (Rassool, 1997).

5.3.2 Theme summary

There is a recognition of the influences on personal identity of BME women, acquired through family aspiration and influence, and ethnic and socio-cultural capital, and influences their professional identity and acquisition of professional, resistant and navigational capital as academic leaders in HE.

For BME women, their parental and family values and ambitions for upward social mobility were translated to their children to foster aspiration and ambition in them.

Ethnic capital includes cultural beliefs, religion and faith, and plays a significant role in the development of values, self-belief and motivation to succeed as leaders in HE; yet it can pose a challenge for BME women where religious and cultural influences lead to expectations in relation to the status of women in society.

Social class and socio-cultural capital were seen to be gained from good schooling and education and considered important to BME women aspiring to leadership. However, socio-cultural gains made in relation to leadership in HE are negated in light of the intersection of race and gender identity for the BME women in this study.

Acculturation or achieving bicultural competence or adopting identities appear to be strategies used by BME women to fit into the institution where whiteness is the norm.

The intersectionality between races was highlighted and acknowledges racism as not homogenous and affecting BME women differently. However, for BME women who cannot access socio-cultural capital through these means, race inequalities were compounded by social class inequalities, making them work harder to fit into the social fabric of the institution.

5.4 Theme 3: Doing leadership

This key theme of 'Doing leadership' is linked to research Sub-question 4: How do BME women negotiate the challenges they face to develop professional relationships within their team(s) in HE?

This is presented and discussed in relation to how BME women used their personal and professional identity in leadership practice.

5.4.1 Personal and professional identity in leadership practice

The BME women in this study used their identity practice to inform their leadership practice in terms of ethical and relational leadership for BME women in academic leadership.

The stories tell us how the BME women in this study use their personal values and beliefs gained through their family values (5.3.1.1), their ethnicity and culture, including religion and spirituality (5.3.1.2), and their socio-cultural capital (5.3.1.3) to support their leadership practice. This within the context of the intersectionality of their race, gender, ethnicity and social class (5.2.1).

Their experiences at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, social class and personal identity influenced their leadership style, which included fairness, inclusivity and collaboration, and their leadership practice, which included formation of professional relationships with colleagues. This is reflective of drawing upon transformative leadership (Shields, 2010) and Ubuntu leadership (Ncube, 2010). Furthermore, they used their own lived experiences at the intersections of their multiple identities of race and gender to advise and encourage other BME women

towards leadership as seen in applied critical leadership (ACL) (Santamaría and Santamaría, 2012) and Bridge leadership (Horsford, 2012). The narratives demonstrate leadership as socially constructed, within a discourse of intersectionality.

5.4.1.1 Race, gender, ethnicity and social class in leadership practice

The BME women in this study used their multiple identities of race, gender and ethnicity to practise leadership in HE:

'*I would say Black and white male managers probably put in less emotional labour (leadership practice). They do less of the groundwork to get the job done, less of the mentoring. Black women leaders like me bring more of ourselves into supporting others. If you were to ask me if there was difference, I think that would be it'* (Odella).

'By me being here (Black African-Caribbean female), by me occupying this role (leadership), I'm saying to students and staff and BME women in particular, 'you're welcome here.' Yes. They're important messages. Just physically embodying a role' (Odella).

The BME women in this study draw on their embodied personal identity and lived experiences to develop their leadership style and practice:

'So, my leadership is authentic leadership. It is from my parents and their influence, their work ethic, being an African, an Igbo, a Catholic. I'm very inclusive in terms of my leadership. I am firm but fair and believe in doing the right thing' (Omolara).

'I think for me, critical leadership is knowing who you are and being courageous enough to bring 'you' to the table and letting your team see who 'you' are' (Mercy).

This is further supported by Victoria's narrative:

'*My style is influenced by my belief system and about treating people the way you would want to be treated, but also about being strong and clear about what you know and what you can do, because it tells others you're the right person to be leading them'* (Victoria).

Commitment to social justice in leadership practice is a thread that runs across the narratives in this study:

'I will fight for anything that needs fighting for. My religion, my upbringing, it puts integrity at the top of the tree. It is all about doing right by the people I lead … I believe very strongly you have to be fair because I am a product of an environment that is not fair, and I know what I can do' (Omolara).

Dealing with conflict in their leadership practice is highlighted in the narratives:

'I want to have a genuine conversation about how we can root out racist practice. It's about working for a genuine commitment to have a fair and reflective institution' (Odella).

'I watched how my parents were victims of racism and how they managed it. It wasn't through shouting and screaming, but with quiet dignity. Remember they are Ibo. Dignity but at the same time making it quite clear that no, you cannot have it all your own way. The quiet dignity shows that I respect you. I use this in my leadership approach' (Omolara).

The narratives show that structural and racial inequalities and discrimination experienced by the BME women in this study underpinned their leadership practice that shows care, respect and a commitment to social justice. It resonates with the kinds of leadership discussed in Chapter 3.5: transformative leadership (Shields, 2010), Ubuntu as a transformative leadership philosophy (Ncube, 2010) and ACL (Santamaría and Santamaría, 2012, 2016). A critical race perspective in doing leadership appears to be inherent in BME female leadership practice in alignment with Santamaría and Santamaría's (2012, 2016) and Horsford's (2012) findings. However, the narratives suggest that BME female leaders must work harder than their male counterparts in their roles of leadership, yet appear very willing to do so (Jean-Marie et al, 2009).

There was respect and care expressed overtly for the people led by the BME women in this study, shown in the way they said they model their behaviour which resonates with Greenleaf's (1970) servant leadership, also discussed in Chapter 3.5 (Portelli and Campbell-Stephens, 2009). There are parallels with what they learned from their

family values and cultural belief system, which included religion and spirituality (Ncube, 2010; Santamaría and Santamaría, 2012). They used personal values at a micro level to inform and support their relational and ethical leadership practice (Ncube, 2010; Santamaría and Santamaría, 2012, 2016).

As seen in ACL, the BME women in this study overcame the challenges faced in the academic leadership by using their race, ethnic and cultural practices to develop a leadership style and leadership practice that is inclusive (Santamaría and Santamaría, 2012). Like Ubuntu and servant leadership, it suggests an internal moral compass that guides leadership practice, reflecting high ethical standards to champion equity, fairness and social justice within one's institution, and the BME women use their voice and agency to pursue it. The narratives also demonstrate that this commitment to social justice, as seen in transformative leadership, gives the BME women leaders a focal point in their leadership, anchored by their personal and professional identities (Shields 2010; Santamaría and Santamaría, 2016). This also demonstrates that a commitment to social justice is a motivator for BME women to enter academic leadership.

Amina's narrative still speaks of a commitment to social justice in her leadership practice even though she did not wish her racial identity to define her. Despite her acculturation (5.2.1, 5.2.2 and 5.2.4), she used aspects of her race, gender and ethnicity to enact her leadership as is seen from her work within the institution.

The narratives highlight the recognition and awareness of power structures within the institution that can cause tension and conflict in their teams and their leadership practice (2014). Odella sought to overcome conflict by using her race and gender and problem-solving approaches and shows a critical race perspective in her leadership (Santamaría and Santamaría, 2012; Horsford, 2012). For example, she uses her Black female identity to have an open discourse on racism with her white male colleagues. This approach requires confidence and agency developed from lived personal and professional experiences and was described by over half of the BME women in this study.

Omolara's narrative shows that, similar to ACL (Santamaría and Santamaría, 2012) and Bridge leadership (Horsford, 2012), she draws on her lived experiences and

traditional cultural perspectives and, having learned from them, uses them within her leadership practice; for example, she uses her experiences as being female and Ibo, reflected in the way her parents conducted themselves, and highlights dignity and respect as key to her leadership practice.

Like the leadership models cited, the women in this study used embodiment of their race and gender alongside their lived experiences from the intersections of their identities, to enact leadership practice (Bass, 2012; Johnson and Thomas, 2012). This embodiment of race and gender within the role and its enactment is seen to serve as an example of attempting to create an inclusive institutional culture which by its very nature would be considered attractive and encouraging to both staff and students (Ncube, 2010; Horsford, 2012;). This leadership style, as seen in ACL (Santamaría and Santamaría, 2012), uses critical race perspectives and Black women's ways of knowing. Lived intersectional experiences inform leadership and tend to be make the women more facilitative and collaborative in their leadership practice. Their lived experiences were also influenced by ethnic and cultural backgrounds and together support doing leadership for BME women (Ncube, 2010; Shields, 2012; Santamaría and Santamaría, 2012, 2016; Horsford, 2012).

This confirms the social construction of leadership learning in personal and professional identity development (Bhavnani and Phoenix, 1994; Rassool, 1997).

Furthermore, BME women in academic leadership use their personal identities and lived experiences to develop professional relations with colleagues in the institution to do their leadership.

5.4.1.2 Developing professional relationships

The narratives show the significance of building professional relationships with academic colleagues and students, and creation of a working environment that is conducive to equality:

'*It's (leadership) about building professional relationships. It's having this kind of collegial attitude to the people you work with, you kind of embrace them and kind of bring them in, you try to ensure an environment that is fair to all' (*Mercy).

'I am a leader who facilitates things happening, encourages people to work well within their roles and I support them to enable them to do just that' (Victoria).

'my style is about helping other Black female academics to navigate what can be quite tricky ground to reach their own heights' (Odella).

The BME women in this study unanimously advocated the importance of professional relationships with their academic colleagues and students in their leadership practice, and that these are at the heart of good leadership that facilitates change (Shields, 2010). Their narratives show that they use their multiple identities and their values and beliefs to develop their professional relationships which support their educational leadership practice (Portelli and Campbell-Stephens 2009; Ncube, 2010).

Odella's narratives speak to racial and gendered inequality within the institution and her focus on social justice is evident. They suggest that there is value in sharing insider knowledge with other Black female colleagues, such as understanding the rules of the game which might be drawn from Black women's ways of knowing and lived experiences in the leadership journey (Mirza, 2013, 2016). This type of transformative leadership and ACL that addresses issues of social justice is an important component of the leadership journey for BME females in HE (Santamaría and Santamaría, 2012, 2016; Osler, 2016). It demonstrates that for all the women in this study, social justice practice in their leadership was seen as a way of addressing issues of marginalisation in the institution (Osler, 2016).

The BME women in this study further used their lived experiences to encourage, advise and guide BME women aspiring to senior leadership in the institution.

5.4.1.3 Advice to BME women who aspire to academic leadership in HE

The BME women in this study show a desire to encourage and support representational leadership, which represents the identities it leads, through navigating the leadership path in HE:

'Racism exists and whilst you need to be aware of it and its potential, you can't let it define you. You must pursue your ambitions' (Verity).

The narratives also advocate resistance in the face of challenges due to BME women's multiple identities:

'Don't shy away from an opportunity and when you don't get it (promotion) ask for feedback. It tells the appointing people that you're not going to go away quietly. They must have a reason to reject you next time. That's what I did' (Ijeoma).

Odella further advises:

'So, you have to learn how to kind of play that particular game. You adapt, how to work out what to do in that scenario, and the right face to present. Make sure you network and get yourself a mentor to guide you through this environment' (Odella).

The significance of social class is further translated into the advice and guidance given to those BME women aspiring to leadership:

'You need to get the best educational qualifications you can, if you want to become a leader. This is about social class. Don't give them any reason to turn you down, and network like mad' (Verity).

Furthermore, the narratives show that BME women use their lived experiences to disrupt the inequity and inequality perpetuated in leadership in HE:

'It is a rocky road, but you have to be brave, because there's no point in achieving leadership and then closing the door and locking it behind you so that no one else can come in after you. Be part of the foundations and the path for others to follow. Find someone to talk to – a mentor' (Omolara).

In discussing the narratives, the reality of racism and marginalisation is highlighted, alongside the advice that it can and must be overcome, to achieve representational leadership for the identities they lead, in HE (Gabriel, 2020).

The narratives show that nearly all of the BME women in this study have experienced inequality and discrimination from their multiple identities, in their academic leadership journey. However, they are prepared to make their vulnerability known and shared so that other BME women behind them can learn. This Black-woman-to-Black-woman relationship is considered invaluable in the academy (Hill-

Collins, 2009; Opara, 2020) and is seen to offer support to other BME women who aspire to academic leadership, through advice, encouragement, learning the rules of the leadership territory and the building of confidence in them. The focus on the achievement of social justice is key (Osler, 2016). It might be challenging but can be achieved by challenging racism and supporting feminist practices in academic leadership in the institution (Brewis et al, 2020).

There was emphasis on educational qualifications, mentoring and networking in the context of acquisition of professional, resistance and navigational capital considered valuable for progression within academic leadership for BME women (Yosso, 2005; Modood, 2010; Opara, 2020). This was a way of encouraging BME women to resist whiteness and to ensure they access opportunities for promotion and progression through networks which appreciate the value of BME talents (Miller, 2016). It highlights that mentoring and networks are tools offering protection and help to challenge attempts to undermine BME women and isolate them within the landscape of the institution (Opara, 2020).

Like transformative leadership, it is suggested that the BME women leaders in this study are prepared to advise and guide other BME women through their own knowledge and experiences through the terrain of the institution, to ensure a socially inclusive environment for them. This is drawing on their lived experiences at the intersections of their multiple identities and using these to influence others (Santamaría and Santamaría, 2012; Horsford, 2012). The narratives also demonstrate care for the individual and desire to see other BME women progress into leadership, offering them strength to pursue their ambitions which is highlighted by Ncube (2010) and Bass (2012) in relation to Ubuntu leadership.

5.4.2 Theme summary

The narratives relative to this theme tell stories that show the social construction of leadership. The BME women draw on their personal values, ethnic and cultural beliefs and lived experiences through their personal and professional identity which includes acquisition of professional, resistance and navigational capitals, to do leadership in HE.

The BME female academic leaders self-report a transformative leadership style and use of a critical race perspective in their leadership practice, drawing on their embodiment in their leadership style, which they see as caring, facilitative and collaborative, and includes Black women's ways of knowing to address conflict.

The BME female academic leaders in this study built professional relationships with colleagues and students using positive attributes from their personal identities, which include care and respect for those they lead. There is an emphasis on collaboration and fairness to engage colleagues they lead, with a commitment to social justice. This commitment to social justice was drawn from their lived experiences at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class. It could be seen as a motivator for BME women to aspire to academic leadership.

Furthermore, Black-woman-to-Black-woman support was offered to encourage other BME women towards leadership, with advice on the significance of educational qualifications and access to mentoring, networks and training for progression in academic leadership.

Despite challenges they encountered to leadership, BME women readily engaged in academic leadership using their personal and professional identities and lived experiences to overcome the challenges faced.

5.5 Chapter summary

This chapter analysed and presented the findings from fifteen interviews undertaken with eight BME women who hold academic leadership positions in HE settings. In response to the research question and sub-questions asked, the data were generated from a career grid and two sets of face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, which allowed the participants to share their experiences of BME leadership in HE.

The narrative analysis adopted an intersectional lens to understand the experiences arising from the multiple identities of the BME women in relation to their leadership journeys in HE. This analysis supported the development of three key themes and six sub-themes, culminated in the summary below.

The under-representation of the BME women in academic leadership in HE can be explained as the outcome or symptom of structural and racial inequalities and discrimination for these women at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class and the intersection of these. This, experienced from a young age, continued into adulthood and their professional lives within the institution that is HE.

Institutional culture, which keeps race at the centre, and institutional racism encompass white privilege, creating disadvantage for BME female academic leaders. This renders them invisible for leadership that is dominated by white male leaders. Racial microaggressions further cause discrimination and distress to BME female academic leaders in HE. Furthermore, intersectionality between races can add to the discrimination felt by BME female academic leaders within the institution.

The racialised and ethnic identity of BME women academic leaders means they are frequently called upon to do work related to diversity issues which renders them hyper-visible. However, this same work can give them opportunities considered an advantage for promotion and progression in academic leadership. There is a paradox of hyper-visibility causing oppression and opportunity for BME female academic leaders.

The institution does not appear to always value the ethnic and socio-cultural possessed by BME women, which can exclude them from senior leadership teams and the decision making inherent in these. This further impacts on their ability to acquire professional and navigational capitals considered significant for their progression in academic leadership in HE.

A lack of equal access to professional resources, such as mentorship, formal and informal networks, and culturally sensitive leadership training, creates disadvantage for BME women in terms of developing their thoughts, ideas and finding ways to resist and navigate the challenges they face in the institution.

Yet, despite the challenges encountered, BME women want to become academic leaders in HE. They use their personal identity and their lived experiences at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class to do their leadership.

Their parental and family values, ethnic capital including religion, and socio-cultural capital including schooling and education are seen as influencing their professional identity and professional work as academic leaders in HE. Having socio-cultural capital is seen as an advantage in their leadership journey. They acquire professional, resistant and navigational capital through accessing professional resources and sources of support which is valued and thought to be significant in their leadership journey.

Drawing on their personal values, ethno-cultural beliefs and their embodiment from their personal identity, they bring an ethical and relational style of leadership within their leadership practice, which they consider to be fair, facilitative and collaborative, and shows a sense of care and respect for those they lead. This style could be seen as a transformative leadership style which includes servant leadership. Furthermore, BME women form professional relationships with colleagues and students and use their embodiment to lead from a critical race perspective with a commitment to social justice, based on their own lived experiences of discrimination and marginalisation. This commitment is a motivator to do academic leadership.

BME female academic leaders want to address under-representation in leadership and are encouraging and supportive of BME women who aspire to leadership, using their lived experiences to advise and guide them. This includes accessing professional resistance and navigational capital through gaining educational qualifications, mentoring and networking. Black-woman-to-Black-woman mentoring and networking relationships and leadership training are considered valuable and significant. These relationships can be seen as a form of resistance to whiteness whilst being used as tools for advancing careers in academic leadership.

Acculturation through erasure of some aspects of identity and using bicultural competence could be seen as strategies used by some BME women to fit into the organisation. Obtaining white sanction through professional relationships could be another. Acculturation is met with varying degrees of dis(comfort) by other BME women. The intersectionality between races affects BME women differently and they use their socio-cultural capital differently to overcome marginalisation and discrimination.

Based on this discussion, the following concluding chapter will address the research questions, outline the contribution to knowledge in the field with implications identified and recommendations made for policy, practice and research. This will be followed by a critical evaluation of my professional learning that has taken place as a result of undertaking this research study.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.0 Introduction

The research presented in this thesis sought to understand the experiences of Black, and minoritised ethnic (BME) women in academic leadership in higher education (HE). Using an intersectional lens and a theoretical framework that keeps race at the centre, this study explored the experiences of eight BME female academic leaders at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class.

The overarching research question and the four sub-questions that supported this were:

Research question

What are the experiences for BME female leaders in HE, at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class?

Sub-questions:

1. How do race, gender, ethnicity and social class intersect to shape BME women's leadership?
2. What do BME women perceive to be the challenges and resources/sources of support in their career?
3. How do BME women perceive their career histories in relation to their role of academic leadership within HE?
4. How do BME women negotiate the challenges they face to develop professional relationships within their team(s) in HE?

These generated rich data that were analysed, presented and discussed as three key themes:

Theme One: BME female academic leaders and intersecting identities of race, gender, ethnicity and social class

Theme Two: Becoming a leader

Theme Three: Doing leadership

Chapter 4.7 shows how the research questions were addressed and the relationship between the questions and themes. Each question was linked to the discussion of the key themes in Chapter 5.

Based on the research questions for this research study and the findings from the data elicited, the following chapter shows how the findings presented and discussed in the previous chapter create new perspectives and offer a contribution to existing knowledge. Furthermore, the implications for policy and practice within HE are identified, and recommendations made for institutional policy, practice and research. A critical evaluation of my own professional learning that has taken place as a result of undertaking this research study is included.

6.1 Contribution to knowledge

This research study contributes to theory, methodology and empirical evidence in the field of women's leadership in higher education.

The existing literature that relates to the experiences of BME women in academic leadership in HE at the intersections of multiple identities remains sparse. In particular, this research study makes an incremental contribution to the academic literature through the focus of lived career experiences at the intersections of the four identities of race, gender, ethnicity and social class, as I found very limited research that focuses on the intersection of these four identities in the literature about women's leadership in higher education.

This study makes a theoretical contribution in relation to the theorisation of BME women's leadership in HE. The theoretical framework keeps race at the centre and intersectionality as key and includes Critical race theory (CRT); Black Feminism (BF); Black British Feminism (BBF) and Postcolonial Feminism (PF) perspectives (Chapter 2), alongside theorisation of identity and culture. This theoretical framework helped to explain and understand the intersectional career experiences for BME women academic leaders. Furthermore, it demonstrates the appropriateness of qualitative feminist research undertaken by feminist researchers, which can be used

by other researchers to explore issues of relevance and concern to our personal and professional lives

A methodological claim is made through the use of the adapted career grid (Appendix 1 and Chapter 4.5.2) as a data collection tool for this study along with the semi-structured interviews. Used as a heuristic device, it allowed for a better focus on gathering data to answer the research questions of the study and added richly to the data collected in the semi-structured interviews.

The intersectionality between racial identities of the BME female academic leaders in HE allows for an empirical claim in this study. It demonstrates the discrimination of BME female academic leaders by BME colleagues in the institution. My reading of the literature shows this has been studied in relation to perception of beauty between BME women and the advantage/disadvantage this causes them (Weekes, 1997), and has been reviewed by Solorzano (1998) and Capper (2015) in relation to social justice projects. However, it remains underexplored within the context of BME female academic leadership in HE and is a significant part of the experiences of BME women who experience discrimination from the intersectionality between races. It also contributes to the knowledge relating to the under-representation of BME female academic leaders in HE.

A unique finding that contributes to new knowledge emerges is that BME female academic leaders within HE use their own lived experiences of racial inequality and discrimination to motivate them to lead for social justice in their leadership practice, and that this motivation was the same for those BME women who have acculturated or used bicultural competence to fit into the organisation. Whilst this has been studied in school settings, it is understudied within the context of HE. This then has the potential to contribute to knowledge on educational leadership and management that addresses the experiences of BME women at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class, within the context of leadership for social justice, and shows how they survive and thrive in their career journeys in academic leadership in HE.

Furthermore, this insight shows how BME women draw on their lived experiences to enact their leadership practices in HE, showing their use of a critical race perspective

and their embodiment to progress a social justice framework of leadership. This allows them to thrive as leaders in HE, despite the disadvantage and marginalisation experienced due to structural, racial and associated inequalities within the institution. This finding adds to the body of knowledge (Santamaría and Santamaría 2012; Santamaría, 2012) relating to the development of applied critical leadership, an understanding of which could help address the issue of social justice and leadership within contemporary HE institutions in the UK.

A unique perspective emerging from this research study is in relation to acculturation and bicultural competence being used as a means of resistance and a strategy by BME women leaders to fit into the organisation of HE. Whilst the literature speaks to acculturation and bicultural competence (Alfred, 2001; Mirza, 2016; Gabriel 2017) and white allies (Miller, 2016), it does not speak of the varying degrees of (dis)comfort associated with acculturation, bicultural competence and gaining white sponsorship or allies by BME women and colleagues. There is an implication for further understanding of acculturation, bicultural competence and gaining white allies as a useful and effective strategy used by BME female leaders, to survive and progress in the institution.

This research study also offers incremental insight into how identity practice informs the leadership practice in terms of ethical and relational leadership for BME women in academic leadership in HE. This type of leadership approach does not appear to have been as well researched in HE, when compared to schools (Horsford, 2012; Santamaría and Santamaría, 2012; Santamaría, 2012).

This research study contributes to the debate around the experiences of BME women at the intersections of social class with race, gender and ethnicity. Given its significance in the development of socio-cultural capital through schooling and educational qualifications that was seen across all the BME women in this study, and even those who considered themselves from working-class backgrounds, it is worthy of consideration as emerging knowledge in this field. The social capital acquired by BME women is considered valuable and essential, in relation to progression in academic leadership. This knowledge adds significantly to the literature on the importance of acquisition of various capitals and reiterates the connections between

educational qualifications, ethnic and socio-cultural capital, and social class for BME women who seek academic leadership in HE.

Building on the evidence gained in relation to women's leadership in higher education, the following section highlights the implications from this research study that are required for consideration within social and educational policy, practice and research.

6.2 Implication of this research study for policy makers, practitioners and researchers

The stories of the lived experiences of BME female academic leaders show structural and racial inequalities, and discrimination at the intersections of their race, gender, ethnicity and social class, which impacts on their progression in academic leadership in HE. Furthermore, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives appear to be tokenistic within the institution, despite legislation (Equality Act, 2010), related to race equality and anti-discriminatory policies highlighted for HE; this despite the recent report from the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (2021) which controversially claims that the UK has removed race-based disparity in education and to a lesser extent in the economy (Chapter 1). The controversy surrounding the findings of this report which influences social and educational policy in the UK, has significance for policy makers and for those in the institution leading on policy. It means a re-focus on equality and inclusive practices for all its members, with a regular monitoring, reporting and action planning which supports institutional governance.

This study showed that there is inequitable access to professional resources, sources of development and support within the institution, for BME female academics who want to progress in academic leadership. Despite drawing on their identity and capitals gained, this type of support is considered significant for progression in the institution. This has significance for human resource policy and development within the institution, and senior leaders in the institution who have a responsibility to progress BME female academic leaders.

Based on the findings of this study and its implications, suggestions are made for areas of research that could add to the body of knowledge in relation to the

experiences of BME women at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class.

R*eligion and faith*

One of the key findings for this research study is that BME women academic leaders in HE use their personal values developed through family influences, ethnic and cultural influences including religion and spirituality in their leadership practice. They use their personal values gained from their personal influences, including religion and faith, to practice a relational and ethical leadership, which has a focus on social justice (Ncube, 2010; Santamaría and Santamaría, 2012, 2016).

Further research is advocated to understand the extent to which religion, spirituality and faith play a part in shaping BME women's personal identities, which influences their professional identities and their inclusive leadership practice in HE which has a focus on social justice. Whilst this research study has highlighted the significance of this category, it may be considered beneficial for those responsible for recruiting academic leaders, e.g. governors, human resources personnel and white academic senior staff, to understand the application of intersectionality and how multiple categories, including religion and faith, influence personal values and identity practice, which shape BME women academic leaders' perceptions and leadership practice. This may help to promote more inclusive senior teams within the institution and an environment that recognises the values of diverse leadership teams (Johnson and Campbell-Stephens, 2014). This could also help address the equality and equity agendas within HE in relation to BME female academic leaders in HE.

This research study links the experiences of racial inequality and discrimination for the BME female academic leaders in this study with a desire and commitment to wanting to support and promote social justice in their leadership practice. For all the women in this study, whether they had acculturated (Mirza, 2016), achieved bicultural competence (Alfred, 2001; Gabriel, 2017) or not, ascribing to social justice was seen as a motivator for BME women to engage with leadership.

It requires further exploration to understand why this was a particular motivation for BME women. Further questions include: What other personal, socio-political, economic, professional factors influence this motivation? What are the evidenced

benefits to leadership that sit within a social justice framework? Does this guide and support their decision making as academic leaders? What might this look like?

The potential knowledge gained would be an important addition to the academic literature on the value and relevance of social justice frameworks to leadership by BME female academic leaders in HE. It would also continue to validate the need for a different approach to educational leadership than is currently prevalent, with the added benefit of creating culturally responsive and critical leaders in HE, thus enhancing the equality agenda for BME female academics in the institution and promoting their leadership progression.

Acculturation and bicultural competence as survival strategies

Further research is recommended relating to the concepts of acculturation and bicultural competence as strategies to fit into the organisation for BME women academic leaders (Mirza, 2016; Gabriel, 2017). This research would seek understanding in relation to intention; the influence of their acculturated identities on their leadership practice and the practice of social justice within this; whether acculturation and bicultural competence means their professional needs are different from other BME women academic leaders; perceptions of other BME women colleagues of those BME women who have acculturated or use their bicultural competence to do leadership; and how their leadership practice is perceived by those they lead and by their senior leaders' colleagues. This may help develop a view on whether acculturation and bicultural competence is indeed a conscious strategy of resistance to fit into the *institution*; how it is managed within the academic leadership practice of BME women; and whether it does contribute to promotion and progression for BME women who have acculturated or use bicultural competence.

Intersectionality and intersectionality between races

As we try to build more diverse groups and perspectives, research on socio-cultural issues such as intersectionality will continue to be needed to provide a deeper understanding of ways that racism, sexism, classism and other social realities can affect an individual's lived experiences in the workplace. Furthermore, in considering the leadership perspectives of BME women, research can inform a framework for

further understanding of how they construct and enact their leadership within their professional contexts.

Lastly, the influence of the intersection between racial identities is worthy of further investigation (Capper, 2015), to explore the nuances of intersectionality within BME female leaders and its impact on oppressions and opportunities for BME female academic leadership and how these impact on the under-representation of BME women in academic leadership. Importantly, this type of research would support BME female leaders in developing an anti-racist identity for themselves which would support the development of an anti-racist identity in their colleagues and students (Gooden and Dantley, 2012; Capper, 2015).

Use of identity practice

There is also a need for researchers to further understand how BME female academic leaders survive and thrive within the institution of HE, using their identity practice to inform their leadership practice and develop ethical and relational leadership, utilising strategies for navigation, and using the various capitals gained to progress their leadership. This is important for the overall leadership of an institution as it embraces multiple perspectives, for example, CRT, Black women's ways of knowing, and broadens the landscape of organisational theory, research and practice to generate 'asserted, creative tensions, critical questions, change, creativity and innovation in the field' (Jean-Marie et al, 2009: 577).

Based on the implications, the following section discusses recommendations for future professional practice within higher education

6.3 Recommendations for future professional practice within higher education

I remain mindful of the need for change at a macro level i.e. social and educational policy which influences institutional policy. However, within the scope of my research study, I have focused recommendations for institutional policy which influences professional practice and academic leaders who can make the necessary change for BME women's leadership in HE.

The equality and equity agenda in HE

To re-set the equality and equity agenda across HE institutions, there needs to be an initial acknowledgement and commitment from governors and senior leaders on the governing board within the institution that a problem exists in relation to structural challenges and inequalities, and the ability to provide the macro level support for actions to identify and address these. This despite the findings of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (2021). It is imperative that this happens as part of the governance of the institutional plan which is audited on a yearly basis by external auditors to ensure transparency. The focus here is on creating a work environment where policies and processes are deployed in a fair, equitable and transparent manner to enable BME female academics to progress and succeed within the institution.

For this process of identification of the issues, I recommend a three-yearly equality and equity audit to be completed by all staff and as part of a People and Culture strategy within the institution, for example, a people survey that gathers data in relation to the environmental space and culture; recruitment processes and culture; frameworks that offer support; access to opportunities for progress; access to staff development that promotes critical thinking and leadership; collaborative working; and individual safety. This needs to be happen as part of the People strategy or equivalent, within the institution's plan (UWL, Achievement 2023).

It would allow for a baseline identification of challenges for marginalised groups and provide a robust means of ongoing consultation on current practices and proposed changes, which might be then crystallised in various policy initiatives at institutional level. Given the recommendation is for this to be initialised at senior leadership level, it would need to be monitored and reported upon for progress at regular intervals and at a strategic level, which would help provide the impetus to embed the required changes to equality and equity.

Diverse senior leadership teams

In view of the structural inequalities that cause disadvantage to BME women in relation to academic leadership, a recommendation is made to re-dress this so as to allow the practice of EDI within leadership.

This must include a commitment at institutional and faculty level, to move away from the maleness and whiteness of leadership teams to a more ethnically diverse leadership group inclusive of BME females (Maylor, 2018). This could include stronger encouragement of all HE institutions to commit to the Race Equality Charter (Advance HE, 2017). A lobbying of the Office for Students (OfS) to move towards mandating the recently introduced Race Equality Charter award could strengthen the impetus for commitment, and in the interim for it to continue being linked to teaching, research grants and access and participation monies for each institution (Jarobe, 2016). This is one way of encouraging institutions to consider where there are gaps in their minoritised ethnic staff and student representations, as well as progression and identifying strategies for overcoming these challenges, and addressing areas of weakness in relation to proportional representation. It moves social justice in leadership from a policy/institutional commitment to doing socially-just practice throughout the institution (Pilkington, 2018).

A further recommendation in the area of diverse leadership teams is made through institutional policy, which allows for attention to be directed to the way BME women are appointed to leadership positions (Maylor, 2018).

I recommend creation of an institutional policy that mandates for all staff, including those on recruitment and selection panels, and university governors, to participate in dysconscious racism and whiteness as power, training, on a two-yearly basis (King, 2007; Maylor, 2018), alongside unconscious bias training (Bhopal, 2018) that is normally undertaken by staff in institutions. The training needs to reflect an understanding of intersectionality in relation to BME women and their multiple identities. It needs to include race language and address race within the context of social justice. This participation should also include critical self-reflection and check for knowledge and understanding of how race and gender equality could be embedded in practice. Furthermore, I support Maylor (2018) who advocates for the training to include testing to ensure that race, gender, cultural equality becomes embedded throughout the institution. Ultimately, this will assist in the appointment, progression and retention of BME women in senior positions who are appointed on merit, rather than as individuals who manifest the tenets of race, gender, cultural and class identity with senior stakeholders in the institution. This policy will help to

challenge individual and institutional stereotypes about BME female leadership potential and transform the leadership of an organisation to become a normal, accepted practice over time.

Decolonisation

Recognising the institutional culture and institutional racism has led me to think about how to re-engage my colleagues and the wider institution with consistent anti-racist and anti-discriminatory action. For this, I recommend the principle and process of decolonisation, as advocated by many Black feminist scholars, to become a requirement within the institution (Rollock 2018; Ahmed, 2018). For me, the decolonisation is taken in the broadest context within the institution to include decoloniality of power, knowledge and being (Rollock, 2018: 326). This would encompass both institutional policy and everyday practice as a result. I am recommending that it include the curriculum with an epistemological decolonisation of knowledge, a paradigm shift to include BME women and men and their lived experiences in research, teaching and knowledge exchange; teaching staff within the institution that demonstrate proportional representation; student and staff support to include safe and inclusive spaces within the institution (e.g. identity related networks; forums that allow voice); recruitment and selection processes that pay attention to challenging deficit constructions associated with equity in relation to contracts, pay structures, workload allocation; training for BME early career researchers; campus landscape; and an institutional culture. This is more than adding a few more students and staff of colour to the institution. I am recommending a strategy that could create institutional change through collective action, agency and self-determination of its participants (Rollock, 2018: 327).

Whilst this recommendation might appear broad, it can be broken down into manageable actions that are time-bound over a period of time: named responsibility for each aspect shared out between individuals/departments/services; and reporting lines into the senior management of the institution who must have the oversight and responsibility for an institutional culture that respects equality, values diverse contributions and remains inclusive for all its members.

Equitable access to professional resources and sources of support

Based on the findings and implications, another policy recommendation at institutional level is in relation to equal and fair access to professional resources and sources of support that are considered valuable to BME female academic leaders, because of the acquisition of capitals inherent within this (Yosso, 2005).

Suggestions for this include a dedicated mentoring and coaching programme which acknowledges racial and gendered identity and an awareness of other multiple identities that can impact upon BME women. This could create empowerment through a scheme that provides opportunities for intersectional mentoring (Opara, 2020) and also reduce dependency on white sanction (Miller, 2016). In addition, the principles of reverse mentoring (Johnson, 2019) could be applied where senior academic leaders are mentored by junior BME female staff. This could be a strategy to build genuine understanding of the challenges faced by BME women who aspire to leadership and inform policy and decision making and policy in relation to BME female academic leadership.

In addition, a white allyship support is also recommended which would include inviting white peers to support BME female academics to detect, avoid or manage undesirable or challenging workplace behaviours (Rollock, 2019). This white peer support could also extend to an individual white colleague who advocates on their behalf or acts as a champion for them, introducing them to opportunities or directly supporting their progression. There is scope for this to become a formal mentoring arrangement (Rollock, 2019).

Leadership development using identity practice and social justice frameworks

One of the findings in this research study shows that BME women use their identity to inform their leadership and demonstrate an ethical and relational leadership practice on which they thrive within the institution. This within a HE environment where equity agendas need to be re-visioned. As educational and social political landscapes shift, it becomes more critical for progressive leaders to think about alternative models of leadership like applied critical leadership (Santamaría 2012), through which to solve pervasive equity related problems such as BME female leadership in HE.

There is a need for investment in leadership preparation programmes that have a focus on critical leadership (Santamaría and Santamaría, 2012), utilise a critical race perspective (Santamaría 2012; Horsford, 2012) in their leadership and support a transformative leadership approach (Shields, 2010) that includes care, collaboration Ubuntu leadership (Ncube, 2010) and sits within a social justice framework of leadership.

Furthermore, identifying BME female critical leaders within the institution will allow for these leaders to bring other BME women together in the pursuit of careers and leadership careers; support inclusive practices within the institution; and work towards solutions that affect other groups such as students, for example, with the achievement gap agenda.

In relation to leadership programmes, attention to culturally sensitive leadership programmes is recommended (Showunmi et al, 2016), which needs to be both locally developed and delivered, specifically for BME women and by BME women within the institution, who have lived career experiences in relation to academic leadership. The programme needs to address the issue of race within the broader context of social justice and consider the intersectionality of multiple identities of race, gender, ethnicity and social class amongst other identities and the influence of these on experiences. It also needs to include self-reflection, a critical theory construction, praxis and the inclusion of race language (Gooden and Dantley, 2012). Such a programme could help prepare BME women for academic leadership within HE. This type of programme will also support building of a network for BME women within the institution which is considered valuable in relation to developing professional, resistance and navigational capital by BME women (Yosso, 2005; Gabriel, 2017).

It is further recommended that the institution builds and maintains such safe spaces as found in the mentoring and leadership training programmes suggested. This is where multiple identities can facilitate sharing and connections across boundaries, create opportunities for collaboration and collective action, and enable learning and development. This is also vital to foster self-care and mental well-being (Richards, 2018). The outcomes for the suggested programme should be monitored for impact via individual level, school and faculty level in relation to promotion, progression and

retention of BME women and BME women in academic leadership in the institution. This to be included in the institutional plan and audited as such, on a yearly basis.

Continuous professional development

Lastly, I make a recommendation for an individual credit account for continuous professional development (CPD) as recently developed for the education and training for nurses and allied health professionals (DHSC, 2019). It allows for equitable, fair access to training opportunities for all staff, and the further building of social and professional capital considered valuable by BME women in academic leadership in HE.

It is anticipated that the recommendations made would support the promotion of equality for BME female academic leaders, and areas for further research discussed next would add to this.

The research study has led to professional growth and development which are discussed as a series of reflections next.

6.4 Reflections on professional development

The impetus for this research study has been discussed in Chapter 1(1.1). Race at the centre of this study was felt to be both contemporary and relevant, in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, Black Lives Matter protests, increased public discourse, media attention and government reports relating to race continuing to cause inequality, inequity and discrimination (Rollock, 2019; Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, 2021).

Against this backdrop, I undertook this research study with the support and co-operation of eight courageous BME women, who helped me understand what it was to live a life that is dominated by the experiences at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class and the varying degrees to which this can cause disadvantage, marginalisation and distress. I felt I was allowed to develop insider knowledge of the challenges that are faced by BME women in academic leadership,

alongside the development of strategies for resistance to navigate the leadership journey and fulfil aspiration and ambition as individuals.

Engaging with the research process at doctoral level has been a valued part of my journey, enhancing my personal and professional development. Personal feelings of satisfaction, big hurrahs, excitement, despair and at times feeling totally lost were part of the journey for me. The latter was an alien feeling for me given my age, life experiences and professional status. However, I learned to grow with it and to ask for support and take it with a listening ear to come back into the thesis and find where I needed to be. That said, I never once thought of quitting this project, which has made me acknowledge my personal resilience and sheer enthusiasm for this subject explored at depth. I have recognised a development and growth in my academic writing through a process where I have seen a change of writing style and ability to engage in critical thinking. It is a life skill I will cherish.

Engaging with intersectionality and the theoretical perspectives within the theoretical framework has enhanced my understanding of the centrality of race for BME female academic leaders and how intersectionality influences leadership careers in HE. This deep understanding derived through the research process has enhanced my sense of moral purpose for supporting and promoting social justice for BME women in academic leadership in HE. I have an increased awareness of the centrality of race and the discrimination and marginalisation it causes for BME people, especially for BME women in the institution, which has made me question and challenge practices inherent within the institution. It has motivated me to continue to make a difference within my remit as a senior academic leader who can influence at local level. This difference continues to be made in the way I use my identity to practice my leadership, which serves as a role model for collaborative, caring, fair and ethical leadership.

Additionally, I feel emboldened to force an understanding at local level, for the need for BME female representation in leadership teams and the value of diverse leadership teams in our institutions that also reflect diversity in the staff and student body. Whilst at times I have felt this has not always been the most popular topic for a complex management agenda, I have persevered, used the evidence from the data collected and the knowledge learned and created, to generate an informed

discussion and debate with senior leaders in the institution. Successes have been noted and are making a difference to the local social justice agenda.

Engaging with this research study and the writing of this thesis has also given me the breadth and depth of knowledge, the skills of criticality and reflexivity, and the confidence to be able to discuss and debate this topic at a wider level, across HE. I have seen this begin to translate in my professional work.

However, I feel the acculturated version of me still holds on to my race, gender ethnic, and socio-cultural values and beliefs. My leadership approach is similar to that described by the BME women in my study, but I also recognise I am part of senior management team where whiteness dominates. Perhaps my voice should be and could be louder in relation issues of social justice, but perhaps like other BME women in academic leadership I am overcome by the whiteness that surrounds me.

I have never asked the question of my colleagues re my acculturation (Mirza, 2016) or bicultural competence (Gabriel, 2017), and how this influences my leadership, my promotions and progression. At this stage, I am undecided if and when I will ask it and what difference it would l make to my leadership work and journey.

Leading from values appears significant to academic leadership as described by the BME women in this study and is supported in the literature review. I took some time to think about this as it was not something I had necessarily thought through previously in my leadership journey. It made me ask myself the question ‘what exactly is the purpose of my educational leadership and how do I do leadership?’.

I did not ask the question directly of anyone during the interviews, but the answers were implicitly for most of the BME women in the study in relation to social justice. In answering this question for myself, I feel the purpose of my educational leadership is about doing better for all staff and students, with attention to those who are from BME backgrounds, for all the reasons cited in this thesis. It is about harnessing my skills, knowledge, values and attitudes to endeavour for social justice and making a difference in relation to this by continuing to influence at personal, local and national level. I want other BME women to succeed in academic leadership. I recognise that despite my acculturation, I do bring my multiple identities of race, gender, ethnicity and social class, and the intersection of these, into my leadership style and practice.

The next section concludes this chapter and lends thought for dissemination of the findings at a wider level within the HE sector.

6.5 Research summary and concluding thoughts

In concluding this thesis, I have detailed the lived experiences of BME female academic leaders at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social work. In doing so, I have also identified some of the challenges they face in their leadership journey which may account in part for the under-representation of BME female academic leaders in HE. The thesis also highlights how they overcome the challenges they encountered to navigate their leadership practice, and to survive and thrive in their professional work.

Engaging with BME women academic leaders' experiences as something meaningful for BME women themselves entails engaging with their narratives in an ethical way, which was facilitated by the design and methodology of the study.

The findings of the study show that structural inequalities cause racial inequality, marginalisation and discrimination from the intersectionality of their race, gender, ethnicity and social class in their leadership. Institutional racism privileges whiteness and creates unequal leadership opportunities for BME women. In addition, racial microaggressions cause discrimination and distress. They are not given equitable access to professional resources and sources of support, and EDI policies are not always meaningful within the context of the institution. Despite the challenges faced, they want to engage with academic leadership and use identity practice to inform their leadership practice, which includes an ethical and relational leadership with a focus on social justice. They develop professional relationships with other colleagues and students and use their own lived career experiences to encourage other BME women into academic leadership.

Gaining socio-cultural, professional, resistance and navigational capital through educational qualifications and professional sources is highly valued and seen as significant for progression in leadership. Acculturation, using bicultural competence, and obtaining white sanction can be seen as strategies used by some BME women to fit into the institution, but this needs to be further explored in relation to how this

affects their leadership practice and the self-perception of the impact of this and amongst those they lead.

This research study has provided valuable insights into the experiences of BME female academic leaders at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class and how these could account for some of their under-representation in leadership teams in HE.

My concluding thoughts are that this research study should be shared with the research and academic community, but it may also be of relevance and interest to senior leaders in the institution and those managing human resources in HE. This research could also be of interest to feminist researchers; those interested in intersectionality and its resulting experiences; formation of diverse leadership teams in organisations; social justice educators and leaders in HE; and BME women aspiring to become academic leaders in HE. I have made recommendations and suggested areas for further research which are worthy of consideration amongst interested parties cited above.

I would like to continue to promote social justice for BME women and raise awareness of the importance of creating diverse academic leadership teams within HE. I intend to continue to lobby for strategies that ensure retention of BME female academic staff within the institution and encourage other BME women to become academic leaders, offering them the professional support they require to shape and develop their leadership experiences.

Furthermore, I plan to share the findings of my thesis through publications such as the *Journal of Management in Education*; *Gender and Education*; *Race, Ethnicity and Education* and contribute to events organised by Advance HE; BELMAS, Universities UK; and Council of Deans-UK, who discuss and debate BME female under-representation in academic leadership in HE, using research and the evidence base, such as provided by this research study, to do so.

Appendix 1 Participant details (as agreed with participants)

INTERVIEW CODE	Pseudonym	Ethnicity	Interview location	Interview date	Interview duration
PARTICIPANT-1	Odella	African Caribbean	Office- London	Sept 17, 2018	47 mins
				Oct 17, 2019	28 mins
PARTICIPANT-2	Victoria	African Caribbean	Office- London	Oct 17, 2018	40 mins
				Dec 5, 2019	23 mins
PARTICIPANT-3	Manushka	Zimbabwean	Office- London	Nov 15, 2018	40 mins
				Nov 27, 2019	25 mins
PARTICIPANT-4	Omolara	Nigerian	Office	Nov 22, 2018	48 mins
				Oct 21, 2019	29 mins
PARTICIPANT-5	Verity	African Caribbean	Verity's Office	Nov 22, 2018	48 mins
				Oct 21, 2019	27 mins
PARTICIPANT-6	Mercy	African Caribbean	Home- London	Nov 21, 2018	51 mins
				Nov 26, 2019	23 mins
PARTICIPANT-7	Irene	Nigerian	Irene's Office	Nov 26, 2018	38 mins
				NO SECOND INTERVIEW	
PARTICIPANT-8	Amina	British Pakistani	Amina's Office - Reading	Jan 24, 2019	55 mins
			SKYPE	Nov 25, 2019	26 mins

Appendix 2 Data collection tools: Career grid

Career History Grid

Thank you for agreeing to complete the career history grid in advance of our meeting for a 1-1 interview (date, time, and location to be agreed with you). I will send this to you electronically/A3 version.

I would be most grateful if you spend some time thinking about the grid and the questions posed in relation to your career history. I have chosen 7-year intervals as I felt it captures tertiary education; decisions about careers/employment; significant influences that may have influenced your career; first jobs; career aspirations and enablers and challenges to your career progression.

Please fill in what you are comfortable to disclose. Feel free to jot down ideas/thoughts in bullet point or note form. The grid will form part of the 60-minute interview that we have agreed upon.

I am grateful for your co-operation with this project and look forward to meeting you in person.

Thank you

Charmagne Barnes

Adapted Career Grid

Age		What would you consider to be the major influences on your career to date? (family, education, social, cultural)	What are the personal or professional life experiences that have influenced your career?	What are your career aspirations and how have you progressed these?	Are you able to identify your career enablers and challenges to progress?
14-21					
22-28					

29-35					
36-42					
43-50					

51-58					

Appendix 3 Questions for the semi structured interview

Questions for the semi structured interview 1

Research Question: What are the experiences of Black and Minoritized Ethnic female academic leaders in higher education at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity and social class?

Research Sub Questions:

1. How do race, gender, ethnicity and social class intersect to shape BME women's leadership?
2. What do BME women perceive to be the enablers and/or challenges to their career?
3. How do BME women perceive their career histories in relation to their role of academic leadership within Higher Education?
4. How do BME women negotiate the challenges they face to develop professional relationships within their team(s) in higher education?

Areas of questioning:

Sub Question 1	**Prompts**
How do race, gender, ethnicity and social class interact with each other to shape your leadership role and practice?	1. How do you think your team(s) think of you in terms of race, gender, ethnicity and /or social class when interacting with you? If yes, can you think of an example?
I am interested in exploring the intersections of race, class, gender, and ethnicity on academic leadership development in HE, and how this has influenced the perception and practice of leadership for the women in the sample	From my previous correspondence with you, you have self-identified as a woman. Does your identity as a woman of BME/Black British/ Asian/Pakistani /Chinese (self-identified term) heritage influence your leadership style described above?

Sub Question 2	**Prompts**
What do you perceive to be the enablers/resources and/or challenges to your career? *This section is intended to explore whether BME women identify enablers and challenges to their progression as academic leaders.* *I am interested in finding out what support is given BME women, to develop them into their roles of academic leadership. I also wish to explore what are the challlenges that hinder their progression and is this linked to being a BME woman. I want to understand whether the support given is seen as useful or not, and if there is more that is seen as being required, by the BME women who are doing the job.*	1. How have you been supported in your role as a leader? 2. What training, mentoring and/or coaching in your leadership role? What aspects if any, have you found to be useful to your role 3. Are re you involved in any formal or informal networks through your leadership role? What aspects of this specific support have you found to be most useful or not as the case might be? 4. Is there a significant individual(s) who has supported your development as an academic leader? Can you think of an example(s) of this support? 5. Is there a significant individual (s) who has hindered your development as an academic leader? Can you give examples of this? 6. What challenges do you face at work because you are a Black British/BME/Indian/Pakistani/Chinese woman? Can you think of an example(s)? 7. What do you find most difficult in your work as an academic leader? This can be more than one example of. Is this related to you being a BME (or self-identified term) woman? 8. What more could have been done or should have been done by individuals or the Institution to ensure your development as an academic leader?

Sub Question 3 Sub Question1: How do BME women perceive their career histories in relation to their role of academic leadership within Higher Education? *I am interested in the roles of academic leadership held and what these roles encompass (leadership rather than tasks).* *I would like to give the participants the opportunity to self-identify early on and prior to the interview.* *I am interested in whether these women's culture, social class, upbringing, significant others, have influenced their leadership views and styles. I want to explore whether they enjoy being a leader and whether being a Black British/BME woman influences that decision and style of leadership.* *I am also interested in what they bring to academic leadership and how this leadership is understood through the eyes of BME women*	**Prompts** 1. What is your current role? 2. How has your background and upbringing influenced your views /perceptions of academic leadership in Higher education? 3. Can you tell me about your academic leadership experience within HE? 4. Who or what prompted you to become an academic leader? 5. How would you describe yourself as a leader? (Look for values, beliefs) your Leadership style? Relationships with your peers? 6. What do you enjoy about your role?? Why is this? 7. Has being a BME woman/ Black British woman (term used would depend on how the participant self identifies) influenced your career into academic leadership? If so, how? Any particular example?
Sub Question 4 How do BME women negotiate the challenges they face to develop professional relationships within their team(s) in higher education?	1. What guidelines or principles have you adopted for yourself when dealing with professional colleagues? 2. How did you handle a challenging situation in your role as an academic leader?

I wish to explore how BME women manage their professional relationships at work within a senior team or other teams within their work. *I want to find out how they manage difficult situations and if this is related to being a BME woman leader.* *This includes interpersonal relationships; nature of the dialogue; mutual respect and any other strategies used to overcome the challenges identified.*	3. Do you think you manage relationships differently to other academic leaders you encounter? If yes, why might this be the case?

Questions for the semi structured interview 2

Sub Questions used

1. How do BME women perceive their career histories in relation to their role of academic leadership within Higher Education?

(Is there anything you would like to revisit in your career grid or in your first interview in relation to your career journey in academic leadership in HE)

2. How do their race, gender, ethnicity, and social class intersect with each other to shape their leadership role and practice?

   (In your first interview you said……I am checking is that what you meant? is there anything you would like to add to this?)

3. What do they perceive to be the enablers and/or challenges to their career?

   (you identified the sources of support as ….., is there anything you would like to add to that; same for challenges , can you think of any further examples you may wish me to be aware of?

4. How do BME women negotiate the challenges they face to develop professional relationships within their team(s) in higher education?

You gave me some really good examples of how you navigate the challenges you face; I am clarifying that is what you meant? Do you want to add anything to that?

Appendix 4 Participant consent

A) Participant Invitation letter

Letter to potential participants

Dear

I am writing to ask for your support for a research project that I am carrying out for my EdD in Educational, at the University of Nottingham. I am looking for 8-10 women Black Minority Ethnic women who are in roles of academic leadership within Higher education. Academic leadership within this study is roles of Professor, Associate Professor, Heads of School, Deputy Heads of school, Pro Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Vice Chancellor.

I would like to interview potential participants about their career histories in higher education. I will also ask participants to complete a career history grid, in advance of the interviews.

The purpose of this letter is to request your participation in generating necessary and relevant data as part of this study. I would like to ask you questions about your lived experiences that may have influenced your leadership ambitions, perceptions, experiences, and influences, enablers, and challenges to progression and how you practice within your role. To this end I am seeking to interview you twice, for no longer than an hour on each occasion. The second interview will build on the first and address any issues/themes that have arisen from interview 1 or across participants. I will conduct the interview at a time and place that is convenient to you. I will also request you to complete a career history grid in advance of the first interview. Guidance will accompany this.

The timeline for the data collection for this research is October 2018-May 2019.

I will adhere to the University of Nottingham Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics. I will also refer to the ethical guidance provided by BERA (2004) and the ESRC (2005). All participants will remain anonymous in the published thesis. All interviews will be fully transcripted and shared with individual participants. There will be an opportunity to withdraw any aspects of the transcript that you are unhappy with.

I really appreciate your consideration of this request given the time constraints you face. I genuinely believe this research study is important to dialogue and action on equity and social justice within higher education. If you would like to know more, please do contact me on

Charmagne.barnes@nottingham.ac.uk. I will be in touch in the next 4 weeks to see if you are able to participate.

Hoping for your support

Yours sincerely

Charmagne Barnes

B) Participant information sheet

Dear (participant name),

Thank you very much for indicating that you are willing to participate in my research study. To refresh you, my name is Charmagne Barnes, and I am a student on a Doctorate in Education programme at the University of Nottingham. As part of my thesis, I am investigating the career histories of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women in roles of academic leadership in Higher Education. These women are currently in service or have recently served (in the last two years) on a senior leadership team within a Higher Education Institution in England.

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT

An exploration of the career histories of Black Minority Ethnic Women in roles of academic leadership in Higher Education

Brief description of the Research Project

This research project is an exploration of the career histories of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women in roles of academic leadership in higher education.

The aim of the research is to identify the motivations and other key factors that have influenced BME women to pursue roles of academic leadership in higher education. This alongside perceived enablers and challenges they have encountered along their career histories, and the strategies they generate to negotiate the challenges faced, so as to develop professional relationships within the workplace.

This is valuable and much needed knowledge, which will help provide insight into the leadership experiences of BME women in higher education. It is hoped the knowledge produced might be used to encourage and support BME women who may aspire to academic leadership. In doing so, this would afford a greater understanding and interpretation of the role of BME women in academic leadership within higher education.

In preparation for our meeting and as part of the data collection, I would like you to complete the career history grid in advance of our meeting. I will send it to you at least 1 month in advance of our meeting with further information and guidance on how to complete it. Kindly indicate this on the proforma attached.

Please be aware that in addition to taking notes during the interview, with your permission I would like to audio record the interviews to ensure accuracy and enable transcription. You will have sight of the transcriptions and be able to make changes, delete or add comments. All the audio recordings will be securely stored on a password protected computer and backed up on a USB memory stick, which will be held securely in a locked cupboard. In the final thesis submission, your real name will not be used, instead, you will be referred to by a pseudonym, so as to protect your true identity and ensure anonymity.

The data generated and findings form this study, will be disseminated through publication in academic and professional journals, and used in scholarly activity.

This project has been approved by the School of Education Ethics Committee at the University of Nottingham.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request. If you have any questions regarding this research study, please contact me on charmagne.barnes@nottingham.ac.uk

Yours sincerely

Charmagne Barnes

C) PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Project title ……An exploration of the career histories of Black Minority Ethnic women in roles of academic leadership in Higher Education
……

Researcher's name ……Charmagne Barnes……

Supervisor's name ……….Dr Kay Fuller……

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it. This includes completion of a career grid (sent to me at least 4 weeks in advance of the interview meeting) in advance of an interview which will be arranged in advance with me. I will participate in two interviews, each no longer than 60 minutes in duration, of a time and location of my choosing.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified, and my personal results will remain confidential. In the final thesis, my real name will not be used, instead, I will be referred to by a pseudonym, so as to protect my true identity and ensure anonymity.
- I understand that I will be audio recorded during the interview, in addition to notes being taken.
- I understand that audio data will be stored on a password protected computer and backed up on a memory stick, which will be held in a securely locked cupboard.
- Transcription of the interview will be sent to me and I will be allowed to amend/delete/add comments to reflect accuracy.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed …… …… (research participant)

Print name …… **Date** ……

Contact detail: Researcher: *Charmagne.barnes@nottingham.ac.uk*

Appendix 4 Outcome Letter

Our Ref: 2018/14

Dear Charmagne Barnes CC Kay Fuller and Lucy Cooker

Thank you for your research ethics application for your project: An exploration of the career histories of Black Minority Ethnic (BME) women in roles of academic leadership in higher education.

Our Ethics Committee reviewers were very impressed with your submission.

They also commented that this is important and valuable work.

Based on the above assessment, it is deemed your research is:

 Approved

We wish you well with your research.

Howard Stevenson

Director of Research

MINOR AMENDMENT TO OUTCOME LETTER

From: TT-ResearchEthics <TT-ResearchEthics@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk>
Sent: 11 March 2021 10:07

Dear Charmagne,

Thank you for this form. Prof Stevenson has confirmed he is happy to approve these amendments. This document will be added to your original application file.

Best wishes with your research

APPENDIX 5 SAMPLE TRANSCRIPT

Excerpts from Mercy's transcript which show how the data was coded and how themes arose

CB: Just as an intro before we go on, what is it you particularly enjoy about senior leadership?

Mercy:

Um, I think one of the things that I really enjoy relates back to what you said to me a moment ago. You identify, first and foremost, as a black woman. Identity -Race and gender

Um, one of the things that I particularly enjoy about senior leadership, is, um, I guess being a little bit of a disruptor, because I just feel that there are so many inequalities that exist within higher education. (Inequalities in HE) When I look at the outcomes, um, for different groups of students, based on ethnicity, um, I see that white students do very, very well, and you know, depending on your ethnicity,(ethnic influence on outcomes) depending on your social grouping, um, some groups don't do so well,(social class influence on outcomes)and I like exploring why that is, and I like bringing that to the fore. So I like, um, just trying to-, it's almost influencing policy, and the things that we do in education, to make things more of an even playing field, so that everyone has the opportunity to fulfil their potential.(Equity, social justice) So that's one of the things that, you know, that I enjoy about senior leadership. Yes-,

Race, gender, ethnicity social class influences on experiences and outcomes

Theme: experiences at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, and social class

Uses identity in professional work

Values equity to fulfil potential,

Theme: this is how she does leadership

CB: Do you think that academic staff, in higher education, are affected by race, ethnicity, gender, social class, in relation to their career aspirations, promotion prospects? Have you got any thoughts on that, at all?

Mercy: Okay. (Laughter 00:08:13) Alright. So, um-, gosh. I have, um, yes, I've encountered, you know-, oh, I've had negative experiences with a manager(? Discriminatory experience), but even if I go back before then-, I'm talking about-, if I'd go back before them, um, in one of my previous jobs, um-, there was a vacancy for an undergraduate program leader, and I wanted that position, (aspiration)but the then manager asked a couple of colleagues, 'Know who would be good? Who do you think would be good?' And they were talking about their friends, who would be good, and so when he went to somebody, to ask her if she'd be interested in applying, and who would be good, um, she said, 'I think Mercy would be really good. She's got a good rapport with the students.' and he never, ever came to me, and said, 'Would you even be interested in applying for this position?'(discriminatory ,unfair) and one of the two people that was kind of, recommended by his friends, got the position, you know(discriminatory practice) .

Race intersecting with gender causes discrimination for black female academics, distress

Theme: experiences at the intersections of race, gender, ethnicity, and social class

Aspirational, wants to do leadership

Theme: wanting to become a leader

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