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Miller, Paul

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'White sanction', institutional, group & individual interaction in the promotion, progression of BME academics and teachers in England

Journal:	<i>Power and Education</i>
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Keywords:	race inequality, White sanction, BME academics, BME teachers
Abstract:	The promotion, progression of BME academics and teachers in England has been the subject of much debate. Although several theories have been put forward, racial equality has stood out a major contributing factor. The experiences of BME academics and teachers in England are similar in terms of aspirations; and their experience of organisations also points to similar patterns of exclusions. This integrated study provides thick data from qualitative interviews with academics and teachers, theorised through the lens of Whiteness theory and Social identity theory, of their experience of promotion, progression; how they feel organisations respond to them and how they in turn are responding to promotion, progression challenges. There was a shared view amongst participants that for BME academics and teachers to progress in England they need "White sanction"- a form of endorsement from White colleagues that in itself has an enabling power.



‘White sanction’, institutional, group & individual interaction in the promotion, progression of BME academics and teachers in England

Introduction & Contextualisation

The participation of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) teachers and academics in the UK's education system has been a source of much research and debate. Similarly, the progression of BME teachers and academics in senior roles in educational institutions has been a source for much research and debate. Despite debates and research evidence however, the progression for BME teachers and academics remains a deep rooted and continuing struggle at the individual and group levels. Put differently, BME teachers and academics are far more likely to occupy entry level and junior roles in schools (Earley et al, 2012) and universities (Bhopal & Jackson, 2009; Equality Challenge Unit, 2014) for what appear to be no other reason but their ethnic/ racial profiles.

In any educational institution, the promotion, progression of staff is arguably a complex affair-subject to much speculation about why and how some individuals progress and why and how others do not. Nevertheless, the progression, promotion of BME staff is a simultaneously complex and fraught issue – underpinned by decades and histories of racial inequality in the United Kingdom and in its education system. On the one hand, the struggle for promotion, progression among all teachers and academics, is a personal one, associated with each individual's quest to be successful in life and in their careers. On the other hand, however, the struggle for promotion, progression among BME staff is a struggle not only for their success but also for mutual recognition at individual and group levels, and for equality. The continuing struggle for mutual recognition and equality in terms of promotion, progression among BME teachers and academics have led them question the usefulness of national and institutional apparatuses believed to be in place *genuinely* advancing equality and diversity, when in fact, evidence continues to confirm that whereas White teachers and academics continue to progress in their careers, the promotion, progression of BME teachers and academics has remained more or less flatlined. This paper examines, in an integrated analysis, BME promotion, progression among school teachers and university academics in England.

BME teachers

As at January 2015, there were 8.4 million pupils enrolled in state-funded and independent schools in England - of which 30.4% of primary school pupils are from minority ethnic origins; and 26.6 of secondary school pupils are from minority ethnic origins (DfE, 2015b). Various patterns of variation exist within the overall data, with some schools in London, for example, having as many as 70% of BME students enrolled, although staffing profiles do not always reflect the student body. In November 2014, there were 454.9 thousand full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers in state-funded schools in England - of which 87.5 per cent of teachers are White-British. Teachers from 'Other White Background' (3.6%), White-Irish (1.7%), Indian (1.7%) and Black Caribbean (1.0%) backgrounds make up the next largest groups of teachers (DfE, 2014). Of the approximately 18,000 qualified BME teachers, approximately 1,000 are in leadership roles and only 104 (or 3%) are headteachers. That is, in 2014, 93.7% of headteachers were recorded as White-British, a slight of reduction 93.9% the previous year.

The necessity and value of having BME teachers and school leaders is well documented. BME students benefit from seeing BME staff in leadership roles which provides role modelling for them, built on what Wei (2007) describes as “co-identification” (p.10). It is widely believed that co-identification can play a role in enticing BME students to enter the teaching profession (McNamara et al, 2009). Furthermore, “Having a leadership team from a range of ethnic backgrounds also helps to forge good relationships between students and staff” (SecEd 2015, np). It has also been reported that BME leaders can draw on their own experiences to engage with BME students by challenging

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3 racial stereotypes and making changes throughout the school in order to address issues of
4 discrimination in trying to create a more inclusive environment.
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6 It is arguably the government's recognition of the continuing problem of BME promotion, progression
7 to school leadership and the associated value of BME school leaders that that underpins the
8 introduction of the Leadership, Equality and Diversity Fund, which aims to support BME teachers
9 into senior leadership roles within 12 months (DfE, 2015a). Although no independent evaluation has
10 so far been undertaken, the government has opened up the fund to all schools, up from the 30 (20
11 secondary, 10 primary) it started with in 2014.
12

13 BME academics

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16 Data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency suggests there are an estimated 1,829,195 UK-
17 domiciled students in higher education. Of this number, there are 33,290 whose ethnicity is
18 unknown. Of the 1,795,910 whose ethnicity is known, there are 1,158,690 White and 377,225 who
19 are from BME backgrounds (HESA, 2016). HESA data also suggests there are approximately
20 186,000 academics employed in UK higher education institutions (HESA, 2014). Of this number,
21 approximately 7.9% (or 14,694) are from BME backgrounds (Singh & Kwhali, 2015). Singh & Kwhali
22 also reported that nearly 11% (or 18,843) of 171,306 White academic staff were professors,
23 compared with approximately 192 BME professors of whom 85 are Black (ECU, 2014). The ECU
24 also reported that BME women were less likely to occupy senior positions, BME staff were more
25 likely to be on fixed term contracts and BME staff received lower levels of pay, in particular, those
26 from Black and Chinese backgrounds.
27

28 Similar to BME teachers, the value of having BME academics and managers have been the focus of
29 research and government initiatives. Launched in 2014, the Race Equality Charter Mark targets
30 improving the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students in higher
31 education, underlining "the continued existence of racial inequalities limits both minority ethnic
32 individuals and the sector as a whole in fulfilling its full potential" (ECU 2014, np). However, despite
33 the "plausible link between BME students and recruitment of staff to higher education" (Singh &
34 Kwhali, 2015, p.8), "the value of having BME staff can go unrecognised in the UK higher education
35 system" (Bhopal & Jackson, 2009, p.i) - since according to Shilliam (2015) "British academia
36 remains administratively, normatively, habitually and intellectually 'White', and Black academics and
37 students suffer the most from the institutional racism and implicit biases that accompany this mono-
38 culturalism" (p.32). Furthermore, as Deem et al (2005) and Law et al (2004) also suggest, UK
39 universities appear, for quite some time, appear to have been immune from scrutiny. It is perhaps for
40 these reasons that only 30 universities volunteered to take part in piloting ECU-led race equality
41 charter mark, of which 21 volunteered to trial the framework; and of the 21 that trialled the
42 framework, only eight met the standard for a Bronze Award- in recognition of their action plans and
43 efforts to improve race equality (ECU, 2015).
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45 White privilege/ Whiteness theory

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47 White privilege is a term used to describe a set of privileges that advantage people identified as
48 white in Western countries, compared with what is usually experienced by non-white people under
49 the same set of political, social, political and/or economic conditions. Critical race theory suggests
50 that racism is normal, and as key thinkers in this area have reported, race is a key organising
51 category for inequality based upon an ideology of White supremacy (Du Bois, 1997; Woodson, 2006;
52 Omi & Winant, 1986).
53

54 Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) situates race as the organising principle of domination. Lynn (1999)
55 cautions against ignoring this reality, which is central to the history of civilisation. Within a system of
56 domination, "Whiteness is the ideology and way of being in the world that is used to maintain White
57 supremacy" (Picower, 2009, p.198). McIntosh (1990) argues that Whites in Western societies enjoy
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3 advantages that non-whites do not experience, and describes them as an "an invisible package of
4 unearned assets" (p.31).-McIntosh also propose that White privilege is an institutional arrangement
5 that grants a set of unearned benefits to White persons for being White. Sue (2003) sees this as
6 particularly problematic since White privilege provides unearned advantages and benefits to White
7 persons based on a system "normed on the experiences, values, and perceptions" of White persons
8 (p. 7). Furthermore, Kendall (2006) describes White privilege as "an institutional, rather than
9 personal, set of benefits granted to people whose race resembles that of the people who are in
10 power" (p.63).
11

12 According to Picower, "Whiteness is operationalised in a variety of ways" (2009, p.198), although it
13 has been commonly agreed, Whiteness has three main components: racial identity, racial bias and
14 racial privilege (Lyubansky & Barter, 2011). In terms of racial identity, Whiteness derives its strength
15 from four primary sources, namely: group size, group power, group discrimination, and group
16 appearance. Whiteness as racial identity holds that, ethnic minorities have less power compared
17 with other groups; do not resemble the majority group and experience more and varied forms of
18 discrimination. Conversely, because of the majority status, the majority racial group sees their racial
19 identity as normal (McIntosh 1990; Stovall, 2006). In contrast to racial identity, Whiteness as racial
20 bias has been viewed as a philosophy underpinned by racial bias (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997).
21 This view holds that society is characterised by a socially created racial hierarchy that values
22 Whiteness above all others and that because Whites are socialised into this identity, they are more
23 susceptible to internalising messages regarding White superiority, even if they consciously reject
24 racist beliefs (Croll, 2011). It is believed that this internalisation leads to unconscious (and therefore
25 unintentional) bias in favour of those who are White (Lipsitz, 1998), a bias believed to be less
26 noticeable or non-existent among non-White groups (Lyubansky & Barter, 2011). Whiteness as
27 privilege on the other hand is arguably characterised by privilege and less so by racial bias. That is,
28 because one is White, and Whiteness has an invisible quality (McClendon, 2004) there are certain
29 privileges associated these statuses, most notably, the privilege to live one's life without the need to
30 be aware of one's Whiteness and how this might be impacting their life (McIntosh, 1989).
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33 **Social Identity Theory**

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35 The main argument *Social Identity Theory* is that a person's sense of who they are is based on their
36 group membership(s), for example: ethnicity, social class, religious group. Tajfel & Turner (1986)
37 proposed that the groups to which people belong are very important to their social identity and
38 provides a sense of belonging. They also propose that, in order to enhance one's sense of self, we
39 enhance the status of the group to which we belong (called an in-group); for example: "England has
40 the best educational researchers" or by discriminating against or having prejudiced views against
41 others (called an out-group); for example, "White academics are better than academics from other
42 ethnicities". The process of diving people into an in-group (us) and an out-group (them), called social
43 categorisation, is one of three mental processes, according to Tajfel & Turner (1979) that underpin
44 an "us" against "them" mentality. The other two states are social identification and social
45 comparison. Social categorisation, categories are made in order to help people understand their
46 social environment, for example: Blacks, White, Muslim, Christians, etc. In social identification,
47 people adopt the identity of the group they categorised themselves as belonging to and conform to
48 the norms of the group, which in turn produces an emotional significance to their identification with
49 that group. Furthermore, their self-esteem will become bound up with group membership (McLeod,
50 2008). In social comparison, people tend to draw comparisons between different groups based on a
51 range of explicit and/or implicit factors. For Tajfel & Turner, understanding these processes is crucial
52 to understanding how prejudice works since categorising people into groups can lead to the
53 exaggeration of (a) differences between groups and (b) similarities of things in the same group
54 (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).
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57 **BME academics and progression in England**

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The progression of BME academics is fraught a sustained body of research findings in this area. For example, just over 16 years ago, Carter *et al* (1999) and Fenton *et al* (2000) who cited evidence of discriminatory practices in relation to the progression of BME staff. These follow on from earlier studies spotlighting the under-representation and disadvantage of BME staff in the academic labour force. For example, Puwar (2004) found that BME academics who enter and progress in traditionally White 'space' have been described as 'space invaders' and 'out of place'. According to Puwar (2001), the presence of BME staff in high level positions can lead to a disorientation of Whiteness, resulting in a 'double-take'... occurring 'because authority is sedimented and naturalised in white bodies' (p.659). Accordingly, Puwar postulates, 'While they (BME staff) now exist on the inside, they still do not have an undisputed right to occupy the space' (Puwar, 2004, p.1). Puwar's observations have been underlined by Pilkington (2013) who found that BME staff were more likely to experience or encounter 'hyper-surveillance' (p.232). Deem & Morley (2006) found equality issues involving staff were not given the same attention as equality issues for students, and Arday (2015) and Loke (2015) and the ECU (2014) found BME academics are more likely to be employed at post-1992 universities, mirroring the situation for BME students in higher education.

Research into race inequality in education in England continue to gain momentum over the last few years as concerns about the inclusion and progression of BME staff have surfaced and more widely debated (Bhopal & Jackson, 2013). There is however a growing body of research literature which suggests diversity in higher education has become "primarily a matter of documentation, audits and bureaucratic paper trails" (ibid, p.2), that can expose 'the gap between words, images and deeds' (Ahmed, 2007, p.607), although there is urgent need to ensure action (Ahmed, 2007; Ahmed, 2012; Pilkington, 2011). The ECU reports that some initiatives have failed due to "the absence of resources and authority for the initiative, and sometimes fatigue and apathy towards new initiatives where previous staff experiences tend to be of unsuccessful initiatives that achieved neither substance nor sustainability" (ECU, 2011, pp.46-47).

Furthermore, in 2011, the ECU reported that BME academic staff who are as qualified as their White counterparts are often overlooked for promotions or were not encouraged to apply for senior positions. As Bhopal & Jackson (2013) also observed "...there is a higher percentage of BME staff at lower grades in the higher education sector compared to their representation at senior levels" (p. 7). This observation mirrors the situation in other fields and in other sections of the wider education sector. Indeed, in 2012 the ECU reported that only a small number of BME academics held senior posts and that overall, staff of BME origin tended to make up the lower rung of organisations. Kalra *et al* (2009) argue that in order for diversity initiatives to be productive they need to be designed to "support individuals" and be designed to "change organisational culture" (Kalra *et al*, 2009, p.11).

In 2015, Miller reported that BME academics, in particular females, were less likely to gain a promotion due to perceived racial discrimination and the fact of having to 'prove themselves' or not belonging to an 'in- group' or 'club'. Connecting 'through intermediate social structures – webs of association and shared understandings of how to behave' (Halpern, 2005, p.3) is an important issue to which I will return in the discussion. Suffice to say here however, mentoring (Roofe & Miller, 2015) and networking are crucial to progressing in one's academic career (Kalra *et al* 2009; Fenton *et al*, 2000). Nevertheless, as Goulbourne (2006) puts it, "what is social capital in one social context may not be social capital in another context" (2006, pp. 239-240), thereby posing a potential challenge for BME academics to access predominantly White middle class male-dominated networks in higher education (Bhopal & Jackson, 2013).

BME teacher progression in England

The issue of teacher progression is highly subjective and often teachers, School Boards and policy makers often have differing views regarding possible factors influencing and appointment or indeed

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3 a 'non-appointment'. Pioneering research by Morgan et al (1983) found that Headteacher selection
4 was arbitrary and problematic and that selection panels did not always have clear criteria for
5 selection. Furthermore, where criteria did exist, final decisions were not always based upon these.
6 Circa a decade and half ago, in 2002, Earley et al, found that race/ ethnicity was a problem in
7 teacher progression as evidenced by the few numbers of BME staff in senior leadership roles in
8 schools. Ten years later, in 2012, Earley et al, re-confirmed that BME staff were disadvantaged in
9 gaining senior leadership roles in schools due to race/ ethnicity, suggesting underlying essentialist
10 stereotypes and the glass ceiling were responsible.
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12 These observations were confirmed by Bush et al (2006), and Lumby & Coleman (2007) who also
13 found that race/ethnicity is a factor in the career progression of some Black and Minority Ethnic
14 (BME) teachers. Coleman (2007) also noted that the appointment of women principals is still
15 problematic, commenting, "overall, women are more likely to become head teachers and are now
16 less likely to be categorised into pastoral roles, but in some cases women still meet prejudice from
17 governors and others in the wider community" (2007, p.389). Research conducted by Moreau et al
18 (2007) and by Bullock (2009) showed women are disproportionately represented in senior leadership
19 posts.
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21 Research by Shah & Shaikh (2010) found that religious and ethnic affiliation is a contributing factor
22 in teacher progression. Specifically, they found that being male and Muslim was problematic in the
23 quest for a principal job. More generally, literature in England identified several barriers that limit
24 teachers' progress to leadership positions in the forms of marginalisation and indirect racism
25 (Powney, 2003); the subtle influence of informal networks that excludes some groups (Harris, 2003).
26 Research McNamara et al (2009) found, *inter alia*: BME teachers are committed to teaching and
27 ambitious to progress although discrimination at work remained a key barrier to progression.
28 Research by Miller (2014) found government policy, social connections, and school level
29 jockeying/interference are primary barriers (and simultaneous enablers) to promotion, progression
30 among teachers.
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33 **The study**

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35 Data collection for this qualitative study was conducted in two phases between March 2014 and
36 November 2015. The overall focus of the study was to gain insights and accounts of BME teachers
37 and academics regarding their progression, promotion experiences.
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39 Phase One was conducted from March 2014 to March 2015. It included seven BME academics, two
40 males and five females. Two females are employed at "Russell Group" universities; two are
41 employed at "Plateglass" universities and three are employed at "Post- 1992" universities. Between
42 them they had over 60 years of university teaching experience or an average of 8.5 years.
43 Academics held job roles such as lecturer and senior lecturer. They were drawn from four London-
44 based universities. All academics were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide.
45 Interviews were held via telephone and face to face. A combination of convenience and snowball
46 sampling were used to enlist academics.
47

48 Phase Two was conducted from May 2015 to November 2015. It included eight BME teachers, five
49 males and three females. One is employed at an "Outstanding" school; five are employed at a
50 "Good" school; and two are employed at a school "Requiring Improvement". Between them, they had
51 over 68 years of teaching experience or an average of 8.5 years. Teacher participants occupied
52 roles such as classroom teacher, Head of Year, Head of Department, Assistant Headteacher and
53 Deputy Headteacher. They were drawn from eight different schools located in five London boroughs-
54 and one is employed at a primary school and seven are employed at secondary schools. All
55 teachers were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide. Interviews were held via
56 telephone and face to face. A combination of convenience and snowball sampling were used to
57 enlist teachers.
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Analysis

The data analysis approach I adopted in this study draws on a combined descriptive and auto-ethnographic research methodology. Whereas descriptive research attempts to provide a detailed picture of a particular situation (Nueman, 2006); in this case the promotion, progression of BME teachers and academics, auto-ethnographic research attempts to provide accounts from participants' viewpoints. By combining these two approaches, it was felt the research findings and would provide better insights and therefore be more authoritative (Etherington, 2004; Sikes, 2013). It is important to note however that this study did not attempt to measure the experiences of BME teachers and academics but rather to provide a description of those experiences (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004). The main question asked of BME teachers and academics in this study was: "What factors hinder/ enable the career progression, promotion of BME teachers and academics in England?"

Findings

The findings reported in this paper relates to the perceptions and experiences of BME academics and teachers in relation to their promotion, progression in their chosen careers. The data presented is based on themes derived from participant interviews and not based on participant grouping such as "teachers" or "academics". The main findings are presented below:

Promotion, progression based on 'White sanction'

Several participants expressed that White colleagues were like 'gatekeepers' and there was no way you could get a job without first impressing and/or forming an alliance with them. I have termed the situation of having to gain endorsement for progression, promotion from White colleagues as 'White sanction'.

Two academics reflect:

It's no longer enough to be qualified. Meritocracy will get you only so far. You have to have connections with white colleagues and those connections must be more than surface level. Surface level connections are "invisible" but you need connections that are "visible". Connections with white colleagues in influential positions who will write your job references; deliver an address at your book launch; submit the next research bid with you; co-author a paper with you and co-present a paper at a conference/ seminar with you. Anything less that this is not going to get you anywhere (Black academic, male, Plateglass University).

I have been at my current university for over nine years. I am still a lecturer. I do think being a black female has to do with my non-promotion. However, I feel however it has much more to do with the fact I am black woman. It took me awhile to realise, but I think I now get it. To get a promotion, as a black academic, you need an ally, preferably a white person who is in a position of influence and who can therefore influence things for you. Without this ally, your journey to promotion is going to be tedious, messy and possibly non-existent (Black academic, female, Russell Group University).

Two teachers also reflect:

I have been in my school now for 12 years and I have seen a number of White teachers progressing and, in a sense, leaving me behind. I love my job and I love my school. However, despite applying for internal promotion four times, I have not gotten through. It's always, 'you are not ready yet'. If I am not ready after 12 years in one school working in several roles and amassing significant experience - when will I be ready? I guess when they tell me I am (Black teacher, male).

I have 13 years teaching experience in this country and five years in Guyana. I have been promoted to a Head of Department and now Lead Practitioner since arriving here. But it seems that's as far as

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I will be allowed to go. Look around, White Overseas Trained Teachers seem to progress effortlessly to senior leadership but for BME teachers, this is not the case. Although my native language is English, and since I cannot change my skin colour, I guess I should commit to speaking the Queen's English- and that may give me an edge (Black teacher, female).

Race discrimination

A number of participants felt race discrimination in the actual appointments process or within their institution's psyche contributes to or is responsible for their lack of progression.

Discrimination and racist attitudes are perceived factors...everything seemed to be fine- 'I am the perfect candidate for the job, I tell myself'...until I walk into the room and they realise I am black. Then they feedback to me, 'you did not get the job because you did not seem as if you really wanted the job' and 'my publications were not enough' although it was a teaching post only. I have found many interview processes are just veneers (Black academic, female, Post- 1992 University).

I applied for a post at an institution where I had previously been employed- the post was almost identical to that which I had left. Interview feedback was that I had not demonstrated that I could deliver the academic programme in a location other than the HEI. I later learnt that the post was offered to a candidate who had recently completed the same postgraduate academic programme where the vacancy was held. This White male had no prior experience of working in an HEI, no experience of teaching either at the undergraduate or postgraduate levels whilst I had over 10 years' experience at the time (Black academic, female, Russell Group University).

People are sometimes shocked to learn I am not further up the ladder. There is a lot of institutional racism at my University, which is compounded by notions of what one perceives an academic should look like- usually someone who is White (Black academic, female, Russell Group University).

Teachers shared similar experiences/ observations:

From my personal experience I have seen BME teachers, in particular Overseas Trained Teachers (OTTs) overlooked for promotion especially those that were internally advertised. I often questioned what the barriers are and have narrowed it down to either skin colour or accent (Black teacher, male).

I think that, despite being allowed to migrate here to teach, and, despite having the relevant qualifications & experience, my experience has taught me that school aims to subtly promote British teachers to positions of responsibility & leadership (Black teacher, female).

More recently I was invited to attend a course called "Stepping up to Leadership" for BME teachers. Why can't BME teachers not apply to the "Future Leaders" programme like anyone else? Why must there be a course especially for BME teachers? Will this solve the problem and create more opportunities? BME under-representation is clearly a nationwide issue (Black teacher, female).

Social connections/ Networks

There was a feeling among participants that recruitment and appointment panels and therefore institutions already knew who they were going to appoint based on racial and/or other ascription and not based on merit. As described by participants, progression, promotion had more to do with social connections (who you know or who knows you) and networking with White colleagues and less about abilities and experience. I have labelled this as notion "Wrong face".

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For at least five interviews that I had, I felt that they were unsuccessful because I was not in the "inner circle". When once colleague found out that I did not get one of the job in particular, she was confident it was because 'my face didn't fit'. I share this sentiment too. It's about face and it's about a club (Black academic, female, Plateglass University).

Sometimes I think it's pointless for Black academics to even apply for jobs/ promotion because someone in the 'club' will usually get it. It may seem cynical but my only hope for progression may be to join their 'club' (Asian academic, female, Plateglass University).

The focus of institutions seems to be more on appearance rather than on skills, experience and qualifications (Asian academic, female, Plateglass University).

I have applied for internal post advertised externally and was 'pipped to the post' by an external candidate who was deemed to have had more recent evidence of successfully running an academic programme. The person appointed in fact had less experience teaching at University and held their previous post for less than two years. I am more qualified and more experienced than the person appointed but was told 'it was close'. It goes without saying the person appointed was White. I think he got the job because he knew people on the inside (Black academic, female, Russell Group University).

Teachers also shared their observations and experiences:

There is a lot of corruption in progression, promotion in schools- especially for internal posts. I am an Assistant Headteacher and I have seen instances at my school where my Headteacher has made progression, promotion decisions contrary to school policies. These decisions are rarely questioned by the Governors who have complete faith in her. But these decisions do not promote diversity and inclusion (Asian teacher, male).

More recently there was a demand for recruiting teachers who attended top universities in preference for those who did not. This will invariably affect some teachers, especially BME teachers from overseas- who qualified at universities not considered 'top' by the UK establishment. Soon, the school system will be led by only one type of leaders- those from certain backgrounds whereas the teachers will be the minions from the less prestigious universities and from overseas (Black teacher, male).

Discussion

The promotion and career progression of BME academics and teachers continues to be a source of much debate at the level of policy and practice. Simultaneously, the promotion and career progression of BME academics and teachers continues to be fraught. The factors limiting the career progression for BME academics and teachers are multiple and inter-related. For example, the ECU (2014) reported the continued existence of racial inequalities limits both the potential of minority ethnic individuals and that of the education as a whole. This important observation from the ECU mirrors one of Tajfel's (1974) key assumptions that, by exaggerating differences between groups through a process of social categorisation, some groups are disadvantaged, not only at the cost of a group particular but as the cost of society as whole. The problems associated with such assumptions and their potential impact on promotion, progression decisions are incalculable. For BME staff however, such assumptions can and do influence decisions by White colleagues about the organisational value, capabilities and therefore their career progression. One teacher reasoned, [to them] "*we are fit to manage behaviour and to teach but not to lead*"; an observation supported by Saran (2007) who acknowledged, "The notion of superiority creates internal colonisation of society...in a general sense, Whites of European heritage consider themselves superior" (p.68).

Wei (2007), Bhopal & Jackson (2009) and SecEd (2015) propose several individual, group and organisational benefits associated with employing BME staff at different levels in educational institutions. From interview data reported in this paper, BME academics and teachers fully understand these benefits and their role in delivering these benefits to students in particular and to the organisation as a whole. Many however they described their minority ethnic status and therefore their “out-group” status as being responsible or at least a significant contributor to being “passed over for promotion”; “not supported for going for promotion progression “and being “written off” because “my face doesn’t fit”. Although such suggestions can be made by any individual or group to explain non-promotion, progression - they are consistent with research by McNamara et al, (2009) on the Leadership Aspirations and Careers of Black and Minority Ethnic Teachers, and by Loke (2015); Shilliam (2015) and Goulbourne (2006) who highlighted a range of challenges for BME academics in accessing White spaces, often dominated by White middle class males.

‘White Sanction’

Based on the evidence from this and previous studies on BME progression, I argue that in order for BME teachers and academics to progress in their careers, it appears they need to go through a process of ‘White sanction’. Used here, ‘White sanction’ occurs where the skills and capabilities of a BME individual is first acknowledged and second endorsed/promoted by a White individual - who is positioned as a broker and/or mediator acting on behalf of or in the interest of the BME individual. ‘White sanction’ can be ‘indirect’ (for e.g.: a verbal reference and/or nomination for an activity) or ‘direct’ (for e.g.: a written reference, joint publication, joint appearance at conference, joint grant application). I should point out however that not every act of acknowledgement is itself ‘White sanction’ and for ‘White sanction’ to occur, it must satisfy three conditions: acknowledgment/recognition; endorsement and “brokerage”. Brokerage is about leveraging opportunities for the BME individual. I also propose that ‘White sanction’ has two forms or outputs discussed below.

‘White sanction’ as legitimacy

Whereas Bhopal, et al (2015) reported that BME academics are not particularly good at networking; Harris et al (2003) found the subtle influence of informal networks excludes some groups (of teachers). Nevertheless, notions that the progression of BME academics and teachers is ultimately tied to having a White colleague vouch for and/or attest to their capabilities is problematic. First, such practices undermine the value of meritocracy and the authenticity of potential benefits to be derived by anyone, regardless of their status, from working hard or hard work. It was strongly felt by both academics and teachers alike however that one of the more likely ways of “getting noticed” or of being “given a chance” is to have the blessing or endorsement of White colleagues. The endorsement of a White colleague one might argue provides BME academics and teachers with a form of legitimacy not readily available through their BME peer networks, and which is of crucial importance in the eyes of, in particular, White peers, who were in control of the seat of power and of decision-making. Second, such practices bring to the surface several important questions in relation to the role and power of networks, in particular White networks, whether formal or informal. Based upon the findings from this research, and based on previous studies on BME progression, one can argue that in the main, in order for BME academics and teachers to progress, [it appears] they need a White colleague to act as a kind of broker, providing a note of verbal and/or written recommendation that says to other White colleagues, especially, “this person has an acceptable personality” and is therefore “ok to work with”. This important note of acknowledgement/endorsement which could be, for example, be a recommendation that the BME individual be approached do a particular task, is however only the first step in a two-step process.

‘White sanction’ as enabling

The importance of connecting ‘through intermediate social structures – webs of association and shared understandings of how to behave’ as described by Halpern (2005, p.3) is an important issue

at this juncture. And for the BME academic and teacher, these connections - webs of association must be within their “out-group” and more importantly, outside their “out-group” (Kalra et al 2009; Fenton et al, 2000). That is, for the BME staff to increase their scope of promotion, progression, social connections external to their “out-group” are fundamental to their success - and without which their chances of progression are severely diminished since BME networks, formal or otherwise, do not have as much clout as White networks and therefore lack the ability (and possibly the credibility) to leverage promotion, progression opportunities - despite being an important space for “talking through issues” and for “affirming each other”. Based on the findings reported, and based on previous studies on BME progression, one can argue that in the main, in order for BME academics and teachers to progress, [it appears] they need an ally, in particular a White ally- someone who is well connected, highly respected, who is listened to, who is a mover and shaker and who can open doors for them. It is this ‘ally’ who will move beyond brokering (or acknowledgement) to creating and leveraging opportunities for said BME individual in networks previously closed to them, and could include the conduct of joint research and initiatives, and/or joint appearances at conferences.

Institutional interaction with BME staff

The findings reported in this paper points to a range of problems at the individual, group and organisational levels. At the individual level, BME academics and teachers feel side-lined for promotion, progression opportunities for no other reason than their ethnicity/race - a situation in contrast to Whiteness theory which holds that Whites are advantaged simply for being White (Lipsitz, 1998). At the same time, the feelings held by BME academics and teachers, and their experiences of promotion, progression, points to a process of social categorisation, the result and the fundamental underpinnings of which are prejudice and discrimination (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). At the level of a group, this limits the ability of BME academics and teachers to sufficiently counteract stereotypes about BME staff and students due to not having adequate numbers of staff in senior/leadership roles (McNamara et al, 2009) and/or lack of authority despite being in post (Puwar, 2004), and therefore being unable or unlikely to directly influence decision-making and/or institutional level policy making. Furthermore, the result of not having BME staff in senior/ leadership roles restricts the quality of mentoring they are able to provide BME students and the numbers of aspirational role models available to BME students based upon their ethnic co-identification (Wei, 2007).

For the organisation, by not recruiting and/or promoting suitably qualified BME staff, this reifies the problems of exclusivity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and simultaneously colonises the production and acceptance of forms of knowledge (Saran, 2007). Furthermore, this sends a signal to students and the wider community that for institutions to work; for institutions to thrive, they must be headed by White leaders, and predominantly White staff must be the key office holders, underlining the “us” against “them” view and the suggestion by teacher participant that “[to them] *we are fit to manage pupil behaviour and to teach but not fit to lead*”.

Drawing on interview data from this study, and on the works of McNamara et al (2009); Bhopal & Jackson (2009); Ahmed (2007; 2012); Loke (2015); Arday (2015); the DfE (2015a) and the ECU (2014; 2015), I propose there are four types of organisations: Engaged; Experimenting; Initiated and Un-initiated; each interacting with BME staff (and therefore their careers) in very different ways. These are summarised in figure 1.

Fig 1: Institutional interaction with BME staff

Engaged	Experimenting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BME staff are represented at all levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Few BME staff in posts - Fewer BME staff in leadership roles

Initiated	Un-initiated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Framework in place to meet legal duty - Few BME staff in posts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No BME staff in posts - No framework in place to meet legal duty

In an “Engaged organisation”, there are BME staff at all levels of its hierarchy- including in [senior] leadership roles. In an “Experimenting organisation”, there are few BME staff in posts and a smaller number of BME staff in leadership roles. In an “Initiated organisation”, there exists a framework for meeting the its legal duty, although BME staff recruitment is kept to a bare minimum with no BME staff in leadership roles. In an “Uninitiated organisation”, no framework exists for meeting its legal duty and no BME staff are in post.

BME [staff] responses to the challenges of promotion, progression

The actual minority ethnic status of BME academics and teachers in England appear to confer upon them two common of struggles: a struggle for mutual recognition by White gatekeepers; and a struggle to reposition themselves in the face of histories of misrepresentation about their talents and abilities. This struggle was highlighted by Saran (2007) who acknowledged “People of color do not always get the respect and recognition for their academic achievements that they deserve” (p.68). From the interview data, BME academics and teachers opted to respond to these struggles in different ways- some more determined than others, to have their voices heard and their knowledge legitimated (Hooks, 1994). I observed three patterns of behaviours, which I summarise below. These are: Activism; Brokerage and Acquiesce.

Fig 2: BME individual and group responses to the challenges of promotion, progression

Behaviour	Explanation
<i>Activism</i>	research, seminar and conference presentations
<i>Brokerage</i>	mentoring, including mentoring by White colleagues; forming/ joining professional networks
<i>Acquiesce</i>	accepting things are the way they are; not (or no longer) putting themselves forward for progression, promotion possibilities

BME academics and teachers involved in Activism are those engaged in research, as doers, participants or both; and in seminar and conferences presentations, contributing to public debate. BME academics and teachers involved in Brokerage are those involved in mentoring other BME staff; being mentored by a BME and/or White staff; joining and/or forming professional networks, whether formal or informal. BME academics and teachers at the point of Acquiesce are those who had “given up” due to being “fed up” and “tired” of a system (and institutions) that had consistently let them down and in which they feel they will not be able to progress.

Conclusions

Goulbourne (2006) suggests “what is social capital in one social context may not be social capital in another context” (pp. 239-240). In the context this research study and from ongoing debates about BME staff progression in England, there appears two forms of capital: a BME capital - which is restricted and [which can be] restrictive and a White capital - which has a degree of power and

1
2
3 influence that can provide access to predominantly White middle class spaces. Problematic as this
4 proposition is, the research evidence suggests the relationships between White academics and
5 teachers and BME academics and teachers is one that is structurally flawed, and where White staff
6 have the power to influence and/or decide the career progress of both White and BME colleagues.
7 Such a situation McClendon (2004) proposition that “Whiteness has a certain invisible quality”
8 (p.223) which according to Saran (2007) “has shaped all aspects of schooling and has justified the
9 privileges of the white population” (p.68) leading to individuals from other ethnic backgrounds losing
10 out.

11
12 From the findings presented in this paper, it appears that essentialist stereotypes about the ability
13 and talents of BME academics and teachers continue to play a major role in current attitudes
14 regarding their promotion, progression in England’s education system. BME academics and
15 teachers continue to be outnumbered by White peers in [senior] leadership roles in educational
16 institutions with no other explanation than the fact of their numeric differences. Proportionally, the
17 numbers of BME academics and teachers in [senior] leadership role is lagging behind that of White
18 academics and teachers respectively.

19
20 Despite research evidence and debates associated with lack of BME staff in senior/leadership roles;
21 and despite research evidence and debates associated with the benefits and value of having BME
22 staff in [senior] leadership roles, intuitional interaction with BME staff appears, in the main, to be
23 light-touch and self-serving. Light-touch and self-serving interactions and interventions are those that
24 are superficial (voluntary or otherwise), lacking in accountability, and by their existence reify notions
25 of exclusivity and highlights weaknesses in policy leadership and educational leadership, from
26 nursery to university. In twenty-first century England, any suggestion of ethnic and/or racial
27 superiority should be vigorously pushed back and talents, skills and voices from all ethnicities
28 legitimised and respected (Hooks, 1994) – an issue of significance for any multicultural, multi-ethnic
29 and multi-racial country.

30
31 BME academics and teachers are no longer hoping the system with deliver justice and equity to
32 them. Nevertheless, and despite its power and influence and power to influence, BME academics
33 and teachers should not need to rely on a process of “White sanction” to legitimise and to enable
34 them. The research evidence suggests, BME academics and teachers are consciously and
35 purposefully taking matters into their own hands by rallying and supporting each other through
36 mentoring and networking and in thinking about and working towards promotion, progression in
37 ways that appreciate the value of BME networks, whilst simultaneously drawing on the influence and
38 power of White networks. Such thinking is not about an “out-group” versus and “in group” or “them”
39 against “us”. Rather, it is common-sense thinking aimed at bringing about changes to attitudes
40 about racial inequality/ race equality and therefore changes in representation in the leadership
41 landscape of England’s educational institutions.

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