

Using Constructivist Grounded Theory to Examine the Experiences of Black British Female Managers: A Worked Example

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Background

Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities

“Put simply we no longer see a Britain where the system is deliberately rigged against ethnic minorities. The impediments and disparities do exist, they are varied, and ironically very few of them are directly to do with racism. Too often ‘racism’ is the catch-all explanation, and can be simply implicitly accepted rather than explicitly examined” (2021, p. 8).

Equality

Diversity

Inclusion

Research findings

- “on average BAME [female] respondents were more ambitious and career-focused than others, especially white British, but in certain respects reported less support” (Arnold et al., 2019, p. 4).
- Black female participants in Showunmi’s study reported how racial discrimination was far more “vociferous” than gender-based discrimination (2020, p. 58).
- Endemic institutional racism is also cited by numerous researchers as one of the main reasons causing disproportionality in positions of leadership in the British school system (e.g., Elonga Mboyo, 2019; Joseph-Salisbury, 2020).
- When Haque and Elliott (2016) examined research literature and findings from various sources, they surmised that racial discrimination was one of the more significant and deep-rooted factors that adversely affected BME teachers’ career progression.
- In an open letter to White psychologists, M’gadzah (2020), a Black female academic and senior educational psychologist, questions why is it that “BAME professionals disappear from the profession? [and] when this pattern of exclusion is repeated time and time again why do psychologists remain silent?” (p. 1).

Methods for Change

Design

- Qualitative
- Demographic questionnaire
- Semi-structured interviews

Participants

- 13 respondents
- Purposeful sample
- 10 semi-structured individual interviews were conducted

Data analysis

- Coding, defining and sorting
- Sampling
- Reflexive memo writing

Themes

The organizational culture

“We are on the outside looking in”

Stereotype threat

Prejudice, discrimination, and institutionalized racism

Espoused practice versus reality

The silent catastrophe

Conclusions

CGT guidelines for conducting research offers helpful approaches for collecting, managing, categorizing, and interpreting interview data in relation to Black British female managers in CYPS. In particular, the notion of reflexive memo-writing was a key component that enabled interpretations to be comprehensively grounded in data. However, I recommend that researcher’s support networks should be explicitly embedded within the reflexive and ethical approval processes, acknowledging how sensitive topics impact both the researched and the researcher’s well-being” (Miller, 2022, p. 2151).

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“I’m managed by a white man, who's managed by a white man, who's managed by a white woman, who's managed by a white man”



The problem of institutional racism in a UK-based university

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Background

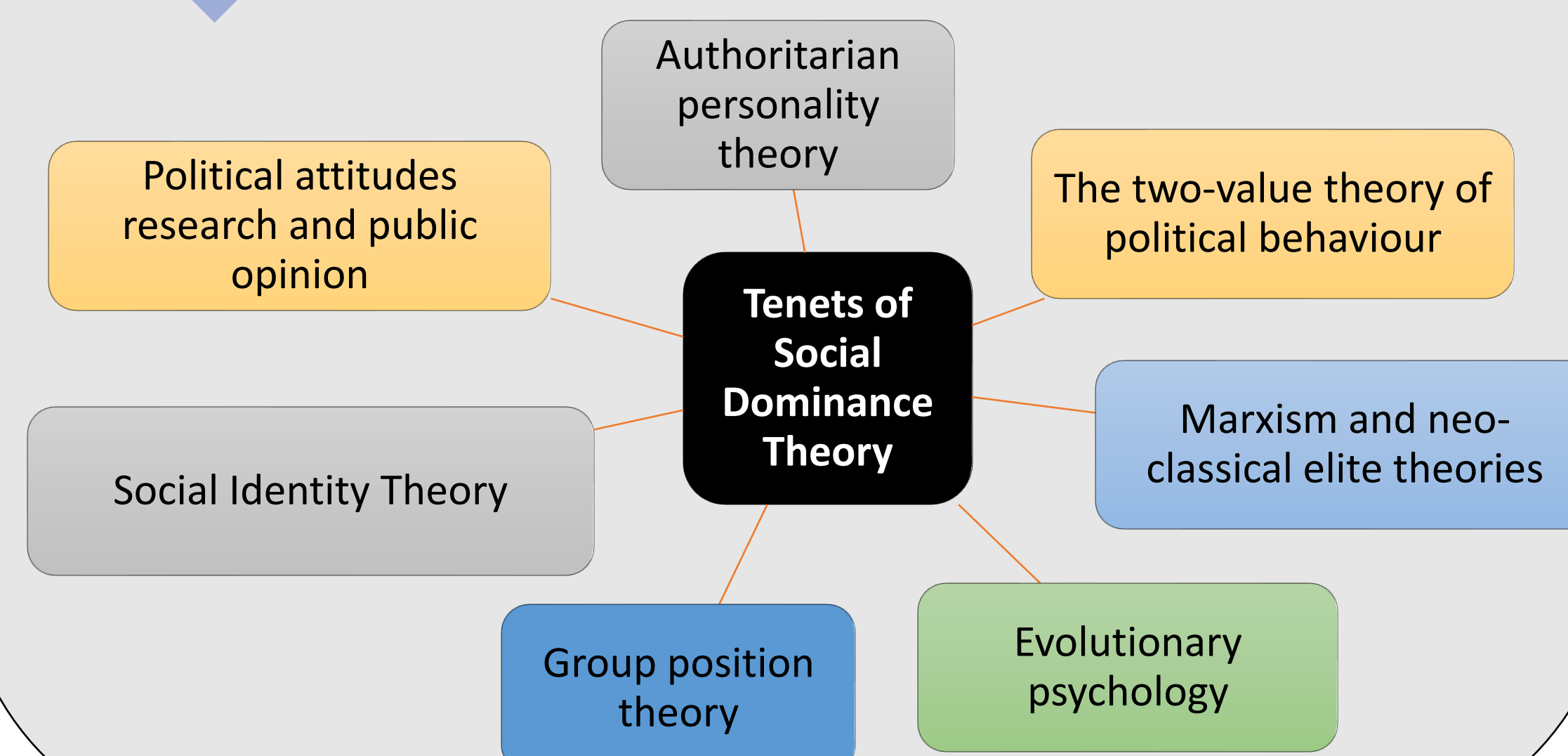
- Following the unlawful killing of George Floyd in the US, many Higher Education (HE) leaders have made...
 - well-meaning proclamations to decolonise curriculum,
 - have espoused to somehow close ethnicity attainment and remuneration gaps, and
 - have targeted equality, diversity and inclusion as a priority once again.
- Recent data shows how UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are becoming more ethnically diverse, yet...
- ...disproportionately lower numbers of BAME staff (compared to non-BAME staff) have permanent contracts, hold senior leadership positions, and are on higher level pay bands (AdvanceHE, 2021).

Research aims

- To examine the extent to which racism was omnipresent across all levels of a London-based, post-92 university.
- To understand the impact on both BAME and non-BAME staff.

Methods

- Design**
- A sequential mixed-methods design.
 - Questionnaire and semi-structured interviews
 - Purposeful sample of BAME and Non-BAME university staff.
 - London-based, Post-92 university
- Phase 1**
- 84 respondents completed an anonymised online survey
 - 60 participants identified as being from a non-BAME background, while 24 identified as being from a BAME background.
- Phase 2**
- 16 semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with 5 BAME and 11 Non-BAME participants.
 - Interview transcripts were thematically analysed, guided by central tenets of Social Dominance Theory (SDT)



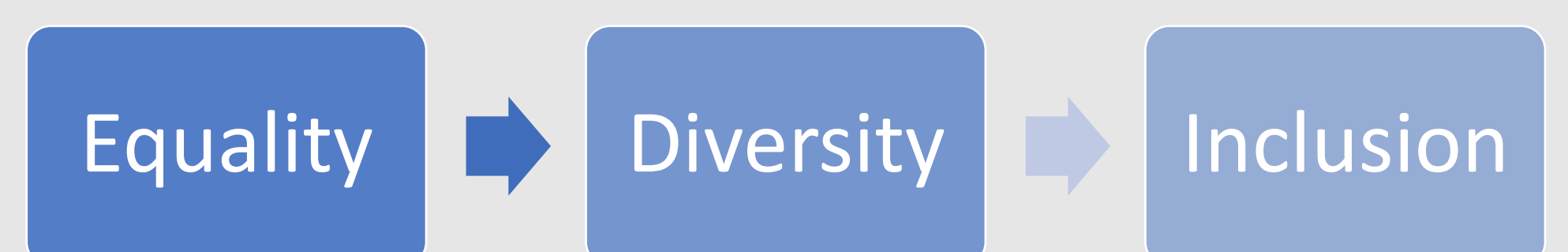
Findings



Conclusions and Recommendations



- BAME staff were primarily affected by institutional racism, yet BAME and non-BAME participants felt the impact, mainly on their mental health and wellbeing.
- The impact of racism was experienced by HE staff at all levels of the university, drawing attention to the systems that produce and maintain racialised hierarchies and inequalities
- University leaders must take responsibility for creating truly equitable, diverse, and inclusive workplaces.
- The long-standing problem of racism might be better understood, addressed and challenged by listening to the stories of both BAME and non-BAME people.



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