BLACK FEMALE TEACHERS IN WHITE-DOMINATED EDUCATIONAL SPACES: NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

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"This work is dedicated to every woman of color who has had to bite her tongue so hard that it bleeds to protect her body, mind, soul, loved ones, livelihood, or even her life."

(Griffin, 2012, p. 139)

Abstract

This study provides a narrative account of the experiences of 10 Black female teachers as they navigate white-dominated educational workspaces and explores how these experiences have shaped their professional identities. Very little research has focussed on Black female teachers' professional identities specifically in England. This study therefore seeks to address the apparent gap, thus contributing to further understanding Black women as teachers, using Critical Race Theory in education and consciousness of Black feminist thought.

The foundations of the two theories led to using narrative inquiry as the methodology. A semi-structured interview approach was used to elicit accounts from participants at various stages of their careers in a range of state-funded schools across England. The data were analysed through both theoretical lenses. Thematic analysis was undertaken to draw out commonalities of experiences to accumulate knowledge from the richness of individual stories.

The findings suggested that participants experienced a number of oppressions in their schools, demonstrated through a lack of career progression, being perceived by white colleagues through stereotyped images of Black women and the impact of seeing unjust practices towards Black and minoritised learners. Despite this, participants held a positive view of themselves. They drew their ability to resist hegemonic stereotyped images from their parents', particularly their fathers' aspirations for them and their agency maintaining positive professional self-definitions. Further, they drew on an enhanced definition of Du Bois' double consciousness, that of 'Blackness' and 'gender', for agentic action to

drive for inclusive educational practices and to facilitate positive consequences, especially for minoritised children, their families and staff representation, whilst challenging normative stereotypes of Black women.

This study found that participants held a unique experiential positionality in white-dominated school spaces, the implications of which provides a positive counter-narrative to encourage Black women to enter and remain in teaching. Further, it provides evidence of the impact of schools' practices on their Black female workforce and a rationale for making positive cultural changes.

List of abbreviations

BAME   Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

BME   Black and Minority Ethnic

CBB   Crazy Black Bitch (stereotype)

CLS   Critical Legal Studies

CPD   Continuous Professional Development

CRT   Critical Race Theory

CSE   Certificate of Secondary Education (pre-GCSE)

DfE   Department for Education

EDI   Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

GCSE   General Certificate of Secondary Education

NASUWT   National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers

TA   Teaching Assistant

TLR   Teaching and Learning Responsibility (payments)

Contents

List of Tables

1. Chapter One - The context of the study

1.1 Introduction

This thesis looks to examine the professional identities of Black female teachers, an area which has received sparse attention in the UK context. The concept of 'teacher identity' is not a new area of research in education, with 21st Century writers, such as Korthagen (2004) and Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop (2004), continuing to articulate the complexity of teacher identity. However, this essentialised approach does not account for the nuances of intersectional experiences that Black female teachers face in schools across England, as white-dominated spaces. Broad brush models of teacher identity fail to recognise the impact of 'race' and gender on professional identities within educational settings. Having started this doctoral journey examining models of teacher identity, such as Dialogical Self Theory (Salgado and Hermans, 2005), I realised that the Black female teachers' voices around racialised and gendered influences would not take centre stage, potentially rendering these aspects of their voices and agency to make changes, that being their thoughts and activism highlighted through Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000), silent and the discourse around schools being racialised spaces would be invisible. In order to understand what shapes the professional identities of Black female teachers in English schools, different lenses which centralised 'race' and gender were required to view the specific racialised and gendered experiences and practices of Black female teachers.

A 2017 report by The Runnymede Trust and National Union of Teachers (Haque and Elliot, 2017) identified the impact of racism on teachers in schools, revealing

discrimination, 'micro-aggressions' and unequal treatment, such as "being denied promotion without institutional clarity" (2017, p. 6). The findings in this report provide, what can be argued as, a deficit view of minority ethnic bodies in white-dominated educational contexts. Having experienced some of these negative treatments and discriminatory behaviours as a racialised female educator (my ethnic categorisation will be explained in more detail later in Chapter Three), this study has become a personal journey to discover to what extent my experiences and how I feel about my place in the education profession are reflected (or not) in the professional identities and career paths of other female teachers of colour. Moreover, this study explores and discusses the dominant influences on how Black female teachers form their professional identities in predominantly white educational workspaces. This study also examines how agency, particularly individual agency, plays a key role in how these Black female teacher participants navigate their workspaces and drive for positive changes to benefit the children they teach, specifically marginalised children and staff, which is discussed throughout this study. I have mindfully chosen to focus on Black female teachers due to my shared cultural heritage and values, particularly with Caribbean communities given my own history, although I do not originate from an African diaspora. Interestingly, the majority of Black women who participated in this study are Black Caribbean female teachers (see Table 1 for demographic information of the research participants), although this was not intentional nor planned in gaining informed consenting participants.

In October 2018, the Department for Education (DfE) released their 'Statement of intent on the diversity of the teaching workforce – setting the case for a diverse teaching workforce' in an attempt to increase the diversity within the profession.

However, the DfE's 'Statement of intent' does little to acknowledge that school environments are racialised. It instead proposes further equality and diversity activities actioned by predominantly white senior leaders who have probably not considered the racialised experiences through the eyes of their minority ethnic staff, nor are equipped with the skills to do so. There also appears to be a disconnect between the intentions of the DfE 'Statement of intent' and the wider educational, social and political landscape. The seemingly British-centric National Curriculum reforms, resulting from a sweeping review in 2011, could be viewed as undervaluing the human cost of the British colonial empire. The place of the Prevent duty in school policy and 'Promoting Fundamental British Values' potentially demonises certain ethnic minority groups and stigmatises their communities. The announcement by Minister for Women and Equalities, Kemi Badenoch MP, in October 2020 to members of Parliament suggested the government's readiness to criminalise schools which taught "contested political ideas" (Robinson, 2020), supposedly promoted through Critical Race Theory (CRT), without balance (although she is seemingly conflating the radical arm of Black Lives Matter and a theory which reveals systemic racialised oppression, describing CRT as an ideology rather than a theory grounded in academic thought). A wider 'hostile environment' political context with perceived nationalistic undertones permeating discourses (Burnett, 2017) engendered the Windrush scandal in 2018 resulting in the continued systematic repatriation of those who struggle to prove their status in the UK or have been through the criminal justice system. The decision by the government in December 2020 to ban unconscious bias training for civil servants claiming that it does not work (Forrest, 2020) and providing no alternative equivalent training sends the message that those central to policy creation do not have to consider and reflect

on the impact of any implicit bias, which marginalised groups in society may be subjected to through state legislation resulting from civil service bureaucracy. The current educational, social and political landscape has directly or indirectly placed minority ethnic communities and individuals in the position of being 'othered'. Further, the seemingly negative discourses in the media around Black youth and gang culture with increasing levels of knife crime (Cushion, Moore and Jewell, 2011; Maxwell, 2019), the disproportionate number of Black men who experience 'stop and search' police practices (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2012; Dodd, 2019) and the rise of the #BlackLivesMatter supporting civil rights in the USA (as opposed to the Black Lives Matter movement with a more radical agenda) which has entered the psyches of UK's Black communities (Phoenix, Amesu, Naylor and Zafar, 2020), all raise the question of whether white-dominated educational environments perpetuates negative Black stereotypes and marginalising views of Black communities. The killing of George Floyd in the US at the hands of police in 2020 (Phoenix et al., 2020) and the subsequent global response in solidarity with #BlackLivesMatter in support of civil rights, alongside the disproportionate effect on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities of the COVID-19 coronavirus global pandemic in the same year (Kirby, 2020) has driven a momentum to hear the voices and experiences of Black communities. My research is timely given the various events and policy changes which affect Black and marginalised communities in the current 'race' discourses and landscape. With the rise in consciousness of how Black racialised groups experience racism and "negotiate the politics of location" (Few, 2007, p. 459) in white hegemonic societal structures, how then do Black female teachers position themselves and feel about the intersection of their 'Blackness' and gender as professionals in their white-dominated work contexts?

1.2 Aims of the research

My research question is: *How do Black female teachers form their professional identities in white-dominated educational workspaces?* The focus of this research is to examine the ways that Black female teachers navigate white-dominated educational workspaces and what experiences influence the development of their professional identities, despite the visible and invisible barriers suggested by Haque and Elliot (2017) above and further in Chapter Two. To answer this question, two sub-questions are addressed. These are:

i. From an experiential perspective, what, if anything, made their school contexts racialised and challenging to exist in?

ii. How do Black female teachers successfully navigate and operate in these spaces?

To answer the research question, the key objectives of the study are:

a) To understand how Black female teachers' intersectional experiences compare with those of their colleagues (white female/white male/black male);

b) To understand what Black female teachers perceive as influencing their professional identities;

c) To explore how Black female teachers' agentic positions frame the expectations and perceptions of their professional experiences; and

d) To explore how Black female teachers challenge white hegemonic stereotypes in forming their professional identities.

To address the two sub-questions, I employ two different theoretical lenses to form my conceptual framework, thus addressing the overarching research question. To understand how schools are racialised spaces, hence providing the

contextual landscape for this study, I draw on CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001). In my study, CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) is used as a lens to examine how the school structures in England maintain white hegemony, white normative views and oppress Black female teachers participating in this research. To explore how Black female teachers, who hold a range of positions within their schools from class teacher to leadership roles, successfully navigate and operate in their workplaces, I draw on consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) as a method of providing a voice to these Black women and how they position themselves. Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) implicitly acknowledges agency through Black women's thought, ideas and actions to drive for change, although does not refer to agency explicitly. Consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000), therefore, provides a platform to counter hegemonic views of Black women in schools and specifically speaks to giving my participants a voice to present their individual agentic positions in striving for positive change through acts of resistance. The combination of these two theoretical lenses is rarely seen in research on 'race', gender and education in the English or UK context, thus forming an aspect of my contribution to knowledge.

1.3 B/black or W/white? Justification for capitalisation (or not) and terms

To explain my choice of whether to capitalise the words 'black' and 'white' throughout this thesis, I take the position articulated by Kapitan (2016) that "I choose to use *Black* and *white* in my own writing out of a dedication to centering the leadership, authority, and truths of the people I'm writing about—particularly when those people are marginalized" (Kapitan, 2016). In a further argument for

capitalising 'Black', Tharps (2014) writing in The New York Times noted that in the 1920s, Du Bois began a letter-writing campaign to publishers and press to capitalise 'N' in Negro when referring to Black people, succeeding in this change in 1930. She added that with the transformation of terminology over time, to demote the first letter back to lowercase seems nonsensical when the argument had already been won by Du Bois in 1930, and additionally stating "Black with a capital B refers to people of African diaspora. Lowercase black is simply a colour" (Tharps, 2014). In the wake of the killing of George Floyd and the resurgence of #BlackLivesMatter, supported by global solidarity, in mid-2020 the Associated Press in the US made the decision to capitalise 'Black' when used in the context of 'race' and culture, going on to note that white people as a majoritarian group have much less shared history and culture hence maintaining lowercase 'w' (Bauder, 2020). Likewise, the Canadian press had chosen to capitalise 'Black' but maintain 'white', with Bell (2018) arguing "[T]he history of slavery robbed many Black North Americans of an ancestral connection to their homelands, thus making 'Black' as much a part of their cultural identity as Scottish, English and Irish are mine" (2018). However, there are organisations and individuals who choose to capitalise both 'Black' and 'White', as they name both as races, thus providing a platform to analyse how whiteness functions (Nguyen and Pendleton, 2020). I recognised that the reasoning for my position on this matter predominantly stems from the experiences in North America, which differs from the experiences of Black communities and histories in England and the UK. I respect the choice of cited authors to have a different perspective and practice than the one I have chosen to take. Thus, I quote their work accordingly.

The use of terminology throughout this research is also a cause for reflection. Terms such as 'BME' (Black and Minority Ethnic) and 'BAME' (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) are sources of contention. Fakim and Macaulay (2020) note the reasons for the rejection of these terms by individuals and communities due to the nuances of ethnic categories and the difficulties which come from essentialising diverse groups under a single term. However, these terms have been used in literature relevant to this research, and I use the terminology according to how the references cited within the body of this work discuss these terms.

Finally, the term 'race' as a social construct "is poorly defined and continually evolving and is historically based on faulty premises" (Wolf, Jablonski and Kenney, 2020, p.1409). As such, I have chosen to confine this term to sit within quotation marks and is written as 'race' throughout this thesis.

1.4 Contribution to knowledge

This research aims to contribute to addressing the apparent gap in knowledge on the influences on Black female teachers' professional identities in white-dominated educational workplaces in England. The majority of work in the area of Black female teachers has been set in the US. Harris and Leonardo (2018) acknowledge the work of Bhopal and Preston (2012) as an example of intersectionality with 'race' in education in the UK, although Black female teachers' professional identities appears to be an apparent gap in the current discussions in England. My study aims to contribute to the existing body of work by such commentators on the importance and roles of Black teachers in the

English education system, but specifically focussing on how the lived experiences of Black female teachers forms their professional identities. Very little has addressed Black female teachers' professional identities, with the works of Al-Khatib and Lash (2017) and Acosta (2019) being scarce examples in its attention to constructed professional identities of Black female teachers in the US. Further, the recent political situation, with Brexit, the 'hostile environment' (Burnett, 2017) and National Curriculum reforms (DfE, 2013) as discourses prior to my research, and with the government anti-CRT position (Robinson, 2020), the banning of unconscious bias training for civil servants without consideration of any suitable replacement (Forrest, 2020), the increasing consciousness of #BlackLivesMatter supporting civil rights in the UK and globally in the wake of George Floyd's killing at the hands of police in the US in 2020 (Phoenix et al., 2020) evident around the time of my data collection, these events and policies all provide a unique and relevant context within which Black communities operate in England, the impact of which could be permeating into school environments creating unforeseen challenges for Black female teachers' development of professional identities in their workplace and career paths in the teaching profession.

Additionally, my contribution to knowledge comes through my conceptual framework, which combines CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) and consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) in the context of Black female teachers' professional identities in English schools. In recent years, there has been some research in the UK combining a broader perspective of CRT and Black feminism, notably Maylor (2009b), Curtis (2017) and Rankin-Wright, Hylton and Norman (2019). However, there is currently a dearth in research which employs this combination of theories to examine the lives of Black women in the

workplace, and specifically within schools, with a focus on professional identities that extends to Black female teachers in roles more widely than leadership positions.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters:

Chapter One has provided a rationale for the study, presented the research question and outlined the contribution to knowledge. It also discussed the nuances of how terminology is used throughout this study.

Chapter Two examines the relevant literature which underpins the conceptual framework for this study. To focus on the lives of Black females working within white-dominated educational spaces, I experienced a journey starting with CRT as my singular theoretical position, initially feeling that this theory was sufficient to justify my methodological approach. However, this journey brought me to understanding the need to centralise the voice of Black women and avoid essentialising collective voices and Black female experiences. Although voice and intersectionality are embedded in CRT, a key critique of CRT provided by Carbado and Gulati (2003) is that it firstly does little to challenge the workplace contexts as sites of racialised social constructs for individuals, choosing instead to focus its activism on macro-level legal and socio-political issues of barriers to entry to professions. Further, CRT can essentialise all minorities (Few, 2007), with Berry (2010) noting that the experiences of Black females are different from Black men and cannot be essentialised. This realisation encouraged me to, firstly, refocus the use of CRT by drawing on the specific use of CRT in education

(Solórzano and Yosso, 2001). Secondly, it brought me to the use of consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000), which centralises the thoughts, ideas and actions for positive change by Black women for Black women and minoritised communities, avoiding feminist essentialism with all women which silences the unique position and lived experiences of Black women. Also, Wing (2014) notes that Black women face specific discriminations which are not faced by Black men. Therefore, homogenising the power and oppression of the wider 'Black' experience is of more limited value for Black women. Both theoretical perspectives have a place in the development of my conceptual framework. I present the tenets of CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) as a way to understand the racialised context of the educational settings within which my research participants work. I then move on to presenting Black feminist thought as a lens to understand the lived experiences of Black women and Black girls within a white homogenised society, focussing on education, educational structures and the workplace. Consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) also reveals unique lived experiential knowledge and self-definitions of Black women through counter-narratives, which take an anti-essentialist position. Further, the concept of agency implicitly underpinning Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000), both individual and collective, is examined as a mechanism to challenge normative perceptions of Black women, through Black women's thoughts, ideas and activism, and that engaging individual and collective agency can produce actions which result in positive changes for Black women. The interrogation of the literature related to these theoretical lenses, specifically focussing on schools and education, reveals an apparent gap in knowledge around Black female teachers' professional identities which this thesis addresses.

In Chapter Three, I present my methodology used to carry out this research. I discuss ethical approval, the process of recruiting participants (10 Black female teachers) for data collection and the data analysis approach. I also discuss methodological challenges I faced around participant access, positionality and power. Embedded within the two theoretical lenses, outlined in Chapter Two, is the use of personal stories as a method to provide Black women a voice, which drove my chosen methodology of narrative inquiry. However, issues of access to participants, power dynamics between myself as the researcher and the Black women in education as the researched group, and the complexities of insider/outsider and 'race' (un)matched positionalities all placed perceived or actual barriers to the initial stages of the study.

Chapter Four analyses and discusses data collected from 10 Black female teachers who hold a range of roles in schools through the lens of CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) to address the first sub-question outlined in section 1.2 of this chapter. Centralising relevant key tenets of CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001), the data analysis takes a deductive approach. The discussion then focusses on the way in which the data addresses the relevant research objectives.

Chapter Five moves the focus onto analysis and discussion of data collected from the 10 participants through the lens of consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) to address the second sub-question outlined in section 1.2 of this chapter. Data analysis this time takes an inductive approach. As in Chapter Four, the discussion then looks to address the remaining relevant research objectives.

In Chapter Six, I conclude this study by drawing together the findings in the previous two chapters to address the overarching research question of '*How do Black female teachers form their professional identities in white-dominated educational workspaces?'*. Like with all studies, there are limitations which I discuss and subsequently present potential for future research areas. I also revisit my contribution to knowledge to consider whether unexpected perspectives emerged which further contribute to the discourse.

2. Chapter Two - Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

There is a breadth of literature and a number of empirical studies which argue that schools are racialised spaces (see Evans-Winters and Esposito, 2010; Maylor, 2009a; Mirza, 1992; Tomlinson, 2019; Watson, 2016; Wright, 2010). In order to understand how Black female teachers create their professional identities in these predominately white and racialised spaces, it is necessary to understand how these educational spaces are structured as racialised. The approach I have taken in this research aims to reveal oppressions experienced by Black female teachers but also to provide a counter-narrative to resist and challenge normative views of Black female professionals within the workplace, specifically teachers in school settings. In order to counter prevailing narratives of Black women, firstly, it is necessary to reveal the nature of the perceived discriminations and oppressions the participants in this study experienced, articulated through their stories, which form the existing normative views and stereotypes. To present a counter-narrative of Black female teachers through the voices of the participants that challenges the oppressions, normative views and stereotypes they face, a lens which centralised sex and/or gender and 'race' alongside other intersectional identities was needed.

To position this research in current academic literature, this literature review will begin with an examination of existing literature which underpins CRT, which posits some useful tenets that illuminate the nature of how dominant ideologies of the majoritarian group permeate societal structures and maintain white

supremacy. It often examines the structures of oppression and subjugation within the white hegemonic society at a wider macro-level. Hence, a model of CRT in education, as proposed by Solórzano and Yosso (2001), is drawn upon to provide an explanation of how schools are seen by the research participants in this study as racialised spaces. CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) provides a lens to examine how oppression manifests itself in educational contexts. Whilst the experiential knowledge of racially minoritised groups is also a central tenet, CRT in education can create an essentialised view of 'race' and racism in education rather than presenting the unique experiences of Black women in educational spaces. As a way to counter this, I draw on a broader discussion of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000), which maintains the focus on the position of Black women within society, recognising the need to engage in the wider discourses of Black women's position and voice in the workplace before focussing on consciousness of Black feminist thought to analyse the experiences, thoughts and ideas which contribute to the actions and activism of the research participants in this study. The concept of 'intersectionality' (Crenshaw, 1989) is considered central to Black feminism (Collins, 2015). As Miles Nash and Peters (2020) note, the place of intersectionality in the discourse of Black women's lives "illumined the ways that Black women were excluded from both feminist theory and antiracist politics" (2020, p. 274). Black feminist thought further provides a platform for Black women to voice their experiential knowledge, allowing for a deeper understanding of how Black women navigate spaces and use agency, as thoughts, ideas and action, in the construction of their professional identities. Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) additionally gives importance to narrative and the power of voice to "change mind-set" and enable the "psychic preservation of marginalised groups" (Delgado, 1989, cited by Tate, 1997, p. 220). Therefore,

this study engages with CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) and Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000), specifically consciousness of Black feminist thought, to create the conceptual framework for this research.   It is important to note that the use of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) alone could have led to problematising Black female teachers rather than recognising that determinants of their professional identities manifest from wider structural oppressions. Likewise, examining Black female teachers' professional identities through CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) alone could miss the nuances of Black female teachers' intersectional voices and experiential knowledge. Hence, using both theoretical lenses is central to the conceptual framework for this research to contextualise Black female teachers' lived experiences in racialised educational spaces that form their professional identities. Both lenses centralise the position of 'race' to examine experiences of Black people, as do they centralise the role of 'counter narrative' or 'counter stories' to present lived experiences that contradict normative assumptions and grand narratives. It is through their personal stories that I examine how the participants view themselves and their professional identities within their predominantly white workspaces. Further, this study provides a platform for Black female teachers' voices which centralises their agency to make changes to benefit learners and other Black staff within their schools.

2.2 Critical Race Theory (CRT) – a lens to view societal oppression

CRT was born out of the Critical Legal Studies (CLS) movement in the early 1970s in the US (Tate, 1997; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Rollock and Gillborn, 2011; Chadderton, 2013; Dixson, 2018; Marom, 2019). Black legal scholars in the US recognised that CLS was a discernible step in examining limitations which existed

in the legal processes of the time but saw that the discourse on civil rights was being inadequately addressed through CLS. Thus, CRT emerged as a movement to critique legal discourses specifically focusing on 'race' structures and civil rights, with Derrick Bell considered the key proponent (Delgado and Stefancic, 2017).

CRT is a force for change in racial equality, centring on the role of 'race' in society through alternative theorisation, beginning with the work of early key CRT scholars like Richard Delgado, Alan Freeman, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Cheryl Harris, Mari Matsuda and Patricia Williams, as well as Derrick Bell (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Ladson-Billings (1998) describes CRT as a tool for "deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruction of human agency, and construction of equitable and socially just relations of power" (1998, p. 9). However, Cardabo (2011) notes that even 20 years after the establishment of CRT, identifying as a Critical Race Theorist invokes a response of "Critical what what?" (2011, p. 1595), particularly for academics seeking to create learning opportunities about CRT within their predominantly white institutions which pushed back on the use of the name of the theory. 10 years on from Cardabo's (2011) response, Trilling (2020) notes that CRT in the UK was unlikely to have been encountered by most people until the #BlackLivesMatter protests of the summer of 2020 and has become centralised in a culture war against the left and liberal elite by the current government seeking to disengage from discourses on structural inequality. Leonardo (2013) states that CRT is not a discipline, but rather "offers a way of conducting research that speaks against current objectifications of race, not just a way of interpreting it" (2013, p. 602). Ladson-Billings (2013) makes it clear that CRT scholars "have an obligation to point out

the endemic racism that is extant in our schools, colleges, and other public spaces" (2013, p. 355).

2.3 CRT and the English context

To understand CRT in the English and British context, Warmington (2020) provides a detailed commentary of the history and development of this theory, noting that CRT in England rose through the field of education. Warmington (2020) explains that CRT has been used to re-interrogate persistent issues faced by Black learners, such as inequalities in examinations outcomes, the disproportionate rate of school exclusions, streaming and setting patterns which consistently place Black children in 'lower ability' grouping, and barriers to access to elite higher education institutions. He further notes that the racialisation of policy discourse has been sporadic, with racial equality at times seeming to be on the political agenda (the release of the Macpherson Report in 1999 being one such example) but never remaining a focus of UK government's policy formation.

CRT in the English and British context has faced a number of criticisms. On examining a range of published exchanges by critics of CRT who hold Marxist positions on the primacy of class, Warmington (2020) cites Parsons (2015), Cole (2009, 2017) and Hayes (2013) to summarise anti-CRT 'tenets' as:

1. CRT has little relevance in England, being an import from the US;
2. CRT applies a rigid Black/white binary by homogenising all white people and essentialising 'race';
3. CRT is a set of beliefs about racism rather than a theory; and

4. CRT has few strengths and can learn from twentieth century Marxist concepts of class relations.

To counter these arguments, Warmington (2020) posits that CRT scholars in England acknowledge that Britain does not have the same civil rights history as the US, but that it does not require a civil rights movement to recognise that in English culture and politics "communities of colour remain marginal and ambiguous" (2020, p. 33). Citing Tomlinson (2018), Warmington (2020) notes that "the growth of nativist politics…compounded by residual post-imperial melancholy, marked by Brexit, Islamophobia, the demonisation of migrants and renewed suspicion of cultural diversity" (Tomlinson, 2018, cited by Warmington, 2020, p. 33) places Black and minoritised communities in precarious positions in British society. The ambiguity and precariousness of Black communities' places in British society suggested by Warmington (2020) was illustrated in the Euros football tournament in July 2021, when three Black England footballers received a barrage of racial abuse via social media on missing penalties in the final (Katsha, 2021), whereas Black players were previously celebrated for their role in getting the national team to the final. As Katsha (2021) notes, the value and acceptance of Black communities is based on their performance, with the title of her Huffpost media article, "Black British or Black in Britain? It Depends If We're Winning" (2021), being a reminder of this marginalisation and ambiguity.

2.4 CRT in education: a brief history

The first seminal paper which examined CRT in education was written by Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) in the US. A key argument they present is that class and gender-based explanations, despite the intersections with 'race', are not sufficient

to explain differential school experience and performance. They go on to posit that 'race' as a stand-alone variable, although under-theorised at the time, may be powerful enough to explain all the educational achievement differences between white students and students of colour. By drawing on work by Oakes (1985), they qualify this position by stating, "there is some evidence to suggest that even when we hold constant for class, middle-class African American students do not achieve at the same level as their white counterparts" (1995, p. 51). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) then use CRT to explain and exemplify educational inequalities, such as the impact of the 1954 *Brown vs Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* ruling on school desegregation leading to increased white flight and the loss of African American teachers and administrative positions rather than providing more and better educational opportunities for Black students. They further critique the move towards multicultural education as a means to pursue social justice, noting that "multicultural education in schools often reduced it to trivial examples and artifacts of culture such as eating ethnic or cultural foods, singing songs or dancing, reading folktales, and other less than scholarly pursuits" (1995, p. 61). This critique is concurred with by Modood and May (2001) in their discussion of school practices specific to 1970s Britain and was "later lampooned as the multiculturalism of the three "S's:" saris, samosas and steelbands" (2001, p. 306). Dixson and Rousseau Anderson (2018) revisit the origins of CRT in education outlined in Ladson- Billings and Tate's (1995) seminal paper, to ask the question "Where are we?". Acknowledging the growth in scholarship in this field, they however "submit that this growth has not necessarily followed a clear path or resulted in a well-defined body of scholarship in education" (2018, p. 121).

CRT in education in England has a shorter history than in the US. As such and due to the size of England, the availability of literature on CRT in education is highly US-centric, as the body of work on CRT in English and UK education builds. Chakrabarty, Roberts and Preston (2012) recognise contextual and socio-historical differences between England and US but believe that there is little difference in the application and practice of CRT in the two countries, possibly due to the prevalence of structural racism in both countries. Nevertheless, Hylton (2012) cites a range of work by UK writers, specifically Gillborn (2006), Warmington (2011), Pilkington (2011) and Burdsey (2011), suggesting that they "have engaged with education policy and practice and it is reasonable to argue that it was here rather than the legal profession where the original site of struggle for CRT in the UK began" (Hylton, 2012, p. 25). The application of CRT to policy and practice in England was also the beginning of what Hylton, at the first conference on CRT in education in the UK in June 2009 organised by the C-SAP group of the Higher Education Academy, posits as 'BritCrit' (Gillborn, 2011).

2.5 Critiques of CRT

Critics of CRT, particularly those who take a Marxist position, point out the role of class in social relations. Ledesma and Calderón (2015) note the work of Darder and Torres (2004) who decry the hyper-emphasis on 'race' at the exclusion of a critique of capitalism and the analysis of the role of social class, arguing that the concept of 'race' has been elevated to a theoretical construct yet is under-theorised. Likewise, Cole (2009) argues that to emphasise 'race' over social class does not facilitate an in-depth understanding of racism in society. Further Marxist positioning argues that CRT lacks the dimension which seeks to place socio-

economic contexts as determinants of the ability "to bridge agency and social structure" (Parsons and Thompson, 2017, p. 595). Warmington (2020) notes "discourses of derision" (2020, p.31) in which Marxist thinking rejects 'race' as an analytical tool and is suspicious of social analysis which centralises 'race' over class.

As this thesis will examine how Black female teachers navigate white-dominated educational workspaces, it is additionally interesting to note the views of Carbado and Gulati (2003) who critique CRT literature for paying little attention to workplace contexts as sites of racialised social constructs. They go on to suggest that "CRT's effort to combat racial discrimination in the workplace has focused on eliminating formal and informal racial barriers to entry" (2003, p. 1759) through practices such as affirmative action. With the focus being on opening the door, virtually no consideration had been given to "the operation of race *within* professional workplaces because so few nonwhites had access to professional jobs" (2003, p. 1760). A second critique provided by Carbado and Gulati (2003) is that CRT sees 'race' as a social construct operating at a macro-level (racialised categories invented by *society*) focussing on legal and socio-political processes and neglecting the micro-level interpersonal connections between individuals. In other words, CRT ignores the choices people make about how to present and represent themselves as racialised persons. These critiques of CRT are important to note as examining how Black female teachers form their professional identities will centralise "the daily negotiations people of color perform in an attempt to shape how (especially white) people interpret their nonwhite identities" (Carbado and Gulati, 2003, p. 1760) within the professional workplace. This is not to say that Carbado and Gulati's views invalidate CRT as an appropriate

theoretical framework, but rather they suggest CRT can help "scholars move to a dynamic conception of race" (2003, p. 1761). This is also advocated by Chadderton (2013) in her work championing post-structural notions of identity in education in the UK.

CRT as a methodological lens is open to interpretation. Rollock and Gillborn (2011) and Ladson-Billings (2013) list five commonly accepted tenets central to CRT. However, Dixson and Rousseau-Anderson (2018) note that Carbado (2011) designed a set of nine 'boundaries' as characteristics of CRT scholarship based on established tenets but adding that CRT is both pragmatic and idealistic. Finally, Bonilla-Silva (2015) reconstructed the central components of CRT, focussing on the role and structure of racism in society, with a recognition that racism changes and develops over time.

2.6 Using CRT in education to understand how schools are considered as racialised spaces

With CRT having been defined and redefined over several years, as noted in the previous section, the mechanism to understand how schools are racialised spaces may be better served by a model of CRT which has seen little, if any, redefinition and which is designed to specifically suit to the field of education. Therefore, turning to Solórzano and Yosso (2001) who are then followed by Smith-Maddox and Solórzano (2002), CRT in education provides a useful framework for this study. The model suggests tenets "that form the basic perspectives, research methods, and pedagogy" (2001, p. 472) for investigating CRT in education, stemming from Solórzano's (1997) early work in mainstream

CRT and with its foundations in traditional CRT tenets. This model consists of five

tenets, with the aim

> …to develop a theoretical, conceptual, methodological, and pedagogical strategy that accounts for the role of race and racism [in education]… and works toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating other forms of subordination, such as gender, class, and sexual orientation" (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001, p. 472).

The connectedness with the recognised and widely accepted tenets of CRT

(Rollock and Gillborn, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Delgado and Stefancic, 2017)

should not be ignored, with Dixson and Rousseau (2005) acknowledging the

views in separate works of Ladson-Billings (1999) and Tate (1999) that critical

race scholars in education should be cautious about moving away too quickly

from the foundations of CRT in legal studies. Within this literature review, the role

of CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) is used to demonstrate how

schools and classrooms are experienced as racialised spaces by both Black

learners and teachers. To avoid a rigid use of Solórzano and Yosso's (2001)

model, only relevant CRT in education tenets which reveal perspectives of

racialised oppressions in educational contexts are discussed, namely:

a) the centrality of 'race' and racism in intersectional lives in educational contexts; and
b) challenging the dominant ideology of white supremacy in education and the impact of whiteness.

2.6.1 The centrality of 'race' and racism in intersectional lives in an educational context

At the centre of CRT is the recognition that racism exists, racism is ordinary and is embedded in societal structures rather than "some random, isolated act of individuals behaving badly" (Ladson-Billings, 2013, p. 347). US legal statutes exemplified the systemic inequalities in matters of race relations and civil rights, resulting in a recognition of the 'permanence' of racism (Bell, 1991) in wider US societal structures. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) reinforce the idea of the existence and permanence of racism in how the law and societal structures function, citing Russell (1992) who states that the premise of 'race' and racism are "a central rather than marginal factor in defining and explaining individual experiences of the law" (1992, cited by Solórzano and Yosso, 2002: p. 25) and therefore experiences of societal structures, including education.

Schools are not immune to the existence and permanence of racism. Crutchfield, Phillippo and Frey (2020) reviewed data on racial disparities in educational attainment, opportunities and discipline practices from a school social work practice perspective, which focussed attention on the increase of structural racism in schools in the US. Likewise, DeCuir and Dixson (2004) note that "racism is prevalent in all aspects of society, with schools not being an exception" (2004, p. 26) in their work examining 'race' and racism in education, focussing on a specific independent school in an affluent, predominantly white area of the southern US. Their subsequent discussion of narratives of lived experiences of Black students recognises that, although the research took place in an independent school setting, "[the students'] stories transcend most school contexts and demonstrate the subtlety and the pervasiveness of racism" (2004, p.

29) in the US context. Okolosie (2017) in her article in The Guardian noted that in a poll of 450 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) teachers conducted in 2015 by the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT), 62% believed that schools treated BAME students unfairly in UK schools. This is a worryingly high statistic, although she does not provide a definition or examples of what 'unfairly' means, and the original survey report appears to be no longer available online to examine. Nevertheless, she further discusses survey data on racial abuse directed at teachers from a BAME background and an "invisible glass ceiling" (Okolosie, 2017) where BAME staff in schools are not taken seriously for senior posts, fuelling negative assumptions about their skills and aptitudes.

A second 2017 Runnymede Trust report, produced in collaboration with the NASUWT, states that BAME teachers "are as committed to teaching as their white colleagues, but struggle with the endemic racism that pervades the British educational system" (2017, p. 5). The report analysed a survey of 12,000 teachers across England conducted in 2016. The findings on the experiences and views specifically of the teachers from BAME backgrounds surveyed are worrying: 79% of teachers from BAME backgrounds felt they were not paid at a level commensurate with their skills and experiences; 64% had experienced verbal abuse by pupils; 52% felt they were not viewed as professional by the school management; and 64% felt that their opinions were not valued by school management. The findings also revealed that discrimination was taking a toll on teachers from BAME backgrounds with 75% of these teachers having considered leaving the profession. The Runnymede Trust/NASUWT (2017) report states that "Racism – both overt and covert – is still a significant issue" (2017, p. 14). This

data suggests there had been inadequate change since a 2007 DfES research report which they cite that "teachers faced considerable racist and stereotypical attitudes from their colleagues, which not only hindered their career progression, but also prevented them from supporting BME [Black and Minority Ethnic] pupils" (Cunningham and Hargreaves, 2007, cited by Runnymede Trust/NASUWT, 2017, p.14), demonstrating inhibiting factors in recruitment and retention of teachers from BAME backgrounds. Haque and Elliot (2017) support these findings, noting that many teachers from BAME backgrounds "reported feeling isolated and lacking in management support with regards to incidences of racism and career progression" (2017, p. 5-6) and complained of being given stereotypical roles and responsibilities, such as behaviour and Black History Month. Additionally, Haque and Elliot (2017) report that most teachers from BAME backgrounds experience "persistent discrimination, "microaggressions" and unfair and unequal treatment in their everyday teaching lives" (2017, p. 6). Both reports (Runnymede Trust/NASUWT, 2017; Haque and Elliot, 2017) suggest a pervasiveness of racism in schools despite the requirements of the *Equality Act 2010*. It raises the question of whether the academisation of schools has exacerbated these experiences for minoritised teachers, particularly around career progression and the remuneration that comes with it, as academy chains manage their own budgets free from local authority accountability. More than 20 years on from the Macpherson Report (1999), which identified institutional racism in Britain's police but with recommendations which affected wider public bodies and societal structures including education, it is no wonder that the findings of the Runnymede Trust/NASUWT (2017) report raises concerns. Robinson and Robinson (2006), discussing the implications of the Macpherson Report for teacher education, raise the following question, "What kind of a future can we have if we do not collectively

respond to the fact that the thrust of the report was about how "white Britain treats black Britain?"" (2006, p. 303).

How 'race' is socially constructed should also be considered in the discussion of educational opportunities for racialised groups. Ladson-Billings (2013) states that

> …humans have constructed social categories and organizations that rely heavily on arbitrary genetic differences like skin color, hair texture, eye shape and lip size. They have used these differences as a mechanism for creating hierarchy and an ideology of White supremacy (2013, p. 349).

This definition of 'race' as a social construction is acknowledged by Delgado and Stefancic (2017), who note that social thought and relations create 'race' and 'races'. They further suggest that racialised categories invented by society are not objective nor inherent and are manipulated when convenient, going on to note that what is not considered is the higher-order traits of personality, intelligence and moral behaviour. 'Races' created by society are often bestowed with unreflective and untrue characteristics which become permanently accepted. The social construction of 'race', therefore, creates a deficit view of minoritised groups. This is exemplified by Tomlinson (2019), who tells of British schools in the 1960s and 1970s blaming migrant children and their parents for their constructed deficiencies, as movement of populations from the Empire to Britain increased. She explains that psychologists and educational researchers began to compare migrant children from Asian and Black Commonwealth countries by measuring 'intelligence' through psychometric tests based on white population standardised attainment, giving rise to an over-representation of Black children in schools for the 'educationally subnormal' (ESN), a category used for labelling children in use until 1981. The example provided by Tomlinson (2019)

epitomises the existence and nature of racism and white superiority in society at that time, as does the BBC documentary entitled 'Subnormal' which was first aired in May 2021.

2.6.2 The need to challenge the dominant ideology of white supremacy in education and the impact of whiteness

Chadderton (2013) recognises that white supremacy and privilege permeates education systems in the UK, writing that the "education system is understood as shaped by white supremacy, which defines roles, identities, interaction and policy. Minority ethnic identities are defined as 'other' against an assumed white norm" (2013, p. 44). Critics of the concept of 'white supremacy' (Cole, 2009, 2020; Cole and Maisuria, 2007) note that the term is problematic as it homogenises all white people together as being in positions of privilege and power, taking no account of the experiences of the white poor working class and discriminations faced by white populations who are 'othered' by society, such as Gypsy-Roma Traveller racism, Irish Traveller racism and anti-Semitism. Further, Cole (2020) argues that white supremacy is one of CRT's key theoretical problems as it fails to address what Walton (2020) notes as "non-colour coded racism, or hybridist racism, or racism between non-White groups" (2020, cited by Cole, 2020, p. 97).

Chadderton (2013) goes on to cite the work of Gillborn (2006) to note that white supremacy in the education system manifests itself through the continuation of Black students being overrepresented in expulsions from schools in the UK. Additionally, Black students and students of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin

continue to score below the national average in the General Certificate of

Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations as they are "consistently entered for

lower papers in these exams by their teachers, meaning that even if they attain

the highest possible mark on these papers, they will never gain university

entrance" (Chadderton, 2013, p. 45), suggesting covert structures of racial

oppression. Further, Chadderton (2013) discusses the ways in which white

supremacy is maintained and enacted in education through the perceptions held

by white teachers of minoritised groups, noting links between the negative way in

which particular groups are perceived by many teachers and their educational

underachievement, "placing the blame at the feet of the individual, their family, or

their whole (perceived) community" (2013, p. 45) and leading to being

consistently entered for lower papers, as discussed earlier. It raises the question

as to whether some white teachers hold similar deficit views of Black teachers,

leading to the maintenance of white supremacy in the staff room as well as the

classroom. The work of Callender (2018, 2020) is beginning to answer this

question, as her research notes that "black male teacher identities are affected by

negative assumptions and stereotypes" (2018, p. 173) and they further

experience "processes of exclusion, othering and surveillance" (2020, p. 1) as

they navigate their place within educational spaces dominated by white teachers

and white leadership. This study examines whether Black female teachers face

similar experiences and how these experiences shape their professional identity.

The impact of whiteness is equally pervasive. Wright (2010) states, "Whiteness

is seen as natural. Whiteness obtains its power from being the norm and hence

Whiteness is privileged" (2010, p. 308). Alongside the centrality of race and

racism existing and being permanent is that whiteness as a dominant ideology

provides benefits and advantages, as well as a position of supremacy, to the majoritarian white population. The model of CRT in education proposed by Solórzano and Yosso (2001) looks to both reveal and challenge this.

The research of Picower (2009) provides an example of the impact of whiteness in schools and how white teachers maintain dominant ideologies. She studied eight white, female, pre-service teachers enrolled on a course on multicultural education in their final semester of a teacher education programme in a university in New York City. The course aimed to help teachers explore their own racial identity, class privilege, their assumptions about students of colour and their developing understanding of the role of the teacher in urban schools. Picower's (2009) findings showed that the white female teachers on the course used their religious identities to deny the role of race in oppression, created hegemonic stories about how people of colour "should be able to pick themselves up by their bootstraps" (2009, p. 201), stemming from the white female teachers believing in American meritocracy. Further, the white female teachers experienced hierarchical relationships with people of colour perpetuating the view that people of colour are there to serve or work for white people. They held white hegemonic understandings to justify their fear of people of colour, presenting themselves as victims of racism. Picower (2009) referred to the behaviours identified in her findings as 'tools of whiteness' which are drawn upon to maintain dominant ideologies of 'race'. She divides the 'tools of whiteness' into 'emotional tools of whiteness' based on the emotional responses of the research participants, 'ideological tools of whiteness' based on beliefs which protect their hegemonic stories, and 'performative tools of whiteness' being behaviours in which the

participant engaged to maintain and protect their beliefs stemming from ideological tools.

A further concept of CRT which maintains the dominancy of whiteness is that of 'colour-blindness'. Majoritarian normativity positions colour-blindness as an ideal of "racial enlightenment" (Crenshaw et al., 1995, cited by Dixson, 2011, p. 814) and seen as progress in racial equality. Referred to by Montgomery (2013) as "empowered mythologies" (2013, p. 2) privileging limited or false perceptions and understandings of the world from a white standpoint, colour-blindness is typically practiced by those who consider "racism as that which only bad people do, about what an exceptionally tolerant nation we live in, or about how distant we (as good individuals or as a multicultural nation) are from the acts or effects of racism" (2013, p. 2). As such, colour-blindness denies and rejects that inequality is the result of racism and racial practices. However, Dixson (2011) further cites Crenshaw et al. (1995) to argue that CRT scholars problematise colour-blindness as a "color-conscious discourse that sustains racial hierarchy and power" (2011, p. 814), providing the example of how American teachers uphold colour-blind ideology whilst at the same time racializing African American student attainment as deficit through their justifying of these students being in 'low level' mathematics and reading classes. Dixson and Rousseau (2005) sum up colour-blindness as saying:

> …if we accept the notion of whiteness as normal, then any person who is *not white* is abnormal. Thus, within polite, middle class mores, it is impolite to *see* when someone is *different*, abnormal, and thus, *not white*. Hence, it is better to ignore, or become colour-blind, than to notice that people of colour have the physical malady of skin colour, or *not whiteness*. (2005, p. 16)

If it is not challenged and faced head on, colour-blindness maintains a white ideological dominance in racial power relations. It provides space for denial that inequality exists and that, as Montgomery (2013) notes, enables the false empowered mythology presuming that "the metaphorical playing field is now level" (2013, p. 10) and that any remaining barriers can be overcome through hard work, which is a view held by those on the right of the British political spectrum (Smith, 2018) who have formed and reformed education policy for the last decade. The myth of meritocracy, underpinned by colour-blindness and maintained by a white ideological power dominance, is presented clearly by Welham (2015) in her Guardian interview with a Black female Deputy Headteacher in London, who commented, "As I climbed the ladder I realised that I had to prove myself more than the next person" (Welham, 2015). Colour-blindness also provides a structure for covert racial resentments and fear to manifest and hence, be articulated in ways which superficially look like moves towards a more equitable society. Delgado and Stefancic (2017) argue that liberal perspectives of colour-blindness, equality for all and the post-racial era are admirable but "perverse" (2017, p. 27).

'Whiteness as property' (Harris, 1993) further embeds the dominant ideology that requires challenging. Whiteness as property has its legacy in slavery and seizure of land from Native American Indians to the benefits of the whites and embedded in property rights legislation in the US. Harris (1993) writes, "The law's construction of whiteness defines and affirmed critical aspects of identity (who is white); of privilege (what benefits accrue from that status); and, of property (what *legal* entitlements arise from that status)" (1993, p. 1725). Donnor (2013) further notes the concept of 'rights' by citing Harris (2005) to posit that Whiteness as

property enables "White people's absolute right to exclude non-Whites from social resources and meaningful life opportunities or chances" (2013, p. 199).

To exemplify how whiteness as property manifests itself, Dixson and Rousseau (2005) cite Morris (2001) who argues that the St Louis desegregation plan post-*Brown vs Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* saw white parents reluctant to send their children to St Louis' predominantly African American magnet schools, perceiving the value of education in these schools was reduced and hence representing a loss in white status. Moreover, Morris notes that devaluing the education of predominantly Black city schools in favour of promoting a superior education provided by predominantly white county schools maintains the perceived value of educational 'property' that belongs to whites. Considering Morris' example, the ethnocentricity of the 2013 revisions of the English National Curriculum provides another example of whiteness as property. Alexander and Weekes-Bernard (2017) note the heavy criticism of the controversial revisions of the English Literature and History curricula which are now narrowly nationalistic. Additionally, the 2019 revised Ofsted framework for schools plans to inspect 'cultural capital', which an article in The Guardian states, shows "white, middle-class paternalism" (Mansell, 2019). Ofsted's plans raise the question: whose 'cultural capital' has value? Yosso (2005) posits a thesis of community cultural wealth as an alternative view of cultural capital, but it is unlikely that Ofsted will evaluate schools' effectiveness on Yosso's prepositions.

Even those white educators who espouse social justice education and social justice in education are challenged by the impact of whiteness. Henry (2015) refers to the work of King (1991) who suggests that 'dysconscious racism' is a

barrier to educational equality. She goes on to explain that "the term dysconscious racism underscores the ways that dominant ideological thinking obstructs critical reflection on systemic racial inequality even by those who purport a 'social justice' positionality" (2015, p. 593). King (1991) herself refers to research carried out on her teacher education students, describing dysconscious racism as a limited or distorted understanding of inequality and cultural diversity, an uncritical habit of mind and a justification of inequity by accepting the existing white norms and privileges, resulting in "understandings that make it difficult for them to act in favour of truly equitable education" (1991, p. 134). King (1991) goes on to explain that dysconscious racism is not an absence of consciousness but rather an impaired consciousness. Her findings tell of white majoritarian ideology and narrative being deeply held by her teacher education students and suggested that existing structural inequity must be recognised in order for the social order to be reorganised, enabling true educational equality to become a reality.

In the cases of white researchers researching minority communities, the impact of whiteness on the research process and the researchers themselves can be obscured, exemplified by Britton (2020) who noted her own "persistent lack of researcher attentiveness to whiteness" (2020, p. 341) in her research involving Muslim men.   Flintoff and Webb (2011) note the views of Archer (2002) who suggests that the identity of the researcher will influence the knowledge produced, with Archer (2002) herself stating that researchers who are not from the same group as the researched may silence or misrepresent their research participants due to lack of commonality of interests and background, and how a comparative analysis of interview data around issues of 'race' and whiteness

were silenced when the researcher was white. Further, Mueller (2017) raises the issue of "*social alexithymia – the inability to understand or relate to the painful experiences of those targeted by oppression*" (2017, p. 229) when white authors research the experiences and identities of people of colour ensuring that the discussion remains as "the structurally recursive by-product of whites' deeply internalized racial framing and *white habitus*" (2017, p. 221). Archer (2002) also questioned the researcher's positionality to generate meaningful data and notes criticisms of dominant group researchers establishing themselves as "self-appointed 'experts' with regard to minority group issues" (2002, p. 110).   She additionally acknowledges the difficulty faced by some research participants regarding both the gender and 'race' of the researcher in terms of patriarchal power, which also serves to self-silence research participants in fear of being judged, citing the experience of participants from Asian decent in Westfield School to exemplify this. On the other hand, Song and Parker (1995) discussed the difficulties faced by white researchers' relationships with Black interviewees, going on to cite the work of Cannon, Higginbotham and Leung (1991) who report employing more "labour-intensive" (1991, cited by Song and Parker, 1995, p.242) practices to recruit Black women in comparison to white women for research participation. Having said this, Song and Parker (1995) go on to acknowledge the possible existence of underlying scepticism, suspicions and fears held by Black communities when invited to participate in research led by white scholars, given the perceived or actual Black/white power relations in societies where the majoritarian group is white (Crozier, 2003) and the likening of the researcher/researched power relationship to "the oppressor and the oppressed" (Ladner, 1987, cited by Crozier, 2003, p. 82).

2.7 White gaze on Black women: existing and persisting "controlling images" as an impact of whiteness

The objectification and subjugation of Black women is a result of "white gaze" (Good, 2000, p. 105), where white perceptions of Black women create stereotypes which objectify, dehumanise and limit her self-definition possibilities. Stereotypes of Black women are considered as tools of oppression (Neal-Jackson, 2020) which are often derogatory generalisations which "powerfully shape the stereotyper's perception of stereotyped groups, seeing the stereotypic characteristics when they are not present, failing to see the contrary of those characteristics when they are, and generally homogenizing the group" (Blum, 2004, p. 251). There are several historical, as well as emerging, stereotypes, or "controlling images" (Collins, 2000, p. 79) which are ascribed specifically to Black women, and which are "designed to make racism, sexism and poverty appear natural, normal, and an inevitable part of everyday life" (Good, 2000, p. 110). They arguably serve to objectify and dehumanise Black women, placing both emotional and psychological tolls on Black women's mental and physical health, if internalised (West, 1995). Over the last two centuries, the nature of the objectifying and dehumanising stereotypes have shifted from overt to subtle forms (Anderson, Holland, Heldreth and Johnson, 2018). Black female teachers can experience the derogation and stigmatisation which comes with the broader cultural stereotypes ascribed to Black women, regardless of their professional status (Ladson-Billings, 2009).

The 'Mammy' image is described as "one of the most pervasive images of Black women" (West, 1995, p. 459). The image conveys that of selfless servitude and

subordination, whilst representing the mother capable of raising and nurturing white children whilst sustaining her own family and her own children in a way which was defeminised, thus enhancing the femininity of her mistress (Mgadmi, 2009) and being expected to transmit the deferential behaviour shown to the superior white/inferior Black relationship to their own children so that the next Black generation know their place in white-dominated structures (Good, 2000). In the workplace, the 'Mammy' image is represented through a nurturing nature and an advocate for Black individuals within the organisation or context, but Black women's professional capabilities are overshadowed by her nurturing qualities (Reynolds-Dobbs, Thomas and Harrison, 2008).   Further, Good (2000) suggests that the 'Mammy' image is sustained by the white majoritarian group to restrict Black women to domestic service and other low paid, low skilled jobs. Reynolds-Dobbs et al. (2008) note that Black women are often given positions which involve a supportive remit within the organisation which results in "little to virtually no vertical mobility" (2008, p. 139), being viewed as lacking the characteristics for leadership which hinders career progression. In the contexts of schools, the remit usually involves some sort of pastoral role or behaviour lead. To counter this 'Mammy' image in the workplace, Reynolds-Dobbs et al. (2008) suggest that Black women must make it known that "they want to be developed and advanced in the workplace" (2008, p. 140) beyond the nurturing roles.

Rather than the 'Mammy' image, Ladson-Billings (2009) refers to the work of Kleinfeld (1975) to describe Black teachers through the "notion of 'warm demanders', where they are personable, kind, caring, toward students while simultaneously demanding that students meet high and rigorous academic standards" (2009, p. 95). However, in the context of the US, teachers and

teaching are judged and assessed through an expansive model of what makes a good teacher, reflecting middle-class views of a good teacher. Black teachers struggle to pass this assessment, being criticised for being too strict or directive, which reflects the desires of Black parents, leaving Black teachers having to navigate the dichotomous expectations of them. Despite these conflicting demands, Black teachers take on the "othermother" (Collins, 2000, p. 192) role to provide a culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billing, 1995) that "moves towards liberation of individuals and communities" (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 97).

The 'Sapphire' image stems from the institution of slavery as a Black woman who refuses to conform to the expectations of being submissive and hard-working, is verbally aggressive, unfeminine and loud. In the workplace, assertiveness from Black women as a figure of authority is perceived as aggressive (West, 1995). Further, the 'angry Black woman' stereotype in the workplace was found to lead "to lower performance evaluations and poorer assessments of leadership capabilities" (Motro, Evans, Ellis and Benson, 2021, p. 7). A study by Donovan (2011) asked 109 white college students participating to choose five characteristics out of a list of 92 to describe Black and white women. The study revealed that traits, such as being loud, domineering and tough, were attributed to Black women, whereas white women were attributed with more feminine attributes, such as sensitive and family orientated. Donovan (2011) posits that the impact is mixed, but that the beneficial impact of this controlling image for Black women "could help Black women cope with the negative effects of racism, sexism, and classism" (2011, p. 458) although this claim requires clarity. Reynolds-Dobbs et al. (2008) posit that in challenging this stereotype in the workplace, Black women can use strategies which focusses on work

performance, using mentoring relationships to work towards tasks that highlight their abilities.

An alternative image similar to the 'Sapphire' image is that of the "Crazy Black Bitch" (CBB) (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008, p. 130) who is deemed crazy and unstable alongside the perceived aggressiveness and anger ascribed to Black women who are competent at their job. This derogatory term refers to the perceptions that Black women are overly aggressive, argumentative and difficult to work with or manage. In the workplace, this negative stereotype has multiple functions to prevent competent Black women from progressing in the organisation. According to Reynolds-Dobbs et al. (2008) firstly, it justifies the existence of the glass ceiling. Secondly, such negative traits are seen as undesirable in senior or leadership roles, being considered as unapproachable and less friendly. Finally, being associated with negative traits overshadows Black women's competence, affecting their workplace experience and career progression chances. To counter the CBB image, Black women in the workplace turn into the image of the 'Superwoman'.

The 'Superwoman' image, or 'Strong Black Woman' stereotype, provides a view of Black women which acts to counter aspects of other controlling images, such as the Mammy and Sapphire image, and is often attributed to ambitious and successful Black women (Donovan, 2011). Nelson, Cardemil and Adeoye (2016) note that where the 'Mammy' nurtures and cares for white children, the 'Superwoman' focusses caregiving on Black families, including extended families, and to counter the aggressive 'Sapphire' image the 'Superwoman' will regulate their emotions and vulnerabilities. Although the 'Superwoman' image counters

other pejorative controlling images, Abrams, Hill and Maxwell (2019) recognise the unrelenting pressure to maintain this image, leading Black women to self-silencing their personal needs (Nelson et al., 2016) and feeling stressed and depressed (Beauboeuf-Lafontant, 2008). The 'Strong Black Woman' psychology conditions and indoctrinates Black women to believe her feelings are not valid thus placing her mental health in peril (Stewart, 2017). Reynolds-Dobbs et al. (2008) suggest that Black women in the workplace feel that they need to overachieve to counter the negative stereotypical images, but as a 'Superwoman' can be seen as a threat and are deemed to be able to do more than their colleagues, taking on additional work or responsibilities with little support and recognition. Beauboeuf-Lafontant (2008, citing Wallace, 1990), therefore states that Black feminists see strength of the 'Superwoman' image a myth. Nevertheless, Reynolds-Dobbs et al. (2008) go on to posit that seeking mentors within and support external to the organisation, especially other Black women, can positively impact on how Black women see themselves and sustain a balanced professional identity.

The stereotype of the 'Jezebel' in the workplace depicts Black women as hypersexual, promiscuous and manipulative "who uses her body and sexuality to get her way…she may be viewed as someone who slept her way to the top – doing anything to achieve career success" (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008, p. 137). This stereotype originated during slavery when white slave masters controlled Black women's reproduction and sexuality, where her value at auction was determined by her capacity to bear children used to maintain and augment the slave population (West, 1995). It embodies the idea that Black women are not considered competent, intelligent, talented and professional, but rather is

prepared to use her sexuality to progress in the workplace. However, West (1995) points out that Black women are at greater risk of sexual victimisation, perpetuated by the myth that Black women are less likely to be considered as victims and that sexual assault and abuse they experience is appropriate and deserved, which compounds the victim blaming attitude faced by Black women.

A controlling image which underpins the 'Superwoman' image is the historical image of the 'Mule' (Collins, 2000). This controlling image draws attention to the volume of Black women's workloads (Wright, Thompson and Channer, 2007). Wu (2014) describes the 'Mule' image as being despite Black women's "contribution to the economy and to the family, their contributions are taken for granted, and very few people really appreciate their effort" (2014, p. 1053). Further, Simms (2001) states that the 'Mule' image presents Black women as "subhuman beasts who were only to be valued for their labor" (2001, p. 883).   In the workplace, the 'Mule' image places and maintains Black women in low paid, low skilled positions. Opportunities for progression are not open for Black women yet they are expected to take on greater workloads without recognition or remuneration.

Although references drawn upon to describe the various stereotypes ascribed to Black women stem from at least the last two decades, discourses about the existence and need to tackle stereotypes of Black women in the workplace continue to the present, as seen in the work of Motro et al. (2021), McCormick-Huhn and Shields (2021) and Opara, Sealy and Ryan (2020) as examples. Controlling images exist in the school environment and affect both Black female teachers, as noted by Ladson-Billings (2009), and Black female learners (see

Hines-Datiri and Carter Andrews, 2017; Zimmermann, 2020). However, controlling images derived through the impact of whiteness can be challenged, and section 2.10 of this thesis focuses on the example of countering negative images of Black girls in the school system, who are often deemed as having inappropriate attitudes and being confrontational (the 'Sapphire' image).

2.8 Black feminist thought – a lens to centralise Black women's thinking and actions

This research aims to centralise the participants' experiences through the analysis of their consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000). In order to contextualise the concept of 'consciousness' (discussed in detail in section 5.2), I present in this section a broader understanding of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) as a lens in which to examine Black women's thought and actions. The unique position and challenges of Black women referred to by Juan, Syed and Azmitia (2016) and Evans-Winters and Esposito (2010) can be viewed through the lens of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000). Taking an anti-essentialist view, Black feminist thought places Black women "in the center, rather than the margins, of the discussion, debate, contemplation, reflection, theorizing, research, and praxis" (Berry, 2010, p. 23). Centralising Black women's experiential knowledge and voice also acknowledges "that men of color may face different kinds of discrimination to their female peers. Issues that require separate analysis may include, among others, female health, sexuality, pregnancy, motherhood and domestic violence" (Wing, 2014, p. 164). Further, Black feminists, in the main, reject mainstream feminism. Wing (2014) goes on to

cite Harris (1990) to posit that mainstream feminism "has been found by many to essentialize all women, often at the price of silencing the unique or varied experiences of women of color" (2014, p. 165). As Berry (2010) acknowledges, writing from an autoethnographic position, her experiences as a Black female are different from Black men (essentialised through CRT) and from white women (essentialised through feminist theory). Collins (2000) is clear that Black feminist thought elevates Black women's thoughts and ideas to become the centre of analysis, thus privileging those ideas to "encourage White feminists, African-American men, and all others to investigate the similarities and differences among their own standpoints and those of African-American women" (2000, p. ix). Black feminist thought is produced by Black women, of Black women and for Black women (Collins, 1986). Chapter Three outlines the methodological conundrum this raised for me. Further, Black feminist thought enables Black women to voice their oppressions but, moreover, specifically centralises on Black women's thought and actions to address the oppressions they have articulated. Collins (2000) explains how her work generated theory through how Black women's thought and actions work together, stating "[I]nstead of viewing the everyday as a negative influence on my theorising, I tried to see how everyday actions and ideas of the Black women in my life reflected the theoretical issues I claimed were so important to them" (2000, p. ix), noting how Black women's concrete experiences challenged worldviews offered by theory at the time of writing her book.

The key tenets of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000; Jacobs, 2016; McClellan, 2020) are:

1. *Self-definition* – the valuing and empowering of self, identifying expertise from Black wisdom and tacit knowledge, providing Black women with a unique viewpoint and a space to develop a consciousness to act as a mechanism to resist oppression(s);

2. *Situated knowledge* – acknowledging lived experience as the "connected knowers" (McClellan, 2020, p.257) of being and difference that operates on the two levels of 'race' and gender, whereby lived experience acts as "a criterion of meaning" (Collins, 2000, p. 275);

3. *Use of dialogue* – the centralising of the knowers' voices on structural, institutional, and day-to-day oppression(s).

4. *Ethic of caring* – posited as three components of an expression of common spirit rooted in African humanism, emotion which validates an argument or point of view, and the capacity to display empathy, respect and understanding of each other's position; and

5. *Personal accountability* so that assessment of an individual's knowledge claim reflects their character, values, and ethics.

Underpinning these identified key tenets of Black feminist thought are several core themes. Collins (2015) posits that, firstly, Black women reveal oppression and the power of intersectional subordination through their voiced thoughts and personal biographies, exposing how domination is organised (Alinia, 2015).

Secondly, by using voice, Black women "exercised epistemic agency in the face of epistemic oppression that had long silenced them" (Collins, 2015, p. 2350). To exemplify, McClellan (2020) discusses how young Black girls in school environments demonstrated agency by being their own advocates and speaking

up for themselves in the face of subjugation or unfair treatment, but this being seen as "talking back" (2020, p. 262) by teachers and school leaders. Exercising agency is a site of resistance to "controlling images" (Collins, 2000, p. 80), but is often viewed by white hegemony as the pejorative stereotype and myth of the 'angry Black woman', characterising a Black woman's agency in speaking up and challenge oppression as aggressive, hostile and ignorant (Collins, 2015). Agency and action through collective agency is pivotal to the ability of Black women to challenge normative perceptions of them and is "the foundation that black women's resistance to systems of oppression is built on" (Del Guadalupe Davison, 2017, p. 5), as actions with the intention of defying and transforming systems of domination. Further, Jasper (2004) notes that "[I]f agency means anything, it would seem to involve choices. Individuals and groups must initiate or pursue one flow of action rather than another, respond in one way to events rather than in others" (2004, p. 2). Evans and Nambiar (2012) explain the conceptual links between agency and collective action at a number of levels. They identify through empirical literature that individual and collective agency result in actions to resolve problems related to public good which impact on women's lives and livelihoods, such as monitoring local education and health services. They also note that individual and collective agency result in actions to enhance women's decision-making powers, such as education groups providing adult literacy classes. Also, Evans and Nambiar (2012) note that individual and collective agency has the power to result in actions which explicitly challenge social norms which constrain female agency, creating new spaces for women to express their agency. They state, "[C]ollective action in this sense is less about solving particular practical development problems and more about shifting the whole context in which women and girls can engage fully and fruitfully in the

process of development" (Evans and Nambiar, 2012, p. 4). Therefore, Black women enact agency, both individually and collectively, through everyday actions of defiance and speaking out against systems which oppress.

Thirdly, Collins (2015) suggests that (self)empowerment feeds the ability to be agentic when Black women's struggles are part of a broader social justice movement. Collins (2000) recognises that individual empowerment has the possibility of bringing about change. However, where a Black woman's ability to act is limited, she can still experience personal empowerment of consciousness, with Collins (2000) stating that "no matter how oppressed an individual woman may be, the power to save the self lies within the self" (2000, p. 130).

Finally, Collins (2015) brings the core themes full circle, positing that Black women are cognisant of how intersecting systems of power complicate all aspects of their lives. As such, she suggests that the paradigm of intersectionality is a central idea in Black feminism.

2.9 The intersectionality of 'race' with gender and other forms of subjugation

Intersectionality is a framework through which to analyse the experiences of women of colour and issues of their identity, according to Tefera, Powers and Fischman (2018), who consider this to be an imperative approach for education researchers. They state that an "intersectional approach is fundamentally oriented toward analysing the relationships of power and inequality within a social setting and how these shape individual and group identities" (2018, p. viii). The

concept was conceived within the work of critical race activists, having its roots in legal frameworks to examine specifically the impact of racism and sexism, but also to act as a mechanism to challenge and change the status quo (Stockfelt, 2018).

Gillborn (2015) explains the concept of intersectionality, referring to the work of Crenshaw (1989), as recognising that categories of group membership, such as gender, race and sexuality, can be perceived as making people vulnerable and open to bias, yet how we each experience that bias is shaped by the complex identities created by the group membership. Harris and Leonardo (2018) cite the work of Bowleg (2012) to define intersectionality as a framework to understand how multiple social identities ('race', gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, religion and nationality), or what Pugach, Gomez-Najarro and Matewos (2019) refer to as "social identity markers" (2019, p. 207), intersect at the individual micro-level of experience to expose systems of privilege and oppression at wider macro-levels. Further, Wing (2014) notes intersectionality recognises that Black females experience "multiple consciousness" (2014, p. 165) which describes the intersectional identities of women of colour, although this thesis focusses on the double consciousness of 'race' and gender. How Black women experience their multiple identities is discussed by Collins and Bilge (2020) who state that these identities exist simultaneously, broadening the "space of subjectivity to encompass multiple aspects of individual identity" (2020, p. 167), hence reconceptualising individual identities and how these are subjectively experienced from one setting to the next to counter the essentialist view of unchanging identities. As such, they go on to note that the nature of social contexts determines "how people use identity to

create space for personal freedom" (Collins and Bilge, 2020, p. 179). However, Stockfelt (2018) cites Delgado (2011) to caution that divergence away from the roots of intersectionality, becoming caught in the continual broadening of Black women's identities, creates situations where "the goal becomes too compartmentalised to make any sense" (2018, p.1013) and progressive work becomes paralyzed in an attempt to encompass all intersectional identities.

Crenshaw (1989) is a seminal writer in the intersectional experiences of Black women and often credited with the conception of the term 'intersectionality' (Harris and Leonardo, 2018; Gillborn, 2015; McCall, 2009). She presents the position that in a single-axis framework, the experiences of Black women are erased; that Black women's experiences are placed in comparison with either white women's experience (gender analysis) or to Black men's experience ('race' analysis). In other words, Black women and girls are denied recognition as a multiple-categorised group. Tefera et al. (2018) confirm that intersectionality identifies gaps in single-category analysis and approaches. Crenshaw (1989) also writes that Black women in feminist theory are devalued and diminished because feminist theory has evolved and been narrowly constructed from the white racial context, which she notes as rarely acknowledged. She provides simple examples of how gender-based stereotypes grounded in experiential patriarchal insights of white women, which have been used in feminist discourses, such as men are seen as independent and powerful whereas women are seen as limited in ability and passive, ignores the anomalies of the 'race' and gender intersectional Black women's experiences; Black men are not seen as powerful and Black women are not seen as passive.

Intersectionality recognises that the experiences of characterised groups of people will be different. For example, racialised groups are unable to escape the impact of their 'otherness' in matters of 'race', and gendered groups are unable to escape the impact of their difference on matters of gender. However, Juan et al. (2016) recognise intersectionality emphasising the unique position of Black women's experiences, particularly compared to white women's experiences and their privileges. They go on to state that although "the intersection of race/ethnicity and gender have been expounded upon in scholarly work…to our knowledge there currently exists no empirical evidence for the central assumptions of intersectionality" (2016, p. 227) to support this claim. However, Evans-Winters and Esposito (2010) note "Female scholars of color have documented the unique challenges young Black women encounter in many of our urban schools, due to their raced, classed and gendered status" (2010, p. 12) although they do not cite any specific references to support their view. With the seeming dearth of empirical evidence about the unique challenges and positionality of Black women in schools in England, this study aims to contribute to the current limited discourse.

In their study of literature on social justice in teacher education, Pugach et al. (2019) note that for teachers to understand and respond effectively to their students, respecting social/racial/cultural groups and recognising students' multiple identities are key, although teachers' multiple identities require equal attention. Pugach et al. (2019) draw on intersectionality as an analytical framework to interrogate questions of identity within the literature in the field of social justice in teacher education to "consider how preservice education addresses the relationship between the dual lenses of respect for social groups

and the universality of multiple identities" (2019, p. 207). Their systematic review of literature based in the US revealed that many authors focussed on a 'trinity' of identities or social identity markers of 'race', gender, and social class as a way to limit the attention to specific identities. They found that 39 of the studies reviewed (73%) made no reference to identities intersecting, with only three studies (6% of those reviewed) giving intersectionality prominence and eight studies (15%) acknowledging intersectionality but not elaborating on it. On seeking academic literature for this literature review, one such example of an author acknowledging intersections of identities but not elaborating on or using intersectionality as an analytical framework is the study by Johnson (2017). She looked at school leadership perspectives of UK Black and South Asian headteachers in relation to social identities through using 'life histories' methodology to capture the unique voice and lived experiences of these headteachers. Methodologically, Johnson (2017) asked her participants to articulate which social identities were important to them to understand their leadership identities. Most of her participants "focused discussion of their social identities in terms of their race and ethnicity, but some female leaders also claimed an identity as a woman leader" (2017, p. 856) as did some comment on their religious identities. However, she did not pursue a deeper understanding of how intersections of racialised and gendered identities manifested in their leadership and wider experiences in schools. Johnson (2017) did not examine whether the challenges and positions of racialised women as school leaders were different to the racialised male school leaders she interviewed. Further, Johnson (2017) did not consider using intersectionality to analyse the varied experiences and life histories of her participants, therefore did not consider this in her commentary of limitations to her study, thus rendering intersectionality as

invisible. Pugach et al. (2019) argue that the invisibility of intersectionality in most papers they reviewed means that previous research does not adequately reveal and illuminate the complexity of identities of students seen as critical for teachers to understand. However, they also acknowledge that intersectionality is not typically in discourses on social justice in teacher education and researchers may be unfamiliar with the concept.

Intersectionality illuminates the "relationships between the structural, symbolic and everyday aspects of domination and individual and collective struggles in various domains of social life" (Alinia, 2015, p. 2334). Additionally, Pereira (2015) notes that intersectional analysis of relations between social markers ('race', gender, class, ethnicity, sexuality and nation) upon which oppression is built counters any notion of a singular type of oppression being the source of all hierarchies. However, Collins (2000) points out that intersectionality also reveals how domination is organised through a "matrix of domination…overall social organization within which intersecting oppressions originate, develop and are contained" (2000, p. 246), with sites of domination listed as schools, housing, employment and other social structures.   Pereira (2015) suggests that Collins' ability to navigate multiple levels of intersectional analysis allows for "bringing into view micro-, meso- and macrosociological manifestations of injustice" (2015, p. 2330).

2.10   How stereotypes can manifest in the school environment: the example of Black girls challenging the 'Sapphire' image.

Black feminist thought enables Black women's consciousness to develop self-definitions which challenge and counter the prevailing controlling images and present alternative positive constructs of Black women and girls, including within educational spaces. However, Evans-Winters and Esposito (2010) note that,

> feminist epistemologies tend to be concerned with the education of White girls and women, and raced-based epistemologies tend to be consumed with the educational barriers negatively effecting Black boys, the educational needs of Black girls have fallen through the cracks (2010, p. 12).

There has been a number of recent publications specifically on the experience of Black girls in schools in the US (see Butler-Barnes and Inniss-Thompson, 2020; Iruka, Curenton, Sims, Blitch and Gardner, 2020; McClellan, 2020; Miles Nash and Peters, 2020; Mims and Williams, 2020) but a dearth of recent literature located in the UK context exists. Even from a very young age, the academic and socio-emotional competencies of Black girls are judged as significantly below their peers on entering early years settings and they, therefore, underperform (Iruka et al., 2020). What is also discussed by Iruka et al. (2020) is that Black girls are viewed as behind their peers in academic achievement in reading and mathematics, as more adult-like and less innocent in comparison to white girls, as demonstrating less feminine traits as gender socialisation in the home tends to teach Black girls to be strong and independent, which are considered anti-feminine characteristics, and as having less emotionally connected relationships with their teachers. Further, Zimmermann (2020) discussed the perception of Black girls' behaviour entering early years settings. He notes that teachers'

perceptions of Black girls' behaviours in the early years creates a "gendered racial penalty" (2020, p. 165) with Black girls receiving less favourable evaluations of their behaviour than both white boys and girls and are often depicted as overly aggressive in comparison to standards of white femininity, an observation also made by Hines-Datiri and Carter Andrews (2017). Additionally, Howell et al. (2019) commented that Black girls in early years settings are punished at a disproportionate rate. The example of J'aiesha Scott in 2005, a 5-year-old who was handcuffed in the Principal's office for having a tantrum, demonstrated the extreme response to young Black girls' behaviours (Hines-Datiri and Carter Andrews, 2017).   However, Iruka et al.'s (2020) research found that although Black girls scored between two and eight points below their peers academically in early years settings, they also found that 70% of Black girls starting school were categorised as 'consistent' or 'excelling' learners and placed emphasis on the teachers' responsibility to engage in pre-service and in-service training to building relationships with racially diverse pupils.

Moving through the school system into high school education, Watson (2016) describes Black girls' perceptions of school environments as hostile towards them, citing studies by O'Connor, Mueller, Lewis, Rivas-Drake and Rosenberg (2011) and Archer-Banks and Behar-Horenstein (2012). Both studies presented the narratives of Black girls determined to do well in school and with aspirations to go into higher education but who felt that many teachers treated them unfairly. Examples within these two studies demonstrated how Black girls experienced interactions which exhibited inherent and deeply entrenched bias, although Watson's (2016) study paints a more positive picture of relations between teachers and Black girls. The perceived unfair treatment by teachers manifests

itself in Black girls in the US being twice as likely as white boys to be suspended from school for behaviour (Butler-Barnes and Inniss-Thompson, 2020). Watson (2016) also comments on the impact of punitive disciplinary policies and procedures on Black girls. She drew on the findings of Morris (2015) who notes that Black girls account for one in three school arrests in the US, despite only making up 16% of the student body nationally but are the fastest growing group in the juvenile justice system (Butler-Barnes and Inniss-Thompson, 2020; Howell et al., 2019). Butler-Barnes and Inniss-Thompson (2020) suggest that disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline now needs to shift its focus to include Black girls, further stating that Black girls are more likely to be disciplined compared to non-Black girls which has an enduring impact on the girls and their communities.

Evans-Winters and Esposito (2010) cite the work of O'Connor (1997) who concludes that "academically resilient Black girls are socialized to have a strong sense of racial identification and commitment to fighting against race, class and gender injustices at school, in the community, and in society overall" (2010, p. 13), but to be academically successful they also have to be "race-less" (2010, p. 12) through assimilation and integration, a notion which is contested by Marsh (2013). Having said this, Watson (2016) notes that the Black high school girls she interviewed and observed all rejected the stereotypes and "controlling images" (Collins, 2000, p. 80), such as the 'Sapphire' Black femininity paradigm of being loud, aggressive, unladylike, confrontational and intimidating (Howell et al., 2019, p. 22), instead holding more traits which are standard to white femininity as positive self-definitions of themselves. Mims and Williams (2020) noted that such stereotypes are "ingrained within institutions and reflected in decisions concerning classroom structure, academic content, and school norms"

(2020, p. 6) and which serve to undermine and marginalise minoritised groups. Further, Watson (2016) notes the importance of the Black girls' friendship networks with other Black girls, as supporting and caring mechanisms, as did Goodkind, Brinkman and Elliott (2020) who identify that the creation of a network produced feelings of belonging and community. This was also found by McClellan (2020) who notes that Black girls "depend on each other for solace, friendship, and protection in atmospheres where they may not feel safe or valued" (2020, p. 263), thus maintaining a strong sense of their positive Black woman identities without feeling the need to assimilate or integrate. Marsh (2013) also suggests that the creation of working groups, social groups and social clubs positively maintained Black girls' connection to "Staying Black" (2013, p. 1226). Watson's (2016) study results in a roadmap of developments which schools can engage with to improve the lived experiences and outcomes of Black girls who attend them. Likewise, Butler-Barnes and Inniss-Thompson (2020) suggest where teachers better relate to their pupils and promote a culturally relevant curriculum and values for all, it could result in increased academic opportunities for Black girls. As McClellan (2020) points out, Black girls want to be and deserve to be valued.

In the UK, research by Wright (2010) suggests the existence of negative teacher perceptions of Black girls, singling them out as disruptors to effective teaching and quoting the following vignette from her interviews to exemplify: "If this group of [Black] girls were not in the class, I feel I'd be able to do a much more effective teaching job with the others..." (2010, p. 311). However, research by Drew, Gray and Sime (1992, cited by Hallam and Rhamie, 2003), and by Mirza (1992, cited by Francis, 2000) provides a counter narrative to the negative view of Black girls,

finding that African-Caribbean girls achieved well at school in comparison to their male and female working class peers, as measured in terms of average exam performance at GCSE level, although it was also noticed that it may take these girls longer to achieve their educational goals. Further, the research carried out by Mirza (1992, cited by Gaine and George,1999; Francis, 2000) shows that, despite negative experiences and possible discrimination in school, African-Caribbean girls achieved better than their African-Caribbean male counterparts. The 2020 GCSE examinations performance data published by the DfE (2021) shows that Black girls continue to outperform Black boys, with 52.6% of Black girls achieve eight GCSE qualifications (a benchmark referred to as 'Attainment 8') as opposed to 45.1% of Black boys achieving Attainment 8. Mirza (1992, cited by Francis, 2000) explains that girls do not internalise and react towards teachers' perceptions of them, but rather challenge teachers' expectations of them. Wright (2010) writes that Black girls did not confront teachers directly, but through verbal challenges refused to accept a normative identity which presented them as helpless and underestimated their abilities. Mirza (1995) goes on to explain that the reason for this lies in the attitudes and ideology of their parents, who are first-generation immigrants. She suggests that first-generation Caribbean immigrants identify with the ideology of meritocracy – that is being part of a group of peoples whose progress is based on ability and talent rather than class privilege or wealth. Additionally, Mirza (1986) referring to the works of Fuller (1980) and Stone (1982), argues that Black girls in the UK from a Caribbean heritage do well because they do not accept subordination and have positive views of the role of Black women, countering the belief that underachievement is linked to negative Black self-esteem. In fact, Mirza (1992) states that Black girls are highly motivated and incentivised by academic credentials and high achieving

Black girls she interviewed were interested to discover more information about careers in law and computing. This creates positive attitudes to education which, along with the unrestricted female labour market in the UK, accounts for high educational aspirations held by young Black women. However, a more recent perspective on highly motivated Black girls in the US who have a desire to exceed academic expectations suggests that Black girls take on perfectionism tendencies and are concerned with stereotype threat, thus affecting their emotional well-being which requires nurturing practices from educators to enable their continued success (Anderson and Martin, 2018).

2.11   Centralising Black women's voices through counter-narrative to form new consciousness

Muhammad, Dunmeyer, Starks and Sealey-Ruiz (2020) state that Black feminist thought "gives voice to Black women who have been told in many ways they do not matter" (2020, p. 423). Citing Etter-Lewis (1991), Sealey Ruiz (2007) notes that it is important to allow Black women to tell their stories and have their voices heard, despite the multi-layeredness of intersectional identities. In doing so, Black women produce counter-narratives to normative majoritarian ideas of who they are.

In researching the differing identities of 26 Black teachers in Britain, Osler (1997b) provides a platform for their experiential positions and knowledge through using 'life histories' methodology. She states that the purpose and aim of using this methodology was

> to give black teachers a chance to speak for themselves; to provide black
> perspectives on the processes of schooling and to establish what it feels

like to be a black teacher within the context of a society and an education system which is structured not only by class and by gender, but also by 'race' (Osler, 1997b, p. 50).

Osler's (1997b) work with 26 Black teachers was part of a larger study (Osler, 1997a). In the larger study, she acknowledges that the process of articulating narratives through interviews was, for a number of people, a painful one, as they recalled incidents of their own schooling in which the participants felt they were treated unjustly or insensitively, but also recalled moments of humour in everyday encounters at school. She also recognised that the stories collected for her study came from metropolitan Local Education Authorities, and that Black teachers employed in more rural settings "would have different stories to tell" (Osler, 1997a, p. 68). The stories of minoritised groups are, therefore, considered "to be counterstories, that is, stories oppositional to the dominant ways of being" (Henry, 2015, p. 592). As Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) note, stories "help to overcome ethnocentrism and the dysconscious conviction of viewing the world in one way" (1995, p. 57).

Counter-stories and "counter-narratives" (Stanley, 2007, p. 14), draw on what Solórzano and Yosso, (2001) list as including "such methods as storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, *cuentos*, chronicles, and narratives" (2001, p. 473). Counter-stories of experiential positions and knowledge serve a greater purpose than to challenge the majoritarian ideology. Solórzano and Yosso, (2001) cite Delgado (1989) and Lawson (1995) to provide four theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical functions of counter-stories, paraphrased as:

(1) putting a human face to stories that support communities at the margins of society;

(2) providing context to transform and challenge established beliefs which lie at the centre of perceived majoritarian wisdom;

(3) demonstrating the realities of those living at the margin of society and shows that they are not isolated in their experiences; and

(4) providing the possibility to construct a different world view richer than either the story or the reality alone.

Societal change through sharing experiential knowledge of marginalised groups is a challenge. Stanley (2007), who identifies as a Black woman professor in the US, describes the challenges of facing the majoritarian dominant ideology and grand narrative or "master narrative" (2007, p. 14) in her paper examining her own personal experiences of editorial boards and editorial review processes of academic educational journal publications. She argues that "Master narratives are often mental models of how voices of the dominant culture have justified systems and rules in educational research, in such a way that makes these models "the standard"" (2007, p. 15) sending a message that the status quo is acceptable, but this system hides institutional, systemic and other forms of racism. Stanley (2007) writes about her submission to a journal of research on 15 Black faculty staff and the discrimination they encountered, providing a counter-narrative to the majoritarian view of university faculties. The feedback received from the editorial board, in her view, perpetuates white privilege as comments made by the reviewers implied her study "could be validated only with a comparison group of White faculty members" (2007, p. 16). Despite providing a counter-narrative to the master narrative of Black faculty staff, feedback from

white academic reviewers included evidence of white victimhood, such as "I had similar if not the same experiences as African American faculty in their interviews" (2007, p. 17); use of ideological tools of whiteness (Picower, 2009), such as "it could be possible that the majority of the issues faced by the African American faculty are nearly identical to those of White faculty at the same institution" (2007, p. 17); and outright rejection of the counter-narrative and validity of Stanley's study, such as "Are these subjects, in fact, friends of the author?" (2007, p. 18). Stanley's (2007) personal counter-narrative and presentation of a counter-narrative of Black faculty members through submission for academic publication highlights some of the difficulties in challenging dominant ideology and grand narratives through counter-stories and counter-narratives.

2.12   Conclusion to the chapter

Geijsel and Meijers (2005) suggests changes in education in societies require a reframing of teacher identity. Therefore, there is a need to consider a reframing specifically of Black teacher identities, and particularly Black female teachers, given the view of Juan et al. (2016) that Black women hold a unique experiential positionality. For Black female teachers, their subjectivity derived from individual identities in the social contexts of the schools they work in will vary from school to school. However, like subjectivities identified in the work of Callender (2020) negative experiences will inevitably shape their professional identities.

Literature cited since Ladson-Billings and Tate's (1995) seminal paper that subsequently focusses on CRT in education demonstrates structural oppressions which exist in school spaces, negatively affecting Black and minoritised teachers and learners, with the majority of literature being produced in the US. Literature

from the UK is more limited, hence the US context can be helpful in illuminating experiences of racialised staff and students in educational settings, including those experiences of my research participants. However, the discourses around the centrality of 'race' and racism and the impact of white supremacy tends to provide essentialised perspectives on Black and racially minoritised teachers and learners. This critique of CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) underpins my decision to use Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) as a lens to centralise the experiential knowledge and voices of Black female teachers specifically. The persistence of stereotyped or "controlling images" (Collins, 2000, p. 80), plays a role in the subjective experiences of Black women in the workplace. However, the consciousness of Black feminist thought has the capacity to challenge "white gaze" (Good, 2000, p. 105) to counter the negative hegemonic perceptions of Black women and girls. Further, citing Collins (2009), Griffin (2012) notes that Black feminist thought aims to better the lived experiences of Black women. Section 2.10 draws on literature which provides counter-narratives to Black girls in education being seen as the 'Sapphire' stereotype. However, there is a dearth of literature which does the same for Black female teachers.

This literature review suggests that within the CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) and Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) discourses, there is little empirical research which presents the unique positionality and subjectivity of Black female teachers and their professional identities in predominantly white-dominated school spaces. Further, little exists on the specific intersectional experiences of Black female teachers in the English context, although there is a body of work which continues to grow in the US context. Reiterating my

contribution to knowledge, this thesis looks to providing a platform for Black

female teachers' voice to articulate how they form their professional identities,

which neither CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) nor Black feminist

thought (Collins, 2000) has addressed in literature related to Black female

teachers working in English schools. By drawing on both theoretical lenses, this

thesis presents a counter-narrative and reframing of Black female teachers in

education in a way which has had little, if any, attention in the English context to

date.

3. Chapter Three - Methodology and methodological challenges of access

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the methodology identified as appropriate for this study. Drawing on the expectations of the conceptual framework combining CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) and consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000), a methodological approach which centralises the lived experiences, experiential knowledge and voices of the 10 Black female teachers participating in this study (referred to as the 10 'participants' henceforth) is paramount. Further, this chapter outlines the methodological challenges in this research of access, recruitment and participation of 'othered' minoritised individuals and communities. To understand the challenges of access, this chapter also looks to examine the intricacies of researchers being 'matched' racially and/or ethnically and the precariousness of assumed insider/outsider positionality I encountered when approaching potential research participants from minority groups.

3.2 Choosing an appropriate methodology

In this study, my research question, '*How do Black female teachers form their professional identities in white-dominated educational workspaces?'* seeks to understand how Black female teachers form their professional identities through examining the nuances of their working experiences in white dominated educational spaces. As such, I sought a suitable methodology to provide participants with a platform for articulating their experiences as their stories. I

found it necessary to find an appropriate narrative methodological framework that enables Black female teachers to articulate their experiences fully and safely. Hence, my starting point was to return to the foundations of CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) and consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000), which form my conceptual framework.

3.2.1 Voice and Counter-stories

CRT and Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) place prominence on the voices and stories of people of colour. Voices and stories provide a way of understanding their experiences of being a racialised minority (Rollock and Gillborn, 2011; Hylton, 2012; Delgado, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Ledesma and Calderón, 2015; Delgado and Stefancic, 2017). Hence, I draw on experiential stories from the participants to present counter-stories to the majoritarian narrative. Delgado (1989) provides a clear rationale for why a platform for the production of stories is so vital:

> Members of the majority race should listen to stories, of all sorts, in order to enrich their own reality. Reality is not fixed, not a given. Rather, we construct it through conversations, through our lives together…Deliberately exposing oneself to counterstories…can enable the listener and the teller to build a world richer than either could make alone. (1989, p. 2439)

Supporting Delgado's (1989) position above, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) recognise that, "[f]or the critical race theorists, social reality is constructed by the formulation and the exchange of stories about individual situations" (1995, p. 57). This raises questions about how 'reality' is constructed, interpreted and valued. Stories that oppose and counter the majoritarian grand narratives, or "counter-narratives" (Stanley, 2007, p.14), challenge hegemony and may be seen as

untruths. A conversation on whose truth has value is an important part of this methodology chapter and is revisited in section 3.5.

Lewis Ellison (2019) notes the importance of counter-stories, in that "counter-storytelling privileges the stories of those who are historically silenced and challenges stories of those in power in an effort to examine other ways of knowing and understanding" (2019, p. 1434). Further, Sian (2019) describes the importance of storytelling as providing "…racially marked communities with a critical space to write our own narratives, open up new questions, and unsettle essentializing discourses. Storytelling in this sense becomes…a valuable political tool that speaks back at, challenges, and resists oppressive structures of whiteness" (2019, p.15). Additionally, referring back to section 2.11, counter-stories have four functions of putting a human face to stories, providing a context to transform and challenge established normative beliefs, presenting the realities of those living at the margin of society and providing the possibility to construct a different world view of minoritised groups. Hence, the power of the counter-stories generated through this research, which collectively produce broader counter-narratives, is a key strength of the study. I use pseudonyms (rather than letters or numbers) to present the counter-stories generated through this study to encourage readers to *see* the person behind the story, so as to value the research participants' reality.

Eliciting and sharing counter-stories through research involves discovering sources of data and having an awareness of the nuances of meaning of the data generated. I am fully aware of the privilege afforded to me of listening to and recording the experiences of the participants for this study, recognising the

sensitivity of their stories, experiences and journeys. This process is, according to Solórzano and Yosso (2002) who refer to the work of Strauss and Corbin (1990), the result of the "personal quality of the researcher" (2002, p. 33) demonstrating a concept called *theoretical sensitivity*, being "the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn't" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, cited by Solórzano and Yosso, 2002, p. 33). Moreover, they note that degrees of sensitivity will vary depending on how engaged the researcher has been with existing literature on the research area and their understanding of the research process itself. However, *social alexithymia* (Mueller, 2017) being "the inability to understand or relate to the painful experiences of those targeted by oppression" (2017, p.229) also influences theoretical sensitivity. As such, Solórzano and Yosso (2002) also draw on the work of Delgado Bernal (1998) to posit that "cultural intuition" (2002, p. 33) is also central in the process of eliciting and sharing counter-stories of people of colour and should operate in parallel to theoretical sensitivity.

Delgado Bernal (1998, cited by Solórzano and Yosso, 2002), contends that the concept of 'cultural intuition' derives from LatCrit Chicana feminist scholars who drew on their own personal experiences, influenced by their own socio-historical journeys, ancestral wisdom, "collective experience and community memory" (2002, p. 33), and professional experiences to position their research on Chicana communities. As a minority ethnic woman who has previously been a teacher, I have personal experiences which may contribute to 'intuiting' aspects of experiences of Black female teachers, although my ethnicity may also exclude or marginalise me from being viewed as part of the Black female teacher

community. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) go on to further cite Delgado Bernal (1998) to recognise that the concept of 'cultural intuition' is "experiential, intuitive, historical, personal, collective and dynamic" (2002, p. 34). '[C]ultural intuition' has since been rearticulated in more nuanced ways by those grounded in CRT, LatCrit feminist theories and anticolonial theories, allowing "scholars to disrupt typical approaches to educational research and to theorize alternative anticolonial methodologies" (Delgado Bernal, 2016, p. 2), to include spirituality, sexuality and place as experiential identity markers. Therefore, central to the generating, analysis and disseminating of counter-stories is what Solórzano and Yosso (2002) present as four interlinking components drawing on 'theoretical sensitivity' and 'cultural intuition': "(a) the data gathered from the research process itself, (b) the existing literature on the topic(s), (c) our own professional experiences, and (d) our own personal experiences" (2002, p.34), to ensure that the counter-stories are "grounded in real-life experiences and actual empirical data and are contextualized in social situations that are also grounded in real-life, not fiction" (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002, p.36).

There are scholars who caution against the use of counter-stories. Tuck (2009) suggests a need for awareness of what she calls "damage-centred research" (2009, p. 413), like the type produced in Haque and Elliot's (2017) report. Tuck (2009) describes this "as a strategy for correcting oppression" (2009, p. 414) but questions its reliability and effectiveness in producing change, saying it is in danger of being seen as "a pathologizing approach in which the oppression singularly defines a community" (2009, p. 413) through a deficit framework. Further, Hylton (2012) notes, "Storytelling still has some weaknesses. Even with their cloaks of validity and reliability stories are socially constructed and can

represent limited versions of reality for subjugated people and their everyday experiences, especially where oppressive social arrangements remain unchallenged" (2012, p. 27). Similarly, Ledesma and Calderon (2015) cite Ladson-Billings (2005) who laments, "I sometimes worry that scholars who are attracted to CRT focus on storytelling to the exclusion of the central ideas such stories purport to illustrate. Thus I clamour for richer, more detailed stories that place our stories in more robust and powerful contexts" (2015, p.206). Therefore, I was mindful of these cautions when I devised an interview schedule to allow me to gain these detailed stories, by creating questions which encouraged richer stories to be told. To address the concerns for more detailed stories posited by Ladson-Billings (2005), cited by Ledesma and Calderon (2015), in Chapter Four I refer back to the tenets of CRT in education, as proposed by Solórzano and Yosso (2001), as a means of revealing and illustrating the lived experiences of the Black female teachers through central ideas of the theory.

3.2.2 Narrative Inquiry

Understanding the importance of enabling participants to provide their stories to create a counter-narrative, I draw on a narrative methodology of narrative inquiry which would centralise the lived experiences of those who chose to participate in this research. This supports counter-storytelling as proposed by CRT and Black feminist thought. Narrative inquiry allows storied lives, which frame lived experiences, to act as windows to comprehend individual's social realities (Clark and Saleh, 2019; O'Toole, 2018). According to Clandinin (2013), who draws on her previous work with Rosiek (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007), narrative inquiry studies "the individual's experience in the world, an experience that is storied both in the living and telling" (2013, p. 12). She confirms that narrative inquiry is

the study of experience; "It is nothing more and nothing less" (2013, p.13).

Further, she goes on to state that narrative is "a view of human experience in

which humans, individually and socially, lead storied lives" (2013, p. 13), with

'story' being defined as, "a portal through which a person enters the world and by

which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally

meaningful" (2013, p. 13). Aujla-Bhullar (2018) notes that a number of studies

which examine the experiences of women of colour have been compelling

through their use of narrative inquiry, citing the work of Housee (2008) and Mirza

(2009). She goes on to acknowledge that the subjectivity of storytelling is often

refuted due to the lack of objectivity but argues that "it is the subject and

subjectivity that signify the depth of oral history and oppose existing forms of

knowledge" (2018, p. 65), and narrative inquiry is thus used to "represent an

ongoing conversation and opportunity to converse about an experience while

living through it" (2018, p.65). This is an important factor in my choice of

methodology, as I recognise that the participants contributing to this research

study are currently living through experiences, which might be difficult, or equally,

exhilarating, to share.

Alleyne (2015) defines narrative as "a presentation of a story" (2015, p. 2) and the

way these stories are told (the 'narrative discourse'), defining 'story' as "a series

of events, where we take earlier events to be the causes of, or at least to have

influenced, later events" (2015, p. 2). Further, and in support of Alleyne's (2015)

view, Livholts and Tamboukou (2015) note the work of Reissman (2008) who

states that "there must be a sequence and consequence" (2015, p. 39) in

narratology. O'Toole (2018) refers to this chronology of events as "emplotment"

(2018, p. 178), creating meaningful connections between events which lead from

one to another. My interview schedule enabled chronological storytelling.
Although I did not pose my questions to focus on consequences, it was my hope
at the point of conducting the interviews that the sharing of the stories would
result in their perceptions of consequences of experiences being articulated.

However, the nature of narrative inquiry requires scrutiny. This methodology
encompasses storytelling which implies a unique point of view without
establishing verification of events (Wilson, 2007). Further, researchers assume
that stories "speak for themselves" (McMullen and Braithwaite, 2013, p. 102) and
are analysed on a formulaic-playful continuum (Smith, 2007). Presentation of
personal stories is determined, therefore, by where the researched places
themselves on that continuum. As Smith (2007) states, "Narrative inquiry might,
therefore, be best considered an umbrella term for a mosaic of research efforts,
with diverse theoretical musings, methods, empirical groundings, and/or
significance all revolving around an interest in narrative." (2007, p. 392).
Additionally, the compounding of essentialising individuals' stories and the
fragmentation for interpretation of whole life stories are problematic, as narrative
inquiry "has the potential to fracture data and generate a detached analysis of the
whole experience of participants" (O'Toole, 2018, p. 184). McMullen and
Braithwaite (2013) cite Josselson (2006) who raises the issue of accumulating
knowledge without losing the richness of individual stories, suggesting seeking
commonalities and patterns "as a means to go beyond individual studies to larger
frameworks of understandings" (2013, p. 102).

3.2.3   Features of narrative inquiry

Clandinin (2013) suggests that there are three key features of narrative inquiry. Firstly, she suggests that continuity helps to understand narrative inquiry, as experiences are continuous. From continuity stems the second feature of relationality as it is "within a stream of experiences that generates new relations that then become part of future experiences" (2013, p. 17). From relationality stems the third feature, that of sociality. Clandinin (2013) refers to her work with Rosiek (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007) to explain that "stories are the result of a confluence of social influences on a person's inner life, social influences on their environment, and their unique personal history" (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007, p. 41, cited by Clandinin, 2013, p. 17).

Livholts and Tamboukou (2015) also suggest three features in the production of narratives. Firstly, they suggest that narratives represent temporality, being a sequence of events. Secondly, meaningfulness is central to narratives, as the stories hold rich meanings. Finally, like Clandinin's (2013) suggestion, sociality is an important feature of narratives, but rather than referring to social influences, they posit that sociality is where "narratives always have an audience, they are in fact produced with an audience in mind" (2015, p. 40).

All of the above features were considered when shaping how I approached the design of the interview schedule and subsequent engagement in the process of interviewing and recording the 10 participants' personal stories. I ensured that participants were able to tell their stories in a chronological manner which encouraged relationality of their experiences, as they recounted one episode after the next. Sociality was seen in the participants' stories through their descriptions

of interactions with key figures in their lived experiences which formed their experiential knowledge. The stories shared demonstrated a series of events which represented given points in time which were considered meaningful to the participants to illustrate the oppressions they experienced. Not only was I an audience for the participants, but they were all informed that their stories would be central to this study and subsequent publications resulting from this study.

3.3 Ethical approval

The process of gaining ethical approval for this study began in the summer of 2019 with the completion of the required online form and a supervision meeting to discuss the sensitive aspects of researching the lives of Black women. Although the identified research group would not consider themselves as being classified as 'vulnerable', it was important to reflect on and address specific nuances of researching racially minoritised communities, enabling trust and respect of the participants. Goddard-Durant, Sieunarine and Doucet (2021) note the "need for transparency, reciprocity and emphasis on relationship building" (2021, p. 190) as central to ethical research with Black communities in particular to mitigate emotional harm. As Osler (1997a) notes and with reference to section 2.11, interviews enabling Black women to share their personal stories can be painful as they recall incidents of perceived oppression. Thus, to mitigate emotional harm, I informed each participant that they can opt out of answering questions which they felt were too delicate or intrusive and that if they required a break during the course of the interview, it was acceptable to stop and even skip forward to the next question or part of their story to minimise the pain caused by recalling upsetting incidents which they perceived as oppressive. For one participant who

became tearful whilst sharing her story, I proposed a break in the interview, but she wished to continue. Further, the need to centralise the participants' voices in the study required me to be reflexive about my own positionality in the research process (see section 3.5) and understand the power relations which exist in the researcher/researched dynamic. The ethical approval form was approved by the School Ethics Panel (see Appendix 1).

3.4 Challenges of access to participants

The issues of access, recruitment and participation became a central methodological challenge in this study as a result of my experiences of being a British born woman appearing outwardly as South Asian with Indo-Caribbean heritage researching the lived experiences of Black female teachers navigating their predominately white educational workspaces to form their professional identities. The ethical process I completed prior to seeking participation from Black women was rigorous, taking into account the impact that generating the data may have through potential emotional harm to the participants and planning mitigating practices (see section 3.3 above). Despite this, I had not envisaged nor anticipated the reception I would receive from a few Black women, particularly from African-Caribbean heritage, to me researching their lives. Many Black women I approached about my study were enthusiastic to hear about it and initially showed interest in becoming a participant, feeling that the research was an important contribution to current discourses on Black women's lives. Notwithstanding, some were more sceptical of my motives and who I was as a racialised researcher. Why should a woman who looks South Asian be genuinely interested in their Black lives? Being of Indo-Caribbean heritage, I did not see

myself as an interloper in Black lives, particularly in Black Caribbean lives. In fact, I saw myself more of an alien to the lives of South Asian communities. However, my experience at one specific event, which I attended for research recruitment purposes and outlined later in this chapter (see section 3.7), forced me to engage in the start of my self-reflexive continuous journey to developing a greater understanding of my racialised and ethnicised researcher positionality.

3.4.1 Insider/outsider positioning

There has been much written about the advantages and weaknesses of insider or outsider researcher positioning when examining the experiences of racialised groups and individuals (Bhopal, 2010; Britton, 2020; Egharevba, 2001; Gunaratnum, 2003; Maylor, 2009b; Obasi, 2014; Pitman, 2002; Ryan, Kofman and Aaron, 2011; Vass, 2017). A researcher claiming to recognise their insiderness and outsiderness can be an oversimplified and misplaced perception. The work of Edwards (1996), who faced resistance and mistrust from Black female potential research participants in conducting two pieces of research on mature students combining educational and family lives and lone mothers' use of day care, exemplifies how a white feminist researcher draws on congruent identities in the belief that these will gain her access to Black women as potential research participants. Despite acknowledging that her position as a white middle class woman protected her from racialised oppression and otherness, she believed that she could understand lives of Black women who engaged in her research but was more ambivalent about being able to accurately represent the experiences of Black women through her research output. The Black women she approached for her research neither trusted her motives nor the likely outcomes of the research, resisting her individually and collectively as a group. By her own

admission, Edwards (1996) expressed how she was "jolted" (1996, p. 171) by the contrast of her self-definition of her identity (an approachable white researcher with experiences which matched some of the potential Black female research participants of being a female mature student and a lone mother) and the perception of being an "untrustworthy white institutional figure" (1996, p. 171). Pitman (2002) also experienced resistance and silence from marginalised individuals with whom she felt she had found connectivity and support for her research ideas. This "trap of similarity" (Pitman, 2002, p. 286) could lead white researchers to believe that there are categories of sameness and solidarity which enable full access to the researched group. Pitman (2002) goes on to describe how initial anger and frustration from the silence received from those she felt she had solidarity and shared views with eventually turned to acknowledgement of her unearned privilege. She also recognises her ignorance of how whiteness influences if and how potential participants are willing to engage with her research.

The invisibility of whiteness has led some white researchers, and moreover white feminists, to ignore, misrepresent and misunderstand Black women's lives, thereby maintaining their hegemony and ensuring Black women's voices remain marginalised and silenced (Spalek, 2004). Britton (2020) posits that whiteness is socially constructed as an empty racialised category often deemed invisible by those researchers who are white. Despite white researchers paying attention to whiteness as being useful, white researchers also rarely acknowledge the influence and impact of whiteness in their research. This observation is exemplified in the work of Flintoff and Webb (2011) who only considered their privileged positions as white women after reflecting on how their previous work

had "left whiteness unmarked" (2011, p. 575), just noting power relations through their perceived marginalised outsider positions of being feminist and female Physical Education instructors. Similarly, Vass (2017) considers the existence of what he described as a "White shadow" (2017, p. 149), which serves to protect whiteness. Vass (2017) exemplifies this by explaining, "it is easy to imagine smiles, winks and nods exchanged between White teachers and White researchers to be overlooked or not valued as 'data', even in research that is focused on race" (2017, p. 149), further expressing concerns of how silencing this type of insider non-verbal data places oppression and racism in the shadow of whiteness.

Milligan (2016) notes that the dichotomous view of insider/outsider positioning has been reviewed and reconsidered by a number of authors. The researcher identity in the research process is fluid and shifting as "liquid identities" (Thomson and Gunter, 2011, p. 26) and the existence of a "third, liminal space" (McNess, Arthur and Crossley, 2015, p. 295) or being an "inbetweener" (Milligan, 2016, p. 237) has entered the discourses on the concepts of insiderness and outsiderness. McNess et al. (2015) argue that positioning should take a broader account of ontological, epistemological and disciplinary perspectives, particularly in contexts of transnational research. They take the view of Calhoun (1995) in understanding that neither the researcher nor the researched are entities which are "fixed, stable and coherent, but constantly shifting, incomplete, fragmented and contradictory in relation to both collective and personal existence" (2015, p. 298). Instead, McNess et al. (2015) posit a third space which pivots between insider and outsider difference and where insider and outsider meet, thus avoiding the essentialist constructs of the dichotomous insider/outsider

positioning to have a deeper and more nuanced understanding of situations and experiences. Supporting this view is Milligan (2016), who argues that researchers are able to make active attempts to place themselves 'inbetween' the binary insider and outsider positions by taking on different gradients of insider and outsider status, first becoming a "knowledgeable outsider" (2016, p. 248) to positioning inbetween.

Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Lee, Kee, Ntseane and Muhamad (2001) suggest that all researchers enter their projects with certain assumptions, one being that the more similar the researcher is to the participants in terms of gender, 'race', class and culture, for example, the greater the assumption that access to participants will be granted, experiences will be shared, and authentic representation will be assured. This assumption can hinder the researcher, as discovered by Bhopal (2010). She discussed her 'outsider' status when researching Gypsy communities, gaining access only through extensive work and coordination with a community-trusted gatekeeper. She also found that researching Asian women, despite gender, ethnic and cultural congruity, did not automatically grant her access to that community as an 'insider'. She revealed her 'insiderness' as a female researcher who identifies as "a British woman of Asian Indian decent" (2010, p. 190) in her notice requests to participants, but there was little interest and response for participation initially shown by the target community. As she notes, "[E]ven though respondents were aware they were going to speak to an Asian woman, shared ethnicity did not necessarily guarantee access to respondents" (2010, p. 190).

In research which centralises 'race' and ethnicity, and particularly the experiences of Black women, Black feminist views (Beal, 2008; Collins, 1996; Mirza and Gunaratnum, 2014), however, suggest the need for a more sophisticated understanding of Black women's self-definition and self-valuation to avoid misrepresentation and externally defined stereotypes. Further, Black women's lives should be viewed through nuanced lenses to understand the nature of oppression, that being the intersection of multiple identities of Black women ('race', gender, class, colour and so on) and the "intersection of multiple structures of domination" (Collins, 1986, p. S19) in which Black women's lives exist in a power matrix embedded in societal systems. As such, Black feminist literature (Collins, 1986, Few, 2007; Harris, 1990) has challenged the position and ability of white scholars, and white feminists (according to Pitman, 2002), to acknowledge the suppression of Black women's ideas and power relations in research on Black women. Feminist standpoint epistemology describes "the vital relationship between granting voice to women's experiences of oppression and activating movement toward social change" (Brooks, 2007, p. 62). However, neo-liberal feminism dominated by white privileged women (Phipps, 2020) is seen to take an essentialist view, despite concepts such as 'double consciousness' (Brooks, 2007), and neglects the nuances of Black female lives and the historical context of oppression from which they derive. This raises questions for Black feminists about who is best placed to research and present the experiences of Black women, hence the need for Black feminist standpoint epistemology, as used by Mirza (1998). When reflecting on my own experience researching Black women's lives, I acknowledge that phenotypically I look South Asian but the hybridity of my ethnicity, cultural background and history allows me to identify as politically 'Black'. Yet by not being of African diaspora, I constantly questioned

whether I am Black enough to be considered a legitimate person to carry out this study of Black female teachers. I am cognisant that terms like 'BAME' have been more divisive than uniting of marginalised communities and I have felt dissonance by the attempt to essentialise all communities that are ethnically diverse under one term but also recognised the desire of these communities to stand out as racialised groups in their own right. The older I got the more I became interested in my history; the personal and family history, the history of the East Indian indentureship in the Caribbean and how my history jigsaws into my Britishness. Further, having trained and worked as a teacher in English schools, I considered my workspace as white dominated and challenging to navigate as a racialised women, feeling that my place in the space was invisible particularly when seeking promotion and progression but highly visible when teaching classes to gain high success outcomes for the national testing regime. Holding immense pride in my cultural heritage and having been a teacher within English schools, I relied on these identities to be the door to Black female teachers' lives but realised that this was naïve as I reflected more on my positionality within my study. This was a humbling experience.

Even for Black female researchers, presumption of insider status based on certain shared identities is not sufficient. Few, Stephens and Rouse-Arnett (2003) cite Nelson (1996) to draw on the concept of "gradations of endogeny" (2003, p. 207) in their work. They explain this as being the emotional and psychological subjectivity which research participants use to determine the extent of legitimate researcher insiderness, acting as an internal gatekeeper to the level of access a researcher can gain to their research participants. Indeed, Milligan (2016) states, "insiderness and outsiderness can be seen as a balancing act

between the positioning that the researcher actively takes and the ways in which their role is defined by how *others* involved in the project, research participants and further afield, view the researcher" (2016, p. 240).

My own positionality swung like a pendulum between initially being confident in my insiderness to realising that for some Black women, I remain firmly as an outsider, to self-reflexivity enabling me to sit somewhere inbetween, as a conduit and providing a platform for their voices, thoughts and ideas. What I recognised in this journey is that I could not stand in any of these participants' shoes, but the similarities of our experiences allowed me to stand in solidarity with them and want to expose their oppressions and champion their positivity, ideas and talents. I wanted to advocate their agency and provide a vehicle for them to make change through individual and, through their gathered voices in this study, their collective agency. Thus, Black feminist researchers are still conscious of the moments of intimacy and distance they experience with Black female research participants and make personal preparations, such as considering dress, hairstyles, make-up and jewellery, and language (which may be seen as symbolic power), as well as technical preparations in the interview process (Few et al., 2003) to mitigate any potential barriers to moving into a more accepted level of insider status. I considered the personal preparations to be important as a means to reducing barriers to access to the participants. As such and reflected upon within my research journal containing my field notes, I wore smart casual clothing to meet the participants, wanting them to note the seriousness in which I took their participation and contributions (the smart aspect of my clothes) but balancing with the need to make them feel comfortable around me as the researcher (the casual aspect of my clothes). I wore no make-up or jewellery to further minimise any

potential barriers that my appearance could create. On meeting each participant, I reiterated by Caribbean heritage to find common ground, particularly with African-Caribbean participants but also as a way to elucidate my understanding of a history of minoritised group oppression, which led to two participants kindly offering me home-made Caribbean food after the interviews had been completed.

3.4.2 'Race' matching the researcher and researched – a methodological conundrum?

In an attempt to overcome the barriers of racialised difference in interracial research, Gunaratnam (2003) notes the increasingly popular use of methodological strategies based on 'race' matching or 'race' symmetry (Egharevba, 2001; Vass, 2017) between the researcher and the researched, in the belief that research participants are likely to be more open with a researcher who can relate to their world view and lived experiences due to sameness and commonalities and avoid misinterpretation of these experiences. However, she suggests that there is a spectrum of epistemological, methodological and political decisions which are entwined with interracial research, with at one end being the choice to "subsume the complexities of subjectivity and social positioning under overarching categories" (Gunaratnam, 2003, p. 81) and the other extreme being to acknowledge and embrace the complexities of difference. Wherever the researcher sits in between these two extremes, it has implications and effects on the knowledge production about 'race' and racialised bodies.

The discourse on researcher and researched 'race' matching is mixed. Egharevba (2001) cautiously notes that where researcher and researched are matched, the researcher is less likely to pathologise and stereotype the

minoritised group being researched, and that participants are more likely to be authentic to give more reliable lived accounts without self-silencing and self-regulating their experiences out of fear or scepticism of the researcher's position and motivations. Having noted the benefits of 'race' matched researchers and researched, Egharevba (2001) also points out the pitfalls of this symmetrical dynamic to the research process, citing Pheonix (1994) to argue that the impact of 'race' and gender on research is unpredictable. The belief that sameness underpinned by 'race' and ethnicity provides greater access to the researched group or individuals can be a misguided one, as Bhopal (1995) and Mirza (1998) discovered. Further, there is little empirical evidence to confirm that 'race' matching reduces scepticism and mistrust between researcher and researched or helps the researched feel more relaxed or elicits more authentic data (Davis, Caldwell, Couper, Janz, Alexander, Greene, Zhang and Resnicow, 2012). Davis et al. (2012) admit, however, that in their own research that many African Americans preferred African American telephone survey interviewers where the survey contained content about 'race'. Buford May (2014) suggests that some scholars see 'race' matching as improving efficacy of research involving racially minoritised groups. Additionally, 'race' matching is considered as central to the cultural sensitivity of the research process (Papadopoulos and Less, 2002), as successful access to research participants is based on, not just the commonalities of ethnicity and 'race', but a "genuine interest…in their community" (2002, p. 261).

Merriam et al. (2001) cite the work of Johnson-Bailey (1999) to demonstrate that 'race' matching of a Black woman researching Black women can reveal shared understandings (spoken and unspoken, verbal and non-verbal) of 'race' and

gender, but issues of class and colourism (the intra-racial discrimination by Black people that gives preferential treatment to those within Black communities with lighter skin, straighter hair texture and slim facial features) remained barriers to full access to participants. Johnson-Bailey (1999) goes on to note that "If class was a wall...to be peered across or broken down, then issues of color were most certainly occasional landmines in our mutual process of discovery" (Johnson-Bailey, 1999, p. 668, cited by Merriam et al., 2001, p. 407).

The belief that 'race' matching will provide researchers with greater access to research participants and more authentic data being collected has also created a power imbalance within research teams. Despite the increasing number of racialised academics in the UK, the increasing popularity of 'race' matching strategies between the researcher and researched has led to racialised researchers being employed on short-term contracts and existing on the margins of the employing research teams and resultant research publications (Gunaratnam, 2003). The impact of this practice on the racialised researchers and the researched group requires further consideration. Research carried out by Ryan et al. (2011) provides an example of employing 'race' matched researchers for data collection purposes only to primarily gain access to the researched community, referring to them as "community" researchers or "peer" researchers (2011, p. 51), both terms being used interchangeably. Arguably, Ryan et al. (2011) unwittingly present an obvious power differential between the white research team and the racialised researchers employed for access to the target community group and data collection, raising questions as to whether the racialised researchers were given equal credit for the outcomes as 'peer'

researchers and if career progression of the racialised researchers was a by-product or not of their study.

3.5 Power, knowledge and representation – the need for self-reflexivity

The location of power, the role of knowledge holders and constructors, and representation remains problematic in gaining access to racialised and ethnicised groups and individuals for research. A mitigating method lies with self-reflexivity, a concept underused in academic practices of research and writing (Popoveniuc, 2014). Pagis (2009) defines self-reflexivity as "the conscious turning of the individual toward himself, simultaneously being the observing subject and the observed object, a process that includes both self-knowledge and self-monitoring", (2009, p. 266). This goes beyond the reflexive process often considered in the research process. Reflexivity alone encourages the object and the subject to reflect the qualities of each other, with the object and subject being different entities, whereas self-reflexivity requires object and subject to be one (Popoveniuc, 2014). In other words, the researcher must be the object and subject of self-reflectiveness, self-consciousness and self-developmental processes. As such, Tanaka (2002) considers the process of knowledge construction and asks the question, "Does the construct promote self-knowledge for the researcher by making his or her culture and social location a part of the analysis?" (2002, p. 265). Turning the mirror on oneself thus plays a central role in knowledge construction, representation and power relations with 'othered' racialised minoritised groups in researching 'race' and ethnicity.

Milligan (2016) considers the impact of multiple statuses, including 'race', age, gender, profession, marital status and language as the location of power, and that these "status sets" (2016, p. 241) reflect multiple shifting identities that contribute to determining insider and outsider positionality. Therefore, Few et al. (2003) discuss the need for researchers to be self-reflexive to counter "unconscious processes of academic colonialism" (2003, p. 2010) which exist in hierarchical power relations between researcher and the racially minoritised researched. Further, they recognise that when Black females study Black females, the research participants are a representation of who the researchers are and why they (Black females as a collective group) do the things they do. Hence, to misrepresent Black female research participants is to misrepresent Black female researchers.

The representation of racialised groups and who creates knowledge about them for public consumption are further areas which require researcher self-reflexivity. Reay (1996) recognised the power of researchers' positioning to determine the prominence of aspects of the data collected and decide what to use, arguing the consequential interpretation is imperfect and incomplete. Further, Crozier (2003) examines this power in term of controlling the data and whether a white researcher, like herself, can accurately represent or should even speak on behalf of Black communities through the data interpretation and write up. Data selection, interpretation and subsequent presentation in the public domain raises difficulties about the nature of 'truth', and whose 'truth' has value in a society where knowledge exists in a hierarchy, noted by Reay (1996) who states, "[N]either my 'truth' nor those of the working-class women I interviewed fit easily into academic 'truth'" (1996, p. 63).

Self-reflexivity is also required to minimise the processes of essentialism that affects knowledge construction and representation. Gunaratnam (2003) cautions against the categorisations of individuals and groups in relation to 'race' and ethnicity, which neglects the differences within categories of racialised and ethnicised groups. The way in which essentialism constructs particular or stereotypical racialised narratives deserves continuous consciousness to resist homogenisation, prevent the erasure of nuanced differences within racialised and ethnicised categories, and reveals oppression. When examining the multiple oppressions experienced by Black women, essentialism reduces their lives to addition equations, such as 'racism + sexism = the experience of cis straight Black women'. Harris (1990) states, "in an essentialist world, black women's experience will always be forcibly fragmented before being subjected to analysis, as those who are "only interested in race" and those who are "only interested in gender" take their separate slices of our lives" (1990, p. 588-589). Therefore, researching Black women's lives demands an anti-essentialist approach.

3.6 Sample and recruitment

With the aim of my research being to examine how Black female teachers navigate their predominately white educational workspaces to form their professional identities through narrative inquiry, I firstly had to decide upon the criteria for interview participant selection to create the sample. Participants had to fit the initial sampling criteria of 'Black female' ('Black' includes those who identify as being Black African, Black Caribbean and Black other, but not bi-racial due to the potential differences in experiences impacted by colourism; 'Female'

includes all those who identify as female) and 'working in a perceived predominantly white educational workspace'. However, on reflection, an additional sampling criterion of 'holds Qualified Teacher Status QTS' was introduced to ensure that the sample contained educators who were integral in learning, teaching and leadership and management in their educational setting, rather than situated in a peripheral employment position and who might be in a supportive educational role for reasons which supersede career choice. Collecting sufficient data to achieve the research objectives and to ensure viability for analysis and reporting is critical, particularly when qualitative research is perceived as less rigorous by non-qualitative researchers (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar and Fontenot, 2013). Initially, it was envisaged that a sample size of 12-15 interview participants would be required for this study. However, fewer participants are needed where "information power" (Malterud, Siersma and Guassora, 2016, p. 1754) is greater. After a few interviews I realised that I would not need as many interviews as expected due to the richness of the stories I was being told. Narrative inquiry elicits a vast amount of data, potentially leading to data saturation with fewer accounts being collected. Further, the phenomenological nature of data collected on lived experiences and the labour-intensiveness of research focussed on depth of detail can justify the use of a small sample size (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006). I wanted to establish a national picture rather than a localised study of Black women's professional identities in predominately white educational spaces, hence it was important for me to access participants across England. With that in mind and with the knowledge that a Black educators' event specifically for school staff takes place annually, I gained ethical approval and contacted the event organisers, providing details of the study, to gain access to the annual event to speak to the delegates about my

research in the hope to sign up potential interview participants. Interestingly, the organisers of the Black educators' event vetted my ethnicity and discussed my request via committee before allowing me access to the event. I questioned at the time whether the ethnicity vetting I experienced was an indirect statement about who the organisers believed should be researching Black educators and whether if I was a white researcher, I would have been granted access to the event.

The event was held on a weekend in 2019. On arrival, I was allocated a 'pitch' alongside organisations providing information and support for issues which affect Black educators but also people who sold health and beauty products especially for Black communities and regional ethnic jewellery. Not only did this mean I would only see delegates at breaks between activities, I would also have to compete for the delegates' attention to explain my study and gain voluntary sign up to the research process. I was nervous that my Asian outward appearance would render me invisible against the stall holders and their wares which catered for the needs and interests of Black communities. Despite my own reservations about my insider/outsider positionality ('insider' by being classified as a 'Black educator' for the purpose of attendance to the event, but 'outsider' by virtue of my outwardly Asian appearance and their potential perception of my difference to those who are Black heritage), 19 volunteers signed up to potentially participate in the study, with nine of the 19 volunteers completing and returning the informed consent form (see Appendix 2) for research participation on the day of the event. However, only four of the volunteers, all of whom had completed and returned the informed consent form on the day of the event, were eventually interviewed, despite follow up communications with all 19 volunteers who originally signed up.

As a result, snowballing methodology and drawing on personal contacts were subsequently used to gain further research participants for the study and a total of 10 in-depth narrative interviews were carried out. Table 1 outlines the demographic information of the 10 participants who were interviewed for this research.

3.7 Scepticism and mistrust: am I considered 'Black enough' to research the lives of Black women?

My position as a 'Black' researcher was under scrutiny. Maylor (2009c) cites Mirza (1993) to say that being Black means "a process of consciousness, when colour becomes the defining factor about who you are…a political kinship" (2009c, p. 369) but that the meaning shifts with public and political discourses and needs. The concept of 'being Black' was something in my subconsciousness but became a more concrete concept as I engaged with this research. I found it provided me with both a strengthened sense of collectiveness and solidarity, but also troubling as I navigated the difficulties faced in attracting participants to this study. I faced women from an African diaspora who saw me as equivalent and equal; I also faced women who saw me as different and without the legitimacy to speak to their lives. Despite phenotypically looking South Asian, I draw on my ethnic and cultural background and history to identify as 'Black' in political terms. The majority of delegates I spoke to at the Black educators' event responded positively to the study objectives, but in many cases, this was only after I explained my Indo-Caribbean heritage. To gain access and manoeuvre towards an insider and accepted status, I had to share my cultural heritage and connections to the Caribbean. In effect, I was obliged to declare my ethnic and

cultural credentials to circumvent scepticism and mistrust from the potential participants I was trying to attract to the study.

Revealing experiential similarities between researcher and researched is a known method used to build trust and rapport for recruitment and retention of participants to research projects and was found to be particularly useful in engaging older African American participants into scientific research (Sabir and Pillemer, 2014). There is a counter argument for rapport building and finding common ground in the research process. Bengry-Howell and Griffin (2012) explain, "[I]f rapport is framed as a form of impression management, then it runs the risk of being viewed as a persuasive mechanism for eliciting consent" (2012, p. 405), which they go on to describe as "methodological grooming" (2012, p. 405) and raises the question of whether consent is truly informed and voluntary. Further, Takhar (2015), noting the work of Liamputtong (2007) and Lumsden (2009), suggests that self-disclosure, in the way I shared my own cultural credentials, can result in a false level of rapport or over-rapport.

How I built rapport with each participant was dependent on how they were approached to participate in this study. Rapport building with those who participated in the study as a result of personal contacts was different to those who chose to participate via the Black educators' event. Those who participated as a result of personal contacts and snowballing were introduced through a trusted gatekeeper, being a mutual acquaintance who already knew me well or participants who had already been interviewed by me, which allowed for a different method of rapport building due to me being accepted by the trusted gatekeeper. In situations where a gatekeeper was involved, I was not expected

to share my ethnic and cultural credentials, although I did to provide context to why I was interested in the experiences of Black female teachers. The interactions were more relaxed from the outset as the gatekeeper had provided sufficient information to the participant in advance of the interview to have a foundation of trust in place. Where a gatekeeper did not exist, I had to employ methods to rapport build which not only revealed my ethnic and cultural credentials, but also my own experiential knowledge and stories of being a racialised woman in school and other educational settings to demonstrate the possible commonalities in experiences of perceived and actual oppression.

I was cognisant of not wanting to influence the stories shared with me by participants with my own stories so chose to keep my experiences as descriptions of events rather than engage in the emotions of what impact my experiences had on me. Despite this, there appeared to be common understanding of my stories, witnessed through non-verbal acknowledgements, such as nodding of a participant's head in recognition of both the events and the unspoken impact of the scenario I shared. Sharing my experiential knowledge made me feel vulnerable, but it was necessary if I was to encourage participants to share their stories. However, to create a false level of rapport or over-rapport by over-sharing my own experiences may have influenced the way in which the participants shared their stories, but also potentially negatively impacted on the trust in my openness to their stories if I had become emotional through the retelling of my experiences.

Revealing my ethnic and cultural credentials was not a consciously planned strategy to gain an insider status and I did not share these details with all

potential participants with whom I spoke. Nor was this method of rapport and trust building always successful, and acceptance was not universal.

The challenges I faced around my insider/outsider positionality are exemplified through the following two episodes noted during my time at the Black educators' event to gain research participants. These episodes are drawn from reflectionswithin my research journal holding my field notes and represent experiences from my first attempt at participant recruitment to this study.

3.7.1 Episode 1: "Why are YOU researching US?"

I was approached by a Black female event delegate from a Caribbean background (identified by a strong recognisable Caribbean island accent) who asked me about my research. After explaining the nature of my project and providing her with further written information to read, I was face with a question that I had not anticipated I would be asked - "Why are you researching us?". I was unprepared and initially perplexed by the question. I reiterated the nature of my research, adding my own lived experience of having been a female teacher of colour. Not satisfied with my response, the delegate repeated her question to emphasise her meaning - "Yes, but why are YOU researching US?". The extent of my outsider status had become clear to me and I felt like a barrier to my own research. I subsequently shared my heritage (colonial indentured servitude) and culture (which regions of the Caribbean I was connected to by parental birth) to hopefully shift the scepticism of my outsiderness towards a more acceptable level(although not complete acceptance due to my Indo-ethnicity) of

Table 1: Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Length of service in profession	Current role	Time in current role	Age Phase	Racial Self-definition*	Location in England
Monica	22 years	Extended SLT	5 years	Secondary	Black British from Caribbean heritage	London
Afia	7 years	Middle Leader	6 years	Primary	Black African	South East
Erika	22 years	Head/Principal	1 year	Secondary	Black African mixed heritage	North West
Teresa	8 years	Class Teacher	2 years	Primary	Black British from African heritage	London
Laurette	20 years	Middle Leadership with some SLT responsibilities	4 years	Secondary	Afro-Caribbean	East Midlands
Patricia	38 years	Retired Head/Principal	N/A	Primary	Caribbean English from African diaspora	London
Lisa	11 years	Middle Leader	3 years	Secondary	Black Caribbean	London
Nicole	10 years	SLT	2 years	Secondary	Black British from Caribbean heritage	South West
Jada	19 years	Middle Leader	10 years	Primary	Mixed Black from Caribbean heritage	West Midlands
Marissa	32 years	Head/Principal	Not specified	Primary	Black British from Caribbean heritage	London

Racial self-definition* - each participant was asked to describe themselves racially and/or ethnically in a contextual interview question.

insiderness. Sharing my ethnic and cultural credentials to gain access to potential participants created a dissonance which forced me to reflect on my capabilities and confidence to undertake this type of research. Was I 'Black' enough to research the lives of Black women? Would my positionality remain in a third inbetween space? To my surprise, this Black female delegate gave informed consent to participate in my research project by the end of the event day, although did not subsequently engage with communications to arrange being interviewed.

3.7.2 Episode 2: My invisibility and the trap of similarity

A Black female delegate had been engaged in conversation with the African heritage woman on the neighbouring stall. In conversation, I heard the Black female delegate reveal her country of origin in the Caribbean, allowing me to understand that she was African-Caribbean and with an accent I deemed familiar. I smiled to hear that she was from one of my parental birth countries, as I do not often encounter people from this country beyond my immediate family, and hence the familiarity of her accent. The Black female delegate concluded her conversation with the neighbouring stall holder and walked towards my stall. As a way of engaging her in conversation, and after making initial introductions about who I was and why I was at the event, I commented on how delightful it was to meet someone from a country connected to my parental heritage. On hearing of our connection regarding national heritage, the Black female delegate chose to not make eye contact with me. I continued to tell her about my research whilst she looked through the sign-up list I had on the table, maintaining zero eye contact. I finally asked if she would be interested in participating in the study. She walked away having not looked at me or spoken to me since the moment I

shared my sameness of national heritage. Reflecting on this episode, I felt

invisible and realised that the sameness of a nation state had not granted me an

insider status. In fact, it had placed me firmly as an outsider. I questioned the

power relations behind the non-verbal interaction and lack of eye contact. Not

looking at me and not speaking to me was powerful and intimidating. It rendered

me impotent. Since the 1950s political instability in our matched nation has

created inter-ethnic social conflict and violence between the East Indian and

African heritage communities (Lowe, 2013). Was her non-interaction with me a

product of deeply embedded feelings from this nation's history of division along

ethnic lines? I wondered whether her lack of eye contact was her method of

communicating to me her own possible deep-rooted nationalist and anti-East

Indian views, given that she had been very engaged and animated with the

neighbouring stall holder. I had fallen into the "trap of similarity" (Pitman, 2002, p.

286), neglecting how the socio-political context and complexities of our ethnicities

became the gatekeeper to our interactions, and hence defined my positionality as

an outsider. She did not sign up to participate in the research project.

3.8 Data collection

In total, 10 participants of differing lengths of service, experiences, locations

across England and positions within their schools were interviewed for this study

(see Table 1 for participant demographics). Gaining participants resulted from

three specific methods of direct approach at the Black educators' event, personal

contacts and snowballing.

The initial interest in my study generated at the Black educators' event did not materialise into as many interviews as I had hoped. 19 Black female teachers signed up to take part and took away consent forms (see Appendix 2), of which nine women returned the form signed on the day of the event. The other 10 interested woman did not return their consent form, despite follow up correspondences. Of the nine who did complete the consent form, six Black female teachers initially responded to email correspondences to arrange in-person interviews. Ultimately, four women agreed to be interviewed with two women choosing to withdraw their consent prior to arranging interview dates, without reason, which I fully respected. Next, I drew on personal contacts to introduce me to Black female teachers known to them, which then resulted in three interviews. Finally, resulting from the interviews already undertaken, I carried out three interviews from a snowballing method of accessing research participants. Naderifar, Goli and Ghaljaie (2017) say that snowballing is "efficient and cost-effective to access people who would otherwise be very difficult to find" (2017, p. 2).

As an England-wide study, participants located in six regions across the country took part in this study (see Table 1 for participant demographics). Nine out of 10 interviews were carried out face-to-face with one interview being a telephone interview. All were carried out between January and March 2020, prior to the national lockdown for the Covid-19 pandemic. I used a pre-designed interview schedule (see Appendix 3) for all interviews. The telephone interview was the first interview carried out and this revealed to me the need to arrange face-to-face interviews, primarily to build the rapport, relationship and trust with each participant. However, the telephone interview was still valuable data and hence I used it in this research. In all cases, I made initial communications via emails or

text messages, where personal contacts were utilised, with all participants on several occasions to answer any specific further questions and arrange the interview location to suit each woman and their personal needs. Half of the participants interviewed (five) were interviewed in their own home by choice, as their safe spaces to be open and authentic in their stories. Four participants were interviewed in public places of their choice, which in all cases were spaces with no-one else within earshot of the interview process, for example a room in a community centre. An issue that I had to be aware of is what Lee (1993, cited by Elmir, Schmied, Jackson and Wilkes, 2011) warns of where "conducting research into sensitive topics can result in the researcher developing a closeness to participants that confuses the roles of friend and researcher" (2011, p. 13). I mitigated this concern through maintaining a professional persona whilst developing and maintaining a relationship of "political kinship" (Mirza 1997, cited by Maylor, 2009c, p. 369) which aimed to inspire trust and openness. However, I felt that refusing to share home-made food that two participants had prepared would have been inappropriate, so maintained a professional persona and boundaries throughout the formal (interview) interactions and the informal (sharing common heritage food) interactions.

I gained permission from each participant to audio record each interview for accuracy. Following transcription, participants were provided the opportunity to check their transcript for accuracy, which was taken up by only three of the participants who made no changes to the interview transcript and content. At this point and having followed up with participants who made no response to accuracy checking, allowing a month to provide any feedback or response, data analysis commenced. One participant was interested in knowing some initial

findings from the data collection, and I spoke by telephone with this individual participant 10 months after I had interviewed her and towards the end of the data analysis period.

3.9 Data analysis process

Following the Braun and Clarke (2012) six phase approach to thematic analysis, I began by spending time refamiliarizing myself with the data by listening to the interview audio recordings and reading through each transcript (Phase 1). I referred to my field notes taken at the point of conducting the interviews to assess whether my initial reactions noted still resonated when immersing myself in the data after several months. At the time of collecting the interview data, I was more familiar with CRT, specifically CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001), than Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) and the field notes I made reflected this, for example noting feelings of being battle scarred by the impact of whiteness. Thus, my initial field notes were partial, reflecting my knowledge and primary lens at the point of data collection. I was aware of the emotions which lay behind each participant's personal story, which alongside my understanding of CRT, meant that my field notes predominantly recorded the negative undertones about the participants' racialised lived experiences. On building a greater understanding of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) as a mechanism of individual resistance, refamiliarising myself with the data several months after conducting the interviews allowed me to see the data with a different lens. Black feminist thought enabled me to deliberately move away from potentially conveying the participants' stories as 'victims' with solely negative lived experiences. I highlighted narratives and statements of interest as part of the

initial coding process (see Appendix 4 as an example), both reflecting how the participants perceived their work environments as racialised spaces as well as how they navigated these spaces and how they made sense of their being in those spaces. Subsequently, I considered if there were specific drivers for the participants' professional identity formation according to their role within their workspaces. These are outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Drivers for professional identity formation according to role.

Role	Drivers for professional identity formation
Teacher	Pupils they teach in their subject/age phase, parents and community.
Middle leader	Pupils across the year group, in the department, parents and community, desire to progress so a need to provide tangible evidence of their competence to senior leaders.
Senior leader/Headteacher/ Principal	Community, governing body, local authority, cluster lead/academy CEO.

Due to the short timeframe in which I had conducted the interviews, I waited until I had completed the data collection process before beginning the analysis of the data generated in the 10 interviews. In generating initial codes, as Phase 2 of the Braun and Clarke (2012) approach, I chose to generate two sets of initial codes to answer my research question fully through my conceptual framework: 'what, if anything, made their school contexts racialised and challenging to exist in?' and 'how do Black female teachers successfully navigate and operate in these spaces?'. In other words, how are their experiences reflected by CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) and Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) to understand what influenced these participants' professional identities within their workspaces. I tabulated each transcript as Word documents, in the first instance, in order to generate and note coding which reflected both aspects

of my conceptual framework in one place (see Appendix 4 as an example). I found that my initial codes were mostly descriptive and in vivo (Saldaña, 2009).

After completing the initial coding process on Word document transcripts, I uploaded these to NVivo 12. Once the data had been uploaded to Nvivo 12, I created nodes which replicated the initial codes. I created separate files to manage the different nodes containing participant stories against the two lenses forming the conceptual framework. I filed additional codes which did not fit the conceptual framework in a 'miscellaneous' file, including a key outlier finding. There were eight additional nodes of coding in the 'miscellaneous file', except the outlier finding, which each held one reference. From here, I began the categorisation process, turning nodes of coding into 'child nodes' within a 'parent node' category.

To create the categories, I returned to the research questions and conceptual framework to ensure these remained at the forefront of the process. The categorisation of the nodes relating to CRT were driven by the structure of the model of CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001), so were more deductive. The categorisation of nodes related to Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) were generated from what the data was saying in a more fluid process, keeping the essence of the theory in mind and avoiding conveying these Black female teachers as 'victims', thus taking a more inductive approach. For both sets of initial coding, I searched for similarities and overlaps in the data to cluster nodes to create suitable categories.

Phase 3 of Braun and Clarke's (2012) model led to the development of key themes. To examine how schools are racialised spaces, I felt it was vital to centralise the tenets of CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) as descriptors. As such, the key themes for the data examined through CRT remain as the tenets outlined in the literature review chapter. However, the process of searching for key themes through the lens of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) centred on the details of the counter-stories of the participants, alongside searching for concepts which influenced their professional identities. This required a more detailed engagement with ideas within Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) and hence the eventual focus on the concepts within consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) as a tool for analysis.

In the fourth phase of Braun and Clarke (2012), I reviewed potential themes, by revisiting the codes and extracts of data collected to ensure that the nodes fully represented the collated data. No significant changes to the way the data was collated were made. However, in line with Phase 5, minor changes to the names of the key themes resulted, changing 'Stereotyping' to 'Intersectional 'race' and gender stereotyping' to be more closely aligned to CRT, and changing the five 'Narratives of…' themes to 'Self-definitions through…' to link directly and clearly to consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000). This ensured that the key themes discussed in each of the two analyses chapters reflect the conceptual framework of the thesis.

3.10   Conclusion to this chapter

The relationships and interactions between the researcher and the researched are complex and difficult to navigate for both parties. Researcher positionality plays a central role in the willingness of marginalised groups and individuals to openly provide sensitive and personal information through the research process. My insider/outsider position and the issues which come with being 'race' unmatched to the potential participants are important discussions to have within this research, building on earlier methodological discourses. To exemplify, during the mid-1990s to early 2000s, female researchers of colour in the UK discussed the dynamics and complexities of the ethnic and racial differences and sameness between the researcher and those being researched, particularly in work related to 'race', equality and diversity (Bhopal, 1995; Egharevba, 2001; Mirza, 1998). That is not to say that white researchers, and in particular, white feminist researchers examining the lives of racialised groups of women and undertaking research with minority communities do not consider the problems of access and racial and cultural sensitivities of the researched group (see for example Ryan et al., 2011) or recognise their 'outsider' status (see Johnson, 2017). Researchers of 'race' and ethnicity are cognisant of their positionality of power, privilege and knowledge ownership in relation to their researched subjects. However, it is more questionable as to whether white researchers are aware of the impact and power of whiteness, which I discussed in Chapter Two. Bhopal (1995) argued that the experiences of white female researchers may be different to the experiences of 'Black' female researchers, again taking the definition of 'Black' in the broader political sense. Maylor (2009b) noted her experiences of invisibility and marginalisation as a researcher in a small number of English schools and other educational contexts, stating that her experiences of 'race' and racism as a

Black researcher are "a burden that my White colleagues appear or seem to neither understand nor are prepared to try and understand" (2009b, p.54).

Matters of trust and eradicating any perception or belief that researchers are engaged in studies on 'race' and ethnicity for purely self-interested reasons is pivotal in the process of recruiting participants. The outcomes of the research process have the ability to change social perspectives of racially minoritised groups. But to encourage Black women to participate in this research, a self-reflexive journey was a critical process to understand my own positionality and how I am viewed by the potential participants. Self-reflexivity did not end at securing interview participants, rather it heightened my consciousness of my insider and outsider status and the researcher/researched power relations during the interview process and through to analysis and reporting. Moreover, listening to and collecting the participants' lived experiences was a privilege and I believe I have a duty to present their voices as truthfully and honestly as I can.

The self-reflexive mirror made me question my position and ability to carry out Black feminist research but concretised my choice of theories to form my conceptual framework for this study. Conducting my research through the lens of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) forced me to question my position to be a 'Black' female activist for Black women. Few (2007) pointed out that Black feminists specifically speak to the concerns and experiences of women from the African diaspora. Additionally, Pereira (2015) noted that Black women intellectuals must meet two necessary conditions to qualify for this status: "(1) being a black woman; (2) being committed to actions aimed at overcoming unjust social relations that black women are subject to, prompting black women's

collective self-definition and self-representation" (2015, p. 2332). Unsure of the definitions of 'Black women' which are being used by these commentators, does this, again, make me not 'Black enough' to view Black female teachers' lives through the Black feminist thought lens? The process of self-reflexivity I journeyed through brought me to a place where I realised that my positioning was one of a 'woman of colour', who has commonalities of experience with African diaspora women (by identifying as politically 'Black) and feels solidarity with their lives but simultaneously recognising the differences in my ethnicity (phenotypically South Asian) and culture which, although can be bridged, can also provide a barrier to being fully accepted by these women. I became committed to provide a platform for the participant Black female teachers in this research to voice their experiences and stories in the following chapters, despite the dissonance of my positionality.

Moving forward for future research with Black women, I will be in a more informed place from the outset. I will be able to position myself as an inbetweener looking in towards their lives in solidarity and with compassion but also looking out towards the periphery as a reminder that I cannot stand in their shoes directly and that my racialised and gendered experiences are different. I experienced a necessary journey of self-challenge, self-awareness, self-reflection and self-definition as a racialised researcher who positions herself as politically 'Black' to speak to Black women's voices, developing an understanding of an inbetween status and knowing that full insiderness is unlikely to be bestowed or accepted in the research process of the sensitivities of the lives of Black women. On reflection, to undertake this journey of self-reflexivity prior to beginning this

research would have provided me with a view on my positionality which I am just

beginning to understand the implications of.

4. Chapter Four - Findings and Discussion 1: Contextualising racialised and oppressive experiences in predominantly white school spaces through CRT in education

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first of two which presents and analyses the personal stories of the 10 participants in varying stages of their professional journeys (class teachers to headteachers or principals) located within schools across England (see Table 1 for participant demographics). Chapter Five will use consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) as the primary lens of data analysis, but this chapter uses the lens of CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001). It contextualises the experiences of the 10 participants to reveal how oppression and racism exists in school spaces, by answering the question, 'From an experiential perspective, what, if anything, made their school contexts racialised and challenging to exist in?'. The 10 participants shared their experiences of how they perceived their school settings to be racialised, articulating their experiences of oppression. This chapter presents and discusses these individual experiences to create an overarching narrative of racialised oppressions, with further examples identified through the thematic data analysis process listed in Appendix 5. The chapter is, therefore, divided to discuss the findings specific to the 10 participants followed by further discussion of how the themes resonate with the broader literature and address the relevant research objectives.

4.2 Understanding how schools are racialised spaces through CRT in education

This analysis and discussion chapter examines how the participants interviewed for this research view their workspaces as being racialised. Looking through the lens of CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001), the participants' interview data revealed lived experiences which describe and demonstrate the ways in which systemic oppression exists in their school environments. Therefore, I draw on relevant tenets of CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) which surface racialised oppressions and centralise them as themes. These are:

a) the centrality of 'race' and racism in intersectional lives in educational contexts; and

b) challenging the dominant ideology of white supremacy in education and the impact of whiteness.

The identified CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) tenets act as a framework for revealing the trauma of oppression and racism in education policy and practice. This chapter, therefore, draws on the personal stories of the 10 participants in this study to situate and contextualise the oppressions they face in their everyday working lives.

With the key themes already established through the tenets of CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001), thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2012) focussed on the deductive emergence of categories to answer the contextualising question, 'From an experiential perspective, what, if anything, made their school contexts racialised and challenging to exist in?'. These are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 outlines the seven categories which deductively emerged through Braun and Clarke's (2012) thematic analysis model. Using the categories as a mechanism to present aspects of the participants' personal stories in this study, the findings under each theme exemplify examples of lived experiences to understand the context within which these women operate as professionals, maintaining the position of presenting research with and for Black women and Black girls (Evans-Winter, 2019).

Table 3: Key themes set by the tenets of CRT in education and emergent categories.

Theoretical lens	Key Themes	Categories
CRT in education	**The centrality of 'race' and racism in intersectional lives in education**	1. The impact of white teacher oppression and stereotyping of Black learners
		2. Professional skills, experience and being hyper-visible yet invisible
		3. Issues of under-representation
	The existence and impact of a dominant ideology	1. Over scrutiny and surveillance by white parents and staff
		2. The impact of self-silencing and self-policing
	Impact of whiteness on the intersectionality of 'race' and gender in education	1. Intersectional stereotyped Black female identities
		2. Intersectional stereotyped Black female abilities

To contextualise this study, a key feature of the participants' experiences was that they are located in white-dominated workspaces. As part of the interview process, I asked a contextual question about what made their school spaces white dominated (see Appendix 4 as an example). All 10 participants referred to

the lack of representation and for three participants they were the only Black staff member in the department or in leadership, as Nicole pointed out about her context.

> I guess in the sense of visually and in the physicality of what I see, it is white. I am one of the only Black members of staff in the school, let alone being the only Black leader in the school. So there is one Black female which is me and one Black male teacher in the entire school. Then I'm part of a federation, so within the federation and I look at the leadership structure I am one of two Black leaders out of 16 different entities within my federation. So, it is predominantly a white space. (Nicole)

Lisa and Patricia also spoke of being the only Black staff or leader in their school, with Lisa particularly noting that she was the "only Black face in my department". Nicole's perception about the wider school and multiple school partnership arrangements is also noted by Afia and Erika, who make an observation about the governing bodies of their schools.

> Even the governing body as well is basically dominated white, maybe because of the area we're in. (Afia)

> [for the majority of time, I] was in predominantly white environments in terms of the staffing, the structure and the governance of the school. (Erika)

Despite working in a faith school which attracts a range of diverse staff and pupils, Teresa was aware of the lack of diversity within the cluster of schools within which her school was joined to, which has an influence on how her school operated.

> We have [North African] members of staff, Black members of staff, white members of staff as well, and [South Asian]. So, we have that mix there in terms of, religious-wise as well, we have a mix there of atheists, Christians, Muslims. So, it is quite a nice mix but we're part of a cluster

school and within that cluster of schools it's still majority of a white space. (Teresa)

The lack of representation in the staffing body was raised by Afia as a reason why she deemed her school as a predominantly white space. She expressed her disappointment in the lack of representation in the staffing body to reflect the pupil body within her school.

…you'd think you'd see [diverse staff] that represented [the pupil body], particularly with the children that we have, our cover was heavily EAL and there's a lot of African children. (Afia)

All 10 participants experienced challenges of working in environments which presented a lack of diversity in the staffing body, leadership and governance as well across the wider life of the school as a member of a cluster, federation or trust. These challenges are outlined in the main body of this chapter.

4.3 Findings

The findings present an analysis of the 10 participants' personal stories, drawing on examples of lived experiences to comprehend racialised experiences of school spaces. Referring back to the point made by Stockfelt (2018) who cites Delgado (2011) to caution the divergence away from the roots of intersectionality in an attempt to encompass all intersectional identities, the findings focus on intersectional experiences of 'race' and gender in school spaces, rather than multiple subjectivities. This allows for a centring of attention on 'being Black' and 'being a female', matching the criteria for recruitment of participants for this study. The findings also examine the participants' experiences of being exposed to and

witnessing systemic oppression of learners and the impact this has on their professional positioning.

Table 4 outlines the number of available stories to draw on to exemplify each of the categories which deductively emerged as a result of the analysis process. Some stories are used within the main body of this thesis, whereas additional stories are available within Appendix 5 to support the experiences of other participants.

4.3.1 Key CRT theme 1: The centrality of 'race' and racism in intersectional lives in education

This section presents the experiences of the participants interviewed to describe and demonstrate how systemic racism and oppression exists in their lived experiences as educational professionals within schools in England. The findings for this theme are divided into three categories (see Table 3).

4.3.1.1 The impact of witnessing oppression and stereotyping of Black learners

The experiences of the participants in this research showed their concerns about how Black learners, both Black boys and girls, face oppression and prejudice within their school settings, impacting on relationships between Black children and white school staff. Black children, particularly Black boys, are disproportionally disciplined, something witnessed by four participants in this study, forcing them into positions of "interceder" (Duncan, 2019, p. 204) to advocate and champion for Black learners. Lisa witnessed an example of a disproportionate level of disciplinary sanction received by Black boys. Describing

a moment where three boys were caught running along the corridor whilst she

was conversing with a senior white female colleague, she recalls,

> …one was Black, one was mixed race, one was white. The white boy was told, "go on you carry on but walk", the mixed race boy was given a detention and the Black boy was then put into, it's called a wrap room, it's an exclusion room and he was like, "What?" You could see that she [senior white female colleague] was winding him up. So obviously, he then really kicked off and said, "I'm not going into the wrap room…I'm not doing it" and then he got an exclusion from that. It was awful. (Lisa)

Lisa went on to explain that after witnessing this disproportionate level of

disciplinary intervention against the Black boy, the injustice of the outcome

became one of the underpinning reasons why she left this school and moved

onto another school.

The 'Sapphire' controlling image (Iruka et al., 2020) of Black girls held by white

teaching staff is exemplified through an experience shared by Nicole in her role

as Safeguarding Lead within her senior leadership position. Nicole explained an

event which took place in a history lesson.

> I had a student, she's smart, well smart and her dad is an African scholar, so when I tell you this girl knows her history, she knows her history and you know, the [white] teacher argues that in this case it was a Freudian slip but in a history lesson he must have said something along the lines that slavery was a benefit, so she broke him down. She took him to task. She's 11 [years old] mind, but she took him to task on her knowledge and said there was never any Black person who benefited from slavery and she challenged him and said how there might have been a difference in treatment from a house slave to a field slave, but there was never a benefit in their experience. That member of staff then made a safeguarding referral for that young person on the grounds of extremism…he is the history expert in the school, and he would make a safeguarding referral for a child who knows her history, that's dangerous. (Nicole)

Table 4: location of stories against each tenet of CRT in education (main text and Appendix 5)

		Monica	Afia	Erika	Teresa	Laurette	Patricia	Lisa	Nicole	Jada	Marissa
The centrality of 'race' and racism in intersectional lives in education	The impact of white teacher oppression and stereotyping of Black learners		□					✓	✓	□	
	Professional skills, experience and being hyper-visible yet invisible	✓ □	✓ □		✓	□		✓ □	✓ □	✓ □	
	Issues of under-representation		✓ □	✓	✓		✓		□		✓
The existence and impact of a dominant ideology	Over scrutiny and surveillance by white parents and staff		✓ □				✓			□	
	The impact of self-silencing and self-policing		□		✓				✓		
Impact of whiteness on the intersectionality of 'race' and gender in education	Intersectional stereotyped Black female identities		✓ □		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	Intersectional stereotyped Black female abilities	✓ □	✓ □	✓	✓	□		□	□	✓	

✓   Story features in main text

□   Story features in Appendix 5

The above incident reveals that the History teacher viewed being challenged by the Black female learner in his class as aggression.

Nicole reflects on the implications of the History teacher's request for a safeguarding referral on the grounds of extremism. The politicised caring (McKinney de Royston, Madkins, Givens and Suad Nasir, 2021) underpinning Nicole's position as a Black female teacher in a senior role is articulated in her recognition of a lack of cultural understanding and empathy shown by the History teacher and other staff involved in safeguarding decision making. She recognised the potential of racialised harm on this child beyond her education in the History class if she, as a Black teacher, was not there to act as an interceder in a position of politicised caring and advocacy for the child.

> That's really dangerous, because if I wasn't in that school, for the question to be put to me, and then for them to say "Nicole, did you think that's extreme?" What if I said that was extreme? What would happen to that young lady? What would have been her experience? Would she have got excluded? Would she have had a referral to social care? What would have happened? (Nicole)

The relational impact of stereotypes and negative perceptions of Black children from their view, in particular Black boys, is summed up by Nicole. She reflected on the breadth of interactions she has had with Black learners in her school as a senior member of staff, by stating,

> If you're going to come to me already with your ideology as to who you think I am or what I'm going to do, our relationship's broken before you've even started, and that's how children are suffering because they're being subjected to the stereotypical views about who they are before a member of staff is engaging with them. That is having a damaging impact on their ability to not only access their education but to even access a relationship with the member of staff. (Nicole)

Nicole's experiences demonstrated the need for interceders to intervene and challenge oppressions faced by learners, but the impact of whiteness can silence Black teachers and create barriers to interceding. This silence and self-policing is seen later in section 4.3.2.2 of this chapter.

4.3.1.2   Professional skills, experience and being hyper-visible yet invisible

Concepts of hyper-visibility and simultaneous invisibility of Black teachers and learners in a range of contexts is not new in research literature (see Callender, 2020; Haque and Elliot, 2017; Lander and Santoro, 2017; Tuitt, 2010). Hyper-visibility is often referring to surveillance and scrutiny, which is discussed later in section 4.3.2.1 of this chapter. However, Smith, Baskerville Watkins and Carlton (2019) note that Black women in the workplace are "marginalized group members, as outsiders, [who] are frequently invisible in terms of being recognized as legitimate authority figures…thus seek to gain visibility as professionals" (2019, p. 1709). Hyper-visibility in the experiences presented in this section refer to the convenience of Black female teachers being seen when it serves the needs of the school yet become invisible in attempts to progress their career, echoing Haque and Elliot's (2017) discussion of the invisible and visible nature of barriers to career progression. The concept of invisibility also refers to the additional work undertaken by participants in this study, as noted by Milner (2020), which goes unrewarded and, moreover, unnoticed when specific participants attempted to gain promotional posts.

Six Black female teachers interviewed expressed barriers to career progression, with most of these individual stories discussed in this chapter (also see Appendix

5). They recognised their hyper-visibility to suit the needs of the school, through being high quality classroom practitioners, but how that high quality teaching keeps them in the classroom and prevents career progression. They felt strongly that they were seen for the sole purpose of being excellent classroom teachers, including being called upon for observation for Ofsted inspection quality assurance protocols when the school wanted to demonstrate a very good lesson. However, such experiences and pupil successes were not valued when it came to gaining promotional posts. This is reflected in Lisa's experience.

> …they said, "oh right, do you mind if they [Ofsted inspectors] come and see your lesson because we need to have a good to outstanding lesson?". So they know my worth then, but when it comes to progression it's not going to add any value to my progression, to me moving on and upwards. (Lisa)

This view is echoed by Monica, who also noted generally how Black female teachers were kept in the classroom, suiting the needs of the school, and faced difficulties in career progression.

> …if they are brilliant teachers, people will ignore them for being brilliant teachers and they will stay at the coalface, and they will be kept at the coalface because they need good teachers. If they get the opportunity to rise then hopefully, they will be able to get to the top, but it won't be an easy journey getting to the top, if they want to be a headteacher or deputy head. They would really have to work hard because they are proving themselves. (Monica)

Monica's view is also reflected through Teresa's account of her experiences. Teresa noted that being successful in the classroom was a reason why she had not progressed in her career. The quality of her teaching made her hyper-visible, in terms of results and pupil outcomes, but made her equally invisible when it came to progressing in her career.

I think because I'm constantly having success with my classes it's kept me at ground level and I think that's a big thing and it's kept me stationary at ground level…then I think it's just like [the normative view is], "well, you know Teresa I think she's good at ground level, we need to keep her there. She can train NQTs and maybe she can support PGCE students, but we need her at ground level. She works really well with both support staff and colleagues, so we really just need her there". Just swimming at the bottom. (Teresa)

In sharing their thoughts about their ability to progress and where they currently are in their career, Lisa, Monica and Teresa demonstrated a palpable frustration and disappointment in their own career development and progression, and what they view as opportunities for others. Lisa goes on to compare how her career progression has stalled in comparison to white women and men (I assume she meant both white and minority ethnic men) as well as relatively inexperienced teachers.

I think I, where my career is now, I'd rather be an SLT, so I'm not where I wanted to be. I've seen people around me, white women, men, NQTs just go up the scale so quickly and I just feel I have to keep on applying, keep on and I get silly excuses for reasons why I don't get jobs (Lisa)

Witnessing how other white, and often younger, colleagues are afforded opportunities, like training and development activities which are not open widely, and which benefit their careers has made Monica internalise her invisibility which affect her behavioural choices. She now feels that holding career progression aspirations is pointless.

I see younger [white] colleagues coming in and they apply for senior positions and they get those opportunities. They get opportunities to do

> training courses and various roles within the school and I just think, 'what do they do to have these opportunities?'… The sheer fact that, giving that person that opportunity would place me in a disadvantaged position if you need that skill to apply for a position, if something came up…I have had some barriers to the point where I don't even bother [to consider career progression]. I even describe myself as not being ambitious anymore…because I don't think there's any point. So, I go in, keep my head down and do the work I know how to do well. (Monica)

Black female teachers in this study do hold a desire to progress their career. However, unsuccessful attempts to gain a promotional position within their schools were often accompanied with responses and feedback that were neither constructive nor supportive. Jada explained what happened when a specific senior leadership position arose a third time, and she chose to submit an application despite two previous unsuccessful attempts at gaining the same post.

> I remember going to the headteacher and saying, "I'm going to apply for this job". Under the new management structure it meant that you know, this would have been my last opportunity now to apply for this role and I remember his words, he said to me, "I'm really glad that you're applying but don't be upset with me if you don't get it". (Jada)

Jada's experience suggests that Black teachers can be deemed unsuitable for senior leadership positions even before an application is submitted. Similarly, unconstructive feedback received after unsuccessful application and interview processes created a feeling of not being taken seriously and being undervalued. Lisa spoke about interview feedback being 'horrendous', providing examples of when she applied for promotional roles. Recalling the specific feedback she received after interviewing for a Head of Department role in her previous school, she described the feedback she received after the unsuccessful application and interview for the role.

> He said to me, "I didn't think you actually really wanted it". He said, "you know, I just thought that you didn't have that kind of, you know, that want for it". (Lisa)

Jada also spoke about the nature of feedback she got following an interview for Assistant Head (Key Stage 1), focussing specifically on feedback related to a lack of clarity in the interview questioning.

> I applied for it and got interviewed. In my head I was thinking I interviewed really well and was told that I interviewed really well, but this time I didn't get the job because I didn't talk about current educational issues, which wasn't a question in the interview. I thought, okay. I later found out that the lady that got the job actually knew the headteacher at the time, so I thought well you can't really do much about that. (Jada)

I searched the data to find opposite experiences and did not find any. The experiences of the six participants who spoke of a lack of career progression into formal roles, such as in SLT, was instead further confirmed in that three participants were asked to undertake influential roles which did not carry any additional salary uplift, and despite showing their competence in these roles, did not receive financial or progressive benefits. For example, Afia noted the resistance by her white school leadership to acknowledge her leadership responsibilities with financial remuneration. A later restructuring of staff and governance within her school resulted in her being moved to an alternative year group and losing her leadership responsibilities, whilst the role she was formally doing without financial benefit became recognised with an appropriate pay uplift. Milner (2020) describes this as invisible work.

> I was given those roles and responsibilities without the actual accolade of the pay and now I'm in another year group and I'm being led by someone else, so I've been demoted, essentially. So, it's like you can have a bit of

> leadership, we'll dangle it over you a little bit, there you go, but actually you're not good enough to be on a school website, be officially given the TLR [payment]. (Afia)

Taking on additional responsibilities and workload without remuneration resonates with the stereotype of the 'Mule', which is outlined further in section 4.3.3.1 and discussed in section 4.4.1.2.2 of this chapter.

Professional skills, qualifications and abilities being questioned was mentioned by Nicole. The assumption of being underqualified or unqualified to be in a position of responsibility within the school has made her feel that her credentials must become public knowledge to justify being within the educational space in their role. Nicole reflects on her experience of public credentialisation as a Black female teacher.

> …here is my qualification from University, here's my observation from the National Teaching College, here's my reference from my CEO, here's my confirmation that I legitimately was interviewed for my job twice. Here's my individual assessment proving that I teach and observations done on me. I've had to, and you're always having to walk around with this life record that justifies why I'm here, all of the time (Nicole)

Here, Nicole felt that she was positioned as having to prove or justify her place in her school. Acosta (2019) also notes this experience in her interview findings with Black women educators. The hypervisibility of credentialisation did not, however, remove barriers to career progression.

4.3.1.3   Issues of under-representation

Black staff in a range of positions in their school play a number of critical roles. Firstly, as Miller (2019) notes, it indicates the type of school in which both Black

staff and Black children are likely to thrive (the 'engaged' school). Within the 'engaged' school, a Black teacher will be valued and recognised within their roles for their contributions to the school and its pupils, reflecting to Black pupils that they can achieve and be respected and valued. Secondly, Black representation on the teaching body is considered essential to advocate for Black children, as already noted earlier in Nicole's experiences (Section 4.3.1.1). Without Black teachers, and particularly Black female teachers with their ethic of care (Collins, 2000), Black children are at risk of losing their childhood through adultification and criminalisation within the school setting (McKinney de Royston et al., 2021). A final key role of Black teacher representation is to ensure fair assessment of Black learners and the support of Black learners to achieve their full potential. Maylor (2009a) notes that Black teachers have turned their attentions to addressing the underachievement of Black learners and Harbatkin (2021) points out that Black students were likely to be assessed more favourably by 'race' congruent teachers. Although representation plays critical roles, the Black female teachers participating in this study noticed the underrepresentation of Black teachers and the detriment of this on learners and on their own experiences of working in schools.

Six of the participants spoke about the lack of representation and the perceived positions of Black women in school settings. Patricia recalls how over time representation has seemingly worsened.

> My first job, the permanent teaching post, there was, I would consider two members of staff who were women of colour. There was myself and there was an Asian teacher…when I became the deputy head, I was the only Black member of staff in that school. (Patricia)

Erika echoes this awareness of underrepresentation in the area of England in which she lives. She made a point of the lack of representation at all levels of the staffing profiles of schools in her area.

> I have applied for jobs in schools and I think that has become more of an issue, being Black up here in the North West, because I'm acutely aware that there is a very massive underrepresentation of minority ethnic teachers, never mind leaders, in schools in the city that I live in now (Erika)

Black and minority ethnic leadership in school was viewed by both Erika and Teresa as a means to make positive change that benefit marginalised learners and minority ethnic staff. The lack of representation of Black female teachers in leadership positions in schools is summed up by Teresa.

> …as a Black teacher I know there's not many [Black leaders] at the forefront within the system. (Teresa)

Looking for representation and inspirational Black women in schools, Teresa wonders about what roles and status other women who look like her hold.

> …it's always me sort of looking at the team and looking at people that look like me and wondering, are you SLT? Are you teaching staff? Are you support staff? Are you a mentor? Are you a TA? (Teresa)

However, in many cases, assumptions are made about the status of Black women in school environments. Afia provided an example of an external visitor from the Local Authority's Multi-Agency Team assuming she was an unqualified staff member.

> …there was a lady [from the Multi-Agency Team] and she always used to come in for hearing impairment [sic] and the first time she met me, she went, "oh I'm looking for the class teacher. I'm looking for the class teacher and are you the class teaching assistant?" I said, "no I'm the class teacher" and that hasn't just happened in school, it happens with visitors, but it's happened when we go on trips as well. People think that you are the, you must be the assistant (Afia)

Even being in a senior role, Marissa would experience assumptions of her position in the school. Her experience resonates with the experiences articulated by Maylor (2009b).

> So, when I was acting head I remember often when we had supply teachers they would say, "Oh where's the head?" And I would say, "Well I'm the head". Or they would think I was the cleaner and talk quite down to me, really patronising and I would say, "Excuse me, I'm the head" and they'd be, "Oh my goodness". (Marissa)

Analysis of data for Key Theme 1 demonstrates the Black female teachers personally experienced and witnessed oppressions in their school environments, which suggests that racism in schools remains a problem in education. The need to be interceders to protect Black and minoritised learners is a necessary additional role but also creates dissonance on whether to speak out. The women in this study have goals of career progression but report being treated as invisible when applying for senior roles, although they take on additional work as a way to demonstrate their suitability for promotion which get overlooked, leading to feelings of being taken for granted. As Monica stated, "I'm exhausted by being invisible. I'm exhausted by the fight to be seen". Being under-represented in schools, Black female teachers are cognisant that they are assumed as being unqualified or less qualified than their white peers, forcing them to be overt in their credentialisation to justify their place in the school.

4.3.2 Key CRT theme 2: The existence and impact of a dominant ideology

CRT asserts the prevalence of white supremacy as a dominant ideology. Gillborn (2005) clarified what this means as being "not the obvious and extreme fascistic posturing of small neo-nazi groups, but rather the taken-for-granted routine privileging of white interests that goes unremarked in the political mainstream" (2005, p. 485). Acknowledging the existence of a dominant ideology is a challenge for majoritarian groups, with de Saxe (2021) stating that, "deliberately naming racism and white supremacy are not something that is commonplace…racism and white supremacy are often danced around, glossed over, or ignored all together." (2021, p. 62). Chadderton (2013) posits that white supremacy defines, amongst other things, interactions with Black communities and individuals against assumed white norms. For three of the participants in this study, white supremacy manifested itself as them experiencing over-scrutiny and surveillance as a form of oppression in ways not experienced by their white colleagues, thus challenging claims that education is 'race' neutral, objective and champions social justice (Hall, 2021). In the same way that white supremacy is maintained and enacted in education through the deficit perceptions held by white teachers of minoritised learners (Gillborn, 2005; Tomlinson, 2019), the experiences of some Black female teachers in this study suggested that they are also viewed through a deficit lens, which required an additional layer of monitoring. Further, white supremacy placed some participants in situations of needing to self-police their actions and interactions for self-preservation.

4.3.2.1 <u>Over scrutiny and surveillance by white parents and staff</u>

Being under a higher level of scrutiny, or over scrutiny, and surveillance featured in three participants' stories. Afia's experience showed the type of scrutiny she was under from predominantly white parents, who she felt were sceptical of her abilities. She talked about feeling as if she were being tested by these parents.

> …they give you that look where they think, are you capable or let me question you more. Let me test you, let me make sure you're doing everything. I cover my tracks, I do everything…So there's nothing you can slip me up on. (Afia)

Afia's need to "cover my tracks" demonstrates the pressure that she felt to ensure her work was constantly high quality and unquestionable. It suggests that there was no room for her to have a bad day but equally that she would cover her tracks even when her day was good. Likewise, Patricia, being in a leadership role, felt a high level of surveillance and over scrutiny from the white staff and governors who were comparing her to her predecessor. She explained how this level of scrutiny made her feel.

> I was aware as a Black leader that I was going to be challenged far more than my white colleagues… I had experienced a lot of resistance from the, I'd call them the junior teachers who were predominantly white, and I was aware that that was the biggest issue for them. They were used to a white male head. (Patricia)

Surveillance and over scrutiny suggested to these participants that their capabilities were in the spotlight at all times, watching for any signs of weakness or failure. As such, Afia noted the micromanagement which came with having her work and interactions under a microscope, despite her constantly evidencing high learner outcomes year on year.

> …you're forced to sort of be micromanaged. "Oh we'll let you have a bit of experience but Afia, this is what you need to do, and this is what you need to do. We need to help you here, and we need to help you here" and [there's] just an expectation that you'll fail. (Afia)

Expectations of failure appears to be a burden of white supremacy on these Black female teachers. Examples of Black female teachers in this study having their capabilities questioned are also seen in section 4.3.3.2 of this chapter.

4.3.2.2 Impact of self-silencing and self-policing

Self-silencing is a mechanism to manage the potential mental health issues that come with maintaining a Strong Black woman persona (Abrams et al., 2019). It was a strategy which three of the participants in this study drew on for self-preservation within their school spaces, in the knowledge that speaking out against oppression could be problematic for them. Nicole recalled a time when she was referred to in a derogatory way due to her commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. Being referred to in a derogatory manner made her question when and how she should step in to protect learners who are facing oppressions.

> I've even had staff go, you know, "Here comes the EDI police". That's how I've been referred to by members of staff within the school, and that's a really hard position to be in because sometimes you're like, so do I not speak up? Do I not challenge? Do I not say that I think something's right or wrong? (Nicole)

Nicole recognised that she would face oppressions herself in advocating for those learners who needed her to challenge unjust and unequal practices as an interceder. There was no doubt that Nicole would challenge oppressions, but she

was highly cognisant of the impact intervening would have on her and the stereotypes of Black women which would become embedded.

Teresa also faced a similar dilemma. Recounting an event of overhearing two white staff members discussing a Black boy in the staffroom, Teresa questioned whether to intervene and challenge the stereotyping of the child. She recognised that being the interceder in this case could manifest in a different stereotype being solidified in the minds of these staff members, that of her being the 'Sapphire' or the "Crazy Black Bitch" (CBB) (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008, p. 130). Teresa, therefore, faced a dilemma of self-policing and self-silencing, and the consequences of that choice.

> …they were just giggling about certain stereotypes, how he [Black male pupil] should be very grateful that he's in the school and I remember hearing it and even then, I sort of say [to myself], "Do I challenge this? Am I in a position to challenge this? I'm the only person [who looks like me] in this space. If I do challenge this, am I deemed as the aggressor?" (Teresa)

Self-policing and self-silencing can take an emotional and physical toll on Black female teachers. Teresa goes on to explain what this toll feels like for her but also the rationale for her actions.

> Today was exhausting because I had to make sure that within that space I was not seen as the aggressor, I was seen with the upmost profession that again I am working ten times harder so I may be considered when maternity cover comes in, or when it's the new academic year, I might get that upper pay scale. (Teresa)

4.3.3 Key CRT Theme 3: Impact of whiteness on the intersectionality of 'race' and gender in education

Despite the caution by Haviland (2008) to avoid oversimplifying and homogenising the concept of whiteness, she recognises the power that the majoritarian group "may (often unconsciously) ignore, resist, or deny" (2008, p. 41). This ignorance, resistance or denial places an additional burden on Black and minoritised individuals and groups to navigate around "techniques that keep it [whiteness] at the centre" (Haviland, 2008, p. 42). Whiteness techniques serve as mechanisms that "reinforces the status quo of silence and hegemony which results in the sustainability of institutionalised whiteness and racial domination" (de Saxe, 2021, p. 62). As such, nine of the participants in this study experienced normative stereotyping of Black women as a method of racial domination.

Citing the work of Bowleg (2012), Harris and Leonardo (2018) note that social identities intersect at the individual micro-level of experience to expose systems of privilege and oppression at wider macro-levels. The intersection of 'race' and gender for the 10 participants in this study revealed that nine of them had experienced some level of stereotyping. These stereotypes are divided into two categories of identity stereotypes and ability stereotypes, both grounded in white hegemonic controlling images. With nine of the participants experiencing ascribed stereotypes at an individual micro-level, it points to a wider noted macro-level problem of oppression faced by Black women in education and potentially in society at large (see Acosta, 2019; Anderson, Holland, Heldreth and Johnson, 2018; Johnson et al., 2020; King, 2005; Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008).

4.3.3.1   Intersectional stereotyped Black female identities

The most common stereotype featured in six of the Black female teachers' stories was that of the 'Mammy' image. The Black female teachers interviewed reference their role in managing behaviour in the school, with two participants likening this role directly to that of the 'Mammy' figure stereotype.

> I always find like I play the Mammy, give Teresa the toughest class, give Teresa the Black class. (Teresa)

> …like you're the big momma [Mammy] in the house and you're safeguarding, you're nurturing, you'll look after the children. If they're naughty we'll send them to you and I will say I constantly assume that role. Even though I am not in charge of behaviour, if there is a behaviour concern, I will be the person that's tannoyed. (Nicole)

With the 'Mammy' image comes the expectation by white colleagues that Black female teachers are strong disciplinarians. As such, they are often expected to deal with behaviour issues, particularly of Black children.

> …being a Black teacher you were thought of as quite strict and you could sort out the behaviour of other Black children. (Marissa)

Likewise, Afia, Erika and Lisa spoke about being given challenging behavioural classes. They all made the point about having high expectations of behaviour but were seemingly exasperated at being consistently given classes with children who displayed challenging behaviours. As Lisa noted about her experiences,

> I noticed that with my Head of Department, I was the only Black staff member out of 9 members in that department and I noticed that the next year I got the difficult classes for year 8 and year 9. (Lisa)

A second stereotype revealed in the participants' stories is that of the 'Mule'. Marissa sums up her view on this expectation of Black female teachers. She made a clear comparison between the expectations on her related to those placed on white colleagues.

> …it was quite obvious to me that being a Black woman, I was expected to take on a lot more than my white colleagues, that I was seen as strong and I could take on more and more and more. (Marissa)

A third stereotype which was discussed by three of the participants was that of the CBB (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008, p. 130) stereotype. Moreover, the aspects of the CBB stereotype which were mentioned related to Black women being aggressive and angry. Jada mentioned two examples of when staff avoided speaking to her due to their expectations of a CBB stereotype revealing itself.

> They said things like staff didn't want to come and have conversations with me on their own because they felt whatever conversations I had with them that I might interpret it in the wrong way. They said that a member of staff was afraid to use the word 'blackboard' in case I took offence to it. We don't have any blackboards in the school. (Jada)

Likewise, Afia recognised that standing by her convictions and fighting against oppression within her school leads to staff developing the perception that she is aggressive.

> When you're standing there fighting by yourself, fighting, people are going to think, oh here she goes again, kicking off. (Afia)

The perception of being a CBB stereotype puts both Jada and Afia in positions of self-policing and potentially self-silencing. However, Erika viewed that the staff member who found her "maybe quite threatening" had her own insecurities. Erika refused to be defined by the other staff member's issues.

A final stereotype evident in the findings is that of the 'Jezebel'. Lisa shared her thoughts on her body being hypersexualised and this being a potential barrier to career progression.

> I think the barriers are white males…I find white males look at me as a sexual kind of thing and not serious at my profession … don't let your guard down with them because they will look at you as a piece of meat rather than what your worth is (Lisa)

Lisa then spoke about a specific incident involving a white male senior colleague.

> … he said to me, "I bet you're high maintenance"… I wanted to cancel the meeting. I was so taken aback by it (Lisa)

With many white males being in positions of leadership in school settings, particularly in secondary provision (workforce data for 2020 show that 53% of headteachers in secondary state-funded schools and 29% of headteachers in all state-funded schools are white males), Black female teachers being viewed as a hypersexual body undermines their professional capabilities and is a risk to their wellbeing. Hence, Lisa saw this as a barrier to her career development and progression. She also heeded the warning to not let personal protective guards down as a means to looking after her wellbeing.

Other Black female identities which were revealed as being problematised by white staff related to culture, specifically around headwear and hair. Three Black female teachers explained their experiences of having to contend with false perceptions related to their hair and headwear. Laurette recalled the lack of understanding about her headwear when she first started teaching and how it still exists two decades later.

> I am astounded at times about the things that come out of colleagues' mouths. I can remember starting 20 years ago when I was wearing a head wrap and being asked if I was wearing voodoo [headwear] and then 20 years later wearing a head wrap and being asked the same thing. (Laurette)

Cultural insensitivity was also revealed by Lisa, who shared an experience with a white female colleague about her hair and how she slept.

> And I had this very rude woman said, "Do you have to sleep [on]… it's a wooden stand about so high and it's got a curve in there where you're meant to put your neck on and sleep, so your hair won't touch your pillow?"…so I thought, okay, is this underlying racism? (Lisa)

Both Laurette and Lisa do not mind if their colleagues are curious about aspects of their culture. However, both felt that their specific experiences showed little sensitivity or respect. Black women's hair was also a theme for Afia, who resented the generalisations made about her.

> Yes, I've got braids in my hair, doesn't mean I'm a spokesperson for everybody that wears braids. It is really cliché. (Afia)

4.3.3.2 Intersectional stereotyped Black female abilities

The various stereotypes which specifically exist about Black women's identities underpin how work colleagues perceive their abilities. These stereotypes "affect Black women's experience in the workplace, especially as they aspire to become leaders" (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008, p. 135), impacting on their ability to reach their full potential in their profession. In the case of the participants in this study, being perceived through these normative stereotypes creates negative assumptions about their knowledge, skills and expertise, thus placing barriers to gaining senior positions in which they can have an impact on the wider cultures of the school.

Sharing experiences of the way less experienced teachers made assumptions about her abilities, skills and expertise, Afia spoke of how she found interactions undermining.

> …they're ready to see your downfall. They're ready to see you fall…they're ready to override what you've done or talk down to you because obviously, there's no way that you can be of more experience than them or [have] more expertise (Afia)

Whereas Afia revealed her frustrations with being assumed as having less experience and expertise by inexperienced teachers, Erika shared her experience of being assumed incapable of managing a particularly challenging class by a member of SLT in her school.

> I never, ever, ever in my teaching career have called on other people to come and manage my classes, ever. I don't care how hard it is, my response is I will go away and come up with another plan to try again tomorrow. So she tried to make out like I couldn't manage. (Erika)

Further to the undermining experiences shared by Afia and Erika where they were seen as less experienced or having less expertise, two participants were deemed as having expertise when specifically required to deal with issues related to Black parents. For Jada, her experience demonstrated that her Blackness was deemed useful to deal with Black parents. Her experience revealed a white discomfort in leadership when interacting with Black parents, rather than a recognition that she may have a beneficial skill set and common cultural capital to draw on to work successfully with Black parents.

> I was asked to deal with issues to do with 'race', in particular Black parents, where I felt the headteacher didn't feel comfortable, so he passed it on to me. (Jada)

Similarly, Monica spoke of Black parents being seen as "difficult" by white colleagues. She noted that by involving her in situations involving Black parents, her white colleagues used her Blackness as a tool for both their own and Black parental comfort and support.

> I think in certain situations where they might find certain people difficult, they [white colleagues] might find it beneficial to have me around and so that parents sometimes see a Black person and they [white colleagues] hope that parents might see someone on their side. (Monica)

In both Jada and Monica's experiences, the focus of their support of Black parents was underpinned by their Blackness as opposed to their abilities to work effectively with parents from a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The expectations held by the colleagues of all four participants was that they do not

have expertise when issues involve matters of the curriculum, but have expertise when issues involve matters of 'race'.

Facing stereotypes of their identities and abilities may have potentially taken an emotional toll on the participants, affecting their health. It made these capable and professional women consider their position in the teaching profession, as exemplified by Teresa's view, who stated,

> …it's making me see that I think my time is up soon, maybe another five years before I need to get out of the classroom setting. Just for my health and that's why I'm now really pushing to make sure I'm building up in terms of my CPD (Teresa).

4.4 Further discussion

The findings above provide perspectives from the 10 participants in this study to understand one of the four research objectives, that being how their intersectional experiences in their educational workplace compare to their colleagues, thus cannot be generalised. Literature outlined in Chapter 2 presents a broader discourse of Black women's experiences in the workplace and specifically in education. However, the findings also demonstrate wider issues of oppression for both themselves as Black female teachers but also for racially minoritised children, which collectively produce a broader picture of the nature of schools being racialised spaces. Findings about witnessing the oppression of Black children, therefore, provides perspectives to understand a second objective in part, that being what Black female teachers perceive as influencing their professional identities.

4.4.1 Black female teachers' intersectional experiences compared to their colleagues

Navigating the workplace presents unique difficulties for Black women, where they experience adversity and trauma as a result of intersectional invisibility (Johnson, Erskine and Morgan Roberts, 2020; Smith, Baskerville Watkins and Carlton, 2019). Intersectional invisibility can be drawn upon to explain why Black women at work are silenced and lack opportunities for career progression. As Johnson et al. (2020) citing Smith et al. (2019) state, it "can explain why Black women face more barriers towards promotion to leadership positions at work than their White female counterparts" (2020, p. 169). Further, they suggest that stereotyping of Black women in the workplace is still pervasive. In facing intersectional invisibility alongside stereotyping and other forms of bias and oppression, Black women may face and manage daily psychological trauma and distress in the workplace in ways that do not affect their counterparts.

4.4.1.1   Lack of career progression

Visible and invisible barriers to Black teacher progression are discussed by Haque and Elliot (2017), positing "passive resistance/lack of support to active discouragement and resistance" (2017, p. 36) being persistent experiences in preventing Black teacher career progression. These experiences are reflected in Teresa, Lisa and Monica's experiences (section 4.3.1.2).

Culturally determined bias, where Black staff are overlooked for promotional positions within white institutions, is embedded in the unconscious view of organisational leadership that these staff do not match a leader prototype (Lowe,

2013). In the UK, the most common leader prototype is the white male. Whilst the gender prototype is changing within education, with more women in leadership, Lowe (2013) notes that progress in terms of ethnicity leaves leadership a predominantly white activity. Further, a DfE (2018) report confirmed the white male leader prototype remains, in that white men still dominate school leadership and are being promoted more quickly than women and any ethnic group. Lowe (2013) goes on to note that the culture of white institutions where Black staff and staff of colour do not feel valued, experiencing microaggressions and invisibility in their work life, they "do not put themselves forward for leadership positions, believing that it would be pointless" (2013, p. 152). This resonates with Monica's view (section 4.3.1.2), choosing to not bother with career progression after several negative experiences with applications for promotions.

Integral in the lack of career progression is the negative post shortlisting and interview experiences, the implications being outlined by Nikolaou and Georgiou (2018). They examine how perceptions of interviewer justice influences job and organisational attractiveness and applicant's future behavioural intentions. They note research evidence regarding interview justice perceived as moderate to low with applicants consequently perceiving a high possibility of unfair discrimination. Hence, Nikolaou and Georgiou (2018) explained that when applicants experience negative selection and interview processes, it has a detrimental effect on applicant welfare, long-term health and future job performance. These detrimental effects are often hidden to minimise further oppression which maintains Black women in positions "that marked the bottom rung of the employment ladder" (Branch, 2011, p. 8), thus rendering the Black female teacher silent and unable to request the assistance and support they need.

4.4.1.2   Normative stereotypes of Black female teachers

Within the findings, I specifically looked for stereotypes, or "controlling images" (Collins, 2000, p.76) outlined in the literature review specifically ascribed to Black women. Five of these stereotypes were evident in the experiences of nine of the Black female teachers interviewed. This suggests that these stereotypes remain embedded in normative views of Black women held by colleagues within school environments, which Acosta (2019) refers to as "constructed professional identities" (2018, p. 31). Further, these stereotypes appear to be held by predominantly white colleagues, as seen in the experiences of participants featured in this study, and provide perspectives of how Black female teachers' intersectional experiences are different to their white colleagues and Black male colleagues, where mentioned. Ladson-Billings (2009) notes that negative constructs of Black women found in popular culture have permeated into education, meaning that Black female teachers "continue to face a separate and different set of standards about what it means to be a good teacher" (2009, p. 87).

4.4.1.2.1 Perceived as the 'Mammy'

Citing Ladson-Billings (2009), Acosta (2019) notes that "Black teachers, despite their professional status, can suffer the same stigmatization and derogation as Black women in general" (2019, p. 28). The teaching profession invokes characteristics of caring, which makes the 'Mammy' controlling image as caring of all children, including white children, but being perceived as strong disciplinarians an enduring and embedded stereotype for Black female teachers. Six of the 10 participants interviewed made reference to being expected to manage the most

behaviourally challenging classes and individual behaviour challenges outside of their classes, particularly of Black and minoritised learners, with two participants specifically referring to being likened to the 'Mammy' image. The types of behaviours which are considered as challenging is wide and varied, as seen in Nicole's experience (section 4.3.1.1 of this chapter), where the History teacher requested a safeguarding referral after being questioned by a Black learner on Black history. In that case, Nicole recognised that being a Black female teacher, she engaged in "risky work of caring for and protecting Black children" (McKinney de Royston et al., 2021, p.70) in a predominantly white environment. Further, the 'Mammy' image overshadows Black women's professional capabilities with her nurturing qualities (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008). This restricts Black female teachers' abilities to progress in their career, being seen as usefully placed within the classroom to manage challenging behaviours.

4.4.1.2.2 Perceived as the 'Mule'

The expectation that Black female teachers take on more work without suitable renumeration and recognition resonates with the idea that Black women in the work force are often seen as the stereotypes of the 'Mule' (Branch, 2011; Collins, 2000), meaning that Black women are seen to be useful to carry out hard, lower level, lower paid activities. Citing Zora Neale Hurston in 1937, Collins (2000) posits that the dehumanising 'Mule' image is central to Black women's exploitation and oppression in the workforce, to be treated as "living machines and can be treated as part of the scenery" (2000, p.51). Being the 'Mule' keeps Black female teachers in low positions of service ("at the coalface", as Monica stated in section 4.3.1.2) and being part of the 'scenery' adds to the invisibility

experienced by Black female teachers who struggle to be seen for promotional posts. Where continued underemployment, where abilities are not matched with tasks, and unemployment, where talents are underutilised (King, 2005), Black female teachers have minimal opportunity to demonstrate that they have the skills and potential for promotional positions yet are expected to carry out duties beyond their remit with no recognition or remuneration. As experienced by Black female teachers in this study, they are often expected to carry out "invisible work as orchestrated by White colleagues without compensation or recognition of these practices as part of their real, official workload as teachers" (Milner, 2020, p.403).

4.4.1.2.3 Perceived as the 'CBB'

The perception and expectation that Black female teachers are overly aggressive and angry is one which remains as a stereotype held by some white teachers. As Jada and Afia's experiences show (section 4.3.3.1) white colleagues have expectations that Black female teachers will start "kicking off" (Afia) and will avoid having conversations in fear of Black female teachers reacting in aggressive ways. Being perceived as a 'CBB' has multiple functions to prevent competent Black women from progressing in the organisation, according to Reynolds-Dobbs et al. (2008). Traits associated with aggression are seen as undesirable in senior or leadership roles and like the 'Mammy' image overshadows Black women's competence.

4.4.1.2.4 Perceived as the 'Jezebel'

Lisa's experience of her headteacher suggestively commenting on her being "high maintenance" (section 4.3.3.1) was an unexpected finding. Knowing that

Black women's bodies can be viewed as sexual objects, Lisa was also cognisant of protecting her physical and mental wellbeing. Jerald, Monique Ward, Moss, Thomas and Fletcher (2017) note that the internalising of this controlling image has implications on Black women's mental health and relationships. Further, Black women's performance can be negatively affected as a consequence of experiencing objectification (Anderson et al., 2018). Hence, there is a need for Black female teachers' self-protection against being objectified in the workplace, with further implications for appropriate clinical management of mental wellbeing where needed.

4.4.1.2.5 *Perceived as the 'Superwoman'*

Abrams, Hill and Maxwell (2019) stated that "many Black women have mastered the art of portraying strength while concealing trauma" (2019, p. 518) in the guise of the Black 'Superwoman' or 'Strong Black Woman' schema. However, they also discussed the overwhelming and unrelenting expectation that Black women face to maintain a display of strength. Likewise, Johnson et al. (2020) note that Black women have to appear "strong, unfazed and non-threatening in order to survive" (2020, p. 167) in their workplaces. In the face of what was perceived as unfair recruitment and selection processes for promotional posts, the Black female teachers in this study who shared experiences on this topic faced externalised situational pressures to present the Strong Black Woman schema. Jada (section 3.1.2) being resigned to the circumstances epitomises the Strong Black Woman schema despite her inward recognition of the unfairness of her treatment in that interview situation.

4.4.2 Influences on professional identities: the impact of witnessing the oppression of Black learners

There is little literature which specifically examines relationships between white teachers and Black learners, except in matters of disproportionate disciplinary sanctions experienced by Black children, especially Black boys, which is widely discussed in literature (Allen and White-Smith, 2018; Bell, 2020; Hughes, Bailey, Warren and Stewart, 2020; Monroe, 2010; Morrison, 2018; Santiago-Rosario, Whitcomb, Pearlman and McIntosh, 2021), with Black children being framed as problematic (Wright, Maylor and Becker, 2016).   However, expanding the Black teacher pipeline to increase representation can reduce the disparity in the disciplinary practices toward Black children (Williams, Davis and Butler, 2020). As Samuels, Wilkerson and Dacres (2021) states, "Black women teachers significantly contribute to the success of underrepresented students" (2021, p. 138).

Where negative expectations and stereotypes underpin white teachers' relationships with Black learners, Black teachers become interceders on behalf of their students, often providing an alternative view to white colleagues of what Black children can do and challenging the low expectations held of Black learners. As Acosta (2019) recognises, Black female teachers hold a "desire to assert the brilliance of Black children as a direct contradiction to pervasive theories of…intellectual inferiority" (2019, p. 30).

A further influence is identified by Samuels et al. (2021) who cite Ellison (2011) to acknowledge that shared cultural background inspires and relates to Black learners, hence arguing for the need to increase representation so that Black

learners "see themselves positively represented in schools, which can help them to reject the negative stereotypes perpetuated by society" (2021, p. 137). Maylor (2009a) provides an extensive discussion on the desire of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) teachers to be role models.

4.5 A word on class as an intersectional identity

Class, as a form of oppression, is not much featured in this thesis. It was not a focus of the thesis and I did not ask about it specifically in interviews. However, I was interested to see how much it emerged in the data. Only one Black female teacher (Erika) mentioned her working class background in relating how her white male headteacher treated her as a self-defined "vocal, assertive, self-assured" Black woman. However, Rankin-Wright et al. (2019) cite Mirza (1997) to note,

> The invisibility of black women speaks of the separate narrative constructions of race, gender and class: in a racial discourse, where the subject is male; in a gendered discourse where the subject is white; and a class discourse where race has no place (Mirza 1997, p. 4, cited by Rankin-Wright et al., 2019, p. 5)

Further, the impact of racism is not negated by class. As Rollock, Gillborn, Vincent and Ball (2015) state in their work on Black middle-class parents and educating their children, "to be Black and middle class does not mean having transcended racism" (2015, p. 3). Ladson-Billings (2009, cited by Acosta, 2019) states that class does not render Black female teachers as immune from the 'Mammy' controlling image, or indeed other normative stereotypes ascribed to Black women.

4.6 Conclusion to the chapter

This chapter sought to find the commonalities of lived experiences within the rich personal stories of the Black female teachers to present the existence of oppressions faced by these professionals in their workplaces. Their experiences are situated alongside wider literature on epistemologies of Black professional women which interrogate the intersection of 'race' and gender.

Analysis through the key CRT in education themes (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) provided examples of a range of racialised oppressions. Witnessing Black and minoritised learners being oppressed led to Lisa leaving her school. Nicole's experience of a request for a safeguarding referral of a Black girl demonstrated the need for Black female teachers to act as interceders. Being hypervisible and invisible simultaneously made many of the participants feel undervalued, further negatively impacting on their attempts to progress their careers. The lack of representation in the schools' workforces served to embed negative stereotypes of Black women. Experiencing over-scrutiny and surveillance created constant pressure for some of the participants, highlighted by Afia's statement that exceptional practice is the only way to "cover my tracks". Survival for some of the participants relied on self-silencing, a mechanism which was also employed to avoid being ascribed specific negative stereotypes. The Black female teachers in this study faced a range of normative controlling images about their intersectional identities and abilities, all of which have the propensity to cause trauma and detriment to their wellbeing.

The following chapter re-examines the participants' personal stories through consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) to counter the

perceptions and narrative of the Black female teachers in this study, as raised in

this chapter.

5. Chapter 5 – Findings and Discussion 2: Constructing counter-narratives of professional identities through consciousness of Black feminist thought

5.1 Introduction

Standpoint and expression of consciousness is integral to constructing Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000). Consciousness as explained in section 5.2 below, therefore, has the power to bring about changes which empower Black women. Thus, in answering the question, 'what made Black female teachers successfully navigate and operate in these spaces?', this chapter presents experiences reflecting the consciousness of the 10 participants, which reframes images of Black working women in education and represents a broader consciousness of Black women. Further, this chapter aims to build upon existing literature on racism and Black feminist theory, "to ensure accessibility to a broader audience; to eschew the intellect/spirit dichotomy often adored in academic spaces; to encourage the reader to craft her own meanings and messages; and ultimately, to situate her story within our story" (Escayg, Butler, Webb, Murray and Henderson, 2019, p. 99). In other words, presenting the findings and subsequent discussion of the experiences of the 10 participants represents researching with and for Black women and girls (Evans-Winters, 2019).

Black feminist thought, as an analysis framework, allows for inductively engaging with participants' experiences to organise, interpret and produce stories to understand people, culture and change (Clemons, 2019). The findings presented

as five themes (Table 5) and discussed in this chapter inductively emerged

through the thematic data analysis process advocated by Braun and Clarke

(2012).

5.2 Consciousness: a framework to construct counter-narratives and alternative images of Black female teachers' professional identities

This chapter will present the 10 participants' experiences through the ideas of

consciousness which construct Black feminist thought. Consciousness of Black

feminist thought implicitly embeds the concept of agency, although Collins (2000)

does not refer to the concept of agency directly. Instead, Collins (2000) explores

consciousness as a mechanism to challenge and reconstruct prevailing

controlling images placed on Black womanhood and prevents Black women

falling into concepts of victimhood through personal and collective resistance and

activism. Collins (2000) describes how Black women produces dual

consciousness; understanding the language and structures which are used by

oppressors and where necessary adopting manners and behaviours of

oppressors for protection, whilst simultaneously "hiding a self-defined standpoint

from the prying eyes of the dominant group" (2000, p. 107).

There are four key ideas to consciousness (Collins, 2000). Firstly, the

importance of self-definition provides Black women with the power to name their

own reality and reject how media and society defines and objectifies them.

Secondly, the significance of self-valuation and respect speaks to the content of

self-definition, where Black women encourage and urge each other to have self-

respect and to demand respect from others by learning to love and appreciate

themselves in a society in which they contradict normative ideologies, such as the strong Black mother being viewed as the antipathy of femininity. Thirdly, the necessity of self-reliance and independence is linked to the Black women's survival and ability to exist and provide for themselves and their families in the face of difficulties and oppressions. Finally, personal empowerment enables Black women to foster action to change both the conditions of their lives and their personal consciousness through self-knowledge. This chapter, therefore, utilises these four ideas as a method of rearticulating images of Black women in school workspaces provided through the experiences of the 10 participants. Through inductively engaging with the Black female teachers' personal stories, five key themes emerged as constructs of alternative images and counter-narratives, which aim to challenge normative controlling images defined by society (see Table 5 below).

Table 5: Emergent key themes through the lens of Black feminist thought (consciousness)

Theoretical lens	Key themes	Categories
Black feminist thought (consciousness)	Formative experiences	1. Experiences of schooling
		2. Influence of parents, particularly fathers
		3. The legacy of slavery
	Private self-promotion	1. "I am your equal"
		2. Gaining additional qualifications
	Commitment	1. Commitment to Black communities as an educational professional
		2. Commitment to enhancing equality through social justice practices and representation
	Agency	1. Owning their career development
		2. Challenging stereotypes and controlling images
		3. Being heard and seen to make positive change
	Resistance	1. "Going against the tide"

5.3 Findings

The findings in this chapter draw on examples within individual stories which demonstrate how the 10 participants resist hegemonic views of them in the school environment and use agency as a mechanism to drive for positive changes. Further supporting examples highlighted in their personal stories are seen in Appendix 6.

To ensure that I presented a breadth of experiences, I tabulated the stories to identify which individual stories would feature in the main text and which would provide additional examples within the appendices (see Table 6).

5.3.1 Key Theme 1: Formative experiences

The consciousness of Black women draws on histories to promote self-definition through reflexivity, self-knowledge and personal realities. As such, formative experiences played an important part of the participants' self-definitions in this study, impacting on their professional identities in school spaces. Dei (1997) states that "Identity is linked with schooling" (1997, p. 244), which in turn has an inextricable link to formative experiences. He goes on to posit that young Black people do not go to school to become "'disembodied' generic youths" (Dei, 1997, p. 245) under a singular definition of 'student' that render their 'race', gender and other intersectional identities invisible. A notional equalising of school-aged learners under one definition did not prevent the continued stereotyping and "miseducating [of] minorities" (Tomlinson, 2019, p. 104) taking place under education policy in England during the 1970s and 1980s. It was during these decades that many of the participants of this study were in compulsory schooling,

forcing their parents to play central roles in advocating and supporting them against hostile school environments whilst embedding their ethnic and cultural identities in the home and community. Hence, the influences in the participants' childhoods made contributions to the self-definitions they now hold as professionals in teaching.

5.3.1.1   Experiences of schooling

Stories were shared of how experiences of early education and schooling in predominantly white schools in England enabled personal empowerment and self-reliance narratives of success, despite the lack of representation in school staff bodies and education policy which marginalised Black children (Tomlinson, 2019). Erika described her school experiences and how witnessing failure of peers provided her with the drive to succeed.

> In our education there were no role models, we didn't have teachers who got us – all of the teachers were white. So our teachers didn't get us, they didn't come from the inner city that we came from, and a lot of the challenges that many of my peers and myself faced, they just couldn't relate to. So on the back of that, many of my peers and relatives failed, you know, they were excluded from school, they didn't really find their way to move on to further education, higher education. So I think that's what kind of motivated me. I always had a lot of education and learning, and I always had a bit of a drive which was that I knew what I didn't want to end up like and which life I didn't want to have. (Erika)

Erika's story reflected the difficulties that Black children faced when she was of school age, reflecting the oppressions and stereotyping of Black learners by white teachers, outlined in Chapter Four. Moreover, Erika's early educational experiences and her educational success became the motivational factor in her

Table 6: location of stories against each theme through the lens of consciousness of Black feminist thought (main text and Appendix 6)

		Monica	Afia	Erika	Teresa	Laurette	Patricia	Lisa	Nicole	Jada	Marissa
Formative experiences	Experiences of schooling		□	✓			□		✓		□
	Influence of parents, particularly fathers		✓				✓	✓	✓		✓
	The legacy of slavery					✓	✓		✓		
Private self-promotion	"I am your equal"		✓	✓ □						✓	
	Gaining additional qualifications			□	✓	□	□			✓	□
Commitment	Commitment to Black communities as an educational professional					✓	✓			✓	✓
	Commitment to enhancing equality through social justice practices and representation	□	✓ □	✓	✓	□	✓ □		✓	□	✓
Agency	Owning their career development			✓ □	✓ □		□				
	Challenging stereotypes and controlling images		✓			□		✓			
	Being heard and seen to make positive change			✓ □	✓		□		✓ □		
Resistance	"Going against the tide"			□	✓		□	✓	✓		

		Monica	Afia	Erika	Teresa	Laurette	Patricia	Lisa	Nicole	Jada	Marissa
Unexpected finding	The trouble with Black sisterhood	✓					□	✓	✓ □		

✓ Story features in main text

□ Story features in Appendix 6

decision to become a teacher, clearly knowing the type of school and pupil body she wanted to work with. Her reflexivity about how her life could have been different provided her with self-valuation to fulfil her ambitions.

> I knew what kind of schools I wanted to work in. I wanted to work in inner-city, diverse, low socio-economic background schools. That's because one of the things that motivated me early on as a teacher was knowing that I'd succeeded in finding my way through education, of navigating the early education system when many of my peers, classmates, relatives, hadn't. (Erika)

In viewing herself as an educational success, Erika found a route away from the expected failure of Black children at the time of her schooling. She recognised that self-reliance in gaining her education, despite teachers who "didn't get us", was central to her success and escape from the negative expectations of Black children, echoing the position posited by hooks (1994) of education as the practice of freedom.

At a time when Black children were considered as educationally subnormal (Tomlinson, 2019), Nicole recalls a potentially contentious decision her mother made about her schooling location.

> I went to a school in South Gloucestershire… my mum really wanted me to go to a school where it wasn't predominantly Black. She had come from the school of thought that, you know, she admits it now that she felt me being around my Black peers would have been a disadvantage. (Nicole)

Nicole's mother was a teacher and was acutely aware of how Black children were being stereotyped and miseducated. To avoid being associated with the negative stereotypes other Black children faced and the risk of potential failure herself and the failure of Black peers reflecting on her, Nicole's mother took the decision to educate her in an area which was predominantly white as a form of protection. Nicole did not feel comfortable being the single Black child in the class, but on reflection knows how this has aided her self-reliance to successfully navigate white-dominated spaces. A further result of Nicole's schooling experience is that she now holds a strong commitment to protecting Black and minoritised learners from the oppression of white teachers, as seen in Chapter Four section 4.3.1.1.

5.3.1.2   The influence of parents, particularly fathers

Stories of self-valuation demonstrated the role of family, particularly parents, in the participants' early education and support for their career choice. Marissa spoke about the importance of her parents' belief in her as a Black girl.

> My parents were so positive about who I was and that being a Black girl meant that you could still achieve what you want to achieve. My mum would constantly say that, you can be what you want to be. I saw my career advisor and I said I'd like to be a teacher. What she did instead was to give me lots of leaflets about nursery nurses. So that, you know, was a

massive barrier that could have really stopped my career in its path and my mum I remember saying, "Marissa just throw that [leaflets] away, just strike the bin. Don't listen to them. Throw them away, you are going to be a teacher, you said you want to be a teacher". And I threw every single leaflet away, I didn't even think about it. I was taught to ignore and just keep going for your target. (Marissa)

Marissa felt empowered by her mother's words. The career advisor had suggested that Marissa should think about being a nursery nurse, based on her predicted grades rather than her own career aspirations. The action of throwing away the leaflets ensured that she did not internalise the negative views held by her career advisor. Further, the aspirations of her mother, or aspirational capital (Yosso, 2005), provided her with encouragement to strive for her goal to be a teacher.

Navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) also played a role in how one participant learnt to successfully manoeuvre in predominantly white spaces from childhood. Nicole recalls a conversation with her school CEO about schooling decisions her mother made (see section 5.3.1.1 above) which enabled her to reflect on her own preparedness for navigating spaces perceived as racialised.

She felt that I had to learn how to articulate myself in white space, having been a teacher herself. She felt that I needed to know the language, I needed to know how to talk appropriately, dress appropriately and how to navigate space and then my CEO said, "So really what you're telling me is your mum prepared you for how to deal with racism, institutional racism?" And it's only when I sat back and I was like, well yeah. I feel like I've had a, almost a life of institutional racism preparation so that these spaces don't feel such a shock to me as it might feel for some of my peers who have not had that experience or that opportunity and I'm very used to being one off. Whether that's right or wrong, I'm used to that. So as much as it was a negative when I was going through it, it has been a benefit in terms of me now being able to navigate myself. (Nicole)

Four participants specifically spoke of the role of their father in their formative experiences, as voices of encouragement, advocacy and caution in navigating white-dominated spaces. The role of fathers demonstrated a key contribution to their self-valuation and empowerment. Lisa remembers how her father instilled in her that there was no barrier to her progression in life, whether at school or beyond.

> I think what's enabled me is my dad. It's like, he says, "You don't stop, you try harder, keep going, there's always a door open. [If] you can't go through a door then jump in a window, but you must always find a way to get in there". (Lisa)

The support of Black fathers as a way to build their daughter's self-valuation was also revealed in Marissa's story of her father confronting her teachers during Parents' Evening. This was an important memory for Marissa, as her father's intervention encouraged her to see value in herself and develop self-reliance to succeed, knowing that her teachers had under-assessed her abilities.

> I remember he [the teacher] said to my dad, "Well, you know your daughter is not going to achieve much, I think she should drop history or she should take CSE", which was the lower equivalent. And my dad said to him, "Well, I know my daughter, I know she's very interested in the subject and she will do well." So for me it was always about proving myself, proving that I could do it. (Marissa)

Marissa went on to complete a History degree. Without her father's intervention, her life path may have taken a different direction, rather than provide her with the empowerment and self-reliance to study a subject at undergraduate level which she was passionate about.

Black fathers also provided their daughters with words of caution about navigating white spaces. Patricia explained how her father had cautioned her to listen to what those around her said as a way of analysing how to interact with people based on their opinions and positions.

> I'm very much influenced by my father. Very wise. Very intelligent…and he always used to say, "allow people to speak their mind, then you know who you're dealing with". (Patricia)

Patricia's father was instilling navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) to boost her empowerment. Similarly, Afia's father cautioned her to consider her position in a context, whether in work or outside of work, to navigate the space successfully. She recalled her father's words more than once during her interview, showing the impact of the advice given to her.

> That's what my dad tells me, "Remember where you are." (Afia)

Afia's father was providing guidance about being aware of her context to determine her identity in that space. These four words have provided Afia with self-valuation to identify spaces in which she is respected and empowered, and those spaces which are less safe.

Not all participants mentioned the influence of their parents in their interviews. However, none referred to absent fathers or to fathers having a negative influence.

5.3.1.3   The legacy of slavery

Self-definition was also determined by a deeply felt legacy of slavery and British

colonialism. Patricia's story reflected on her slave ancestry as a means to define

who she is and her role in society and education.

> This is my favourite quote from her [Maya Angelou], 'Bearing the gifts my
> ancestors gave, I am the hope, the dream of the slave'. And I know I am
> the hope and dream of the slave…My ancestors died in slave ships to get
> to the Caribbean. Many of them didn't get there. So I have that strength in
> me, so it's my job to make sure that I use the talent and the skills that I
> have to make this world a better place, not just through my work but
> through my values and the way I work with the children and the parents. I
> know I've made a difference. (Patricia)

Patricia drew strength and a positive perspective of her place in society from her

feelings on Britain's legacy of slavery. Out of the 10 participants, Patricia was the

only one to articulate the personal impact of slave history on self-definition in this

way. However, both Nicole and Laurette mentioned the legacy of slavery to

acknowledge the impact of slavery in their different localities. Nicole noted that

institutionalised racism remains an issue in her area, suggesting that its

connection with the legacy of slavery is an underlying factor in the slow rate of

institutional change.

> We have to be very honest about the area of the country that we're
> in…this particular area comes from a real legacy of racism and really been
> involved in the forefront of slavery and that kind of, almost, legacy that
> came post-slavery. Some of that institutionalised stuff is still very much
> ingrained and we're talking about generational change that hasn't quite
> happened. (Nicole)

Rather than seeing the local area as a negativity, Nicole and Laurette chose to

use the locality as a learning resource for Black children and their families.

Laurette drew on her self-reliance to arrange educational opportunities through

the Saturday school she teaches at, for Black communities to engage with the local history as a way of knowledge empowerment for children and families in the area.

5.3.2 Key Theme 2: Private self-promotion

Literature suggests that there is a fine line between self-promotion being seen as a method of conveying accomplishments and successes, talents and positive traits, and making a positive impression as opposed to being perceived as being arrogant and making proclamations of superiority (O'Mara, Kunz, Receveur and Corbin, 2019). Black female teachers are acutely aware of this fine line but recognise that they have a voice which deserves to be heard, and knowledge and skills which are beneficial to their school environment. O'Mara et al. (2019) further note that negative perceptions of self-promotion results from the lack of verifiable evidence for claims. However, Black female teachers' work with Black and minoritised children provide tangible benefits, through increased outcomes for Black and minoritised children and improvements in behaviour, both derived from building cultural bridges to learning (Farinde, Allen and Lewis, 2016). Yet Black female teachers' public self-promotion which use these verifiable claims, such as application for promotion, often results in unsuccessful recruitment to senior roles and feedback which is unconstructive and unhelpful, as the findings in Chapter Four outline, compounding hostile intersectional invisibility (Smith et al., 2019). Where perceptions of public self-promotion are navigationally challenging for Black female teachers, their self-definition is supported by their own recognition of their strengths, talents and successes through private self-promotion being voiced in safe spaces.

The positive views of seven of the participants held of themselves was reinforced through self-promotion. The remaining three participants did not speak of experiences which were underpinned by self-promotion.

5.3.2.1 "I am your equal"

Stories of being undermined by less experienced white teachers coming into the profession served as an opportunity for participants to reaffirm their self-valuation and self-respect as educators and self-promote their place within their predominantly white workspaces. Afia demonstrated this when explaining how relatively inexperienced teachers talked down at her and would not accept that she has the breadth of knowledge and experience she has.

> I am your equal. I'm not less than you. I don't want to ever feel like someone else should take my place. I rightfully own this place. I have studied just the same as everybody else, from day dot my parents have made me study and they've always tried to give us the best in everything, so why should I feel like I don't have a right to be here because I do. (Afia)

Afia was not the only participant to expect others to see her as an equal. Jada also held this expectation. Demanding respect, as well as self-respect, is embedded in forming self-definition to develop consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000). Reflecting on how schools as workspaces can change to be more equal and inclusive spaces for Black female teachers, Jada offered her self-promotional view on how being respected and treated equally are vital to improved relationships and working conditions.

> You need to see me…see me as your equal, respect me as your equal. I am your colleague, and you don't need to hide me away or tuck me away or not acknowledge anything that I'm saying because you think that you're more superior to me. You're not. (Jada)

Both Afia's and Jada's self-valuation and sense of worth prevented them viewing themselves as unequal or in a deficit way, despite being treated as having less experience and inferior. Marissa also spoke about being seen as inferior but challenging people's perceptions of her in her workplace. Challenging inferior and deficit stereotypes were also evident in stories of self-promotion, self-valuation and personal empowerment which demonstrated successful impact in schools. Erika explained her role in leading change in the school she's worked in.

> I was doing really well. I didn't complain about my workload, I was doing perfectly well. I was leading huge areas of the school. I had to lead a team of eight assistant head teachers as a new deputy and to set up this system of houses, which was all about the cultural ethos of the school. I had to lead that team through this transformation, and we did a fantastic job, really, really well. (Erika)

Erika's experience is one of success and capability. She demonstrated her self-promotion of her abilities and a sense of pride in her work for the school and the children. Erika's self-valuation and empowerment derived from doing a "fantastic job" provided a positive recollection that was important to her self-definition as a successful and effective teacher and leader.

5.3.2.2   Gain additional qualifications

The desire to gain further qualifications underpins the concepts of self-valuation, self-respect and self-reliance as Black female teachers within school spaces, as well as providing verifiable evidence for self-promotion. As noted earlier in Afia's story (section 5.3.2.1) and in section 5.3.1.2, parental influence on educational

achievement has a part to play in ensuring Black female teachers succeeded in their educational journeys. However, as professionals, six of the participants independently and actively engaged in gaining further qualifications, providing verifiable evidence to maintain self-valuation and self-respect in environments which treat them as potentially inferior.   Jada provides an explanation for why Black teachers gain further qualifications.

> Over educate yourself to the point where nobody can say that you're under qualified or you're not suitable. The only unsuitability would be that your face doesn't actually fit, but once you've got a qualification or qualifications behind yourself, you can go, and you don't have to stay in that place. You can go and do your own thing, to be where you want to be. (Jada)

Being highly qualified does not eradicate barriers which the Black female teachers face in their career progression, but there is a desire to open a discussion about why Black female teachers are not gaining senior roles as readily as their white counterparts. Teresa's self-definition, being highly qualified herself and wanting to publicly self-promote her qualifications and credentials, wanted this discussion to improve representation at senior levels.

> [What] I've also noticed is that people of colour, and we spoke about this at one of our [senior leadership team] meetings, that actually we're over-qualified. We are over-qualified, yet we're still not getting these roles. So that's something we, again we need to talk about. (Teresa)

For both Jada and Teresa, gaining tangible additional qualifications provided evidence to self-promote themselves as Black female teachers suitable and credible to exist in predominantly white school spaces. However, Teresa recognised that gaining more qualifications does not necessarily result in career

progression and promotion into senior roles. Nevertheless, this did not negate the self-valuation gained from building their qualifications portfolio.

Self-promotion in a safe space was important to participants in this study. It provided self-respect and self-valuation to exist in spaces which potentially sees them as inferior. Gaining further qualifications as a form of self-promotion enabled personal empowerment through a sense of pride and achievement. Moreover, it solidified the participants' self-definition around being sufficiently or over-qualified and shifted their expectation of their place in the school space, looking for improvement and change. As Teresa stated, "Just doing a great job is not enough. I have to advocate for myself", as a way of moving towards a leadership position to actualise their commitment to effect structural change to improve the school for the children, their families and the wider community, particularly Black children. The challenge comes with moving from private self-promotion to public self-promotion without being perceived as negative or a threat to the dominant group which elicits hostile intersectional invisibility (Smith et al., 2019), but instead advancing the career progression of Black female teachers.

5.3.3 Key Theme 3: Commitment

Eight of the 10 participants in this study specifically revealed self-definitions rooted in a commitment to community, supporting children and families within it, particularly those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Four of the participants spoke directly of the community to which they serve and live. Four participants were explicit in their commitment to learners within their communities through equality practices and the impact of representation within schools. Yosso (2005) notes that the commitment to community is driven by community cultural

wealth where familial capital, including extended family members, and social

capital emphasised an importance in maintaining connection to community.

Therefore, one of the reasons why Black teachers choose to enter the teaching

profession is based on a desire to serve their communities and "giving something

back" (Maylor, 2009a, p. 5).

5.3.3.1 Commitment to Black communities as an educational professional

This commitment to their community is exemplified through Jada's position. She

articulated a self-definition of herself as a Black female teacher in having a strong

preference of locating herself in a community for which she has built the

connections through familial and social capital.

> [I] had a very clear vision of where I wanted to put myself as a Black
> teacher and that was definitely in the community that I grew up in. (Jada)

Commitment and making a difference to Black learners, Black families and Black

communities is core to how participants in this study view themselves. Marissa's

story articulated this commitment to making a difference when she spoke about

taking up a new teaching post in a more diverse school.

> I went on to a school and felt very comfortable there because there were a
> lot of Black children and I thought, I can make a difference here and so
> accepted a job at this school, became a teacher there and it was
> absolutely wonderful feeling that I could make a difference to Black
> children who were given such a bad name even then. They weren't
> expected to achieve very much. Any educational difficulty they had wasn't
> seen as something that they could overcome (Marissa)

Black children, families and communities were also served by additional

educational services established by participants in this study. Laurette was keen

to share the existence and work of a supplementary school provision run through the local Black Caribbean community centre. She spoke about this provision with a sense of pride, knowing that it was central to the academic and social nurturing of Black children.

> I have started recently with a colleague, a Saturday sub club entry school here. It's based here out of the building [community centre] actually and we're looking at trying to improve the achievement of our young Black boys largely, Black boys and Black girls. (Laurette)

Another form of service to the community is shared by Patricia, whose aim was to provide appropriately representative reading and learning materials to the children of Black communities in the area.

> Myself and a group of other young Black professionals at the time formed a collective and we opened the first Black book shop [in the area]. So, I was pretty much involved, but I did it without thinking…it was just who I am and the other young Black professionals, so we were running this Black book shop and we were making sure that Black books were available [to the community]. (Patricia)

Patricia's active participation in the community served as both a resource for children and a source of contributing to community identity. The book shop provided access to education outside of schools at a time when Black children in particular were being assessed as educationally subnormal. Hence, Patricia's actions and the existence of the book shop represented resistance to the stereotypes and educational practices faced by Black children and their families within the community.

5.3.3.2   Commitment to enhancing equality through social justice practices and representation

A commitment to social justice as self-definition featured in three participants' personal stories, particularly to support racially minoritised communities. Both Teresa and Nicole expressed a desire for more training which enhances social justice and equality of opportunity practices for minoritised children and their families in their schools. However, Erika described a leadership discussion about the future of her school and suggestions about the pupil demographic, which she challenged in support of the diversity of children and families in the community.

> We served a very poor community, and the school was on the edge of quite an affluent area. So we had a conversation about where the school was going and there were polarised views there because the woman who was the acting head eventually said, "I want this to be the kind of school my kids come to". That meant a whole different thing to me, because she's middle class, she's got kids who are middle-class, who are very privileged, who are white, and actually I said "We haven't succeeded if the school gets better because we've got different kids coming in. We only succeed if we have the same kids and we do good with them". That I feel quite deeply and passionately, and that's where we were different. That's where our directions were very different. So we had different views of what social justice looked like. (Erika)

Patricia drew on her leadership vision for the school to make it clear that any form of oppression would not be tolerated. This stemmed from her own experience of racial bullying in her childhood. As such, dealing with bullying and specifically racial bullying was part of the culture she created in her school.

> One of the things that we experienced as children was bullying, racist bullying was the norm. So that's really influenced me. So I'm the sort of head who will not have any bullying in my school and tackle it head on. It's never covered up, it's never under cover. So that has influenced how I tackle the culture and the environment in which children can either grow or suffer within schools. (Patricia)

Patricia's commitment to her community is reflected in her commitment to social justice and eradicating racial oppression seen in bullying episodes. Being in a leadership role enabled her to set expectations for the improvement of school culture. Her representation in senior leadership was critical for the changes needed in her school to improve the experiences and outcomes of Black and minoritised learners. Erika's experience also highlights the importance of being committed to representation in the staffing body, to support the diversity of learners, including Black and other minoritised children within the school. Likewise, Teresa demonstrated a commitment to diversifying the workforce as a means to enhance representation, through wanting to have a positive influence on the recruitment practices of schools (see section 5.3.4 below). Afia spoke about her own childhood of not seeing diverse teachers and how this has remained with her. As such, she has strong views about representation.

> I don't think it's right that there are some children that will never see a teacher that looks like them and I didn't understand why I'd never seen a teacher who looked like me…I'm thinking about when I was younger and always thinking, "Oh why am I the only one? Why am I never seeing anyone like me?" I know that there's children, you know, it's nice to see that they can see someone who's like them. (Afia)

Representation, however, was also considered an additional responsibility which placed an unwanted pressure on one of the participants to be the voice of Black children and families within the school. Nicole expressed her feelings about this pressure.

> I feel like I hold a burden and the burden of being somebody who's supposed to speak for the entire BME community because I'm one of them, and that's a really hard, kind of poison chalice sometimes to carry

because what it means is that you ultimately have to speak to everybody's experience, but I only have my own. (Nicole)

Despite the potential for representation feeling as a burden and creating additional workload for Black female teachers, the importance of this responsibility is recognised and taken seriously. Teresa spoke of representation breaking down barriers for minoritised children and providing reassurance for parents.

> I'm very conscious of what my role is in terms of representation because again there's not many of us, so that responsibility is heightened…the responsibility of breaking down barriers, especially for children that look like me, Black and brown girls. Black and brown boys and girls. (Teresa)

Likewise, Afia noted how representation provided an assurance to minoritised parents that their children were being treated fairly and equally, in contrast to Afia's experience of over scrutiny and surveillance by white parents who she felt were testing her (section 4.3.2.1).

> I have had a lot of parents come up to me, which is lovely, and they've said to me things like, "we're so glad you're at our school because you are our voice for our children". Some of them have said, "We're so glad someone like you can be there", because there have been instances where teachers have punished children, particularly Black children, ethnic minority children, with that view that they are doing something wrong when they haven't done something wrong and I do see that underhand [action], I do see it (Afia)

Further, Black teachers become advocates and interceders on behalf of their students, often providing an alternative view to white colleagues of what Black children can do and challenging the low expectations held of Black learners.

Nicole pointed out why being an interceder is crucial in the schooling experience of Black children.

> [I]f there is nobody doing this race work those children are going to suffer. (Nicole)

Nicole recognised that she has a key role in supporting Black and racially minoritised learners within the racialised spaces of schools. Further, without anyone interceding in the minoritised children's oppressive experiences, their families are also likely to feel disconnected and voiceless in their children's schooling journeys.

The stories and experiences in this section outline that central to self-definition is the commitment to children, parents and community and the recognition that representation plays a key role in supporting them. These participants' stories reveal a strong desire to give back to their communities, which is summed up in Marissa's statement.

> I need to make a difference to my community and not just my school but my community and the borough I work for (Marissa)

5.3.4 Key Theme 4: Agency

According to Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, Hökkä, and Paloniemi (2013), there is a lack of clarity around the definition of the concept of 'agency', but it is often considered as "associated with active striving, taking initiatives, or having an influence on one's own life situation" (2013, p. 46). In this section, agency draws on Davidson's (2017) three core principles of agency. Firstly, agency is

dependent on the ability to make choices for oneself. Secondly, agency requires rationality to work towards and achieving the identified end goal. Finally, agency relies on recognition. Black women's self-definition centralises being a voice for change. The findings of this study identified agency in three key forms: taking ownership of their career development; challenging stereotypes and normative views of Black female teachers as professionals; and being heard and seen to drive change within and beyond their school environment to improve experiences and opportunities for themselves, other Black staff and Black and minoritised children.

5.3.4.1   Owning their career development

Black female teachers made conscious choices to engage in continued professional development but also made choices to pay for this themselves as a form of self-reliance. Paying for professional development, like choosing to undertake accredited courses and additional qualifications as outlined in section 5.3.2.2 of this chapter, enable participants' self-valuation and self-respect development. Teresa's personal story revealed a choice to take ownership of her professional development, including paying for courses she undertook. The identified end goal of her decisions around her development is to be able to influence and make change through gaining a senior role. Articulating her need to be over-qualified as one method of demonstrating her credentials to be in a more senior role was her self-recognition of strategies needed to challenge the status quo.

> I've had to use my hard-earned money to build my own professional development. I've had to pay for my middle management course, partly one because I wanted to pay for it, two because I did not want school to pay for it and then there's this kind of underlying rule that we've paid for

this, now what are you going to do for us? No, it was off my own back, I've paid for it so that was a big thing for me. It's wrong that we have to use our own funding to do that but we need to make sure that is done so we can try, try our very best to again, get that promotion, to be seated at the table if we can. (Teresa)

Discussing the course she was taking at her own cost, Erika also mentioned being at "the table" as a reason for her self-reliance in financing her own professional development.

> …throughout my career I've taken ownership of my own professional development and my path. So whatever I've been doing in school, I've done other roles, like being a governor, being a volunteer of things, to make sure that I've got other things to bring to the table…So, every single year of my career there has been some kind of personal growth and development. (Erika).

Like Teresa above, Erika made conscious choices around professional development in order to participate in driving for change as her goal, but also to ensure that she was continually developing and growing as self-valuation and credibility to be at "the table".

5.3.4.2   Challenging stereotypes and controlling images

The agency demonstrated by the three participants taking ownership of their professional development and being prepared to finance it themselves, with career progression to be in roles to make changes as their goal, challenges the 'Mule' image stereotype of Black women (Collins, 2000). Both Teresa and Erika's stories showed their investment in their professional development was an instrument to career progression and a demonstration of their increasing ability to move towards a senior position to make change.

Other stereotypes challenged by the participants in this study was 'The Sapphire' image (Howell et al., 2019, p. 22) or the 'CBB' image (Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008, p. 130) of being loud, aggressive, confrontational and intimidating. Lisa felt very strongly that she wanted to present a positive image of Black women. She used her agency to be "the example" and provide a counter-image of Black women as being hardworking and committed to education, underpinned by her self-valuation and self-respect.

> …from my experience of being a Black woman in school, I think I work harder because I feel I'm the example. They [learners] don't know anybody else [like me] so I don't want them to think what they see on TV or what they read or might see on social media that is me…when they leave school thinking about Black women are like this rather than aggressive and loud and only into makeup or drugs or whatever, I don't want them to think that. (Lisa)

Likewise, Afia recognised that she challenged the stereotype of 'The Sapphire' and the 'CBB'. Talking about the expectations that staff in her school and trainee teachers have articulated to her about her educational and socio-economic status, Afia drew on her self-valuation, self-respect and agency to challenge the stereotypes she has been confronted with.

> Yeah, I think people have this view, particularly being a Black woman, that I'm going to be, yeah, argumentative and my family's going to be all over the shop and I, you know, I'm probably the only one who works. I know people have that view about me. I know that and I don't fit those criteria. They always ask me about whether I was born abroad and I wasn't, I was born here. You know, where do you come from? When did you come here? You know, were you educated here? I'm like, "Oh God. You can hear my accent clearly… I'm from East Africa but I clearly don't speak like an East African." (Afia)

Despite the exasperation felt by Afia, she knows she has the power to challenge the negative stereotypes and that it is necessary to do so to change people's perception of her.

5.3.4.3 <u>Being heard and seen to make positive change</u>

The drive for ethnic and racial inclusive practices through sustainable change processes was evident as agentic activities in the findings. Teresa held a clear goal of wanting to affect recruitment practices through activities within and beyond her school.

> I want to be in a space where I can change policy, blog even, write for Tes.com (formally known as 'TES' and the 'Times Educational Supplement'). Yeah, I definitely want to shift the agenda, to shift policy, to encourage the recruitment of ethnic minority teachers. (Teresa)

Erika's agency also encouraged her to examine opportunities outside of her employing school. Reflecting on her success in pastoral and safeguarding roles in schools with very diverse pupil bodies and being an interceder for racially minoritised children, Erika was empowered to plan how to use her expertise and self-schema for change to support children and families in the wider community.

> I explored setting up a business to do with education where I would go in and support schools, because I've successfully reduced exclusions et cetera in the last two schools I was in…I thought that was something I could go in [to schools] and offer. (Erika)

Despite the emotional labour (Kelly, Gardner, Stone, Hixson and Dissassa, 2019) expended by participants as they navigate predominantly white school spaces, their self-definition as change agents drives them to frequently make positive

choices about their existential identities, to hold aspirations with tangible goals for positive change, and to recognise their self-schema in playing active roles in promoting and developing inclusive practices both within and beyond the school environment. Linked closely with their commitment to make a difference and "giving something back" (Maylor, 2009a, p. 5) to minoritised learners, their families, communities and other Black and minoritised teachers, agency is key to actualising the values and vision of equity and social justice that Black female teachers hold. Nicole summed up why being a change agent is so central to her self-definition.

> I want to legacy build. I want to, you know, push down that ladder and pull some more people up (Nicole)

However, in order to build a legacy and to make a difference to learners and staff who look like them, Black female teachers also have to enact actions of resistance.

5.3.5 Key theme 5: Resistance

The previous section outlined how agency manifested itself in the participants interviewed for this study. The desire for change articulated through the personal stories require resistance to the ideas, practices and outcomes defined by the normative group. Resistance through agency does not have a definitive beginning point as a result of a single action. Rather it is a multiplicity of acts which defy and challenge systems of oppression and domination (Davidson, 2017).

5.3.5.1 "Going against the tide"

Resistance against racial injustice and oppression has been embedded in Black communities' psyches and activities for centuries, with the Black feminist perspective recognising that Black women in the workplace have multi-layered struggles as Black, women and workers simultaneously (Nummi, Jennings and Feagin, 2019). These struggles are palpable, as Nicole's story below showed, but resistance remained embedded in her self-definition.

> I think I have to continue to be unapologetic and that's not easy because you're constantly going against the tide and there's a certain level of tenacity and resilience that you have to have in this position to keep going, and I'll be honest, there's been many times I've been crying and I'm like I don't want to do this anymore. I'm fed up of being the token Black. I'm fed up of being the token female. I'm fed up of being the one that's constantly having to fight all of the time and then I look at those children and they say to me, "If you aren't here Miss, who's going to be the one that's going to fight for us?" (Nicole)

Nicole recognised that, despite the challenges of resistance, her role as an interceder for children from minoritised backgrounds was central to her need to continually resist unjust practices within her school. With this empowering resistance and necessary disruption to the status quo, Nicole hoped for change.

> …my hope is that I can continue to be involved in education and generally have an impact, an impact of disruption that changes the current system, and I don't know in what role that has to be in. The role might not even exist yet, but I think being in the classroom and being behind a[n organisational] structure will allow me to do that. (Nicole)

The participants were cognisant of the oppressive practices used within predominantly white school spaces, as discussed in Chapter Four. To survive and maintain their self-definition, they aim to adopt an empowering resistant

mindset and speak up about their mistreatment. Lisa's story demonstrated her resistance to oppressive treatment she had experienced but also a coping mechanism to ensure her survival in her school setting and her continued commitment to the teaching profession.

> …we have to say, we're not going to be walked over and we'll not be spoken to like that, we'll not be treated like this…you have to wear a coat of armour and when you leave then that coat, you take that coat off but when you're in here, your coat of armour has to be on all the time…if your armour gets dented you refresh that. (Lisa)

Lisa's self-valuation and self-respect encouraged her to verbalise her resistance. Likewise, Teresa's story of empowerment showed her intentions to use her voice for resistance and positive change but recognised that this is a process which takes time.

> I'm building up my voice now with more experience, now going into each year, I'm building up that voice. I'm making myself known in the space…I think there's also that idea if I work extremely hard at some point in time I'm going to eat at the table and then I'm going to change policy and I'm going to rock the establishment. (Teresa)

Regardless of the oppressive experiences faced by the participants in this study, they draw on their consciousness to resist how they are perceived and how minoritised learners are treated. Speaking out is not easy. Davis (2018) notes that potential barriers can be erected in the workplace by vocalising the nature of oppressions, forcing many professional Black women to use more inconspicuous strategies to demonstrate resistance in a non-threatening way, particularly to white men, such as using indirect communication. Despite this, Nicole, Lisa and

Teresa are committed to being the voices of the oppressed and demonstrating resistance through change by working towards being seated at "the table".

Nicole provided a perspective on developing self-valuation and the ability to resist oppressions as a way of empowering other Black female teachers.

> …particularly as a Black female, there will be times where you are going to come up against being marginalised. You're going to come up against discrimination and you have to be prepared to have the resilience and the tenacity to keep going and so I would say, prepare yourself before it comes. So whether that's just about good mentorship, good allies, having therapy and just knowing your stuff so that you can truly be confident in what you're delivering, it just feels like your toolkit is full and you might never have these experiences and I pray you never do, but if you do, you're ready. (Nicole)

Nicole wanted to share her perspectives on navigating white-dominated spaces and support other Black women in the profession. However, the next section shows that this support from Black women is not always available or offered.

5.4 Unexpected finding: The trouble with Black sisterhood

The work of Smith and Niguel Moore (2019) posits the value of sisterhood as a way to voice self-affirmation, self-definition and self-valuation, and as a method of managing the isolation which comes with being the only Black female teacher in their school, or one of only a few. They note the benefits of sisterhood being that Black women are able to hear each other fully and to mitigate any feelings of invisibility that each may feel, stating, "…if we will not listen to one another, then who will?" (Smith and Niguel Moore, 2019, p. 86). However, my findings reveal that sisterhood can be damaging to participants' self-definition through negative and oppressive interactions with other Black female staff within their schools.

Lisa spoke about an experience which conflicts with the expectation in Black feminist thought that sisterhood is something which provides another form of self-valuation and wider self-definition. She explained how happy she was when a Black woman was employed into a senior leadership role within her school, but how this delight turned to stress, anger and disappointment when she realised the assumed sisterhood was absent.

> She was the reason why I left the school. She was awful. She targeted Black staff and we worked harder…she was making us more accountable for our data, she was picking up little things, my students who were SEN students she took away the extra time for exams and I questioned her why and she said to me, "because I can". I was beginning to feel very stressed with her and angry. I was disappointed and angry, and I actually told her, I said, "The worst thing about you is the colour of your skin", and that's what I said to her. And she said, "What do you mean?" I said, "I would expect you to at least treat Black staff as equal, but you aren't". She denied it but she was [treating Black staff differently]…Okay, she's one of these people who need to prove that she's separate from being Black and [her view is] "this is my role", but she's over-compensating this role and [I] couldn't stand her. (Lisa)

Monica also mentioned the challenges and mistrust that existed between herself and Black female peers in her school. Talking of specific relationships with Black female colleagues, Monica expressed her exasperation with the lack of sisterhood and the strategies taken by other Black female colleagues which impact negatively on working relationships.

> Working with other Black [female] colleagues, I feel there's a lack of trust there, and they'll do what they have to, to keep ahead, to keep afloat. Historically, it's in the psyche. Black people are perpetrators against Black people, and it is exhausting to fight that too. (Monica)

These challenges faced by Lisa and Monica reveal that Black female peer support should not be assumed to exist. Collins (2000) notes that in cases of relations between middle-class and working-class Black women, interactions between "Black women may in fact become instrumental in fostering other Black women's oppression" (2000, p. 75). However, in this context, the status and roles of Black female teachers within schools creates tension and oppressions. Nicole sums up the consequences of that lack of support from Black colleagues.

> …if you haven't got that sisterhood, brotherhood, mentorship or even those white allies, the space feels very small very quickly. (Nicole)

5.5 Further discussion

Revisiting the objectives of this study, the findings above suggest that examining the lived experiences of the 10 participants through consciousness of Black feminist thought provides an understanding of:

1) the influences on their professional identities (adding to the discussion of the impact of witnessing the oppression of Black and minoritised learners);

2) their agentic positions which frame their perceptions and expectations of their experiences in school spaces; and

3) their challenges to white hegemonic stereotypes in their professional lives.

5.5.1 The influences on Black female teachers' professional identities

Chapter Four discussed how Black female teachers act as interceders for Black learners to challenge normative expectations of Black and minoritised children and to provide an alternative view to white colleagues of what these children can do. Being interceders as an aspect of professional identity was highlighted as a

critical role, particularly through Nicole's story (section 4.3.1.1), with Black female teachers having to carefully navigate making professional decisions about whether to challenge stereotyped perceptions of Black and minoritised learners or whether to self-police and remain silent. However, formative experiences played an integral role in these participants' self-definitions and drive to be educationalists. Their professional identities are, therefore, built on the outcomes of these formative experiences. Through their experiences of self-valuation and personal empowerment, often underpinned by the influence of their parents, particularly fathers, and their ancestors, the participants in this study strived to be educational successes and be educators to make a positive difference in society.

5.5.1.1   Parents' aspirational capital

The importance of education instilled in these participants underpins their values about schooling and the place of learning in their lives. This then manifests itself in their desire to ensure that all children, but particularly Black children experience positive and successful school education.

The role of Black parents in their children's education and educational success is an area of growing research in the UK to date, with a more established body of work building in the US (McCarthy Foubert, 2019). Further, the place of Black mothers and the role they play in their children's education, specifically their son's educational journeys, is well documented in the US contexts (see Allen and White-Smith, 2018; Leath, Marchand, Harrison, Halawah, Davis and Rowley, 2020; Williams, Banerjee, Lozada-Smith, Lambouths III and Rowley, 2017; Wilson Cooper, 2009) but again less so in the UK. Wilson Cooper (2009) points out that parental involvement in educational discourses were often gender

neutral, yet school-related activities and roles mostly referred to involvement by mothers, grandmothers and other female kin. To counter this discourse, four participants' personal stories revealed how their fathers played a central role in empowering them as Black women and their sense of their self-valuation. These stories challenge normative views and stereotypes of absent Black fathers and Black masculinities. The absence of Black fathers is considered a common occurrence (Wilson, Henriksen Jr., Bustamante and Irby, 2016) and shapes negative representations, popular perceptions and scholarly discourse about disengaged and negligent Black fathers (Abdill, 2018; Mattis, McWayne, Palmer, Johnson and Sparks, 2020). In challenging stereotypes about Black fathers being absent and disengaged, Lisa and Marissa specifically were clear that their fathers' influence was integral in their personal empowerment. Likewise, Patricia and Afia's experiences added the caution instilled by their fathers on navigating white spaces, which is equally empowering as that of advocacy.

There is a dearth of studies both in the US and UK which examine the Black father-daughter relationship and the Black father's role in their daughter's advancement, success and achievements, which is also noted by Willie and Lane (2001). Willie and Lane (2001) discuss Black fathers taking on the role of mentor, valuing and furthering their daughter's education and providing guidance to their daughters, echoing the experiences of Lisa and Marissa. Marissa's story reveals an additional role of her father, that of advocate for his daughter and her goals, preparing to challenge those who under-assessed his daughter's abilities and outwardly supporting Marissa's interests, thus empowering Marissa and developing her self-definition.

The importance of education is instilled in Black children by their parents as aspirational capital (Yosso, 2005). Challenging normative views of Black parents being disengaged and disinterested in their children's education, Black parental support and encouragement embeds the value of education (Allen and White-Smith, 2018; Peters, Seeds, Goldstein and Coleman, 2007; Waters, 2015), which played a central role in Black female teachers being successful as learners and choosing to enter teaching as a profession. As a result, self-reliance was revealed through navigating their early education to succeed despite their teachers expecting them to fail, built from the aspirational capital (Yosso, 2005) held by their parents.

5.5.1.2   Professional position in the community

Teaching is an opportunity to improve the lives and outcomes for Black children and supporting their families in an "othermother" role (Collins, 2000, p.13; Howell et al., 2019 citing Dixon, 2003, p. 26; Shipp, 2000, p.207). Further, through an ethic of care (Collins, 2000) Black female teachers individually and collectively hold positions that nurture community development and succeed with improving educational outcomes for Black and other learners, a phenomenon known as "community mothering" (Harris and Hayes, 2019, p. 47). Laurette and Patricia's lived experiences (section 5.3.3.1) demonstrated how community mothering manifested itself in activities beyond the school and classroom to benefit local Black communities and learners. Their resourcefulness also demonstrated how Black communities ensure a richness in educational materials and opportunities for Black children, as is also noted in the work of Maylor (2020).

Further, a balanced representation of the teacher workforce is salient to better reflect the diversity in society and for learners to experience teachers from diverse groups (Maylor, 2009a), most notably that Black children benefit from seeing Black teachers as influential adults (Wei, 2007, cited by Tembo, 2020). There continues to be an under-representation of Black women in leadership positions in schools. This is demonstrated by the workforce data for 2020 revealing that in English state-funded schools, Black or Black British females made up just 163 headteachers, 179 deputy headteachers and 413 assistant headteachers out of a total female leadership in these three posts in state-funded schools of 45,615. Black female teachers who progress to leadership roles show personal characteristics of resilience, determination, courage and ambition (Bush, Glover, and Sood, 2006), recognising that these characteristics are important for Black children to see for positive representation of Black communities, without the need for ascribing a "pioneering role" (Bush et al., 2006, p. 302) narrative to their daily duties.

Milner (2020) suggests that Black female teachers are often expected to be the expert on all matters related to Black people, and specifically the Black children and families in the school community, which resonates with my data. This expectation manifests itself as knowledge about 'race' is deemed superior to their knowledge of the content of the curriculum, and they are expected to manage all discipline issues related to Black children, even though they did not know the child involved (Milner, 2020). As such, Milner (2020) points out that "Black women teachers were expected to work overtime, engaging matters that were both visible and invisible to others in order to maintain White dominance and Whiteness in mostly White schools" (2020, p. 403). Further, this additional work

includes taking on the role of interceders to intervene on behalf of Black and minoritised children to prevent injustice and discrimination.

5.5.2 Agentic positions that frame perceptions and expectations of their professional experiences

In discussing the definition of Black women agency, Davidson (2017) states,

> Agency…for traditional feminists (white and black) is values as a site of resistance. Where the traditional black feminists' treatment of agency will depart from that of white feminists, however, is in their emphasis that the construction of agency is not only *gendered* but also *raced*. (2017, p. 17)

As such, the agency of the participants in this study, underpinning their thoughts, ideas and actions, is discussed through the double consciousness of gender and 'race'. Acuff (2018) describes double consciousness as the way in which Black people "must look at themselves through the eyes of others while simultaneously attempting to self-define" (2018, p. 174). She argues that the narratives imposed on Black people accumulates emotional and psychological traumas which require engaging in exhausting work to counter them, directly influencing the development of "racial battle fatigue" (Acuff, 2018, p. 175). Where racial battle fatigue becomes evident, double consciousness requires careful management in agency construction for positive action.

5.5.2.1   Managing double consciousness effectively

There was no doubt that the participants in this study were proud of their heritage. However, they also recognised that they experience a double

consciousness of being Black, with distinct ethnicities and cultures, and a woman, a concept stemming from Du Bois' work 'Strivings of the Negro People' (1897, as cited by Brannon, Markus and Jones Taylor, 2015) and coined in his text 'The Souls of Black Folk' (1903, as cited by Welang, 2018).

The concept of double consciousness has subsequently been developed into a triple consciousness (Welang, 2018) of belonging to the nation in which they work and live, race and gender. Welang (2018) further suggests that Black female teachers face challenges of being accepted in mainstream British culture whilst maintaining their own ethnic culture. To avoid their consciousness being problematic, they draw on their Blackness (heritage and ethnic culture), their location (as teachers in English schools) and their gender (ethic of care as Black women) to engage in agentic action to drive for inclusive educational practices and to facilitate positive consequences, especially for minoritised children, their families and staff representation whilst working towards challenging normatively defined stereotypes of Black women in education. To effectively manage their double consciousness and their unique place they hold in driving for racial and ethnic inclusive educational practices, Black female teachers create two self-schemas, one being independent to maintain their cultural and ethnic identities and one being interdependent to relate to others in wider societal contexts, which direct their behavioural processes (Brannon et al., 2015).

5.5.2.2   Positive professional self-esteem

In contradicting discourses which existed in the run up to the end of the 20th century, spanning decades, and which presented Black identity as one of self-hate and low self-esteem (Robinson, 2009), Afia articulated a view (section

5.3.2.1) demonstrating self-promotion and a healthy perspective of self-valuation of her abilities, strength in self-respect derived from the support and guidance of her parents and a knowledge position that empowered her. Being knowledgeable about one's position is critical in becoming agents of knowledge, a feature distinct in Black feminist thought (Smith and Niguel Moore, 2019).

There is a scarcity of literature on Black women being successful as teachers with varying degrees of responsibilities in educational spaces, particularly in the UK context. Discourses which exist focus on successes of school leadership and take a student-centred approach as a measure of their successes (see as examples Johnson and Campbell-Stephens, 2013; Moorosi, Fuller and Reilly, 2018) or successes in navigating as learners or academics in Higher Education spaces (see as examples Mirza, 2009; Wright, Maylor and Watson, 2017). The participants interviewed knew that their measurable (such as increased pupil outcomes and Erika's setting up the house system) and unmeasurable (behaviour improvements) successes go unnoticed by majoritarian groups, yet they articulated their self-promotion privately as a method of self-definition.

A report published by the Mayor of London's office (Maylor, Ross, Rollock and Williams, 2006) noted that respect from children is a reason why Black teachers were encouraged to stay in the profession in London. However, there is little which examines the concept of 'respect' between peers and colleagues within school settings, although Thomas and Hollenshead (2001) note the lack of respect from colleagues as being a point of resistance by Black and marginalised women faculty members in US higher education. In self-definition, demanding and commanding respect from others is an expectation for Black women. Where

it was not forthcoming, Jada articulated this expectation as a form of self-valuation and private self-promotion as an equal.

For six of the Black female teachers in this research, self-esteem is further maintained and raised through gaining additional qualifications, which resonates with the literature on Black women's abilities in the workplace. Overqualification and outperformance of Black female teachers lay in the need (conscious or unconscious) to dispel and challenge the stereotyped images of Black women around ability and work ethic (Smith and Niguel Moore, 2019). As a defensive move (Diangelo, 2018), rather than face the racial stress that might come with conversations about discriminations, white colleagues are likely to blame the Black woman by viewing her as angry and unable to manage the expectations of the job. To counter this, Black female teachers know they have to gain qualifications and experience beyond those expected as the norm and actively strive to over-qualify themselves. Further, Black women in the workplace who exceed the levels of qualifications, income and occupational status defy expectation around 'race' and gender (Smith et al., 2019). As such, they often experience an "outsider within" (Smith et al., 2019, p. 1706) positioning as Black professional women operating in predominantly white, and often male, dominated spaces. Smith et al. (2019) therefore posit that "outsider within" positioning plays a significant role in experiences and progression of Black professional women within the workplace, as they are not expected to occupy the spaces and places they hold within a profession, like teaching.

5.5.3 Challenging white hegemonic stereotypes in their professional lives

The participants featured in this study demonstrated a strong commitment to Black and minoritised children, their families and the community. In challenging the 'Mammy' image (Collins, 2000, p. 79) as well as other controlling images, Black female teachers demonstrate that they are more valuable to schools beyond managing behaviour and that their nurturing is a wider ethic of care (Collins, 2000) which takes into account a holistic development of Black and minority ethnic children and enables educational success, supporting these learners to navigate spaces which oppress them. The positive role and effectiveness of Black female teachers on Black learners have been the subject of discussion in the US for a number of years (Acosta, 2019; Coffey and Ferunde-Wu, 2016; Howell, Norris and Williams, 2019; Shipp, 2000). However, in the UK, Black and minoritised teachers are often treated and viewed as an aggregate (see Osler, 1997a, 1997b; Wright, 2010), with no gender differentiation to examine the specific roles of Black female teachers, although there is a growing body of work examining the experiences of Black male teachers and leaders, for example Callender (2018, 2020) and Miller and Callender (2018) and Black male student teachers (Maylor, 2018). To exemplify the difficulty of the discourse in the UK, Wright (2010) suggests that Black teachers (both Black female and male) have frequently felt that constructions of Black girls and boys by white teachers has been driven by white normative views of femininity, masculinity and class. It is unclear to what extent this is a view held specifically by Black female teachers.

Literature based in the US context, however, provides clarity on the positive perspectives of Black pupils held by Black female teachers and their positioning as cultural and academic champions of Black learners in their schools and

classrooms through an ethic of care (see McClellan, 2020; Miles Nash and Peters, 2020; Wilson Cooper, 2009), resonating with nine of the participants in this research. Howell et al. (2019) outlines in detail the characteristics of Black female teachers' positive constructs. A key characteristic is that Black female teachers view their Black pupils through a cultural lens, unlike the deficit view of white normativity. As such, Black female teachers can empathise with the societal and local level discriminations their Black pupils face and the difficulty of "the nuances of "straddling" two worlds" (Carter, 2006, cited by Howell et al., 2019, p. 25) of Blackness and white majoritarian society. Shipp (2000) suggests that Black female teachers are experienced as the "cultural other" (2000, p. 207) which they can draw on to understand the Black pupils' experiences and to inform their work in their classrooms, and act as role models particularly to often marginalised Black girls. However, Farinde, Allen and Lewis (2016) provide an alternative perspective to the role model view, stating that Black teachers are "cultural translators, counselors, parental figures, and mentors who advocated for their students and gave a voice to the voiceless" (2016, p. 117). Further, Howell et al. (2019) note that Black female teachers challenge white-centred curricula with an underlying understanding of how systemic disparities work against Black pupils and seen in their educational outcomes. Additionally, Black female teachers do not just see their position in schools as a job, but as an opportunity to improve the lives of Black pupils, Black families and Black communities, employing inclusive and cultural teaching practices which enable Black children to reach their full potential without the pressures to assimilate to white norms and to acquire cultural capital valued by whiteness. They are central in providing support for culturally affirming Black children and as well as helping with their academic success, through "culturally relevant pedagogy" (Ladson-Billing, 1995,

p. 469) and culturally responsive teaching (Duncan, 2020). Howell et al. (2019) go on to explain how Black female teachers take on a role of "othermother" (Dixson, 2003, cited by Howell et al., 2019, p. 26), having the high expectations and aspirations that Black mothers hold for their own children and an understanding of connectedness to the Black pupils' communities. Shipp (2000) describes the concept of 'othermothering' as the "tendency of Black female teachers to develop a sense of family toward their students and be involved in varying degrees with them and their problems outside as well as inside of school" (2000, p. 207). All of these characteristics serve to humanise Black learners in their classrooms and position Black female teachers as an activist for Black pupils against systemic oppression (Farinde et al., 2016). The activist element of Black female teachers' work provides a value that extends beyond the purely nurturing, pastoral, behaviour-expert stereotype of the 'Mammy' image, which underpins how Black female teachers are often seen in predominantly white school spaces.

The role of Black female school leaders plays an equally important role in the schooling and school experiences of Black children. Miles Nash and Peters (2020) examine the ways in which Black female school leaders engage in activities which uplift Black girls, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects. They note that Black female educational leaders also demonstrate 'othermothering' through nurture and support of Black students and the wider Black community, holding a passion for educational equality for marginalised students and facilitating access for Black girls to the STEM associations, societies and groups. An ethic of care (Collins, 2000; Miles Nash and Peters, 2020) underpinned Black female school leaders' drive towards

an accountable school culture to Black children and their families. McClellan (2020) also examined the positionality of a Black female educational leader, stating that her position gave her credibility with the Black girls in her school, and was seen as a kinship figure of authority to be respected, and whose presence was appreciated and revered. In return, the Black girls in his study supported and protected Black female leaders who they valued and respected, and who were their advocates. McClellan (2020) noted the importance of these symbiotic relationships between the Black female educational leader and Black girls in his study, which go some way to "heal some of the deepest wounds inflicted upon [Black girls] in schools" (2020, p. 267).

5.6 Conclusion to the chapter

Despite the adversity and trauma outlined in Chapter Four, participants in this study continue to thrive, strive for improvement and persevere in predominantly white school spaces. Black women use a range of strategies to cope with oppression as forms of personal resistance, including drawing on laughter, seeking support, acting assertively, practicing self-care and thinking positively (Kilgore, Kraus and Littleford, 2020). Moreover, Black women's voice is central to self-definition as a mechanism to resist oppression (McClennan, 2020). This chapter demonstrates how the 10 participants in this study show commitment, agency and resistance supported by their strength from familial capital and self-promotion as means to define their professional identities and their place in white-dominated school spaces. Through concepts which underpin consciousness, this chapter draws on the personal stories of the 10 participants in this study to create a positive construct and counter-narrative of Black female teachers' professional

identities which challenge normative views and controlling images of Black women in the workplace.

I identified participants' self-definition in their commitment to their communities and the role of "community mothering" (Harris and Hayes, 2019, p. 47). Further, I provided examples of how their agency to drive for educational equality and social justice to benefit specifically Black and minoritised learners and their families is central to their self-definition. I saw self-valuation in participants' desire to gain additional qualifications to show their capabilities to be in predominantly white educational spaces and hence to work toward being promoted into senior levels to have greater influence on policies and practices within their schools. I showed that the participants' self-reliance is demonstrated in their willingness to self-fund their own personal and professional development to be able to progress in their career. Finally, I presented examples of how empowerment is embodied in their parental advocacy, and particularly the support and aspirations of their fathers. By drawing on consciousness of Black feminist thought, the shared stories of the participants in this study challenge normative stereotypical views to provide a positive counter-narrative of Black women in school environments and in the workplace. Moore Clemons (2019) cites Dillard (2016) who acknowledges that the use of Black feminist thought is "a catalyst for thinking about a vision/version of feminisms that, for diasporic Black women, might open a way to (re)member our identities, lives, and work as Black women" (2019, p. 2). Therefore, this counter-narrative forms a contributary discourse of resistance to white hegemonic views and a positive vision of the place and role of Black female teachers in English classrooms and schools. Moreover, it demonstrates agentic resistance to racialised oppressions and a

version of Black female teachers willing to protect those who face subjugations, particularly children and families who are from Black and minoritised communities.

6. Chapter Six – Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the study by returning to the objectives and addressing the research question, '*How do Black female teachers form their professional identities in white-dominated educational workspaces?*'. The two sub-questions and four objectives, outlined in Chapter One and revisited in Chapters Four and Five, enabled discussion of findings to understand the lived experiences of the 10 participants in this study and how they navigate being in white-dominated educational spaces. The conceptual framework of CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) and consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) reveals that these Black female teachers continued to be perceived through negative stereotyping, experiencing and witnessing oppressions, but counter the controlling images through voicing their self-definitions of who they are as Black women in their workplace as resistance to normative views.

6.2 Addressing the research question

My research question is: *How do Black female teachers form their professional identities in white-dominated educational workspaces?* In addressing this research question, this study required a contextualisation of Black female teachers' lived experiences in predominantly white educational spaces. Analysis of the 10 participants' personal stories through the lens of CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) revealed a number of ways in which schools are racialised spaces, which impacted on how they view themselves in their work

environment. Firstly, their professional positions were grounded in an ethic of care (Collins, 2000) and politicised caring (McKinney de Royston et al., 2021), so that advocating for Black and minoritised learners becomes "risky work" (McKinney de Royston et al., 2021, p.70).   Participants who took on the role of interceder found themselves in positions of challenging normative views and negative expectations of Black and minoritised learners to avoid racialised harm, whilst simultaneously facing the dilemma of self-policing and silencing and the consequences of that choice. The dominant ideology of white supremacy and the impact of whiteness can create barriers to interceding that serve to silence Black female teachers as they mentally traverse the fine line of being a staff member wanting to progress in their career to reach positions where they can influence school culture and policy, thus needing to avoid outward behaviours which reinforce negative racial stereotypes of Black women, and being Black women witnessing disproportionate sanctions on Black learners in particular, whose professional being is underpinned by an ethic of care (Collins, 2000). Secondly, Black female teachers face the dichotomy of hyper-visibility and invisibility, suiting the needs of the schools by undertaking "invisible work" (Milner, 2020, p. 403), yet being overlooked when applying for promotion into senior positions which can impact on the culture and practices in the school. The nature of the "invisible work" (Milner, 2020, p. 403) provided minimal opportunities to demonstrate that they had the skills and potential for promotional positions. Black female teachers were expected to carry out duties which were essential to pupil progress or school leadership without recognition or remuneration yet remained invisible when they sought promotional positions. The view of "swimming at the bottom" articulated by Lisa (section 4.3.1.2) left Black female teachers who are struggling to progress in their career perceiving that they are not taken seriously in the

profession and hence, feel that they are expected to credentialise their legitimacy in educational spaces. Culturally determined bias and the dominant leadership prototype (Lowe, 2013) in the UK deemed Black female teachers as not fitting in senior leader positions. Their hypervisibility also resulted in scrutiny from both within and beyond the school. Their invisibility is further demonstrated by the continuous underrepresentation of Black teachers in educational spaces. Thirdly, the participants in this study faced white colleagues perceiving them through normative stereotyped controlling images and employing cultural insensitivities within the educational spaces they worked. Being perceived through these normative controlling images created negative assumptions about the participants' knowledge, skills and expertise. Instead, Black female teachers are considered as not having expertise in matters of the curriculum but as having expertise in issues that involve matters of 'race'. This also placed barriers to career progression into senior roles that impact on the cultures and policies of the school.

Analysis of the 10 participants' personal stories through the lens of consciousness in Black feminist thought, however, provided a counter-narrative of how they place themselves in their educational spaces. Consciousness also provided a context to challenge and reconstruct prevailing controlling images placed on Black womanhood and prevented Black women falling into concepts of victimhood. The findings revealed that firstly, formative experiences of schooling in England enabled these Black female teachers to develop personal empowerment and self-reliance narratives of success. This, for five of the participants, was a motivational factor in their career choice to become an educational professional. In particular for five of the participants, the role of their

families, and specifically the participants' fathers, acted as pivotal experiences which enabled their empowerment to strive for their goals to become teachers, to do well educationally measured by the qualifications achieved and in one case to prepare her for the complex navigation of white spaces. Fathers, as a voice of encouragement and advocacy, embedded their self-definitions as confident and competent Black girls and women and challenged the negative discourse of absent Black fathers. Secondly, again, participants realise that they traverse another fine line between self-promotion of accomplishments, success, talents and positive traits and being perceived as arrogant and superior by white colleagues for these same characteristics. The participants have knowledge and skills beneficial to their schools derived from building cultural bridges to learning (Farinde et al., 2016) and will acknowledge their strengths, talents and successes through private self-promotion in safe spaces. Their success is also underpinned by their desire to gain additional qualifications, a legacy of parental influence, as verifiable evidence which legitimised their place in the educational space as well as maintained self-valuation and self-respect in the environments which treat them as potentially inferior. Legitimisation through qualification acquisition solidified the participants' self-definition of being sufficiently qualified, and often overqualified, and credible to exist in school spaces. Holding verifiable credentials empowered them to seek improvement and change for children, their families and the wider community, particularly Black children, but also to resist hostile intersectional invisibility (Smith et al., 2019). Thirdly, four participants' self-definitions were rooted in a commitment to community and was core in how they viewed themselves. This commitment acted as a way of supporting children and families, particularly those from a Black and minoritised background, to participate and succeed in educational activities in and beyond school, thus

contributing to community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005). Further, despite the additional and "invisible work" (Milner, 2020, p. 403) which came from their focus on supporting and serving Black and minoritised children and families in their community, nine of the participants also held strong commitments to social justice, inclusive cultural practices and representation in the teaching workforce as key to improving the educational and occupational experiences of Black children and Black teachers in their schools. Fourthly, agency, in the form of thoughts, ideas and actions, enabled the participants to take ownership of their career development, despite barriers to progression and promotion. Agentic actions also challenged normative stereotypes of Black women as educational professionals and ensured that they drive for change within and beyond their workplaces. Investment in their own professional development, challenging controlling images by ensuring their actions do not confirm or embed normative stereotypes and holding aspirations with tangible goals, like gaining senior or influential roles, for positive change underpinned the participants' self-definitions as change agents. Finally, with agency comes resistance, through what Davidson (2017) suggests are acts which defy and challenge systems or oppression and domination. Resistance embodied self-valuation and self-respect necessary to disrupt the status quo of white hegemony. Despite the absence of sisterhood as a support mechanism in four of the participants' experiences in this study, they voiced their resistance to the normative stereotypes held by their white colleagues and their firm belief in their place in white-dominated educational spaces.

Through both theoretical lenses which form the conceptual framework, this study centralises 'race' and gender to understand how Black female teachers form their

professional identity in white dominated educational spaces. Applying relevant CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) tenets, in the absence of definitive core tenets of CRT in a wider context, alongside drawing on consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) provides an interrogation of racialised and gendered intersectional experiences of Black women in education which goes beyond existing literature in the English context. Further, the use of the two theoretical approaches in this study provides an alternative view of Black women in education in which they recognise and acknowledge the obstacles of their double consciousness, or what Beal (2008) refers to as the "double jeopardy" (2008, p. 166) of 'race' and gender, but demonstrate resistance, agency, navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) and tenacity as characteristics of their professional identities to cut their own paths to success and thrive in their work places. Therefore, in addressing the research question, the participants' voices reveal that their professional identities were formed by drawing on a set of values and principles framed by familial, aspirational and cultural capital (Yosso, 2005). Their professional identities are grounded in an ethic of care (Collins, 2000) towards all learners but a particular politicised caring (McKinney de Royston et al., 2021) commitment to Black learners, their families and the communities they serve. Despite the participants being cognisant of the way they are perceived through normative stereotypes, they confirm their credibility and value to their schools through high quality teaching, improved learner outcomes, relationships with the wider community and gaining further qualifications, demonstrating their legitimate place in educational spaces which are perceived as hostile. Agentic choices to drive positive changes for social justice and inclusive cultures and practices are embedded in their professional identities, with a determination to gain senior positions to be "at the table" to

influence policy that specifically benefits Black and minoritised learners and staff within their schools. Despite facing continued normative stereotyping, participants in this study challenged and resisted white hegemonic perspectives to form professional identities which advocates for Black and minoritised learners and their families.

Drawing on the work of Maylor (2009b), who used both CRT and Black feminism in her paper highlighting her experiences and challenges as a Black researcher, she notes the usefulness of CRT to examine the effects of racial oppressions on individuals (herself as the individual in this context) and "to expose racism in all of its manifestations" (2009b, p. 54). She also notes that CRT places 'race' is at the centre of its analysis and provides a framework for examining "interactions with White people in educational contexts" (Maylor, 2009b, p. 54). Her specific use of Black feminism was to address "the absence/invisibility of Black women's experiences/knowledge in White feminist discourse" (Maylor, 2009b, p. 53) enabling her as a Black woman and Black researcher to define her own reality by moving her own voice to the centre of the activity of challenging normative discourses through sharing her knowledge and experiences. Maylor (2009b) citing Reynolds (2002) also noted that Black feminism "encourages critical and reflexive thinking about gender and race" (2009b, p. 53) enabling a fuller comprehension of the multiple consciousness Black women experience. Therefore, Maylor (2009b), when considering her intersectional experiences as a Black woman and Black researcher, posits that "[A]pplying CRT and Black feminism to Black women's experiences is crucial if shared knowledge and understandings about Black women's research experiences, the meaning they give to such experiences and, the discriminations they struggle with are to

develop" (2009, p. 54). Taking the same standpoint, my use of CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) and Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) promoted the use of storytelling by Black female teachers participating in this study to share experiences, knowledge, thoughts and ideas of being in white-dominated workspaces, which firstly revealed their perceptions of discriminations and oppressions and secondly, demonstrated how their stories gave meaning to their thoughts, ideas and actions that demonstrated resistance and activism to create change.

It is important that I acknowledge that analysis of individual personal stories in this study sought to identify commonalities and patterns in experiences of the 10 participants to present a larger framework of understanding (Josselson, 2006, cited by McMullen and Braithwaite, 2013) to address the research question. However, professional identities are not essentialised as fixed or move from one situation to another unchanged. Agency determines which "subjectivities" (Collins and Bilge, 2020, p. 178) are drawn upon to be who the person wants to be within the constraints and power relations of the social context. The characteristics of professional identities elicited through individual personal stories in this study serve to provide a broader counter-narrative to normative views of Black female teachers rather than present fixed and essentialised professional identities.

6.3 Limitations of the study

Firstly, the dearth of England and UK based research on the experiences and professional identities of Black female teachers, compared to that emanating from the US could impact on the understanding of the phenomenon studied from an

England and UK perspective. However, to mitigate this (as noted in section 6.2 and section 3.2.2) I argue that seeking commonalities and patterns through an appropriate narrative methodology aids the construction and accumulation of knowledge in a larger framework and context without losing the richness of the individual stories and experiential knowledge.

A second limitation draws on the recognition provided by Osler (1997a) that the experiences of Black female teachers based in metropolitan cities will likely be different in some ways to those based in rural settings. My research participants were all located in cities and urban areas, resulting in a lack of voices of those who work in schools located outside of these areas. However, there is scope to carry out further studies which could present platforms for the voices of Black female teachers located in rural settings to provide some points of comparison and complement this research.

A third limitation is the limiting of the focus of 'intersectionality' for this study to 'race' and gender. This study could have drawn out the impact of other potentially subjugating intersectional identities of Black female teachers. However, heeding the caution by Delgado (2011, cited by Stockfelt, 2018) of divergence from the roots of intersectionality, I made a conscious choice to only focus on the 'race' (Black) and gender (female) of teachers. Being transgender was not an intersectional identity which was spoken about by any of the Black female teachers who participated. Class was raised by one participant on one occasion in the data. However, referring back to Rankin-Wright et al. (2019) citing Mirza (1997), in "a class discourse where race has no place" (Mirza 1997, p. 4, cited by Rankin-Wright et al., 2019, p. 5), class as an intersectional identity was

consciously not prioritised in the discourse within this thesis, although provides opportunity for further study (see section 6.6). Given the centrality of 'race' in this thesis, the place of class was excluded but not entirely ignored. No other intersectional identities were raised by the participants in their interviews.

A final acknowledgement is my own positionality, access and interpretation of the data through a lens of an unmatched racialised researcher. Evidence that research participants are likely to be more open with a researcher who can relate to their world view and lived experiences due to sameness and commonalities and avoid misinterpretation of these experiences (Gunaratnam, 2003), possibly an African diaspora researcher may have gained more authentic stories and interpreted the data in more nuanced ways through unspoken and non-verbal understandings (Merriam et al., 2001) that I may not be aware of. Having said this, data can be richer in some ways where the researcher is not 'matched' as participants say things explicitly rather than relying on assumptions of shared understandings. I acknowledge that what the participants shared with me may be different to what they may share with another researcher who is matched or unmatched ethnically and culturally. I exercised self-reflexivity throughout the study and did my best to ensure that the participants' voices were treated with the care and respect that they deserve as I present the complexities of working in white-dominated educational spaces through counter-narratives of the professional identities of the 10 Black female teachers, which they kindly shared through their lived experiences and stories.

6.4 Methodological appropriateness to address the research question

Counter-storytelling is supported by CRT and Black feminist thought, providing a window to comprehend individual's social realities (Clark and Saleh, 2019; O'Toole, 2018), as noted in section 3.2.2. Although other writers have engaged in the use of life histories methodology, such as Osler (1997a, 1997b) and Johnson (2017), narrative inquiry provides an equally suitable framework to capture stories and lived experiences with theoretical sensitivity (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, cited by Solórzano and Yosso, 2002) and "cultural intuition" (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002, p.33) expected in methodologies associated with CRT and Black feminist thought. Clandinin (2013) makes the case for narrative inquiry as a suitable methodology in that how an individual experiences the world is both through living and telling experiences that are storied. Further, Aujla-Bhullar (2018) notes that narrative inquiry is used to "represent an ongoing conversation and opportunity to converse about an experience while living through it" (2018, p.65). As such, narrative inquiry enabled the participants to share their stories as they lived them, providing a suitable methodology to answer the research question through the rich collection of data for analysis and sharing through this thesis.

6.5 Implications

This study highlights that the Black female teachers who shared their lived experiences through their personal stories held a unique experiential positionality, producing a positive counter-narrative about who they are in white-dominated school spaces. The implications for this are threefold. Firstly, Black females considering a career in teaching but are dissuaded by the research and data

which describe the oppressions and racism which still exist in English schools, such as the findings of the Runnymede/NASUWT (2017) report, can be encouraged by the positive counter-narrative and perspectives of the professional identities of the Black female teachers in this study. Likewise, Black female teachers currently working in schools who have considered leaving due to oppressive experiences can potentially find experiences which resonate with them within the counter-narrative that encourage them to stay in the profession. According to the School Workforce in England in 2020 data, only 1.6% of all class teachers and 0.7% of all Headteachers are from a Black heritage background and are female (although these figures do not include mixed heritage females), hence representation remains an issue in English schools. To encourage greater diversity of the teaching and education workforce, as per the aims of the DfE's 'Statement of intent on the diversity of the teaching workforce – setting the case for a diverse teaching workforce' (2018), experience and narratives which present the positive value and impact of Black female teachers are needed to provide Black women a holistic perspective of the profession to enable them to make informed choices about joining and staying in it.

Secondly, this study provides a rationale for school leaders to drive for cultural change within white-dominated school spaces to be more inclusive of their Black staff and pupils. The McGregor-Smith Review (2017), on 'race' in the workplace, notes that organisations consistently perform better with a diverse and developed workforce. In order to diversify their staffing bodies and be inclusive spaces, this thesis presents to school leaders the areas of policy and practice which require addressing, from more transparent recruitment practices with robust and supportive feedback, to being more cognisant of the impact of Black female

stereotypes on their Black female staff and pupils. As such, it would be prudent that school leaders equip themselves with the knowledge of Black female teachers' lived experiences in schools and the skills to challenge inequities in educational spaces which currently exist.

Thirdly, through networks like the Black educators' event Black female teachers can draw on collective agency through shared experiences, thoughts and ideas for social change. Flesher Fominaya (2010) discusses the concept of collective agency, that being "a shared sense of 'one-ness' or 'we-ness' anchored in real or imagined shared attributes and experiences among those who comprise the collectivity…Embedded within the shared sense of we is a corresponding sense of collective agency" (2010, p.394). The identification of commonalities in experiences of the 10 participants enabling the presentation of a larger framework of understanding (Josselson, 2006, cited by McMullen and Braithwaite, 2013) suggests a 'we-ness' that exists between the participants which can activate positive activism for change.

I will be presenting the findings of this study at a future Black educator's event from which some participants were drawn. The event is an existing network which can mobilise collective agency and action around common causes and shared interests that challenge and resist "inequalities, exclusion and injustice rooted in the oppression of people" (Millward and Takhar, 2019, p. NP1). Millward and Takhar (2019) go on to note that features of movements which create social change "involve political and collective action, resistance to oppression and have a network" (2019., p. NP3). Therefore, sharing this work with the 10 participants and a wider network of Black educators has the

propensity to create action and resistance in how Black female teachers are viewed and valued in their school settings driven by a collective consciousness and the collective agency of these professionals, with support from the Black educators' network.

6.6 Potential future research

Putting aside how this study can be modified for further research through addressing the limitations identified earlier in this chapter (section 6.3), there are other potential areas for future research which have been opened up through this study. Firstly, there is potential to carry out further research on Black female teachers in England to present a disaggregated perspective and understanding of their impact in education. Currently, the majority of literature on Black teachers in England and the UK takes an aggregated perspective (see Osler, 1997a, 1997b; Wright, 2010 as examples) with no gender differentiation to examine the specific roles of Black female teachers. Works by Callender (2018, 2020), Miller and Callender (2018) and Maylor (2018) examining the lived experiences of Black male teachers, leaders and student teachers are examples of the exception to this. A similar disaggregated approach with a focus on Black female teachers in England is also needed to sit parallel to the existing and growing work on Black male teachers.

Secondly, this study revealed that a positive Black father-daughter relationship which challenges the absent Black father narrative is seldom referred to in literature. Many of the Black female teachers in this study experienced support and advocacy from their fathers. This is an area deserving of greater attention.

Thirdly, there is scope for wider study which broadens the definition of intersectional identities beyond 'race' and gender. The exclusion of class as an intersectional identity was a methodological and epistemological choice for this study. Broadening the scope of the definition of intersectionality will allow for a robust examination of the impact of multiple identities on professional identities of Black women in the workplace.

Finally, this study focussed on Black women in a specific profession. The professional identities of Black women in other professions, such as nursing and policing, could be addressed in a similar way to this study about Black female teachers. In doing so, there will be a breadth of literature which positively shapes perspectives of Black women in the workplace, which in turn challenges the normative stereotypes which remain embedded in the white hegemonic psyche.

6.7 Contribution to knowledge

There are several areas in which this study makes a contribution to knowledge. Firstly, the conceptual framework combining CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) and consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) is rarely seen in literature. The combination of CRT and Black feminist insights is seen in the work of Rankin-Wright et al. (2019) who discuss gender equality within sporting equality and coach development, and Curtis (2017) who examines leadership in early years settings. However, the literature on Black women in educational contexts mostly presents an either/or discourse, with much of it based in the US. The use of these two theoretical frameworks enabled a focus

on the racialised and gendered intersectional experiences of Black female teachers to create an additional layer of understanding to current discourses of how Black women successfully navigate their place in schools located in the English context. CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) is a tool to illuminate, understand and address structural issues of 'race' and gender intersectional inequalities in education. However, CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001) takes an essentialised approach to the intersectional experiences of 'race' and racism in education. To examine the nuanced lived experiences of Black female teachers, consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) provides a complementary platform to acknowledge the 'race' and gender intersectional inequalities faced on an individual level by Black women. Further, it challenges the normative views through Black women's self-knowledge and strength which reveals a counter-narrative of success and drives them as change agents. Therefore, used together, consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000) identifies the resistance and activism by individual Black women in education through their agency, navigational capital (Yosso, 2005) and tenacity to challenge the structural inequalities surfaced by CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001).

Secondly, this study provides a robust and detailed counter-narrative to normative stereotyped views of Black women in the workplace, and specifically in education, which is rarely found in literature, putting an alternative perspective of Black women, and specifically Black female teachers in England, into the discourse of Black feminist literature. Additionally, narratives of Black teacher success is predominately located in discourses of leadership (see Curtis, 2017; Johnson, 2017; Maylor, 2020; Miles Nash and Peters, 2020; Miller and Callender,

2018, as examples) whereas this study provides a counter-narrative of Black female teacher success in various roles within the school structure.

Thirdly, this study provides an outline of Black female teachers' roles in educational experiences of Black learners. This moves away from the aggregated view of the role of Black teachers (both male and female) which exists in UK-based literature. With a specific ethic of care (Collins, 2000) towards Black and minoritised learners attributed to Black female teachers, there is a need for additions to the discourse on the role of Black female teachers in the UK or English context to supplement the existing literature in this area of research stemming from the US.

Fourthly, the personal stories presented in this study about Black father-daughter relationships provide an important discourse which is seldom referred to in literature. Further, these stories challenge the normative view of the absent and disinterested Black father and places the Black father as a central influencing figure in these Black female teachers' lives, supporting their decisions to enter the teaching profession.

Finally, a number of studies (Anderson et al., 2018; Blum, 2004; Collins, 2000; Donovan, 2011; Neal-Jackson, 2020; Reynolds-Dobbs et al., 2008) serve to confirm that Black women in society continue to face oppression and negative stereotyping. The findings and discussion in Chapter Four of this study adds to the existing discourse on the continued framing of Black women through controlling images. However, my contribution to knowledge in this discourse is the continuing existence of controlling images of Black women specifically in the

teaching profession and educational spaces in England, which has had little attention to date. This study, therefore, contributes to the framing of Black women away from the existing controlling images (the outcomes of Chapter Five) as well as adding to the discourse which continues to firmly define them through existing controlling images (the outcomes of Chapter Four).

6.8 Conclusion to the chapter

The rationale for this study arose through an unsettled social and political landscape in the UK, which has seen the promotion of a British-centric National Curriculum in schools, the potential demonisation and stigmatisation of certain ethnic minority groups and communities through the Prevent duty, the disproportionate number of Black men who experience 'stop and search' police practices, the disproportionate effect on minoritised communities of the COVID-19 coronavirus global pandemic beginning in 2020, and a wider 'hostile environment' which engendered the Windrush scandal. All of these issues have directly or indirectly placed minority ethnic communities and individuals in the position of being 'othered', hence the time has come to hear the voices and experiences of Black communities. Change is needed to challenge the "nativist politics…residual post-imperial melancholy…and renewed suspicion of cultural diversity" (Warmington, 2020, p.33) which has been marked by Brexit, an increase in anti-immigrant government policy and the continued attempt to repatriate those with a criminal past to the Caribbean and other Commonwealth countries in recent years. The global response in solidarity of #BlackLivesMatter in the wake of the killing of George Floyd in 2020 saw a shift in public mood, signifying an appetite for social change. As Akala (2018) noted, "The twenty-first century could well turn out to be a shit century in which to be a bigot clinging to

old assumption of gender, 'race' and the eternal supremacy of a particular culture or geographic region, or alternatively old hierarchies might well continue to reassert themselves" (2018, p. 286-287). My journey through writing this thesis has brought me back to the reflections that I began with. Although the oppressive experiences outlined in Chapter Four resonated with my own lived experiences of working in white-dominated education settings, I have come to understand the resistance that Black women in education bring to act as change agents and in being an inspiration to educators like myself. Counter-narratives can prevail.

7. References

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8. Appendices

Appendix 1: Application for Ethical Approval

Ethics ETH1920-0003: Ms Janet Ramdeo (Medium risk)

Date Academic Student ID Project School Division

Ethics application
Project details
06 Aug 2019
Ms Janet Ramdeo 3011157
Doctoral Research Project Law and Social Science Education

Research project title

Black female teachers in white-dominated educational spaces: narratives of identity (Doctoral Research Project)

Researcher(s)
Ms Janet Ramdeo

Theoretical Rationale
Please see the main body of my Res2 submission attached. The following is taken from this document:
A 2017 report by The Runnymede Trust and National Union of Teachers (Haque and Elliot, 2017) identified the impact of racism on teachers in schools, revealing discrimination, 'micro-aggressions' and unequal treatment, such as "being denied promotion without institutional clarity" (2017, p.6). The findings in this report provide, what can be argued as, a deficit view of minority ethnic bodies in white- dominated educational contexts. In October 2018, the Department for Education (DfE) released their 'Statement of intent on the diversity of the teaching workforce – setting the case for a diverse teaching workforce' in an attempt to increase the diversity of the teaching workforce. However, the DfE's 'Statement of intent' does little to acknowledge that school environments are racialised. It instead proposes further equality and diversity activities actioned by predominantly white senior leaders who have probably not considered the racialised experiences through the eyes of their minority ethnic staff, nor are equipped with the skills to do so. There also appears to be a disconnect between the intentions of the DfE 'Statement of intent' and the wider educational and political landscape. The seemingly British-centric National Curriculum reforms, resulting from a sweeping review in 2011, could be viewed as undervaluing the minority ethnic human cost of the British colonial empire. The place of the Prevent duty in school policy and 'Promoting Fundamental British Values' potentially demonises certain ethnic minority groups and stigmatises their communities. A wider 'hostile environment' political context with perceived nationalistic undertones permeating discourses (Burnett, 2017) engendered the Windrush scandal in 2018. The current educational and political landscape has directly or indirectly placed minority ethnic communities and individuals in the position of being 'othered'. So, do white-dominated educational environments perpetuates negative Black stereotypes and if so, how then do Black female teachers position themselves and feel about their 'Blackness' as professionals in their white-dominated work contexts?
The proposed research aims to fill the apparent gap in knowledge on how Black female teachers in England form their professional identity in white-dominated educational workplaces. The majority of work in the area of Black female teachers has been set in the US. Harris and Leonardo (2018) acknowledges the work of Bhopal and Preston (2012) on intersectionality and race in education in the UK, although Black teacher professional identity appears to be a gap in the current discussions in England. My study aims to contribute to the existing body of work by such commentators. Further, the current political situation, with Brexit, the 'hostile environment' and National Curriculum reforms, provides a unique context within which Black communities operate in England, the impact of which could be permeating into school environments creating unforeseen challenges for Black

female teachers' development of professional identity in their workplace and career path in the teaching profession.

Examining and analysis of intersectional experiences in professional identity formation of Black female teachers will be viewed through Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT as the main theoretical framework enables a platform for Black female teachers to express their feelings about their 'Blackness' as professionals in their white-dominated work contexts and articulate their sense of professional identity in these spaces. As such, CRT leads me to using a narrative methodology, mainly due to the complexities of lived experiences. Henry (2015) discusses how narrative methods can provide an approach which is "more humanising for marginalised participants" (2015, p. 592) when researching how Black women exist within the intersections of their professional identity. Bamberg (2010, p. 5) further supports that narrative "has been argued to be a privileged genre for identity constructions" due to the activity drawing towards reportable or tellable human life. I intend to analyse the narratives through the lens of CRT, a framework which lends itself to the analysis of the narratives of Black women in non-representative workplaces. The research instrument will be interviews. The interviews will aim to enable the participants to fully articulate their narratives and lived experiences.

References:

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Procedure

Please see attached GANTT chart.

It is envisaged that the procedure will be:

1) Prepare all aspects of ethical approval application in August 2019 (participants' information sheet, consent form and indicative interview schedule);

2) After ethical approval is gained, the information sheet and consent form will be used to gain informed consent of participant(s) for a pilot study. It is hoped that this will take place in October 2019;

3) After informed consent is gained from one or two participants, carry out pilot study using the indicative interview schedule. It is hoped that this will take place in October 2019 and no later than November 2019;

4) From November 2019, I intend to begin gaining informed consent from potential participants for the main study (view to starting data collection in January 2020). I intend to access potential participants via:

(a) contacting National Education Union (NEU) to attend their annual BAME Teachers' Conference (normally November every year) to speak to potential participants and hand out the information sheet;

(b) using national HEI network contacts (e.g.BELMAS RIG) I have to access school partnerships across England;

(c) where necessary, place an advert for participation in the online media connected to the networking group mentioned in (b). It is not envisaged that this will be necessary;

d) use existing contacts school partnership contacts to determine if there are new appropriate staff members who I have not had any previous connections with.

5) After analysis of data from the pilot study and evaluation of the data collection process, the interview schedule may be reviewed and amended for greater effectiveness. At this point, it is hoped that only minor changes to the question structures are needed. However, I am mindful of the potential need to revisit ethics if substantial changes to the interview schedule and methodology is required;

6) If no changes or only minor changes are required to the interview schedule, the changes will be made in December 2019. This is in preparation to begin main data collection from January 2020. No data collection will take place without informed consent being gained;

7) I intend to follow up with courtesy reminder emails to those individuals who have shown interest in the project but have yet to supply informed consent. Once informed consent is gained, interview dates will be arranged for soon thereafter, to maintain momentum of the participants' interest in the study. I envisage this will start in January 2020;

8) I intend to interview approximately 15 participants between January and July 2020. Analysis of each interviews will take place soon after the interview is completed using NVivo;

9) Participants may be contacted for clarification only as part of the analysis process. This will take place only if required and as soon as possible after the interview. Participants will have an opportunity to comment on the transcript of their interview if requested;

10) Participants will have access to the finished research on completion in 2021.

Are there any beneficiaries to the proposed research project?
Yes

If yes, who are they and how will they benefit?
It is envisaged that beneficiaries will be:
Participant interviewees are provided with a platform to articulate their experiences through the chosen methodology with a view to policy and practice change in schools as a result of the research;
Future Black female teachers should benefit due to the envisaged positive impact on policy and practice in schools;
Senior Leadership in schools will benefit from developing a greater understanding of the school-based factors which affect Black female teachers, hence impacting on policy and practice;
Pupils will benefit from any changes in policy and practice which affects how Black female teachers view thier position in the school. If positive changes take place, this will hae a positive benefit to learners.

Does any of your research fieldwork take place outside of the UK?
No

If yes, please state the location(s) of your fieldwork Region
Country

Research project start date
30 Sept 2019

Anticipated research project end date
31 Aug 2021

Ethical risk
Does the research project have funding?
No

Does this research project involve other organisations?
No

Does the research project involve people as participants or in any other way?
Yes

Does the research project involve vulnerable groups?
No

Does the research project involve sensitive topics?
Yes

Does the research project involve secure data, or publicly available data in which individuals can be potentially identified?
No

Does the research project involve any situations where the safety of the researcher may be in question?
No

Does the research project involve involve recruiting participants via the internet?
No

Does your research project involve access to, or use of, material which could be classified as security sensitive?
No

Does the scope of the research project involve additional insurances over and above the University's standards?
No

Does the research project involve deceased persons, body parts, or other human elements?
No

Ethical guidelines
All research conducted by LSBU staff and students should follow the LSBU Ethics Code of Practice. You should also follow the guidelines relevant for your discipline. Please indicate which discipline guidelines you will use below.
Other

If you selected other, please enter details here.
British Educational Research Association Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2018)

Is there any special training of investigators needed to complete this research project?
No

If yes, please provide details for the training and how it will be delivered.

Human participants: Information and participation Who will be recruited?
I aim to gain suitable and willing participants who fit the description of 'Black female':
'Black' includes those who identify as being Black African, Black Caribbean, and can be British or not, but not bi-racial;
'Female' includes all those who identify as female. Due to the nature of the study, an additional criteria is:
Currently or previously working in schools whereby the staff demographic is 'white-dominated'(where the participant is in a minority regarding ethnicity). It is difficult to put a percentage on this as each setting will have a different size of staffing.
I would prefer to use participants unknown to me to avoid any bias about schools and contacts I know.

How will recruitment take place?
I will make contact with participants directly through organisations, such as NEU, and networking organisations which I belong to. To exemplify further, I will be:
(a) contacting National Education Union (NEU) to attend their annual BAME Teachers' Conference (normally November every year) to speak to potential participants and hand out the information sheet;
(b) using national HEI network contacts (e.g.BELMAS RIG), through which I have to access school partnerships across England;
(c) where necessary, place an advert for participation in the online media connected to the networking group mentioned in (b);

(d) use existing contacts school partnership contacts to determine if there are new appropriate staff members who I have not had any previous connections with.

I may also find that after interviewing one participant, she may refer an additional associate by word-of-mouth. This is not unusual for this type of study (as experienced by Johnson, 2017).

Johnson, L. (2017) The lives and identities of UK Black and South Asian head teachers: Metaphors of leadership. Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 45(5) pp.842–862

Does the research project involve members of the public in a research capacity (participative research)?
No

How will you gain access to the research setting and research participants?
This research does not involve the need to interview minors. I do not perceive the need to contact anyone as a 'gatekeeper' to gain voluntary informed consent from individuals for this study. Informed consent of each participant will be gained. An invitation letter, information sheet and consent form will be provided to each potential participant.

Will written consent be obtained?
Yes

If written consent will not be obtained please indicate why and how verbal consent will be obtained or what will be considered implied consent.
N/A. I will be honest and open with the participants and other relevant stakeholders about the research design and the collection and storage of data. I will seek to gain appropriate consent at the earliest time for future use of data if necessary, for example as secondary data to address a new or similar research question. I will explain to participants how long the data will be stored for (according to ethical guidelines) if it is to be stored for future use. I will also be clear on the disposal of data if not required beyond the life of this research project.

I do not envisage the need for any type of non-disclosure agreements. I do not envisage any conflicts of interest and I will not be in receipt of financial gain for this study.

Please upload consent form and evidence of communication with participating organisations if the latter is required.

Could the research project involve the sharing of confidential information beyond the initial consent given?
No

Does the research project involve visual or vocal methods where identifiability may be a concern?
No

Does the research project involve deception?
No

Is the choice to participate likely to be a sensitive issue?
No

Does the research project involve situations which may induce stress, anxiety, humiliation or pain?
No

If yes, what safeguards will be put in place?

Please upload your participant information sheets / invitation letters.

Will incentives beyond reasonable compensation for time and travel being used in the proposed research project be offered to participants?
No

If yes, please describe the incentives and outline any strategies to mitigate ethical issues relating to their use.

Human participants: Method
Does your research contain any possible risk to participants?
Yes

If yes, please indicate which of the following risks may be entailed by your research project.
Potential psychological intrusion from questionnaires, interview schedules, observation techniques

If other has been selected above, please indicate what this risk consists of.

How will these risks be mitigated?
I do not envisage any potential harm or risks to participants arising from this research project. However, I am aware that there is always a potential risk of psychological intrusion and that disclosing sensitive life stories through narrative interviews may cause upset to participants when conducting interviews. To mitigate this, participants are able to decline to answer any question that they feel would potentially be too psychologically intrusive. I recognise that I have a duty of care to participants to minimise and manage any upset that may arise. In such cases, I will offer participants an opportunity to stop the interview at that point. If they wish to take a break, I will provide the opportunity for this. If the participant wishes to postpone the interview until another date, I will respect the circumstances and reschedule. I will consider the sensitivity of framing of the interview questions to enable the participants to choose what to provide as their own narrative.
If the participant wishes to withdraw, I will acknowledge their decision and their continuation in the project will cease. In instances of unforeseen circumstances occur, in terms of relating life experiences, I recognise the importance of renegotiating consent with the participant, if this is considered appropriate and necessary (BERA, 2018, p. 20).

Does the research project involve intrusive interventions or data collection?
No

Will participants be debriefed?
Yes

If yes, how will participants be debriefed?
Participants will be given an opportunity to comment on the transcript of their own interview. Participants will have access to the finished research.

If no, why is debriefing not required?
Please upload any debrief sheets.

Data collection and sharing
Does the research project involve access to records of personal or sensitive information concerning identifiable individuals?
No

Which of the following data types will you be using?
Interveiws/Focus groups

For each data collection type please indicate how data will be collected and from what sources.
Examining and analysis of intersectional experiences using Critical Race Theory leads me to using a narrative methodology, mainly due to the complexities of lived experiences. I intend to interview 12- 15 Black female teachers. I intend to analyse the narratives through the lens of CRT, a framework which lends itself to the analysis of the narratives of Black women in non-representative workplaces. The research instrument will be interviews. The interviews will aim to enable the participants to fully articulate their narratives and lived experiences.
I will be honest and open with the participants and other relevant stakeholders about the research design and the collection and storage of data. I will seek to gain appropriate consent at the earliest time for future use of data if necessary, for example as secondary data to address a new or similar

research question. I will explain to participants how long the data will be stored for (according to ethical guidelines) if it is to be stored for future use.

I recognise that participants disclosing sensitive narratives may wish to do so away from their place of work. I will allow the participant to make suitable suggestions for neutral locations in which to carry out the data collection process.

The nature of collecting narratives through interview may give rise to information which implicates other people (positively and negatively). As expected by BERA (2018, p. 23), I will take all possible precautions to avoid identification of mentioned third parties. I will ensure that third parties implicated are not identifiable (by using pseudonyms or fictionalising the third party) or considering if this aspect of the narrative can be omitted without adversely impacting on the message being communicated.

What steps will be made to ensure the data collected will be anonymous or made anonymous?

I will maintain confidentiality and anonymity of all participants in the research project. Participants will be informed of this during the consent process. When reporting, I will use a 'fictionalising' approach, such as using codes or pseudonyms to ensure full anonymity, and this will be explained to participants at the point of gaining informed consent. I intend to audio record the interviews. I must comply with GDPR in relation to storage of data, which the participants will be informed of. I will keep the audio recordings (data) collected securely (i.e. secure computer network, password-protected and data encrypted in each location. Data will be stored in at least two locations for back-up purposes under these listed criteria) and stored for 10 years. After this time (whether at the end of the life of the research or after using the anonymised archived data as secondary data in a future study), all audio recording and associated data will be securely destroyed (university IT support for this process will be sought). Any third-party access to this data will be agreed by the participant in advance.

Quotations from interview data will be included in the thesis and any related publications. Suitable pseudonyms will be used to ensure that no individual will be identifiable.

I do not envisage any degree of anonymity for each participant to change during the life of the study.

Will data be stored electronically?

Yes

If yes, what steps will be taken to secure the data?

I intend to audio record the interviews. I must comply with GDPR in relation to storage of data, which the participants will be informed of. I will keep the audio recordings (data) collected securely (i.e. secure computer network, password-protected and data encrypted in each location. Data will be stored in at least two locations for back-up purposes under these listed criteria) and stored for 10 years.

If no, where will the data be stored?

When will the data be destroyed?

Data will be stored in at least two locations for back-up purposes under these listed criteria) and stored for 10 years. After this time (whether at the end of the life of the research or after using the anonymised archived data as secondary data in a future study), all audio recording and associated data will be securely destroyed (university IT support for this process will be sought).

Although all forms of data analysis cannot be foreseen prior to data collection, please indicate what form of analysis is currently planned.

Analysis is currently planned as coding themes identified in each interview through using NVivo.

Disclosure and Barring Service

Does the investigator or anyone else connected to the research project require a DBS check?

No

If no, please indicate why.

I will not be interviewing minors or vulnerable adults. If the interview is carried out in the school setting, I will always be accompanied by a school representative, as per school policy around

visitors. It is likely and envisaged that many interviews may be carried out away from school premises.

If yes, please attach a copy of the certificate.

Has a health and safety risk assessment been carried out and, for applicants with supervisors, has the assessment been approved by a supervisory team?
Yes

Appendix 2: Participant Consent Letter

London South Bank University

EST 1892

Dear School-based Practitioner,

Re: Invitation to participate in doctoral research (interview).

Title of project: *Black female teachers in white-dominated educational spaces: narratives of identity.*

You are invited to participate through interview in my doctoral research project entitled, '***Black female teachers in white-dominated educational spaces: narratives of identity.***'.   Please find attached an information sheet giving you details of the project, including the aims and the methods of data collection.

Please read the information sheet carefully and feel free to contact me at ramdeoj2@lsbu.ac.uk if you require any further clarification. As you will read, there is no expectation for you to participate, and it is voluntary. Your identity will be kept anonymous under the requirements of the BERA Ethical Guideline for Educational Research 2018 and the expectations of the University Research Ethics Committee at London South Bank University, where I am undertaking this thesis.

Also attached are two copies of the consent form. If you are happy to participate in this research project, please complete and sign one copy of the consent form and return to me at the above email address, and keep one copy for your own records. Please note that you are free to withdraw at any time from the research.

Thank you for taking the time to consider your participation in this research project. Please contact me if you have any further questions.

Yours sincerely.

Janet Ramdeo

September 2019

Research Participant Information Sheet for
SCHOOL-BASED PRACTITIONER Interviews

Title of project: *Black female teachers in white-dominated educational spaces: narratives of identity (draft).*

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Also note that you are able to withdraw from the research at any time after you had agreed. There is more information on this within the information sheet.

This study is being completed as part of a Professional Doctorate in Education (EdD) at London South Bank University. It has been reviewed and ethically approved by the London South Bank University Research Ethics Committee. The study complies with the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research 2018.

The purpose of the study

The title of the study is: *Black female teachers in white-dominated educational spaces: narratives of identity (draft).* Being from a BAME background and having been a school-based practitioner myself within white-dominated schools, I became interested in how other teachers from minority communities navigate the development and changes to their professional identity. Thus, the focus of the study is on how Black female teachers view their professional identity within educational settings and spaces, specifically schools, which are white-dominated in terms of staff demographic. There are several aims of this study:

7 To understand what Black female teachers perceive as influencing their professional identity;
8 To understand how Black female teachers compare their experiences with their colleagues (white female/white male/black male);
9 To explore how Black female teachers' professional identity frames the expectations and perceptions of their experiences; and
10 To explore through theory (Critical Race Theory) how Black female teachers' professional identity is perceived to be influenced by race and gender.

Why are you being asked?

I have chosen to focus this study on Black female teachers. You have been invited to participate in the interview as you meet the criterion of:

1) You categorise your ethnicity as being **Black** (Black African and Black Caribbean, British or not);
2) You categorise your gender as **female**; and
3) You currently or have in the past worked in an **educational setting where the staff demographic is/was white-dominated**.

I aim to interview 10-12 school-based practitioners for this study from across the country.

Data collection

The data collection timeframe is expected to run from January to June 2020. The doctoral thesis is due to be submitted by the end of 2021. If you are willing to participate, you will be invited to take part in an interview, which will form the basis of the qualitative data set in this study. A short interview schedule will be used to elicit your views and experiences. The interview is designed to allow you to provide a narrative of your experiences, if you chose to participate. It is envisaged that the interviews will last approximately 45-60 minutes. Interviews will be digitally audio-recorded for accuracy and any extracts used as part of the research project will not be attributed to any individuals as extracts will be coded and pseudonyms used to maintain your anonymity.

If you agree to participate in this study, I will maintain your anonymity and confidentiality (unless disclosure of a safeguarding issue becomes apparent). I will use a 'fictionalising' approach by using codes and pseudonyms to ensure full anonymity. I must comply with GDPR in relation to storage of your interviews, so I will keep the audio recording collected securely (i.e. secure computer network, password protected and data encrypted in each location. Data will be stored in at least two locations for back-up purposes under these listed criteria) and stored for 10 years as standard practice for research projects. After this time (whether at the end of the life of the research or after using the anonymised archived data as secondary data in a future study, for which permission will be gained at the point of gaining consent), all audio recording and associated data will be securely destroyed (university IT support for this process will be sought). Any third-party access to your interview data will require your permission in advance.

Quotations from interview data will be included in the thesis and any related publications. I will use suitable pseudonyms to ensure that you are not identifiable. Data will ensure that any line managers who may subsequently read my work will not identify you and research finding, where appropriate, will be presented in aggregate form.

If you agree to participate in this study, it is understandable that you may not wish to be interviewed at your workplace. All efforts will be made to locate an alternative suitable venue at which you are comfortable. If you agree to participate, you are welcome to suggest alternative locations for the interview to take place.

Voluntary participation

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. You are free to withdraw from the study and not have your information included, at any time up to the time of completion of the thesis. However, after that time, and once the thesis is in the public domain it would not be possible for me to support your request.

If after agreeing to participate you change your mind, please contact me at your earliest convenience at ramdeoj2@lsbu.ac.uk to inform me. You do not need to provide a reason. If you wish to withdraw, I will acknowledge your decision by email and your continuation in the project will cease. No form of coercion or duress will be used to encourage you to remain part of the study, if you choose to withdraw.

Possible disadvantages or risks

I do not anticipate that you will be any disadvantage or suffer any risk from this study. However, I am aware that there is always a potential risk of psychological intrusion and that disclosing sensitive life stories through narrative interviews may cause upset to you when conducting interviews. To mitigate this, you are able to decline to answer any question that they feel would potentially be too psychologically intrusive. I recognise that I have a duty of care to you to minimise and manage any upset that may arise. In such cases, I will offer you an opportunity to stop the interview at that point. If you wish to take a break, I will provide the opportunity for this. If you wish to postpone the interview until another date, I will respect the circumstances and reschedule. I will consider the sensitivity of framing of the interview questions to enable you to choose what to provide as your own narrative.

Benefits of participating in this study

I will not be using any incentives to encourage you to participate in this study. However, your involvement will help to better understand your experiences in the workplace and may potentially encourage change of practices within educational spaces.

What now?

You will be provided with two copies of the consent form. Please retain one copy for your records and return the second copy signed if you are happy to participate in the research project outlined in this information letter. All information received from you will be handled in a confidential manner. The data will be stored as per the details outlined in this information sheet. Only my supervisor and I will have direct access to the information.

Thank you in advance for considering this request for participation in my research project. If you have any reason to make a complaint about the research being undertaken, please contact Chair of University Research and Ethics Committee (UREC) at ethics@lsbu.ac.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Janet Ramdeo

Research Project Consent Form

Full title of Project: Black female teachers in white-dominated educational spaces: narratives of identity.

Ethics approval registration Number: ETH1920-0003

Name: Janet Ramdeo

Researcher Position: EdD Professional Doctorate in Education - Doctoral Student

Contact details of Researcher: ramdeoj2@lsbu.ac.uk

Taking part (please tick the box that applies)	Yes	No
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet/project brief and/or the student has explained the above study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions.	☐	☐
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without providing a reason.	☐	☐
I agree to take part in the above study.	☐	☐

Use of my information (please tick the box that applies)	Yes	No
I understand my personal details such as phone number and address will not be revealed to people outside the project.	☐	☐
I understand that my data/words may be quoted in publications, reports, posters, web pages, and other research outputs.	☐	☐
I agree for the data I provide to be stored (after it has been anonymised) securely and I understand it may be used for future research.	☐	☐
I agree to the interview being audio recorded.	☐	☐
I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.	☐	☐

_____   _____   _____
Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   ___16/11/19_____
Janet Ramdeo   Date   Signature
Name of Researcher

Project contact details for further information:

Project Supervisor/ Head of Division name:
Dr Helen Young (Supervisor)

Email address: youngh@lsbu.ac.uk

Appendix 3: Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule

Research question:

How do Black female teachers form their professional teacher identity in white-dominated educational contexts?

Research objectives:

10.4   To understand how Black female teachers' intersectional experiences compare with their colleagues (white female/white male/black male);

10.5   To understand what Black female teachers perceive as influencing their professional identities;

10.6   To explore how Black female teachers' agentic positions frame the expectations and perceptions of their professional experiences; and

10.7   To explore how Black female teachers challenge white hegemonic stereotypes in forming their professional identity.

Interview schedule:

Initial context questions

How long have you been working in education?

What role are you in currently in your school?

How would you describe your ethnicity? (Black, specifically Black-African, specifically Black-Caribbean)

In what ways do you see your workplace as a white-dominated educational space?

Main questions to elicit narratives

Tell me about your journey to your current role

(Probe: Has your background influenced your chosen career path into teaching? Probe: If yes, how?)

Tell me what it is like to be a teacher in your school

Tell me what it is like to be a Black female teacher in your school

(Prompt: consider position, relationships with staff/pupils/parents, cultural capital, career development opportunities and promotion)

Tell me about your career progression

(Prompt: Are you where you hoped to be in your career at the moment? Probe: If yes, what has enabled this?

*   If no, what do you think are the barriers you have faced?*

*   Are your experiences same/different with white/black/male/female colleagues?)*

Tell me about your hopes for yourself within this profession

(Probe: Do you see these things happening for you? What are the factors that keep you going?)

What do you think other black female teachers should know about coming into the profession?

<u>Other more specific questions to use only if needed to keep the interview focussed.</u>
Who are you in this profession? How do you perceive yourself as a teacher?
(If this question requires redefining, the question becomes, 'How would you characterise your professional identity currently?')

What do you think influences your perception of your professional identity?
(Prompt: may want to refer back to question one on background
Probe: Do you perceive that you are valued by the school? If yes, how? If no, why do you feel this way?)

How are your experiences as a teacher the same/different to your colleagues?
(Are your experiences same/different with white/black/male/female colleagues?)

Appendix 4: Example of coding procedure ('Afia')

Transcript	Coding (CRT in education)	Coding (Black Feminist Thought)
I: **Thank you very much for your time today, really appreciate it. We're going to start with some contextual questions. So, how long have you been working in education?**		
A: I have been, I'm currently in my sixth year of teaching but I worked as a teaching assistant the year before. So, seven years roughly.		
I: **And what role are your currently in, in your school?**		
A: I'm a class teacher in Year 6 and I'm also a subject lead for PSHE across the school.		
I: **How would you describe your ethnicity?**		
A: Black African.		
I: **And what ways do you see your workplace as white dominated?**		
A: I would say we have middle leaders who are, within each year group we have middle leader and our management team which is basically all white. Some of the people have been in that school for a particular amount of time, haven't necessarily had experience in other schools but have been there and just been given the job in the way of internally. So sometimes thing have been advertised without even, under your nose. People have had experience of leadership, but not a chance to actually have the accolade of being a middle leader or the TLR that comes along with it. Even governing body as well is basically dominated white, maybe because of the area we're in but still there are, we do have a bit of diverse staff so you'd think you'd see that represented, particularly with the children that we have, our cover was heavily EAL and there's a lot of African children.	Lack of representation at higher levels

No accolade or title | Can do the job |
| But, yeah, I don't see my face within that and we've had staff come and go as well, diverse staff but people haven't stayed. So I've been there for a good number of years and I think before the deputy head, there was a deputy head who was Black but she left to go on and get her own headship because I think she wasn't going anywhere in that school in terms of possibly going into headship. I don't see myself in that, representing the management. | Lack of representation

Barriers to progression

Face doesn't fit | The need for representation |

I: **Thank you. So let's move on to the main questions. Can you tell me about your journey to your current role? What brought you to teaching and all of the things that you went through to where you are now?** A: I'd say it started from a real young age. When I was much younger I would always, I come from my family are mainly nurses, working in NHS, my whole family works NHS in some way or another but I always wanted to teach. Always, when I was little I was always sort of role playing teaching. I went to a Catholic school, in a suburb and it was obviously quite predominantly white. We had one or two, there were one or two black children within the class. I was the only black child in my class but as the years went up there were more Black children, and the school's completely different now, but I just remember whenever we used to have a supply teacher, sometimes we have a supply teacher and the only time I ever, in all of my schooling, my primary school years, saw a Black teacher was when they were supply, and I always questioned it because I was quite a critical child.	"I always wanted to teach" Lack of representation	Commitment to the profession The need for representation
I used to think quite a lot and ask a lot of questions and get told off in turn about the questions I was asking and I particularly remember when we had, even when we had supply teachers the way they would act towards me was I was going to be a troublemaker. So, I decided from a young age, I think it was about 10 or 11, I was like I'm going to do something different. I don't think it's right that there are some children that will never see a teacher that looks like them and I didn't understand why I'd never seen a teacher who looked like me. It was actually one person in year 5, I had a teacher in year 5, she wasn't English, I think she was Anglo-Indian and she inspired me because she just was different and she was very traditional but she just inspired me for the love of history and geography. So that inspired me to do history at university later on.	The importance of representation	The need/importance of representation Inspirational role model
[04.49] A: But, when I went to secondary school, my secondary school was a bit different and we had a range of teachers but I did find that often the black teachers were treated, like they weren't serious, other people didn't take them seriously. I always made sure I tried to behave because I wanted to be respectful. So, as I went through secondary school, I just had in the back of my mind I could possibly go into teaching but I also wanted to go into law as well. I was put off from doing law actually from careers advisors who said that, oh I don't think you'll be capable or they tried to steer away from the idea of doing A levels and	Black teachers not taken seriously The 'incapable' stereotype	

make me do something vocational, even though all the subjects I studied were always, I was writing so it was always English, geography, history, science, I enjoyed science but mainly like literature.		
So never really stopped me because I was quite stubborn, so I just, my A levels I took were English language and literature, history, geography. Whereas other people were taking things like media studies or less writing. So I went to university, did a history degree and I saw the same thing, the same trend. I didn't see anyone that really looked like me in any of those positions, ever really. You had the one off lecturer here or there. So the same thing was in the back of my mind. Whilst I was at university we had an opportunity to do some volunteering in schools, so I did that consecutively for three years, I volunteered in schools in ▓▓▓▓▓ in the Midlands and that was interesting to see because in the Midlands it's quite different.	Lack of representation (HE)	It "never really stopped me"
There are a lot of teachers, particularly a lot of Asian teachers, which I'd never seen before and I thought that was really nice because the children were all different but they had people they could look up to that were different as well. So I volunteered in secondary schools and primary schools. So when I came out of university, I started temping, working a little bit and I was working in an office, I was working in finance and I knew I didn't want to do that, I didn't want to do that at all. I enjoyed it but I knew I wanted to be in the classroom again. So I applied for a secondary school, no primary school sorry, as a teaching assistant in ▓▓▓▓▓, just outside ▓▓▓▓▓ and that's the first time when, obviously I was in school, I loved the children, the children were lovely and it was really diverse as well, so everybody, it was a mixture of everybody.	The importance of representation	The need/importance of representation
But again, there were Black teachers at that school and I really liked that, and again I was in a class as a teaching assistant which had like, the teacher wasn't always there so we sometimes had supply teachers and the supply teachers were always, always Black; Black or mixed race and I remember just seeing so many of the supply teachers and a lot of the children, again, didn't respect the supply teachers but I kept watching the teacher that I was with and those supply teachers and thinking, I've got to do this now. I've said I'm going to do it and I want to be at least, if I can be one person in the classroom that is passionate and cares and is a role model and other children can look up to that person, say ah do you know what, I've got a teacher, if they can be that I can be that, or I can do what I always wanted to do. No-one should stop me.	Represented but undervalued	Role model

So I became a teaching assistant then I applied for PGCE, did a PGCE at ▓▓▓▓▓ and the school I was at as a teaching assistant, the headteacher offered me a job when I came back. She said, look I've seen what you do in the classroom, you're dedicated so you can have that job when you come back. So, went and did my PGCE, came back a year later and the school had changed, as schools do but I was ready, raring to go and I got my first post, NQT post and because I had been in that school before, the school had loads of new NQTs, they decided to put me in Year 6 and I was thinking, oh why Year 6, why me? You know, I was suspecting a lovely Year 2, Year 3 class. I'd been promised, you know, you could be Year 3. I was intent I was going to be put in Year 5 because I love Year 5.	Under pressure as a teacher	
So I was put in Year 6, one of the toughest classes in the school. Data was flawed so they, this was when we had levels, they came up all with sort of 4A, 4B, 4C but when you assess them there's no way they were working at those levels. So, I did struggle in that year but it wasn't me struggling with the children, I was obviously getting to grips with behaviour management, the school tried to almost manage me out and try and put me on capability, even though my observations had all been outstanding, outstanding.	Systemic failure towards learners Under surveillance/scrutiny (as an NQT)	
So, I look back at my observations and I see outstanding, outstanding, outstanding and the feedback was always really, it was really nit-picky if I can say, so it was like things like you know, I'd have this amazing lesson, I'd give them angles and they'd be doing all these actions and I put in everything, I'd put in ICT, I've put in everything you wanted, that whole long list but the thing is, this child wasn't sure how to answer a question, or you could have made sure the worksheets were handed out like this, or when you handed out a lollipop to one child, you said you've already put your hand up so you need to make sure that you're accessing it for all children.	Under threat "Nit-picky"	
[10.24] A: So I continuously was like hitting that ceiling as in, oh I'm trying, I'm staying late, I'm doing as much as I can, I'm doing all these singing and dancing lessons. I'm doing everything that I've copied from people and I'm trying all these new ideas and you're still trying to stop me from passing basically. The other thing that was ironic was the person who was my NQT mentor, I don't think they had been in teaching, they were like an inclusion manager so they didn't	Hoop-jumping	

have much teaching experience but they were giving me observation advice. So, it got to sort of about midpoint, maybe like just before SATS, I think it was like February May and they decided, someone who I'd worked with before was going to come and team teach with me so that we could push up the results, which I found was devastating because I thought it looked like I can't cope, I lost all respect in the classroom but the children saw it as just they were getting two extra teachers.	Undermining	
So that's when I really, I contact NUT at the time, when it was NUT because that was my union and they really did support me, because where the borough I worked in has a history of not always supporting NQTs, so that really, that was a knock for me because I felt it was the first time I'd had real, proper like rejection within a job because I was always, whatever job I'd done, I'd always got yes's in interviews and things and it kind of made me question, oh am I cut out for this? Already I'm right at the beginning and you're already trying to stop me. So after that, I carried on but then I knew, I just can't really stay at this school, because even though I knew the people personally, I wasn't being respected.	"am I cut out for this?" Disrespected.	
So I decided to apply for a Catholic school, because I am Catholic. I'd always, I went to a Catholic primary school, so ideally I wanted to go to this outstanding school, so I moved boroughs and I applied for another Catholic school, which is a bit of a leafier borough but it's still the same challenges and when I applied I was the only black teacher, they hadn't had a Black teacher for a while in that school. So I think they were kind of taking me on as in like, oh this is different, you know and I've been at that school now for a while and I think I've slotted in but I think they've had to learn a lot of things and through employing me, they have employed a lot of other staff now that are divers, which is good.	Representation	
I don't like saying the word diverse but I feel like by being, the difference was being at this school now, you sometimes become like the poster child, particularly for ethnic minority parents. I have had a lot of parents come up to me, which is lovely, and they've said to me things like we're so glad you're at our school because you are our voice for our children. Some of them have said, we're so glad someone like you can be there because there have been instances where teachers have punished children, particularly Black children, ethnic minority children, with that view that they are doing something wrong when they haven't done something wrong and I do see that underhand, I do see it and it's hard to be able	Representation	The importance of representation

Commitment to the community

"you are our voice for our children" |

to call it out because you have to remember, I always say to myself, remember where you are.		
That's what my dad tells me, remember where you are because your micro aggression sometimes come out, obviously I'm quite passionate when I speak and also the way you conduct yourself is something I've learnt from day dot, I think I learnt that from working in the corporate environment, working in finance but when you apply it to a school I can, I think my first school didn't have many instances where people didn't necessarily respect me or wondered why I was there, but I'd say when I moved to this school I've had instances, for example where it happened a few times, we have like speech, hearing impairment people come in, I think it happened 3 or 4 times, there was a lady and she always used to come in for hearing impairment and the first time she met me, she went oh I'm looking for the class teacher. [14.54] I'm looking for the class teacher and are you the class teaching assistant? I said, no I'm the class teacher and that hasn't just happened in school, it's happens with visitors but it's happened when we go on trips as well. People think that you are the, you must be the assistant, and at this school.	Place in the space Invisibility Mistaken for a lesser role	Impact of father
I've, I started in Year 5, I've been in Year 5 for a good number of years but one of the years, I think it was my second year in, actually third year in, they had unofficial year leaders, so our school went from two form to three, so that meant in my year group I had two new teachers come in, so it meant I became the year leader, so I'm responsible for data, I'm responsible for reporting to governors, I'm responsible for leading assemblies, leading school plays, leading masses, organising trips, the list goes on. So that was my first taste of leadership, but it wasn't with a TLR and it wasn't with the official role of you are a year leader or you're going to be middle leader. So I took on those responsibilities and then did that for two years and then suddenly now we have year leaders who are now middle leaders. So that, I was given those roles and responsibilities without the actual accolade of the pay and now I'm in another year group and I'm being led by someone else, so I've been demoted, essentially. So, it's like you can have a bit a leadership, we'll dangle it over you a little bit, there you go, but actually you're not good enough to be on a school website, be officially given the TLR, so I'm itching and looking to leave but then I've asked for middle leadership, there's another person who's similar to me in the same position, we've been there for the same number of years.	 Taken advantage of	Taking responsibility (without the recognition)

We've asked for, if there's any middle leadership opportunities and we're always told there isn't because of budgets but then you're happy to advertise four TLR roles to be people and do it, what's the word, internal, so you never know about it. These people have got the role before you could even apply. So that's how I got into my role and at the moment I'm in year six, so I'm working within a team. So I've gone from year leader to now just working within the team. And that's where I am basically.	Opportunities hidden Nepotism	
I: So as a Black female teacher in your school, what is that like for you? So think about your position, think about your relations with other members of staff, think about your relations with parents and children. Think about things like opportunities. Think about what you bring in terms of your cultural capital. So as a Black teacher, what is it like for you in your school? A: I think I'm able to maybe comment on things that sometimes people cannot comment about, for example there's been discussions about hair and policies about braids, and it seems like I always seem to be the person that has to answer for them. Yes I've got braids in my hair, doesn't mean I'm a spokesperson for everybody that wears braids. It is really cliché but it's ironic that I lead PSHE, so obviously I'm going to promote black history month regardless. But I feel like that's the responsibility that I've taken on and it's really cliché but unfortunately it is and I do make a big song and dance of it but also when I was year leader and even just planning in the curriculum, I've tried to make sure that I've planned things.	Unelected spokesperson	
So for example, I planned a unit of work to do with Windrush, before the whole scandal came out Empire Windrush, because I really enjoyed Floella Benjamin's book Coming to England, so we planned some English around that and that stayed in the curriculum but then problem that happens is, someone else has taken over as a year leader now and they just, they demoted that to one week. They put it as a one reading comprehension, boom we're done, we can just study it and brush over. But then apparently some parents have come up to the year fives and said thank you for putting that in. Whoever put that in, thank you because our children are learning about different cultures.	Decolonise/recolonise the curriculum	Efforts to decolonise the school and its curriculum Parental appreciation
So I think, I bring different experiences. I bring, I'm able to relate to the children because our children are different. There's a lot of Eastern		Ethic of care

European children, I have a lot of children that are African and able to talk to them about their experiences. <mark>I do think in terms of a negative is, people always think that you're going to be able to deal with behaviour. Yes I am strict, maybe I'm strict because of my parents, the way they brought me up but it doesn't mean you need to give me, I've had, last year I had one of the worst classes in the school and I think they just think it's, you'll deal with it, you can deal with it, you're strict you can deal with it, to my detriment because actually, then they misbehave again you think, oh why couldn't you deal with it, why couldn't you solve it?</mark>	The mammy figure – dealing with behaviour	
[20.12] A: And now I have, the class I had are horrendous, but not through my fault. That's just the way they have been. Not horrendous but obviously they're challenging. So I think what happens is, people think first of all that you, you know you bring different experiences, I'm different. It stops people in their tracks when they're about to say things that make other people uncomfortable. <mark>There have been times where I've been made to feel uncomfortable obviously, so a key example is recently the recent election year results. Somebody in staffroom thought they could tell everybody about who Black people vote for, because obviously he knows where Black people live and he's got a great experience of Black people. I had to walk out the room because I could have just lost my cool and I always have to remember where you are, remember where you are.</mark>	Facing stereotyping Microaggressions	Remaining non-confrontational in the face of oppression
But I think, you know you're visibly different. I know I'm different. I quite like the fact that I have a story to answer and actually also when I meet parents for example, we had parents evening recently but <mark>our parents are very respectful and they are understanding, but I think some of them do, they give you that look where they think, are you capable or let me question you more. Let me test you, let me make sure you're doing everything. I cover my tracks, I do everything. I work hard, I know that I work hard.</mark> I don't necessarily agree with the term outstanding but I know that I endeavour to be good with outstanding all the time. <mark>So there's nothing you can slip me up on.</mark>	Prove yourself – being tested	
With regards to staff, I mean, obviously when you're working in a particularly in a heavily female environment, there are you know, things we don't necessarily always get on or, and teaching's highly competitive. So I find that people, <mark>their surprised when you know stuff, they try and do one up on you, one upmanship if that's the right word, so very competitive</mark>, your know if I, I share resources so I'm happy to share things, I'm happy	Credentialising – show me your credentials.	Qualified

to talk through things. People will question you, why that, what about this, what about that? Just to make sure that you know what you're doing. Trying to put you, kind of rock your boat, rock the boat. 　　　　Somebody wanted me, I think it was at this school, oh yeah where did you, it was a student, she was like oh my gosh, did you do a degree? Where did you do your degree? It's just a silly student, but asking, she was trying to allude to the fact that maybe I went down a route where I didn't need to get a degree to become a teacher, even though I've got two degrees. So, you know, it's kind of like people ask you about your story to check that you have the same story as them. Or people have a view that obviously I've, you know I've come from somewhere different. I have to live somewhere different, when actually I live in quite a nice area, so and I've grown up in that area.　Oh Afia, you must travel far. Afia, you must travel far.	Credentialising - Show me your legitimacy	Challenging stereotypes
So people must think my experiences are maybe I live like in inner city London or something when actually we're right in the stub suburb so how could I live that far and travel. Yeah, I think people have this view of particularly like being a black woman that I'm going to be yeah argumentative and my family's going to be all over the shop and I, you know, I'm probably the only one who works. I know people have that view about me. I know that and I don't fit those, that criteria. So they just want to know my story. They always ask me about whether I was born abroad and I wasn't, I was born here. So people do ask your story. You know, where do you come from? When did you come here? You know, were you educated here? I'm like, oh god.	Stereotyping	Challenging stereotypes
You can hear my accent clearly is not, I'm from East Africa but I clearly don't speak like a East African. So, it's just, it's always, you're always having to be on your toes. Any day, there's no slip or let up. There's no day where you're like, you can't say to someone, ah do you know what I'm really feeling like today I just can't deal with it, because you don't know, I feel like everyone, people are out to get you. You can't trust anyone. I always say trust no-one, but particularly in this sort of environment, you know, people they're ready to see your downfall. They're ready to see you fall.　So even if it's you're maybe reprimanding a child they'll be watching to see how you do that so they can check so they can go and tell management.	Stereotyping "They're ready to see you fall"	
[25.01] A:　　　So the other thing is, what's the word when people take over you? When people sort of go over you, I'm trying to think of the word. You		

know, so when you do something and somebody overrides your decision, even when they're not your, I don't want to say the word inferior but when they may have less experience, ==they might be like an NQT+1 but they're cocky and they're confident and they're ready to override what you've done or talk down to you because obviously they, there's no way that you can be of more experience than them or more expertise, even though I'm older, you know, I do look quite young but I have more experience than some people and they're happy to tell me what to do. So it's just, I'm learning, I've learnt to bite your tongue, but not bite my tongue in the fact that I don't say anything, but with my words I can communicate that actually, I know exactly what you're talking about. I am your equal. I'm not less than you.==	"I'm not less that you"	"I am your equal"
Another thing that's interesting is because obviously I teach in a Catholic school as well, so it may be quite rare to see but I don't' think it's rare but to see maybe black teachers that are in Catholic schools. There are successful heads who have been in Catholic schools but maybe people don't, it's not the norm. So people just want to know your background, that I went to a Catholic school. Did you go to a Cath, yes I did. What did you got to Catholic school? Yes I did. Okay, just like you I'm the same alright and the one thing I say is, I never feel, ==I don't want to ever feel like someone else should take my place. I rightfully own this place. I have studied just the same as everybody else, from day dot my parents have made me study and they've always tried to give us the best in everything, so why should I feel like I don't have a right to be here because I do.==		Qualified Resilience Challenging stereotypes
And particularly for the children, that's why I'm doing it. ==I'm thinking about when I was younger and always thinking, oh why am I the only one? Why am I never seeing anyone like me? I know that there's children, you know it's nice to see that they can see someone who's like them,== but the only other thing I say is people do come to you for the issues. So for example, braids, use of the N word when that's been used before in a racist incident and I've said, it's just wrong. It's part of a policy. We, you know, so people ask me things. ==It's like I'm a spokesperson and yes sometimes that's helpful but it's not something you want to do.==	Unelected spokesperson	Commitment to the learners Representation
I: Thank you for that. Can you tell me about your career progression? So what kind of things have been enablers for you? What kind of things have been barriers for you? A: I say enablers has been, well I took on the subject leadership role and that's been helpful		

because I've built a subject from, we had a subject and I've brought in a new curriculum and implemented it, then I've been able to even show that to OFSTED for example but I'd say I've sort of plateaued because I came in as an NQT+1 and then worked in a year group, been in the same year group for a while and not moved and asked for movement but haven't really moved. Main experience I had was when I led the year group for two years and that was heavy handed and a lot of pressure as well on you and the pressure for your to fail. ==And you're forced to sort of be micromanaged. Oh we'll let you have a bit of experience but Afia, this is what you need to do, this is what you need to do. We need to help you here, we need to help you here== and just an expectation that you're fail and actually the year group did really well. anything we needed to work on, anything that was a subject for example reading, I made sure we put things in place but people almost can't believe that you've done that. I'd say, so I led a year group for two years but then after that we had a reshuffle of management and then that meant that now I'm in a year group again but I'm now being managed by someone else, who only has the same amount of experience as me, but has been given all these positions and he's been groomed to be in leadership, to be a leader.	Micromanaged	
==So, it's basically that door's shut. It's like a revolving door, it's open for you a little bit, you can look in and then you come back and then it's shut when you get that reality, that oh actually there are positions available but they're not going to be there for you. They'd rather even advertise for someone else external than you. So I've learnt that you do have to be, you do have to move around unfortunately, and I like stability but unfortunately I'll have to think about moving somewhere else but the thing I find is when you move somewhere else, you have to start from the bottom and work your way up again. So you've built all these relationships with people, you've built relationships with management and then you have to start over again with a new school.==	Opportunities are like a "revolving door"	Reflects findings of Rollock when looking at Black women in HEI – have to move to get opportunities
[30.05] A: So that's the only barrier I find and I think, thinking about in the future for example if I plan to have children, that will set me back. So I'm almost making this conscious decision now, do I just not look into going into management? Do I just be a classroom practitioner? And it's a bit of a shame actually because I always have been quite, I've always wanted to be progressive, you		

know I don't want to just be flatlining and coast along, you know.	Issues of retention	
I: **What would you like to see change?** **A:** I'd like to see, I think it's the, I think the people, it's the people that you hire really. I think, I don't like the idea of quotas but it's true, you need to have a workforce that is representative of your community. It should just be common sense. You should be able to have, for example, someone that's African, if there's an African community. Somebody that's Eastern European so that it represents your community because otherwise you're seeing it from one viewpoint and you have your nuances, you have your stereotype, your stereotypes and it's wrong because we're meant to try and break those stereotypes, you know. We shouldn't be pigeonholing children, which essentially does happen. Obviously there's trends we see. So I just think it needs to be more open, more open. I don't know what's going on at, I know with teacher training, I know when I trained there weren't, there was a handful, there was not, I trained in South London but obviously the majority of the course I'd say, honestly 80% were white and 20% were Asian and black and I can tell you not many of them are still teaching now. It's just really sad.	Put off due to lack of representation	
I: **Can you tell me about your hopes for yourself within this profession?** **A:** I'd say my hopes is just to inspire children really, in the future so that they can see that actually, if I want to do something I can do it. Yes it's going to be hard, it's not going to be easy, you are going to have to always answer for yourself, hopefully you don't have to answer for yourself in the future, but it's the idea that, also I think it's respect. I think it's, children for example, white children, they have to respect me as a teacher. I have had children who I know they don't respect me, they haven't taken me seriously. I really know that, but actually when you're in a position of authority you have to respect and it also helps them in the future because I know when they go to secondary school they're going to have teachers that are different. And particularly for some of these children in the area that I'm teaching in, they will have black friends but they might not have the experience of black people. So actually, dealing with a teacher one on one every day, you're, you know I can talk about my experiences. I think it's just to inspire really. Like I know it's different from when I was a child, definitely now. Children obviously play with so many different people and	Putting children first Lack of respect from children	Role model To inspire

it's lovely. I think it's just getting that, you to think, oh do you know what, I saw something today and I don't normally see that and makes me think, oh maybe I can do that. That's really all I want, to be honest.		
I: So you've talked about your hopes for young people, but what about yourself? What do you want for yourself in this profession? A: I think I want my, it's quite a hard question actually. Like I said, I had in my mind that I would, when I started teaching I would probably become you know NQT, NQT+1 then work to be middle leader, then work to be a senior leader but I don't want, I think for me a family is more important. I've seen the side, I see people who are working in management and some of them are really lonely and they don't have anything. They only have the job and actually life is more precious, people are more precious. I never thought I'd hear myself saying that but I've learnt that and maybe I've been put off because I don't see people that look like me and that is sad.	Lack of representation	
And I've had people talk to me for example, been to conferences, teacher conferences and they've said, you've got to get your foot in the door, you've got to get in management, but it's very easy to say that. When you're standing there fighting by yourself, fighting, people are going to think, oh here she goes again, kicking off. So, yeah, that's what I see.	Angry black woman trope	
[34.55] **I: So I have one final question for you.** A: Okay. **I: What do you think other Black female teachers should know about coming into this profession? So if you were doing either a career's talk or you were thinking about supporting somebody who is deciding whether they're going to do a PGCE or teacher training of some sort, what would be your advice?** A: I don't like to say, I don't like the phrase play the game, but I always use a phrase that my dad taught me, which is remember where you are, know where you are. You are always going to have to work two or three times harder. You're always going to have to prove yourself. You're always going to have to explain yourself unfortunately. I don't know if that will ever change. I think it's just, I think it's just in general knowing, in a work environment unfortunately there are ways you have to act. Personally, I think	Be their expectations – play the game	Resilience – fighting for recognition

<mark>I always say it's like the idea of black faces in white spaces. So it's things like knocking on the door, you might have to talk with a polite tone, it's just the way you have to be.</mark>		
I'm very different when I'm out of work, I really am. I speak differently, I am different. It's put your guard up and I don't trust anyone to be honest, I really don't and that's sad. I just, I'd only, just don't trust people that you think are equal to you because it is quite a, the profession is very competitive so everybody wants to get, and it's all about showing off, you're showing off your best self. So, unfortunately, people do trample on each other. <mark>So, it's just, it's knowing why you started, that's what I always say to myself. Knowing why I started and know why you want to teach, what is the reason why you want to teach.</mark> If you want to go into teaching so you can get into high management positions, you're in the wrong place job because you shouldn't be trampling over people. It's a vocation and you choose to work with people. That's what I'd say.		Knowing myself
I: **Thank you very much.** A: That's alright. Hopefully it's helped. Think I just went off on a bit of a tangent.		

Appendix 5: Additional examples of racialised experiences through the lens of

CRT in education (Solórzano and Yosso, 2001)

Participant by pseudonym	Narrative
The impact of white teacher oppression and stereotyping of Black learners	
Jada	We had a magician that came in who thought that it was okay to call the children 'monkeys' and when I raised this with the Headteacher, it was almost as if he didn't understand what I was talking about and he didn't understand why I was upset about it. [At antiracism training] I was so embarrassed when members of the senior leadership team and teachers argued with this lady [the training facilitator]…she was going into the history of what may offend a Black person and again the monkey issue came up and they argued with her and said, "We're supposed to treat children equally. If you can call a white child a monkey, why can't you call a Black child a monkey?" And I'm just stunned, I really couldn't, I thought 'Wow, this is the senior leadership team'.
Afia	Data was flawed so they, this was when we had levels, they came up all with sort of 4A, 4B, 4C but when you assess them [Year 6 Black children] there's no way they were working at those levels.
Professional skills, experience and being are hyper-visible yet invisible	
Laurette	I think I thought I would be slightly further ahead [in my career].
Monica	I asked to do a training course on something I was interested in and they said to me that they wouldn't pay for me, but they felt that a younger [white] colleague would benefit from it [the course] because they have less experience and they wanted them to be trained up for that. The shear fact that, giving that person that opportunity would place me in a disadvantaged position if you need that skill to apply for a position, if something came up.
Monica	You might make suggestions about things that could happen and then…it's almost like you don't say it and then somebody else seems to have this great idea – and it's the same idea that you had – on some other occasion and people seem to think it's a wonderful idea.
Monica	…you become invisible until they need you. I use the word 'invisible' because there's a lot of people in the workplace who have become invisible. And I don't

	know whether its an age thing or I don't know if that's the colour thing, but I think lots of Black women and Black professionals…they fight so hard, maybe at the beginning of their journey that if it's a marathon they're doing a sprint and they burn out and then they have to keep going because of course, they have to earn and progress and then they just decide to just do the journey and hope that there aren't too many rocks in the way or deviations.
Jada	I worked as a teacher for about 8 years and then decided I could do more. I applied for an assistant head role which would have been assistant head for early years. I was interviewed and then told that I was unsuccessful because the lady that was successful was already an assistant head teacher would be more suited to the role. So, I accepted that and that was that. The position came up again a year later, again I put my application in but was told the same thing, I wasn't even going to be interviewed this time because I hadn't had management experience. My argument at the time was, how can I gain management experience if you don't give me the opportunity.
Lisa	…the excuses were absolutely horrendous! Just don't think you're ready, you need to have a little bit more experience behind you. Or they would say, I don't really think this role would really suit you in your career progression, silly things like that.
Lisa	I didn't get the job and the headteacher said the reason why I didn't get the job because of a question which I answered. I said to him, what was the question? He said, I asked you what was your best experience, what was your best lesson? And you mentioned a lesson from your previous school, not this school. So I said to him, well you wasn't, you didn't specify to me to give you an example from this school, it was a general question.
Afia	So, it's basically that door's shut. It's like a revolving door, it's open for you a little bit, you can look in and then you come back and then it's shut when you get that reality, that oh actually there are positions available but they're not going to be there for you. They'd rather even advertise for someone else external than you.
Afia	There was a deputy head who was Black, but she left to go on and get her own headship because I think she wasn't going anywhere in that school in terms of possibly going into headship.
Afia	So I've learnt that you do have to be, you do have to move around unfortunately, and I like stability but unfortunately,

	I'll have to think about moving somewhere else but the thing I find is when you move somewhere else, you have to start from the bottom and work your way up again. So you've built all these relationships with people, you've built relationships with management and then you have to start over again with a new school.
Jada	…the headteacher did ask me if I would lead the middle management team, which I did because I thought that's some management experience that will be good for you. I did that for six months and asked for a TLR and I was told that there was no money in the budget for a TLR, so I was doing this unpaid role. Following that, the headteacher then decided that it wasn't going to be called the middle leadership team anymore, it was going to be called the Excellence Committee and I felt that because he knew that he should be paying me, he was trying to find a way to say, well it's not really middle leadership, it's something else but the role that this team were doing was to assist the senior leadership team in improving the school, moving the school forward, and having a say in the school development plan.
Nicole	So imagine already thinking you've got a job role that's then taken away from you. So you have to step back down. So at this point in time, I'm still doing the job, but I don't have the title and I don't have the pay. So I have to go through near on 18 months to two years of working as a member of SLT doing all of the things that SLT do, teacher observations, being part of the duty team, taking on leadership responsibilities and yet not being on the leadership structure or having the title attached to my name.
Issues of under-representation	
Afia	I did find that often the Black teachers were treated, like they weren't serious, other people didn't take them seriously.
Nicole	I would say I'm always justifying myself. I'm always having to justify my existence.
Over-scrutiny and surveillance by white parents and staff	
Jada	She didn't accept that she had to take instruction from me, a black teacher. She would do things her way, which meant that increased my workload because then I had to redo it all and because she was very experienced, she'd been there longer than me, there were times where she told me she wasn't covering my class for PPA time, even though she had been instructed to do so by the

	headteacher…The help and support that she gave to the other teachers, I didn't get that.
Afia	…the school tried to almost manage me out and try and put me on capability, even though my observations had all been outstanding, outstanding.

Self-policing	
Afia	There have been times where I've been made to feel uncomfortable obviously, so a key example is recently the recent election year results. Somebody in staffroom thought they could tell everybody about who Black people vote for, because obviously he knows where black people live and he's got a great experience of Black people. I had to walk out the room because I could have just lost my cool and I always have to remember where you are, remember where you are.
Afia	I have more experience than some people and they're happy to tell me what to do. So it's just, I'm learning, I've learnt to bite your tongue.

Intersectional stereotypes Black female identities	
Afia	There have been times where I've been made to feel uncomfortable obviously, so a key example is recently the recent election year results. Somebody in staffroom thought they could tell everybody about who black people vote for, because obviously he knows where black people live and he's got a great experience of black people. I had to walk out the room because I could have just lost my cool and I always have to remember where you are, remember where you are.

Intersectional stereotypes Black female abilities	
Afia	I do think in terms of a negative is, people always think that you're going to be able to deal with behaviour. Yes, I am strict, maybe I'm strict because of my parents, the way they brought me up, but it doesn't mean you need to give me, I've had, last year I had one of the worst classes in the school and I think they just think it's, you'll deal with it, you can deal with it, you're strict you can deal with it, to my detriment because actually, then they misbehave again you think, oh why couldn't you deal with it, why couldn't you solve it?
Lisa	…then it took literally a week for them to get back to all of us [after interviewing for a single post] and then what they had done, split the job into three ways. And surprise, surprise, I was there for behaviour. So my role was behaviour, pastoral and tutor.

Nicole	I think that rhetoric continues time and time again and you know, even when you look at the balance of who does pastoral and who doesn't, our pastoral team is predominantly BME.
Laurette	I had my performance management last year and I started on one system that we were using, Microsoft Word and a set document and then we switched to our online database Blue Sky Education it's called. So obviously, one part of my performance management, the review of the targets from the previous year were on the Word document, whereas the new targets were set on the Blue Sky. I got a letter from my head teacher, on headed paper, in a brown envelope, in my pigeon-hole, that said I'm really disappointed that you haven't completed your performance managements. It's a part of your obligations as a qualified teacher, der, der, der. So I went to see her, and I said, I'm really disappointed that you didn't ask me why I hadn't completed my performance management. In my 19 years I've never, because this was last year, not completed it. I said, one part's on one system and one part's on the other but I then scanner her letter and wrote a formal reply to her letter, which she then had to write me a formal reply to my letter saying, oh I understand now from the deputy head that she should have asked in the first place, because she was the one who did it to me, she was my reviewer, that it has been completed but it's on two different systems.
Monica	I got to what I would call a senior position as a SENCO. How many years down the line and I'm still a SENCO. I feel that I work a lot but I just think I'm recognised for what I do and there isn't that much…errr…I don't think they see me beyond that.

Appendix 6: Additional examples of participant experiences through the lens of

consciousness of Black feminist thought (Collins, 2000)

Participant	Narrative
Formative experiences	
Laurette	I was part of a pilot with the [name] Fellowship and one of the things that they got us to look at was, when we went into school would we be a teacher or would you be a Black teacher and I'm quite sure that I'm a Black teacher 7 days of the week.
Marissa	I actually thought I have to be two different people; I have to be the person at university who speaks a certain way, acts a certain way, doesn't mention certain topics in conversation and to my friends I can be the me and speak perhaps, if I want to I can just be me and mess around and talk about racial topics which I could never do at university, I felt.
Marissa	My career advisor said well I'm looking at your grades and it's predicted that you're not going to get the grades that you need to be a teacher and go to university, so have you ever thought about being a nursery nurse, that's a really fantastic profession, why don't you do that?
Patricia	Our character defines in many ways how we deal with the challenges and conflicts that life puts in front of us. So because of my character, which is a strong character, a sense of who I am and the strength, all the racist bullying in the world, I mean they could exhaust themselves calling me wog, nigger, blah, blah. I just used to look at them and think, so this is what I was like as a child. So my personality hasn't changed and that's what people need to understand. Your personality traits are there with you and the experiences that you go through in life can strengthen that, bring it out.
Afia	…the only time I ever, in all of my schooling, my primary school years, saw a black teacher was when they were supply, and I always questioned it because I was quite a critical child.
Private self-promotion	
Erika	I'm able to get a balanced perspective on things, even though I might be going through something that people might be trying to make out like you're less than you are. I think I'm quite able to say – to see that actually, I've done quite well and I've got these strengths and I've got these characteristics.

Erika	So for me, I'm quite principled and I will give you blood if I need to, if I believe it's aligned with my principles and what I'm here for. I'm quite a principled person and I think that's what I'd be led by rather than just the need for money or status or title or anything else.
Patricia	I had my Cert Ed, then I went on to do my degree B Ed and that's very important because I think a lot of teachers go into teaching and that's it but I continued, so I did the Cert Ed then I did the B Ed. So, when I became a deputy, I had my B Ed honours, so I was more than well qualified. A lot of the teachers on the staff had their Cert Ed and that was it.
Laurette	I started my Masters, I didn't quite finish it, I'm in the process of finishing that now, in educational leadership.
Erika	I studied for my Masters while I was working full-time as an assistant head and a deputy, so I'm well qualified.
Afia	I've always wanted to be progressive, you know I don't want to just be flatlining and coast along, you know.
Marissa	So, in terms of our curriculum, we've got black history weaved throughout the curriculum but it's still not, I think, as celebrating and my teachers don't know much about it so they teach it half-heartedly. So that is why I'm planning to do an MA because for me, that's the next step. You need to be an expert of what you want other people to be doing and you need black history to become not just black history but history. We have a major difference, we don't call white history, white history. So for me, that's where I need to go.
Commitment	
Afia	…the teacher wasn't always there so we sometimes had supply teachers and the supply teachers were always, always black; black or mixed race and I remember just seeing so many of the supply teachers and a lot of the children, again, didn't respect the supply teachers but I kept watching the teacher that I was with and those supply teachers and thinking, I've got to do this now.
Afia	I'm thinking about when I was younger and always thinking, 'oh why am I the only one? Why am I never seeing anyone like me?' I know that there's children, you know it's nice to see that they can see someone who's like them
Jada	…how effective is their interaction with those children at that school if they cannot interact with me in the correct way as the only black teacher there? So for me, it's about change.

Laurette	[I] became a science teacher who wanted to try and engage more on young black people, try and improve results.
Monica	I enjoy aspects of my work and enjoy working with the children. And because I enjoy working with the children, I make sure I do the best by them and for them.
Patricia	One of the things that we experienced as children was bullying, racist bullying was the norm. So that's really influenced me. So I'm the sort of head who will not have any bullying in my school and tackle it head on. It's never covered up, it's never under cover. So that has influenced how I tackle the culture and the environment in which children can either grow or suffer within schools.
Afia	…you sometimes become like the poster child, particularly for ethnic minority parents. I have had a lot of parents come up to me, which is lovely, and they've said to me things like we're so glad you're at our school because you are our voice for our children. Some of them have said, we're so glad someone like you can be there because there have been instances where teachers have punished children, particularly black children, ethnic minority children, with that view that they are doing something wrong when they haven't done something wrong and I do see that underhand, I do see it.
Agency	
Erika	I'd just got to the point where I thought – do you know what? I need to work for somebody that I know where they're going and what they stand for, because it's hard, it's exhausting, trying to support somebody who is all over the place. So I decided from that to leave and to go and get another job and that's how I ended up in this other school, which was a huge risk, because I knew the school was in a mess before I went, but looking back that way and going that way, it's like, well, they're both risks, so that's what prompted me to go into being a principal in a risky school because I kind of felt it was a risk where I was anyway because the head was unravelling a little bit.
Erika	I think something needs to change in that early stage of the recruitment process to make sure that it is fair and that there is an actual accountable monitoring system that goes alongside it. It needs to be monitored. There needs to be some accountability for it.
Patricia	…professionally develop first Black members of staff, I'm not singling them out but I've kind of made sure that they've been encouraged and supported in their professional development

Laurette	…it's my personal responsibility as a Black teacher to show my ethnic minority students positive role models, as in women in science, my classroom that was named when we moved into a new building, I had it named after Mae Jemison, first black female astronaut because when I was their age, I didn't know that Black female astronauts existed.
Nicole	…there's people in my own federation who don't want this versus those who will publicly say, no this is great and we're thankful and actually I've learnt so much and you've changed the way I'm going to deal with children now. You've changed the way I'm going to deal with other members of staff. I'm going to be much more sensitive and mindful and not disrespectful. I'm going to be more open, and whether that's because of someone's space, their race, their gender, their sexuality, you've forced me now to kind of consider more than just my narrative, and that's a good thing, but I wouldn't say it's 100% at all. A long way to go.
Teresa	Even when it comes to interviews, I always think when I'm doing my lesson plan, when I'm doing my resources, what am I going to do extra that my counterparts aren't doing, so I can secure the job, so that my identity and my outer appearance, they can't say, they can't shut that door on me because I'm an outstanding teacher and I've worked for this and I've worked at me in this space.
Teresa	I've looked at their website and the fact that they've had a black member of SLT has actually persuaded me to go to those schools because I'm like, okay, they have a black member of SLT and therefore I feel promotion can happen there but then also there's a lived experience, there's a dual kind of, yeah experience, a shared experience that I feel like I want to be part of. And I think because of that, I've been like, okay this could be the place where I can progress. This person in leadership could be mentor, so I've kind of seen that and I've, yeah, I've been persuaded to be part of school teams because of that, yes.
Resistance	
Erika	I was determined not to run away from a tough challenge. So I decided I wasn't going to leave that school until I knew I had cracked managing the kids and managing the behaviour. I mean, the behaviour was horrendous at the start. I had a classroom on the ground floor, and I remember children climbing in, coming in the door of the classroom where I stood, because I'd been taught to stand at the door and receive them, and climbing out of the window and going out and round in loops and their friends coming, and it was just absolute pandemonium…I persevered, and I stayed there for

	five years. By the time I was three years in I think I was regarded quite well by my older colleagues as someone who was hard-working, recognised for the effort I put in
Erika	I think, I'd learnt to survive and that kind of thing, that first school taught me all the foundations of survival as a teacher. Anything, if you could survive there, you could survive anywhere, that kind of school.
Erika	I think I was quite good at maintaining a positive outlook on things and fixing myself when there's issues or challenges, I'm quite a resilient person. But I think what I found so hard in that situation was feeling trapped because I couldn't just leave, I couldn't just give up my job because I couldn't pay the bills and I had a child in school and stuff. So that was really hard.
Patricia	So to be told by a Black colleague who worked in the borough, because she knew, like she'd experienced racism herself, so she was warning me.
Patricia	I think overall my personal characteristics, I have a winner mentality. If I didn't, I would have allowed the fact that I'm a woman and I'm a Black woman stop me from achieving what I have achieved.
Is sisterhood a reality?	
Nicole	…actually most of my critics have actually been Black more than white and it's my Black peers that have publicly torn me down and said, "she shouldn't be in that role, she shouldn't be in that position. She hasn't earnt her stripes".
Patricia	Because of course, they're very suspicious, they're like, oh you must think you're better than us. They've already got this mindset that you think you're better than them when all you're trying to do is your job. So that is difficult.