UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON
The Career University

The Intersection of multiple identities of race, ethnicity, gender & social class in academic leadership: Is there a story to be told in higher education?

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Background to this research study:

- *My story*
- *Personal and professional interest*

Purpose:

- *Enhance understanding of how BME women construct and enact academic leadership*
- *Contribution to discussion, debate, action on equity and social justice*
- *Influence education organisational policy*

Facts

Professors (UK)

68.5% male, white	**6.5% male, BME**
23.0% female, white	**2.0% female, BME**

Advance HE (2018)

Vice Chancellors (UK)

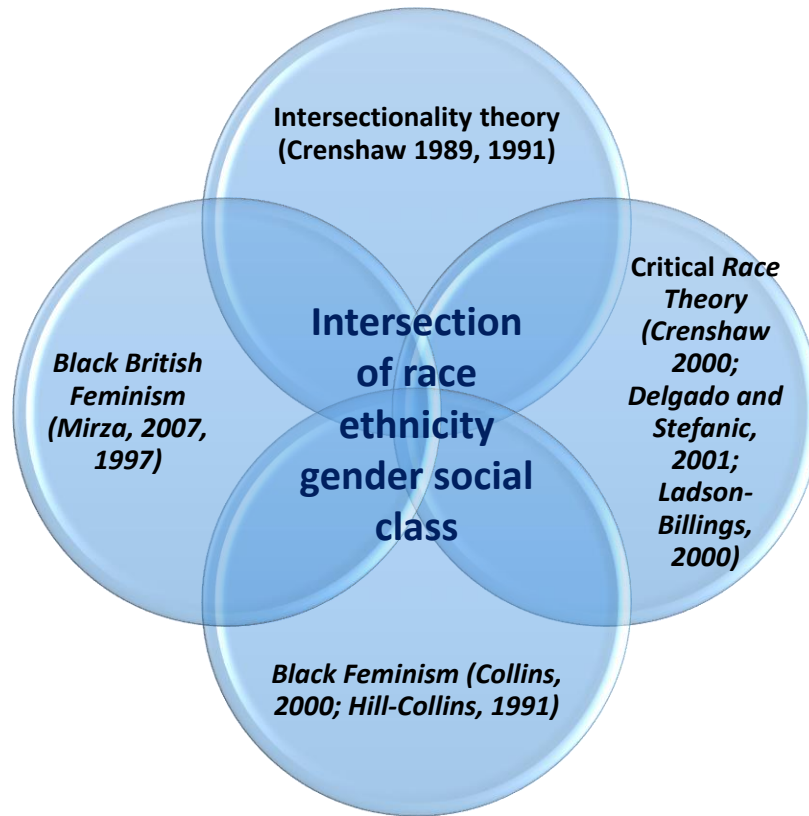| |
|---|
| **71% male of which 3 are male, BME** |
| **29% female of which 1 is female, BME** |

HESA (2017)

Aim of the research study:

'*Exploration of the career histories of black minority ethnic (BME) women in roles of academic leadership in higher education*

Research questions:

- *How do BME women perceive their career histories in relation to their roles of academic leadership within higher education ?*

- *How does their race, ethnicity, gender and social class intersect with each other to shape their leadership and practice ?*

- *What do they perceive as the enablers and/or barriers to their career?*

- *How do BME women negotiate the barriers they face to develop professional relationships within their team(s) in higher education?*

Theoretical underpinnings (influenced design, methodology and literature review)

Intersectionality theory (Crenshaw 1989, 1991)

Critical *Race* *Theory* *(Crenshaw 2000; Delgado and Stefanic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2000)*

Black British Feminism (Mirza, 2007, 1997)

Intersection of race ethnicity gender social class

Black Feminism (Collins, 2000; Hill-Collins, 1991)

Design and Methodology

Ontological assumption

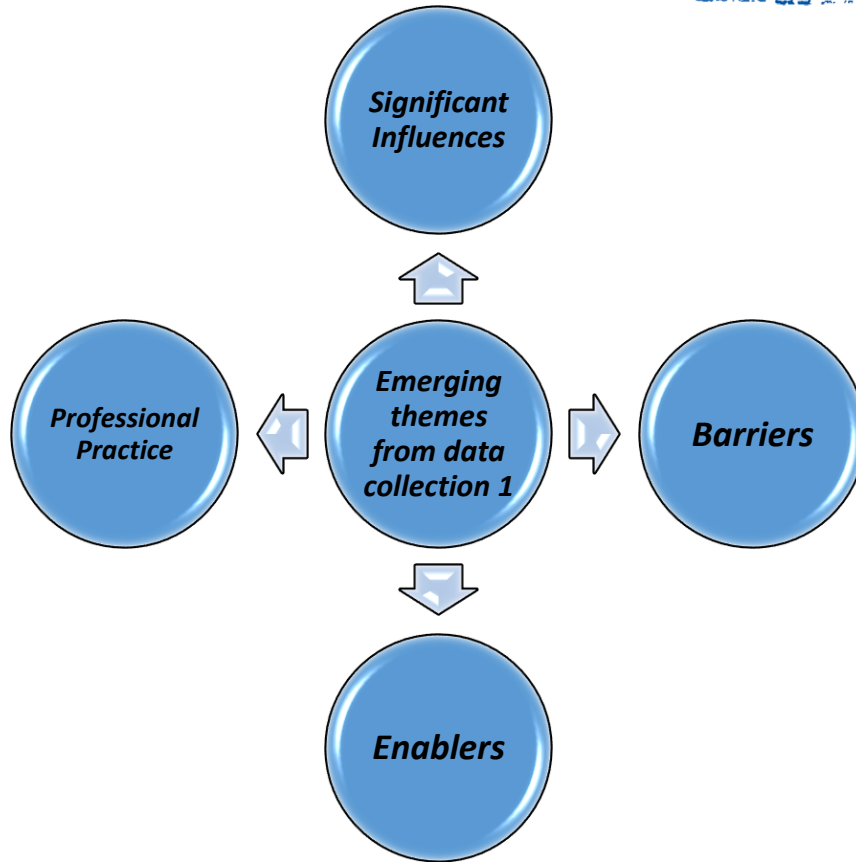Epistemology – 'Social constructivism'

Qualitative research

- *Narrative Inquiry approach (linked to the above and to my theoretical underpinnings)*
- *The Life History method*
- *Data generation : career history grid and semi-structured interviews*
- *Sampling and selection*
- *Ethical considerations*

Challenges Encountered!!!!!

Where am I at – July 2019

1. Significant Influences:
Family, education, culture, social class, religion

2. Barriers:
Blackness/white privilege in society
Institutional gendered racism
Institutional gendered discrimination

3. Enablers:
Networks
Culture and ethnicity impacting on leadership
Self-belief and motivation to succeed
Significance of good mentorship in academic leadership

4. Professional Practice:
Leadership practice that is inclusive
Advice -Don't give up, optimism

Need to keep going …