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Facing the Stereotype

Ethnocultural, Structural, and Organizational Barriers Preventing Black
and Asian Women from Achieving Senior and Executive Positions in
the Civil Society Sector

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Abstract

Objectives: In the UK there is a high concentration of women engaged in the civil society sector, still, less than 3% of organizational leaders are Black and Asian ethnic minority women. The aim of this study is to understand the low representation of Black and Asian women in senior positions across the civil society sector in the UK on a comparative level. The objective of this study is to explore the prejudice and limiting practices that create obstacles for Black and Asian women, respectively, preventing them from reaching a higher position.

Methods: A qualitative comparative research approach was employed to highlight the hidden hurdles that limit the upward movement in the career trajectory of Black and Asian female leaders. A combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques was used to select the participants of this research study. The data required for this study were collected from surveys with three Black and three Asian women leaders working in the hierarchical position in the civil society sector of the UK.

Principal Findings: Both Black and Asian women are significantly impacted from reaching higher positions in civil society organizations due to the preconception created by their ethnic identity. While Asian women leaders put up with the discrimination and endure it as much as they can, black leaders on the other hand, despite the discrimination and take action against it.

Keywords: Black and Asian women, Ethnic Minority Women, Glass Ceiling, Systematic Barriers, Institutional Discrimination, Civil Society Sector

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Abbreviations

AE	Asian Ethnicity
BAME	Black Asian and Minority Ethnicity
BE	Black Ethnicity
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EMG	Ethnic Minority Group
TFT	Transnational Feminist Theory
WOC	Women of Color

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. The Motivation of the Study

The glass ceiling¹ a concept stemming from systemic racism and inadequate representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic² (BAME) women have globally received overwhelming attention. Both the academic and political world criticizes the situation to reduce workplace discrimination and increase opportunities for BAME women. Evidence shows that in contrast to white women, BAME women are linked with various obstacles in their careers (Dildar, 2017; Howells, Bower & Hassell, 2018). The majority of Black and Asian women employees in the United Kingdom (UK) see race and ethnicity to be the factors affecting their professional growth, and their access to career opportunities (Kosova, 2020). Unconscious bias, lack of role models, ineffective diversity and inclusion policies, nepotism, and informal networks are some of the practices identified as unfair obstacles limiting their career progression (ibid). Such discrepancies display workplace discrimination between White women and Women of Color (WOC)³, validating investigations on BAME women to better understand their career struggles. Likely, the increase in the quest for equal opportunities for upward mobility in the professional field highlights the needs for holistic intervention and BAME-inclusive plans to eliminate the existing obstacles for BAME women.

In the UK, depending on the country of origin, BAME people can be divided into Asian Ethnicity (AE) and Black Ethnicity (BE) (Opara, Sealy & Ryan, 2020). While AE represents people of East Asia (Chinese), South Asia (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi) and other Asian ethnicities, BE represents Black African, Black Caribbean and other Black ethnicities (ibid). In terms of population size, in the UK, the dominating proportion of BAME individuals represent 1) Indian,

¹ Glass Ceiling' is a metaphor used to explain the invisible barriers of prejudice and discrimination that limits women to attain a leadership position (Carli & Eagly, 2001: 631).

² BAME is made up of non-white British population that includes ethnic and racial groups like *"Indian (20%); Black African (14%); Pakistani (13%); Black Caribbean (10%); Bangladeshi (5%); Chinese (5%); Mixed (8%); Asian other (9%); Black Other (1%); and Other (15%)"* (BITC, 2010; as in Opara, et.al, 2020:1193).

³ Women of color is a commonly used term to indicate all the women who aren't white (Alvarez, Liang & Neville, 2016).

2) Black African, 3) Pakistani, 4) Black Caribbean, 5) Bangladeshi, 6) Chinese and other mixed groups (BITC (Business in the Community), 2010; as in Opara, et.al., 2020: 1193). This variation in population size clearly specifies that the population composition of BAME people is not uniform in the UK. Differing population size is also likely to indicate that depending on the country of origin, BAME women might receive a different prejudice. According to Loomba (2005), the west perceived Black women to be overly sexualized, while Asian women were associated with abundance. Loomba's (2005) perspective suggests that with varying perception, the experience of Black and Asian women is likely to differ from each other. However, there is only minimal research that would comparatively investigate the prejudice and the workplace discrimination experienced by Black and Asian women working in the same professional sector. This dearth inevitably leads to urgency in addressing the situation.

1.2 Aim and Research Question

In the UK, there is a high concentration of women engaged in the civil society sector where women make up 68% of the workforce (Dildar, 2017), yet the report shows only 2.25% of all leaders are BAME women (Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organizations (ACEVO), 2019). BAME women view intersectionality formed by race and gender as amplifying their obstacles while taking a senior leadership position in the civil society sector (Kosava, 2020: 3). The problematic hierarchical structure in the civil society sector is also influenced by its board structure where the majority of the trustees are male, who seldom promote women into the position of a senior executive (WomenCount, 2012). The stereotypes of leadership are linked to heterosexual white male with middle-class attributes (Coleman, 2012), so the image of Black and Asian leadership is never thought of.

The majority of studies conducted in the UK's civil society sector represents and highlights the experience of white women whereas only a few sporadic studies inclusive of both Black and Asian women have been conducted so far. A substantial body of research indicates stereotypes associated with BAME leadership have hindered the upward mobility of Black and Asian women professional careers (Gibelman, 1989; Gibelman, 2000; Sampson & Moore, 2008; Howells et.al., 2018; Kosava, 2020). Yet, no study examines the depth of persisting invisible barriers encountered by Black and Asian women working in senior positions in the civil society sector of the UK. While the civil society sector has severe underrepresentation of Black and Asian leadership, their

situation often gets ignored. To address this deep-rooted issue, it is important to investigate the prevailing factors affecting Black and Asian women from their career advancement.

The aim of this study is therefore, to understand the low representation of Black and Asian women in senior positions across the civil society sector in the UK on a comparative level. The objective of this study is to explore the prejudice and limiting practices that create obstacles for Black and Asian women, respectively, preventing them from reaching a higher position. To realize this objective, the following two research questions frame this study:

1. How does the ethnic identity of Black and Asian women, respectively, marginalize their opportunities for a higher position in the civil society sector?
2. What are the different resilience mechanisms used by Black and Asian women to cope with existing institutional discrimination?

1.3 Scope and Limitation

Due to constraints created by limited time, this research is unable to include all the AE and BE represented under the BAME threshold. Only the top two populous ethnicities were selected for this research study because getting access to them was comparatively easy. Hence, the female leaders with AE chosen for this study belong to Indian ethnicity and the female leaders chosen for BE represented African ethnicity, respectively.

1.4 Outline of Thesis

Second, to this introduction, chapter 2 presents the contextual background of the glass ceiling by describing the conceptualized concept of the civil society sector, former division of women within the CSOs, the 20th century's professionalization of the civil society sector, and the current position of the Black and Asian women in the UK's civil society sector.

Chapter 3 covers the scholarly literature addressing the institutional discrimination faced by the BAME community and ethnic minority groups. It also delves into the professional experience of Black ethnic women and Indian-Asian ethnic women within the civil society sector.

Chapter 4 elucidates the theoretical framework used in this research study. The oppressive social structure subjected to the Black and Asian women will be clarified using the post-colonial theory. Kimberly Crenshaw's feminist intersectionality theory will specify the various forms of discrimination faced by WOC. Transnational feminist theory will detail the situation of transnational women. Decolonial theory will portray how the colonial mindset continues in the modern world. And the social closure theory will look into the process of advancement in the organizational hierarchies.

Chapter 5 describes the methodology and the view of reality suffusing this research. It explains the research design, methods of data collection, data analysis, and the methodological limitations and positionality of the researcher.

Chapter 6 is drafted by linking the empirical raw data to the theories in chapter 4 and the analytical framework in chapter 5 respectively. This chapter will further represent two parts from the study findings, namely; Institutional reasoning and coping mechanism.

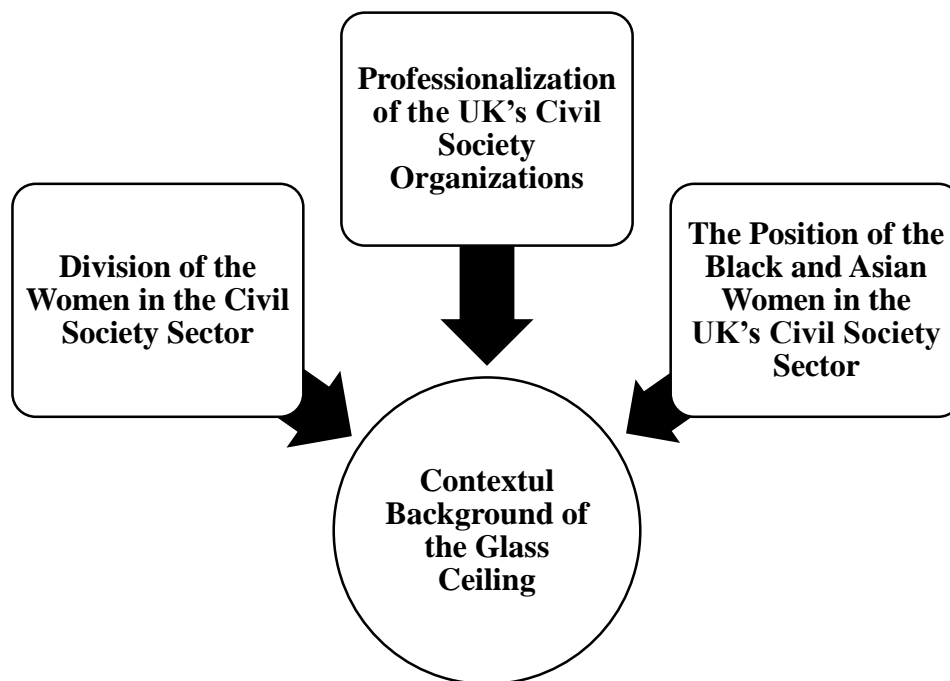
Chapter 7 represents a discussion on the findings extracted from the result and the analysis.

Finally, chapter 8 reflects on the research questions proposed in chapter 1 to present the conclusions of this research study as well as the recommendation for further research.

Chapter 2: Background

In this chapter, the contextual information of the systematic discrimination and glass ceiling encountered by Black and Asian women in their endeavor to career progression in the UK's civil society sector is presented. Here, the rationale behind the conditions, settings and situations that have led to the systematic bias has been provided. The first part of the chapter provides an elaboration on the voluntary nature of the civil society sector and the involvement and division of women in the sector. The second section dwells on the professionalization of the sector and highlights underlying reasons for male dominance in leadership positions. Subsequently, the current position of the Black and Asian women is detailed to provide grounds for the research problem.

Figure 1: Overview of the Research Background



2.1. Involvement and Division of Women in the Civil Society Sector

The civil society sector has been used to represent a vast range of formal and informal voluntary community-based organizations (Salamon & Anheier, 1997; Lyons, 2000; Carey, Mayer & Barraket, 2009). While some refer to this type of institutions as social clubs, universities, hospitals, human rights organizations, professional organizations, environmental groups, etc. (Salamon, Anheier, Lis, Toepler, & Sokolowski, 1999: 3), others explain their purpose as member-based

religious and/or indigenous community organizations, to trade unions and sports associations (Cameron, 2008: 1). This research study follows Salamon et. al.'s (1999) description of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to conceptualize the civil society sectors. According to them, the characteristic features of the civil society sector are as follow: "1) they must be composed of their own administrative structure 2) they must not be affiliated with any bureaucratic institutions, 3) they must abide by the principle of non-profit i.e., earned profit must not be distributed among its board members 4) they must run their own administrative operations, and 5) they only operate due to the voluntary contribution of people in regards to time or money Salmon et. al. (1999:3)".

During the 1990s, the civil society sector was considered a female-dominated profession as a vast majority of CSOs function was associated with health and human services, with about two-thirds of CSOs labour force being dominated by women (Gibelman, 2000). At that time, about 75% of the labour force in health and human services were women, so people defined work in the civil society sector as a nurturing activity (ibid). The female-centric view of the civil society sector was based on the ideology of "naturalism", which proposes the view that women are drawn to voluntary work because it enables them to nurture and take care of the needy ones (Odendahl & O'Neil, 1994). Caregiving roles were seen as natural to women because it was considered an extension of their innate capabilities (ibid). The civil society sector was also more appealing to women due to its flexible working structure that enabled part-time positions (Lewis, 2010:36). However, according to the socio-economic background, work demand and areas of specialization, the female domination in the civil society sector were distributed to different hierarchical positions (Dildar, 2017). In comparison to the women of middle-class background, women from an elite family were given more executive positions (Odendahl & O'Neil, 1994). This was mainly because elite women could make higher voluntary contributions to people in regards to their time and money (ibid). The involvement in the sector was voluntarily for the non-profit purpose, hence it was not an ideal place for women who worked as the breadwinner (ibid). The majority of Black and Asian women living in the UK were immigrants; those who worked for-profit purpose. Conclusively, their voluntary contributions were low compared to the native White women. The hierarchical positions in the civil society sector were thus, occupied by white women because their social status was higher and they could voluntarily contribute their time and money in the sector.

2.2. Professionalization of the UK's Civil Society Organizations

In comparison to the private and public sectors, the civil society sector is quite different in terms of funding, volunteer mobilization and orientation (Hyndman, 2017). As the institutes are well known for providing support and services to the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, the majority of the public support their cause (Lyons, 2001). Nonetheless, the overtime development and expansion of the civil society sector have changed its fundamental organizational dynamics (Carey et al., 2009). According to the Almanac report⁴ (National Council for Voluntary Organizations (NCVO), 2020:8), the UK's civil society sector has generated an income of £53.5 billion and contributed £18.2 billion to the economy (NCVO, 2020: 9). The 47% of the sector's income (£25.4 billion) is obtained by the public compared to 29% of the funding (£15.7 billion) obtained from the government (ibid). The report states that 166,592 established British CSOs provide employment opportunities to 909,088 people (ibid), making civil society a prominent sector for economy and growth. Today, CSOs accessibility to money, information, expertise, and knowledge have taken over their role of advocacy in every socio-political field such as climate change, inequality, health, migration, and human rights (Johanson & Uhlin, 2020). This has established its social position as a powerful nonpolitical entity. With the pressure precipitated by government funding, contracting and meeting the demand for excellent services at a minimum price, the civil society sector is going through a process of 'professionalization', which is well documented by various scholars (Carey et al., 2009; Hadjievska & Stavenes, 2020). According to the scholars, professionalization takes place by appointing professionally trained staffs to increase the ability of organizations to supervise funding, launch a large scale project and serve a wider group of population (Brown, 1997; Fyfe & Milligan, 2003a).

Along with the upsurge of professionalization, the amount of men working in the civil society sector has proliferated enormously. Historically, women-centric work was poorly paid and had minimum social significance compared to the work of men in for-profit institutions (Odendahl & O'Neil, 1994: 89). The nurturing role was portrayed to be innate to women, so recognizing and compensating women's work was considered unnecessary (ibid). The limitation of female leadership in the women-centric field was created by valuing men's work more than women's

⁴ "The Almanac gives an overview of the voluntary sector's scope and characteristics, including its finances, workforce, and volunteering" (NCVO, n.d.) retrieved from <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/about/>

(ibid: 94). Men were viewed as desirable to lead the organizations because the leadership role in the management and executive positions were perceived to contain masculine attributes (Heilman, 2001). Even the administrative tasks were deemed masculine (ibid), as a result, all the paid executive positions were occupied by men. Social perception of men's positions in higher status and self-criticism by women further restricted women from advancing in the senior level positions (Carli & Eagly, 2001). The combination of preference for male leadership and the professionalization of the sector has created male dominance in the civil society sector because instead of recruiting women in executive positions, CSOs started employing men and using their social power to expand CSOs' social presence.

2.3. The Position of the Black and Asian Women in the UK's Civil Society Sector

The civil society sector, being the UK's major female-dominated field, exhibits the significance of Black and Asian women's career barriers as less than one in 10 voluntary sector employees (9%) are of an ethnic minority groups (ACEVO, 2020). The Trust report (2017:19) states that about 92% of the CSO's board is made up of white leaders, and only 9.6% of trustees from the top 100 charities are from Black and Asian ethnic minorities ACEVO's (2018) 'Pay and Equalities' survey points out that in the UK only 3% of the third sector's chief executive were of Black and Asian ethnic minority. Similarly, it was found from a study by Green Park that the leaders with Asian ethnocultural backgrounds are virtually non-existent in the civil society sector because they hold less than 1% of senior leadership positions in the 100 largest CSOs by income. At the UK's 500 largest charities by income, only 5.3% of people in senior leadership teams are from an ethnic minority background (ibid). Among them, less than 3% are Black and Asian ethnic minority women (ibid).

2.4. Summary

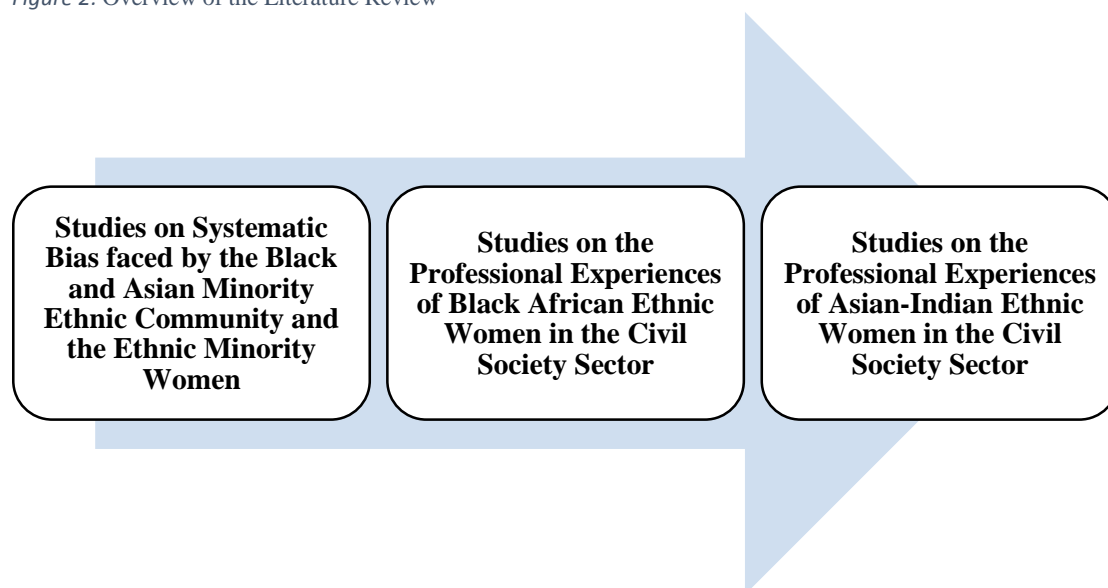
From the above subsections it has been specified that overtime, civil society sector evolved from being a women centric sector to a powerful non political entity that holds huge accessibility to money and power. While the hierarchical positions in the civil society sector were initially occupied by white women professionalization of the sector has transformed the hierarchical positions in the hands of white men who seldomly promote WOC and ethnic minority group in the hierarchical position.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

The continuous institutional discrimination of the Black and Asian women working in the civil society sector has received global significance and is widely discussed by western scholars. Various research has been conducted outside the United Kingdom (UK) to investigate the effect of ethnicity and race in the career advancement of the ethnic minority group (EMG) albeit research on ethnic minority women (EMW) is comparatively limited. This chapter will present an overview of the academic discourses addressing invisible barriers and institutional bias affecting the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) community, EMW, Asian-Indian ethnic women and Black - African ethnic women from climbing the executive hierarchy in the civil society sector.

Here, it is crucial to note that, while all the members of the BAME community of the UK are not Black and Asian ethnic minority women, all the Black and Asian ethnic minority women of the UK belong to the BAME community. In that sense, academic discourse highlighting the glass ceiling on the BAME community in the CSOs of the UK has been reviewed in this study because it represents the professional experience of Black and Asian women. Similarly, the research studies on the career advancement of the ethnic minority women in the civil society sector comprise the experience of Black-African and Asian-Indian ethnic minority women. This research study does not contain literature that does not specify Black-African and Asian-Indian ethnic minority because depending on the country ethnic minority group varies.

Figure 2: Overview of the Literature Review



This figure illustrated above represents the steps of the literature review incorporated in this research. First, the wider view of institutional bigotry faced by the BAME community and ethnic minority women within CSOs will be discussed in the global context. Second, the studies on the barriers and motivating factors of the African ethnic women in executive leadership in the civil society sector will portray prejudice surrounding them. Finally, elucidation of professional experiences of the Asian-Indian women will verify the systematic partiality encountered by them.

3.1. Studies on systematic barriers experienced by the ethnic minority women in the Civil Society Sector

Given the consequential adversity faced by the minority women due to the institutional bias and systematic oppression, research has been conducted outside the UK to investigate the barriers of career advancement faced by the ethnic minority group (EMG) and the ethnic minority women (EMW). This section will present the studies highlighting the barriers during career advancement faced by the EMG and the EMW in the UK and the USA.

In her research *“Protecting Positions of Power and Privileges; The Racial Glass Ceiling in the UK Civil Society Sector”*, the author Kosova (2020) addresses the significant causes for “the racial deficit and the significant underrepresentation of BAME community in the executive hierarchy of the UK’s CSOs” (Kosova, 2020: 4). According to Kosova, unlike white leaders, BAME have limited opportunities for career progression as they inextricably face a multitude of professional barriers in every phase of their career (ibid). In her qualitative analysis, Kosova employed semi-structured interviews with six supporters and organizers of the Charity So White Campaign to delve into institutional racism, cultural norms, and exclusionary practices that obstruct BAME’s chances for career advancement in the hierarchical position in the civil society sector (ibid). The findings of this study indicated that the BAME community in the CSOs are not just provided unequal access to opportunities, they also experience other structural obstacles that limit their possibilities for career advancement (ibid). The results also specify that “the implemented practices and embedded cultural norm are “driven by homogeneity as a socially ruling value instead of embracing differences and attracting BAME talents” (ibid: 68). Moreover, Kosova’s study expressed concern over the fact that a large number of BAME employees are leaving the civil society sector due to the coalition resulting from invisible barriers and denial of the situation by the groups in power (ibid).

While Kosova presented analysis on overall low representation of the BAME community in the hierarchical position in the CSOs, another study by S. Wesley (2008) presents an extensive study about the impact of race and gender on minority women's career advancement. The study represented 20 Hispanic, Asian and African American women working in senior executive-level positions across various American nonprofit organizations (ibid). The purpose of this study was to "identify the actual organizational, personal, influences, and barriers that minority women had to overcome to advance their careers within nonprofit organizations" (ibid: 6). In terms of qualification and capabilities, this study identifies minority women to be as qualified as white women (ibid). Nonetheless, the findings of this study indicate that despite earning advanced educational degrees, minority women are institutionally restricted to demonstrate their capabilities (ibid). Through semi-structured interviews, the accounts of the glass ceiling encountered by research participants were highlighted (ibid). Among others 'lack of mentors', 'limited access to network systems' and 'organizational unwillingness to address diversity issues' were noted as the key reasons for impeding minority women's career advancement (ibid). Similarly, gender stereotypes and the organizational structure were also shown to limit the career expansion of minority women (ibid).

In the above-mentioned articles, both studies delved into the underlying causes for the significant underrepresentation of ethnic minority groups. While the research conducted by Kosova targeted BAME of the UK as a whole, Wesley's research focused entirely on ethnic minority women of the USA. Despite the differences in the country where the research was conducted and differences in the targeted population of the research, the findings were similar: ethnic minority's people (Asian-Indian and Black-African) are discriminated against in the civil society sector. The research further indicated similarities regarding institutional obstacles behind the underrepresentation of the ethnic minority group (EMG) and ethnic minority women (EMW) in the civil society sector of their respective countries.

To provide a thorough analysis on the situation of the EMW, the academic paper "*Minority women's perspectives on career advancement in upper management positions in the nonprofit sector*", looks over the factors that have helped few successful, female minority executive leaders to achieve their leadership position in North Carolina, USA. Similar to the studies mentioned in the above paragraphs, this study is also qualitative by nature, and it used extensive individual face-

to-face interviews among 20 minority female executive leaders working in nonprofit organizations (ibid). The main purpose of this research was to help aspiring young minority women comprehend the life struggles of minority women working in senior executive positions, so they could break the barriers and attain a higher position (ibid). Despite variants in the career path, the findings of the research identified 10 major themes that enabled the study participants to achieve their leadership goals (ibid). While the common factors identified from previous studies encompasses networking, barriers, family, education, experience, mentors, high profile assignments, opportunities, strategies and professional development. Two new factors identified by this study were ‘volunteering as a board member in a desirable nonprofit organization’ and ‘targeting a nonprofit rather than a for-profit organization to facilitate career advancement’ (ibid). This study sheds light on the fact that the institutional barriers work both as an obstacle and also as a motivating factor for making women determined to progress their careers inside the civil society sector.

Another qualitative study “*Leadership styles of women of color in the nonprofit sector: a narrative inquiry*” authored by scholar Jennifer Richardson (2021), aims to disclose the perceived leadership styles of women of color (WOC) who occupy senior leadership positions in their CSOs. To spotlight behavioral practices influenced by their leadership styles, 11 WOCs were selected as study participants (ibid). The participants participated in open-ended semi-structured interviews to divulge their self-acknowledged leadership styles and ‘their experiences ascending to the leadership ranks’ (ibid). The findings of the study revealed that the participant’s leadership style was highly influenced by their team members, their lived experiences, and their work environment (ibid). Despite facing the systematic barriers resulting from racism and sexism, participants vouched upon maintaining a routine rooted in professional development, identifying mentors, developing a strong support network, and personal experiences for motivation to be successful in the field.

Regarding the factors and leadership styles that have helped female minority executive leaders to achieve their leadership position, the factors such as developing a strong support network, personal experience, having a role model, and professional environment have been the key determinants that inspired them to pursue their goal.

3.2. Studies on the professional experiences of Black-African ethnic women in the Civil Society Sector

This subchapter zeroes in on the discrimination faced by the Black African Ethnic minority women in the civil society sector. After working in the non-profit sector, the factors that influenced the career choice of the Black African ethnic women were identified in the academic research, by scholar Josette C. Brown (2019). The study employs qualitative narrative inquiry to “identify the impact of race and other barriers and motivators experienced both personally and professionally on the career paths of African ethnic women who have succeeded in acquiring executive-level leadership roles in nonprofit organizations” (ibid: 10). This research study was theoretically grounded by in Critical Race Theory, which identifies the “reality and pervasiveness” of racism across various structures of the society (ibid). The constituents of the critical race theory are consequently used in this study to analyze the dearth of African ethnic women in executive leadership positions in the non-profit sector (ibid). The required data for this research study was collected through snowball sampling technique and convenience sampling (ibid). Four African ethnic women who are working in an executive leadership position in nonprofit organizations were interviewed to gather the necessary information. The findings of this research determined two themes as barriers and two themes were motivators of the career paths of the participants (ibid). The social support consisted of the moral support of family and friends, and their passion to serve were the two greatest motivators experienced by the participants on their journeys to executive leadership roles. Whereas, persisting racism and sexism demotivated them to continue their work as executive leader in the non-profit sector.

Similarly, another qualitative research study by Alicia D. Williams (2021), “examines how African American female executives made sense of their leadership experiences within the nonprofit industry” (Williams, 2021: 12). In her article, “*Making Sense of Her Journey: Exploring African American Female Executives’ Leadership Experiences within Nonprofit Organizations*” Williams used nine African American female executives as her research participants to examine the extent of oppression faced by them as well as how these women persevered their leadership journey despite their adversity (ibid). The author used participant interview techniques to collect the raw data from the study participants and shed light on the fact that the African women have both a strong desire and qualification to take over the executive leadership positions (ibid). The study was

founded based on four underlying assumptions that include: 1) the skill that helped them grasp about the environment in their organization is the result of their life experience, 2) participants got to perform the role of executive leader despite the continuous oppression, 3) participants had numerous identities in their society, and 4) participants formed an intentional relationship with one another to create a better environment for women from the same ethnic background within the nonprofit industry (ibid). The findings of this study revealed that the professional experience of black women could not be narrowed down to a single identity, instead, the intersection of race, gender, and class has resulted in consistently supporting them with their realities (ibid). The identity of Black ethnic women cannot be homogenized as it consists of their individual life experience which comprises the connection they have with people of a different race, gender and class (ibid).

The above-mentioned literature indicated the motivating factors, career barriers as well as the leadership experience of the Black African ethnicity female in the non-profit sector. As the USA and UK are among the developed countries of the world, the situation portraying the career of ethnic minority groups inside the civil society sector in both the countries are similar to some extent⁵.

3.3. Study on the professional experiences of Asian -Indian ethnic women in the Civil Society Sector

Another study by Sanghamitra Buddhapriya (2009) “*Work-Family Challenges and Their Impact on Career Decisions: A Study of Indian Women Professionals*” presents an overall review of the existing literature on the obstacles limiting women career advancement. According to the author, one of the pivotal reasons limiting women’s senior executive position is “the work-life conflict that women professionals experience because of their strong commitment to family responsibilities” (ibid: 32). According to Buddhapriya, the lack of gender-sensitive policies is another barrier that affects women to reach senior executive positions (ibid: 42). The scholar conducted this study among 121 Indian women professionals to analyze their perception concerning the barriers faced by them in their career advancement (ibid). Moreover, the author

⁵ The USA and the UK are both developed countries <https://www.investopedia.com/updates/top-developing-countries/>

asserts that family responsibility affects the career choices of Indian women because they are bound to focus on their household duties neglecting professional work (ibid). Similarly, Buddhapriya affirms, the organization policies and support help them advance in their career.

As the article by Buddhapriya shows the crucial role of family's support and organizational policies, the article "*A Qualitative Inquiry of Asian Indian Women's Journey to Leadership*" scholar Surjit K. Hayer (2015) analyzes the professional experience of Indian ethnic women working in the executive hierarchical positions in their CSOs. Similar to the studies described in the first subsection, this study holds a qualitative inquiry that elucidates the lived experiences of the participants to explain and review their leadership journey (ibid). Hayer (2015) provides a view on personal attributes, support received from family, professional experiences and the action of the participant to give motivation for their success. By employing semi-structured interviews, the findings received from this study specify personal determination, support networks, and resilience among the Indian ethnic women to help them continue their journey to leadership (ibid). The findings of the study also indicated empowerment, self-efficacy, power, and influence as prerequisites for Asian-Indian ethnic women in achieving higher-level executive positions (ibid). Regarding Asian-Indian women's struggle, the study shows that within the civil society sector, lack of gender-sensitive policies and organizational policies affects them from reaching a hierarchical position.

3.4. Summary of the Literature Review

This section delves into the significant findings derived from the literature above. To begin with, all the studies depicted above are qualitative and they employed either semi-structured or face to face interviews to obtain data from their sample population. The studies showed that Asian -Indian and Black African ethnic minority women working in the civil society sector are parallelly discriminated against in the UK and the USA. The institutional obstacles faced by the ethnic minority group (EMG) and ethnic minority women (EMW) are also similar. While systematic bias hinders ethnic minority women from advancing in leadership positions, the factors such as developing a strong support network, having a role model and personal experience motivate them to continue their work in the civil society sector.

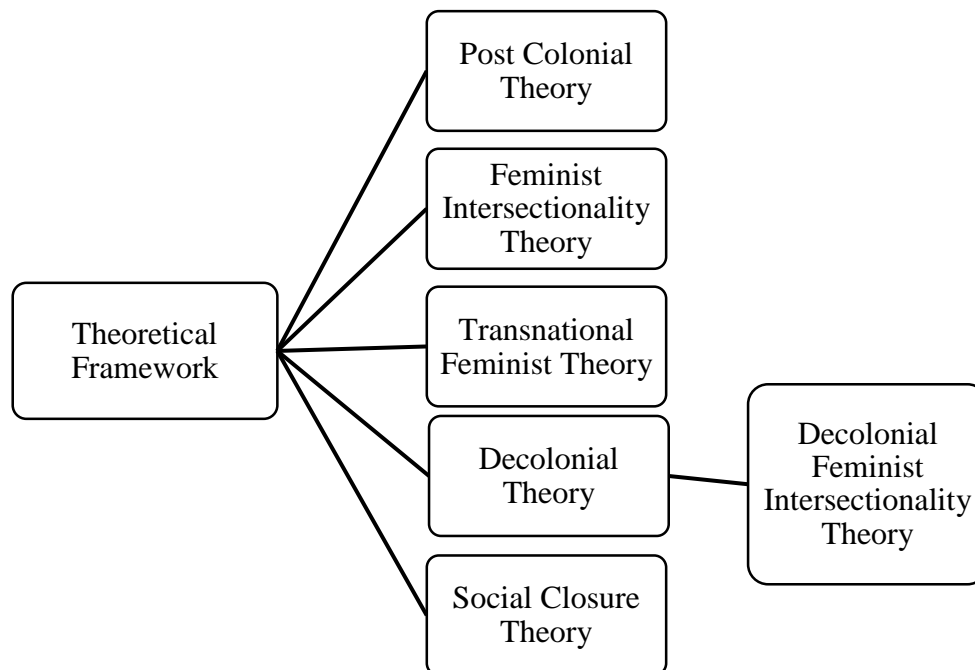
It has been illustrated from the studies that the professional experience of Black-African ethnic minority women cannot be homogenized as it consists of their individual life experience which comprises the connection they have with people of a different race, gender and class. The intersection of race, gender, and class restrict Black ethnic women to be narrowed down to a single identity. While persisting racism and sexism demotivates Black ethnic women to work in the CSOs, their passion to serve and the moral support from family and friends motivate them to continue their career in the civil society sector.

Finally, in the case of Asian-Indian ethnic minority women, reviewed academic discourses show that the lack of gender-sensitive policies and organizational policies prevent them from reaching a hierarchical position in the civil society sector. Family responsibilities and their household duties also affect the career choices of Asian-Indian women because they are culturally bound to focus on their household duties by neglecting professional work. Therefore, personal determination, support networks, resilience and self-efficacy, were key determinants for the Asian-Indian ethnic women to advance their career in the civil society sector.

Chapter 4: Theory

To analyze the systematic bias and glass ceiling encountered by Black and Asian women leaders in the civil society sector of the UK, this research is grounded on the Post Colonial theory, Feminist Intersectionality approach, Transnational theory, Decolonial theory and the Social Closure theory. In this chapter, the theoretical framework devised from these five approaches will be presented (Fig. 3).

Figure 3: Overview of the Theoretical Framework



Based on the background in which this study is situated, the use of Post-Colonial theory, Kimberlé Crenshaw's Feminist Intersectionality approach, Transnational Feminist theory, Decolonial theory and Social Closure theory have been selected to shape the theoretical framework of this research study. First, Ania Loomba Colonialism/Postcolonialism (2002) will provide a colonial binary view of 'othering' to present post-colonial influence on contemporary power structures. The colonial binary view of 'othering' is regarded as a prerequisite of establishing stereotypes of Black and Asian women. Second, the intersectionality approach will present multifaceted discrimination faced by ethnic minority women. Third, elaboration of transnational feminist theory will highlight the narration of female immigrants within sociocultural hegemony. Fourth, decolonial theory will narrate the continuation of colonial mindset in the modern world and its subsection decolonial

feminist intersectionality theory will give the notion of coloniality to discard the western perspective on gender, race and ethnicity. Finally, social closure theory will delve into the process of advancement in the organizational hierarchies as well as the barriers that influence systematic bias.

4.1. Post-Colonial Perspective

The presence of the post-colonial structure of the world is recognized by this research study, which is present within a global capitalist structure, where the colonial binary view of “othering” exists. Following theorist Jorge de Alva’s reasoning as explained by Ania Loomba, I understand that postcolonialism is not merely a circumstantial situation resulted from colonialism, but it is a world view shaping global power relation by using the medium of discursive practices, language and knowledge production (Loomba, 2002). It has created a global power legacy, which determines how others (non-white people and countries) are viewed. This explanation of postcolonialism provides an extensive theoretical framework for my research study because as de Alva connects postcolonialism to post-structuralism, it allows the researcher to move past the link between colonized and the colonizer on its own (Loomba, 2002, 12f). Instead, the researcher can delve into practices passed from colonization and analyze them coherently (ibid.).

Analyzing the practices of postcolonialism from a standpoint of post-structuralism with a Foucauldian perspective of power entails that the discourse of colonialism construction is not pressed by top-down hegemonic power holders, rather they are endorsed by everyone within the discourses. Post-colonial practices thus become internalized, (re)produced and practiced by agents on all levels of the post-colonial power structure (Loomba, 2002: 41). Emerging ideologies like “the west and the rest” and “othering” have ingrained people of colonial power as a superior group whereas colonized subjects were referred to as uncivilized and barbaric (Loomba, 2005). Stereotyping colonized subjects as inferior groups legitimized colonization as a development mission (Eriksson et. al., 1999: 29). Since 1978, through the work of postcolonial theorist Edward Said, the instances of stereotyping colonized subjects has been debated. According to Said, the colonial discourse has stereotyped both colonizer and colonized subject. By regarding colonized subjects as “others”, colonizers referred to themselves as its opposite. The colonial binary view of superior/inferior, civilized/uncivilized, rational/irrational, progressive/backward and modern/traditional was thus formed, where the former was imposed higher status than the latter

(Loomba, 2002: 44ff). This persisting binary view is not only limited to how the past colonizer perceives colonized subjects but also what these agents think about themselves. While the identification of WOC was not only defined to be everything that white women were not, but despite attaining all skills they could never receive the same position possessed by white women (Lugones, 2007). Loomba (2005) asserts women of color were not just discriminated against, according to the nationality and ethnicity they were given a different deception. While the visuals of African women were overly sexualized, Asian women were portrayed as the representation of abundance (ibid: 152).

The view of “othering” has also fueled patriarchy because colonialism from the beginning has been illustrating masculine dominance (Nandy, 1999: 184). Only the white men were the affluent to produce knowledge, so even the creation of knowledge was gendered and racialized (Lugones 2007). Gendering and racializing of colonization have gone beyond social norms into the domain of social power and domination (Lugones 2007: 18). This is the reason why despite being capable to lead the organizations, the majority of Black and Asian women are bound to junior positions. The identity is given to others still prevails in society, so postcolonialism is an influential theory in analyzing the identity formation and perception of Black and Asian women. This will also provide an analysis of the hierarchy formed within the Black and Asian communities. Thus, investigating the glass ceiling resulting from post-structuralism and post-colonial perspective will present a structural foundation for the analysis in this study.

4.2. Crenshaw’s Feminist Intersectionality

This research study recognizes that systematic discrimination comes in various forms and is therefore likely to be faced differently by different groups of people, in this study – Black and Asian women, respectively. Using Kimberlé Crenshaw’s intersectional analytical approach, instances of oppression and discriminatory practices experienced by Black and Asian women can be rationalized to strengthen this research study. Crenshaw’s intersectionality is a critical feminist theoretical framework that has been used in this research study to present the varying experience of suppression. Crenshaw developed intersectionality as a multidimensional indicator that indicates various experiences of discrimination faced by women’s of marginalized groups (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). As a research framework, intersectionality is deliberated to draw the overlapping tyranny of ethnicity, race, class, gender, disability, religion, sexuality, and age (Hill-

Collins, 1990, 2000; Razack, 1998; Mehotra, 2010). The focus of intersectionality lies in overlapping dynamics of power and oppression used to shape social identities (Smooth, 2013).

According to Crenshaw (1989; 1995), the founding need of the intersectionality framework was due to the overbearing use of single-axis analyses of discrimination. According to Crenshaw, the concept of single-axis analysis is based upon western societies' interpretation of discrimination as something that happens exclusively. This is problematic because the depth of discrimination happens on multiple levels (Crenshaw, 1994: 140, 151, 166). Facing instances of discrimination in various forms from various areas makes it more severe, as one discriminating structure might legitimize the other. Similarly, society often fails to acknowledge that every marginalized group faces discrimination differently and therefore often fails to help the victims encounter a discriminating structure. It is as if marginalized groups are pigeonholed to depict single-axis discrimination by circumventing multiple axes of discrimination (Crenshaw, 1994: 145, 149). This research attempts to include a multiple-axes analysis as professional inequality manifests itself in various forms and the intensity of discrimination is perceived to be tackled differently by Black and Asian women. Furthermore, it can be assumed that by not applying intersectionality analysis to systematic discrimination, this research study could deceive readers into perceiving that all Black and Asian women are alike and oppressed in similar ways, which – following Crenshaw - is not likely to be the case. With that in mind, this research study will look into institutional discrimination faced by two ethnic minority groups (EMG) of the United Kingdom (UK) – Black women and Asian women, by studying how power relations affect them and the type of injustice they have to face to reach a certain hierarchical position in any civil society sector.

A matrix of power dispositions developed by intersectionality scholar Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge (2016), comprises four domains of power, which includes: 1) structural, 2) disciplinary, 3) cultural (hegemonic), and 4) interpersonal. According to Collins & Bilge (2016), above mentioned four domains of power administers both human behavior and access to resources. The analysis of power relation is important in this study because the correlation formed between social positions with power relation influences the way women from ethnic minority groups are treated. It also forms the argumentation that is disseminated by the research respondents. Here, intersectionality aids to uncover various forms of power and portrays how they result in discrimination and structure the power relation that generates behavioral practices experienced by

ethnic minority groups such as Black and Asian women (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Limiting Black and Asian women from reaching their full potential by subjecting them to systematic discrimination can be either criticized or considered normal from the view of structural and disciplinary authorities, reinforced by hegemonic power and condemned by individuals facing it. Intersectionality analysis, therefore, contains the positionality that exhibits prevailing discrimination caused by systematic discrimination.

However, multiple axes of intersectionality have been criticized for their tendency to mislead the researcher. The critics of intersectionality state that instead of focusing on how an obvious constituent that leads to discrimination, intersectionality researcher should start looking for multiple components outside the mainstream (Krasnikova, 2020). To avoid misleading, while employing an intersectional approach, a researcher should only prioritize learning from the study group (ibid). As a result, a researcher should not self-identify the components that might point to intersectionality. Thus, in this research, only the account of study respondents will be noted to trace persisting forms of intersectionality.

4.3. Transnational Feminist Theory

To analyze the oppressive hegemonic narratives subjected to Black and Asian women in the UK's civil society sector, this research study uses the postulations offered by Transnational Feminist Theory (TFT). Transnational perspective offers alternatives for distorting oppression and proceeding liberation in diverse cultural contexts, by describing the experience of women living within, between, and across boundaries of cultural hegemony (Enns, Díaz, & Bryant-Davis, 2020). TFT destabilizes western feminists' notions of "global sisterhood", which implies that women globally experience the same form of oppression. Instead, it encourages solidarity among women by accepting cultural differences in local, regional, and global contexts (Enns et.al., 2020). The features of the transnational theory are accepting the power divide between Global North and Global South, heeding the experience of women from Global South, challenging persisting views of othering, considering cultural and ethnic diversity as an occasion to comprehend social intricacy, and emphasizing the experience of women who are often unnoticed (ibid: 12). TFT is therefore comprehensive to the micropolitics of daily life and the process of recognizing diverse socio-cultural identities of women (Mohanty, 2003).

According to postcolonial feminist Chandra Mohanty (2003), transnational feminism must be established in an anti-capitalist view because the identity struggle of women has resulted from hegemonic global capitalism. To analyze discrimination, Mohanty (2003) has led to the assimilation of transnational feminism and decoloniality by arguing that in the present world, capitalism has become a new form of imperialism. In her book “Under Western Eyes – Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses” (2000), Mohanty condemns Western feminists for creating a false perception of third world women. According to her, Western feminists defined third world women as a homogenous group who are identified by the oppression they face (Mohanty 2000, 303). Western feminists viewed third world women as “uneducated”, “ignorant”, “traditional”, and “domestic” and conclusively grouped them in the categories of “underdevelopment” and “backwardness” (Mohanty, 2000). Within these ethnocentric assumptions, while third world women were victimized, western women were discerned for being their counterpart i.e., modern, developed, and liberated (ibid, 305). Mohanty adds that due to the categorization, third world women cannot rise above the identity given to them by the Western women and find their agency to represent their patriarchal societies and themselves otherwise (ibid.). As a result, in the name of saving third world women, western feminist were instead colonizing them (Mohanty, 1984; 2003).

History, according to Mohanty, has been shaped by material relations formed from production and reproduction as opposed to being created by concepts, ideas, or opinions (Mohanty, 2003; 2013). Unlike western feminists, Mohanty insists gender is not the only reason behind the practices of discrimination faced by third world women within the boundaries of cultural hegemony, instead intersectionality of race, ethnicity, and class should also be taken into account (Mohanty, 2000: 311). People’s life experiences and work circumstances should be prioritized when analyzing discrimination as well as instances of partiality faced by them (Mohanty, 2003). In this research study, the transnational feminist framework is used because Black and Asian Women are both subjected to institutional discrimination in the UK for not just being women but because they are transnational women of different race, origin, and ethnicity than would be the norm for white women. Furthermore, by not applying a transnational lens this study would only examine gender discrimination in an institutional setting, which would only present a limited view of the problem.

The critics of TFT point to a theoretical overreliance on women’s experience in North America, which raises questions of using it for examining “global dynamics of racial power” (Patil, 2013;

cited, Curtis & Adams, 2016: 14). A counter-critique calls for emerging TFT with postulates of decolonial intersectionality (Grabe & Else-Quest, 2012; Salem, 2014) to analyze women's experience of the Global North embedded within colonial history and racial power (Curtis & Adams, 2016). To examine the cultural hegemony faced by the women of the Global South in the UK, this study thus also postulates TFT by correlating it with Decolonial theory (decolonial theory will be presented in the upcoming subsection).

4.4. Decoloniality Theory

The scope of this research study acknowledges that the formerly colonized Black and Asian women in the UK are exposed to oppression because they are everything that their colonizer, i.e., White European women are not. Using decoloniality as a perspective, multisided institutional discrimination affecting the life of formally colonized Black and Asian women in the UK can be examined (Mendoza, 2020). Developed by the authors of the Global South, decoloniality is grounded on lived experiences of previous colonized subjects from Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Mohanty, 2003). It represents various forms of social bigotry that have been inherited from colonization and is affecting the people of formally colonized countries (Quijano, 2000). Decoloniality entails examining how people from the formally colonized countries have embodied the beliefs of colonizers and in response to what type of coping strategies have, they adopted to deal with the persisting exploitation (Enns. et.al., 2020). This concept will be further examined in the research paper as the respondents of this research are residing in the UK, which in the past had colonized their home countries. It will further assess how the respondents dealt with the enormous amount of prejudice they faced and the action they took to break the stereotypes.

The decolonial framework analyzes how discriminatory practices affect the lives of formally colonized people and questions the monopoly of knowledge formation from the Global North (Ndhlovu, 2016). The hierarchy of power formed by colonialism continues to differentiate the society in terms of socio-cultural resemblance (Agboka, 2014). Consequently, the discussion of decoloniality starts with questioning power conceptualized from coloniality, which Anibal Quijano (2000) refers to as "coloniality of power". For Quijano, the coloniality of power is an ongoing process that exists in modern time by structuring the power relation between the past colonizer and their former colonies (ibid). According to him, coloniality of power generates critical thinking on how former colonial outposts adhere to the behaviors and patterns of colonialism

(ibid.). It underpins the idea that current preconception on sociocultural identities is rooted in the power structures influenced by the social and political structure of (post)colonial societies (ibid.) In addition, Quijano contends that in the modern era, these preconceptions are actioned by race relations and ethnic perceptions (ibid). This research study will hence identify power struggles, inequality and partiality faced by Black and Asian women using the decoloniality framework. It will further examine the extent to which systematic oppression has been affecting Black and Asian women to form professional barriers.

While coloniality of power does not formally represent gendered perspectives, Argentinian decolonial feminist and sociologist María Lugones have developed a theoretical framework around “coloniality of gender” to emphasize gendering practices of colonization (Verez, 2019: 396, 399). Lugones writes that "unlike colonization, the coloniality of gender is still with us; it is what lies at the intersection of gender and class and race as central constructs of the capitalist world system of power” (Lugones, 2011, cited in Velez, 2019: 399). Mohanty (2003: 147), also encourages integrating decoloniality with gender to study the gender dynamics formed in the presence of capitalist modes of recolonization. Mohanty believes decolonial views on gender can create coalitions between WOC to render a world against racialized gendered oppressions of colonialism and global capitalism (Mohanty, 2003)

4.4.1. Decolonial feminism and the Intersectionality Theory

The necessity of decolonial feminism arose due to the multiple faceted struggles encountered by females, which are the outcomes of former colonization and imperialism (Velez, 2019). To analyze the account of oppression faced by women in post-colonial societies, decolonial feminists necessitated querying Western Eurocentric concepts on gender and ethnicity (Mohanty, 2003; Lugones, 2007). Decolonial feminism's goal is to form a multicultural and anti-imperialist coalition that supports diversity within women by offering strategies for the post-colonial women against gendered oppression caused by colonialism (Pedersen, 2019). Hence, decolonial feminist theory scrutinizes the notion of coloniality to discard the western perspective on gender, race and ethnicity that have resulted in sociocultural hegemony for non-western women.

To address concerns of sociocultural hegemony for non-western women, decolonial feminist theory has been highly influenced by the intersectionality theory. Resonating with

intersectionality, decolonial feminism shares the same view on multifaceted oppression caused by race, skin color, class, and gender (Mohanty, 2003: 5). Although decolonial feminism and postcolonial feminist intersectionality theories share similarities, that “decolonial feminists raise critical questions regarding intersectionality and its underdeveloped and inadequate engagement with the question of colonialism” (Velez, 2019 as in Pedersen, 2019: 32). Decolonial feminism discloses “how coloniality undergirds the oppressive categorical logics identified by intersectionality by interrogating their source and imposition” (Velez, 2019: 392, as in Pedersen, 2019). It pursues coloniality to highlight the degree to which everyday realities of the world structure are the legacy of the colonial oppression that generated western domination (Pedersen, 2019). In contrast, the existing perspective to intersectionality is built on a disproportionate account of experience in the Global North and, as such, is contemplating the socio-cultural divide and colonial violence of the western world (Lugones, 2007). Using decolonial intersectionality thus, this research not only analyzes the oppression of gender and ethnicity faced by Black and Asian women in the civil society sector but will also analyze the oppressive gendering, racialization, and equalization of ethnic groups as created by colonial imposition (Velez, 2019; Connell, 2014: 557).

4.5. Social Closure Theory

This research suggests that ethnic background, race and gender of an individual are considered as major factors to determine their position of the organizational hierarchies in the civil society sector. The postulates of social closure theory assert that the power exercised by the higher up plays an important role in bringing changes in the probability of any individual's growth in the social hierarchy. Coined by sociologist Max Weber, social closure is a popular concept that probes the formation and transformation of authority/power and also accessibility within the structure of rewards and resources (Weber, 1978: 128-129). Weber distinguished social closure theory into the concept of open and closed social relations (ibid). While the open relation indicates to the social system where everyone who wishes to participate can unconditionally do so, a closed relation is defined as a system where the participation of certain people is excluded or subjected to conditions that help to enhance insiders' positions by monopolistic strategies (ibid). Open relation is a situation where an individual can voluntarily participate to work inside the civil society sector, despite the social background they belong from. On the other hand, close relation is perceived

where only prevailing powerful people belonging from a specific social background can achieve the hierarchical structures.

A closed social relation comprises two consistent stages of "expansion" to "exclusion" as a transitioning process, which we can also use for describing the ethnic minority inclusive stages of CSOs (Weber, 1978: 130). In the expansion stage, out of their interest, firstly, the higher-ups from the civil society sector tend to grow their organization by hiring candidates in various positions and giving them organizational authority. This trend moves towards exclusiveness at one point as the higher-ups tend to form barriers for the same candidates as they prefer people from similar backgrounds (people who do not belong to ethnic minority groups) to team up to be on the same level. Weber further adds that through the closure of a relationship, dominating groups (insiders) control the less privileged groups (outsiders) by holding the resources which eventually limits opportunities for the less privileged groups (Weber, 1978: 130). For this, the insiders use characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, nationality etc. as an excuse for exclusion as well as limiting opportunities for outsiders (ibid). In this sense, with the help of Weber's social closure lens, a process of producing and maintaining discrimination, inequalities, oppression and hierarchical order in the society can be examined. Similarly, using social closure constituent this research study can highlight and analyze both the lower representation of Black and Asian women in the higher position and the institutional practice that limits them from their potential growth.

The classic conceptualization of social closure has been strongly criticized by Raymond Murphy (1984: 547), who believed that Weber's account of social closure failed to take into account the deep structure of closure (Murphy, 1984: 547). However, this research study solely attempts to analyze and highlight the minimal presence of Black and Asian women in the senior executive hierarchy, for that Weber's account of social closure deems convenient.

Chapter 5: Methodology

This chapter presents an outline of the research methods employed in this study and their contribution to fulfilling the research objectives. First, an explanation of the metaphysical worldview employed in this study dictates the position on reality pursued by this research. Second, a description of the research design presents the research methods and the techniques this research study employed to fulfil its aim. Third, the sampling technique clarifies the approach used to gain access to the research respondents. Fourth, data collection depicts the strategy employed for assembling raw data for the study. Fifth, the analysis describes the process of data analysis used in this research study. Sixth, ethical considerations sum up the principles that have been adopted to legitimize this research study. Finally, elucidation on limitations and positionality concludes this chapter.

5.1. Metaphysical Worldview

In the first part of the chapter, the world view and the knowledge of reality guiding this research study is presented. Stating these premises are quintessential because they rationalize the choice of methodology and present the fundamental beliefs of the study. Metaphysical proposition comprises information about ontology, epistemology and methodology, all of which are interrelated with one another (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Using ontological and epistemological stances the worldview guiding this research study is laid out. This research will present the understanding and beliefs of the researcher on the subject matter. Further, methodological choices that correlate to the reality of the subject matter will also be presented.

The ontological perspective guiding this research follows the view of constructivism and the ontological position of constructivism regards the reality to be socially constructed by the action of the social actors (Bryman, 2016: 29). This means that the social phenomena construct the world and the knowledge about reality is indeterminate. From an epistemological perspective, social phenomena can only be studied by examining their process of construction and the meaning ascribed to them by the social actors. Here, both the researcher and the object of study are presumed to be connected so that the knowledge is uncovered as the research begins (Guba & Lincon, 1994: 111). To comprehend the existing invisible barrier in the UK's civil society sector it is necessary to find answers to the research questions. To seek the answers to the research

questions, a qualitative approach is used. According to Creswell (2009), a qualitative approach is ideal when acquiring information about a specific event or occurrence. The qualitative approach also enables a researcher to prioritize the methods of knowledge creation allowing more “probing, critical and discursive process” (Pernecky, 2016: 188). This research study aims to understand the professional experience of Black and Asian women and to recognize the invisible barrier from their view, hence a qualitative approach is suitable for this research study. The study will be deductive where the theory will guide the findings. As the knowledge and the creation of reality are socially constructed, the researcher will highlight a specific version of reality that might differ from one context to another (Bryman, 2016: 29).

A qualitative comparative research approach was employed to highlight the hidden hurdles that limit the upward movement in the career trajectory of Black and Asian women. The decision of using a qualitative research design was made by reflecting on the nature of the research question. Silverman (2013: 11) insisted; if research is examining “life experience” or “everyday behavior” the choice of qualitative methods is beneficial. Likely, Creswell (2009: 4) affirms, qualitative approach is a method to analyze circumstances by examining the perspective of people facing the problem. According to him, a qualitative approach focuses on the participant's perspective for collecting required data and solving research problems. This is attained by emphasizing words instead of collecting quantifiable data and analyzing them (Bryman, 2016: 380). Hence, rather than using quantitative research, which is grounded in numbers, this research study is found upon words.

5.2. Research Design

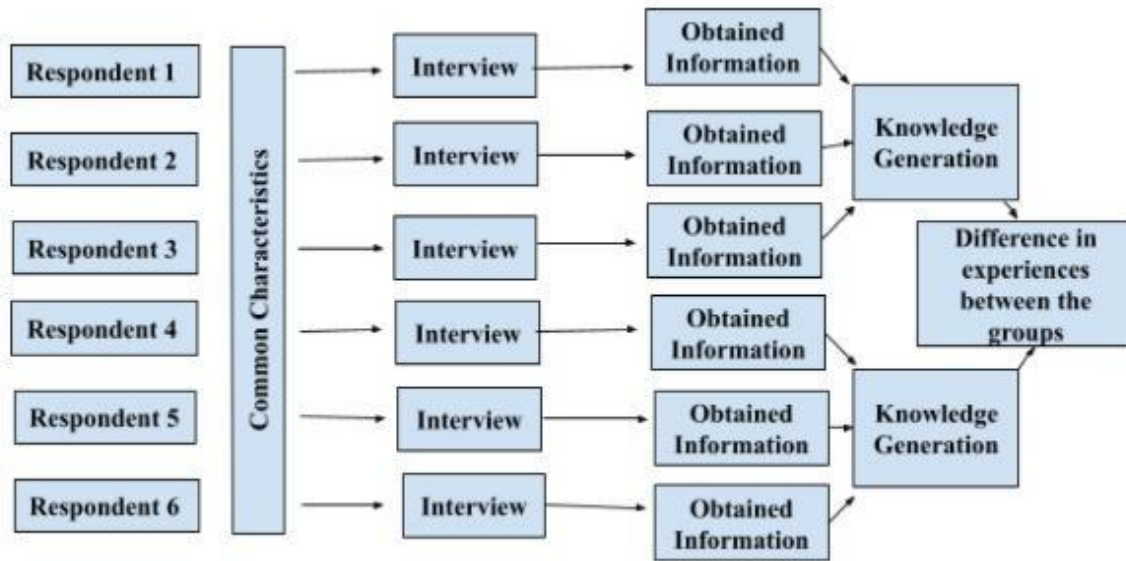
The use of qualitative comparative design “entails studying two contrasting cases using more or less identical methods” (Bryman, 2016: 64). David de Vaus (2013: 220), defined a ‘case’ as a “unit of analysis” that ranges from an individual, family, places, organizations, event, decision and/or period. Following Vaus' (2013: 220) definition, “case” in this study refers to two groups of respondents; (1) three Asian female leaders and (2) three Black female leaders who are the “unit of analysis”. Guest et.al. (2006: 78) affirms that in a qualitative study “a sample of six interviews is sufficient to enable the development of meaningful themes and useful interpretations”, conclusively, six participants in total were selected as respondents for this research study. Similarly, the respondents for both groups were selected based on their common characteristics of

gender, race, ethnicity, organizational designation (acquiring senior position) and time spent in the civil society sector of the UK. These are also the foundational characteristics required to be respondents in this study.

The main focus of the research lies in understanding participants view regarding the systematic discrimination that they have witnessed inside the civil society sector. To help develop a deeper understanding of the situation, a qualitative approach has been used. For this study, a semi-structured interview was applied to record the respondents' version of the reality by doing extensive probing of and around the research problem. The semi-structured interview contains the attributes of both structured and unstructured interview. It is structured as the researcher prepares topics to be covered during an interview in advance. Nonetheless, there is not a particular order in which the topics should be covered. This inherent flexibility offered by semi-structured interviews eases the equation of discussion between researcher and participant (Edwards & Holland, 2013) and allows the researcher to change the way a question is asked in case of confusion and/or misunderstanding. Also, depending on the response received, a researcher can add, skip and/or move questions if the answer has already been answered by the respondents (Moberg, 2016).

After receiving the required data from semi-structured interviews, the data were subjected to data analysis by comparing the raw data obtained from both groups. The qualitative comparative research method ensures a complete investigation of the research problem with a concrete answer to the research questions.

Figure 4: The process of qualitative comparative analysis between group 1 and group 2



As shown in the above figure, using comparative analysis the knowledge (data) generated from the interview were rationally equated against one another to formulate answers to the research problem.

5.3. Sampling Technique

The primary data required for this research was collected through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques. This means that the participants of the research were selected because of the specific feature they own (Mujis, 2010). The purpose of this sampling technique is to strategically pick the respondents who are essential the character of a specific research study (Becker, 1998).

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where the researcher deliberately samples participants who are pivotal in answering the research questions (Bryman, 2016). Since the research respondents' exhibit particular characteristics of gender, race, ethnicity, and occupied executive positions in a nonprofit organization in the UK they belong to a difficult-to-reach population group. They are also a handful in number. Purposive sampling was thus adopted during the initial phase of getting access to the research respondents. The sampling was conducted via LinkedIn; a social media networking site that allows its registered members to connect with employers/leaders professionally (TecTargetContributor, 2016). More than 20 leaders were

messaging to participate in this study. Among them, only the leaders who were positive to participate were invited for an individual interview session.

Despite reaching out to more than 20 Black and Asian female leaders, securing six leaders (3 black female leaders and 3 Asian leaders) turned out to be challenging. Snowball sampling was hence utilized to fulfil the required leaders' count. As the respondents of this research form a niche group of people occupying senior positions in the nonprofit sector, snowball sampling was the best way of getting access to them. Snowball sampling is a sampling technique where “the researcher initially samples a group of people relevant to the research question, and these sampled participants propose other participants who have had the experience or characteristics relevant to the research” (Bryman, 2016: 415). Snowball sampling is popularly used in studies with the sensitive subject matter and/or when it is difficult to reach research respondents (Lee, 1933 as cited in Berg and Lune, 2012: 52)

Table 1: Information of Leaders with Asian Ethnicity (Group 1)

Respondent Number	Ethnicity	Age	Organizational Position	Years of Engagement	Length of the Interview
1	Asian-Indian	63	Chief Executive Officer	29 years	46 minutes
2	Asian-Indian	57	Chairperson	27 years	50 minutes
3	Asian-Indian	57	Non- Executive Director	25+ years	47 minutes

From the above table 1, it can be seen that the sample of female leaders with Asian-Indian ethnicity accounts for half i.e., 50% of the population. Among them, respondents 2 and 3 are of the same age, i.e., 57 years and respondent 1 is six years older than the previous two. In terms of organizational position, all three respondents held heterogeneous positions; chief executive officer; chairperson and non-executive director respectively.

Table 2: Information of Leaders with Black African Ethnicity (Group 2)

Respondent Number	Ethnicity	Age	Organizational Position	Years of Engagement	Length of the Interview
4	Black-African	55	Chairperson	30+ years	51 minutes
5	Black-African	53	Director	30+ years	37 minutes
6	Black-African	40+	Director	20+ years	33 minutes

Table 2 shows that the sample of Black female leaders can be further divided into Black British African and Black British Caribbean African ethnicity and they account for the remaining half i.e., 50% of the sample population. During the interview, respondent 6 felt unease in disclosing her real age so instead an age range was provided. Consequently, all Black female leaders belong to the age group of 40-55 age range. In terms of organizational position, respondent 4 holds a chair position, and respondents 5 and 6 are both directors. Furthermore, all the respondents have more than 20 years of working experience within the civil society sector.

5.4. Data Collection

The main method used in the data collection of this research study was individual semi-structured interview with both Black and Asian female leaders. To gather relevant information on the experience of the leaders with the invisible barriers, it was crucial to obtain their version of reality. Individual interviews were opted instead of group interviews to lower the possibilities of dominance in storytelling that could be resulted from a false sense of homogeneity (Goebel, 1998).

Using semi-structured interviews, the understanding of the topic and discovery of knowledge has resulted from the interactive bilateral communication and collaboration between the researcher and the participants (Mason, 2018). The quality of the responses provided during the interview mostly depends on the interviewer (Quinn-Patton, 2001: 341). A safe environment was prioritized

by eradicating presence of third person and ensuring confidentiality throughout the interview session so that the respondents would comfortably answer the question. To protect the confidentiality of the respondents, no one was allowed to enter the room during the interview. The interview began with the introduction of the researcher, followed by respondents' introduction and stating the objectives of the research study. The responses from the respondents were made clear through necessary probing of the question and some follow up question. When the participants went off-topic, follow-up questions were used to specify the problem area to delve deeper into the research problem (ibid). As a couple of interviews took place, respondents' answers started resembling each other. Therefore, it got easier to interpret the answers of the respondents by connecting them with other members of their group.

Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, all the interviews were conducted online using the Zoom platform. Mason (2018: 129), suggests before using online interview, the researcher should ask themselves “whether you are using online interaction simply as a way to get in touch and to circumvent the need to meet up in person, or whether there is something distinctively of interest to you in online modes of interaction”. Online interaction was employed in this research study mainly due to the government-imposed rules of closed borders, uncertainty, and avoidance of the health hazards that have arisen due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Further, online interaction was employed because the study respondents regularly used the internet platform to disseminate their thoughts and views among their friends (followers). Their online engagement indicated that they were suitable participants to gain insights on the research topic. Similarly, living in two different countries in the time of closed borders, online was the suitable medium to gather the required information.

The respondents also had all the technical equipment required for online interview such as; laptop, web camera, microphone and internet connection, which were prerequisites for the online face to face qualitative interview (Mason, 2018). The format of virtual face to face interview was used for the online interview as it generated trust among the participant and the researcher. To ensure all the necessary topics were covered during the online interview, research questions and an interview guide was developed beforehand. The prepared questionnaire followed the theme of professional experiences and comprised questions that answered the research questions. The questionnaire was the founding base for semi-structured interviews because it aided in providing insights into the

issue that is sensitive and personal. A pilot interview was conducted with a friend to ensure the interview guide was suitable for the interview with the research participants. As a result of the pilot interview, 45 minutes were initially planned for the interview. However, two interviews were conducted between 30- 40 minutes due to the leader's hectic schedule.

While the interview guide helped the researcher to transit from one query to another, the respondents did not receive questions before the interview. This was done to receive the reality in its truest form and to make the online interview as interactive as possible. Mason (2018: 130) points, researchers should be careful about the issue of privacy and confidentiality, conclusively, before starting the interviewing researcher and the respondents confirmed nobody was present and will be present in the room during the interview session

5.5. Analyzing the qualitative data

Analyzing qualitative data necessitates going back and forth of the raw data to elucidate the facts obtained through the sources, which in this case is the interviews (Mills et al., 2010a: 749). Punch (2005: 193) suggests there are various techniques to analyze qualitative research, and most of the researcher goes through the steps of 1) preparing the data; 2) coding the data and 3) presenting the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, after completion of my research interviews, all the audio recordings were thoroughly transcribed. The recording was repeated to verify every word. Once all the interviews were coherently transcribed, they were subjected to qualitative coding. Saldaña (2013: 3), regards qualitative coding as a symbolic process of assigning “a word or short phrase” to capture the essence of textual data. The subject theme represents significant information of the data to provide meaning to the data set and answer the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 10). After completion of the interviews, the data were systematically tabulated and presented in MS Word. The majority of similar answers along with other unique responses were used for the further analysis.

5.6. Ethical Considerations

Dealing with a sensitive issue of gender and racial biases, several ethical considerations were made in this study. Firstly, before starting the interview all the research participants were informed about the objective and the nature of this research study. They were also informed about what their contributions will result in. Similarly, the research participants will be provided a digital copy of

this thesis after it is completed. As this research shed light on “the glass ceiling faced by the participants”, the anonymity of their personal life had to be taken into consideration. To ensure complete anonymity and confidentiality an oral consent was taken before starting the interview. No names of the participants were recorded and random numerical codes were assigned to each interview recording. The recorded interviews were transcribed on the computer to easily use during the analysis process. While transcribing the recorded data, the sentences were structured properly which included detailed grammatical arrangement i.e. comma, full stop, brackets to give more meaning to the data. The recorded interview, transcribed data and the lists of participants were properly stored in a laptop secured by password and they were only used for academic purposes.

5.7. Study Limitation

This study has certain limitations due to some unavoidable and strategic reason. First of all, the findings from the research cannot be generalized as the sample size of the study is very limited and cannot represent a larger population. Using qualitative research among a small sample population, this study is rather limited for generalization. Only six respondents (three Asian- Indian leaders and three Black-African leaders) participated in this study. It means they do not represent entire Black and Asian women but instead present the threshold of discriminatory practices present in the UK’s civil society sector.

Second, the use of qualitative methods provided both strength and limitation to this study. Unlike the quantitative method which can be easily used for generalizing and replicating the results, qualitative research has problems in generalization, replication and presents the subjective view. Nonetheless, as the qualitative method provides in-depth contextualization of the subject matter it was chosen for this research study (Bryman, 2016).

Third, the limitation in time created by the study frame of the master’s thesis created some barriers because during the ending phase of the analysis a couple of ethnic minority leaders presented interest in contributing to the research by being research participants. Due to the dearth of time, their perspectives could not be included in this research study

5.8. Positionality of the Researcher

As a qualitative researcher, being aware of my positionality and its effect on the data is essential (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Being a female from Global South, trying to make a career in the Global North, respondents saw me as one of their own and explained to me the situation I might be facing if I worked in the civil society sector. I believe my positionality has had a positive impact on the interview as the respondents especially from group 1 i.e., British Indian ethnicity bonded with me easily and answered my queries by seeing me as their own. Further, the respondents of group 2 viewed me as a non-white person so they expressed their disappointment swiftly.

Similarly, I was also aware that my position as a female of Global South might result in bias from the researcher's perspective because before conducting the research I could pre assume where the research analysis might head across and what kinds of facts can be obtained from the Asian-Indian women. However, recognizing my study bias reminding myself that this is not a study about me, this is my study I proceeded to collect the data and analysis them.

5.9 Validity and Reliability

In a research study, validity simply means reflecting whether the obtained results align with both, the research aim and the research question imposed by the thesis. Research validity can be divided into two types: internal validity and external validity. According to the authors Lincoln & Guba (1985), while internal validity presents that the social reality can be interpreted in different ways, external validity is related to phenomena of transferability.

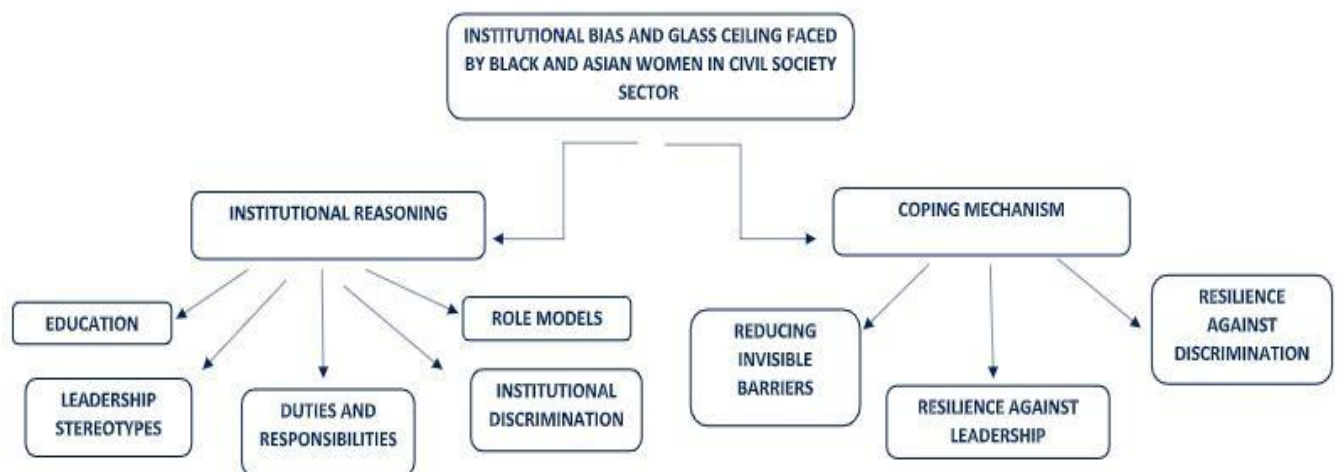
The interviews conducted for this study interview aligns with the aim of this research study written in the first chapter. Only the Black and Asian female leaders were interviewed because they were the pivotal group facing the problem. In terms of external validity, transferability data that has been collected by the interview without the research context of this research gives no meaning to the data.

Similarly, the elaboration of the world view used in this research study, methods description, and the elucidation of the analytical method describes the credibility of this research study.

Chapter 6: Results and Analysis

This chapter comprises a walkthrough of the results of this study, accompanied by the analysis of the empirical data in relation to the theory. The analysis of the data was guided by the aim of the study i.e., to understand the low representation of Black and Asian women in senior positions across the civil society sector in the UK on a comparative level. The first part of the chapter will analyze institutional reasoning that leads to systematic discrimination, which will also present the answer of the research question one. The second part distinguishes coping mechanisms employed by the respondents in response to the institutional biases they encounter, this will also present the answer of the research question two. While institutional reasoning presents the unconscious bias and oppressive practices that limit the hierarchical growth of Black and Asian women, the coping strategies contextualize the motivating factors that prompt the research respondents to continue working in the civil society sector despite the professional bias they encounter. It is important to analyze the coping strategies used by the respondents because it helps understand the action taken by them to combat the glass ceiling. Nevertheless, it cannot be considered fully effective to completely eradicate the bias practiced inside the civil society sector. The process of this analysis can be further illustrated through the figure below:

Figure 5: Overview of the analytical structure of this research



The above diagram depicts the analysis structure underlying this research study understand the institutional reason behind the low representation of Black and Asian women in senior positions across the civil society sector in the UK. For reasoning, the glass ceiling on Black and Asian women, the analysis has been divided into two parts i.e., institutional reasoning and coping mechanisms. While institutional reasoning provides the embedded sectoral reason of the civil society sector for continuing the discrimination against the research respondents, coping strategies details the techniques used by the respondents to deconstruct the systematic discrimination. This study will analyze both perspectives as institutional discrimination stems from suppressing women already at the junior level. In addition to that, this study will further analyze the actions taken by Black and Asian women leaders to rise above the discrimination.

6.1. Institutional Reasoning

The first division of the chapter contains the analysis of the institutional settings that have led to a partiality for our study respondents. To understand the institutional reason behind the low representation of Black and Asian women leaders in the civil society sector, understanding their educational background which led to their career in the civil society sector is significant. This chapter will first look over the educational background of the respondents followed by the organizational duties as an ethnic minority group. Thirdly, it will assess the instances of institutional discrimination and professional bias encountered by the respondents in comparison to the white leaders. Fourth, respondents' views on not having an inspirational figure who would visually and ethnically represent them during the beginning of the career and the impact it had throughout their careers will be discussed. Finally, leadership stereotyping leading to various challenges for the Black and Asian women leaders in the civil society sector will be analyzed.

6.1.1. Education Background

This section of the report will highlight the educational background of the respondents. All of the respondents ensured that they had a university degree from their respective educational institutions. Despite all the respondents being university graduates, their views regarding the role of education in their professional careers varied. The given statement from a few of the respondents illustrates the differences between their career formations due to education. As a few of them stated:

“My education background is economic history. However, during my initial days, I worked as a freelancer in the media which later coincided with the headhunting of the setup of public advocacy work. Despite having a degree in economic history and working in media I worked hard to secure the rank of chief executive officer in several nonprofit organizations throughout my career.”

- Group 1, Respondent 2

On the same note, another Asian-Indian woman also had similar experiences:

“My degree is in both drama and performing arts. I started my career making a portfolio which means I should have either been employed in the culture or volunteer sector. However, I run a cross-sector and I am recently working in the development consultancy sector which works on international cultural policy.”

- Group 1, Respondent 3

The Asian-Indian respondent perceived education as an integral part to secure a position in the organization. They also believed that their hard work played a major role in helping them secure their rank in the civil society sector. Comparatively, the narrative of education was different for Black-African respondents. As they stated:

“My education background is in law, I also have two diplomas along with teaching qualifications and various leadership courses. Attending university was not something I envisioned, yet when I started working after completing my high school education, I felt lacking. It dawned on me that if I attended university I could reach somewhere higher professionally. Hence, I decided to join university and acquire my qualifications in respective diplomas.”

- Group 2, Respondent 5

Likely, another Black-African leader stated:

“I have a degree and I think it played an important role in my career. It enabled me to climb the ladder by providing me the necessary skills and information required to work in a civil society sector.”

- Group 2, Respondent 6

As responses from group 1 and group 2 expressed, acquiring a university degree has served two different purposes in the life of the respondents. In comparison to the response from Asian-Indian female leaders, Black-African female leaders believed their educational qualification helped build a foundation for the job they are doing. Respondent 5 added that getting a university degree was not her priority. This is mainly because she wanted to be financially independent as soon as she graduated from high school. Nonetheless, after realizing education adds value to with work she studied in the university to sharpen her skills and enhance her social/professional position.

The achievement of a university degree by all of the respondents confirms that unlike the western feminist view of transnational women from the Global South as uneducated, traditional and backward, (Mohanty, 2003), our respondents, who are originally women from the Global South are equally educated, developed and liberated to make their own decision. Depending on the priority, in the initial stage of their career, Black and Asian leaders had different views on education. While Asian-Indian leaders continue education before pursuing their career, Black-African leaders not having an education that could provide them with work up to the mark, go back to the university and do their work.

6.1.2. Organizational Duties and Responsibilities

In this section of the paper, organizational responsibilities and the duties of the respondents will be discussed. The findings show that all of the respondents were senior staff and their major responsibilities included fulfilling works related to governance. Organizational resources, working with the executive team, finalizing decisions, developing strategic requirements for the organization and ensuring that the project meets policy were some of the major tasks relating to governance. Additionally, creating impact and adding values that determine the growth of their organization is considered as one of the most integral aspects of their work. Hence, the findings from the study indicate similarity in the nature of the work of the respondents.

During the research, the respondents were also asked whether or not they believe that their responsibilities would differ if they belonged from a white community. Asian-Indian leaders accepted that if they belonged to the white community they would get more recognition inside their workspace, ensuring that racial discrimination exists inside their institution. While on the other hand, Black-African leaders had a strong opinion regarding the same topic. They agreed that

they wouldn't be a part of any organization which practices any sort of discrimination. In between the discussion regarding this topic, one of the respondents shared the following:

"I strongly believe that if I was a white woman working in a civil society sector, a senior level position would be handed over to me a lot sooner. Despite being a WOC, I am working in a senior-level position although I feel that being a white woman would have given me the opportunity of being in this position preferably faster. This would have helped me achieve my goals and would have shaped my career a lot by now."

- Group 1, Respondent 3

Similarly, another Asian-Indian leader highlighted:

"In my case, if I were a white woman, I would, in general, be exposed to more resourceful CSOs. As an ethnic minority women, despite my abilities, I have been bounded to work in smaller organizations because the civil giants only accept white women on top of their organizational hierarchy"

- Group 1, Respondent 1

The Asian-Indian leader's respondents are very vocal about being limited inside the civil society sector. From their responses, it can be perceived that despite working on top of the organizational hierarchy they consider that their growth in the organization is comparatively slower and in some other cases they were offered jobs only in smaller organizations.

While the Asian-Indian leaders agreed on being subjected to some form of institutional discrimination, Black-African women leaders showed resilience against the persisting institutional bias which can be mirrored by:

"Professionally, I've only taken work that has treated me equally as my white counterpart. I believe positive aspects can also be resulted by black leadership, so I do not spend my time in an organization that makes assumptions about me because of my ethnicity".

- Group 2, Respondent 5

A similar response was received from another respondent who stated:

“I am the co-founder and the overall head of the CSO and I can assure you that any work that has been done from this organization is equivalent to the work done by a white person led CSO.

- Group 2, Respondent 6

The answers obtained from the respondents of group 1 and 2 in response to work satisfactions are interesting in relation to the previously discussed linkage between common organizational responsibilities. Asian-Indian women continued working in organizations that did not provide the right opportunities according to their qualification whereas Black-African women on the other hand, only worked in the organizations that offered them an equal opportunity as their white counterparts. Here, despite the fact that women are oppressed as women in a patriarchal society, it is important to recognize that not all women are positioned in the same way. Their identity is constructed at the “intersection of different social positions and, the relevance of which changes across time and space” (Scuzzarello, 2010: 27).

6.1.3. Experience of institutional discrimination

This subsection of the research study will present the instances of institutional discrimination encountered by the respondents in their professional career in the civil society sector. All the respondents have been engaged in the civil society sector for more than 20 years. In the past two decades, they have come a long way professionally by beginning in the junior positions to now serving at the senior level. In this duration, all the respondents agreed to have been subjected to some form of discrimination, as they stated:

“Once my application for an executive-level position was shortlisted and selected for a job interview at a big organization. Since the beginning of the interview, despite having all the required leadership skills, the president of the organization turned his back against me as soon as he saw me. He did not look at my direction once during the interview. While other board members were interested in me and what I represented, the president simply continued to ignore me till the end. As a result, I didn't get the job position. Later, the vice president personally called to apologize to me for the misbehavior of the president”

- Group 1, Respondent 2

Also, another instance of discrimination faced by Asian-Indian women leader is seen as:

“I was lost in a humongous prop center on my first day. A guy randomly took me to the kitchen assuming I am there to serve food before even asking me. I discovered the same day that he was working below me”

- Group 2, Respondent 3

The Asian-Indian leader respondents face instances of institutional discrimination based on their physical identity. It is evident from the response of the respondents that without querying about their professional position, general people perceive Asian-Indian leaders worked in an informal institution. Likely, in another case considered inadequate to take the leadership role. The Black-African leaders in contrast were susceptible to a different form of discrimination, such as:

“In the organization, I worked with before, a male colleague of mine harassed me by continuously undermining my work and referring to me as a problem. It impacted my professional well-being to the extent that I complained about him to my superiors and filed a lawsuit against him. I won the case against him, but instead of supporting me, the other senior staffs mistreated me until I officially resigned”

- Group 2, Respondent 5

Likewise, related case of discrimination comprises:

“During staff meetings, it is noticeable that black leaders get very little to null acknowledgement on the ideas they put forward. Although, in a white colleagues case it is vice versa as they get an extra appreciation for the most minimal tasks they do. Likely, when a black person makes a mistake everyone makes a big deal about it, but when a white colleague makes a mistake it is hidden.”

- Group 2, Respondent 4

From the verbatim quotes obtained from the respondents, it can be portrayed that all of the respondents have experienced at least a form of discriminatory behavior while working in the civil society sector. While the Asian-Indian women leaders shared their experience due to their physical

appearances, Black-African women leaders detailed the behavioral pattern that distinguished Black-African women leaders from their white counterparts.

It can be perceived from the response of the respondents that a multitude of discriminatory practices is experienced by the Black and Asian women across the civil society sector. It shows that the notion of a colonial binary view of “othering” still exists for the women of the Global South working in their former colonizer’s country. On the same hand, gender is not the only reason behind the practices of discrimination faced by the study respondents within the boundaries of cultural hegemony, instead, the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, and class also creates oppression (Mohanty 2000: 311).

6.1.4. Leadership Stereotypes faced by Black and Asian Female Leaders

The participants expressed how their work has been undervalued various times solely because they did not represent the “white community”. Respondents believe that they have been disparaged multiple times by both internal and external workers/colleagues as they continue to undermine their capacity, give minimal attention to their work and often misunderstand their position and refer to them as a subordinate. They further added that while attending meetings, workshops and any other public events, the majority of the people especially outsiders tend to approach white men to have professional talks. This is due to the ignorant attitude and lack of acceptance by many, as they fail to believe that women belonging to ethnic minority groups can hold a higher-level position in the civil society sector. According to the respondents, this stigma still exists within the civil society sector too as internal staff of the organization showcase favoritism towards white men for maximum tasks.

The following account from a few of the respondents depicts the occurrence of leadership stereotypes faced by the respondents. As stated by a few of the respondents:

“I generally attend inter-organizational meetings and seminars with my assistant and the junior officers. Interorganizational events are essential for networking and idea-sharing, so I take my juniors to provide them with a learning opportunity and introduce them to the leaders of the civil society sector. Nonetheless, when I take part in those events with a white man, people think he is my boss and talk with him instead of”

- Group 1, Respondent 2

At the same time, additional Asian-Indian leader expressed:

“In the civil society sector, there is an unconscious bias formed by how people see me. When I attend meetings with people outside my organization they do not think I am a chief executive officer of my organization.”

- Group 1, Respondent 1

The Asian-Indian leaders' respondents responded that people usually perceive white men to be the leaders of their organization. They affirmed that the public doesn't consider ethnic minority women holding superior positions to their male counterparts. This can also be seen described in the experience of the Black-African leaders as:

“While working in a team in the same position with a male colleague, all the staff of the organization treated him well, he looked more accomplished and directed more.”

- Group 2, Respondent 5

Likely, another experience of Black-African leaders' entails:

“I have faced instances in meetings, where a fresh concept I initiated was completely ignored whereas when a white leader brought a similar concept, he/she was automatically considered a problem solver.”

- Group 2, Respondent 3

As responses from group 1 and group 2 conveyed, the leadership stereotype persists in the civil society sector in various forms. In comparison to the response from Asian-Indian female leaders, Black-African female leaders believe the majority of the leadership stereotypes they encounter are beyond their physical appearance. Respondent 5 added that while holding the same leadership position with a male colleague, the members of her organization recognized him as their sole leader. This is mainly because the leadership role in the management and executive positions are associated with masculine attributes (Heilman, 2001). In addition, respondent 3 asserted that Black-African leaders are not given recognition for the effort they provide. Living in the country

of their former colonizer ethnic minority group is still perceived within the colonial view (Quijano, 2000).

6.1.5. Role Models

The study noted that almost all of the respondents have faced multiple consequences due to minimal or null ethnic minority group representation in the civil society sector throughout their careers. Lack of visual representation of women from the same ethnic background at the senior level impacted their growth as they believed reaching that height of position was unattainable. Due to this reason, they faced numerous challenges and fought discrimination to secure the roles they have now. The responses of the Asian-Indian women leaders in the context of lack of role models are:

“When I first started my career in the civil society sector, there was no one who looked like me in the senior level. Among the British Indian leaders who were working in the sector, all of them were working in a junior position. So it impacted my professionalism because I thought I could never reach the organizational hierarchy. And sometimes I wondered if giving my effort was worth the position I received.”

- Group 1, Respondent 1

Likely, another Asian-Indian leader's respondent replied:

“Yes, I was affected by seeing a lower representation of women in a senior position because there was no one who could understand me and the value I present”

- Group 1, Respondent 3,

On the same note, similar to the account of Asian-Indian female leaders, Black-African female leaders also supported the impact created by lack of representation had a negative impact on their career. It can be shown by:

“All my life. In the charity sector, it was hard to get along with the higher sector.”

- Group 2, Respondent 5

Likewise, respondent 6 supported respondent 5 by asserting:

“Yes, of course, I went to a meeting where I met a senior executive officer and I was like wow she can do that. We are subtly told that we are not good enough and that leaves a trace in your mind. You start doubting yourself”

- Group 2, Respondent 3

On contrary, to the answers of the respondents, one of the Asian-Indian leader respondent:

“No, because I did not expect Asian people in higher positions”

- Group1, Respondent 2

Here, one Asian-Indian woman agreed to have not been impacted by having any role models like herself, during her early career, the rest of them, however, were adversely affected for having no visually representing role models as themselves inside the civil society sector. Having no role models to look up to has had an obvious impact on the career building of the respondents thought it is arduous to identify the community which has faced extreme consequences. The prejudice against women in leadership roles, and the existence of such stereotypes is the barrier towards women gaining full access to these positions (Carli & Eagly, 2001). Although there is an abundance of women who are qualified for top positions, character attributes by others and their self-evaluation can limit their advancement in their careers (Carli et. al, 2001). Respondents believe it is difficult to comprehend something until and unless they experience it and witness it by themselves, connecting it to the fact that they didn't have any female role models to admire. They experience continuous self-critique, comparisons with the male counterparts, and battle with the subjected stereotypes.

6.2. Coping Mechanism

The second division of this chapter will provide an analysis of the coping mechanism used by the study respondents in response to the persisting institutional partiality. First, the practices of resilience against the leadership stereotype will be provided. Second, resilience against discrimination will be analyzed in detail. Finally, an examination of the activities launched by the leaders to promote ethnic minority groups on the hierarchy of the civil society sector will end this chapter.

6.2.1. Resilience against the Stereotype of Black and Asian Women Identity

This section of the report will provide information and key findings on the coping strategies applied by Black and Asian female leaders in response to the leadership stereotype encountered by them. During the interview, the respondents were asked what motivated them to continue working in the civil society sector while continuously being perceived as vulnerable people (the group who is incapable to lead and be a leader). In comparison to the Black-African leaders, the Asian-Indian leaders stated that instead of giving up to the stereotype, the fact that they can present a different identity of an Asian-Indian woman motivated them to work. That being said, some of the strategies used by Asian-Indian are:

“I decided to change my clothing patterns by putting on loud colorful clothes. I did this intentionally to garner more attention as an Asian-Indian woman. Therefore, I visually stood out from other people in the panel and people started remembering me for being more than my race and ethnicity”

- Group 1, Respondent 2

On the same note, another account of Asian-Indian leader respondent noted:

“Whenever I had to make TV appearances, I would ensure that I have a traditional Indian attire on. I did that on purpose so that I could create an impact amongst the audience as they would eventually understand that a woman with Indian ethnicity can also stand out professionally”.

- Group 1, Respondent 3

As noted by the response from respondents 2 and 3, wearing ethnic attires that stood them out from the crowd was a step Asian-Indian women took to portray their Indian heritage and dismantle prejudice associated with their leadership. While Asian-Indian women decided to visually represent their ethnicity to break the stereotype against them, the techniques used by Black-African leaders were different, as some of the respondents stated the following:

“Wherever I feel like someone is stereotyping me, I reach out to them and address the discomfort I have been feeling. I ask them not to stereotype me and after the conversation, if they

still differentiate me, I record them and then complain about them. I believe we can only do two things about the stereotypes: you can either let it break you down or tackle the system on your own.”

- Group 2, Respondent 5

A similar response was received from another Black-African leader:

“Regarding the stereotypes; you find them, jump through them, elevate yourself and take yourself forward. Although there are times when those challenges seem heavy it’s important to focus on your inner strength”

- Group 2, Respondent 6

Black-African leaders tend to bravely confront people who are accountable for stereotyping them personally/professionally. They do not resist any forms of oppressions from any individual or organization. Asian-Indian leaders on the other side are unlikely to take the same path. They bring out their cultural clothing patterns to highlight their presence amongst the higher-ups. They do this in order to educate people on how stereotyping shouldn't define an individual. The coping strategies used by the people from the formally colonized countries depends on the embodied beliefs of colonizers (Enns. et.al.). Hence, according to the colonial view on the ethnic group, their practice of dealing with it is also different.

6.2.2. Resilience against discrimination

The respondents gave very prompt answers regarding what pushed them to move forward by stating most of them were social aspects. The social aspects were inclusive of family value, societal norms and their desire to serve the vulnerable. Firstly the responses obtained from Asian-Indian respondents will be presented here:

“I was motivated by the impact I was creating. I was working with the BAME community so that was motivating the support around me that helped me to work. You have to make sacrifices to be true with yourself because your life does not belong to the community, it belongs to you.”

- Group 1, Respondent 1

Another response from Asian-Indian leaders' states:

"I always thought about what I need to do to serve the best for people in my organization. Being true to yourself. When you are busy thinking about what others are thinking about you, you can never do what you want. So I prioritized myself; I was continuously learning, improving and I was doing what I want to do every single day. Also, my family is an overachiever so my ethics are very strong"

- Group 1, Respondent 2

The final response of the Asian-Indian leader presents:

"I was always supported by my husband and family. My parents always taught me to believe I could do whatever I wanted to do. They also told me the harsh reality of life and that I would have to work extra hard."

- Group 1, Respondent 3

Responses from the Asian-Indian leaders suggested that while it was hard for them to work in the civil society sector, having self-reflection, finding the purpose of their life and doing the work they love helped them continue working in this sector. Additionally, having strong family support and understanding the harsh reality of life was considered the main push factor for the respondents to be motivated for their work.

Now, the experiences of Black-African female leaders are given below:

"Being able to deal with it depends on the person you are. I went to Nigeria for two years and going there changed my mind because in Nigeria I was seen as a person and it enhanced my confidence because I realized my worth. Because if you see yourself as a minority your self-worth might be neglected but just knowing my worth helps me build myself."

- Group 2, Respondent 4

Likewise, Black-African female leader respondent replied:

“Sometimes you get motivated and sometimes you don’t. If it’s to the extent that it makes me ill, depressed and anxious then why would I stay in that environment. I moved out of it. As a black woman, when you get into a senior position on your own, there is no one to speak with. And when others tell you are not good enough it makes you feel inferior. So, you have to know your worth and the fact that you are good enough”

- Group 2, Respondent 5

On the same note, responded 6 added:

“I think it is something innate in me. My parents always supervised me to be the best that I could ever be and I was also the first black gymnast competing in the Olympics. I was always competing against myself and I thought it was my role with cultural leaders and young people to be able to help them, to inspire them to be the best they can be.”

- Group 2, Respondent 6

There is a recurring pattern found in the case of resilience against discrimination, which is connected to receiving full support from their family, getting motivation from the work they were doing, from the impact they were creating, prioritizing on themselves and strengthening their mindset. They knew they had to work hard and beat the odds. Their parents and partners played an integral role by instilling confidence in them and building a foundation for them to believe in themselves. Their self-confidence, self-reliance, and self-pride also helped them face their adversity and continue to instil the characteristics that help them succeed.

6.2.3. Reducing the invisible barriers

Here, the activities executed by the respondents to reduce invisible barriers in the civil society sector will be described. Black-African leaders were focused on building a network/forum to convey messages regarding invisible barriers which would ultimately lead to giving awareness to a big group of people. Asian-Indian leaders on the other hand had a different approach to eradicate the invisible barriers. They would prioritize people belonging to the BAME community by providing them opportunities starting from the recruitment process. They believed that this approach would slowly reduce the barriers and at the same time enhancing the BAME community.

First, the responses of Asian-Indian leaders are as follow:

“I actively work to increase the diversity of the board I am in. What I have done is when someone is retiring, I am actively recruiting BAME talents to include diversity, networking with BAME talents. I also vouch for giving chances to new people instead of opting for people with 10-year experiences, why do we need people with 10 years to do it.”

- Group 1, Respondent 2

Similarly, another Asian-Indian respondent stated the parallel reasoning:

“I was chair of the institute of fundraising in the expert panel and one of the groups we focused on was BAME fundraiser; I have informally provided answers to one of the founders of a white people dominated charity, which works for anti-racism in the UK; Sometimes I also include other people who are from the diverse community so that they can form a network and enhance opportunity and I talk with my peers about the topic. I do think I am not an expert and my experience pertains to me but I still talk about it.”

- Group 1, Respondent 3

As stated by Asian-Indian female leaders, the majority of the work they have done to reduce the invisible barriers comprises recruiting BAME talents and enhancing the number of ethnic minority groups in the civil society sector. On the other hand, Black-African female leaders used different measures for making the civil society sector approachable from more ethnic minority groups. The measures used by Black-African leaders against persisting systematic bias for Black-African and Asian-Indian female leadership can be mirrored by:

“In any role, I am in I bring the value of participation and engagement or personal development career development. If I work around and feel there is a barrier then I will do whatever I can to break that barrier for black women.”

- Group 2, Respondent 5

A similar response was received from another respondent who stated:

“It’s about being open, transparent and having that dialogue and awareness that I think some people live in the nominal society therefore certain things are not brought to their awareness.”

- Group 2, Respondent 6

The answers recorded from Black-African leaders illustrated that in order to encourage Black and Asian women’s engagement in the civil society sector, they encourage debates and conversation. Being in a senior-level position gives power to the Black and Asian female leaders to change the narrative of their story. Inside their organization, they create more work opportunities for BAME people, as they can shape the constructions, norms and terms upon which a glass ceiling is imposed. Similarly, by building the network by initiating dialogue the leaders can shape the constructions of reality, through being in control of disciplinary norms, behaviors and language (Lilja & Inthagen 2009, 34). In the civil society sector, senior leaders have more power to influence the Black and Asian women representation compared to the people on the junior level.

Chapter 7: Discussion

Based on the analysis from the previous chapters, this chapter provides a discussion on two main findings of this research study. It also answers the research questions that have been imposed by this study, which are as follow:

- 1) How does the ethnic identity of Black and Asian women, respectively, marginalize their opportunities for a higher position in the civil society sector?
- 2) What are the different resilience mechanisms used by Black and Asian women to cope with existing institutional discrimination?

First, the factors resulting in discrimination against Black and Asian women within the civil society sector will present the severity of institutional oppression experienced by the ethnic identity of Black and Asian women in the civil society sector. The differences between professional bias encountered by Black and Asian women will be laid out to illustrate whether it is beneficial or detrimental to put people of different ethnicities into one group to overcome the institutional discrimination.

Second, different resilience mechanisms used by Black and Asian women will detail the coping strategies used to dismantle institutional discrimination in the civil society sector. The second section will further elaborate a discussion on whether the coping mechanism helps combat discrimination or cover up cultural differences.

7.1. Factors Resulting in Discrimination against Black and Asian Women in the Civil Society Sector

As pointed in the previous chapter, the severity of discrimination encountered by Black and Asian women in the civil society sector can be affiliated with the key factors of institutional reasoning such as leadership stereotypes, uneven distribution of organizational duties and responsibilities, instances of institutional discrimination, and dearth of the role models.

The envisioned illustration of a leader as a homogeneous character, represented by white men denotes the structural obstacles that have hindered Asian women from expanding their career. According to Kosova (2020: 68), the embedded cultural norms and the executed practices are

“driven by homogeneity as a socially ruling value instead of embracing differences and attracting BAME talents”. While the majority of the institutional discrimination and leadership stereotypes persisting to Asian female leaders have resulted from their physical dissimilarity with the standard white men, Black female leaders assert the most institutional discrimination and the leadership stereotypes encountered by them are beyond their physical appearance. As the hierarchy of power formed by colonialism continues to differentiate the society in terms of socio-cultural resemblance (Agboka, 2014), the views of Black and Asian women are considered to be less impactful as compared to their white counterparts. The findings from Brown, (2019) denotes that the persisting racism and sexism demotivates Black-African women to continue their work as an executive leader. This shows that the organizational structure is at fault and has induced discrimination and the existing gender stereotypes in the civil society sector.

The impact of race and gender stereotypes on career advancement explained by Wesley (2008), also contributes to institutional discrimination. Kosova (2020) study mirrors these findings as she highlights ethnic minorities encounter other structural obstacles that hinder their possibilities for upward mobility and career progression. This is evident with the findings from this research study as the respondents stated that their views and opinions were disregarded inside their organization. The Asian women leaders showed dissatisfaction with the institutional recognition and the extent of responsibilities they receive from their respective CSO. Their dissatisfaction is present as their growth in the sector is stagnant and they only receive higher designations inside smaller CSOs. These findings correlate to the findings received from Wesley’s (2008) study, which affirms that despite earning advanced educational degrees, minority women are institutionally limited to demonstrate their capabilities. In contradiction to their qualification, which qualifies the Asian leaders to work in civil giants, they are working in the small CSOs due to limited or unequal access to opportunities. In presence of discrimination, the Black women leaders included resigning from white-centric CSOs to work in an organization that provides them equal opportunities to succeed. This coincides with the findings of Kosova (2020) which states that a large number of BAME employees are leaving the civil society sector due to the coalition resulting from invisible barriers.

Since the period of colonization, several social bigotry has been given to formally colonized subjects from Asia and Africa (Mohanty, 2003). Limiting the Black and Asian women from reaching their full potential also adhered to the behaviors and patterns of colonialism where

subjects from Asia and Africa were labelled incapable to perform leadership roles. The power exercised by the higher up plays an important role in bringing changes in the probability of Black and Asian women's growth in the social hierarchy. On the same account, lack of role models and higher representation adds severity to discrimination because there is no homogeneity in the experience encountered by ethnic minority group with the white counterparts. This has been discussed by Buddhapriya (2009), as she specifies that the lack of mentors in the senior position also results in gender-sensitive policies because there is no one to represent their issues. Therefore, people's professional experience and work circumstances are crucial for analyzing discrimination and instances of partiality faced by them (Mohanty, 2003).

As indicated in the first chapter of this research study, both the Black women and the Asian women are ethnic minority women of the UK and are commonly presented under the BAME threshold. However, the discussion presented from the above subsection illustrates that Black and Asian women encounter both leadership stereotypes, institutional discrimination, as well as their coping strategies against institutional discrimination, which also contrasts with one another. Hence, confirming the analysis this study believes detrimental to put people of different ethnicities into one group to overcome the institutional discrimination because there is no homogeneity in the glass ceiling they encounter and the strategies they use for resilience against them.

7.2. Different Resilience Mechanisms used by Black and Asian Ethnic Women

The respondents of this study indicated that instead of getting defeated by the glass ceiling existing in the civil society sector, they fought back against the prevailing discrimination and leadership stereotypes. To cope up with the stereotypes, Asian women leaders continued their dedication and visually represented their ethnicity to break the stereotype against them. In terms of discrimination, Asian women relied on self-reflection, finding the purpose of their life and doing the work they love. These strategies also align with the strategies written in the findings of the study by (Hayer, 2015; Lowery, 2012; Brown, 2019). According to Hayer (2015), Asian-Indian women use their attributes, support received from family, professional experiences and the action of the participant to motivate them to continue working in the civil society sector. Similarly, Lowery's (2012) findings specify that networking, barriers, family, education, experience, mentors, high profile assignments, opportunities, strategies and professional development are essential to break the

systematic oppression formed toward ethnic minority women in the civil society sector. Buddhapriya (2009) affirms, receiving support from their family helps Asian-Indians to face the stereotypes and continue working in the civil society sector. Further, Asian women leaders expressed to cope with the existing glass ceiling and institutional bias, they have taken an initiative to enhance the number of ethnic minority groups by recruiting BAME talents.

The resilience actioned by Black women leaders on the other hand includes confronting the system and situations that lead to stereotyping and discriminatory practices. Likely, they also rely on their family and their networks to break the institutional oppression. This finding correlates with the findings from Brown (2019), which identifies the moral support received from family and friends, and their passion to serve as the two greatest motivators experienced by the participants on their journeys to executive leadership roles. The Black women leaders on the other hand have initiated the awareness of the issue by encouraging debates and conversation. These findings correlate to the findings from Richardson (2021), who indicated that maintaining a routine rooted in professional development and developing a strong support network is crucial to reduce the barriers for ethnic minority women. As mentioned by Williams (2021) study, Black African ethnic leaders' participants formed intentional relationships with one another to create a better environment for women from the same ethnic background within the nonprofit industry.

As pointed out by the respondents above, there are various types of coping mechanism used by the Black and Asian female leaders in the civil society sector to combat the discrimination pertaining to the ethnic minority groups. While the use of Indian traditional cloth by the Asian-Indian leaders visually promotes their culture among a larger audience, relying on the support of the family to combat discrimination covers the cultural differences as their white counterparts might not even realize the adversity. In this situation, being vocal about the discrimination and not enduring it could be rather a better way of fighting against the discrimination. In terms of Black-African leaders their coping strategies comprise of confronting the system, relying on their friends and networks by increasing debates and awareness about the situation assist to combat discrimination because instead of enduring the situation, they are taking action against it.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This study provided a comparative analysis between the systematic discrimination faced by Black and Asian ethnic minority women in the civil society sector of the UK and the coping measures used by them to reach their organizational hierarchy.

In answering the research question one, which inquires, “how does the ethnic identity of Black and Asian women, respectively, marginalize their opportunities for a higher position in the civil society sector?” It is identified from this study despite working on top of the organizational hierarchy Asian-Indian ethnic women consider that their growth in the organization is comparatively slow because they are ethnic minority women. Asian-Indian women face instances of institutional discrimination based on their physical identity which is exemplified by the fact that without querying about their professional position, people perceive Asian-Indian leader’s work in either an informal sector or as a health care worker.

On the other hand, due to the racial and ethnic oppression encountered by Black-African women, they switch organizations regularly. It has been specified that Black-African women are subjected to a different institutional behavioral which distinguishes them from their white counterparts. While the ideas and contribution of Black women are ignored in the board meeting, the same ideas when presented by their white counterparts is praised. Similarly, the majority of the leadership stereotypes encountered by Black-African female leaders are beyond their physical appearance as they are constantly problematized if anything goes wrong in the organization.

The prevailing practices of institutional discrimination highlights the “colonial binary” view of “othering” persistent to Black and Asian women which restricts them from advancing their career in the civil society sector. Their accounts also show that despite being women from an ethnic minority group, they face discrimination differently and are differently impacted by it. It is also confirmed that as a transnational woman originated from a different social structure, the intersection of gender, ethnicity and race has resulted in oppression toward the Black and Asian women in the CSOs. The presumption of ethnic minority women as a worker from informal sector clarifies that the current perception of the sociocultural identities is rooted in the power structures influenced by the social and political structure of (post)colonial societies where Black and Asian ethnic minority women were regarded lower than the standard white person (Quijano, 2000).

Hence, the socio-cultural ethnicity of Black and Asian women has limited them from advancing their career in the civil society sector.

Now, moving towards research question two, which questions “the different resilience mechanisms used by Black and Asian women to cope with existing institutional discrimination” It is indicated from this study that Asian-Indian ethnic minority leaders use visual representation by wearing ethnic attires to portray their Indian heritage and dismantle prejudice associated with their leadership. Asian leaders also relied on self-reflection, having strong family support, finding the purpose of their life, doing the work they love and understanding the harsh reality of life to help them cope with the persisting institutional bias of the civil society sector.

Similarly, Black-African ethnic minority leaders tend to bravely confront people who are accountable for stereotyping them professionally. They do not resist any forms of oppressions from any individual or organization. Their view self-confidence, self-reliance, self-pride along with the help from their family, getting motivation from the work they were doing, impact they were creating, prioritizing themselves and strengthening on their mindset motivates them to beat the odds and continue their work in the civil society sector.

The differences between the coping mechanisms employed by the Black and Asian ethnic minority leaders represent the heterogeneity among the ethnic minority groups. While Asian women instead of voicing/confronting the discriminatory structure choose to endure it by taking the support from with the help of their family and friends, Black women used the same support of family to strengthen their mindset and take action against the discriminatory practices. Therefore there is a presence of highlight variation between the coping strategies used by Black and Asian leaders to cope with the discrimination they encounter.

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Annex I – Zoom Interview Question Guide

A. Demographics

(The first part contains basic information about the respondents)

Age:

Self-Identified Gender:

Nationality:

Self-Identified Ethnicity:

Involved Organization:

Organizational Position:

Level of Education:

B. Research Questions

1. What role has your education background played in your professional career?
2. Did your education background helped you get the job you are working in?
3. What are your responsibilities in the organization you are affiliated with?
4. Do you think you would have received the same responsibility in your designated position if you weren't a Black/Asian female leader?
5. Have you noticed any difference between the responses the general public give to your projects compared with the projects lead by white leaders?
6. Have you personally encountered any institutional discrimination throughout your career in the non-profit sector?
7. Have you been affected by seeing a low representation of Black/Asian women in an executive leadership position in the charity sector in the UK? If yes, what motivated you to carry on?
8. How do you deal with the stereotypes pertinent to Black/Asian leadership?

9. Do you think new generation Black/Asian female leader go through the same barriers in their professional career?
10. As a successful Black/Asian women leading a nonprofit institution, have you taken any initiative to reduce the invisible barriers pertaining to the women of the Black/Asian ethnicity?
11. To what extent does the Black/Asian community take pride in seeing their representation leading a nonprofit organization?
12. Mentorship.