

# How can we make not break black and minority ethnic leaders in higher education?

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# How can we make not break black and minority ethnic leaders in higher education?

## Stimulus paper

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# Stimulus Paper Series

**The Leadership Foundation is pleased to present this latest series of 'Stimulus Papers' which are intended to inform thinking, choices and decisions at institutional and system levels in UK higher education. The themes addressed fall into different clusters including higher education leadership, business models for higher education, leading the student experience and leadership and equality of opportunity in higher education. We hope these papers will stimulate discussion and debate, as well as giving an insight into some of the new and emerging issues relevant to higher education today.**

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# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>01</b>
<b>The facts on BME staffing in UK higher education</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>Experiences of BME staff and issues for BME leadership</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Learning from advances in BME leadership in the United States</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Understanding and developing BME leadership in the UK</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Conclusions and possible actions for HEIs</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Author biographies</b>	<b>38</b>

1  
See [www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charter-marks/race-equality-charter-mark](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charter-marks/race-equality-charter-mark)

## Introduction

*"It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences."*

Audre Lorde  
(1934–1992), Caribbean-American writer, radical feminist, and civil rights activist.

*"It is not light that we need, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake."*

Frederick Douglass  
(1818–1895), African-American social reformer, abolitionist orator, writer, and statesman.

The above quotes illustrate the nature of the present racial equality challenges facing higher education in the UK, namely the ability to value difference and the need to intensify energy for change.

This stimulus paper was commissioned by the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education to inform ongoing debate and practical actions on equality in the leadership of UK higher education institutions (HEIs). Although significant advances in staff and student equality and diversity have been made under widening access and human resource policies, there is substantive, well-established evidence on the stark under-representation of staff from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds at senior leadership levels. The good news is that the sector as a whole is beginning to realise that the status quo is no longer tenable. For example, the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) Race Equality Charter Mark is currently being piloted in 24 UK HEIs with the expressed aim of inspiring a strategic approach to continuous cultural and systemic change. This will also involve ECU working with HEIs to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the Charter Mark, including the impact on the careers and conditions for staff in member institutions<sup>1</sup>.

The paper focuses on leadership issues in relation to UK higher education and HEIs. In these contexts, leaders can include governors, vice-chancellors, senior management teams, other formally appointed individuals, as well as people in temporary leadership roles or acting-up (ie, undertaking a specific job role without formal appointment). HEI leadership also includes strategic and academic leadership (professors and principal investigators), and leadership of networks, disciplinary groups or collaborations. More broadly, leadership in higher education also includes leadership of policy and its implementation, quality assurance and regulation. It can also include more diffuse forms of leadership associated with programmes, networks and organisations, including student leadership. This paper draws on a wide range of research and staff experiences in the UK, as well as research and insights from the US, to offer a critical analysis of the issues.

The topic of racial equality in higher education leadership covers multiple, inter-related issues. This paper draws on different literature bases that include, but are not limited to, issues of: under-representation of groups of staff, for example within departments, staff structures or the higher education system;

ethnic diversity and the ethnic composition of organisations; staff inequalities, including racial inequalities, equality of opportunity and equality of outcomes; structural inequalities, or the way systems and structures within organisations work to enable some groups, or form barriers for others; intersectionalities, meaning the complex ways in which socially and culturally constructed categories (class, gender, ethnicity, disability etc) interweave to create multiple, differential and, in some cases, systematic experiences of inequality; racism and its different forms including explicit racial harassment and institutional racism; discrimination, for example treating some individuals less well than others because of their protected characteristics; conscious and unconscious bias, for example showing preferential treatment towards individuals with certain protected characteristics; and positive or affirmative action to provide minority groups with equality of opportunity or outcomes. The specific questions that we focus on in this paper are explained below.

## Aim

The aim of this stimulus paper is to present a critical perspective on issues of BME leadership in UK higher education. The issues examined in the paper are framed by the following questions:

- What are the facts on BME staffing and staff inequalities in UK higher education?
- What are the experiences of BME staff and the issues for BME leadership?
- What can be learnt from advances in BME leadership in the United States?
- How can BME leadership be better understood and developed in the UK?
- What conclusions and practical actions can HEIs use to encourage positive action?

## Approach

In line with the aim of this stimulus paper, the critical approach we have used draws on particular perspectives of the issues of BME leadership in UK higher education. The points made are informed by research evidence from higher education research and further afield. The paper also draws on our personal insights as black academics and activists with extensive experience of working within higher education and public sector organisations. Our intention is not simply to present a summary of the issues, but to identify key points for HEIs to consider and make suggestions for change. Though we do not underestimate the scale of the challenge, our experiential knowledge from working in higher education tells us that change is necessary and possible. We reflect on this approach in the conclusions section.

## Terminology

The Oxford English Dictionary defines ethnicity as ‘the fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition’. However, the language used to define and describe ethnicity issues is complex. The terms ‘ethnicity’ and ‘race’ tend to be used interchangeably in the literature and policy discourse. Academics and activists concerned with ‘race’ and racism have coalesced to refute biological conceptions of ‘race’ and to argue that ‘race’ is a social construct<sup>2</sup>. Various terms (‘ethnicity’ or ‘race’ for example) are used in different disciplinary contexts and countries and some of these are contested. The terms used in this stimulus paper are explained below.

2

Warmington (2009)

'Black' or 'black': The term and its earlier synonyms such as 'coloured' and 'negro' was first defined in law in the United States under the Racial Integrity Act of 1924 as 'anybody with a drop of black blood stretching back to a solitary great-grandparent'<sup>3</sup>. The political meaning of the term has changed over time as people have affiliated themselves with black interest groups and social movements. In the UK, the term 'black' or 'Black' is used in far more variable ways in different contexts to refer to ethnicity, racial identity and cultural heritage, amongst other things. Individuals of Asian origin may consider themselves as Black politically whilst being considered Asian by official forms of categorisation by ethnic group. Some authors use the term 'black' or 'Black' as an all-encompassing term to mean all black and minority ethnic groups. We use the term black to mean people of black or black British ethnicity.

BME: The term black and minority ethnic (BME) is widely recognised and used to identify patterns of marginalisation and segregation caused by an individual's ethnicity. The term 'black, Asian and minority ethnic' (BAME) or 'visible minority' are also sometimes used in the literature.

Ethnic group: A number of different systems of classification of ethnicity in the UK exist based on self-defined categorisation, that is, which ethnicity or nationality people see themselves as belonging to. Limitations of these definitions are that they group together staff from heterogeneous backgrounds (eg, Black African is a very broad category) and the assumption that individuals within any category experience ethnicity or discrimination in the same way.

Nationals/non-nationals: Depending on context, the term 'nationality' may either be used synonymously with ethnicity, or synonymously to mean citizenship of a country. In higher education, it is common to distinguish between BME staff who are British nationals and BME international/non-British. For example, UK higher education staff statistics from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and ECU distinguish between nationals/non-nationals (referring to the former as UK staff). Research on degree attainment focuses on BME home students rather than international students because the issues and challenges for these groups differ. Similarly, international BME staff report different issues than British national BME staff.

## Structure

The structure of the paper is in five sections which follow the questions outlined above:

**Section 1: The facts on BME staffing in UK higher education** presents the facts and figures on BME inequalities in higher education, including the striking under-representation of BME leaders; describes factors contributing to BME staff inequalities; discusses the possible impact on students; suggests reasons for the apparent reluctance of higher education to address the issues; and sets out the social and economic imperative for change.

**Section 2: Experiences of BME staff and issues for BME leadership** examines issues relating to BME leadership in UK higher education, including: issues of attracting and retaining BME people in UK HEIs; concerns that have been expressed about race equality in higher education; and views about poor implementation of equality policies.

**Section 3: Learning from advances in BME leadership in the United States**

examines the US and UK historical contexts of racial segregation and oppression; explains US advances in BME leadership through the creation of black colleges and black studies programmes; discusses US policy and strategies for affirmative action; and draws lessons for how these insights might inform UK higher education.

**Section 4: Understanding and developing BME leadership in the UK**

discusses issues of defining BME leadership; examines the meaning of black academic enquiry and BME-led research; and considers the importance of intersectionalities to BME leadership.

**Section 5: Conclusions and possible actions for HEIs** draws together conclusions and offers a range of practical suggestions that HEIs can adopt.

At the end of each section a summary and key points for HEIs to consider are presented.

**4**  
The Russell Group is a self-selected association of 24 prestigious British public research universities. The term Russell Group has connotations of academic excellence, selectivity in admissions and social elitism. In 2010, Russell Group members received approximately two-thirds of all university research grant and contract income in the UK.

**5**  
Runnymede Trust (2010)

**6**  
HESA (2012)

**7**  
Hefce (2014)

**8**  
ECU (2014)

**9**  
ECU (2014) p148

**10**  
ECU (2014) p168

**11**  
ibid

## The facts on BME staffing in UK higher education

This stimulus paper seeks to build a critical perspective on issues of BME leadership in UK higher education. We begin by exploring the facts on BME staffing and staff inequalities. This section of the paper:

- Presents the facts and figures on BME inequalities in higher education including the striking under-representation of BME leaders
- Describes factors contributing to BME staff inequalities
- Discusses the possible impact on students
- Suggests reasons for the apparent reluctance of higher education to address the issues
- Sets out the social and economic imperative for change.

### Facts and figures

In 2010, the then Labour Party Shadow Minister for Education, David Lammy, observed that there were more black students at London Metropolitan University (a former polytechnic with a lower employment record for new graduates) than in all the 24 esteemed Russell Group<sup>4</sup> universities put together<sup>5</sup>. Lammy's observation stimulated important questions about the presence, position and perspectives of BME students and staff within higher education. In 2014 HESA<sup>6</sup> worryingly revealed that there were just 85 black professors, of which just 17 are women, in UK universities<sup>7</sup>.

A recent ECU report<sup>8</sup> provides a snapshot of the ethnicity of the higher education workforce. Using data from HESA, the report presents an analysis of the gender, ethnicity, disability and age profiles of the higher education workforce (Part 1: staff) and full- and part-time students (Part 2: students) during the 2012/13 academic year. The data covers all academic and professional and support staff holding one or more contracts of employment with a UK HEI. In 2012/13, there were 185,585 academic staff working in higher education, representing a 23.5% increase from 2003/04 levels. During this same period, the number of professional and support staff increased by 4.8% (196,935 in 2012/13, compared with 187,875 in 2003/04).

- Among UK staff, similar proportions of both academic and professional and support staff were BME (7.9% and 7.8%, respectively). However, the proportion of UK staff who were BME was markedly lower among managers, directors and senior officials on academic contracts (2.6%) and strikingly higher among professional and support staff in sales and customer service occupations (10.3%)<sup>9</sup>.
- A higher proportion of UK academic staff from all ethnic groups worked in science, engineering and technology (SET) departments than in non-SET departments, with the exception of black staff (48.4% in SET)<sup>10</sup>. This was particularly pronounced among Chinese (77.0%) and Asian (68.3%) UK academic staff. Within SET subject areas, electrical, electronic and computer engineering (47.6%) and mechanical, aero and production engineering (47.2%) have the highest proportions of non-UK staff who are BME. Archaeology (3.5%) and psychology and behavioural sciences (13.6%) had the lowest<sup>11</sup>.

- Among UK staff, 10.7% of white academic staff were professors compared with 9.5% of BME academic staff. However, the proportion of UK black staff who were professors (4.0%) was lower than for any other ethnic group<sup>12</sup>. BME women are even less likely to occupy senior positions compared with BME men (5.8% of UK professors were BME men and 1.3% were BME women)<sup>13</sup>.
- The proportions of UK staff on fixed-term contracts are higher for BME staff than white staff. This difference is largest among those working part time, where 25.7% of BME staff have fixed-term contracts compared with 16.7% of white staff (a difference of 9.0%)<sup>14</sup>.
- On average, BME staff receive lower levels of pay. Around one in five white (19.1%), Asian (20.2%), Chinese (21.8%) and other (20.9%) UK academic staff earned a salary in the highest pay spine range of over £56,467. In contrast, 8.2% of black and 14.2% of mixed ethnicity UK academic staff were in this pay spine range<sup>15</sup>. The proportions of staff within this pay spine range were lower among black (4.9%) and Chinese (5.9%) non-UK academic staff<sup>16</sup>.

There are many other figures and facts in the research literature to substantiate BME staff inequalities in higher education and HEIs and differences between ethnic groups<sup>17</sup>. A recent report by the think tank the Runnymede Trust<sup>18</sup>, entitled *Aiming Higher: Race, Inequality and Diversity in the Academy*<sup>19</sup> confirms that inequality remains prevalent throughout all areas of higher education, including staffing, admissions and employment, with some of the most acute disparities in professorial and senior management roles. The next section looks at factors contributing to this situation.

## Factors contributing to staff inequalities

In this section we examine the factors that appear to be contributing to BME staff inequalities<sup>20</sup>, including racial inequalities, equality of opportunity and equality of outcomes:

- Structural inequalities, or the way systems and structures within organisations work to enable some groups, or form barriers for others
- Racism and its different forms including explicit racial harassment and institutional racism
- Discrimination, for example treating some individuals less well than others because of their protected characteristics
- Conscious and unconscious bias, for example showing preferential treatment towards individuals with certain protected characteristics.

If one dismisses a conspiracy theory, or myths about white intellectual supremacy, then it would not be unreasonable to suggest that the combined force of structural inequalities, racism, discrimination and bias are the plausible explanations for why staff inequalities remain.

**12**  
ECU (2014) p174

**13**  
ECU (2014) p276

**14**  
ECU (2014) p134

**15**  
ECU (2014) p188

**16**  
ECU (2014) p190

**17**  
HESA (2012); ECU (2009a); ECU (2011)

**18**  
The Runnymede Trust is the UK's leading independent race equality think tank. It generates intelligence for a multi-ethnic Britain through research, network building, leading debate and policy engagement.

**19**  
Alexander & Arday (2015)

**20**  
ECU (2009a); ECU (2011); ECU (2014)

**21**  
Hefce (2008); Leathwood et al (2009); Bhopal (2014)

**22**  
Pilkington (2011)

**23**  
ibid

**24**  
Newman (1858)

The continued presence of BME staff inequalities in higher education is a complex issue that partially stems from the historical under-representation in higher education amongst post-war migrants and their descendants and the lower average BME student degree attainment<sup>21</sup>. Pilkington's<sup>22</sup> study, Institutional racism in the academy, paints a somewhat bleak picture of the persistence of ethnic differentials. He suggests the mainstreaming of race within the context of the Equality and Human Rights Act (2010) and a relative cut of social and cultural research funding have resulted in race issues being sidelined<sup>23</sup>.

Historically universities have served elite interests. They were configured around a self-justificatory idea that the capacity for higher thought was afforded to the few and that the role of universities was in preparing them to take up their position as the modern equivalent of the philosopher kings of ancient Greece. As noted by John Newman in his influential text, The idea of a university, communities of thinkers were engaging in intellectual pursuits devoid of any concerns about the external world; thinking and learning were simply an end in themselves. Technical or vocational knowledge was of secondary importance to the need to enable students to nurture their capacities to 'think and to reason'<sup>24</sup>.

The notion of universities as an 'ivory tower' symbolises the construction of academic hierarchies of knowledge and relegation of vocational interests to lower level intellectual pursuits. It is, therefore, no great surprise that, until relatively recent times, there was an assumption that higher education was not for working-class people or BME people. Whilst arguably the ivory tower mindset might remain, especially amongst the Russell Group of elite institutions, public and private opinions about equality have gradually changed. Dramatic social, political and economic changes have resulted in new configurations of globalisation, coupled with the significant erosion of the binary divide between academia and society – between 'gown and town' and between vocational and academic knowledge. HEIs are increasingly subject to the same kinds of economic and ethical challenges facing other sectors, one of the most significant being the issue of diversity and equality.

Structural disadvantage and discrimination are contributing factors, covered in Section 2 of this paper. However, the 2012 Race Equality Survey, undertaken by the Black British Academics network, revealed that 56% of Black British academics reported discrimination, while almost three-quarters (73%) rated their institution's performance on race equality as poor or very poor. Of the 100 respondents to the survey, 91 worked or studied at UK HEIs, with the remaining nine working in related areas including schools and the early learning sector. The effects of discrimination extend far beyond the individuals who directly suffer it; and these effects do not disperse evenly through organisations or communities.

Whilst the impact of bias might be unintended, it is questionable as to whether it is entirely unconscious. There is certainly a lack of clarity on what equality (of opportunity versus outcomes for example) actually means in different areas of higher education practice. HEIs may not fully consciously comprehend their legal requirements for equality or the public sector equality duty and positive (or affirmative) action versus (illegal) positive discrimination.

## Possible impact on students

Very little is known about how issues of BME staffing relate to student outcomes or student experiences. One of the great success stories of UK higher education over the past 20 years is the dramatic increase in BME student participation rates. As a consequence of various policy changes, developments emerging from a complex set of social, political and cultural imperatives, widening participation is now firmly embedded in the institutional mainstream of most universities<sup>25</sup>. Indeed, in relation to BME students, current estimates suggest that they are 'over-represented' in relation to their proportion of the population, though in relation to top-rated, research-intensive institutions there is still a significant deficit, particularly in relation to Black Caribbean students<sup>26</sup>.

While there are many positive stories to be told about BME student participation, the literature reveals disparities in degree attainment, with students from BME backgrounds consistently receiving lower degree classifications than their white counterparts<sup>27</sup>. BME students are significantly less likely to get a 'good degree' (First or Upper First) compared to their white counterparts and this pattern is consistent across the sector<sup>28</sup>. The BME student experience has rightly become the focus of attention amongst researchers, policymakers and higher education leaders.

There does seem to be a plausible link between BME students and recruitment of BME staff to higher education. For example a longer-term possible implication for higher education is that on average, lower degree classifications could make it more difficult for BME students to move on to Masters or doctoral studies, and possibly close down options for an academic career.

## Reasons for slow progress on equality in higher education

The arguments for diversity, inclusivity and non-discrimination in higher education can be traced back at least to the 1960s and the development of new social movements<sup>29</sup>. Although the contributing factors to BME staff inequalities are complex, the figures on BME staff, particularly in leadership roles, have been slow to change.

Although racial inequalities within higher education have been identified since the late 1990s<sup>30</sup>, specifically in relation to the question of leadership and the experiences of BME staff in the UK, universities have been relatively immune from scrutiny<sup>31</sup>. Adopting what Gulam<sup>32</sup> suggests is a 'colour-blind' approach, higher education has historically demonstrated a capacity to develop complex theories about social justice/injustice without feeling obliged to apply these very same insights to itself.

A number of authors identify the seemingly subtle ways in which racism is transacted and ignored within HEIs<sup>33</sup>. Beattie<sup>34</sup> examines the possible consequences of unconscious bias in recruitment and promotion within universities, issues that we explore from the perspective of BME staff in the next section of the paper. Though universities are no strangers to questions associated with human

- 25**  
CFE & Edge Hill University (2013)
- 26**  
Boliver (2014)
- 27**  
Richardson (2008); Broecke & Nichols (2007); Singh (2011)
- 28**  
Singh (2011); Berry & Loke (2011); Stevenson (2012); Cousin & Cuerton (2012)
- 29**  
Yamane (2002)
- 30**  
Bhattacharyya et al (2003)
- 31**  
Deem et al (2005); Law et al (2004)
- 32**  
Gulam (2004)
- 33**  
Deem & Morley (2006); Bhopal & Jackson (2013); Pilkington (2013)
- 34**  
Beattie (2013)

**35**  
Back (2004)

**36**  
ibid (2004) p5

**37**  
Pilkington (2011)

**38**  
Bhopal (2014) p67

**39**  
Gilroy (1992) p52

diversity, justice, equality, power and oppression, they have not always displayed an ability to apply their own insights. Why could this be the case? Les Back<sup>35</sup>, in a discussion of institutional racism in higher education, suggests that white academics align themselves to concepts of liberalism and rationality and that this, coupled with a belief that racism is simply the product of small-minded, morally-degenerate hateful individuals, could explain the existence of a blind spot. He goes on to argue that there is a need for a shift in mindset to acknowledge that our capacity to reason is never absolute. Back argues:

*Racism has damaged reason, damaged academic and civic freedoms and damaged the project of education itself<sup>36</sup>.*

A more recent study<sup>37</sup> entitled *Institutional Racism in the Academy* reaches similar conclusions, where one is contending with HEIs that suffer from considerable complacency under the sheer weight of whiteness. Similarly, Bhopal<sup>38</sup> suggests that the internal cultures of HEIs often present a picture of themselves to the world that highlights liberal sentiments, progressive values and a commitment to meritocracy. Hence, while it is not unreasonable to take pride in the broadly free, open and tolerant ethos that higher education aspires to, at the same time there needs to be recognition that, like other institutions, universities are not immune from bias and that a misplaced complacency creates some unique challenges for the sector. In particular, normalised staff perceptions that ethnicity is not an issue in higher education could be based on pervasive opinions about the importance of equal opportunity or treatment based on individual merit.

Universities, as places of knowledge creation, are perhaps better placed than other public bodies to lead the debate on much criticised staff recruitment and promotion practices within UK HEIs; to facilitate and fund BME-led research (described in Section 4); and to actively encourage BME students and academics to contribute to national and international debates on issues of particular relevance to BME communities. That they have largely failed to do so is unfortunate given the negative racial experiences of those BME academics that universities do manage to recruit to their ranks.

Therefore, to claim a public image of diversity and equality – in the knowledge that HEIs remain dominated by white men, and where serious concerns about BME student attainment levels and BME academic employment rates pertain – is ethically questionable. By adopting what Gilroy<sup>39</sup> termed a ‘coat of paint’ theory of institutional racism, what arguably emerges across the sector is a passive, superficial institutional response to issues of race equality that appears dislocated from the lived realities of BME academics and their experiences within the academy. It is the reluctance to acknowledge the prevalence of staff inequality, discrimination and racism within universities and the variable ways in which these might manifest, that arguably restricts progress.

A very recent example is that one of the most prestigious universities (University College London, part of the Russell Group) was challenged by student activists to confront its eugenics heritage and what was seen by some as uncritical praise of one of its benefactors, the Victorian polymath Francis Galton, known as the father of eugenics<sup>40</sup>. This included a public debate chaired by UCL provost and president Michael Arthur where a number of prominent BME academics suggested universities were beset by a racist mindset that viewed BME people as outsiders<sup>41</sup>. One of the consequences of a joint campaign including staff and students at UCL was the production of a short video entitled *Eugenics at UCL: We inherited Galton*, which highlights concerns about the legacies of colonialism and race science within the university.

## The social and economic imperative for change

Inequalities manifest in diverse ways for individual BME people, ethnic groups and communities. Race, ethnicity and skin colour interface with gender, religion, language, nationality, social class, disability and other factors. Whilst it is important not to erect a divisive hierarchy of oppression, it is also important to understand how the nuances of inequalities, discrimination and racism impact on different individual BME people and are detrimental to society as a whole. This can be seen in something as supposedly straightforward as ethnic monitoring. Whereas for instance people who originate from Ireland, India and China are categorised by country<sup>42</sup>, the millions of people who originate from the African continent are grouped together as Black African as if no ethnic differentiation exists. Africa is of course a vast continent characterised by a rich diversity of countries, nationalities, languages and cultures. Similarly, knowing that a person's family originates from Asia does not facilitate targeted interventions in respect of particular Asian groups, such as Bengali Muslims<sup>43</sup>, who experience economic, religious and social exclusion. Categories such as 'Black other' and 'mixed race/ multiple ethnic groups' are not ethnic identifications but generic, and potentially offensive ways of categorising people whose ethnicity does not neatly fit into an officially defined category. This is not to argue for tight colour-/ethnicity-based identity politics but to encourage the higher education sector to exercise a greater critique of generic and largely meaningless ethnic monitoring categories and not to rely on simply counting numbers of BME staff as evidence of improvements in racial equality.

If inequality, discrimination and racism are acknowledged as a reality that affects the insights, history, categorisation, identities and attitudes that people bring into higher education, then dialogue is possible and the potential for change emerges. If however people are locked in denial, guilt and/or indifference, then it is likely that BME staff will continue to complain about the discrimination they face and the manner in which their experience is so often dismissed and refuted. It is our view that denying racial issues within the academy achieves little but adds considerably to isolation and social injustice. It projects the problem of BME under-representation or lack of integration or career progression back onto minorities. It encourages both majorities and minorities to collude in a dishonest discourse where 'we don't notice colour' and in 'not noticing' stay silent on why we 'don't notice' the absence of BME academics within higher education generally

**40**  
Grove (2014)

**41**  
ibid

**42**  
ONS (2012)

**43**  
ibid

**44**  
Richardson (2008); Broecke & Nichols (2007); Singh (2011)

**45**  
Hefce (2008); Leathwood et al (2009); Pilkington (2011); Alexander & Arday (2015)

**46**  
DfES (2013)

**47**  
Law et al (2004); Leathwood et al (2009); ECU (2010)

**48**  
Faulkner (2011)

**49**  
ibid p34

**50**  
ibid p34

**51**  
Brown (2013)

**52**  
ECU (2014)

and in its higher echelons more particularly. Hence, before higher education can make any serious inroads into the under-representation of BME academics it might ask what it wants them for and whether they are permitted to draw on their ethnicity with the intellectual, social, institutional and practical challenges and possibilities that might bring.

The last 10 years have seen questions of race in higher education slowly moving centre stage. This has included both a focus on how increased BME student numbers are not necessarily reflected in degree-improved student outcomes<sup>44</sup> and the under-representation of BME staff in academic and leadership roles<sup>45</sup>. While such a state of affairs was possibly sustainable under conditions where higher education served the needs of a small and largely privileged white elite, under government policies of expansion, fair access and widening participation<sup>46</sup>, the political climate has dramatically changed. As a consequence of greater scrutiny through such bodies as Hefce and tighter statutory requirements, we have seen in recent years an emergence of some worrying trends<sup>47</sup>.

In a chapter entitled 'What is a university education for?', Faulkner<sup>48</sup> argues that the post-war period saw large numbers of students from relatively ordinary backgrounds enter higher education for the first time and that this challenged rigid knowledge frameworks that had been long-established by elites. Further change has, according to Faulkner, meant that the educational experimentation that happened because of the democratisation of higher education has been blocked off by top-down control of universities, colleges and schools. Universities have changed, with the work of academics becoming more 'regulated and pressured'<sup>49</sup>. Faulkner argues that the needs of capital, where the content of education is driven by the demands of the labour market and the international competitiveness of British business have come to predominate over those of both students and society<sup>50</sup>.

In contrast to the political and social arguments, economic perspectives of ethnic diversity are more recent. Economic globalisation and neoliberalism have been characterised by the unprecedented intensification of flows and cross-border movement of capital, services, technologies, peoples and goods. Universities are increasingly being subjected to the kinds of challenges confronting other institutions, both public and private, as they seek to compete in terms of quality and mission relevance. Marketisation of the higher education sector globally is characterised by changes to the labour market, including creating a flexible workforce that retains a well-paid core staff but with a much larger peripheral group (often of women and minority ethnic staff) on lower pay and insecure appointments. So the two trends collide: more equality legislation, but increasing flexibility of the workforce<sup>51</sup>. A recent study by the ECU<sup>52</sup> based on 12 institutional case studies entitled *The rationale for equality and diversity* identifies some clear economic imperatives such as enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, external profile/reputation, competitive advantage and maximising the pool for human resource capital. Beyond the institutional interests, there are wider social and economic benefits related to facilitating social mobility, regeneration and national competitiveness within an increasingly globalised higher education sector.

## Summary

In this section we have demonstrated the under-representation of BME staff in higher education particularly at senior levels; described how this demonstrates institutional and structural disadvantage or racism; and highlighted the economic as well as moral imperative of addressing this and maximising human capital. We have suggested that the success of HEIs within an increasingly unforgiving commercial environment is predicated on their capacity to maximise their potential human resource capital. We have challenged HEIs to face up to the realities of what seems to be widespread racism not only as a legal duty but as a social and economic imperative. In the next section we focus on the issues concerning BME leadership in higher education.

### Key points for HEIs to consider

- Across the sector, BME staffing is very uneven in terms of where staff work and the positions they hold – Is this unevenness present in your department or institution?
- It has been argued that higher education has generally failed to see BME staff inequalities or to comprehend equality issues – Do you feel this is the case in your institution?
- There are many factors contributing to staff inequalities – Which factors do you see as being most important in your institution?
- Some would say that equality and diversity should be mainstreamed into all policies and practices in organisations – Is equality and diversity part of your institutional strategic plan?

53  
ECU (2009b)

54  
Leathwood et al (2009)

55  
Hefce (2008); Leathwood et al  
(2009); ECU (2009b)

56  
ECU (2010)

57  
UCU (2009)

58  
ECU (2011)

59  
ECU (2012)

60  
THE (2015)

61  
ibid

## Experiences of BME staff and issues for BME leadership

This section of the paper explores the experiences of BME staff working in UK HEIs and the associated issues for BME leadership. The section:

- Explores issues of attracting and retaining BME people in UK HEIs
- Outlines concerns that have been expressed about race equality in higher education
- Discusses views about poor implementation of equality policies.

### Attracting and retaining BME people

A literature review published by the ECU<sup>53</sup> on BME staff experiences in UK higher education reveals very slow improvements in the recruitment of BME people. Leathwood et al<sup>54</sup> highlighted that while the proportion of BME staff in higher education has increased, BME staff were largely concentrated in lower grades. BME staff at all levels felt they had experienced discriminatory treatment in every aspect of their role<sup>55</sup>. In a follow-up empirical study in 2010, ECU concluded that the lack of BME staff in leadership roles is likely to be as a result of widespread discrimination based on ethnicity and poor support for BME managers<sup>56</sup>. Another study by the University and College Union (UCU) in 2009 reported that nearly 50% of BME staff said they had experienced racism within the workplace<sup>57</sup>.

More specifically in relation to leadership roles, research by ECU<sup>58</sup> based on a combination of survey, focus group and interview data, confirms the under-representation of BME staff at senior levels, and reveals a number of concerns amongst staff. These included subtle silencing of BME staff in cases of discrimination, complacency on equality issues, a minimalist approach to statutory duties<sup>59</sup> (for example simply complying with prohibited conduct on unlawful discrimination), and evidence of nepotism and personal discretion in promotion and employment. There was also evidence of diminishing of self-esteem amongst BME staff, labelling of BME staff who were prepared to challenge racism as trouble-makers, lack of BME mentors, and a general lack of institutional awareness of the potential difficulties faced by BME staff members. The facts and figures on differentials in pay and promotion have already been described in Section 1.

Of two recent vice-chancellor posts advertised in English universities<sup>60</sup>, neither made specific reference to equality issues nor required such an orientation in its skill set: this is well behind advertising practices in local government. Out of 10 online Times Higher Education adverts reviewed for department heads, only one stated that the university was an equal opportunity employer welcoming applications from all sections of the community. Another university offering over 60 funded doctorates made no mention of the under-representation of BME doctoral students and failed to provide a positive message to encourage under-represented groups to apply. This was despite the same university asserting equality to be at the heart of its mission and aims<sup>61</sup>. Our point is not to suggest that universities are seeking to exclude BME applicants; it is that concepts of equality may simply translate into little more than everybody having an equal

opportunity to apply for a position. This stance ignores the institutional and social inequalities that privilege some people and act as barriers to BME people and other minority groups.

## Concerns about race equality in higher education

It is worth noting that the occasional public expressions of concern about race equality by higher education leaders largely coincide with the publication of data and articles evidencing and challenging BME group under-representation. At such times the response appears largely defensive rather than strategic and often explained away as just a manifestation of a broader social problem. Of course issues of BME staffing are not unique to higher education and under-representation is evident in other areas of education. According to the annual statistical report<sup>62</sup> of the Graduate Teacher Training Registry (GTTR) only three out of 30 (10%) of BME applicants were accepted on to postgraduate teacher training courses the previous year in contrast to the 26% success rate of white applicants. Only 7% of UK teachers are from BME groups, with 1% being of Black Caribbean or Black British heritage. Black teachers, like their university counterparts, also reported on the various manifestations of discrimination they experienced. The government's response was to cite the increase in the numbers of teachers from BME groups over the last decade without informing the reader as to precisely which ethnic minorities the teachers came from and how the increase contrasted with the increase in the BME school population more generally<sup>63</sup>.

When policymakers talk of there being a problem with ethnicity in higher education, it is important to question how the problem is perceived. Is it seen as the mere absence of a few black and brown faces in senior positions around campus, or broader issues of marginalisation identified by BME academics themselves? Solutions are possible if universities address the problem by focusing on increasing the numbers of BME staff in their employment. The most straightforward way of doing this is to group all ethnic minority and nationality groups together and head count the total. This of course ignores the class, gender, ethnicity, and national differentials and inequalities that exist between them and is likely to mask the under-representation of certain ethnic minority groups.

A related point is the importance of distinguishing between BME nationals and BME non-national staff. The types of barriers may be quite different for people from national and international origin<sup>64</sup>. The seminal work by Fenton and colleagues<sup>65</sup> distinguished between national and non-national staff to show that the patterns and positions of staff in higher education are different. Universities obviously recruit internationally and ethnic minority academics from the UK that will include white Americans, white Australians and Continental Europeans. This potentially enables universities to meet an international staff target without one BME person being appointed. If BME academics are primarily recruited from outside the UK and from economically and educationally advantaged social backgrounds this may mask the under-representation of BME people of British birth, education and upbringing as well as BME non-nationals.

**62**  
Guardian (2014)

**63**  
Guardian (2014)

**64**  
ECU (2014)

**65**  
Fenton et al (2000)

**66**  
London Councils (2014)

**67**  
Law et al (2004)

**68**  
HESA (2011)

**69**  
HESA (2014)

**70**  
Macpherson (1999)

**71**  
Campbell-Stephens (2009)

**72**  
Deem & Morley (2006); UCU (2012); Beattie (2013); Bhopal & Jackson (2013); Pilkington (2013)

Another weakness of primarily equating race equality with the numbers of BME staff in employment is the question of how many is enough? If BME academics are to be representative of their numbers in the population, what might this mean for the employment practices of universities in London where 3.3 million of its 8.2 million residents are from BME groups? Indeed, the combined BME totals represent a majority amongst London's school children<sup>66</sup>. If the focus is on representative numbers then this might exclude from the debate universities in areas with a small BME population. If instead representation is to be based upon the overall university student profile then the number of white academics and senior managers would theoretically need to decline rapidly. Hence even setting a seemingly straightforward organisational target based on numerical representation poses challenges and issues that are ethically and technically complex.

## Views about poor implementation of equality policy

Equality legislation is underpinned by the explicit assumption that all people will have equal opportunities with regards to access to public services, employment and promotional opportunities. Whilst universities and the higher education sector more generally, like all other public institutions, are duty bound to implement equality legislation, historically it would be safe to assert that they have not been as responsive to questions of institutional discrimination as some other sectors<sup>67</sup>. It is therefore legally and socially important for HEIs to be concerned about the under-representation of Black British academics especially<sup>68</sup> and to take appropriate action to address any specific deficit. This especially applies at a time when the characteristics of the student body are increasingly diverse with regards to ethnic and cultural heritage<sup>69</sup>.

Questions have to be asked as to why, after 60 years of post-war migration, Black British academics, in particular, are so poorly represented and why this has not provoked the kind of serious public scrutiny that occurred following publication of the Macpherson Report<sup>70</sup>. In that report, particular attention was given to the under-representation of BME people in the Metropolitan Police and the need for the Police Service to be representative of the population it served. Given that the population of UK HEIs is also ethnically diverse, the lack of attention to securing a representative workforce might lead BME people to conclude a lack of institutional appetite to support BME people to fulfil their educative and career potential<sup>71</sup>.

If HEIs choose to simply increase the visible minority ethnic group academic and leadership presence then arguably this could be done through a programme of positive action initiatives (permitted under Section 158 of the 2010 Equality Act). Indeed, there are many examples within other sectors, most notably local government, where such target-led initiatives have been adopted and numbers of BME staff have subsequently increased. However, if the problem of ethnicity in higher education is reframed from having sufficient numbers of BME academics to a problem that focuses on how best organisations can understand and enhance the racial discourses that operate within them<sup>72</sup> then different thinking about the meaning of equality might follow.

It is indeed likely that higher education shares with other UK institutions the problem of BME under-representation, but universities have specific privileges and responsibilities, given their powerful role in training present and future professionals, innovators and managers. Moreover, they are educating people drawn from an increasingly diverse population that may not be reflected in the structures of the organisation. For many people a higher education qualification is a sought-after and valuable resource. Academia's influence on the cognitive and social development of people and the disciplines they form is considerable; as is their influence on the various professions where a degree is now a prerequisite of entry. We would therefore argue that it is essential that universities engage with their existing BME academics in order to understand what academic life is like for them, to evaluate their experiences and to share in those experiences so that knowledge might be gained, assumptions challenged and strategies formulated.

## Summary

In this section we have examined some of the issues relating to BME leadership in higher education. Owing to the relative absence of BME staff at senior levels within universities, inevitably our analysis has focused on considering some of the reasons for this and what forces/imperatives exist for instigating change within the sector. In the next section we turn to the US black experience of higher education for some insights into possible strategies for change.

### Key points for HEIs to consider

- Higher education staff recruitment practices can overlook the importance of positively promoting equality – Do job advertisements for your institution mention ethnicity and equality of opportunity?
- Research shows that BME staff often feel unsupported or discriminated against – What mechanisms are there in your institution for staff to report negative experiences, gain support, or make suggestions for improvement?
- Some BME staff feel that equality and diversity policies are not well implemented in their institutions – What actions and rewards are currently in place to ensure that policies and guidance are met, for example through performance review?

73  
Barnett (1978)

74  
Perkins (1993)

75  
Chesler et al (2005)

76  
ibid p34

77  
Washington (1996) p81

78  
Chesler et al (2005)

79  
Chamberlain (1991)

80  
Perkins (1983)

81  
Sollers et al (1993)

## Learning from advances in BME leadership in the United States

To build on the understandings presented so far, and identify possible areas for development in the UK, this section of the paper explores what can be learnt from advances in BME leadership in the US. This section of the paper:

- Examines the US and UK historical contexts of racial segregation and oppression
- Explains US advances in BME leadership through the creation of black colleges and black studies programmes
- Discusses US policy and strategies for affirmative action
- Draws lessons for how these insights might inform UK higher education.

### US historical context

Within most industrialised capitalist societies, education systems, deliberately or not, have in material terms tended to act to reproduce prevailing social inequalities. Perhaps most starkly, in the US during the times of slavery, African Americans were prohibited from learning to read and write. This led some of the early black intellectuals, such as Mary McLeod Bethune and W. E. B. Dubois, to seek to educate themselves and others<sup>73</sup>. However, it was the end of the American Civil War in 1865 that marked a change when some former and free black slaves were allowed access to education and we saw from this period a gradual involvement of African Americans in institutions of learning, both as founders and also administrators<sup>74</sup>. As noted by Chesler and colleagues<sup>75</sup>, the race/class nexus within education and broader society, was a situation that:

*...functioned to serve the material and symbolic interests of the white elites who in turn sought to use their advantage to maintain white privilege and to subordinate black people<sup>76</sup>.*

Washington<sup>77</sup>, cited in Chesler et al<sup>78</sup>, goes further by arguing that the prominence of eugenics and race science and the treatment of slavery as a benign entity meant that in effect US universities were in part functioning to indoctrinate students into the myths of white supremacy and black subservience.

The passage of the Morrill Land Grant College Act of 1862 and the Supplementary Act of 1890 represented a watershed moment for public higher education in the US<sup>79</sup>. Black involvement in the higher education system increased gradually from this period onwards, though progress was slow with a mere 300 black men and 30 black women in the United States having earned baccalaureate degrees by 1890<sup>80</sup>. Many colleges simply refused to admit black students, for instance, in 1850 Harvard Medical School admitted just three black students and even this was fiercely opposed by other, white students, resulting in them having to withdraw after the first semester<sup>81</sup>.

The turn of the century, a period known as the Harlem Renaissance, saw a gradual improvement in African American participation in higher education though it is not until the middle of the 20th century against the backdrop of the emerging civil rights movement and the demand for desegregation that we see a significant change. A key milestone was the *Brown v Board of Education* decision which heralded a phase of desegregation in schools. As Green<sup>82</sup> notes, 'the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s increased the necessity of institutions of higher education to accept more students, and subsequently hire more minority faculty and administrators'<sup>83</sup>. Moreover, it is only from this period where accounts of US higher education begin to directly address questions of 'race, racism and multiculturalism'<sup>84</sup>.

## Black colleges and programmes

Though racial segregation is now illegal in the US<sup>85</sup>, one of the consequences of the historical full or partial segregation and exclusion of black people from the mainstream white institutions was the development of black colleges and universities. This is one of the major differences between the UK and US higher education sectors. As noted earlier, the years following the end of the Civil War were characterised by an explosion of black self-help initiatives particularly through African-American Baptist churches. This resulted in the establishment of black colleges and universities. The first and arguably most celebrated college was Howard University in 1867; originally established as an African-American Theological College<sup>86</sup>. As well as playing a crucial role in the civil rights movement, Howard and other such institutions were able to confront racist myths about black people's innate intellectual capabilities. Currently there are 106 historically black colleges and universities in the US that were established before the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

A US strategy that seems to contrast with the UK context is the development of black leadership programmes, though most seem to be aimed primarily at students in promoting success and students as change agents. The Black Leadership Institute (BLI) at the University of Virginia offers one such programme that aims to provide resources that sustain communication, solidarity and cultural consciousness among black student leaders<sup>87</sup>. The BLI convenes black student leaders for community development and leadership training. Its mission BLI is to provide resources that sustain communication, solidarity and cultural consciousness among black student leaders at the university. The goals of the BLI are to: promote unity and community within black student population through promoting the cooperation and collaboration of black student leaders, build upon the successes of past and current student leadership at the university, increase the capacity of black student leadership at the university, and encourage and facilitate collaboration and support between black student organisations.

**82**  
Green (1988)

**83**  
ibid p120

**84**  
Chesler et al (2005) p33

**85**  
Betsey (2011)

**86**  
Kwhali (2012)

**87**  
Leadership Institute (undated)

88  
Crawford (2014) p74

89  
ACLU (2000)

90  
Fobanjong (2001)

91  
US Department of Labor  
(undated)

## Affirmative action

One of the most potent and controversial planks of the Civil Rights Act was the provision for affirmative action. In the 1978 *University of California v Bakke* decision, the Court made it clear that a university could take race into account under appropriate circumstances. The policy of affirmative action was based on a view that the only way to counteract the effects of many years of discrimination and disadvantage against black people was to take positive action in favour of historically disadvantaged groups. The US framework has allowed the sector to establish such things as quotas in admissions policies and the lowering of entry grades for disadvantaged groups. It must be noted that no such provision for black under-representation exists within UK legislation. Interestingly, it has been suggested that Oxford, Cambridge and other esteemed universities:

*... may wish to consider lowering their entry requirements for pupils from non-selective or low-value-added state schools (relative to pupils from selective or high-value-added state schools, or independent schools) in order to equalise the potential of students being admitted from these different types of school<sup>88</sup>.*

Certainly in relation to US admissions, by 1990, a position was achieved where the overall proportion of BME people in the country was reflected in the higher education sector. However, worryingly, following a backlash against these policies throughout the 90s and a US Courts of Appeal judgment in 1996 (*Hopwood v University of Texas*), it was ruled that the University of Texas Law School's affirmative action programme was unconstitutional. As a result of this decision, Latino and African-American admissions plummeted by 64% and 88% respectively in just one year. Similar patterns were observed in other institutions, though the numbers subsequently seem to have recovered<sup>89</sup>.

As well as targeting diversity in student participation, the affirmative action policies in the US also sought to improve staff diversity. However, staffing policies were much less successful and from their inception, were widely criticised with case after case lodged in various courts challenging the policies<sup>90</sup>. Complainants' reasons for objection varied but included inherent unfairness, tokenism and reverse discrimination, the last of which effectively endorsed the positive discrimination and inherent unfairness of the advantages enjoyed by white North Americans as a result of the US's racist history and its enduring legacy. It is also worth noting that, contrary to popular belief, in relation to employment, quota systems were never made legal under affirmative action policies. However, there were provisions in the legislation for federal contractors and employers to establish targets, goals and strategies to meet these in good faith<sup>91</sup>. In practice, the kinds of policies adopted by US universities under the affirmative action provisions are little different from the framework that applies in the UK under the Equality and Human Rights Act 2010, where institutions are required to establish clear policies, collect data, and develop action plans and positive implementation strategies.

## Celebration of black achievement

Another dimension of the US approach, which can be clearly seen by a cursory web search of university websites and the many alumni associations, is the positive celebration of black achievement in higher education. For example, the website of the American Association of Black People in Higher Education (established 1980), contains scant detail of the wider struggles for racial equality in the system but is very upfront on celebrating black achievement, aspects of black history and the promotion of personal development programmes. A recent study carried out by Bhopal<sup>92</sup> comparing the experiences of BME academics in the UK and US confirms that both systems were adept at masking racism. Although public displays of overt racism were considered rare, behaviours are reported to mask racist views or to justify racism as a clash of personalities. By deploying rhetorical strategy or race talk (including for example the ability to overcome and make visible the fears associated with talking about race, talking openly about race, navigating discussion with expert strategy, awareness to the hidden rules that govern race talk and the benefits of successful conversations), staff may deflect accusations of being racist<sup>93</sup>.

Though the US has made progress in relation to opening access for BME students and in confronting the ethnocentric curriculum through the development of black studies programmes and a network of departments of African-American studies, structural exclusion of BME people in faculty positions still remains prevalent. Turner and colleagues<sup>94</sup>, in a review of the experiences of black faculty in the US academy, note that at faculty level, institutions are predominately white, with only 5.5% being black, with the percentage at the high-ranking universities being significantly lower. Moreover, they conclude that there has been an abject failure to translate affirmative action policies into any sustained change, with black women facing discrimination based on both race and gender. Though statistics on the racial make-up of management structures seem to be well hidden by most institutions a survey by the Journal of Blacks in Higher Education in 2005<sup>95</sup> revealed some telling statistics. Overall in the US they found that the recruitment of BME faculty was at a 'snail-like' pace, though the liberal arts colleges were doing significantly better than the large research-intensive universities. Also, BME staff on average were under-represented in tenured posts, particularly so in the Ivy League universities and high-ranking liberal arts colleges.

One of the key determinants of faculty success in the US is that of tenured posts. Tenure is a contractual right to protect professors from being dismissed without just cause. As well as providing protection in relation to academic freedom, tenured posts also provide consolidated time to pursue scholarship and research. Though in the UK we do not have such an arrangement, insofar as providing a launch pad for career enhancement, it might be argued that increasingly, submission to and a reasonable outcome (ie, having a research profile and publication record that is deemed returnable for inclusion in a HEI's REF submission) from the Research Excellence Framework (REF) serves a similar function.

**92**

Bhopal (2014)

**93**

ibid (2014) p4

**94**

Turner et al (2008)

**95**

Journal of Blacks in Higher Education (2005)

96  
ONS (2012)

97  
Matlin (2013)

98  
ibid (2013)

99  
Stanley (2006)

100  
Fenelon (2003)

## Lessons that could inform UK higher education

The history of the US and the world is arguably a history of competing interests and of oppression and resistance. From a contemporary black perspective, perhaps the most noteworthy point is the fact that those on the receiving end of oppression who manage to survive will seek to confront the systems that deny them equality and justice. This is a lesson to learn from the US, which unlike the UK, functioned as an officially sanctioned racially segregated system. The development of black colleges, churches and universities is a lasting legacy. More by necessity than design, what they managed to achieve was a critical mass of academics, activists, orators and leaders who were empowered to confront the myths of racial inferiority whilst also seeking to challenge institutional racism within and beyond the US higher education sector. They also provided for students evidence of black scholarly advancement – something that remains positively affirming for African Americans today in institutions such as Howard. In relation to building a critical mass of BME leaders in higher education, an important difference between the US and UK contexts is the proportion of BME people in the general population. Black people constitute over 15% of the US population whereas in the UK, the black population is 3.5% (1.1% Caribbean; 1.8% African and 0.5% Black British or Black 'other'). The inclusion of black people of 'mixed' Black/White heritage increases the total by another 1%<sup>96</sup>.

Despite the positive story of black resilience in the US, as Daniel Matlin<sup>97</sup> notes, outside the confines of discussions of racial justice, US black scholars still struggle for recognition, characterised by Matlin as being trapped on the race track. He argues that black intellectuals are in some sense being held back because of moral obligations they feel towards writing about subjects of race and injustice:

*... black scholars, authors and artists have been motivated not merely by financial inducements, at least no more so than other public intellectuals who have offered their services as columnists or television pundits, or who target a wide, commercial readership for their books. Many have used their status and profile to call attention to the effects of segregation, exclusion and poverty on life in black communities and to foster support for campaigns for equality and policy reforms<sup>98</sup>.*

He goes on to discuss parallels between black intellectuals and female authors who have equally felt obliged to remain close the cannon of gender equality and women's oppression.

The idea of being held back only applies if research on issues of race and gender is seen as academically inferior to mainstream research: that is, research endorsed by the largely white and male academy. Stanley<sup>99</sup>, in her research, identifies a number of barriers related to research, where research undertaken by black faculty, who chose to focus on diversity-related research, is often seen to be politically motivated and therefore scientifically suspect. Fenelon<sup>100</sup>, in a paper addressing this very issue, goes further. He suggests that the valorisation of research that is deemed to be politically neutral and the diminishing level of research with an overt political slant is itself another mechanism for silencing

BME people and therefore reproducing racial inequalities. Fenelon goes on to suggest that the problem is even more acute within the burgeoning private universities which are driven by corporate interests. A paper by Özbilgin<sup>101</sup> refers to the preponderance of white men as journal editors, that is, those in power with regard to decision-making about publication. It provides clear evidence that being white and male affords overwhelming privilege in deciding what counts as important knowledge.

Though both experience similar mechanisms of exclusion, it seems as if in the US BME academics have sought to influence change on their own terms through a plethora of associations and from a legacy of political struggle for basic civil rights. In the UK, it has been our experience that though in the public sector from the 1980s, we did see the creation of black workers' groups, nothing like this occurred within the higher education sector. To this day BME employee networks are patchy.

Interestingly, led by Deborah Gabriel, we saw the establishment of the British Black Academics Association (BBAA) ([www.blackbritishacademics.co.uk](http://www.blackbritishacademics.co.uk)) with the aim of promoting the interests of staff and students of colour and to promote leadership on race equality in higher education. Indeed, much of the impetus for establishing this group has come from an appreciation of the contribution made by black and African-American studies departments in US universities. Unlike in the UK, these departments did enable black academics to build a critical mass. The Association is subscription based and despite being aimed at academics of African descent, membership is open to people from all ethnicities.

One of the goals of the BBAA is to establish a black studies programme in the UK. William Ackah in a piece in the Guardian dated 14th May 2014 makes a powerful argument for this. As he notes:

*As someone who draws heavily on the work of African-American scholars to inform my own teaching and research, I can only look with envy at what has been achieved in the US and wonder why, after all this time, there are still no equivalent Black Studies degree programmes and academic departments here in the UK<sup>102</sup>.*

For Ackah, the presence of departments of black studies or African-American studies within a wide range of institutions including the likes of Yale, Harvard and Columbia has been directly responsible for the 'emergence of more black professors, heads of departments and university administrators'<sup>103</sup>. In this regard, it is one of the genuine success stories of the 1960's civil rights struggle. Ackah also suggests that, like gender studies, which has existed in the UK for many years<sup>104</sup>, the study of black experience and contribution across the spectrum of academic disciplines could become a bulwark to the corrosive idea that black culture is somehow anti-intellectual.

Though it would be difficult to dispute the obvious benefits that black studies have had in the US, given the relatively different contexts and histories, one needs to be careful how this might be implemented in the UK context. There could be unforeseen or unintended consequences. For example, given that black studies is not a distinct academic discipline, but a perspective that cuts across disciplines, there is a danger that mainstream departments (eg philosophy,

**101**  
Özbilgin (2009)

**102**  
Ackah (2014) p

**103**  
ibid p

**104**  
Coate Bignell (1996)

politics, history, English, sociology) could be 'let off the hook'. Similarly, it may be argued anything is better than the current status quo though there is a danger that institutionalising black studies in the UK may lead to ghettoisation, as has been the case in some US institutions. Another potential difficulty is related to how one might define black studies in the UK context, given that the term black has different cultural, historical and political antecedents here.

African Americans also have a shared history of struggle within a country where their ancestors were forcibly enslaved and where the black churches were, and continue to be, a political force for change, arguably more than the universities<sup>105</sup>. Black history is therefore rooted within the scarred tapestry of the modern United States of America where both black and white North Americans are settlers of immigrant heritage. In the UK, the ethnic composition of the population is more diverse and BME people's racial history is as much rooted in their grandparents' experiences of empire in the colonised countries of the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and beyond, as it is in the UK per se. These are experiences and forms of knowing that need to be captured, preserved, understood and theorised, but we would question whether the white-dominated UK academy is currently able to fulfil this important role.

## Summary

In this section we have explained how the historical contexts of the US and UK higher education sectors are marked by a legacy of colonialism, slavery and white racism. Both systems have been challenged by anti-racist social movements and are now covered by equality legislation. Both countries have witnessed BME people making significant inroads into the structures of institutional racism and white privilege in all areas of public life. We have sought to offer some insights into the development of BME leadership in the US and in doing so explored some lessons that could be applied to the UK situation.

### Key points for HEIs to consider

- The US and UK contexts have similar histories of racial segregation and oppression – Do you feel that racial assumptions are sometimes made in your institution?
- In the US, successes have been made through the creation of black colleges and black studies programmes – Do you think similar initiatives could be effective in the UK?
- In the US, positive action has meant that BME staff are overtly supported and developed as individuals – Do you think increasing positive action on BME leadership could work in the UK?

In the next section we seek to develop this discussion further by exploring what we might actually mean when we talk about BME leadership.

# Understanding and developing BME leadership in the UK

Much of the debate about BME leadership in higher education has revolved around the issue of representation which was discussed in Section 2. In this section we pose the question, how can BME leadership be better understood and developed in the UK? In order to answer this question it is first necessary to explore actually what we mean by BME leadership and what makes it distinctive from white leadership. In other words, is the challenge one simply of numbers or is there something more to be said about the unique contribution that BME leaders can make? This section of the paper:

- Discusses issues of defining BME leadership
- Examines the meaning of black academic enquiry and BME-led research
- Considers the importance of intersectionalities to BME leadership.

## Black leadership

The term 'black leadership' can be understood in two distinct ways. As a descriptive term it can operate as a simple marker of difference whose significance is minimal. However, we would argue that racial markers of difference rarely, if at all, produce benign effects. In this regard, the invocation of the notion of black leadership has powerful resonance with black anti-racist struggles against white power structures. This is in terms of black liberation struggles against slavery or colonialism, the struggles of black communities against institutional racism, (eg the Scarman Report<sup>106</sup> (1981) and the Macpherson Report into the death of Stephen Lawrence<sup>107</sup> and of workers' struggles within white-dominated organisations. In this regard, the idea of black leadership has always been synonymous with struggle against racist hegemonies and the various responses of the prevailing (white) power structures. Gramsci<sup>108</sup> suggests these can range from acceptance, to incorporation, appropriation and rejection.

This also raises the issue of legitimation, that is, other than themselves, who or what are black leaders representing and what is it that they are leading black people for and to? Cornel West suggests in his book *Race Matters*<sup>109</sup> that a black leadership devoid of a clear and credible sense of political struggle is rendered irrelevant. As he notes:

*The crisis in black leadership can be remedied only if we candidly confront its existence. It is neither a matter of a new Messiah figure emerging, nor of another organization appearing on the scene. Rather, it is a matter of grasping the structural and institutional processes that have disfigured, deformed, and devastated black America such that the resources for nurturing collective and critical consciousness, moral commitment, and courageous engagement are vastly underdeveloped<sup>110</sup>.*

**106**  
Scarman (1981)

**107**  
Macpherson (1999)

**108**  
Gramsci (1982)

**109**  
West (1994)

**110**  
ibid p45

**111**  
Bhopal (2014)

**112**  
Mohanty (1991)

**113**  
Ribbens & Edwards (1998)

**114**  
Cited in Kwhali (2012)

**115**  
Singh (2009)

## Black academic enquiry and BME-led research

Bhopal notes that the black intellectual contribution to quality (world-leading) research (REF definition of 'Four star') is largely absent. Bhopal's study<sup>111</sup> revealed a picture of black academics feeling isolated and marginalised with their research work and their intellectual contribution devalued if it was concerned with race or if they failed to publish in peer-reviewed, high-status journals, which presumably very few people outside academia are likely to read. There seems little point in wanting a more diverse and representative leadership unless it is recognised that black people may enter academia with different perspectives, experiences, interests and insights that stem directly from their historical and radicalised location as black people.

Some writers have questioned the concept of black academic enquiry, arguing that the practices of black people have always been mediated by the dominance of white authority and truth and that once admitted into educational institutions, black people have to operate according to those norms with little power to affect change. Mohanty<sup>112</sup> cited in Ribbens and Edwards<sup>113</sup> for instance questions whether black academics simply become part of the colonisation process as their work has to accord with white academic tradition and is evaluated and peer reviewed accordingly<sup>114</sup>.

Within this discourse we feel it is important not to equate the mere employment of BME staff with the advancement of black interests, but to see it as part of a bigger project of developing inclusive and cohesive institutions that are built on the maximisation of their cultural capital. Programmes of BME research with BME leadership, ie where research is conceived, designed and managed by BME academics (rather than predominantly white academics leading research on BME issues) could help to set the agenda, develop acceptable research approaches and appropriate outcomes of research to inform and advance the lives of BME people and BME communities. Such research might serve an emancipatory function to empower marginalised BME people and communities by drawing on black epistemologies and ways of knowing. BME-led research could also help to shift the discourse of how to undertake research on BME people to how to research with BME people. However, the rigorous tendering process and lack of dedicated funding streams for such research, together with negative attitudes about the validity of emancipatory forms of research, are all to likely to hinder progress.

## Race experts, spokespersons and role models

Where BME staff do get recognition at the institutional level, this is often associated with them being typecast as race experts. However this positioning can be unwelcome and have detrimental effect. As Singh<sup>115</sup> argues, there is an implicit assumption that in addition to the stated job description, BME employees will provide positive role models for junior colleagues and students, deal with minority ethnic group issues, provide a beacon of understanding on such matters for the institution and be the visible evidence of the organisation's commitment

to race equality. If, however, universities are as cliquy and nepotistic as Mirza<sup>116</sup> claims, then questions are raised about the individual BME people who are attracted to academia and succeed within it. If BME academics have neither the desire, awareness, energy or ability to question or challenge unjust practices or are merely interested in their own career progression and personal survival, then having a few more black and brown faces in evidence will do little more than benefit the fortunate few who secure a job or promotional opportunity. The dominant racial discourse within which higher education is transacted will remain unchallenged. Indeed, it may instead be reinforced if individuals simply collude in practices and policies from which they may have personally benefited but that disadvantage BME groups more generally. Arguably, one of the most important roles of leadership is to maximise the effectiveness of human resources, particularly in higher education. In this regard, the contributions of black women are invaluable given the insights they have gained into issues of race, class and gender and from their experiences of racist and sexist discourse.

## Intersectionalities of race, gender and other protected characteristics

The concept of intersectionality, initially developed by the African-American academic and activist Kimberley Crenshaw<sup>117</sup> seeks to assist understanding of the complex ways in which socially and culturally constructed categories (class, gender, ethnicity, disability etc) interweave to create multiple, differential and, in some cases, systematic experiences of inequality. Specifically, Chancer and Watkins<sup>118</sup> have argued that race, class and gender are the three core oppressions from which other inequalities stem. This is because oppression of women, BME people and the working class is historically and structurally embedded in paternalistic capitalism with labour exploitation of the poor, female and third-world peoples being necessary for its maintenance<sup>119</sup>.

BME women potentially experience institutional and structural exclusion across the three domains of race, class and gender, including within academia and the dominant white male narrative that largely informs it<sup>120</sup>. They do not enter higher education as women who happen to be from a BME group or as BME people who happen to be women but with historical and contemporary realities that intertwine experiences of womanhood and ethnicity into unique forms of being and knowing. Grant indicates that concepts of liberation are more pertinent to black women as they are potentially oppressed by the patriarchy of black and white men and the racism of white women<sup>121</sup>.

Another relevant concept that captures BME women's duality of racist and sexist experience is what the African-American author Alice Walker<sup>122</sup> termed a 'womanist perspective' (a term that can mean an individual woman's own personal reality and the multiple and varied realities of women)<sup>123</sup>. Bagihole<sup>124</sup> subsequently commented on the difficulty for many black women of identifying with white feminism and gay rights activism because of their perceived attacks on the traditional family unit and on the role of organised religion, both of which are of considerable importance to many black women with the family and places of worship being the primary sources of cultural transmission and peer support<sup>125</sup>.

**116**  
Mirza (2011)

**117**  
Crenshaw (1991)

**118**  
Chancer & Watkins (2006)

**119**  
Kwhali (2012)

**120**  
Mirza (2009)

**121**  
Grant (1989), cited in Kwhali (2012) p25

**122**  
Walker (1983)

**123**  
Sheared (1994)

**124**  
Bagihole (2010)

**125**  
Kwhali (2012)

**126**  
Collins (2000) p28

**127**  
ibid

**128**  
HESA (2012)

**129**  
Fanon (1952)

**130**  
Jean-Marie et al (2009)

**131**  
ibid p567

**132**  
ibid (2009) p577

Hill Collins<sup>126</sup> explains that it is important to stress that no homogeneous black woman's standpoint exists. She argues that there are however common threads and themes that link those different experiences. Hill Collins concludes that a black women's collective standpoint does exist, one characterised by the tensions that accrue to responses to common challenges<sup>127</sup>.

It is questionable as to whether higher education recognises those womanist common challenges. BME women academics are distinguishable by their relative absence in the leadership structures of higher education<sup>128</sup>. Like their BME male counterparts, BME women are assumed to fit into the organisation as if their colour and gender were of no more relevance than the shade of their jumper or the shape of their coat. Those who manage to succeed on the academy's terms will likely have done so at considerable personal cost and against the normative employment patterns for those groups.

Frantz Fanon<sup>129</sup> spoke of racism's dehumanisation of black people and the sense of inadequacy that they experience in a world where their culture and sense of self-worth have been destroyed through the process of colonisation. He also identified the manner in which some black people, especially those with economic aspirations, may seek to acquire affirmation of superior whiteness by denying their blackness and mimicking the behaviours, values and languages of white society. However, because of their non-whiteness they will never achieve full affirmation and thus experience psychological tensions. For BME women who may aspire in white organisations, there is the additional risk of being pathologised as difficult or aggressive and ultimately unwomanly, particularly so if they chose to not collude with racism and sexism. Jean-Marie et al<sup>130</sup> in their empirical study of 20 black women educational leaders in the US talk about the double jeopardy of race and gender and, unlike the analogy of breaking through a glass ceiling, for them it felt more like shattering a concrete ceiling<sup>131</sup>. One might develop the analogy further and suggest that unless the underlying culture of gender and race stereotyping is not changed, then having broken through the concrete ceiling, for many this raises the real prospects of falling through the floor from height. However, on the positive side, the respondents who managed to overcome the barriers talked about the strengths that their experiences gave them, such as needing to be creative, developing an empowering collaborative approach to management, not compromising excellence and belief in all students and their potential to succeed despite any social disadvantage they may have experienced:

*Despite stereotyping and challenges to their authority, Black women use their creativity and knowledge of the world, inside and outside formal institutional processes, to be successful. Many possess a strong self-image and cultural understanding of their own personal histories that allow them to transcend the chilly and unwelcome climates in their professional settings<sup>132</sup>.*

## Summary

In this section we have sought to engage in a discussion about the meaning of BME leadership. In doing so we have drawn attention to the complexities of BME experiences and the dangers of reducing these simply to one determined by radicalisation. Arguably, BME women, through the experience of multiple oppressions, may have developed the kinds of resilience, negotiation skills and autonomy that would be invaluable to complex organisations such as universities. Such abilities are rarely valued within universities; worse still they can be used against BME staff in labelling them as overly sensitive or limited in experience and outlook.

### Key points for HEIs to consider

- Some talented BME individuals are reluctant to put themselves forward for leadership roles or do not wish to be considered as spokespersons or role models – Do you think this might be the case in your department or institution?
- Research on diversity suggests that leadership teams with ethnic diversity can have advantages for organisations – Do you feel that diversity is valued at senior levels in your institution?
- Intersectionalities of race and gender are important to who gains leadership roles – Do you see these differences at a senior levels in your institution?
- Theoretical perspectives suggest BME leaders have unique qualities that can enhance teams and organisations – Do you think BME leaders feel able to use their unique qualities in your institution?

133

Johnson (2015)

134

ibid p13

## Conclusions and possible actions for HEIs

Returning to the challenges that we set out at the beginning of this paper, in this final section we draw conclusions about the UK higher education sector's ability to value difference and the need to intensify energy for change.

In relation to the challenge of valuing difference, some would say it should not matter what colour your lecturer or professor is. Should it matter if the head of department, head of research or for that matter, the senior management team is black, Asian, white, male or female? The evidence shows that the ideal of treating everyone the same does little to change inequalities in the system or achieve equality of outcomes. However, we live in a world where ideals about equality are misplaced or can lead to unintended consequences. It is a world in which distortions of human capabilities and deficits have been built up over the years, in particular heavily influenced by processes of capitalism, colonialism and slavery – a world where race becomes embedded to an extent that it is almost, in the case of HEIs, rendered invisible, though its effects are not.

In this paper we have argued that various forms of racial oppression have persisted – or even propagated – within the higher education sector. Today the challenges are to identify and tackle overt and subtle forms of discrimination and to promote equality. That is not to say that the challenges are the same across the whole sector or that all BME staff are or have been affected in the same way. That would be an unhelpful generalisation to make, given the number of variables at play.

This leads to the second of our challenges, to intensify energy for change. Many of our universities came into being in the past 50 years during what might be seen as a period of civil rights and social inclusion. It is true that in terms of student participation, some institutions have really led the way in widening access for BME students, but this is not the case amongst some of the so-called elite institutions. However, when it comes to who operates the managerial functions and therefore exercises institutional power, then the picture is much bleaker.

In facing these realities, it seems as if the choice of not acting is simply unjustifiable. For universities in the 21st century to claim their position as the pre-eminent engines of economic and cultural development, it is crucial that they look into the mirror, both literally and metaphorically. It is highly likely that a failure of HEIs to reflect the globalised world from which they gain their legitimacy could mean that HEIs are likely to, at best, play a marginal role in shaping the future. Johnson<sup>133</sup> makes a number of incisive observations about the gulf between some of the rhetoric in universities and reality and the lack of 'dedicated resources and time given to initiatives to link the institution's overall strategy'<sup>134</sup>. One of the tensions is to establish the right balance between targeted interventions where BME staff might be seen to be receiving favourable treatment and a genuine recognition of BME staff inequalities.

This paper has sought to pose some challenging questions for those responsible for ensuring the relevance of universities to the world they serve. We have endeavoured to articulate some of the barriers that BME staff experience in higher education, of the sense of inequalities, discrimination and racism on the one hand, but constant surveillance on the other<sup>135</sup>. Wider societal radicalised stereotypes about BME groups become reproduced, albeit in much more subtle ways, within the universities. Amongst other things, this can lead to the devaluing of the scholarship of BME staff. Staff, either through design or because of the kinds of roles they are permitted to occupy (ie as ethnic specialists), may focus on issues related to race and social justice. Their confidence may be eroded by the requirement to justify their personal or professional lives almost on a daily basis, not only to their superiors, but peers, students and subordinates. The ECU have funded work to examine equality issues in relation to research assessment<sup>136</sup> and universities have set up REF equality committees. The equality outcomes may not be great, but this issue has not been ignored altogether.

And so in seeking to '*make and not break black and minority ethnic leaders in higher education*', there is a critical need to value the diverse qualities, perspectives and motives that BME leaders bring to their role. For example, those leaders who are committed to social justice do not simply have an academic curiosity, but a desire to challenge and change social relations. It is therefore essential that BME leaders are permitted to draw on their personal capacities and resources as they see fit to inform their approach to leadership and for them – or anyone else – to see these as being essential to their personal capacity to lead. Indeed, this is particularly important in relation to the enterprise of higher education, which is arguably to empower learners to achieve their full potential. Such perspectives are vital to contemporary challenges facing the higher education sector in terms of not only race, but leadership that values diversity of gender, disability and other protected characteristics.

As authors of this paper we have chosen to use what may be described as emotive or provocative language to debate the evidence and articulate the arguments. We acknowledge that some readers may question our objectivity – a point that we fully embrace and do not wish to hide from, given the arguments set out above. Indeed, our stance and message to other academics is to be even more willing to express the different perspectives that enable us to collectively see the greater whole. As victims and survivors of multiple oppressions, throughout our own personal and professional lives, for us, the task of writing a stimulus paper could never have been a purely technical exercise. In reflecting on some of the available literature by drawing on our own lived experiences as academics and activists, we hope to convey the imperative for UK HEIs to *make not break BME leaders*.

The best possible prospect for HEIs as they face the future of an increasingly globalised, competitive higher education system is to free their diversity to intensify energy for change. The ethical case for equality is made in law and the business case for diversity is growing. We would implore that leaders and staff in higher education make use of this stimulus paper to make a dent, push some buttons, or even initiate a chain reaction so that their organisations can truly reflect a global reputation. HEIs need to claim their role as leaders for not only knowledge production, but also social progress and social justice.

**135**  
ECU (2009b)

**136**  
ECU (2008)

We conclude with what we think could be some practical actions and strategies for addressing the very real concerns identified in this paper.

## Actions HEIs may choose to take

1. Currently many HEIs are approaching race equality either as an inconvenient necessity or a nuisance. HEIs can take a far more proactive, holistic approach by ensuring diversity and equality are at the heart of their organisational strategy and managerial functions.
2. All HEIs can as a matter of course annually and publicly publish statistics on the breakdown of staff according to ethnicity, nationality and gender at each level of the organisation.
3. HEIs can develop proactive recruitment and selection strategies that actively seek to increase the numbers of BME applicants, including stating their commitment to racial equality in job advertisements. In relation to senior and leadership positions, briefs for headhunting agencies should stipulate requirements for an adequate pool of BME candidates.
4. There is anecdotal evidence that when it comes to appointments to leadership roles, previous connections and relationships come into play. This is not only in contravention of current equality legislation, it makes poor business sense. Therefore, HEIs can ensure all individuals involved in recruitment are aware of legal requirements and the duty of equality. Where HEIs use recruitment agencies to headhunt or pre-select candidates, there should be clear communication about organisational duty of equality and a commitment to recruitment strategies that do not disadvantage BME people.
5. Exit interviews with BME academic and managerial staff who leave the university can be undertaken as a matter of course. This will enable HEIs to gain insights into any possible failings that might be addressed to improve retention of high-quality BME staff.
6. Arrangements for acting-up in managerial roles should be subject to the same levels of scrutiny as would be the case for appointed posts. Moreover, statistics can be collected by HEIs as to the prevalence of such arrangements and their impact on equality requirements.
7. HEIs can review and develop BME employee networks with a view to building on best practices across the sector. In pursuing this, experiences of other public sector organisations, such as the NHS and local government, as well as trade unions, could be very useful. Adequate resources need to be made available for networks to be genuine vehicles for staff empowerment.
8. As an interim measure, HEIs can consider developing black studies and black leadership development programmes targeted at BME students, researchers and lecturers. Indeed, the success of these initiatives will be dependent on there being no need for them in the longer term.

9. HEIs can allocate monies to enable BME research in areas that will advance black knowledge and/or the wellbeing of BME communities.
10. HEIs can review graduate teaching assistant roles, doctoral scholarships and any other routes that may be available for career progression to ensure that there is fair representation of BME students.
11. HEIs should review BME participation in research assessment exercises with a view to ensuring equity but also to identify the negative impact of non-inclusion.
12. Schemes such as National Teaching Fellowship nominees and other internal systems of recognition could be reviewed to ensure fair representation of BME staff. Often it is these sorts of achievements and accolades that can provide the advantages and encouragement staff need to pursue leadership roles.
13. Formal and informal mechanisms for mentoring staff in HEIs could be reviewed and/or developed with a view to enhancing the prospects, knowledge and confidence of BME staff. Where suitable mentors do not exist in an institution, partnership arrangements with other institutions could be developed.
14. Performance management and appraisal can be reviewed within HEIs to ensure BME staff are not being adversely penalised and that those staff in leadership roles are rigorously appraised in how they are addressing race equality issues and targets.
15. HEIs can review current disciplinary processes to ascertain whether they are fairly operated and that BME staff are not disproportionately represented.
16. Building on the momentum of the Equality Challenge Unit Race Equality Charter Mark<sup>137</sup> currently being piloted in 24 UK HEIs, organisations can establish a fully resourced race equality reference group that can engage in open and honest debate, lead evaluations and support creative solutions for change.
17. HEIs can introduce face-to-face training and education for all staff about how to promote race equality and tackle racism in the workplace. This could be bespoke for different types and levels of staff.
18. Staff performance review and appraisal systems can be reviewed with a view to testing how they contribute to equality targets. This might include, for senior managers in particular, stringent targets for equality and development of black leadership and commensurate sanctions for those failing to meet these.

**137**

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**Dr Gurnam Singh** is Principal Lecturer in Social Work at Coventry University and Visiting Professor of Social Work at Chester University. Following undergraduate studies in 1982-87 he worked as a professional social worker with Bradford Social Services, and then spent six years working in the field of organisational and personal development specialising in race equality. Prior to entering academia in 1993 he was involved in community activism.

Gurnam completed an MSc on Race Relations and Community Studies at the University of Bradford in 1992. He was awarded a PhD from the University of Warwick in 2004 on anti-racist social work. In 2009, in recognition of his contribution to pedagogy, equality and higher education, he was awarded a National Teaching Fellowship from the UK Higher Education Academy. His teaching and research interests centre on pedagogical interventions for personal and social transformation, specifically in relation to questions of social justice, human rights and anti-oppression. He has published widely on all these and related issues in leading academic journals. Selected recent publications include:

- Singh, G (2011). Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students participation and success in Higher Education: improving retention and success - A Synthesis of Research Evidence. York, Higher Education Academy. [www.heacademy.ac.uk/node/2904](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/node/2904)
- Cowden, S, and Singh, G, (eds) (2013). Acts of Knowing: Claiming Critical Pedagogy in, against and beyond the university, Continuum Books. London and NY
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- Singh, G and Cowden, S (2011) Multiculturalism's New Faultlines: Religious Fundamentalisms and Public Policy. Critical Social Policy 32(3)
- Singh, G and Cowden, S (2013) Part two Response to Tariq Modood - Accommodating religions: Who's accommodating whom? A three-part debate about multiculturalism and religion. Critical Social Policy published online 22 Oct 2013.

**Dr Josephine Kwhali** is a Senior Lecturer in Social Work and Course Director for the B.A. (Hons) in Social Work at Coventry University. She has previously taught in higher education institutions including the University of Kent, University of Lincoln and University of Wolverhampton. She has an extensive managerial background, having been Head of Children's Social Work Services in Hackney and Assistant Director of Social Services in two other London Boroughs.

In 2012 Josephine was awarded her Doctorate from the University of Sussex for a thesis on the lives and stories of African Caribbean Christian elders. Previously, she completed her MPhil at Brunel University, researching and theorising the interconnections between race, class and gender.

Josephine was involved with the Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (CCETSW) during its pioneering work in the 1980's on developing and integrating equality considerations into the qualifying requirements. Josephine has spoken, written and presented at numerous conferences, training events and forums over the years and her academic and theoretical insights are informed by her own enduring experiences of race, class and gender inequalities.

She contributed to the seminal publication 'One Small Step to Racial Justice' (CCETSW, 1986: London) and co-authored 'Bringing Race and Culture in to the Mainstream of Social Work Provision' (Kwhali, J. & Mukherjee, T. 1987: Local Government Training Board). More recently she has contributed to research funded by the NSPCC entitled 'Social workers' knowledge and confidence when working with cases of child sexual abuse: what are the issues and challenges?' (Martin, L., Brady, G., Kwhali, J., et al. (2014). NSPCC/Coventry University) and is part of the project group led by Prof Paul Bywaters researching social welfare inequalities with regards children in need across the four countries of the U.K. (funded by Nuffield Foundation).



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