

# "I'm managed by a white man, who's managed by a white man, who's managed by a white woman, who's managed by a white man"

## The problem of institutional racism in a UK-based university

Associate Professor Denise A Miller, Dr Charmaine A Brown and Dr Ryan Essex  
 d.miller@greenwich.ac.uk, C.Brown@greenwich.ac.uk, R.W.Essex@greenwich.ac.uk

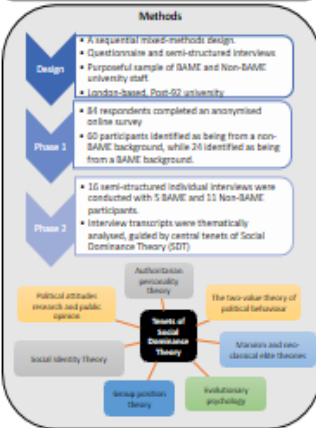


**Background**

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

**Research aims**

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



**Conclusions and Recommendations**

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

Equality → Diversity → Inclusion



**Indicative references**

- AdvanceHE (2021) Equality in higher education: statistical report. Retrieved from Equality in higher education: statistical report 2021 | Advance HE | [advance-he.ac.uk](https://www.advance-he.ac.uk)
- Shopai K, Brown H, Jackson J. (2016). BME academic flight from UK to overseas higher education: aspects of marginalisation and exclusion. *British Educational Research Journal*, 42 (2), 240-257
- Miller, D. (2021) Black British female managers—The silent catastrophe. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 28(4), 1665-1682. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12688>
- Rollock, N. (2019) Staying Power: The career experiences and strategies of UK Black female professors. *Universities and Colleges Union*. Retrieved from [www.ucsu.ac.uk](https://www.ucsu.ac.uk), February, 2019.pdf
- Sidanius, J., & Prati, F. (2009). Social dominance: An intergroup theory of social hierarchy and oppression. Cambridge University Press.