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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Ed D programme (University of Nottingham)
Associate Pro Vice Chancellor & Dean -College of Nursing Midwifery and Healthcare, July 2019
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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male, White</th>
<th>Male, BME</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>68.5%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.0% female,</td>
<td>2.0% female,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BME</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Advance HE (2018)

### Vice Chancellors (UK)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male of which 3 are male, BME</th>
<th>Female of which 1 is female, BME</th>
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<tr>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
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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 Feminism (Collins, 2000; Hill-Collins, 1991)

Black British Feminism (Mirza, 2007, 1997)

Intersection of race, ethnicity, gender, social class
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 …