

# Understanding White privilege in Higher Education...

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# Aims of Workshop Session...

- To understand the concept of **White Privilege** within a **higher education context...**
- To explore the **landscape of racial inequality within the Academy**, in relation to Whiteness...
- To consider thinking about ways forward... What can be done to **dismantle the racism and inequality within higher education...?**

# A Thought... Is there a slight contradiction...?

- ‘Despite the **lofty ideals of universities**, they do no better... **and are in fact doing worse...** than other institutions in **British society** when it comes to **race equality...**’
- **Why is this the case...?**
- **Why is racial inequality and a lack of diversification a reoccurring theme within the Academy...?**

(David Lammy, MP, Chair of APPG on Race and Community, 2015).

# The Elephant in the Room...

- Why do we find **talking about race uncomfortable...?**
- Does this challenge our own views and opinions on **race, equality, diversity and inequality within our society...?**
- Does this perhaps encourage us to **reflect on our own racial disposition...?**

# Is there a privilege associated with being White...?

- In your own opinion what are **the privileges of being White...?**
- Does being White provide individuals with advantages **potentially over people of colour...?**
- Do you think the concept of **Whiteness is a useful vehicle in understanding** the nuances of institutionalised racism and racial inequality...?
- Conversely, are reactions to Whiteness **purely subjective and situated within a discourse of hyper-sensitivity...?**

# Privilege...

- The conception of **White privilege** refers to the ‘invisible package of **unearned assets**’ and the plethora of **opportunities and benefits that are obligatory** simply based on the principle of being White (McIntosh, 1992, p. 48).
- This conception provides a platform for us to begin to **understand the landscape inequity and normativity within the Academy...**
- Do we **recognise** this or **challenge this within our institutions...?**

# Querying the landscape of Higher Education...?

- Why do think there is a **dearth of BME academics within Higher Education nationally...?**
- Why is there a paucity of **BME leaders within Higher Education...?**
- How do we potentially disrupt **this culture of inequity (if we believe it exists)...?**
- How could universities better **diversify academic staff workforces...?**

# Why is this a reoccurring theme...?

- For professional and support roles, the overall average pay gap between black and white staff in **2015-16** was **7.3 per cent... rising to 12.6 per cent for senior administrative posts...**
- Among academics, **black staff were paid 12.6 per cent** less than their white colleagues, while for academics of **Asian ethnicity, the gap was 10.4 per cent...**
- This is not reflected in the recruitment of academic staff, particularly when focusing on the lowly percentage of **BME academics which constitute 7.8 per cent of the total population** (Alexander and Arday; 2015; Bhopal et al., 2014; HEFCE, 2012; ECU, 2014).
- Nationally, there are just **96 BME staff at Professorial level...**

(Times Higher Education Pay Survey, 2017).



# Understanding Normative Whiteness...

- The challenging of normative **Whiteness is paramount** in dismantling the **cycle of inequality that permeates society...**
- Stovall (2006) explains that the **presence of academics of colour powerfully threatens and disrupts normative canons** by challenging elitist binaries of the Academy whilst developing boarder debates concerning what we perceive to be legitimate knowledge...
- Race remains a problematic issue for some **White academics to confront...** (Ahmed, 2012; Gillborn, 2008)...
- ... Particularly when having to acknowledge that their **privilege can sometimes** contribute towards **maintaining cycles of inequality** with regards to the **paucity of diversification within the Academy** (Gillborn, 2008; Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1997; Roediger, 1994).

# Challenging dominant cultures...

- How does the hegemony of **Whiteness** inform racial dynamics within the **Academy...?**
- What can **higher educations** do programmatically, structurally and **interpersonally** to disrupt and transform normative Whiteness...?
- How can an integration of **Whiteness** inform and shape higher education policy, practice and research...?

# Moving forward: Changing the landscape of inequality...

- What can we do within our institutions to **create more inclusive cultures which advocate greater diversification...?**
- How may you attempt to **challenge the normative orthodoxy of Whiteness within your own institutions...?**
- **What recruitment interventions** are already in place within your institutions to create **greater diversification regarding academic staff...?**

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