Forget me not: demarginalising trailblazing and leading Black women's WEIRD industrial, organisational, and societal career experiences with "power" in the world's top music industry ecosystems

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Forget Me Not:

Demarginalising Trailblazing and Leading Black Women's

WEIRD Industrial, Organisational, and Societal Career Experiences

with "Power" in the World's Top Music Industry Ecosystems

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated in loving memory to the late Professor Marcia Lorraine Worrell, Head of Contemporary Studies, Professor of Psychology, and a beacon of light in this world.

To my principal supervisor, "PhD mum", and now, great ancestor, it has truly been the honour, and esteemed privilege, of a lifetime, to proudly be your "PhD daughter" and mentee. Thank you for the many years of your generous wisdom, mentorship, and lessons that I can carry with me and pay forward. Just as you instructed, whenever in doubt, I look to the pendant you gifted me in your office that reads "Still I Rise". Those words from Dr Maya Angelou's poem have continued to be my source of inspiration, throughout this journey.

This thesis is also dedicated to all my loved ones, who have journeyed home, over these past few years, to join the ancestors. I miss you all dearly and carry your love in my heart. I hope I have made you proud.

Until we meet again.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this time to formally acknowledge and express my deepest gratitude to my esteemed supervisors, the late Professor Marcia Lorraine Worrell, Dr Moira Cachia, and Professor Madeleine Ohl, Director of Studies, for your unwavering support, encouragement, and guidance throughout this doctoral journey. When I received word about Professor Worrell's sudden transition near the start of the pandemic, she and I were actually due to meet that day, for our weekly video meeting, within an hour, because the country was in lockdown. Stunned, I still showed up and just sat there in utter disbelief and heart-breaking silence, during our meeting time slot, as the news, I wanted to desperately reject, and unsee, began to sink in and tears overflowed. That day felt like my world fell apart; and all the unexpressed love, which we label as grief, was challenging to process then, and even now, writing this. However, there are not enough words to express how infinitely grateful I am for the loving memories that will stay with me, and for Professor Ohl, Dr Cachia, and Maria Pennells, Senior Administrative Officer from the Graduate Centre, for stepping in to hold me up and support me so that I could cross the finish line, and truly honour Professor Worrell, and her legacy as she was so supportive, and just as excited (and probably more so), about the publication of this scholarly work. Even when my health severely declined, your support, kindness, and patience were the greatest gifts I could ever ask for; and I thank you sincerely for making the rest of this journey a bit easier to move through.

To the entire University of West London staff, especially Sara Raybould, Senior Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education and Student Experience), Alan Shannon-Smith, Head of Student Advice and Immigration, Jackie Forbes, Senior Compliance Officer, and the Information Technology, International, and Library departments, thank you for your amazing support throughout this process as well. To my therapist, Myriam, I could not have done this without our consistent sessions. Thank you for coaching me on how to work with my nervous system and stay grounded to persevere through some of the most growing moments in this shared human experience. To the expert medical teams of doctors and specialists, who helped to get my health to a place so that I could successfully complete this journey, I thank you. To my parents, your love and support kept me; and, to my mother, especially, thank you for standing in the gap and being my primary caregiver at a time when my mobility rapidly declined. You were in the trenches with me, day and night, as I adjusted to a new norm (on multiple fronts); and a mother's love – a fellow multidimensional being's love – is truly like no other, and I cannot thank you enough. I love you. To my family, friends, sorority sisters, and colleagues, thank you for being blessings in my life and for walking with me – whether for a season, or many, in this journey.

Last but certainly not least, to the phenomenal Black women in this study, I am forever indebted to you. Thank you so much for entrusting me to share your stories, for the purposes to drive awareness and transformation. It is my hope that this project joins the collective voices of those doing the work to recentre, uplift, and prioritise humanity in the music industry.

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Declaration

The submitted work is the sole original work of the author. The thesis has not previously been submitted for a comparable academic award, whether at the University of West London or any equivalent academic institution. The research has not been submitted for, or contributed to, any other academic award at the University of West London or any other academic institution.

Abstract

Governments in the UK and US passed a slew of acts and laws, from 1960s onward, to prohibit discriminatory practices aimed at marginalised groups, across business and society. Despite these landmark rulings, it is still the case that ideological, institutional, interpersonal, and internalised acts of dehumanisation continue to permeate WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized [sic], Rich, and Democratic) consciousness, perceived-to-be justifiable behaviours, as well as (dysfunctional) ways of relating within cultural paradigms, as (nonaccountability) being ascribed to "social norms".

By framing this groundbreaking IO psychological research project, within multiple wider social contexts, while also centring the implications of "human (business) practices" in the music industry[1], I sought to cross-culturally examine trailblazing and leading UK and US Black women's industrial, organisational, and societal career experiences, in this "equality" era. Accordingly, I developed this project from the specific lenses of Black women navigating "power", "identity politics", the "politics of identity" and the implications of social constructs, in the, purported-to-be, egalitarian, top-performing music industry ecosystems of the world.

In commissioning both intersectionality theory (IT) and, what I will name, an "intrasectional" conceptual framework – a hybrid critical realist ontology and Black feminist epistemology (BFE), where reflexivity would be valued, were

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[1] In this project I situated the music industry as a "power structure".

ultimately chosen to guide the methodological choices. Also, as narrative research is critical to understanding "lived experiences", (a criterion in BFE), this thesis leaned towards a Big Q qualitative model, incorporating a multimethod design, featuring two reflexive thematic analyses, using archival data, for Study 1 (n=9 industry trailblazers), to inform the approach for in-depth semi-structured interviews, for Study 2 (n=12 industry leaders).

Based on the findings, the themes I generated from Study 1 and Study 2, strongly indicate that Black women's systemic WEIRD MIE career experiences, are an alarming cause for concern, as the negative workplace issues they tend to encounter fit the criteria of a "humanitarian crisis", by the UN's standards, which deserves macro-contexts, urgent attention, and a call-to-action for stakeholder and organisational interventions, as Black women spoke to themes of workplace abuse and incivility, prolonged poor mental and physical health outcomes, other forms of multidimensional exploitation, as well as experiences with disconnection, and barriers at every level in their careers, in the relationship-driven music industry. As these outcomes adversely impacted the pace and progression, as well as trajectories, of their careers across the multisectoral and occupational spectrums in the MIEs, this thesis sought to explore *how* and *why*, adding an original contribution to knowledge in psychology through this niche exploration.

Keywords

WEIRD Psychology; Cross-Cultural; Intersectionality Theory; Intrasectionality; Industrial-Organisational Psychology; Societal Psychology; Music Industry Ecosystems; Black Women; Complex Misogynoirism; Power in the Workplace

List of Abbreviations

APA	American Psychological Association
BPS	British Psychological Society
BSA	British Sociological Association
QOL	Quality of Life
UN	United Nations
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
WHO	World Health Organization [sic]
OMB	The US Office of Management and Budget
ONS	The UK Office for National Statistics
NIMHD	National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities
EEOC	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
DOL	Department of Labor [sic]
BLS	Bureau of Labor [sic] Statistics
HR	Human Resources
SME	Subject Matter Expert
DEIBA	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Accountability
BAME / BME	Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic / Black Minority Ethnic
POC	People of Colour
WEIRD	Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, and Democratic (see Chapter 2)
SHAPE	Social Sciences, Humanities, and the Arts for People and the Economy / Environment
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, Mathematics
IO	Industrial and Organisational (Psychology)
BFT	Black Feminist Thought (Multiple Theories)
IT	Intersectionality Theory
RTA	Reflexive Thematic Analysis
MIE / MIEs	Music Industry Ecosystem / Music Industry Ecosystems
IFPI	International Federation of the Phonographic Industry
RIAA	Recording Industry Association of America
360º	360 Deal
A&R	Artists and Repertoire

Terminology

- The terms "Black" denoted by an uppercase "B" and "Afro-Diasporic" will be used interchangeably to identify people of African descent.

- The term "black" denoted by a lowercase "b" will only be used as a point of reference to the UK's socio-political context of "black" as an umbrella term, homogenising specific non-White communities, namely South Asian and Black people (British Sociological Association, 2021).

- The term "popular music" will be used as a measurement of mainstream commercial success, rather than as a genre. Also, when discussing "popular music" as an "industry" it will acknowledge the multi-billion-dollar global business, which is comprised of multiple sectors, subindustries, companies, and brands.

Disclosure Regarding Regional Settings for the Study

I have multiple ties to both examined regions[2] selected for this investigative research. Thus, it is imperative to explicitly make known that these territories were solely nominated on the statistical basis that they have continued to remain the top-performing music markets, worldwide, from the start of the study to date, according to the annual Global Music Report produced by the IFPI (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2021). Advantageously, these leading markets also have significant labour force populations of career Black women in music, compared to other regional territories that also generally have less global prominence.

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[2] The United States of America (US) and The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK)

Preamble

I.   "Owning My Perspective" (Elliott, et al., 1999)

One of the key tenets of Black Feminist Thought (BFT), and other investigative fields, which also employ standpoint epistemologies and theories (Harding, Fall 2009), is that the researcher can be positioned as both an "insider" (Braun & Clarke, 2013) and "producer of scholarship". This unique placement allows the researcher to hold epistemic authority for advancing multiple standpoints, to re-establish one of its goals for insider researchers (IR) within this practice theory, which is not to claim to be the representative voice of a minority social class. Rather, BFT allows the IR to beneficially facilitate ushering in "[…] more inclusionary politics within group-based identity politics," and discourse (Collins, 2019; Hull, et al., 2015) as a means to recognise, and not conflate "intragroup differences" (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1242). In this research, functioning dually as a "situated knower" (Collins, 2009) while also still occupying an "outsider-within" (Collins, 1986) status, has been a distinctive dynamic I was keenly aware of throughout the writing process of this dissertation. Upholding this awareness allowed me to set up appropriate systems to practise mindfulness, critical thinking, and self-distancing techniques, when appropriate, after repeatedly listening to, and analysing, the reported discriminatory career experiences of the research participants.

Employing this systematic approach made it more practical to try to best mitigate triggers and perception biases upon listening to their narratives,

which I consciously made the effort to not process through the lens of my own limited past experiences. As a result, I had to often deconstruct and reframe my own experiences through intensive inner-work, talk therapy, scheduled breaks, and journaling, alongside completing this project. Considering this, it has been important to often "Remember […] that the smallest minority on earth is the individual," (Rand, 1967) and the presumptuous assumption that any group, despite sharing many similarities in cultural experiences and struggles, is a monolith, would only further marginalise and disenfranchise individuals within said groups. Consequently, this would harmfully demonstrate multidimensional cultural incompetence (Sue, 2001), working against my best efforts to conduct myself as an ethical qualitative researcher, fellow human being, and fellow Black woman, respectful of our deep interconnectedness (Fuller, 2016) and vast differences.

II.   Reporting on Research Participants' "Black Music Herstory"

It was a privilege to have been entrusted by the research participants, to listen to, and gain insights from them, as they candidly shared their personal career journeys, to date, and ongoing structural challenges, navigating "identity politics" (Hull, et al., 2015) in the music industry. Their openness and candour were fundamental to this study, and humbly appreciated, especially provided there have been no "safe spaces"[3] for them to do so. Accordingly, the anonymisation of the interviews granted them a level of protection. Their powerful stories reflected the discounted, and harsh, realities for vulnerable Black women in music, who are conditioned to accept their lot (hooks, 2014) in the workplace. Along with this, they addressed how social conditioning normalised less than humane treatment throughout their careers, where they work and interface with actors in these systems across multiple sectors, including in areas which have been less examined. This aspect helped to make the study more accessible, robust, relevant, and applicational across the occupational spectrum. Since participants were asked to provide insights regarding their personal and professional experiences, in the study[4], my personal background, and relationship to social constructs, influencing the research, will also be shared here in the preamble. In terms of sharing aspects of my socioprofessional journeys in the industry, these will be highlighted in the third chapter, under the section, "Reflexivity Statement".

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[3] Lexico (2021b) defines "safe space" as: "A place or environment in which a person or category of people can feel confident that they will not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm."
[4] Participants' insights were observed through a comparative historical to modern-day lens, cross-culturally, intraculturally, and individually.

III. Slight Deviation from BFT Tradition: Special Note about "Class" versus "Net Worth"

Scholarship within BFT commonly highlights the intersectional experiences of "class" along with "race", "gender", and "sexual politics" for Black women when reviewing the operationalisation of the "matrix of domination" (Collins, 2009). However, this study designedly views a person's "net worth" (rather than "class") as a better, and much more accurate indicator when discussing how a person is doing financially, in terms of the "choices" they are empowered (read as "allowed") to make. For example, if they are in a privileged financial position, they are more likely able to make optimal choices for their careers and life, generally. Contrastingly, if they are in an oppressed financial position, the study will extrapolate and distinguish the construct of "choices" from the construct of "constraints", which Collins Dictionary (2021) defines as "[…] something that limits or controls what [a person] can do." Although participants answered questions on "class", the majority of them detailed accounts where they were highly vulnerable to (and experienced) financial robbery and free labour exploitation, accompanied by degrading and/or devaluing treatment. Also, they expressed scenarios that indicated they largely operated within the construct of "constraints" where they felt they had no "choice" but to stay in toxic workplaces. This feeling could be said to be attributed to retaliatory penalties, such as "employer blackballing" (Yang & Liu, 2021; Bales & Stone, 2020) and "algorithmic blackballing" in this technology age. Furthermore, it seemed to far outweigh their ability to simply walk away from toxic situations and organisational cultures to another company in the relationship-driven music industry (Beeching, 2020).

IV.   The "Constructed" Researcher

Researcher's Self-Definition & Social Location within Power Structures

This interdisciplinary research was conducted from a BFT perspective, where "self-definitions"[5] and "self-valuations"[6] are important (Collins, 2009). Within this framework, these aspects function as necessary tools for social "empowerment"[7] and "resistance"[8]. According to Patricia Hill (Collins, 2009, p. 126), "Self-definition speaks to the power dynamics involved in rejecting externally defined, controlling images of Black womanhood."

As a multidimensional being, who is first seen, and treated, by others as a "Black woman", I primarily self-identify as a "learner", "un-learner", "creator", and an "ever-evolving construction" on many revelatory and evolutionary journeys, worthwhile, for both my personal and planetarily-minded growth. Personally, I value the constructs of a "growth mindset" (Dweck, 2017), "interconnectedness", "collaboration", as well as "harmony"; and, I aspire towards making profound positive contributions in my communities, and in the world, during, and hopefully beyond, my lifetime, in this shared "human experience".

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[5] Merriam Webster (2021b) defines "self-definition" as: "The evaluation by oneself of one's worth as an individual in distinction from one's interpersonal or social roles."
[6] Merriam Webster (2021d) did not have entry for "self-valuation". However, it defines "valuation" as: "Judgment or appreciation of worth or character."
[7] American Psychological Association (2021b) defines "empowerment" as: "the promotion of the skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary to take greater control of one's life. In psychotherapy, the process involves helping clients become more active in meeting their needs and fulfilling their desires and aims to provide them with a sense of achievement and realization of their own abilities and ambitions."
[8] American Psychological Association (2021f) defines "social resistance" as: "(1) group opposition to the political, economic, or social actions and policies of a government or society." "(2) subgroup opposition to the values and strictures of a dominant culture."

In terms of "externally defined" labels, I am largely perceived, and cast, in some instances, under the following "privileged" and "marginalised" social constructs. The "favourable" or "unfavourable" assignment of each, is always contingent upon time, place, and context, which is where nuance plays an integral role in spotting the subtleties of when, where, why, and how these oscillations can occur. It is important to distinguish that each listed "construct" in the figure below was not (over)shared without cause. Since participants spoke to all these constructs in their personal accounts, in ways that indicated that these greatly shaped their overall intersectional experiences, as Black women, it was important that I intentionally exercised fairness by way of also sharing my "social locations" within power structures.

Race ASAB-Gender: Black Cis-Woman	**Pronouns:** She/Her	**Skin Colour:** Brown-Skinned	**Hair Texture:** Curly-Coily
Body Image: Curvy / Average	**Health:** Nonvisible Disabilities & Neurodivergent	**Social Class:** Lower-Middle	**Net Worth:** Negative (From Crippling Student Debt)
Sexuality: Demisexual (On the Asexual Spectrum)	**Generation:** Millennial	**Religion:** Spiritual (Upbringing: Nondenominational) (Schooling: Roman Catholic)	**High School Education:** College Prep School (On Academic Scholarship)
College Education: Bachelors, Masters, Working towards PhD	**Job Types:** White-Collared Worker & Impact Entrepreneur	**Adopted Country:** UK	**Native Country:** USA
Accent: General American	**Name Origin:** **Forename:** English, French, Celtic **Middle Name:** Welsh **Surname:** English	**Marital Status:** Single	**Children:** None

Figure 1   Researcher's "Marginalised" and "Privileged" Social Constructs

The Researcher's Constructed US "Black Woman" Identity

I am an "American-born" "Black woman" whose constructed identity is largely

the product of complex human atrocities[9] committed during colonialism. Due

to "population admixture" (Bryc, et al., 2015) in the "New World", I am

genealogically "multi-ethnic" of "African"[10], "European"[11], and "Indigenous

Peoples of North American"[12] descent, on both sides of my family.

Figure 2   Researcher's Ancestral Photo Collage

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[9] Namely, European Imperialism: Examples include (a) Indigenous Peoples rape, genocide, colonialisation, displacement, forced labour enslavement and servitude by European colonists (and Indigenous Peoples) (b) African rape, genocide, colonisation of Africa, ethnic cleansing across the diaspora, displacement, and chattel enslavement by European colonists, as well as the less discussed African enslavement (chattel and forced labour) by African, Indigenous Peoples, and free people of colour slaveholders in the US and (c) Poor European immigrants indentured servitude, as well as convict labour, by European colonists in the US (Smith, 1947; Doran, 1978; Krauthamer, 2013; Lightner & Ragan, 2005; Woodson, 1924; US Department of Labor, 2022a)

[10] Researcher's African DNA Ancestry: Nigerian, Cameroonian, Sierra Leonean, Malian, Togolese, Ivorian, Beninese, Ghanaian, Senegalese, Gabonese, Bissau-Guinean, Equatorial Guinean, Guinean, Congolese, Namibian, Zambian, Angolan, Central African, Zimbabwean, Kenyan, Burkinabé, Rwandan, Liberian, Sudanese, South Sudanese, Malagasy, Tanzanian, Burundi, Botswanan, Ugandan, Seychellois, Malawian, Mozambican, Cape Verdean, Somalian, South African

[11] Researcher's European DNA Ancestry: English, Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish, Irish, Manx People, German, Luxembourgish, Swiss, French, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Dutch, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Icelander, Belgian, Channel Islander, Faroese, Greek, Albanian, Kosovar, Macedonian, Bulgarian, Montenegrin, Romanian, Serbian, Turkish, Austrian, Czech, Hungarian, Slovak

[12] Researcher's Indigenous Peoples of North America DNA Ancestry: (Indigenous Americans, Indigenous Peoples in Canada)

Researcher's Ancestral Connections to the US and UK

For personal historical and modern-day contexts, Britain established its first-ever settlement in the then-British Colony of Virginia in 1607. Forty years afterwards, my ninth great-grandfather, whose surname I share, became my family's first ancestor to emigrate from England to settle in their first colony[13]. From the year 1619 (Hannah-Jones, et al., 2021; Olusoga, 2016) to 1783, African chattel slavery had been operating in "America" under British Rule for the first 164 years[14], during a time when the English dominated the African slave trade. Throughout that period, my British ancestor's progeny largely participated in politics, government, military, and agriculture – in the New World; and, they also participated in the horrific and inhumane practices of African chattel slavery, as evidenced by their slave schedules, against my African and Indigenous ancestors, for centuries across multiple generations. Although my Anglo-American fourth great-grandfather (of White English descent) was part of the first-born generation of "Americans", since the US became a brand-new experiment of a nation, he deviated from some of the social norms of the time that slightly changed the course of my family's particular history. To cite an example, he never married and only had children with my enslaved 4th great-grandmother of African descent, to whom he had

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[13] When he left England, Britain was in the middle of multiple civil wars during the reign of Charles I, King of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

[14] TBC declared independence from British Rule in 1776 but secured their independence in 1783, to officially become, what is now called, "The United States of America". This new status was only made possible due to its dependence on the institution of African chattel slavery that coincided with the growth of capitalism, "advancing" both societies, in terms of rapid industrial development from forced free labour. This is being noted to show that this form of slavery had already been practiced for more than a century by English and other European settlers in "America", who have been criticised as trying to distance themselves from their involvements (Eddo-Lodge, 2018), in the earliest formations of modern-day power structures that continue to affect human relations throughout the globe today, stemming from the pervasiveness of White supremacist ideologies.

passed his inheritance, as well as to their children, when he died, which was very unusual for that time. Despite the marginal economic gains for some members of the family, issues of "colourism" and "political" ideologies also passed down and became an even stronger point of contention through the generations. Additionally, conflict deepened on the basis of phenotypical features, which were so indistinguishable that some opted to "pass"[15] for a number of reasons, including survival and to access "an easier life". To maintain this diverging construct of newfound, yet taxing, "freedom", they had children with White partners for the purposes to further "remove" their Blackness (meaning "Black features"). To this point, one of the major signifiers of "Black features" include "hair", which has historically and presently been criminalised, politicised, and deemed as "unprofessional", especially in the workplace and schools (US CROWN Act, 2019; Byrd & Tharps, 2014). Considering this, disparaging comments about hair texture biases were found to be normalised, within and outside of the Black racial social class, and commonly passed down through the generations, which I also personally experienced, within the family, community, and wider society. Therefore, it was not surprising that those taken-for-granted elements, in terms of the shaping of Black women's experiences, came up in discussions surrounding the social constructs that affected participants in the study.

Fast forward to present-day, my mother is a phenomenal Black woman with a powerful story that inspires me to "keep going and to take time for rest and

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[15] Racial passing is when a Black person can phenotypically pass for a White person situationally or permanently (Callum, 2015).

joy", as part of the larger resistance project for Black women's liberation. Her refusal to be bound by society's expectations, influenced my evolving worldviews as a "human, being" who cares deeply about humanity and equity, and as a "Black woman" unapologetically "evolving" and "taking up space" (Kwakye & Ogunbiyi, 2019).

While schools taught that slavery ended in 1865 in the United States of America, I knew that was not accurate. That messaging conflicted with my knowledge that I am the daughter of a former neo-enslaved[16] little Black Southern girl (Blackmon, 2008). She grew up in the deep South with her "sharecropper" family, who had to pick cotton, crop tobacco, and harvest wheat, sun-up-to-sun-down, on the same plantation, and dwelling, other enslaved Africans resided before the abolition of the legal institution of chattel slavery in the US.

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[16] The commonly used term is "neo-slave" however, "[…] 'enslaved person' emphasises the humanity of an individual within a slaveholding society over their condition of involuntary servitude" (US National Park Service, 2022).

Figure 3   Southern US Cotton Picking (US Library of Congress, ca. 1920)

My maternal grandmother left my mother and her children in her husband's care to move up North in search for a better life for all of them, where she became a live-in maid, cleaning rich White families' homes; and she worked in the hospitals too. As soon as she could, she returned to the South to remove her family from that situation. Thus, she brought them along with her to the Northern part of the States for a "better life", which still had its systemic challenges, but it was not as bad, comparatively speaking, in terms of their previous "living" conditions.

While I knew there was a lot of emotional pain (Van Der Kolk, 2015; Carter, 2007), it was not until I was an adult that my mother began to share more stories about her past, as I asked more questions. She described the countless horrors she witnessed and personally experienced on the plantation by both the "planters", as well as the Ku Klux Klan members who frequently terrorised her and her family on horseback with bloodhounds, during her formative years, which was traumatising; and that kind of trauma, largely

undiscussed but passed on, spoke to Dr Joy DeGruy's important work on "Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome" (DeGruy, 2021), which stemmed from White nationalist terrorists, traumatising Black people, even till this day, for merely existing and being "Black in America".

The version of sharecropping my mother and immediate ancestors endured, was actually "slavery by another name" for Black sharecroppers (Blackmon, 2008), unlike the experiences of White sharecroppers[17]. While my mother shared glimpses of her upbringing, it did not honestly fully register or crystallise for me until only a few years ago, while in this doctoral programme. In 2017, my family and I made our first trip to Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), which officially opened its doors to the public, a year prior. During our visit, the museum had a slave cabin, "Point of Pines" on display (see Figure 4) to which my mother said, "Oh my God, this looks like my childhood home," which stunned me. My own mother and her eight other family members, lived in that tightly confined space, on top of each other – with no privacy, no plumbing, no electricity, no telephone, no radio, and no television. It was overwhelming to process.

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[17] For context and clarity, Black sharecropper families in the deep South, pre-Civil Rights, lived under a very "different America" where federal legislation surrounding this form of labour, as well as its regulations and parameters, was frequently treated as mere suggestions in the South, rather than as laws to abide by, which were often ignored (Blackmon, 2008).

Figure 4   Point of Pines Slave Cabin (Smithsonian Magazine, 2018)

In recalling childhood memories, my mother even shared that she was not even aware of the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) because she did not have access to that world. Also, she stated that her parents' deep engrossment with the religious practice of Black Pentecostalism was largely disconnected from the CRM, whereas Black Methodist and Black Baptist denominational churches were more heavily involved, and at the forefront of the fight for racial justice.

As I have always had keen interests to learn more about her life and better understand our ancestral origins[18], that moment at the Smithsonian's NMAAHC was an eye-opening experience. Hearing her stories versus also

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[18] When I was I was younger, with limited knowledge about my ancestry, I was invested in the idea and possibility "(to finally be able) to claim", "be (re)claimed" and/or "experience" a "sense of identity" and "belongingness" through primordial attachment (Ferenczi & Marshall, 2013; Cojanua, 2014; Maslow, 1943) to specified ancestral native lands (not continents, but countries and tribes), cultures, and customs – like my peers were fortunate to experience.

hearing them, but through the aide of visual imagery in real-time, is why I chose to embed photos for illustration, on how these are not just stories, but socially produced realities to systemically disadvantage, and keep, those on the margins.

On that day, my initial thought when I looked upon the slave cabin was, "Wow, my (distant)[19] ancestors lived in these types of dwellings and had overcome so much". However, my mother's revelation in that moment, made me realise how the "past" and the "present" can, and often do, blur. Today, there is still active denial at play of even the most recent atrocities, and persisting structural biases, in human history, which does all of humanity a great disservice in many ways. To briefly cite a real-life example of this, there are a slew of legislative proposals (where several have been passed) across the US to block teachings of Critical Race Theory[20] (CRT). It is generally worrying that lawmakers and politicians presenting these bills do not actually understand what CRT is, as revealed by the language used in Figure 5 (The Brookings Institution, 2021; NAACP Legal Defense Fund, 2022; Education Week, 2022; African American Policy Forum, 2022b; Crenshaw,

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[19] The term "distant" is underscored here since photos highlighting this era (especially in school textbooks) were generally black and white, which could be said to create the construct of a perceived "historical distance" and the Construal-Level Theory (CLT) of "psychological distance" (Lee, et al., 2014).

[20] According to Education Week (2022) "Since January 2021, 35 states have introduced bills or taken other steps that would restrict teaching critical race theory or limit how teachers can discuss racism and sexism, according to an Education Week analysis. Fourteen states have imposed these bans and restrictions either through legislation or other avenues […] A proposed bill in New Hampshire, for instance, would ban teachers from advocating "any doctrine or theory promoting a negative account or representation of the founding and history of the United States of America."

Kimberlé, et al., (Editors), 2019; Crenshaw, Kimberlé, et al. (Editors), 1995;

Mayorga-Gallo, 2019).

Also, the exploitative use of "fear-mongering" and concerted efforts to not only

ban; but also, criminalise "public and charter school teachings" and

"workplace diversity trainings" covering concepts such as systemic- "racism",

"sexism", and "gender and sexual identity", is equally, if not more so,

concerning[21].

Arizona	⤢ House Bill 2898, which was signed by Gov. Doug Ducey on 6/30/21, prohibited the use of "public monies for instruction that presents any form of blame or judgment on the basis of race, ethnicity or sex" in K-12 public/charter schools and establishes fines for violations. However, on 11/2/21 the Arizona Supreme Court ⤢ upheld a trial court ruling that HB2898 violates the state constitution by including multiple subjects in a single bill, and it was invalidated. See the Arizona Board of Education guidance ⤢ here.
Idaho	⤢ House Bill 377, which was signed by Gov. Brad Little on 4/28/21, bans teaching specified concepts about race and gender in public schools, public charter schools, and public institutions of higher education.
Iowa	⤢ House File 802, which was signed by Gov. Kim Reynolds on 6/8/21, bans incorporating specified concepts regarding race and sex into mandatory trainings for government agencies, teachers, and higher education students. Specified concepts must also not be included in curriculum in public K-12 schools.
New Hampshire	Anti-CRT section was incorporated into ⤢ House Bill 2, the state budget trailer, and signed by Gov. Chris Sununu on 6/25/21. This bill prohibits teaching specified concepts in public schools and in governmental agency trainings.
North Dakota	⤢ House Bill 1508, which was signed by Gov. Doug Burgum on 11/15/21, prohibits K-12 public schools from instruction related to critical race theory, which is defined in the bill as the "that racism is systemically embedded in American society and the American legal system to facilitate racial inequality."
Oklahoma	⤢ House Bill 1775, which was signed by Gov. Kevin Stitt on 5/7/21, prohibits public institutions of higher education from requiring students to participate in mandatory gender/sexuality diversity training, and bans teaching specified concepts about race and sex in public schools. The Oklahoma Department of Education elaborated here about how the law will operate, including reporting violations.
South Carolina	Anti-CRT section incorporated into the education section of ⤢ H. 4100, the state budget bill, which was passed on 6/30/21. This bill prohibits schools receiving state funding from teaching specified concepts regarding race and sex.

Figure 5   Excerpt from "Appendix: Legislative and administrative actions

regarding CRT" (The Brookings Institution, 2021)

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[21] The algorithmic-driven sociopolitical landscape is an area that is a cause for concern (García-Orosa, 2021; Bail, et al., 2018; Su, et al., 2022).
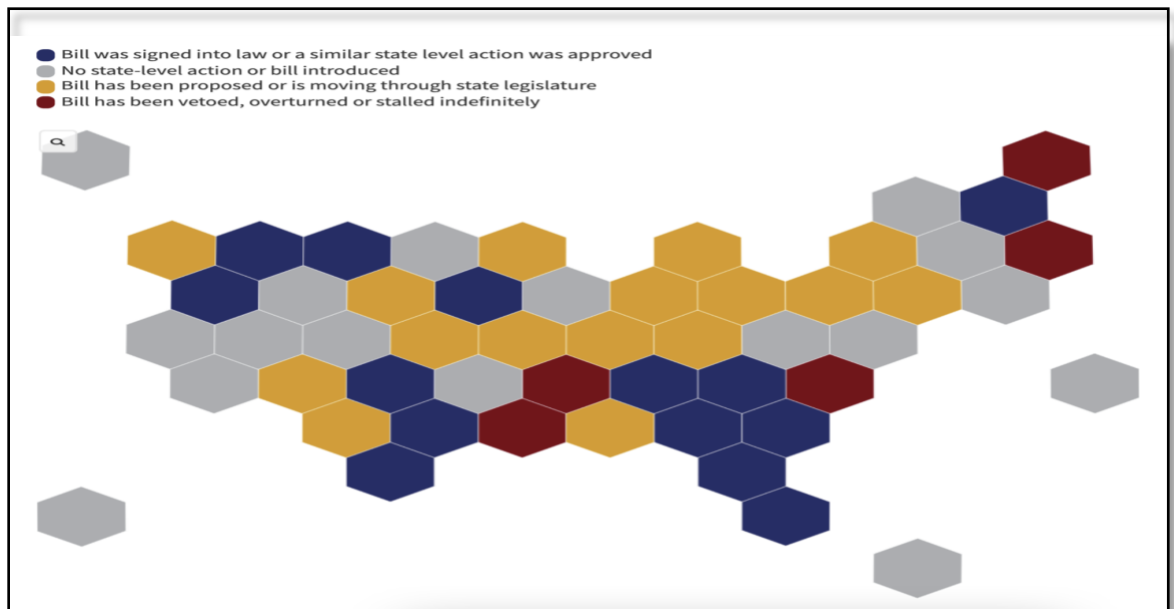
Figure 6   United States Colour-Coded Map on States Taking Legal Action
                to Ban Teachings of CRT (Education Week, 2022)

Overall, I thought about how there must be so many untold stories, like my

mother's; and, there are people among us who survived those times, who can

provide insights. Knowing this, sparked my interest in conducting narrative-

driven research. Despite the state of the world impacting entire communities

and families, I remain hopeful in the goodness of humanity to still make

strides and social progress for equity. Likewise, I believe through these types

of resistance and liberation projects, we can collectively do our part to build

on each other's scholarship and practices to deconstruct, and dismantle

systems that no longer work, so that we, as a society, can confront our past

and our present, to heal, move forward, and build a better and brighter future,

for present and future generations.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1   Aims of the Research and Importance of the Study

This dissertation seeks to shed light on the underdiscussed, and growing demand for a required comprehensive, critical analysis to demarginalise Black women in music's WEIRD (see Section 2.3.5) industrial, organisational, and societal, career experiences, with navigating "power[22]" in ways that influence their career trajectories and pace of progression, working in the world's top music industry ecosystems. As this research project is situated from post-equality legislation, starting from the 1960s in the US and UK, respectively, to present-day, the set of experiences of the two main groups, who consist of trailblazing (icons) and leading Black women in music, form the narrative-driven focus of this research. To best answer the research aims, Crenshaw's (1989) mainstream popularisation (Plum Analytics, 2021) of the "intersectionality framework" (Collins, 2019) was employed and built upon in this study to rigorously investigate and to try to identify which particular factors, and overlapping forms of discrimination experienced by each research nonparticipant and participant, largely affected her overall career experience in this industry, to date. By adopting this cross-sectional, and never-before attempted more holistic approach, it helped to assist in identifying common patterns, as well as divergent themes, to their experiences, how they have been able to respond to them, and factors which may have worked in favour of, or militated against, their actual (and desired) degree, and longevity, of career success.

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[22] Power is used as a double entendre for Black women who hold "positions of power" who must still navigate the music industry – recognised as a "power structure" for this project.

1.2   Time Period Observed for the Research Analysis

Despite various legislative mandates in place to prohibit discriminatory practices directed towards people on the basis of their social categorisation(s), as minority and disadvantaged groups, in America, Britain, and elsewhere in the world (Stryker, 2017), it was still the case that many (e.g., Black women) continued to experience different versions of reality as shown in Figures 7 – 8. These differences across lived experiences point to how "equality", as a detached strategy[23], has proven itself to not be sufficient for everyone's "liberation" from structurally oppressive "power systems" (Collins, 2019). Alongside this, there has been a growing recognition that discrimination on the basis of social categorisations such as, but not limited to, race, gender, skin colour, disability, age, religion, class, and sexuality, does not occur in isolation, but rather, overlaps in complex ways that intensifies the experience of each. The created language of these overlapping forms of discrimination have been coined by Crenshaw (1989) as "intersectionality", an increasingly used conceptual framework rooted with origins in centuries (US Library of Congress, 1851; Cooper, 1892), of Black feminist scholarship and activism. This model has been used to describe the ways in which, when experienced together, each separate form of discrimination faced is greater than the sum of its parts. This, according to Crenshaw and other Black women intellectuals, led to a unique set of experiences, deserving of its own more inclusionary critical analysis.

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[23] Although a considerable body of research, industry reports, and public policies have hyper focused on the strategy of "equality", less attention has been paid to "equity" being as much of an integral component in the broader vision and requirement in the execution for creating systems that would fulfil the promises of freedom for all social groups, not just a select few.

1.3 Systemic Hierarchies in "Social Progress": Equality ≠ Equity

While it is noted that "equality" and "equity" share the same prefix (Dictionary.com, 2021d), the world's leading digital dictionary cited how these two terms have erroneously been used interchangeably, which required a closer look to better understand how their outcomes exactly differed. To clarify where these terms converged and diverged, Dictionary.com[24] offered unique insights, made available on their company blog, to directly address the increasing call from human rights activists for "equity" to be advanced so that "equality" could truly be accessible for all groups[25]. For this reason, the mechanisation of the "equity" construct is especially critical for disadvantaged social classes, who have been historically disenfranchised in interlocking and debilitating systemic ways, which have continued to have profound impacts on their present-day realities, as shown in Figure 7 below.
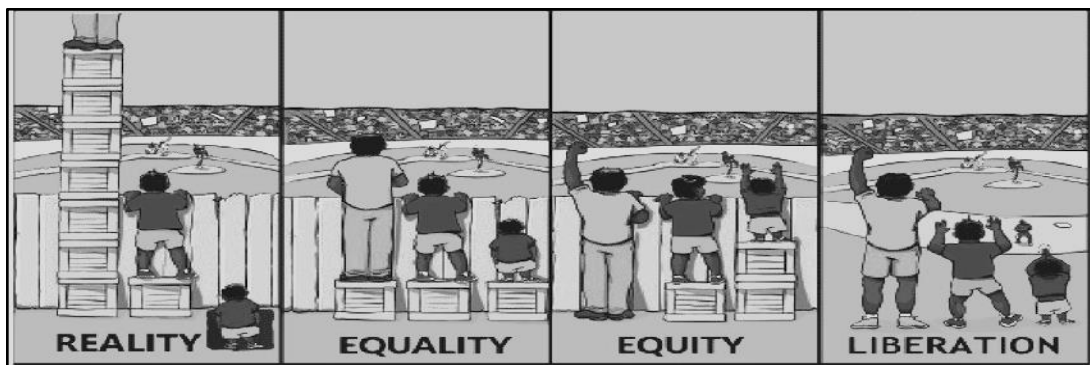
Figure 7   The 4th Box Resources (Center for Story-Based Strategy, 2019)

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[24] […] equality and equity are not synonyms, and the methods used to achieve them are often very different […] The complication with equity is that people often disagree on what is "just" or "fair." These are subjective concepts and, as a result, laws and policies that attempt to achieve equity are often challenged in court or are highly controversial […] In modern times, the usage of the word equity has increased due to concerns about social justice and a --desire for fairness for historically oppressed groups (Dictionary.com, 2021c).

[25] See Table 1 for recent examples of how these terms have been used in official reporting.

Table 1   "Equity" and "Equality" in Official Reporting Practices

Example A: Conflation in Official Reporting	As a point of reference, a recent example of this type of construct conflation in official reporting was reflected in a 386-page "31st Annual World Report" produced by Human Rights Watch (2021). The term "(in)equality" appeared nearly 40x's, whereas "equity" and "inequity", each", respectively, appeared once, in the report that set out to shed a light on the status of "human rights conditions" regionally, and around the globe.
Example B: Distinction in Official Reporting	The absence of the "equity" context contrasted with a more inclusive approach taken by the Offices of the President and Vice President of the United States. In October 2021, they jointly released a report entitled: "National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality" (The White House, 2021), where they announced their plan to improve the social conditions of girls and women in the US, and around the world.

Importance of Distinction in Official Reporting:

The strategy of "equality" was clarified in the latter report to mean to universally give everyone access to the same opportunities, whereas "equity" recognised the reality of patterned discrimination, blocking access to "equality", for historically oppressed groups. By accounting for different realities, and, thus, "equitable" paths towards liberation, their intersectional (i.e., equity-to-equality) strategy was elected to tactically eradicate, or minimally supplement, for those disproportionately impacted so that "equality", as mediated by human practices, is accessible to all groups.

In relation to this thesis, conflating practices of these concepts gave plausible rise to the increasing use of standpoint epistemologies for oppressed[26] groups, as well as those who are "othered" within these groups[27], where an African Proverb indirectly summarised their importance: "Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter." Although the optics of some Black women reaching positions of power and prestige, in the music industry, and elsewhere, can be perceived as "equality" being realised, it is still the case that they face systemic inter- and intra-group-based inequities (Lean In, 2020) at all levels, especially the more senior, as illustrated in Figure 8.

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[26] Cambridge Dictionary (2021) defines "oppressed" as: "Governed in an unfair and cruel way and prevented from having opportunities and freedom."
[27] This speaks to intra-group-based structural inequities and inequalities

As this study focuses on the career experiences of Black women in music, it is important to statistically consider that Black women represent 7% of the US's 4.25% world share of its 331 million country population and 1.6% of the UK's 0.87% world share of its 68 million country population (Worldometer, 2021). However, it is equally important to contextually consider "equality" is neither "a numbers game[28]" nor is it suggested to mean that employee and senior leadership compositions within an organisation should aim to match with that of the respective general population percentages.

> [Rather] equality is about ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents. It is also the belief that no one should have poorer life chances because of the way they were born, where they come from, what they believe, or whether they have a disability (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2022).
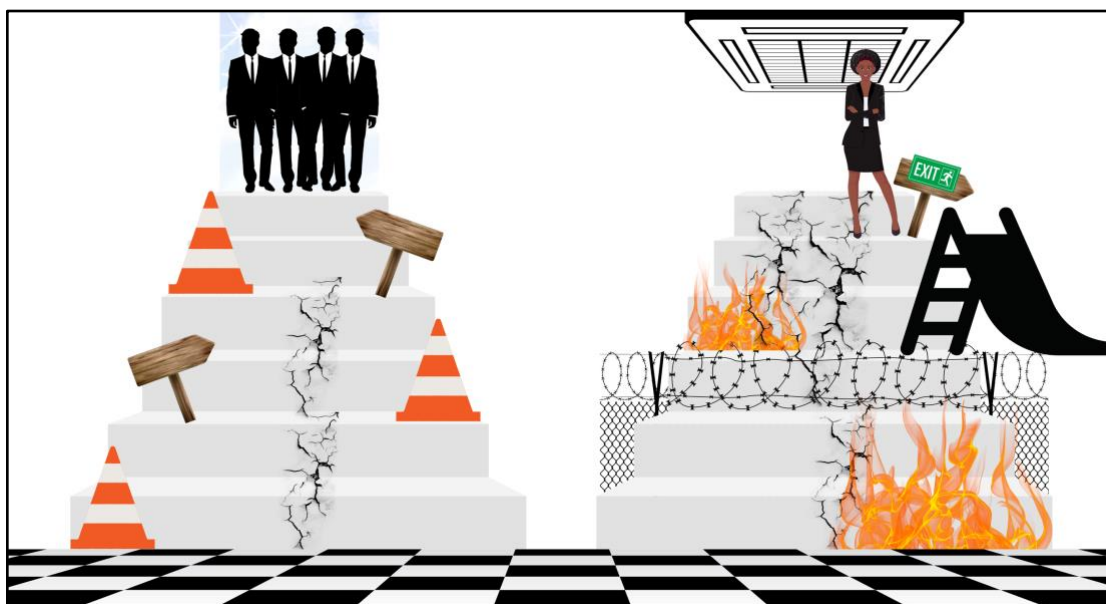
Figure 8   Chess Game of Inequities Blocking Equality – Systemic Barriers in the Career Climb

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[28] Cambridge Dictionary (2022b) defines "a numbers game" as: "a situation in which the most important factor is how many of a particular thing there are, especially when you disapprove of this".

Irrespective of governments' assurances around protected characteristics in the UK and US, it could be said that "equality" federal mandates have habitually failed to safeguard Black women. Based on the latest research and alarming data trends on the "Quality of Life[29]" (QOL) (World Health Organization, 2021) for Black women, it is evident they continue to live at one of the most vulnerable intersections of overlapping systemic crises in both societies[30], adversely affecting them at disproportionate rates compared to other groups, across major areas of life[31], as shown in Figure 9.

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[29] The World Health Organization (2021) defines "Quality of Life" as: "as an individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns."

[30] Special note about Figure 9: In the UK, official industry, or government, reports on many of these areas are nearly non-existent for Black women of African descent, outside of small print media coverage and a dearth of research enquiries that centres, rather than conflates, the realities and social conditions of Black and Asian British women. Two "**" next to words highlighted in bold and red, mean the reported statistical outcomes are similar in the UK.

[31] See Figure 9: **QOL Status of US Black Women – Data Sources:** (US Congress, 2019a; Goldman Sachs, 2021; American Psychological Association, 2020a; The National Center on Violence Against Black Women in the Community, 2018; Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2021b; Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2021a; Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2019; US Department of Labor Blog, 2021; African American Policy Forum, 2021; American Association of University Women, 2017); (Violence Policy Center, 2019; US Census Bureau, 2021b); **QOL Status of UK Black Women – Data Sources:** (MBRRACE-UK, 2021; UK Government FCDO, 2021; House of Commons House of Lords Joint Committee on Human Rights, 2020; Trades Union Congress, 2020).

1.4   US Black Women's General "QOL" & "Humanitarian Crises"[32]

Median Net Worth Crisis and Wealth Gap Crisis:	**Lowest** Among All Racial and Gender Groups
	Lowest Among All Racial and Gender Groups
Labor Force Participation and Occupational Hierarchy Crisis:	**Highest** Among All Gender Groups **Underrepresented**** in High-Paying Occupation **Overrepresented**** in Low-Paying Occupation
Wage Gap Crisis:	**Among The Lowest** of All Racial and Gender Groups
Black Female Entrepreneurship and Investment Funding Gap:	**Highest**** Among All Racial and Gender Groups
	Lowest** Among All Racial and Gender Groups
Educational Debt Crisis:	**Highest** Among All Racial and Gender Groups
Poor Health Outcomes Crisis and Risk for Major Diseases Crisis:	**Highest** Among All Racial and Gender Groups
	Highest Among All Racial and Gender Groups
Maternal Mortality Crisis:	**Highest**** Among All Racial and Gender Groups
Marriage Disparity Crisis:	**Lowest** Among All Racial and Gender Groups
Incidence of Emotional and Mental Health Crises:	**Highest** Among All Racial and Gender Groups
Victims of Homicide Crisis:	**Highest** Intraracially
	Highest Among All Racial and Gender Groups
Victims of Sexual Violence Crisis:	**Highest** Among All Racial and Gender Groups
Victims of Sex Trafficking Crisis:	**Highest** Among All Racial and Gender Groups

Figure 9   Snapshot of Systemic Crises Impacting Black Women (fn. 31)

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[32] "Humanitarian crises -- including man-made conflicts, natural disasters, and pandemics -- often result in or exacerbate human rights concerns. In addition, deteriorating human rights situations may trigger crises and increase humanitarian needs of affected populations" (UN OHCHR, 2021).

1.5   Black Women in the Workplace

On the discussion of Black women, as a social class, Black women
intellectuals consistently drive the message for the critical need to ensure that
our[33] overlapping systemic experiences neither be reduced, nor framed, as
being "additive" since they cannot be separated. For example, being a Black
woman, is minimally, a gender-racialised experience (or a racialised-gender
experience) since the analysis of our oppression cannot be independently
framed as being caused by "either / or", which would disregard the many
components and multidimensionality of Black women's realities and lived
experiences. Instead, a different, and more "radical" analytical approach was
altogether required to critically review and deconstruct the makings of
"intersectional paradigms" and to better understand the mechanisms behind
the "matrix of oppression" (Collins, 2009, p. 21) faced by Black women who
have historically been systemically more at risk of disadvantageously
experiencing group-based and intra-group based differential treatment,
including in the workplace, as illustrated by a quick Microsoft Bing search,
which was conducted using the terms "Black women in the workplace".
The first page automatically populated links, largely describing the unique
adverse challenges, distinctive to this group[34], as shown below.

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[33] Patricia Hill Collins wrote: "To adhere to [BFT's] epistemological tenet required that, when
appropriate, I reject the pronouns 'they' and 'their' when describing U.S. Black women and
our ideas and replace these terms with the terms 'we', 'us', and 'our'. Using the distancing
terms 'they' and 'their' when describing my own group and our experiences might enhance
both my credentials as a scholar and the credibility of my arguments in some academic
settings. But by taking this epistemological stance that reflects my disciplinary training as a
sociologist, I invoke standards of certifying truth about which I remain ambivalent" (Collins,
2009, p. 22)
[34] The subject of Black women's workplace experiences in the UK and US civilian labour
force is not discussed in this section. However, it is explored in the Chapter 2, "Literature
Review", which continues onto Chapter 6, "Discussion".
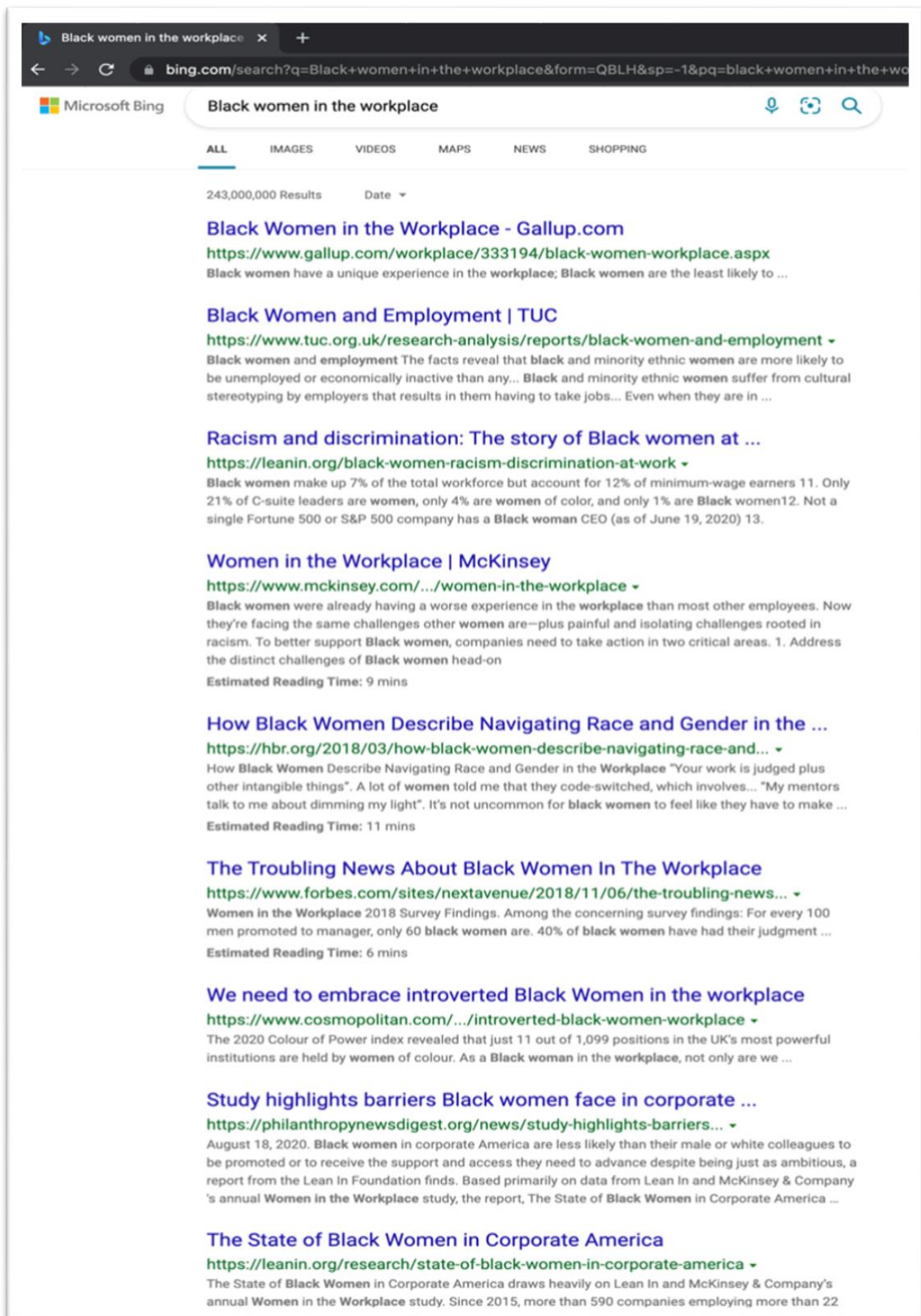
Figure 10   Microsoft Bing Search for "Black women in the workplace" conducted on 2nd January 2022

1.6 Black Women's Career Experiences in the Music Industry

1.7 Gaps in Existing Research

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study, to date, has exclusively investigated the breadth of Black women's career experiences, from a multisectoral approach in this industry, outside of a dearth of coverage in column and academic journalism, as well as, scholarship focusing on very niche topical areas, in discussions on population segments of Black women in music. For this reason, an amalgamation of information was synthesised, for the purposes of this research, to attempt to provide a more holistic starting point, and framework, to uncover shared, and incongruent, underlying mechanisms contributing to their reported group-based experiences. This was done, regardless of their foreground or background leading roles, within the industry, where the research also considered cross-cultural and time-period comparative contexts.

1.8 Special Note About Global Music Markets

While the study includes research participants working in either the UK and/or US regional territory, the American music market was chosen as the benchmark for the iconic trailblazing group to be explored in this research because, according to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) (2021) Global Music Report, at 37%, the US maintains the largest market share of the global music industry, to date, followed by Japan at 13.5% and then the UK at 6.9%. Due to this, many professionals working in domestic music markets also seek recognition in the US music industry.

1.9 Assumptions About the "Progressive" and "Egalitarian" Industry

As previously stated, the top performing markets of the global popular music industry (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2021) were elected as the background setting for this dissertation. However, these markets were also chosen since they are often regarded as being relatively "progressive"[35] and "egalitarian"[36] in the creative industries. Today, it is still the case that complex occupational and human hierarchal-based challenges continue to exist, arise, and remain the norm, in the industry culture and its leading markets, thus prompting the research to also investigate which factors are (or should be) included in measuring what defines "success", beyond the parameters of capitalism and exploitative nurture (not nature) of "15 minutes of fame"[37], in the constructed White-male dominated music business. Black women in this industry continue to disproportionately face insurmountable systemic barriers, historically and presently, with very few achieving mainstream success, accredited influence, and fame without devaluation. Moreover, when compared to their counterparts, there are glaring systemic disparities in terms of the degrees of success achieved, and sustained, by Black women in the industry (Jerald, et al., 2017; Watson, et al., 2015), who seem to have to either endure toxic workplace cultures, or leave altogether, requiring further investigation where context is treated as important.

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[35] Dictionary.com (2021e) defines "progressive" as: "Favoring [sic] or advocating progress, change, improvement, or reform, as opposed to wishing to maintain things as they are, especially in political matters" or "Making progress toward better conditions; employing or advocating more enlightened or liberal ideas, new or experimental methods, etc."

[36] Dictionary.com (2021b) defines "egalitarian" as: "Asserting, resulting from, or characterized by belief in the equality of all people, especially in political, economic, or social life."

[37] Lexico (2022b) defines "15 minutes of fame" as: "Used with reference to a brief period of fame or notoriety experienced by an ordinary person." This entry attributes this remark as being made by Andy Warhol, however an article from Smithsonian Magazine (2014) contested the legitimacy of that authoring claim.

1.10 Expanding the "Intersectionality" Framework for the Project

By interlinking the reported realities of heterogenous Black women working in the multisectoral global popular music industry, together, this thesis also seeks to introduce and build upon existing and evolving familiarised concepts, to complete this multimethod qualitative analytical process more efficiently. Thus, the development of the "multitiered-sectionality conceptual framework" (MSCF) is necessitated, where different levels of social analyses in the psychological sciences, namely "macro", "meso", and "micro" (van Wijk, et al., 2019), are required and can be applied, and readjusted as many times as necessary, to the original intersectionality framework, which falls under this newly introduced umbrella term, as illustrated in Figure 11. This add-on is to demonstrate and acknowledge the multidimensional and strategically scalable complexity and potentiality that lies within providing constructionist and constructivist dimensions to this already innovative conceptual framework, pioneered and developed for centuries (US Library of Congress, 1851; Cooper, 1892; Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989; Hull, et al., 2015; hooks, 2014; Lorde, 2009) by the foremothers of Black Feminist Thought. While this adopted approach has been valuably applicable for this study, it could also be beneficially useful across other disciplines in the social sciences to account for different applicational levels of analytical approaches that may be required to make the accessibility of "identity-politics", especially those which are group-based, more flexible, on an "as needed basis" and inclusionary for analyses that could also help other multiple minority and disadvantaged groups to construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct their lived experiences, in numerous ways.

"MULTITIERED-SECTIONALITY CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK"

INNERSECTIONALITY (MICRO)

INTRASECTIONALITY (MESO)

INTERSECTIONALITY (MACRO)
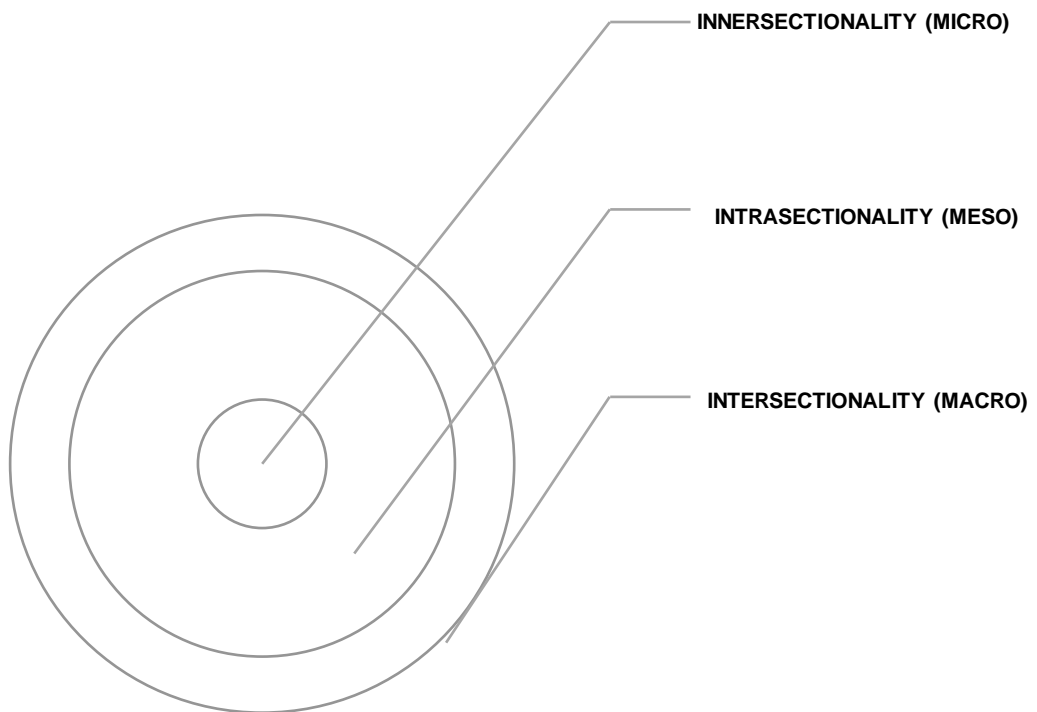
Figure 11   "Multitiered-Sectionality Conceptual Framework"
(See Section 1.11)

1.11 Abridged Working-Definitions & Examples for this Dissertation:

Intersectionality

- Macro: Group-based intersectionality analysis

  → Example: Black women in the top-performing music markets

Intrasectionality

- Meso: Intra-group-based intersectionality analysis

  → Example: Black women in music in a specific market / country (e.g., UK, US), sector (e.g., tech, legal, broadcasting, live), and/or role (e.g., officer, creator, performer)

  → Example: Black women in music who may self-identify with or be caste as other marginalised community members (e.g., LGBTQQIA2s+[38], minority faith-based, phenotype-based, disabled, et cetera)

Innersectionality

- Micro: Individual-based intersectionality analysis

  → Example: Black women in music in a specific company / work team

  → Example: Black women in music from a specific cultural upbringing and/or community (e.g., Afro-Caribbean, African, Black American, Black British, Multi-ethnic, et cetera)

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[38] LBTQQIA2s+ is an acronym that stands for Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, Two-Spirit, and more.

1.12 Structure of Dissertation

1.12.1 Chapter 1: Introduction

This doctoral dissertation is comprised of a total of seven chapters, which are strategically structured in a way to help guide the reader through the study's elected systematic approach to best answer the research aims and objectives. This chapter introduces the reader to the importance of the study, starting with the major overarching aims of the research, which is to partly provide an account of the role played by multiple dimensions of intersectionality requiring interdependent levels of analyses[39] to address complex social problems, such as the ones presented in the thesis, involving a host of diverse actors (van Wijk, et al., 2019) in these systems. Accordingly, this is applicably termed as "multitiered-sectionality" – a new conceptual framework, proposed for use in this and future research, developed out of necessity for the study and illustrated by the researcher in Figure 11, building on the intellectual works of BFT's foremothers and qualitative analysts in the psychological sciences, in this dissertation. These dimensions are viewed more holistically with respect to the overlapping experiences and treatment faced by Black women, alongside how these may have changed over time, post-equality legislation, and within the cross-cultural contexts of the US and UK, in terms of impact these produced realities may have had on the career trajectories and pace of progression for both the leading and iconic trailblazing groups of Black women in music featured in the study.

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[39] The "micro-meso-macro" levels of analysis are commonly applied in the sociological and psychological sciences (Jaspal, et al., 2015; Kwon, et al., 2016; Piazza & Castellucci, 2014; Cunningham, et al., 2014)

1.12.2 Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter highlights seminal and newer literature that focuses on the social conditions, everyday experiences, and the psychology of Black women, primarily covered in BFT's multipronged strategy for human rights and liberation in works across Black women scholar-activism, artist-activism, and community-activism[40]. Before facets of Black women's lived experiences are discussed, the additional incorporation of national census and labour data statistics, corporate studies, as well as a host of industry and government reports, are framed as being important components of the review, where the chapter preface sets the tone and cites relevant historical background information to provide a more universal framework to work from in this investigation. Furthermore, this featured section also covers the evolution of terminologies, phraseologies, and euphemisms, applied to the social class of Black women, where gained insights provide a lens as to how externally projected definitions and value-assignments based on arbitrary human hierarchies (American Psychological Association, 2021g) with real-life implications, have largely been dictated by governmental bodies and corporations in the private sector, who have the means to fund, change, and drive narrative-influence, socially (and economically) impacting, especially, minority and disadvantaged groups.

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[40] Black women's voices are centred; and other voices that contribute to discourse on the human condition are also included and applicably drawn upon in the study.

Since the interrogation of constructs are a key part of the study, "White supremacy dogma" and the "pseudo-science of eugenics" (Farber, 2008), are also covered, within the context of this research, as background information in the review, as it pertains to how systems built from these ideologies particularly impact Black women, more generally, and Black women in music, specifically. Altogether, a diversity of sourced materials, consisting of scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles, open-source dissertations, and research, in addition to essential readings, are also discussed. Furthermore, significant attention is brought to unanticipated information in the study, which begins to point towards a deeply shared, yet suppressed, historical connection between both Afro-diasporic communities, whose centuries-long relationship predates the latest voluntary Black migration of present-day first-and-second-generation Black Britons and Black Americans[41], where both Black immigrant groups largely migrated from English-speaking, British-colonised Caribbean and African nations (New American Economy, 2020) (Pew Research Center, 2015). The (re)memory of this multidimensional shared history, which could provide insights regarding some of the uncanny similarities in expressions of Black women's experiences reported in the study, is contextually recentred, for reasons that will become more apparent in the "Discussion" chapter.

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[41]According to the UK Office for National Statistics (2011), The Black British population has a population size of 1.8 million. Data from the (New American Economy, 2020) noted that the Black American immigrant population has a population size of 4.3 million. Please note that the US, unlike the UK, also has a substantial population of descendants of African chattel slavery, which was practiced for 1 ½ centuries primarily under British rule in the then-British Colonies of America, whose generations of families have been born in the British colonies since long before the country's existence and recognition as the United States of America. This segment of the Black (alone or in combination) demographic has a population size of 46.9 million (42 million alone) as of 2019 according to the US Census Bureau (2019a).

1.12.3 Chapter 3: Methodology

For the methodology chapter, the interdisciplinary nature of this qualitative research is systematically designed to gain taken-for-granted insights and perspectives into the underreported experiences of leading Black female music industry professionals, working across the occupational spectrum, in the top-performing markets of the global popular music industry. For the research design, a BFT social constructivist epistemological approach is employed, to help address key issues of intersectionality (and its dimensions), in terms of the degree to which the value-assignations of social constructs for Black women, overlap, interact, and/or produce semantic and latent patterned themes, worth examining, to better understand their workplace treatment, career choices (and constraints) in this industry. Furthermore, a list of reasons for selected methods are offered in this chapter to support why two specific types of qualitative data were suitably chosen for the multimethod qualitative study, where both datasets – comprised of archival studies and in-depth semi-structured interviews – were reflexively thematically analysed (Braun , et al., 2017) for the research. For the narrative-driven research design, this helped to shed a light on participants' experiences and to identify common, as well as divergent, themes employing multiple meso-level analyses, including an examination between the iconic trailblazing group of Black women in the industry and leading Black women in music, who have influence, but less prominence, to date. Together these approaches, and the reasons to justify their use, provide a rich picture of the myriad of challenges faced by Black women working in the industry at different levels, and a broader reflection on some of the challenges faced by Black women more generally.

1.12.4 Chapter 4: Study 1 – Archival Studies

For the first reflexive thematic analysis chapter, the employment of archival studies focuses on nine iconic Black female trailblazers in the world's topmost music market, who have worked, and/or are still working, across different sectors of the music industry. Their intersectional experiences are examined within the context of a 60+ year timespan ranging from the advent of major equality legalisation, from the 1960s to present-day. This is implemented methodically to identify any changes, more appropriately, in the expression, and impact, of Black women navigating "multitiered-sectionality", over a specific timeframe, measuring the quality of their experiences under the assumption that equality legislation advanced human rights for all in the purported egalitarian music industry. Despite their superstardom, accolades, and longevity in the industry, many of these legendary Black women in music have faced, and still face (to some degree), systemic challenges rooted in misogynoir and (what the researcher will broadly describe as) "identity-policing" ideologies, where their intersectional forms of discrimination may be masked by their massive success, and little understood, as a result. The selection criteria, regarding the sampling, are outlined in the "Methodology", Chapter 3.

PERFORMERS	CREATORS	OFFICERS
Diana Ross	Sylvia Robinson	Suzanne de Passe
Janet Jackson	Patrice Rushen	Sylvia Rhone
Beyoncé Knowles-Carter	Melissa "Missy" Elliott	Bozoma Saint John

Figure 12   Nine Iconic Trailblazing Black Women in Music

1.12.5 Chapter 5: Study 2 – In-Depth, Semi-Structured Interviews

For the second thematic analysis chapter, first-hand accounts are gained using anonymised in-depth semi-structured interviews with twelve leading Black female music industry professionals operating in the US and the UK music markets across the multi-sectoral and occupational spectrums. This is explored in the study to examine how the produced realities for this group are compared to those of the iconic trailblazer group; and, also, to identify any common and divergent themes, as well as dimensions of "multitiered-sectionality", experienced by Black women cross-culturally, intra-culturally, and individually within the global popular music industry ethos. For regional parity, six Black American and six Black British women were invited and confirmed for participation in the study. The selection criteria, regarding the sampling, and ethics, are outlined in the "Methodology", Chapter 3.

BLACK AMERICAN	BLACK BRITISH
(Ava)	(Grace)
(Bailey)	(Hazel)
(Carmen)	(Iris)
(Dior)	(Jena)
(Elyse)	(Kendra)
(Faith)	(Lola)
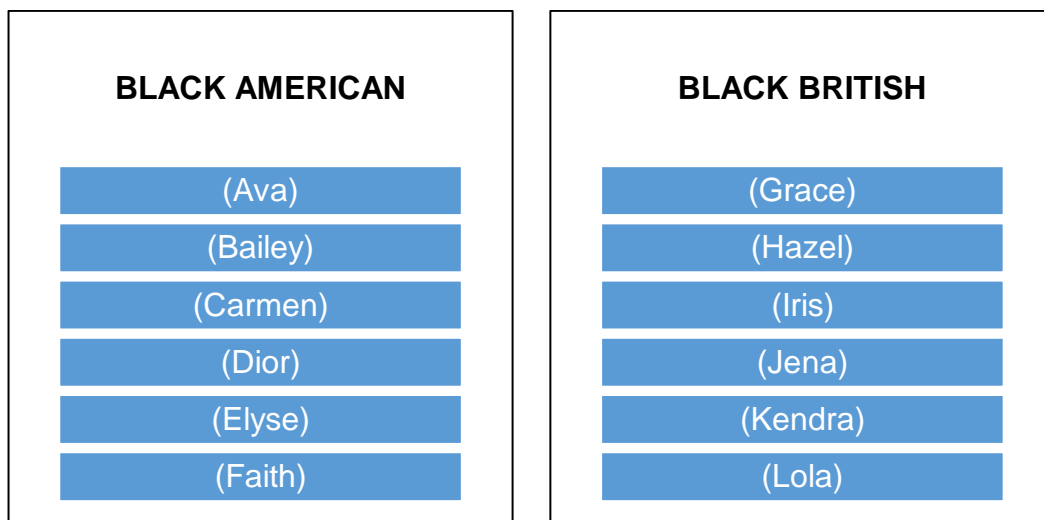
Figure 13   Twelve Anonymised Leading UK & US Black Women in Music

1.12.6 Chapter 6: Discussion

For this chapter, the results and findings are reported as a follow-up to both conducted reflexive thematic analyses in Chapter 4 (Study 1 – Thematic Analysis – Archival Studies) and Chapter 5 (Study 2 – Thematic Analysis – In-Depth, Semi-structured Interviews). To contextualise the findings around the research aims and objectives, business psychology, as well as human and organisational behaviour literature, shedding a light on Black women's workplace experiences, are embedded throughout this chapter. Also, the results are organised using a dual-system – first, it is organised by major themes and then by tiers, employing the "multitiered-sectionality" model, which places importance on the mechanisations of "power" in these interdependent systems contributing to Black women in music's multidimensional intersectional career experiences.

1.12.7 Chapter 7: Conclusion and Recommendations

For the final chapter, the major impact of the research highlights the importance to provide a better understanding of, how "multitiered-sectionality" can operationalise for Black women in the music industry; thus, presenting the need to advocate for more interdisciplinary studies in this area using a macro-meso-micro analytical approach to attempt to address these types of interdependent complex challenges.

First, the urgency for shedding a light on this topic is discussed at-length in this chapter. The researcher's drive is to primarily increase awareness and present findings in a way to encourage key stakeholders and diverse actors to move into effective action to shift workplace cultures in the industry as a starting place. Second, discussions surrounding the urgency and enforcement of company-wide policies, together with more intersectional federal legislation and the shaping of inclusive organisational practices for this social class, is presented as ways for improving the social conditions and workplace experiences for Black women in music. Third, the development of coalitions and research non-profits that centre Black women in music is discussed as being imperative to produce data and insights to monitor progress appropriately and materially.

Also, in closing, this chapter helps to provide deeper insights about Black women in music's career experiences to deliberately draw attention to the

importance of distinguishing "popularity", which can be volatile[42], from "legacy

and equality" – to broadly and minimally mean (1) accessibility to economic

opportunity, equity, and prosperity with the removal of archaic systemic

barriers, (2) full protection of intellectual property, music catalogues, financial

assets, image, and likeness, and (3) proper accreditation, in perpetuity, for

creations and contributions to the global popular music industry, where

erasure is far too commonplace.

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[42] Oxford Language defines "volatile" as: "liable to change rapidly and unpredictably, especially for the worse," which is an ever-present real risk, which may have more dire consequences for Black women in music, compared to other groups.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Background Context

Despite Black women achieving a degree of recognition and prominence in the $25.9 billion dollar USD global music industry ecosystem[43] (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2022b; International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2022a); there has been, to date, no significant body of scholarship, which brings together, for the purpose of analysis, in-depth insights, that centres Black women's MIE[44] career narratives – neither in psychology, more broadly, nor in industrial-organisational psychology, particularly.

During the surveying process, of the literature review, I expanded my search into other academic fields and databases, outside of the behavioural sciences. However, I found that other disciplines have yet to explore this research topic, from their respective contexts, as well. Instead, the most closely related research topics in this area (Gammage, 2017; McNally, 2016; Emerson, 2002), mainly focused on exemplary cases of "misogynoir[45]" (Bailey, 2014; Bailey, 2016; Bailey & Trudy, 2018) and other forms of bigotry encountered by Black women in music, in the public sphere, which were framed as occurring under the "White gaze" or the "male gaze"[46]. Since the

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[43] This is forecasted to grow to $131 billion USD, in the next eight years, by 2030 (Goldman Sachs, 2022).

[44] MIE is an acronym for "Music Industry Ecosystem"

[45] Dictionary.com (2022b) defines "misogynoir" as: "the specific hatred, dislike, distrust, and prejudice directed toward Black women."

[46] These were more prominent topics in publications that veered towards popular music studies (where song structures, music videos, and lyrics, for example, were highlighted), as well as Black studies and gender studies, which focused on "identity politics" (Hull, et al., 2015) and symbolic representation, from a cultural perspective, in these academic journals.

primary focus of much of the available scholarship, seemed to maintain a particularly heavy concentration on Black women in music, in visual popular culture, these studies could not inform the broader scope of my research, although these could help inform other aspects of insights, that may be found in the research, at a later stage.

However, as this project sought to pivot from the more commonly taken path of either critiquing Black women in music, or deconstructing others' critique, or gaze, of Black women in music, I sought to demarginalise (Crenshaw, 1989) both, the mainstream academic discourse and Black women in music, by, instead, redirecting much needed attention to their industrial, organisational, and societal career experiences, as leading industry professionals and pioneers.

Considering they concurrently co-shape and navigate the global MIE as powerful Black women, operating within a White and male dominated power structure, I sought to investigate how (sometimes subtle) power and dominance structures, can underpin the shaping and re-shaping of their career experiences. Also, I wanted to examine how these can occur, on a continuum, as mediated by human practices, organisational cultures, workforce designs, social norms (in the industry) as "power" (Liu, 2018; Krupka & Weber, 2013), and other shapeshifting, less considered, multidimensional contexts.

2.2 Introduction

To frame the research, this literature review was less concerned with identifying gaps, as Braun and Clarke (2022) argued that the notion of this commonly taken, conventional, approach:

> […] reproduces a positivist-empiricist idea of research as truth-questing […] that this is the right way to locate research which does not] […] fit well with qualitative paradigms and localised, contextualised knowledge (2022, p. 120)

Thus, the primary focus was to, instead, add on to the rich tapestry of others' scholarly contributions, in addressing other facets of Black women's wide-ranging lived and career experiences (Dickens, et al., 2019; Lean In, 2020; Motro, et al., 2021; Hall, et al., 2012; McCluney, et al., 2021). Based on this collaboratively framed objective, this research aims to shed light, by centring human behaviours within music industry practices, where Black women's and social actors' "politics of identity" (Bryan, et al., 2018), as mediated by human practices and context, in relation to power structures and the matrix of oppression, are in constant (imbalanced) negotiations, which deserve context and a close examination.

Accordingly, the expectation for this doctoral research project is to not only make an original contribution to knowledge; but also, to join grassroot movements to further elevate this conversation and build a case, in terms of its importance, for the affected groups and key stakeholders. As conversations are slowly becoming more mainstream for inclusion in the workplace (McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.org, 2021), I hope this project can enter the ethos of discourse to support wider human liberatory causes

(Collins, 2009) to promote and implement systemic inclusion in the music industry ecosystem. As the aim was to apply theory to practice – I sought to, both, co-advocate for systemic change and co-advance humanity, especially in the workplaces of the less-regulated creative industries – centring music, in this thesis.

INTEGRATED RESEARCH HOUSE:
WEIRD Cross-Cultural Black Feminist
Industrial-Organisational Psychology Research Project

PRIMARY INTEREST:
To gain in-depth insights to understand leading Black women's industrial, organisational, and societal career experiences navigating "power" across the purported-to-be egalitarian work environments of the world's top-performing music industry ecosystems.

ACADEMIC FIELDS & DISCIPLINES

Black Feminist Thought

Industrial-Organisational Psychology

Behavioural Sciences

Business and Human Resource Management

Popular Music Culture and Media Studies

Figure 14   Integrated Research House

Synthesising Literature Across Academic Disciplines

To begin, in the western sciences, Black women's psychology has routinely been relegated to the margins (Spates, 2012; Cole, 2020), and therefore much is still left to be researched, and understood, about Black women's lived experiences, beyond the field of sociology (Collins, 2009). As a direct consequence of this gap, the process of surveying literature on the psychology of Black women (Spates, 2012; Thomas, 2004; Cole, 2020), within the context of this research, was found to be a predictably challenging endeavour. Not only, was this compounded by the dearth of research available, on Black women, more generally, in psychology, but also within this

specific branch of industrial-organisational psychology (Leung & Rainone, 2018) – where the initial aim was to peruse and review other study templates so that the top-performing MIEs, in my research, could merely be treated as another cultural backdrop, to examine Black women's – industrial, organisational, and societal – career experiences within their socioprofessional worlds. Due to this presented area of opportunity, innovation[47] was necessitated to be employed to synthesise a diversity of academic scholarship and non-academic industry reports, to better inform how the design process could better take shape to attempt to most affectively address the research aims and objectives.

Subsequently, the texts ultimately selected for this appraisal were chosen on the basis they were primarily conducted from a Black feminist lens – meaning studies conducted in both qualitative and quantitative paradigms were considered on the basis they also valued the intersectionality conceptual framing of Black women's experiences. If they shared this value of emphasising, rather than suppressing – and riskily compromising – Black women's experiences, operated as the baseline criteria.

While I did "[…] not [seek] to provide a comprehensive review of the existing evidence to date" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 120) – I did seek to offer a contextualised review to help build a stronger case around the necessity of advocating for this project.

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[47] This is still the case where Black feminist intellectual works reject positivistic realist frameworks (Collins, 2009).

Aims of the Interdisciplinary Literature Review

Accordingly, the aims of the ILR were defined to operate as a guiding

framework, as outlined in the figure below:

1ST AIM	Review literature within the context of best addressing the overarching research aims as outlined in Chapter 1.
2ND AIM	Survey and feature well-known, and lesser-known, scholarly works, related to the research, while examining their ontological and epistemological underpinnings. Also, include, other credible literature and industry reports, and consider the use of terminologies and eupehmisms.
3RD AIM	Observe how other researchers analyse Black women's human experiences, across the psychological and social sciences, to assess broader understandings of what is known, to date, and how it is known.
4TH AIM	Identify what is known in literature across various modes of knowledge production, as it pertains to dissecting the experiences and psychology of Black women in the music industry ecosystem context.
5TH AIM	Review other researchers' approaches to their designs, to assess effectiveness, and possible application, to inform, improve on, or both - to justify chosen methodological choices.

Figure 15   Five Aims of the Interdisciplinary Literature Review

Sources for Literature Review

This chapter's appraisal included scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles,

empirical studies, and dissertations accessed through online databases such

as SAGE Premiere Journals, JSTOR Arts and Sciences Collective, APA

PsycARTICLES, APA PsycINFO, EBSCOhost, Google Scholar, "Summon",

The University of West London's Library's academic search engine, and The

British Library's EThOS e-theses service, to name a few. Select corporate

studies and music industry reports, as well as, government legislation and

policies, were also included – if they shed light on the lived (workplace and

career) experiences of leading Black women, more generally, and in the

music industry, more specifically.

2.3   Framing the Research Within Wider Social Contexts and

Constructions

As the examination of this research is framed in this post-equality legislation

era, it was important to centre the evolution of human relational power

dynamics, dysfunctions, understandings as well as their implications for Black

women's embodied experiences navigating "politics of identity" (Bryan, et al.,

2018) in their careers and personhood in WEIRD societies (Henrich, et al.,

2010)– from the 1960s to present-day. This necessitated their lived and

career experiences to be examined, within macro social contexts, which can

shed a light on human practices and power structures that could transfer over

to micro industry contexts.

Accordingly, this ILR will cover literature to help situate Black women's social

locations within five wider social contexts, in relation to the industry, to frame

this research project; and this is illustrated in the order in which it appears,

and will now be discussed, as shown in Figure 16 below.
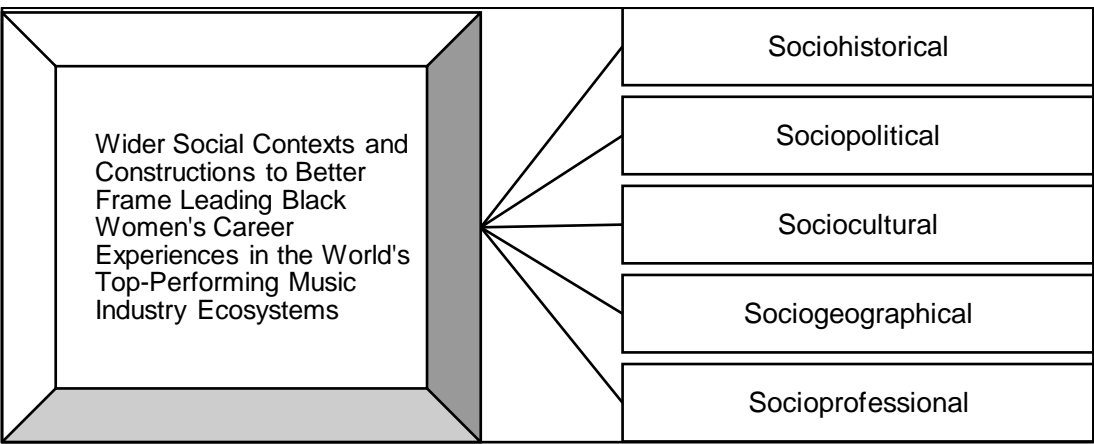
Figure 16   Framing the Research within Wider Social Contexts and
               Constructions

2.3.1 Sociohistorical Context

The WEIRD Racial Constructions of "Black" Identity

For this research, on the career experiences of trailblazing and leading Black women in music, I sought to place special attention on the shared, yet suppressed, historical relationship between both African-diasporic transatlantic communities, to which the Black women featured in this research, share group cultural memberships.

This centuries-long transatlantic relationship between both populations, in WEIRD societies, predates even the latest voluntary Black migration of present-day first-and-second-generation Black Britons and Black Americans[48], where both Black immigrant groups largely migrated from English-speaking, British-colonised, Caribbean, and African nations (New American Economy, 2020; Pew Research Center, 2015).

Considering this, it was important to frame these connections, as well as the (re)memory of pieces of shared histories between both groups, as the located background, for this review. I adopted this approach from Rasool, as cited in

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[48]According to the UK Office for National Statistics (2011), the Black British population has a population size of 1.8 million. Data from the New American Economy (2020) noted that the Black American immigrant population has a population size of 4.3 million. Please note that the US, unlike the UK, also has a substantial population of descendants of African chattel slavery, which was practiced for 1 ½ centuries primarily under British rule in the then-British Colonies of America, whose generations of families have been born in the British colonies since long before the country's existence and recognition as the United States of America. This segment of the Black (alone or in combination) demographic has a population size of 46.9 million (42 million alone) as of 2019 according to the (US Census Bureau, 2019a)US Census Bureau (2019a).

(Mirza, 1997), who indicated the importance of "placing the remembered past" at the centre of her own analysis (1997, p. 191), which I intend to do here. Also, to address the research aims, and probable causes for under-researched lived experiences, which continue to persist in the study of the psychology of Black women (Cole, 2020; Spates, 2012; Thomas, 2004) and the Western sciences, more generally, this section also sought to integrate literature, institutional, and governmental publications that could highlight the fundamental role the Western sciences played in the development of "arbitrary constructions of human division" (Wilkerson, 2020, p. 37), rooted in White supremacist ideology, as it could be said to operationalise in the WEIRD music industry. As this harmful belief and indoctrination system still massively impacts Black people, people of colour (POC), as well as White minority and ethnic groups, in both societies today (Yakushko, 2019), this was important to centre, to frame how this informed this research.

Accordingly, in the next section, I include literature that focused on the constructions of "Blackness", to deepen culturalised understandings of the social implications of this evolutionary social construct.

1 – Origin – The Western Psychological Science's Ideological Creation and Pseudo-scientific Legitimisation of their Divisions of the Human Race

For this review, it was important to locate, and centre, the origins of "Black" as a racial identity construct, since deconstructions of UK and US Black women's cultural identities, and their implications, were highlighted to provide more complete understandings, regarding their socially produced realities, in their career experiences in the MIE. Although it is known that the "Black" racial identity construct, was developed by the Western sciences, to support pseudoscientific claims of inherent inferiority and superiority (Crenshaw, Kimberlé, et al., (Editors), 2019; Wilkerson, 2020; Olusoga, 2016), the origins of this was important to (re)centre.

As this racial identity construct, and its developed cultural assignations, remained, and continue to evolve, under different (who I will describe as) "construct creators" (see Figure 17) – the transformations are discussed in this, and the following subsections, for this literature review:

1. Origin
2. Past
3. Present and
4. Future
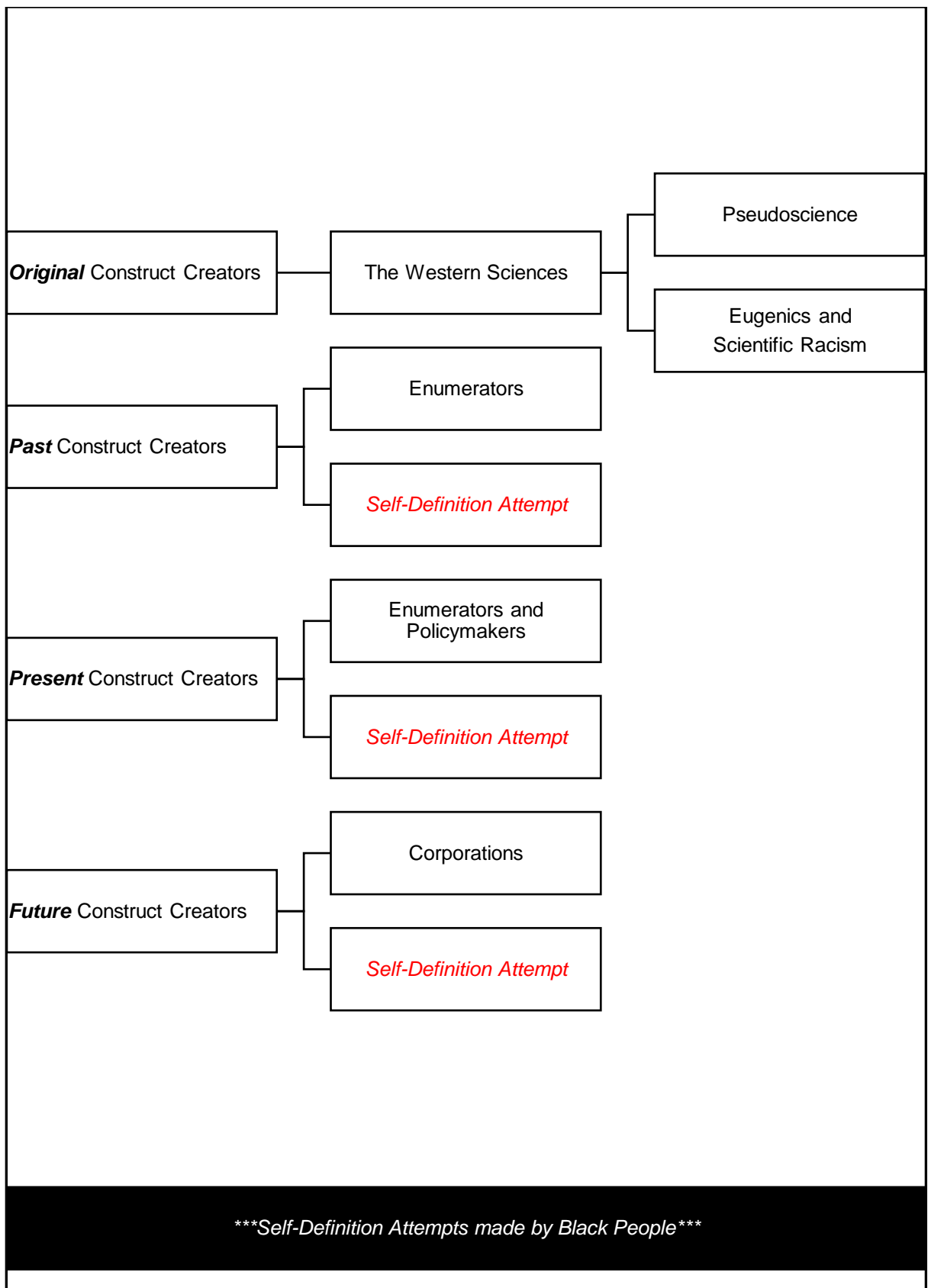
Figure 17   "Black" Racial Identity Construct Creators

White Eugenicists and Race Scientists

The National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) (2021) reported:

> […] race is an ideology and for this reason, many scientists believe that race should be more accurately described as a social construct and not a biological one.

The US government agency further noted that:

> […] race has been documented as a concept developed in the 18th century to divide humans into groups often based on physical appearance, social, and cultural backgrounds [and] has been used historically to establish a social hierarchy and to enslave humans (2021).

The NHGRI's Social Behavioral [sic] Research Branch indicated that it had recently partnered with the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD), under the leadership of the US government's National Institute of Health (NIH). The objective of this partnership was:

> […] to develop a consensus on the appropriate use of race and ethnicity in research study designs [today] […] to help the public understand the rich diversity and common history of all people (Mjoseth, B.A. & NIH, 2021).

This initiative could be said to acknowledge the real-life implications of the immoral application of this dehumanising eugenics agenda (Farber, 2009), as pushed by institutional gatekeepers and ideological supporters of "White supremacy", for centuries (American Psychological Association, 2021g).

These efforts have continued to have long-lasting consequential global effects on humanity and it continues to threaten public health[49] safety across multiple diasporic colonised and marginalised communities of colour (CDC GOV: Racism and Health, 2021), where racism historically and pervasively can insidiously operate across three levels whether it be (1) institutionalised (2) personally-mediated, or (3) internalised (Jones, 2002).

Figure 18   The Impacts of Racism on Health (Jones, 2001)

Numerous reviews of past scientific studies have critiqued the strategic ideological fixations, which motivated "race scientists" to establish a eugenics agenda, having founded the Eugenics Research Office, the American Eugenics Society, and the Eugenics Research Association (Farber, 2009, p. 244) to try and influence government and social policies in attempt to legitimise White superiority. In Farber's 2008 article, published online in 2009, he reflected on, and criticised, the US and European's scientific communities'

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[49] On 8th April 2021, "Rochelle P. Walensky MD, MPH, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and administrator of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), declared racism a serious public health threat" (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021)

establishment of the Eugenics Movement that gained significant momentum, and was even taught as a legitimised science, for a period, at the university level.

While much of the article highlighted the different sites of organisation, as to how this movement dangerously became widespread, he also "[….] [recognised] the contributions of the scientists who have eliminated it from today's scientific life" (Farber, 2009, p. 245), where he posited that:

> […] what is often not appreciated is that Nazi efforts were bolstered by the published works of the (1907–1939): A Contemporary Biologist's Perspective American eugenics movement as the intellectual underpinnings for its social policies. (Farber, 2009, p. 244).

While this was framed as being resolved, the legacy of this movement still lives on. For instance, these mechanisms are still framed to be so pervasive that the American Psychological Association recently issued a formal public apology on 29th October 2021 in a released statement entitled, "Apology to People of Color [sic] for APA's Role in Promoting, Perpetuating, and Failing to Challenge Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Human Hierarchy in US" (American Psychological Association, 2021g), followed by an adopted resolution, that included the following acknowledgements, as shown in Figure 18, on the next page.
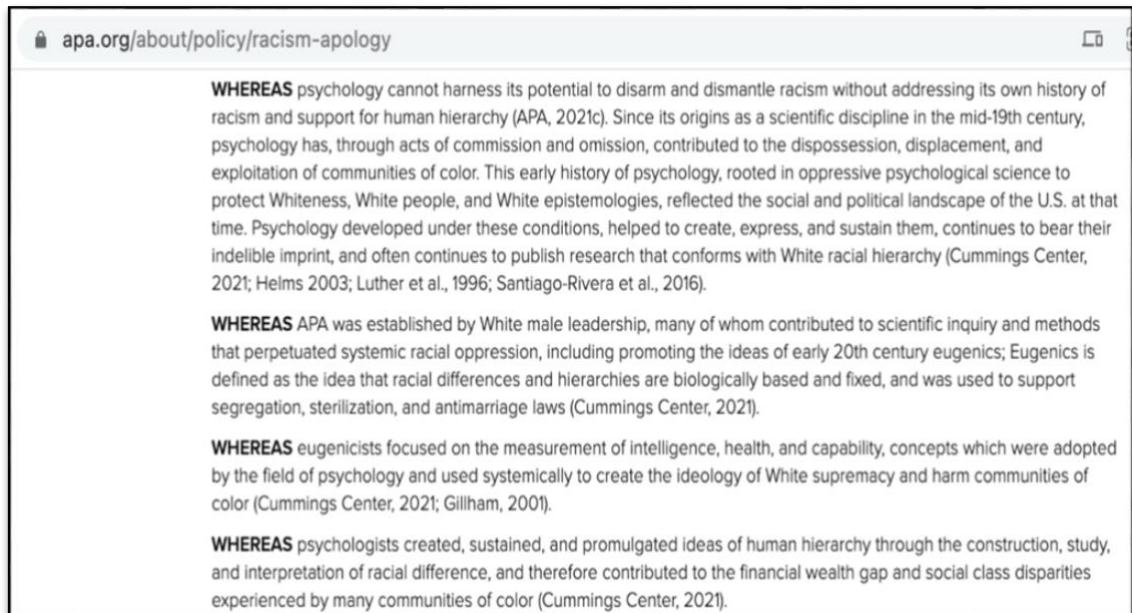
Figure 19   Excert from Resolution Adopted by the APA Council of
             Representatives (American Psychological Association, 2021g)

Collins (2009) highlighted how:

> Under scientific racism, Blacks have been construed as inferior,
> and their inferiority has been attributed either to biological
> causes or cultural difference (2009, p. 85).

Similarly, co-authors and Critical Race Theory (CRT) scholars, Crenshaw,

Harris, HoSang, and Lipsitz (2019), evidenced how:

> Perceptions of innate human difference led scholars in the
> emerging physical and natural sciences in the eighteenth and
> nineteenth centuries to labor [sic] tirelessly to generate
> scientific theories of racial difference and hierarchy […] [while
> masking] unacknowledged ideological predispositions (2019, p.
> 7).

They also related how the search for universal principles in comparative racial

difference, in attempt to legitimise White superiority, was chiefly guided by five

nations (see Figure 20 below), who colonised many parts of the world.
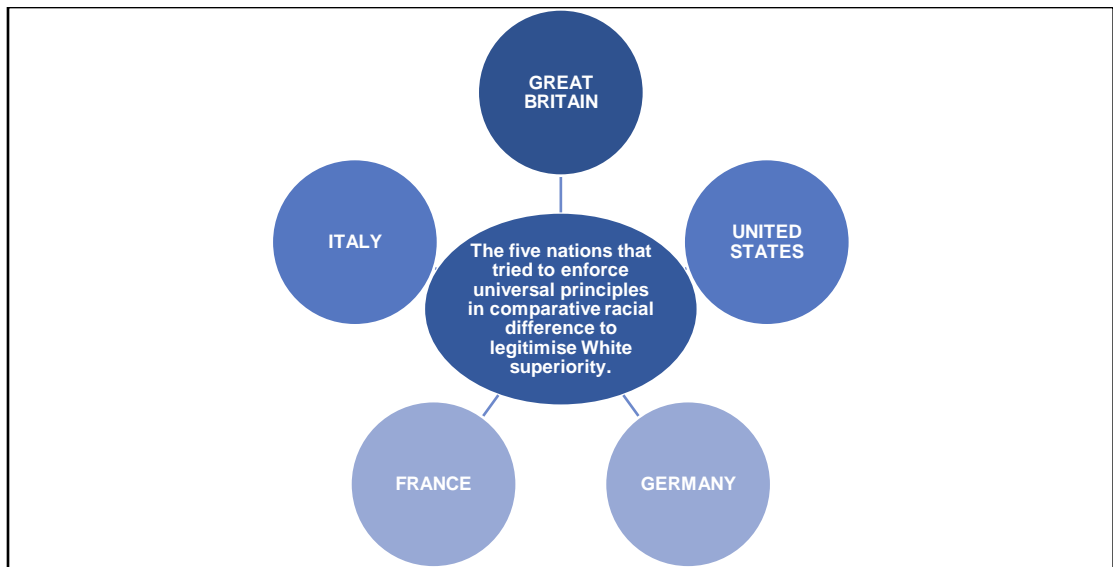
Figure 20   The Five Nations (Crenshaw, Kimberlé, et al., (Editors), 2019)

Ethnographers from each respective country socially constructed racial caste systems (Wilkerson, 2020), using "ideology" to influence study designs in biology, as a tool to dehumanise "other" populations, groups of minority backgrounds who were seen as "[…] 'people without history' rather than co-inhabitants of the modern world" (2019, p. 6).

For example, Brown (2020) noted how race scientists theorised that Black people were inferior, which Crenshaw and her team, corroborated, citing earlier published works and projects, revealing which key people were involved and invested in permeating "white supremacist commitments" to American policies (2019, p. 7).

> Scholars of philosophy, history, sociology, political science, and economics […] turned to biology [to explain] why European empires came to dominate the world, attributing that dominance to evolution and "the survival of the fittest" instead of systematically investigating the brutality of conquest and the cruelties of expropriation and exploitation (2019, pp. 5-6).

One of the tools that were effectively used to validate their assertions, was the use of racial categories (see Figure 21), with the introduction of the first national decennial census in the US in 1790.

> Some race scientists and public officials believed it was important to know more about groups that were not "pure" white or black. Some scientists believed these groups were less fertile, or otherwise weak; they looked to census data to support their theories. From the mid-19th century through 1920, the census race categories included some specific multiracial groups, mainly those that were black and white (Pew Research Center, 2015).

It is worth noting it was reported that census takers (also known as enumerators) determined the populations' racial categories from 1790 – 1960 (Pew Research Center, 2015). From 1960 – 2000, US citizens were allowed to self-report and select only one race from the offered categories. However, only as recently as 2010, has the option to self-report and select more than one race, become available for US citizens.

Figure 21   Measuring Race and Ethnicity (US Census Bureau, 2021a)

2 – Past – "Black" Identity Defined and Debated Black Intellectuals and Journalists

Since the study examines how navigating power within complex "politics of identity" (Bryan, et al., 2018) impacts UK and US Black women, historical relations between both communities in these territories were purposely sought. This was pursued with the understanding that the erasure of "cultural identity[50]", has served as an effective mechanism to produce the construct of "alienation" within communities unknowingly, and more deeply, sharing more similar threads, than initially thought in "the struggle".

To this point, Black American and Black British scholars and journalists, Burroughs and Vassell (2014), using pan-Africanism as a theoretical thread, co-authored and published a paper that analysed the functions and formations of the original Black press in both territories. They did this to try to relocate the erased centuries-long historical relationship between both marginalised transatlantic communities. Their article explored how "Black" identity, was first formed between African diasporic communities in Britain and America in the early 19th century, during the same time as the earlier mentioned "Eugenics Movement"[51]. The authors clarified that the establishments of the first Black press on both sides of the Atlantic, "showed the centrality of Black newspapers to [the collective] Black survival and

[50] A method employed during African chattel slavery, displacing, and disconnecting families.
[51] This re-placement of history challenged much of the literature produced today about the formation of "Black" identity as it is now understood and experienced in modern American and British societies, as well as within a global context where pan-Africanism had been first introduced and used as a theoretical "thread", at that time as well, by Black intellectuals across the African diaspora.

progression" (Collins, 2009, p. 256) They also provided a brief timeline to review how "Black" identity, in terms of "self-identification", was emphasised and valued in studies and observations on Black life. This is also a fundamental tenet used in BFT, which traditionally highlights the necessity of "Self-Definition[52]" (Collins, 2009, p. 107) as a form of resistance "that speaks to the power dynamics involved in rejecting externally defined, controlling images of Black womanhood" (2009, p. 126).

The Printing Press's Influence on "Black" as Racial Identity

Citing this example of knowledge suppression, evidenced why credible journal and periodical sources were also included in this literature review, and throughout the thesis, to, more deeply, understand the socio-political climate for Black women, post-equality legislation. More specifically, the election of these sources was chosen to also better understand how that could manifest, and influence their interactions, in their work environments in the top-performing markets of the global music industry ecosystem across the past three scores to modern-day. These scholars noted the formation and importance of the Black press in helping to advance the importance of "self-definition", a tool that is used in Critical Race Theory (Crenshaw, Kimberlé, et al. (Editors), 1995; Crenshaw, Kimberlé, et al., (Editors), 2019), Black Feminist Thought (Collins, 2009), and Intersectionality under Critical Social Theory (Collins, 2019) and Psychology (Cole, 2020).

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[52] Not "identity". Collins noted, "Identity is not the goal but rather the point of departure in the process of self-definition. In this process, Black women journey toward an understanding of how our personal lives have been fundamentally shaped by intersecting oppressions of race, gender, sexuality, and class" (Collins, 2009, p. 125).

"Freedom's Journal" in the United States, Founded 1827

In the US, the first Black owned newspaper, "Freedom's Journal" (Collins, 2009; Fraser, 2016; Lopez, 2020), was founded by a small percentage of free Black people in New York City in 1827, where there were approximately 500,000 free (not freed) people of colour in the northern states, 38 years before slavery was legally abolished. The publication only operated for two years.

> [However, it] covered many issues of interest to African Americans in its columns, such as colonization [sic], education, self-improvement, women's, and men's ideal roles in the home and in society, and slavery […] to further 'self-determinist' values central to African American thought in the 1820s (Bacon, 2003, p. 9).

The newspaper had nationwide and international distribution through its agents, especially in the US," Haiti, [Liverpool,] England and Canada" according to Bacon, who conducted extensive research on the historical origins and endings of this ground-breaking publication (2003, p. 7).

"The Pan African" in the United Kingdom, Founded 1901

In the UK, the first Black newspaper, "The Pan African", was founded nearly 75 years later in 1901. This publication aimed to capture and disseminate the ideas of the first ever Pan-African Conference held in Westminster Town Hall in London, UK in 1900 [where] following the conference, the Pan-African Association was formed. Henry Sylvester Williams, a prominent Trinidadian barrister who had lived in the West Indies, parts of Africa, North America, and Britain, and who had later become one of the first Black Britons to be elected to public office in the UK, organised the conference and set up the journal.

Intellectuals' Influence on "Black" as Racial Identity

The likes of prominent Black intellectual figures, such as Anna Julia Cooper (Cooper 1998, p. Location 358), W.E.B. Du Bois, and Booker T. Washington (Collins, 2009), were in attendance. The primary reason why Williams and other Black intellectuals and activists across the African diaspora chose London as the location to convene was because they saw that the City of London was the seat of the British empire's power and the "city [was already] familiar with vocal opposition to white supremacy" (Burroughs & Vassell, 2014, p. 259), which could indicate the degree to how relatively progressive the city of London was during those racially turbulent times for people of African descent, in other parts of the world.

Activists were "keenly aware that White writers were distorting Black history" (Collins, 2009, p. 259), which further fortified the efforts for Black intellectuals

and community activists to chronicle and disseminate the lived experiences of Black people across the Atlantic from the "Black" perspective, a collective identity they ultimately formed, although located within different origins. This could be said to have become a global "Black" diasporic culture in the Western and Western-influenced world, consequently resulting from British imperialism and global European colonisation.

Late 19th Century Meetings in London

London became the gathering spot for Afro-Diasporans, "where many came to study and work". The selection of this location could also shed light on how "racial discrimination had rendered life difficult for [all] Africans either at home or under the flags of unknown powers" (Collins, 2009, p. 259) stemming from the direct and residual impact of The Age of Imperialism (Olusoga, 2016), where the British Empire participated in the African transatlantic slave trade for centuries, and colonised countries and territories across several continents and regions including Africa, the islands of the Caribbean and the Americas (The Commonwealth, 2021; SlaveVoyages Database, 2022).

However, this first global movement for "Black" identity, by means of self-definition, was short-lived. The authors claimed that "Black" identity in Britain swiftly became suppressed following the discontinuation of "The Pan African" in the early 1900s, who is said to have released only one issue, which included the controversial statement, "no other but a Negro can represent the Negro" bringing about another point the authors observed.

> […] the loss of Black newspapers is one of the examples of a new, multicultural Black British reality—a generational shift away from the collective "Black" British identity once promoted (in traditional Black newspapers and periodicals) by the nation's Black activists and intellectuals. Though many more news sources are available for the nation's Blacks, they tend to target audiences based on their ethnic origin, rather than any shared Black British experience (Burroughs & Vassell, 2014, p. 263)

Suppression of a Transatlantic "Black" Identity

Despite this knowledge suppression of a transatlantic "Black" identity, Dunstan's peer-reviewed scholarly paper (2016) reported that nineteen years later, DuBois wanted to revitalise the progress made by those who participated in the first Pan-African conference in London, United Kingdom, to keep people of African descent in international conversation, united under this umbrellaed identity. This was after he came across US President Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points" principles where the tone of "enthusiasm for self-determination" was strongly emphasised to European nations in efforts to end World War I.

Early 20th Century "Pan-African Congress" Meetings

DuBois wanted an international spotlight on racial issues pertaining to people of African descent who were globally disenfranchised and were capable of self-determination but were seen as subhuman by their White counterparts. This is being cited to draw the connection between the origins and adoption of those values still in place today, affecting humanity, and the Black women, in this research.

Despite being met with resistance, even from within shared groups to which he belonged, DuBois organised the first Pan African Congress in Paris, France, to accomplish this goal. Subsequent meetings of the Pan African Congress took place in major cities, including London and New York City, in the years following. However, at the first meeting, DuBois had hoped to accomplish two results. "That first that it would offer Africans the opportunity to gradually free themselves from colonial exploitation and the second that it would change long held attitudes about the inferiority of Black people by demonstrating their parity with White populations" (Dunstan, 2016, p. 135). The author noted that there were some contentions within this movement, largely due, in part, that Black delegates who attended the congress meetings, did not uphold similar views, motivations, or values that were representative of the diverse Black communities from which they came[53]. Also, many attendees were considered educated, Black elitists who were pro-

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[53] This marks one of the reasons why this study uses "standpoint" as a means to explain universal experiences; however, it is lightly weighed from the vein that context takes precedence in the interpretation and internalisation of documented and reports experiences in this dissertation.

colonial and preoccupied with being seen as equal to their White counterparts, wanting to distance themselves further and further away from negative depictions of indigenous African communities that dominant social groups, such as White supremacists, who have hoarded power across different areas of life, saw as "inferior" and "primitive". This could provide insight as to why Collins argued that "Black women have produced social thought designed to oppose [dominant and structural forms of] oppression. Not only does the form assumed by this thought diverge from standard academic theory – it can take the form of poetry, music, essays, and the likes," in BFT as Critical Social Theory (CRT) (Collins, 2009, p. 11).

Albeit, these findings are mentioned here to demonstrate how the emergence and sudden suppression of "Black" identity, through "self-definition" in the 19th century, emerged, mobilised and gained global momentum, but then was suppressed, a common pattern that is also apparent in the suppression of BFT, which could explain why there is substantial growth opportunities in terms of the production of knowledge in academic fields, using these theories, to attempt to view multiple facets of Black women's lived experiences, especially in the psychological sciences, using the foundations of Black Feminist Thought as a theoretical lens.

3 – Present – "Black" Identity Defined by National Censuses

United States

US Census Bureau's Role in Defining "Race" and "Ethnicity"

In recent years, the US Census Bureau released a one pager to define "race" and "ethnicity" (2017). They reasoned that "race" is defined as a person's self-identification with one or more social groups, whereas "ethnicity"[54] is defined in the US as a person either being of Hispanic or Latino origin, or not. The government reasoned that the recognition of only one "ethnicity" was due to an increased interest for policymakers, researchers and advocacy groups wanting to see if Hispanic or Latino people had the same equal opportunities as others in American society (US Census Bureau: American Community Survey, 2020).

Data from the Pew Research Center [sic] (2015) supported the US government's rationalisation to separate "race" from "ethnicity" where racial categories in the US census were reduced to "White", "Black", "Asian", "American Indian" or "Pacific Islander". However, the Pew Research Center [sic] made the argument that "standard U.S. racial categories might either be confusing or not provide relevant options […] to describe their racial identity."

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[54] The question around "ethnicity" was newly introduced in the 1970 US census.

US Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Role in Defining "Black"

In 2010, the US Census Bureau (CB) provided the following definition of

"Black" or "African American", which was used interchangeably as racial

classifications, as shown below.

DEFINITION OF BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN USED IN THE 2010 CENSUS

According to OMB, "Black or African American" refers to a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.

The Black racial category includes people who marked the "Black, African Am., or Negro" checkbox. It also includes respondents who reported entries such as African American; Sub-Saharan African entries, such as Kenyan and Nigerian; and Afro-Caribbean entries, such as Haitian and Jamaican.*

*Sub-Saharan African entries are classified as Black or African American with the exception of Sudanese and Cape Verdean because of their complex, historical heritage. North African entries are classified as White, as OMB defines White as a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

Figure 22   The OMB's[55] Definition of Black or African American

(US Census Bureau, 2011, p. 2).

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[55] "The OMB serves the President of the United States in overseeing the implementation of his or her vision across the Executive Branch" (African American Policy Forum, 2022b).

United Kingdom

UK Office for National Statistics' (ONS[56]) Role in Defining "Black"

In the 2011 census, The UK Office for National Statistics indicated the following regarding the definition of "Black".

> A further development has been to combine national or geographical origin with a colour term such as Black, as in Black-African, to identify more precisely which group is being referred to for people originating from a part of the world which is itself multi-ethnic, such as sub-Saharan Africa (Office for National Statistics, 2012).

Given its origins and changes in British history, the UK Government's website showed that the term "Black" was no longer being used as an umbrella term for South Asian and Black African / Black Afro-Caribbean minority ethnic communities, which they made apparent by listing each group as distinct from one another under separate headings (GOV.UK Ethnicity Facts and Figures, 2020). Also, The National Archives published a guide about Black British history in the 20th century, which explicitly stated "We use 'black British' to mean Britons with African and Caribbean ancestry" (GOV. UK The National Archives - Black British History, 2020).

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[56] The ONS's website states, "We are the UK's largest independent producer of official statistics and its recognised national statistical institute. We are responsible for collecting and publishing statistics related to the economy, population, and society at national, regional, and local levels. We also conduct the census in England and Wales every 10 years" (UK Office for National Statistics, 2022).

British Sociological Association

According to the BSA (2021), the society indicated that the guidelines were initially drafted by the BSA Black Women's Sub-Committee and revised by the BSA Race Forum, on language pertaining to defining ethnicity and race in Britain. In the document, both groups within the organisation provided a brief five-point overview, as shown in Figure 23 below, of how the term "Black", as a social category, has evolved, and remains an "ongoing debate" of who classifies as that, in the British context.

POINT 1
- Black is a -term that embraces people who experience structural and institutional discrimination because of their skin colour and is often used politically to refer to people of African, Caribbean and South Asian origin to imply solidarity against racism.

POINT 2
- The term originally took on political connotations with the rise of black activism in the USA in the 1960s when it was reclaimed as a source of pride and identity in opposition to the many negative connotations relating to the word "black" in the English language (black leg, black list etc.). In the UK however, there is an on-going debate about the use of this term to define South Asian peoples because of the existence of diverse South Asian cultural identities. In the USA, the term 'people of colour' is increasingly used instead of, or alongside black.

POINT 3
- Some South Asian groups in Britain object to the use of the word "black" being applied to them. Some sociologists argue that it also conflates a number of ethnic groups that should be regarded separately - Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Indians and so on.

POINT 4
- Whilst there are many differences between and within each of the groups, the inclusive term black refers to those who have a shared history of European colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism, ethnocentrism and racism. One solution to this is to refer to "black peoples", "black communities" etc., in the plural to imply that there are a variety of such groups. It is also important to be aware of the fact that in some contexts "black" can also be used in a racist sense.

POINT 5
- The capitalisation of the letter "B" in the term "Black British", "British Asian" are shifting ground and it should be stressed that social scientists need to be very clear that the use of these terms does not prioritise nor indeed conflate ethnicity and citizenship.

Figure 23   "Black" Defined by the British Sociological Association (2021)

4 – Future – "Black" Identity (Re)Defined by Private Sector

Corporations' Role in Defining "Black": Capitalising the "B" to Redefine "Black" Racial Identity

Procter and Gamble is a multibillion-dollar American multinational consumer goods company. Their initiative, "My Black Is Beautiful" (MBIB), is a community programme created to empower Black Diasporan women to feel more confident about themselves to combat systemic biases they may interface because of their race and gender.

Recently, MBIB launched a campaign, "Redefine Black", where they led the charge and petitioned for Dictionary.com, the world's leading digital dictionary, to change how "Black" can become a "positive, racially-unbiased definition", which was met with positive reception and success (PR Newswire, 2019). As of June 2019, (Dictionary.com), released a statement.

> When it comes to the language of identity, the words we use are especially important. This is why when My Black Is Beautiful reached out to Dictionary.com about "Redefine Black," we saw an opportunity to revisit our current entry of the word Black. As a result of this conversation, we are making some updates and revisions that will be rolled out on Dictionary.com later this year […] [one of which,] we will be capitalizing [sic] Black throughout the entry when it is used in reference to people. Why capitalize Black in this context? It is considered a mark of respect, recognition, and pride. This is common practice for many other terms used to describe a culture or ethnicity. Not capitalizing [sic] Black in this context can be seen as dismissive, disrespectful, and dehumanizing [sic].

Sociohistorical Summary

Shedding light on this is not only to home in on the social construction of "Black" as a racially constructed identity in WEIRD[57] societies, but to also demonstrate how it could be exploited, as a by-product, of its intended design to facilitate "othering" and "inferiorising", still today.

Within the music industry context, this framing was critical to understanding some of the possible factors behind what could be said to underpin some of the human relational dysfunction and dehumanising treatment Black women may personally encounter, or witness in action, in occupationally segregated music industry work environments today (NAACP Economic Development, 1987; USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, 2021; USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, 2019; UK Music, 2020; Black Lives in Music, 2021; Black Music Action Coalition, 2021).

In the next section, the sociopolitical context is discussed to understand the implications of trailblazing and leading Black women in music's social locations, more generally, and how that information could be used to better inform how situations in society may mirror their industry experiences, as a result of these surrounding contextual factors.

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[57] And colonised non-WEIRD societies.

2.3.2 Sociopolitical Context

In this section, I sought to understand Black women's lived experiences from their macro (African diasporic) and micro (various collectivities[58]), sociopolitical contexts, to inform how variable factors, within each, as well as their perceptions of those factors, could show up in their music industry experiences in their career journeys. Thus, it was important to review how Black women groups and individuals conceptualised their oscillating social locations, in relation to their understandings of power and marginalisation within those considerations (Liu, 2018) (see Figure 24), and within "power structures[59]" (Collins, 2009; Collins, 2019; Carbado, et al., 2013).

POWER CONCENTRATES	POWER JUSTIFIES ITSELF	POWER IS INFINITE
"First, power concentrates. That is, it feeds on itself and compounds (as does powerlessness)." (pp. 25)	"Second power justifies itself. People invent stories to legitimise the power they have (or lack)." (pp. 25)	"Third, power is infinite. There is no inherent limit on the amount of power people can create." (pp. 25)
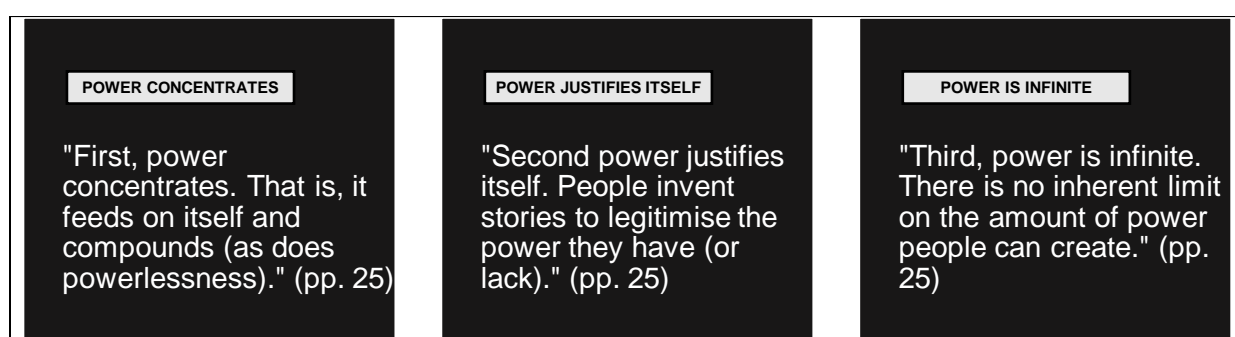
Figure 24   "The Three Laws of Power" (Liu, 2018)

To critically examine the construction and deconstruction of "power", Black women intellectuals consistently raised the ideas that the personal aspect of Black feminisms, must extend beyond theories, into social action and political practice (US Library of Congress, 1977; Harris, 2019). These tools for

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[58] People's experiences and ways of seeing the world are mediated by human practices (Braun & Clarke, 2022b), and thus, can be influenced by a myriad of contributing factors stemming from "[…] their placement within the families, groups, nations, and other collectivities that make up their social world" (Collins, 2019, p. 13).
[59] In this case, the "power structure" is framed as the "music industry" for this research project, which is further expounded upon, under "Sociocultural Context" (see Section 2.3.3.).

liberation were cited to be just as critically vital as their intellectual production sites in BFT (Emejulu & Sobande, 2019; Mirza, 1997; Lorde, 2009; Hull, et al., 2015; Bryan, et al., 2018; Davis, 2000; Cooper, 2018; Thomlinson, 2017). Based on this call-to-action, I sought to honour this longstanding tradition, and sought to proceed situating UK and US Black women's music industry career experiences from with this framework.

Accordingly, in the next sections I attempt to shed light on Black women's varied experiences with intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), more generally, to develop a better understanding of their unique concerns, which helped to inform the iterative aspect of my BFT epistemological (Collins, 2009) and Intersectionality theoretical (Carbado, et al., 2013) approaches, needed to be guided by their located narratives, within BFT, as a starting point.

Accordingly, topics, in this section, covered the following:

1. Equality legislation (1960s – Present-day),
2. Black feminist politics, and
3. Black women in music's empowerment

The Personal is Political…in the Music industry Too

1 – Equality Legislation (1960s – Present-day)

While the UK and US's respective governing bodies mandated laws to protect the most vulnerable of society from overt occurrences of discrimination, such as racial discrimination[60] or sexist discrimination[61], the legal language used to guarantee the full protections of said marginalised groups, fell short of being inclusive (Crenshaw, 1989). In this regard, Crenshaw (1989) homed in and drew attention to this in her landmark Black feminist critique of US anti-discrimination doctrine. It was in this paper, that she famously "named the perspective" (McCormick-Huhn, et al., 2019, p. 447) "intersectionality[62]" – her own coinage, which gained significant popularity, in the academies, over the past decades. In highlighting the importance of context in "power relations" navigating "interlocking systems of oppression" (Hull, et al., 2015; Collins, 2019), this was important to highlight, for this review, since this thesis examined the career experiences of Black women, from the 1960s onwards[63].

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[60] **Equality Legislation on Racism**: United Kingdom – (UK Race Relations Act 1965) (UK Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000) […] United States – (US EEOC: Facts About Race/Color Discrimination, 2018) (US Civil Rights Act of 1964, 2020)

[61] **Equality Legislation on Sexism:** United Kingdom – (UK Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act 2002 , 2002) (UK Sex Discrimination Act 1975 , 1975) […] United States – (US EEOC, 2019),

[62] As a quick point of digression, "intersectionality" is an analytic framework, with origins in BFT. It is well-documented that its practices and intellectual production sites began centuries earlier, in response to the status of Black women's position in US society (Cooper, 1892; Stewart, 1832; US Library of Congress, 1851) during colonial African chattel slavery, the "Age of Neoslavery" (Blackmon, 2008), and postcolonial eras. During the 1970s and 1980s, this framework was revolutionised and further advanced by Black queer feminist luminaries (Taylor, 2017), who operated under the name, Combahee River Collective (Collins, 2009), which many prominent thinkers, including Lorde, (1983), were founding members. Collins (2019), contended that academics have framed their works as using "intersectionality" as a theory, but it has been used more so as a heuristic, explained in later sections of the thesis.

[63] The US and UK experienced many societal shifts, prompted by social movements and the passing of a raft of landmark rulings and legislative mandates for equality.

United Kingdom's Equality Legislation[64]

Table 2   1 of 2 – UK Equality Legislation Impacting Black Women

STATUS	
Public General Act	Employment Act (1989)
Public General Act "Repealed by Equality Act 2010"	Equal Pay Act (1970)
Statutory Instrument	Equality Act 2010 (Equal Pay Audits) Regulations (2014)
Public General Act	Equality Act of 2010 (2010)
Statutory Instrument	The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations (2017)
Statutory Instrument	Equality Act 2010 Codes of Practice (Services, Public Functions and Associations, Employment, and Equal Pay) Order (2011)
Public General Act "Repealed by Equality Act 2010"	Race Relations Act (1965) Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000)
Public General Act "Repealed by Equality Act 2010"	Sex Discrimination Act of (1975)

Table 3   2 of 2 – UK Equality Legislation Impacting Black Women

Bill (House of Lords)	Well-being of Future Generations Bill [HL] (2019)
Bill (House of Commons)	Employment and Workers' Rights Bill (2017-19)
Bill (House of Lords)	Equal Pay Bill [HL] (2019-20)
Bill (House of Lords) "This bill will make no further progress"	Ethnicity Pay Gap Bill [HL] (2016-17)
Bill (House of Lords)	Workforce Information Bill [HL] (2019-20)
Public General Act and Parliamentary Business	The Immigration Act 1971 and The Windrush Generation (1971; 2018)

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[64] The researcher produced this table by pulling relevant legislation from multiple British government websites that have impacted Black women, since the 1960s. Each citation is listed within the year on each line under "Official Title".

United States' Equality Legislation[65]

Table 4   1 of 3 – US Equality Legislation Impacting Black Women[66]

Public Law	Equal Pay Act of (1963)
Public Law	H.R.1242 - 400 Years of African-American History Commission Act (2018)
Public Law	Civil Rights Act of (1964) (US National Archives, 1963-1964)
Public Law Bill (House of Representatives)	Voting Rights Act of (1965) (1975) Voting Rights Amendment Act (2019b)
Public Law	The Immigration and Nationality Act of (1965) or Hart-Celler Act
Public Law	Higher Education Act of (1965; 2019)
Bill (Senate)	S. 1981: Women and Minority Equity Investment Act of (2019)
Bill (House of Representatives)	H.R. 2005: Women's Retirement Protection Act of (2019)
Bill (House of Representatives)	H.Res.169 - Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the need for increased diversity and inclusion in the tech sector, and increased access to opportunity in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM) education. (2019)
House – Concurrent Resolutions	H.Con.Res.30 - Recognizing the significance of equal pay and the disparity between wages paid to men and women. (2019)

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[65] The researcher produced this table by pulling relevant legislation from multiple American government websites that have impacted Black women, since the 1960s. Each citation is listed within the year on each line under "Official Title".

[66] The researcher produced this table by pulling relevant legislation from multiple American government websites that have impacted Black women, since the 1960s. Each citation is listed within the year on each line under "Official Title".

Table 5   2 of 3 – US Equality Legislation Impacting Black Women

House – Concurrent Resolutions	H.Con.Res.59 - Recognizing the significance of equal pay and the disparity in wages paid to Black women in comparison to men (2019)
Bill (House of Representatives) Bill (Senate)	H.R.5309 "CROWN Act of 2019" (2019) or S.3167 "Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair Act of 2019" (2020)
Senate – Simple Resolution	S.Res.261 - Designation of June as African-American Music Appreciation Month. (2019)
Bill (House of Representatives)	H.R.5 Equality Act (2019)
Bill (House of Representatives)	H.R. 5360 - Closing the Racial Wealth Gap Act of (2019)
Bill (House of Representatives)	H.R. 3279 - "Diversity in Corporate Leadership Act of 2019" (2019)
Bill (House of Representatives)	H.R.40 - Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act (2019)
Bill (House of Representatives)	H.R.1828 - Ending Secrecy About Workplace Sexual Harassment Act (2019)
Bill (House of Representatives)	H.R.3468 - Fair Pay for All Act of (2019)
Bill (House of Representatives)	H.R.1864 - Pay Equity for All Act of (2019)
Joint Resolutions	H.Res.256 - Recognizing people of African descent and Black Europeans (2019)
Senate – Simple Resolution	S.Res.154 - "Black Maternal Health Week" (2019)

Table 6   3 of 3 – US Equality Legislation Impacting Black Women

Bill (House of Representatives)	H.R.2148 – "BE HEARD in the Workplace Act" or "Bringing an End to Harassment by Enhancing Accountability and Rejecting Discrimination in the Workplace Act" (2019)
Bill (House of Representatives)	H.R.1521 – "EMPOWER Act" or "Ending the Monopoly of Power of Workplace harassment through Education and Reporting Act" (2019)
Bill (House of Representatives)	H.R.3130 - Age Discrimination in Employment Parity Act of (2019)
Public Law	S.181 - Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of (2009)

2 – Black Feminist Politics

Although equality mandates were put in place to protect the rights of those occupying a minority, disadvantaged and/or vulnerable status in society, the reality remains that discrimination continues to occur, and in multidimensional ways, that can transform as a seemingly inescapable staying feature in Black women's daily lives (Seaton & Zeiders, 2021), which can crossover into their MIE workplace experiences.

Since Black women remain vulnerable to discriminatory treatment, it would be fair to presume that unfair treatment and malignment in their career experiences may not only just be experienced but could be said to mechanise as becoming more intensified in the less-regulated, hybrid work environments, such as the music industry (NAACP Economic Development, 1987). As this can be further compounded by those, who are more visible within celebrity-culture, of the White and male-dominated music industry, where these harms could be said to occur at greater degrees, compared to that of their counterparts (Collins, 1986; hooks, 2015; Cooper, 2018; Crenshaw, 1989).

In considering the different possibilities of these types of imbalanced power dynamics, this thesis sought to, first, centre Black feminist politics in the UK and US. In reviewing these, it was thought to best inform how to merge the intersectional concerns of both regions, to work towards constructing a "WEIRD Cross-Cultural Black Feminism" as a temporary conceptual prism, uniquely created for this project.

Prism: WEIRD Construction of Cross-Cultural Black Feminisms
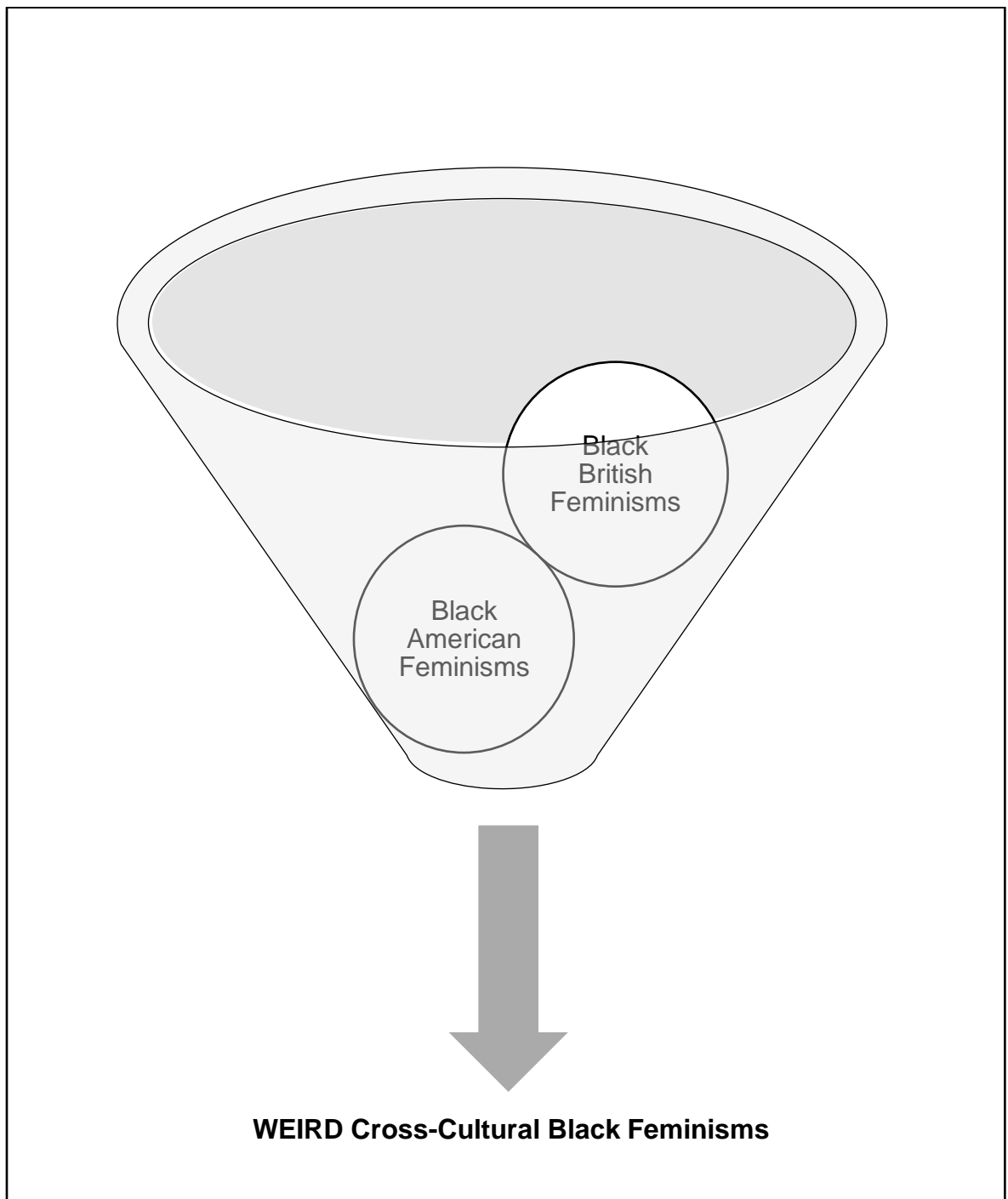
Figure 25   WEIRD Cross-Cultural Black Feminisms as a Prism

> The Colored [sic] Woman of to-day [sic] occupies […] a unique position in this country. In a period of itself transitional and unsettled, her status seems one of the least ascertainable and definitive of all the forces which make for our civilization [sic]. She is confronted by both a woman question and a race problem and is as yet an unknown or an unacknowledged factor in both (Cooper, 1892) as also cited in (Taylor, 2017, p. 5).

Figure 26   Photograph and Excerpt – Dr Anna Julia Cooper[67] (Bell, 1901)

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[67] Anna Julia Copper, PhD is recognised as the 4th Black woman to earn a doctoral degree (Gines, 2015) in the United States. The excerpt I embedded onto her image marks the earliest origins of Black Feminist Thought, in text format, from her (1892) writings that focused on the intersections of race, gender, and class interlocking oppressions.

Moving Beyond US Black Feminisms to a Transnational Context

Collins (2009) clarified that although there are many shared struggles in navigating oppressive systems that uniquely impact Black women, and other minority women, globally, there are also key distinctions in terms of how these challenges may arise and, thus, how they can be met with resistance[68]. This was important to keep at the forefront, in trying to best shape the intersectional "social action" outcome of this WEIRD cross-cultural doctoral research, as I sought to strive towards co-developing this project within a co-operative human liberatory transnational context. To this point, Collins noted:

> While U.S. Black feminism occupies this location between Americanness – the struggles with White feminists and with Black men – and women of African descent globally, the lion's share of its attention has been directed at American groups. As a result, U.S. Black feminism has been preoccupied with responding to the issues raised by American groups. The task now lies in fleshing out dialogues and coalitions with Black women who live elsewhere in the Black diaspora, keeping in mind that intersecting oppressions have left a path of common challenges that are differently [organised] and resisted. In the context of a global gender apartheid, women of African descent share many qualities (Collins, 2009, p. 254).

To work towards "fleshing out dialogues" to try to conduct this research from a more thoughtfully informed position, I embarked on a literary adventure to centre UK Black and black feminists.

In the next section, I deliberately draw attention to the "elephant in the room" in respect to some of the contentions, and reservations, in respect to the US, which is also covered to, both, deepen my own understandings, and to check

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[68] These were suggested to be informed and guided by varying local historical contexts, from which they can emerge.

my privilege (by national association), as an intercultural visitor, in these vital collectives' spaces, in this part of the world.

One of the goals was that I sought to learn how the shaping of this research could acknowledge both UK groups' liberation efforts[69], under the collective Afro-Asian unity umbrella, and under the Black African and Afro-Caribbean contexts, to remain cognisant of their multi-layered and differently located value constructions, shared values, and appreciated differences.

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[69] Although only women who self-identified as being of African descent were centred in this research project.

Gaining Insights on UK Black and black[89] Feminisms

Mirza[70] (2015) authored several books and scholarly texts to advance Black

Feminism as a theoretical field in the UK, and contextualised how "black" has

historically been viewed as a "multiracial signifier" (Mirza, 2015, p. 2) in this

country, which was used more as a:

> […] conscious political rather than a racial identification, used
> to forge allegiances between African and Indian anti-colonial
> liberation activists (Mirza & Gunaratnam, 2014, p. 127).

She also cited how Collins spoke about the energy behind the "coming to

voice" in black British feminism as being reminiscent to the earlier Black

feminist movements in the US, "embracing a collective 'black' but far from the

uniform voice," (2014, p. 127)[71,72,73].

As the Black Women's Movement in the UK started during the 1940s and

1950s, migrant women[74], who came to Great Britain, post-World War II,

organised their collective movements around anti-colonial activism. This could

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[70] Heidi Mirza is a black British feminist scholar of Indo-Caribbean and Austrian descent, recognised as being one of the first black women professors in Britain's history. Her pioneering writings and works significantly advanced this field in the Academy.
[71] For example, the US-based Combahee River Collective (CRC) was comprised of Black Queer Feminist luminaries (Hull, et al., 2015; US Library of Congress, 1977; 2015), who were critical to advancing intersectionality. This collective formed after they separated from the US-Based National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO) who prioritised "race" and "gender" – decentring Black women who faced other forms of oppression. As a result of these intragroup contentions, the CRC laid the groundwork for a more inclusive intersectional analysis of Black women's experiences (Taylor, 2017), which is widely recognised today as "intersectionality", a term coined by Crenshaw in (1989), with origins that extend back to centuries of Black Feminist Thought productions. The CRC advanced the inclusion of heterosexual and class oppressions, along with their critique and activism to dismantle interlocking oppressions.
[72] Lorde also spoke to the lived experience of intragroup exclusion, where she indicated no matter which minority social group she found herself in, she was always deemed "the minority of minorities", so to speak, and the assigned meanings these groups placed on her intersected identity, labelled her as "difficult", "inferior", or "just plain wrong" (1983, p. 9).
[73] This is still the case in the US, as there is a wealth of diversity of differently constructed values and visions across different sites and practices of Black feminisms.
[74] From Africa, the Caribbean, and the subcontinent of India.

be said to offer glimpses of insights to better understanding some of the complex ways of how black and Black British women worked to counter "anti-blackness", developed from overlapping contexts, where "black" was viewed:

1. *politically* – where traditions of variations of black and Black British feminisms, were and still are multiple movements and prisms, in and of themselves, created to dismantle systemic barriers[75] specific to these women, in the wider British society; and

2. *racially* – within an African diasporic context in Western culture, and in terms of how the UK government now defines "Black" today (UK Government, 2022) – disaggregating it from the BAME umbrella, on the advice of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (UK Government, 2022) to not conflate specific minority group's unique experiences with inequalities and inequities, as well as navigating the "politics of identity" (Bryan, et al., 2018).

This cultural context could explain why Young (2000) agreed with Mirza (1997) that "blackness" should not be limited to racialised constructions to challenge the ways in which women of colour (WOC) identifying with this group are marginalised as a result of their overlapping experiences with oppression. Further, Young (2000) pointed to the ways in how Black American feminist scholarship has helped black and Black British women find a "rich source of intellectual sustenance and networks for support," (2000, p. 48). However, she argued that there are differences, cross-culturally, between

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[75] Such as colonialism, racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism, to cite a few examples.

the US and UK under the pretext that the development of social hierarchies,

impacting Black women in the US, were organised under slavery and the

UK's main issue had more to do with institutionalised classism[76]. In the case

that aspects of Young's assertion held some truths, for the British context, this

distancing from slavery, in terms of it not impacting the development of social

hierarchies seemed incongruent to earlier and later writings (see Footnote 71

and Figure 27) by fellow Black British intellectual producers.

Figure 27   Screenshot of HM Treasury's 9th February 2018 Tweet

(Olusga, 2018)[77]

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[76] Olusoga (2016) and Eddo-Loge (2018) wrote extensively about Britain's dominance in the African slave trade in their books, where they also mentioned Britain's suppression of their heavy involvements.

[77] In 2018, the HM Treasury in a post-and-delete tweet, following public backlash, informed taxpayers on Twitter that they all "helped" pay off the last of the UK government's debts to slaveholder families in Britain in 2015, for purchasing enslaved African people's freedom to pass the Slavery Abolition Act (Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slavery, 2022)

As an example, the Brixton Black Women's Group[78] (BBWG), co-authored a foundational text in UK Black Feminism, "Heart of the Race" (2018), originally published in 1985. In it, they spoke extensively to Britain's entrenched involvements, and world domination, in the African slave trade (see Figure 29), which they framed, in respect to how it shaped British modern society, and their Black British Afro-Caribbean lived experiences.

As they detailed the impact and enduring legacies of African slavery throughout the West Indies[79] as influencing the development of social hierarchies in the UK, their oppressions were described to occur on a continuum (see Figure below).
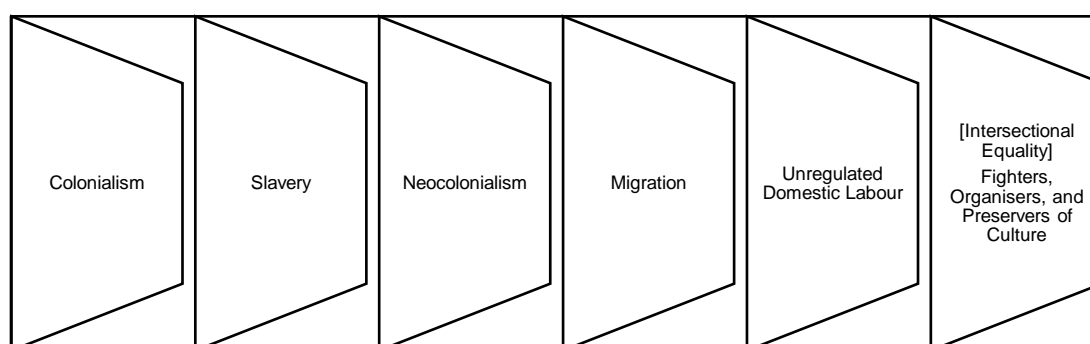
Figure 28   A Black British Afro-Caribbean Perspective (Bryan, et al., 2018)

For historical reference, data from the SlaveVoyages Database (2022) suggests that out of the 10.7 million enslaved African ancestors, who survived the "Middle Passage" / "Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade", only 2% disembarked

[78] The Brixton Black Women's Group was a collective (Feminist Review, 1984), whose members included the three credited writers, Bryan, Dadzie, and Scafe (Bryan, et al., 2018).
[79] For context, although slavery has been framed as the "Black American experience" by western media, it is a global African Diasporic experience. This regurgitated erroneous framing could be said to be attributed to US media's powerhouses' investments (Collins, 2009) in regularly exploiting and exporting "Black trauma" through slavery filmography (Stevenson, 2018) for mass media consumption.

under the "USA" Flag, and 26% disembarked under the "Great Britain" flag between the 1600s – 1800s. For further context, it is also important to consider that the United States was "British Colonial America" for the first 164 years, following the establishment of Britain's first-ever colony in 1619 (Olusoga, 2016), until self-definition was exercised by the new nation of "Americans", through the "Declaration of Independence" in 1776 in conjunction with the American Revolutionary War, which lasted from 1775 – 1783, with the USA officially gaining independence from the Empire in 1783, as officiated by the Treaty of Paris that went into effect the following year.

To expound on the earlier point of oppression occurring on a continuum, Scafe (2018) spoke to the importance of framing these experiences of intersectionality as the "politics of identity" (Bryan, et al., 2018, p. 103), rather than as "identity politics[80]" (Hull, et al., 2015; US Library of Congress, 1977).

> I think identity politics is a misnomer. I remember when I first started teaching, the white faculty would talk a lot about identity politics and I would find myself correcting them and saying, "What we're talking about here is actually the politics of identity." For me, that distinction is crucial, because that is about how you are situated in terms of class, culture, gender, and sexuality and so on; it's about your position in society. Whereas identity politics is a way of suggesting that your politics are based only on a very narrow definition of identity. So in a pejorative sense, blackness can be construed as identity politics, or a politics based only on colour or race; whereas the politics of identity suggests a more complex context, a way of legitimately surviving, and a way of identifying where and how you're situated in society (Bryan, et al., 2018, p. 103).

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[80] "Identity politics" is a term coined by the Combahee River Collective (US Library of Congress, 1977; 2015).

To revisit Young's (2000) framing of one of the key differences between UK and US Black women's struggles (being "institutionalised classism"), could be said to carry assumptions about perceptions, which I contend may be an issue with language, and conflation, in terms of how classism is approached (as well as from who), and how it is discussed, literally and euphemistically, in both territories[81]. Further, while this may be true for her lived experiences, the "matrix of oppression" (Collins, 2009), which can manifest as, (more specifically) anti-Black racism, gender oppression (from an Africanist lens), colonialism, and other forms, were noted throughout the BBWG's (2018) and Emejulu and Sobande's (2019) important texts – as one not taking precedence over the other, but rather operating interdependently, and on a continuum.

Further, the BBWG framed "classism" through the lens of it being built from the centuries long-practice of institutional African slavery[82].

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[81] Although the issue of race may generally be the primal lens in which different power structures tend to frame the "Black American experience" culturally, studies have extensively documented issues of institutionalised classism, as underpinning these continuing structural challenges as being rooted from the slave economy, which economically benefitted US and European nations (McKinsey Institute for Black Economic Mobility and McKinsey Global Institute, 2021; Crenshaw, Kimberlé, et al., (Editors), 2019; Coates, 2017; Taylor, 2017; Bryan, et al., 2018).

[82] They also spoke about the prevalence, yet suppression, of state violence, as they cited several events involving the killings of Black children and adults, under mysterious circumstances in London and elsewhere in Britain, from 1981 onwards.

In fact, it was the British ruling class which had the highest stakes in prolonging our enslavement. Members of the Royal Family, churchmen, Members of Parliament – they all had interests in the West Indies. But it was not simply a case of the privileged few acquiring wealth and massive profits. The ordinary British people were able to reap the rewards, too, from the plunder of Africa's people and the exploitation of our labour. The Slave Trade provided new industries and employment, new markets and investments and overall profits which can never be fully assessed. When, a century later, Black people began to enter Britain as immigrants, we came to a country we had already helped to build. Our labour provided the foundations upon which many financial institutions, seaports and industrial centres were built. […] The impact of the Slave Trade on Britain was not confined to the material. Our presence in eighteenth-century England was an accepted reality. Black women and men were sold openly at auctions […] Black servants were common too, and our children were the inevitable appendages of slave captains and high-society women. […] This country's past is littered with the names and deeds of Black women and Black men, frequently anonymous and unsung, who have helped to shape it into what it is today. By no stretch of the imagination can we be described as new arrivals (Bryan, et al., 2018).

Figure 29   A Framing of Classism in the UK (Bryan, et al., 2018)

As a final point, when the co-authors were asked their thoughts about the "demise" of some umbrellaed organisations, which were critical to the Black British Feminist movements in the 1980s as it once united migrant African and South Indian woman, the authors offered different perspectives noting it "was a confluence of a lot of different issues" (2018, p. 103). However, most notably, they confirmed that women of African descent did not meet funding criteria.

Certain organisations got the funding, and others didn't. And part of the funding criteria, the way they saw it, was to do things that were cultural or ethnic rather than political (Bryan, et al., 2018).

Thomlinson's (2017) review of four black feminist periodicals, during Britain's second wave feminism era, seemed to address and further contextualise their

statement, citing both ideological differences and structural inequalities, as the cause for being "broken down" (2017, p. 16) (see Figure 30).

UK Black Feminist Periodicals		
	"Speak Out" and "FOWAAD"	The first black feminist periodicals to be published in the UK in the 1970s that focused primarily on racism from the British state, within a Marxist framework. (pp. 8 - 9)
	"We Are Here"	The third newsletter founded after the "first dedicated black feminist conference ever held in London in May 1984" that centred on the experiences of solely Black women (pp. 10)
	"Mukti"	The only periodical in this group to receive a grant from the government, where the newsletter addressed the specific realities of South-Asian British women, revealing the limitation of "black" as a political construct for this group of women to understand their experience with intersectionality. While the idea of "blackness" brought Afro-Caribbean, South Asian and African women together, South Asian women contended to feel marginalised in this movement. (pp. 13)

Figure 30   UK Black Feminist Periodicals (Thomlinson, 2017)

Perceptions of "BFT" and "Black History" US Dominance

In continuing on perceived structural inequalities, Young (2000), Emejulu and Sobande (2019), Lewis (2011), BBWG (2018), and many other Black British feminist intellectual producers, expressed similar grievances and contested how US Black feminist scholars have more recognition in BFT; while, Black and black British feminist scholars, need "more attention, more recognition, and more debate" (2000, p. 57) in the UK to advance existing, and further develop, localised frameworks of BFT.

In speaking to this, Lewis[83], (2011), who famously co-edited one of the earlier foundational key BFT writings in the UK (Grewal, et al., 1988), spoke on her non-personal resentment towards the power structure of the Academy, for seemingly contributing to this imbalanced power dynamic. She explained that the Academy looked to the US for insights and context to build intersectional frameworks to advance feminisms, and Black feminisms, as theory and practice. However, Black British women, who have been organising and engaging in these spaces throughout Britain, concurrently, were mainly overlooked, by their own country-people[84]. Some Black British feminist texts also went out of print and circulation, either indefinitely, or for an extended period – resurfacing decades later.

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[83] Gail Lewis co-founded the Organisation for Women of African and Asian Descent (OWAAD) – founded 1978 and was a member of the Brixton Black Women's Group – founded 1973 (Thomlinson, 2017; Emejulu & Sobande, 2019; British Library, 2011; British Library, 2011).

[84] These erasure dynamics seemed reflective of the ideas shared in the widely circulated, frequently referenced, and repeatedly contested "Willie Lynch Letter" (1712).

Lewis continued:

> Because the fact that we're much more known, I mean *all of us*
> in all of our work, in the States – as a body of thought […] We
> just weren't given that kind of recognition [here in the UK]
> (British Library, 2011).

To further contextualise her statement, the description section of this British

Library's (BL) oral history project, offered a possible reason for the perceived

US dominance narrative, since US Black women's writings and thinking were

suggested to be prioritised, by gatekeepers, of the [UK] Academy. This was

implied to further marginalise, and silence, Black and black British women, in

particularly harmful ways, within the context of "silencing" (rather than "giving

voice") and not being included to "talk back" (Emejulu & Sobande, 2019) in

power negotiation spaces. To this, BL noted:

> The work of black [sic] feminists was significant in the
> development of feminist theory as well as literature and history,
> the humanities, and social sciences. This was particularly true
> in the USA, whereas in Britain the black women's movement
> was more closely associated with activism than academia. One
> reason for the different recognition and status of black [sic]
> women's writing in the USA and Britain is that more women in
> the USA went to university during the 1960s and '70s. Another
> is the role that civil rights played in the American feminist
> movement (British Library, 2011).

Beyond BFT, Eddo-Lodge (2018), a Black British author, of Nigerian descent,

also noted how more insight, related to the complex relationship with "Black"

identity in the UK was needed, in general. Since context[85] was missing, she

cited she often looked to the US for assigned meanings and "knowledge of

Black history" (Eddo-Lodge, 2018, p. 9), which could be said to speak,

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[85] A key tenet used in this qualitative research.

somewhat, to an aspect of "monoculture" (Eddo-Lodge, 2018, p. 15) social conditioning, since she noted British schools routinely angled "Black history" and "Black struggles" as uniquely "American", which Olusoga (2016) sheds light on the effects of Britain's "historical amnesia" (The Guardian, 2020), later in this chapter (see Section 2.3.5). It was not until Eddo-Lodge took a "short university module" that she learned about Black history from a British-centric lens, which began her journey to studying world wars, "uprisings" and/or "riots" (as she noted – depending on who is asked), the British Eugenics Movement, the UK Civil Rights Movement, and Black British oral histories, where she also conducted interviews with public figures in the UK, for more insight.

Considering this glaring institutional absence of context, it could also explain why US Black feminist scholars, for example, were cited particularly throughout the chapter on, "The Feminism Question", highlighting how even approaching "feminism with a race analysis", was, and still is considered taboo, to a degree, and could warrant severe backlash in Britain. To this, she indicated she personally experienced antagonistic retaliation for raising this in predominantly (what will succinctly be described as) "White-humanity-centred" British feminist spaces. Further, she noted that the conventional politics, within, tended to try to universalise "the woman problem", while refusing to acknowledge "the race problem" (hooks, 2014) and other compounding factors, where the possibilities within "intersectionality", as a framework, could hold space for all these aspects (and more) in power- and empowerment-politics.

Overall, she contended that Britain's deep history with imperialism, and deeply entrenched involvement with African slavery, in both the UK and its colonised territories, tended to be glossed over or omitted entirely from traditional spaces of learning and schooling. To this, she cited the role of patriotic socialisation, where the concept of one's "nationality[86]" was deemed as more important in the socially constructed hierarchal system of identity, in the UK. Here, Eddo-Lodge summarised:

> […] with little discussion of the history of colonialism, or of why people from Africa and Asia came to settle in Britain […] While the black British story is starved of oxygen, the US struggle against racism is globalised into the story of the struggle against racism that we should look to for inspiration – eclipsing the black British story so much that we convince ourselves that Britain has never had a problem with race. We need to stop lying to ourselves […] Black Britain deserves a context (Eddo-Lodge, 2018, p. 9).

In echoing Eddo-Lodge's sentiment, "context" was, and shall remain, a primary feature, throughout this doctoral research project. As a "Black woman" from the "US", I am keenly aware of my "non-membership status" as an "intercultural visitor[87]" in Black British spaces, sharing Black British women's stories. From this positioning, I understood I needed[88] more nuanced context, in moving forward to better inform the prism, from which I intend to conduct this research[89].

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[86] As earlier mentioned, under the "Sociohistorical Context" section, Burroughs and Vassell (2014) spoke to this dynamic regarding patriotic socialisation.
[87] Being of British lineal descent is a moot point in the context of this country's complex politics and unique sociopolitical discourses – as I did not grow up here nor was I culturally indoctrinated.
[88] And still need, as learning is an ongoing process.
[89] The primary goal is to gain deeper understandings, so that all participants, involved, can feel validated, seen, and more importantly heard – as "giving voice" (Collins, 2009) is central to working towards a collective human liberation, made partially accessible, through BFT – as "theories" and practice.

3 – Black Women in Music's Empowerment

- First, to try to best move towards a "WEIRD Cross-Cultural Black Feminism" as a temporary applicational lens to account for both UK and US Black women in music's located concerns, and understandings of power[90], I understood I needed to be mindful of how I proceeded, so that the final report did not come across as "American-washed".

- Second, as my core value-construct remains Black women groups, as well as other dominant groups, and minority groups, are not a monolith, this must continue to remain a clearly communicated point, for clarity, throughout the research and writing process.

- Third, as nuance within intragroup dynamics were evidenced in this section, across both regions' Black feminist politics, I intend to propose and discuss expanding IT's framework, by also reviewing these Black women's lived experiences through an intrasectional-labelled framework, to be further expounded upon in the discussion, in Chapter 7.

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[90] With respect to their social locations, within the context of their career experiences in MIEs.

Sociopolitical Summary

By reviewing Black women's diverse sociopolitical contexts, it was clear why an intersectionality analysis (Cole, 2020) in psychology and "intersectional interventions" (African American Policy Forum, 2022a, p. 4), must be conjointly implemented, to not only examine, but also work to improve Black women's career experiences, within the context of the music industry. Also, it was important to envision the different, but not limiting, possibilities as to how Black women could become disenfranchised (hooks, 2015) within hierarchal (Liu, 2017), non-hierarchal (Collins, 2009) and kyriarchal[91] paradigms (Fiorenza, 1992) in both US and UK music industry ecosystems that could assist with the analysis. As I sought to specifically centre trailblazing and leading Black women's career experiences in the industry, this occupational hierarchal group, was intentionally centred, based on Collins's following assertion, which I intend to apply to this research, from within a cross-cultural context:

> US Black women's long-standing participation in organized [sic] political activities fosters [sic] a rethinking of the ways in which many Black women conceptualise and use power. Black women's use of power seems to grow from distinctive conceptions of how people can become empowered, how power can be structured and shared in organizational [sic] settings, and how organizations [sic] would look if people were to be fully empowered within them. Examining Black women's leadership in organisations whose mission is institutional change offers a route to examining these larger questions (Collins, 2009, p. 234).

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[91] In 1992, Harvard University's Krister Stendahl Professor of Divinity and Feminist Theologian, Dr Elizabeth Schussle Firoenza, coined the term "kyriarchy" to move away from the applicational use of patriarchy to a more non-gender specific analytical tool to recognise how systems of oppression can manifest and shift, regardless of social identity, contingent upon context, which falls in line with the conceptual framework of "intersectionality" (Crenshaw, 1989).

In view of this, to attempt to address these larger questions, as it pertains to the context of this research, the dictum, "the personal is political" (Else-Quest & Grabe, 2012) was centred, to begin to understand how politics, which is ultimately about "power" (Liu, 2018) can transform in different contexts, especially within the music industry ecosystem, in overt and covert ways, for trailblazing and leading Black women, which the next section addresses.

2.3.3 Sociocultural Context

The Power Structure of "The Music Industry[92]"

Collins (2019) clarified:

> Intersectionality's emphasis on intersecting systems of power suggests that distinctive forms of oppression will each have its own power grid, a distinctive "matrix" of intersecting power dynamics. (p. 239).

Since "conduits of power" can include "institutions", "organisations", "networks", and more (Liu, 2018, p. 51), I chose to situate the "music industry" as the "power structure", for this doctoral research project. To frame trailblazing and leading Black women's career experiences, from within this sociocultural context, was considered to be central to the project, as this industry is less regulated, and, clearly, segregated (NAACP Economic Development, 1987; USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, 2021). This has repeatedly been made evident by the glaring lack of diversity and inclusion of underrepresented groups, evidenced by it remaining largely White and male (Black Music Action Coalition, 2021; Black Lives in Music, 2021; UK Music, 2020) – both, in workforce representation and in "positions of power" – 60+ years since the passing of landmark equality legislation to prohibit employer discrimination (US National Archives, 1963-1964; UK Equality Act 2010, 2010; UK Equality Act 2010 (Equal Pay Audits) Regulations 2014, 2014), across industries.

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[92] As this thesis is set in the UK and US music markets, the interchangeable use of phraseologies like "the (music) industry", "the (music) business", "the (music industry) ecosystem", or the "popular music industry", is to acknowledge either, or both, territories and multiple operational business sectors (Williamson & Cloonan, 2007) throughout both, interrelated, industries. Accordingly, sectors may extend, but not be limited, to – sound recording and production, legal, human resources, STEM, corporate, marketing, financial accounting, live music, and broadcasting – to name a few examples.

To deconstruct this, the next sections sought to provide a quick overview of:

1. Commonly used terminology and euphemisms in the industry and

2. Business practices involving systemic erasure and exclusion
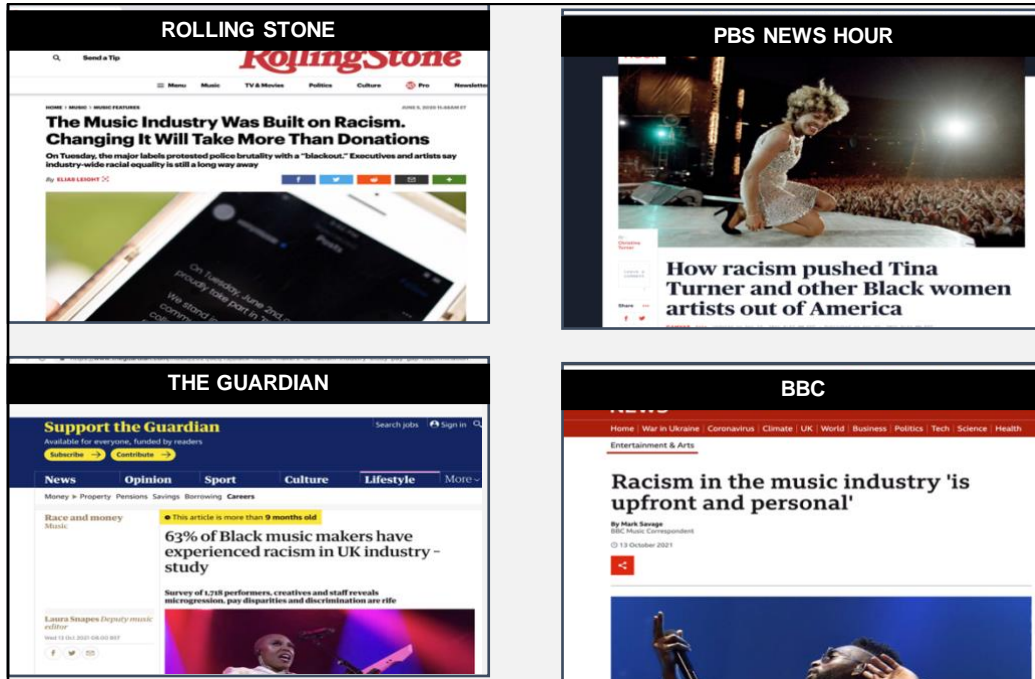
Figure 31   Music Articles Published Between 2020 – 2021
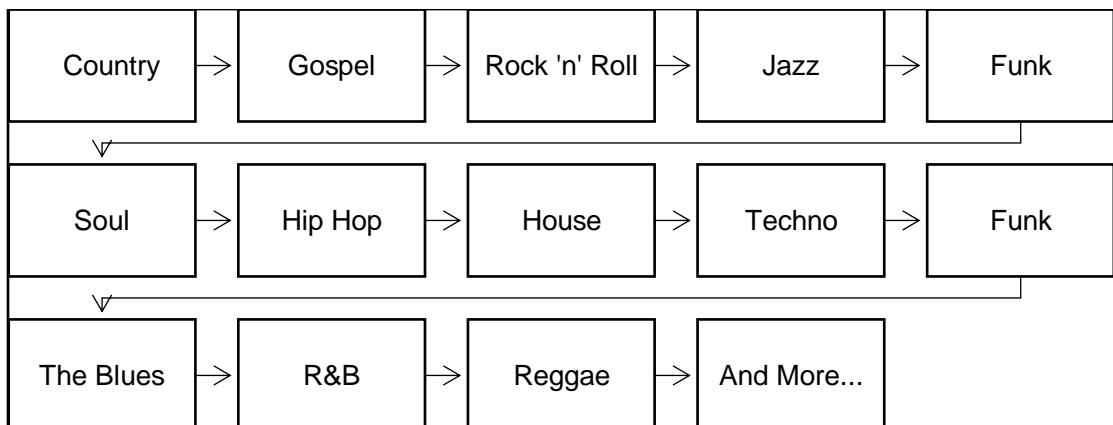
Figure 32   Non-exhaustive List of Genres Pioneered by Black Musicians

1 – Commonly Used Terminology and Euphemisms in the Industry

Mainstream Terminology: "Popular Music"

For this research project, which sought to gain in-depth insights about trailblazing and leading Black women's career experiences, in this industry, it was important to cite that the terminology "popular music" will not be defined as a genre; but rather as:

> Any commercially oriented music principally intended to be received and appreciated by a wide audience, generally in literate, technologically advanced societies dominated by urban culture" (Britannica, 2020, p. para. 1).

Also, more broadly, "popular music" will be used in accordance with the definition provided by Lexico[93], who defined it as, "Music appealing to the popular taste, including rock and pop and also soul, reggae, rap and dance music" (2020a).

Racialised Terminology: "Urban Music"

Although these definitions of "popular music" were elected to use for the purposes of this project, there are reasons to believe that the euphemism for "Black", may have been codified as "Urban" by Britannica (2020) in their description[94]. In terms of the use of the considered euphemistic word placement of "urban" culture, in their offered "popular music" definition, it included a special note that the entry was last revised and updated by Assistant Editor, Patricia Bauer, whose academic background in Spanish and

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[93] Lexico is a collaboration between Dictionary.com and Oxford University Press.
[94] Terminology on Britannica's website is periodically updated by named contributors over time as semantics naturally continue to evolve along with a progressing society.

Theatre Arts were publicly made known on the corporate website, which could

be said to be on account of transparency. However, Bauer's, and the other

editors' expertise, or consultation with experts, in the subject area of

musicology, more generally, or popular music studies and culture, was not

made known. Thus, this marginally raised three queries (see below).

1	**First**, the offered definition posed a two-part question: (**1**) Who oversees the vetting process of word selections within evolving definitions? **(2)** Does that vetted person's, or team's, social standing influence any aspect of how words' meanings are produced and interpreted by society with popular culture nuances in understandings, which may progress overtime? Due to these potential inclinations, this illustrated why an authoritative person's reflexivity statement may be critical to be made known, as is done in qualitative research, for transparency and possible motive (Braun & Clarke, 2013).
2	**Second**, this example brought to question how insidiously power structures and the inequalities in the evolution of meanings in words, can unconsciously produce an undercurrent of authoritarian racialised euphemisms, where its use can ultimately become pretextual in erasing minority groups' societal contributions. For example, the term "urban", in this context, could codify "Black" people and culture, which could be connected to assumptions surrounding the historical and ever-present constructs of racial and class hierarchy of America's caste system (Liu, 2017). This will be further discussed in the next section.
3	**Third**, this entry brought to question of what could be an unchallenged relational power dynamic that can emerge and exist between society's overreliance on trusted brands and sources for "meaning-making" and "understanding", whose human personnel may be subject to any of the cognitive biases (Maymin & Langer, 2021) when defining and updating the lexicon that is depended on. The established credibility of these trusted academic sources can be inadvertently undermined if there are no public observances of checks and balances in place, which go beyond just listing contributors' names, to check for potential partialities.

Figure 33   1st Three Critiques About Britannica's "Popular Music" Entry

Britannica's extended entry on the definition of "popular music" contended

that it has its origins in Blackface minstrel shows[95] (Britannica, 2019) (see

Figure 35), which is a debasing art-form historically rooted in anti-Black

racism from African chattel slavery days (Suthern, 1971; Pickering, 2017;

California Task Force, 2022). Interestingly, Pickering (2017) noted:

> […] the minstrel show was a major form of music and
> entertainment in Britain from the 1840s to the 1970s, rather
> longer than in the United States, where it was equally popular
> in the nineteenth century but by the mid-twentieth century had
> largely faded away (Pickering, 2017, p. preface).

Albeit compelling, this "origin" claim is still posed as a hypothesis in popular

music scholarship (Brown, 2013). However, this raised another, and final,

query regarding this entry, from an analytical standpoint (see Figure below).

4

In terms of racialising and codifying "contributors" of "popular music", Bauer noted how Black Americans' impact on "popular music" was solely distinguished from an "African rhythm", "jazz" and "blues" angle, erasing the community's extensive contribution to the creation of other popular genres and art forms, such as "rock music" (Nielsen, 2018), which has historically been and is still presently deemed as racially "White".

Figure 34   Final and 4th Critique About Britannica's "Popular Music" Entry

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[95] The US Library of Congress (2022c) explained, "Blackface minstrelsy, which derived its name from the White performers who blackened their faces with burnt cork, was a form of entertainment that reached its peak in the mid-nineteenth century. Using caricatures of African Americans in song, dance, tall tales, and stand-up comedy, minstrelsy was immensely popular with White audiences. These caricatures usually featured the uncultured, parochial, happy-go-lucky southern plantation slave (Jim Crow) in his tattered clothing, or the urban dandy (Zip Coon or Dandy Jim), frequently presented as slow-talking, mischievous and gaudily overdressed. Both were dim-witted, lazy, and were intensely fond of both watermelon and chicken. For several decades these two stereotypes remained the most enduring of American minstrelsy."

Figure 35   Jim Crow Song Sheet (US Library of Congress, 2022b)

"Urban Culture" in Music: Codification Producing Erasure

For context on why this is being challenged, Britannica's use of "urban culture", is also a term used by corporations, which has been understood to be a euphemism for "Black culture" – at least in the US (Hess, 2017; Caputo-Levine & Lynn, 2019).

US Census Bureau's Terminology: "Urban"

In its most literal context, the Census Bureau (2010) classifies "urban" today as "a densely settled population", and territory that meets one of the following two criteria: (1) Urbanized Areas (UAs) of 50,000 or more people or (2) Urban Clusters (UCs) of at least 2,500 and less than 50,000 people."

Official Statistics of "Urban" Populations in the US

Statistically, Black Americans "make up the single largest racial minority in the United States" (US Library of Congress, 2020), making up approximately 13% of the total population, where the top "ten places with the largest number of Blacks or African Americans" in the 2010 US Census are listed as shown (US Census Bureau, 2011), in Table 7. This majority representation could be said to be due to the "Great Migration" (Trent, et al., 2017), where millions of southern Black families moved to the Northern part of the states[96], in search of a better life, decades following The American Civil War.

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[96] Including my mother's family.

As Black families moved in droves, into major "urban" cities, such as Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Detroit, and Philadelphia (US Census Bureau, 2011), they pioneered the music scene and artistic movements in these cities that are all still considered major music hubs, today.

Britannica's plausible indirect acknowledgement could be said to draw attention to the ways in which, and how, members of a Black community can experience, subtle erasure, where they remain major influencers of the topmost leading music market's mainstream and popular culture as reported by Nielsen (2018), yet widely uncredited through the mechanism of "codification systems".

Table 7   The Black Population: 2010[97] (US Census Bureau, 2011)

Place	Total Population	Black or African American alone or in combination		Black or African American alone		Black or African American in combination	
		RANK	NUMBER	RANK	NUMBER	RANK	NUMBER
New York, NY	8,175,133	1	2,228,145	1	2,088,510	1	139,635
Chicago, IL	2,695,598	2	913,009	2	887,608	3	25,401
Philadelphia, PA	1,526,006	3	686,870	3	661,839	4	25,031
Detroit, MI	713,777	4	601,988	4	590,226	13	11,762
Houston, TX	2,099,451	5	514,217	5	498,466	8	15,751
Memphis, TN	646,889	6	414,928	6	409,687	58	5,241
Baltimore, MD	620,961	7	403,998	7	395,781	29	8,217
Los Angeles, CA	3,792,621	8	402,448	8	365,118	2	37,330
Washington, DC	601,723	9	314,352	9	305,125	22	9,227
Dallas, TX	1,197,816	10	308,087	10	298,993	23	9,094

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[97] The ten places with the largest number of Black or African-American populations

2 – Business Practices of Systemic Erasure of Black Innovators in Music

As an example, Bennett (2001) noted that the attribution of Black roots in rock 'n' roll music experienced a shift in mainstream representation and consumption in the mid-1950s, as the genre – pioneered and previously dominated by Black musicians – such as Chuck Berry, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Little Richie, and Big Mama Thornton (Schaap & Berkers, 2020) – gained favour amongst White audiences (Bennett, 2001). He further spoke to how the artistic "rock music" sound birthed by Black musicians, was "cleaned up" and repackaged for White consumption, in ways that relegated Black acts – catapulting White acts as the new and, still, current face of the genre in popular culture and mainstream media, today.

In a more recent study, authors Schaap and Berkers (2020) similarly pinpointed when the phenomenon of this shift precisely occurred, also citing that it was during the mid-1950s. In their study, they investigated how today's consumers:

> […] [navigated] the whiteness of rock music practice and discourse […] [and] addressed the complex connection between aesthetic categories (popular music) and ethno-racial categories and to what extent this relationship is open or resistant to structural change (2020, p. 416).

This is just one example, as to how the music industry as a "power structure", can marginalise Black people.
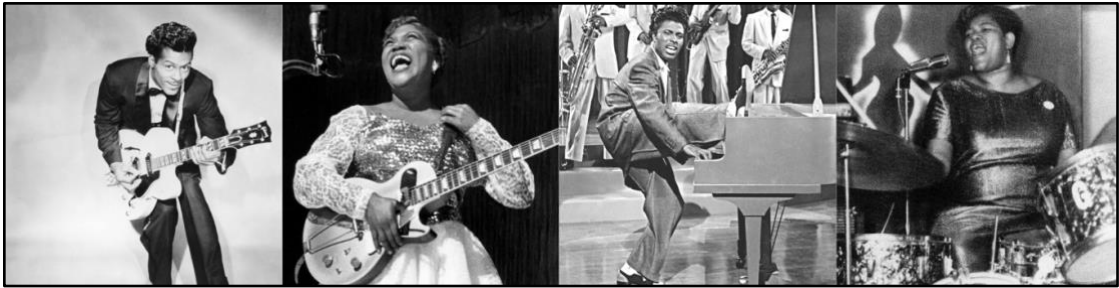
Figure 36   Rock 'n' Roll Pioneers[98]: "The Father of Rock 'n' Roll[99]" –"The Godmother of Rock 'n' Roll[100]" – "The Architect of Rock 'n' Roll[101]" – "Big Mama Thornton[102]"

> As a Black woman, I should be singing purely "Gospel", or "Blues", or some kind of "Delta" sound, or "Motown" sound. That's what I should- "As a Black person, that's what I should be doing." But that's not what I was doing. So, they had to work out, "Well, there isn't a Black person doing this. How do we? How do we sell this to the public?" You know, "We're looking at something, but we should be hearing something else." "When we look at this person, we should be hearing this. But we're looking at this person and we're hearing something that isn't quite- ((laughs)) it's not quite gelling" (BBC 4 TV Documentary, 2019)

Figure 37   Genre-Defying Pioneer, Joan Armatrading[103]

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[98] Photographed left to right.

[99] Chuck Berry was active in the music industry from 1953 – 2017.

[100] Sister Rosetta Tharpe was active in the music industry from 1919 – 1973.

[101] Little Richie was active in the music industry from 1947 – 2020.

[102] Big Mama Thornton was active in the music industry from 1947 – 1984.

[103] Kittitian-British singer-songwriter, Joan Armatrading CBE, has been active in the music industry since 1972 (Armatrading, 2019).

Sociocultural Summary

By centring the "music industry" as the "power structure", and offering some insights as to how erasure did, and does, occur, helps to contextualise how these practices could be said to impact Black women navigating work environments in the MIE.

In the next section, a more in-depth rationale for choosing the research locations is discussed.

2.3.4 Sociogeographical Context

Since the MIE is framed as the "power structure", for this project, it was important to elect the top-performing music markets of the world to study trailblazing and leading Black women's career experiences. This was done since it could be presumed that inequalities would be less commonplace, in regions that are generally thought to be the most globally progressive and egalitarian – minimally, industrially, organisationally, and societally.

Accordingly, these framings would suggest that Black women are respected as full human beings, and that they experience inclusion in their everyday experiences in the workplace. These would also suggest, Black women automatically have equal access to opportunities, as their counterparts, for career advancement, psychological safety in the workplace (Kim, et al., 2020; Edmondson & Lei, 2014), and a sense of job security – guaranteed by their governments' legislative mandates that illegalised employer and workplace discrimination (US Civil Rights Act of 1964 - Public Law 88-352, 1964; UK Equality Act 2010, 2019).

Accordingly, this section sought to identify the following, from a sociogeographical context, to better contextualise trailblazing and leading Black women in music's career experiences, for the project. The following points will now be discussed:

- Rationale for choosing specific global music markets
- Acknowledging The WEIRD research setting of the music markets

Global Music Market Research Trends

1 – Rationale for Choosing Specific Global Music Markets

Longitudinal Secondary Data Tracking: Music Market Research Trends

According to the latest released "Global Music Report" (see Table 8) it states that, at 37%, the US maintains the largest market share of the music industry, followed by Japan with 13.5% and then the UK with 6.9% (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2021). Over the progression of this research, the US music market[104] is the only country whose total market share has incrementally increased by 4%; whereas Japan and the UK's total market share have both decreased, over the years, by 2.5% and 2.1%, respectively.

Table 8   IFPI Global Music Reports – % Of Global Revenues (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2017; International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2018; International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2019; International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2020; International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2021)

	USA		JAPAN		UK	
Year	Global Ranking	**Market Share**	Global Ranking	**Market Share**	Global Ranking	**Market Share**
2016	1st	33%	2nd	16%	3rd	9%
2017	1st	34%	2nd	18%	3rd	8%
2018	1st	34%	2nd	16%	4th	8%
2019	1st	34.9%	2nd	15%	3rd	7.3%
2020	1st	37%	2nd	13.5%	3rd	6.9%

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[104] The US has maintained its global ranking as the top-performing market and the UK has steadily maintained the top-performing market in Europe, placing the country between 3rd and 4th, in terms of global rankings, where Germany ranked 3rd place for market dominance in 2018.

Inclusion of the 1ˢᵗ and 3ʳᵈ Largest Music Markets in the World

Since this research was framed as exploring the career experiences of

trailblazing and leading Black women, in the top-performing music markets,

the following criteria had to be met, as a starting point.

- Each music market's respective government, or country's research

  institutions, had to formally acknowledge populations of Black women,

  in some manner, for inclusion.

- Scholarship, literature, and data were needed to help inform and

  support contextualising and framing for the research, on an already

  under-researched population, in the African diasporic context, and

  sample population, in the music industry context.

Exclusion of the 2ⁿᵈ Largest Music Market in the World

While the inclusion of Black women across all three music markets was

desired for this research, it was important to note the following:

- Social constructs, such as race and ethnicity (Yamashiro, 2013), have

  specific socially located, colonial and historical contexts.

- The non-collection of these types of population survey data (Japanese

  Government Statistics, 2022), was neither assumed to mean Japanese

  culture is, or self-identifies as, homogenous; nor, does it mean that

  people, or women of African descent, do not exist, or do not work in

  leading and expert capacities, in that music market.

Regrettably, based on the criteria, women of African descent in Japan were, not included, or sought out, for this current doctoral project. However, since the research included sample populations in the UK and US, the wider cultural contexts inherently shifted to, and prioritised (by default), the Western world and Western culture.

As these shifted implications about knowledge productions in these settings, literature that addressed this, was discussed next, and contextualised in terms of the possible directions for the research.

2 – Acknowledging the "WEIRD" Research Setting of the Music Markets

Henrich, Heine, and Norenzayan (2010) co-authored a comprehensive review on accepted experimental studies that were published in the world's top journals in the behavioural sciences. Across datasets, they noticed empirical patterns, where findings about human nature, cognitive science, and evolutionary psychology, tended to problematically claim "universality", when only a small subset of humanity (who were often from Western societies) would largely be represented in these studies, led by Western researchers. To challenge universalist assumptions (Sabik, et al., 2021), they introduced a new concept, which they coined as "WEIRD" – a backronym, and working prefix, for "Western, Educated, Industrialized [sic], Rich, and Democratic" (2010, p. 1).

Markedly, "WEIRD" and "non-WEIRD" were adjectivally used throughout their study, when describing populations (sample and general), societies, studies, and people – where they were grouped into these categories, if they were, or were not, from the Western world. The co-authors indicated they wanted:

> […] to inspire efforts to place knowledge of such universal features of psychology on a firmer footing by empirically addressing, rather than a priori dismissing, or ignoring, questions of population variability (2010, p. 3).

In relation to my research, the sample populations included, are based in WEIRD societies – namely, the UK and US – which fit their general definition. Originally, this prefix seemed like a good fit, especially since the African (or Black) Diaspora is geographically spread across WEIRD and non-WEIRD societies, globally. By using this language, would demonstrate transparency

in explicitly acknowledging which populations were included, this time, for the research; and it would indicate that "Black" as a social racial identity construct is not a euphemism for "Black American" or "Black British".

Accordingly, as previously highlighted, this thesis sought to gain insights regarding the under-researched career experiences of leading Black women of African descent, working across different roles and sectors, within the UK's and US's music industry ecosystems. Since nuance and context are valued as important within a qualitative research paradigm (Braun & Clarke, 2013), a slight modification was thought to make the transferability of use, a better fit for the research framing, while factoring the following ethical considerations.

Although the sample populations of Black women in this research would be classified as WEIRD, by those co-authors' criteria, it would be interesting to know what percentage of Black women (if any) were included in the reviewed databases, as the "research participants" and as the "researchers", in their study. This concern was informed by supported claims of Black feminist thought suppression (Collins, 2009), as being linked to Black women's multidimensional oppression, the exclusion of Black women in feminist psychology (Marecek, 2016), and the increasingly documented knowledge that (see next page):

- Black women's experiences are significantly lacking in the psychology literature [….] [and] basic information regarding Black women is virtually absent from behavioural sciences […] (Spates, 2012, p. 2).

- As Black women represent richly diverse populations, and subpopulations, they may navigate differently produced realities, in particular ways that are relationally – socially located.

- Based on several studies, Black women classify as a vulnerable group, who have been historically, and presently, oppressed, within WEIRD societies.

  → Case in point: On a systemic level, UK, and US Black women, are currently in the middle of overlapping, yet overlooked, and severely underreported, humanitarian crises (see Figure 9 – Chapter 1[105])

- Black women are incredibly diverse (socioeconomically, culturally, and ethnically – to cite examples); so, they may have different reference points and may oscillate across the spectrum of privilege and oppression, at varying degrees – which is not static (Collins, 2019; Crenshaw, Kimberlé, et al., (Editors), 2019; Crenshaw, 1989).

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[105] **Data Sources**: (US Congress, 2019a) (American Psychological Association, 2020a) (The National Center on Violence Against Black Women in the Community, 2018) (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2021a) (African American Policy Forum, 2021) (MBRRACE-UK, 2021) (House of Commons House of Lords Joint Committee on Human Rights, 2020)

Accordingly, these reference points and cultural sites, may compete with the "universalist assumptions" that could then become associated with the WEIRD label. As a provisional workaround, the suffix "-ish", will be added on to make this delineation, if used as an adjectival prefix before describing underrepresented groups, or fields of studies about underrepresented groups. For example, "WERID-ish Black Feminist Project" instead of "WEIRD Black Feminist Project". In other cases, "WEIRD Cross-Cultural […]" could be used in this project since it does not operate as a prefix for a marginalised group.

Sociogeographical Summary

By framing the research setting, the next section, explores some relatively newly published insights about Black women in music's career experiences in the music industry, as well as, various cross-industrial workplace reports, produced by organisational bodies in UK and US societies that address, the psychology of Black women in the workplace.

2.3.5   Socioprofessional Context

Black Women's Career Experiences

1 – Micro-Level: Black Women's Music Industry Career Experiences

Since commencing this doctoral research project, I have yet to come across academic, non-academic, or industry studies designed to investigate the industrial-organisational psychological aspect of Black women's diverse career experiences across the UK and US music industry ecosystems[106], to date. However, I included music industry reports in this review that could shed some light on their career experiences in this industry, in this section.

Black Women in Music Industry Reports – Exclusion Examples

Although data from UK Music's (2018) quantitative study was included in the earlier stages of the research, their key findings from both their (1) 2nd annual "Music Industry Diversity Survey" – consisting of 2,748 respondents "to map BAME representation at all levels within the [UK music] industry" – and their (2) 3rd annual survey (2020) – consisting of 3,670 respondents, could not be used for this research[107]. Further, this was also found to be the case for the USC[108] Annenberg Inclusion Initiative (AII) (2019) mixed-method study on "Inclusion in the Recording Studio", where their project sought to investigate possible causes for gender and race/ethnicity disparities by tracing the "Hot

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[106] This glaring absence prompted me to register "Black Women in Music", as a research firm in 2018, in preparation to disseminate the research, upon successful completion of this doctoral thesis project. In the meantime, I have worked on smaller projects and partnered with organisations on collaborative initiatives to empower Black women in music.
[107] I referenced the "UK Music Diversity Taskforce Ten-Point Plan" in the Discussion chapter (UK Music, 2022) .
[108] USC is an acronym for University for Southern California.

100 year-end Billboard charts from 2012 – 2018" to measure representation, which they followed up with 75 in-depth interviews[109]. The first organisation defined their populations for their data collection, in a manner that ultimately homogenised groups on a racialised binary construct – as either "White" or "BAME" – meaning "non-White" as the category has been historically used as a constructed "catch all". Similarly, the second organisation, mentioned, designed their methodology, which homogenised women as either "White" or "Women of Color [sic] (WOC) or Underrepresented".

As people can interpret terms, like "BAME" and "WOC", to mean any "non-White women" with no further context, these organisations' definitions for their sample populations for data collection, could not provide the needed insights about Black women in music's career experiences, per se. This was attributed to the language in these descriptors, which rendered Black women, and other minority ethnicity groups, invisible, within the contexts of how the data was reported via umbrellaed framings, which the UK government confirmed as recently as 2021 that they will stop doing (see Figure below).

We do not use the terms BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic) and BME (black and minority ethnic) because they emphasise certain ethnic minority groups (Asian and black) and exclude others (mixed, other and white ethnic minority groups). The terms can also mask disparities between different ethnic groups and create misleading interpretations of data. In March 2021, the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities recommended that the government stop using the term BAME.One of the recommendations in the final report on COVID-19 disparities, published in December 2021, was to refer to ethnic minority groups individually, rather than as a single group. This was supported by research commissioned by the Race Disparity Unit (RDU), which found that people from ethnic minorities were 3 times more likely to agree than disagree that the term 'BAME' was unhelpful (UK Government, 2022).

Figure 38   UK Government's Statement on BAME (UK Government, 2022)

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[109] I referenced the findings from the interviews about women's and WOC's experiences in the Discussion chapter (USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, 2021).

To illustrate how this practice in research can "mask disparities between different ethnic groups and create misleading interpretations of data," (UK Government, 2022), AII reported:

> Results, as it pertained to production credits, slightly differed since only 400, not 700, songs were analysed. It was found that out of 871 producers, only 2.1% were females. Even worse, "female producers of colour…[did] not fare as well. **Only 4 women of colour** have producing credits across the 400 songs analysed (USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, 2019).

For clarifying purposes, the bolded area is where special attention was drawn to exemplify why "WOC" was too broad as it could refer to any non-White minority woman – who may, or may not, be Black. However, this was not to say it should be completely eradicated. Instead, if definitions like "WOC", "BAME", or BME (to the UK government's point) are to be used, they need to be further disaggregated, in reports, to analyse key findings about structural issues, from a multilevel perspective, to prevent conflation. This qualifies why the deployment of an intersectionality framework is so important.

Based on these examples, reports in the next sections, for the review, were included if they explicitly recognised "Black women" – by category, name[110], or both.

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[110] Meaning if they mention Black female celebrity music industry professionals in their studies.

Black Women in Music in Industry Reports

Apart from the NAACP's (1987) report, other music industry studies started to recently recognise "Black women" and "Black people" as a sample and general population, which noticeably became more common after the 2020 phase of the global pandemics[111]. This societal shift[112] could be said to be linked to the private sectors' involvements as UK and US corporations (in non-music and music industries), publicly pledged to stand against racism (Reuters, 2020; Financial Times, 2022; Lexology, 2020; Black Music Action Coalition, 2021).

For example, the "Big Three" major record labels – whose headquarters[113] are run from the US – pledged to combat systemic anti-Black racism through various social justice initiatives, they launched, in response to these events (see Footnote 111), together with their UK divisions (US Department of Labor, 2022b; Warner Music Group, 2021; Sony Music Group, 2020).

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[111] Both COVID-19 and Anti-Black Systemic Racism.
[112] The collective grief felt throughout the African diaspora was "deeper than deep", as many of us are consciously aware of the many "ties that bind us", as well as in the collective fight, at different sites of the world, for our humanity and for our right to life. The wider collective grief seemed to speak to a degree of preparedness for humanity's reckoning with arbitrary constructs blocking equality from being realised for all social groups in the human race.
[113] It may either be corporate, operational, or both.

Special Note: Situational Context for the Shift to "Swift" Action

Corporate responses seemed to follow a string of viral videos and widespread media coverage showing and detailing the murders of several Black Americans and community allies, at the hands of police brutality (African American Policy Forum, 2021) and (White supremacist) vigilantism – erupting protests worldwide, for humanity. During the global lockdown, many watched the violently fatal versions of traumatic outcomes that can stem from different insidious productions of anti-Black racism. As many forms of anti-Black racism and other oppressions are entrenched in the very fabric of WEIRD societies (Crenshaw, Kimberlé, et al., (Editors), 2019; Crenshaw, Kimberlé, et al. (Editors), 1995; Collins, 2009), where we must navigate oppressive power structures – around the world, Olosuga wrote:

> "[These moments] stirred memories of another list of names
> […] killed or rendered disabled in similar circumstances at the
> hands of the British police or immigration officers. […] When
> black Britons draw parallels between their experiences and
> those of African Americans, they are not suggesting that those
> experiences are identical. Few people would deny that in many
> respects life is better for non-white people in the UK than in the
> US. The problem is that it is not as 'better' as some like to
> believe […] Excusing or downplaying British racism with
> comparisons to the US is a bad habit with a long history[114]. It
> began in 1807, with the abolition of the slave trade and […] with
> the end of British slavery, twin events that marked the beginning
> of 200 years of moral posturing and historical amnesia[115]" (The
> Guardian, 2020).

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[114] When media in WEIRD societies frame the US, as having a unique "race problem" – as if this ideology has geographical bounds, with no historical, transnational, or transformational contexts, outside of the US – these discourses can feel gaslighting to members of the Afro-diasporic communities within and across both sides of the Atlantic.

[115] To reiterate, before the US declared (1776) and gained (1783) independence, they (including my own British ancestors) were involved with the institution of African chattel slavery, in modern-day US, as British citizens, under British rule for the first 164 years (Coates, 2017).

NAACP's Economic Development Department

The NAACP's Economic Development Department's (1987)[116] Record

Industry Task Force, conducted an investigative report to "examine the status

of Blacks within" the music industry, using qualitative methods. Task force

representatives secured information from meetings with:

> […][1] presidents of several major record companies, [2] [they] attended a number of industry-related conferences and conferred with representatives of four organisations identified as "Industry Watchdogs for Blacks[117]" [….] [3] [and] scores of interviews were conducted with present and former employees [of different music companies] (1987, p. Foreword)

In this non-gender specific report, where Black female and male industry

professionals were mentioned by name, they sought to answer four main

questions (see Figure 39), as listed below.

FOUR CENTRAL QUESTIONS	1	Are Blacks receiving a fair share of the economic opportunities generated by the industry?
	2	Is there racial discrimination in the industry, and if so, to what degree is it present?
	3	Are Blacks equitably employed in the behind-the-scene jobs?
	4	Do Black artists use their influence to promote and provide opportunities for other Blacks?

Figure 39   Four Central Questions: The Discordant Sound of Music (1987)

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[116] "The report, supervised by Fred Rasheed, the NAACP's director of economic development, is an outgrowth of a record industry task force organized in July 1985 by NAACP Executive Director Benjamin Hooks." (Washington Post, 1987)
[117] (1) Black Radio Exclusive, (2) Jack "The Rapper" Gibson, (3) Black Music Association, (4) Young Black Programmers Coalition

Some of the key findings, at the conclusion, of their investigation were

revealed in Figure 39 below:

THE DATA

"While [Black artists] have been pioneers in blazing new music trails, their music has often been copied by others who have gone on to gain greater wealth and prestige than the originators." (pp. 11)

"The record industry is overwhelmingly segregated and discrimination is rampant. No other industry in America so openly classifies its operations on a racial basis. At every level of the industry, beginning with the spearation of Black artists into a special category, barriers exist that severely limit opportunities for Blacks. The structure of the industry allows for total White control and domination. While the intent may not be to deliberately and consciously keep Blacks out, the results are the same. " (pp. 16 - 17)

"The industry operated virtually free of federal regulations, government intervention, or public pressure. The largest organised group in the industry, the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) represents 85% of the nation's record companies, but has no control of influence over the practices of its member companies, which dictate its own activities." (pp. 2)

Record companies conflate their reports submitted to the US Equal Opportunity Commission, due to how the business is structured. (pp. 2)

"Black music executives are tightly restricted in the exercise of authority" [...] where decisions are made by "White executives in the popular music division." (pp. 4)

"None of the major record companies has an affirmative action program to recruit Black employees or increase their representation in management and professional positions". (pp. 4)

Black industry professionals are often relegated to Black music divisions to the Urban and Promotions departments that experience high employee turnover rates. (pp. 4)

"[...] Blacks within the industry are fearful of becoming too outspoken because of the real possibility their employment could be terminated" (pp. 18)

"The top Black artists employ very few Blacks [...] thereby increasing the difficulty of Blacks making inroads into [...] well paying positions." (pp. 12)

Figure 40   NAACP's Economic Development Department (1987)

USC Annenberg Inclusion initiative

The USC Annenberg Inclusion initiative (2021), released findings from their

quantitative study, to "map the diversity of the U.S. music business across

different positions of power" – where they inaugurally included "Black" as a

recognised sample and general population. Noticeably, throughout their

report, they seemingly measured the health of Black representation in the

industry, against the US general population size of the Black population,

where they make up "14.4%". Although they did not explain why they adopted

that approach, some key findings revealed the following, in Figure 40 below:

THE DATA	3% of the 4,060 music executive rank positions (VP level and above) are made of Black women (pp. 3)
	"Black women executives was even smaller-- labels had the highest percentage of Black women executives at only 5.3%, while radio (1.4%) and live music (1.7%) had the lowest percentage. Streaming (3.8%), music groups (3.6%), and publishing (1.9%) held the middle ground." (pp. 3)
	"Less than 5% of A&R executives were Black women (4.8%)." (pp. 3)
	For Black women working as agents for established acts, "Only 3 Black women (1.2%) were responsible for the artists in [the sample of a "total of 242 solo artists associated with the companies studied [who] had at least one song on the Billboard Hot 100 across the last 9 years (2012-2020)"]. Further, less than a tenth of all agents (9.9%) were Black men. (pp. 3)
	"Few publicists were Black (11.9%), with only 6 (4.4%) Black men working in this capacity and 10 (7.4%) Black women, as measured from [the sample of a "total of 242 solo artists associated with the companies studied [who] had at least one song on the Billboard Hot 100 across the last 9 years (2012-2020)"]." (pp. 3)
	There are only 3 top music business executives (pp. 1)
	"Music groups had the greatest share of Black executives (23.7%) on their executive boards." (pp. 1)
	"Live music and concert promotion had the lowest percentage of underrepresented executives (12.5%) and no Black executives (0), but the highest percentage of women in leadership roles (40.6%)." (pp. 1)

Figure 41   USC Annenberg Inclusion initiative (2021)

Black Lives in Music

Black Lives in Music (2021) released findings for their inaugural mixed-method study, where they used an online survey, as a data collection tool, that offered opportunities for respondents to elaborate on their individual experiences in the built-in questionnaires. The survey "drew responses from 1,718 participants" during the pandemic, where 25% self-identified as "Caribbean[118]", 17% self-identified as "African", 7.4% self-identified as "Any other Black/African/Caribbean background", 7.1% self-identified as "White and Black Caribbean", and 3.2% self-identified as "White and Black African". By these numbers, a total of 59.7% self-identified as explicitly being of African descent. However, the organisation noted, a different percentage (64%), which could be on the account of the category, "Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background[119]" (4.2%), being added to that percentage. As this is the first UK industry study that highlights Black women's career experiences, in their reporting, the data findings revealed the following, in Figure 41 below:

THE DATA	
	39% of Black women professionals believe their mental wellbing has declined. (pp. 19)
	50% of Black women felt they had to change the way they speak (pp. 19)
	48% of Black women felt they had to change the way they behave (pp. 19)
	44% of Black women felt they had to change their appearance (pp. 19)
	11% of Black women felt they had to change their name (pp. 19)

Figure 42   Black Lives in Music (2021)

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[118] Although it is not clear if they meant "Caribbean", in general, or "Afro-Caribbean".
[119] It is not clear if the "Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background" category meant, "of African descent".

2 – Macro-Level: Black Women's General Career Experiences

Black Women in the Labour Force

As noted in Chapter 1, the status of Black women in the labour force was highlighted (see Figure 9). Considering this, it was important to centre Black women's socioprofessional standing in the different workplace ecosystems of the UK and US, more generally, to try to take into account their broader corporate experiences, in the music industry setting, if applicable.

Statistically, Black women make up a small segment of both countries' general populations, as also highlighted in Chapter 1, which could possibly, and partially, explicate the general low representation, and often overlooked experiences, across job roles and positions of power and influence in the White male-dominated global popular music industry (United States Department of Labor, 2019; Office of National Statistics, 2019; Office for National Statistics, 2018).

Next, the following section highlights key findings from Black women in workplace studies.

Black Women in Workplace Studies

McKinsey & Company and Lean In

For McKinsey & Company's and Lean In's (2019) and (2021) mixed-methods cross-cultural American-Canadian studies, their findings, in 2019, were based on data collected from 329 companies[120], employee experience surveys completed by 68,500+ employees from 88 companies, and 39 individual interviews conducted with both women and men across 14 companies. Some key findings revealed the following, about Black women's workplace experiences, highlighted in Figure 42 below:

THE DATA

"Black women and Latinas are more likely to be held back by the broken rung. For every 100 entry-level men who are promoted to manager, just 68 Latinas and 58 Black women are promoted. Likewise, for every 100 men hired to manager, 57 Latinas and 64 Black women are hired." (pp. 11)

"Most notably, Black women and women with disabilities face more barriers to advancement, get less support from managers, and receive less sponsorship than other groups of women." (pp. 28)

"Not surprisingly, Black women and women with disabilities are far less likely to feel they have an equal opportunity to grow and advance, and are far less likely to think the best opportunities go to the most deserving employees. They are also less happy at work and more likely to leave their company than other women are." (pp. 28)

"Some groups of women face more types of microaggressions. Compared to other races and ethnicities, Black women are the most likely to have their judgment questioned in their area of expertise and be asked to prove their competence." (pp. 48)

"Black women, who are often the only woman and the only person of their race in the room, can feel especially on guard and closely watched—50 percent report feeling this way as an Only." (pp. 53)

Figure 43   McKinsey & Company and Lean In (2019)

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[120] Employing 12 million people.

They repeated the study, in 2021, where findings were based on data

collected from 423 companies[121], employee experience surveys completed by

65,000+ employees from 88 companies, and 24 individual interviews

conducted with only, unlike the earlier study, where women across 20

companies, in 15 industries, took part. Some key findings revealed the

following, about Black women's[122] workplace experiences, as shown in

Figures 43 and 44 below:

THE DATA	"Women leaders with traditionally marginalized identities are even more likely to contribute to DEI efforts. Among women at the manager level and above, Black women, LGBTQ+ women, and women with disabilities are up to twice as likely as women overall to spend a substantial amount of time on DEI work outside their formal job responsibilities." (pp. 19)
	"[...] compared to White women, Black women are more than three times as likely and Latinas and Asian women are twice as likely to hear people express surprise at their language skills or other abilities—and we see a similar pattern for other common microaggressions." (pp. 29)
	"By almost any measure, Black women are facing disproportionately high barriers in the workplace. They are heavily impacted by bias in hiring and promotions; Black women are promoted at a significantly lower rate than white women at the first step up to manager, and more than a quarter of Black women say their race has led to them missing out on an opportunity to advance. They experience more microaggressions than other groups of women, and are three to four times as likely as white women to be subjected to disrespectful and "othering" comments and behavior. They are also less likely to report that their managers check in on their well-being or help them balance priorities and deadlines." (pp. 30)
	"To add to their burden, Black women are far more likely than other employees to be coping with the impact of racism and racial trauma. More than 60 percent of Black women have been personally affected by racial trauma in the past year." (pp. 31)

Figure 44   McKinsey & Company and Lean In (2021) – 1 of 2

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[121] Employing 12 million people.
[122] Black women participants self-identified as "Black", "African American" or "Black Canadian".

"Given that they face bias on a regular basis at work, it should come as no surprise that Black women are relatively pessimistic about their company's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Black women are twice as likely as women overall to say their company has not followed through on their commitments to racial equity, and less than half of Black women feel that DEI is an important priority at their company." (pp. 31)

"Even as they navigate an incredibly difficult experience, Black women are pushing their companies to do better. Black women are more likely than any other group of employees, including men of color and women of other races and ethnicities, to spend a substantial amount of time on DEI work that falls outside their formal job responsibilities. They are more likely to speak out against bias and discrimination at work—and more likely to experience retaliation for doing so." (pp. 31)

"And they are more likely than any other group of employees to step up as mentors and sponsors to other women of color. Many Black women say they do this work because they feel it wouldn't get done otherwise—which speaks to the urgent need for employees with more privilege to show up as allies." (pp. 31)

"When women of color take a stand, they too often experience retaliation—32% of Black women who've spoken out against bias and discrimination at work report experiencing retaliation, compared to just 6% of white men."(pp. 32)

Figure 45   McKinsey & Company and Lean In (2021) – 2 of 2

Lean In

Lean In's "State of Black Women in Corporate America" report significantly

draws from their annually co-produced "Women in the Workplace" study with

McKinsey & Company. Some of the key findings are outlined below:

THE DATA

"Women are having a worse experience than men. Women of color are having a worse experience than white women. And Black women in particular are having the worst experience of all." (pp. 3)

"Black women are unfairly penalized for being ambitious. Because we expect women to be kind and communal, women are often criticized as "overly ambitious" or "out for themselves" when they express a desire to lead. For Black women, this ambition penalty can be compounded in some contexts by stereotypes that unfairly portray Black women as aggressive and angry." (pp. 21)

"Fifty-four percent of Black women say they are often "Onlys," in that they are the only Black person or one of the only Black people in the room at work. Black women who are Onlys are having an especially difficult experience. They are very aware of the fact that they may be seen as representatives of their race, and they are more likely than Onlys of other racial and ethnic groups to feel as though their individual successes and failures will reflect on people like them. This leads to a sense that they are constantly under scrutiny: Black women who are Onlys often report feeling closely watched, on guard, and under increased pressure to perform." (pp. 16)

"Black women are no more likely to express anger than any other group of Americans, but despite this reality, they are often on the receiving end of racist comments that they are "angry". Fixating on a Black woman's tone is a form of bias that's rooted in sexism and racism, and it can cause real harm—in one study, Black women who were perceived as angry tended to receive lower performance evaluations and lower recommended raises.20" (pp. 15)

Figure 46   Lean In (2020) – 1 of 2

"Black women receive less support from their managers. Women of color, and Black women in particular, tend to receive less support and encouragement from their managers. Compared to white women, Black women are less likely to have managers showcase their work, advocate for new opportunities for them, or give them opportunities to manage people and projects. Black women are also less likely to report that their manager helps them navigate organizational politics or balance work and personal life" (pp. 9)

"Black women's successes are often discounted. When a Black woman succeeds, people often attribute her accomplishments to factors outside her control—such as affirmative action, help from others, or random chance." (pp. 7)

"Black women are much less likely to be promoted to manager—and their representation dwindles from there. Black women are underrepresented in the workplace for many reasons. One big factor is a "broken rung" at the first critical step up to manager. For every 100 men promoted to manager, only 58 Black women are promoted, despite the fact that Black women ask for promotions at the same rate as men. And for every 100 men hired into manager roles, only 64 Black women are hired" (pp. 6)

"Black women are significantly underrepresented in leadership roles" (pp. 5)

Figure 47   Lean In (2020) – 2 of 2

The Fawcett Society and The Runnymeade Trust

The Fawcett Society and The Runnymeade Trust co-published one of the first comprehensive reports to investigate the workplace experiences of women of colour, across eight groups, including "Black African, Black Caribbean, Chinese and East Asian, Indian, Mixed / Other Ethnicities, Pakistani or Bangladeshi, White British and White Other". A total of 3,231 respondents participated in the survey, and "a sample size of 3,176 [was used] for most analyses, including 1,994 women of colour." Some key findings revealed:

THE DATA	"Black women of African heritage were most likely to change [...] their clothes (54% did so), the language they use (50%), the topics they talk about (46%), their hairstyle (39%), and accent (29%)" (pp. 59)
	"Black women of Caribbean heritage, and women of East Asian and Chinese heritage were the least likely to report 'often' or 'always' feeling comfortable in their workplace culture, at 43% and 41%, respectively." (pp. 59)
	"Women of Black Caribbean heritage from our early career focus group, experienced racist 'bantering', with colleagues feeling it was acceptable to engage in derogatory or explicitly racist conversations under the guise of 'banter' or 'jokes', once they thought they had reached a level of familiarity or comfort. This was made worse when no one else challenged or picked up on these comments, leaving women of colour second guessing their emotions and feeling unsupported." (pp. 57)
	"Women of Black African heritage reported that the micro-aggressions they experienced revolved around being labelled as 'aggressive', combined with a sense of being under constant surveillance and scrutiny. Participants spoke about how they couldn't do anything right – for example, becoming close with other Black colleagues was seen as a problem and managers would ask them why they would 'always' sit with Black colleagues. For some women in this group, avoiding social contact became the 'safest' option." (pp. 57)

Figure 48   The Fawcett Society and The Runnymeade Trust (2022) – 1of 2

THE DATA	"Women picked up on class being a factor in this exclusion, with workplaces not just having a white bias but also a middle-class bias. There was a shared sense that the work environment is a white and middle-class space. One that assumes a universally shared experience where progression is dependent on the ability to relate to this experience, assimilate and navigate it. As a result, women of colour acknowledged the futility of these attempts to 'fit in'." (pp. 61)
	"Black African and Caribbean women in our research commonly described how what was admired and rewarded as assertive leadership in others, was often labelled as 'aggressive'. This was thought to be based on existing stereotypes that reached into tropes about the 'angry Black woman'" (pp. 72)
	"The cumulative impact of racism and microaggressions takes its toll physically as well as mentally on women of colour. One woman of colour told us that she had a stroke and believes it was linked to the stress of constantly needing to prove herself, and several women in our interviews and focus groups spoke about ending up off sick from work due to the severe impact of these experiences." (pp. 80)
	"According to EY sponsored report 'Minority Businesses Matter' ethnic minority businesses contribute at least £74 billion to the UK economy. Despite this high contribution figure, many, particularly those of Black African and Black Caribbean heritage, experience barriers in accessing capital and investment in their businesses. Whilst being self-employed brings more career freedom, women of colour face additional barriers accessing financial support to grow their businesses. (pp. 89)

Figure 49   The Fawcett Society and The Runnymeade Trust (2022) – 2 of 2

Black Women in Leadership Network

Black Women in Leadership Network (2022) published findings from their

inaugural quantitative study on Black women's workplace experiences, where

findings were produced from 250 who classify as "white-collar employees".

Some key findings revealed the following, in Figure 46 below:

THE DATA	
	"4 in 10 Black Women do not believe they are offered the same career advancement opportunities as their non Black female colleagues. [...] As a minority in the workplace, blackwomen are often said to have to "work harder" to get the visibility,recognition and sponsorship required to be offered career advancement opportunities. This is compounded by the fact thatthe funnel of career advancement opportunities decreases with seniority. As a result, several women fall off the career ladder orstagnate at critical points." (pp. 4)
	"2 in 3 Black Women reported experiencing racial bias at work [...] Black women are at the intersection of race and genderdiscrimination, and they face the challenges relating to both. Ofthe women surveyed, senior executives reported experiencingracial discrimination the most." (pp. 7)
	"4 in 10 do not believe they earn the same as their non-black female colleagues performing the same job." (pp. 7)
	"A third had resigned due to race related unfair treatment". [...] 33% of Black women surveyed had resigned from a professionalposition due to racially related unfair treatment in the workplace,a proportion rising to 52% for those in a senior executive position." (pp. 6)
	"4 in 7 Black Women surveyed had a workplace mentor or sponsor. [...] 58% of black women reported having a workplace mentor orsponsor. It is often the case that black women can accessworkplace mentors more easily than sponsors, reconfirming the rhetoric that 'black women are under-sponsored'." (pp. 7)
	"Almost half believe they will be overlooked for promotion. [...] the support required to ensure retention and careeradvancement of black women in the workplace remains limited,though improving." (pp. 4)
	"44% and 45% of black women believe they will be overlooked for a promotion if they have the samecompetency as a white male and female colleague respectively. (pp. 5)

Figure 50   Black Women in Leadership Network (2022)

Socioprofessional Summary

This section sought to centre Black women's career experiences in both the music and non-music industries, to frame some of the more commonly reported challenges they can (and do) face within wider socioprofessional contexts. This was done to demonstrate how their socially produced different realties (see Figure 7, Chapter 1) may not be sector or industry specific, as captured by the data presented in Figures 40 – 50. Rather, it could be said to be evidence of a systemic human relational dysfunctional problem, where Black women's perceived inferiority (Holder, et al., 2015) operates more so as a symptom of a macro structural humanitarian crisis, humanity needs to urgently address.

Within the context of the MIE, these insights were also important to highlight since Black women work across similar job roles (different industries) and the reported employee and leadership composition, in terms of workforce design, were also framed as shared features across industries. As this was critical to note, these elements are further expounded upon in Chapter 6, within the framing of this research.

To conclude this chapter, the next section provides a brief recapitulation of the aims of the literature review, as well as an explanation as to how the information highlighted in this chapter could more comprehensively inform the research approach.

2.4 Literature Review Chapter Summary

As stated throughout this interdisciplinary literature review, the music industry ecosystem is purported-to-be, egalitarian, in the top-performing music markets. Provided that this research is interested in gaining in-depth insights about Black women in music's career, more generally, the research is also interested in testing that assertion, by, primarily examining Black women in music's experiences from the 1960s to present-day, post equality legislation, from within wider social contexts. Accordingly, this review brought together literature across a range of academic disciplines, as well as human, industry, and government data insights, reports, and legislation, to try to best address the research aims and objectives for this doctoral research project (see Figure 51 and Figure 52). Since this required innovation in how I approached this review, I sought to synthesise, seemingly unrelated, but deeply interrelated studies and appraisals, to examine the innerworkings and productions of the varied multidimensionality of Black women's career experiences, from within these contexts.

Compatibly, BFT's tenets (Collins, 2009) and others' scholarship adopting this framework (Abrams, et al., 2019; Biernat & Sesko, 2018; Cole, 2020), in conjunction with my insider-researcher statuses (see Footnote 123), together, instrumentally informed my unique approach on the types of literature to survey and consider to try to build two compelling cases:

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[123] **Insider-Researcher Statuses**: **(1)** "Black woman", **(2)** "(WEIRD) US natural-born citizen and UK resident of 7 years", **(3)** "STEAM industry professional", and **(4)** "SHAPE academic practitioner". See Footnotes 124 – 127 for information on the use of backronyms in this footnote.

1. To illustrate the significance for conducting this research, for this critical time in human history, to co-advance humanity, equality, and equity, in organisations and sector, that make up MIE, which has been alleged to be systemically biased (NAACP Economic Development, 1987), for centuries; and

2. To demonstrate how I intend to make an original contribution to the field of industrial-organisational psychology, as there is a dearth of research available that has centred on Black women's experiences (Spates, 2012; Cole, 2020), and more specifically, on Black women who work in the creative-centric fields, but within traditional business roles, such as the music industry.

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[124] "WEIRD" is a backronym, and working prefix, for "Western, Educated, Industrialized [sic], Rich, and Democratic" to describe studies of those living in the Western world (Henrich, et al., 2010, p. 1). "[…] WEIRD highlights the sampling bias present in studies conducted in cognitive science, behavioural economics, and psychology. […] [The] goal was to encourage experimental behavioural scientists to diversify their sampling and avoid generalising from a peculiar subgroup to the entire species. Only by recognizing this diversity can we begin to rewrite the textbooks in ways that provide a more inclusive picture of the psychology and behaviour of Homo sapiens" (Harvard University, 2022).

[125] "SHAPE" is a backronym for "Social Sciences, Humanities and the Arts for People and the Economy/Environment **[…]** a collective name for the social sciences, humanities, and the arts (The British Academy, 2022).

[126] "STEAM is a very specific subset of SHAPE within STEM; it captures the 'A' but not the 'S' and the 'H'. STEAM captures the value of integrating art and design with STEM, but not the value of integrating STEM with social sciences and humanities. In contrast, SHAPE enables us to talk about the value of integrating STEM with that much wider set of disciplines focused on people and societies. It's critical we recognise the value of that wider set of interactions" (Black, 2020; The British Academy, 2022).

[127] "STEAM" is a backronym for "Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics" (Education Week, 2010).

The next chapter discusses the methodology, where I describe and justify the design approach taken, to work to systematically address the research aims and objectives of this thesis.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1   Introduction

Given Black women's structurally and culturally disadvantaged statuses (Collins, 2009) in WEIRD societies, and in the top-leading MIEs, I sought to frame contextual understandings around how they manage to navigate "identity politics"[128] (Hull, et al., 2015) and "politics of identity" (Bryan, et al., 2018), in their industrial and organisational career experiences, across the multisectoral and occupational spectrums. Since answers to these could only be excavated using specific analytic tools that could shed an intersectional light on the interdependent mechanisms and outcomes of the relational power dynamics within systems, where they navigate the industry, methods were elected based on their usefulness to provide in-depth insights, to try to best answer the research aims and objectives.

As stated in Chapters 1 and 2, WEIRD MIEs[129], purport to be "progressive" and truly "egalitarian". To attempt to holistically examine these assertions, the project sought to incorporate a narrative analysis (Collins, 2009; Hesse-Biber, 2014) to investigate how varying risks, and degrees, of structural privilege and discrimination, could mechanise and impact trailblazing and leading Black women's careers, and overall occupational health. The latter is also cited, considering the insights gained from the previous chapter about Black women's socioprofessional worlds, in the industry, and more generally.

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[128] Group-based and intra-group-based
[129] MIEs is an acronym for Music Industry Ecosystems

For the methodology, the interdisciplinary nature of this qualitative research required that it be systematically designed to try to employ the most appropriate methods to gain "taken-for-granted" (Collins, 2009) insights and perspectives. More specifically, the final choices needed to concurrently "give voice" (Collins, 1986; hooks, 2015) and centre the workplace and career experiences of Black women, working in the world's top-performing music industry ecosystems, as trailblazers and leaders. This approach was taken so that more could be better understood about their socioprofessional worlds.

First, this chapter outlines which philosophical assumptions underpinned the research aims and objectives (see Figure 51 and Figure 52). Since the research centred around "meaning-making" (Madill & Gough, 2008; Willig, 2001) and "lived experiences" (Collins, 2009), the elected schools of thought, to be discussed, were selected on the basis they provided rich insights to choosing the best analytical tools, to build a rigorous methodological framework that could offer much needed flexibility, for expected and unexpected findings.

Second, in line with this, a qualitative systematic approach, was carefully assessed and commissioned using a unique set of analytical processes, that could only be meaningfully accessible within a qualitative paradigm, which upheld qualitative values.

Dual-Objectives of the Research

THE 1ST RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:

To explore how the real-life implications of social constructs for Black women, as well as their productions, interpretations of meaning, and equally complex outcomes, may influence their career trajectories and experiences in the music industry.

THE 2ND RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:

To observe how Black women's individual, cultural, and collective experiences with navigating "multitiered-sectionality" in this industry have changed, or remained the same, comparatively observed from post-equality legislation, from 1960s to present-day.

Figure 51   Dual-Objectives of the Research

Three-Pronged Aim of the Research

THE AIMS OF THIS RESEARCH WERE TO:

provide an account of the role played by "multitiered-sectionality" with respect to overlapping experiences of group-based identity social constructs

how these may change over time, and

in the cultural contexts of the US and UK, in terms of impact that this has had on the career trajectories and pace of progression of leading Black women working in the top-WEIRD music industry ecosystems.

Figure 52   Three-Pronged Aim of the Research

3.2   Research Philosophy

To structure the research's philosophical model a range of ontological, epistemological, and theoretical assumptions and practices, within a qualitative paradigm, were deemed to be useful for selecting rich data (Coolican, 2017), to be applied across wide-ranging contexts. However, to tell a meaningful story about Black women required vetted and proven qualitative techniques, where "giving voice", was prioritised, and deemed to be most accessible through BFT epistemic (Collins, 2009) and intersectionality frameworks (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 2019). Before that aspect can be discussed, the ontology and epistemology are addressed in the next section.

3.3 Ontology: Theories of Reality

Figure 53   Theories of Reality (Braun & Clarke, 2013)

Critical Realist Ontology

Taking on a hybrid critical realist (CR) ontological position (Gareth, et al., 2017) was elected based on the objectives and aims for the experiential-based research. Unlike strictly realist or relativist ontologies, a critical realist approach is "commonly adopted in qualitative research" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 27), allowing for "lived experiences" to be centred on the principle that some "unknowable and unobservable reality" cannot be known. However, a "mediated reflection of reality" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 171) can be, which helps to make "reality" partially accessible within the context of historical and evolving social structures, their mechanisations, and impact across cultures and groups. Together, they contextualise what participants' conceptions of their realities, processes around sense-making, and negotiations and constraints of their worlds, could be grounded in. This middle approach, which evolved from the writings of Bhaskar (Bhaskar, 2016; Bhaskar, 2010; Bhaskar, 2020), was established as an analytic tool to access these insights, within a qualitative paradigm, that could honour qualitative values, while recognising other inputs that can influence their understandings. Befittingly, the reported realities could be "theorised as [being] mediated by language and culture" which connote the perception and (de)construction of "value".

3.4 Epistemology: Theories of Knowledge

In addressing epistemology, Guishard, Halkovic, Galleta, and Li, argue that:

> […] the term […] suggests a discursively accepted and reproduced normalcy of what constitute (psychological) knowledge and of what is considered legitimate and valid knowledge. However, if the discipline of psychology is considered an apparatus of knowledge production, we cannot examine ethical conduct of psychologists without also taking a self-reflective stance to explicate our own epistemological assumptions. Assumed neutrality or objectivity would only disguise or self-deceive hidden relationship between power and knowledge that is ever present during the entire research process (2018, p. 15).

Collins also contends that:

> Epistemology[130] investigates the standards used to assess knowledge or why we believe what we believe to be true. Far from being the apolitical study of truth, epistemology points to the ways in which power relations shape who is believed and why (2009, p. 270).

For these, and previously explained reasons[131], a BFT epistemology, was elected since it allows researchers to synthesise information, to uncover "power relations" (Collins, 2019) through (non)conventional data. These can include oral histories, interviews, songs, documentation of social justice movements, and more, to produce deeper insights, otherwise not accessible. Although these tools have oft been met with challenges in the academy, as not being rigorous enough, those claims are recognised to operate under the assumption that only positivistic frameworks could be validated. Despite this dominance – scholars, activists, and artists, have continued to strategically

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[130] In her later work she further clarifies that "[…] the purpose of standpoint epistemology was to never become a theory of truth. Rather [it] is a dimension of theorising that recognises the significance of power relations in producing knowledge".
[131] See Chapter 2, Section 2.3.2.

resist, "to give voice" to the voiceless, which is a human liberatory tradition I intend to carry on in this project, centring Black women's WEIRD MIE career experiences, to understand their socioprofessional worlds and perceptions.

Black Feminist Epistemology

As stated in earlier chapters, BFT's epistemological commitments must drive the research that centres the experiences of Black women, whose stories, historically and presently, are still relegated to the margins (Coles & Pasek, 2020; Harris, 2019; Collins, 2009) especially, at glaring levels, across the behavioural sciences (Spates, 2012).


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                          ┌────────────────────────────────────────────┐
                          │  Lived experience as a criterion of meaning.│
                          └────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ┌────────────────────────────────────────────┐
  ┌──────────────┐        │ The use of dialogue in assessing knowledge  │
  │  Black       │        │ claims.                                     │
  │  Feminist    │        └────────────────────────────────────────────┘
  │  Epistemology│        ┌────────────────────────────────────────────┐
  └──────────────┘        │  The ethic of personal accountability.      │
                          └────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          ┌────────────────────────────────────────────┐
                          │  The ethic of caring.                       │
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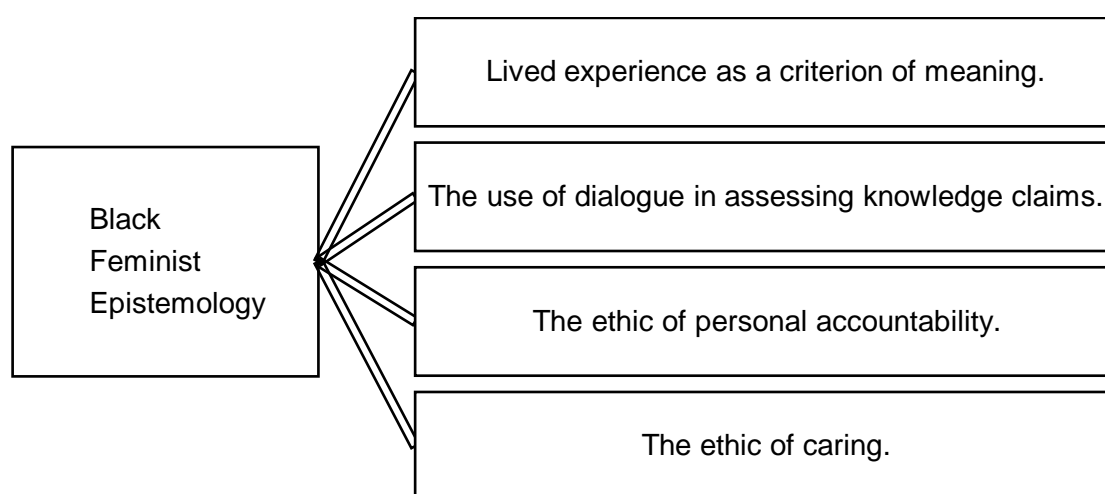
Figure 54   Black Feminist Epistemological Commitments

(Collins, 2009, p. 286)

In illustrating the importance of employing a BFT critique (Crenshaw, 1989; Cole, 2020) within an epistemic interpretivist-constructionist paradigm, for Black women-centred research, Collins emphasised that BFT, in line with the tradition, must be developed for, and by, Black female intellectuals. She continued to explain why Black women intellectuals should produce scholarship – highlighting intrinsic understandings and interpretations of this group's constructed, yet very real, realities.

Accordingly, the aim was to employ a methodology where I could accentuate taken-for-granted cultural nuances, which can both, emphasise dissimilarities[132] and reveal, from a sociological standpoint, similarities of what patterned themes could be produced[133] for Black women in WEIRD MIEs where organisational behaviours could be said to reflect, and uphold, similar value systems (re)produced in wider social contexts.

3.5   Research Paradigm

Black Feminist Social Constructivism

Continuing the importance of using BFT as an epistemology, it was also imperative to situate the research paradigm. Since Black women can be multi-marginalised, in multidimensional ways, their experiences, in any capacity, necessitate intersectional critical analyses and advocacy tools to challenge oppressive structures, more holistically, for the purposes of human liberation. This inclusionary value construct is deemed necessary to deconstruct "interlocking systems of oppression" (Hull, et al., 2015) to best dismantle the interdependent systems (Collins, 2019; Carbado, et al., 2013) harming, not only them; but also, their spirits (Vega & Comer, 2005; Erskine, et al., 2021), and humanity (Fuller, 2016) more generally. Also, this approach, makes it more probable to (re)imagine and implement new possibilities, through "empowerment", as an integral part of the broader social justice and liberation project, for everyone (not just Black women), to be free (Lorde, 2009).

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[132] Observed on a micro-level, in terms of experience.
[133] At the macro-level.

3.6 Theoretical Perspectives

Intersectionality as a "Conceptual Framework" and "Power Analysis"

Conventionally, the conceptual framework of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; Hull, et al., 2015; Collins, 2019) has been used (as it was intended in some cases) as a prism and as an effective analytic tool, to deconstruct systems of inequality and power structures, to more acutely understand, and shed light on, Black women's experiences with operating within the bounds of power grids of the "matrix of domination" (Collins, 2009; Collins, 2019). While scholars across different disciplines epistemically employ BFT, through an intersectional analysis, they have largely examined and gathered data from Black women's first-hand narrative accounts about their career experiences in the traditional, more structured, work environments (Dillard, 2016; Dickens, et al., 2019).

In contrast, there has not been significant scholarship produced, to date, on Black women's career experiences in less examined, and more loosely business structured settings. Consequently, although scholars have advanced their respective fields, largely applying these theories and frameworks to academic (Clarke, 2010) and traditional corporate settings (Levchak, 2018; Erskine, et al., 2021), there remains a gap in the creative macro industries, such as music, which this doctoral thesis aims to fill and seeks to make an original contribution to knowledge productions in this area.

Theorising Intersectionality

As previously discussed, in Chapter 2, Crenshaw (1989) named the perspective, "intersectionality" in her Black feminist critique that brought mainstream attention to the prominent gap in anti-discrimination doctrine in the US (Carbado, et al., 2013), in terms of "how dominant conceptions of discrimination condition [people] to think about subordination as disadvantage occurring [only] along a singular categorical axis" (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 140). As she asserted this framing inherently dismisses and discounts the experiences of what it means to move through the world as a Black woman, she cited how this can (re)produce structurally disadvantaged outcomes, rendering this group, and others who maintain double (or more) minority statues, invisible, and thus still vulnerable since they do not fit recognised group prototypes (Coles & Pasek, 2020). In view of this, the conceptual framework of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) has been increasingly used as an analytical tool in the psychological sciences within the last two decades (Grzanka, 2017; McCormick-Huhn, et al., 2019; Moradi & Grzanka, 2017). While it has been used more so as a heuristic[134], it has both revitalised knowledge productions across disciplines, and simultaneously stifled its potential, as an innovate theoretical framework (Cole, 2020).

To rectify this trend, some scholars raised how this approach, has both decentred Black women and depoliticised "intersectionality", as a tool, by

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[134] Collins (2019) cautioned that this practice of using intersectionality as a heuristic could infer that "systems of power" underpinning each particular social category, could become falsely equivalated and treated as interchangeable if intersectionality's "core constructs and guiding premises" are not considered. See Figure 56.

many researchers ardently focusing on "identity" as if it is stagnant, one-dimensional, and universal (Sabik, et al., 2021), while simultaneously dismissing the interdependent roles both power structures and oppression play, for populations relegated to, and on, the margins.

Intersectionality Theory in Psychology

First Point of Contention of IT in Psychology

To highlight how intersectionality has been misused in psychology, there are

scholars in this discipline, who agree with Cole (2020), in terms of her field

assessment – that fellow psychological researchers need to employ better

stewardship, if they plan to continue to stake a claim in employing IT in their

studies. As there has been much debate and contention about its (mis)use in

academia (Collins, 2019), and namely psychology, IT was not introduced into

the ethos for the purposes to centre "identity", which should operate as a point

of departure (Collins, 2009). Rather it was to understand the mechanisms of

how power structures and the (re)productions of social inequalities, can

persist and impact systemically disadvantaged groups, in particular ways.

To redress this "epistemic riptide" (Grzanka, 2017, p. 250) as cited in (Cole,

2020), psychology scholars, such as McCormick-Huhn et al. (2019), argued:

> To date, psychology has been slow to embrace
> intersectionality's emphasis on power and systems of inequality
> as important factors that shape individuals' lived experiences.
> The erasure of the structural power element of intersectionality
> results in misunderstandings and common misapplications of
> the framework (p. 447).

In Cole's (2020) article, where she shed light on how Black women are

marginalised in the psychological sciences, as both IT "knowledge producers"

and "subjects of investigation", she agreed with Alexander-Floyd's (2012)

assessment in that:

> […] social science approaches reframe intersectionality as a tool to understand complexity[135], rather than oppression (and by extension, liberation). This move, which she calls a bait-and-switch, depoliticises intersectionality (2020, p. 1038).

Further, Alexander-Floyd critiqued:

> The conflation of the ideational and ideographic dimensions of intersectionality and its de-historicised renderings has fomented growing concern about its problematic uses (p. 4)

Collins (2019) also spoke to this, regarding how the variations of these

dimensions are oftentimes conflated in academia, to which she elucidated:

> This assumption of equivalence and interchangeability may facilitate intersectionality's ease of heuristic use, but it simultaneously limit's intersectionality's theoretical potential (2019, p. 40)

Second Point of Contention of IT in Psychology

In other arguments, regarding the "informal epistemic exclusion of IT" (2020,

p. 803) in psychology, Settles et al. noted (2020) that because IT prioritises

macro interlocking social structures of inequality, which is used as a prism, to

better understand people's experiences[136] within a wider "social and historical

context" (2020, p. 801), some scholars have tried to delegitimise its

usefulness in the field, where individual variables, as well as positivist

frameworks, have conventionally dominated knowledge production.

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[135] For clarity, I am looking at both the "politics of identity" (Bryan, et al., 2018), "identity politics" (Hull, et al., 2015) in respect to "power structures" and "relational power" (Collins, 2019), with human rights and social justice (Moradi & Grzanka, 2017) at the forefront (Handl, et al., 2022).

[136] As being mediated by these systems of power and human practices (Braun & Clarke, 2022b)

Possibilities for IT in Psychology

Despite "dominant psychologists'" attempts to delegitimise "intersectionality psychologists", Settles et al. noted the many benefits of IT, within the discipline, highlighting the following points, advocating for it:

> We call on other scholars to consider structural solutions—changes in disciplinary values, policies, and practices, to remedy the epistemic exclusion of intersectionality theory. Key to this change is for disciplinary gatekeepers to loosen their hold on the centre, with the recognition that the field will gain for their having done so. We also note that research on social issues and social policy is itself marginalised in psychology and relegated to lower impact journals. Social issues research shares many characteristics with intersectionality, including an activist agenda and a focus on marginalized [sic] populations. Thus, we hope that greater inclusion of intersectionality would necessarily increase the valuation of social justice research as well (2020, p. 808).

Granzka, Flores, VanDaalen, and Velez (2020), who have been proponents for IT in psychology, stressed the criticality of its use, as being further underscored by recent, troubling, world events, that are still ongoing. In response to sceptics of IT in the psychological sciences, which has become mainstream in the past 15 years, in this field, they maintained:

> […] intersectionality is not anti-psychological or anti-scientific. To the contrary, intersectionality remains an indispensable tool for crafting innovative science that seeks […] "to be of use" in these revolting times (2020, p. 16).

For all the reasons listed, in this section (3.8), as well as in previous chapters, these arguments reconfirmed the cruciality of deploying IT, which seeks to innovatively contribute to filling in gaps in less explored areas of Black women's lives, who have long been decentred in this field. Building on the momentum of co-advancing intersectionality in this field, feels timely.

3.7 Methodology

In relation to WEIRD psychology, Braun and Clarke made the case that:

> Qualitative methods [unlike quantitative methods] were touted as allowing access to people's subjective worlds and meanings, and to groups, marginalised […] and often invisible within western psychology (2013, p. 8).

Since Black women are a multi-marginalised group, the research aim was to access their "subjective worlds and meanings", as informed by macro-localised WEIRD world contexts[137], to try to better interpret within micro-localised contexts, via narrative research (Collins, 2009; Ntinda, 2019).

In relation to WEIRD I-O psychology, Pratt and Bonaccio (2016) asserted:

> Qualitative research facilitates impact in two ways. First, because its goal is to understand the worldviews of those we study, we have the ability to translate findings to people in that organisation (and potentially to other practitioners) more easily. This ease of translation, of course, may vary depending on the type of qualitative methodology used. […] There is also some evidence, albeit from our "sister" field of organisational behaviour, that inductive qualitative research may be more impactful with regard to academic scholarship as well (2016, p. 698).

Since the focus was to examine how and why trailblazing and leading Black women industry professionals, across the top-WEIRD music industry ecosystems, can experience different realities and perceive their career journeys, in specific ways, this seemed to example how they navigate both group-based and intra-group-based identity politics, in work and relational power dynamics within those settings. As the real-life implications, stemming

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[137] The UK's and US's businesses and societies are viewed as being "progressive" and "egalitarian" due to the implementation of (more inclusive) equality legislation, from the 1960s.

from their historical (and continuing) oppression, in conjunction with their

worldviews, could culminate into them defining their overall industry

experiences on a spectrum, oscillating between unfavourable and (more)

favourable, this was important to keep at the forefront, in terms of developing

insights about their perceptions within the context of organisational

behaviours[138] (Heath & Sitkin, 2001) (see Figure below):
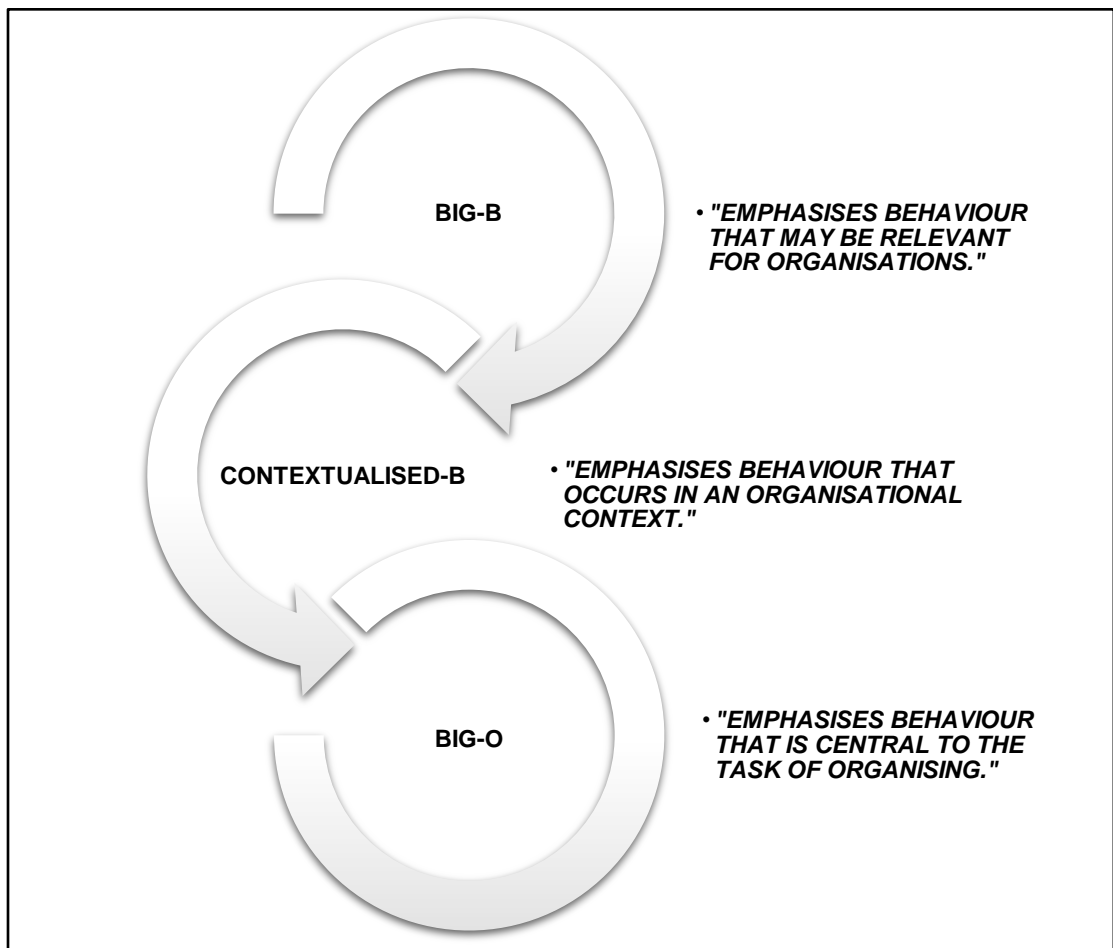
Figure 55   Three Definitions of Organisational Behaviour
              (Heath & Sitkin, 2001, p. 50)

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[138] "The field of organisational behaviour (OB) has emerged from the disciplines of
psychology, sociology, political science, and economics, although it is primarily identified with
psychology […] (Heath & Sitkin, 2001, p. 44).

Since Black women represent a multi-dimensionally marginalised social

group, it was important to respect the diversity of meaning-making formations

of these experiences, which occasionally mechanised differently culturally and

sectorally, although it consistently yielded similar outcomes. To qualitatively

examine this, the current research was rigorously designed, and framed,

within intersectionality's paradigmatic ideas, (Collins, 2019).

CORE CONSTRUCTS	GUIDING PREMISES
Relationality	(1) Race, class, gender, and similar systems of power are interpendent and mutually construct on another.
Power	(2) Intersecting power relations produce complex, interdependent social inequalitites of race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, ability, and age.
Social Inequality	(3) The social location of individuals and groups within intersecting power relations shapes their experiences within and perspectives on the social world.
Social Context	(4) Solving social problems within a given local, regional, national, or global context requires intersectional analyses.
Complexity	
Social Justice	

Figure 56   Intersectionality's Paradigmatic Ideas (Collins, 2019, p. 44)

3.8 Qualitative Paradigm

Since qualitative research involves systematic processes that tell a meaningful story about the data and a situated *compelling* truth[139], it has been gaining popularity amongst the psychological, social, and health sciences (Madill & Gough, 2008). This is because it is viewed as a far richer[140], and more insightful, methodological framework, that seeks to better understand people's "lived experiences" (Collins, 2009, p. 275), their constructed realties, and equally complex outcomes.

The ontological and epistemological assumptions guided the values in this research. Accordingly, as these values inherently strayed from positivist-empiricist frameworks that are often utilised in quantitative paradigms that seek out an ultimate truth, that realist approach would not ontologically align with this "fully qualitative" research. Instead, "a concept of truth" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 169), that is informed by the notion of community[141] and their relation to power, could only be accessed, but never known – given the ever-changing dynamics of human practices, in agency and social action (Collins, 2019). Furthermore, a qualitative research paradigm was viewed as being a good fit since it prioritises context and meaning and deprioritises numbers and variables. Accordingly, "the absence of a power analysis has consequences"

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[139] Rather than an absolute truth or single answer.

[140] Braun and Clarke describe "rich data" as "those which offer a more thorough, thoughtful, or unexpected commentary on the topic […] [as they] reach below the surface and allow the researcher to gain a deep understanding of the topic of interest" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 34).

[141] A dual construct that suggests community is both a "process and a structure" (Collins, 2019, p. 182)

(Collins, 2019, p. 183), which was taken into consideration with this research design.

A range of methods offered from within qualitative research, unlike quantitative research inquiry, were thought to be more suitable for understanding ascriptions in the data. An additional benefit was that this paradigm could be broadly approached one of two ways, which were namely critical or experiential (Reicher, 2000; Braun & Clarke, 2013), and employable for both Big Q and small q Qualitative Research – where reasons were provided to explain why this research categorised as Big Q Qualitative Research.

Big Q Qualitative Research

Since "qualitative tools and techniques [were used] within a qualitative paradigm" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 7), this multi-method "fully-qualitative" exploratory research categorised as a Big Q framework (Willig, 2001).

1. Critical qualitative research is generally interested in language practice and prioritises the analyst's standpoint.

2. In contrast, experiential qualitative research leans on "participants' experiences and meanings (personal and wider societal meanings) [which] drive" the qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 21).

To align with BFT's epistemological tenets more closely, the latter approach was thought to be better suited for shedding light on aspects of Black women's standpoints (Collins, 2009, p. 269).

As the overarching research objective was to gain insights about their socioprofessional worlds and how this may be used to inform understandings and practices going forward, the next sections describe the application of flexible methods that were developed from a qualitative research paradigm. This approach was selected to also allow a critical examination of reported experiences through a set of systematic procedures underpinned by the ontological and epistemological principles of BFT. In doing so, the researcher's position as an insider[142] (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 10) in the

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[142] Braun and Clarke (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 332g) define "insider researcher" as "a researcher who belongs to the groups/communities they are researching.

psychological sciences, and preferential status as a situated knower[143] in BFT (Collins, 2009, p. 22) were taken into account, reflexively; and, "dominant and hidden assumptions (or oppositions) they relied on [were taken apart]" in the broader discussion of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 25).

3.9 Qualitative Methods

3.10 Why Pattern-Based Analytic Methods?

There are many pattern-based analytic methods (PBAM), available in qualitative analysis, although "some are more common in qualitative psychology" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 174), including, Thematic Analysis, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith, et al., 2022), Grounded Theory (Willig, 2001), Pattern-based Discourse Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Although these listed methods have all been proven to be useful tools to produce rich insights, around phenomena the research project was epistemically framed within BFT. Therefore, this meant that since BFT allows for the use of more nonconventional tools to access and gain deeper insights to better understand the lived experiences and psychology of relegated Black women (in the sciences, academy, business, and society), this helped to inform which PBAM to adopt for this research project, which required innovative research design.

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[143] Collins states that "Black women intellectuals best contribute to a Black women's group standpoint by using their experiences as "situated knowers" (Collins, 2009, p. 22)

3.11 Why Thematic Analysis?

To best gain insights about leading Black women's industrial, organisational, and societal (if applicable) career experiences in the top-WEIRD music industries, I needed to select an analytic method that would act more as a method than a template methodology, that would be just as flexible, as the framework this research is situated in, and rigorous enough, to answer the research aims more comprehensively. Thus, TA, which can be applied to data across the spectrum – from a bottom-up and top-down approach, was thought to be suitable for the research.

Thematic Analysis within Psychology

Holton has been credited to be the first philosopher to develop TA (Merton, 1975) in the sciences (Braun, et al., 2018); however:

> […] [it was] only recently […] recognised as a distinctive method
> with a clearly outlined set of procedures for the social sciences
> [by Braun and Clarke in (2006)] […] who "named and claimed"
> TA within psychology" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 178).

As a systematic approach, this PBAM has grown in popularity over the past 15+ years as a widely accepted qualitative method to identify, analyse and report patterned themes using rich data (Morse, 2000; Braun & Clarke, 2013; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun, et al., 2018), which has been regarded as being more academically rigorous, and preferred, in the conduction of qualitative research.

Thematic Analysis Schools

There are three different schools of Thematic Analysis (see Figure 57). At first glance, only two – namely Codebook TA or Reflexive TA – were the only viable options that could be considered since I was a single independent coder for this project and because Coding Reliability could only be "situated within a small q framework" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 235). Accordingly, as this research is "fully-qualitative" – which Codebook TA is only partially – this also informed my methodological choice to use Reflexive Thematic Analysis.

Coding Reliability
• "a type of TA that is broadly (post)positivist in orientation assumes that coding can be 'accurate' and 'reliable'; the use of a fixed codebook and multiple independent coders are techniques for ensuring and demonstrating reliable coding" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 285).
Codebook TA
• "involves a structured and (more or less) fixed approach to coding; a set of codes are developed before data analysis or following (some) data familiarisation, and then applied to the data. Themes are usually conceptualised as analytic inputs and coding is a process of allocating data to the pre-determined themes. Reported themes often reflect a topic summary conceptualisation. Variations include: framework analysis; template analysis; matrix analysis; network analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, pp. 284-285).
Reflexive TA
• "our approach to TA, located within a qualitative paradigm. Foregrounds the active role of the researcher in coding and theme development, the inevitable subjectivity of these processes, and the importance of the researcher reflecting on their assumptions and practices, and how these might shape and delimit their data analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 294).

Figure 57   Three Different Schools of TA
              (Braun & Clarke, 2022, pp. 284-285, 294)

3.12 Why Reflexive Thematic Analysis?

The research method to analyse the gathered data was elected to identify any "emerging" (read: generated) themes, as well as subthemes, if applicable, using a practical six-step guide to produce a thorough reflexive TA report. As illustrated in Figures 55 and 56, Braun and Clarke recommended that research analysts followed a methodical procedure in this type of research design, which is prevalently useful in the psychological sciences.

Six Orientations within Reflexive TA (Braun & Clarke, 2022)

INDUCTIVE	• "Coding and theme development are directed by the content of the data"
DEDUCTIVE	• "Coding and theme development are directed by existing concepts or ideas"
SEMANTIC	• "Coding and theme development reflect the explicit content of the data"
LATENT	• "Coding and theme development report concepts and assumptions underpinning the overt content of the data"
CRITICAL REALIST	• "Analysis focuses on reporting an assumed reality evident in the data"
CONSTRUCTIONIST	• "Analysis focuses on exploring the realities produced within the data"

Figure 58   Six Orientations within RTA

Six Step Phase for Reflexive TA
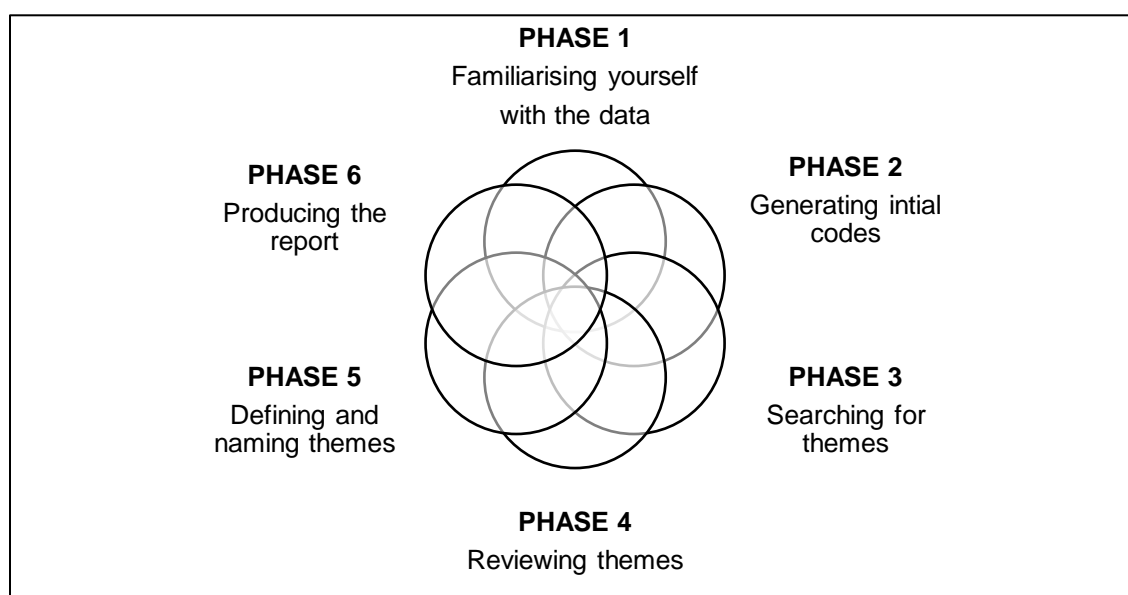
Figure 59   Original Six-Step Phase for Reflexive TA (2006, pp. 16-23)
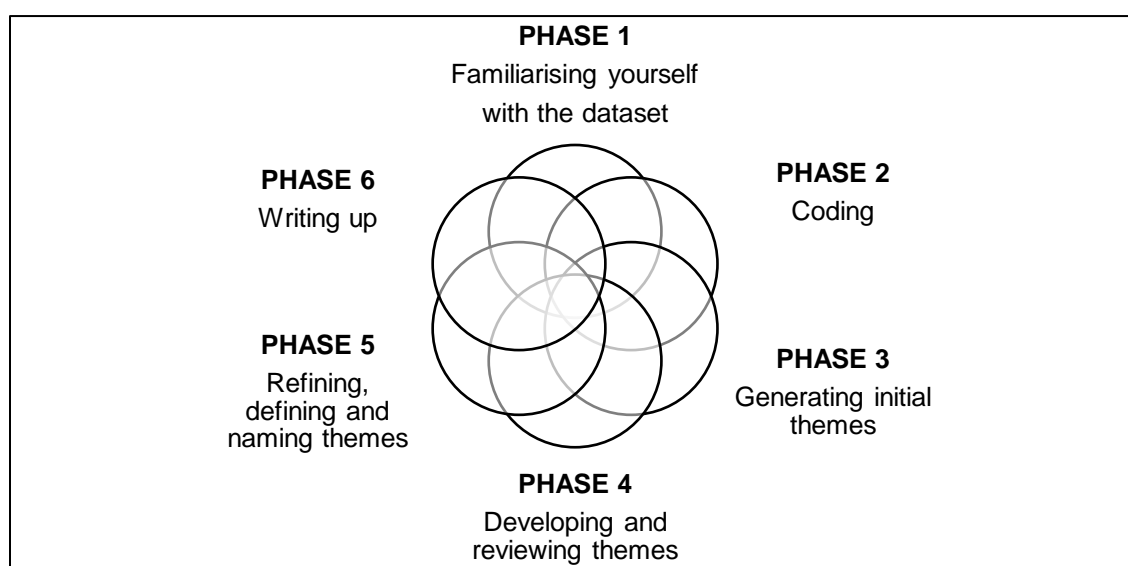
Figure 60   Updated Six-Step Phase for Reflexive TA[144]   (2022, pp. 35-36)

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[144] "Phase 3" of the Six-Step Process was recently updated to address confusion to conducting TA correctly, according to Braun, Clarke, and Hayfield. Victoria Clarke uploaded a series of university lectures on Braun's, theirs, and Hayfield's newest developments with the systematic approach to TA. They emphasised during the recorded lecture, "Themes don't passively emerge from the data; they are actively generated by the researcher [as they are] […] not a trivial concern central to the underlying philosophy of reflexive TA" (Braun & Clarke, 2018)(Braun, et al., 2019).

As discussed earlier, for the research, reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) was nominated as the best approach, compared to Grounded Theory or Discourse Analysis (Willig, 2001; Madill & Gough, 2008) because RTA has a lot more flexibility, since it can be both deductive and inductive, incorporating a hybrid approach, across a comprehensive list of epistemologies in qualitative research, including IT and BFT. Also, subjectivity is valued RTA and viewed as a resource (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This type of agility, for an interdisciplinary study of this nature, was important as it could affect the outcomes of new knowledge produced.

3.13 Selecting Qualitative Methods in RTA for a "Hidden Population"

With the advent of "Black Women's Studies" as an autonomous discipline" in the late 1970s (Hull, et al., 2015, p. xxv) academic Black feminism introduced the axioms of employing an intersectional framework before the word "intersectionality" itself was coined almost more than a decade later by Crenshaw (1989). BFT scholars had been pioneering theoretical applications to answer a host of questions across multiple areas of life concerning Black womanhood and Black women psychology.

As was stated before, Crenshaw (1989) coined the term "intersectionality" as a provisional concept, and not as a "[…] new, totalizing [sic] theory of identity", with origins in Black Feminist Thought (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1244). Over the past thirty years, intersectionality has become increasingly framed across multiple disciplines as both a methodical application, as well as a heuristic that brings "new systems of power into luminaries view" where even "identity is […] a constantly shifting process of positioning" (Hall, 2017, p. 16). To build from those conceptual frameworks, this thesis proposes a "multitiered-sectionality", allowing for a macro-meso-micro analysis, built out of necessity to examine multiple interdependent systems, within a context as impacting Black women in the global popular music industry.

As noted earlier, Braun and Clarke cited the structural challenges within western psychology (Braun & Clarke, 2013) playing an integral role in further relegating hidden populations' experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2013) such as Black women. As a result of Black women dealing with unpredictable degrees

of forms of multi-directional discrimination, their intersectional experiences had not traditionally been studied, recorded, or included in conventional academic, or public, discourse regarding human rights and equality scholarship in the academy until less than 50 years ago (Hull, et al., 2015). Given this active participation of gatekeepers in the academy in the suppression of BFT knowledge, Black feminist scholars had to design and employ unique research tools and methods, while moving away from positivistic frameworks that were implicitly designed for dominant groups. For example, the euphemistic term for "women" in Feminist Psychology generally implied "White women" and the focus group of Race Studies was typically "Black men", where Black women, and other minority genders, were not the archetypal representation for either area of qualitative enquiry.

As it pertained to the function of Intersectionality Theory, Marecek noted,

> The centrepiece of [this] theory is its assertion that social categories [i.e., race, sex, and class] are imbued with meanings by their conjunction with other categories. For example, the intersection (or conjunction) of the categories African, American, and woman (i.e., African American woman) has unique meanings that differ from the singular meanings of African, American, and woman. This emphasis on meanings poses a challenge for conventional psychological research methods (Marecek, 2016, p. 179).

This supported the point made by (Crenshaw, 1989), who noted that 'intersectionality' was advantageously being used to describe the ways in which overlapping occurrences of discrimination experienced together, formed its own unique compounded experience. Conversely, it had been orthodox thinking across theoretical fields, including in the psychological

sciences, to assess that each separate form of discrimination experienced was not greater than the sum of its parts, but disadvantageously, and ultimately erroneously, additive. Hence, the rise of archetypal representations of "dominant minorities" being framed as the chief focus of being the most vulnerable of each form of singular discrimination. This occurred while simultaneously disregarding even more vulnerable multi-minority status members facing "interlocking systems of oppression" within each of their respective marginalised groups. Subsequently, it was worth noting how Moradi and Grzanka (2017) keenly observed that:

> The point [of intersectionality] is not to discourage critical analysis of minority statuses and oppression, but to encourage full engagement of intersectionality, including critical analysis of privilege (2017, p. 504).

Which Reflexive TA Data Sources?

Since the research centred Black women's career experiences, namely in the UK and US music industry ecosystems, this project aimed to select data that would both empower, and centre, Black women's perspectives so that they could be best positioned to "give voice" to their own career experiences. Thus, another benefit to commissioning RTA in this research design, allowed flexibility regarding selecting suitable types of data to achieve this goal for the overall project.

3.14 Multimethod Research Design

Study 1: Reflexive Thematic Analysis	Study 2: Reflexive Thematic Analysis
Archival Case Study Nonparticipants	In-depth, Semi-structured Interview Participants
Trailblazing Black Women in Music	Leading Black Women in Music
No. 1 Global Ranking Music Market	No.1 and No. 3 Global Ranking Music Markets
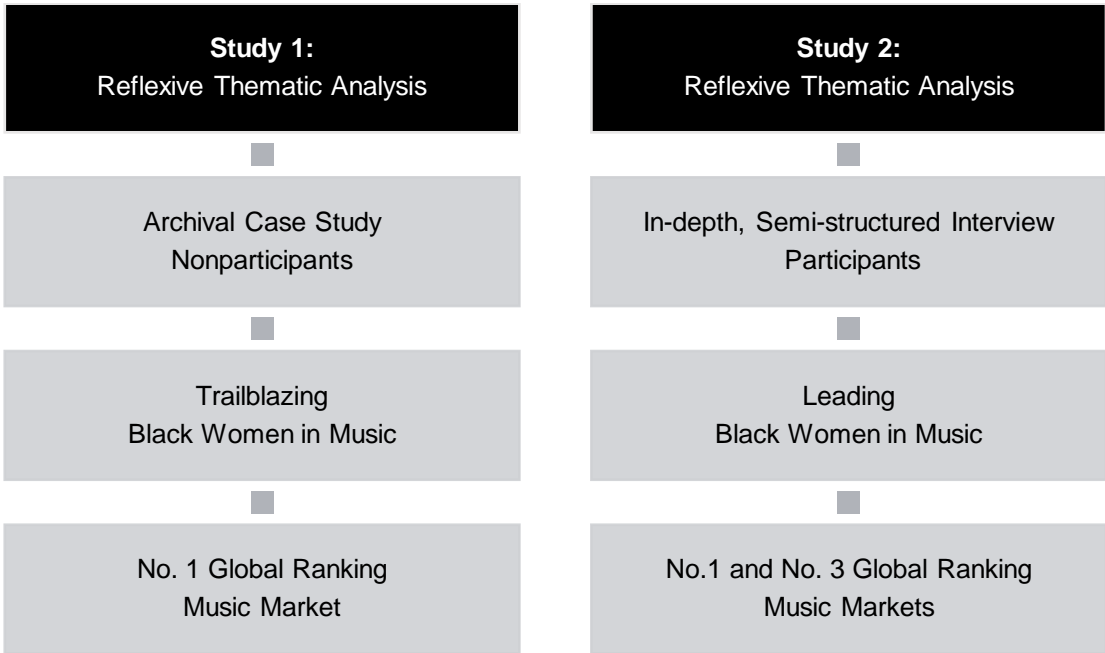
Figure 61   Multimethod Research Design

For the research, I used a multi-method qualitative approach to gather and analyse data to address the research questions and their ensuing aims and objectives. Accordingly, the elected suitable types of data included both archival data and one-to-one interviews – so that a unique, and individual, approach to RTA could be conducted for each single dataset, applying the principles of IT and BFT, flexibly.

Constructively, the application of these multi-method research tools allowed for an interrogation of the data gathered, to better understand how these processes of intersectionality affected Black women's career trajectories and pace of progression. Additionally, they allowed observation of how societal factors, reflected in the workplace, provided deeper insights in the way these

experiences evolved and became framed, influencing and contextualising the assignation and the shifting production of meaning, for Black women in music. In summation, data collected from both archival data material and semi-structured interviews, were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun, et al., 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2022) to throw light on these experiences. Additionally, they were used to identify common, as well as divergent themes of trailblazing Black women, in the industry, and those who were leaders. For the latter group, if participants were celebrities – they were relatively less high-profile[145] than the first group from Study 1.

These twofold approaches aimed to provide an overarching rich contextual sociological perspective of the challenges faced by Black women particularly working in the industry at varying leadership levels, and a broader reflection on some of the challenges faced by Black women more generally.

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[145] James Ulmer, American film analyst, journalist, and contributing writer for the New York Times, created "The Ulmer Scale" in 1997, which ranks Hollywood Actors' star power and bankability, used by "Hollywood's top powerbrokers and professionals" in hiring practices for talent. On this scale, celebrities are graded from "A-List" to "D-List", with the latter being the lowest in the "celebrity hierarchy" (Ndounou, 2014)This same system has widely been adopted across creative industries.

3.15 Study 1: Archival Studies

At first, case studies (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Patton, 2002) were considered

for this qualitative research design since they generally provide a basis for

rich contextual data that would be representative of specific situations or

detailed examination of a phenomenon (Morgan, et al., 2016). However, upon

further review, a more nuanced and emerging conventional approach in the

social sciences, namely archival studies (Mohr & Ventresca, 2002) was

selected as it was ultimately better suited for this study.

The function of archival studies was thought to be considerably more

progressive as it could help to:

> […] uncover the [evolving] relationships [surrounding]
> constructs... [and estimated] the population value of an effect"
> (Barnes, et al., 2018, p. 1459). Positively, archival studies also
> considered that "[…] time [was] an important factor that [could]
> influence the proposed relationship with variables" (Barnes, et
> al., 2018, p. 1460).

The aim of archival studies was to provide succinct accounts of the

intersectional forms of oppression experienced by the first dataset

(trailblazing) group to review alongside the other dataset group of leading and

entrepreneurial Black women in music. The intention in compiling these was

not to ceaselessly pursue every primary or secondary documentary source,

but to sample from exemplary sources which spoke to and reflected any, or

all, of the intersectional axes relevant to this research. This research tool

carried overwhelming benefits for this type of study and:

> […] [served] as an important building block to subsequent confirmatory studies [in exploratory research despite the] lack of awareness about the vast amounts of archival data that [were] now available" (Barnes, et al., 2018, p. 1454)

The employment of archival studies allowed for Black women, to speak from a first-hand account, about their career journeys and trajectories, which meticulously followed epistemological principles in BFT. Within this theory of knowledge, Black women are treated as "situated knowers" and experts giving voice to their own lived experiences, and understandings of them, which this social group could do better than anyone else could (Collins, 2009).

Nonparticipants: Selection Criteria for Archival Studies

The selection criteria for trailblazers to be included in the archival study phase of this research was that they were high-profile Black women in the top-performing markets of the global popular music industry.

Each had impacted the industry in any of the following ways:

- Major publications must have been written about their contributions to the industry

- Major music industry awarding bodies like the GRAMMYs or Billboard Women in Music Awards have recognised their creative works or visionary leadership that provided a platform for the next generation of music professionals in their area

- Their contribution to the industry was recognisable in the industry across and beyond the US, the largest market in the world.

The archival studies covered a period spanning from the 1960s through to the 2020s and were divided into the following categories:

- Performers (which included lead singers and solo acts)

- Music creators (which included songwriters, composers, arrangers, producers, engineers, and mixers)

- Industry officers (which included executive, managerial and consultant roles)

Nonparticipant Selection Strategy

Nonparticipants for this phase of the research were selected on the basis that they:

- Publicly identified, as being Black or of African descent (i.e., African, African American, Black American, African Caribbean, Black British) at any point in their career
- They worked in at least one of the identified three areas; as performers, music creators and industry officers
- They could ether be living or deceased[146], considering the research spans from the 1960s to present-day.

Sample Size

Anywhere between 1 – 200 secondary sources may be used in a large multimethod qualitative project, such as this doctoral thesis. These may include, but not be limited to, "printed materials, online/electronic materials, broadcast media and film" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 49). Accordingly, 100 data sources were used for this study.

Selected Nonparticipants

A total of 9 trailblazing Black female music industry professionals (based in either the UK or US[147]) were illustratively featured in the study.

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[146] One of the nonparticipants resides in the UK.
[147] One of the nonparticipants resides in the UK.

Procedure for Gathering Data

Ethics Approval

Full ethical approval for this study was obtained by the University of West London's School of Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. Approved submitted documentation included information about the use of archival data.

Research Archival Data Sources

Types of Reserach Archival Data Sources Utilised for Study 2 **Published between 1982 - 2022**	Audio, Lyrical, and Visual Performances
	Awards Acceptance Speeches
	Multimedia Case Studies
	Documentaries
	Oral History Programmes
	Conference Keynote Addresses
	Autobiographies and Memoirs
	Anthologies
	Special Archive Collections
	Magazine and Newspaper Publications
	Podcast Interviews
	Radio Broadcast Programming
	Television Talk Shows

Figure 62   Types of Archival Data Sources Utilised for Study 2

Only publicly available data items (see above) were electronically sourced for the research project to access nonparticipants' personal accounts about their career journeys in the industry. The data collected was coded and systematically analysed in innovative ways; and, the preliminary and final results, reported in this RTA, helped to inform which areas to investigate more closely, to make the interview design, more effective, for Study 2.

Method of Analysis

How I Engaged with the Six Step Phase Process for Study 1

Table 9 Reflexive Engagement with the Six Step Phase Process [Study 1]

PHASE 1: Familiarising yourself with the dataset	To begin familiarising myself with the dataset, I reviewed data items, watched and listened to interviews, documentaries, special programmes, and keynotes, in full, and repeatedly - to not only piece together and familiarise myself with nonparticipants' career jouney stories, but also to familiarise myself with the surrounding contexts of their first-person narratives. I also read and re-read archived interviews and other articles that were popular during that time to better understand the social norms, and sociohistorical context, through mainstream popular cultures's lens of the time since this study was multigenerational, spanning from the 1960s to present day (post equality legislation). I also reviewed the surveyed and compiled relevant archival data items, from publicily available and credible sources which I compiled and organised into an excel spreadsheet, embedded with images, videos, quotes, notes, and hyperlinks, categorised by broad theoretical themes, initially, since Study 1's design was more so theoretcially guided by BFT. From this process, I then set out to collect at least 10 - 30 strong quotes, per trailblazer, which I organised into a 43-page document. Because I developed a better understanding concerning the settings in which quotes, were said, it helped to ensure these extracts were not taken out of its original context. I re-read, re-watched, and re-listened to content often.
PHASE 2: Coding	For the coding of the compiled quotation extracts, I used three different systems across the course of the study. I started coding in Excel. After a couple of years, I started to use Trint software programme (when applicable) to upload audio to use the programme's new "Story" feature tool, which functions like coding, to continue the process of grouping shared meanings in the data. Then, from there, I moved all relevant extract quotations into a comprehensive 43-page Word document, where the quotes, had thematic headings, categorised by each nonparticipant, to make finding thematic quotes easier, in the dataset.
PHASE 3: Generating initial themes	The initial themes that were genererated were developed around shared meanings across the dataset, guided by a BFT framework, initially. As I re-read, re-watched, and re-listened to the full context while re-reading the extracted quotes, I tried to capture core ideas, which were elevated into topic summaries, which required further refinement, for it to be considered and ultimately promoted into intitial candidate themes, if they captured shared meaning in the dataset that could address the research questions.
PHASE 4: Developing and reviewing themes	To develop the themes, the candidate themes were reviewed to see if they were represented well across the dataset.
PHASE 5: Refining, defining, and naming themes	Themes were defined and refined several times (although not as many times as Study 2). For the most part, renaming themes so that they were not so rigid in what could be covered under each, was a helpful approach. Also creating clear and concise theme definitions, once these were decided on, was also very helpful.
PHASE 6: Writing up	To write up the analysis, I set out to tell a story from a sociohisotrical post-equality legislative context to show how the data indicated how the mechanism of oppressions transformed. Because the themes were organsised and defined, it helped to plug in other poignant extracts under the appropriate subthemes, under each theme, which helped the writing process feel more natural.

Reflexive Thematic Analysis using Archival Studies

The first phase of the multimethod study involved engaging with archival studies (Mohr & Ventresca, 2002; Barnes, et al., 2018), as a way to accessibly gain first-hand accounts, through secondary data sources, to extract and reflexively thematically analyse (Braun & Clarke, 2022) insightful[148] direct quotations (Eldh, et al., 2020), as a single dataset, from nine trailblazing Black American women in music. For this study, developed themes sought to centre and contextualise their multifaceted career experiences, navigating power within the context of complex identity politics and policing, as trailblazing Black women, in the top music market in the world – the US (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2021).

In using a critical realist ontological and Black feminist social constructivist epistemological approach, this narrative analysis centred their voices, as informants (Patton, 2002; Collins, 2009), which honoured BFT's epistemological commitments. Also, provided this framework, their lived and reported realities were treated as real and true within social contexts that can only ever be partially accessed through human practices and language, mediated and viewed within interdependent oppressive power structures (Collins, 2019) and within broader socioprofessional, sociocultural, socio-political, and sociohistorical contexts (Gareth, et al., 2017). As Study 1 was guided by BFT, the dataset was coded mostly semantically, but latently, as well; and it was analysed within an iterative deductive and inductive orientation (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Braun & Clarke, 2013).

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[148] Capturing their perceptions, as Black women, from the 1960s to present-day (post-equality legislation), was important for the multimethod study.

3.16 Study 2: In-Depth, Semi-Structured Interviews

The second study utilised in-depth semi-structured interviews (Edwards & Holland, 2013; Coolican, 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2022; Braun & Clarke, 2013) with leading Black women working in the US and UK music markets.

> The researcher has a list of questions but there is scope for the participants to raise issues that the researcher has not anticipated […]. (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 78)

These interviews were conducted with twelve Black women to examine how the lived experiences of this group in professional settings, compared to that of the trailblazer group.

Also, these interviews were used to cross-culturally identify any common and divergent practises of intersectional forms of marginalisation or structural privilege experienced by participants working in the US and those from the UK working in the top-performing markets of the global music industry.

For regional parity, six Black women based in Britain and six Black women based in America, were interviewed.

Participants: Selection Criteria for In-Depth, Semi-Structured Interviews

A total of twelve in depth, semi-structured interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 50;56) were conducted with Black women professionals working in areas matched to those of the archival studies. Those were:

- performers (which included lead singers and solo acts)

- music creators (which included songwriters, composers, arrangers, producers, engineers, and mixers) or

- industry officers (which included low to mid-level managerial and consultant roles)

In depth, semi-structured interviews were used to gain first-hand accounts of Black women professionals' experience of the music industry in terms of the intersectional themes that formed the focus of this thesis. Access to these participants was gained from industry events, in addition to, outreach efforts to the following organisations:

- Professional music industry organisations, included but were not limited to Musicians' Union (MU), Girls I Rate (GIR), Music Producer Guild (MPG), Women in Music (WIM), Association of Independent Music (AIM), Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI), British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors (BASCA), Performing Rights Society (PRS), Phonographic Performance Limited (PPL) and The National

Association of Black Female Executives in Music & Entertainment, Inc. (NABFEME)

- Terrestrial radio broadcast stations that promoted Black women in the American and British popular music industries

Participant Recruitment Strategy

Participants for this phase of the research were selected on the basis that they:

- Identified as being Black or of African descent (i.e., African, African American, Black American, African Caribbean, Black British)

- They worked in at least one of the identified three areas: as performers, music creators and industry officers

- They were actively pursuing a career either in the American or British popular music industry or have aspired to break into the American pop music industry since it maintains the largest music total market share in the world at 37% (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2021)

Sample Size

- 30 Black female music industry professionals (based in either the UK or US) were individually invited to be interviewed via email or in-person from radio show programming or networking music industry events.

- 20 professional music industry organisations, with either a membership-based platform or employee group, granted permission for the researcher to disseminate the Research Ethics approved email

blast for the "Call for Interviews" to a representative, who confirmed they would cascade the information.

- A digital flyer was created for reposting purposes and shares on social media platforms to promote the "Call for Interviews", reviewed and approved by the PhD supervisory team.

- There was equal representation between Black British and Black American women for the study to maintain regional parity to better understand how Black women in music, navigating systems of power and intersectionality in the music industry, can mirror and differ, within a transnational context, cross-culturally.

Selected Participants

A sample size of twelve research participants were recruited for the interdisciplinary multimethod qualitative study. They ranged between the ages of 22 – 65 for the in depth, semi-structured interviews. Although saturation is not relevant in Braun and Clarke's reflexive TA method (Braun & Clarke, 2022), the dataset reached the point of saturation by the ninth interview (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Morse, 2000; Sandelowski, 1995). However, the final remaining three interviews were kept, for regional parity purposes. The youngest participant had up to five years of industry experience, and the oldest participant had 50+ years of industry experience.

Materials

Call for Interviews: Email Blasts

See Appendix A

Digital Flyer

See Appendix B

Interview Protocol

See Appendix C

Participant Information Sheet

See Appendix D and Appendix E

Debriefing Statement

See Appendix F

Research Summary and Consent Form

See Appendix G, Appendix H, and Appendix I

SHSS Ethics Committee Approval

See Appendix J

Data Management

See Appendix K

Procedure for Gathering Data

Research Ethics

Ethics Approval

Full ethical approval for this study was obtained by the University of West London's School of Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. Approved submitted documentation included (1) Research Summary and Consent Form (Appendix G, Appendix H, Appendix I), (2) Participant Information Sheet (Appendix D and Appendix E), (3) Debriefing Statement (Appendix F), (4) Research Instruments – Interview Questions (Appendix C) and Data Management (Appendix K).

Risk Perception and Ethical Considerations

For anonymity, the interviews were transcribed both manually and also through the use of artificial intelligence transcription software services, including Trint and NVivo, to fully grant anonymity and protect participants' identities. The data storage of these recordings was saved under each participant's pseudonym in a private playlist for playback purposes, which will be destroyed in five years from the dissertation publication, as outlined in the release forms each interviewee received. The form detailed information about the research and how the sensitive data will be handled to comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), as well as the policies enforced by the School of Human and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of West London.

Recruitment

Research participants were recruited for the study, using a six-month lead time, through organic (unpaid) digital advertising on popular social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, that gained significant traction. The digital flyer (Appendix B) was reviewed and approved, beforehand, by the PhD supervisory team and the School of Human and Social Sciences. Additionally, a mixture of cold calls and email marketing were used as tools to contact music companies and industry professional bodies who agreed to forward the Research Ethics approved "Call for Interviews" Digital Letter to their membership-base and/or employees. Congruently, word-of-mouth marketing (WOMM) was also initiated to seek and recruit potential participants for the study, who were in attendance, at various music and entertainment industry events.

Recruitment Strategy

Once participants confirmed interest and availability, they scheduled a date and time slot and received the required documents: "Research Participant Information Sheet" (Appendix D and Appendix E) and "Research Summary Consent Form" (Appendix G, Appendix H, and Appendix I). After the interview took place, each participant then received a "Debriefing Statement" (Appendix F), which included resources to therapy directory links, directing participants to culturally competent BAME and Black female therapists, in case anything that was discussed was emotionally distressing due to the nature of the subject. Participants were recruited through various methods outlined in earlier sections of this chapter

Setting

All participants were presented with a choice to meet in-person at a private, university-approved location, in the Greater London area, or virtually via video phone conferencing on secured webhosting platforms, such as Skype, FaceTime, or Zoom, in a quiet and private area for both the researcher and interviewer.

All twelve participants requested to meet online via video conferencing. During the interview, two different audio recording devices were used simultaneously, for precautionary purposes. Most of the participants elected to either speak at their place of work in their private office, where they could close and lock their office door, or in the comfort of their own home. The majority of the interviews lasted between 45 minutes – 90 minutes. However, there was an outlier as one interview lasted approximately three hours.

Pilot Interviews

Three pilot interviews were conducted which helped shape and finalise the twelve in depth, semi-structured interview questions so that they were better suited for identifying various themes, while leaving space for new themes to emerge by using a semi-structured interview design. For the research design, twelve indicative questions were created and tested on three pilot studies to ensure they were not leading questions, which could have compromised the research. The final set of questions selected (see Appendix C), were reviewed, and approved by the School of Human and Social Sciences' (SHSS) Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix J), and prompt questions were used sparingly, depending on the information disclosed by each research participant. Examples of questions asked during the interview are listed below:

- Do you feel that what happens within the music industry also happens in wider society or do you believe that the music industry is different in terms of the way Black female professionals may be treated?

- How do you see your role as a Black female professional in the music industry and how do you feel the industry views you?

- If you could change anything about your experience as a Black female navigating your professional career in the music industry, what would you change and why?

The information collected from the interviews provided rich contextual data where the set of questions that were asked drew from preliminary archival

studies from an intersectionality framework, which helped to provide context

surrounding systemic issues that were still prevalent.

Method of Analysis

How I Engaged with the Six Step Phase Process for Study 2

Table 10 Reflexive Engagement with the Six Step Phase Process [Study 2]

PHASE 1: Familiarising yourself with the dataset	One-liner notes were taken sparingly during the interviews for key points that stood out to me, which I placed to the side, to not influence how I re-listened to the audio playback of the recordings. After the interviews were completed I listened back repeatedly, and began to transcribe the data, initially without the aide of AI until the third interview (due to affordability). As soon as I was able to, I purchased Trint's software transcription and re-transcribed the previous as well as transcribed the remaining interviews on Trint for accuracy. Once transcriptions were cleaned, I continued to re-read them, take notes, and refer back to my previous notes to see if I interpreted it differently the next time, being in a different head space or environment.
PHASE 2: Coding	I uploaded the cleaned and anonymised transcripts to NVivo to begin the coding process. I took a two-day training seminar to learn how to use the platform for this feature. As it was still a learning curve, I began colour coding on the actual transcripts with highlighter. However, once I became more comfortable with the programme, I created nodes that captured shared meanings, different meanings, and more complex meanings in NVivo. These were often further refined semantically and latently, which, was driven by my unique position as an insider-researcher, in being attuned to cultural nuances.
PHASE 3: Generating initial themes	The initial themes that were genererated were developed around shared meanings, that were clustered by coding, across the dataset.
PHASE 4: Developing and reviewing themes	To develop the themes, the candidate themes were reviewed to see if they were represented well across the dataset.
PHASE 5: Refining, defining, and naming themes	Themes were heavily negotiated. Since the dataset was rich, I found that I had to frequently rename, remove, and add back in (but redefine), where appropriate, but in way to better capture a single idea with a maximum of top three facets, of each central organising concept, in the subthemes to keep it succinct. While I understand this is methodical, I personally struggled with removing entire themes for the sake of word-count, because this is a liberation project for a multi-marginalised oppressed group. So, to leave out any important facets to understand their vulnerabilities felt like a betrayal. However, instead of discarding these themes, I have placed them to the side to incorporate in future projects, with their approval.
PHASE 6: Writing up	Phases 5 and 6 often blurred during the writing up, which Barun and Clarke mentioned is a part of the process since it is never final. Keeping that in mind, I ended up selecting which themes to incorporate by how well it could tell a meaningful story, and have a natural flow. So, from this positioning, I tried to approach the themes like acts in a play, to try to best show the story progression, while maintaining the essence of each captured complex theme.

Reflexive Thematic Analysis using In-depth, Semi-structured Interviews

The second phase of the multimethod study involved the use of twelve in-depth, semi-structured interviews (Smith & Sparkes, 2012; Hesse-Biber, 2014; Edwards & Holland, 2013), which were conducted with leading Black American and Black British women, working across the industry ecosystems of the world's top-performing music markets – in the US (#1) and the UK (# 3) (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2021).

As the interview design was informed by the archival studies, presented in Study 1, as an "elicitation tool" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 49) – this narrative analysis (Collins, 2009) correspondingly applied a critical realist ontological and, inherently[149], Black feminist social constructivist epistemological framework to conduct a RTA – where all interviews were treated as a single dataset.

Although the analytical paradigmatic treatment[150] applied to Study 1, was commissioned in Study 2, it was done for the sole purposes to access Black women's socioprofessional worlds through "the use of dialogue" (Collins, 2009, p. 286), mediated by human practices, to gain rich and in-depth contextualised insights about their career experiences, as leading Black women, also, navigating power within the context of "politics of identity" (Bryan, et al., 2018), throughout their multifaceted career experiences and journeys, in the industry. However, where the analytical treatment delineated,

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[149] By both the interview design and the overall research paradigm.
[150] See "Reflexive Thematic Analysis using Archival Studies"

occurred at the coding and theme development phases. Accordingly, Phases 2 – 5 of the RTA Six Step Phrase Process[151], was designedly more inductive[152] in the sense that participants' accounts were prioritised, regardless of the existing ideas or concepts, or my insider-status where I was mindful to not ask leading questions, which is why I conducted a few pilot interviews to try to ensure this – to not contaminate the data. This was also why semi-structured interviews were employed. Fittingly, their accounts directed the orientation of this RTA, and some aspects, that I had not considered[153], were raised, which was very informative, and useful to keep in mind for this, and future, research.

As the developed and defined themes sought to look in depth at how, and the ways in which, multitiered-sectionality[154] influenced both the direction and their degree of success, participants' accounts informed the analysis – providing for richer insights, where comprehensive semantic and latent coding, notated in the reporting, shaped the analysis – to gently guide the storytelling aspect.

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[151] See Table 10
[152] Although, it could be argued that it was still deductive since the interview design, itself, was informed by Study 1, which was guided by BFT – I made sure to repeatedly ask participants to describe their career experiences – "positive", "negative", or "neutral" – and I assured them there is no "wrong" or "right" answer – and instead that it was just about their journeys, which I believe allowed them to feel more willing to be candid and open.
[153] This was not surprising – as no group is a monolith.
[154] See (Chapter 1, Figure 11)

3.17 Research Positionality Statement

3.18 Importance of Making Positionality Known

In qualitative research in psychology, "reflexivity is a central principle […] [and it] is a strong theme in feminist psychological research" (Coolican, 2017, p. 269), where "pragmatism offers a framework for theorizing [sic] […] [community and power relations]" (Collins, 2019, p. 181). This is because it is:

> […] [A] particularly incisive tool for navigating shifting power dynamics, using it to draw attention to how a researcher's positionality informs every aspect of the research process (Hamilton, 2020, p. 520), as cited in Hesse-Biber's work (2014).

3.19 Occupational Reflexivity

From a practitioner's standpoint, who has worked in both territories observed for the multimethod research, my involvement in the relationship-driven music industry (Beeching, 2020) advantaged my outreach efforts. As this research topic piqued the interest of key people in the industry, across both regions, I met my goal to recruit all twelve research participants of leading Black women in music, based in either (or both) music markets.

To date, I have professionally worked in various sectors (although this is not an exhaustive list) across all three categorical roles[155] observed in this music industry study, as shown on the next page (see Figure 63):

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[155] The three categorical roles observed include: officers, creators, and performers.
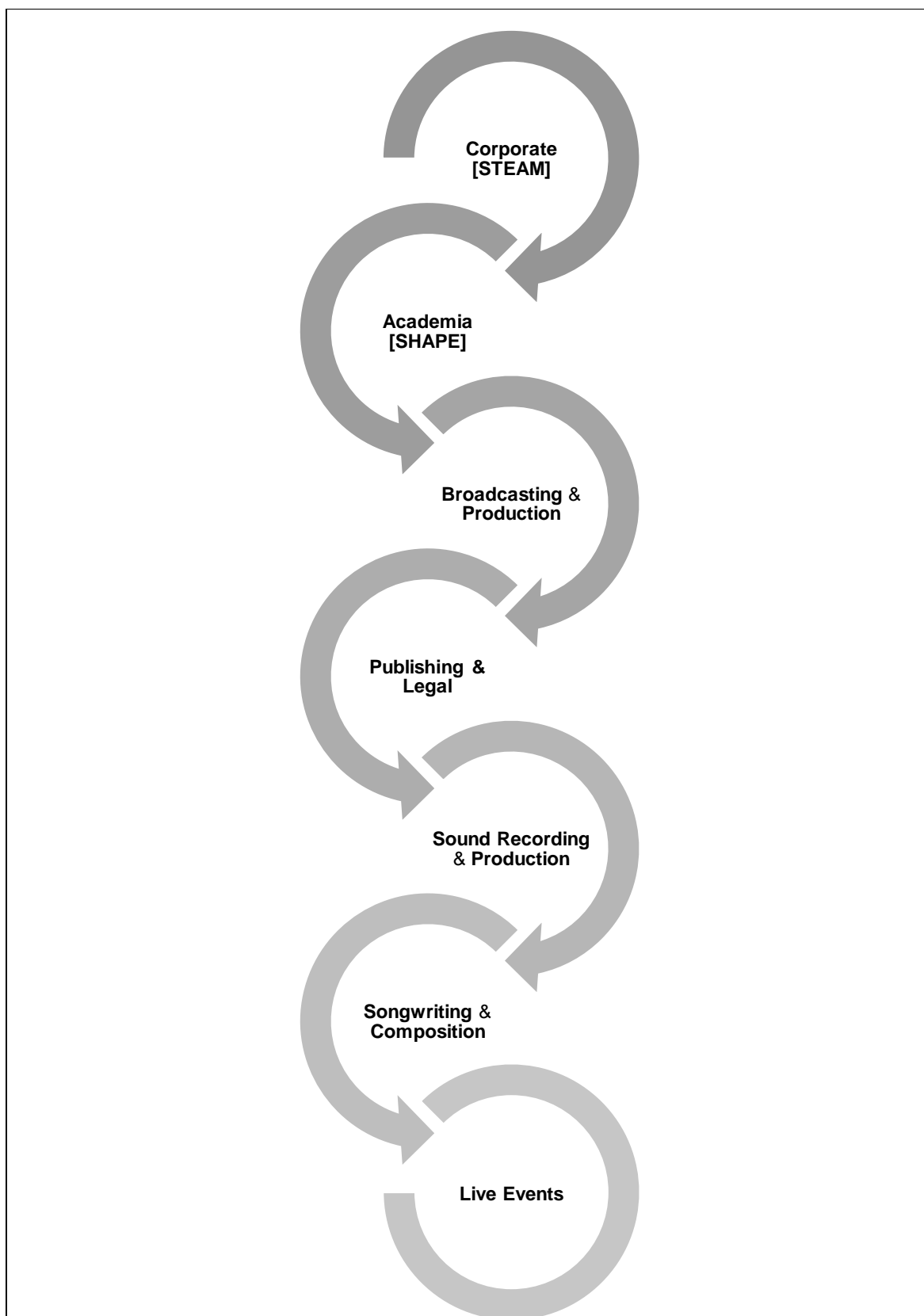
Figure 63   The Researcher's Music Industry Experiences By Sector

3.20 Academic Reflexivity

As an interdisciplinary researcher, I was fully aware of my proximity to shared experiences reported by Black women who participated in the study; however, I was also keenly aware that Black women, who are multidimensional, multi-ethnic, multinational, multicultural, and socioeconomically diverse, are not a monolith, a point I stressed and continued to reiterate throughout this thesis. This clarified why I felt able to stand apart from (as well as beside) the material in this thesis, as a researcher.

Since I asked research participants about their career entry experiences and trajectories in the music industry, to date, navigating "interlocking systems of oppression" (Hull, et al., 2015), it was equally important that I also transparently shared mine (Braun & Clarke, 2013) in this formal reflexivity statement for the study.

3.21 Personal Reflexivity

I was brought up in a Black American working-class family, where many of the members in my immediate, including extended, family were (and are) professional musicians. In my formative years, our family room was converted into an overcrowded rehearsal space, filled with audio and studio equipment, Hammond B3 organs, drum sets, different percussive instruments (such as timbales, cabasas, congas, bongos), and beat making machines. It could be said that my environment, unsurprisingly, marked the beginning of my love for music, as an aficionado and, as a performer, creator, and officer.

Witnessing and Experiencing "Relegation"

Through societal, industrial, and organisational observations, in conjunction with the shaping, and reshaping, of my worldviews, from personal and second-hand experiences – I witnessed the common occurrence of people in "positions of power" relegating darker-skinned Black women in this industry, in ways that impacted the derailment of their vision for their careers. More specifically, I witnessed them be pushed towards background (invisible) positions, as well as towards only select genres, previously (and problematically) categorised as "Race Music" (that is, R&B, Soul, Gospel)[156].

Similarly, I personally experienced this type of "relegation" in my own artistic career journey. Although I deeply loved all the incredible musical stylings birthed from the richness of my Black American and Black diasporic cultures, I had no desire to conform, or pursue, any of the more mainstream ethnocentric biased genres, as a solo performer. Since it seemed as if expectations of me were possibly linked to biased perceptions around my "skin tone", "hair texture", and even expectations revolving around how "churchy" and "soulful" my voice should sound, in terms of what others expected should come from a Black woman, I rejected the invitations to adopt that worldview, which I felt was being mechanised to convince me (a full human being) that there are limits to self-expression and self-definition. A few years before engaging with this multi-year project, I had no knowledge that

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[156] "Race Music" is a misleading euphemism for "Black Music" that could serve as a means of erasure for other mainstream genres Black musicians also pioneered (e.g., Rock n' Roll, Country, Jazz, Funk, Blues, House, Disco) but have not traditionally been accredited (Nielsen, 2018).

"Black Feminism" was its own theoretical field and social justice

empowerment project until early adulthood; yet interestingly I innately

engaged with the traditions of its practices[157] from a young age, which I

thought was an isolated coping mechanism for myself, at the time (see

Appendix N).

3.22 Reflexivity Summary

The purpose of this write-up was to provide a clearer context of my interests

and motivations as it pertained to the development of this thesis. With the

heightened sense of understanding, regarding the knowledge I produced, in

relation to the power it was presented to, who controls the validation process,

I understood I ran the risk of being discredited. BFT, in general, runs a higher

risk of that happening since the tools, created out of necessity, to prevent the

erasure of this population's histories, can be non-traditional. However, I

believed that my rare position and intersectional identities, along with my rich

experience and in-depth insight, gave me an upper-hand in terms of how I

approached the creation, production and, hopeful, dissemination of the

knowledge I developed, where I was uniquely positioned as the observer and

practitioner "[…] who 'matched' the major social characteristics of the

participant" (Braun & Clarke, 2013, p. 88) and sympathised, empathised, and

had compassion for the experiences, shared, by my fellow Black women in

the top-performing markets of the global pop music industry.

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[157] Patricia Hill Collins affirmingly noted in her seminal text: "Traditionally women engaged in this overarching intellectual and political [BFT] project were blues singers, poets, autobiographers [sic], storytellers, and orators. They became Black feminist intellectuals both by doing intellectual work and by being validated as such by everyday Black women" (Collins, 2009, p. 286).

3.23 Methodology Chapter Summary

To recap, Study 1 and Study 2, were designed to employ a Black feminist social constructivist epistemological and critical realist ontological framework, to shed light on nonparticipants' and participants' career experiences in the top-WEIRD music industry ecosystems. They were also designed to identify common, as well as divergent, themes, between and within both datasets.

Reasons for selected methods were detailed in this chapter to support why archival studies and in-depth semi-structured interviews – were chosen to be reflexively thematically analysed (Braun , et al., 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2022) for the research. Together these approaches, and the reasons to justify their use, was to focus on meaning and context to provide a richer picture of the myriad of challenges faced by Black women working in the industry at different (leadership and iconic status) levels, and a broader reflection on some of the challenges faced by Black women, more generally.

The chosen structure for the qualitative nature of this research topic made it possible for Black women's career narratives in the industry to be centred, explored, using a hybrid approach, through the (aforementioned) select tools in multimethod qualitative inquiry (Collins, 2018). These helped to produce deeper insights surrounding the constructions and productions of behavioural "norms" in these industry ecosystems, where participants worked at, and alongside (in terms of brand partnerships and collaborations), some of the most globally well-known music centric companies.

In the next two chapters, the results are reported for Study 1 and Study 2, which respectively shed light on trailblazing and leading Black women's career and workplace experiences, navigating identity politics and identity policing, in the world's top-performing, and purported-to-be egalitarian, music industry ecosystems.

Chapter 4: Study 1 – Archival Studies

4.1 Introduction

Nonparticipants' conceptions about their history-making, and daily, career experiences, with navigating shifting "politics of identity" and "identity politics" were captured, through a BFT epistemically informed approach, to collate thematic quotations, for this part of the research. The objective was to gain glimpses of insights into their worlds, in relation to their industrial, organisational, and public (societal) treatment, as trailblazers. Thus, interpretations of their comments were framed, from a US socioprofessional context, across the following scores (see below) – where their curated first-hand accounts (via secondary data), were pulled, from a range of different types of publicly available multimedia sources in Figure 60.

4.2 Research Archival Data Sources

Types of Reserach Archival Data Sources Utilised for Study 2 **Published between 1982 - 2022**	Audio, Lyrical, and Visual Performances
	Awards Acceptance Speeches
	Multimedia Case Studies
	Documentaries
	Oral History Programmes
	Conference Keynote Addresses
	Autobiographies and Memoirs
	Anthologies
	Special Archive Collections
	Magazine and Newspaper Publications
	Podcast Interviews
	Radio Broadcast Programming
	Television Talk Shows

Figure 64   Types of Archival Data Sources Utilised for Study 2

4.3 Archival Research Study Nonparticipants

Group		Trailblazer	Name	Generation	Role
Group 1 [1960 - 1980]		Trailblazer A	DIANA ROSS	Silent Generation	Performer
		Trailblazer B	SYLVIA ROBINSON	Silent Generation	Creator
		Trailblazer C	SUZANNE DE PASSE	Baby Boomer	Officer
Group 2 [1980 - 2000]		Trailblazer D	JANET JACKSON	Generation X	Performer
		Trailblazer E	PATRICE RUSHEN	Baby Boomer	Creator
		Trailblazer F	SYLVIA RHONE	Baby Boomer	Officer
Group 3 [2000 - 2020]		Trailblazer G	BEYONCÉ KNOWLES-CARTER	Millennial	Performer
		Trailblazer H	MELISSA "MISSY" ELIIOTT	Generation X	Creator
		Trailblazer I	BOZOMA SAINT JOHN	Generation X	Officer

Figure 65   Archival Studies Categorised into Groups by Scores

(US National Archives, 2022)

4.4 Results

By reconstructing, and centring, their career journey narratives about their experiences as trailblazing Black women in music – using an iterative systematic process, informed by a Black feminist social constructivist and interpretivist epistemological framework – four major interrelated themes were produced, using Braun and Clarke's six-step RTA process (2022). The final selected themes were found to be salient across the dataset (see Figure 66).

4.5 Thematic Results
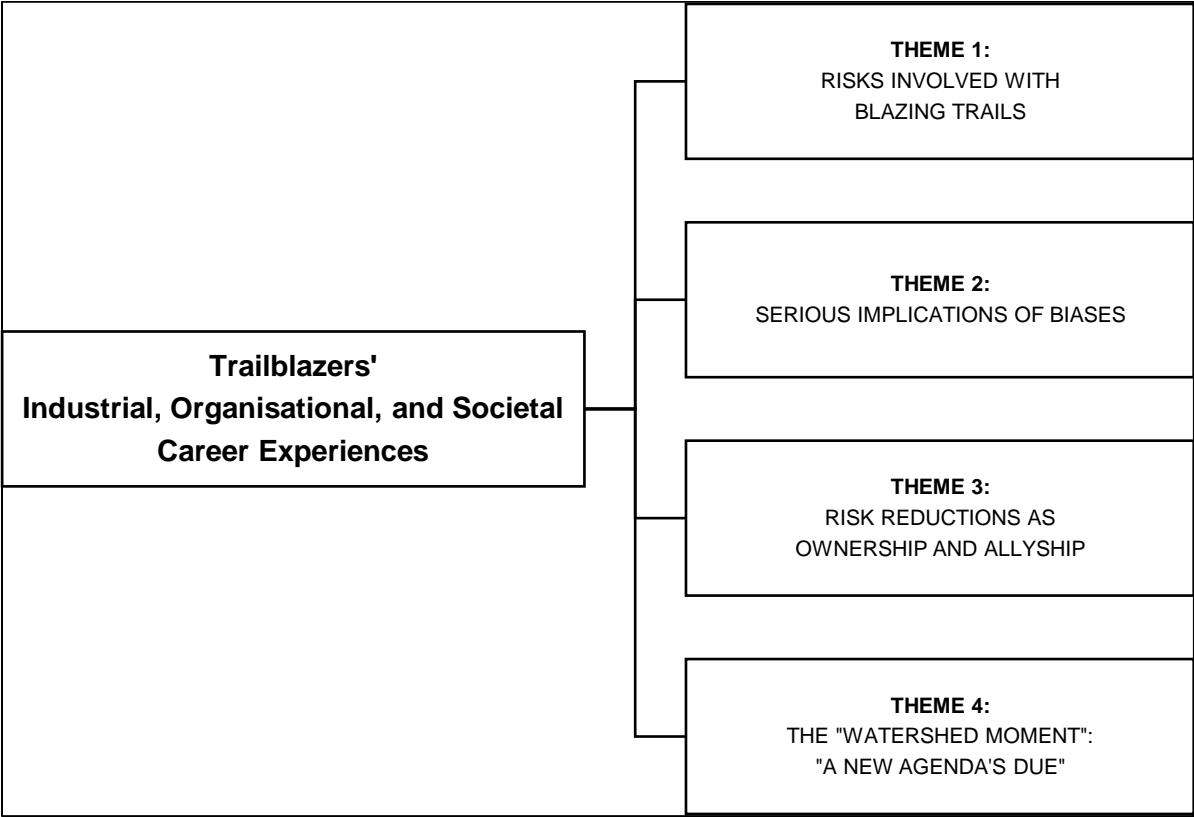
Figure 66   Four Major Interrelated Themes – Study 1

4.5.1 Theme 1: Risks Involved with Blazing Trails

THEME 1:
Risks Involved with Blazing Trails

SUBTHEME 1:	SUBTHEME 2:	SUBTHEME 3:
Navigating imminent threats in work environments and…	Sacrifices as part of the journey	Pressures and barriers with becoming the "first"
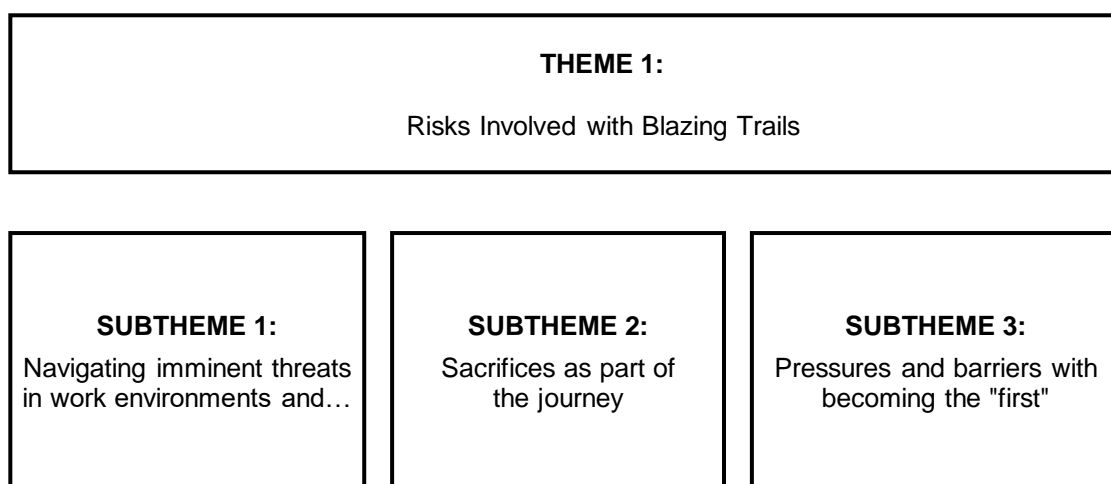
Diagram 1   Study 1 – Theme 1 & Subthemes

The first theme was built around trailblazers' distressing experiences with navigating work environments, as they faced a range of risks and harms that mechanised to jeopardise their safety and wellbeing, in the process of them establishing their industry careers. Accordingly, under this theme, the following subthemes that best captured these features of their experiences, and their perceptions of them, were defined as: (1) "Navigating imminent threats in work environments", (2) "Sacrifices as part of the journey", and (3) "Pressures and barriers with becoming the first".

Subtheme 1: Navigating imminent threats in work environments and…

Nonparticipants spoke about risks as "imminent threats", they encountered, in their work environments – inside, and outside[158], the music industry ecosystem. The way these accounts were depicted, made it evident that the notion of occupational safety was presented as elusive and non-existent in their line of work. This mechanised to normalise the construct of automatically not being protected as a Black woman in the male-dominated society, and industry, where they had to look after themselves and expect discriminatory treatment, as being a natural part of the journey.

For instance, [Trailblazer A] identified the ways she was regularly dehumanised, on the road, presumably by White Anti-Black racist social actors, while touring in the southern part of the US during the 1960s.

> […] In some of those southern towns, you could just feel the bigotry in the air. […] Sometimes **we were afraid** to get off the [tour] bus and ask where the toilet was. There were many times that we would stop at a cafe or gas station, and **we were not allowed** to use the public restrooms. We had to squat beside the bus and pee in the bushes. (Ross, 1993)
>
> Diana Ross, Trailblazing Icon, Silent Generation

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[158] **Author's Reflexive Note:** After long consideration, I decided to stop trying to make their work environments fit neatly into a conventional relatable business model. Accordingly, due to the nature, and business diversity, of the industry, most sectors, in the ecosystem, use a business-to-consumers (B2C) structural model, where work environments are typically converted spaces. Since their career experiences unfold in these environments, it could be said that these trailblazers' career and workplace interactions were largely also co-shaped by the public (meaning consumers, in this case, which may include, but not be limited to, fans, general spectators, brands, and audience members, for example). In this light, the public's responses to them shattering glass ceilings, and breaking barriers, were unsurprisingly discussed as being just as prominent, as the overall industry's, and their respective organisations, responses – in terms of their feedback having an impact on their careers.

These "frightening" experiences were framed as the norm for that time – given the recurring retaliatory backlash from white supremacist and white separatist believers (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2022), who tried to coercively block equality efforts, mandated by US legislation. In her account, this was demonstrated to be done through means of structural violence ("we were not allowed to…") ("we used to try to integrate the audiences[159]") and physical violence ("snipers shot at us, as we were leaving the concert hall").

> I think the most **frightening** experience of all happened in Macon, Georgia. Late one night after a performance, as **snipers shot at us, as we were leaving the concert hall,** at that time, it was strict segregation in Georgia. We used to try to integrate the audiences. When we heard the shots, we took off towards the bus, as quickly as we could. We tore up the stairs of that bus so fast, people fell into the aisles and rolled on top of each other. When we got far enough away for our hearts to stop pounding, we saw that the gunshots had gone right through the metal, hit the glass window, and the entire front of the bus was full of tiny gunshot holes. (Ross, 1993)
>
> Diana Ross, Trailblazing Icon, Silent Generation

Being "shot at" by "snipers" was reported as "the *most* frightening" ordeal, indicating that frightening experiences were so common that navigating these imminent threats were recognised as standard, unavoidable, occupational hazards, reflective of the times. These depictions spoke to the deep traumas and terrors, these Black women endured and worked under. It also spoke to the severe lack of protection, for them, establishing their careers.

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[159] **Author's Reflexive Note:** Title II of the Civil Rights Act (1964) legally prohibited discrimination in public accommodations[159]. Despite this new mandate, some music venues refused to racially integrate their audiences, which led some high-profile music entertainers to protest (Billboard Magazine, 2020; Smithsonian Magazine, 2009) these establishments and their promoters, by not performing.

In relation to the dataset, this account was neither viewed, nor treated as an outlier. Instead, it served as a prevalent point, to draw attention to the different perpetuated legacies of this socially located form of bigotry as productions of these were frequently reported, throughout nonparticipants' accounts – in this analysis.

In another example of navigating imminent threats in work environments, the record label, where [Trailblazer C] worked, was in an inner-city residential area, at the time. Her safety and wellbeing were depicted as being instantly jeopardised, as noted by her comment "I was in a vulnerable place" when riots broke, in her location, where people were harmed and killed.

> In April, not long after I arrived, Martin Luther King was assassinated and there was rioting. One of my colleagues at the company, Billie Jean Brown, knew I was in a vulnerable place and came and picked me up and took me to her condo in the suburbs until things calmed down. (Variety Magazine, 2022)
>
> **Suzanne de Passe, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer**

This account described the imminent danger she was in. However, what also stood out as important, was that her Black female co-worker was the one who rescued her, in a sense, at a critical time, as "[she] knew [she] was in a vulnerable place", and thus took immediate action to ensure her co-worker's safety. While her colleague opened her home to her until things settled down[160], she found safety in that moment.

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[160] Once she returned in the late spring, she discovered one of the greatest acts in music history, the Jackson 5, whom she had introduced and connected to the Founder of the label she worked.

Details beyond that, were either not given, or included in the published version, in the interview. Subsequently, it is not known if this colleague reached out on behalf of the label, or on her own. However, this arrangement came to be, the meaning-making of "Black women supporting Black women" was noted as a passing comment, which seemed to illustrate a seemingly important point. Other examples of this form of "support" and notion of "protection" for the conventionally "unprotected", as looking out for each other, are revisited in Theme 3.

For nonparticipants – whether they were in their young twenties, teenage years, or still in the single digits, as some started out very young in the industry, many seemed to encounter extremely distressing forms of bigotry. For example, although [Trailblazer D] was just a toddler, when she and her musical celebrity family first moved into an affluent predominantly White neighbourhood, she was raised there, and eventually became a child star in the family business. Despite their "celebrity" and "class" social status and privileges, these constructs denoting "success" did not shield her, or them, from the dangers and traumas of bigotry, rooted in white supremacists' and separatists' desire to subordinate, and inferiorise, those whose group memberships they shared.

> [...] people didn't want us, so they had this petition going around, so that we wouldn't be in the neighbourhood. I remember walking down the street and being called the n-word. Someone driving by yelling it out. Be told to go back home to *your country* and feeling it at school with some of the teachers and some of the kids (.) Touching your hair cause [sic] your hair was different from theirs (.) Or your skin ((rubs skins)) ((pause)) rubbing it. Was like "Does that come off?" "No. Does yours?"" ((Laughs)) I didn't have a lot of friends. I had a couple, but my closest were my brothers and sisters. (Janet Jackson., 2022)

Janet Jackson, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X

In this account, it evidenced, again, that protection was elusive, even for little Black girls, associated with celebrity families. Here, she spoke to being antagonised, "called the n-word", traumatised "walking down the street", treated like a spectacle by her peers ("touching [her] hair") ("Does [your skin colour] come off?"), which was framed as dehumanising, and discriminated against by both adults and children, in the purported upper echelons of US society, where they were not only made to feel they do not belong, but "a petition [was] going around" to try to force her family out of the neighbourhood.

Overall, these accounts shed a prism of light in terms of the multifarious ways the precarious US socio-political climate, directly impacted nonparticipants' safety and wellbeing, which extended into their work environments.

Subtheme 2: Sacrifices as part of the journey

This subtheme spoke to the risks as the construct of "sacrifice", (in some capacity), commonly experienced by nonparticipants as an unavoidable part of their career journeys, in blazing trails. This was reported to be the case whether they were breaking into the industry or taking precautions to keep the momentum going in their careers. Across the dataset, the mechanistic outcomes, of the construct of "sacrifice" could be said to be made evident by their successes and accolades. This was confirmed by their broader consensus that they understood what these "sacrifices" afforded them – in terms of considerable career gains, the cultivation of a hard work ethic (that was cited to still pay off for them), and various privileges. However, alongside those perceived gains, they reflected on their perceived losses, as well. The latter was framed as being the difficult, less spoken about parts of their journeys, they had to manage and navigate, to reach notoriety. For instance, trailblazers spoke to having "to give up a lot" and some framed this compromising positioning as being the norm, most of their lives – as they started at young ages, in the industry. In those accounts, they identified they were already working demanding rigorous schedules, like adult talent, to break into the industry, indicating a perceived loss of a "normal childhood".

> […] It brings back memories. This is where I started when I was seven. My first time on any stage was here. We would perform two-three weeks at a time doing double shows (.) Two shows a night. That's a lot for a seven-year-old […] I don't ever remember being asked. I, um ((pause)) just remember being put into it. […] None of us had a normal childhood. My friends, they went to gymnastics class […] Girl Scouts for brownies. And I wanted to do those things [...] but, yet we had to go to work. (Janet Jackson., 2022)
>
> **Janet Jackson, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X**

This account shed a light on the complexities of this positioning. While nostalgically reflecting on her start, which contributed to her overall success, she also seemed to insinuate she did not have agency, as a working child star, and that this career path was not (at least initially) her own choice. She indicated in the documentary she had other aspirations but there was mounting pressure for her to follow her siblings' path. In this scenario the perceived losses were cited as a loss of a "normal childhood" where she would not go to "gymnastics class" or "Girl Scouts" like her friends and, perhaps, child labour exploitation – as she worked a gruelling schedule of where she cited working "two-three weeks at a time doing double shows […] a night" with her siblings was "a lot for a seven-year-old".

In more reflections, another trailblazer, who also started at seven, nearly two decades apart), shared, that while being on stage made her feel "safe" since she was a "shy" child and "introvert" – she stated she "sacrificed a lot" as well.

> […] I was competing in dance and singing competitions at **age seven**. When I was on the stage, I felt safe. **I was often the only Black girl, and it was then that I started to realize** I had to dance and sing **twice as hard**. I had to have stage presence, wit, and charm if I wanted to win. I started taking voice lessons from an opera singer **at nine**. **By 10** I had already recorded at least 50 or 60 songs in the recording studio. […] I had my first vocal injury **at 13** from singing in the studio for too many hours. We had just gotten our first record deal, and I was afraid I had developed nodules and destroyed my voice and that my career could be over. The doctors put me on vocal rest all summer […] **My teenage years** were about the grind. I grew up hearing this particular scripture from James 2:17, "Faith without work is dead." Vision and intention weren't enough; I had to put in the work. I committed to always being a student and always being open to growth. My energy went into Destiny's Child and the dream of us getting a record deal and becoming musicians. If something wasn't helping me reach my goal, I decided to invest no time in it. I didn't feel like I had time to "kiki" or hang out. I sacrificed a lot of things and ran from any possible distraction […]. (Harper's BAZAAR, 2021).
>
> Beyoncé, Trailblazing Icon, Millennial

In this account, it could be said that the perception of loss (as sacrifice), manifested in a few prominent ways. (1) The first being, her recognition that she was being judged to a different set of standards, because she was "often the only Black girl" in these competitions. It was important to note here how early the gender-racialised socialisation of this messaging took root, which was described to be an intimately familiar experience for nonparticipants. In recognising this mechanism of double standards, from a very young age, meant she internalised the messaging she had to work "twice as hard" – "if [she] wanted to win". (2) To do this, she indicated she had to "grow up fast" (another sacrifice, which spoke to a perceived loss of childhood), and thus rigorously trained, (3) where overtraining presented its own set of risks as well ("vocal injury" – another sacrifice, but from overexertion that posed a serious risk on her career path choice as she could have permanently damaged her instrument) to stay ahead of the competition. This constructed hard work ethic was cited to carry over into her teenage years, which "were about the grind" to secure "a record deal and become musicians". (4) Another perceived sacrifice was framed as not having time to socialise ("'kiki' or hang out") if it did not help her reach her goal. "Faith" as "work" was cited as her driving motivation, and "distractions", which was viewed as anything non-work related, to help her reach her goal and achieve her dreams, were viewed as perceived threats – as early as childhood and her teenage years.

As these "sacrifices" manifested in different ways, for nonparticipants – it seemed to vary, largely based on their age and status, in life, at a given moment. Prime examples of this were reported in [Trailblazer F's] account.

> [...] Unquestionably [my daughter] is the single most important thing in my life [...] Of course, my career is also important. But when you really want to do something, you find a way to get it done. [...] You have to be well grounded, organized [sic] and focused [...] and you have to save time for yourself. I can be a good mother, and I can be a good professional. But it is also important that I be true to myself (EBONY Magazine, 1992)
>
> Sylvia Rhone, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer

In this account, sacrifices, were viewed as several perceived conditional losses that needed to be mitigated by being "well grounded, organised, and focused", which spoke to the required mechanistic construct of high executive functional strategy, to balance these important areas in her life – as she did in business. As she blazed trails – she made it clear that her daughter remained her topmost priority in life ("she is instrumental to my success" (1992) – a sentiment shared by many nonparticipants who are parents).

In terms of balancing both motherhood and trailblazing careers, perceived losses – as also being cited as perceptions of losses by other trailblazers – were described to be the constructs of "time" ("you have to save time for yourself"), "authenticity" ("it is also important that I be true to myself"), and perseverance and resourcefulness ("when you really want to do something, you find a way to get it done"). In (Trailblazer F's case) this mechanised to also mean embracing the idea that sacrifice may need to be made in both important areas, as part of the journey of blazing trails.

> [...] And sometimes it was at the risk of my job, or sometimes it was at the sacrifice of not going to school events. (The WIE Network: In Conversation with Sylvia Rhone, 2015)
>
> Sylvia Rhone, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer

Subtheme 3: Pressures and barriers with becoming "the first"

This subtheme highlights how nonparticipants discussed risks as pressures and barriers associated with becoming "the first" – Black woman, woman, or Black person – to ascend to levels of prominence, in the industry. Before those risks are addressed in this section, it was important to centre their motivations, for perspective, as many indicated that as they were breaking barriers, and building their legacies, it did not cross their minds as they were doing so. Instead, they seemed to largely view their achievements, within the framing as "the first", as an afterthought – unintended, unsought, and "overrated". For example, in these moments, some described to be laser focused on becoming first-rate and innovative in their craft.

> Yeah, the new ground that it seems that I've […] sort of broken, pioneering, was just not seeing women in the position of "music director" for some really large shows- large productions that required music. And, you know, at the time that you're doing it, you just- trying to get the job done. You know what I mean? [..] I'm definitely not worried about […] if "I'm the first woman," "I'm the first Black person" […] I'm just glad to be there and just want to do it, and just put a stamp of excellence on it. And to do that, um (.) takes up […] all of the space. (NAMM Oral History Program: Interview with Patrice Rushen, 2015)
>
> Patrice Rushen, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer

For others, they indicated their achievements were not driven by the desire for notoriety, they wanted "to make good music" and travel the world":

> *Interviewer: And when you look at your career, you recognise that you are, and were, a star; and what that meant?*
>
> I don't think we felt like we were stars. We felt like we were still growing. We were still becoming. We wanted to make good music and we wanted to travel the world. Coming- the little Black girl from Detroit. And so, I don't think we were really so consciously thinking at that moment that we were- had made it. (The Oprah Winfrey Show: Interview with Diana Ross, 2011)
>
> Diana Ross, Trailblazing Icon, Silent Generation

On "recognition" and "legacy", others indicated they were less concerned about those rewards for themselves. Instead, they said to be more concerned with "[making] it bigger] to help provide a larger platform, and world stage, for their artists, instead, on their label because they wanted to see them succeed – not for their notoriety ("not for me"), but to support them.

> Not really. That's why I'm determined to make it bigger. So that they will respect us…I would like to see the gang like "Fat Albert" on television. I'd like to see them in Vegas. I'd like to see Grand Master Flash the same way. A movie about these kids and what they're all about, I think that would be nice. Not for me, but for them and what they're doing. (Adler Hip Hop Archive [BA], 1982)

Sylvia Robinson, Trailblazing Icon, Silent Generation

Their accounts seemed to suggest that becoming "the first" manifested, merely, as a by-product of doing what they wanted to do in their careers – which was to become excellent at their craft, to make good music and travel, and to empower others. Since it was so rare for Black women to be in these positions, the pressures, and barriers they faced, alongside blazing trails, impacted them, as the "challenges that lied ahead" [Trailblazer F] became more insidious and sophisticated, each new level, they ascended to, in the ecosystem.

For example, [Trailblazer E] cited specific types of challenges, she faced in her career journey of blazing trails, where she commented, "You get a lot of heat when you're 'first', you know?" The first barrier she noted, seemed to speak to the construct of obstacles as facilitated by social actors (perhaps higher-ups) maintaining weak organisational infrastructures that seemed to be designed to mainly support members of dominant groups.

This meant that even if a select few individuals, within an organisation empathised and wanted to support her, but neither had the know-how to make meaningful changes, or the power to, she was still ultimately disadvantaged.

> There's people that understand, and want to, certainly rally around you, and help you, but don't totally know how, because you're first. And so, they don't exactly know how they're going to best help you. (NAMM Oral History Program: Interview with Patrice Rushen, 2015)
>
> Patrice Rushen, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer

This was discussed as a common scenario for other nonparticipants, in relation to their career experiences, of "making it to the [proverbial] top", and then encountering a new level of challenges, within organisations, that often left them in a position to fend for themselves. The severe lack of structural support, to succeed, for Black women, was evident in their accounts; and these barriers, mechanised as them not having access to support systems, required, to maintain a viable career, especially in these historically exclusionary organisations, where many faced obstacles that were described to be unique to Black women.

For instance, [Trailblazer G] noted that when she got her "big break", it was insinuated that the major label she had just signed to, gave her and her bandmates (as teenagers) full creative control[161] to "write [their] own songs and write [their] own video treatments" (ELLE Magazine, 2016). In this account, it was implied that there was an underlying expectation they would

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[161] For context, it is typically the label's responsibility to assemble multi-expert business teams to manage these critical aspects of artists' careers.

fail as it was indicated "[the label] didn't really believe we were pop stars".

This seemed to insinuate gender-racialised undertones, factoring in they were

four Black teenage girls and "they underestimated us" (2016).

Another prime example of this was described by [Trailblazer H] in an

acceptance speech, where she addressed a predominantly Black audience

and tearfully spoke about the different structural barriers she encountered and

overcame, while blazing trails, in the industry, as an innovator – and

especially as a darker-skinned Black woman.

> […] one thing I want to say to women […] I went through a place where ((pause)) I did a record […] someone replaced me with someone who was more of "the look". And that discouraged me. Um ((pause)) I was dropped. That discouraged me. But we don't control (.) timing. […] the God I serve is powerful. And if he wasn't, I wouldn't be standing here today. I was sick and I couldn't even lift a pen. My nervous system had broke [sic] all the way down [...] but I say that because even with them replacing me, for someone who they deem to be more beautiful, or "the look" ((pause)) it didn't stop me. Because I knew that I was gifted. And, I knew there was an anointing on me. […] You got to believe in yourself. Because there are gonna [sic] be times that people tell you, "You can't do it," or "You don't look the part," "You ain't [sic] gonna [sic] make it." But I'm a walking testimony. I stand here today ((pause)). (ESSENCE Magazine, 2020; Elliott, 2018; Kingz, 2018)
>
> **Missy Elliott, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X**

This account explicitly spoke to the lack of structural support, as fuelled by

biases, in her situation, that mechanised to relegate and devalue her, while

adversely impacting her health. Here, the degree of severity was implied to be

worse, since the construct of featurism was cited to be pervasive, and even

more damning towards Black women of darker skin tones and different body

sizes. This contextualised her stance to champion for marginalised "brown,

dark women".

> I am a champion for my brown, dark women. If we knew how special we were, we would be unstoppable. (Marie Claire Magazine, 2019)

Missy Elliott, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X

These, as well as other examples, stood out as important features evident in their experiences, as noted in the data. This organisational behaviour was found to be a patterned one, for other Black women as well[162]. Before closing out this theme, it was important to quickly revisit the first barrier, [Trailblazer E] spoke to, with becoming "the first". As previously mentioned, she spoke to the idea of weak organisational infrastructures, that seemed to be designed to mainly support members of dominant groups – which mechanised to relegate Black women, and women, in the male-dominated industry. Continuing, the second barrier she noted, spoke to the construct of obstacles as people in higher positions having conflicted reactions, to her having the perceived distinguishing title "as a first".

> Then you have (.) the people that realise that you're there, and they want you there, kind of. But they didn't really […] intend […] for you to come in as "a first", (NAMM Oral History Program: Interview with Patrice Rushen, 2015)

Patrice Rushen, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer

She elaborated how "[coming] in as 'a first'", in her situation, was felt to be viewed as deviant behaviour. In this context, retaliation to this perceived deviance being described as the higher-ups trying to make her "conform". This – was observed as a shared experience across the dataset – as noted by nonparticipants, who were intimately familiar with this tactic. Like

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[162] **Author's Reflexive Note:** In thinking about Black women being the fastest growing demographic of business owners (although the most underfunded) in the US, patterned organisational behaviours and market trends could elucidate why so many started their own businesses.

[Trailblazer E], many nonparticipants experienced some form of backlash, which is discussed in the next theme.

4.5.2 Theme 2: Serious Implications of Biases

THEME 2:
Seriour Implications of Biases

SUBTHEME 1:	SUBTHEME 2:	SUBTHEME 3:
Misconceptions and stereotypes	Different rules: equality viewed as automatic deviation	Abusive backlash from pushing things forward
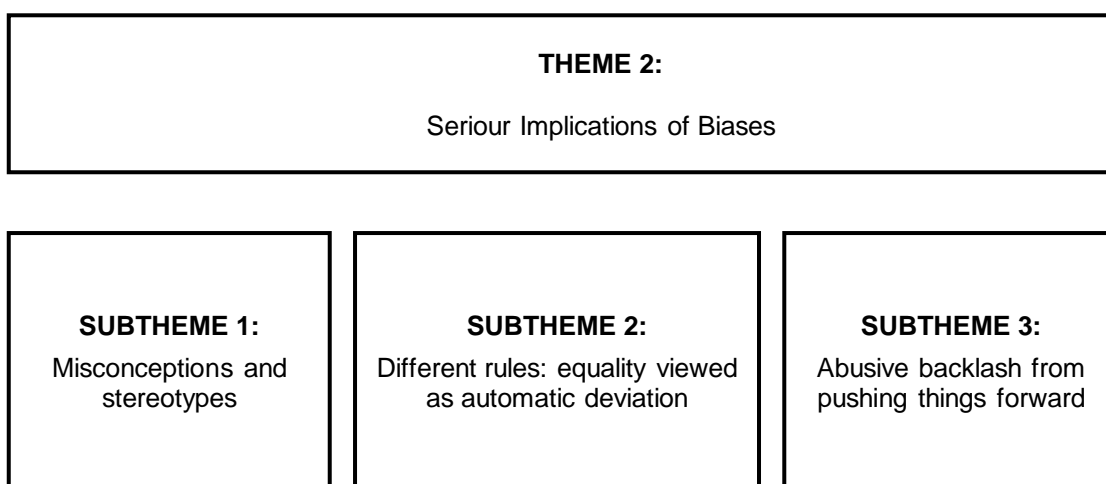
Diagram 2   Study 1 – Theme 2 & Subthemes

The second theme encapsulated trailblazers' perceptions about their career experiences, across the music ecosystem, with combatting harmful stereotypes (specific to Black women and their shared groups). The commentary they provided indicated the adverse, and degree of, impact stereotypes have had on their workplace and career experiences, as well as overall occupational wellbeing, more generally. To illustrate the specific ways biases impacted them, their accounts were thematically divided into the following subthemes that best shed light on how these occurred, captured under: (1) "Misconceptions and stereotypes", (2) "Different rules: equality viewed as automatic deviation", and (3) "Abusive backlash as dehumanisation".

Subtheme 1: Misconceptions and stereotypes

Nonparticipants spoke to how they were prejudged in ways that were evident to be rooted in the denigration of Black women in the White male-dominated industry. Here, their thoughts on others' "misconceptions" about them, as Black women, were perceived as others trying to rob them of their "humanity" [Trailblazer D], and agency in ways that they viewed to reinforce the use of disproven western human hierarchal power dynamics in business – that were explicitly compared to slavery.

> We women artists — and women in general — are saying we will not be controlled, manipulated, or abused. We're determined not to fall back to those days of emotional and even physical enslavement. (Billboard Magazine, 2018)
>
> Janet Jackson, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X

One of the ways the human hierarchy construct was believed to be reinforced was through the corruption of western media, as a power structure, which is not in and of itself oppressive. However, it was understood by nonparticipants, that it can be used as a vehicle by whoever who has the means to fund group-based narratives (negative or positive) to be exported globally, which can influence social norms. From this respect, nonparticipants spoke to how they either funded their own projects to put out uplifting and more balanced narratives about groups, and others spoke to how they turned down projects to distance their brands from potentially harmful associations, which all traced back to stereotypes through media imagery – and their implications.

For instance, to counter the overwhelmingly negative portrayals of vulnerable people, [Trailblazer G] noted her intentionality with the projects she curates. She spoke to how she uses her platforms to positively amplify the marginalised through media representation – where no group feels othered.

> For me, it is about amplifying the beauty in all of us. I rarely felt represented in film, fashion, and other media. (ELLE Magazine, 2019)
>
> Beyoncé, Trailblazing Icon, Millennial

She also indicated, in another archival data source, why it was important for her to curate positive imagery around the social construction of Blackness in the US and in the African Diaspora, for her children, for them to see positive reflections of themselves, as Black people, in media. This spoke to the sentiment, awareness, and pervasiveness of anti-Blackness and Black people's portrayal in media by people with ill-intent[163].

In noting how media imagery can contribute to the development of the construct of either an inferiority complex (for Black people) or superiority complex (for non-Black people), where either scenario can contribute to relational dysfunction, spoke to how damaging these funded narratives can be and become. It was felt that these messages were so permeating that it could even riskily influence her own Black children to second guess that "they're beautiful, intelligent, and capable".

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[163] For sociohistorical context – these were suggested to be deeply rooted in their oppression, and their marginalised experiences in the US, that started with the horrors of African chattel slavery.

> It's important to me to show images to my children that reflect their beauty, so they can grow up in a world where they look in the mirror—first through their own families as well as the news, the Super Bowl, the Olympics, the White House, and the GRAMMYs—and see themselves and have no doubt that they're beautiful, intelligent, and capable. (Recording Academy / GRAMMYs, 2017)
>
> **Beyoncé, Trailblazing Icon, Millennial**

On this note, another trailblazer spoke to how impactful these media portrayals can shape people's perceptions, about Black people, but more importantly Black people's perceptions about Black people through the youth, which is why she was fiercely protective of her label artists' image (comprised of Black men). She understood how certain brand alignments could "hurt their image" and have a domino effect to negatively influence youth culture. She considered that their young fans could be impressionable – indicating the likelihood they may try to emulate that visual representation, of themselves, which [Trailblazer B] was very cognizant of, which influenced her decision to turn down certain major commercial offers for her artists, as noted below:

> Shg [sic] approached to do a wine commercial but I would not allow that. I thought it would hurt their image. I didn't want them involved in any wine commercials or cigarette commercials [because it's too influential with the kids] but Panasonic. We could do a Panasonic commercial, that would be good. You know, they used "Earth, Wind and Fire" to do a rapping commercial. They should've used "The [Sugarhill] Gang". (Adler Hip Hop Archive [BA], 1982)
>
> **Sylvia Robinson, Trailblazing Icon, Silent Generation**

By situating these contexts, provides deeper understandings as to how and way "misconceptions" and "stereotypes" were particularly viewed to be

harmful – in more damaging ways for Black women and marginalised groups. This mechanised to compound onto the risks they already faced with establishing themselves in this industry and blazing trails.

For instance, in terms of gendered-racialised stereotypes, and stereotype subtypes (Devine & Baker, 1991), specific to Black women, [Trailblazers A, F, G, and I] noted how their experiences with overt and covert discrimination manifested in ways that seemed to evidence others' (societally enabled) sense of entitlement to socially police Black women.

On her journey towards becoming a superstar, [Trailblazer G's] comments spoke to the mechanistic construct of stereotype threats. In this extract, she explicitly stated she made it her "mission" to try to shift US society's widespread negative, and harmful, portrayals about Black women.

I wanted to break all of the stereotypes of […] the absurd misconception that Black women were angry. (Harper's BAZAAR, 2021)
Beyoncé, Trailblazing Icon, Millennial

In [Trailblazer I] describing her career experiences in corporate spaces, she spoke to the construct of gender-racialised tone-policing, where being perceived to be loud ("if you could just tone down your voice") and using physical gestures, such as using hands and snatching air, was perceived as unprofessional. Their policing of her form of expression spoke to the

mechanistic construct and anti-Black racialised stereotype subtype of acting ghetto.

> […] I get the responses that say things like, "You know, if you could just tone down your voice, then other people could hear your ideas better." And I'm like, "No, it's called 'passion', kay [sic]? That's what I have. I'm passionate about the ideas. And yes, I'm going to use my hands, and snatch air, okay?" ((General laughter)) ((audience claps)) Yes. You know, because- that- because that ((laughs)) that to me, is how I get my ideas out [...] That's really how I express myself. And when I get excited, yes, my voice goes up (.) Octave ((click sounds)) goes up, you know what I'm saying? And I get pitchy. I know that. But that's because I'm excited, and I'm thinking, and I'm creating, and if I'm in [...] a conference room and we are talking about a creative idea, and where it's cooking, and we're getting there, I want to be able to do that without having to think, "Let me quiet myself down." "What word should I use?" "Oh, my God. Did I find her just now with the excitement in my voice? Let me just-" You know I mean? Like, that's- by the way, I won't be able to bring any of my imagination, my creativity, then, into it. (Keynote: Bozoma Saint John with Ashley Graham | SXSW, 2019)
>
> **Bozoma Saint John, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X**

When [Trailblazer F] was appointed as the first Black woman and woman, in US music history, to run a major pop label, she spoke to the *real* reasons behind why her competency was challenged:

> That was the first time I encountered issues of racial and gender bias. There were many in the music community who questioned my ability as an African-American and a woman to run a label. (Billboard Magazine, 2018)
>
> **Sylvia Rhone, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer**

She also spoke to the how anti-Black racialised stereotype subtyping was exercised, in this context – as underpinning others' assertions, that she would make the organisational culture "urban[164]" because she was a Black woman.

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[164]Urban here acts as a euphemism for "ghetto" – a derogatory term, in this context, ascribed as a means to inferiorise Black people.

For [Trailblazer E], she experienced gender-racialised stereotyping, during her audition to [musically] score a film. She cited nonverbal microaggression as "the look on their faces" as evidencing their bias to her presence, as a Black woman, in a predominantly White male space, explicitly noted in the last line in her comment ("I'm like the triple threat. I'm female, short and Black. We got everything going here.")

In terms of the more subtle gendered-racialised stereotyping, trailblazers experienced and spoke to, they used more implicit language to indicate how these mechanised to harm Black women more.

For instance, in [Trailblazer C's] experience, a Black male music executive empowered her to be "in charge of" artist and repertoire (A & R). While the organisation was gender-inclusive in leadership, her experiences in the wider industry, navigating macro-work environments, evidenced how she still had to deal with gendered-racialised stereotypes. Outside of that environment, when working off location, she was often presumed to be a "groupie", which spoke to both the rarity of others, in the wider industry, seeing a Black woman in that

space and in that prominent position. It also spoke to the larger issue of the hyper-sexualisation of Black women – as devaluation, in this context. Others' underlying belief that Black women, or women, would only be in that space, for sexual purposes, in the male-dominated arena, evidenced these biases.

> Yes, I came off the road after the second tour because Mr. Gordy had put me in charge of West Coast A&R. It was kind of creepy being on the road anyway. I would go out for soundcheck and if a different person was on the door when I came back, they'd think I was a groupie and I'd have to get one of our tech guys to get me backstage, things like that. (Variety Magazine, 2022)
>
> **Suzanne de Passe, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer**

For [Trailblazer A], she was asked what the biggest misconception was about her. She candidly, and immediately, replied that she is automatically perceived to be a "bitch" *because* she communicates "her needs" and "how she wants [things] to be done", which spoke to gendered expectations of the belief that women should not have agency. Acknowledgement of this double standard, was expressed by many nonparticipants, including [Trailblazer H]:

> […] sometimes [women] have to put our foot down. To other people that may come across as being a bitch, but it's just knowing what we want and being confident. (Interview Magazine, 2014)
>
> **Missy Elliott, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X**

On the surface, by noting that having "standards", ascribed her a "bitch" label – spoke to the wider, relatable, (and more palatable), campaigning of gender inequality issues, as being a recognised and rampant problem throughout entertainment subindustries. The full statement was:

Oh, I think the biggest misconception is that "I'm a bitch." Maybe, if people think that. […] Because I'm just like you. I have standards. I have- You have a way that you want to run your business. I have standards. I have a way that I think works. I request that in my presence. And when a woman-woman is in that position, and strong about her needs, and how she wants it done, then the information coming back might be, you know, "That's a bitch," you know. (The Barbara Walters Special: Interview with Diana Ross, 1989)

Diana Ross, Trailblazing Icon, Silent Generation

Considering this interview was aired on primetime, on a US major broadcasting network, in 1989 – the verbal and nonverbal language she appeared to use seemed to indicate there was a (forbidden) unspoken compounded layer to her intersectional experiences with this label. The subtle preface near the start of her answer (to the White female interviewee), "Because I'm just like you […]", seemed to go beyond this shared struggle as relating from (powerful) women-to-(powerful) women, navigating patriarchal power structures.

Within the contexts of race, gender, and class – specifically pertaining to the historical subjugation and dehumanisation of Black women in the US – this trailblazer's embodied experience as a *powerful* Black woman in these settings and contexts, seemed to example the notion of double standards within double standards. Meaning, her successes, her power (and especially awareness of it), were treated as extreme deviances – in comparison – to the White woman, in terms of the more tolerable (still not accepted) divergences from social norms.

In line with this, [Trailblazer H's] generational reference to Black women, before her[165], also being labelled this, seemed to mechanise in more pointed gendered-racialised-classed ways; whereas, men, responding similarly, would just be considered "aggressive" (a social norm positively affiliated with men, in western cultures), but they would not be dehumanised and called "male bitches".

> […] For a guy, though, it's just considered aggressive. You don't hear people call males bitches. But I've heard that people talk that way about Chaka Khan. And Aretha Franklin: If it was cold in the studio, she'd put the mike down and leave. Someone who sees her act like that may say, "She's a bitch," but she just means business when she says, "Yo, please have the heat up when I get here." Of course, nobody's gonna call her a bitch to her face. (Interview Magazine, 2014)
>
> **Missy Elliott, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X**

Thus, while [Trailblazer A] and the interviewee shared commonalities in their struggles as powerful women, who are aware of their power, the nonparticipant's verbal and nonverbal language seemed to shed light on the delineation of their experiences – as evidencing the constructs of structural privileges and structural oppressions, in the background. These mechanised to intensify, or lessen the intensities of, these experiences – but on a spectrum, based on social location and perceived group memberships.

In speaking to the construct of sexism, trailblazers noted how gendered stereotypes adversely impacted them, in their careers. For instance, [Trailblazer H] noted how when women have actual power, in certain settings,

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[165] [Trailblazer A's] contemporaries.

within the male-dominated industry, they are only respected when they

masculinise the delivery of their leadership style[166].

> Cause sometimes you're nice and people don't jump on what they're
> supposed to do, but if you go in there screaming at everybody […] then
> they jump right on it. (Interview Magazine, 2014)

Missy Elliott, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X

This pointed to the more insidious ways as to how gender biases could be

reinforced, in injurious ways. In this account the people she paid to do a job

were cited to become lackadaisical to the point, she would have to *chase*

them to ask "Look, why aren't my posters up?" or "Why wasn't my single out

on this day?", which impacted her bottom line. This was a shared experience

for others as well, in scenarios where even when Black women hired and paid

contractors and freelancers, to do a job, how they wanted it to be done – they

were met with resistance and taken-for-granted.

A final example to draw attention to how gender bias manifested and

negatively impacted nonparticipants – stereotyping by a person's name was

cited to occur as well. For instance, [Trailblazer E] shared that when she went

in for an audition to (musically) score a film (as mentioned earlier), her

industry peers were cited as developing preconceived notions off her

name[167], without having met her yet – even though she was internationally

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[166] **Author's Reflexive Note:** In reflection, I have been guilty of unconsciously perpetuating this form of gender bias, as far as having more confidence in those whose authoritative styles of leadership were more masculine. I think this is a direct effect of my multidimensional upbringing in patriarchal paradigms that I internalised as "normal"; and there have been instances, where my "niceness" and "overstanding", in my own leadership style, had been perceived as weakness, and exploited.
[167] [Trailblazer E's] given name is gender-neutral, masculine, and feminine – depending on geography – and her given name and surname are of European origin.

established and well known around the world, for her music – at this time. She brushed off them not knowing her to the film industry perhaps operating in its own silo; ("[…] it's like nobody ever listened to the radio or heard music or made any connexion with the other commercial art forms. Maybe so. They just didn't know me.")

> […] I remember the look on the director and the committee of folks- their face because <u>my name doesn't necessarily give away that I'm female.</u> ("5 Questions with She Knows Tech" - In Conversation with Patrice Rushen, 2018)
>
> **Patrice Rushen, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer**

This spoke to how even when trailblazing Black women are privileged on paper[168], it could be said to advantage them *to a point* because, in this example, she was able to get "in the [proverbial] room"; but, as soon as she made it into the room and the panel saw her, for the first time, in person – their nonverbal cues seemed to communicate that they perhaps had negative preconceived notions, linked to her womanliness and Blackness, which was described as baffling for them ("they couldn't (.) wrap their heads around the fact that I'm there to be interviewed, to score a film"). The implications of those notions were said to lead them to make gendered-racialised assumptions about why she would, possibly, be in that space.

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[168] **Author's Reflexive Note:** This has happened to me on numerous occasions, as my full name is of European origin. While it could be said that my name has advantaged me on applications, I have experienced "the (occasional) looks" of "shock" and "surprise" when I entered certain rooms of predominantly White spaces. One time as a personal social experiment, I included a small image of my professional headshot on my résumé, to see if I would get a different response when I applied for jobs that I either met or exceed the listed criteria. Interestingly, I had a 0% callback rate and was not invited to progress to the next stage.

For context, her social location (as a "composer" and "as an instrumentalist"), shed a light on the biases women can experience in those male-dominated communities, where women were often relegated, and automatically perceived, to be the "singer" or the "vocalist" – although things are "in a healthy place" (2013) now, relatively speaking. The committee's presumptions, in this account, seemed to evidence that bias, and elucidate there was a recognition of the mechanistic construct of occupational segregation in this White male dominated and exclusionary space.

In experiences with anti-Black racial stereotyping, trailblazers spoke to the double standards and the deployment of negative images as well, as ways to devalue and dehumanise them as well. For instance, in commenting on her first C-suite appointment with becoming the first Black women, and one of the two concurrent Black people to lead a label, she acknowledged the double standard in the press that Black music executives will be watched more closely – to indicate they will face harsher scrutiny as others would be seeking for them to "mess up" to perhaps prove claims of incompetency and inferiority, as confirmation bias, rooted in the mechanism of white supremacist paradigms in the White-male dominated industry.

> Will we be under a microscope? Sure. That's life being Black. But hopefully, these appointments will open doors for other Blacks that have been closed to them before. (Los Angeles Times - Archives, 1991)

Sylvia Rhone, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer

In understanding how pervasive harmful portrayals of Black superstars were the norm, [Trailblazer G], continued her thought regarding her "mission" to also eradicate stigmas, that mechanised to paint even privileged Black people, in these spaces, and in her position, as being inherently prone to being self-destructive where drugs and substance abuse, were racialised and depicted as exclusively being a problem amongst "Black superstars".

> I wanted to break all of the stereotypes of the Black superstar, whether falling victim to drugs or alcohol […] (Harper's BAZAAR, 2021)

Beyoncé, Trailblazing Icon, Millennial

Subtheme 2: Different rules: equality viewed as automatic deviation

Another way the serious implications of "biases" – as adversely, or riskily, impacting nonparticipants' career experiences – was framed, was that they were not only aware that they were judged to a different (and harsher) set of standards than their non-Black female counterparts. They were also aware that they were expected to follow an unspoken, yet understood, different set of rules and social cues, ascribed to multi-marginalised Black women, in work environments, to reinforce their relegation in these spaces.

In [Trailblazer E's] experiences as "the first", she spoke to being exploited by higher-ups *because* she was "the newbie".

> […] sometimes […] you're in situations where you are in a position and have a platform, to be able to nicely speak up about maybe something that's been either unfair or that needs to be modified or adjusted, so that the outcome can be better all around. And […] maybe people [the higher-ups] don't want to talk about, and they're hoping that when you come in as "the newbie" or […] "first" that, most think you might not mention those things. (NAMM Oral History Program: Interview with Patrice Rushen, 2015)
>
> Patrice Rushen, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer

This account highlighted how the construct of tokenism, employed by organisations, harmfully facilitated workplace coercion, as she spoke to being discouraged from raising critical issues, involving issues around employees' wellbeing, which seemed to highlight the organisation's acknowledgement of there being issues, but their choice to ignore them. As this was perceived as organisational stratagem to discourage token minorities from speaking up, it was felt that this method was used as a way to maintain the status quo.

Many nonparticipants, across different scenarios, spoke to the pressures expected of them, to not draw attention to glaring inequities – even if they

"have a platform, to be able to nicely speak up" about it (another form of policing regarding *how* palatably issues should be raised which was indicated as more important than the issues themselves). So, when she raised issues around "pay", "breaks", "new use payments[169]", and "royalties" (2015) to advocate for musicians, despite the higher-ups' persisting intimidation tactics, she said:

> But, they got mentioned and they got done. And I would have to say that even with some of those things- and I couldn't call them "negatives" I would more or less just call them "part of what happens when you're trying to push the ball forward." You know, um- (.) even with all of that, you know, I would say that I wouldn't change a thing. It was all good. (NAMM Oral History Program: Interview with Patrice Rushen, 2015)

Patrice Rushen, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer

As nonparticipants spoke to how employer's made attempts to control and police them in more sophisticated, devaluing ways, they cited the reasons why organisations downplay, or refuse to recognise their contributions. These methods were insinuated by them, as being specifically done in ways to erase their impact and devalue them. This outcome from tokenism being exploited was best highlighted in [Trailblazer I's] industrial experiences. She shared:

> […] especially for me, as a Black woman in the corporate spaces, uh (.) my value has not been touted at all. (Keynote: Bozoma Saint John with Ashley Graham | SXSW, 2019)

Bozoma Saint John, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X

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[169] "New use, sometimes called re-use, is when a recording is used outside of its intended purpose. For example, music originally recorded for a CD is later used on a TV show or in a commercial triggering a new use payment. New use payments apply for all types of original recorded music, including sound recordings, TV and film scores" (American Federation of Musicians, 2022).

For instance, despite her proven track record, within the organisation, they not only devalued her contributions, in reviews (which affects promotions and bonuses), but they shared (read: stole) credit for the amazing work she did for the organisation. She perceived this behaviour, as a mechanism for them to "write [her] out of that [success] story" for the organisation, which spoke to the harmful construct of erasure – where even the most powerful Black women in C-suite spaces, remain vulnerable to.

> [...] my review came around (.) And my boss at the time said that "I wasn't hitting enough home runs" ((pause)) "that my contributions- uh (.) were not enough." "I was getting to first base, second base, and then somebody else always had to bring it home." And I thought, "[...] what?!" And this is one of those moments where, you know, it's like- yeah, of course. A lot of people were taking credit for that moment, you know? And like I said, I didn't really care because I knew what I did. Beyoncé knew what I did. You know what I'm saying ((laughs)) like we- *we* knew. And so, I didn't really care that much that other people were taking some of the credit. But it was a moment of ((pause)) realisation. You know? And- and I felt that, "Wow, well, you know what? Sometimes you do need to get into your own self-promotion. And you need to stand up for yourself, and say how great you did that thing, because somebody else will write the story for you ((pause)) and somebody else will write you out of that story. (Keynote: Bozoma Saint John with Ashley Graham | SXSW, 2019)
>
> Bozoma Saint John, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X

Overall, the idea that gender equality was framed as deviation from social norms in the male-dominated industry, was a shared sentiment amongst nonparticipants who commented on the irrationality, and real harms, perpetuated by this double standard.

For instance, [Trailblazer D] cited how conversations typically played out to indicate how this reasoning was used by self-perceived superior adults, who felt they had the right to tell a fellow adult, who happens to be a woman – what she can, and cannot do, as a full human being, who is expected to

accept this treatment, based on the social construction and conditioning around gender rules and norms.

> It was difficult at times being a woman and being told, "No, you can't." "Why?" "Because women don't do that." (Allure Magazine, 2022)
>
> Janet Jackson, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X

Another nonparticipant spoke to this as well – as she voiced that women should be allowed to fully express themselves, as full human beings, just as their male counterparts.

> If you believe in equal rights, the same way society allows a man to express his darkness, to express his pain, to express his sexuality, to express his opinion—I feel that women have the same rights. (ELLE Magazine, 2016)
>
> Beyoncé, Trailblazing Icon, Millennial

To illustrate how pervasive these ideas are, and were, in the male-dominated and patriarchal industrial culture, [Trailblazer B] noted how often people made assumptions about *who* had the final say (based on gender stereotypes and social conditioning) in business dealings, at the multi-million dollar record label she co-founded with her husband and another Black male music executive, where she ran the studio, produced, engineered, and managed the artists on the roster.

> If my husband is approached *first* about a group, he'll ask what do *I* think about this particular group; and, if I told him, "No, I don't want them," *that* would be the end of it. (Adler Hip Hop Archive [BA], 1982)
>
> Sylvia Robinson, Trailblazing Icon, Silent Generation

Subtheme 3: Abusive backlash from pushing things forward

Nonparticipants reflected on their career experiences with receiving abusive backlash – from reactions to their performances or for their new leadership appointments – which all traced back to the serious implications of biases, ascribed to Black women, and the policing of them, in this industry.

As nonparticipants felt that others used these events, or appointments, as moral justification to ostracise and dehumanise them (as Black women), in very public and harmful ways, this was recognised by trailblazers as those biased sentiments already being there, just looking for an opportunity to come to the surface for others to express spew hatred outwardly, in contexts that would be deemed acceptable, by the perceptions of the masses.

For example, [Trailblazer G] implicitly noted how the media intentionally tried to spin her messaging around her broadcasted performance that shed light on the genocide (UN Office, 2022) and state violence, sanctioned against unarmed Black people, where studies have linked the higher rate of police killings of Black people (relative to the population) as being correlated to how Black people are perceived to be dangerous (again linked back to media portrayals and historical oppression) – highlighting the mechanistic construct of systemic "pro-White / anti-Black racism" (DeAngelis, 2021, p. 8). While it was clear that she used her platform to protest police brutality – not police – the media misconstrued her messaging in ways that engineered (distracting) outrage to suppress the actual message.

In a quick example, before continuing with [Trailblazer G's] experience, the

patterns in the dataset seemed to indicate that trailblazers who raised

awareness around human injustices through social commentary songs,

experienced backlash and were all relegated (in some capacity, at some

point) in their careers, which was a phenomenon in the dataset. While

[Trailblazer B's] label released hip-hop's first social commentary record, she

noted:

> [Regarding Grandmaster Flash and The Furious Five's "The Message" being the first really big political record since James Brown's 1970 "Say It Loud"] It was something that people all over, Black, and White, could relate to […] revolutionary? **I didn't mean to start a war or anything like that!** But we can relate to "Don't push me / Cause I'm close to the edge." I'd had that rap for some time and I think that when I really decided I wanted to dig back and get that message was when people were pushing me to the edge. I said, "It's time for that record now! It really got to be personal. (Adler Hip Hop Archive [VW], 1982)
>
> Sylvia Robinson, Trailblazing Icon, Silent Generation

To continue with [Trailblazer G's] account she reflected:

> I mean, I'm an artist and I think the most powerful art is usually misunderstood. But anyone who perceives my message as anti-police is completely mistaken. I have so much admiration and respect for officers and the families of officers who sacrifice themselves to keep us safe. But let's be clear: **I am against police brutality and injustice.** Those are two separate things. **If celebrating my roots and culture during Black History Month made anyone uncomfortable, those feelings were there long before a video and long before me**. I'm proud of what we created and I'm proud to be a part of a conversation that is pushing things forward in a positive way. (ELLE Magazine, 2016)
>
> Beyoncé, Trailblazing Icon, Millennial

For background, [Trailblazer D] has an extensive catalogue of iconic social

commentary songs where she has shed light on humanity and many social

injustices ranging from poverty, education, homelessness, racism, colourism,

sexism, sex positivity, and domestic abuse, to name a few[170]. These timeless

songs have resonated with generational global audiences – then and now.

Within the vignette of this popular music culture context, it seemed like there

was more motive behind the media frenzy and news cycles, as well as multi-

industrial, multi-organisational, and US governmental severe rebuke of

[Trailblazer D], regarding her televised wardrobe malfunction when a White

male pop star, who was a guest on her set, pulled off an article of her

costume. The backlash, seemingly rooted in misogynoirism, was so severe, it

adversely impacted her career, as his advanced and skyrocketed.

> What's really important is going back to having that foundation. Not just family, but God. That's what really pulled me through. **It's tough for me to talk about that time. Whether I want to be part of that conversation or not, I am part of that conversation. I think it's important. Not just for me, but for women.** So, I think it's important that conversation has been had. You know what I mean? And things have changed obviously since then for the better. (Allure Magazine, 2022)
>
> Janet Jackson, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X

Interestingly in the dataset, I saw there was a connection amongst three

specific trailblazers, where the outcome of one severely abusive backlash,

seemingly had a domino effect on the other Black women's careers, as

punishment, in a sense. To explain, one experience united them, which

seemed to evidence the mechanism of organised outrage, against Black

women, as a stratagem to dehumanise, devalue, in ways that others felt

justified to adversely impact their careers in ways that seemed very

intentional.

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[170] Through songs like "State of the World", "The Knowledge", "A New Agenda", "Rhythm Nation", "Together Again", "What About", and many others.

When [Trailblazer I] arranged [Trailblazer G's] first performance[171] on that

platform, she mentioned she "fought really hard" for corporate to greenlight it.

The reason she had to fight hard was because the corporation who

sponsored this performance, did not believe a Black woman could "connect to

a large audience". She also indicated that the last time, a Black woman had

been "on that stage" was ten years since [Trailblazer D's] wardrobe incident.

> [...] It was incredible. An incredible experience working with her, um (.) proving all the people wrong, who said that **she wouldn't connect to a large audience because she was a Black woman** and **a Black woman hadn't been on that stage in ten years since Janet Jackson. And we fought really hard for that.** And she killed. I mean, like, completely slayed the entire thing. And we were feeling real hot. (Keynote: Bozoma Saint John with Ashley Graham | SXSW, 2019)
>
> Bozoma Saint John, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X

Given the background contexts, these events did not seem coincidental, as

[Trailblazer I] received a poor review, as mentioned earlier in subtheme two,

of this theme.

Finally, another form of abusive backlash, linked to the serious implications of

bias was detailed in [Trailblazer F's] account, following her C-Suite

appointment of a major label. In an interview, she shared:

> [one of the label acts comprised of White men] began to spew racial and sexist epithets publicly, calling me a "cunt" from the stage and a "n—- bitch" in a [...] magazine article. I had no choice but to take a stand and immediately drop them from the roster (Billboard Magazine, 2018)
>
> Sylvia Rhone, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer

This evidenced that no matter how senior their position, they were still

vulnerable to the serious implications of biases.

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[171] a different performance, on the same platform, from years earlier in 2013.

4.5.3   Theme 3: Risk Reductions as Ownership and Allyship

THEME 3:
Risk Reductions as Ownership and Allyship

SUBTHEME 1:	SUBTHEME 2:
Ownership as Power	Allyship as Empowerment
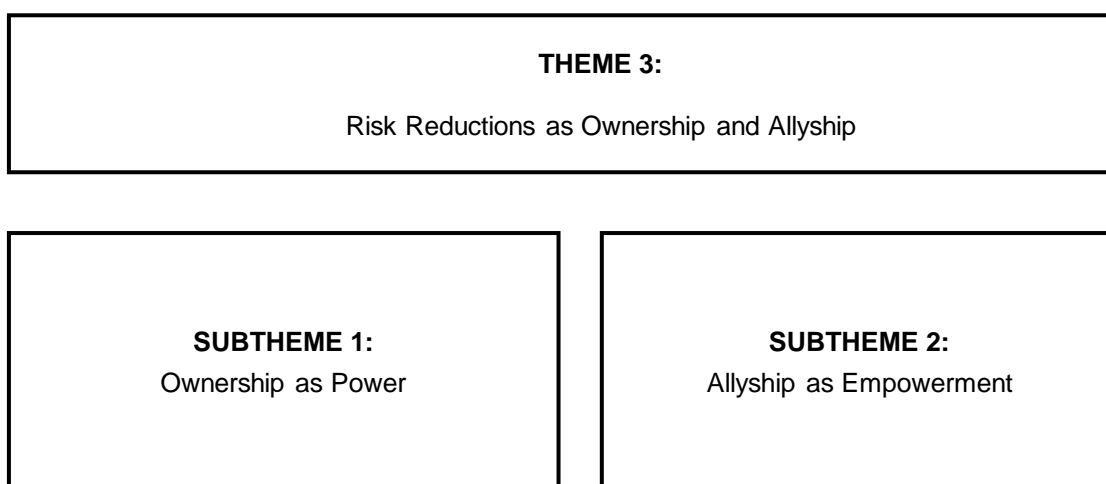
Diagram 3   Study 1 – Theme 3 & Subthemes

This third theme highlighted the measures these trailblazers took to try to mitigate the music industry's systemic biases that recurrently mechanised to adversely impact Black women's careers, which was what they wanted to completely prevent, not let happen again, or minimally reduce the risks. They also spoke about the measures they put in place, such as severing (complex) business ties, in individual case-by-case scenarios, where the basis of those decisions was described to be motivated by them wanting to gain independence and take full charge of their vision, destiny, and protection of their legacy, in this industry.

Subtheme 1: Ownership as Power

Trailblazers spoke about the importance of ownership as independence, in ways that indicated they viewed this as a stratagem to participate in the exercising of "power" and autonomy, over their careers, which was typically reserved to be wielded by men in the male-dominated industry, even the male figures in their life, who helped get their careers to a point.

For example, [Trailblazer B] who started different record labels – since nearly twenty years from first starting her career, in the industry, indicated:

> […] I imagine that the reason **I do have such freedom is that by me owning the company** I never had a boss to tell me what to do. (Adler Hip Hop Archive [VW], 1982)
>
> Sylvia Robinson, Trailblazing Icon, Silent Generation

Here, the construct of "power" mechanised to mean having the "freedom" to call the shots, and not be the party, in business exchanges, who is essentially positioned as being expected to follow and obey orders (a dynamic overly familiar for women in music and society). In her account, she spoke to the rejection of (occupational) subservience, which also had a sociohistorical context to Black women's social location, and their experiences with imbalanced power dynamics in the workspace, and in other areas in society, more generally. In other accounts, this construct of "power" as "ownership" also spoke to the notion of "control" as "calling the shots" but also in trusting oneself enough to not allow fear to stop them and take full ownership of their "independence", which meant sometimes they severed business relationships that were meaningful, which was cited as "not easy", but necessary.

For instance, [Trailblazer G] noted:

> […] **I've been managed by my father for a very long time, and a real change meant separating from him**. It was scary, but it empowered me. And I wasn't going to let fear stop me. **It was very risky for me to step out on my own.** Being a young woman, I want to set the example that is possible for us to own our own businesses and own our own record labels. And sometimes we don't reach for the stars. **Sometimes we are satisfied with what people tell us we're supposed to be satisfied with. And I'm just not going for it.** (Year of 4 Documentary, July 2011)
>
> Beyoncé, Trailblazing Icon, Millennial

In acknowledging the challenges ahead, she noted, "as I get my team, it's going to get easier". A decade after she made those comments in her documentary, she reflected, more on her reasons, in a magazine interview:

> I took control of my independence at 27 and started Parkwood Entertainment. At the time, there wasn't a company that did what I needed it to do or ran the way I wanted it run. So, I created this multipurpose badass conglomerate that was a creative agency, record label, production company, and management company to produce and work on projects that meant the most to me. **I wanted to manage myself and have a company that put art and creativity first.** (Harper's BAZAAR, 2021)
>
> Beyoncé, Trailblazing Icon, Millennial

Similarly, [Trailblazer D], who had also first been managed by her father experienced a similar pivotal moment, before moving on, from being under his management, to assert her independence and be in "control" of her career and vision. Although this datum was not included in the archival data sources for this study, it is known that she does have her own business ventures.

> Excitement was in the air. Music was always my heart, and now I was getting to sing my heart out. The songs were good, but they weren't me. [She only began co-writing most of her songs on Control.] That was a little confusing. I knew I had something to say, **I knew I had to assert myself. I also knew I had to go through the painful process of what my brothers had gone through. I had to thank my father for his help and then move on. I had to assert myself**. (Billboard Magazine, 2018)
>
> Janet Jackson, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X

Across the dataset, nonparticipants pivotal moments seemed to be a shared experience in a way that seemed to resonate with [Trailblazer A's] chart-topping hit, "It's My Turn".

> In 1980, just prior to my leaving Motown, I had three big hits. Two of which were directly expressing my life "I'm Coming Out" was the first one. Then one month later, they released "It's My Turn", a beautiful song written by a great songwriter named Michael Masser. It's my turn became very important to me. Apparently, I wasn't the only one who felt this way. After it was released. I heard from a lot of other women who told me that they strongly connected with that particular song. […] It was a collective experience. (Ross, 1993).
>
> Diana Ross, Trailblazing Icon, Silent Generation

It could be said that song resonated with women because it spoke to the need for independence as empowerment where the message was that the mechanistic constructs of people-pleasing and playing it safe were no longer viable options, even if guilt was used to keep a person in a familiar space and role.

She continued to reflect on how she arrived at this place, in her life, where she no longer wanted to just be given "directives" as she felt she was "stagnating" – as in, she felt stuck like she had no control over her vision and career; and she also expressed the dominating work environment that became too overwhelming. While noting this, she spoke to the surface-level upsides of this positioning, since it can appear to be a privileged one – from the outside looking in. However, she indicated that "enough was enough" for reasons listed in the last three lines (bolded), in the extract, below.

> After all, [the label] had made it so easy. They did my finances. They paid my taxes. They bought my house. And I never had to figure out any of these things for myself. **It was a seductive lifestyle**. Somewhere in there, I decided that enough was enough. I felt that I had to start doing for myself. When you make a film, you have a director. He tells you what to do and you act accordingly because he's supposed to see the big picture. **Well, that might work in a film, but life is not a movie. Human beings have minds of their own. We are not puppets to be pushed and pulled at someone else's whim** (Ross, 1993).
>
> Diana Ross, Trailblazing Icon, Silent Generation

She indicated that she left the label, not because she "was upset or angry or hurt". Instead, she stated, "I was growing as a person, and it was time for me to move on." In moving on, she shared that she went into business for herself, where she started multiple companies in different industries, to protect her assets and "secure" her future.

> […] The 80s were about creating a brand new life […] In 1980, I went full swing into business for myself. I think the real estate has been my best investment to date. I bought an office building in New York, five floors of which I used to create my companies: Innate Films, Ross Records, Ross Town, Ross Publishing Company, and my own financial department called RTC Management. (Ross, 1993)
>
> Diana Ross, Trailblazing Icon, Silent Generation

Subtheme 2: Allyship as Empowerment

Nonparticipants explicitly highlighted industry relationships where they felt supported, in their careers by different communities, even in settings where they were the only woman, or Black woman, in male-dominated spaces.

For example, a Black male music executive was cited as empowering women to work in "positions of authority", where his label was viewed as being organisationally culturally gender inclusive – cited as being largely influenced by his personal relationships with the women in his own life[172]. In [Trailblazer C] reporting how "fortunate" she felt, this was stated within the socioprofessional context that these kinds of career opportunities were rare for women in the 1960s and 1970s. To this, she commented:

Men [in music] own the ballpark. Men own the team. And [women] we get a chance to play. I started with [him] 13 years ago and never, not even when the going got rough, did he make me sit on the bench. You can't ask for more than that. (de Passe, 1981)
Suzanne de Passe, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer
I think [his label] had more women in positions of authority than any other company. (Variety Magazine, 2022)
Suzanne de Passe, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer

Due to his support in her career journey towards becoming a C-suite executive, she credited much of her success to him for giving her "a shot" and for not penalising her when "the going got rough", which he did not perceive to mean that was she was incompetent. Instead, he was cited as understanding the nature of the business has its "ups and downs", which were viewed as

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[172] Namely, his "four sisters" who "accomplished many great things in the company", as well as his "very strong mother".

normal oscillating occurrences, that can arise for anyone – irrespective of gender. Other trailblazers spoke to this pendulum effect as well, as being a "normal" part of the journey of working in the industry – where it was situated as not out of the norm, to have to ebb and flow, to navigate "ups and downs".

[…] everything hasn't been successful. I've had ups and downs, and ups and downs, like most people, in the music business, and those downs become much higher when you're in a high position like a president or a CEO. (The WIE Network: In Conversation with Sylvia Rhone, 2015)
Sylvia Rhone, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer
[…] there has been way ups and then there has been way downs, and that's a lot, especially if you're coming from way up. (Broken Record Podcast, 2022)
Missy Elliott, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X

Major labels, that were predominately run by White male music executives, who supported their artists to execute their vision, how they wanted, were viewed as important, by trailblazers. For example, when it came to addressing topics like social justice issues in songs, which many labels in the industry intentionally shied from, [Trailblazer D] credited her early mentors, for not only okaying the project, but also advocating for it because they understood it was important to her.

May Gil [who died in 2012] rest in peace. He was a music-loving man who also saw I needed to sing about issues that were important to me — like racism. He understood my need to protest. I was truly fortunate that my early mentors — especially label owners Herb Alpert and Jerry Moss — were completely artist-oriented. They not only allowed me to go my own way, they urged me to do so. (Billboard Magazine, 2018)
Janet Jackson, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X

For other nonparticipants, they spoke to the support they received from their male-counterparts in more social settings.

> […] I was in high school, the majority of my peers were men, especially as an instrumentalist. My level of seriousness and commitment wasn't ever a question. They were my best friends, so they were protective of me. I had a very healthy association with being the only woman but being supported (Afropunk Magazine, 2019)
>
> **Patrice Rushen, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer**

From having had positive experiences with men in music, she indicated that in situations where she encountered bias(es), she just "kept it moving" because she already felt she was given permission[173] to be herself and to fully show up in these spaces. This was cited as an outcome of the support she received, which prepared her, in a way to not *internalise* others' biases.

Similarly, [Trailblazer H] also spoke to this, in an acceptance speech where she thanked her supporters and male collaborator for "believing in [her]" – whose support was cited to have made a positive difference in her journey in the music industry.

In [Trailblazer F's] experience, she noted that while men were very protective of her, (like in [Trailblazer E's] experience, which spoke to gendered social norms around men, masculinity, and the socialisation of protection for women), she also noted their maltreatment towards women, in general. This could be said to speak to the construct of tokenism, as being played out, in micro-relational group dynamics, influenced by any number of factors.

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[173] By her parents and her peers.

> […] when I was promoted […] I was on the road with all the guys, and I felt like I had been born and- and reared in a den of lions. And they were so protective of me. [...] I learnt a lot from those guys. They were tough. They were disrespectful to a lot of women, but never to me. (The WIE Suite Keynote, May 2015)

Sylvia Rhone, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer

In a final example of men in music supporting nonparticipants, [Trailblazer B] spoke about the importance of her husband and business partner having mutual respect, which enabled her to do what she wants.

> I wouldn't know anything else to do besides make records – and cook!
>
> *[In response to "doing all the writing, producing, and singing – and taught herself engineering into the bargain […] and acknowledging "the mutual respect between her and Joe that has enabled her to do what she wants, and admits that it might not be easy for another woman with writing and engineering skills equal to her own" – The Interviewer, Sylvia responded]* (Adler Hip Hop Archive [VW], 1982)

Sylvia Robinson, Trailblazing Icon, Silent Generation

Given the socio-political climate ("in the late 1970s"), for example, it was implied that finding support was more of a challenge back then, attributed to the structural barriers set up against women in the workplace. This was credited as being a socially produced norm as many were often relegated to lower-ranking positions (on paper), on the occupational hierarchy. Despite not having a mentor, they did not let, not having one, deter them from making "[their] own path".

To this, [Trailblazer F] noted:

> […] as far as mentors going up the ladder, […] there were not really a lot of women that I could ((pause)) emulate at that point. Um. But I found people and-and they became close friends and close allies, and we helped each other basically because we were all new in the business at that point. So, we're talking back in [...] the late 1970s. So, there weren't […] a lot of role models for us to follow. So, we had to make our own path. (The WIE Network: In Conversation with Sylvia Rhone, 2015)
>
> Sylvia Rhone, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer

For other trailblazers who benefitted from having role models they

emphasised the importance of those roles in encouraging them along their

journey. By being able to speak to those who have gone through industry

experiences and understood the politics of it, on an intimate level, was cited

as giving them hope to "overcome many obstacles" themselves. Here,

[Trailblazer H] thanked [Trailblazer D's] in her acceptance speech and shared:

> […] this is not just a business, someone that I do music with. You know, I can call Janet at any time in the night, blacking about shit, sorry ((general laughter)). And she will listen [...] And, the times that I may have felt like giving up, she's always gave me an- an encouraging word. And I've watched her as a strong, Black, powerful woman who has had to overcome many obstacles. And so I just want to say, I appreciate you for inspiring me and inspiring (.) it- I'm quite sure everybody in here, can say that. (ESSENCE Magazine, 2020; Elliott, 2018; Kingz, 2018)
>
> Missy Elliott, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X

4.5.4 Theme 4: The "Watershed Moment": "A New Agenda's Due"

THEME 1:
That "Watershed Moment": "A New Agenda's Due"

SUBTHEME 1: Renewal of the mind, body, spirit	SUBTHEME 2: Transforming business	SUBTHEME 3: Moving culture
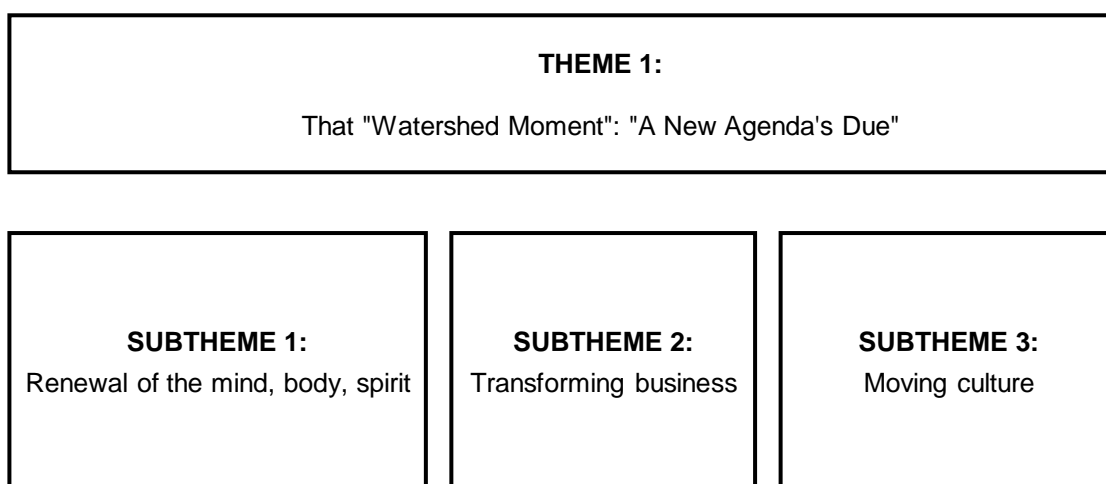
Diagram 4   Study 1 – Theme 4 & Subthemes

The fourth theme contained a condensed summary of nonparticipants' perceptions, as well as the strategies they used, to try maintaining equanimity from the psychological harms, enabled by various systemic barriers, they encountered throughout their careers. This theme also shed light on their beliefs that a more egalitarian music industry, and even society, are not only within reach, but are currently underway – which they cited as hoping to help to usher in. Across the dataset, some of their reflections on their sense of wellbeing, as well as their thoughts on the state, and future, of the music industry, were summarised and divided across the following subthemes: (1) "Renewal of the mind, body, spirit", (2) "Transforming business" and (3) "Moving culture".

Subtheme 1: Renewal of the mind, body, spirit

Nonparticipants reported on their reliance on, spirituality and faith, in their career journeys. Many indicated leaning on God (in the umbrella Christian faith-based context) as their source of strength, to get through extremely "rough" periods, and moments, in their careers. Across the dataset, these periods were described to have taken mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional tolls on them – where many reportedly shared their experiences, including in their bodies of artistic work, about their dealings with trauma, sadness, depression, grief, angst, exhaustion, and even moments of complete debilitation – where work-related stress was implied to exacerbate underlying health conditions, which some cryptically, and publicly, disclosed.

On the importance of spirituality, faith, and health, the following nonparticipants, [Trailblazers H, A, and D], explicitly shared:

I want to thank God, first of all. Because ((pause)) I've been sick. There's [sic] times I've been sick. Anxiety (.) Depression ((pause)). Through the grace of God. In faith. I have kept going. If I hadn't, I wouldn't be standing here in front of (.) a [Hollywood] star. I've come here 20 some years ago and just used to walk past all of these stars and just imagine. And um (.) it's just a blessing to dream big, and it truly happen. I'm truly standing here. (Hollywood Walk of Fame, 2021)

Oh, spirituality plays a role in Missy period ((laughs)). In this industry, if I didn't have some kind of spiritual connexion, I don't know how I could have made it. You know? In this- in this industry, a lot of artists come in just thinking it's going to be, "You going to make a lot of money." "You going to be famous." You know- "You're going to be hot forever" and all of these different things. You know, that's- that's what you come in thinking. And then, you realise, "Oh, you been duped. ((general laughter)). You know, I always tell people, "[…] you won't be hot forever. You can always have respect, though. Because, it'll come a time where even the "hottest of the hottest" won't be sitting at the top of the charts anymore. But you- the impact and respect will always be there. But spiritually, you have to have […] I feel like I had to have some kind of connexion, because when those times come- of those ups and downs […] I come from a praying family. So (.) being that, I feel like "God going to work it out" […] a lot of artists deal with mental health issues (.) because they came in and nobody prepared them for those different ups and downs. (Broken Record Podcast, 2022)

Missy Elliott, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X

All the pain I've had in my life, I'll hold on to it for a second and then I let it go. I really try to let go of all the negativity and leave the rest up to God. That's one of the beautiful gifts my mother gave me. The ability to allow certain things to be. My childhood gave me the greatest gift available. My profound spiritual faith, a faith that has been simple and unwavering throughout my life. (Ross, 1993).

Diana Ross, Trailblazing Icon, Silent Generation

"Control" [the album] was undoubtedly the break-through. But I think the concept is sometimes misunderstood. I'm a believer. I know that God has absolute control. I've never wavered in that belief. […] (Billboard Magazine, 2018)

Janet Jackson, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X

Nonparticipants identifying "faith" as being the "reason" they are "standing here today[174]" seemed to imply they had very close encounters with almost "giving up", which could be interpreted in multiple ways. However, two that immediately come to mind, could be understood as a cry for help (shrouded in everyday Black church expressions) and the other could be a way of merely acknowledging that systemic barriers were exceptionally challenging that "overcoming" was perceived as miraculous – to express the degree of severity of the situation(s) that they made it through, in the industry. This also seemed to contain some elements that spoke to the social construction of the "strong Black woman" schema, as noted in one of the extracts earlier, in Theme 3, of powering through adversities because it is either that, or death (and not in the poetic sense). In those possible (not claiming to be accurate or the only) interpretations, their commentary on spiritual practices, rooted from US African chattel slavery, seemed to mechanise as a critical and Black traditional coping mechanism, in response to the severe inequities, and hardships generated by social actors who exploit power structures for ill intent – to institutionalise biases, harming, not only trailblazers' occupational wellbeing – but their holistic wellbeing.

On the importance of prioritising holistic health, others also spoke to which interventions they put in place, and they spoke about the importance of changing their perceptions and self-perceptions. For instance, [Trailblazer G]

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[174] "Standing here today" is an expression commonly used in the Black [US] Christian-faith based church, to speak to the adversities a person overcame – and possibly almost did not – through "the grace of God".

spoke to healing "generational trauma", which could be said to implicitly shed light on the impact and real harms stemming from the traumas and enduring legacy of US African chattel slavery and its successors – systemic anti-Black racism and systemic misogynoirism, to name two. These biases were, evidenced in hers and others' career experiences.

> […] I worked to **heal generational trauma** and turned **my broken heart** into art that would help move culture forward and hopefully live far beyond me.(Harper's BAZAAR, 2021)
>
> Beyoncé, Trailblazing Icon, Millennial

[Trailblazer I] spoke to the importance of "worthiness" as a Black woman, in "corporate spaces" in the industry, where she, like others, frequently encountered biases in work environments, where White male social actors tried to make her feel unworthy and devalue her contributions, to the point she expects their biases to show up in performance "reviews". This is despite her successful, and (very public) proven track record. In internalising the construct of worthiness, for herself (a theme all nonparticipants spoke to and resonated with), she noted the mechanism, and cited that she uses every part of her experience, as a Black woman in this space, to channel back into her work – good or bad – to move culture, and to innovate, as similarly noted by another nonparticipant's extract above.

Worthy. Absolutely worthy. […] And so ["as a Black woman"], knowing my own worthiness and knowing that my opinions matter, that my taste matters, that my creativity matters, my point of view matters- like all of these things, it's all about "worthiness". […] But I also believe back to the point about worthiness that my experience and- you know, my- my moments of joy, or sadness, or anger- whatever affect the work I do, and therefore it affects the outcome, and it affects the culture around me. And therefore, because I'm at a seat which then can have a mass influence, I am able to, therefore, do bigger work because of the things that I'm going through. (Keynote: Bozoma Saint John with Ashley Graham | SXSW, 2019)

Bozoma Saint John, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X

A final example of this subtheme spotlighted [Trailblazers A and E's] remarks. They notably spoke to the importance of maintaining a positive mindset – citing how (slow but still) social progress, in the industry, was evidence that things can, and will improve; and, personal framing was viewed as an important strategy to not develop a complex, and instead "own it".

I am happy to report that, in my mind, things are in there in a healthy place. I think that we are ((pause)) finding that the young women who are coming into this now get that (.) they can own this. And when I say that what I mean is: own it and be- (.) have pride in the fact that they are part of a community that no longer just looks at gender as being the "make or break" as to whether or not they should be able to play. "Can you play?" "Can you sing?" "Can you write?" "What do you think?" "What do you say you can do?" And then come with it. Bring it. (The Girls in the Band Documentary featuring Patrice Rushen, 2013)

Patrice Rushen, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer

Okay. Let me tell you this. My impression, I have a certain- uh- I guess, positive- positiveness about my life. But I (.) realise that every time I create a positive thought in my mind, I- also I create a negative thought. It's just like "I'm going to be very successful". My mind said, "Oh, no, you're not." You know? Okay? So, since I create "positive" and "negative", its which one I give the most attention, that is powerful. When I think positive, constantly, it's very powerful and it controls me. If I think negative all the time, it's going to control me too. So, right now my positive thought is "There is no- going to be no disaster to destroy what I have planned for me and my family. And if there is, that's life." You know? And I can accept what I get. My intention is for it to work and to be successful. And I will accept what I get. (The Russell Harty Show, 1976)

Diana Ross, Trailblazing Icon, Silent Generation

Subtheme 2: Transforming business

Within the context of noting "music is male-dominated", nonparticipants spoke to the glaring consequences of these structural barriers as blocking equal opportunity access to critical (marginalised) voices from being allowed to instrumentally co-shape organisational cultures, in the industry. As the overwhelming consensus, expressed across the dataset, was that these historically rooted, yet persisting, homogenous, and exclusionary, workforce designs need to become obsolete, they reflected on what they believed would be required to comprehensively make that happen.

First, many spoke to the need for the industry to shift towards becoming more human-centred, where organisational cultures work to "amplify" everyone and not just the privileged few. This was viewed and discussed as a starting point, best encapsulated in [Trailblazer' I's] broader comment on how there needs to be a recognition by organisations that "companies are made up of people".

> There are a mix of individuals who are getting it right. […] I don't think it's necessarily, like, companies, because companies are not brick and mortar. Companies are made up of people. You know? They're made up of individuals. And when those individuals move to some other place, they take that with them. You know? And so, to me, it's like, those individuals are what make things interesting. (Keynote: Bozoma Saint John with Ashley Graham | SXSW, 2019)
>
> **Bozoma Saint John, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X**

To this, many stressed the importance of equalising the "power" "playing field" in the music industry, in truly meaningful ways to create more inclusive and innovate work environments throughout the ecosystem, that would put an end to the "token minority" era.

For example, [Trailblazer G] noted she hires women to work in senior roles in her company, while shedding light on organisations' glaring systemic hiring patterns of excluding women out of leadership.

> It's always been important to me to hire women. I believe in giving a voice to people who are not always heard. […] I hire women not to be token voices in the company but to lead. ((ELLE Magazine, 2019)
>
> Beyoncé, Trailblazing Icon, Millennial

On championing for more women in leadership, across all areas of the industry, nonparticipants made it clear that their interests in pushing for this were motivated by their perceptions of women's leadership and management style as being "more inclusive" and generally better (meaning: more "balanced").

For example, [Trailblazers F and G] commented:

> I believe women are more balanced and think with compassion in deciding what's best for the business. They see the big picture absent of personal agendas. Most women are loyal and commit with 100 percent follow-through. ((ELLE Magazine, 2019)
>
> Beyoncé, Trailblazing Icon, Millennial

> As a woman, you have to come from a position of confidence. There's a certain gift that women have in their management style that's more inclusive than a male counterpart's. One of the keys is to always be your best self. There's no secret formula to it. You just have to understand that you're managing a team of people, whether it's two or 100, that is far more important than you. (Billboard Magazine, 2018)
>
> Sylvia Rhone, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer

Women's leadership was also viewed as being more collaborative and partnership-oriented in contrast to the competition and dominance paradigm, which was perceived as a massive benefit, especially within the context of how businesses are increasingly operating today. This spoke to the construction of a more feminine leadership style, which was cited as being preferred by nonparticipants.

I'm much more a collaborator than a controller. […] I didn't control those wonderfully creative people, and they didn't control me. It was more about moulding fruitful partnerships. --- And based on those partnerships and the success of "Control" [the album], I could move on and assert myself even more boldly. (Billboard Magazine, 2018)
Janet Jackson, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X
[…] I wanted strong women to be in key roles throughout my company, when most of the industry was still male dominated. I wanted collaborators who had not been jaded by the corporate world and wouldn't be afraid to rock with me when I came up with unconventional ideas, a team that would challenge me but wouldn't be conditioned to say you're not supposed to do something. (Harper's BAZAAR, 2021)
Beyoncé, Trailblazing Icon, Millennial

In terms of career opportunities, for women, in the industry, [Trailblazer F] noted there are more available than ever today, than there were from when she first started in the industry as a secretary[175] in the 1970s. From there, she proceeded to shatter glass ceilings[176] throughout the 1990s, 2000s, 2010s – many times over – till even as recently again in 2019, following her latest appointment as Chairwoman and CEO of a major pop label.

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[175] [Trailblazer F] noted, "When I was coming up, I started as a secretary, and all the- most of the women started as a secretary. And I worked in the promotion department" (The WIE Network: In Conversation with Sylvia Rhone, 2015).

[176] [Trailblazer F] noted, "We smashed right through the glass ceiling this time ["referring to her status as the most powerful woman in the music industry"]. This is an important symbolic moment not only for me, but for every African American and woman in our business. I know I have some very big shoes to fill, and I look forward to the challenges ahead" (Los Angeles Times - Archives, 1994).

She remarked:

> […] and I think those opportunities aren't as restricted as they were when I was coming up. […] there's so many businesses that thrive off of music and that have been built off of music, that I think it has created a great amount of opportunity. (The WIE Network: In Conversation with Sylvia Rhone, 2015)
>
> Sylvia Rhone, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer

She also noted how the "content and technology business" model contributed

to this paradigm shift, which nonparticipants perceive to be underway.

> The transformation of our industry into a content and technology business has created more entry points, a broader range of music-centric companies to explore than just record labels. (Billboard Magazine, 2018)
>
> Sylvia Rhone, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer

Most recently, she cited the most historically relegated groups are beginning

to find their voices in the industry on the more corporate business front, which

[Trailblazer D] also spoke to, from the artistic business front:

> [After several decades working in the C-Suite of the music business, this current role is] […] profoundly more significant now because of the culture change taking place. Black culture and women around the globe are finding their voices like never before. It's a watershed moment. (Variety Magazine, 2020)
>
> Sylvia Rhone, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer

> No [I'm not discouraged about today's state of the nation]. I'm anxious. I'm angry. I'm certainly concerned, but when I hear new artists finding their voices, just as I found mine, I'm optimistic. Young artists are exhibiting more courage than ever. Music is more alive than ever. And more relevant. (Billboard Magazine, 2018)
>
> Janet Jackson, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X

Subtheme 3: Moving Culture

In closing, nonparticipants spoke about ways to move culture throughout the interviews. However, a brief overview on ways trailblazers, cited how organisations and people can institutionalise equality are presented in the following extracts. For instance, [Trailblazer I] spoke on the importance of asserting oneself (an evident theme in the data) and maintaining one's "authenticity" in the workplace, to move culture forward – citing that it is a lot more "psychological" than people realise. It was indicated that people "can't bring the fullness" of themselves to really "bring the ideas". In this context, "taking up space" – and not sacrificing to make others feel more comfortable, while the self is uncomfortable does not work. This spoke to the precedence set from the exclusionary paradigm, that can only be maintained by organisational cultures' enforcing the construction of "assimilation" to reinforce the inferiority complex of "othering".

> Absolutely. Because then if I show up like this and all sudden you're like, oh, I don't know what that is. I don't know what to do with that. So maybe they should just look like me. And then that way I'm more comfortable. Well, then I'm uncomfortable, though. And so then I can't bring the fullness of myself and I can't bring the ideas. I mean, it literally it- it- it happened to me and it happens to me. And sometimes I do have to check myself. Even now. Yeah. Because I walk into a room, or I walk into an environment, especially new ones, where maybe you don't know me, you don't know anything about me. And yes, the probability is I'm probably wearing sequins. Okay? That's probably happening [...] So I walk in, and, you know, sometimes there's a reaction ((general laughter)). It's like ((mimicking others' gasp)), you know? I can see it on your face. And I'm like, "Oh yes, if you like it, let me twirl for you." You know what I'm saying? ((General laughter)) Like, I'ma [sic] give you a second to gather yourself. You know what I mean? And that's okay, because you're going to get used to me (.) this is mine- this is now my space, and so you're going to get used to me. And then, I'm going to bring the rest of myself because it doesn't stop with the sequins. There's a whole lot going on up in here ((general laughter)). (Keynote: Bozoma Saint John with Ashley Graham | SXSW, 2019)
>
> Bozoma Saint John, Trailblazing Icon, Generation X

Another way to move culture, was noted by [Trailblazer E] who encouraged

for men in music to take accountability, pay attention to the composition of

work environments, and note the behaviours in them. It was suggested that

as all these factors actively co-shape organisational cultural experiences, they

have power to use their voice to call out inappropriate behaviours in the

workplace, to help maintain a professional atmosphere.

> What the men can do, in realising now that we- we're not going back (.)
> […] we are here to stay. We've been here. We're here to stay. We want to
> be able to participate, um (.) and we will participate. What they can do is
> understand that change takes time. It's hard to teach an old dog new
> tricks. ((Pause)) Men who are conscious are going to have to look around
> the room, and when they do not see ((pause)) a situation where a female
> presence should, and could, be there, they got to speak up and say that.
> "We don't have any women in the room. We don't have somebody else
> here. We don't have that point of view here to determine what we're going
> to do, or how we're going to collaborate, or if there is a way for us to be
> able to- to think about this. We need to make sure that women are there." I
> hope we get to the point where that does not have to be the case. But
> when you're trying to do something different ((pause)) when that difference
> is not necessarily habit, uh ((pause)) then you have to remind yourself to
> do it. Men, who are out there, keep an eye out. Pay attention. You see an
> opportunity, or you see a situation that's lacking in that area, say
> something. And then, if you see that there is some kind of inappropriate
> action, or inappropriate verbiage that happens, that creates a certain kind
> of atmosphere, or- or the potential for it, it's a workplace. I'm not telling
> people don't say what they want to say. But just like everyone is required
> to have a certain comportment, in a professional atmosphere, in a
> workplace, that should hold true - no matter what. ("5 Questions with She
> Knows Tech" - In Conversation with Patrice Rushen, 2018)
>
> **Patrice Rushen, Trailblazing Icon, Baby Boomer**

As a final example, to move culture forward, [Trailblazer G] noted:

> Working to make those inequalities go away is being a feminist, but more
> importantly, it makes me a humanist. (ELLE Magazine, 2016)
>
> **Beyoncé, Trailblazing Icon, Millennial**

In this account, it seemed to imply that if others recognised the humanity in

each other and adopted this approach, equality would be a no-brainer, for the

culture.

Chapter 5: Study 2 – In-depth, Semi-structured Interviews

5.1   Special Note about the Interview Transcription Notation System
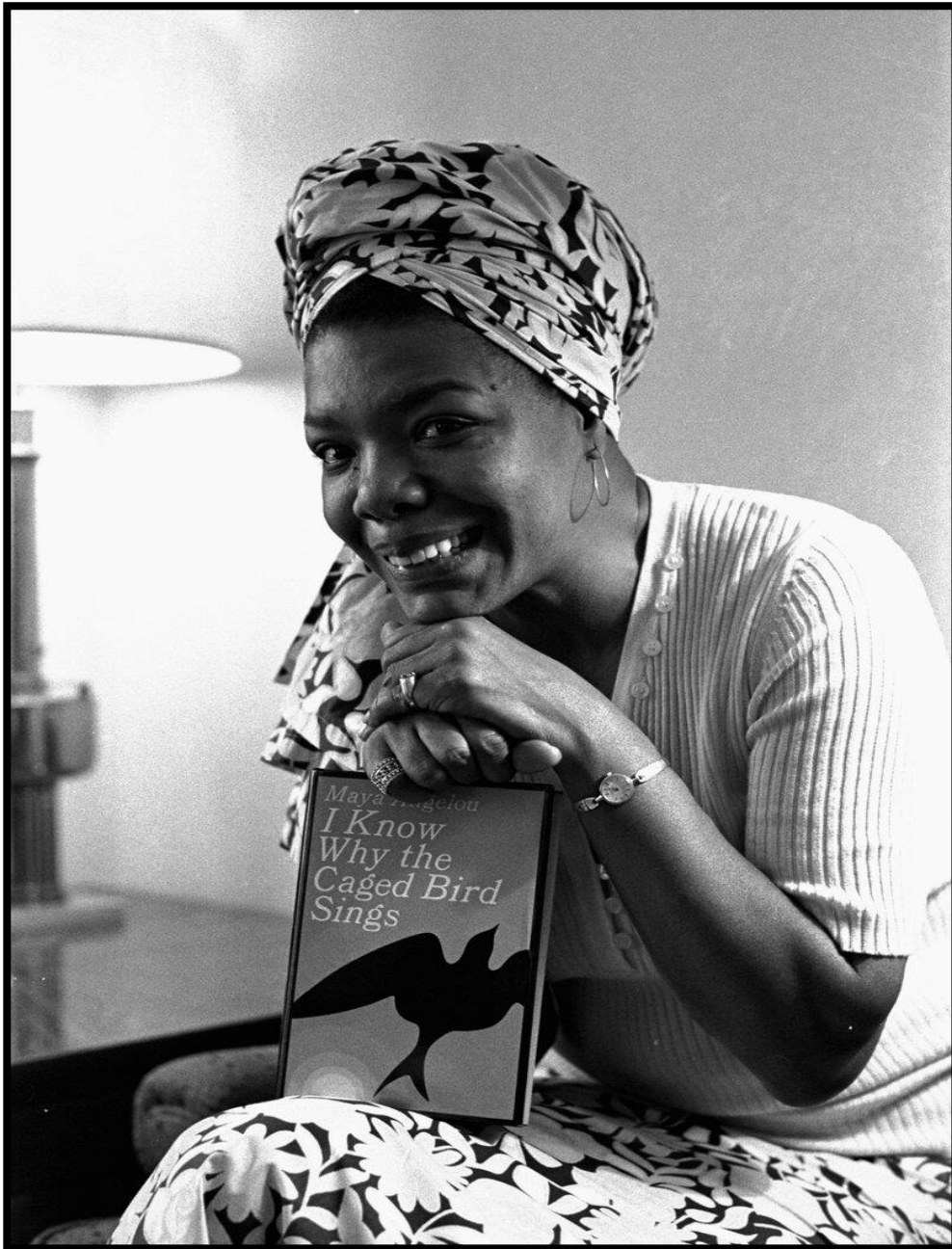
Figure 67   Photograph of Dr Maya Angelou[177]

Dr Maya Angelou[177] fused her adaptation of Mr Paul Laurence Dunbar's, 1892 poem, "We Wear the Mask", with her poem, "For Old Black Men", titled "The Mask"[178]. For this reflexive Thematic Analysis, an excerpt from her speech, introducing the poem, was shared below. This was done since there are many instances throughout the interviews where participants "laugh" – systematically notated as "((laughs))" or "((general laughter))", in the transcription. Noticeably, these "laughs" would occur after participants shared deeply distressing career stories about their adverse music industry experiences (AMIE). As a researcher, I must be careful to not project, psychoanalyse, or both. However, as a "situated knower", who must honour Black Feminist epistemological tenets, and speak to the "human experience", it is imperative I shed a light on possibly taken-for-granted knowledge, and plausibly easily missed cultural cues and nuances, reflected in the different forms of expression. To this point, sometimes, in the Black community, what comes across as "laughter" to other cultures, should not always be taken at face value. In the context of the weight of this research topic, a "produced sound", appearing as "laughter", is not always what it seems.

Excerpt from Dr Maya Angelou's Speech Introduction for "The Mask"
Now (.) If you don't know Black features, you may think that [Black] woman is laughing. She wasn't laughing. She was simply extending her lips and making a sound. (("Laughs")). I thought, "Oh, I see (.) That's that survival apparatus at work."

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[177] The late Dr Maya Angelou is a celebrated American poet, memoirist, Civil Rights activist, Calypso singer, composer, professional dancer, actress, writer, director, and producer.
[178] There are multiple archived video clips of her reciting this poem at various speaking events, as well as in front of a live audience in 1987 at "Live and Unplugged", filmed in the Lewisham Hippodrome, produced by Thames Television for Channel 4.

5.2   Music Industry Sectoral Representation in the Research

Figure 68   Sectors Participants Reportedly Work(ed) in the Music Industry[179]

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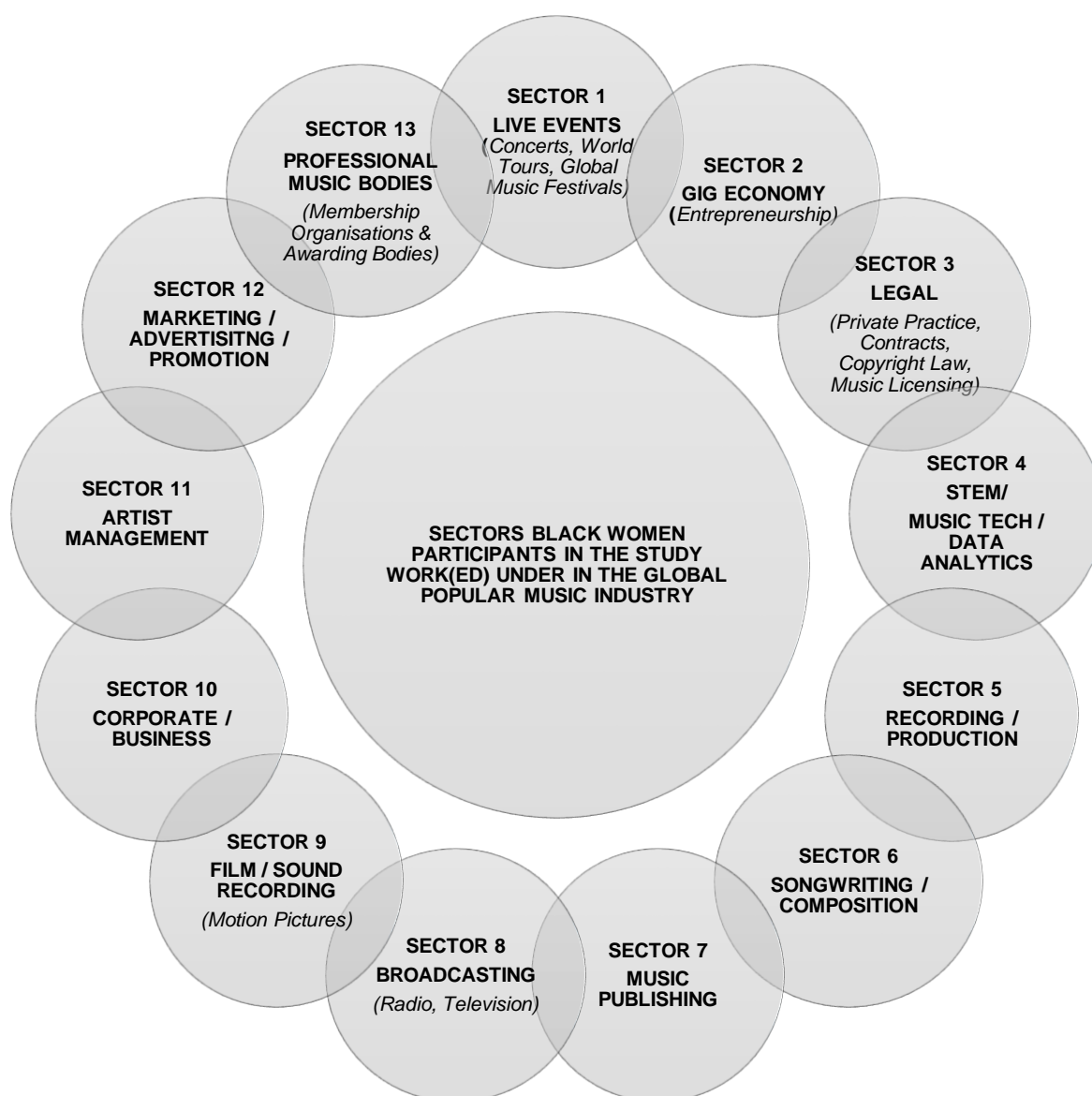
[179] Key Box: The "S" (above the sector name) followed by a "number" indicates how the anonymised participants will be coded. For example, if "S1" is written next to the pseudonym, that indicates that participant has worked or currently works in "Live Events".

5.3 Anonymity

Participants expressed a mixture of relief, appreciation, and apprehension to finally be able to share their music industry ecosystem (MIE) career journeys. The "relief" may be attributed to the research design, which lessened the threat of "repercussions", made possible through anonymity. The "appreciation" may be attributed to providing a platform to "give voice" to their experiences, which countered their systemic erasure. The "apprehension" may be attributed to them knowing it is sometimes the case that the act of acknowledging disparities, whether naming aggressors, or not, could negatively impact their lives, socioprofessional standing amongst industry peers, and livelihood. Since Black women remain a vulnerable workforce population, important data protection measures were taken for this research. Accordingly, detailed background stories were removed. Also, anonymity extended to also redacting participants' direct connections to high-profile affiliations – to avoid identifying them[180].

Figure 69   "On The Record[181]" Feedback About Anonymity

> I'm glad you're studying it because I've always said, like, this is a case study waiting to happen, in terms of the treatment [...] of Black women [in the industry].

> I'm glad our narrative matters to someone.

> I'm glad this is anonymous.

> Good thing this is anonymised [...] In fact, I'm kind of glad to be a part of the study.

> I just want to say that, obviously, I [...] spoke about a song that I released. Maybe it's probably best to not say the title otherwise.

---

[180] For transparency, there is employee and contractor representation from all the Big Three major labels, as well as other prominent global music brands – including well-known music industry professional organisations. However, it is not disclosed who is affiliated with which company for obvious protective reasons.

[181] Every participant shared feedback about anonymity. However, the remaining seven were not listed here since those comments were made "off the record".

Research Categorical Roles[182]

- The largest group of participants (n=10/12) worked as "Officers".

- The 2nd largest group of participants (n=9/12) worked as "Performers".

- The 3rd largest group of participants (n=8/12) worked as "Creators".

SECTORS REPRESENTED IN STUDY 2	
	Sector 1 – Live Events (n=10/12)
	Sector 2 – Gig Economy (Entrepreneurship) (n=8/12)
	Sector 3 – Legal (n=2/12)
	Sector 4 – STEM (n=3/12)
	Sector 5 – Recording/Production (n=7/12)
	Sector 6 – Songwriting/Composition (n=5/12)
	Sector 7 – Music Publishing (n=2/12)
	Sector 8 – Major Broadcasting (Radio / Television) (n=5/12)
	Sector 9 – Film / Sound Recording (Major Motion Pictures) (n=2/12)
	Sector 10 – Corporate / Business (n=9/12)
	Sector 11 – Artist Management (A-List Celebrities) (n=2/12)
	Sector 12 – Marketing / Advertising / Promotion (n=2/12)
	Sector 13 – Professional Music Bodies (n=2/12)

Figure 70   Music Industry Sectoral Representation[183]

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[182] Most participants worked across two to three categorical roles throughout their career journeys in the music industry, while 16.6% consistently worked in one categorical role.
[183] See Figure 68.

5.4   Participants

Gender

- All twelve participants (n=12) self-identified as "woman".

- While it is public information that more *also* self-identify as "nonbinary", only one (n=1/12) officially stated this on the record and confirmed "she", "they", one, or both can be used as their pronouns.

Sex

- This data was not captured. However, it is only being listed here to acknowledge that "sex" and "gender" are two different constructs.

Race

- All twelve participants (n=12) self-identified as "Black".

Ethnicity[184]

- From the UK participant group (n=6), two self-identified as being of Afro-Caribbean and African mixed heritage (n=2/6), two self-identified as being of solely African heritage (n=2/6), and two self-identified as being of solely Afro-Caribbean heritage (n=2/6).

- For the US participant group (n=6), three self-identified as being interchangeably "Black", "Black American" or "African American" (n=3/6); and one self-identified as being of "mixed ethnicity [due to

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[184] For protective reasons, participants' ethnicities were replaced with broader African diasporic classifications. This edit is indicative of how severely Black women are underrepresented.

colonisation and African chattel slavery] but Black American" (n=1/6). Two participants' ethnicities were not reported[185] (n=2/6).

Class

- From the UK participant group (n=6), two self-identified as "middle class" (n=2/6), two self-identified as "working class" (n=2/6), one self-identified as "aristocratic/royalty"[186]" (n=1/6). One participant's class was not reported[187] (n=1/6).
- For the US participant group (n=6), four self-identified as "middle class" (n=4/6). Two participants' class were not reported[188] (n=2/6).

Education

- From the UK participant group (n=6), the highest level of education completed was a "Bachelor's degree" by all participants (n=6/6).
- For the US participant group (n=6), the highest level of education completed was a "Doctorate degree" by one participant (n=1/6), one "Masters degree" (n=1/6), two "Bachelor's degrees" (n=2/6), one "Associates" (1/6), and one dropped out of her Bachelor's programme, midway, but completed an accredited "Executive Certificate" (n=1/6).

Marital Status

- Although participants' marital status was not a question in the research, two (n=2/12) voluntarily disclosed they are married.

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[185] Unfortunately, this data was not captured in the first round of interviews.
[186] This participant is part of an upper-class family in an [African country].
[187] Unfortunately, this data was not captured in the first round of interviews.
[188] Unfortunately, this data was not captured in the first round of interviews.

Parental Status

- Although participants' parental status was not a question in the research, some (n=4/12) voluntarily disclosed they are mothers.

High-profile Families

- Two participants voluntarily shared their kinship to high-profile families (n=2/12) and disclosed the impact of either living in the public eye, or living in the shadows, of their loved ones, which presented another dimension of navigating "multitiered-sectionality".

Sexual Orientation

- Although "sexual orientation" was brought up, in terms of listing examples of discrimination, it was not an explicit question asked in the research, which was a missed opportunity. Voluntarily, one (n=1/12) self-identified as "Queer", another (n=1/12) participant spoke to being "sexually fluid", and another (n=1/12) spoke to being "heterosexual" in a space where women were often prejudged to be "lesbians".

Age (as Generation)[189]

- Most participants were "Millennials/Generation Y" (n=8/12), which included persons born between 1981 – 1996. [Ages 26 – 41]
- Some were a part of "Generation X" (n=3/12), which included persons born between 1965 – 1980. [Ages 42 – 57]
- One was part of the "Baby Boomer Generation" (n=1/12), which included persons born between 1946 – 1964. [Ages 58 – 76]

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[189] For protective reasons, participants' ages were replaced with broader generation classifications (Pew Research Center, 2019).

Disability Status

- Although disability was not a question in the research, one (n=1/12) voluntarily disclosed she is a cancer survivor and others (n=10/12) disclosed their struggles with trauma-induced mental health challenges, triggered by psychological assaults of oppression.

Creed

- Although "creed" was not a question in the research, most participants voluntarily brought it up, in relation to navigating identity politics. The more specific contexts in which it was raised, ranged from some citing how they relied on faith for "resilience" and "hope" to navigate "toxic environments" to others critiquing how the mixing of church and state societal expectations, left them to feel "demonised". Only one explicitly self-identified as "Christian" (n=1/12). Eight others commented on faith or religious institutions (in)directly (see Figure 71).

Religion has played a major role in my becoming. Absolutely. The negative effects, I would say.

I come from [...] a lovely family. Um ((pause)) very traditional. Conservative [...] so, I went to a Catholic school.

Am I going to […] be who God made me?

You have to have an understanding of God, or whoever you're praying to. Um ((pause)) just because you have to find your centre ((pause)) um ((pause)) constantly [in this music industry].

Thank God!

But she's every Black woman, in everybody's church.

[Another participant briefly spoke about being sexually fluid.]

It's that whole Christian background as well. It's that whole, um, "[Queerness] It's wrong, or it's not." […] where I come from, you're just told that you just don't open certain doors, innit? And, certain things, you just don't explore. […] And, [my family] still believes […] some people […] in the industry, are involved in some type of darkness.

Figure 71   Participants' Religious References in Commentary

Global Music Markets

- Half (n=6/12) chiefly worked in the world's 3rd top music market [UK[190]]

- Half (n=6/12) chiefly worked in the world's 1st top music market [US].

Structure of Reflexive Thematic

5.5   Earlier Concept Mapping

Figure 72   Earlier Structure of Study 2's Reflexive Thematic Analysis

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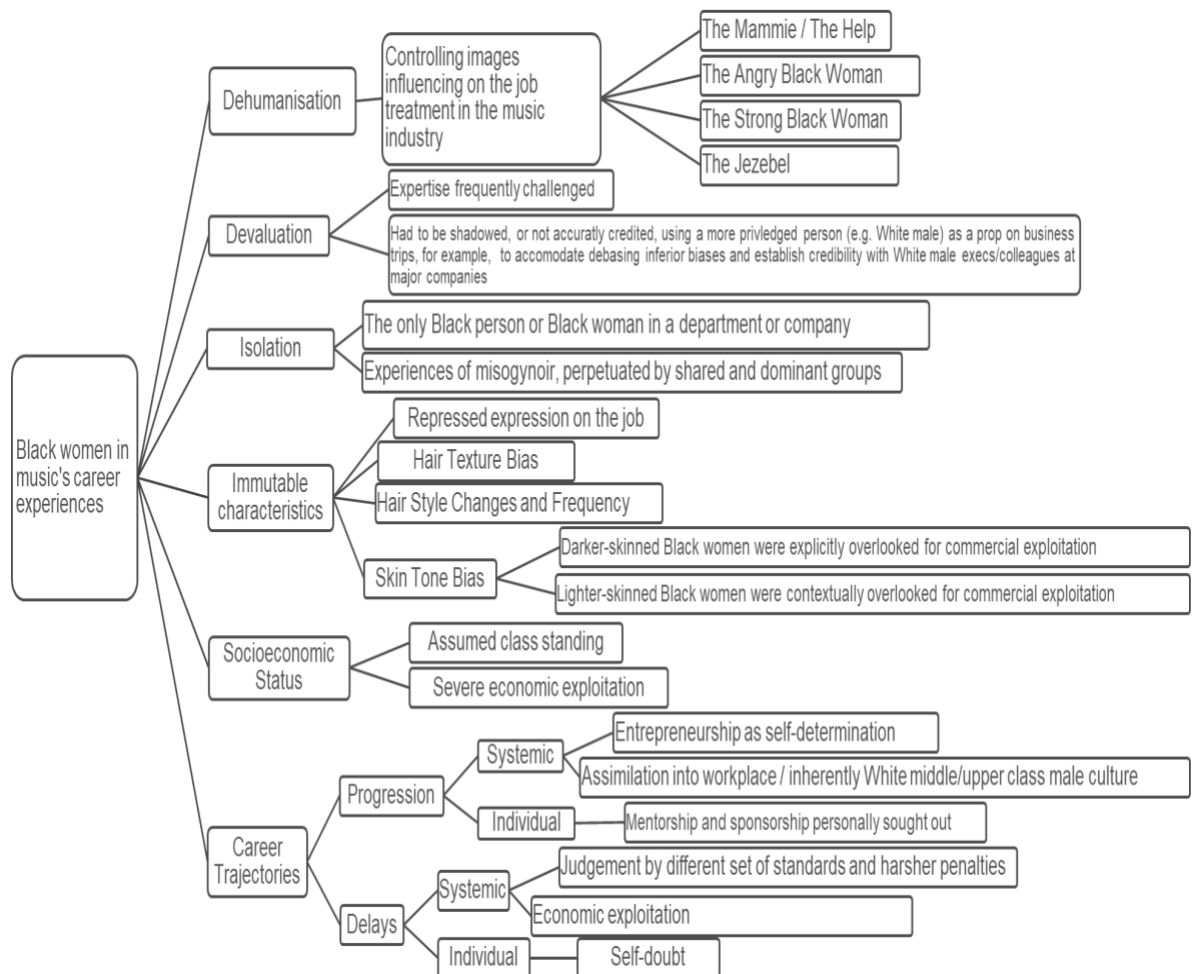
[190] A participant, included in the UK group, also works in a top ranking [African] music market.

5.6 Final Structure of Themes

Figure 73   Final Structure of Study 2's Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Overarching Theme:	Theme 1:	Subtheme 1:
Complex misogynoirism (CM) as a distinguishing feature in the top-WEIRD music industry ecosystems	Tokenism as a prime site for workplace-induced trauma	Occupational and Sectoral Segregation
		Subtheme 2: Isolated and Stereotyped: The One and Lonely
		Subtheme 2: Competition: Work S.I.S. (Sisters in Silos)
	Theme 2: Career crises enabled by routine labour exploitation	**Subtheme 1:** Career Limbo
		Subtheme 2: Career Setbacks
	Theme 3: The diversity fixer and the (overworked) organisation's rescuer	**Subtheme 1:** Toxic Handler
		Subtheme 2: Hiring Practices and Inclusion Labour
	Theme 4: Workplace vigilante targets. over respectabliity politics.	**Subtheme 1:** Code-switching
		Subtheme 2: Deviation Costs
	Theme 5: Pretty (for a Black woman) privlege as perceived power, applying pressure	**Subtheme 1:** Web 2.0 Featurism and Body Image
		Subtheme 1: Skin Colourism and Intra-shadeism
		Subtheme 1: Hair Texturism and Stylism

Results

5.7 Overarching Theme: Complex[191] misogynoirism as a distinguishing feature in the top-WEIRD music industry ecosystems

Being a Black woman in the music industry- it's harder […] And, when I say it's harder, I mean, if you are really a Black woman ((pause)) […] If you are really a "strong Black woman"- I'll add that to Black woman […] It's definitely not easy. You really can't have an opinion of your own. You really can't have […] a stance. […] You really kind of have to be able to fold into what's happening, and what's going on, and […] really, um ((pause)) not be yourself so much, if you are a strong Black woman. […] you don't really get to […] be powerful anymore and be an artist as a Black woman. You know? And […] I don't know that we ever really were able to be. […] I would say being a Black woman in the industry is definitely […] if I have to make a blanket statement, it's way more difficult than […] it is for any other type of artist, in the industry. (Dior, US, Generation X)

Diagram 5   Overarching Theme – Study 2 – Archetypal Quote

Special Note about the use of an overarching theme in RTA

Overarching themes are neither common nor ideal in reflexive TA. However, Braun and Clarke clarified they can be used as "structuring or organisational devices" instead (2022, p. 87).

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[191] For this study, the use of the terminology "complex" as a preface of "misogynoirism", was included to cover the four multidimensional levels of this type of oppression, which included interdependent analyses on ideological, institutional, interpersonal, and internalised bases.

Introduction

The study's final overarching theme was formed to synthesise participants' conceptions over the shared belief that "being a Black woman in the industry […] is way more difficult". They framed this sentiment, as a site of frustration – and for some, a source of "depression" – as industry leaders and experts, on the ground, who feel like the progression of their careers are "limited", by outside forces, beyond their control, working against them, because they are Black women. These systemic barriers were framed as mechanistically blocking them, in terms of how far "they are allowed to go" in their careers – which, was stated within the context that they observed, and personally experienced, the industry to be anti-Black, anti-woman, and anti-other. This was implied when they used terms, like "racist", "sexist", "ageist", "elitist", "homophobic", and generally "toxic", as some descriptors to describe the energy of work cultures in these top-WEIRD music industry ecosystems.

In the interviews, they discussed the myriad of challenges they faced, and continue to face, in their careers, as a result – in terms of navigating "identity politics" (Hull, et al., 2015), "politics of identity" (Bryan, et al., 2018), and "power" (Liu, 2018) at multiple interlocking levels. While there were numerous shared meanings expressed across the rich dataset, only the most salient were incorporated and elevated into five core interrelated themes.

As this research sought to gain glimpses into their socioprofessional worlds, through accounts about their career and workplace experiences, in this industry, the final themes were identified as: (1) "Tokenism as a prime site for workplace-induced trauma", (2) "Career crises enabled by routine labour exploitation", (3) "The diversity fixer and the (overworked) organisation rescuer", (4) "Workplace vigilante targets. over respectability politics.", and (5) Pretty (for a Black woman) privilege as perceived power, applying pressure. The figure below summarised into one word the implications of each of them.

Isolated

•**THEME 1:**
Tokenism as a prime site for workplace-induced trauma

Injured

•**THEME 2:**
Career crises enabled by routine labour exploitation

Overworked

•**THEME 3:**
The diversity fixer and the (overworked) organisation rescuer

Overpoliced

•**THEME 4:**
Workplace vigilante targets. over respectability politics.

(Dis)advantaged

•**THEME 5:**
Pretty (for a Black woman) privilege as perceived power, applying pressure

Figure 74   The "One-Word" Bottom Line for Each Theme

5.7.1 Theme 1: Tokenism as a prime site for workplace-induced trauma

> […] So, I went to (Country 1), and I was told that (.) some of the people there weren't comfortable […] They didn't feel that I had the right authority to complete the project, even though I was nominated as the subject matter expert. So, what was told to me was it would be better if I were accompanied in future by a White male. […] I actually had to be accompanied [...] [due to] ethnicity bias [...] That was deeply challenging. That was deeply challenging. I [...] managed to get both [...] countries implemented and I managed now to develop a relationship with those two [...] countries. So one was (Country 1) and one was (Country 2), where I was told "A Black woman leading (.) it doesn't work well." [...] So, although I know the application, and I know what I'm talking about, it's not about that. It's about their perception of who they feel they have trust with, and who they feel confident can deliver what's being required. Because it's complex [...] programmes that we're working with. And [...] it was felt- in view of the initial feedback that it would go better if I was accompanied [by a White man with "blonde hair and blue eyes"]. So I went along with it. (Iris, UK, Generation X)

SUBTHEME 1:	SUBTHEME 2:	SUBTHEME 3:
Occupational and Sectoral Segregation	Isolated and Stereotyped: The One and Lonely	Organisational Competition: Work S.I.S. (Sisters in Silos)

Diagram 6   Study 2 – Theme 1 Archetypal Quote & Subthemes

The first theme focused on how participants experienced workplace-induced trauma from tokenism, which was suggested to be more intense – "the more senior" their positions, the more "(White) male-dominated" the sectors, were, or both. Noted patterns in the data, indicated how the degrees of intensity, around these experiences, were presented as more obvious, and likelier, under certain contexts. These were cited to be driven by socially constructed relegation, loneliness, or workplace tensions and structural power imbalances, captured in the following respective subthemes: (1) "Occupational and Sectoral Segregation", (2) "Isolated and Stereotyped: The One and Lonely'", and (3) "Competition: Work S.I.S. (Sisters in Silos)".

Subtheme 1: Occupational and Sectoral Segregation

Before Black women's experiences with tokenism in the workplace, are

addressed, in this theme, participants shared their general observations on

organisations' (lack of) diversity climates and employee demographic

compositions, in ways that seemed to denote that segregation was being

widely, yet quietly, practiced within these music ecosystems. For example,

one Black woman, who used to work in the legal sector noted:

> […] It was very noticeable at [my previous] [post] because […] it was very middle-upper class, White and almost elitist. And the few of us that weren't White […] we always felt as though we never really fit in and that maybe [we were] there like, as a "tick-box", kind of thing. And (.) we also kind of noticed that the […] people that were let go tended to be Brown and Black […] But […] no one's really saying anything. Like they've not actually done anything. But they're more likely to let you go if you're Brown or Black.
>
> Jena, UK, Millennial

This dynamic was found to be commonplace, based on all participants'

accounts in the dataset. Others also added how this was evident across

leadership, where one commented that "basically, obviously, all of the

managers are White" (Hazel). To this, Iris shared her thoughts on how biases,

contributed to workforce segregation, which she traced back to structural

barriers – shedding light on who was (not), allowed access to career

opportunities.

> It's just the opportunities. If you […] look at the label heads, and you look at people in seniority, invariably they're White male. So, I […] know there's some kind of bias going on. It's not […] that they're the most talented person in the room. But that's what we've ended up with. And at board level, I think if […] we have one or two women, […] we've done *exceptional* ((pause)) because the more senior, the less the representation. So, it's really skewed. So, it's quite obvious. It's not something that you can hide behind. Once you start looking at the senior managers, it's very obvious ((pause)) that it's not a level playing field.
>
> Iris, UK, Generation X

Her account spoke to the social construction of segregated leadership as not having to do with lack of talent (for minority groups) but the lack of them being included for consideration in the talent pool, which was also found to be evident across the dataset.

To revisit Jena's accounts, she spoke to an aspect of segregation as being actively practiced today by institutions, through the "tick-box" hiring of the minimum requirement of the few minorities, and the just-as-quick firing of them. Her highlighting this organisational behaviour seemed to speak to their abusive use of positive discrimination to exploit getting by on technicalities – to fill a diversity quota, as proof they are not discriminatory – at least, on paper. However, the high turnover rate of, seemingly targeted, employees from "Brown and Black" racial demographics who have ("not actually done anything"), was suggested to prove otherwise. Also, the organisational culture, itself, was described as feeling segregated, which most participants also attested to, feeling like, "[…] we never really fit in [with the "middle-upper class, White and almost elitist" majority".

In another example, the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM) sector was cited to have the "lowest concentration of women" (Iris), to which two Black women reported:

> [The music industry is already] quite a challenging environment. I mean, music in general is male dominated. But […] it's like a lethal cocktail because you have music *plus* [STEM].
>
> Iris, UK, Generation X

> […] all of the women [in STEM], we knew, like, we got the short end of the stick. […] that's kind of been my experience working in STEM companies. This whole- […] like, especially when you're talking about music and [STEM], like, it's just some White man. That's a problem. […] [even for conferences and panels] the fact that you only can find White men to talk about [STEM] and music industry, is baffling and it's really stupid
>
> Ava, US, Millennial

First, comparing the merging of both male-dominated industrial cultures to that of a "lethal cocktail" for women in STEM and music, spoke to how Iris, and other Black women in this intersectional space, viewed people in key positions as designing workforces, to largely accommodate men. Meaning, these organisations exclusively promote and reinforce westernised-gendered-socialised male business cultures, in ways that seemed to automatically relegate women in the workplace, in multifariously harmful ways. Some of the outcomes of this biased design were cited to contribute to participants' common career experiences with being othered, and excluded, in work environments, that were almost always exclusively comprised of (White) men, whereas they were often the only Black woman[192]. This was reported to be the case for most, in the study – where one or two women (maximum) was described as the norm – across all sectoral representations in organisations, apart from one.

While "ethnicity bias" was cited to be experienced by Black women in this sector, as well as others, Ava noted the degree to how much she felt that

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[192] The implications are detailed in depth and discussed in the next subtheme.

variable of her intersectional embodied experience, "prohibited" her, in her career journey.

> (pause)) but I think, to a degree, being (.) like my racial identity isn't the thing that prohibits me the most (.) in either of those industries because […] ((pause)) even though [STEM] […] kind of seems like we're in Silicon Valley or like ((inaudible)), a bunch of White bros […] they still value some sort of diversity and especially as there become more products and there become more platforms, especially, for like, Black [STEM] people […] that's fine. But for some reason, […] it's still- the degree of discrimination for women is still far worse. And you're just like "Why? We're 50 percent of the population. Why?" ((laughs))
>
> Ava, US, Millennial

In this account, she critiqued the "glaring" employee demographic compositional makeup of women in this intersectional field. Here, she reasoned that since the US female general population, is 50%, the female workforce population, in this space, and beyond, should be reflective of that statistic, presumably based on the notion of equality – to suggest that gender parity, under un-tampered circumstances, would be automatically commonplace. Also, by comparing and shedding light on the structural advancements for "Black [STEM] people" (which could be said to indicate mostly Black men, based on her surrounding context), she also shed light that Black people make up a much smaller percentage of the US general population [at 12.6%] (US Census Bureau, 2011), yet women, who make up half [or more] are still systemically more severely disadvantaged, or non-existent, in this space. In other words, it was felt there must be structural barriers to account for this – blocking women from access to career opportunities in this sector – as facilitating occupational and sectoral segregation.

In contrast, being the token minority in spaces was found to be a much less prevalent experience in marketing, or in any business related to the "Urban" music markets. It was suggested by participants that most of the industry's Black professional talent were expected by others to work in these specific sectors, only where Iris offered:

> […] Black women [are viewed as a "niche" "not the mainstream"] […] So, for example, if you're working in urban music, it's okay to have a Black person in that space. So that's been a niche. You understand? "They can do their little bit." But they wouldn't necessarily want them to head or lead the whole team.
>
> Iris, UK, Generation X

Here, "they can do their little bit", spoke to how *corporate* perceives (and disregards) Black people, and Black people working in areas of the industry deemed as "Black" and thus unimportant, and more importantly, non-threatening to them – as White people – where "Whiteness is power" (Elyse) and anything outside of Whiteness, is not. Within this context, it was clear that participants' perceptions and general understandings is that people in positions of power (White) devalue "Urban" (euphemism for "Black") music – and thus devalue what *they decided* to count as Black people's only musical genre contributions – recognising only certain genres as "Black" music. To confirm the euphemistic use of "Urban" to mean "Black", Ava critiqued:

> And […] ((pause)) the whole of the music industry, a lot of it was to exploit Black people. And (.) […] we still call-what we call "Black People Music", "Urban Music", like (.) Yo, we need to look at that (.) And, like, R&B […] (.) it was separated from like actual "Pop Music". So (.) I think there's still a little bit of the (.) residuals today in, like, how we, like, treat people of colour – especially Black women.
>
> Ava, US, Millennial

The first part of her comment has a sociohistorical context that will be revisited and more deeply explored in the discussion in the next chapter, however she shed light on organisations' tendencies to position Black people and an aspect of Black culture (in music) as the undesirable other, while devaluing and erasing their major pioneering contributions to many popular genres of music, including the birth of rock 'n' roll (see Figure 75 below). She implicitly cited these behaviours to be rooted from relational dynamics normalised in US African chattel slavery as playing out in the industry – to indicate one of the successors of slavery (meaning: segregation) is being mechanised, structurally, to keep that legacy alive and institutionally operational.

Figure 75   Image of The Pioneer of Pioneers and Godmother of "Rock 'n' Roll" – Sister Rosetta Tharpe circa 1938 (NPR, 2021)

Whether (or not) higher representation was socially constructed, many participants noted employee racial demographic compositions, to be higher for Black people in these sectors, where Elyse confirmed for this to be true in

her personal experiences. Having worked both sectors, as well as in multiple areas, as a sought-out expert, in the marketing sector, throughout her career, she noted that even in her latest post:

> The majority of [my] […] team is Black. They're Black women. [….] there's a lot of Black women, actually […] in my department. […] we work under [a global music and entertainment conglomerate] [and operate] like an internal agency [….] we [help the company] pay the bills, right? [in "brands and sponsorships"] […] And, I think that for sure, project management and event production have the most Black women ever.
>
> Elyse, US, Millennial

Also, Carmen and Dior implicitly confirmed an aspect of this notion to be true by identifying how the popular Urban labels (they were signed to and associated with for an extended period of their careers), were made up of a largely Black racial employee demographic composition – however, they were solely run, and employed, by all Black male leadership teams. To revisit Iris's comment about Black women being "a niche" but never positioned as "the head" or "lead" of a team – their statements evidenced her claim to be true, which spoke to this dynamic where Black women, were generally excluded from any decision-making positions – even in the perceived lesser important areas in the music industry – as dictated by the White-male (power-dominant) culture of the industry.

From their reports, the insinuations that seemed to evidence bias, as segregation, by participants, seemed to manifest in threefold ways. (1) Many noted Black people were often relegated to these sectors. (2) Black people were cited as being automatically presumed to work in "Urban promotions", whether they worked in these sectors or not, (3) and the statements about

"Black people" being represented seemed to be subconsciously conflated and euphemistically[193] conveyed to really mean "Black men" being represented – in both teams and positions of power. For example, Carmen noted:

> […] it was [the Black male music executive's] company, but, like, all the men he worked with are all Black men.
>
> Carmen, US, Millennial

However, as Dior noted, although they are comprised of mostly Black male music executives, they are oftentimes subsidiaries to the major labels, which means they must still report to the top White male music executives, who are overrepresented in these real "positions of power", where Ava noted:

> […] huge hip-hop houses, and, like, labels and whatnot; […] these top leaders [sic] like some White dude; and you're just like (.) I mean, I'm more than happy that you're super into the culture. But [are you] really the best person who can, like, know or relate to the talent, but kind of like relate to the audience of this music? Like, and you're like, "Is there- some still some disconnect?" I feel if we were ((pause)) truly as diverse and welcoming as we would, at least purport to be, in terms of gender and race, like, you would see, like, the labels [..] that cater to specific markets, would look like those markets.
>
> Ava, US, Millennial

In now providing a fuller context, the summarising of this information could shed a (more contextualised) light as to why leading Black women in the study, would take offence to being presumed to work in "Urban" industry work environments. As these expectations seemed to mechanise as non-Black

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[193] **Author's Reflexive Note:** This aspect was captured due to additional probing questions being asked, of Black women, to try to gain more clarity on the background of certain social actors they discussed, for possible relational contexts and interpretative purposes to consider when reporting the analysis.

people exposing their awareness of this (unspoken) trend, participants'

offence was not conflated to mean that they, themselves, devalued those

sectors. Instead, their offence was that these assumptions now mechanised

as an anti-Black racial microaggression. Thus, these sectoral assignations

placed on them by others, were promoted to, being a stereotype, by some

participants, where Ava noted:

> […] if [colleagues] see Black people, [they] just assume that they work in the Urban Promotion department. Like ((laughs)) [they] just assume that they work in R&B, hip hop […] Cause [they're] like, "Oh they're Black, so obviously they work in *thatttt* department." So, like, […] I work at [a global music company] where we have mostly pop music and people are always like [asking me], "So what do *youuuuu* do?" I'm just like, "Interesting you should ask. I am Head of [STEM]," so […] that's kind of it at any label you walk into. [They're] just like, [upon seeing someone like me], "Oh, there must be an *urban* department on this floor." And you just kind of want to be like, "Eh. First of all, fuck you" ((general laughter)).
>
> Ava, Millennial, US

This account poignantly shed light on how presumptions about Black

women's (and Black people's) mere physical presence, and visibility, in

spaces, outside of marketing and Urban, are suspiciously questioned, as if

they are not supposed to be there. This type of posturing, by their industry

peers, was telling of some level of existing, and expected, (unspoken) social

exclusion dynamics, and bias, as occupational and sectoral segregation, at

play, enabling tokenism and competition, discussed in the next subthemes.

Subtheme 2: Isolated and Stereotyped: The One and Lonely

In this subtheme, participants highlighted the underlying mechanism, of tokenism, to be indicative of ideologically driven human relational dysfunction, still at work. Across diverse corporate, recording studio, and music venue settings – participants shared they were typically the only Black woman, whether that be in the entire organisation, department, or team – throughout their career journey.

For instance, Jena worked in the legal sector before involuntarily switching careers, following a wrongful, and suggestively gender-racially motivated, termination. Upon starting her next role at a major global music brand, in STEM, she immediately cited the following, recurring, predicament for her, and fellow Black women in music, in general.

> And I was, of course, the only Black female within my team.
>
> Jena, UK, Millennial

Hazel also noted, the same, regarding her time working in an office for a global music festival, for several years.

> I'm the only Black woman in this company. […] Interviewer: The only Black woman [in the company]? Oh yeah! *Of couurrssee*, yeah, yeah, yeah!
>
> Hazel, UK, Millennial

Here, the usage of the phrasing, "of course" indicated this was an expected socially produced norm, and outcome, made possible by social actors with hiring power in organisations, who designed workforces that were described,

by most, as being homogenous ("White and male dominated"). In another example, Ava shared that out of more than 30 employees, at a start-up, she was the only Black woman.

> I was the only Black woman at that company. In terms of, like, "diversity" there were only, like, less than 5 Black people. Total.
>
> Ava, US, Millennial

Here, the full stop she inserted in her speech pattern, before she stated "total", seemed to be a nonverbal cue to underscore how organisations typically do the bare minimum to make their work cultures more "inclusive" – where companies view "acceptable" ratios of employee "diversity" as "less than 5 Black people", "only [one] Black woman", or as "one or two woman" at most, to which another participant critiqued companies viewed to be "exceptional" (Iris), in relation to "diversity". Overall, participants agreed with Iris's sentiment and perceived this to be a mechanism to ensure these work environments remain mostly homogenous to maintain the current status quo, which they spoke to, in different aspects, in this context, as well as in the next themes.

For the industry to maintain this type of perceived unnatural overrepresentation of White men in leadership and key roles, participants drew a correlation between them involuntarily becoming the "token" minority, and them observing, and experiencing first-hand, harmful behavioural "patterns" (Jena) in maltreatment, directed towards them, in these spaces.

They interpreted these experiences as mechanistic means to maintain the "status quo" (Carmen, Iris, Lola). Thus, under these dynamics, for participants, "tolerance" (Grace) for workplace incivility[194] and workplace violence[195], were treated as accepted practices targeting these Black women, which meant no "protection" (Bailey, Faith, Dior) from instances of exploitation and the emotional pain of othering.

This gave rise to the two-dimensional "workplace isolation" construct[196], they spoke to, that subsequently mechanised, breeding ultra-competitive, psychologically unsafe, and perceived to be apathetic work environments within – enabling instances of "workplace-induced trauma". The following scenarios best exampled this, across the dataset.

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[194] "Workplace incivility has been described as low-intensity deviant behavior [sic] with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect" (Bartlett II, et al., 2008).

[195] United States Department of Labor [sic] (2022c) defines "workplace violence" as: "any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behaviour [sic] that occurs at the work site. It ranges from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and even homicide. It can affect and involve employees, clients, customers, and visitors. Acts of violence and other injuries are currently the third-leading cause of fatal occupational injuries in the United States [...] Among those with higher-risk are workers who […] who work alone or in small groups."

[196] "Workplace isolation is a two-dimensional construct that represents individuals' perceptions of isolation from others at work and includes perceived isolation from both colleagues and from the company's support network" (Marshall, et al., 2007, p. 195).

Iris's Story: "A Black Woman Leading, It Doesn't Work Well"

For instance, in Iris's account (see Diagram 6), dehumanisation was camouflaged as "preference" and "trust", as denoting "perceived competence" through the lens of gendered-racialised biases. When she was explicitly told, "A Black woman leading (.) it doesn't work well," she described feeling dehumanised and "stunned" at the organisation's brazenness and collusion to allow this to play out – which was framed to be traumatic for her.

> […] that's ugly to actually say that to me that in spite of my competency or expertise, that it isn't sufficient, because of who I am [a Black woman]. So, I won't be seen as credible, without a White man, basically.
>
> Iris, UK, Generation X

In the interview, she also disclosed that they sent in a White woman[197] to make this "roleplay" suggestion, on their behalf. This point seemed important for her to highlight to show how any minority member is susceptible to becoming complicit, through coercion, in these systems, which Elyse noted:

> […] you don't know that you're, like, a pawn in the bigger picture.
>
> Elyse, US, Millennial

Although Iris's circumstances improved once she reached "veteran status" (which Ava, Dior, and Bailey explicitly noted as well) Iris described how insulting this arrangement has been for her to be requested to pretend to play a subservient role in powerful rooms filled with her White male counterparts for years – where they all technically held equal "positions of power", but for

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[197] Neither the White woman's position nor her relation to the senior team were made clear. So, she could have been a fellow senior team member or an assistant to them.

business travels, she was expected to socially co-construct scenarios, as a "team" player, to essentially trick bigoted business partners into believing she was less important – since otherwise they would not value her expertise, solely based off their biases of her being a Black woman.

In these work arrangements she also cited an instance where this dehumanising form of social exclusion extended into after-work activities.

> […] everyone was included for the dinner except for me. And the people there felt embarrassed and uncomfortable. So, that's what it can look like. You can be excluded. ((Pause)) So, I've lived through some really challenging behaviours. […] two people actually pointed it out […] and they said, "Why wasn't Iris included? She's come with a team. She's part of the team. It's actually deeply offensive and disrespectful to exclude her." And they were told that the table booking was done, and they didn't realise and they couldn't add a chair, or […] they couldn't move the table. […] I knew it was deliberate. I knew it was deliberate because I had said something. That's why I'm a bit cautious about what I do say. But somebody has to say something. It has to start somewhere.
>
> Iris, UK, Generation X

This seemed to evidence both racial and gender biases accounting for the undercurrent awareness, in this dynamic, that historically, enslaved Black people were not allowed to sit down at "the (White) master's" table, which she seemed to insinuate was the same dynamic being played out in this scenario – although the excuse they used was that when the "booking was done […] they didn't realise" – to manipulatively position and frame it as an unpremeditated mishap. To her, their denial, here, highlighted that it was more important for them to not be perceived as, or accused of bigotry. This demonstrated why participants perceived the baseline constructs of workplace civility and human decency are not culturally mandated in organisations, to be extended to Black women.

Ava's Story: "Clean Up After the Rest of Us"

In another scenario of dehumanisation, as the token minority, Ava shared:

> […] early on, I had a job where [the White male employer] was just like, "Well you're the only woman in the office so you clean up after the rest of us."
>
> Ava, US, Millennial

The organisation consisted of just Ava and a handful of employees, who were all on equal footing. However, she was the only human being demanded by the employer to "mop up […] sweep after […] and […] clear the desks" for everyone (meaning: all the men) at work. Her depiction of his behaviour seemed to indicate that he held (White) male supremacist ideologies that were rooted in a (White) patriarchal value-construct that normalised and reinforced his worldview, in the workplace, of women being inferior to men, and therefore, obligated to be subservient to them. This appeared to be evidenced by his inappropriate action of singling her out to do (unpaid) domestic work, at the office, in addition to her STEM analyst responsibilities.

She cited her level of vulnerability, at that time, as she reasoned, "I guess this is what one does to, like, make sure they stay employed", which indicated she felt humiliated and fearful of losing her job as the "disposable" (Jena) token minority in this scenario. Her perceived threat assessment of that potentiality or generally being penalised for not obliging, influenced her decision making to clean up after the men, while with that company.

This spoke to the construction of workplace coercion – as her employer, who weaponised his "position of power" as her White male boss – and leveraged the situation to achieve his preferred outcome of how he feels the world should be (seemingly where non-men are subjugated in some capacity).

In later reflections, she shared:

> […] like, that should never be a thing, where you ask […] the one female to [do that]. […] In hindsight, I was like, "*Wowwwww!* That dude should have caught hands." ((laughs))
>
> Ava, US, Millennial

As she "laughed" back at the situation, she added:

> Now, if somebody said that to me, I'd just look at them sideways and be like "Who the fuck do you think you're talking to?" ((laughs))
>
> Ava, US, Millennial

She also used language in a way to suggest she showed herself grace and compassion in her follow-up remark, in acknowledging, "Like (.) I was young" to connote that the construction of ageism, in the industry, is also another variable that can, and does, compound intersectional experiences with exploitation.

Hazel's Story: "I Got a Pet Black Man"

In an example of first-hand and second-hand dehumanisation, in the business sector, Hazel cited challenges she faced as the only Black woman[198], in the workplace. In the early stages of her career, she recounted a serious incident, which resulted in her leaving a well-known music production company. This case involved her former White colleagues, who casually held a racially degrading conversation about their "pet[199] Black men" and a Black awards show, that one of the White colleague's Black artists was nominated for. This conversation took place in front of Hazel's cubicle, during late hours in the office, without any respect or regard towards her humanity, or workspace.

She contextually shared, "I'm the only Black woman in this company […] two other Black people [Joe and Tony] work in Finance," (Hazel), which she cited as a means to denote her social location as the token "minority of minorities" in this specific context.

> [The White woman who manages the Black male nominee's career] was like "Oh yeah, I'm just gonna [sic] walk in with a Black guy [at the awards]. He's so tall, so Black […] Ya, I'm gonna [sic] walk in […] with my Black man standing next to me." And there was a guy sitting opposite me. He was like "Oh yeah, so I'll strut in with my pet Black man." And [another] guy opposite of me was like, "Oh yeah, yeah, like, I got a pet Black man at home."
>
> Hazel, UK, Millennial

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[198] At most, she has only worked as one of two Black women in a company in this industry.
[199] For historical context, the usage of the word "pet" by her colleagues in relation to describing the "possession of a Black man", was innately racist regarding its located origins in how it has been historically used in Britain. The UK Government's Official Archive and Publisher noted how "By the 18th century [in Britain], images of Black people were being used to denote prosperity and high fashion. For example, trade cards picturing Africans advertised commodities such as tobacco, spices, tea, and coffee. Black children were bought and treated like pampered 'pets' by wealthy White families. Black servants and soldiers became symbols of social status."

The conversation, which continued, was described to be emotionally and psychologically distressing for Hazel who was subjected to listen to it. In reflection, she said:

> And I was like ((pause)) so obviously, better mindset, I'm the only Black person in the office, even though I was in a cube. I was the only Black woman, in probably the building ["where politicians" also worked]
>
> Hazel, UK, Millennial

Stating this indicated that although she was rightfully outraged, she was hyperaware of others' anti-Black ideologies that pre-mechanised, or could mechanise, to morally, and irrationally, justify the dehumanisation of Black people, Black people's pain, and their expression of it, which indicated a hint of sadism, at play. This historical human relational relevance signalled to Hazel that if she expressed, even a smidge of her anger, or frustration, outwardly, as a Black woman, she would probably face consequences for having a human reaction, as a human being, in front of people whose intentions are to dehumanise her. She also spoke to a common fear expressed amongst the participants of being accused of, or labelled as, the "Angry Black Woman" stereotype, which was implied when she said, "I didn't want to cause a scene, innit [sic]?" (Hazel).

> [...] I got so hot. I didn't know what to do […] So, I got up and I walked into (Joe's) office who's a Finance Director. Thank God he was there. It was only, him, [Tony] had gone- […] and I just went in, in his cube, and I started crying, I was like "*Ugghhhhh*" […] he hugged me […] If I didn't have [Joe, her only Black colleague] there, yeah? I don't know what I would've done [in that moment].
>
> Hazel, UK, Millennial

Here, her White colleagues' deeply harmful words had such a profound effect that they triggered a series of physiological responses not only from Hazel, but now also from Joe, who caught second-hand psychological stress, from their casual racist conversation in the workplace, where their colleagues did not face any repercussions from the employers[200].

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[200] Hazel left that company.

Bailey's Story: "Let Me Just Talk to [Him] About the Business Aspect"

Another form of dehumanisation was reported in Bailey's experiences in the

industry's "recording production" and "composition" sectors. Despite her

extensive industry credits of being a multi-platinum and multi-gold songwriter

and producer for some of the world's most celebrated pop music icons[201], she

shared that her successes did not exempt her from dealing with

presumptuous male music collaborators.

For instance, she indicated that was automatically presumed to be a

"groupie", whenever she entered studio sessions, including when she was

with her Black male music business partner, [Frank].

> […] we worked with a lot of men of course. And a lot of men, I feel were probably just like ((sucks teeth)) "She's a woman. Let me just talk to [Frank] about the business aspect of whatever we're putting together." […] They just believed that I didn't have a major role in the creative process.
>
> Bailey, US, Generation X

When asked how that made her feel, she repeated, "It made me feel horrible.

It made me feel horrible" (Bailey). She then continued:

> I remember having a conversation with [Frank] just, in tears, because I was just like "How come these people don't respect me?" And then it wasn't until, like, a short time ago [after more than 25 years of working in the music industry] that I feel like I started getting the respect that I felt I deserved.
>
> Bailey, US, Generation X

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[201] The international pop stars she has written for hail from four top-ranking music markets.

Here, navigating male-dominated environments was not framed as the issue. Rather, navigating sexist male-dominated environments for decades, was. In these music industry work cultures, participants cited how microaggressions as devaluation presented as discrediting, verbal and nonverbal slights, and invalidations, rooted in biases and stereotypes which caused most participants – and Bailey, in this account – to reach their breaking points. At least half shared details. For Bailey, her breaking point is what prompted her to have a conversation with [Frank], "in tears". She stated:

> At first, he didn't see it or understand it. And I think- it was just (.) a man thing. You know what I mean? I think that he just didn't get it. He was used to doing business in that way […] where people would talk to him […] But I could see it. Because I was a woman, I [...] saw exactly what was happening to me. I saw what was happening […] Once I brought it to his attention, I think he made a conscious effort to stop it in its tracks. So, if he knew that something like that was happening, he would […] address it right then and there.

Bailey, US, Generation X

Here, [Frank's] support as constructed protection of Bailey was described as a critical step beyond allyship, which was accompliceship[202]. He used his "male" privilege, in this music industry space, to create a more inclusive and safer environment for all music collaborators – at least while in his presence.

To this, Dior also highlighted a similar relationship rapport with a Black male music executive who offered her support as constructed protection, where she referred to him as a "cornerstone" because it is so uncommon for women to have that kind of support.

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[202] Lexico (2022a) defines "accompliceship" as: The fact or state of being an accomplice; complicity.

Faith's Story: "She's Gay", "She Acts Like a Man", "Her Expressions Are Like a Man."

As a final example of dehumanisation, in this section, as being described to be intensified by being a token minority, Faith experienced often being maligned in the male-dominated field she has played in since the late 1960s and early 1970s, as a Black female instrumentalist – starting out.

In discussing the range of gender disparities, she faced, Faith commented:

> […] the disparities that came [from the men] […] [were] a little […] less than desired. However, once I sat down at the set most of [the men] backed all the way up. However, the experience of having to prove myself before I could be accepted, at some level […] depending on with whom I was dealing […] brought some discomfort, and some satisfaction, as I could prove that I could handle this as a full bodied African American female.

Faith, US, Baby Boomer

Throughout her interview, Faith detailed the ways many Black male instrumentalists, in her professional environment, made attempts to derail her career, exclude her from the musicians' camaraderie, block her from opportunities to play with high-profile artists (which occasionally worked). They also made anti-queer-based discriminatory remarks, accusing her of being a "lesbian" because she was the only woman in the space, which they used pejoratively, while criticising her appearance, discussed in Theme 5.

Considering the period these re-counted situations occurred, seemed to speak to the of social attitudes when sex discrimination had just become illegal – but was still culturally practiced.

While Faith did not have an advocate, she knew she was a pioneer in her field then, to which she credited her talent as ultimately creating room for her.

> I set the pace for women not to feel like this is a male job. Women can play, and still be feminine, or still be, you know, heterosexual […]. That was kind of a struggle, uh, for me to go through and I think the other young ladies have realised that you can be, and not become. So, I would say I was kind of a maverick and that's that ((pause)).
>
> Faith, US, Baby Boomer

Subtheme 3: Competition: Work S.I.S. (Sisters in Silos)

> You could still very much feel the tinge of like "Music is a boys club" and, like, women, who would like, help you, but, like, under the guise "There can only be one." So, it's more like, "I'm trying to monitor you and make sure you don't get ahead of me."

<div align="right">Ava, US, Millennial</div>

Black women spoke to one of the consequences stemming from the lack of workforce diversity, as facilitating intra-competitive work environments, where "self-serving", "sabotaging", and "back fighting" behaviours were described to be evident amongst minority ethnic employee groups, but especially between women and Black groups, who have historically and systemically been disenfranchised at greater degrees and institutionally blocked from access to real power (meaning in top leadership – as there are multiple levels in leadership, which participants made clear), in the ecosystem. This understanding of power, as autonomy, was described to be hoarded by White men, and men (structurally), who all were described to benefit from the constructed scarcity model, which seemed to mechanise more intensely amongst women groups as "fierce" competition and amongst racial groups as adversely impacting Black women's careers, by following the same "formula" as organisations, who dehumanise Black women in specific ways. Thus, the constructions of "competition" reported in the data were viewed as a natural by-product of these oppressive workforce designs, as evidencing both segregation and the internalisation of the implications of this construction for marginalised groups who were ultimately made to feel like, "there's not a lot of spots". To this, participants shared some of their thoughts on how these attitudes mechanised in work environments, driving tensions within groups.

[…] community wise, it's just that same, old dead chestnut slavery mentality. And what we've been fed, and what we've carried for years.

Lola, UK, Millennial

[…] there's a lot of back fighting in the industry too amongst other female Black artists. It's like "Why would you never promote your sister?" But it's because competition is so fierce. There's not a lot of spots, that's what it seems like. There's not a lot of spots. It doesn't feel like everybody gets to win. It feels like they put everybody in direct competition because they all want you to be the same thing. You'll notice the same legs on people, the same makeup artist, the same clothing choices because they want everybody to be this one idealistic version of what they feel a pop star or music act should look like. So, it's just, a, a lot of that. A lot of that, that happens.

Carmen, US, Millennial

The mentality. The mentality is not where it needs to be for everyone to stick together and say, 'We're taking all of our artistry out of the equation, until you treat us fairly". Black people in the States can never do that because Black people in the states can never come together on one accord. It's always a competition because there's always a mentality that goes way back to slavery where "Okay, well, you in the house. But I'm outside, so I'm trying to get in the house." You know that type of thing. And it's sad, but true. But that is the mentality of the average person trying to get somewhere that'll step on a brother or sister, you know, to get there. And so, yeah. We feed- we feed into that. We feed into that. And- and we make it possible for it to happen.

Dior, US, Generation X

[…] I've seen lots of people just leave the music industry, especially Black women, because, like, we don't find these groups and it's really hard […] There's still a lot of that competition because not only is it competition with women, but like, Black women; and, so like, you're really, like, the only one in the room, and you have to, like, be on top of it, and you don't want to feel like you're competing with other people, but you always are because they're going to compare you anyway. So, like, a lot of them just get burned out and leave.

Ava, US, Millennial

[…] So now we're like, okay- we're not level with men, or like White people or whatever, but we're a bit more, getting there. And it's still some bit between women, as ourselves so it's still hard to- for everyone to win. But it's like if one Black pers- woman wins, it's like "Hey, okay great," but it's like, "Okay, we still can't all" […] But I mean, […] it's gotten better over the years in terms of us against everyone else; but not us against each other, if that makes sense.

Grace, UK, Millennial

5.7.2 Theme 2: Career crises enabled by routine labour exploitation

> […] the contract was just pure evil. Like, I'm actually just so happy I survived that. Like, I didn't own anything of myself at all. Everything I breathed [...] was [the major record label's]. And I only realised later because I wanted to, you know, navigate my ship. I'm writing all these songs that have just got me out of the countryside to here and [Title of Kendra's Top Pop Hit] [...] only to find out, '"OK. Now they want to stay on this vibe." I'm growing, and I need to write about other things. Then ((pause)) you know how it works in a machine. It just started getting hard. And now my music isn't really being pushed and you can feel it slowing down [...] And, it was just too frustrating. Too many back and forth. They started holding money from me [...] like hundreds of thousands [...] I wouldn't get paid directly and I just didn't feel like that was right. Why is my money going to you first before it comes to me? It is my cash, you know, like so. I ((inaudible)) was an image, but I was a fucking slave. So, but like in a whole new twisted, fucked up way. That shit messed me up! [...] It's called a 360° deal. The worst. Apparently, when they presented it in the UK, everyone was like "Jump off". They go to Africa and they rape. It's always the same! Fucking. Same. Because we didn't know better. (Kendra, UK, Millennial)

SUBTHEME 1:	SUBTHEME 2:
Career Limbo	Career Setbacks

Diagram 7   Study 2 – Theme 2 Archetypal Quote & Subthemes

The second theme focused on how participants' experiences with routine labour exploitation, made career crises frequent occurrences for them. The severity of their exploitation was explained as being directly tied to them being Black women – as they were perceived to be inferior by their work and industry counterparts. Thus, they were frequently underestimated, underrepresented, undervalued, dehumanised, and, vulnerable to workplace abuse, where consequences as accountability, for others' ill-actions, were viewed as non-existent. Outcomes manifested into occurring as: (1) "Career Limbo" and (2) "Career Setbacks" for them – as these experiences adversely impacted their career progression and trajectories.

Subtheme 1: Career Limbo

Participants noted how Black men who tended to run labels, were usually highly successful solo artists and sought-out producers, themselves, but largely inexperienced in music business management.

> [Black-owned "urban" labels support Black women] to a degree […] And then […] that becomes a whole other conversation, to be honest with you because I also feel like artists shouldn't necessarily sign artists because (.) they're artists, and they really don't necessarily get what it is to put out another artist, sometimes, which was the problem with [Black Male Music Executive]. […] it becomes a situation where an artist may not get every aspect of the other artist, and may not know what it takes, and be concentrating from-from the aspect of a label and a producer, like, he is being an artist. So, yeah. It just- it just depends. Um. I haven't seen much success with that, for a lot of Black women.
>
> Dior, US, Generation X

Here, Black women's careers being in limbo at different periods in their journey, was attributed to some of the label heads described occupational incompetence, as businessmen – where perceptions of their skillsets in the business context, was insinuated as possibly being camouflaged by their individual artist celebrity success. Whereas several Black women in the study described how they were constantly made to feel like it was a "marketability" problem, with them (which had misogynoiristic undertones) they found that it was not the case. Instead, they came to the realisation that their handlers did not know what they were doing – thus leaving their careers at a stalemate.

Participants also highlighted how very few opportunities exist for Black women in music to advance their careers. To this point, they discussed encounters with White and Black men who actively "blocked" them from "opportunities", which were given to women who were either White or mixed

race. For example, Lola was part of an all-girl group, who was signed to a major label, where the lead was a racially ambiguous woman. While being recorded by two White male session engineers in the US, one of the men held the talkback button (perhaps by accident – as everyone in the vocal booth could hear) and vented "I don't understand why they won't let this girl [as in Carmen] sing". The reason was later cited as being due to her darker skin colour, which will be revisited in Theme 5. However, she reflected:

> I didn't want to be the lead. I just didn't want to be ((pause)) seen as, like, not being allowed to sing leads […] [They're like] "No, no, no, keep her in the back." I think, like, that feeling. I was just like "I don't want to sing lead on every song, like […] let's all kick ass together." […] Oh, like, "What's this holding me back shit?" That's mad to me ((inaudible)) ((pause)).
>
> So yeah, after that- after when he said that I literally went in the bathroom. And obviously, back then, the roaming thing wasn't the same as it is now; and I fucking called my mom in the UK. And I bloody cried my eyes out. And, um, I'm just like, "I can't believe what I just heard." But my mom's not very um. She's not ((laughs)) […] she's had ((inaudible)) experiences in the business and she's just like, "Well. It's either you suck it up and carry on, and then, you know, if the group gets established, then you can make your own thing out of your own thing; or you walk out. What are you gonna [sic] do?"

<div align="right">Lola, UK, Millennial</div>

The "not being allowed" aspect, shed light on how her career was put in limbo, as her handlers, deliberately made her the background because of skin colour prejudice – although she had the strongest vocals. Also, the language they use, "keep her in the back", spoke to the re-memory of traumatic African chattel slavery dynamics for Black women of different complexions where most participants noted darker-skinned Black women are treated much worse. This was described to affect her mentally and in other ways, very deeply – which will (again) be revisited and further discussed in Theme 5.

Carmen's retelling of the following experience drew attention to an often-overlooked form of devaluation, that is commonly experienced amongst women and other minorities within the Black cultural community. She cited a situational, yet profound, incident in the music industry that blocked her solo career as a signed major recording artist. Since the beginning of her career, she revealed in her interview that she had always been acknowledged and praised behind the scenes for her talent by key influencers and decision makers in the music industry. However, in terms of receiving the necessary support, and funding, to successfully launch and pursue a solo career, she was explicitly instructed by her label boss, a prominent Black male executive, to place her career on hold, so that she did not "overshadow" the White female recording artist, who they were pandering to young Black consumer markets, as they wanted her career to skyrocket before hers.

> I had expressed that I still was interested in doing my solo work. And [I was told by the Black male music executive] "Yeah, but don't. Because I don't want you to overshadow this [White female artist]. […] we can talk about your stuff later. Or talk about your […] being an artist. Or get you to write some songs later. But, right now, it's basically about her and that's like our "Bread and Butter". And that's how he approached it. Like, "See. She's a White girl, she can rap, she can sing. We're gonna [sic] get her on, she's gonna [sic] blow up, and we're gonna [sic] all be rich." As opposed to saying "Okay, let's find somebody with actual talent that we can cultivate. And, regardless of what they look like, let's get their music out there." That was never the focus. It was all kind of a gimmick.

Carmen, US, Millennial

However, "later" never came, which prompted Carmen to leave that situation altogether, as they did not invest in her to pursue a solo career through that specific route. (Also, she noted the "gimmick" did not land with audiences.) While there are more examples in the dataset, these strongly highlighted the

multifarious ways Black women experienced devaluation in the music

business, within shared social groups.

Subtheme 2: Career Setbacks

Kendra's Story: "I Was a Fucking Slave […] That Shit Messed Me Up"

Kendra's[203] story was highlighted as the archetypal quote under this theme (see Diagram 7), where they equated their career setback to being an outcome of severing ties from what they depicted as a socially produced slave-master relational dynamic between them and their record label, who literally owned all their masters – which they did not know, or understand, at the time when they signed with the record label[204]. Throughout their account, they spoke to how they were severely exploited by their label, in multiple harmful ways – financially, legally, and discriminatorily. They also shared the organisational backlash they faced from genderqueer discrimination.

> […] I was still morphing cause, like, I was talking about sexuality. Like I'm saying things like sensory on TV. Like [the label] saying "No, we can't show kissing." Like, dude, that's the whole point of my song. Like, how are you stopping my expression? Like, it's like I got to the point where **"You're the most powerful but you still gotta gag."** Like ((pause)) how twisted is that? Like yeah that energy. That's what- that, NO, THAT SHIT WAS BAD! So, I was like, "I'm out. It's not working for me." I wasn't- I wasn't feeling good. I was drinking. I was depressed. ((Pause)) I just wasn't the person that I, I needed to be, and I was losing my vision of what and why I started music and stuff, you know, so that's why we parted ways.
>
> Kendra, UK, Millennial

The frustration of "you're the most powerful but you still gotta [sic] gag" spoke to how their star power was not enough to give them permission, or leniency, to honour all of who they are. However, the idea of being openly queer was

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[203] Kendra uses she/they as pronouns, so these will be used alternatively, when referring to Kendra (NPR, 2021a).

[204] This meant everything they "breathed" (meaning anything they wrote, recorded, engineered, produced, and commercially released, including the use of their image and likeness in TV and film, had to be approved and was entirely owned by the label – not her. Thus, the label would get paid directly for any project they did, then they would pay her a small percentage from the large percentage they took off, which could be said to be compared to the social construction of US sharecropping for Black people – "slavery by another name" as mentioned in Chapter 1.

not even close to being as accepted, celebrated, and exploited by corporations (in popular culture), the way it widely is today, in the music industry, until recent years – where (it is still to some degree) notoriously discriminatory towards marginalised groups within the vulnerable LGBTQIA2S+ communities. Based on her account, it seemed evident that her record label, at the time, had multiple motives behind their damaging actions that severely set her career back, which was depicted as being calculated. They removed their business team without warning, they withheld hundreds of thousands of dollars, and they still own, and are profiting off her masters, as one of the top artists in their genre. Hence, she had no choice but to start from scratch. This sheds a more contextualised light on why she described herself as the "minority of minorities", which spoke to the severity of degree of harms she faced as being further compounded and intensified, due to her multiple marginalised social identities as a self-identified, and perceived: "Black" (race), "[Indigenous]" (tribe), "genderless", "nonbinary", "woman" (gender), "female" (ASAB[205]), "pansexual", and "lesbian" (sexual orientation).

I'm a triple threat, I was made to be triple oppressed, but somehow this might be turning in my favour because despite all of that, we are here.
Kendra, UK, Millennial
And it wasn't just about the money because money will come but like (.) time man. It's time.
Kendra, UK, Millennial

---

[205] ASAB is an acronym for "assigned sex at birth"

Other Black women spoke to their perceptions regarding a sense of loss of time (in their careers), in different ways, but ultimately framing it to be the most valuable resource they can never get back.

For example, some shared:

> Like I used to work [through] weekends. But sometimes I open my computer, but I think mentally, I just can't. […] I deserve time to myself. I deserve sleep. I deserve, like, food (.) and things. Yeah, I'm not gonna [sic] give you that. So (.) that's a hard boundary […] for the last two months, I've been doing super well where I've really been making that boundary.
>
> Elyse, US, Millennial

> […] I spent, like, two years doubting myself.
>
> Ava, US, Millennial

> […] the sad thing is that half of my musical career has been spent in litigation and fighting someone that has taken something that I've earned.
>
> Bailey, US, Millennial

Bailey, who also had over six-figures, stolen from her, spoke to the construction of "time" as, being perceived to, also, be her biggest loss in her career journey. Her career experience is shared next.

Bailey's Story: "Half of My Musical Career Has Been Spent in Litigation"

Before Bailey's account is discussed, the framing of it could be better understood from setting this part of the analysis up from a gendered-racialised socioeconomic lens. Thus, centring some Black women's thoughts about the social construction of "class" as being an integral part of their intersectional embodied (career) experiences, will be reported first, which will then lead into how this variable particularly impacted Bailey's career. This study included Black women from a diversity of "economic classes" (see Figure 76), where most reported to be a part of the middle-class bracket.
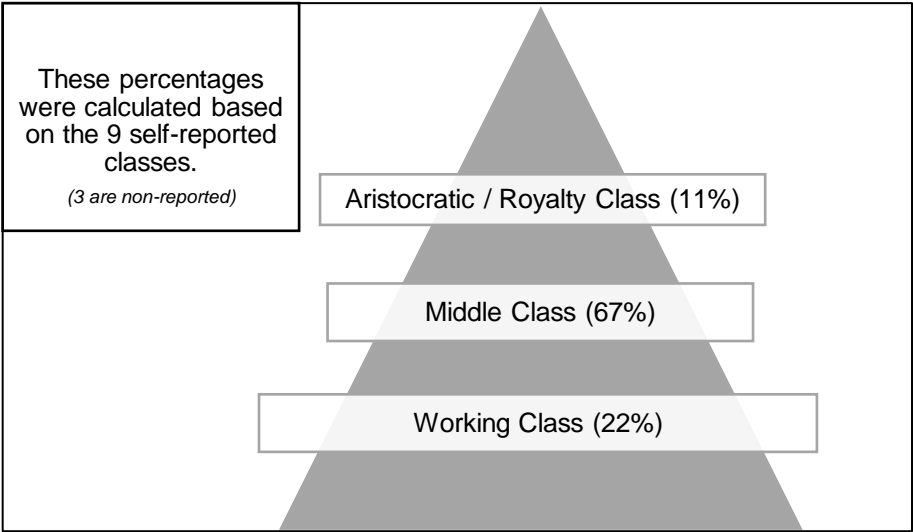
Figure 76   Black Women's Self-Reported Economic Class Status

Since class is a complex construction, it is clarified how participants framed their perceptions around it. For example, in terms of class as cultural discrimination, Ava spoke to how she has been accused of being called "bougie", which she hinted was used at her in a derogatory way.

> And so, there's a whole lot more of that, where people are just, like, "Oh you're a little bougie". I'm like "No, I'm a lot bougie. Like, I earned it."
>
> Ava, US, Millennial

The historical context will be revisited and discussed in chapter 6. However, her remark spoke to a US societal belief that Black women, who live comfortably (meaning: money is not a struggle), should not be allowed to. Because living (financially) stress-free is suggestively viewed as deviance (for historically oppressed US Black women). The label "bougie", here, (meaning: snobby) – was intended to dehumanise her, for being able to afford her lifestyle. Instead of internalising the negative ascription, she indicated she leans into the label, and reasoned, "I earned it" to connote she is self-made[206].

> […] almost all the Black women I know, are either in the industry or they're fairly high-up in what they're doing. So […] it's also kind of like at the intersection of "Class". Like, I was raised middle-class. I'm bougie as fuck. So, like, my friends are kind of the same (.) same cloth. So, we're just kind of like, "We are at a certain level." Like, "We did our hustle." Like (.) "We did those days." And "We're all kind of here." And so […] it's kind of like a mirror that you're like "Oh. Well, you're where I am. So, we're all good." […] so I ((pause)) don't feel like I can effectively speak to like, "Oh, well this is how this industry treats Black women" because I don't talk to, like, a lot of people who are, like, not on the same elevator like (.) level as I am. So, I know it sounds really elitist and I'm sorry ((laughs)).
>
> Ava, US, Millennial

By clarifying, she does not feel she can representatively speak to the industry career experiences of Black women, was a moment of her distinguishing her own individual class privilege, within the collective, as slightly being set apart from the majority's[207]. Meaning, that she perceives her economic status as circumstantially different to most Black women in the industry – which,

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[206] The "self-made" comment also spoke to another widespread controlling image of Black women as being derogatorily perceived to be "welfare queens" – and not self-sufficient – another form of dehumanisation, which positioned her comment as resistance to this interrelated stigma.

[207] For example, she may be able to exercise the construct of choice, rather than constraint more so than others (at least at this current stage in her career).

perhaps, shed light on either the structural barriers, against Black women, more generally, or it served as a signal of her net worth and income status, as a global senior leader, in the industry – or both.

In another example – in terms of class, but, as generational barriers, Hazel spoke to the implications of this, in her career, which she framed as a second-generation Black British woman's experience.

> I had to figure out on my own but that was because ((pause)) again, culturally, it's lack of generational wealth. If my parents just came here ((pause)) […] Both my families came here, a generation […] or two, ago. It's not ((pause)) it's not embedded. Like, I don't have a cousin who is the Head of Talent at [Record Company]. Like, my uncle is not (.) do you know what I mean? So, it's like, yeah. […] my parents have had to do it themselves, and I had to do it for myself, so ((pause)).
>
> Hazel, UK, Millennial

For context, Hazel, spoke to how many of her White colleagues, she worked alongside, were able to get into the industry by way of their family's net worth and affluent network social connections – which situated her perception of their wealth as advantaging them to benefit from the mechanistic constructs of cronyism and nepotism in the workplace. These were understood as "tick box" "positive discrimination" – but for the White and wealthy, since her colleagues had personal access to key people in the industry, for employment opportunities – viewed as being only accessible to the upper-class of White UK society.

As a daughter of a mixed immigrant family, she spoke to the value construct of "figuring it out", as her parents had done, as a source of pride and tradition

– of making a life out of fewer available (limited) resources. Simultaneously, she also noted her resentment as she felt her career would be much farther along sooner if she had the same access as her counterparts.

To this, she even highlighted how race and gender, seemed to further disadvantage her. For instance, like Carmen and Lola's situations, she disclosed how she and her White female colleague started the same platform at the same time, did the same things, but she witnessed her colleague's meteoric rise in the Black British music industry space, where her own career progression (as a Black woman) was described to experience, a bit of a limbo even in the "niche" area – as earlier discussed in this theme.

To this, she remarked:

> ((pause)) this is the maddest thing, is that there was […] me and […] the White girl I mentioned earlier. We had the exact same trajectory, but her trajectory went ((skyrocket sound)) just because she was White in a Black space, if you know what I mean? That's why it went ((skyrocket sound)). We were doing the *same* things, like *same* thing. […] We had similar platforms, but now (.) I feel like it's just about taking up space and we know we have to take up space. […] we're taking up space now. So yeah, I'd say like, being […] the young Black British (.) person, creative, we're just taking up so much space now. Like in 10- 20 years, it's going to be mad. It's going to be mad for our kids. Like, they won't have to do what we had to do. […]. But now, the next fight for us, is the space. ((pause))

Hazel, UK, Millennial

To tie these perspectives back into Bailey's account (around industry Black women and class), she spoke to her gendered-racialised stereotyped-driven discriminatory experiences, with class, where shed light on how it seemed to

facilitate barriers for her, and ultimately a major setback in her career. In her account, the methods of how financial abuse mechanised for her (which other Black women spoke to, at varying degrees), were believed to be largely driven by preconceived notions about their presumed economic class status, which will be coined and described in this study as, "classumptions".

For instance, Bailey disclosed:

> […] I've had money [$100k+] stolen from me. […] I had a company that was administering my music. And [...] ((pause)) […] It was [over a decade ago]. [...] the administrator [...] signed a license agreement, basically stating that I allowed him […] "Power of Attorney" to collect my music royalties on a song that we had no contracts for. And […] I'm glad this is anonymous. I obviously believe that this man (.) did this because I was a Black woman.
>
> Bailey, US, Millennial

Linking "class" and "educational attainment" to her gendered-racialised marginalisation experience (which has a US sociohistorical context regarding the structural barriers of Black people) she continued:

> [...] he felt like I didn't know anything about my music royalties and […] how my money is generated. And, he didn't think I was college-educated. He didn't know anything about my background. And, I think he just assumed that, you know, I was just a Black girl from quote unquote "around the way'" [...] that didn't have any real education (.) Just because of what he saw.
>
> Bailey, US, Millennial

As this account explicated what she felt made her a target, she shared:

> But little did he know that I knew a lot about how my money was made. I had a team of people that had my best interests at hand. And ((pause)) yeah, I'm still in court with him right now. We're still in litigation.
>
> Bailey, US, Millennial

Although she praised her music legal team's efforts, she shared how severely this set back her career, as she had to pay court and legal fees, for more than a decade, out of her own pocket, which meant her financial resources dwindled rapidly and she needed more funds (even if that meant taking up another trade to make more money to sustain herself in the meantime) to fight for her justice. Overall, she insinuated, she never conceived she would ever be in this predicament decades working in the industry – writing (and being credited for writing) for the world's biggest pop music icons, as mentioned earlier. To this, she lamented on both the perceived missed time (framed as the most valuable and irreplaceable resource by her and Kendra) and how this was driven by (lower) working-class anti-Black woman bias – which she was presumed to be.

> […] Just knowing that your money is just out there in somebody else's account and he's doing, or has done, whatever he wants to do with what I've earned. […] I've been in a financial bind because of this. So, music was my primary source of income at one point. So, if I don't have music royalties coming in, then it's like, "Okay, so where am I supposed to get money, if this is what I'm doing on a full-time basis?" So now I just have to totally alter the way I do things. […] I have to go find a full-time job. Well, this was my full-time job. And this was my specialisation. […] So now you're telling me that I have to go and find something else to make money and that I really need to specialize in […]. But thank God I did get a degree because after this happened to me, I was able to find a job. […] Just, like that. […]. But I shouldn't have had to do that. I shouldn't have to be forced into the [traditional] workforce. You know what I mean? I should have been able to do that on my own will.
>
> Bailey, US, Millennial

Dior's Story: "She Can't Go Anywhere Else. Do Not Sign Her."

> […] you get barred. They will literally blackball you.
>
> Carmen, US, Millennial

Black women spoke to their career experiences with being blackballed by the most powerful top-White male music executives, in the industry, which Kendra described as being a deeply traumatic ordeal for them (detailed earlier in this theme). Across the dataset, patterns in participants' accounts indicated this type of abuse, appeared to be exclusive to Black women, where the outcomes, (being career setbacks), were not isolated. Rather, participants made it clear that those with "real power" (meaning: "economic power" in the industry) deployed their resources, to bully and denigrate them into "silence" – in backdoor deals and single conversations, in the industry that seemed to confirm reasons for their justification and high anxiety around the idea they felt companies viewed them as "disposable" – contributing to them feeling like they must "work harder".

As Carmen cited "blackballing" was a common tactic deployed against Black female recording artists, she listed off some of her contemporaries (who will remain nameless in this research) in the industry who were personally affected by this, as well, behind the scenes. Similarly, Dior did the same, and spoke to how one of her contemporaries, especially, was viciously ostracised and blackballed not only by (White) mainstream media – but also Black media, public opinion, and the music industry, in general – as a Black woman; and she spoke to how she, too, was personally blackballed at one point in her

career, but in a more discreet way. She wanted to walk out of her deal from fear of repercussions of being "shelved", from the label's team's[208] business error that brought on a major lawsuit that blindsided her and derailed her career. She explained:

> […] At one point, when I asked to go, [a top-White male music executive] made sure I couldn't go anywhere else and get a major deal. […] And in that situation, they call it "blackballing" […] When [executives] blackball an artist […] they make those phone calls and say, "Okay, you can't- she can't go anywhere else." "Do not sign her." "She owes us enough money." "Don't do it." So, in those situations, I would say, those are the people that make the machine go, that can "make or break" your situation, as an artist […] They're "the powers that be" (.) that make the machine roll.
>
> <div align="right">Dior, US, Generation X</div>

When asked if the Black-male-owned subsidiary, who she mentioned was her "cornerstone" (in other ways in the industry), could have interceded, on her behalf since the failure was on the team they assigned her, she answered:

> If [the subsidiary] has to pick between me and [his boss], [his boss] is what makes [his subsidiary] a working entity. So (.) Um. Yeah […] I would be the small sacrifice […] in that arena. So, yeah. No. He wouldn't. He wouldn't say anything to stand up for me on that end of things.
>
> <div align="right">Dior, US, Generation X</div>

The language used here indicated there was generally neither a sense of, nor expectation of, protection, or agency for her, as she cited to be merely viewed as a "small sacrifice" (meaning: collateral damage for others' [men's] error).

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[208] Comprised of all men.

Lola's Story: "In the Interest of Your Career, We Can Put an End Tomorrow."

The fear of being shelved by labels, was described to be gruelling to navigate, by both Kendra and Dior, as well as Carmen, in a sense, since the major she was under, did not keep their end of the agreement to even begin working on her solo project[209]. Here, these examples shared similar dynamics to Lola's story. To cite, a final example of "blackballing", which set back Lola's career, for a period, as she – was also demoted, somewhat similarly to Carmen – disclosed it started when top-White male music executives threatened her.

> [The label] just said […] "In the interest of your career, we can put an end tomorrow." This is what you should say. That's […] how it was put across, really. […] as it started to dwindle down, and as I feel the end was coming, I came to the conclusion like, "You can take the deals away. You can take the opportunities away. You can take all this stuff away. But you can't take my talent away. So, as long as I still have that, then I'm going to do what I can until I can't."
>
> Lola, UK, Millennial

The practice, of White women, or women closer to the White aesthetic, being "chosen" and elevated in even Black spaces, while demoting and side-lining Black women, was mentioned earlier by Hazel, as well – where examples were made evident by participants, working in both the recording and broadcasting sectors[210]. Lola further confirmed this pattern when she added:

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[209] Instead, as previously mentioned, the White male-funded (major), Black-male-owned-label decided to solely invest and focus on launching her White female label mate's career – using gimmicks including Carmen's image as the sidekick Black woman to give her "street credibility" – by making her the White woman's "hype girl" on stage for live performances.

[210] **Author's Reflexive Note:** Some of the accounts were so eerily similar across both regions, that I had to keep extra care in relistening to their interviews for an extended period, while taking notes, to organise the progression of each storyline, compartmentally – as many shared the same plotlines, with similar background characters – just in different countries and sectors, which gave me reason to believe, while analysing, that their traumatic career experiences could be classified as an epidemic in the top-WEIRD countries and industries.

> […] [The label] had been speaking to the lead singer for a few weeks and decided to keep her on a solo artist and drop us two, um ((pause)) and continue with her. So that was like a major blow. So that didn't end nicely.
>
> Lola, UK, Millennial

For context, again, the lead was described earlier as racially ambiguous and light-skinned, whereas the other women were described as dark-skinned. As the label kept the lead, the label invited Lola back, but for a more invisible, but still critical role – that was not public facing, which Carmen cited she witnessed happened often to darker-skinned Black women, in the industry.

> […] And, and then [the label] called me back into office and said that […] They said they feel like I'm a songwriter, and that I should just focus on that. I was told that I should just focus on that.
>
> Lola, UK, Millennial

When asked how this moment in her career journey made her feel, she answered:

> […] I just literally- **I didn't say this to them**; but I just (.) fuck it. I was like, "Fuck you" and I left. And then **that was the energy**. I used that energy to kind of stir me on to be an independent artist.
>
> Lola, UK, Millennial

5.7.3 Theme 3: The diversity fixer and the (overworked) organisation rescuer

> […] my best practice [is] to, [..] work with HR because they'll just be like "Oh here's a bunch of people, who like, went to the same school, have the same background"; and, I'm just like "That's boring, first of all ((laughs)) and second of all- cause [sic] […] I need more variety of people to choose from. Because […] if they're all the same background, one of them's not good, guess what? None of them are probably going to be good." […] So I've taken a little bit more active role in, like, recruiting- […] even for my interns, which is exhausting, because I get, like, fifteen hundred applicants a semester. (Ava, US, Millennial)

SUBTHEME 1:	**SUBTHEME 2:**
Organisation's Toxic Handler	Hiring Practices and Inclusion Labour

Diagram 8   Study 2 – Theme 3 Archetypal Quote & Subthemes

The third theme focused on how participants felt organisations unfairly placed the heavy burden of positioning them, as Black women, to be both the unofficial crises managers and diversity fixers, in the workplace. Evidence of these occurrences often manifested as them being coerced or feeling pressured into doing unpaid additional DEIB[211] and Human Resources labour – unrelated to their job descriptions, which they indicated made them feel exploited, in ways that seemed to evidence misogynoir. Also, some described to voluntarily take on the "fixer" role, to demonstrate proactiveness in creating a more egalitarian work environment for everyone to feel valued, seen, heard, and respected, which spoke to the idea of sacrifice for the "greater good" – but at what cost? Noted patterns revealed how and why these largely manifested as them becoming: the organisation's (1) "Toxic Handler", as well as the multi-culturally competent (unpaid) lead in (2) "Hiring Practices and Inclusion Labour".

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[211] DEIB is a business acronym for diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging.

Subtheme 1: Organisation's Toxic Handler

Black women spoke to how ultimately dysfunctional the music industry is, in most organisations, for workers, regardless of one's social background.

> That's why I was like Black women feel [the toxicity of the music industry] the most. […] Black women should kind of be the signal of […] how [organisations] test for things […] if Black women are getting real [sic] tired, like everybody's getting tired. But we just feel it far more.
>
> Ava, US, Millennial

By referring to how much more the toxicity of the industry generally impacts Black women, compared to other groups, Ava insinuated that Black women "feel it far more" as she described they are habitually peer-pressured by both senior leaders and co-workers to (unofficially) to take on a lot more of the workload, while also taking care of others' (read: employee) wellbeing – which is supposed to be the collective job of the organisation's top leaders.

Regarding the latter, Black women were cited to "naturally" operate in a more "nurturing" (Elyse) capacity in work environments to "make sure everybody's good" (Ava), which spoke to, somewhat of "the mammie" stereotype (Collins, 2009) being mechanised as one of Black women's expected role – as the sacrificial caretaker for the organisation.

For example, Elyse shared:

> […] naturally, sometimes it feels like Black women become still very much in service, um ((pause)) and very much like- and not necessarily catering, […] but aware of, like, the specific needs […] So, you become like a little bit more ((pause)) you cater in a different way.
>
> Elyse, US, Millennial

She continued, by illustrating how this version of "catering" could play out:

> Like, for example, […] we had a Black guy that was working on a team here […] When […] you're a Black woman, [to other Black women] you're like, ((snaps fingers quickly and successively)) "Yo. Let's get it done. Like what we doing? What we doing? What we doing?" And with Black men, we're like, ((gentler voice)) "Okay. Did you get- did you get it? You're cool?" Like- it's like a different type of nurturing, and a different type of relationship. And, um, that is- it's still very special but ((pause)) different.

<div align="right">Elyse, US, Millennial</div>

Here, she highlighted how she viewed Black women to entreat each other (in presumably less "gentle" and inpatient ways, in the workplace) that seemed to speak to both inter-personalised and internalised gendered role reversals, as straying from western cultural norms – but only to a point. While she described Black women to somewhat coddle others in the business arena, and be "in service" to them, this larger power dynamic seemed to speak to Black women's constructed social location (meaning as subservience), as this strenuous positioning of Black women was normalised (and morphed) into becoming part of western cultural norms rooted in human relational dysfunction, during US African chattel slavery – where Black women had to be everyone's caretaker, for survival.

To this, participants spoke about the ways they overextended themselves by speaking up (even when it was "taboo") and going above and beyond to offer emotional laborious support for co-workers in the workplace, in different ways. For instance, when Iris first started out in the industry, she said:

> I remember speaking to [male] colleagues to say, "I don't even feel comfortable. There's not even one female I can talk to in the room." And people are looking at me like I've got two heads.
>
> <div align="right">Iris, UK, Generation X</div>

In her citing the importance and the beneficial outcomes of employees being able to bring their "authentic self" into the workplace (where the company failed to foster that), she recounted the lengths she went through to support a female colleague, who decided to leave due to the toxicity.

> […] I remember going into the toilet and I said to one woman, "Please don't leave." She said, "No, I've already made my mind up. My husband's doing something, and I'm going to go." And after that, I just thought every woman that joined, I'm gonna [sic] make an effort to say "I'm here," you know? "If you feel challenged, I'm here for a coffee. I'm happy to meet with you, just to reach out on a personal one to one basis to say, "It's okay, I'll just listen. You don't have to say, you know, too much." But this is deeply challenging because I actually think we need people that look like us, you know, people of our own gender, of our own ethnicity, to identify with, as well. So, we need diverse, mixed groups to actually, you know, be our authentic self at work.
>
> <div align="right">Iris, UK, Generation X</div>

Within this framing, participants cited they spent anywhere between 25% to 53% of their time (read: lives), managing different large-scale projects, due to the rigorous, and sometimes unrealistic, demands of their hectic work schedules, as well as others' wellbeing in addition to home life, which sometimes led to severe burnout, from lack of structural support, as many also cited to be severely underpaid or not paid all, for this overlooked form of exploitative labour (as vital for the organisation to sustain).

Generally, Black women felt that they "must work harder", "outperform" their peers, and "assimilate" to "stay employed" (Ava), which they suggested is what demarcated surviving from thriving, for leading Black women, in their careers as many insinuated to be surviving – and (in)voluntarily taking on responsibilities as the organisation's toxic handler. On Black women working in the industry, some stated:

> We just don't get it easy. We work 10x's harder to get it. […] And then don't let it be a darker skinned [Black woman]. We just have to work so much harder. And I don't know if that will ever change.
>
> Dior, US, Generation X

> I've heard many different situations where people are like, "Yo, Black women work hard […] particularly in this [music] industry […]. And it's like you give it to a Black woman, it's going to get done […]". We *know* that *we have to* work double.
>
> Elyse, US, Millennial

> [Due to biases] […] I might need to work even harder to perform better. Or I might feel a bit like shit [if I don't].
>
> Grace, UK, Millennial

> Black women are the most discriminated against […] We have to work 10x's harder.
>
> Hazel, UK, Millennial

In this context, "working harder" took on deeper nuanced meaning for these Black women, than simply achieving to prove their competence. "Success", for them, also meant the bare minimum, of finally being "allowed" "in the room", (Ava, Elyse, Iris) even if it often meant that others "[took] the credit" (Faith) for their contributions (framed as "teamwork"). Despite having to work "twice as hard", "10x's harder", or more, depending on their social location on the "intersectionality" and "intrasectionality" spectrums, Black women reported

to only reap half of what their peers received (who did much less work, producing less output on the job, under less pressure – all around).

As devaluation was a common and constant threat to their career viability, they spoke to how these constructed desperate-making dynamics played into them overextending themselves in unsustainable ways, to get theirs, and often others' jobs (when coerced) done, by any means. This was cited to be a common scenario even if what they were being asked (read: demanded) was outside of their job scope.

> […] at some point, you're like, "My brain hurts, like I cannot think of another thing- another- another-thing that I need to figure out. I can't, like- there are so many fires. Just so many fires […] Like, no one dies. If this shit doesn't get done, no one dies."
>
> Elyse, US, Millennial

> Wait. I make the least amount. I'm the most client-facing. I am the one putting out every- all the fires. Fuck this shit!' ((laughs)).
>
> Ava, US, Millennial

Subtheme 2: Hiring Practices and Unpaid DEIB Labour

As an extension to being the organisation's toxic handler, throughout the dataset, Black women spoke to the systemic and individual disparities in hiring practices. However, some also spoke to how they personally took matters into their own hands as hiring managers, at different points.

For instance, Ava (see Diagram 8) shared that her former employer's HR department tended to forward her only White male candidates for review to be considered to join her team, which shed light on how HR's perception-biases, seem to influence homogenous workforce designs. Although she already had a lot on her plate to execute her role and manage her staff, she also possessed rare decision-making power; and felt like she was the only one who cared about equality. Thus, she made the choice to take on (unpaid) work by "collaborating" (meaning doing it herself), rather than criticising HR and its failures, to effectively, do their job in an ethical manner, to advance equal access to opportunities, for everyone – not just one group.

In another example, Elyse also reported how she took matters into her own hands to drive inclusion at her organisation:

> […] I mean I am very vocal about [hiring in the company]. I mean […] we had a conversation about, you know, how producers need to hire […] more diverse groups of people, even including women. Cause [sic] a lot of their crews are very White men centric. And I was like, "Listen, I made it a point to hire Black people."
>
> Elyse, US, Millennial

While her company was depicted as being (verbally) supportive of her mission, infrastructurally – it was evident that this sense of responsibility was positioned as a personal (not organisational) matter. Thus, sourcing talent and companies from minority backgrounds fell squarely on her shoulders to advocate for diverse representation, which seemed to speak to what other participants' have said about organisations' minimal effort in the areas of diversity and inclusion. Instead of being upset by it, she took ownership of it, despite the extra (unpaid) workload, where she indicated, "I make it my business to hire Black and Brown people [so] we're not the 'others' in my [production] crew."

5.7.4 Theme 4: Workplace vigilante targets over respectability politics.

> I'm not super aggressive in the way that I communicate […] ((pause)) I'm not one that you would consider problematic […] I'm able to kind of flow as opposed to- and- and that probably is not always that great. […] you're very aware of what the bounds are [...] You know that "It's because it's a Black woman saying something," as opposed to it being "a White woman saying something" that is kind of interpreted as, to mean (.) different […] I've heard people say crazy things where you're like, "If that was me, then that would be seen as-" or like, for example, I've seen White men have temper tantrums, right? And they're screaming and they're upset and they're doing their little dance. And you're like, "If I was to do that, you guys would throw me out." […] However, if someone's whining and they're upset and they're screaming and they're able to have their freedom, of like (.) bitching ((laughs)) and when it comes to [...] women (.) [...] not even doing, close to what they do, and then it becomes, "Oh, [...] she's hard to manage." "She's hard to deal with." "She's difficult." (Elyse, US, Millennial)

SUBTHEME 1:	SUBTHEME 2:
Suppressing and Code-switching	Deviation

Diagram 9   Study 2 – Theme 4 Archetypal Quote & Subthemes

The fourth theme focused on the participants' modified behavioural practises and mannerisms, with navigating policed, and self-policed, identity performance in predominantly macro-White-male industry and work environments. These modifications were seen as crucial to circumvent the real consequences of negative stereotypes that often resulted in the rapid and ruthless demonisation of Black women, in ways that could affect their livelihood. For protection, some participants conveyed the extremes they went to, to try to assimilate. Some also spoke to the detriments of not being allowed to bring their "full-self" to work. To this, these social costs were discussed as: (1) "Suppressing and Code-switching" and (2) "Deviation".

Subtheme 1: Suppressing and Code-Switching

Across the dataset, Black women spoke about how the power of negative stereotypes further marginalised Black women, as facilitating code-switching (for survival) in the industry. As Black women largely attributed their experiences as being linked to negative western media messaging – they cited how it seemed to impact their industry peers' perceptions of them.

Here, Carmen and Jena both reiterated participants' intrinsic understandings as to why they believe they are over-policed and quickly demonised.

> Being Black and female, like, because in the media, like […] we're portrayed as people that you shouldn't really show respect to, or value, as much as you do others.
>
> Jena, UK, Millennial

> Black women, stereotypically, have been thought to be angry, or mean, or not sexy[212] **[…]** like a lot of different derogatory connotations.
>
> Carmen, US, Millennial

This also shed light on why most participants viewed their treatment in the music industry and in Western society as "[…] exactly the same" (Hazel). Their accounts seemed to suggest that their counterparts (regardless of background) felt justified and entitled (which spoke to "superiority") to not only police fellow human beings (Black women); but also, to enforce a different set of "social norms" onto them, which was viewed as "brutal" (Iris) and "more intense" (Elyse), as Black women had more to lose.

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[212] The inclusion of the terminology "sexy" in this contextualised list perhaps speaks to the halo-effect bias, regarding how perceived attractive people are judged in a more affirming and positive manner, which is important in an industry that values "image" (Kendra).

To better understand Black women's perceptions around being "strong" (to navigate this), it was important to visually illustrate (see Figure 77) their depiction of "strength" (see Diagram 5) within the context of them describing how they felt they must navigate oppressive "toxic" environments, for their careers to survive. This explains how "strong" became a euphemism for "suppression" necessitating code-switching.

Adopting the "Strong Black Woman" Stereotype
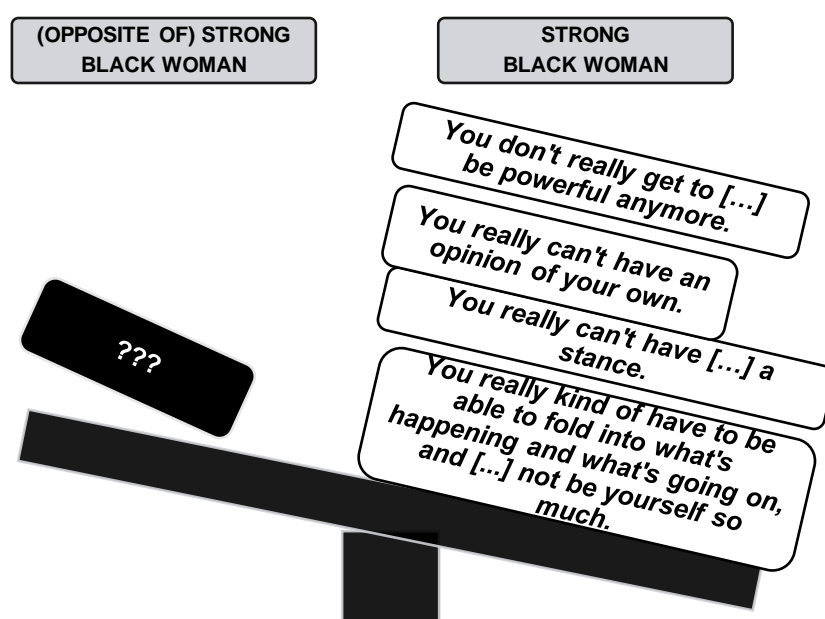
Figure 77   Dior's Description of a "Strong Black Woman"

Based on this illustration, Iris seemed to agree with Dior on this depiction of strength, as she continued to elaborate, on her account, from Theme 2:

> […] it is actually absurd that I need to be chaperoned to do some of this stuff. It can be deeply- I mean, I've accepted it. Because I think there's a part of me that says, "You won't change everything overnight." "[…] there's a way of working through it." So (.) […] I think it can empower you if you choose it. *If you choose it*. […] I just persevered, and I thought "I'm just going to work through this." All of it is BS, to put it bluntly. But, if that's what they need to have (.) […] this White person […] If that works for them, then, hey. ((Laughs))
>
> Iris, UK, Generation X

Avoiding the "Angry Black Woman" Stereotype

A form of defence from some Black women was to "assimilate" (Ava), which was described to be another form of policing (but self-policing), to "survive" (Elyse) "toxic environments" that perpetuates gendered racism, as well as other forms of, microaggressions directed towards them. This was suggestively viewed as normalised bigotry they tried to circumvent, although it remained an inescapable (re)produced reality.

As a form of protection, sometimes Black women watched from the side-lines – how others were entreated when they raised discriminatory issues – to gauge the limits of what can(not) be said, to avoid being stereotyped, and to code-switch, within the "bounds", as demonstrated in Diagram 9.

Iris also elucidated the conflicting challenges of this positioning of self-policing:

I think it could be a deal breaker if people feel that you're a whistle-blower or you speak up against things, like discrimination, it makes you [a] target ((pause)) if you speak up.
Iris, UK, Generation X

[…] I'm not my authentic self [at work]. I will think carefully before I give feedback. I'll think about the audience that I'm giving the feedback to. And I am *muted* about […] certain [discriminatory] aspects. Because ((pause)) life is tough enough without me being singled out […] on issues. […] we've had issues in the past where people have been called out and people have lost their jobs […] So, it's something you have to be mindful of.
Iris, UK, Generation X

Due to these oppressive dynamics, they felt like they could not bring their "authentic" (Iris, Lola) self into the workplace because they "feared" (Ava, Jena, Lola) they would be at risk of being quickly demonised (and fired), because they knew their colleagues were "always watching [them]" (Ava); and, specifically "watching for the first mistake" (Faith) "in order to disqualify [Black women]" (Elyse), if they did not adhere to unspoken, but understood, "triple" (Dior) standard social norms, seemingly ascribed to Black women who have, minimally, "two additional hurdles" (Hazel), to which Hazel elaborated why:

> I closely identify with being a Black woman first […] The second is being Black ((pause)) because Black men are crazy. They're actually nuts sometimes ((laughs)). The [deeply hurtful] things they say [on their large platforms], it's just nuts. […] we're not just fighting against the outside. We have to fight […] against the inside too because it's just nuts. And the third is being a woman […] because it's (.) obviously I'm a woman, but ((pause)) it's the thing that I would fight for the least […] It sounds bad when I say it, but I wouldn't be fighting next to someone who doesn't understand the *ADDITIONAL* parts of the struggle because their struggle stops at being a woman. I have […] *TWO* additional hurdles […].
>
> Hazel, UK, Millennial

For context, Hazel recalled a deeply disappointing moment, in her account, involving some prominent Black male artists in the UK industry. She shared that they made publicly hurtful comments in response to a controversial incident that received media coverage – about a music venue discriminatorily barring darker-skinned Black women and heavier women from entry, in recent years. In response, she shared that one of her colleagues (a Black woman) spoke out about the harms of this discrimination, and instead of them empathising ("like they can [regarding the racist practices of] […] stop and

frisk" (Hazel), these men allegedly verbally attacked her colleague instead, and claimed:

> […] "Well no, [darker-skinned Black women are] just bitter ((pause)) no, no, no, you're just jealous." […]
>
> Hazel, UK, Millennial

Their actions were described as feeding into the "angry Black woman" trope as a function to reduce her and Black women to an irrational emotion of being "bitter" without just cause – to further detract, dehumanise, devalue, and silence Black women and their pain. This was reported as being important to them because, whenever instances like these arose, they felt like men (with power) in their community sent loud and clear messages to other communities (meaning: in the White-male dominated patriarchal, anti-Black racist, and anti-woman sexist society), that even Black men feel (darker) Black women are not only not worth protecting; but also, are deserving of degradation, subjugation, and malignment – which Hazel noted it had everything do with their "lack of empathy and it's purposeful" (Hazel).

To juxtapose this account to the earlier "pet Black man" office controversy, reported in Theme 2, she cited she was psychologically and emotionally distressed, but she knew she could not cry, from the harmful things her White colleagues said, (in front of them). She felt that she would be penalised for having a natural reaction to what was depicted as sadistic behaviour in the workplace.

To this, she spoke to why she walked away from her area:

> And I was like ((pause)). So obviously, better mindset, I'm the only Black person in the office, even though I was in a cube. I was the only Black woman, in probably the building […]
>
> Hazel, UK, Millennial

> [...] I got so hot. I didn't know what to do; and, then I just- I didn't want to cause a scene, innit [sic]? So, I [went to] (Joe's) office who's a Finance Director. Thank God he was there. It was only, him, (Tony) had gone- […] and I just went in, in his cube, and I started crying, I was like "*Ugghhhhh*" […] he hugged me […] If I didn't have [Joe, her only Black colleague] there, yeah? I don't know what I would've done.
>
> Hazel, UK, Millennial

In that single moment, she was able to be consoled by her fellow Black colleague. However, she framed that outcome as rare and lucky.

Generally, many participants spoke to the challenging constructed dangers of being stereotyped as the "angry Black woman" in work environments. Fear of this stigma seemed to play a more prominent role in how they navigated the industry, as exampled above.

For instance, Lola intentionally did not address her traumatic career experiences publicly (before this anonymised interview), citing how she witnessed what recently happened to a US Black female recording artist as discouragement. She noticed how her industry peer received severe industry backlash, in addition to being vilified in ways only Black women can be – where others are not typically held accountable by organisations and the wider culture within the industry, from abusive behaviours towards them.

To this, she commented:

> I'd like to do it in song rather than […] ((pause)) you know, doing an interview and ranting, and just like *completely destroying* the industry. Yeah, I'd like to do it in a bit of a tasteful way. […] [I think it would be better received that way] One hundred percent. Cause I think sometimes when you go ranting, you're just called ((in singing voice)) *"The Angry Black Woman"*.

Lola, UK, Millennial

Here, she spoke to code-switching (for artists) in the recording sector – where creative license was described to offer a safer way to open about their struggles with the industry's dehumanisation of them, as Black women – instead of ever officially speaking about it – as a stratagem for self-preservation.

In other examples of participants trying to escape this stereotype, the complex construct of "tone" (within the context of code-switching) was also named as one of the critical areas that was pinpointed and cited to be over-policed against Black women.

Here, Jena offered:

> […] I think within the music industry, I guess within labels, just per example, a lot of the people are generally White males. So that's just kind of like what they're used to seeing and who they're used to interacting with. So, when it comes to interacting with someone that isn't anything like that at all. I think it's hard for them to adjust in terms of like what kinds of things you might be interested in […] talking about, or how we might talk about things. Whereas for us, we're so used to adjusting our tone, or our vocabulary, and making it palatable for them. Um. So, yeah, it's a tricky one, I think.

Jena, UK, Millennial

Accordingly, participants, like Ava, made modifications, such as (initially) toning down the colours they wore to work. So, some cited to wear black (or muted) colour clothes to not stand out – from fear of being seen – and thus at higher risk of being targeted for discrimination. For other Black women, like Jena, toning down was also reflected in how they styled their hair where others cited, they spaced out time regarding how often they changed their hairstyle so that it did not become an office conversation. In terms of toning down to avoid being stigmatised, this also manifested in their selection of music they listened to at their cubicle since rap music for example would feed into stereotypes and facilitate confirmation bias for bigoted people in their workspace. Therefore participants, like Hazel, intentionally played soft alternative music to try to steer clear from anything angry sounding that would automatically make others refer to the "angry Black woman" trope.

As Elyse spoke to this form of policing, in the archetypal quote, she elaborated below, and explicitly said what other participants were hinting at:

> […] you're so aware of your Blackness that […] when I walk into a room, […] you try to make sure […] (.) Like, you can't be too assertive or too bitchy because now […] you're being perceived to be one way […] you're checking yourself to make sure that how you're saying it, isn't perceived otherwise. […] you can't even have a natural way of talking to some of your colleagues, um, in the way that y'all both know […] **Instead, you have to find […] the softer and more politically correct, or the more, um, essentially […] White-approved way of saying things** […] It's like a weird game, of like, balance. So, balancing your Blackness, or trying to be professional and trying to make sure that someone's hearing you, and not saying something inappropriate, you know?
>
> Elyse, US, Millennial

Based on these accounts, Black women seemed to speak to a phenomenon around how workplace vigilantism mechanised against them in such insidious ways that Jena disclosed it impacted her so deeply she felt (socially) criminalised if she was even seen with a handful of Black employees in a lobby – at one time. Reason being, she sensed the weird stares they would get by their White colleagues – as if they were doing something deviant, which also spoke to overseer/slave master dynamics, which had a sociohistorical context to African chattel slavery.

In the next subtheme, an amalgamation of some their thoughts around deviation costs was compiled and summarised into Diagram 10.

Subtheme 2: Deviation Costs

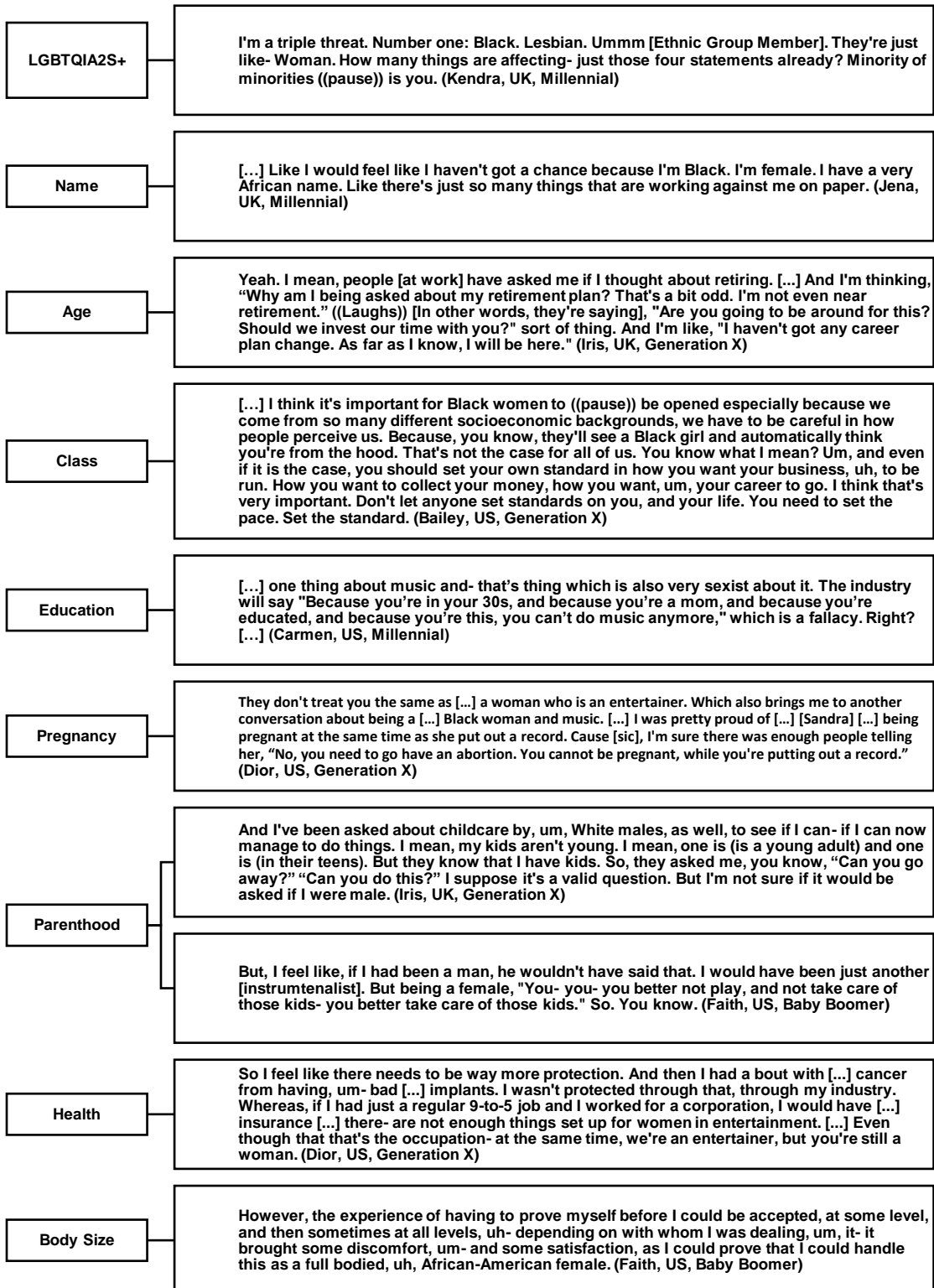|	
LGBTQIA2S+	I'm a triple threat. Number one: Black. Lesbian. Ummm [Ethnic Group Member]. They're just like- Woman. How many things are affecting- just those four statements already? Minority of minorities ((pause)) is you. (Kendra, UK, Millennial)
Name	[…] Like I would feel like I haven't got a chance because I'm Black. I'm female. I have a very African name. Like there's just so many things that are working against me on paper. (Jena, UK, Millennial)
Age	Yeah. I mean, people [at work] have asked me if I thought about retiring. [...] And I'm thinking, "Why am I being asked about my retirement plan? That's a bit odd. I'm not even near retirement." ((Laughs)) [In other words, they're saying], "Are you going to be around for this? Should we invest our time with you?" sort of thing. And I'm like, "I haven't got any career plan change. As far as I know, I will be here." (Iris, UK, Generation X)
Class	[…] I think it's important for Black women to ((pause)) be opened especially because we come from so many different socioeconomic backgrounds, we have to be careful in how people perceive us. Because, you know, they'll see a Black girl and automatically think you're from the hood. That's not the case for all of us. You know what I mean? Um, and even if it is the case, you should set your own standard in how you want your business, uh, to be run. How you want to collect your money, how you want, um, your career to go. I think that's very important. Don't let anyone set standards on you, and your life. You need to set the pace. Set the standard. (Bailey, US, Generation X)
Education	[…] one thing about music and- that's thing which is also very sexist about it. The industry will say "Because you're in your 30s, and because you're a mom, and because you're educated, and because you're this, you can't do music anymore," which is a fallacy. Right? […] (Carmen, US, Millennial)
Pregnancy	They don't treat you the same as […] a woman who is an entertainer. Which also brings me to another conversation about being a […] Black woman and music. […] I was pretty proud of […] [Sandra] […] being pregnant at the same time as she put out a record. Cause [sic], I'm sure there was enough people telling her, "No, you need to go have an abortion. You cannot be pregnant, while you're putting out a record." (Dior, US, Generation X)
Parenthood	And I've been asked about childcare by, um, White males, as well, to see if I can- if I can now manage to do things. I mean, my kids aren't young. I mean, one is (is a young adult) and one is (in their teens). But they know that I have kids. So, they asked me, you know, "Can you go away?" "Can you do this?" I suppose it's a valid question. But I'm not sure if it would be asked if I were male. (Iris, UK, Generation X)
	But, I feel like, if I had been a man, he wouldn't have said that. I would have been just another [instrumtenalist]. But being a female, "You- you- you better not play, and not take care of those kids- you better take care of those kids." So. You know. (Faith, US, Baby Boomer)
Health	So I feel like there needs to be way more protection. And then I had a bout with [...] cancer from having, um- bad [...] implants. I wasn't protected through that, through my industry. Whereas, if I had just a regular 9-to-5 job and I worked for a corporation, I would have [...] insurance [...] there- are not enough things set up for women in entertainment. [...] Even though that that's the occupation- at the same time, we're an entertainer, but you're still a woman. (Dior, US, Generation X)
Body Size	However, the experience of having to prove myself before I could be accepted, at some level, and then sometimes at all levels, uh- depending on with whom I was dealing, um, it- it brought some discomfort, um- and some satisfaction, as I could prove that I could handle this as a full bodied, uh, African-American female. (Faith, US, Baby Boomer)

Diagram 10   Deviation Costs for Black Women

5.7.5 Theme 5: Pretty (for a Black woman) privilege as perceived power, applying pressure

> You had to be thin. You had to be not too dark. [...] You had to have [...] sex appeal. You know what I mean? So, the [...] best artist for [label heads], in terms of a Black woman, was Beyoncé / Rihanna. Like, those are the two names that you heard, no matter what, all the time. [...] but, if you look at them, they're fair enough-skinned Black women [...] I think [this group of Black male label heads] had been in the industry for so long [...] it was kind of [...] engrained that "Light, and/or White, is right". And "Everything else is, like, a 'No'". Cause [sic] I'm sure if I had've [sic] walked into that audition, um- a few shades darker, it would have been, you know- an issue [...] I left the situation because I got uncomfortable with it [...]. (Carmen, US, Millennial)

SUBTHEME 1: Web 2.0 Featurism and Body Image	SUBTHEME 2: Skin Colourism and Intra-shadeism	SUBTHEME 3: Hair Texturism and Stylism

Diagram 11   Study 2 – Theme 5 Archetypal Quote & Subthemes

The fifth theme focused on participants' perceptions around the notion of "security" (career viability) – where odds for success in this industry were viewed to be enhanced, and linked, to only advantaging those who held pretty privilege status, in the primarily visually driven industry. Here, shifting standards of beauty, from "Eurocentric" to "racially ambiguous", due to web 2.0, were largely observed as still not being privileged to "regular" Black women. Thus, under this context, participants described the industry's ideal Black woman (see Figure 78), to illuminate who gets to exploit being the "exception". Here, perceived (un)attractiveness, and the industry's beauty ideals in relation to the career implications for Black women, were discussed – from those with "the look" and "the overlooked", as: (1) "Web 2.0 Featurism and Body Image", (2) "Skin Colourism and Intra-shadeism", and (3) "Hair Texturism and Stylism".

	BODY IMAGE:	"Thin Lips"
		"Thin Nose"
		"Tall"
		"Slim Model (Body)"
MUSIC INDUSTRY BEAUTY STANDARDS FOR BLACK WOMEN (According to UK Participants)	HAIR TEXTURE AND STYLE:	"Relaxed"
		"Straightened"
		"Long Straight Hair"
		"Relaxed or Texturised"
		"Long Weave"
		"Wig"
	SKIN COLOUR:	"Light-skinned"
		"Mixed-race" [Eupehmism]
		"Racially Ambiguous" [Euphemism]

	BODY IMAGE:	"Thin-lipped"
		"Slendered Nose"
		"Super Thin (Body)"
		"Slim (Body)"
		"Athletic"
MUSIC INDUSTRY BEAUTY STANDARDS FOR BLACK WOMEN (According to US Participants)	HAIR TEXTURE AND STYLE:	"Straight"
		"Mixed Hair"
		"Long"
		"Slicked Back"
		"Weave"
		"Wig"
		"In Place"
	SKIN COLOUR:	"Light-skinned"
		"Light-brown-skinned"
		"No darker than such & such"
		"Not too dark"

Figure 78   Music Industry Beauty Standards for Black Women

Participants described how the music industry's "widened" beauty standards expanded the pool of who gets to (naturally or cosmetically) benefit from "the [desired] look". Historically, and still presently, the advantages of being perceived as attractive, is inferred to enable the "halo effect" bias, privileging those who fit (or are near) the constructed Eurocentric ideal. As accessibility to technology disrupted entire industries and transformed society, participants attributed these expanded beauty standards to the power of consumer-driven engagement (although it is mostly algorithm-driven now) on "social media[213] platforms. To this, participants noted when these disruptive companies were introduced into the popular culture ethos of the noughties, these platforms for the first time allowed people to connect with each other and curate their "media" experience based on what they wanted to consume rather than what traditional media presented for people to consume.

Despite some perceived gains with this "new model" (Grace) of more inclusive beauty standards, participants noted how it continues to relegate a much more vulnerable subset of "Black women", where Black women are already collectively stigmatised as being "the least attractive" (Carmen). In other words, those who had more dominant Afrocentric phenotypical features – and limited-to-no apparent Eurocentric phenotypical features, found their discriminatory experiences, in this industry, to be even more intensified. This was discussed within the context in how the exploitative nature of vanity in the image-driven music industry was valued as an important construct in these

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[213] As noted by Millennial and Generation X-born participants

systems. All participants witnessed how it mechanised – both powerfully

shaping, and shifting – the quality of their career experiences, positively,

negatively, or both. It was suggested that those who possessed all, or some,

of the desired features (see Figure 78) spoke candidly about their shifting

"situational privilege" and the discomforts it sometimes brought. Also, for

participants who did not possess certain desired features, spoke candidly

about their own, as well as other Black women in music's systemic challenges

where they described to have a significantly harder time. Subsequently,

participants across this spectrum discussed how these constructs greatly

impacted their career journeys, in terms of their career mobility, trajectories,

and stalls, in some cases.

Subtheme 1: Web 2.0 Featurism and Body Image

Participants described how featurism either personally impacted their careers,

or other Black women's, in the industry as it mechanised to "limit how far one

could go".

For instance, some of the Black women in this study noted:

> [For a DJing gig, for example – if it was between me and another non-Black woman with a "Kim Kardashian[214]" look as their pick], I mean, [we] could both be amazing. I can be better, or she can be better, or whatever. But, again, from like, first impressions and what you see […] [in] media's ((inaudible)).
>
> Grace, UK, Millennial

> […] there's just a certain standard for women, um ((pause)) in how they should look, how they should be, you know, perceived. Um. There's some that slipped through the cracks [she cited two famous White women] […] women are always going to be, you know, judged. They're always going to be "Ah, you're a little too heavy," or "Mm, you're not really cute enough," or, um- "Do something with your hair." You know what I mean? So, I think these are things that women are going to have to, um ((pause)) deal with for a long time. Different issues that they're going to have to deal with for a long time unless you have your own funding, your own marketing, your own promotion […] [to] put your music out on your own, it's what they're going to have to deal with.
>
> Bailey, US, Millennial

> […] I feel like if you are very fair-skinned and you have a mixed look, you might get a deal before somebody who has the dreadlocks and dark skin. I […] happen to have a very good friend who […] can blow the socks off of half the chicks in the business. And when I tell you, she's amazing onstage, [….] she does a lot of shows. But she never really got a [record] deal because of the way she looks. She's very, very dark-skinned. Got really long dreads. And to me, it's gorgeous. She's beautiful. But to the industry ((pause)) you know, the industry is probably not- you know, not a place for her, according to them. You know what I'm saying? Probably not marketable. So, yeah. Definitely. Definitely, definitely, definitely. You probably won't get signed if you look like that.
>
> Dior, US, Generation X

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[214] Grace shared that the "Kim Kardashian" aesthetic represents "[…] the new standard of Eurocentric [beauty] […] [in the music industry and media where] people forget that it's actually our [African] bodies that they're after". Grace added [that it is seen as] rubbish [on Black women] and Lola observed how Afrocentric aesthetics are considered "not cool until some Kim Kardashian or Amber Rose" adorns them, since the insinuation is that Black women's features are "celebrated", but only on non-Black women.

As participants spoke about the media and direct impact of Web 2.0 (the current internet), participants, like Lola, shared:

> […] Um ((pause)) I think the worst thing is, like, seeing through social media what ((sighs)) the core preference is. And, a lot of the time, Black women are deemed to be, like, the bottom of the barrel ((pause)) or the least attractive. […] And that's not sometimes coming from ((pause)) the press and everything. That's sometimes coming from our own Black men […] who prefer not to be with a Black woman- who prefer to be with an exotic, or a mixed race, light-skinned woman. Um ((pause)) So, that has definitely effects on ((pause)) not just musicians now [but also] presenters, models, you know, anyone that's kind of pursuing a career in entertainment.
>
> Lola, UK, Millennial

Subtheme 2: Skin Colourism and 'Intra-Shadeism'

In terms of skin colourism many participants spoke to the construct of skin-tone trauma and its impact on their careers, and mental health. However, Lola went into more depth as she vulnerably disclosed the serious impact of this:

> Being a dark-skinned woman *has* hindered me ((pause)) I think on my journey, I've been able to (.) um, garner the attention […] of almost every Urban A&R that's in this country […] **I've heard more than one of them say, the problem with me was my look.** And, if it wasn't my look, it was, "Oh, you know, if she has that *one* song, then it- it would overturn a lot of things." But I'm not the look they go out looking for. **Like my sound is the sound that they look for. But I'm not the look they look for**[215]. […] because they would prefer either it to be a White woman or a mixed-race woman, um, that doesn't look as ethnic, or is probably, like, not as, um, "headstrong", maybe, as well. Um. So, I know that's been something that's always come up. So, to me, I've always said like colourism, as a massive issue. And even up until now, I see, um, you know, like, some of the artists who are popular. But I know that to compare them with the-the other artists of the same genre, you know, it's always this. It's always this, like, the female- that- the female who looks like more European or is light-skinned is here and the other ones hate. Always that. You know what I mean? And so, I think definitely skin colour thing. Um. Definitely, has been a hindrance for me.
>
> Lola, UK, Millennial

> […] it's been always tough. I mean ((pause)) I definitely feel like, number one is, I haven't felt like I've been able to be myself (.) to become what I want to be. Um ((pause)) **The colourism thing is very (.) it was a very deep, deep challenge for me because it's the one thing about myself that I can't change ((pause)).** Um. I could be trying to take out over some different characteristics of my personality. And I could probably laugh different. Put on weight. Lose weight. Change my hair. Um ((pause)) but I can't change the colour of my skin ((laughs)). **So, for that to be a problem for me, there's always going to be a battle there. Um. It has challenged me. It challenged my mental health. It's challenged, um ((pause)) my day-to-day thinking. My belief in myself.** Because also that comes along with believing that that's one of the hinderance from you progressing, *that* being my skin colour. And I remember I went through a stage of just thinking to myself, "Well, maybe if I was better or if I was more talented, it wouldn't matter ((pause)) the colour of my skin," or whatever people were saying to me at the time.
>
> Lola, UK, Millennial

---

[215] In reference to Lola's comment about labels wanting her "sound" but not her "look", was the same statement shared by Bailey, in her career experiences, where she spoke to the industry's preference for White talent (over Black talent) signing R&B and soul music, which she was on the fence about whether to call it cultural tone appropriation.

Carmen seemed to confirm this experience as standard for Black women as well, as she cited her own experience, in a girl group:

> It's […] not necessarily that they prefer a White girl. But […] they would take a Spanish girl, a light-skinned Black girl, or a White girl, any day over-say-, browner women. I was in a group with […] two women. So, one was [Latina]. It was me. And then there was another girl […] who was dark-skinned. She was [Afro-Caribbean]. Dark-skinned. She was (.) the writer. Like, she wrote songs for all types- she had a publishing deal. So, she had written songs for all types of people, but she could never get someone to pay attention to her, or, to allow her to be a solo artist. So, she always put groups together because she felt like, **"Okay, I have to find all these other women to allow me my music. I'll write the songs for the group. I'll do all these things, but no one's going to give me that look."** And it's terrible. You know what I mean?
>
> Carmen, US, Millennial

Even in the more traditional work environment, Jena recounted how she experienced colourism (by a fellow Black person), at the workplace.

> […] being objectified by Black males, I would say is one thing. Um. Just like really odd- quite conversations that are just, "Why are we having this conversation?" Like, I remember one […] I was at [Another Music Company], again […]. But I remember just being at my desk and a couple of the Black guys came over, and I guess we just started talking. I don't know how this came up, but one of them was very fixated on trying to put me in a box in the sense of like, […] "You're not a 'lighty' But you're not a 'darkey' either, you know". […] I was literally sitting here just like, "Sorry. Is this a real conversation? Why are we talking about this?"
>
> Jena, UK, Millennial

She added:

> And he was, like, offended because "male pride" because I was questioning why this ((pause)) is not even a conversation. It doesn't make any sense. Why are we even talking about this? It was the most bizarre, like- and he didn't really, honest- He was so fixated on the fact that I had sort of belittled him, I guess, as opposed to recognising what he was saying was trash.
>
> Jena, UK, Millennial

Generally, even in corporate settings of the music industry, it was felt that skin

colourism can impact Black and Brown people, in terms of "upward mobility",

which Elyse spoke to:

> I mean guess that when it comes to ((pause)) ((inaudible)) want to say that when it comes to like "upward mobility", I feel like it is not as (.) um, rapid for Black and brown people. But then, if he were of lighter skin colour, able to assimilate a little bit better. So maybe like (.) Um, Asian people might have the ability to navigate in White spaces a little bit more fluidly just because of, um (.) how they're perceived. Um. But yeah, I think that there are definitely probably some differences.
>
> Elyse, US, Millennial

Finally, as a last example (for this analysis), of skin colour bias, Faith spoke to

how her intersectional experience (in a male-dominated sector) was further

intensified, when she was selected to play at a concert venue, which her

Black male instrumentalist peers were upset over, which was depicted as

being the reason they said hurtful things to try to dehumanise her. She noted:

> Well- well, they were not gentlemen. […] some of them even said "She's not that great. Why is he choosing her?" ((pause)) […] "She's just- uh- fat, or she's dark, or she's heavy." Um. And, I was a little heavier than I am now. I will agree ((laughs)) but, it had nothing to do with my skill. And so, I just kind of decided to stick close to this one [famous White male instrumentalist] that we all were- were hoping to get a chance to play with.
>
> Faith, US, Baby Boomer

Subtheme 3: Hair 'Texturism' and Stylism

Participants discussed how Black women's "hair" and "hairstyles" are often

policed, politicised, criticised, and uncomfortably turned into inappropriate

workplace discussions, cited as always being initiated by their non-Black

female colleagues, in ways they indicated, made them feel deeply

uncomfortable.

For instance, Hazel shared:

> I'm technically the only Black person in the out-office and I'm a woman. When I come to work and I have my hair in braids, **I was nervous to come to work, cause [sic] I knew ((inaudible)) people would comment.**
>
> <div align="right">Hazel, UK, Millennial</div>

While she offered different accounts of how these encounters played out, she

noted her level of comfort increased when there was at least one other Black

woman present in an office setting (which she cited to experience for a short

time, once, while at another company). With the woman there, she indicated

she felt freer to culturally express her identity through her hair, citing:

> […] **to be able to express yourself through hair ((pause)) I just feel like ((pause)) I actually feel like it's a privilege** that we have cause when I was younger, White people would always say "Oh I got my hair cut." "Oh, I got my French cut." "I dyed my hair" […] the most *I* did was relaxed, and that was it, will get plaits, but plaits were coming out of fashion. So, it was just relaxer. And then it was kind of weave. That's the next step. And it was like, packet hair. And then it was, like, Brazilian. Then it was like closure or frontal; but now **I feel like there's so much you can do- *weee* can do with our hair.** So, I feel like it's a privilege that Black women have (.) because I can change my hair tomorrow, I can get braids with gems, you know gems with it and gold clips in it and it looks so good. It looks so good. We look so nice in braids. And then the next day, I can take my hair out, wash it, straighten it, have a pony, but my hair is not relaxed. But you know what I mean. Next, I can put a wig on. So, yeah, it's so important. […]
>
> <div align="right">Hazel, UK, Millennial</div>

This was also marked as important for her because until recent years, she did not know what her own hair texture felt like because she had always had relaxers since a young age – indicating how early assimilation starts for little Black girls in WEIRD societies, which Ava also spoke to.

In the beginning of Ava's career, she felt more pressure to "assimilate" noting:

> Oh yeah. When you're new and young, and I think it's a lot of, like, upbringing- […] I had a relaxer every month. Made sure my hair was straight, and try to, like, assimilate as much as I can because I needed [my colleagues] to focus on my work and not me.
>
> Ava, US, Millennial

She also noted how hair was tied to perceived competence in the workplace:

> I think there was not only the pressure of being good, [but] […] to work twice as hard to be considered half as good […] and to […] look a lot more assimilated to essentially what the rest of everybody looked like.
>
> Ava, US, Millennial

Jena also cited this, as she jokingly critiqued, and spoke about hair during the interview stage to connote most Black women understand that experience of their competence (unfairly) being measured based on something as trivial as hair. Despite it being perceived as ridiculous, Jena spoke to how they styled their hair to fit a White European aesthetic, to make it past the initial stage:

> I would definitely say, I've never […] No, I don't think I'm ever gone for an interview with my natural hair. […] I think it's kind of a joke that we kind of have, like- whenever I […] come into a new office, obviously, I make friends quite quickly with the other Black females. And it's kind of an in-joke that, you know, you go to the interview with like straight weave or whatever it is. And then, when you get the job, it's like, "Okay, this is the real me." ((general laughter))
>
> Jena, UK, Millennial

As Ava became more established, she noted when a shift happened for her, where she felt like she "has no more Fs to give" – after resolving she's proved herself in the industry, which meant she felt she earned the freedom to at least be able to wear her hair in its natural curly state. She recounted:

> […] [At the time] I got a new job a couple of weeks after my [milestone birthday] and I decided [to transition to natural] […] so it's like all curls. […] I mean hair is versatile, but it's very much a different, like, **identity**, cause- and you can see […] from, like, when I had straight hair and I was young to like I now have curly hair and **I'm just a lot more free. I don't have to, like, be like, super, um (.), contained in my emotions, cause [sic] you know, you don't want to like, draw attention.** Now people are just saying I have, like, I put up a new picture and it's just me in a ball pit with my curly hair and I'm screaming, having a good time. And people are like, this is very much you. **Whereas that's something I wouldn't have done in my twenties because I wanted people to think I was professional, and now I'm like "I don't care!"** Like everybody knows me already. ((general laughter))
>
> Ava, US, Millennial

To end the analysis, three more examples are reported to show other ways how hair bias impacted Black women in ways linked to their overall career experiences with misogynoirism. For instance, Lola spoke to how straight weave was the only exception and standard for all professional Black singers in the music industry, until only as recently as "five-ten years ago".

> The natural hair thing […] It was like every Black singer […] they all have little straight weave. […] back in the day […] I don't know five-ten years ago, "Wear natural hair where?" "No." "Put it away." Like, no one was saying that. "[…] you don't look like a star." "You don't look like an artist." "You don't look like" ((pause)) It's crazy.
>
> Lola, UK, Millennial

In terms of how it impacted her career experience, and perception of self, she suggested that by today's standards, her natural hair, as a Black woman (loose-curled), is perceived as the exception –she indicated most viewed as

privilege. Although she spoke to that, she contextualised how she had always been shamed for it, since young, and she was encouraged to hide it.

> When it comes to natural hair, and all that stuff, I feel like (.) a lot of people, a lot the time […] ((Pause)) They put me on the other side of the fence (.) because of how my hair type is. […] It's more loose-curled. […] And, I feel like, to be honest, when I was a lot younger- because [Elsa] […] used to ((pause)) not encourage me to wear my natural hair out. Because "It wasn't ((pause)) artist-esque." "It wasn't ((pause)) the look of a singer." "It wasn't the look of a ((pause)) an entertainer." You had to have long weave and ((pause)) slick hair […] ((pause)) so I do think for a long time, *we* [Black women] have been kind of shamed into not letting our own natural hair out. But now […] it's being a lot more celebrated, and […] I love that.
>
> Lola, UK, Millennial

In another illustration, Jena shared an inappropriate workplace incident she experienced from a White male colleague:

> […] there was one incident [at the] office […] where a White male- […] by that point I had my hair natural, and the White male was asking, "Can I touch your hair?" And I said, "No, because it's not a petting zoo[216]." So (.) then he sat down and didn't say anything.
>
> Jena, UK, Millennial

As a final example, Faith spoke to how, depending on which organisational cultural environment she was in, she received mixed responses to her hair, which seemed to evidence how misogynoirism can transform, just as it has been demonstrated across other Black women's career accounts.

> So, as far as *our* [Black] people that I was around, "Fine". However, in the corporate environment […] I was talked about, laughed at. Even in my own environment, I was called names concerning my hair, ((pause)) sometimes doing like, […] with my complexion. My size was an issue for some people.
>
> Faith, US, Baby Boomer

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[216] The "petting zoo" reference has a specific sociohistorical (often forgotten) context. For (re)memory, Black people were displayed (like animals), at human zoo exhibitions, for White families' entertainment, as part of travelling world fairs across the UK, US, and other major cities in the world in the 19th and 20th centuries (Jonassohn, 2001; Willis, 2010).

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

STUDY 1: Reflexive Thematic Analysis	STUDY 2: Reflexive Thematic Analysis
Archival Case Study Nonparticipants	In-depth, Semi-structured Interview Participants
Trailblazing Black Women in Music	Leading Black Women in Music
No. 1 Global Ranking Music Market	No.1 and No. 3 Global Ranking Music Markets

Figure 79   Multimethod Research Design

The first objective of this research sought to gain in-depth insights about trailblazing and leading Black women's career experiences with navigating "multitiered-sectionality" in the world's top-performing, and purported-to-be, egalitarian, music industry ecosystems. Alongside this, the second objective for the research sought to also comparatively examine where participants' career experiences converged and diverged, in this respect – first, in comparison to nonparticipants in the trailblazer group, and second, by region and sectors. In doing this, the aim was to try to identify fault lines hindering social progress from humanity in the workplace – across their diverse work environments – as measured by the assurances of the implementation of UK and US equality legislative mandates – from the 1960s to present-day. Finally, the third objective was to report on the degree as to how much systemic and individual barriers particularly impacted Black women's career trajectories and pace of progression – as all three objectives were examined using an intersectionality framework, as a starting point.

Recap – Studies' Thematic Results

To briefly restate, the results identified in the multimethod study, yielded four major thematic findings in Study 1, and five, in Study 2 (see Figure 80 below), respectively, where each study provided in-depth insights about Black women in music's multifaceted career experiences, navigating the top-performing music industry ecosystems, as trailblazers and leaders.
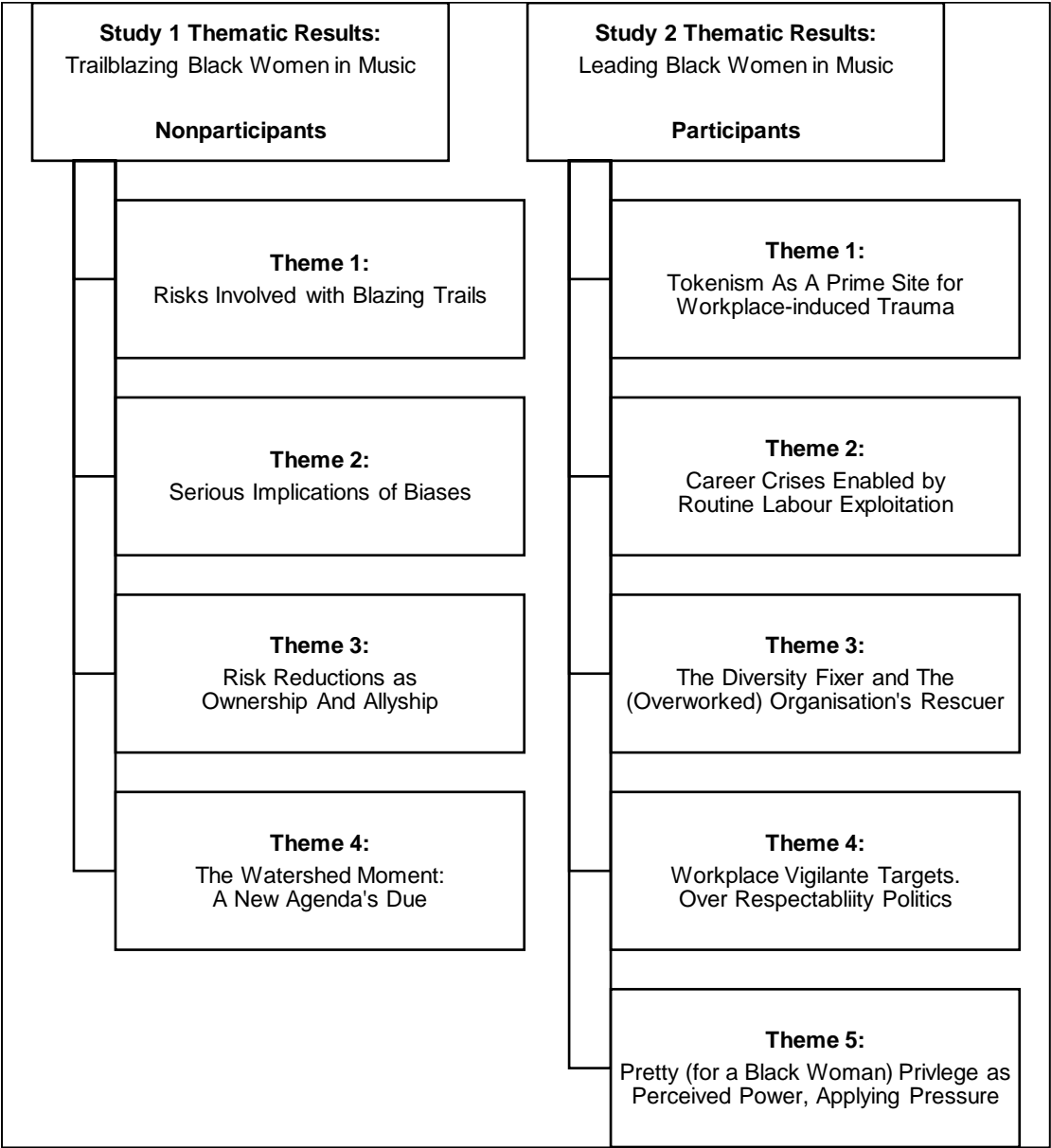

Figure 80   Thematic Results from Study 1 and Study 2

This thesis used qualitative techniques to analyse, trailblazing and leading Black women in music's career experiences. Based on the reflective thematic analyses, a broader reflection of the multifaceted thematic results, developed in each study, were further condensed into three insightful key findings. These will now be thematically interpreted, alongside current relevant literature, for this discussion chapter, to be followed by a review of the strengths and limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research.

Key Findings – Final Thematic Results

1st Key Finding: Socialisation of Disempowerment	Mechanisms of Anti-Black Woman Stereotypes
	Exploitation as an Expected Norm
	Disempowered Leveraging as Structural Symptomology
2nd Key Finding: Norms Reinforcing Exclusion from Power	Perceived Inherent Inferiority at Work
	Jim Crow Workforce Segregation
	Policing in the Workplace and Industry Vigilantism
	Challenges After Smashing Concrete and Glass Ceilings
3rd Key Finding: Resocialising to Reimagine and Practice Power	Redesigining the Workforce
	Redesigning Organisational Cultures

Figure 81   Three Key Findings Impacting Black Women's Careers

6.2 Discussion on Three Key Findings

To theoretically re-situate the research, it was advantageous to use an intersectionality conceptual framework (Handl, et al., 2022; Haynes, et al., 2020) to critically examine and analyse the multidimensionality of Black women's career experiences – at the industrial, organisational, and societal levels – as trailblazers and leaders of the industry. By adopting "the four levels of oppression" framework, which I drew from Jones (2001)[217], as well as the American Psychological Association (2021), I applicably used it to define the contours of how complex misogynoirism[218] (CM), is framed in this project (see Figure 82), building off of Bailey's (2014) (2016) (2018) popularised coinage of the term "misogynoir". Further, I report on how CM could, and did, occur for Black women, across both studies, at multiple interlocking levels. As this model helped to better situate and contextualise the degree as to how much their experiences with biases and "othering" (Abbink & Harris, 2019; Sng, et al., 2016; Perry & Winfrey, 2020) adversely impacted their careers and overall occupational wellbeing (Sojo, et al., 2016) , it helped to better frame the findings for this research project within mediated contexts, in relation to power, empower, and disempowerment, as influenced by human practices and other variables within power structures.

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[217] See Figure 18
[218] Dictionary.com (2022a) defines "misogynoir" as: "The specific hatred, dislike, distrust, and prejudice directed toward Black women (often used attributively).

COMPLEX MISOGYNOIRISM

IDEOLOGICAL COMPLEX MISOGYNOIRISM:

- The widespread societal and deeply engrained cultural belief in the idea that Black women are inherently inferior to non-Black women (including more structurally privileged groups of Black women), which enables other groups to feel morally justified to dehumanise and police Black women.

INSTITUTIONAL COMPLEX MISOGYNOIRISM:

- Institutions that reinforce this ideology, (un)intentionally, systematically maintains inequalities and inequities through policies, practices, and organisational cultures that further subjugate Black women, which enables non-Black women and some Black women groups to feel morally justified to dehumanise and police Black women.

INTERPERSONAL COMPLEX MISOGYNOIRISM:

- Individuals who are members of a dominant group, in relation to Black women, can internalise negative messages about Black women, which subconsciously enables them to feel morally justified to dehumanise and police Black women, which is underpinned by this ideology that is reinforced at the institutional level.

INTERNALISED COMPLEX MISOGYNOIRISM:

- Black women, and non-Black women groups, can both internalise these negative messages about Black women, that further exacerbate their subjugation to the point their perceived inferiority (reinforced by ideology, institutions, and interpersonal relationships) is then convoluted to be held as a truth rather than as a construct with processes set up for a specific outcome.

Figure 82   The Four "I" Dimensions of "Complex Misogynoirism"

6.2.1 1st Key Finding: Socialisations of Disempowerment

1ST KEY FINDING:
Socialisations of Disempowerment

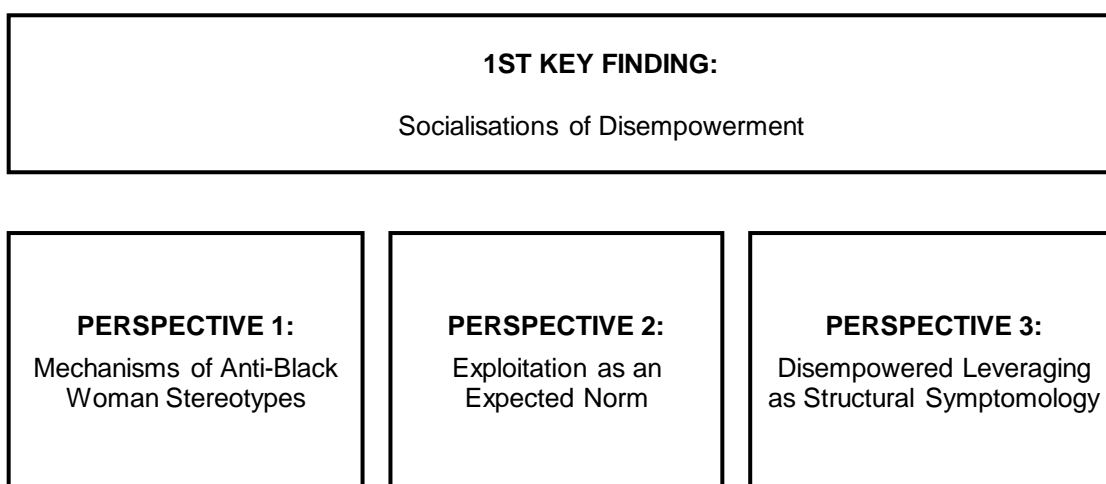| PERSPECTIVE 1:	PERSPECTIVE 2:	PERSPECTIVE 3:
Mechanisms of Anti-Black Woman Stereotypes	Exploitation as an Expected Norm	Disempowered Leveraging as Structural Symptomology

Diagram 12   Discussion – 1st Key Finding

This research sought to focus on the career experiences of Black women, operating across higher occupational tiers in the top-performing music industry ecosystem. As this project pursued to understand their experiences from a more comprehensive lens[219], their insights helped to increase my understandings of less-considered mechanisms at play, in the understanding of "power", contributing to their conceptions about it, within the context of their overall career experiences. Based on this framing, the research found that Black women[220] contextualised the role of socialisation, as little Black girls (Davis Tribble, et al., 2019), as critical and as being integral to their mindset development in navigating power relations in their careers today. By their accounts, many seemed to indicate they were conditioned to perceive social exclusion as the norm, reflected and reinforced in implicit and explicit behaviours and values, as informed by their placement within their family

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[219] This is why a qualitative paradigm was used.
[220] Only speaking to those who spoke candidly about their childhood experiences.

units, communities, WEIRD society (Henrich, et al., 2010), and WEIRD media portrayals (Collins, 2009; Lopez, 2020). As some observations were framed as guideposts of internalised messaging and limitations – "on how far one could go", regarding what, who, and how they can be, in the world – seemed to indicate early formations of their world's influences in contributing to accepting these messages as true, developing an inferiority complex (Simmons, 2010) , which many shared prompted them to take risks and "step out on their own" from occupying this "disadvantaged" position, in relation to their non-Black girl and non-Black peer groups as unfavourably setting them apart. By citing this, they spoke to experiencing "self-actualisation" (Maslow, 1943) at a point in their careers, where they viewed the construct of "proving worthiness", as a construct – and no longer as "truth" or indicator of what they could become.

This "renewal of the mind" seemed to evidence an individual shift in their motivations as being driven from a growth mindset paradigm (Dweck, 2017), despite their familiar orientations with society, systemically reproducing starkly different human experiences for "othered" groups, such as Black women. Further, as some noted it took them decades to arrive to this place, mentally, they indicated, they seemed to pinpoint precisely when the core messaging they "must work 10x's harder", crystallised and mechanised as a by-product of a systemically produced reality, propositioned to them as "the norm[221]" in childhood. As some spoke to developing an early awareness of their

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[221] Liu (2018) noted the construct of social norms operate as a power structure.

difference, they further explained they tried to change themselves. Reasons included wanting to be "accepted at some level", as there are advantages to being accepted in a work group and to "assimilate" to not "stand out". As they reported being targeted in the workplace, all shed light on how understandings of the "politics of identity" and "identity politics" (Hull, et al., 2015) interdependently evolved, for them, in relations to others, in their music industry ecosystem (MIE) career journeys. Accordingly, this section discussed this point from the following most pressing perspectives:

A. "Mechanisms of Anti-Black Woman Stereotypes",

B. "Exploitation as an Expected Norm", and

C. "Disempowered Leveraging as Structural Symptomology".

A. Mechanisms of Anti-Black Woman Stereotypes

In line with previous studies this research found how mechanisms of stereotypes (Collins, 2009) and stereotype threats (Kray, et al., 2004; Motro, et al., 2021; Steele & Aronson, 1995; Cooley, et al., 2018; Sims & Carter, 2019) seemed to measure the degree as to how deeply these harmfully affected Black women, across both study groups. As they are hypervisible in their roles, by proxy of them being Black women, and, more specifically, Black women with perceived and actual power in prominent positions, they spoke to their dealings with having to manage hypervisibility (Dickens, et al., 2019). Accordingly, as vulnerability was largely discussed as them needing to protect themselves, in White and male dominated work environments, was telling of how dire the MIE can be for them. By their accounts, organisational, and industrial work cultures were deemed to be psychologically unsafe (Patient, 2021), especially for Black women, where terms like "toxic" and "deeply challenging" were used several times by Black women for both groups, when describing their ordeals. To "survive", which was another commonly used term, many indicated the need to have a "strong sense of self", a "strong team", and, for some, "a strong sense of spirituality".

As these constructions and reinforcements of imbalanced power dynamics in MIE were described to be the norm for Black women, and suggestively more intensified for darker skinned Black women[222], this indicated the degree as to how much they remain vulnerable to multidimensional exploitative forms of

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[222] Black women, of different hues, across both studies, attested to this.

workplace induced traumas and incivility (Cortina, et al., 2018), in ways that were evidenced to adversely impact not only their careers, but their lives, livelihoods, and industry relationships, which are key, within the context of the relationship-driven industry.

Although some described extremely harrowing accounts detailing their experiences with discrimination (such as, being terrorised and shot at by snipers, where the tour bus was sprayed with bullets because White vigilantes did not want audiences to racially integrate), every Black woman across both studies indicated their careers were impacted by anti-Black woman negative stereotypes, to some degree.

Controlling Images

Collins (2009) noted:

> […] controlling images applied to Black women that originated
> during the slave era attest to the ideological dimension of U.S.
> Black women's oppression (2009, p. 7)

The data provides overwhelming evidence of this to be true, as underpinning

US Black women's MIE career experiences. However, I would add that this

origination, of the ideological dimensions, could also extend to UK Black

women's[223] MIE career experiences with oppression as well[224], based on

minimally two factors, including similarly shared located histories (Bryan, et

al., 2018). Also, it could be said that the largely US media shaped cultural

attitudes through the power of imagery, as the largest export in the world, in

comparison to other major markets combined (US Department of Commerce,

2016; Collins, 2009; Lopez, 2020). The results from this research evidenced

how Black women remain vulnerable to being prejudged into any of the

negatively ascribed labels (Gammage, 2016). Accordingly, across both

studies, out of the many controlling images ascribed to Black women, three

were described to take precedence and adversely impact their career

experiences, which included: (1) Strong Black Woman (SBW), (2) Angry

Black Woman (ABW) and (3) Mammy, most prominently.

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[223] Of African and Afro-Caribbean descent.

[224] As mentioned in the literature review, African slavery was rampant, even more so in the West Indies, under the British flag (Bryan, et al., 2018; SlaveVoyages Database, 2022) as 2% of all enslaved Africans disembarked on US soil, and 26% disembarked in the West Indies territories, under the British flag, between the 1600s – 1800s. Further, African colonialisation involved many forms of barbaric violence inflicted by European colonists, including the stripping of Indigenous identity, genocides, rape, and other torturous violent methods they employed to subjugate African peoples on the continent, of the Motherland (Crenshaw, Kimberlé, et al., (Editors), 2019).
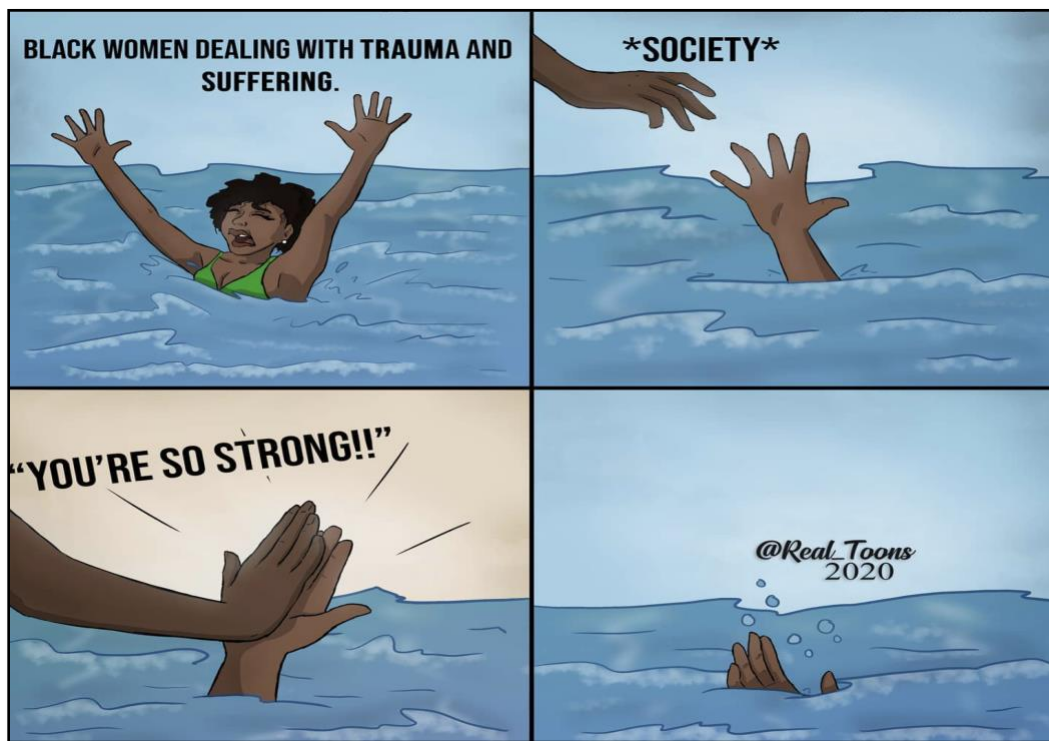
Strong Black Woman

Figure 83   "Strong Black Woman" Graphic Illustration (Chester, 2020)

The results indicate that Black women, across both study groups, either implicitly or explicitly described taking on, or internalising, the "Strong Black Woman" stereotyped identity, mostly as a strategy to cope with the glaring amounts of inequities and inequalities, they encountered – and cited as being "rampant" throughout the wider industry. However, their reasons for adopting this identity were rather more complex and nuanced than what was stated, or suggested, at face-value.

Considering this research found that this form of identity shifting (Dickens, et al., 2019) constructed very differently, across different spectrums, for these

Black women – where motivations for their respectively adopted outlooks, were critically examined and further explored, further reviewing the results. For example, some viewed the adoption of the SBW identity:

> (1) as an empowering catalyst (Nelson, et al., 2016) to help them achieve their personal mission to "prove others[225] wrong", or

> (2) as a negotiating site of sense-making (Graham & Clarke, 2021) of the emotional pain (Liao, et al., 2020), where bargaining (Kray, et al., 2004) seemed to be the only form of constructed power, within that context; or

> (3) as a disempowering indoctrinating "go-to" for Black women (The Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality, 2019; Watson-Singleton, 2017) who believes this group needs to reject it, altogether.

Regarding the first, this sentiment seemed to be a key motivator for most, if not all, nonparticipants, and participants. This was not surprising as psychology scholars have framed endogenous motivations – such as this, through allegories like "the underdog" mechanistic construct (Zhu, et al., 2022; Goldschmied & Vandello, 2010) – to analogically frame the relational dynamic of this phenomenon.

Regarding the second, stark differences, in terms of this adopted outlook, seemed to be much more identifiable amongst Black women in Generation X,

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[225] Including their own doubts.

Baby Boomers, and Silent Generation age groups, compared to that of the

Millennial Generation[226]. However, in relation to ascribing meaning to horrific

and discriminatory career experiences – the more seasoned generations

seemed to insinuate that there must be a "higher purpose" for all the

challenges that are preventing them from having a psychologically safe and

humane human experience in White and male-dominated work environments.

Moreover, it was discussed as if the ultimate reward, such as basic income

security, career viability, and standard respect as a fellow peer and colleague,

were framed as outcomes that were not as easily accessible to Black women

– and, thus the expression they, and Millennials, repeatedly used of having to

work "twice as hard to get half of what others get" who seemingly exert less

effort and produce much less output; whereas, they must "work 10x's harder",

was evidenced as being literal[227], and not just a figure of speech, for these

Black women.

Regarding the third, some – and more notably the millennial generation of –

Black women in both studies, spoke to their rejection of this hybrid stereotype,

ideology, and identity (Abrams, et al., 2019), while acknowledging its use in

preceding generations. For example, one encapsulated this generation's

sentiment in her single statement, "if only the strong survive […] there's gonna

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[226] This is not to conflate the SBW identity and the notion of resilience, which all spoke on the importance of, to some degree.
[227] Especially within the contexts that Black women make less compared to White men, and career-wise, they are statistically less supported by their managers, despite making an effort, and they rarely receive sponsorship so much to other point that their careers do not have equal opportunities for advancement as their counterparts, which Lean In (2020) declared a crisis.

[sic] be a lot less of us". Another also spoke on healing "generational

trauma[228]" (See Table 11 with Figure 84 below) (DeGruy, 2021; Wolynn,

2016; Van Der Kolk, 2015; Ramo-Fernández, et al., 2015).

Table 11   Intergenerational Trauma, Epigenetics, and The Linkage

Intergenerational Trauma	American Pychological Association defines "**Intergenerational Trauma**" as a phenomenon in which the descendants of a person who has experienced a terrifying event show adverse emotional and behavioral reactions to the event that are similar to those of the person himself or herself. These reactions vary by generation but often include shame, increased anxiety and guilt, a heightened sense of vulnerability and helplessness, low self-esteem, depression, suicidality, substance abuse, dissociation, hypervigilance, intrusive thoughts, difficulty with relationships and attachment to others, difficulty in regulating aggression, and extreme reactivity to stress. The exact mechanisms of the phenomenon remain unknown but are believed to involve effects on relationship skills, personal behavior, and attitudes and beliefs that affect subsequent generations. The role of parental communication about the event and the nature of family functioning appear to be particularly important in trauma transmission.
Epigenetics	The United States Center for Disease Control (CDC) defines "**Epigenetics**" as the study of how your behaviors and environment can cause changes that affect the way your genes work. Unlike genetic changes, epigenetic changes are reversible and do not change your DNA sequence, but they can change how your body reads a DNA sequence. Gene expression refers to how often or when proteins are created from the instructions within your genes. While genetic changes can alter which protein is made, epigenetic changes affect gene expression to turn genes "on" and "off." Since your environment and behaviors, such as diet and exercise, can result in epigenetic changes, it is easy to see the connection between your genes and your behaviors and environment.
The Linkage	One of the earliest studies to document "intergenerational trauma" was conducted by Vivian M. Rakoff, MD and colleagues who focused on the children of Holocaust survivors and their experiences with psychological distress. Since then, other studies, focusing on other historically marginalised communities as well, have shown evidence there may be a strong **link** between intergenerational trauma transmission as occurring through epigenetic mechanisms and modifications - triggered and exacerbated by environmental factors, as shown in Figure 84, below. In relation to this research, and within the context of the legacy of African chattel slavery, genocide, rape, colonialisation (see Chapters 1 and 2), continuing workplace-induced trauma and workplace incivility (see Chapters 4 and 5), Black women's adverse career experiences with "power" in "positions of power" could be said to be gravely intensified by historical and presently unrelenting trauma, contributing to what the UN would classify as a "humanitarian crisis" (see Figure 9).

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[228] DeGruy indicated that "The legacy of [slavery] trauma is reflected in many of our behaviors [sic] and our beliefs; behaviors [sic] and beliefs that at one time were necessary to adopt in order to survive, yet today serve to undermine our ability to be successful" (2005, p. 225).
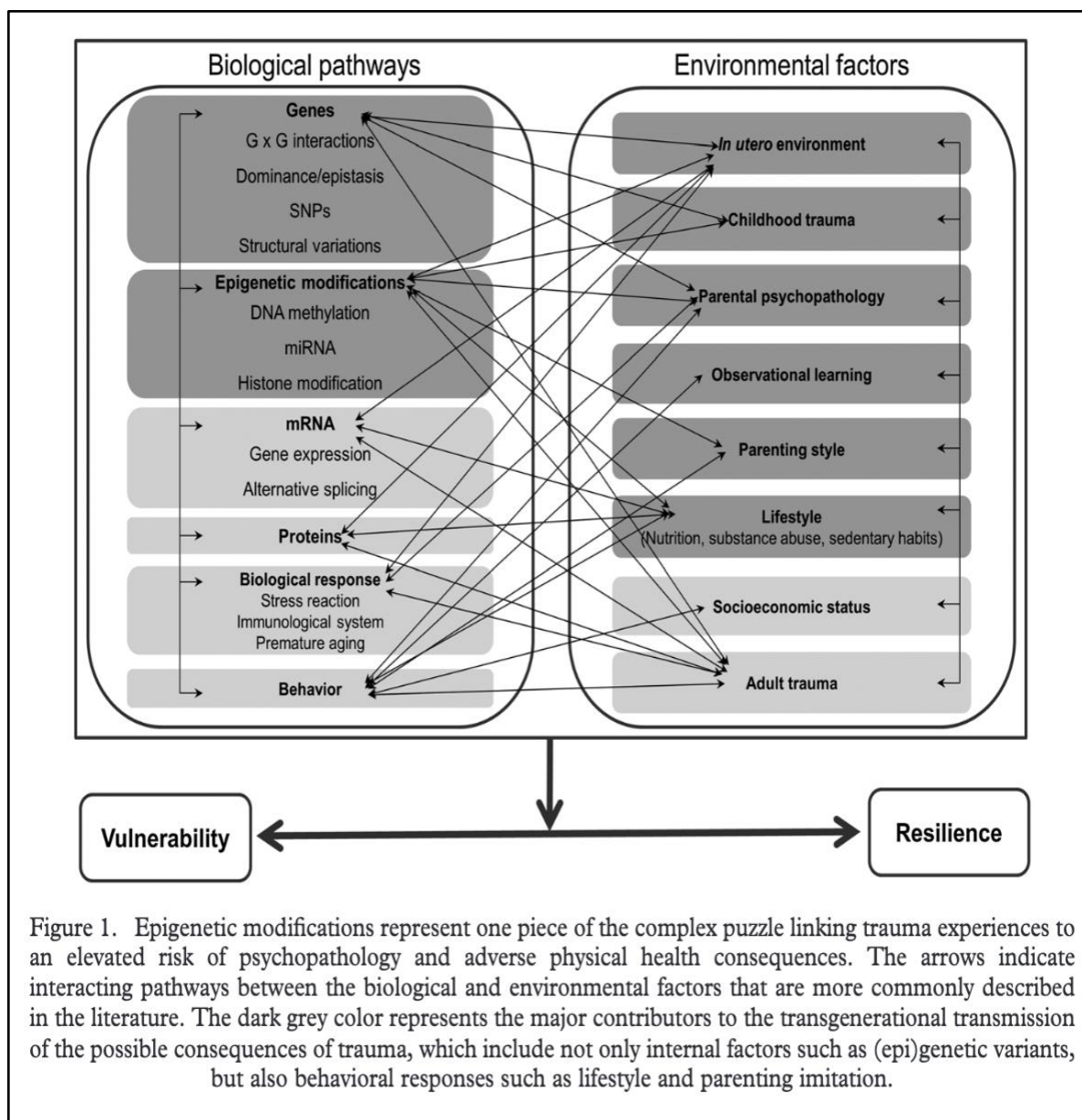
Figure 1. Epigenetic modifications represent one piece of the complex puzzle linking trauma experiences to an elevated risk of psychopathology and adverse physical health consequences. The arrows indicate interacting pathways between the biological and environmental factors that are more commonly described in the literature. The dark grey color represents the major contributors to the transgenerational transmission of the possible consequences of trauma, which include not only internal factors such as (epi)genetic variants, but also behavioral responses such as lifestyle and parenting imitation.

Figure 84   Ramo-Fernandez, et al. Epigenetic Modifications Model (2015)

This indirectly seemed to speak to the collective intentionality of moving away from this sacrificial paradigm (Allen, et al., 2019), which many in this group described to be exhausting – highlighting how potentially dangerous this social positioning has been, and continue to be, for Black women (see Figure 83). This indicated why some opted out of taking on that persona – vehemently rejecting, the continuation of, it altogether.

To this point, when Black women spoke to the notion of proving worthiness, the different variations of their views were also similarly evidenced in Nelson, Cardemil, and Adeoye's (2016) qualitative psychology study. In it, they interviewed 30 Black women, to gain in-depth insights regarding their conceptualisations around the "Strong Black Woman" or the "superwoman" role. One of the study's key findings indicated how:

> Within the theme of hardworking and high achieving, the notion of "proving themselves," such that Black women have to do more, was a salient message that several women identified as an impetus for the need to achieve and show commitment to hard work (2016, p. 556).

To explore this further, another recent quantitative psychology study, initially featuring 250 Black women, then 194 Black women, in the final version, was conducted by Abrams, Hill, and Maxwell (2019), who investigated if there were connections between the "Strong Black Woman" and "Black superwoman" schema and the mechanism of "self-silencing" – as producing depressive symptomology – an understudied area of mental health for Black women.

The findings in their study further elucidated the findings in this research in terms of how Black women, across both groups, framed and explicitly spoke to the conception of "strength", while also sharing their, deeply debilitating, mental health struggles. Some expressed being "gaslighted", and many others shared experiencing bouts of "depression", "sadness", "burnout", extended periods of "self-doubt", "loneliness" and periods of feeling "lost".

Angry Black Woman

The mechanism of the "Angry Black Woman" (Motro, et al., 2021) stereotype was also strikingly evidenced throughout Black women's MIE career experiences across both studies' results. As many of them detailed how they actively tried to circumvent being ascribed this mechanistically dehumanising label, they expressed that their primary motivations were to try to change others' "misconceptions" about them. This seemed to indicate how much of a powerful effect this stereotype could, and does, have, in terms of (re)producing systemic and individual barriers, specific to Black women, working in MIEs, where the stifling of career progression and stagnation were both cited as plausible, and experienced, outcomes.

For instance, when some tried to speak up against various injustices — the "purposeful" and "patterned" misconstruing of Black women's messaging seemed to demonstrate "Complex Misogynoirism", at play. This was the case, regardless of if it was on a world stage, in protest to police brutality (not police), or in the office space with White mean, as the only Black woman (Dickens, et al., 2019), who continued to raise the lack of gender and race representation, or in the media space, in protest to the colour and body image biases where darker-skinned Black women (Phoenix, 2014; Landor & McNeil-Smith, 2019) were barred from entry into a music venue, to which Black men asserted, in response to the outrage, "You lot are just bitter", instead of feeling empathy for their experiences.

In its place, of others granting them the space to be heard, it seemed as if concerted efforts were instead made to try to detract from the core of the issues they raised. This was depicted by some as a mechanism to facilitate the ritualistic process of Black women's dehumanisation (Gammage, 2016; hooks, 2015) for others to feel morally justified, and thus no guilt , in terms of their group participation to demonise Black women without remorse (Hall, et al., 2012), which was evident throughout the reported results.

Also, in other situations some Black women spoke to the notion of double standards in office settings in terms of how White men can have "temper tantrums", whereas, if they were to do the same, as women, and especially as Black women, they understood they would immediately be terminated, which spoke to the prevalence of this label eliciting harsher judgements and more harmful outcomes. To this, Motro, Evans, Ellis, and Benson III (2021) conducted a two-part quantitative psychology study, using Parallel Constraint Satisfaction Theory[229] (PCST), involving a total of 555 participants, to investigate how the ABW stereotype can mechanise and activate, influencing negative perceptions about Black women in the workplace, and in leadership, in ways that can adversely influence their stagnation with progression in their careers.

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[229] Kunda and Thagard (1996) developed "Parallel constraint satisfaction theory", which purports that "stereotypes influence the interpretation of observed behavior [sic] so that it aligns with our expectations" (Motro, et al., 2021, p. 1)

Consistent with their findings, my research also found that stereotype

activation of the ABW trope, was glaringly apparent across both studies,

which was further compounded by gendered anti-Blackness, specific to Black

women, in particular ways. On this, they reported:

> […] Black women may experience unique hurdles that Black men do not face because they carry with them unique stereotypes that affect how they are treated in the workplace. When expressing anger, Black men receive similar reactions to White men (Motro, et al., 2021, p. 7).

Mammy

The third most identifiable stereotype, which suggestively mechanised as hindering Black women's career experiences in the MIE, appeared to be the "Mammy" trope (Holder, et al., 2015). For instance, Black women spoke to taking on the role of being everyone's support system. However, the reasons for this were cited as being due to organisations' lack of infrastructures to provide psychologically safe organisational cultures, and equal access to opportunities for the advancement, as well as retention, of underrepresented employee groups. Instead, much of the burden was described to be left on Black women, especially for those in leadership positions, in ways that tended to double their workload, which spoke to an aspect of exploitation.

In terms of the "Mammy" stereotype, its historical origins extend to the imagery of Black women as the caretaker, formed during African chattel slavery (Collins, 2009). This trope portrayed the Black woman as being content with her subjugated status, where everyone's needs being put before her own (Reynolds-Dobbs, et al., 2008) were ascribed to the meanings of this image as being ideal and sought out, so that Black women could feel needed. However, Collins countered how this can operate as a prime site to mechanise as "a controlling image designed to hide Black women's exploitation" (Collins, 2009, p. 44).

Further, in line with the research findings, Reynold-Dobbs, Thomas, and Harrison (2008) co-authored an article on how controlling images of Black

women can mechanise in the workplace. As many Black women in my studies

spoke to aspects of caretaking, this article interestingly noted:

> [The Mammy is "seen as a senior-ranking or older Black woman" who] is competent at her work, but her emotional and nurturing qualities may overshadow her professional strengths. Thus, Black women who exemplify the Mammy image are still looked at as support systems in the workplace.

This phenomenon was found to be evidenced throughout this research as

well, especially amongst leading Black women in the corporate sector, where

workplace politics are more commonplace, and the expectations for them to

adopt this role, were glaringly evident.

B. Exploitation as an Expected Norm

This research also found that Black women commonly experience multidimensional forms of exploitation that can take the form of financial abuse, authorship erasure, being actively blocked from important career opportunities, otherwise accessible to others, and more. To recap (see below), Black women spoke to their career journey experiences with:

Being "blackballed", "shelved", or "silenced"	Being told to "clean up" after the men
Being coerced into a "360º Deal"	Being left to "fend for themselves", by their major labels, who expected them (read: "set them up") to "fail"
Being immediately "terminated" from a job role without cause (suggestively due to compounded Anti-Black woman biases)	Being exploited and having over $100,000+ "stolen from" them by either major labels or other music companies, as noted by participants in both the UK and US
Being suddenly dropped as an act and told "skin colour" was the barrier; while, suggesting they do background work such as song writing and backing vocals	Being suddenly dropped as an act and treated merely as collateral damage, due to some prominent men in music's (White and Black) missteps, who continued to lead successful careers in these MIEs
Being cruelly verbally attacked, by WEIRD media, the US government, US law enforcement, the global industry, and the public - in a dehumanising manner, specific to Black women	Being explicitly instrcuted to cosplay a subservient role, so a specific type of White man can present her authored project since, "A Black woman leading (.) it doesn't work well" [for key (White male) stakeholders]

Figure 85   Recapped Examples of Exploitation

The results evidenced that despite their location, sector, occupation, seniority in leadership, or level of prominence, in these MIEs, many of their career stories seemed to eerily mirror each other to the point I had to re-listen to the recorded audios, and re-read transcripts, and the coding, to ensure that my recollection of each Black women's records was correct. More strikingly, these features of their experiences seemed to evidence that Black women working in these MIEs, are devastatingly treated as if they are "disposable", the "least valued", "not worthy", and "the "bottom", descriptors used by Black women in these studies.

This seemed to evidence human-hierarchal based structural issues (Liu, 2017), in relation to the prevalence as to how often Black women were almost ritualistically carelessly sabotaged, and unprotected, from multiple directions. This patterned industrial, organisational, and societal behaviour seemed to also shed light on an underlying mechanism of an "anti-Black woman agenda", which Gammage (2016) spoke to in her research, as underpinning these horrific and traumatic professional experiences.

C. Disempowered Leveraging as Structural Symptomology

As Black women continue to remain vulnerable to structural, cultural, and individual biases (Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 1991) , rooted in CM, the results overwhelmingly indicate how their pre-disadvantaged leveraging positioning, tends to mechanise as one of many symptoms of deeply engrained structural issues, contributing to their adverse career experiences.

These were most evident, as they discussed how they modified their behaviours and participated in (or critiqued) beauty politics, in ways that seemed to indicate these elements were they only factors they could exercise a sense of "power" and "control", within this systemically "toxic" power structure.

Behavioural Modifications

In continuing from the ABW trope, many described making the following

alterations to try to circumvent being dehumanised in professional settings.

By altering the following, this trope seemed to imprison them in a sense, as

they explicitly stated their primary intentions, which was to try change

people's perceptions, exampling the severity of "stereotype threat" at play

(Steele & Aronson, 1995; Casad & Bryant, 2016).

For instance, some described to either change or be overly self-conscious of

the following (see below):
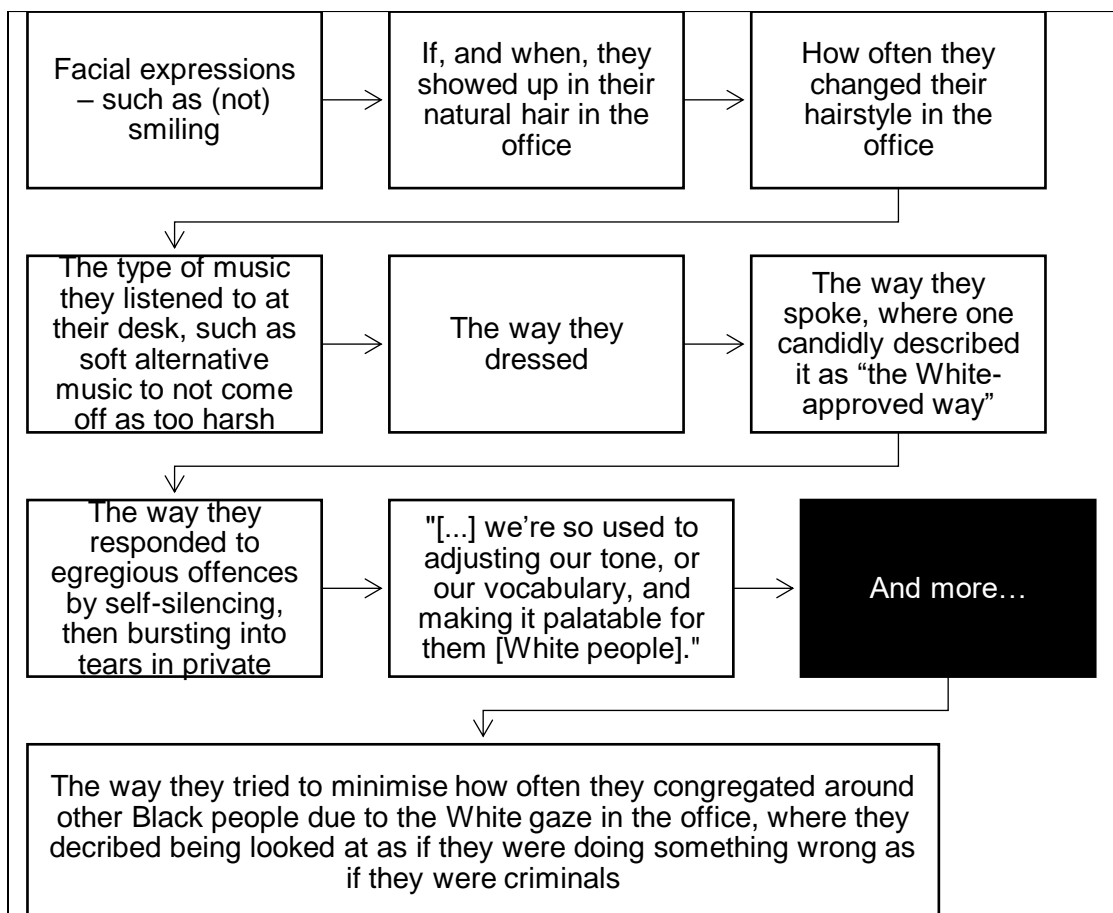
Figure 86   Behavioural Modifications

To centre the comment about the "White approved way" of conducting themselves, in these spaces, to try to increase their likelihood of succeeding in these work environments, this form of codeswitching was also highlighted in McCluney, Durkee, Smith II, Robotham, and Lee's (2021) study as well. They who co-conducted a quantitative psychology study to investigate how impression management strategy can be employed to influence perceived professionalism, through the lens of racial codeswitching.

In line with their general findings, they indicated:

> Adjusting one's self-presentation to fit the norms, experiences, and attributes of the dominant group at work may help to foster similarity and positive evaluations from others, including being seen as a professional. Yet, engaging in this behaviour could produce social and psychological costs to individuals (McCluney, et al., 2021, p. 8).

Similarly, Black women, in my studies, understood the potential rewards associated with assimilation, which they described to afford them opportunities, even if it only extended to them not being targeted in the workplace. However, they also largely indicated the psychological and "exhausting" costs of not being able to bring their "authentic self" into the workplace. This was further intensified by how perceived deviation costs, can mechanise to elicit much harsher backlash, in these White and male dominated spaces, where the top senior leadership is comprised of all White men, which McCluney et al's study also noted.

Beauty Politics

As the appearance of Black women has always come under intense scrutiny, for example, in terms of facial features, skin tone, physicality, hair type and texture, this was evidenced as a common experience for Black women in the studies as well. As confirmed by previous studies (Hall, 2017; Harper & Choma, 2018; Byrd & Tharps, 2014), the further away Black women fell from both idealised White Eurocentric features and body types, as well as racially ambiguous (Reece, 2016), and the look (for Black women[230]) – the less attractive they were deemed to be, especially in the top-performing markets of the global popular music industry. Despite growing debates about cultural appropriation, where non-Black women (and men) adopt the hairstyles, features (e.g., through lip and bottom augmentation), skin tone (through tanning) and clothing styles, as mentioned by several Black women across both study groups (Cherid, 2021; Stevens, 2021), these "traditionally" African type features were cited by Black women as MIEs deeming these to be more attractive when worn by non-Black women who have adopted the clothing style and fashion adornments, than by Black women themselves. This outcome impacted Black women in ways that reflected that they either felt less attractive, or were made to feel less desirable, than their non-Black counterparts. This could be said to offer glimpses of insights as to why some felt pressured to modify their bodies (Watson, et al., 2015), surgically or cosmetically, to try to enhance their beauty.

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[230] See Figure 78 – Chapter 5

Although this may come across as being vanity-driven, there is a body of research which points to the fact that people who are perceived to be less attractive gain fewer social advantages than their perceived to be "more attractive" counterparts (Hosoda, et al., 2003; Reece, 2016). Beyond the aesthetic aspect, scholarship in the psychological sciences, explored this area, as well as the psychosocial effects of this gendered-racialised pressure exampling the serious implications, of self-perception, which were made glaringly evident in the data.

In terms of hair identity and self-perception, Ellis-Hervey, Doss, Davis, Nicks, and Araiza (2016) conducted a quantitative psychology study, featuring 208 participants, using survey methods, as well as "Rotter's Locus of Control" and "Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scales", to examine the ways in which Black women internalise Eurocentric beauty standards. In line with the results from the studies in this thesis, their research also supports Davis-Sivasothy's (2011) findings that:

> African American women have begun to reject the Westernised standards of beauty and hold greater levels of appreciation for natural hair, and in turn have more appreciation for themselves (Ellis-Hervey, et al., 2016, p. 879)

This was demonstrated in a few of the US participants' accounts, who described feeling much freer, and more authentically true to who they are. However, I would extend this to also be the case for UK participants who, just as passionately, spoke about natural hair and the versatility of it – attributing their deepened appreciation to hair blogs, for educating them about their hair.

In another qualitative psychology study that investigated beauty and body image, amongst Black women, Awad, Norwood, Taylor, Martinez, McClain, Jones, Holman, Chapman-Hillard, (2014) co-conducted five study groups, on a college campus, with 31 African American women. They cited using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step approach to produce themes that yielded significant insights on the impact of "hair, skin tone/colourism, body shape, and message sources" (Awad, et al., 2014, p. 9). Based on their findings, it was also similarly found in their studies that:

> Despite prior studies that suggest Black women have high esteem when it comes to body image attitudes, these data amply demonstrate that Black women struggle daily with reconciling their beauty with that of mainstream standards. We also find that Black women feel like they are under constant assault (blatant and latent) for their perceived "ugliness" by media, peers and even family (Awad, et al., 2014, p. 15).

This finding encapsulates the final theme in Study 2 for this research, which was labelled "Pretty (for a Black woman) Privilege" to highlight the qualifier in terms of how Black women, in MIEs, are excluded and perceive to be excluded, even from the "new model" of beauty standards. This was described to not only affect their self-perception, but it also impacted them from being considered for career opportunities where many noted would likely go to another woman who has more of "the look" (see Figure 78), in this industry. As many spoke to how patterns of a "core preference", seemed to be at play, not just in the "media", the "press", and by the artists who were signed to be lead (rather than backing) vocalists, but it was described to also come from "our own Black men", perceiving Black women to be "the bottom". To

this, another participant spoke to this feeling of deep rejection from Black men, where male validation within the racial intragroup setting, was described as important to her and many other Black women in these studies. However, since she was denied that form of reassurance to feel beautiful, she felt that her talent had to, and did, make room for her, eventually. Other Black women across both studies also spoke to this notion of having to work harder because they did not have "the look". Beyond not receiving that assurance, one of the participants indicated, how she was, instead, daily ostracised and berated and told she was unattractive (Palmer & Peterson, 2021) and, thus, underserving of opportunities. As the depths of these traumatic experiences were evident in the results, the devastating effects were profound.

In a paper, co-authored by Landor and McNeil-Smith (2019), they proposed a new conceptual framework of "skin-tone trauma" (see Figure 87) to examine how colourist experiences can elicit "traumatic stress" responses. Their paper elucidated some of the stress-responses I recurrently noticed, especially in the one-to-one interviews, as several, detailed their experiences and deep emotional pain from having to not only navigate, colourism, in the MIEs; but they also indicated their careers were severely derailed or impacted in glaringly obvious ways as they were deliberately "held back" from having access to equal opportunities as their peers. Black women, of different hues, also acknowledged this to be a pattern they often witness, play out, noting how darker-skinned Black women are frequently relegated to background roles, such as song writing or backing vocals, no matter how talented they are.

Fig. 1. Skin-tone-trauma model. BMI = body mass index.
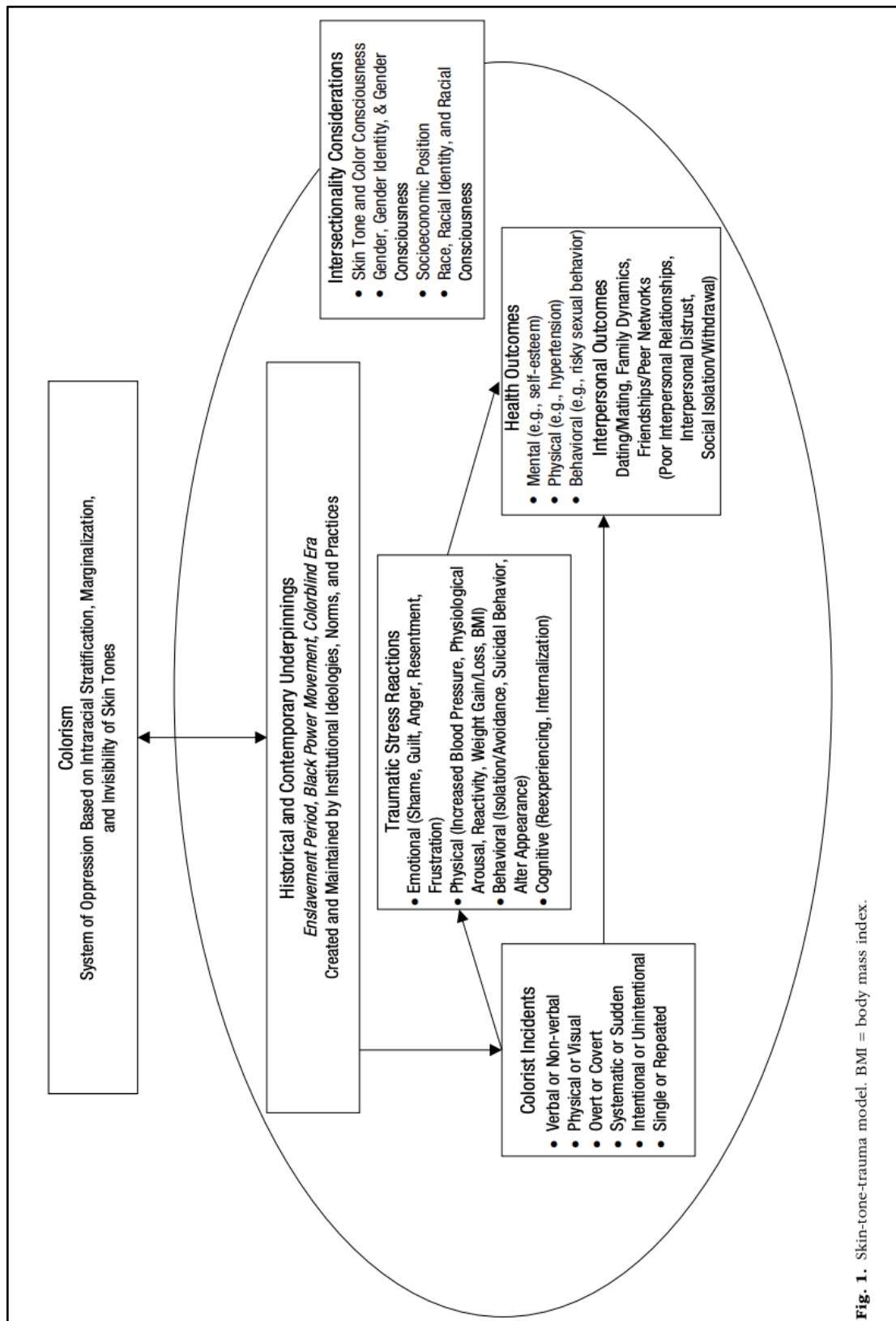
Figure 87   Landor and McNeil-Smith's Skin Tone Trauma Model (2019)

In another article, Hall (2017) conducted a qualitative psychology study, to investigate the psychosocial impact of skin colour, on the lived experiences of US Black women. The findings in her study also confirm the findings, in this research, in terms of both the psychologically distressing experiences linked to colourism, being compounded by its impact on "social, economic, and relational" (2017, p. 77) opportunities. She also found:

> For light skinned women, the narratives reveal negotiations around skin colour and internal conflicts around identity and belonging directly related to the history of skin colour stratification (2017, p. 77).

Notably one of the participants explicitly acknowledged "If I had've [sic] walked into that audition, um- a few shades darker, it would have been, you know- an issue [...] I left the situation because I got uncomfortable with it".

Summary

In observing the interdependent relationship of stereotypes and the social conditioning of exploitation, as an expected norm, Black women suggested the practice of disempowered leveraging to be one of many symptoms of a macro structural issue, rooted in others' perceptions of their inherent inferiority.

In the next section, the second key finding from the multimethod study, will be discussed.

6.2.2 2nd Key Finding: Norms Reinforcing Exclusion from Power

2ND KEY FINDING: Norms Reinforcing Exclusion from Power

PERSPECTIVE 1: Perceived Inherent Inferiority at Work	**PERSPECTIVE 2:** Globalisation of Jim Crow Workforce Segregation	**PERSPECTIVE 3:** Policing in the Workplace and Industry Vigilantism	**PERSPECTIVE 4:** Challenges After Smashing Concrete and Glass Ceilings
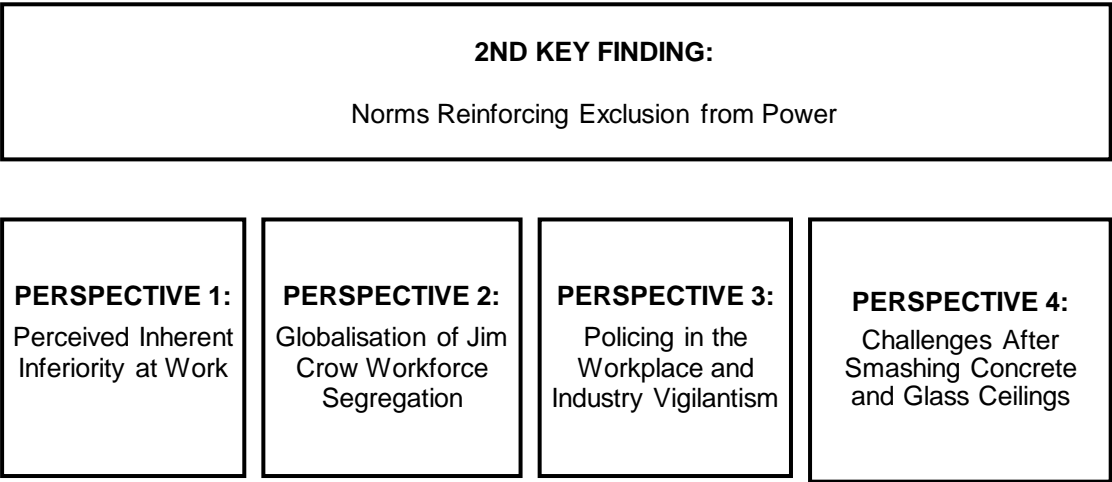
Diagram 13   Discussion – 2nd Key Finding

The research also found that exclusion from power, for Black women, were reinforced through social norms in the MIE.

Accordingly, this section covered four areas to explain how these can mechanise:

A. "Perceived Inferiority at Work",

B. "Globalisation of Jim Crow Workforce Segregation",

C. "Policing in the Workplace and Industry Vigilantism", and

D. "Challenges After Smashing Concrete and Glass Ceilings"

A. Perceived Inherent Inferiority at Work

As discussed earlier, stereotype biases were cited to impact Black women's careers in the MIE prevalently and adversely. Due to the mechanisations of these preconceptions, Black women continue to be challenged, in particular ways, as evidenced in the results. Further, these highlighted recurrent outcomes of commonly reported experiences with isolation, relegation, workplace-induced traumatic stress, and victimisation (and demonisation) from workplace incivility (Smith, et al., 2021). While these were framed as the symptoms, the root cause, underpinning these was suggested to be their perceived intellectual inferiority, which has an ideological legacy that extends back to African chattel slavery, as noted in the literature review and the pro.

In using Sue's (Sue, et al., 2007; Sue, 2001) microaggression[231] model, Holder, Jackson, and Ponterotto (2015) conducted a phenomenological methodological qualitative psychology study and interviewed 10 Black women who were senior-level corporate professionals, in the US. As they sought to give voice (Collins, 2009) to how senior Black women can experience racial microaggressions in the workplace (see Figure 89), they found:

> Participants shared various verbal, nonverbal/behavioural and environmental incidents that conveyed racial invalidations and indignities. A primary racial microaggression was related to the stereotype of being intellectually inferior, a common type of subtle bias African Americans encounter (Holder, et al., 2015, p. 174).

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[231] Pierce (1970) coined the term "racial microaggressions".

This described phenomenon was consistent with the findings from the studies in this thesis; and, I would add that this is overwhelmingly painfully the case for UK Black women as well, who detailed their everyday experiences with microaggressions, macroaggressions, "microinsults, microassaults, and microinvalidations" (Sue, 2001; Sue, et al., 2007) (see below) to be "deeply challenging", as they emphasised this is a staying feature in the career experiences for UK Black women in the MIE.

Racial Microaggressions
Commonplace verbal or behavioral indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults.

Microinsult
(Often Unconscious)
Behavioral/verbal remarks or comments that convey rudeness, insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity.

Microassault
(Often Conscious)
Explicit racial derogations characterized primarily by a violent verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior or purposeful discriminatory actions.

Microinvalidation
(Often Unconscious)
Verbal comments or behaviors that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color.

Environmental Microaggressions
(Macro-level)
Racial assaults, insults and invalidations which are manifested on systemic and environmental levels.

Ascription of Intelligence
Assigning a degree of intelligence to a person of color based on their race.

Second Class Citizen
Treated as a lesser person or group.

Pathologizing cultural values/communication styles
Notion that the values and communication styles of people of color are abnormal.

Assumption of Criminal status
Presumed to be a criminal, dangerous, or deviant based on race.

Alien in Own Land
Belief that visible racial/ethnic minority citizens are foreigners.

Color Blindness
Denial or pretense that a White person does not see color or race.

Myth of Meritocracy
Statements which assert that race plays a minor role in life success.

Denial of Individual Racism
Denial of personal racism or one's role in its perpetuation.

Figure 88   Sue et. al (2007) "Categories of, and Relationships Among, Racial Microaggressions" Model

B. Jim Crow Workforce Segregation[232]

As many Black women in Study 1 and Study 2, spoke about their isolating experiences of being the only or the token minority leader, it was evident that the type of harms they faced, such as being frequently challenged on their expertise, seemed to be directly linked to White supremacist ideologies (Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, Kimberlé, et al., (Editors), 2019; Liu, 2017; Grzanka, et al., 2019) about their perceived inferiority.
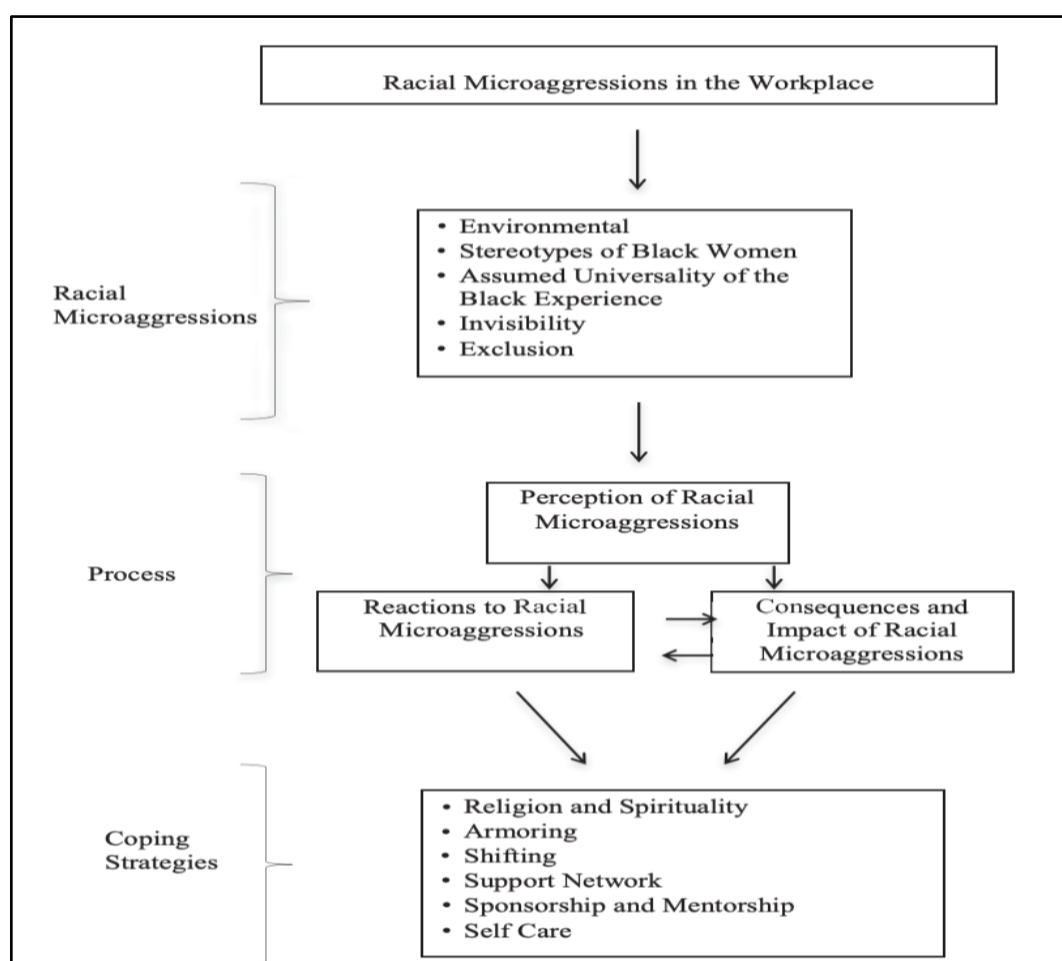
Figure 89   Holder et al. (2015) Microaggressions and Coping Strategies
            Model

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[232] Although research commonly refers to these phenomena as "tokenism" or being "the one", it may better help serve the criticality of advancing intersectional social justice efforts in organisations and industries by undoubtedly acknowledging that what they are describing is "systemic segregation".

Consistent with the findings in the cited music industry and workplace reports, on Black women, in the literature review, this research also found that tokenism appears to be a systemic crisis (Lean In, 2020), harmfully, impacting Black women's career experiences in the MIE. Although more seasoned Black women industry professionals from the studies acknowledged social progress, has been made[233], they also recognise more work is still needed to "even the playing field", as the MIE continues to remain male-dominated and White-dominated, which all attest to it not being due to the lack of talent of non-White and non-male groups. Instead, it was cited to be due to the lack of fair and equal access to career opportunities as well as organisational and relational support, once underrepresented groups, such as Black women, are in these spaces. Particularly, Black women in the STEM and recording and production sectors, found systemic segregation to fare much worse than other areas. They indicated that the workforce and leadership representation continue to remain largely homogenous, despite it being 60+ years since the passing of equality legislation.

Correspondingly, Dickens, Womack, and Dimes (2019) co-authored a conceptual paper in psychology, highlighting the paucity of literature on the hypervisibility and identity shifting strategies, employed by Black women in the workplace, who often experience tokenism and navigate "invisible barriers in the workplace" (2019, p. 113).

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[233] In comparison to when they first started.

In their paper, they examined the following popular theories, and recommended how these frameworks can take intersectionality into account, to inclusively review Black women's practices with identity shifting:

1. Identity Negotiation Theory (Ting-Toomey, 2015),

2. Cultural Contract Paradigm (Jackson, 2002), and

3. Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (Spencer , et al., 1997)

They also highlighted how code-switching is just one iteration of identity-shifting, which has more to do with "languages or dialects". However, identity shifting:

> […] reflects a broad set of alterations including language, behaviours, morals, and values. In general, the threat of stigmatisation informs one's decision to manage his or her identity through shifting. Identity shifting involves attempts to limit visibility, to become more socially invisible […] and to lessen the negative consequences associated with stereotyping and discrimination (2019, p. 113).

This behaviour was prominently highlighted in this thesis wherein one participant even explicitly stated, "Made sure my hair was straight, and try to, like, assimilate as much as I can because I needed [my colleagues] to focus on my work and not me," which spoke to attempts to become socially invisible, as a form of protection. This research found that Black women's commonplace encounters with workplace-induced trauma, reinforced social norms as power (Liu, 2018) where their dehumanisation was viewed as natural and expected as apathy seemed to be evident. This research found that since there seems to be a lack of accountability when it comes to how

Black women are harmed in the workplace, they are often left in situations where they are forced to fend for themselves (The Fawcett Society & The Runnymeade Trust, 2022; McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.org, 2021). Due to this, many cited experiencing emotional and psychological distress (Watson-Singleton, 2017), as they used descriptors like "powerless" and indicated the barriers as stalling or derailing their careers.

For instance, many of the participants seemed to be reliving the trauma of their experiences as they distressingly shared their accounts. "I was a fucking slave!" when one described how painful that period was in her career when a major label signed her into a 360⁰ deal, then proceeded to derail her career and shelve her as an artist, which she suggested to be on the compounded grounds of anti-Blackness, anti-womaness, anti-queerness. She even cited, despite having that level of star power, she "still had to gag". Others also spoke to bursting into tears in bathrooms and in private rooms of these professional spaces that took serious tolls on their mental health. Due to their traumatic career experiences, where the denigration of Black women felt like an everyday occurrence in their own journeys and their witnessing of their fellow Black women peers' career journeys, in this industry.

C. Policing in the Workplace and Industry Vigilantism

This research also found that Black women remain targets of workplace vigilantism (DeCelles & Aquino, 2017). This was denoted based on how Black women vaguely spoke to an undescribed "they", although one referred to them as "the powers that be" or their fellow peers as – citing "them" as watching for Black women to "fail" or monitoring them "for their first mistake", facilitating dehumanisation and confirmation bias (Cooley, et al., 2018). This was raised as important, from the studies, to indicate that this premise was used to try to justify why Black women are perceived as inferior, and thus do not belong in organisational cultures nor do they belong in their earned "position of power". This human relational dysfunctional power dynamic was described in other studies as well. For instance, DeCelles and Aquino (2017) co-authored a quantitative-based research paper, which was described to be the first of its kind to focus on a phenomenon, they named "workplace vigilante syndrome". Based on answers provided by 2,258 respondents, to their surveys, they were able to investigate others' perceptions to determine the role and effects of vigilante behaviour in the workplace, and to determine how prevalent it may be across industries and organisations. Although they noted the positive aspects of this type of behaviour for organisations, if used by well-intentioned employees, they also noted the exploitative downsides.

> Vigilantes can […] potentially create a climate of fear and distrust in an organization, compromising employees' abilities to form mutually beneficial and supportive relationships at work, not to mention imposing legal and reputational liabilities for organisations if their actions are imprudent or excessive (2017, p. 4).

Based on their findings, they indicated the severe consequences of this type of behaviour, mechanising in the workplace, which has led victims of this behaviour to be fired or quit, due to the hostility, imposed by vigilantes who were described to elicit a "strong sense of moral superiority" (2017, p. 10) when engaging with fellow employees.

Within the context of this research, findings from their study seemed to confirm behaviours that were recurrently described, in the studies in this thesis, by the Black women who navigated distrustful work environments where they were "policed" on how they can be and show up in spaces, which seemed to be rooted in the belief that they are perceived to be inferior. As this was mainly enacted on by White men, and men in general, these behaviours were also described to come from a least likely demographic – non-Black and Black women.

Interestingly, DeCelles and Aquino's study similarly found that women were likelier described to take on this role, which shed light on one of my participant's striking comments such as, "[…] women, who would like, help you, but, like, under the guise "There can only be one,"". Another mentioned, "And it's still some bit between women, as ourselves, so it's still hard to- for everyone to win." Another also indicated, "[…] there's a lot of back fighting in the industry too amongst other female Black artists. It's like "Why would you never promote your sister?" But it's because competition is so fierce. There's not a lot of spots, that's what it seems like. There's not a lot of spots. It doesn't feel like everybody gets to win."

In reviewing their findings, alongside those of this thesis, within the context of an intersectionality lens, these monitoring behaviours, which were described to come from White men, Black men, non-Black women, and Black women, (Bailey, 2014) seems to indicate the degree of severity of this behaviour as being a lot more intensified, with complex misogynoirism at play, in the background of these relational dynamics. Also, these behaviours seem to also consider the sociohistorical context, of its manifestations as following the African slavery era, when White vigilantism, through slave patrols, became prevalent, as a means to police Black people (NAACP, 2022), which led to the formation of the US law enforcement, which deserves more attention, evidenced by today's polarising sociopolitical climate (Grzanka, et al., 2019).

D. Challenges After Smashing Concrete and Glass Ceilings

Some Black women expressed that "the more senior" or "trailblazing" they were, (Dickens, et al., 2019), they indicated how inequalities and biases could transform and worsen, which could explain why some explicitly and implicitly conveyed the sentiment that "being the first is overrated". In line with findings from Holder et al's study, many Black women, in my studies, also described being subjected to experience more intense scrutiny, linked to their hypervisibility, from navigating senior positions in corporate to navigating their star power in the live sector.

> Despite the use of these adaptive coping strategies, experiences of racial microaggressions created harmful consequences for these accomplished professional Black women. Underrepresentation of senior level Black women creates a feeling of "hypervisibility" where their behaviour is scrutinized and intensely monitored (Holder, et al., 2015, p. 175).

While there are many studies that tend to focus on the journey (Society for Human Resource Management, 2021) of breaking barriers as an aspiration, there is a dearth of information available on resources on how to navigate, once those barriers are surpassed, and underrepresented groups find themselves as the first in these historically exclusionary spaces, that were structurally not designed for them to be in because of their multi-underrepresented identity.

This could explain why many, in senior positions, in companies, spoke to not having mentors, as slowing down their careers, and thus they had to rely on the peer-to-peer support they cultivated through networking and fostering their

own relationships, which many cited "relationships" to be critical to survive in the industry. As a result, the types of challenges Black women found that they must endure spoke to how dehumanisation and exclusion from power tended to mechanise in more "sophisticated" ways, where they had to take risks and navigate these spaces, understanding the weighted pressures of being the first and the last. This was demonstrated, most prominently, in the Study 1 group, where three Black women's career experiences were interrelated, regarding the Superbowl experience. The research also found that Black women are frequently challenged in leadership and in their area of subject matter expertise (SME). This was cited to be the case even for those who are hired, or personally sought out, for a very specific job, requiring a highly trained set of skills, their respective employer selected them to perform.

Based on their accounts, this took on meaning as the precedence that was seemingly set from the top-down, in leadership and management (or lack thereof) influenced these Black women's performance appraisals, where "rater [sic] biases" became hazardously apparent. It adversely seemed to affect their overall performance reviews in ways that either slowed down their career progression, limited career development opportunities, which in turn, affected upward mobility, mentorship, and sponsorship opportunities for this group within the workplace – no matter how senior – which was a challenge that many, if not all, participants shared. Their intersectional identities and experiences with being on the receiving end of navigating workplace politics, through predominantly gendered-racialised and additional contexts, often mirrored their societal experiences, interactions, and interpretations of them,

across multiple settings. The construction of reality in these workplace settings where Black women were generally at risk of harsher judgement, and the consequences of them, were influenced by unconscious and conscious biases which seemed to be commonplace toxic behaviours directed towards this group.

Summary

In observing the interdependent relationship of social norms, as a power structure, reinforcing Black women's exclusion from power was discussed as manifesting at three multiple interlocking levels, that seemed to result in the potential lack of preparation for the next level of challenges, reflected as unchartered territories. The first point that was discussed revisited the ideological aspect of CM. The second point underscored how these ideologies seemed to become structurally embedded. The third point highlighted how the individuals took it upon themselves to police these Black women. The final and fourth point stressed how these issues could result in being set up to fail, due to ideological, structural, and interpersonal dysfunctional issues seemingly rooted in the pseudo-scientific construct and belief in White supremacy, as discussed in the literature review.

In the next section, the third, and final, key finding from this multimethod study, will now be discussed – as it focuses on how Black women resocialised themselves to reimagining and practicing power to make changes, using a grassroots organising approach to try to empower and support what this research will define as "the talented discounted".

6.2.3 3rd Key Finding: Resocialising to Reimagine and Practice Power

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│                        3RD KEY FINDING:                           │
│                                                                   │
│            Resocialising to Reimagine and Practice Power          │
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│                              │      │                              │
│        PERSPECTIVE 1:        │      │        PERSPECTIVE 2:        │
│    Redesigning the Workforce │      │  Redesigning Organisational  │
│                              │      │           Cultures           │
│                              │      │                              │
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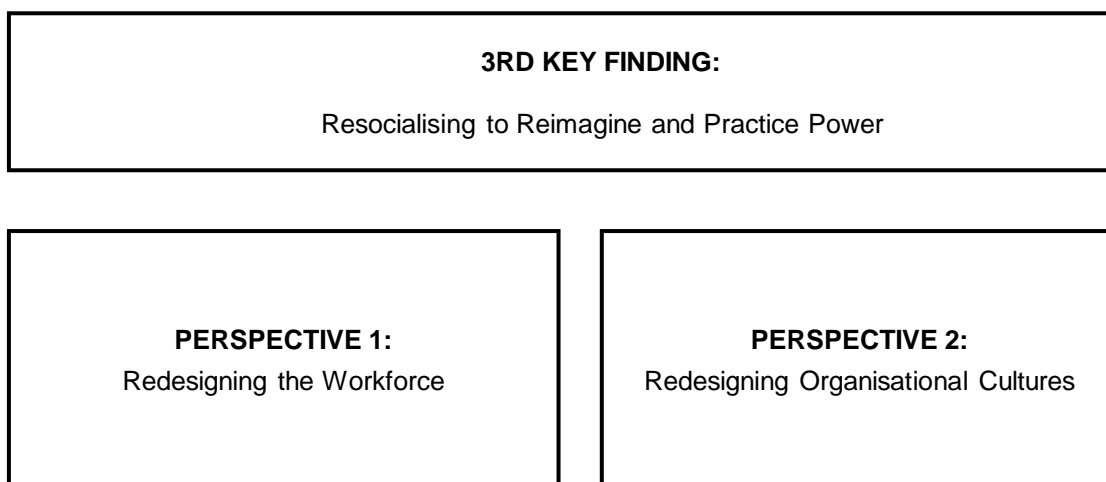
Diagram 14   Discussion – 3rd Key Finding

Accordingly, the final key finding from this research homed in on Black women, where they spoke to using what "power" they had to try to drive organisational workforce and cultural change. It was clear in the results that they not only wanted to empower themselves, but they also desired and worked towards empowering other historically disenfranchised employees, including fellow women, Black people, and other minority ethnic group representatives. Some also took it a step further by also volunteering their personal time to mentor and engage as a support system for some of the people from within these groups, which other industry studies also alluded to – Black women taking on this role, almost naturally – in their research findings (Block, et al., 2011; Kray, et al., 2004). Accordingly, this section discussed two perspectives of how power was reimagined and practiced within the following contexts.

  A. "Redesigning the Workforce" and

  B. "Redesigning Organisational Cultures".

A. Redesigning the Workforce

Although the inequities in workforce designs were glaringly apparent as noted by Black women across both studies, many described to take a grassroots approach to try to change systemic issues on an individual level, while aware of the risks of what was at stake, in doing so. Interestingly, they comparatively described these work environments to school cafeteria settings, and college campuses, to subtly centre and draw attention towards the reproductions and transformations of segregation, as a structural issue, and social norm (as power) (Liu, 2018)which seems to still be at play, as being influenced by wider, largely unspoken, social contexts (Howarth, et al., 2013).

By organisations not having the proper infrastructural support, in place, to support Black women's individual endeavours to diversify an organisation's workforce in ways to make these changes long-lasting, this lack of support was evidenced to take a mental and physical toll (Holder, et al., 2015) on Black women in multifarious ways where they indicated they felt pulled in multiple directions. The number of obstacles they had to navigate while managing teams and doing other employees' (such as HR's) jobs, who were depicted as being culturally incompetent (Sue, 2001), was described to have a domino effect that seemed to further disadvantage Black women, from fully thriving in their careers (Lean In, 2020) as they were tending to the needs of others, which several nonparticipants and participants spoke to.

B.   Redesigning Organisational Cultures

In terms of reimagining and practicing power, many Black women, across both study groups, highlighted they own their own businesses, which highlighted the action steps they took to not only empower themselves; but also, in some cases, other women and marginalised voices to provide them equal access to opportunities for senior roles (McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.org, 2021), which are critical to setting the cultural tone of organisations (Dweck, 2017; Arnold, et al., 2016). Due to a combining factor of being relegated in organisations and devalued (Holder, et al., 2015; Dickens, et al., 2019) they also cited their intentions to disrupt conventional hiring patterns, seemingly employed by corporations, to do the bare minimum for wider DEIBA efforts, where hiring one or two women, for example, is viewed as "exceptional" in largely homogenous settings of White men (NAACP Economic Development, 1987; UK Music, 2020).

By exercising their authority and power in this manner, could be said to contextualise why reports indicate Black women are the fastest demographic of business owners, which seems to have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19, partially underscoring some of the structural issues driving the "Great Resignation" (BBC, 2021). However, as these issues have long been a produced reality, the mainstream attention could be said to be amplified by today's further polarising sociopolitical climate, alongside unprecedented challenges, modern-day.

Summary

In reviewing how Black women can reimagine and practice power, helped to provide context as to how they took matters into their own hands to try to drive change. However, provided this is a structural issue, more comprehensive and a collective approach, requiring the full participation of fellow actors, will now be discussed in the next section, "Implications".

6.3   Implications

"The multidimensionality of these groups must be factored into the equation. These goals can be advanced by using an intersectional prism to 1) analyse social problems more fully; 2) shape more effective interventions; and 3) promote more inclusive coalitional advocacy." (African American Policy Forum, 2022, p. 3) "In the end, antiblack, antifemale, and all forms of discrimination are equivalent to the same thing - antihumanism." Shirley Chiscolm, as cited in: (Collins, 2009, p. 47)	Race / Ethnicity / Tribe
	Skin Colour
	Gender
	Gender Expression
	Sexuality
	Age
	Dialect
	Disability
	Neurodiversity
	Class
	Net Worth
	Pay Scale
	Features (Physical)
	Nationality
	Occupation and Ranking
	Celebrity
	Education
	and More...

Figure 90   Examples of Black Women in Music's Multidimensionality

Comprehensive Exploitation Interventions Needed

Based on the findings from the studies, many aspects of these Black women's career stories seem to indicate that the unnamed "violation of [their] human rights"[234] in MIEs, should be considered to be reframed as a "humanitarian crisis"[235], in these business settings. This suggestion is being made on the account that features of their socioprofessional experiences seem to fit the criteria, as defined by the UN's Human Rights Council (HRC). The HRC endorsed the "UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights" 42-page report, which outlines both the state's[236] duty and corporate responsibility to protect human rights in the workplace (The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2011).

DEHUMANISATION
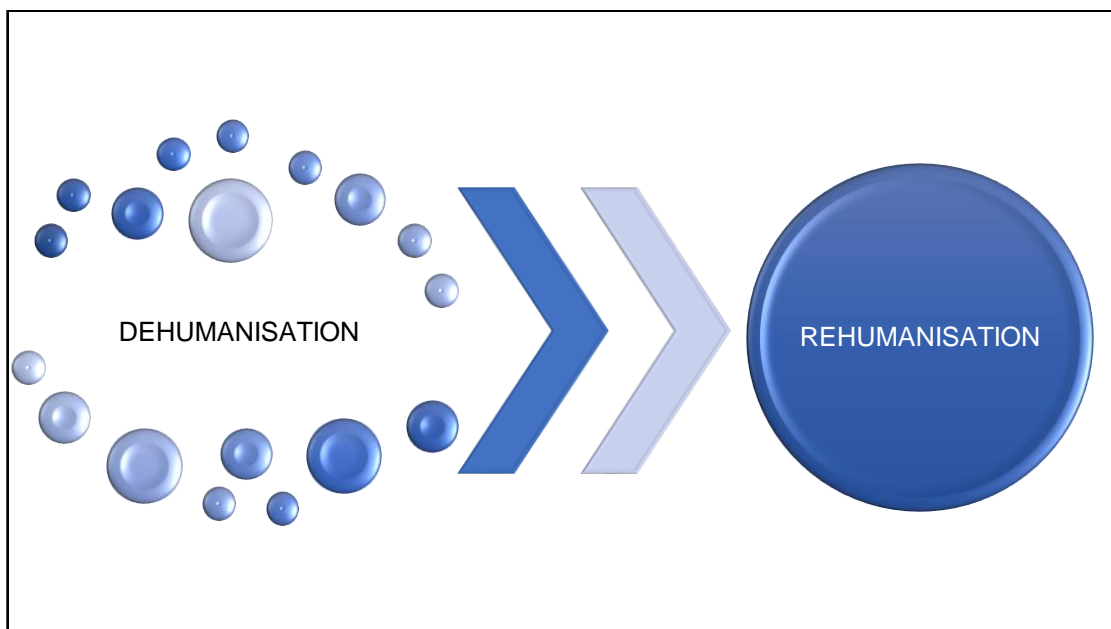
REHUMANISATION

Figure 91   Emergency Interventions: Dehumanisation to Rehumanisation

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"[234] The United Nations define "human rights" as: "[…] rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination."
[235] The United Nations
[236] Meaning territory or jurisdiction

Dehumanisation Crises in MIE Work Environments

In terms of urgency and severity, the research evidence makes it abundantly clear that there is a deeply structural (and discounted) humanitarian crisis[237], that is harming, maligning, and further marginalising Black women, including in positions of power, in the MIEs. Based on the limitations, in terms of the individual efforts put forth by these Black women, to try to advance inclusion in organisations, themselves, the lack of structural support was cited, and insinuated in their accounts, to be purposeful, and a mechanism, to maintain the status quo (Haughnessy, et al., 2016) (read: segregation) in the workplace. This is assessed in direct relation to the findings of the studies, as Black women reported on often being "the only" (Lean In, 2020; Dickens, et al., 2019) as well as others' support systems (Jerald, et al., 2017), where they also cited to experience many forms of abuse in the workplace, as stifling their career trajectories, pace of progression, or both. This manifested as them perceiving not have the same access for opportunities, as well as the opportunity to thrive, citing they are overworked in terms of attending to others' needs and picking up others' slack, which was described as being expected of them, although it was not described in ways to indicate that reciprocity occurs in these relational dynamics and encounters. This further compromisingly pointed to how the "Mammy" stereotype can be involuntarily activated (Holder, et al., 2015; Reynolds-Dobbs, et al., 2008), as described earlier in the chapter, as having a consequential effect on their careers and on

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[237] As described in Chapter 1.

their overburdened emotional capacity (Dickens, et al., 2019; Reynolds-Dobbs, et al., 2008).

Further, these results, indicate that the lack of support, compounded with various forms of ignored practices of workplace abuse (Lutgen-Sandvik, 2008) and workplace incivility (McKinsey & Company, 2016) were described to manifest frequently, evidencing cases of "complex misogynoirism", that seemingly reproduces, yet, another set of structural challenges in their multifaceted career experiences, which was evidenced to transfer into other areas of their lives, as these instances, were described to impact their socioprofessional worlds, their "thinking", and their overall wellbeing.

As cases of "workplace bullying" (Noreen, 2012) were overwhelmingly reported, by both study groups, to be a regular, prolonging occurrence, across nearly 15 sectors observed in this research project, it seemed to evidence others' research findings regarding the consequences of these dynamics.

For instance, Caesens, Nguyen, and Stinglhamber (2018) co-conducted a quantitative psychology study, where they found:

> […] [that] there is a causal link between abusive supervision and organisational dehumanisation perceptions so that abusive supervision leads to higher levels of organisational dehumanisation perceptions […] (2018, p. 16).

Within the context of this research, this was raised as important, for contextual insights, considering the prevalence of workplace abuse throughout their career journeys.

As an example, one shared her fears, at the time, about starting at a new role at a bigger company, citing her apprehension towards the likelihood of re-injury (Carter, 2007), after her immediate past experience (in that time period) of being discriminatorily dismissed on vague grounds and a lie. For context, she further elucidated these high turnover outcomes to be targeted at Black and Brown people in these spaces, and especially for Black women, who cited are viewed as "the least valued". She continued to explain her fears about reexperiencing the sense of feeling "disposable", which she, and other Black women, attested to, experiencing occurrences of dehumanisation, as being the norm (a form of structural power) (Liu, 2018) . To this, Caesens et al. also indicated, regarding their findings:

> […] results […] supported that organisational dehumanisation perceptions mediate the relationships between abusive supervision and employees' job satisfaction, affective commitment, and turnover intentions. In other words, organisational dehumanisation is an important underlying mechanism explaining the negative effects of abusive supervision. (2018, p. 16).

Although, it is clear Black women face harmful prejudgments, which can impact how they are perceived, as well as how their work may be perceived (Erskine, et al., 2021), because of *who* the output is coming from, studies have proven these factors to be adversely influenced by stereotyped bias (Heilman, 2012), which spoke to the importance of the PSCT study (Kunda & Thagard, 1996), as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Moreover, this seems to spotlight the activation of code-switching (Hall, et al., 2012) to try to overcome systemic barriers in their careers, which is another area that needs to be addressed – as some Black women across both studies, indicated the importance of being able to bring their full-self to work, which they feel they are prevented from doing (fully), which is perceived to be a loss.

Congruent with industry-related reports (see Section 2.3.5) (e.g. McKinsey & Company's and Lean In's (2021), The Fawcett Society's and The Runnymeade Trust, (2022)) Black women in my studies also shared that being able to be authentic in the workplace can have an immense positive effect (Ménard & Brunet, 2011) on their sense of belonging (Laltendu & Pradhan, 2018), that can be amplified with authenticity, which findings from academic studies also support (Ostermeier, et al., 2020; Filstad, et al., 2019). Since retaliation, in response to perceived deviance, is understood to be the norm, activations for code-switching and identity-shifting (Dickens, et al., 2019), continue to persist, which the findings indicate to present as another structural barrier.

In macro context, Black women, more generally, are already in the middle of overlapping systemic humanitarian crises[238], as highlighted in Chapter 1. Thus, their reports on how severely these stigmas, perpetuate harms, and prejudgements (Kunda & Thagard, 1996) indicate how these outcomes can

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[238] See Figure 9 – Chapter 1

become so damaging and pervasive. They also shed light on the underlying reasons why so many pursued routes of trying to desperately circumvent these disadvantaged experiences through varying degrees of behavioural modifications which could also present as assimilation, as discussed earlier. However, based on how abuse towards Black women in these spaces of power, with power, mechanised, seemed to indicate their participation in these human practices for survival and protection of their livelihood (McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.org, 2021; Lean In, 2020), which was also described as being another manifestation of a structural issue.

While my next observation is not being noted to purport this assertion to be true, it is something to seriously consider. Elements of what they described, in addition to the visible emotions they displayed, seemed to indicate that even through the retelling of their adverse career experiences, it appeared as if they were reexperiencing the pains of it all over again; but, within the context that they now had a person who would listen. This is being noted here as it seems to highlight what was found in different scholars' works to understand how psychological distress (Watson-Singleton, 2017), race-based traumatic stress injury, and other physical and mental health outcomes (Seaton & Zeiders, 2021), can present in different ways, depending on the company (meaning: in relation to people) they are in, if they feel psychologically safe. Based on others' studies, the listed symptomology strikingly seemed to either resemble, or closely align, with what was made apparent (Sue, 2001) in both nonverbal and verbal communications.

As a final observation, on this crisis, some of the workplace stories they described seem to indicate that some of the root of their career experiences, within the context of navigating "power" in the top MIEs, seemed to elucidate the importance of the work Grzanka et al. (2019) are doing in their space. To this point, they recently co-authored a paper, to urgently address the crisis, which, in relation to this research, seems to be underpinning these Black women's career experiences. Specifically they drew attention to the need for social justice, noting that the renascent "mainstreaming of White nationalism [...] [and the global and] emboldened White supremacy" movement are on the rise, which is a cause for concern, namely in Central Europe and the US, as they noted far-right groups are said to be "gaining political traction" (2019, p. 513), which psychology scholars need to take heed and get ahead of.

The researcher insists that due to the seriousness of these prevailing threats, to humanity, despite being disproven as pseudoscience, the myth of White supremacy needs to constantly be explicitly disproven and centred in psychology studies (see Section 2.3.1) as a means to be combatted "through research, clinical practice, and advocacy" (2019, p. 488).

Interventions for Rehumanisation in MIE Work Environments

Given the complexities of this crisis for Black women navigating "power" in WEIRD MIEs, organisations should focus on comprehensive interventions to work to prioritise and redress the structural issues, as evidenced in both study groups' accounts. The data makes a case for the need to eradicate human relational dysfunction, that is facilitating and reinforcing systemic biases and harms[239] in organisations. To offer a couple of exemplary tools to identify potential fault lines (van Knippenberg, et al., 2010) the following suggestions are merely considerations, as there is not a "one size fits all approach" to correcting course (Handl, et al., 2022).

To start, Watts, Gray, and Medeiros (2022) drew attention to how "side effects" are often not considered, when putting organisational interventions in place, signifying how "accountability", within this context, can easily become murky, in practice.

> […] the qualifications of the person providing organizational [sic] interventions are largely unregulated, [and] an important caveat is that some consequences of organizational [sic] interventions are regulated. (2022, p. 86).

Although they were speaking about the lack of industry regulation, from other situated contexts, the first part of their statement shed light on a pattern I noticed in the studies. Interestingly, some participants spoke to being expected to take on unofficial organisational intervention roles, so to speak. While these areas were not part of their job functions, it seemed to mechanise

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[239] Unsurprisingly, this research found these issues to be equally apparent across both MIE work environments.

as integrating into their roles, as additional (unpaid) labour, for this service, by their organisations. Within the context of this research, in critically examining how Black women were exploited, this is an area, which organisations should take inventory to redress, as this patterned behaviour, can adversely impact Black women, resulting in them feeling "overwhelmed", "burned out", and like everything is urgent – all at the same time. This type of pressure is unhealthy can have a domino effect in other areas, which they spoke to as adversely impacting their Quality of Life (see Section 1.4). Also, this seems to indicate one of the ways as to how the abuse of loopholes[240]" in norms and practices in organisational cultures can occur, seem to reproduce damning (Gammage, 2016) social hierarchies.

As Watts et al. offered quantitative approaches to rectify "side-effect" issues, Beckel et al. (2022), in contrast, advocated for qualitative approaches as a more effective strategy. However, LeNoble and Hudson (2022) held how "side effects" should become a moot point, altogether, if a more comprehensive multilevel intervention research (MLIR) is used to advance organisational interventions. The latter falls more so in line, with "intersectionality interventions" as proposed by the African American Policy Forum (2022a).

Considering this, it is important for organisations to look to others who are already engaging with rehumanising practices, such as Bain & Company

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[240] The NAACP (1987) spoke to the lack of regulation, and exploitation of loopholes, in the first-ever pan-music industry report of its kind.

(2022) and Lean In (2022), who offer a free digital programme to combat bias, as they adopt an intersectional approach, in light of how less-considered barriers can harmfully impact groups like Black women, as this research as well as others' research clearly indicate, they are dealing with interlocking systems of oppression (Collins, 2009), systemic biases (Heilman, 2012; LeanIn.org, 2022), stereotypes threats (Steele & Aronson, 1995), metastereotypes (Jerald, et al., 2017), everyday microaggressions (Sue, et al., 2007), and more, which studies have linked to declining wellbeing outcomes (Heilman, 2012; Seaton & Zeiders, 2021; Pieterse, et al., 2022; Hall, et al., 2012; Jones, 2002; Spates, 2012).

6.4 Strengths and Limitations

Subjectivity Bias

Although subjectivity is generally discouraged as scholars argue it can lead to subjectivity bias, it is a constructed value that is upheld in studies conducted from a positivistic framework. Since this research fits squarely within a Big Q qualitative research paradigm that, also, employed RTA, subjectivity is viewed as a core strength, within this context (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Harding, 1995); and reflexivity, is strongly valued, for both transparency and rigour, as in IT.

Limitations on Secondary Data Analysis

For Study 1, secondary data sources were used like a meta-primary dataset to try to gain in-depth insights about trailblazing Black women's career experiences in the world's leading MIE, to centre their perspectives and their voices, to honour the epistemological tenets in BFT (Collins, 2009). As interviews and documentaries can be edited in post-production, I recognise that points that were kept in, may not have had the full context, in which they were originally stated. This meant I had to trust the interviewers to a degree, as I had to rely on their final presentation as being as close to the unedited versions, as possible.

Language in Recruitment

The language for recruitment specified "self-identifying Black women"; however, it could have benefitted this research to state that even if they co-self-identify as other genders, as was the case for two participants, although

only one stated this on record, it would have been insightful to also centre

their perspectives, within the context of this research.

Data Protection for High Profile Participants

Many of the Black women are high-profile. Given the nature of this research, I

had to take extra care and additional precautions, with handling the sensitive

data, to conceal their identities. I also removed the chart indicating their roles,

which is why I used sectors, more broadly, and I replaced any of their

associations' names as well. I also removed their chart-topping recognitions

and, due to the severity of representation Black women in these spaces, I

also could not transparently disaggregate indicating who is Afro-Caribbean,

for example, due to the severity of low representation of Black women in

positions of power in the MIEs. The need to take these steps implicated the

degree to how vulnerable they are, within the context that many of them are

active; and I did not want their participation in this research to endanger or

jeopardise their livelihoods, or lives, especially given the polarising socio-

political climate today.

Missed Data Collection

After the first set of interviews were conducted, aspects such as parenthood,

marriage, level of educational attainment and other social statuses were

raised as important as they indicated how these contributed to their

intersectional experiences. Although some of that data was missed from the

earlier interviews, I put a workaround in place to still find a way to incorporate aspects in the reporting of the results.

Research Design

This research project may be the first of its kind, within the field of industrial-organisational psychology, that is framed with this specific context. Since there were no previous studies to compare this interdisciplinary research to, I needed to draw from others' scholarship and business industry reports, featuring Black women participants, which also employed a Black feminist critique in the psychological sciences, using a qualitative approach and narrative analysis. Beneficially, BFT and RTA, together, offered flexibility, and a range of options for complementary pairing of data sources, which also worked favourably within the IT framework. Thus, the use of archival data with in-depth, semi-structured interviews, was found to be instrumental to help to excavate in-depth insights to be systematically interpreted, for the research.

Generalisability

Generalisability is not a goal in reflexive TA (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 146); and, thus it is not viewed as a limitation. Further, BFT elicits "[…] different standards that are consistent with Black women's criteria for substantiated knowledge and without criteria for methodological adequacy" (Collins, 2009, p. 275).

6.5 Future Research

Non-WEIRD Research

Scholars critique how the WEIRD psychological sciences typically centre and attempt to universalise the experiences of WEIRD populations as being psychologically representative of all human populations (Henrich, et al., 2010). In terms of reproducibility of the studies (Sabik, et al., 2021), the findings could yield entirely different produced insights, as it is understood that values are constructed and mediated by human practices that can shape and reinforce cultural norms, elucidating how power structures operate and may be understood within those regional contexts.

Considering this, future non-WEIRD research could investigate these questions, with the understanding tweaks should be made, as guided by localised wider social contexts at the forefront, as well as the local Black feminisms, to try to situate the investigation to try to more comprehensively understand Black women's structural social location, in relation to "power", to gain understandings about their ways of seeing the world (Fraser & MacDougall, 2016). In this regard, it would be insightful to learn about Black women's experiences, in different countries across the continent of Africa, as well as other parts of the African diaspora, using this adjustable template.

As an example, Brazil has the 11th largest music market (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2021) in the world, and the largest African diasporic community, since nearly 50%, of all enslaved Africans,

during the Transatlantic Slave Trade, disembarked under the Portuguese flag in Brazil[241] (SlaveVoyages Database, 2022) (see below). As previously stated, to begin to locate their lived experiences, it is recommended to look to their local activist and intellectual movements within Afro-Brazilian Feminisms (Pons Cardoso, 2016)[242] . It cannot be stressed enough that BFT should always be centred to frame what the most pressing concerns impacting these Black women. Then, guided by those insights, is how the research could be situated to understand how to frame relevant questions that speak to Afro-Brazilian women's career experiences in the Brazilian MIE. Also, since the data methods are easily replicable the insights gathered from those tools, can also be informative.

Figure 92   Enslaved Africans in Coffee Yards Sao Paulo, 1882
                        (NPR, 2013)

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[241] Slavery in Brazil lasted from the early 1500s to the late 1800s, which makes it the last country in the Americas to abolish slavery (SlaveVoyages Database, 2022).
[242] Translated by Miriam Adelman

WEIRD Research

Although it has been evidenced how Black women relegated to the margins in the western sciences, more studies are needed in these territories and beyond the UK and US, to centre Black women's experiences, especially within a post-colonial context.

It would also be interesting to see this research reproduced across different non-Black women groups to increase in-depth understandings of the shared, and differently presenting, human experiences of industry professionals navigating "power" in the power structure of different WEIRD MIEs.

Qualitative and Mixed Method Studies

Based on the insights gained from both studies, I agree with Pratt and Bonaccio (2016), as well as Beckel, Gardner, and Prasad (2022), who advocated for an increase in qualitive studies in the field of I-O psychology. Pratt and Bonaccio (2016) made the case that only 5% of articles in the top journals in this field, between 2006 – 2013, were purely qualitative. With the use of mixed methods, this percentage raised marginally to 8%, which was suggested to be a missed opportunity to the field. Further, Beckel et al. (2022) described the underuse, to be an issue of the field not:

> […] Confronting our colonial and discipline-specific biases and better understanding the effects of our interventions on organisations (2022, p. 114)

In relation the project design, if this research had not been conducted from either a Big Q or medium q qualitative paradigm (Braun & Clarke, 2013), the

insights gained would likelier not be as insightful, or as rich, as the data was

filled with nuance, complexity, and meaning-making (Smith & Sparkes, 2012),

framed within wider social contexts.

For organisations, either approach can better inform them of which "side

effects" (Watts, et al., 2022; Beckel, et al., 2022) to consider, when

implementing interventions that may fall through the fault lines due to less-

considered aspects stemming from the absences of context and depth.

Further, it may prove to be equally beneficial to incorporate more mixed

method approaches, which Weaver, Crayne, and Jones (2016) also advocate.

To this, they contended:

> The qualitative component allows researchers to identify and
> understand how complex social phenomena are shaped by
> individual identities, whereas the quantitative component allows
> the relationships among such processes to be tested
> statistically (2016, p. 203) .

Overall, it may be helpful to conduct future research through data collection

tools such as, open-response surveys, in-depth interviews (Hesse-Biber,

2014), and archival resources (Barnes, et al., 2018), which some industry

bodies, are already doing, proving to yield significant and more

comprehensive findings. McKinsey & Company and Lean In's (2021)

partnership on their annual "Women in the Workplace" report offers an

excellent methodology, for researchers to look to, as a great resource for

reproducibility (Sabik, et al., 2021).

6.6   Discussion Chapter Summary

INTERSECTIONALITY	To recap, the research found that both trailblazing and leading Black women, in both territories, of the music industry, all reported they faced, what this research defined as, "complex misogynoirism" (see Figure 82), which was cited to occur at multiple interlocking levels. For Black women (across cultures, different levels of leadership, as well as, influence, and sectors), they all attested to experiencing either dehumanisation or devaluation in their work environments, in some capacity. As they had to navigate "systems of power", "identity politics", and "politics of identity", in ways that were cited to adversely impact their career experiences, in terms of pace of progressions, and equal access to opportunities for upward mobility, as well as their mental and physical health, in varying ways.

Figure 93   MSCF Recapped Analysis – 1 of 3

| INTRASECTIONALITY | Interestingly, as I expected this research to find, at least a handful of key, differences between how Black women's career experiences, in the UK and US, can mechanise - not finding many, was perhaps the most surprising aspect of conducting this project. As I previously mentioned, I needed to replay audio tracks and re-read transcripts and coding so as to not conflate their narratives due to how eerily similar, they were. However, I recognise this could be attributed to several factors, including shared cultural histories, within the African diasporic and British empire contexts, compounded by how oppression can be similarly produced, within certain higher occupational tiers for Black women in positions of power, who can face enduring experiences with anti-Black woman subordination in the modern macro-WEIRD society. From a business perspective, this can also be attributed to large-scaled global companies maintaining organisational identities and attitudes that could be said to adopt the most dominant market's organisational behavioural values in MIEs.

In terms of intragroup differences, that aspect tended to come to the forefront across age generations more prominently, in terms of their thinking around social norms as influencing their responses and perceptions. Also, the career experiences of the self-identifying Black queer nonbinary woman participant could be said to have experienced more blatantly severe backlash from her dealings with a major label, indicating the ciritcal need for more exploration within this context to demarginalise self-identitying Black women and other gender minorities from the LGBTQIA2S+ communities.

Finally, the class stratification seemed to be more wide-ranging in the UK group; but that could be attributed to missing data and one outlier, as one participant is a member of the royal class in her native country. |
|---|---|

Figure 94   MSCF Recapped Analysis – 2 of 3

INNERSECTIONALITY	The research found that there were rarely unique one-off instances – even in situations where major labels or music entities withheld over six-figures of these Black women's earnings in ways that severely set their careers back. Many of their stories seemed to thematically crossover because of how similarly the mechanisms of complex misogynoirism seemed to be deployed in these top (WEIRD) MIEs.

Figure 95   MSCF Recapped Analysis – 3 of 3

Next Chapter

This chapter discussed the following three key research findings, that were prominent between both studies, as well as the implications, strengths and limitations, recommendations, and possible directions for future research.

For the concluding chapter final thoughts are shared about the impact of the research.

Chapter 7: Final Thoughts and Recommendations

To restate the aims and objectives, this research sought to gain in-depth insights about trailblazing and leading UK and US Black women's career experiences with navigating "power", "identity politics" (Hull, et al., 2015; Crenshaw, 1991), the "politics of identity" and the implications of social constructs, in the, purported-to-be, egalitarian[243], top-performing music industry ecosystems of the world.

7.1 Reflections

Based on the results and discussion chapters, it can be concluded that this project met its objectives and aims, which was to gain multidimensional understandings about Black women's career experiences, which reportedly demonstrated the degree as to how much oppressive systems are integrally embedded throughout WEIRD MEI organisational cultures. These were evidenced as harmfully impacting, not only, the career trajectories and pace of progression for Black women; but also, their occupational health (Sojo, et al., 2016), which seems to clearly demonstrate the degree of how much more social progress is urgently needed to ensure that humane treatment, and humanity, in the workplace are ideologically prioritised and institutionally reinforced.

Considering how work environments and industrial cultures reportedly reinforce this dynamic, to the point wherein Black women are still terrified to

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[243] From the 1960s to present day.

speak up[244], is telling. The severity of retaliatory measures taken and abusive practises, at play, were made abundantly evident in the studies, as Black women spoke to their experiences with being "blackballed", "immediately terminated", "shelved", "robbed", "financially exploited", and "erased", which were cited to be, and remain, a common feature, which needs urgent comprehensive organisational interventions to be directly redressed, as a starting point. In doing this, organisations can begin to work towards ensuring the psychological safety and occupational wellbeing of Black women, and all people, working in the music industry.

This may require internal and external systems for checks and balances to be put in place to monitor accountability across organisations' verbal commitments to action, and sustain, these changes. Nonetheless they are urgently needed, so that new a new paradigm of values can be co-constructed, in organisational cultures; to also encourage and hold organisations liable, in conducting ethical and humane, business practices, as well ensuring that workforce and leadership designs are heterogenous, bringing out the best talent for the job, where systemic barriers no longer play a role in that decision making process.

In terms of the research design, based on what the conclusions yielded, employing an inter-conceptual framework, through intersectionality and

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[244] This could explain why some even chose to conduct their interviews from their homes, despite having their own office space.

"intrasectionality[245]", demonstrated how what combining these two elements in a Big-Q paradigm (Braun & Clarke, 2013) can offer to knowledge production pursuits. As qualitative contributions can deepen understandings, and provide insightful context to numerical and non-numerical data (Braun & Clarke, 2013), while also demarginalising (Crenshaw, 1989) Black women's representation and voices, as knowledge producers and examined populations, in the field of psychology (Cole, 2020; Spates, 2012), was dually beneficial, in practice, for the research.

Quantitative and "Eurocentric thinking and assumptions" (Sabik, et al., 2021) in research designs continue to dominate the field. However, the deployment of the literature review in this thesis deliberately centred the tabooed multidimensional social contexts (as done in "IT", "BFT", and societal psychology) to build a case (Braun & Clarke, 2022b) to critically re-centre and draw attention to how some of these structural imbalances, came to be, as elucidated in the literature review and across both studies.

Case in point, in Chapter 2, earlier movements led by the psychological and western sciences (Crenshaw, Kimberlé, et al., (Editors), 2019) communities co-conspired to try to legitimise "White supremacy" (Farber, 2008; Grzanka, et al., 2019) and "Black inferiority", as well as the construct of an arbitrary "human hierarchy" (Wilkerson, 2020), which was even taught at the university level until it was debunked and denounced as pseudoscience.

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[245] See Section 7.2.1

While the scientific community owns and acknowledges their active involvements – now – centuries later (American Psychological Association, 2021k; American Psychological Association, 2021j; British Psychological Society, 2020; Britannica, 2021), the domino effect of those movements, then – minimally compounded by: (1) the institution and legacy of African slavery, (2) structural and interpersonal segregation, (3) epigenetic modifications (Ramo-Fernández, et al., 2015), (4) disconnection and relational poverty (Perry & Winfrey, 2020), and (5) the systemic workforce segregation, amongst other factors, together with (6) knowledge suppression of these variables – contribute to human relational dysfunction today. The validation of this claim was overwhelmingly evidenced in Black women's reports about their career journeys in the less-regulated and less-structured work environments within these WEIRD MIEs, that formed the focus of this thesis, in the studies.

As stated earlier in the methodology chapter, contentions about psychology employing IT still dominate discourse; however, I am hopeful this research can be a part of the conversation, where the strengths and limitations (see Page 435), can inform the advantages as well as well as possible directions on how to better develop practices, for future, and improved, research. It is my hope to join the collective voices of scholars, who recognise the immense value this framework can provide – as it allows for more balanced perspectives, within situated contexts with a focus on "power" that can allow for more holistic understandings around diverse evolutionary human behaviour (Henrich, 2020). Thus, I feel that this doctoral thesis can add value

and perspective to help to further advance the need for more research in this area, within a Big Q or medium q qualitative paradigm.

Finally, considering multidimensional contexts, should not be separated from the individual, especially in relation to "power", IT instrumentally helps to facilitate, since these power structures, impact everyone, which raises another point. Beneficially, "context" and "reflexivity" were critically underscored throughout this doctoral thesis. This is why the following philosophical underpinnings were selected, which enhanced the research:

- Intersectionality Theory in IO psychology[246],

- Critical Realist ontology,

- Black Feminist epistemology, and

- Big Q research, where I employed Reflexive Thematic Analyses in both studies for the archival data and in-depth semi-structured interviews

In the following sections, recommendations for scholars and stakeholders are discussed, which is followed by next steps, to conclude this doctoral thesis.

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[246] IT is slowly, but surely gaining more mainstream traction across the behavioural sciences, especially following the pandemic (Grzanka, et al., 2019)

7.2 Recommendations

7.2.1 Scholarship: Field Expansion Proposals

"IOS Psychology"

While IO psychology can usefully examine human behaviour in organisations, and within industries, the findings from these studies strongly indicate that practitioners should consider it may be correspondingly imperative for future investigations on people's career experiences, in the creative (business) industries, to be conducted from a "transdisciplinary" lens that co-prioritises interdependent social contexts (Collins, 2019) (see Figure 56), contextualised in observation to the diverse evolutionary psychology of groups. Beneficially, to this point, societal psychology (Himmelweit & Gaskell, 1990; Howarth, et al., 2013), has the framework to do so, constructively, especially in research centring (politicised) marginalised communities. Howarth et al. (2013) noted:

> Rather than societal psychology being a subset of social psychology or political psychology, we argue that societal psychology should be seen as a trans-disciplinary field that includes aspects of social, political, community and organisational psychology, and other disciplines that explore interconnections between psychological processes and social contexts (2013, p. 365).

Aligned with the value constructs set in both IT and BFT, which centres "theory to practice" to drive change, the branch of societal psychology, pioneered by Himmelweit and Gaskell (1990), is equally invested in doing the same. Further, this field is invested in understanding the implications of both "structural inequalities" and "social change" (Abreu Lopes & Gaskell, 2015; Collins, 2019); as well as the mechanisms (Howarth, et al., 2013) behind them.

For these reasons, I propose that future research that centre marginalised groups, such as Black women working in WEIRD MIEs, should consider moving towards discovery of how to merge the two subsets of psychology into IOS psychology, applied within an intersectional and "intrasectional" lens. As the multifaceted career experiences of communities from underrepresented and marginalised groups can be unique[247], factoring these considerations could aide in better informing how to design studies to deepen understandings around the *how* and *why* negative perceptions and structural inequalities can continue to spectrally persist in the ways they do, in professional settings.

Also, for industry research practitioners, merging methods from these two disciplines, and an IT framework, could particularly benefit future studies on the less-examined inner workings of the media and entertainment industries, in "Hollywood", for example, which all fall under the macro-umbrellaed creative industries.

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[247] This could be due to the more evident societal influences on macro human behaviour, and current ways of relating, in less-structured corporate environments.

Intrasectionality Theory

There are different categories of what Crenshaw (1989), named as "intersectionality", including further coinages she defined as "structural intersectionality", "representational intersectionality", and "political intersectionality", in her follow-up landmark article, "Mapping the Margins" (1991). In this paper, she elucidated how structural disadvantages are typically not considered, as these can erroneously conflate intragroup differences, consequently relegating the "minority of minorities" (Lorde, 2009), so to speak, even further to the margins. This dynamic, as demonstrated in my studies, was framed to defer full liberation since "intersectional invisibility" (Coles & Pasek, 2020) mechanised to hinder social progress. In another paper she co-authored, cases of "intra-intersectional discrimination" (Carbado, et al., 2013) were hypothetically described to illustrate how members of the same shared groups can experience in-and-out "group based differential treatment" (Collins, 2009) across varying degrees by intergroup and intragroup members. Based on observations of scholarship output, as well as what has been viewed across different productions of BFT and IT, an "intrasectional" conceptual framework has been used – although not named but grouped under intersectionality. However, it may be useful for practitioners to disaggregate these concepts to consider officially naming this umbrellaed conceptual perspective for clarity, which I propose should be "Intrasectionality Theory" to make these iterations of intersectionality more clearly defined, and distinct, in scholars' application of one or both, in future studies (see Figure 11) for more accessible understandings and possibilities for future directions.

7.2.2 Stakeholders

 Based on the key findings from the results and discussion, they evidenced that there are deeper systemic issues that need to urgently be redressed, within organisations, through comprehensive measures and interventions[248]. Without the cooperative support of stakeholders implementing transparent accountability metrics to prevent, or course correct, adverse career experiences, as reported by Black women in the studies, critical changes may fail to become new social norms (Liu, 2018). As a paradigm shift in values, is urgently needed, this would help to ensure, that professional workspaces are, and remain, psychologically safe, ethical (Lean In, 2022), supportive, inclusive, and rehumanised (Bain & Company, 2022).

To work towards these aims and objectives, invested groups, should, consider, possible "side effects" (Beckel, et al., 2022; Watts, et al., 2022) of organisational interventions, needed, to prevent "cycles of progression and regression" (Black Music Action Coalition, 2021) from persisting; which may mean they need to constantly assess and reassess their workforce design practices, business dealings, and organisational cultures, more frequently. Also, they may need to consider the possibility of establishing a regulating body to conduct audits, as reinforcements, and trust with the public and affected parties, to regulate these types of practices from continuing.

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[248] A couple of possible avenues are underscored under "Implications", in Section 6.3.

Since the unprecedented pandemic events, there seems to be more of a collective willingness for music-centric companies to deviate from conducting "business-as-usual" (see Figure 31 and Page 140). As external key stakeholders are instrumental, in driving this (contextualised) cultural shift, their publicised call-to-action, in their reports, for companies to balance (Yang & Liu, 2021) representation in key positions and in the workforce, galvanised industry-wide support, which organisations have been paying attention[249] to. Thus, this is why alliances such as the Black Music Action Coalition (2021), through their "MIA Report Card", and UK Music (2020), through their "Ten-Point Plan", published reports because these critical initiatives – to continue to keep the pressure on companies in MIEs – are needed to ensure they follow through, on their verbal commitments to action and institutionalise equality and equity, in the workplace, at scale.

Although the incentivising benefits of DEI (see Figure 96 on the next page), are often capitalistically promoted, it could be said that some of those drivers, albeit well-intended, tend to mechanise as being short-sighted, on a relational level since it is assigned contingency-value, within a transactional relational model.

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[249] Especially as these collectives are comprised of past and current employees and leaders of the industry.

Figure 96   Catalyst's Diversity and Inclusion Infographic (2020)

To try to collectively shift from a "fixed mindset" paradigm (Dweck, 2017), it could benefit businesses, and people within them, to instead, identify reimagine how "transformation", "rehumanisation" (Bain & Company, 2022), and healthier ways of (human) relating (Perry & Winfrey, 2020), are crucial to our interdependent survival (Fuller, 2018), as we need to urgently make the "scarcity" construct, contributing to the superiority-inferiority constructs, obsolete, since it could be said they tend to manifest as dysfunction and harmful human interactions, across WEIRD MIE work environments, which Black women spoke extensively to, in the studies.

7.3   Next Steps

This research marks the beginning of my next journey. To join collective efforts to advance humanity in music, as well as to co-advance systemic cultural transformation through the implementations of DEIBA initiatives and research in the global music markets, I founded a non-profit organisation, to disseminate findings from this research, as well as future, scholarship, where I also intend to host others' works, from around the globe. Correspondingly, I founded a multimedia brand, to curate a digital space to celebrate and preserve the legacies of Black women's (often-erased) impact in music, and within the MIEs, across the African Diaspora[250].

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[250] Through these platforms, key stakeholders, universities, and music departments have engaged with the content, since its public 2018 launch, where some subscribed to the mailing list, to stay abreast of the latest developments. Based on the website analytics, to date, unique site visitors from nearly 25 countries frequent the platforms, which shows potential in terms of reach to advance scholarship and practice, in this topic, globally in the MIEs.

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Appendices

From: **Brittany Blackwell** Brittany.Blackwell@uwl.ac.uk
Subject: Call For September 2018 PhD Research Interviews
Date: 10 August 2018 at 14:06
To:
Bcc:

Dear

My name is Brittany Blackwell and I am a doctoral researcher in the School of Human and Social Sciences at the University of West London.

I would like to invite members and staff of your professional association, **Authors,** to take part in a PhD interdisciplinary study. I am actively seeking and recruiting participants to conduct in-depth interviews for this research. The study aims to examine the psychological effects of intersectionality in terms of their impact on the career trajectories, employer-employee relations and entrepreneurial pursuits of Black women in the top performing markets of the global pop music industry.

Inclusion criteria are as follows: (1) must self-identify as a Black woman, (2) must be based in either the UK or USA, (3) must be actively working in the global pop music industry in at least one of the following areas:

- a performer - which may include, but not be limited to, lead singer, background vocalist or solo act
- a music creator - which may include, but not be limited to, songwriter, composer, producer, arranger, engineer, disc jockey and/or
- an industry officer - which may include, but not be limited to, a low to mid-level managerial, executive, or consultant role at record labels, music publishing companies, marketing/PR agencies, music consulting agencies, performing rights organisations, or law firms that specialise in servicing the music industry.

If members and/or staff of BASCA meet the criteria and are interested in participating in this research study, and/or if they have further enquiries related to the study, please feel free to contact me by 31st August 2018, directly at brittany.blackwell@uwl.ac.uk.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration to share this **Call For PhD Research Interviews**.

Sincerely,
Brittany Blackwell

Brittany L. Blackwell

Appendix A   Call for Interviews: Email Blasts
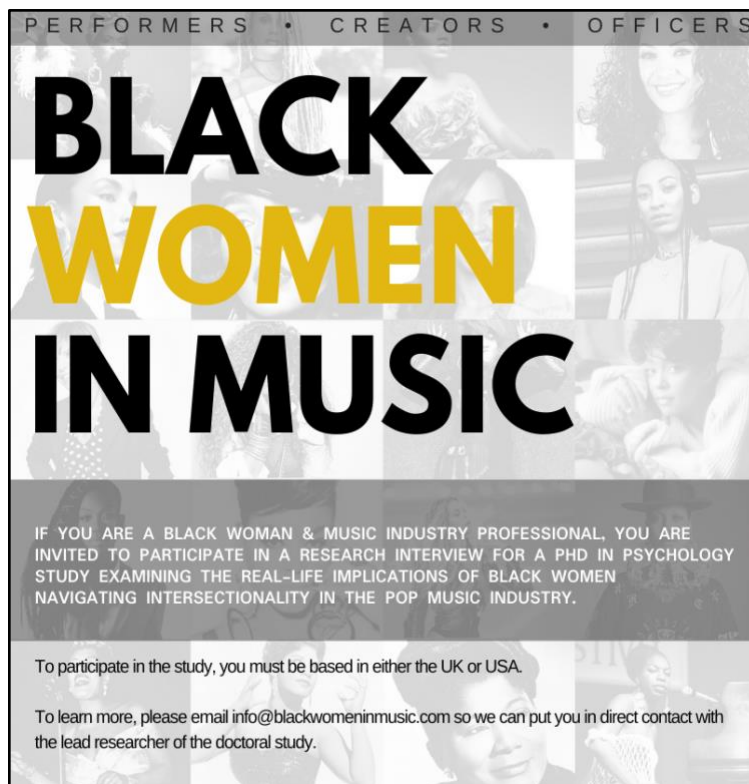
Appendix B   Digital Flyer

UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON

Author:
Brittany Blackwell

Thesis Title:
Forget Me Not: Distinguishing Popularity from Legacy and Equality for Black Women in the Global Pop Music Industry

INDICATIVE RESEARCH TOOLS / INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Please note: As the principal research investigator, I intend to ask interviewees approximately 12 questions along with some prompts. The questions below are solely indicative. However, the final questions will be decided after a short pilot.

Before the start of the interview, I will introduce myself and provide a brief summary of the research. I will then provide a verbal summary of the informed consent followed by giving a written copy for participants to review and sign.

1. Can you tell me a bit about yourself?
   a. For example, your role, why and how you got into the music industry, who is your role model in this music industry and how long you have been active in the music industry?

2. As you know, my research is interested in the ways in how black female professionals not only navigate intersectionality in their career path through the music industry on the basis of being black and female; but, a whole range of other factors may play a part such as the colour of one's skin tone, hair texture and body image. Can you please say a bit about how any or all of these factors may have influenced how you feel you have been treated within the industry?

3. Are there other factors about you which you feel may be relevant to how you are seen in the industry?
   a. For example, your sexuality or gender identity as a black female?

4. Can you describe any experiences you may have had that are a direct result of you being black and female and/or how you look?

5. And, is that treatment, whether it be perceived as positive or negative, valid/understandable?

6. Have you observed that some people from within or across different minority groups may be treated differently within the industry?
   a. If yes, why do you think that is?

UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON

Author:
Brittany Blackwell

Thesis Title:
Forget Me Not: Distinguishing Popularity from Legacy and Equality for Black Women in the American Pop Music Industry

INDICATIVE RESEARCH TOOLS / INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

7. Do you think the degrees to which discrimination can occur differs depending on the range of social groups to which a person may belong? (e.g. black, female, gender fluid, sexuality)

8. Do you think the way you look has affected how you have been treated by the industry?
   b. If yes, can you give some examples?

9. Do you feel that what happens within the music industry also happens in wider society or do you believe that the music industry is different in terms of the way black female professionals may be treated?

10. Are you aware of any legislation that is in place to protect your rights?
    c. And can you say what they are and how they may protect people like you?

11. How do you see your role as a black female professional in the music industry and how do you feel the industry views you?

12. If you could change anything about your experience as a black female navigating your professional career in the music industry, what would you change and why?

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Institution:
University of West London - The Graduate School
School of Human and Social Sciences

Doctoral Researcher in Psychology:
Brittany L. Blackwell
Student ID 21307786

Research Project:
Forget Me Not: Distinguishing Popularity from Legacy and Equality
for Black Women in the Global Pop Music Industry

Study Title
Forget Me Not: Distinguishing Popularity from Legacy and Equality
for Black Women in the Global Pop Music Industry

> *I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please also feel free to ask questions if anything you read is not clear or would like more information. Take the time you need to decide whether or not to take part.*

What is the purpose of the study?

The major purpose of this study is to provide an account of the role played by overlapping experiences of race(ism), sex(ism), class(ism), gender biases, forms of sexual expression and representations of body image, how these may change over time and in the cultural contexts of the US and UK, in terms of impact of this has had on the career paths of professional Black women in the music industry.

Why have I been invited?

The research will take the form of interviews that will be used in order to gain first-hand accounts of professional Black women's experiences in the music industry in terms of the themes that form the focus of this thesis. These interviews will be recorded, but please do not worry as your real name or anything that may identify you, will not be used.

You have been invited to take part in this research study on the basis that you

I. identify as being Black or of African descent (i.e. African, African American, African Caribbean, Black British)

II. work as a performer, music creator or industry officer

III. are pursuing a career in the popular music industry or have aspirations to break into the top-performing markets of the global pop music industry

Do I have to take part?

It would be really great to have your contribution to this study, but is up to you to decide. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have regarding the study. You will then be asked to read and sign a consent form to show you agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw from this study at any time, without giving a reason.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Institution:
University of West London - The Graduate School
School of Human and Social Sciences

Doctoral Researcher in Psychology:
Brittany L. Blackwell
Student ID 21307786

Research Project:
Forget Me Not: Distinguishing Popularity from Legacy and Equality
for Black Women in the Global Pop Music Industry

What will happen to me if I take part?

The interview will take about 45 minutes to complete and it will take place in a quiet and private room appropriate for this purpose at the University of West London or at another suitable location, for example at your place of work. We do not anticipate that there are any risks associated with your participation in this study, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time.

What will I have to do?

You will be asked to answer up to twelve questions to provide an account of your experience in your professional role as a Black woman in the music industry.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

If you have been affected discussing the challenges you may have endured in this industry, we would encourage you to contact the network of services we provided you on the debriefing statement. The debriefing statement will be given to you after taking part of this study.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The information we get from the study will help to increase the understanding of the experiences of Black women in the music industry and the information will hopefully influence business practices and policies to help improve the treatment of Black women music industry professionals.

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researcher who will do her best to answer your questions by emailing her at brittany.blackwell@uwl.ac.uk

If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally you can do this through either contacting the Principal Supervisor of this research at marcia.worrell@uwl.ac.uk or the University of West London's Chair of the Psychology Ethics at ethics@uwl.ac.uk.

Appendix D   Participant Information Sheet – 1 of 2

UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Institution:
University of West London - The Graduate School
School of Human and Social Sciences

Doctoral Researcher in Psychology:
Brittany L. Blackwell
Student ID 21307786

Research Project:
Forget Me Not: Distinguishing Popularity from Legacy and Equality
for Black Women in the Global Pop Music Industry

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?
Yes, your taking part in the study will be kept confidential. As the participant, your information will be safeguarded during and after the study. To comply with the Data Protection Act 1988 and GDPR 2018, your information will be anonymised at point of collection to protect your privacy. The researcher will ensure that:

- All identifying information will be kept in separate locked filing cabinets/files and working files will contain no identifying information, and will only be accessed by one or two persons. Also, electronic files will be encrypted and password protected and will only be accessible to me as the researcher and my supervisor.
- All audiotapes will be transcribed using codes or pseudonyms to protect the identity of individuals and will be destroyed upon completion of the research project
- Access to computer files will be encrypted and password protected.
- Research data will be encrypted, password protected and stored for up to 5 years after the end of the project, after which they should be disposed of safely

What will happen if I don't carry on with the study?
If you wish to withdraw from the study all the information and data collected from you, to date, will be destroyed and removed from all the study files.

What will happen to the results of the research study?
If you wish to learn about the published research findings of this study that is projected to be completed by May 2020, please contact brittany.blackwell@uwl.ac.uk.

UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Institution:
University of West London - The Graduate School
School of Human and Social Sciences

Doctoral Researcher in Psychology:
Brittany L. Blackwell
Student ID 21307786

Research Project:
Forget Me Not: Distinguishing Popularity from Legacy and Equality
for Black Women in the Global Pop Music Industry

Further information and contact details:

This research has been reviewed and approved by the University of West London Research Ethics Board. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

Researcher	Brittany L. Blackwell
Email Address	brittany.blackwell@uwl.ac.uk

Supervisor	Professor Marcia Worrell
Email Address	marcia.worrell@uwl.ac.uk

Appendix E Participant Information Sheet – 2 of 2

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Institution:
University of West London - The Graduate School
School of Human and Social Sciences

Doctoral Researcher:
Brittany L. Blackwell

Research Project:
Forget Me Not: Distinguishing Popularity from Legacy and Equality
for Black Women in the Global Pop Music Industry

Thank you for taking part in this study conducted by lead research investigator, Brittany Blackwell. The information from this interview will provide an anonymised account of your experience as a black female music industry professional in the global pop music industry.

As stated in the consent form, the major aim of this research is to provide an account of the role played by intersectionality with respect to overlapping experiences of race(ism), sex(ism), class(ism), gender biases, forms of sexual expression and representations of body image, how these may change over time and in the cultural contexts of the US and UK, in terms of impact of this has had on the career trajectories of Black female music industry professionals.

If you have been affected discussing the challenges you may have endured in this industry, we encourage you to contact the following networks of therapists who cater to communities you self-identify as:

FOR UK INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

The Black, African and Asian Network

- Therapist Directory: https://www.baatn.org.uk/find-a-therapist/#!directory

FOR US INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

Therapy for Black Girls

- Therapist Directory: https://www.therapyforblackgirls.com/therapist-directory/

If you are interested in learning about the published research findings of this study that is projected to be completed by May 2021, please contact brittany.blackwell@uwl.ac.uk. You may keep a copy of this debriefing form for your records. If you do not wish to keep this debriefing form, please return this to the lead research investigator. Contact information for the researcher is on your copy of the consent form which you may also keep for your records.

Appendix F   Debriefing Statement

UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON

RESEARCH SUMMARY & CONSENT FORM

Institution:
University of West London - The Graduate School
School of Human and Social Sciences

Doctoral Researcher in Psychology:
Brittany L. Blackwell
Student ID 21307786

Research Project:
Forget Me Not: Distinguishing Popularity from Legacy and Equality for Black Women in the Global Pop Music Industry

Dear Participant:

The following study has received research ethics clearance by the University of West London.

Research Summary

The major aim of this research is to provide an account of the role played by overlapping experiences of race(ism), sex(ism), class(ism), gender biases, forms of sexual expression and representations of body image, how these may change over time and in the cultural contexts of the US and UK, in terms of impact of this has had on the career paths of professional Black women in the global pop music industry.

Interviews

In-depth interviews, lasting approximately 45 minutes, will be conducted with Black women, who are music industry professionals based in the US and the UK, in order to identify any common and distinctive experiences of women working in the US and those from the UK seeking to work in the top-performing markets of the global pop music industry.

At this point of the research, a total of twelve Black women music industry professionals working in the global pop music industry will be recruited to take part in the study, from across the following areas:

I. performers (which include lead singers and solo acts)
II. music creators (which include songwriters, composers, arrangers, producers, engineers and mixers) or
III. industry officers (which include low to mid-level managerial and consultant roles)

Participants for this phase of the research will be selected on the basis that they

I. identify as being Black or of African descent (i.e. African, African American, African Caribbean, Black British)
II. work in at least one of three areas as performers, music creators and industry officers
III. are pursuing a career in the popular music industry or have aspirations to break into the top-performing markets of the global pop music industry

UNIVERSITY OF WEST LONDON

RESEARCH SUMMARY & CONSENT FORM

Institution:
University of West London - The Graduate School
School of Human and Social Sciences

Doctoral Researcher in Psychology:
Brittany L. Blackwell
Student ID 21307786

Research Project:
Forget Me Not: Distinguishing Popularity from Legacy and Equality for Black Women in the Global Pop Music Industry

Consent Form

Research Project Title	Forget Me Not: Distinguishing Popularity from Legacy and Equality for Black Women in the Global Pop Music Industry
Research Investigator	Brittany L. Blackwell
Research Participant's Name	

The interview will take approximately 45 minutes to complete. We do not anticipate that there are any risks associated with your taking part in this study, but you have the right to stop the interview or withdraw from the research at any time.

Appendix G   Research Summary and Consent Form – 1 of 3

RESEARCH SUMMARY & CONSENT FORM

Institution:
University of West London - The Graduate School
School of Human and Social Sciences

Doctoral Researcher in Psychology:
Brittany L. Blackwell
Student ID 21307786

Research Project:
Forget Me Not: Distinguishing Popularity from Legacy and Equality for Black Women in the Global Pop Music Industry

Dear Research Participant,

Thank you for the interest you have shown in taking part in my research project. Ethical procedures for academic research undertaken in UK institutions require that interviewees explicitly agree to being interviewed and they must be provided with information on how the interview will be used. This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation.

It is really important you are clear about all aspects of my research before you agree to take part, which you can demonstrate by ticking the boxes below. Would you therefore read the accompanying information sheet and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following? Please note that this form will be kept securely and separately from any information you may provide from this study.

☐ The interview will be recorded and a transcript will be produced
☐ You will be sent the transcript and given the opportunity to correct any factual errors
☐ The transcript of the interview will be analysed by Brittany Blackwell as research investigator
☐ All names and identifying information will be removed from the recordings and will not be transcribed
☐ No real names will be used in the write-up of your research and that a pseudonym or made up name will be used instead
☐ Access to the interview transcript will be limited to Brittany Blackwell and academic colleagues and researchers with whom she might collaborate as part of the research process
☐ Any summary interview content, or direct quotations from the interview, that are made available through academic publication or other academic outlets will be anonymised so that you cannot be identified, and care will be taken to ensure that other information in the interview that could identify yourself is not revealed

☐ The actual recording will be archived with Brittany Blackwell for future research unless the interviewee requests that it be destroyed within a five-year timeframe after publication
☐ Any variation of the conditions above will only occur with your further explicit approval or a quotation agreement could be incorporated into the interview agreement

Agreement

I understand that my words may be quoted directly. With regards to being quoted, please initial below any of the statements that you agree with:

+ I wish to review the notes, transcripts, or other data collected during the research pertaining to my participation.
INITIAL HERE: ___

+ I agree to be quoted directly.
INITIAL HERE: ___

+ I agree to be quoted directly if my name is not published and a made-up name (pseudonym) is used.
INITIAL HERE: ___

+ I agree that the researchers may publish documents that contain quotations by me
INITIAL HERE: ___

Appendix H   Research Summary and Consent Form – 2 of 3

RESEARCH SUMMARY & CONSENT FORM

Institution:
University of West London - The Graduate School
School of Human and Social Sciences

Doctoral Researcher in Psychology:
Brittany L. Blackwell
Student ID 21307786

Research Project:
Forget Me Not: Distinguishing Popularity from Legacy and Equality for Black Women in the Global Pop Music Industry

All or part of the content of your interview may be used

☐ in academic papers, policy papers or news articles

☐ in other feedback events related to this research

By signing this form, I agree that

☐ I have read the Information sheet;

☐ I am voluntarily taking part in this project. I understand that I do not have to take part, and I can stop the interview at any time without reason or explanation;

☐ The transcribed interview or extracts from it may be used as described above;

☐ I do not expect to receive any benefit or payment for my participation;

☐ I can request a copy of the transcript of my interview and may make edits I feel necessary to ensure the effectiveness of any agreement made;

☐ I have been able to ask any questions I might have, and I understand that I am free to contact the researcher with any questions I may have in the future.

Participant's Printed Name	
Participant's Signature	
Date	

RESEARCH SUMMARY & CONSENT FORM

Institution:
University of West London - The Graduate School
School of Human and Social Sciences

Doctoral Researcher in Psychology:
Brittany L. Blackwell
Student ID 21307786

Research Project:
Forget Me Not: Distinguishing Popularity from Legacy and Equality for Black Women in the Global Pop Music Industry

Researcher's Printed Name	Brittany L. Blackwell
Researcher's Signature	
Date	

Contact Information

This research has been reviewed and approved by the University of West London Research Ethics Board. If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

Researcher	Brittany L. Blackwell
Email Address	brittany.blackwell@uwl.ac.uk
Supervisor	Professor Marcia Worrell
Email Address	marcia.worrell@uwl.ac.uk

What if I have concerns about this research?
If you are worried about this research, or if you are concerned about how it is being conducted, you can contact the Chair of the Psychology Ethics Committee, University of West London, St Mary's Road, Ealing W5 5RF (or email at ethics@uwl.ac.uk).

Appendix I   Research Summary and Consent Form – 3 of 3

From: Brittany Lynn Blackwell <21307786@student.uwl.ac.uk>
Sent: 19 June 2018 12:44
To: Shss Ethics <shss.Ethics@uwl.ac.uk>
Cc: Marcia Worrell <Marcia.Worrell@uwl.ac.uk>
Subject: Re: UWL Reference: 21307786

Dear SHSS Ethics,

Thank you so much for granting me full approval.

I am so appreciative of this opportunity and I look forward to beginning the process of collecting data for my research.

Kind Regards,
Brittany

Brittany L. Blackwell

From: Shss Ethics <shss.Ethics@uwl.ac.uk>
Sent: 15 June 2018 15:23:33
To: Brittany Lynn Blackwell
Subject: RE: UWL Reference: 21307786

Dear Brittany Blackwell,

Thank you for your ethics application.
It was very thorough and well-written.
You have been granted full approval and can begin collecting data.

Thank you.

SHSS Ethics

Appendix J   SHSS Ethics Committee Approval

DATA MANAGEMENT AND STORAGE STATEMENT

All applicants should familiarise themselves with the Data Protection Act 1998, and adhere to its principles in all aspects of their research:

http://www.uwl.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Departments/About-us/Web/PDF/policies/policy-on-data-protection.pdf

Research data covers a broad range of types of information (see examples below), and digital data can be structured and stored in a variety of file formats.

EXAMPLES OF RESEARCH DATA

Some examples of research data:

- Documents (text, Word), spreadsheets
- Laboratory notebooks, field notebooks, diaries
- Questionnaires, transcripts, codebooks
- Audiotapes, videotapes
- Photographs, films
- Test responses
- Slides, artefacts, specimens, samples
- Collection of digital objects acquired and generated during the process of research
- Database contents (video, audio, text, images)
- Models, algorithms, scripts
- Contents of an application (input, output, log files for analysis software, simulation software, schemas)
- Methodologies and workflows
- Standard operating procedures and protocols

As a student or member of staff undertaking a research project, I understand that I am responsible for the following:

- The security and confidentiality of all data collected

- Mitigating all risks to anonymity, privacy and confidentiality posed by all kinds of personal information storage, processing, including computer and paper files, e-mail records, audio and video files, and any information that directly identifies an individual. It is recommended that data be anonymised at the point of collection.

DATA MANAGEMENT AND STORAGE STATEMENT

I will ensure that:

- Data and codes and all identifying information will be kept in separate locked filing cabinets/files and working files will contain no identifying information, and will only be accessed by one or two persons. Also, electronic files will be encrypted and password protected and will only be accessible to me as the researcher and my supervisor.

- All audiotapes will be transcribed using codes or pseudonyms for identification of individuals and destroyed upon completion of the research project

- Access to computer files will be encrypted and password protected.

- Research data will be stored for up to 5 years after the end of the project, after which they should be disposed of safely.

Name:
Brittany Blackwell

Application ID:
21307786

Project title:
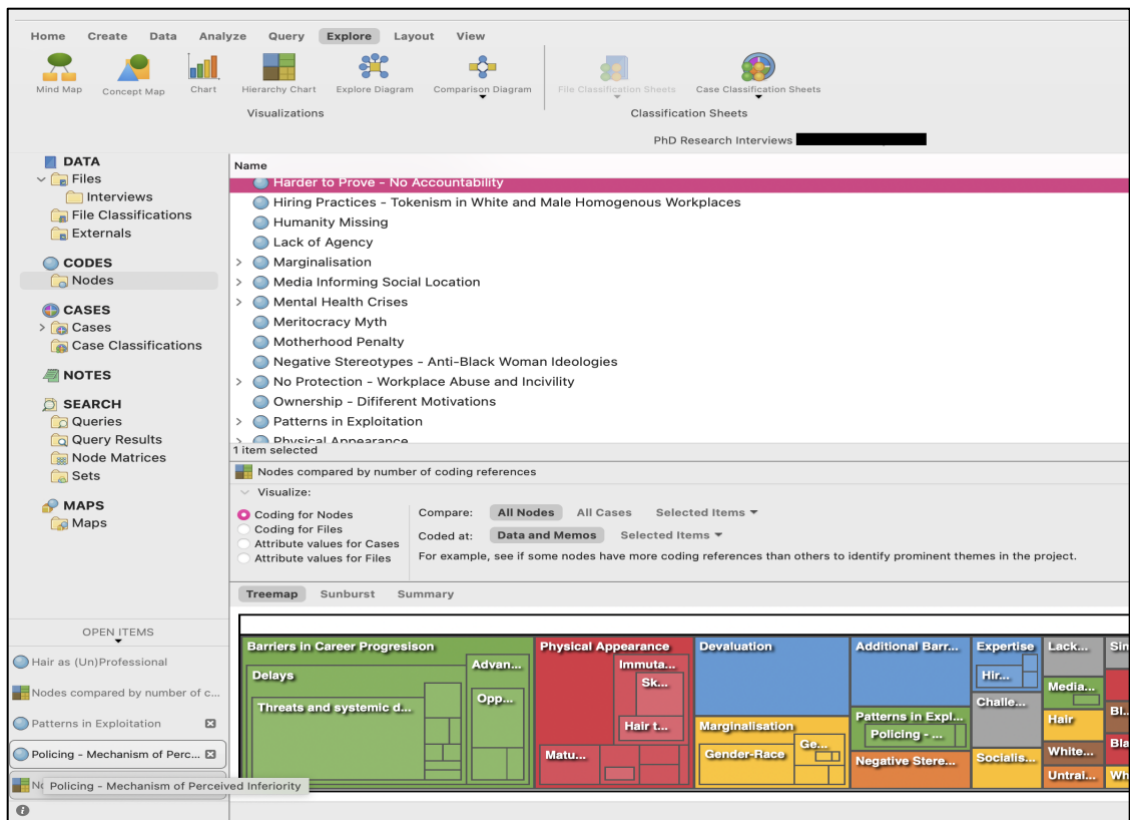Forget Me Not: Distinguishing Popularity from Legacy and Equality for Black Women in the American Pop Music Industry

Appendix K   Data Management

Appendix L   Study 1 – Trint Stories [Sample]

Appendix M   Study 2 – NVivo TreeMap [Sample]

SONG: "COLOR"
MUSIC & LYRICS: BRITTANY BLACKWELL

Verse 1

Growing up I was aware of my color
I was looking for myself inside my culture
The butterflies in my stomach, they would flutter
My own rejected me and the foreign were scared to love
I didn't move like them so they were ruffled
I was stranded in the midst of two world's rubble
Of the illusion of division in this bubble
Reaction to my hair, Didn't think it would stir trouble
To add, the mixed signals from my old man's perception
I am so in dire need of some real affection
I know my strength and my beauty is a blessing
I'm unlearning the opposite message that I bring to question

Chorus

Growing up I was aware of my color
(Afro Bone Unknown, Yeah)
G-g-g-growing up, growing up
G-g-g-
(Repeat 2x's)

Verse 2

Went to college prep school up in New England
I was the token brown skinned girl one lonely freshman
My name threw others off cause it sounded just like them
They were shocked, I had a much higher dose of melanin
Back at home, my so called friends said I was better
They said "You talk white" why give a race so much credit?
My mom instilled in us the high cost of ignorance
Hold up: It's not "you talk"; It is "you speak", but I digress
You act like explanation is my obligation
Anywhere I go I shall not be complacent
With limited expectations from people's hatred
Not just from others, but from my own which is heartbreaking

Chorus

Growing up I was aware of my color
(Afro Bone Unknown, Yeah)
G-g-g-growing up, growing up
G-g-g-
(Repeat 2x's)

Bridge

But I won't assimilate to fit in your mold
I'm in the big leagues of my own
Always pushing the envelope
They're threatened that I-I-I use my voice;
Their tactics no longer pierce my soul
My blood's already gone international
Mainstream says "my kind's" too bold

My spirit raises nations of hope

I'm still ridiculed "You're doing the most"
But I'm mother Earth
God bless your soul
All your genomes come from my womb
No matter your color, I'm where you're from
All your DNA traces back to me
And if you didn't know, well now you know
(Now you know, now you know)
Afro Bone Unknown, Yeah

Chorus

Growing up I was aware of my color
(Afro Bone Unknown, Yeah)
G-g-g-growing up, growing up
G-g-g-
(Repeat 2x's)

Outro

Remember, Remember Me
(Repeat 4x's)

Appendix N   Music & Lyrics to "Color" [sic] (2007)