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The Workplace Experiences of BAME Professional Women:

Understanding Experiences at the Intersection.

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The Workplace Experiences of BAME Professional Women: Understanding Experiences at the Intersection

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Situated within workplace equality and discrimination scholarship, this paper focuses on intersectional identity narratives. We seek to better understand the workplace experiences of British Black, Asian, and minority ethnicity (BAME) professional women, and how these experiences impact on a range of wellbeing outcomes.

The absence of research relating to BAME professional women reflects a failure to consider intersectional organizational identities and experiences. We aim to problematize the existence of single and static identity categories within intersectional analyses and the challenge they represent. We engage a non-traditional methodological approach, conducting real-time online written interviews with professional British BAME women. We consider the important interplays at the intersection of minority ethnicity, gender, and nationality. The main themes to emerge were (a) experiences of misperceived identity imposition, whereby such social treatment had implications for participants' well-being and (b) the use of strategic essentialism by participants on the basis of nationality, ethnicity and gender, an innovative finding in intersectional research. We conclude that a focus on identity categories such as ethnicity or race and gender alone may lead to the further constraining and classifying of certain individuals. To avoid this there is need to consider intersectional identity experiences in light of nationality and the disparate underpinning systems of domination.

KEYWORDS

BAME, ethnicity, gender, intersectionality, nationality, organizations, workplace experiences, social identity, well-being.

1 INTRODUCTION

The workplace experiences of women are qualitatively different to the experiences of men (Mattingly & Blanchi, 2003). Workplace gender equality has yet to be achieved (Liebig & Levy, 2015; Doldor, Sealy & Vinnicombe, 2016). Discrimination against women manifests itself in various forms, including: wage gaps, the denial of access to social networks, and a lack of promotion opportunities (Akpinar-Sposito, 2013; Welle and Heilman, 2005). This gendered difference in organizational experiences continues to provide impetus for research that considers women's workplace experiences and, as such, women's experiences in organizations has become a significant field of study within the last twenty years (Akpinar-Sposito, 2013; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Powell & Butterfield, 1994). Our paper engages with the workplace experiences of Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) women as they negotiate ethnicity/race, gender and nationality within UK professional work organizations. We focus on specific claims around BAME professional women and their intersectional experiences within the UK context as their particular experiences are not always consistent with women's experiences in the US context for instance.

Roberts (2005, p.687) defines a profession as *"an occupation that meets the following criteria: application of skills based on technical knowledge, requirements of advanced education and training, formal testing of competence, controlled admission, professional associations, code of conduct, and sense or responsibility to serve the public"* (see also Benveniste, 1987; Hoyle & John, 1995; Lester, 2007; Noordegraaf, 2011). We us this to form a basis of our definition of a professional as "*one undertaking a job wherein possessing the minimum requirement of an undergraduate degree*

confers authority to practice." This definition does not suggest that professional job roles are the same across the board, rather it seeks to highlight that these jobs require advanced education and formal testing to undertake them. Hence, some examples of professional jobs include: teachers, lawyers, doctors and lecturers.

As far as professional British women are concerned, BAME women make up 12.4% of British women (BITC, 2010). The acronym BAME denotes the UK's non-white British population and comprises different racial/ethnic population groups, including Indian (20%); Black African (14%); Pakistani (13%); Black Caribbean (10%); Bangladeshi (5%); Chinese (5%); Mixed (8%); Asian Other (9%); Black Other (1%); and Other (15%) (BITC, 2010). The breadth of diversity within the BAME category is seen when we considered stereotypes attributed to particular subgroups. The most prevalent stereotype attributed to Black women is dominance, while Chinese women are stereotyped as competent but submissive (Rosette, Ponce de Leon, Koval, & Harrison, 2018). Moreover, how an individual experiences their own "Blackness" or "Asian-ness", for example, is informed by whether one is British-Nigerian, British-Jamaican, African-white Mixed, Chinese or Indian. These terms are an amalgamation of one's nationality/ethnicity or heritage. Thus, the term British- Asian refers to an individual born in the UK or someone who becomes a citizen (hence British national) but ethnically indigenous to a nation within the Asian context. Indeed, there are clear variations in experiences and outcomes for different BAME groups (e.g., Agarwhal, Wang & Whalley, 2017; Imoagene, 2017).

Nonetheless, what unites BAME individuals is a shared ethnic minority experience within the UK context, despite the qualitative disparities concerning how one ethnic minority experience may manifest in relation to another. Thus, the BAME label allows us to align our research with Government policy and society at large to

recognize that discrimination does occur along the dimension of being non-white British in the UK. Finally, the term BAME was our preference, due to there being no appropriate substitute, other than to adopt US terms such as “visible minorities” or “people of color”. However, this term would exclude people of white Eastern European backgrounds or white Gypsy or white Irish backgrounds, which, ultimately, we do not seek to do. For example, Gypsy, Roma or traveller communities have experiences of being a UK ethnic minority with a life expectancy 12 years lower than the general white British population (Goodman & Rowe, 2013), thus, is their whiteness all that matters? We recognize that their experiences will be dissimilar to the experiences of non-white ethnic minority women in the UK, as race plays a role when we seek to understand the experiences within UK workplaces. Nevertheless, as we are advocating for research that is applicable to the UK national context and research that takes on board the disparate underpinning systems of difference between the US and the UK, we see BAME as the most appropriate term.

It remains that the voices of British BAME women professionals are all but absent in workplace equality and discrimination research. Research into women’s workplace experiences tends to focus on the experiences of white women. Thus, implicit to our understanding of gender in Western contexts, is the assumption that “female” experiences in organizations are the experiences of white women (Öztürk, Tatli & Özbilgin, 2016; Ryan & Branscombe, 2013). Where racial diversity *is* considered, research tends to pay attention to the experiences of ethnic minority men or ‘men of color’ from a U.S. perspective (Ely & Thomas, 2001; Rodriguez, Holvino, Fletcher & Nkomo, 2016). This bias means that when we seek to understand the experiences of Black, Asian, and other minority ethnicity women in the Western workplace, we are faced with a dearth of research. Ryan and Branscombe (2013)

argue that women's experiences of gender cannot be homogenized. The absence of BAME women in the literature greatly diminishes our capacity to understand the full complexities and dimensions of their organizational narratives and experiences. This limits our understanding of women's workplace experiences, relative to key workplace outcomes, as those relevant to white women. If the experiences of racially and ethnically diverse women are themselves diverse, then we assert that current knowledge within the field of workplace inequality and discrimination scholarship is irrefutably lacking. What ensues, is we are left grappling with issues of how can we fully understand the experiences of racially and ethnically diverse women at work? Attempting to address this gap, intersectional research is becoming a topic of interest in the organizational field (Dennissen, Benschop & van den Brink, 2018).

Intersectional theory is entrenched in Black feminist scholarship (Bowleg, 2012). The term was coined by feminist legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) to illustrate the exclusion of Black American women from white feminist discourse (which likened women with white) and antiracist discourse (which likened Black with men). Our purpose in this paper is two-fold. First, we seek to undertake an empirical exploration of the workplace experiences of British BAME professional women and the impact of these experiences on a range of wellbeing outcomes, through the use of real-time, online, written interviews. Second, through these interviews we aim to highlight the important interplays between intersections of ethnicity, gender, and nationality. Our fundamental research question is: how do British BAME professional women experience their multiple identities at the intersection of ethnicity, gender, and nationality?

We first discuss the extant literature relevant to the tendency to focus on a single identity within organizational research and practice, considering the significance

for understanding workplace experiences. We consider the absence of ethnic minority women within the organizational literature and explore what this means for our understanding of women's organizational experiences, and their wellbeing outcomes. We then discuss the history of intersectional theory and how this has served to address gaps in the narration of critical race and gender research, specifically when considering the experiences of US Black and other minority women. Finally, the paper considers differences in identity conceptualizations between national contexts, to highlight the difference between and within groups when trying to understand how individuals make sense of their organizational experiences, it does this by regarding national context and the underlying systems of domination.

2 SINGLE IDENTITY

Current research concerning the impact of company policies and workplace cultures on organizational experiences tends to consider this impact on different groups in an isolated manner (e.g., by gender, by race, by disability, etc; Callan, 2007; Lee, Yu, Sirgy, Singhapakdi, & Lucianetti, 2015; Mennino, Rubin & Brayfield, 2005), as though these categories are mutually exclusive with no interaction between them (Crenshaw, 1991). This is because the policies themselves tend to target single identities. The intersection of different forms of inequality and opportunity (Crenshaw, 1991) is thus ignored or unrecognized. Bowleg (2012) highlights the problem of single identity categories and the boundary conditions they induce. Bowleg (2012) argues that the problem with statements on 'women' and 'minorities' is the implied mutual exclusivity of these populations; she further highlights that "missing is the notion that these two categories could intersect, as they do in the lives of racial or ethnic minority women" (p. 1267).

Because of the emphasis on single categories, there is an extensive lack of published data that is disaggregated by more than one factor (Sandhu & Stephenson, 2015). For example, comprehensive gender pay gap data, tends to simply report that more than 75 per cent of 'in scope' UK companies pay their "male" employees more on average than their "female" employees (Gov, 2018). This tendency to aggregate across all women is problematic, as it implies that this is a "one size fits all" problem, for women and does not consider differences between women. We suggest that there are wider implications for organizations and those responsible for diversity and equality within organizations and institutions (Sandhu & Stephenson, 2015).

For instance, the Fawcett Society report (2010) on gender pay by ethnicity evidences that the full-time pay gap with white British men ranges from a reserved gender pay gap of 5.6% for Chinese women in Great Britain, to 17.2% on average for white British women, 19.6% for African women and 26.2% for Bangladeshi and Pakistani women. This data suggests that the efforts required to close the gender pay gap for one particular group of British women are likely to look very different to those efforts required to close the pay gap for another group of British women. This means that there is need to understand the differences that exist between the respective groups of women and their respective experiences in the workplace. To address such differences between women, it is important that we understand the stories and articulate the experiences of all individuals within organizations, across different axes of identities. This is a key intervention for changing dominant organizational discourses, as doing so will bring to light alternative, mainly hidden narratives that rarely find their way into mainstream accounts and organizational theories (Atewologun & Sealy, 2014; Calás & Smircich, 1999; Ely & Meyerson, 2000). Regularly including diverse samples within the broader identity literature would

promote a conceptual shift in how gender is understood. We believe this would facilitate the reconceptualization of gender away from being only white or European.

3 BAME PROFESSIONAL WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE

Workplace scholarship tends to focus on the experiences of white men. In the Western context, where diversity and inequality are considered, research has focused on white women, meaning that the types of inferences that should be made in relation to BAME women's organizational experiences remain unclear (Öztürk, Tatli & Özbilgin, 2016; Ryan & Branscombe, 2013). If we are to extrapolate from what we know about women in gender research, what we know about BAME individuals more generally and what we know about ethnic minority women, within a US context, we are able to conclude that BAME professional women will experience both 'privilege' and disadvantage arising from the simultaneous position of professional organizational status with female gender and minority ethnic identities (Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001). Nevertheless, organizational experiences of disadvantage such as discrimination, are commonplace for different minority groups.

Consistent within organizational research, is the notion of workplace discrimination. People generally have expectations of the stereotypes surrounding that individual's social group memberships and ultimately will treat an individual according to those stereotypes (Fiske, 2018). Therefore, the assertion that salient experiences of discrimination occur towards different minority groups (racial minorities, religious minorities, sexual minorities, and women) is not new. For British BAME women this manifests in various ways, including the less generous remuneration and reward (Welle & Heilman, 2005), lesser chance of promotion or less access to professional networks (Welle & Heilman, 2005), relative to men or to white women.

Despite this experience of discrimination, when their professional identity is made salient, professional BAME women are likely to be esteemed highly in accordance with their 'privilege' on this dimension. For example, a Black female lawyer is likely to experience privilege when her legal identity is made salient, but where ethnicity or gender identities become salient, then this could lead to a lower sense of wellbeing and an increase in challenges such as, needing to grapple with negative stereotypes and discrimination (Atewologun, Sealy & Vinnicombe, 2016; Gonzalez, 2005; Kenny & Briner, 2013; Thomas & Hollenshead, 2001).

If women and other minority group members are more likely to face discrimination in the workplace, then complexity arises when we consider that it is possible for an individual to be an ethnic minority group member as well as a woman, all at the same time; this is all before regarding the specific interplays of nationality and national context. If we neglect to take into account nationality or the underpinning systems of domination that inform national identity (e.g. racism, patriarchy, apartheid, colonialism), it means we are left grappling with what *exactly* it means to be a British BAME woman. We assert, that there is need to identify the category tensions and interactions that exist, when national context (specifically) is regarded. For example, the acknowledgement of national context exposes ambiguities concerning how we understand the "Black" or "Asian" categories, particularly when we consider a second, third, or fourth generation individual, for example. In this instance, the label of 'immigrant' or 'expatriate' as an identity category, does not adequately conceptualize the identity experience of such an individual (Asher, 2011).

3.1 Well-being Outcomes

There is increasing interest in understanding workplace experiences of individuals and how these constructs relate to well-being outcomes (Schmader &

Sedikides, 2017). It has been argued that minority identity status may increase identity salience, which in turn could have consequences for well-being outcomes such as job satisfaction, work-life balance, and performance (Carless & Wintle, 2007; Kenny & Briner, 2013). For example, Ravenswood, Harris, and Wrapson (2017) found that women have lower well-being not only in relation to their family demands and work-life balance, but also in relation to experiences of workplace discrimination. Discrimination has implications for ones' health and well-being and experiences of workplace discrimination are commonplace for minority group members (Tariq & Syed, 2018). Gender or ethnic minority identity status is also related to feeling that one may face discrimination or be stereotyped, which could lead the individual to increase impression management activity, as to avoid feeling that they are under scrutiny (Kenny & Briner, 2013; Niemann & Dovidio, 1998). Feagin and Elias (2012) have demonstrated that when trying to understand ethnic/racial minority experiences, racial meanings and white racial framing often inadequately explain the deep foundation and layered complexities of race and racism. This is troubling as issues of race and racism persist in the workplace and have implications for well-being outcomes.

Speaking more generally to issues of well-being at work, a study of bar staff from Haslam, O'Brien, Jetten, Vormedal, and Penna (2005) observed a moderate correlation between identification with one's work team and a global measure of work satisfaction. Further work from van Dick and Haslam (2012) found that where individuals have a sense of shared identity with their work colleagues it engenders a sense of 'we are in this together' and thus, these organizational members are more likely to be protected from those workplace stressors that are targeted specifically at isolated individuals — the most significant of which is possibly workplace bullying*;* which we know can lead to stress and burnout (O'Brien & Haslam, 2003; Nielsen &

Einarsen, 2012; Hansen, Hogh, Persson, Karlson, Garde, & Ørbæk, 2006). This is relevant when considering discrimination at work because according to Tajfel and Turner's (1979) theoretical concept of social identity (SIT), a person's concept of self comes from the groups to which they belong to and identify with. Thus, intergroup discrimination is more likely to occur between organizational members when an organizational member chooses to favour a member of his/her particular ingroup as oppose to those members of a particular outgroup (Haslam, 2004).

Studies exploring the relationship between gender and workplace outcomes such as, stress and burnout have suggested women are more likely to experience stress and burnout at particular stages in the life cycle when there is greater strain resulting from caregiving and household responsibilities (Dilworth, 2004; Hill, Jacob, Shannon, Brennan, Blanchard & Martinego, 2008; Halbesleben & Zellars, 2006). If we are to consider intersecting dimensions of identity, such as where gender intersects with ethnic minority identity, there is likely to be a compounding of the challenges faced. For example, ethnic minority employees face more workplace challenges, including accessing employment, and underrepresentation within managerial and executive roles than their white British counterparts (Rodriguez, Holvino, Fletcher & Nkomo, 2016). Tariq and Syed (2018) argue that organizational inequalities such as these represent systematic disparities in opportunities and difference in key wellbeing outcomes, such as experiences of health and wellbeing, stress, and burn–out.

This suggests that BAME women could experience poorer family to work conflict than their white counterparts if experiences of work-life conflict are compounded by experiences of discrimination in accessing employment and managerial and executive roles. In contrast, research also suggests that BAME households are more likely to be multigenerational, with grandparents living with

traditional nuclear family units and providing tangible childcare assistance (Dale, 2005; Özbilgin, Beauregard, Tatli & Bell, 2010). This mixed evidence suggests a need for further research that investigates the workplace experiences of BAME professional women and its impact on key wellbeing outcomes.

4 INTERSECTIONALITY

While intersectional research tends to be rare in the UK context, there is a small amount of British BAME intersectional scholarship (Atewologun & Singh, 2010; Atewologun & Sealy, 2014; Atewologun, Sealy & Vinnicombe, 2016; Özbilgin, Beauregard, Tatli, & Bell, 2010; Showunmi, Atewologun, & Bebbington, 2015; Tariq & Syed, 2018).

The introduction of intersectional analyses allows us to understand differences among women. The specific definition of *intersectionality* varies by research context. We define intersectionality in accordance with Shields (2008) who states: "*social identity categories serve as organizing elements of social relations, they mutually constitute, reinforce and naturalize each other"* (p. 302). Shield unpacks the term *mutually constitute* to mean that "one category of identity, such as gender, takes its meaning as a category in relation to another category" (Shield, 2008, p.302). By *reinforce* she asserts that *'the construction and preservation of identities is a dynamic process in which the individual is actively involved'* (Shield, 2008, p.302).

Alongside this definition of intersectionality, we also recognize that meanings are historically contingent, that is, interpretation is subject to national context (space) and time period (time). Over time, the definitions of intersectionality and its use as an analytical tool have expanded. Nonetheless, intersectional approaches are not without their limitations. For instance, Dhamoon's (2011) formulation problematizes

intersectional theory and analysis, due to its failure to give recognition to the interactions between institutionalized processes of differentiation (e.g. racialization, gendering, and culturalization) and systems of domination (e.g. racism, patriarchy, apartheid, colonialism). For example, the notion that professional Black women are not able to utilize social networks in the same way as white women, may apply in a US context (Ibarra, 1993). However, in the UK, British BAME women may tend to build professional networks internationally, in their country of origin and through family members specifically; as well as within their country of birth or residence (Castle, 2002). Thus, the picture is different, when we consider the UK context. This difference is in part informed by the disparate underpinning systems of domination (e.g. slavery *vs.* colonialism). Attention to national context and systems of difference could move intersectional analyses beyond a simplistic focus on the essence of certain identities to the precise processes and contexts in which interpretations of difference are organized (Carrim & Nkomo, 2016).

4.1 Underpinning Systems of Domination: Legacy Effects on BAME Women

When Crenshaw (1991) coined the term intersectionality she was describing the way in which multiple oppressions are experienced. Thus, the political aim was to address flaws in the US legal system, to highlight that each multiple oppression is not suffered separately but rather as a single, synthesized experience (Crenshaw, 1991). This has implications for applying intersectionality in a UK context, as the UK and the US approach the notion of 'multiple oppression' in very different ways.

When we compare the UK context to the US, there are disparities in national histories, and political and institutional constructions. The long-lasting effects of colonialism as well as slavery still influences US criminal justice policy today (e.g., Bosworth & Flavin, 2007). For example, many African-American people residing in

communities such as Chicago or Detroit descend from those who were exiles or refugees from lynching and terrorism in the US South, after slavery had “ended” in 1865 (Oliver & Shapiro, 2013). In contrast, for many UK BAME individuals, it was the economic, commercial, linguistic, cultural and familial interconnections between Britain and its former colonies that provided impetus for the waves of migration that followed. An ability to recognize these disparate realities when utilizing categories such as “Black”, “Asian”, or “minority” is needed in intersectional research. The application of intersectional research can be inherently limiting if national context and underpinning systems of domination are overlooked.

An intersectional approach is useful as it allows us to observe differentiation between women (and other categories) by referencing their multiple, intertwined identities (Calás & Smircich, 2013). This notion extends to dis(ability), sexual orientation, social class, religion discourse, and so on. Where there are gaps in our understanding of underrepresented group experiences at work, an intersectional approach is the vehicle that allows for the experiences of underrepresented groups to be heard and understood.

Thus, we seek to undertake an empirical exploration of the workplace experiences of British BAME professional women and their impact on a range of wellbeing outcomes, through the use of real-time, online, written interviews. Through the interviews we aim to highlight the important interplays between intersections of ethnicity, gender, and nationality. This leads us to the main research question of: how do British BAME professional women experience their multiple identities at the intersection of ethnicity, nationality and gender?

For this reason, we have utilized a qualitative research methodology to thoroughly investigate professional experiences that occur at the intersection of

minority ethnicity identity, gender identity, and British nationality. Real-time online interviews were employed to facilitate the analysis of complex and understood phenomena (Salmon, 2015).

5 METHOD AND SAMPLE

A qualitative exploratory methodological design allowed the gathering of accounts through real-time online written interviews conducted via an online document sharing website. Interviews were semi-structured, consisting of 18 open-ended questions, delivered in a set order (see: appendix 1).

Participants

Interview participants were identified by personal networking, supplemented by the snowballing technique (that utilized contacts of contacts) and were employed across public and private sectors. The participants for this study were 20 BAME professional women, we defined professional job roles as those, requiring a minimum qualification of, a university undergraduate bachelors' degree in order to practice. Participants were asked to self-identify as British ethnic minority and were further asked to describe their particular ethnic group, within the BAME category. The ages ranged from 26 to 64 years, with an average age of 35 years. Women's job roles spanned various employment sectors including legal, healthcare, education, accounting and finance, social care, creative arts, and construction. Given the exploratory nature of this phase of the research, the sample size was deemed suitable for gaining insights into the issues. Table 1 provides the biographical profiles of participants.

Table 1: Biographical data of participants

Pseudonym	Age	Highest Qualification	Employment Sector	Position	Self-Ascribed Ethnic Identity
P1	28	Bachelor's degree	Law	Associate Solicitor	Black
P2	36	Masters degree	Creative Arts & Fashion	Senior Fashion Designer	British Born Nigerian
P3	27	Masters degree	Healthcare	Pharmacist	British-Indian
P4	36	Doctorate degree	Healthcare	Paediatrician	British-Pakistani
P5	30	Doctorate degree	Education	Senior Lecturer	British Born of Nigerian Heritage
P6	29	Masters degree	Public & Civil Service	Forensic Psychologist	Black African
P7	40	Masters degree	Education	Lecturer	British-Pakistani
P8	27	Masters degree	Healthcare'	Paediatric Nurse	British-Pakistani
P9	32	Masters degree	Accounting & Finance	Finance Manager	Black-British
P10	64	Masters degree	Social Care	Social Care Manager	African
P11	50	Doctorate degree	Healthcare	Epidemiologist	British Nigerian
P12	26	Doctorate degree	Property & Construction	Project Manager	Black British
P13	36	Masters degree	Education	Teacher & Head of KS3 Maths Department	Black-British
P14	36	Bachelor's degree	Healthcare	Auxiliary Nurse	Black British Nigerian
P15	30	Bachelor's degree	Actuarial	Actuarial Analyst	Black African British

P16	42	Doctorate degree	Education	Senior Lecturer	British-Chinese
P17	30	Doctorate degree	Education	Lecturer	British-Nigerian
P18	36	Bachelor's degree	Social Care	Social Care Worker	Black British Caribbean
P19	35	Masters degree	Accounting & Finance	Human Resources Manager	African Nigerian
P20	30	Masters degree	Retail	Senior Merchandiser	British-Caribbean

Process

We sent each participant an initial email inviting them to participate in the study. The invite also included an information sheet and a consent form. Participants were informed about anonymity and confidentiality of the interviews. No personal information such as name, telephone number, or otherwise identifiable data was obtained or registered. Only information about the participants' age, ethnicity, gender, and professional job role was retained.

On the day of the interview, participants received a link to a Google Document, an online document that can be edited in real time by multiple people at the same time. Each participant only had access to their own Google Document. Google Docs can be used synchronously or asynchronously. Within the study, we used Google Docs synchronously, so that we could respond in real time to the interviewees. We were able to view and access their Google Docs during the interviews and probe or add further questions similar to a verbal interview. Each interview session lasted about 1½ hours. After the interviews the participants were debriefed in full.

Interviews

The interviews were conducted as semi-structed interviews. Each Google Doc contained 26 pre-written questions: 8 questions about age, gender, highest qualification level, and ethnicity. There were also 18 open-ended questions that asked about "*experiences at work, focusing on one's sense of health and well-being; experiences of stress and burnout and work-life balance"*. Further questions required participants to consider how their initial answers were relevant to their *"experiences as an ethnic minority"; "experiences as a British national";* and *"experiences as a woman"."* Finally, we asked participants to consider their responses in view of all three identity categories, to capture the intersectional experience of ethnicity, gender and nationality. Thus, the question was asked *"How are any of your previous experiences particularly relevant to your experience as a British woman with a BAME identity?"*. As the women wrote their answers to each question, we were able to see what they were writing and add further questions. We conducted all interviews in real-time, and then, the interviews were transcribed verbatim immediately afterwards. We used a qualitative, interpretivist approach to gain in-depth understanding of participants' organizational experiences when considered at the intersection of race/ethnicity, gender, and national identity. Here our research interest lies in making a theoretical contribution by exploring how intersectional identities are experienced amongst a sample of professional women within UK organizations, in light of a range of wellbeing outcomes, including experiences of health and well-being, stress and burnout and work-life balance.

We conducted coding and analyses of the interview scripts in an iterative process between, and including, all interview responses. We undertook coding using

the qualitative research software Nvivo. This allowed us to code any data that was deemed important but was not accounted for in the first iteration of the template. We coded these types of data under an “open node” which helped to inform our decisions of how and where to revise the final iterations of the template. The first author began with open coding, which involved breaking down and categorizing the text. Here, we coded salient and meaningful descriptions regarding the intersection of ethnicity, gender and nationality and other social identities directly from the data. This was followed by the first and second authors engaging in axial and selective coding for the purpose of this paper. Here, we considered and categorized the relationships between codes into higher order themes. During analysis, the first and second authors adopted ‘intersectional sensibilities’ (Bowleg, 2008; Crenshaw, 1991). This meant paying attention to when and how gender, ethnicity, and nationality became salient in respondents’ workplace experiences. We subjected the data to thematic template analysis, an approach that relies heavily on recommendations of Brooks, McCluskey, and King (2015). This method allows the researchers to abstract core analytical themes and important patterns of information that are contained within the data set. Our use of qualitative data analysis software Nvivo, made it possible to automate the data processing, allowing for analytical rigour. We developed an initial version of the coding template on the basis of a subset of the data, which we then applied to the data set as a whole.

6 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 provides an example of the structure of our findings, demonstrating how we aggregated theoretical dimensions in-line with Miles and Huberman (1994).

Table 2: First order codes, theoretical categories and aggregate theoretical dimensions

Number	First order codes	Theoretical categories	Aggregate theoretical dimensions
1		• Perceiver expectations • Disparate treatment	• Identity Imposition
2	• Flexing identity as a defence mechanism • Flexing identity as a source of advantage	• Behaviour modification	• Strategic Essentialism

6.1 Theme: Experiences of Identity Imposition

Most interviewees spoke about the imposition of identity within their organizations. These experiences of misconstrued identity impositions refer to a host of negative assumptions about how BAME women are 'supposed' to behave. The women described how they as individuals needed to negotiate co-workers' and clients' ideas about their intersecting ethnic minority identity and female identity. The women's narratives illustrated that often co-workers' and clients' ideas about being an ethnic minority woman distorted description of what it means to be a BAME women. Thus, the women were confronted by the politics of having an intersecting identity as a BAME

woman and the challenge of negotiating an organizational culture, that was fundamentally rooted in the organization's white (prototyped) culture.

Managing the imposition of undesirable and misperceived identities emerged as a distressing aspect of the women's organizational experiences. These imposed identities were often seen as (a) discriminatory in relation to their appearance, (b) burdensome, (c) disproportionately experienced by ethnic minority women, and (d) motivated by race and gender. People generally have expectations of the stereotypes surrounding an individual's social group memberships and ultimately will treat an individual according to those stereotypes (Fiske, 2018). This in turn will shape that individual's own behavior. We found support for previous research that demonstrates that others "impose" identities (i.e., they impose expectations or treat the women according to their social group memberships (and the stereotypes of their groups; Fiske, 2018). What is novel with our intersectional perspective is that it not only highlights the uniqueness of expectations or treatment of BAME professional women (compared to white women or BAME men, for instance), but also that these expectations are multiple, diverse, and conflicting. For example, while expectations for white women in a professional context create an extremely fine or nearly impossible line to walk, for BAME women it's as though this fine line is constantly being moved, pulled, or twisted.

To illustrate, participant – 8 (P8) offers an account wherein her wearing of a hijab was made salient and subsequently a misconceived identity was inferred. P8 reports being asked:

> *"Are you not hot?" and also "what are you hiding under there?" (P8 – British-Pakistani, Paediatric Nurse).*

The assumption made here is that she has something to hide. Thus, imposing an identity that comprises some element of secrecy or duplicitousness. This unique experience of identity imposition is particular to ethnic minority women, and reflects stigmatization occurring at the intersection of minority ethnicity and female gender. This type of experience of intersecting ethnic minority identity and female gender identities can be likened to cases of intersecting Muslim and gender identities when concerning Muslim women choosing to wear their hijab at work, due to their religious dress often being perceived as a symbol of difference, as well as a symbol of submissiveness in the Western context. This is not to try and homogenize the organizational experiences of Black and Muslim women, nor is it to assert that Muslim and Black women are mutually exclusive as those who identify as Black/African may also be Muslim. Nonetheless, stigmatization will often occur at the intersection of minority ethnicity/ or religion and “female” gender. Thus, the key difference here is that the dynamics of imposed expectations of others, that is where people treat the women according to stereotypes, are unique/ distinct for BAME women and others with multiple stigmatized identities.

Table 3: Experiences of Identity Imposition

Identity Imposition	Experience	Quote
1. Identity imposition due to physical appearance	***Cultural Symbols*** The women spoke about being reacted to differently, based on their physical appearance. This example illustrates disparate treatment due to the women displaying certain cultural symbols. They spoke about physical traits that are symbolic of their ethnicity or religion, being seen as "unprofessional" or "inappropriate" for the women in the study, this concept is damaging and forms part of the reason they reported feeling uncomfortable or demoralized as part of their day-to-day organizational experiences.	*"I have gone on a journey, you are told you have to look as British as you can (so no headwraps, no braids), you have to hide your ethnicity to get further…but at a point, I just felt that, I am not going to put up with all of this... put up with all of the headaches of work, and then not be free to be myself. Now I am liberated to be a successful African woman, and I am wearing an African headwrap to work" (**P2 – British Born Nigerian**, Senior Fashion Designer)*
2. Identity imposition due to physical appearance	***Skin Color*** Instances of experiencing less-favorable treatment from white colleagues and/or clients was commonplace. Many of the women reported being targeted by their white counterparts. In these situations, they felt they were made a scapegoat due to them being an ethnic minority woman.	*"Some patients can be more impatient because I am a person of color, it is usually people on income support or the older population, whereas I have noticed that they can be a lot easier and less demanding with my other white colleagues" (**P3 – British-Indian**, Pharmacist)* *"My previous workplace was quite oppressive, it was clear you were being tolerated. In this place I became a scapegoat for their failings, yet they would come back and say I was the one doing wrong they would blame me (where as*

			*everyone else was white)" (**P2 – British Born Nigerian**, Senior Fashion Designer)*
3.	Identity impositions based on assumptions of behavioral attributes	***Behavior Traits*** The women commented on the expectation of others at work. The women found that their white colleagues would often deem them to be rude or 'sassy' for expressing an opinion. The consequence of this was, that the women felt marginalized. In some instances, they would modify their behaviour to try and appear less 'sassy'	"*I've been called 'sassy', which at times makes me think twice before I respond or react to people. Normally I would have taken this up directly with the individual but I think I could've easily been made to look bullish or domineering. When I get irritated or angry I'm not able to be myself as I have to be mindful not to show these emotions… so not to be labelled an 'angry black woman'." (**P20 – British-Caribbean**, Senior Merchandiser)*
4.	Identity impositions based on assumptions of behavioral attributes	***Behavior Traits*** The women commented on the expectation of others, in more ways than one. They contrasted the earlier "sassy" comment with the notion that, for women with a faith or religion, they were expected to exhibit a particular etiquette; as though they were ambassadors for the entire religion or faith.	"*The only thing I found difficult was to be real with my faith…there is this behaviour that you are expected to have. When you have a faith or religion, they still want to stereotype you...you can't do that because you are a Christian…people are always looking for ways to define you." (**P17 – British-Nigerian**, Lecturer)*

The women in the study referred to the disparity of interpersonal organizational encounters, compared to their white counterparts. This was believed to be determined by how they were groomed or by the types of attire they chose to adopt. For example, where Black women were seen to be embracing Afrocentric hairstyles above European interpretations, remarks were made to highlight this. The remarks reiterated the dominant stereotypes of intersecting identities (e.g., of Black women).

Participant – 6 (P6) shares when she experienced an imposition of identity from a white male colleague:

> *"Once I had my hair in cainrows and when I walked into the group staff room a comment was made along the lines of, am I going for the 'ghetto look'. This I feel was due to me being black as other women who work in the prison do have two cainrows in their hair, but they are white and so such a comment has not been made to them" (P6 – Black African, Forensic Psychologist)*

P6's comments demonstrate that the separate stereotypes of "women" and "Black individuals" are not additive. Thus, the impositions and treatment Black women experience should not be assumed to be simply the sum total of the expectations or impositions typically put on women and Black individuals. What we uncover here, is that the distinct nature of identity impositions placed on BAME women and other individuals at key intersecting identities are likely to have unique implications, regarding stress, burnout, health, and well-being. More generally this leads us to questions about whether one would expect the implications of identity imposition for BAME women to have an "additive" effect or an altogether unique collection of effects, that is, a unique set of disadvantages, but perhaps also certain unique advantages?

The reports of the women within this particular study highlight that their workplace experiences include forms of identity impositions, in that they were confronted by multiple, diverse, and conflicting accounts or narratives of their intersectional identity from others. These narratives were not neutral but highlighted experiences of misperceived (incorrect) identity impositions may be due to the belief in racist or discriminatory beliefs of ethnic minority groups within the UK. It is important

to note that the imposition of identity did not occur in isolation, but alongside some of the women's self-initiated attempts to flex identity or to strategically essentialize. This is to say, that: BAME women are active players in navigating/ responding to these expectations/ treatments coming from others. The important parallel here, is that identities can be imposed by others *versus* used strategically by the self in-order to make meaning.

6.2 Theme: Strategic Essentialism

Strategic essentialism refers to a political tactic in which members of minority groups, such as those belonging to religious minorities, minority ethnic groups, nationalities or women, mobilize on the basis of a shared gendered, cultural, or political identity to represent themselves (Bernstein, 2005; Kahani-Hopkins & Hopkins, 2002). While strong differences may exist between individual members of these groups, it is sometimes advantageous for them to temporarily "essentialize" that is to treat their particular identity as a verb, instead of a noun in-order to produce and reproduce a particular identity in a simplified way, so to achieve certain goals, such as equal rights or even privileges (Kahani-Hopkins & Hopkins, 2002; Spivak, 1990).

Most interviewees spoke about instances of realizing the inherent dynamism and opportunity that comes from being British and yet an ethnic minority. One participant referred to herself as similar to a chameleon, she compared her organizational experiences to that of her white colleagues, stating:

> *"I am able to relate with people from different cultures as I can turn on the Britishness or turn it off, a bit like a chameleon. Whereas white British people cannot do this, as they are often seen as just white."*
>
> *(P2 – British Born Nigerian, Senior Fashion Designer)*

This comment highlights that the intersection of specific identities (British nationality and ethnic minority identity) was a key element that allowed them to experience this 'advantage', and important in determining the nature of their organizational experiences. At the same time there was recognition that the organizational context was often dissimilar to that of home. The organizational context was fundamentally rooted in the organizations' white British (prototyped) culture, whereas the home context was to some extent informed by the norms of their respective ethnic origins. This meant that the women embraced a bifurcated approach to reconciling their identities when transitioning from home to the workplace and back home again. The women referred to this process in various ways:

> *"I have benefited, as having a strong women role model at home is a cultural thing for Igbo /Nigerian women. Nigerian women are strong women, for the most part and all of that has led to who I am today, me being my own boss" (P2 – British Born Nigerian, Senior Fashion Designer)*

This was said as a way of explaining the idea of strong women being embraced within Igbo culture, that is, it is normal for Igbo or Nigerian women to be strong, and less normal for white British women to be strong in the same way. The comment reflects the original disposition of many West-African societies. Pre-colonial West-African societies were subject to multi-level governance, with particular areas of life (public and private) being governed by women in principle (Agunbiade & Olajide, 2016). The following participant, who works within the education sector explains how

she navigates home-work contexts through strategically essentializing in-line with her British national identity as context dictated.

> *"I guess I am more flexible or versatile as I am very typically "British" at work, far more-so than I would be around my friends and family" (P17 – British-Nigerian, Lecturer)*

There was also evidence that the women did not fully conform to behaviors prescribed by their organizations (which to a large extent are typically informed by Western-white "male" behaviors), but rather operated within their own unique intersectional space, at the intersection of ethnic minority identity and British nationality.

> *"As a British BAME woman they always try to put a negative spin on your 'feistiness', I play this down at times, but actually we were born with fire in our belly. For me I wonder how other people are able to exist without having a bit of a fiery side or a backbone" (P19 – African Nigerian, Human Resources Manager)*

The comment above highlights that she did not fully endorse all aspects of the organization's culture. This highlights a willingness to somehow transition between expected behaviors; thus, constructing a fluid, hybrid identity, within which behaviors could be modified as context dictated.

Table 4: Experiences of Strategic Essentialism

Types of Strategic Essentialism		Experience	Quote
1.	Strategic essentialism as weaponry	***Cultural Hybridity*** The women in the study felt that they were able to conform to one or more of their particular identities in a strategic manner. They felt that by softening a particular identity they were able to dissociate themselves from a particular group when necessary. This was often done as a defensive measure. Whereby language that evoked images of going to war was used to describe this process.	*"It is context dependent, you can choose to be British or reject it, you can use it to your advantage or as weaponry when you need it. There are struggles, but I have never felt disadvantaged, I have felt empowered by it, it is like a double-edge sword."* *(**P2 – British Born Nigerian**, Senior Fashion Designer)*
2.	Strategic essentialism as a source of advantage	***Accent*** Some of the women also felt that their particular intersectional identity was especially potent within a UK context. They felt that they were able to utilize their British accent as a symbol of nationality, in a strategic way within the workplace.	*"If I took out the British national and I was say African born, you don't have any link to the UK. I am privileged as a British national, if it is me and someone with an accent, I am going to be favoured, if we are talking BAME vs. BAME. I can lay my Britishness on thick when I want to and draw it back when I don't need it" (**P11 – British Nigerian**, Epidemiologist)*
3.	Strategic essentialism as a source of advantage	***Cultural Hybridity*** The women in the study felt that in certain contexts their own narratives of being a British women, and an ethnic minority women was important, as this allowed them easy access to knowledge, concerning aspects of life beyond the British culture	*"As a British ethnic minority, I have been taught to embrace aspects of various cultures, not just one. This means I am open to learn and even educate those who haven't been exposed to other cultures outside of their own. I think this means I can make more informed decisions, based on this, in a way it empowers me" (**P15 – Black African British**,* Actuarial *Analyst)*
4.	Strategic essentialism as a source of advantage	***Accent*** Participant perceived their particular local British accent as a source of advantage. This further supports the notion that various dimensions of identity interconnect or intersect to produce qualitatively disparate experiences of the workplace.	*"I'd say being a British national with a local accent has indirectly aided my work in some way".* *(**P18 –Black British Caribbean**, Social Care Worker)*

The words of *P17* help to sum up the politics of strategic essentialism as a way of problematizing rigid identity categories, from the perspective of a British BAME professional women:

"As a BAME women, I feel that I am unique, and this could be a hindrance or an advantage depending on how I strategically use it." (P17 – British-Nigerian, Lecturer).

This demonstrates how the meaning of essentialist ideas also might play-out in a strategic or constructive light, when initiated by self. Essentialist notions could have more positive connotations when considered in an intragroup context. Essentialist notions often take on negative meanings for women and minorities, within intergroup contexts because of the association with discrimination (Morton, 2013), however there needs to be consideration of how this differs when essentialism occurs within the intragroup context. We found that essentialist narratives were salient throughout the women's interview scripts.

Essentialist ideas can suggest a fundamental connection within group boundaries and thus could become a source of empowerment. Morton (2013, p. 389) supports this notion stating that *"it is not always possible to equate the endorsement of essentialist ideas with an oppressive agenda."* He asserts that dominated groups and minorities might typically be suspicious of essentialist accounts of their identity, especially when these are offered by others.

Yet there are conditions under which essentialism might be appealing from their perspective. These conditions concern the dynamics of power. Where the essentializing of identity is initiated by the "minority" group member this in turn could

be empowering as they are able to strategically endorse or reject particular identities in a way that proves advantageous to them, this was seen amongst participants when they chose to endorse particular identities such as “feistiness” or “Britishness”. As Bottomley (1991) argues, ethnic identities are the dialectical interplay of self-identification and identification by others and of processes and structural forces. Identities then can be strategic and positional. Spivak’s (1990) notion of a ‘strategic essentialism’ – the expression of an irreducible “otherness”, which is operationalized for the critical speaking position that it offers minority intellectuals – has wider applicability to the everyday organizational practices of marginalized groups. The critiques of essentialism have given little consideration to the ways a popular essentialism is crucial not just for racist constructions of identity, but the ways communities may mobilize their sense of identity in certain contexts.

Participants reported their willingness and capability to strategically essentialize, within a number of spaces and contexts. For instance, participants were explicit about their decisions to “accept” or “reject” their British identity, referring to their ability to perform Britishness or not; thus, essentialize strategically as a source of empowerment.

This provided insight into some of the women’s ability to construe the views of “others” and develop alternative ways of understanding oneself. Therefore, multiple minority identities at the intersection of “Britishness” could be seen as enabling, in certain instances (Bourne & Özbilgin, 2008). This meant that for some of the study participants they were able to “strategically essentialize” of flex their identity, which was seen as a positive thing with women concluding that they had greater adaptability or versatility at the interpersonal level, than their white colleagues, due to their ability to endorse a particular essentialism thus perpetuating inclusion among other members

of a particular social group e.g. Non-British (non-white) ethnic minority individuals or white British nationals.

The women within this study emphasized their ability to conform to a greater or lesser extent, to one particular identity (i.e. ethnic minority identity or British national identity). This was seen to have great utility for the individual.

6.3 Accent as a Proxy for Britishness

One of the participant's described the link between accent, class and nationality and differential implications for those ethnic minority individuals not natively born in the UK:

"As a British national I am audibly similar to all Brits, white, Black or Asian. This gives me a rite of passage at work. I see that I am freely able to navigate certain situations, due to being British and having a British accent. Whereas I feel there is less patience for colleagues with non-British accents" (P17 – British-Nigerian, Lecturer).

In work contexts, having a British accent was regarded as an important element of identity for participants. This was due to a British accent sending a clear and unambiguous signal to others, that they were British born. Research has shown that individuals who use non-indigenous accented speech often experience prejudice and discrimination (Nelson, Signorella & Botti, 2016). A US study that measured perceptions of competence when considered at the intersection of gender and accent has shown that speakers with non-indigenous accent were rated as less competent compared with speakers with an indigenous accent (Nelson, Signorella & Botti, 2016). Furthermore, a second finding highlighted that an increased bias exists against female accented speakers compared with female indigenous accent speakers. The final

findings showed that US men were more likely to endorse these stereotypes than US women

Therefore, taking an accent as a proxy for class in the UK context, that is a northern accent *versus "*Queens English" could be truer for a White British person, whereas in the case of a BAME individual, we deduce that an accent proxies class, but it also signals nationality. This could be due to an accent having the capacity to signal more than just class, but it also could signal race, class, gender and one's origins.

6.4 Contribution and Implications

The study findings show that variations in identity interpretations and stories should be expected (Carrim & Nkomo, 2016). That lessons learnt in one context, do not necessarily import to another (i.e., US to UK) and thus, differences within categories are as important as differences between categories to avoid constraining individuals once again. This suggests that we should seek a bottom-up approach to appropriately conduct intersectional analyses. In this way intersectional research should allow for the piecing together of contextual or national processes and systems of domination to give rise to a more complex and overarching approach to conducting intersectional analyses. We believe our findings further problematize the investigation of identity experiences in isolation of the multiple social categories to which an individual belongs and emphasizes the importance of the national-social-historical context that has informed these identity categories. Consequently, intersectional theory and analysis (in its current form) is fundamentally limiting, as it tends to pay attention to rigid identity categories. To advance theorizing of what it means to be intersectional we can extend our understanding beyond the discourse of multiple

oppression, to a discourse that elucidates the importance of national-social contexts as a basic dimension of intersectionality to explicate the vastness and difference among “ethnic minority women” or “women of color”. This will allow us to better understand the differential impact that everyday workplace practices have for different women in organizations

This article has investigated empirically the experiences of British BAME professional women in light of a range of wellbeing outcomes (a) to know what the experiences are, and (b) to consider experiences at the intersection. The study findings have direct implications for the workplace, in-that organizations should consider the challenges that result for women who routinely face identity impositions at work. There are also direct implications for research, in that research should consider the efficacy of intersectional analyses, when shifts in social context (space) and/or time are considered. Our findings reveal that the women in this study utilized their intersectional identity in order to leverage an advantage, with British nationality being pertinent. This should be considered an attempt to strategically essentialize as the situation (space / time) prompts. This supports the idea that organizational experiences of social identity categories cannot always be homogenized; as shifts in ethnic minority women’s organizational experiences will occur in accordance with shifts in physical space and time. Carrim & Nkomo (2016) assert that while identity may be subjectively fabricated, it is embedded in a wider social and organizational context, which can have multiple effects. There is no pure or central definition of a professional, yet “professional” is not absent of gendering and racialization processes and practices (Atewologun, Kutzer, Doldor, Anderson & Sealy, 2017). Thus, there are implications for those workers who fall outside of the mainstream version of a professional worker within the UK context.

6.5 Limitations

The current findings are not without limitations. First the findings are limited to an English population, as we lack the networks within other UK countries. Further studies should seek to conduct research with greater representation from other UK countries (e.g. Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales), due to arguments made about the importance of regarding social context, this becomes relevant as the social histories of individual parts of the UK differ. Thus, the differences within Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are as important as differences between them.

Furthermore, the category of BAME is vast, comprising numerous ethnicities, creeds and colors. Nonetheless class effects were quiet, as the women were all university graduates and were employed within professional roles. It is likely that BAME women of a different class may have a different story to tell. Equally, it is possible that if the focus was solely on one particular ethnic group (e.g. British-Nigerian women, etc.) they too may have had a different story to tell. As the women that were interviewed were similar to the author who conducted the interviews, as a British BAME professional women, it is possible that participants could have presented their views differently to someone with a different identity. Nonetheless, by having a review of the coding and themes, we are confident that prominent themes are indicative of those that were most salient within the women's workplace experiences.

The findings also have direct implications for future research. For example, we suggest quantitative research could be used to consider the implications of receiving *negative* or *misperceived* identity imposition and whether this has implications for a wider range of workplace outcomes (e.g. work-life balance, stress and burnout, health and well-being). This might include instances where women make extra efforts to stay late at work; sense a feeling of 'helplessness' or 'burnout' or avoid a particular

individual (despite knowing this individual is pertinent to their career success) resulting from receiving *negative* or *misperceived* identity imposition.

7 CONCLUSION

In this paper we aimed to share the organizational narratives and experiences of British BAME professional women, and to demonstrate how current conceptualizations of intersectional theory create boundary limitations. This article has shown that the workplace experiences of British BAME professional women comprise experiences of identity imposition *versus* strategic essentialism, and that national identity, as well as gender and ethnicity, were useful to properly understand the nuanced nature of these experiences. The study has demonstrated that their workplace experiences include forms of oppression (identity impositions) as well as forms of opportunity (strategic essentialism), which has direct implications for organizations as, there is need for organizations to better understand the challenges that result for women who routinely face identity impositions at work.

The study also suggests that consideration of intersectionality in-line with the social or national context is key. Intersectional analysis in the UK context revealed an array of experiences, some of these UK experiences were deemed enabling and constructive experiences relative to other minority individuals in the face of misperceived identity impositions. The constructive experiences were afforded by the multifaceted nature of being regarded an ethnic minority, alongside one's British nationality.

When conducting intersectional analysis, the focus on categories alone may lead to further constraining and classifying of certain individuals, due to the assumptive nature of these categories. There is need to embrace the national system and cultures

that inform professional experiences, rather than focus on identity categories alone. This would suggest that currently there is an overdependence on US derived intersectional analyses, to interpret the experiences of all ethnic minority women within the Western context, including within the UK.

Finally, we put out a call for more empirical research that considers experiences of BAME professional women at the intersection of identities; with consideration of the current temporal and spatial limitations of intersectional analyses.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Interview Script

WORK STRUCTURE & SATISFACTION

1. What things interest you most in your current job role?
2. What things at work make you feel the most satisfied about your job?
3. What do you least like about working in your current job?

SOCIAL ASPECTS, WORK-LIFE BALANCE & HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

4. Please describe your experiences at work in relation to your work-life balance (e.g. do you work longer/shorter hours than others, do you have enough time for yourself)
5. Please describe your experiences at work in relation to any social-life aspects at work (e.g. friendship groups, socialising outside of the working environment)
6. Please describe your experiences at work in relation to your health and well-being (e.g. physical health, happiness, emotions or mood)

PROMOTION & DEVELOPMENT

7. Can you describe the opportunities you have been given for promotion and progression?
8. Can you describe, the ways in which you feel you have achieved success in your career, and the ways in which you have not succeeded?

8b. What does career success mean to you?

WHO YOU ARE AT WORK

9. Explain any concern you may have in relation to who you are at work

9b. What was your emotional reaction to this?

10. Describe who you feel you are at work – this might involve your sense of identity, your personality, your place within the group…

10b. Describe a time when you felt that you were not able to be yourself at work

11. Describe a time when you felt that you fitted in at work
12. When you first meet people and tell them what you do for work, how do they respond?
13. What do you think they are thinking about you at this moment?

Given the experiences you've already listed above, we'd like to know if any of these experiences are particularly relevant to your experiences as a British national, as a woman, as an individual with a BAME identity and finally as a British woman with a BAME identity.

Please feel free to say as little or as much as you wish…

14. How are any of your previous experiences particularly relevant to your experience as a British national?
15. How are any of your previous experiences particularly relevant to your experience as a woman?
16. How are any of your previous experiences particularly relevant to your experience as an individual with a BAME identity?
17. How are any of your previous experiences particularly relevant to your experience as a British woman with a BAME identity?
18. What have you hoped I would ask that I haven't yet asked?