WORKPLACE RACE EQUALITY IN UK HIGHER EDUCATION:

AN EXPLORATION OF THE DIFFERENTIAL OUTCOMES FOR BLACK STAFF

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Abstract

For more than a decade consistent attention has been drawn to the under-representation of ethnic minority staff in UK higher education. This attention has focused on the failure of institutions to represent their increasingly diverse student populations through their academic faculty, whilst statistical reports and published research continue to expose the negative workplace experiences of ethnic minority academics. In parallel, ethnic minority colleagues in professional and support roles and their lived experiences of UK higher education have remained largely in the shadows yet mirror that of their academic counterparts.

Ethnic minority staff do not share the same lived experiences and despite representing more than a fifth of all ethnic minority staff in UK institutions, black staff experience the least favourable outcomes compared to all other ethnic groups. Black staff are least likely to be represented at senior levels, are more likely to be employed on fixed-term contracts and are paid less than their peers. This dissertation provides a unique, in-depth, multi-layered exploration into the lived experiences of black staff in UK higher education and how these contribute to the differential workplace outcomes evidenced through workforce statistics. The study demonstrates that there are multi-level structural and agential factors that influence the way black staff navigate white hegemonic institutional spaces, that evade or deny talk of race or racism, creating psychological and ethnic penalties for black staff that are materially different to staff of any other ethnic group.

The research takes a qualitative, social constructionist approach by employing one-to-one semi-structured interviews with black staff in academic and professional and support roles, equality and diversity and HR practitioners, senior managers in UK institutions and sector agencies. The dissertation applies Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field, capital, and symbolic violence to interpret participants feelings, perceptions and experiences of racism and institutional racism in UK higher education. It also offers a perspective as a practitioner-researcher and proposes recommendations to inform policy and practice in the field of organisational equality and diversity, to advance race equality in UK higher education institutions and create good diversity practice across any industry or sector.

Glossary of terms

Athena SWAN	Advance HE gender equality charter
BAME	Black Asian and Minority Ethnic
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
BRC	Biomedical Research Centre
BRU	Biomedical Research Unit
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CPR	Critical Philosophy of Race
CRE	Commission for Racial Equality
CRED	Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities
CRT	Critical Race Theory
ECU	Equality Challenge Unit
EDI	Equality, diversity and inclusion
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
HEA	Higher Education Academy
HEEON	Higher Education Equal Opportunities Network
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HERAG	Higher Education Race Action Group
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HR	Human Resources
LFHE	Leadership Foundation for Higher Education
NHS	National Health Service
OfS	Office for Students
ONS	Office of National Statistics
PSED	Public Sector Equality Duty
REC	Advance HE Race Equality Charter
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
UCEA	Universities and Colleges Employers Association
UCU	University and College Union
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UUK	Universities UK
US	United States of America

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The spotlight on race has been well overdue in the UK and finally arrived in 2020 following the death of George Floyd, who was killed by a white police officer in the US (BBC, 2020). In April 2021, that police officer, Derek Chauvin, was found guilty of two counts of second- and third-degree murder and one count of second-degree manslaughter (New York Times, 2021). This horrific incident spurred the largest civil rights protests in decades drawing once again much-needed attention on racial injustice across the globe and through the Black Lives Matter campaign that would ensue.

Domestically, there were mass protests in cities across the country, including the destruction of Edward Colston’s statue, a 17th century Bristol slave trader, following an anti-racism demonstration in June 2020 (Wall for The Observer, 2020). In response a school in Bristol, named and funded by Colston, was recently ‘rebranded’ (Wright for Daily Mail, 2020) to disassociate itself from its past. Before these protests few people would have known who Edward Colston was. Sir Winston Churchill, whose statue was daubed with ‘was a racist’ during the London protests in summer 2020, caused the Imperial War Museum to review Churchill’s legacy. The National Maritime Museum in Greenwich are reviewing the colonial legacy of Lord Horatio Nelson, and The National Trust reported that 93 of its properties are said to have links to colonialism or slavery (Davies for Daily Mail, 2020). In September 2020, Ofcom received 24,500 complaints from the public following a performance from dance troupe, ‘Diversity’, on Britain’s Got Talent that featured events of 2020, including the Black Lives Matter protests. ITV were later cleared of any breach of broadcasting rules following an investigation by the regulator (Waterson for The Guardian, 2020).

In July 2020, UK universities attracted negative attention for their ‘tokenistic’ support for Black Lives Matter (Batty for The Guardian, 2020) following an open letter signed by more than 300 academics, students, and professional and support staff, who work/have worked in UK higher education institutions, calling on sector leaders to eliminate racism in higher education (Times Higher, 2020). The open letter states that “there is no clear incentive for universities to take racial justice seriously or consequences if they do not. However, there are disadvantages to

us: black and minority ethnic staff leave, are not promoted and experience racism but these facts do not lead to the institution radically improving its practice". This comes almost a year after UK research councils revealed that white researchers are almost 59 per cent more likely to receive research funding than their minority ethnic peers (Murugesu for New Scientist, 2019). Following a recent televised documentary, the chair of Universities UK, Professor David Richardson, acknowledged that the sector is institutionally racist (Mohdin for The Guardian, 2021). This was set in the context of the student experience and failed to mention how this might also be applicable to the staff experience. This research explores the perceptions of staff across the sector and how they believe institutional racism manifests itself in our institutions.

In March 2021, the Commission for Race and Ethnic Disparities (CRED) released their much-awaited report, which has subsequently been met with public criticism (BBC, 2021; The Conversation, 2021) for its claims that ethnic minority communities could help themselves through their own agency, relabelling the slave period as the 'Caribbean experience', which has transformed how culturally African people have transformed themselves into a remodelled African Britain, as well as suggesting that misapplying the term racism has diluted its credibility, among other things. The UN have condemned this report and have called on the UK government to reject the findings from it and that the CRED should be disbanded or reconstituted to prioritise an authentic and rigorous examination of race (OHCHR, 2021). The backlash since this report's launch demonstrates that race is still a big deal in the UK. It is within this context of heightened awareness of racism and inequality, that the findings of this research are presented. This research exposes that racism and racial inequality exists in UK higher education despite the conclusions presented by CRED.

This relevant, important, and timely research focuses primarily on black staff in UK higher education and is distinctive because it takes into consideration the lived experiences of black academics *and* their black professional and support colleagues. Exploring race and racism in UK institutions highlights the extent of the problem black staff face. The empirical data provides a voice to the individuals who participated in this study, where so often these narratives are silenced or unheard and which conveyed the full spectrum of emotion, including anger, frustration, pain, and exhaustion. These lived experiences are critical to understanding the nature and impact of systemic racism, so that we might be better equipped to reduce disadvantage and inequality, not solely in UK universities, but within other organisations.

From a total of 391,045 staff employed in the UK higher education sector there are 51,325 staff who have declared a minority ethnic background[1] (Advance HE, 2020). From this staff cohort 21.4 percent are black, representing the second largest staff cohort from within the minority ethnic staff communities. It might be assumed that black staff would be represented across all levels of institutional life, except they are not, with only 0.6 percent of professors with a declared black ethnic background.

This research seeks to understand what lies behind these workforce data and consider the experiences of black staff in UK higher education institutions, who statistically experience poorer outcomes than any other ethnic group in the workplace. In doing so, this exploration looks to identify the opportunities available, and challenges faced by senior leaders, human resources and equality and diversity practitioners to develop strategies that can create more inclusive workplace cultures to better attract, recruit, retain and develop black staff at all levels.

The study draws upon previously published literature, desk research (Chapter Five) and qualitative research methods that enable participants' perceptions and experiences to be analysed in the context of social and organisational structures to understand whether there is a correlation between these and the workplace demographics. This is achieved by taking a multi-dimensional approach that considers a macro, meso and micro level analysis that explores influences such as history and power (Layder, 1993), across institutional structures and participant perceptions and lived experiences. The elements of history and power are relevant in terms of the way that institutions have and continue to function, considering their own structural development through time, combined with the past and continuing experiences of black staff. Together, these may influence the way that black staff are able to navigate through white-dominated spaces, systems, and structures.

I will draw upon my own experiences as an equality and diversity practitioner over the past two decades, including in UK higher education institutions, and offer a unique insight to this research study. In using my professional experience to inform this dissertation, I have researched and reflected on my own past and current management practice as I continue to lead and manage a team of diversity specialists within the public sector. In exploring this

[1] This includes those who identify as black, Asian, Chinese, mixed heritage and any other ethnic background.

institutionally sensitive topic, drawing upon unique empirical data gathered during this research, this dissertation is an original contribution to our knowledge and understanding of race and racism, and advances the practice of business administration in the space of organisational race equality. I approach this important topic from a practitioner-researcher perspective, by exploring the role that equality and diversity practitioners like myself play in assisting institutions to address race equality, and I consider how organisational structures may help or hinder a practitioner's progress in effecting change. This role can be integral to advancing equality, diversity, and inclusion within institutions, however a practitioner's personal and professional context must be considered to understand the extent to which a practitioner is capable of influencing change within institutions. The influences of history and power (Layder, 1993) will be explored in the same way as other participant experiences being analysed in this research.

In parallel, these experiences will be considered through the broader application of habitus, field, capital, and symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1977; 1984; 1990; 1991; 1998; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Like history and power, a person's background, upbringing, work, and life experience have a considerable role to play in shaping their experiences of organisational systems, structures, and processes. How these might contribute to the outcomes of black staff are highlighted in this research. This approach considers the relationality of actors involved with advancing race equality in UK higher education in terms of the interdependence, intersubjectivity, and interactivity of individual and organisational phenomena (Tatli and Özbilgin, 2009). Participants may both influence the structural and operational environments, as well as become impacted by those same structures and operations. Individually, the research participants possessed perspectives as people of colour, as practitioners or as senior managers, which are not mutually exclusive, in relation to some or all of which can be further influenced by an individual's culture, experience and field of practice.

The research participants hold a combination of these roles within the sector, making their perspectives multi-dimensional. The research also includes the perspectives of practitioners from different ethnic backgrounds, highlighting other issues associated with the advancement of race equality in the sector. A practitioner's own ethnic identity may also impact upon their own competence to address matters of race. In setting the context of this dissertation, the

following section will provide the rationale for undertaking this research and will identify the influences that prompted it.

1.2 Rationale for the research

The topic of workplace outcomes for different social groups has become a growing area of interest for me as an equality and diversity practitioner. I have been involved in the field of equality and diversity in a range of roles, and first gained an interest in social justice as a trade union representative in the 1990s, campaigning with other colleagues across the country for employment protection based on sexual orientation. As a gay woman that had at the time been outed at work, this was very important to me. Being outed at work without my knowledge left me feeling powerless. That part of my identity had been hijacked and this made me feel vulnerable, fearful and open to public scrutiny. I had not appreciated at the start of this research journey how important personal identity is. I had forgotten what it felt like to have that attribute used as a weapon against me. This aspect would emerge unexpectedly in this research through accounts of the lived experiences of participants.

Subsequently, I have worked across several industries and across all areas of equality, diversity and inclusion. Leading teams within two institutions and working independently in another that were a combination of Russell Group and Post-1992 universities. My interest became fuelled by increased activity across UK higher education around the attainment gap between ethnic minority and white students, whilst also dealing with an increasing number of workforce-related concerns that prompted reflection on the absence of attention to staff outcomes. My interactions with people of colour, not exclusive to UK higher education, that sought my advice about their workplace experiences reminded me of how I felt, and although I am not a woman of colour, the core aspect of identity resonates strongly. Whilst working in UK higher education I began to monitor workforce demographics more closely. Following years of workforce analysis, the differential outcomes for black staff in terms of their representation across those institutions, and despite institutional type and geographical location, followed similar patterns. This raised several areas for enquiry in terms of the interconnectivity of institutional culture across autonomous organisations and how this affects the representation of black staff and their experiences.

I witnessed as a practitioner the challenges faced by ethnic minority staff coming to terms with and dealing with race-related matters through informally and formally reported perceptions of bullying, harassment, and discrimination. I attempted to tackle those perceptions through the development of appropriate policy, practice and initiatives that could improve workplace culture. However, this was often set within the context of resistance from senior leadership and human resources apathy or low prioritisation against broader institutional goals. This research offers an insight into the world of institutional equality and diversity practice from my own perspective as an equality and diversity practitioner. This often-unheard lived experience will add a level of context to the challenges of tackling discrimination and advancing equality and diversity practice in UK universities because these roles, if they exist at all as specialist teams, are often under-resourced; situated within wider human resources teams, which can create conflicts of interest if challenging policy or practice; lack senior sponsorship; or lack adequate prioritisation. Together, these act as the perfect storm for glacial progress in achieving race equality.

1.3 Aims of the dissertation

The aim of the dissertation is to explore the lived experiences of black staff working in UK higher education and how those experiences create differential outcomes within the institutional workplace. Statistical evidence of differential outcomes for black staff have been reported for more than a decade through higher education sector data (Advance HE, 2020), yet there has been little improvement during this time. To explore these phenomena, the research has considered several key features to determine how the actions or omissions of institutions contribute to the perceptions and experiences of black staff, their under-representation across senior levels in institutions, their higher rate of attrition from institutions and their negative workplace experiences. These outcomes have all been highlighted in varying degrees by studies for more than a decade (Carter, et al, 1999; UCEA, 2003; Institute of Employment Studies, 2005; Jones, 2006; ECU, 2009, 2011; Pilkington, 2011, 2013; Philips, 2012; University and College Union, 2016, 2017; Rollock, 2011, 2012, 2019; Bhopal, 2018; EHRC, 2019).

There has been growing sectoral and academic interest towards the experiences of diverse minority ethnic groups in the higher education sector and this dissertation will seek to explore

the associations between the differential outcomes reported through workforce data and the perceptions from black staff concerning their lived experiences of institutional life. This exploration will be supported by the perceptions and opinions of agents working in the sector that are involved in advancing race equality within institutions and agencies to explore why differential outcomes for black staff persist despite equality and diversity being an explicit organisational commitment for UK higher education institutions.

To investigate the elements mentioned above the research objectives are to:

1. Understand the strategic drivers to advance race equality and how this has progressed over time
2. Consider staff perceptions of the manifestation of racism in the workplace
3. Determine the impact of racial inequalities on black staff in UK higher education
4. Consider perceptions of the existence of institutional racism and its effect within a higher education context
5. Explore the presence of an ethnic penalty faced by black staff in UK higher education.

1.4 An outline of the dissertation

This dissertation has eight chapters, with this chapter providing the context of the research topic and outlining the aims and objectives of the study and structure of the dissertation.

In Chapter Two, the dissertation conceptualises race and ethnicity and the evolution of racism in the UK, by defining the terms and considering the origins of race from a historic, anthropologic, economic, and political perspective. The chapter continues to explore the evolution of language to describe background in terms of race and ethnicity and how terminology has confused and problematised discussions pertaining to race and how this has impacted individuals and organisations. Chapter Three explores how Bourdieu's concepts presents a distinct interpretation on human interactions and interdependencies within a workplace setting. These concepts will encourage greater consideration of the multi-dimensional aspects of structure and agency, and how an individual's history can impact the

way agents interpret and navigate the workplace, providing insight into potential solutions to tackle workplace racial inequalities. Chapter Four outlines the methodology and research methods employed in undertaking the study. This chapter provides an overview of the research journey and describes how access was gained to diverse staff members across a broad and geographically dispersed workforce, together with the routes taken to engage with practitioners from external agencies with an interest in UK higher education. Crucially, the research has been approached using a social constructionist perspective that interprets the data gathered through in-depth interviews and analysis of secondary sectoral quantitative workforce data.

Chapter Five discusses the evolution of workplace equality and diversity as an organisational instrument to future proof the workforce. The chapter considers how concepts have changed over time particularly within a national context, how the UK higher education sector has approached equality and diversity and the role of equality and diversity practitioners as agents for change. There is a focus on race within the broader equality and diversity agenda in UK higher education and the chapter concludes by examining the higher education workforce profile, providing an overall discussion on sectoral demographic profile, levels of pay and status and attrition when compared to white staff.

Chapter Six provides the initial analysis and interpretation from interviews with participants to explore whether staff had considered the diversity of the UK higher education sector before joining the workforce and if an ethnically diverse workplace is important to an individual's sense of identity and feeling of belonging. The chapter continues to consider the language of race within the workplace and whether terminology helps or hinders individuals and/or organisations to initiate and maintain conversations about race in the workplace. In Chapter Seven the data is analysed and interpreted further to explore the identification of workplace racism and considers the varied experiences of black staff in the context of the shape-shifting form of racism, how considering its altered state staff are able to navigate white social spaces and the coping strategies employed to function in this environment. The chapter concludes with an exploration into perceptions of the existence of institutional racism within the UK higher education sector, how this is manifested within institutions and the impact on institutional capability to deal with matters of race. Chapter Eight brings together the combined academic literature, primary data and analyses from previous chapters and

considers the research questions of this study. The chapter will propose recommendations for the UK higher education sector to address the findings in this research study to tackle workplace race inequalities across institutions and UK sector agencies.

2 The evolution of race, ethnicity, and racism in the UK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter will explore the historical and contemporary evolution of the concepts of race and ethnicity through an evaluation of literature considering sociological, anthropological, philosophical, psychological, and political approaches. The discussion will consider how the notion of race and ethnicity has changed over time, the influences that have made those changes occur and reflect on contemporary opinion about race. As well as charting the course of race and ethnicity through history, the chapter will also consider the evolution of racism and how this has altered over time from 'traditional' overt acts or speech to a modern form that is barely recognisable, and which involves subtle, concealed acts or omissions.

Much of the material reviewed for this chapter originates in the United States, where significant contributions have been made over the decades towards developing, and subsequently challenging, the concepts of race and racism across a variety of disciplines. Latterly there has been growing academic interest and discussion in the UK as race-related debate has advanced. This review will provide a framework to understand the contemporary position in and around our societal and individual conceptualisation of race and racism, and the prevailing change in social attitudes around these topics. To provide this foundation, the origins of the term 'race', the context of its use, and how this discourse has developed over time to shape the language of 'ethnicity' will be explored. The terms 'race' and 'ethnicity' are often used interchangeably by equality and diversity practitioners.

It is important to note that there has been a reliance on existing literature whose origins are in the United States (US), of which some dates to the 1960s, which raises some interesting considerations on the challenge this poses for this UK-based study. Firstly, in terms of the civil rights movement in the US and its genesis, which is different to the UK context of race relations, albeit the clear link between Britain's role in building the foundations for enslavement. The fundamental difference is that the British established slave colonies while Americans (US) live alongside the descendants of their slaves. The proportion of minority racial groups are much smaller in the UK in comparison to the US, however there is an added dimension of class in UK society.

There are other important differences such as the history of violence towards African Americans by white Americans, including at the hands of the police (see Chapter One). Lynchings still take place and there are geographic areas that African Americans avoid for fear of attack with no reprisal from the law, posing a threat to both psychological and physical safety.

The advancements made in US legislation through constitutional amendments in the 19th century were certainly more advanced than the UK's own race relations legislation a century later. According to Ferner et al (2005) although diversity has historically been poorly studied internationally, it has been of particular interest in the US. They propose that this is because diversity has very clear roots to the American policy agenda, such as Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action, agendas which are driven by legislative programmes requiring compliance. Additionally, Ferner et al (2005) suggest that the US legal systems do not tend to deliver equality unless they are underpinned by social mechanisms such as the inability of groups to enforce their legal rights. This is in contrast to the UK, where Trade Unions and collective bargaining are important elements of social regulation that support legal frameworks of equality and help build and enforce legal rights. Despite these socio-political differences, there are similarities in the employment context and lived experiences of people of colour in the workforce irrespective of distinct protections.

The approach to this chapter is founded in the personal stance that race as a concept has been socially constructed to categorise people according to biological criterion, predominantly based on skin colour and to reinforce a power dynamic. There is general acceptance amongst a range of academics that the notion of race has no scientific validity (Montague, 1972; Modood et al, 2002; Smith, 2002, Helms et al, 2005; Bernasconi, 2001; Kandola, 2018), and this has long been a dominant view in British social science and virtually undisputed today (Modood et al, 2002).

The legislative framework in the UK identifies race as a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, however this is not new terminology and has been maintained from previous anti-discrimination legislation. The term race is one that is used often to describe an individual's national background and in practice, this can create tension, particularly when the term is used to refer to racialised minorities in the UK, rather than encapsulate all individuals' ethnic background. From a personal and practical perspective, it is common for individuals to

conflate race or ethnicity with ethnic minority rather than encapsulating any ethnic background. Anecdotally, there is no resistance to working with the term race as it has been well established within UK law, policy, and practice. However, it should be noted that the terminology is more prone to challenge amongst social scientists and in academia in general, than in other workplace environments.

In the construction of race, society has created methods upon which to oppress those with minority group status and this chapter will explore how the politicisation of race has contributed to the manifestations of racial prejudice. There will be an exploration of individual (micro-level) and organisational (meso and macro-level) racial prejudice to expose the evolution of racism from traditional or overt acts to liberal camouflaged or symbolic acts. In leading the discussion to this conclusion, the following section will investigate the notion of race and ethnicity and will be followed by an account of how history and societal advancement have shaped what we understand race and ethnicity to mean today. The subsequent sections will explore how the notion of race has advanced to broaden the spectrum of our traditional understanding, how the language around race has evolved together with notions of identity and how this can affect an individual's feeling of belonging. The latter sections of the chapter will also explore how race has become politicised over time and how geopolitical aspects have informed attitudes and public policy and will conclude to consider how racism has evolved in modern times, including an exploration of institutional racism.

2.2 Exploring the notion of race and ethnicity through history

The contemporary definition of race is given as "a group of people sharing the same culture, history, language, etc.", whereas ethnicity is defined as "the fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition" (Oxford English Dictionary). Both these terms in practice are used interchangeably, however there are notable differences, both in their history as well as in their reception, and these aspects will be explored further. The term 'ethnic' is related to or is a characteristic of a human group with certain key features in common and is derived from the Greek *ethnos*, meaning a (non-Greek) race or people. From a sociological perspective, Winant (2000) defined race as a concept that signifies and symbolises socio-political conflicts and interests in reference to different types of human bodies. A study about ethnic minorities in Britain (Modood et al, 1997) employed a definition

of ‘ethnic group’ which included the physical appearance of individuals, arguing that there are important boundaries separating one ethnic group from another and supported the idea that membership can be ascribed to individuals by sociologists rather than being elected by the individuals concerned. Smith (2002) however questioned whether the definition used within the study is any more meaningful or any less racist and identified an interesting contemporary issue about the use of language, and whether too much emphasis is placed on terminology rather than the inequalities themselves.

The legal framework has provided a fixed definition of race in the UK for several decades as including colour; nationality; ethnic or national origins, and classes a racial group as ‘a group of persons defined by reference to race’ (Equality Act 2010). Prior to the implementation of the Equality Act 2010, a significant case that went before the House of Lords in the early 1980s debated the definition of a racial and/or ethnic group (*Mandla v Dowell-Lee* [1982]). The case itself was related to a person’s religion, at a time when there was no such protection from discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief as there is today. The Court was tasked with defining which religious groups would be protected as particular racial groups, and concluded that the essential conditions for the constitution of an ethnic group were:

- a long-shared history of which the group is conscious as distinguishing it from other groups and the memory of which it keeps alive
- a cultural tradition of its own including family and social manners, often but not necessarily associated with religious observance
- a common, however distant, geographical origin
- a common language and literature.

Given that there are multiple definitions of race and ethnicity, and that these definitions bare great similarities, it is no wonder that there is so much confusion behind these terms, particularly amongst lay people, and more importantly, which term in today’s society is the most appropriate to use. What we can glean from the combination of all these definitions is that race and ethnicity is broad enough to encapsulate a person’s physical attributes, which may include colour and physical characteristics, language, and culture. The way our understanding has developed around these concepts, and principally constructing race as non-western, must, to some degree, contribute towards implying the exclusion of white

ethnic groups. This is despite references to colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, which are applicable to anyone regardless of race or ethnicity. The contention surrounding the term race in practical terms sends people into a deep dark place where there is a real fear (Rollock, 2012) and where people close ranks (Cole, 2009) and this perhaps has contributed to the interchangeable use of the terminology, as well as the continuing academic debate demonstrated by the critical observations and responses (Modood et al, 2002).

The notion of race was developed by historical events, with its origins in the expansion of Europe from the 15th century and especially during the rise of the British Empire (Mason, 2000). The term race was seemingly first recorded in the English language in 1508 in a poem by William Dunbar in reference to clan or kin, and further literal references to race or racial difference were used in Shakespearean texts as a reflection of contemporary Elizabethan society (Hendricks, 2000). Up to the 18th century race was a literary work, lacking scientific attachment, and denoting a class of persons or things (Husband, 1982).

Imperial expansion across Africa, India and the Americas increased the exposure to peoples of different populations and societies. With this came an increase in accounts from narrators of the time, such as those chronicled by Samuel Purchas in the 17th century, and his interpretation of the story of Noah and the Curse of Ham, identifying the inferiority of the descendants of Ham (Africans) (Samson, 2005; Olusoga, 2017). The most striking physical characteristic of people of 'foreign' origin was their colour and this was an aspect of emphasis to underline difference. The contrast between black and white became greatly politicised through the subjugation of newly conquered peoples and the exploitation of their land and resources. To justify these acts of domination, harmful and derogatory attitudes were formed that would form the basis for the perception of the opposites between good and evil; 'white' representing 'good, purity and virginity' and 'black' the colour of 'death, evil and debasement' (Jordan, 1974).

The precursor to what we understand race to be today first originated in 18th century zoology, when Carolus Linnaeus, a white Swedish botanist, zoologist, and physician, included Homo sapiens within the taxonomy of apes and primates in his *Systemae Naturae* (1740). He took an essentialist approach to classification by identifying four main subgroups of Homo sapiens: Europaeus albus (white Europeans), Americans rebescens (Native Americans), Asiaticus fuscus (yellow Asians), and Africanus niger (black Africans) (Graves, 2001). As well as categorising

humans, he also developed behavioural characteristics that were considered essential to the category (Caspari, 2003), e.g., Homo sapiens europaeus was described as active, acute, and adventurous, whereas the descriptors used for the other subgroups lacked such positivity. This early stage of human categorisation should be set within the context of its time, when western colonisation of the Americas, India and Africa was at its peak. The bias toward white European groups provided the scientific justification for the domination of these other ethnic groups. Furthermore, enslaved Africans in North America were categorised according to seven cultural-geopolitical regions, creating a hierarchy based on ancestral groups who were thought to make the best slaves or whose ways most resembled Europeans (Kendi, 2017). Kendi (2017) argues that making hierarchies within the African kingdom can be termed ethnic racism, while making hierarchies pitting Europeans over all Africans was simply racism.

The classification of human beings would continue throughout much of the 18th and 19th centuries and science became the vehicle to confirm and reaffirm the notion of inferiority of non-western peoples (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021). In parallel, social Darwinism, an application of the theory of natural selection to social, political, and economic issues, began to emerge. Consequently, this concept was promoted by 19th century English philosopher Herbert Spencer, who was one of the principal proponents of evolutionary theory during the Victorian era, to suggest that white Europeans were a superior race to others, and therefore destined to rule over anyone that was not in this ethnic category (Littlefield et al, 1982).

The classification of humans into the categories of colour we are more familiar with today: black, brown, yellow, red, and white were developed by Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (Barkan, 1992; Bhopal, 2007). Blumenbach did not attach a hierarchy to his colour coding of people. The construction of race continued to evolve through political and economic expansion, and throughout the 19th century the development of polygenism, that humans have multiple origins, widened the perception of distinctions among races, and physical differences were correlated with culture and social status. Regardless of conceptual differences, monogenists (a belief that humans descended from a mating pair) and polygenists alike agreed on the natural superiority of whites and the inherent inferiority of blacks - the opposing poles of global racial hierarchy (Harrison, 1995; Kandola, 2018). With this, the ideology of race took root within the natural sciences through a sub-discipline of physical

anthropology, later becoming a proxy for the study of race, providing it with legitimacy and which academia contributed to making more respectable (Bernasconi, 2001; Caspari, 2003).

Robert Knox claimed that “Race is everything: literature, science, art - in a word, civilization, depends on it” (Knox, 1850). For the Victorians, race was a description of social distinctions rather than colour difference and by the late 19th century the English social elite now measured non-whites against the same benchmark (Malik, 1996). Racial concepts continued to develop throughout the Victorian period as something that identified with inheritance or descent (Lorimer, 1996), a concept that today might be interpreted as socio-economic background. Scientists, and later some philosophers of the time, believed there to be a link between anatomical features and mental and psychological traits (Lorimer, 1996). This latter aspect would cause significant controversy in the 20th century with a study, *The Bell Curve*, which claimed racial differences in levels of intelligence and how they are influenced by environmental and inherited factors (Hernstein and Murray, 1994).

At the beginning of the 20th century there was a notable shift in opposition towards long-held beliefs about racial inferiority and scientific racism. German-born anthropologist, Franz Boas, recognised as the father of American anthropology, would be a major contributor to modern thinking about race. During the turn of the century colour difference would not be sufficient to explain racial variety, resulting in studies of other physical characteristics, such as head and nose shape, and hair and eye colour through anthropometry and craniometry. With proponent views towards evolution, Boas’ studies of skeletal anatomy showed that cranial shape and size depended on environmental factors, such as health and nutrition, in contrast to the theory of the day that head shape was a racial trait. Boas introduced culture as a primary concept of anthropology and opposed Carleton Coon’s concept that suggested there were five major races of human that evolved in parallel from Homo erectus, and that these ‘races’ evolved at different times and rates. Moore (2009) suggests that the implication here is that the racial group that evolved the slowest would be at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

Boas has been recognised as developing the American concept of culture, which would in time purge race from social science (Visweswaran, 1998). This has been seen as an important and significant contribution by anthropologists to move away from its origins in the study of race, to the study of a variety of sub-divisions that we recognise in contemporary anthropology that includes social, cultural, linguistic, and biological or physical disciplines. Visweswaran (1998)

notes that Boas equated blood to racial inferiority and that a large black population would disappear with the sufficient infusion of ‘white blood’, a view that Boas is better known for disputing. He further suggests that in the attempt to rid social science of race by assigning it to biology, Boas and his students helped legitimate the scientific study of race, thereby fuelling the machine of scientific racism (Visweswaran, 1998). This is contrary to Gossett’s (1997) view that Boas did more to combat race prejudice than any other person in history.

An aspect of race history that cannot be omitted is the impact of slavery on the preservation of negative attitudes and actions towards people of a very specific racial group, black Africans. Slavery became common practice since ancient Greece, Aristotle believed that slavery was natural because some people were irrational and others were not, therefore, to enslave ‘barbarians’ was proper (Samson, 2005). Slavery in ancient times was unrelated to skin colour and was widespread across the Mediterranean. Most of those who were enslaved were of European origin, and despite there being some African slaves at the time, slavery had not been racialised (Zuberi, 2013). British trade routes with West Africa began in the late 16th century, and to the English who set foot on those shores, the most notable characteristic of the African was their colour. Travellers of the time rarely failed to comment on this (Jordan, 1982). Following early interactions with Africans, stereotypical views about their culture, habits and character began to develop. It seems customs of the past would recur in this period, with Africans becoming viewed as the new barbarians. This is similar to the way that 17th century English would describe the Irish, as savages and incapable of being civilised, during attempts to conquer their lands and use them as forced labour (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021).

The slave trade developed throughout the 17th century and involved the trading of manufactured goods from Europe to the west coast of Africa in exchange for captured people provided by African traders (Olusoga, 2017). The ships, laden with their human cargo would then set off for the Americas or the Caribbean in exchange for sugar, rum, tobacco, and other luxury items back to Europe (British Library). Accounts from explorers and traders became popular reading material for the general public and in the period 1770-1860 caricatured writing occupied a crucial role in racialist thought. A notable philosopher of the time, David Hume, wrote in 1771 in Gentleman’s Magazine, an influential periodical of the day, that “the Negroes were naturally inferior to Whites”, and in 1788 within the same publication, the Negro [sic] was cast once again as peculiarly sexual, musical, stupid, indolent, untrustworthy,

and violent (Walvin, 1982). The individual characterisation of African slaves from the experiences of West Indian planters formulated characteristics as universal qualities that were possessed by all blacks wherever they might be, and this served to justify and defend the slave trade further amongst the masses of the era.

In addition to the characterisation of Africans in this way, their 'traders' viewed their customs and practices as uncivilised, particularly in relation to their lack of religion. By debasing and reinforcing the inferiority of black Africans through the interpretations of biblical texts, philosopher Charles de Montesquieu suggested that one could not imagine that God, who is a very wise being, would have placed a soul, especially a good soul, in a body entirely black (Samson, 2005). According to Jordan (1982) it was important for the English Christians in west Africa to differentiate between and convert the heathens and bring them into the Christian fold. It was the instrument of religious cleansing that would support the machine of slavery throughout this period and once again provide justification for the enslavement of black African peoples during this time. The slave trade was eventually abolished through an Act of Parliament in 1807, however slavery would persist in the colonies until 1838 although abolitionists continued to campaign internationally beyond this date.

History has shown that the process of racialising the human species has been weaponised to assert power over and control populations around the world for the benefit of white European interests. It is then not surprising that the social construction of race during these tumultuous times has become debated in modern times and across multiple scientific fields and the next section will explore this evolution of modified thought further.

2.3 Ethnicity as the new race

Race as a term has been tarnished through time by negative stereotyping, scientific racism, and in more modern times, the Holocaust. One U.S. study (Littlefield et al, 1982) drew attention to the contradictions amongst anthropologists in their acceptance of the concept of race, showing during the period 1932-1979 a great shift had occurred in the textbook use of the term race, from the position that races exist to a position where they do not. During the period analysed, it was clear that major historical events had occurred, such as World War II, proceeded by a significant shift in social attitudes around race, which was achieved through the US Civil Rights movement. The anthropological shift commenced following challenges

from English anthropologists, such as Hogben and Huxley, as early as the 1930s but were ignored or even ridiculed by American anthropologists until the 1960s (Littlefield et al, 1982). A similar move occurred in the field of psychology, by firstly rejecting the theoretical or scientific meaning of race, followed by critiquing racial categorisation within the science by offering an alternative, e.g., the term ethnicity (Helms et al, 2005).

To challenge the status quo and further the gains made during the U.S. Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, writers began to critique American systems with a view that race should be central to legal, educational, or social policy analysis (Cole, 2009), resulting in Critical Race Theory (CRT). CRT is a concept that is relatively new to the UK and is thought to derive from two major sources; Frantz Fanon, a French West Indian psychiatrist and political philosopher, and William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, an American sociologist, historian, and civil rights activist, and emerged from Critical Legal Studies in the 1970s. The influence of colour and diversity of perspectives from social narrators of the time around race created a space to critically debate and challenge the status quo. As such, the two major tenets of CRT are the concept of 'white supremacy' to describe the oppression based on race rather than the notion of racism; and the second is the belief in race, not social class, as the primary contradiction in society (Cole, 2009). Cole (2009) expands on this second point by articulating that white supremacy must be overthrown to establish a social democracy, however, given the advantages to capitalism of racialised capitalism, then capitalism without racism is inconceivable. It could be argued that white supremacy is not the issue, but racialised capitalism, which was fashioned by white Europeans in the formation of empires.

CRT has allowed writers to express a critical analysis of the issues that revolve around race in theoretical terms as well as in practice. CRT themes include critiques of liberalism as a means of addressing the race problem; storytelling as a means of challenging power-laden beliefs; querying where anti-discrimination legislation has failed to redress racial inequalities, etc. There is an immense body of work in this area in the U.S. however, as Cole (2009) commented, the first ever international CRT seminar took place in the UK in 2006, and there has been a growing body of work in this field in the UK since this point. Similarly, there is growing debate in the UK on the Critical Philosophy of Race (CPR), challenging the history of racial injustice and its philosophical underpinnings. Singh (2014) argues that philosophers such as Kant and Hegel, helped shape the Eurocentric view that philosophy was exclusive to the West from the

late 18th to 19th centuries. This influenced the confinement of Africa and Asia to the margins. Kant has been credited for being the first philosopher to theorise race in a substantially influential way that justified scientific debate at the time (Bernasconi, 2001; Sandford, 2018). Stone (2017) interprets Hegel's Philosophy of World History in a way that suggests that freedom can only be recognised and practiced in classical, Christian, and modern Europe, meaning that for others, freedom can only be acquired if Europeans impose their civilisations upon them.

Ethnicity, as an alternative term, has to some degree replaced race as a more acceptable term in modern times to encapsulate more than just the physical traits assumed under race, e.g., skin colour. Max Weber, the German sociologist and philosopher, provided some initial consideration on status groups circa 1911 and argued that race creates a group only when it is subjectively perceived as a common trait, especially where there would be a consequence of collective political action. According to Jenkins (1997), Weber suggested that ethnic membership did not constitute a group, it only facilitates group formation. Group membership and subjective identification is explored further by Modood et al (2002) concerning the assumption that ethnic minority groups are shaped by racism or by attitudes, behaviours, and structures of dominant groups as well as by their own heritage, collective action, and reaction to exclusion. This is a valuable perspective that suggests that if it were not for the construction of race, peoples of the world may not have been divided in the way that they are.

Expanding this further, Coates (2015) wrote that race is the child of racism, not the father. In some way this notion supports the idea that oppressed racialised affinity groups have been marked out from, or by, their oppressors (whites), who are less often inclined to recognise their own ethnic identity, and even less likely to relate to an affinity group based on this. There may be exceptions to this if a white ethnic group is marginalised, e.g., eastern Europeans, gypsies, Irish Travellers, etc. Here race can be interpreted as that which is not white, as Coates (2015) suggests that whites do not assign an ethnicity to themselves and herein lies one of the problems associated with the notion of race. It has, and continues to, shape the way this concept is understood by people of white ethnic background. Despite race applying equally to all people, the term is associated with those of non-white background, and as a result it disproportionately impacts racially minoritised people.

In the late 1990s, ‘ethnicity’ as a more inclusive term, would capture the diversity of difference, remove stereotypes, and at face value remove the historical biological classifications of those subjects (Modood et al, 1997). Yet would attract criticism from Smith (2002) who argued that ethnicity is equally exclusive in its social interpretation, particularly as Modood, et al (1997) suggested that physical appearance should be considered when identifying ethnic groups, which Smith (2002) believed would be racist. Despite these debates, in practice the UK and its public sector organisations consistently use systems of classification via population (UK census) and workforce monitoring that continues to use the same racial categories. Whether human subjects are referred to in relation to their race or ethnicity, Blum (2002) maintains that inequalities based on either of these descriptors continue to exist.

This section has explored the evolution in terminology from race towards ethnicity and how this has been influenced by historical events and social and academic reflection that has informed shifting attitudes. These changes have continued to inform the notion of race and how this has descended from racism, rather than racism existing as a product of racial categorisation. The complexities surrounding the historical context influence how society tackles racial inequalities and this in turn informs the language used to describe a person’s background and the following section will explore the topic of race talk further.

2.4 Race talk – the language of race and ethnicity

Academic literature suggests that the terms race and ethnicity are problematic and exclusive (Modood et al, 1997; Smith, 2002) and in considering this, the terminology used might affect institutional capability to address matters of race or ethnicity within a workplace setting, and ultimately, affect an institution's ability to advance race equality. Racially minoritised individuals within the UK higher education system may be affected by their own understanding of these terms, which may impact their own sense of identity within their institution. Moreover, this sense of belonging may be further impacted by the institution's understanding, commitment, and investment towards minority ethnic staff in dealing with matters of race. Institutional commitment to and progress with race equality will be discussed in Chapter Five and language and terminology will be explored further in Chapter Seven when perceptions of racism will be considered.

In practice it has become acceptable and mainstream to use race and ethnicity interchangeably without entering into discussion about their histories, their evolution, or their difference. Some academic debates conclude that the concepts of race and of ethnicity are problematic because of their social construction (Cole, 2009; Modood et al, 2002; Smith, 2002). Despite an overall acceptance of these conclusions, the problem does not necessarily lie in their construction, but about the way the terms are used in practice. These differences will include the way an individual sees themselves within a particular ethnic group, how they compare themselves to others within that ethnic group and may be influenced by geography, upbringing, or nationality. This can become more complex according to how an individual defines themselves if they identify with multiple ethnic groups. Hirsch (2018), who identifies as mixed race, discusses how identity can become meaningless if that identity belongs to the dominant group. This perspective resonates to some extent with the work of DiAngelo (2018) and Eddo-Lodge (2018) who both comment on the lack of racial socialisation for people who identify as white. Therefore, a lack of lived experience, appreciation for, or emotional disconnect as Eddo-Lodge (2018) suggests is demonstrated by white people around the subject of race. Hirsch's (2018) reference to meaningless can therefore be interpreted as the denial, defensiveness and lack of empathy felt by some white people towards the experiences of people of colour. The challenges apparent with identity and acknowledging the socio-

political pressures surrounding this topic create difficulties for organisations who may lack confidence with dealing with a diverse workforce and creating spaces within institutions to talk about race.

For many individuals and organisations, it has been difficult to initiate conversations relating to race due to the history, emotion and defensiveness attached to the subject matter (Eddo-Lodge, 2018; DiAngelo, 2018). It is not even the discussion *about* race and ethnicity but the perceptible lack of engagement by those in dominant ethnic groups who may grapple with unfamiliar concepts. White people frequently may not possess the vocabulary to make expressions about race, which may be as a consequence of the lack of racial socialisation. DiAngelo (2018) asserts that white people have not been conditioned to think of themselves as racial beings, and it is perhaps because of this, that conversations about this subject are such difficult ones, particularly where dominant groups participate in those conversations. Eddo-Lodge (2018) suggests that white children are taught not to see race, whereas children of colour are often taught that they must work twice as hard as white counterparts if they are to succeed.

As a society we have maintained a discursive fear around race, which Crawley's (2007) point surrounding the lack of racial socialisation for the dominant ethnic group demonstrates has become further repressed over time by the silencing of any articulations on race and ethnic minority people. DiAngelo (2018) asserts that silencing discussions around race has created an anxiety among white people within a racial discourse, where dialogues voicing experiences of racism raise anxiety levels even further. Drawing attention towards negative experiences, perceptions and opinions will act as a catalyst for fear, denial, and trepidation (DiAngelo, 2018; Eddo-Lodge, 2018; Bhopal, 2018). The subject of race is emotive and may affect the way in which different ethnic communities can share different perspectives. Feelings of guilt, shame and ignorance might prevail and cause an incendiary outcome that can cause conversations to prematurely break down and anxieties to heighten (Lingayah et al, 2018; Campbell, 2016). These anxieties might manifest themselves through defensiveness, discomfort, or trigger perceptions that privileges of the dominant racial group might be limited or removed altogether if racial inequalities were to be eradicated (DiAngelo, 2018).

Discussions around terminology are not limited to the higher education sector and this has become a subject of increasing public debate since this research study began, with an article

proposing that BAME, an acronym used to describe black, Asian and minority ethnic people, should be discarded (Sandhu, 2018). A more recent article discussed racial terminology in the Civil Service and the 'dithering', observed by the authors, of people attempting to find the appropriate and correct terms to describe groups according to race (Saeed, et al, 2019). These articles highlight that there remain mixed feelings about racialised terms across diverse communities and across a variety of sectors. The act of accepting and utilising acronyms by racially marginalised people to describe themselves and others of minority ethnic background as a homogenous group is a production and reproduction by agents of colour and enables others not directly affected to perpetuate its use. Similarly, minority ethnic people may be constrained to cease using acronyms in future (Giddens, 1984) because it has become normalised within their workplace setting.

A layperson's understanding of racialised terminology can be explained to some extent by the legislative context that has informed our thinking as a society in terms of 'race relations', which can create the perception that there is a problem between people because of race. In turn those statutory limitations have influenced and driven organisational practitioners in the fields of equality and diversity and human resources managers to engage with race as a protected characteristic (Equality Act 2010). Consequently, the use of the term race can be justified from a practitioner perspective, and this has become normalised through practice. Within a higher education context, there can be greater understanding and appreciation of race and ethnicity, particularly for those who hold an academic interest in these subjects, however policy development and implementation within institutions sits generally within the corporate centre, and therefore may not be directly informed by research in this area.

This section has explored how the terminology used to talk about race can unintentionally marginalise people of colour. Racialised language and terminology is bound to have an impact on the way that people of colour see themselves and how they navigate white hegemonic workplace settings. To explore this further, the subsequent section will consider how identity and belonging are key features of this topic that provide context to the research objectives and how they may play a part in the outcomes for individuals in the workplace, specifically in relation to objective two concerning staff perceptions of the manifestation of racism and objective three in determining the impact of racial inequalities on black staff.

2.5 Racialised identity and the impact on belonging

The dictionary defines 'identity' as 'the who or what a person or thing is; a distinct impression of a single person or thing presented to or perceived by others; a set of characteristics or a description that distinguishes a person or thing from others' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2021). These definitions provide a simplistic view on an aspect of ourselves that plays a critical part in the way we see ourselves, how we present ourselves, the experiences we have as a consequence of it, and the impact it can have on our outcomes.

The way we internalise our own identity and those around us can be affected by the way we have been racially socialised. People of all ethnic backgrounds will racially socialise their children and Steinbugler (2015) suggests that children are not born with an innate interpretation or valuation of blackness or black culture and therefore black parents will emphasise facets of black culture and socialise their children to race, including raising awareness of societal racial discrimination (Shelton, 2008; Steinbugler, 2015). Steinbugler's (2015) US research discusses black identities for those who are in interracial relationships and the accounts given in this study highlight the intersections of multiple aspects of identity with ethnicity, such as gender, sexual orientation or class and the way that the participants navigate their own ethnic identity. Accounts provided insight into the challenges faced by black Americans and their relationships with white people, how their black authenticity might be questioned and the confusion about one's own sense of self where one was socialised within a predominantly white-dominated neighbourhood, education and the choices being made of whom to socialise with. This resonates with what Frantz Fanon, a West Indian psychoanalyst and social philosopher, described that the black man has two dimensions; one with his fellows and the other with the white man, explaining that a Negro [sic] behaves differently with a white man than he would with another Negro [sic] (Fanon, 1967). The importance of intersectionality cannot be ignored in terms of the experiences and outcomes for people of colour in combination with other characteristics, such as gender, age, sexual orientation, etc (Crenshaw, 1989).

Mapedzaham and Kwansah-Aidoo (2017) assert that the black body in the white space has always been constructed as a problematic difference to whiteness, and one which is inferior and othered. Blackness is therefore not merely a skin colour, but rather a social construct that

is consistently perceived in opposition to whiteness. Solanke's (2018) article raises the continued stigmatisation of black identity. Attributing this to the hypervisibility for example of young black men in the criminal justice system and the hyper*in*visibility for example of black women in public life, such as the senior ranks of academia as well as the displacement of identity politics by the politics of identity. Solanke (2018) also states that the rejection of 'black' in favour of BME and BAME contributes to the ongoing stigmatisation of black people, where this stigmatisation is the precursor for the perpetuation of discrimination. The level of stigmatisation may be different for persons that have mixed ethnic heritage and Hirsch (2018) described that as social creatures, part of knowing oneself is knowing what group we belong to and that this includes not just characteristics, but also values and beliefs that we can share. This is the same for any group, however she goes on to say that it is not the muddled inheritance of a mixed-heritage person that is the problem, but the way in which people deal with multiple ethnic identities and create difficulties around identity.

The values and beliefs that Hirsch (2018) describes will also invariably involve a person's class identity, which can change over the course of a person's lifetime but can impact upon the resources made available to individuals. Class is an economic, social and cultural construct and the class position of black people will have been impacted by the limited economic opportunities made available so that their social mobility is constricted within the class structure (Moore, 2005). Moore's (2005) study focused on the importance of class and racial identities and explored the symbolic meaning of class and the nature of inter-class relations relating to urban community development activities within the black community in Philadelphia. The findings from this research identified an unacknowledged class bias among residents and particularly through tensions between middle class and residents of lower socio-economic backgrounds who did not share their cultural orientation, with one participant commenting on the vulnerability experienced by middle class residents with neighbours with a 'ghetto' orientation. The discussion continues to highlight the potential for secondary marginalisation where black individuals who experience upward social mobility can access some of the social institutions of power and are given the responsibility by both blacks and whites of servicing, regulating and representing the race. Blacks in these positions of limited power are expected to embrace the norms and values of the dominant society. This process

of regulating stigmatised individuals by members of their own racial group results in secondary marginalisation (Moore, 2005).

Belonging is a core psychological need, which forms one of the levels within Maslow's (1943) motivational theory, that is most well known as five hierarchical elements of a pyramid that includes at its base physiological needs, such as food, water, warmth. This is followed by safety, love and belonging, esteem (prestige and feelings of accomplishment) and capped by self-actualisation (achieving one's full potential). If any of these levels are left unsatisfied, an individual will not be able to reach self-fulfilment. Baumeister and Leary (1995) state that being socially accepted is a basic need for all individuals and the literature suggests that the need to develop and maintain meaningful interpersonal relationships, as well as experiencing a sense of belonging in the workplace, is vitally important (Baumeister and Leary, 1995; Mohamed et al, 2014). As important as forming and maintaining relationships is the reluctance to break social bonds and individuals are often motivated to preserve these bonds, sometimes resulting in significant personal sacrifice. Participant commentary included in Steinbugler's (2015) study touched upon the difficulties that black people experience within institutional settings when having to specifically decide who to socialise with and the backlash of socialising between competing groups, e.g., white and black, heterosexual and gay, etc.

From a workplace perspective, institutions like most large and complex organisations are driven by the need to diversify their workforce. Diversity in the workplace has a multitude of benefits and can lead to high quality group outcomes because of the broader knowledge, skills, and attributes that different individuals can bring to a group (Cox et al, 1991; McLeod et al, 1996). Although there are tangible benefits these mixed working groups can bring to an organisation and their teams as groups, there can be detrimental impacts on group individuals, particularly where individuals are dissimilar to the dominant cohort within a group. These effects can impact the level of satisfaction and commitment to the group and these outcomes were confirmed in a study (Kim et al, 2017), which found that ethnic dissimilarity can frustrate belonging and consequently, reduce group members' attachment, as well as increase levels of absenteeism and turnover.

When workers are the demographic minority, they are more likely to be seen as different, which may result in increased stereotyping, biased job performance evaluations (Wilson, 2010), and exclusion from informal workplace relations (Kanter, 1993; Ibarra, 1993, 1995).

Kanter (1993) described token subjects as experiencing feelings of isolation and ostracism and identified that token subjects are likely to encounter increased visibility; boundary heightening; and stereotyped portrayals (Kanter, 1993; Smith, 2013). Their increased visibility in the workplace can further produce anxiety regarding expectations and work performance. Those who are scarce within the workforce are more likely to attract attention (hypervisibility), stand out in a group setting and may be evaluated more critically (Wilson and Jones, 2008; Solanke, 2018). This may be amplified somewhat if an individual was born outside of the UK and being marked out through one's ethnic identity may increase feelings of isolation further. Hirsch (2018) discusses identity and recounts how meaningless the term 'black' became in a country like Nigeria which is dominated by black people.

Furthermore, individuals can experience psychological distress due to social identity threat. Social identity threat is the state of psychological discomfort when confronted by an unflattering group or individual reputation (Nelson, 2009), such as might occur if an individual is being stereotyped. A stereotype is a preconceived and oversimplified idea about a person or group (Oxford English Dictionary, 2021) where this idea is used to make assumptions. This threat can become particularly heightened where that reputation can be confirmed, through an onlooker's own confirmatory bias towards that person or not, or by one's behaviour – adding a significant emotional burden if the individual is being judged by their peers, particularly in a professional setting. An example might include a black woman challenging a decision and is therefore assumed to be stereotypically 'angry'. The impact of social identity threat can include disruptive effects on performance in the short-term, e.g., interview, examination, etc. Over time, social identity threat can prompt defensive behaviours in individuals, such as disengaging from activities or teams and can result in a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby the person begins to resemble the stereotype; therefore, living down to the expectations of others (Nelson, 2009).

While an individual might readily accept or acknowledge that they have experienced negative or unequal treatment, Pearce (2019) indicates that people are often reluctant to attribute this to racism. Ahmed (2012) suggests that a claim of racism is an institutional injury, an injury to whiteness. It can be argued that a reluctance to name racism is a way of protecting whiteness. According to Pearce (2019), people of colour often make strategic decisions not to use the language of racism, particularly if that individual already poses a problem or appears 'out of

place' in the whiteness of the institution, as to do so would further affect a person's sense of belonging within the workplace.

Chen and Hamilton (2015) argued that a reduced sense of belonging might be as a result of the subtle cues that occur within the academic work setting, which can lead to under-represented minorities questioning their sense of belonging within these domains. In these environments minority ethnic staff might become stigmatised by dominant group members and as a result experience social isolation and exclusion in formal and informal groups and networks. A person that does not feel like they belong in the workplace might employ coping strategies to address the social isolation and marginalisation they may experience (Stainback and Irvin, 2012).

This section has explored the complexities of racial identity, the positive *and* negative connotations of blackness and racial socialisation and how this may differ dependent on whether a person's socialisation has involved an emphasis on positive black cultural affirmation and the types of inter-racial relationships experienced during formative years and throughout adulthood. Identities are also impacted by social status, which may bring about conflict or bias towards others within diverse socio-economic groups, potentially affecting the way society views black communities, as well as the way that black people view themselves. This is further complicated if a person straddles multiple ethnic identities and the challenges faced in navigating from within and beyond those identities. The way individuals internalise their sense of self and how they are positioned within wider society can impact upon their sense of belonging and this will be explored further in Chapter Six.

The following section will explore how race has been politicised in modern UK society and the impact this has had on policy development and the way organisations have been enabled or constrained to deal with matters of race.

2.6 Politicising race in modern UK society

A modern political perspective around the concept of race, including the rejection of scientific racism began in 1933 with calls to rebuke 'Aryan science', however few scientists would still do so explicitly and publicly (Barkan, 1992). In the years following World War II UNESCO sponsored a large international project to disprove and discredit claims of racial science that had brought about the atrocities of the time, culminating in the *Statements on Race* from 1950 to 1967, (UNESCO, 1969).

The 20th century brought about a renewed racial politicisation through UK Government policy on immigration (Mason, 2000). Immigration can bring not just new groups of people, but immense social impact, and raises the potential for social unrest. The early part of 20th century saw new migrants being invited to the country to aid Britain's war effort during World War I. Resources were scarce and for the first time there were higher concentrations of black, Asian and Chinese communities. Tensions rose amongst white working-class communities due to post-war unemployment, the informal and formal national and governmental narratives about visible racial minorities, a heightened visibility of black workers, and housing shortages, especially in the port cities (Fryer, 1984). The first significant race riots exploded across London, Liverpool, parts of the north-east and south Wales in 1919. Here, the intersection between race and class was apparent. Added to the insecurity of limited resources were the interracial relations between non-white men and white women, which caused further strain on community relations. Not only were non-whites taking the jobs of the indigenous population, but their women too. In the aftermath the government repatriated hundreds of black people (National Archives, 2021).

Britain may have started to turn into a more multi-cultural society, but that was not reflected in Government policy. Gilroy (2008) revealed that at the suggestion of Churchill, a Conservative cabinet discussed using 'Keep Britain White' as an electoral campaign slogan as early as 1955. Despite there being great social change in 1950s Britain, there were significant undertones of race policy making following the post-war inflow from the colonies. A post-boom slump, poor housing conditions and discrimination in employment, developed into unrest once again culminating in the Notting Hill riots in London, in 1958. The racialisation of immigration was no new phenomena by the time of these riots as the Aliens Act 1905

introduced immigration controls with the main objective of controlling Jewish immigration from eastern Europe. This was followed by a rise of anti-Semitism against growing numbers of impoverished Jewish refugees arriving in London's East End. The Alien Act 1919 would form the basis of all future immigration legislation up to the introduction of the Immigration Act 1971 and would be renewed each year until then (Brown, 1995).

Despite the regular debates and updates to immigration law during the 20th century, whose restrictions would become more and more racially motivated, multiple employment initiatives that would fall outside of the legislative restrictions continued to address British labour shortages. Such an initiative was the arrival of the SS Empire Windrush with around 500 men from the West Indies to Tilbury docks on 22 June 1948. As a result of increasing immigrant numbers, racial tensions across post-war Britain would erupt. Ahead of the 1964 General Election, the Labour Party committed to legislate against racial discrimination and incitement in public places and give special help to local authorities in areas where immigrants had settled (Brown, 2018).

To tackle racial prejudice, the government needed to legislate, which it did through the Race Relations Act 1965. The legislation outlawed discrimination on the grounds of colour, race or ethnic or national origins in specified "places of public resort", such as hotels and restaurants. It did not make discrimination in employment or housing unlawful, nor did it include shops or private boarding houses. Mechanisms to monitor the progress of race-related matters were placed in the hands of Commissions with powers to act, e.g., the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) in 1967. On the day of the Act's implementation, the press reported that Labour backbenchers wanted the legislation to go further to penalise employers who discriminated against applicants on the grounds of race and local authorities which barred people renting council homes (BBC, 2018).

According to Cabinet Papers from 1967, the Labour Party proposed to further strengthen the Race Relations Act 1965 by making discrimination on racial grounds unlawful –

a) in respect of places and services open or available to the public at large
b) in employment or trade union activities, except domestic employment or employers with fewer than 10 employees
c) in the disposal of property

d) in the provision of insurance and credit facilities
e) in the form of discriminatory advertisements.

Following the racially motivated murder of Stephen Lawrence, the subsequent inquiry (Macpherson, 1999) resulted in further legislation through the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, which introduced statutory requirements for public sector organisations. This change would introduce a general duty to positively promote race equality and 'good relations' between people of different racial groups. Other duties included assessing the impact of policy and practice on ethnic minorities and taking remedial action where necessary; monitoring the workforce, recruitment, promotion and training, grievances, disciplinaries, dismissals and other reasons for leaving; having a publicly accessible policy on race equality; and publishing monitoring data annually. In addition to this, the then Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) were given powers to issue compliance notices to a public body that did not fulfil its duties. The CRE and other commissions covering gender and disability would be disbanded and merged into an all-encompassing commission, the Equality and Human Rights Commission in 2007.

In time and with a political shift to reduce bureaucracy and introduce a legal mechanism that would facilitate a consistent application of remedies to address discrimination, harassment and victimisation across employment and goods and services, the Equality Act 2010 came into force, incorporating all previous race relations legislation. In 2012, the Public Sector Equality Duty was enforced through regulation[2], obliging public authorities to have in place at least one equality objective every four years. This is of stark difference to the duties set out under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act a decade earlier.

Legislative change has facilitated to some degree social attitudes in the UK towards racialised others. As such, British social attitudes should have shifted in tandem. However, in a migration survey in 2017, 45 percent of respondents agreed that there were too many immigrants, compared with 64 percent agreeing with this statement just four years earlier. Interestingly, although British people reported attaching greater importance to skills rather than country of origin in the survey, 37 percent of Britons responded that no Nigerians should be allowed compared to 10 percent responding that no Australians should be allowed (Migration

[2] Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011

Observatory, 2020). Social attitudes have shifted since the 1950s however, social unrest e.g., Tottenham riots in 2011, the Syrian refugee crisis and sweeping right-wing political gains across the European Union may have influenced these results. The social climate and the race agenda has received further attention shadowing an increase in race-related hate crime and xenophobia following the UK referendum to exit the European Union in 2016 (Gabbatiss, 2017; Golec de Zavala et al, 2017; d'Ancona, 2018) and a recent social attitudes survey report confirmed that 26 per cent of people said they were 'very' or 'a little' prejudiced towards people of other races (Kelley, Khan and Sharrock, 2017).

This section has explored how Government policy has shifted social attitudes in ways that can advance race equality, as well as hinder it because of racial stereotyping and fearmongering. The following section will discuss how racial prejudice has transformed from traditional overt acts to becoming more obscure and insidious.

2.7 The hidden nature of contemporary racism

The way race has been politicised for decades in UK politics and wider society has had far-reaching consequences for the way individuals are able to deal with matters of race and racism. The evolutionary political landscape of race has impacted the language society uses and the attitudes social actors possess, making this a particularly complex matter within organisational environments where lived experiences of racism will be enacted by and through social actors.

In establishing the links between the historical and political development associated with the way race and ethnicity have evolved in the UK, there have been several references to racially motivated prejudice, and it is important to understand what is meant by the term prejudice before exploring the manifestations of it within a workplace setting. Prejudice might include a preconceived opinion that is not based on reason, actual experience or a dislike, hostility, or unjust behaviour deriving from preconceived and unfounded opinions. Allport (1954) suggested that a person's prejudice is unlikely to be merely a specific attitude toward a specific group: it is likely to reflect his [sic] whole habit of thinking about the world, assuming that in general a person's beliefs and attitudes are negative. While prejudice is formed through learnt stereotypes, racism is a manifestation of prejudice and is the differential treatment enacted by an individual, group or organisation on individuals based on assumptions about a group

(Gamst et al, 2011, p.251). According to DiAngelo (2018), we are all prejudiced and therefore, we are all capable of making assumptions about the people around us. The difference lies in having prejudicial beliefs or attitudes and the way we act upon them. These manifestations or enactments can occur at institutional (law, policy, practice), societal (hate crime) and individual (racial stereotyping, microaggressions) levels in overt (traditional) or covert (modern) ways.

Essed (1991) articulated that racial discrimination includes all acts – verbal, nonverbal, and paraverbal – with intended or unintended negative or unfavourable consequences for racially or ethnically dominated groups, providing the foundation that prejudice need not be intentional and includes a range of actors at multiple levels. According to van Dijk (2002), a system of racism consists of a social and cognitive subsystem, with the social subsystem constituted by social practices of discrimination at the micro level and relationships of power abuse by dominant groups and organisations at the macro level. People of colour may also hold racially prejudicial attitudes, views and even discriminate against other people of colour, however whites hold the social and institutional power that will continue to benefit whites and uphold racism as a society-wide dynamic (DiAngelo, 2018). Would racism exist without race? For Bonilla-Silva (2015) racism creates and maintains race. Racism is the product of racial domination projects, such as colonialism, slavery, and labour migration, which produces a network of social relations at social, political, economic, and ideological levels that shape the outcomes of various groups (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Races have been socially constructed, but they are socially real and impact upon the daily lives of many.

Colonialism, slavery, and labour migration provoke distinct reactions across the UK population. However, collective amnesia and skewed perceptions of these historical race projects means that because acts, overtly harming people of colour but which are not seen, might imply that racism no longer exists. Is the interpretation about the altered state of racism being confused with a post-racial epoch? If so, this presents a problematic discourse that disables the identification of modern racism. Bonilla-Silva (2015) suggests that new racism came into existence following the US Civil Rights movement and describes this as comprising the following factors:

1. Increasingly covert nature of racial discourse and practices
2. Avoidance of direct racial terminology

3. Elaboration of a racial political agenda that eschews direct racial references
4. Subtle character of most mechanisms to reproduce racial privilege
5. Rearticulation of some racial practices of the past.

Of course, overt acts of racism continue in the 21st century, albeit with less frequency and this is particularly the case in the workplace. Since the rise in populism across the United States and Europe in recent years, and domestically the UK 2016 referendum to leave the European Union, instances of anti-immigrant sentiment and racial and other hate crimes have risen sharply, where for instance 76 per cent of reported hate crimes in the UK were racially motivated (Weaver in The Guardian, 2018; Home Office, 2018). These increases in hate crime and negative attitudes toward people of colour and/or non-British people have in turn become stoked by hostile government policy in recent times and support the factors mentioned above of what may constitute contemporary racism. It is the evolution of modern racism that we must now become more aware of and find solutions to tackle in addition to becoming more assertive in addressing overt forms.

Whilst recent increases in overt racism have largely affected those seeking asylum in the UK or where religion was a factor (Home Office, 2018), scholars have suggested that overt expressions have been largely replaced by symbolic forms of racism (McConahay, 1986; Rowe, 1990; Henry and Sears, 2002; Sears and Henry, 2003; Noon, 2017), whilst others have argued that race inequality is less legitimate due to modern anti-discrimination laws and activism (Acker, 2006). Acker's (2006) point does resonate to some degree in terms of the sentiments of those who disagree in general with any forms of inequality. However, there is a chasm between cause and effect and although inequality in principle lacks legitimacy, neither law nor policy appears to effectively reduce the level of inequality of outcomes. To DiAngelo (2018) and Noon (2017) the persistent nature of racism is maintained by several aspects: colour-blind racism, where a person claims that because they do not see colour, there can be no racism; and aversive racism, which DiAngelo (2018) argues manifests itself in well-intentioned people who see themselves as educated and progressive. This is a subtle and insidious form of racism and one in which the perpetrator can hide behind a liberal, progressive façade and yet is most likely to remain unseen to others, including the target.

Scholars have provided commentary on colour blindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2002; Zamudio and Rios, 2006; Hirsch, 2018) and it is important to acknowledge the challenge for individuals and

organisations to address insidious forms of racism that can become embedded within and in the implementation of policies and practice so that race or ethnicity is now rendered invisible by this new racism. Noon (2017) suggests that symbolic, modern, or colour-blind racists are aware of their biases and do not conceal their views, since they are a socially accepted form of racism, albeit in a moderated form. Noon (2017) appears to propose that a moderated form of racism might also be accepted within organisations, particularly as our workplaces attitudinally reflect the society around us. This statement implies that our institutions could therefore be a hotbed of racist activity, particularly once organisations became more attuned to these microscopic and symbolic acts that occur in every day institutional life. Those organisations are composed of dominant and minority groups, resulting in a racism rooted in the material rewards of white privilege (Zamudio and Rios, 2006), and which motivates the persistence of racist attitudes at multiple levels, through action or inaction, and serves to reinforce colour blind racism.

At micro level, contemporary workplaces provide ample opportunity for subtle, sometimes unconscious manifestations of racial microaggressions and microinequities that include neglect, incivility, ostracism, and inequitable treatment (Fox and Stallworth, 2005). Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of colour (Sue et al, 2007). Equally, microinequities can be made up of apparently small events, which are often ephemeral and hard to prove; events that are covert, often unintentional, and frequently unrecognised by the perpetrator (Rowe, 1990). Webb et al (2004) suggest that these acts (being treated as inferior, denied resources, limited in their social mobility and aspirations) are not perceived as 'symbolic' forms of violence, rather their situation seems to be 'the natural order of things'. In contrast, Kandola (2018) articulates that the phrase 'microaggression' is too judgemental and accusatory, preferring the phrase 'micro-incivility', which describes more accurately the types of behaviours that people are more likely to acknowledge, accept and potentially modify. As a result, micro-incivilities are described as daily, commonplace behaviours or aspects of an environment which signal, wittingly or unwittingly, to members of out-groups that they do not belong or are not welcome (Kandola, 2018).

Other terms that describe witting or unwitting behaviours are microinvalidations and microinsults, which are other subtle forms of discrimination. Microinvalidations include behaviours that deny the importance of race, or which convey the myth of societal meritocracy. Microinsults are actions that convey insensitivity or rudeness, or directly demean a person's ethnic heritage, such as mistaking a person of colour for a cleaner for example. This latter point was featured in The Guardian headlining *'I've been mistaken for the coffee lady': experiences of black female academics to highlight the career trajectories of women of colour in UK academia* (Hall, 2017). Perpetrators of microaggressions are often unaware that they engage in such communications when they interact with racially minoritised people (Sue et al, 2007, 2008; Kandola, 2018).

Within the UK higher education sector differential outcomes have been discussed in this context for some time, predominantly in relation to the outcomes of racially minoritised students when compared to white students (Gillborn, 2008; Higher Education Academy, 2008; Higher Education Academy/Equality Challenge Unit, 2011). In relation to the outcomes of staff in higher education the attention has come later and with less emphasis than has been placed on the outcomes of the student population (Pilkington, 2011; Philips, 2012). Several studies have highlighted that racially minoritised staff in UK higher education are less likely to be recruited (Pilkington, 2011), experience disadvantage through a range of microaggressions and are more likely to be isolated, ignored, racially stereotyped and micro-managed (ECU, 2011; Rollock, 2011, 2019; Pilkington, 2013; EHRC, 2019; UCU, 2016, 2017). De Cuir-Gunby and Gunby (2016) state that it is anecdotally false that as people of colour attain greater social status, more education, and higher incomes the prevalence of racial microaggressions will decrease.

The EHRC's recent report (2019) into racial harassment in UK higher education found that more than half of staff respondents did not report racial harassment. The reasons provided by respondents included having no confidence that the institution would address the matter; staff did not know how to report; staff could not judge whether the complaint was serious enough; and a difficulty in proving what had happened. Others feared the consequences of reporting, such as a negative consequence to career prospects and being seen as a troublemaker. The findings from this report provide useful and relevant themes, which are explored further in Chapters Six and Seven of this dissertation.

Identifying and reporting acts of racism can be fraught with difficulty as contemporary race talk can be strategically organised to deny the existence of racism, and as such has created a post-racial society where making accusations of racism has become taboo (Augoustinos and Every, 2010) and which conceal and legitimise racism to protect white privilege (Harries, 2014). Augoustinos and Every (2010) continue to remark that to avoid identifying racism explicitly presents racism as highly unusual and exceptional. Harries' (2014) study showed that incidents of explicit racism were downplayed or denied by respondents themselves often in response to the potential of being labelled as a 'victim', but which also played part of a greater narrative around racial tolerance in the UK. Here we see the juxtaposition between societal denial of racism at a macro level and individuals who experience acts of racism on a micro level, despite those acts being traditional or overt.

This section has explored the contemporary nature of racism where the literature suggests that it has become much more difficult for those affected by it to articulate their lived experiences as they are small and commonplace and therefore difficult to prove if seeking an organisational remedy. The following section will continue to explore the broader meso and macro manifestation of racism within an organisational context.

2.8 Exploring institutional racism

This section will continue the exploration of racism to consider an aspect that has been little researched within a higher education context - institutional racism. The term is one that was coined in the mid-twentieth century and has been resurrected at key points in the UK's racial history, most recently at the turn of the 21st century following the death of Stephen Lawrence and the resulting inquiry into the Metropolitan Police Service (Macpherson, 1999). The concept of institutional racism provides a perspective that focuses on the way that organisations, through their systems, processes and policies might have a detrimental impact upon minority ethnic people and who can be members of the workforce, customers, clients, or service users. It is important to reflect on the role organisations can play in extending the reach of individuals *through* the organisation, rather than solely *in* an organisation. In other words, that the organisation is the vehicle within which symbolically it can cause harm to ethnic minority people through its acts or omissions and that as a collective of individuals this may go largely unnoticed.

The phrase institutional racism has been in use since the 1960s principally in the United States and used to describe how white interests and attitudes saturated the key institutions in American life of the time (Gillborn, 2002). Black activists, Stokely Carmichael and Charles V Hamilton, (1967) stated that institutional racism *"originates in the operation of established and respected forces in the society. It relies on the active and pervasive operation of anti-black attitudes and practices. A sense of superior group position prevails; whites are 'better' than blacks and therefore blacks should be subordinated to whites. This is a racist attitude and it permeates society on both the individual and institutional level, covertly or overtly"* (in Macpherson, 1999:23).

The language used by Carmichael and Hamilton in relation to 'established' and 'respected' forces can be interpreted as pertaining to institutions, such as those within the higher education sector. Higher education itself was established in the Middle Ages in Britain and made available by and for persons of privileged background (Gillard, 2011). These early institutions with canonical roots, followed by other modern secular universities have retained an air of privilege despite the modernisation of higher education. Institutions in the context of this discussion are organisations founded for the provision of higher education. These organisations are governed by a Board or Senate with the overall operational management of an institution being held by a Vice Chancellor or equivalent, supported by a senior management team. The management structure is supported by academic and professional and support staff at various levels in the delivery of higher education provision or related services. These institutions are constituted of numerous individuals, and as such, collectively represent a microcosm of society, although the extent to which an institution wholly reflects the society around it is debatable and may indicate certain local preferences in populating those workplaces (see Chapter Five).

From the above articulation, one can envisage the potential for negative racial attitudes at an individual level within an organisation if those attitudes exist within sections of the society, however the references of racism at an institutional level have caused much debate. The notion of institutional racism in Britain was addressed in the 'Scarman Report' (1981) following the Brixton Riots of the same year. In his report, Lord Scarman rejected claims of institutional racism by stating:

It was alleged by some of those who made representations to me that Britain is an institutionally racist society. If by that it is meant that it is a society that knowingly, as a matter of policy, discriminates against black people, I reject the allegation. If, however, the suggestion being made is that practices may be adopted by public bodies as well as by private individuals which are unwittingly discriminatory against black people, then this is an allegation which deserves serious consideration, and where proved, swift remedy.

(Scarman, 1981:11)

Deconstructing Carmichael and Hamilton's (1967) notion of institutional racism and Scarman's (1981) statement that discriminatory practices might be 'unwitting', there is in both an implied acknowledgement that these discriminatory practices can occur on an individual *and* institutional level. The word 'unwitting' in Scarman's statement is later revived through the inquiry launched into the Metropolitan Police Service following the racially motivated murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993, and following consideration about the way the case had been handled presented institutional racism as:

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.

(Macpherson, 1999:28)

Gillborn (2008) highlights that in this contemporary definition there are two important features condemning the actions of individuals through conduct, attitudes and behaviours, as well as organisations whose processes disadvantage certain groups of people. By doing so, the inquiry moved away from the assertion that racism is limited to a few 'rotten apples' within an organisation and focuses on the outcomes of actions, by identifying 'unwitting' or 'thoughtless' acts that are as equally problematic as overt acts of racism. Furthermore, Ahmed (2012) made a valid point that solely blaming individuals underestimates the scope and scale of racism, leaving us without an account of how racism is reproduced. Individual negative attitudes and behaviours can be easily assimilated over time into practice, whether their

origins were unwitting or not and whether the reproduction of those attitudes and behaviours happen consciously. In defining institutional racism, these unwitting acts with adverse outcomes reinforces Pilkington's (2011) view that a racist discourse embeds itself within institutional processes. The disparities highlighted by studies within UK higher education and the suggestion that institutional racism exists in our universities (ECU, 2011) cannot be ignored further.

The Macpherson report (1999) continued to define unwitting racism as arising from a lack of understanding, ignorance, or mistaken beliefs together with well-intentioned but patronising words or actions. It can also arise from racist stereotyping of black people as potential troublemakers. Furthermore, such attitudes can thrive in a tightly knit community, so that there can be a collective failure to detect and outlaw this class of racism (Macpherson, 1999). These types of actions are also referred to as racial microaggressions (Rowe, 1990), and were explored earlier in this chapter.

Wight (2003) explains that institutional racism is nothing other than a combination of overt and unwitting racism – both of which are firmly based at individual level. Yet if we are to consider how racism is reproduced as Ahmed (2012) suggested then it will be necessary to move beyond addressing individual manifestations of overt or subtle acts of racism, particularly where those acts have become normalised in an organisational setting, creating the notion of collective acts of racism. It may be that this inconsistency creates a challenge for organisations to deal with institutional racism. Is institutional racism an outcome or a cause of racial prejudice, or both? The conceptual and practical understanding of institutional racism (Pilkington, 2011; Souhami, 2014) shows that organisations have found it difficult to deal with the issue and challenging to interpret and operationalise the definition in organisational practice.

The Macpherson report (1999) asserted that it was not the policies of the Metropolitan Police Service that were racist, but that it was the implementation of policies and in the words and actions of officers acting together that racism became apparent. Contextualising this within higher education, Pilkington (2011) remarked in his case study of a university that the development of a policy and action plan was solely viewed as a compliance exercise. As such, there was reluctance to accept specific race-related policy and initiatives from above and below, manifesting itself in staff as well as members of the governing body perceiving the

exercise as political correctness gone mad. Writing about reform in the police service, Souhami (2014) commented that there has been little sign of new development in tackling institutional racism in the context of police reform at either conceptual or practical levels and attributed this to a lack of understanding of how it might work as a conceptual instrument for change. The inability to operationalise institutional racism within organisations might be due to the terminology used, which Solomos (1999) suggests is essential in contextualising racist discourse and practice within distinct settings and how they shape the development of racial ideas and political actions. The difficulty, as Solomos (1999) identified, was that there were no clearly defined actions within the description of institutional racism in the Macpherson (1999) report.

Wight (2003) argued that institutional racism is linked to intentionality and is an agential characteristic not a structural one and this view is contrary to Gillborn's (2008) observation that Macpherson's notion of institutional racism is devoid of intentionality. These arguments appear to be circular considering that racial prejudice or discrimination need not be intentional and can be overt or symbolic in nature (McConahay, 1986; Rowe, 1990; Essed, 1991; Henry and Sears, 2002; Sears and Henry, 2003; Noon, 2017) and be perpetrated at multiple levels (van Dijk, 2002). According to EHRC's (2019) report some behaviours, such as those described by participants in this study (explored further in Chapters Six and Seven of this dissertation), together with the responses given as part of the inquiry into racial harassment in UK higher education, might constitute direct discrimination where a person has been treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic[3] and is unlawful whether it was perpetrated consciously or not and regardless of motive or intention (EHRC, 2019).

Both Gillborn's (2008) and Wight's (2003) views are compelling, however their focus is centred around intentionality albeit from opposing sides. Despite this polarity, the notion of institution is critical to ensure that organisations can understand how, as an entity, it can affect the outcomes of the workforce by the way it constructs and implements its policies, services and practices. Institutional racism is that which, covertly or overtly, resides in the policies, procedures, operations, and culture of public or private institutions – producing certain kinds of practice and at the same time being dependent upon such practice. (Wight, 2003).

[3] As defined in section 13 of the Equality Act 2010

There has been limited research on the macro-level racism within the context of UK higher education. However, a 2011 report by the Equality Challenge Unit (now Advance HE) suggested that institutional racism existed in UK higher education and cited other studies (Carter, Fenton and Modood, 1999; Blackaby and Frank 2000; Law, Phillips and Turney, 2004; Jones, 2006) that supported this statement. The matter was not advanced further throughout the report findings, nor did it offer specific recommendations to the higher education sector on how to deal with the issue of institutional racism. More recently Sian (2019) stated in an article discussing the extent of institutional racism in British universities that racism was endemic in UK higher education and named five myths about 'liberal' universities that supported this assertion as:

Myth 1: Universities encourage inclusivity and diversity

Myth 2: Universities invest in non-white academics

Myth 3: Universities are post-racial

Myth 4: Universities desire curriculum reform

Myth 5: Universities are committed to race equality

The approach taken by Sian (2019) provides the broader context of institutional racism by exposing the issues that lay beneath the continuing racial inequalities in the UK higher education sector. She suggests that since institutions are resistant to address these five areas this confirms that UK institutions are institutionally racist and sector statistics (Chapter Five), and previous academic literature (see Chapter Two) supports this. Ahmed (2012) also asserts that institutional racism has already been identified within higher education, and even if it did exist, the sector would not use the term to describe its existence because of its implied injury to the institution, and therefore an injury to whiteness. Recently, the chair of UUK publicly acknowledged that UK universities are institutionally racist, yet despite these narratives, the recent report from CRED (2021) claimed it 'found no evidence' of institutional racism in the UK. The Commission argues that use of the term institutional racism should only be applied when deep-seated racism can be proven on a systemic level and not be used as a general catch-all for any microaggression, witting or unwitting (CRED, 2021). The report suggests that to limit the widening charge of racism, and therefore the dilution of its importance, that

assessing the intent of the perpetrator as well as the perception of the victim would be required. A perspective that contradicts Gillborn (2008) and the importance of effect rather than intentionality. The Commission also calls for further clarity and standard definitions for institutional racism, structural racism, and systemic racism.

This section has explored the notion of institutional racism and the complexities associated with the organisational responsibilities required to tackle it. The literature debating the definition as posed by Macpherson (1999) is important since it provides insight into how this can be used to inform how organisations tackle it. However, further research in this area is required to understand the extent to which the UK higher education sector is engaging with this topic from an organisational perspective.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the construction and evolution of race, which has informed science, legislation, and government policy particularly during the post-war period in the UK. Societal attitudes towards race have been influenced by history. Whilst transformation has been evident over the past sixty years, notions of kinship and national identity have played a significant role in the pace of change to address race relations in the UK and has to some extent informed public policy decisions relating to immigration. The UK's exit from the European Union has contributed to further perpetuate nationalist and xenophobic sentiment that has degenerated the progress made.

History has played a significant part in perpetuating an understanding amongst the general population that people are from different races. These models of difference have been further developed through the racial anthropology of the late 19th century, and in later centuries this has been further supported by racialised terminology, which has become preserved by the legal framework and sets the parameters upon which anti-racists have campaigned and within which equality and diversity practitioners work.

There is a clear timeline in terms of economic, social, religious, political and scientific agendas that have all contributed to the development of and the continuation of the notion of race. Economic and political power has been the driving force in establishing oppressive regimes that have used race as the central defining feature to control populations for the creation of

wealth and enable slavery to continue for a protracted period. These regimes have been eroded by social, moral, and ethical pressure that would change social attitudes. However, the impact on society's perception of a racial hierarchy, which was created and supported during these tumultuous times, has had a significant and long-lasting effect which continues to be reproduced across different societies in modern times.

The UK legislative framework has contributed to the continuing legitimisation of race as a term, despite race as a concept no longer being scientifically valid. Theoretically, academics can continue to debate the meaning of race, yet this has not made an impact at grass roots level in the search for the eradication of race discrimination nor racial prejudice. It seems unlikely that this will change soon as remedies for race discrimination are well established within the court and employment tribunal systems in the UK. With a political and industrial drive for 'diversity' and the value of diverse perspectives in a growing global economy, it is more likely to underpin the trend of continuing to capture and manipulate information based on well-established ethnic categories, such as those collected via the UK Census (Aspinall, 2009). One could argue that politics in relation to race has existed from the moment dominant groups oppressed other groups for gain and how this system of oppression formed the racial categorisation we are used to today. The racial hierarchy that measures all other persons against white Europeans has served to preserve white privilege and white supremacy, and this is evident in published literature and higher education workforce data.

Although social attitudes have evolved, contemporary UK society continues to carry racial prejudice because it has remained unchecked and unchallenged. In trying to understand and define the nature of racial prejudice the chapter has explored how the politics of race has manifested itself within political agendas and law-setting and how it has evolved from acts that are traditionally overt to acts that are modern, liberal, and symbolic. Whilst capitalism, and increasing nationalist agenda, white privilege, class structures and racialised oppression continues, it may not be possible for the foreseeable future to move away from evaluating racialised inequalities using existing systems and by default the language that maintains it. The complexities of these phenomena will be explored further in the findings of this research (Chapters Six and Seven). The year 2020 has been filled with discussions around race and many people will have seen, listened to, read, or taken part in narratives relating to the lived experiences of ethnic minority people. There has been a noticeable increase in representation

of minority ethnic people in newspapers, magazines, television programmes and advertising. This has been a positive move, but one that has not been well received by some of the general population, such as the racist backlash following Sainsbury's Christmas advertising campaign that featured a black family (Skopeliti for The Guardian, 2020). This demonstrates that although we are making some progress, we still have some way to go in achieving racial parity in the UK.

Racialised identity and socialisation to race is important to us all. People who are racially 'othered' are constantly perceived in opposition to whiteness and this can make people of colour hypervisible, or in certain settings, hyperinvisible. Race cannot be detached from other characteristics, such as socio-economic background and which can invariably affect an individual's capability to access social and cultural capital, and this will be explored further in Chapter Three in relation to structure, agency, and the role of power.

As we have discovered throughout this chapter, racism is not solely manifested through overt acts and a new racism has evolved that is hidden and easily misrecognised. People of colour who experience this new racism, e.g., microaggressions or microincivilities, may not report these incidences because they may be too frightened to do so or lack confidence in organisational processes to tackle it (EHRC, 2019). These outcomes should present a challenge to organisations, and particularly UK higher education to deal with recommendations effectively. This is particularly pertinent for institutions in terms of their processes and policies and how they are implemented. Institutional racism is not a new concept, and the literature demonstrates that UK public sector organisations have not taken a firm grasp of what it means to check for institutional racism in a practical sense, and more importantly the steps needed to eradicate it. The debate about the definition as provided by Macpherson (1999) has not been followed up in the same way as for example, guidance, such as codes of practice (EHRC, 2014). This absence should cause some alarm considering the impact that the differential implementation of policy and practice can have on different groups of people.

The next chapter will explore social theory and its importance in terms of the topic of race and racial marginalisation. The discussion will present the work of Pierre Bourdieu as an alternative lens upon which the literature and findings within this research can be considered to elucidate meaning from these in the context of exploring the differential outcomes for black staff in UK higher education.

3 Structure, agency and the role of power

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the notion of race and ethnicity, the language we use as a society to speak about it, the nature of racism and how it has metamorphosed amongst individuals and within organisations, and how race has been politicised throughout the ages. The consequences of this shapeshifting have directly contributed to the way that individuals and organisations deal with matters of race and has created marginalised groups who have been and continue to be, affected first-hand by it, and alienates those who do not feel confident to discuss it. The construction and reconstruction of race was made possible by and through power relations, resembling monolithic structures that seem immovable and perpetual. This social, yet structural notion remains with us today.

This chapter will consider the underlying structures that maintain the status quo within our society, which perpetuate racial inequalities. Multiple studies over the past decade have highlighted the topic of race and racism within the higher education sector (ECU, 2011: Rollock, 2011, 2019; UCU, 2016; Bhopal and Brown, 2016; UCU, 2017; Bhopal, 2018; EHRC, 2019) and consistently articulate the disadvantage experienced predominantly by academic staff within institutions. Despite the continued attention in this area, including through research undertaken by sector agencies and trade unions, there has been little change in the outcomes of racially minoritised staff in the UK higher education workforce (see Chapter Five). These publications should have prompted institutions to act, and therefore a renewed and alternative perspective on the problem would be advantageous. This alternative perspective will be explored here and will consider how the social agents within our institutions contribute at multiple levels to produce and reproduce workplace cultures, whether intentionally or not, and create exclusionary environments and unequal outcomes for black staff. Because these outcomes are a social phenomenon set within a particular context, the social relationships developed and maintained by individuals at micro level will influence those at meso level and those created and maintained at macro level. These relationships are intertwined across multiple levels and cross multiple social groups.

This chapter will begin by exploring social theory to understand the schools of thought around *why* social actors do what they do, the concepts of structure and agency and consider their relevance to the topic under enquiry within this dissertation. The discussion will progress by considering the work of Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist, anthropologist, philosopher and public intellectual, who advanced the sociology of education through several concepts that consider human agency and structures. There has been a recent proliferation within academia in the use of Bourdieu's (1977; 1984; 1990; 1998) concepts to explore human resource management topics and as such, this research will benefit from analysis using this lens to investigate the findings in an innovative way that increases our understanding of agential dynamics and the power of organisational structures and systems.

3.2. Social structures and their influence on human agency

According to Aristotle, humans are social beings. As individuals we interact with other individuals or groups on a regular basis, whether intentionally or not. For Giddens (1984), to be a human being is to be a purposive agent. Our interactions might include activities within familial networks or extended through associations with people who share similar identities, beliefs or any other characteristics that can maintain a group structure and which may be oriented towards the satisfaction of material and symbolic interest (Bourdieu, 1977). Outside of our closest networks, people interact within wider society in ways that might not necessarily be obvious to the lay person, that is pre-existent and established across multiple levels. At macro level, the social structure relates to the system of socio-economic stratification, such as class (Marx in Jones and Bradbury, 2017; Moore, 2005) or other patterned relations between large social groups, such as organisations. At a meso level, it relates to the social networks, such as friendship groups, affinity groups, etc. At a micro level, the social structures include the way that social and cultural 'norms' inform individual behaviours within that social system.

Social and cultural norms are a set of rules, attitudes and behaviours that have been developed over time by individuals and/or groups and to which we are socialised by family, friends, peers, and work colleagues. These cultural norms influence social structures through relations between individuals and/or groups to the point that the prevailing norms are set by

the dominant group. The relationship between those that conform to the pre-established cultural norms and those that do not, creates a hierarchical social stratification that favours the dominant group (Jones and Bradbury, 2017). There are several social theories that articulate society as a structure of rules, which influence and inform the behaviours of social actors. One such notion is consensus theory (Jones and Bradbury, 2017), which argues that society's cultural rules determine or structure the behaviour of its members, and regards human behaviour as learned behaviour, gained through socialisation, and suggests that people learn expected behaviours in social settings. However, these can be constrained by cultural rules that might apply, such as how a person was brought up as a child, which could be informed by multiple factors such as religion, value system, generational influence, household composition, etc. In opposition to this is conflict theory (Jones and Bradbury, 2017), which poses that society determines our behaviour by structuring or constraining it, and that the real structural determinants of behaviour are the rewards and advantages possessed unequally by different groups in society. This means that the origin and persistence of inequality lies in the domination of society's disadvantaged groups by dominant groups (Jones and Bradbury, 2017). Giddens and Sutton (2017:201) assert that the quest for power, attempts to gain social status and social inequalities lead to the formation of distinct social groups with shared interests and identities that pursue those interests against others, and therefore, conflict theory sees the potential for strife as always present.

Jones and Bradbury (2017) suggest that there are two ways that a structure of inequality can survive. Firstly, if the most disadvantaged by the structure can be prevented from seeing themselves as disadvantaged, or secondly, and even if the first is recognised, that they can be persuaded that their disadvantage is legitimate. The way this can occur is through control and manipulation of the norms and values or cultural rules, into which people are socialised. The authors argue that socialisation is likely to be an instrument of power, producing social order by means of force and domination in which the simplest way for the dominant to exercise power and maintain their advantage, is if the dominated are complicit in their own subordination (Jones and Bradbury, 2017).

Whilst consensus and conflict theories provide particular perspectives about social structures, those structures are recurrent arrangements, which influence or limit the choices and opportunities available. Structure is a concept that depicts a durable framework, defined by

sociologists such as Giddens (1984) and Bourdieu (1977) as rules and resources that are both the property of, and which give shape to, social systems. In contrast, agency is the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices. The structure versus agency debate may be understood as an issue of socialisation against autonomy in determining whether individuals act as free agents or in a manner that is dictated by social structure. Giddens (1984:9) suggests that agency refers not to the intentions people have in doing things, but to their capability of doing things in the first place. This is further supported by Bourdieu (2001a) who asserted that far from being the conscious, free, deliberate act of an isolated 'subject', the practical construction of (and response to) symbolic power is in itself the effect of a power, durably embedded in the bodies of the dominated in the form of schemes of perception and dispositions, which sensitises an individual to certain symbolic manifestations of power (Bourdieu, 2001a:40). Interpreting this, does this amount to free will at all if as agents we replicate behaviours that are firmly entrenched?

For Giddens (1984), structure is the product of routine activities that enable and constrain agents within the social space and is reproduced through the regularised conduct of knowledgeable social agents. The rules Giddens referred to can be viewed as generalised procedures that can apply in various contexts and which allow for the methodical continuation of an established sequence, such as human resource management, legislation, etc. These rules tend to be reproduced with such consistency that they take on an objective form, and within an institutional context will provide the parameters upon which social agents will interact and coexist. The resources Giddens refers to are a form of power, which are either authoritative (in the control of people) or allocative (in the control of material objects). Giddens furthered his theory of structure and agency, and the duality of structure (structuration) by, instead of describing the capacity of human action as being constrained by powerful stable societal structures, such as religious, educational, or political institutions, or as a function of the individual expression of will, e.g., acknowledging the interaction of meaning, standards and values and power and posited a dynamic relationship between these different components of society.

Actors can be both enabled and constrained by structures and agency is not a straightforward matter of choice. In considering New Labour's social policy, Greener (2002) considered Gidden's structuration theory and the extent to which structures enable or constrain an

individual’s agency and suggests that a non-reflexive agent would behave instinctively, with little control of their environment. Greener (2002) states that resource constraints may prevent actors from acquiring capital and that structural, habitual, or informational constraints may severely restrict the range of actions an agent might make, because their actions have become so ingrained. Therefore, if an actor does not, or cannot, act, they appear from a structuration perspective, to have no agency. Giddens (1979) argues that humans are knowledgeable social agents that will always have some role and/or power available to them despite constraints. Gidden’s notion of the ‘dialectic of control’ holds that agency and power are inextricably linked and no matter how asymmetrical, the power relations are always two-way, contingent and to some degree, interdependent (Collinson, 2016).

The concepts Giddens (1984) presents are similar to and complement those introduced by Bourdieu (1977; 1984; 1990; 1998) and although the terminology is different within the Bourdieusian context, there are some noticeable distinctions where Bourdieu advanced the notion of structure through the concepts of field and habitus, which will be explored further in this chapter. Kirchberg (2007) observes that structures are not only dependent on agency-driving individuals; they are the results of social interactions, particularly those interactions that become routines with the highest degree of accountability and that Giddens’ notion of routine is similar to Bourdieu’s concept of social practice, where routines can create and change practices, just as practices can create and shape routines. However, Bourdieu also explains to some extent how structuration occurs by providing details of the process of structuration, such as the internalisation and reproduction of social processes. This framework enables a deeper consideration of the capacity and capability of agents within social relations through the concept of capital, which impacts on the extent an agent can create or shape practice on an organisational scale, and that incorporates multi-level interplay between agents and management structures. These never-ending cycles of structuring structures are particularly relevant to provide an interpretation of perceptions and lived experiences given by participants in this study and which will be explored further in subsequent chapters. In the meantime, the following section will explore how Bourdieu’s concepts can further provide a dynamic lens upon which to analyse the empirical data of this research.

3.3 Using Bourdieu as a lens for exploration

Tatli (2011) drew attention to the lack of empirical work that operationalises Bourdieusian concepts for the investigation of workplace equality and diversity. It is useful to apply the concepts of Pierre Bourdieu (1977; 1984; 1990; 1998) and Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), which include habitus, field, capital, and symbolic violence, to understand how the structures formed within our institutions contribute to the outcomes of racially minoritised staff and how the role of individual agents produce and reproduce these structures within the context of UK higher education. Bourdieu set out through his various theories (1977; 1984; 1990; 1998), and particularly his notion of habitus to overcome the dualism of objectivity and subjectivity.

Bourdieu's *Homo Academicus* (1984) is an ethnological and sociological analysis of the academic world in the French higher education system and is particularly relevant for this study in terms of exposing power relations and structures within the institutional social space that enables and constrains academic careers. Bourdieu's analysis and subsequent development of the concepts of field, habitus, capital, and symbolic violence will allow for the societal, organisational, and individual enablements and constraints within UK higher education to be examined and how they might shed light on why racial disadvantage persists. Social space is constructed in such a way that agents or groups are distributed in it according to their position based on two principles of differentiation, economic and cultural capital. Reality according to Bourdieu (1977) is a social concept and to exist is to exist socially and what is real is relational to those around us. Agents are distributed in the overall social space, in the first dimension, according to the overall volume of capital they possess and, in the second dimension, according to the structure of their capital, that is, the relative weight of the different species of capital, economic and cultural, in the total volume of their assets (Bourdieu, 1998:6).

This is particularly relevant within a higher education context, which contains hierarchical organisational structures, and here it can be proposed that a university professor would very likely hold more overall capital for being positioned at a higher level of the organisational structure, and therefore as a result attract a higher salary (economic) and higher cultural capital by virtue of their field (academia, subject specialism and value placed by the institution on that capital etc.). This is in comparison to a lecturer, who would hold a lower position in

the institutional hierarchy as well as potentially hold, or be perceived to hold, less cultural capital by virtue of their positioning. Interestingly, a professional and support staff member may not possess the same overall capital, despite being positioned at the same level within the institution as a professor or lecturer, which may be due to the value of symbolic capital placed upon academic staff compared with professional services staff within the institutional community (Whitchurch, 2006; Deem, 1998).

Bourdieu defines the notion of space as containing:

> …the principle of a *relational* understanding of the social world. It affirms that every 'reality' it designates resides in the *mutual exteriority* of its composite elements. Apparent, directly visible beings, whether individuals or groups, exist and subsist in and through *difference*; that is, they occupy *relative positions* in a space of relations which, although invisible and always difficult to show empirically, is the most real reality…and the real principle of the behaviour of individuals and groups
>
> (Bourdieu, 1998:31).

Applying this definition for the purpose of exploring the social dynamics of the UK higher education sector will provide a valuable perspective to further understand the enablements and constraints of the workforce, and particularly those who are marginalised and/or disadvantaged at work. The remainder of this chapter will explore Bourdieu's concepts in more detail and subsequent analysis utilising the concepts of habitus, field, capital, and symbolic violence will be applied further in chapters six and seven when considering participant accounts.

3.3.1 Social space as a field of power

Although Bourdieu related his concept of social space on a societal level, this is equally fitting of an institution, where the environment represents a microcosm of wider society. Within the confines of the institution the workforce holds an assumed mutual understanding of the environment in which staff reside, noting their differences whether as individuals or in groups according to the multiple categories of difference, such as gender, race, role, grade, perceived capital, etc. These social spaces appear as structures of differences, which are mutable structures of the distribution of forms of power or the kinds of capital that are effective and

define the rules and resources that are legitimate within that space (Bourdieu, 1977; 1991). Bourdieu refers to these spaces as *fields*; a field of forces imposed on agents and as a field of struggles within which agents confront each other with differential means and ends according to their position in the structure of the field of forces that contribute to the conservation or transformation of the structures (Bourdieu, 1998:32). Bourdieu felt that any social research should begin with defining the field within which the investigation is situated. However, the boundaries of a given field can only be understood empirically in a specific point in time because the boundaries of fields are dynamic and therefore, not fixed (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Within the *field* power struggles and conflict take place and specific kinds of capital (economic, cultural, social, symbolic, etc.) are at stake and certain forms of habitus or dispositions are fitted for success. This helps us to understand how certain agents can be powerful in some fields and much less so in others, even though capital can sometimes become transferable between fields (Gaventa, 2003). The concept of field is particularly relevant within higher education because of its hierarchical and sometimes isolated and isolating structures that can impact inter- and intra-relational actions and practices between different groups of staff e.g., academic, professional and support staff. As suggested in a recent study, conformity to rules and roles is played out in particular ways dependent on the level and type of capital held by the agents within the field (Randle et al, 2014). Similarly, it is important to consider the field of equality and diversity practitioners and how their roles within institutions are sponsored, facilitated, or hindered in addressing racial inequalities. The social space they occupy is constructed of relationships with key institutional agents in the broader field of academia, however there are competing priorities within institutions that make it difficult to advance the equality and diversity agenda. Özbilgin and Tatli (2011) suggest that equality and diversity actors have unequal access to, and ownership of, power and resources, which constitutes a significant imbalance in the struggle for domination and legitimacy, thereby impeding any cultural or organisational change.

In defining spaces, agents play their part in creating the rules of the social game, what Bourdieu (1998) refers to as *illusio,* where agents must be invested in the game and see it as worthwhile, as well as understand the boundaries upon which agents are relationally engaged. If the agents' mind is structured according to the structures of the world in which one plays,

everything will seem obvious and the question of knowing if the game is worthwhile will not even be asked (Bourdieu, 1998). The stakes of the game will appear as an illusion for those who do not participate in the game, and each field will impose its own tacit entry fee to comply with the rules of the field, resulting in subscribing to the *illusio* of the field (Tatli, 2011). In defining the field, Bourdieu does not make distinctions between the agents that would occupy a field and here it is particularly apt to mention that contextualised within this investigation around the field of higher education, there are several agential qualities that may negatively impact upon an agent's access to the game, and whether agents have the requisite knowledge of the rules of the game within a given field. The struggles and confrontations Bourdieu posited are particularly relevant in understanding the lived experiences of racially minoritised staff and the extent to which institutional structures are conserved or transformed because of an agent's ethnicity. Viewing agential interaction through this lens presents an alternative view of daily institutional life within the constraints and enablements that an agent's position within the field provides, and accounts for other differences that are not job specific, e.g., personal characteristics, background and experience that will have an impact on their position-taking as agents within the field.

3.3.2 Habitus - A feel for the game

The concept of habitus has a long history and has been subject to widespread criticism, mainly because of its perceived determinism (Reay, 2004; Morrison, 2005), yet Bourdieu tried to counter this by developing the concept to demonstrate that not only was the body part of the social world, but the social world part of the body. Despite Bourdieu's focus on gender and class within his work, there is great scope to apply his concepts to matters of race within an educational context. Bourdieu (1977) posed that dispositions are the internalisation of structures, which influence the practice of individuals and/or members of a group. Therefore, exploring the habitus of staff in UK higher education will highlight individual experiences and expose how agent dispositions impact the choices of racially minoritised staff to navigate through that system and the social spaces contained within it.

Bourdieu's (1984) theory around class also helps us to understand the role of agency in shaping class identity and structure, where class is primarily conceived and communicated by consumption. The choices a person makes indicates their level of cultural knowledge as well

as an assertion about their class identity. Moore (2005) suggests that to claim a particular class identity, a person must be familiar with the cultural markers of that identity, have the resources to participate in that lifestyle and demonstrate the cultural and material resources to others in the status group. Moore (2005) emphasises that Bourdieu's (1984) model of class introduces the importance of performance as a central part of asserting class identity and that class is also about social and cultural relationships. Moore (2005) articulates that there are notable differences between black and white class structures, with black class structures relying on social distinctions, such as education and cultural practices rather than occupation and income.

Bourdieu (1977) saw power as culturally and symbolically created, and which is constantly legitimised through the interplay of structure and agency. This happens by virtue of an agent's *habitus* or socialised norms or tendencies that guide behaviour and thinking. Each agent, wittingly or unwittingly produces and reproduces objective meaning, and it is because subjects do not know what they are doing that what they do has more meaning than they know (Bourdieu, 1977). Habitus are systems of durable, transposable dispositions that are structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures (ibid.) and are created through a social, rather than individual process, shifting from one context to another over time. Bourdieu later extended his view of habitus by suggesting that agents are active and knowing and endowed with a practical sense, an acquired system of preferences, of principles of vision and division, which are essentially the product of the internalisation of objective structures, which in essence is the knowledge of what needs to be done in a given situation. Bourdieu called this a 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1998:25). Hay and Wincott (1998) suggested that since individuals (and groups) are knowledgeable and reflexive, they routinely monitor the consequences of their actions. In doing so, they assess the immediate and unfolding impact of their strategies in relation to earlier intentions and anticipated outcomes in light of the assessment of the conduct of those around them. As a result of this, Hay and Wincott (1998) argue that strategic actions then yield:

- *Direct effects* upon the institutional and institutionalised contexts within which it takes place and within which future action occurs, producing a partial transformation of the institutional environment

- *Strategic learning* on the part of the agents involved as they revise their perceptions of what is feasible, possible, and desirable considering their assessments of their own ability to realise prior goals (which complements Gidden's (1979) notion of a dialectic of control).

Within the context of the higher education environment, a person will enter the system possessing their own specific habitus, constructed from their own background, personal characteristics, and previous experience. Depending on how this habitus has been constructed and the agent's own system of preferences, an agent's engagement into this social space already constructed by existing agents in the field, will determine the agent's positioning within that field, as well as determine future perceptions in relation to other agents around them. This pre-existing 'organisational habitus' will shape the agent's own habitus, further creating a new set of dispositions and preferences, that will impact on practice and possibly the field. This transformation may restructure existing structures; however, this may be dependent on how that transformation is legitimised by other agents in the field.

Organisational habitus is a concept that has been adapted from Bourdieu's concept of habitus and refers to the class-based dispositions, perceptions, and appreciations transmitted to individuals in a common organisational culture (Horvat and Antonio, 1999). McDonough (1998) outlined the concept of organisational habitus to describe college counselling programmes offered in a US high school setting, and how the sociocultural demographics of the school would inform the level of support provided to wealthy students compared with students of low income. Kolluri (2019) offered a more complete conception of organisational habitus that wrestles with the notion that organisations exist at the intersection of numerous, interconnected social arena considering that organisations, like the individuals that comprise them, straddle a variety of communities with diverse cultural norms and values. An agent's habitus will inform them of their own position-taking within the organisational habitus and will evolve with their immersion within this environment. An organisational habitus could be present at multiple levels, such as that which is present within sub-cultures within organisations. The enablements and constraints of organisational habitus are theoretically similar to those on an individual basis if one interprets the organisation as a collective of individual agents with diverse cultural norms and values as Kolluri (2019) suggests. The position occupied by key individuals in the social space will affect the distribution of different

kinds of capital and command the representations and position-taking within this space in the struggle to conserve or transform it (Bourdieu, 1998).

In writing on the topic of habitus and the practice in Canadian public service, McDonough (2006; 2016) argues that front-line public servants' narratives reflect a public sector habitus, a socially constituted set of dispositions representing the internalisation of a dominant vision that privileges the public good over private interests. The symbolic force of the public good is embodied in, and reproduced by, public servants in their daily practice. To fully understand the pervasiveness and reproduction of cultural privilege Bourdieu argues that the norms and practices of educational institutions must first be examined, as he believed that those institutions held the most power in perpetuating one's level of status and privilege (in Payne, 2015). Considering agential and organisational habitus, such as that undertaken by McDonough (2006; 2016) will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of how higher education institutions, or the agents within them, contribute to the perpetuation of dispositions that produce or reproduce racial inequalities. This concept may be fundamental in identifying transformational solutions to address workplace race equality within UK higher education.

Agents will position themselves within the social space according to two main principles of differentiation. In doing so, agents themselves will bring a set of internalised dispositions that will inform how one navigates the social space. However, there are other fundamental considerations relating to the extent to which agents have access to Giddens' (1984) notion of resources, e.g., power. Bourdieu extended the concept of *capital* beyond the notion of material assets (economic) to capital that might be social, cultural or symbolic. However, Mander (1987) suggested that it is the differential distribution of capital that structures society, yet agents can have an impact upon the level of capital in their possession. Occupants of positions will employ structured, yet not structurally determined, strategies to defend or enhance their position in relation to these capitals. Bourdieu (1986) asserts that capital can present itself in three fundamental ways; economic, cultural and social, which can be accumulated and transferred from one area to another and be exchanged for other forms of capital. For Bourdieu (1986) capital is accumulated labour, which in its materialised or incorporated, embodied form, enables a person to appropriate social energy in the form of reified labour that has the potential to affect individual life chances.

3.3.3 The power of connections

Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) defined social capital as the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition. Group membership provides each of its members with a collectively owned capital, which symbolically can be deemed to be a credential by virtue of group membership. The volume of social capital possessed by an agent depends on the size of the network of connections and on the volume of capital (economic, cultural, or symbolic) possessed by them and by each of these connections. Social capital is not completely independent of the economic and cultural capital possessed by an agent because the exchanges institute mutual acknowledgement that presupposes the re-acknowledgement of a minimum homogeneity, and because it attracts a multiplier effect on the capital the agent possesses in their own right (Bourdieu, 1986).

A network of connections or relationships can be for most the product of investment strategies, whether individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at producing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable. Each member of the network is a custodian of the limits to the group, and as such the criterion for entry is at stake with each new entry and may expose the group to redefinition or alteration. Groups will favour legitimate exchanges, excluding illegitimate ones, by producing occasions, places or practices that will bring together individuals that are as homogenous as possible in order to maintain the group dynamics (ibid.) Examples of how this may manifest within the academic environment can be networks comprised of individuals who are similarly qualified, and this may be strengthened among academic staff within the same academic discipline and/or field, their academic reputation, output or even previous experience, which may include previous institutions. The criteria for 'entry' into a collective may be based on any one or multiple capitals within these categories and is not solely exclusive to academic staff as professional and support staff networks may use similar conditions for the creation and reproduction for group membership.

The possession and accrual of social capital is an important part of institutional life, particularly when the accrual of an overall volume of capital can attract gains within the structural system. Consideration of social capital can presume that all agents are equally competent at

developing or maintaining social networks, however Bourdieu (1984; 1986) asserts that considerable time and effort are required to achieve this, which is integral to the accrual of social capital. Compton and Meier (2016) considered social capital in relation to student outcomes and concluded that stronger social networks, shared norms of reciprocity, civic participation, and trust among individuals and institutions should encourage cooperation and productive sharing of information to improve performance and outcomes. However, a social capital rich group may benefit more because social capital is not equally distributed and may lead to disparities in the outcomes of racially minoritised groups (Compton and Meier, 2016) and to mitigate some of the effects of the absence or lack of social capital among the most disadvantaged groups, a commitment to diversity management in its broadest sense is required.

Social capital, through the power of personal connections and their extended networks provides the beneficiary with opportunities within an institutional environment to gain legitimacy and credibility in ways that may not be possible on one's own. This is distinct from cultural capital, which will be explored in the subsequent section however, this attribute can be gained through the appropriate connections.

3.3.4 Knowledge is power

Cultural capital, and the means by which it is created or transferred, plays a key role in societal power relations as this provides the means for a non-economic form of domination and hierarchy (Gaventa, 2003). Cultural capital can be defined as the cultural knowledge that serves as a form of 'currency' and which can help us navigate society; in turn, this can alter the work-life opportunities available. These are non-financial assets that can help promote social mobility, whereas a lack of these assets can greatly limit social mobility (Randle et al, 2014). Bourdieu (1986) emphasised that there are three states of cultural capital: embodied, objectified, and institutionalised. In the embodied state, cultural capital consists of both the consciously acquired and passively acquired properties, e.g., language and socialisation. In the objectified state, cultural capital consists of material objects that are owned. These cultural goods can be transmitted both for economic profit and for the purpose of symbolically indicating social class. Bourdieu (1998) argued that Marx (1848) provided a false theoretical solution by affirming the real existence of class. For Bourdieu, the real class, if it has ever really

existed, is nothing but a realised class, the mobilised class, and the result of the struggle of classifications, which is properly symbolic (Bourdieu, 1998:31). In modern times stratifying agents in this way has become increasingly difficult because the boundaries of traditional class structures in the UK have blurred with post-industrial modes of production that have shifted from the production of material goods in the Marxist sense to the production of knowledge (Atkinson, 2015:26). In the institutionalised state, cultural capital is the way society measures social capital and can consist of institutional recognition, such as that afforded through academic credentials or qualifications and this can be evident in the access given to agents within specific professions, such as the legal and medical professions and within academia, where there are minimum objectified expectations required to practice in these fields.

For Bourdieu, race is an aspect of embodied cultural capital that creates certain dispositions within the individual; dispositions that define one's socially constituted nature (habitus), determining an individual's social positioning and therefore, the nature of the strategies that will be employed in social actions. If race, as embodied cultural capital, creates certain dispositions within an agent who is racially minoritised within the institution that is dominated by white agents, this environment could have a significant impact on the strategies employed by those minoritised agents in navigating that social space in terms of attaining further capital. These concepts can also explain the current subtleties of racism through the concept of symbolic violence (discussed in the subsequent section), where overt racism has become unacceptable due to the evolving societal and legislative landscape that has enabled its concealment.

Bourdieu (1998) describes power in terms of *symbolic capital,* which comes with social position and status. It can be referred to as the resources available to an individual based on honour, prestige, or recognition, and serves as value that one holds within a culture or field. One could argue that Bourdieu's concept of capital explores class without other characteristics, e.g., gender, and Huppatz (2009) made a valid point about the misrecognition on Bourdieu's part of gendered capital and how women are equally able to engage in the accumulation of different forms of capital as men, yet women can be excluded by the dominant male hierarchy. This can be particularly amplified when gender intersects with race. In classifying subjects, Bourdieu refers to age, gender, and social class, yet not to race and like gendered capital, there is scope to acknowledge racialised capital and how this might be used

for gains in specific fields by minority ethnic agents as well as translated on the contrary to become what we may recognise as white privilege.

Bourdieu defines symbolic capital as:

> …any property (any form of capital whether physical, economic, cultural, or social) when it is perceived by social agents endowed with categories of perception, which cause them to know it and to recognise it, to give it value (Bourdieu, 1998:47).

Symbolic capital is earned on an individual basis and may fluctuate between members in a community. Özbilgin and Tatli (2005) observed that this conceptualisation embodies both subjective and objective properties and is formed through shared meanings of value and worth, which can also be demonstrated through organisational narratives of meritocracy, schooling, and professional experience as legitimate indicators of individual worth.

3.3.5 Symbolic power as a means of domination

Kamoche et al (2014) described that symbolic violence manifests itself in three ways: it seeks to change what is at stake through the power of pedagogy; it invokes mechanisms of social control, which are not always explicit; and it works through misrecognition. Their study examined how the dominant (senior management) team sought to control through complicity of the dominated (scientists) cohort to take on a knowledge-management system in a global organisation. This is relevant to this research study as an exploration of the notion of symbolic violence within a UK higher education context focuses on the relation of domination in a relatable context, e.g., senior management vs academics, and in what Kamoche et al (2014) described as factions within dominant classes united by habitus. It could be argued that a similar social space operates within UK institutions also, except there is an additional layer of complexity when the whole workforce is considered to include professional and support staff in institutions where there may be institutionally constructed 'class' structures at play and therefore there are multiple and multi-layered dominant-dominated groups interacting in the social space.

Using symbolic power against another implies symbolic violence and may take such forms as dismissal and judging the person inferior. This power may be dispensed without words, using physical symbols and behaviours. Bourdieu posed that symbolic power constitutes the given

through utterances, of making people see and believe, of confirming or transforming the vision of the world, action on the world and therefore the world itself and is a power that can be exercised only if it is recognised, or misrecognised, as arbitrary (Bourdieu, 1991). Symbolic violence is imperceptible, insidious, and invisible and its invisibility is an effective tool of silent domination. According to Thapor-Björket et al (2016) silence cannot be overcome by allowing the dominated to speak or for them to voice their concerns, as such acts are futile. The authors suggest that domination arising from symbolic violence is less a product of direct coercion and more an outcome of when those who are dominated stop questioning existing power relations as they perceive the world and the situation as natural, given and unchangeable.

Bourdieu's concept of *symbolic violence* was introduced to account for forms of coercion effected without physical force, which is "gentle, invisible violence, unrecognised as such, chosen as much as undergone, that of trust, obligation, personal loyalty, hospitality, gifts, debts, piety…presents itself as the most economical mode of domination because it best corresponds to the economy of the system" (Bourdieu, 1990:127). The use of symbolic violence is often so entrenched that the dominant party may not be aware that the behaviour is being perpetuated against the dominated party (Johnson et al, 2008). Symbolic violence is exerted wherever power imposes meaning and legitimacy yet conceals the power relations which impose those meanings, such as policy, practice etc. The policy and practices that assume a place of dominance are those that correspond with the interests of the dominant group and any action taken because of those policies or practices is accompanied by authority, giving it persuasive powers. Recognising the legitimacy of the dominant culture is at the same time delegitimising the dominated culture (Mander, 1987).

This symbolic power does not reside within symbolic systems. It is defined in and through a relation between those who exercise power and those who submit to it. In contextualising Bourdieu's concept of symbolic power, it is not the policy, practice, communication, etc. (symbolic system) where the power resides, but the method in which the policy, practice, communication, etc. is executed and Bourdieu further makes this point in his article relating to television (2001b) where he suggested that there were mechanisms that could wield a pernicious form of symbolic violence with tacit complicity between victims and agents where both remain unconscious of submitting or wielding to it. Symbolic violence occurs when the policies and practices, that on face value give the appearance of fairness and transparency,

are used as weapons to inflict domination and that silence groups into submission. To support this, Healy et al (2011) argued that workplace inequalities based on gender and race might be legitimated in practice through rationalisations based on different capabilities and negative stereotyping.

The interrelation of symbolic power with habitus was addressed by Bourdieu (1990) in relation to the division of labour between the sexes. Here, Bourdieu refers to the unconscious, collective creation being the basis of its durability and its transcendence to individual consciousness. On the topic of masculine domination, Bourdieu (2001a) argues that the socially constructed division between the sexes, as natural and self-evident, therefore contain full recognition of the legitimacy of the division of labour. Bourdieu states that the embodied social programme of perception is applied to all things of the world, and firstly to the body itself. Although Bourdieu writes in relation to gender and the perceptions created through its social construction, it can equally be applied to race in that despite these concepts being socially constructed they have become objectified, legitimised, and embodied through perceptions of the self and others. Bourdieu suggests that it is this (social) programme which constructs the difference between the biological sexes (*and races*) in conformity with the principles of the vision of the world, which is rooted in the arbitrary relationship of domination of men over women (*whites over ethnic minorities*) (Bourdieu, 2001a:11).

In furthering the Bourdieusian concept, Kamoche et al (2014) state that symbolic violence cannot be viewed in isolation because of its interrelation with Bourdieu's other concepts of capital, field and habitus, whereby symbolic violence is objectified through material objects, qualifications and other forms of cultural capital that affirm an individual's status and identity (Kamoche et al, 2014). Furthermore, misrecognition is key to the act of domination and Kamoche et al (2014) argued that 'cultural arbitrary' is a condition that expresses the arbitrary imposition of power by misrecognising its effects and purpose, which consequently reproduces and legitimises social inequality. The way in which dominated individuals or groups respond to symbolic violence will consequently become informed by their habitus, field, and capital, but as Kamoche et al (2014) discovered in their case study, so can peer pressure, which organisations may rely on to achieve workforce compliance.

For Bourdieu, the concept of symbolic violence informs wider theory on power and domination to explain how social hierarchies and inequalities are maintained not by physical

force but rather by forms of symbolic domination. Bourdieu (2001a:1-2) also describes symbolic violence as a form of violence that is 'exerted for the most part … through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition … recognition or even feeling'. Power operates through subjective misrecognition of the meanings implicit in the action, practice and ritual, and any language (the language of the establishment) that can command attention is an *authorised language* (Bourdieu, 1977) and thus becomes legitimate. The authorised language silences other voices in the narrative through misrecognition. This can be explained by what Bourdieu refers to as the 'magical frontier between the dominant and the dominated', through which the dominated unknowingly and unwillingly, 'contribute to their own domination by tacitly accepting the limits imposed, often taking the form of bodily emotions, e.g., shame, humiliation, anxiety, or guilt' (Bourdieu, 2001a:38). It is this 'magical frontier' that will also be explored further in considering the accounts of participants interviewed as part of this research in Chapters Six and Seven.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the significant role that social structures play in understanding human interactions within the social sphere. These structures are not necessarily physical in our general understanding of the term, such as objects, buildings, or institutions. They are also invisible and can be controlled by any one of us at any moment in time. Despite the inconspicuous nature of these structures their effect can be life changing and career limiting from a positive and indeed negative perspective.

The foundations of social theory provide a duality, that although much debated, offers the opportunity to consider the factors that influence the decisions social agents are confronted with, whether through socialisation or free will. King (2016:2000) argues that Bourdieu's attempt to move away from subjective/objective dualist social theory fails by relapsing to the objectivism that Bourdieu rejects, yet equally recognises that Bourdieu's contribution to the structure-agency debate cannot be ignored. The structures that surround social agents can be enablers as much as they can constrain, yet as Giddens (1984) theorised, human interaction is more dynamic than previously considered and therefore not mutually exclusive within that binary system.

Bourdieu advances on Giddens' structuration theory through his concepts of habitus and field, providing additional tools to explore the extent to which individuals can operate free will within the context of academia. Similar critique of Bourdieu's theories around field and capital have been reflected in Joas and Knobl's (2011:21) essay asserting a remarkable proximity to utilitarianism, despite Bourdieu's criticism of utilitarian social theorists, such as Habermas and Marx. Despite these criticisms, the work of Bourdieu offers theories that will facilitate a richer exploration of the research questions of this study. These theories provide a relevant and appropriate conceptual framework to aid the exploration of the extent to which 'power', in all its forms, operates at multiple levels across the UK higher education sector.

Considering the role structure and agency play in producing and reproducing practice and its effect on social agents within the UK higher education sector provides a powerful lens on a persistent problem. The broader exploration of Bourdieu's (1977; 1984; 1990; 1998) concepts of field, habitus, capital, and symbolic violence enables us to reframe institutional structures and systems to understand the social relations between agents within the socially constructed environment of our institutions. These societal, organisational, and individual elements represent UK higher education as a social space, which is occupied by various agents engaged in social relations across different levels of the organisational structure. This will provide a major contribution to knowledge and practice in terms of how the Bourdieusian notion of power manifests itself within institutions and how they may be operationalised to investigate equality and diversity, and more specifically for this dissertation, race.

Applying Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence will reframe our gaze to allow an alternative analysis of how institutional structures, systems and practices might appear fair and transparent on the surface, and be misrecognised as such, yet their application affects different groups of staff in distinct and disproportionate ways. These concepts will be further applied to consider the responses of the research participants interviewed as part of this study and these findings will be presented in Chapters Six and Seven of the dissertation. The following chapter will present the philosophical approach taken in approaching the topic and the methodology and methods employed to undertake this research study.

4 Methodology and methods

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to position this research within an ontological and epistemological perspective and describe the process utilised in undertaking this study. Throughout this chapter there will be references made to actions and considerations in the first person to personalise the activities that have brought this study to fruition.

The chapter will begin with an exploration of the methodological approach taken and how this has been informed by relevant concepts related to the topic under enquiry. The chapter will also consider the research strategy employed and will describe the methods utilised in the research in terms of the data collection and subsequent data analysis techniques and will conclude with an overview of the discussions. In anticipation of the methodological approach to this research, the personal and professional context for this study is appropriate to understand the motivations of a white, female practitioner-researcher exploring the differential outcomes of black staff in UK higher education. The remainder of this section will focus my journey to this destination; however, a more comprehensive reflexive discussion is provided in Chapter Eight (section 8.3) of this dissertation.

It is important to locate myself within this research study since who I am and what has brought me to the point of embarking on a doctoral research programme is relevant to the way I view the world. I am first-generation born in the UK to parents of working-class Spanish descent and so I bring an appreciation of the notion of being 'othered' as these were my and my family's collective experiences growing up in 1970s UK society. This habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) was my starting point in coming to terms with my identity, which had been formed by cultural norms constructed within my family unit, but which also conflicted with those in the social spaces that I would interact as a child and in my formative years where my heritage would be used as a point of difference in a derogatory sense. I came to realise that in witnessing my parent's experiences of living in a society where they were immigrants, they (to a lesser extent because of their accent) and I could at least be invisible because of our whiteness. It was not this that led me to become an equality and diversity practitioner, but my sexual orientation, and this aspect of my identity became the catalyst in assisting individuals to navigate through

complex workplace experiences that could involve bullying, harassment, and discrimination. As such, I have remained an equality and diversity practitioner working in the UK public, private, and voluntary sectors at varying levels over the past two decades, which include three different higher education institutions, and which provided me with the opportunity to begin this research study.

As a practitioner-researcher of white ethnic background the issues which have been explored in this research have not been because of any personal experience of racism per se. My interest has grown over time as my consciousness has increased in terms of the practical complexities related to race and ethnicity in organisations, and in positioning myself in close proximity to individuals within those organisations in dealing with outcomes that affect ethnic minorities in adverse ways. Over the course of this research, there has been a growing cognisance of my own ethnic background and how this has informed and shaped my view of the world and my practice. This is particularly relevant as an equality and diversity practitioner dealing with matters of race, the support and advice I have provided to people of colour around bullying, harassment, victimisation, and discrimination related to race, the development of organisational policies, procedures, and strategies, and subsequently in the way I have approached this research.

These reflections have impacted on my professional practice, particularly when dealing with the experiences of others facing race discrimination or other adverse impact because of race in the way that informs and shapes the policy and practice of the organisations within which I operate. These considerations also include the intersections of race and other characteristics (Crenshaw, 1989), such as gender, age, etc. since for example black women have different experiences and outcomes to white women or black men. It is apparent from my own professional practice that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world around them through their own experiences, and this may be followed by a period of reflection of those experiences for sense-making. Those experiences are further reconciled with previous thoughts, attitudes, and experience to shape future ideas and so on.

I have developed an increased consciousness of the issues affecting people of colour in society in general, as well as in the workplace. This consciousness has had a profound effect on the way in which I now view the world. I have become awakened to the structures in which I have and continue to operate in, which provide me with a distinct advantage, one that I had not

wholly appreciated in the past. I have felt guilt during this research journey as I have reflected on how I may have contributed to or supported systemic racism, not solely as a diversity practitioner, but as a manager and a colleague to others. This has also motivated me to operationalise my knowledge and contribution through this research to inform my work and organisational practice, which is transferable to any organisation or industry. I recognise that my whiteness places me closer to the centres of influence than my peers of colour may have access to, and I have a responsibility to use my privilege as an ally to those who have shared their lived experiences with me. It is for dual reasons, one of identity and the other my field of specialism, that this research topic is of personal importance, however it is critical that individuals of a white ethnic background become engaged with this subject matter within the educational sphere (Archer, 2003) as well as from the perspective of human resource management and organisational development.

Before embarking on this research, I had not appreciated the scale of experiences that for some had been built up over time, and which often would be brought together with historic psychological burden, informed, and shaped by familial experiences of race and racism, which would be part of an emotional armoury to survive in contemporary society. An awakening to these issues throughout the course of the data collection brought much frustration in attempting to resolve these issues through my own practice, and a sense of deep disappointment that I may not have noticed similar experiences as a practitioner. I have reflected on my own sense of arrogance that I would or could be the person to change workplace culture singlehandedly and yet, there is part of me that believes that had I not felt like this before embarking on this research study, this research would never have started.

The following sections of this chapter will outline in more detail the approach I have taken to undertake this inquiry on the topic of differential outcomes for black staff in UK higher education. This will include the methods I have employed to engage with participants at the heart of this study through the gathering and analysis of the empirical data that will form the basis of the findings.

4.2 Methodology – taking a social constructionist approach

This research attempts to explore social phenomena set within the specific context of UK higher education with a view to understanding how and whether the social interactions

contained within institutions, and amongst its social actors, contribute to the outcomes for black staff. Due to the nature of the enquiry within this research study, the conditions of the experience are more complex than simply what can be observed within the workplace. Berger and Luckmann (1991) asserted that society exists both as objective and subjective reality. The objective reality is created through the interaction of people within the social world, which influences actors to routinise and habitualise behaviours and actions in such a way that they become reproduced with minimal effort. As a result, these actions become normalised to such an extent that the created knowledge becomes objective. This objectivity continues to be reaffirmed in actors' interactions with others (Andrews, 2012). Before exploring the methodological approach to this research study, the rationale for this will be explained further below.

There are aspects contained within this study, such as the concept of race, where despite academic attempts to refute claims that race objectively exists, a shared understanding of race continues to persist in the social sphere where the terminology has become an ordinary and accepted part of our everyday life to such an extent that race has become objectified. The same can be attributed to the concept of racism, which lies at the heart of this research study and whether this is a contributing factor to the outcomes of black staff. The concept of racism, which can also be viewed as having been socially constructed, attracts what may appear at face value to carry a shared understanding within contemporary society, however these understandings or appreciations can vary according to life history, cultural context and experience, and this aspect is explored further in Chapters Six and Seven when considering participants' responses.

The most current UK higher education workforce data (Chapter Five of this dissertation) identified that statistically, there are differential outcomes for black staff compared to the outcomes of staff of any other ethnic background; they are least represented, particularly at the highest levels of the hierarchy and are paid less in comparison to their white peers. What is observable through the data might highlight several aspects that have contributed to this sectoral workforce profile; namely that people of colour may not be attracted to higher education; that there are discriminatory practices in place that disadvantage and exclude people of colour from being recruited to and promoted within the sector; or towards the extreme view that the data is inaccurate and therefore not a factual representation. I have

assumed for the purpose of the study that the secondary data is the most factual quantitative position in relation to the state of the higher education workforce in the UK as it is taken from a well-established and trusted source (Advance HE, 2020). As such, other than these statistical 'facts' this research explores the experiences of black staff to gain a better understanding of this workplace demographic and how this profile continues to be maintained over long periods of time, e.g., to ascertain the perceived causes of the statistical workforce profile in relation to black staff in UK higher education. In exploring the perceptions and lived experiences of participants operating within institutions and sector agencies, these accounts are set within the premise that as humans we have developed the capacity to interpret and construct reality, therefore the world of human perception is not real in an absolute sense (Patton, 2015). The data in isolation do not provide sufficient information about the conditions that lie beneath the surface in respect of the experiences of black staff and the underlying structural and operational functions within the system that inform and shape that position. Some of those underlying organisational structures and mechanisms have also become objectified, e.g., organisational policies and practices, and they too are central to the discussion contained within this research resulting in the appropriate application of social constructionism as my ontological approach to this study.

From a social constructionist perspective everyday life presents itself as a reality, which is interpreted by social actors and becomes subjectively meaningful to them as a coherent world (Berger and Luckmann, 1991) at a particular moment in time. Social constructionism insists we take a critical stance over the taken for granted ways of understanding the world and ourselves and poses that our knowledge of the world is constructed by and between social agents through daily interactions where our versions of knowledge become fabricated (Burr, 2015). As such, there are multiple perspectives on the causation of these various outcomes, and as a result this research does not intend to elicit 'facts' from the interactions with participants, nor will there be an attempt to make judgement about the accounts given by the persons who have contributed to this research. Searle (1995) suggested that judgements are subjective, since their truth or falsity cannot be settled objectively because the truth or falsity depends on certain attitudes, feelings, and points of view of the makers and the hearers of the judgement. However, there are multiple research studies and volumes (ECU, 2011; UCU, 2016, 2017; Hirsch, 2018; Eddo-Lodge, 2018; Rollock 2019) that have relied upon the accounts

of social actors depicting lived experiences that have racist outcomes within a workplace setting, and I would argue that this has become objectified over time and has contributed significantly to my interest in researching these phenomena.

In taking the view that reality is socially constructed and may attract different and conflicting viewpoints, the starting point for the research lay in the data (UCEA, 2018; Advance HE, 2020), which has suggested over several years that black staff are disadvantaged in the workplace and this has been empirically measurable by quantitative data gathering exercises at a national level. As an equality and diversity practitioner working in the field of UK higher education, I had become aware of multiple accounts that might be viewed as contributing factors to these phenomena. In addition to this, the views, attitudes, and interpretation made as a practitioner-researcher, insider-outsider (Gair, 2012) perspective all contribute to this exploration and all accounts gathered through the course of this investigation reflect the uniqueness of each participant's experiences, are equally valid and worthy of respect in understanding the phenomenon under enquiry. Therefore, this exploration seeks to draw together these multiple realities to uncover the complexities of the lived experiences of black staff set within the context of objectified workplace inequalities. In addition, these accounts will be interpreted in such a way that allows for a new contribution to knowledge about this subject as well as a contribution to practice by identifying solutions that can address the findings within this dissertation, not just within higher education but in any organisation with a diverse workforce. These solutions will be explored in the concluding chapter.

The rationale for taking this ontological and epistemological approach to this research has been based upon the consideration given to other philosophical methodologies. It would not have been possible to have taken a positivist approach, since positivism is premised on a phenomenon being real and observable and asserts that only verifiable claims based directly on experience can be considered genuine knowledge (Patton, 2015). I have previously outlined how the topics under enquiry here are more subtle and reality is individually constructed and therefore cannot be objectified. Social constructionism, which opposes positivism and empiricism as these approaches assume that the nature of the world can be revealed by observation (Burr, 2015), is therefore a more natural ontological fit. This creates a problem, insomuch that the research questions cannot verify a hypothesis that racism is the cause for the differential outcomes for black staff in UK higher education. Therefore, the

subjective perceptions and lived experiences of participants working in UK institutions and sector agencies would not amount to 'facts' in a way that could support a positivist approach. If I were utilising a more positivist stance, the means of gathering data would be compromised as the starting position might be that racism *is* the cause of differential outcomes and the enquiry would become more rigid and structured to prove or disprove the hypothesis. In addition to this, one would need to define racism, where there are multiple definitions and consequently multiple understandings, and individuals would need to relate their own outcomes within these stringent parameters.

The same consideration has been given to grounded theory, which incorporates and applies concepts such as validity, reliability, causality, and generalisability to qualitative inquiry. This approach is premised on analysing actions and processes rather than themes and structures, which would not have been ideal with this study. In terms of critical realism, this methodology posits that there is a reality out there that exists independently of our knowledge of it (Patton, 2015; McLachlan and Garcia, 2015). However, McLachlan and Garcia (2015) found the application of critical realism challenging throughout the interview stage of their research journeys in which they became aware of a more constructionist influence. Their view was that applying critical realism meant the approach was too rigid and that attempting to command the interview in an objective manner considering the subjectivity of participant accounts became a secondary consideration (ibid). Due to the nature of this research study, it was imperative that I could include myself within the participants' perceptions and lived experiences not as an objective outsider looking in but immersed within the topics being discussed to facilitate a collective generation and transmission of meaning between researcher and participant (Crotty, 1998; McLachlan and Garcia, 2015).

As a practitioner-researcher, I too construct my own reality based upon my own background, experience and attitudes towards others and the world around me. Because meaning is socially constructed, ideas, properties and understanding of phenomena are conditioned through historical processes. I therefore follow Cunliffe (2008) who states that social reality is not separate from us and that social realities and ourselves are intimately interwoven as each shape, and are shaped, by the other in everyday interactions. As I am researching the topic of race and racism through the lens of a white, female practitioner-researcher this has meant that I have had to be sensitive to assumptions I may make because of the way I view the

subject matter, which has been informed through practice, and through my interactions and experiences within a workplace setting. On reflection, these perspectives have helped *and* hindered my discussions with participants during the data gathering phase of this research, which is discussed further in section 4.6 of this chapter. The following section will provide further insight about an influential concept (Critical Race Theory) that has helped with the approach for this research and brought me closer to gaining certain capital in preparation for my interaction with people of colour within the field.

4.3 Critical race theory – the starting point

In keeping with, and as an extension to taking a social constructionist approach to the research, the study has also been influenced by Critical Race Theory (CRT), which offers a radical lens upon which to view the topic under enquiry. CRT provides the basis to make sense of, deconstruct and challenge racial inequality based on the understanding that race and racism are products of social consciousness and power and seeks to expose the way racial inequalities are maintained through systems and structures that appear normal and unremarkable (Rollock and Gillborn, 2011) and this is applied in the analysis of participant accounts in Chapters Six and Seven of this dissertation. The principles of CRT underpin the perspectives behind the research in that racism is central to the enquiry insomuch that it has become an entrenched feature of society (Delgado and Stefancic, 2000: xvi), and as a continuation of this it has become embedded within our institutions (Gillborn, 2006; Sian, 2019; EHRC, 2019) and is often taken for granted and viewed as natural. Racism can also be evidenced in the outcomes of processes and relations irrespective of intent (Gillborn, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1998) and this too is a feature of social relations within a workplace setting.

The second principle is that white supremacy plays a significant role in maintaining the status quo within institutions and the privilege enjoyed by people of white ethnic background cannot be ignored in the context of the hierarchies of power that exist in our institutions, which are overwhelmingly in the possession of white people, particularly men. In this context, white supremacy is not what society tends to associate through extreme right-wing hate groups, but the everyday privileges enjoyed by people of white ethnic background, who will not tend to be conscious of their own ethnic identity (DiAngelo, 2018). By engaging with CRT as a theoretical approach, I must be mindful of my own white ethnic background as a practitioner-

researcher to interrogate my own racial privilege in the process of this research journey, in addition to considering my ability to unveil invisible racism in the accounts provided by participants of this study (McIntosh, 1997).

Notwithstanding the importance of white privilege and the pertinency to the topic under enquiry, the concepts of whiteness and white privilege will not be explored in their entirety within this research although these aspects will be addressed to a lesser extent in considering the organisational structures that people of colour find themselves in within UK higher education institutions. Furthermore, the intersection between race and gender is a significant area for exploration, as individuals possess multi-dimensional identities which inform perspective and experience and are likely to affect a person's outcomes (Crenshaw, 1989; Bourdieu, 2001a). Despite intersectionality playing a pivotal role on the experiences of people of colour, this aspect will not be addressed in detail within this study due in part to limited data being available that considers gender and ethnicity together, and particularly where data is disaggregated to show outcomes for specific ethnic groups. Where data is available, e.g., through ethnicity and gender pay differences, this is evidenced and discussed in Chapter Five of this dissertation.

A further strength of CRT is that it places importance on the voices and experiences of people of colour, and especially people of black ethnic background who are the focus of this research. CRT is aligned with the social constructionist perspective as it does not make assumptions that the accounts of people of colour reflect a singular truth; rather they represent a kaleidoscope of experiences that represent the experiences of people on the margins of a racist society (Rollock and Gillborn, 2011). Another viewpoint of CRT is that white people have little incentive to eradicate racism because it maintains and reinforces organisational hierarchies and power systems that serve to subjugate people of colour. It is this aspect of CRT that, as a practitioner, resonates with my own experiences in being (un)able to advance practice around race and ethnicity and this has been an area which has elicited the greatest resistance and/or emotive response from white colleagues. From experience, discussing white privilege has been problematic because white staff find it challenging to think of themselves as personally being advantaged solely by their colour or ethnic background (DiAngelo, 2018). Many times, the subject of class has crept into the conversation and/or there are complexities around the outcomes of white staff that are not UK-born, which are sometimes different to those who

are white British. These are all valid points however, these accounts tend to derail the focus away from the benefits derived because of ethnicity, and in certain cases, nationality as white people and how these are often different and advantageous compared to the outcomes enjoyed by people of colour.

My professional stance, and the manner in which I have approached this research topic is positioned firmly in the belief that race has been socially constructed; that racism exists in the UK higher education sector as it does in wider society; and that storytelling will provide an opportunity to hear the lived experiences of the participants interviewed through this dissertation.

4.3.1 Qualitative research – the vehicle to provide a voice

The catalyst for this study is the statistical data produced for the UK higher education sector (Advance HE, 2020) on an annual basis through reports that provide demographic information according to different protected characteristics[4] for staff employed within institutions and students studying in institutions. As an equality and diversity practitioner working in UK higher education this data is critical for creating in-house reports and for benchmarking against the rest of the sector. Those data provide sufficient context to the issues affecting the workforce in relation to race, e.g., ethnic minority representation, and examples of the relevant data which have informed this research have been presented in Chapter Five of this dissertation. However, although informative, the statistical data can only identify the outcomes for staff of colour in a retrospective form and across the whole sector and lack the nuances of individual institutions (Acker, 2006). As a result of this, one must rely on generalising the issues that might affect racially minoritised staff in broad themes of representation, career development and retention without knowing the extent to which all or some of these aspects impact upon the overall demographic profile of the UK higher education workforce. Therefore, this research requires a more in-depth enquiry to understand the dynamics of perceived social relations within institutions and the impacts upon racially minoritised staff in the UK higher education sector that might influence these outcomes. To satisfy the requirement of CRT to provide a voice to people of colour, qualitative data gathering is essential to understanding

[4] The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation

the experiences of black staff in UK higher education. Quantitative data highlighted a persistent problem yet is not capable of providing the context nor the richness that qualitative data is capable of offering (Sayer, 1992), especially when researching the lived experiences of participants within a highly emotive and sensitive area.

Despite the richness that qualitative data can provide, there are limitations to qualitative research in terms of the orthodox understanding of generalisability. The participants that self-selected to take part did so through various motivations and the very topic of enquiry may have attracted expressions of interest to participate from those who had a particular story to tell, which may not be wholly indicative of a generalisable experience of all black staff in UK higher education. The purpose of this research is therefore not to generalise in this way, but to further our understanding of the phenomenon (differential outcomes for black staff) by providing indicative themes and participant voice, which have been further analysed conceptually through the lens of Bourdieu, that strengthens and helps develop existing literature on this topic and which is transferable (Daly et al, 2007) to other organisational contexts where there are similar quantifiable staff outcomes identified via workforce data.

In addition to taking a social constructionist approach to understand the lived experiences and perceptions of participants in the UK higher education sector, this research also seeks to understand the social construction of various concepts, such as race, ethnicity, racism etc. as well as make sense of participants' experience of and attitudes towards race and racism in the workplace. To facilitate this, it has been necessary to view these phenomena from a particular perspective. To explore and understand the constructs of race, racism, and workplace race equality within the context of UK higher education and be in a position to explore the differential outcomes for black staff, the research takes a qualitative inductive approach. To support this stance, the study follows an interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith, Flower and Larkin, 2009) and the empirical data has been organised thematically to answer the research questions. To engage with the experiences of others it is necessary to consider and reflect upon personal experiences, preconceptions and assumptions in interpreting participant feedback (Bryman and Bell, 2007), and process those accounts through intersubjective meaning-making (Berger and Luckmann, 1991). However, Cunliffe (2008) suggests that we are not individuals coordinating activity and coming to an understanding of

what each other thinks, but that we are 'selves-in-relation-to-others' and therefore, inseparable.

As an equality and diversity practitioner I have become exposed to the multiple perspectives and experiences of people of colour in the workplace, and all these have been equally valid in constructing and informing the design and methodology of this study. I am conscious that this professional experience has to some extent prejudiced my view about the role institutions play in contributing towards the outcomes for black staff and throughout this research journey I have reflected on how my views and perspectives might influence my interactions with participants, my interpretation of the data gathered and my practice within an organisational setting. Despite this, my appreciation of the issues when engaging with participants during the study has allowed me to gain access to participants in a way that perhaps another white researcher may not have had the privilege to secure. It is not clear whether this has been because of being viewed as an insider (employed within higher education at the time of fielding participation and conducting interviews), being known to be an equality and diversity practitioner and therefore perceived to 'understand' the issues, my reputation for activism within the sector, or whether it was a combination of all these aspects. Whatever has facilitated access, the roles I have held within higher education have enabled me to deal with the complexities of organisational equality, diversity, and inclusion in addition to addressing first-hand how the acts or omissions of organisations impact upon employees within these settings, and it is these insights that have informed my world view and professional practice, and subsequently the research design in addressing this topic.

4.4 Research design

The research design was influenced primarily by Layder's (1993) research map (Table 1, p.87), as it was a useful illustrative tool to link Bourdieu's (1977; 1984; 1990; 1998) and Gidden's (1979; 1984) theories around structure and agency and articulate the complex and inter-related social interactions of people (see Chapter Three). These concepts will be used as an interpretive tool to make sense of the data gathered from participants in the study. Using Layder's multi-level map for analysis is also a useful mechanism from a social constructionist perspective to realise that social interactions and their complexities are weaved within and across a range of layers and is particularly relevant when studying the intricacies of human

behaviour, their impact within an organisational setting and how these might affect outcomes for specific groups of people.

Layder (1993) identified four research elements as context; setting; situated activity; and self, which set out the multiple layers of social organisation by adding texture to the dualistic macro-micro perspective of social relations and sets these within a broader context of history and power, both of which inform and influence the social relationships within and across the layers. The research elements have been adapted to support this research study. The 'context' allows for a macro social organisational focus to understand how the UK higher education sector is informed by wider legislative and social policy to address its approach in embedding equality and diversity practice and how this might impact specifically on advancing race equality in institutions. Race shares a platform with other considerations in terms of the broader equality and diversity agenda and because of this, an organisation's ability to advance race equality has become more challenging. There will be numerous actors involved at multiple levels of an organisation to formulate institutional responses to legislative and policy requirements. In doing so, both 'history' and 'power' play a significant part in the extent to which an institution can respond effectively to legislation and policy development. The perceptions from a range of participants in this study will help identify the extent to which institutions are indeed committed to embedding the principles of equality and diversity and more specifically in the advancement of race equality.

The 'setting' within this research focuses on the intermediate meso-level social organisation and seeks to consider how institutions address the concepts of race and ethnicity, within a broader equality and diversity agenda, and the way institutions approach the management of diverse workforces. This is particularly relevant as UK institutions are set within a backdrop of a white hegemonic structure. The research seeks to understand the views of equality and diversity practitioners within institutions and in agencies with an interest in the sector and consider the opportunities and challenges as practitioners in the field of equality and diversity in driving or informing the agenda. Additionally, the research seeks to establish the shared meanings and understanding of the aspects of this research that relate to race, ethnicity, and racism and whether those meanings and interpretations are indeed shared at all. It can easily be assumed that there is a societal understanding of the concepts of race and ethnicity, and this study wishes to explore whether in fact this is replicated within the workplace. There is

an added consideration that the environment under analysis is one of higher learning and perhaps there is a greater assumption that actors within these settings should be, or are, better informed.

The element of 'situated activity' focuses on the micro-level social activity of actors and set within the context of this research will consider the identities of participants and their perceptions and experiences of working within UK higher education. This is particularly relevant for minority ethnic staff working in institutions where this staff cohort might be isolated by virtue of their ethnic background. In considering situated activity, the research hopes to identify the strategies employed by staff of colour in navigating through organisational structures and shedding light on the opportunities and challenges that this journey brings in respect to their working lives in UK institutions.

Layder (1993:74) described that the 'self' and 'situated activity' are separable elements although the two cannot easily be separated from the social situations in which they are routinely embedded. The research map will assist in considering and analysing the complexities of social interactions through the vertical macro- to micro-organisational layers combined with the horizontal time-space continuum of history through to power, enriching the interpretation of empirical data captured from participants. The research map compliments the theories around structure and agency (Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1984) and will allow greater consideration about the structures of power within institutions and understand better how they operate at macro through to micro level. Furthermore, these layers are overlaid and influenced by history, which is considered in Chapter Three of this dissertation, and considers the imbalance of power that exists within organisations. Although Layder's (1993) research map provides a multi-layer framework for analysis, the map is dynamic and multi-dimensional that allows for richer consideration of complex organisations where agents may act within and across multiple layers of their institution, and in certain circumstances, the wider higher education sector.

In terms of the aspects described above in relation to race, ethnicity and racism it is the manifestation of these aspects that this research seeks to consider and interpret as lived experiences and how they impact upon the self as a participant in this study, as an employee within their respective institution, the way in which these perceptions affect day-to-day workplace activity, the relationships between themselves and other colleagues and their

attitude and behaviour towards the wider organisation. In addition to this, people of colour are to a greater or lesser extent represented across all layers and levels within our institutions and consideration of positioning, identity, belonging and the challenges and opportunities that these aspects bring for black staff at different levels will be explored further within Chapters Six and Seven and Layder's map can facilitate this analysis further.

Table 1: Research map (adapted from Layder, 1993)

	Research element	Research focus and Objectives	Key methods	Theoretical consideration	
History	***Context***	**Focus**: The emergence of equality and diversity within organisations and their impact on race equality **Objective**: Explore to what extent the evolution of equality and diversity in UK higher education has advanced workplace race equality	Systematic literature review and interviews with staff and relevant stakeholders with an interest in UK higher education	Historical and contemporary theories of race, ethnicity and racism in the UK and US Critical race theory Organisational social interactions and power	**Power**
	Setting	**Focus**: Race and ethnicity in the context of white hegemonic organisational structures **Objective**: Explore the experiences of black staff in the context of differential outcomes in UK higher education institutions	Systematic literature review Secondary empirical data – workforce demographics Semi-structured interviews with participants	Historical and contemporary theories of organisational equality and diversity in the US and UK Critical race theories	
	Situated activity	**Focus**: Meanings and understandings of social interactions in an organisational setting and the impact on outcomes for specific groups. **Objective**: Explore experiences of black staff in UK higher education and how they situate themselves within the organisational context	Systematic literature review Historic and current literature on the experiences of people of colour in the workplace Secondary empirical data – workforce demographics Semi-structured interviews with participants	Critical race theories Bourdieu (habitus, field, capital, symbolic power and symbolic violence) Giddens (structure and agency) Race and racism	
	Self	**Focus**: Experiences and perceptions of black staff in the study and on own experience and practice as E&D practitioner **Objective**: Explore the ways in which organisational structures and social interactions impact on working environments	Semi-structured interviews	Critical race theories Bourdieu (habitus, field, capital, symbolic power and symbolic violence) Giddens (structure and agency) Race and racism Identity and belonging	

4.5 Gaining access

The first phase of my data gathering involved an electronic communication (Appendix 3) sent via two higher education networks requesting expressions of interest. At the time, I was employed as Head of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in a post-1992 higher education institution and because of this I was a member of those networks and had access to, and was able to share messages through, its distribution list of academics and practitioners who had self-subscribed to these networks. I used my position in the field, which gave me legitimacy and credibility, as a way of 'infiltrating' the rest of the sector to gain access to personnel that might be difficult to engage through my own connections (Patton, 2015). Participation was sought from staff who identified as possessing black ethnic background, employed at any level and who might be either an academic or professional or support staff member. In this communication expressions of interest were also sought from human resources and equality and diversity practitioners and senior managers of any ethnic background. Participation was sought from all types of institutions and across all areas of the UK with access to these networks. Interestingly, despite outlining within the invitation that the focus of the study was to explore the differential outcomes for black staff in UK higher education and that participation was sought from this cohort, there were a number of expressions of interest received from staff of diverse ethnic backgrounds and in hindsight a definition of the meaning of 'black' should have been made clearer. The networks utilised for the purpose of promotion of this study were the Higher Education Equal Opportunities Network (HEEON) and the Higher Education Race Action Group (HERAG). Both networks have self-selecting membership and are accessible to academics, students and practitioners across the UK higher education sector and coordinated through Advance HE.

Initially, the intention was to interview fifty participants following the receipt of approximately seventy expressions of interest from various colleagues across different institutions in England, Scotland, and Wales. Subsequent attempts at contacting these colleagues, some unsuccessfully, resulted in a total of thirty-one participants being selected on a first come-first-served basis, and interviews began in May 2016. The thirty-one participants interviewed represented various mission statement institutions, e.g., Russell Group, Post-1992, non-affiliated institutions, research institutes, and included practitioners

from external agencies with an interest in higher education. The geographical locations of participants were selected to represent a cross section of different institutional settings with diverse workplace and local population demographics, which resulted in participants representing institutions that were, except for one institution, predominantly based in or near large urban centres. Both the University and College Union (UCU) and Unison, as the two most prominent trade unions representing staff in UK higher education, were contacted to take part however both declined to do so. A small selection of Vice Chancellors were approached once it became apparent that there was no representation at this level amongst those that expressed an interest. As a result of this exercise, one Vice Chancellor agreed to take part in the study. The demographic profile of participants interviewed for this research study can be found at Table 2 (p.93).

Black staff have represented varying levels across academic and professional and support roles, including those who hold an institutional position where they are either a senior manager, human resources or equality and diversity practitioner. Participants identified as various ethnic backgrounds including black, Asian, and mixed heritage although black staff accounted for most participants interviewed as part of the study, e.g., staff from a black African, black Caribbean or any other black ethnic background. Despite it not being the original intention of this research study, on reflection it has been a useful exercise to compare the experiences of staff from diverse minority ethnic backgrounds in the context of UK higher education and how their perceptions and experiences might have been influenced by their ethnic background.

In recognition of the limited ethnic diversity within roles such as senior leaders, human resources or equality and diversity practitioners, expressions of interest were sought from people with any ethnic background to gain an understanding of the opportunities and challenges of advancing race equality in higher education from these perspectives. Interestingly, there was an overall under-representation of staff representing human resources, equality and diversity practitioners and senior managers although the shortage was most acute for senior leaders and human resources professionals. This came as a great surprise considering the number of practitioners involved and engaged across the Higher Education Equal Opportunities Network (HEEON) and Higher Education Race Action Group (HERAG) networks in which the call for participation was promoted. On reflection, it is

possible that due to the topic under investigation that few practitioners may have been prepared to expose the issues affecting their institutions in relation to race, and particularly to another serving practitioner, subjecting their own and colleague's practices under scrutiny. However, despite these challenges, there was no overall shortage of participants who were forthcoming through snowballing for expressions of interest via these practitioner networks. The following section describes the process employed to collect and analyse the data gathered from participants in the study.

4.6 Data collection

This section will explore the considerations given to the methods employed in accessing participants for the research and provide an overview of the themes of the questions that would be used to gather data and subsequently in the analysis of participant feedback. Interviewing is a key tool for a qualitative researcher and in terms of gathering data this is an invaluable method of researching in social sciences (Bryman and Cassell, 2006). The purpose of qualitative interviews is to interpret descriptions of individual's lived experiences and perceptions (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Critique of qualitative data gathering methods has focused on the notion that the interview is not a static event, but an active dynamic process where the interviewer and participant co-construct meaning throughout the interview encounter (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997; Bryman and Cassell, 2006; McLachlan and Garcia, 2015).

Interview schedules (Appendix 4 and 5) were constructed based on the objectives of the study, which was informed by the preliminary literature review undertaken at that point in time and data was gathered using semi-structured one-to-one interviews in person, by phone or via Skype. There was a specific schedule of questions for those who identified as black for the purpose of the study and included those who identified as Asian and mixed race. There was a separate schedule of questions for human resources and equality and diversity practitioners and senior leaders, as there were many crossovers between this specific group in terms of their understanding of race and the opportunities and challenges of advancing race equality across higher education.

The use of a semi-structured interview technique was considered the most appropriate method to extract information around the lived experiences of individuals and would be

undertaken on a one-to-one basis. Interviews were conducted using an informal conversational approach (Patton, 2015) so that I could quickly form a rapport with participants and utilise the time that was available to me to gather as much information as possible. This was considered preferable to using focus groups to question multiple participants due to the personal nature of the questions, e.g., experiences of racism, which I did not feel would be possible to gather had the questioning been carried out within a group setting. Carrying out semi-structured interviews allows a reciprocal relationship between researcher and participant in a way that allows for a fluid mutual negotiation of meaning and power and can allow, not just the collection of data, but the interaction and engagement with participants in real time (Galletta, 2013) using diverse methods of questioning to clarify, probe and to check for understanding on both sides. Not being completely prescriptive with the interview schedule provided a guide to the conversation that allowed participants to move within and around relevant, and sometimes quite abstract, topics at will. Using semi-structured questions allowed me to return to aspects within the conversation that would be specific to the participant and/or to elicit further explanation in a more dynamic way (McLachlan and Garcia, 2015).

The interviews themselves were conducted in a variety of places and were arranged to mutually suit both parties. Some interviews took place within my own private office within my institution or in the participants' institutions within a confidential setting. One interview took place in a café in central London at the request of the participant, which on reflection may not have been the most appropriate setting to conduct an interview due to the background noise of customers, however the setting created an informal environment where we could talk openly about some complex organisational issues. It was important to provide participants with the opportunity to select the venue where we would have a discussion as it was paramount that the participant could feel safe, comfortable and that the environment could provide neutrality for the discussion (Patton, 2015). This would be particularly useful to participants who felt strongly about being away from their usual workplace environment. All interviews, including those conducted over the phone or via Skype were recorded to ensure that an accurate record of the conversation could be produced, and which would facilitate transcription and analysis later. Interviews varied in length, the shortest taking approximately 90 minutes and the longest taking three hours.

An aspect that had not been anticipated with this research was the proportion of self-selecting individuals that expressed an interest to participate who were female. Participants were interviewed in the order that they expressed their interest to take part in the study. It could be interpreted that the higher proportion of women that wished to participate reflects the multiple complex issues that affect women of colour in UK higher education. The same could be observed in the equality and diversity practitioner cohort, who were all women. It is unfortunate that this study has been unable to interrogate this specific cohort of women further to understand their experiences in greater detail in a way that is able to probe the intersection of gender and race and how this might manifest itself within an institutional setting. Despite this, it would be beneficial to explore this aspect further in future.

On reflection it may have been useful to gather information relating to participant nationality status, particularly as the secondary data discussed in Chapter Five mentions the workforce profile according to UK and non-UK national status of staff, although some of the participants talked about their national origins indirectly during interviews.

In summary, the demographics of the participant cohort is as follows:

- 35.5 per cent are employed in Russell Group institutions
- 80.6 per cent are women
- 67.7 per cent are from a black ethnic background
- 48.5 per cent are employed in academic roles
- 41.9 per cent are aged 45-54

The table below provides a demographic outline for the participants interviewed in this study.

Table 2: Demographic profile of study participants

Participant	Institution type	Role	Ethnicity	Gender	Age group
Participant 1	Russell Group	Equality & Diversity Practitioner	Black	Female	45-54
Participant 2	Post-1992	Academic	Black	Male	25-34
Participant 3	Post-1992	Professional	Black	Male	55-64
Participant 4	Russell Group	Academic	Asian	Female	35-44
Participant 5	Post-1992	Senior Professional	Mixed race	Female	45-54
Participant 6	Research institute	Academic	Black	Male	35-44
Participant 7	Russell Group	Senior Professional	Black	Female	55-64
Participant 8	Post-1992	Academic	Other	Female	45-54
Participant 9	Post-1992	Academic	Asian	Female	45-54
Participant 10	Post-1992	Professional	Black	Female	45-54
Participant 11	Post-1992	Professional	Black	Female	16-25
Participant 12	Post-1992	Academic	Asian	Female	35-44
Participant 13	Post-1992	Senior Professional	Mixed race	Male	45-54
Participant 14	Russell Group	Academic	Asian	Female	35-44
Participant 15	Post-1992	HR Practitioner	Black	Female	25-34
Participant 16	Post-1992	Academic	Black	Female	35-44
Participant 17	Post-1992	Academic	Black	Female	45-54
Participant 18	Post-1992	Senior Professional	Black	Female	45-54
Participant 19	Sector Agency	Equality & Diversity Practitioner	White	Female	35-44
Participant 20	Post-1992	Academic	Black	Female	45-54
Participant 21	Post-1992	Academic	Black	Female	55-64
Participant 22	Post-1992	Academic	Black	Female	35-44
Participant 23	Sector Agency	Equality & Diversity Practitioner	White	Female	35-44
Participant 24	Russell Group	Professional	Black	Female	25-34
Participant 25	Russell Group	Professional	Black	Female	45-54
Participant 26	Russell Group	Academic	Black	Male	45-54
Participant 27	Russell Group	Academic	Black	Female	35-44
Participant 28	Russell Group	Academic	Black	Female	35-44
Participant 29	Russell Group	Senior Leader	White	Male	45-54
Participant 30	Post-1992	Equality & Diversity Practitioner	Black	Female	45-54
Participant 31	Russell Group	Equality & Diversity Practitioner	Black	Female	25-34

4.7 Data analysis

All the interviews were recorded using a portable digital voice recorder to ensure that the whole conversation between myself and the participants could be retained for transcription. As Flick (2013) notes, a transcript is the result of transcribing performed by a single person or several persons and for the purpose of this research the interviews were transcribed verbatim in person and by utilising a professional transcriber for some of the interviews due to time constraints. I utilised an analytical framework approach to identify thematic issues (Patton, 2015) by reviewing all transcripts manually to identify content of interest, which were then copied into a separate spreadsheet that identified the most common themes. The spreadsheet focused on several themes that were reoccurring throughout all the interviews and which would inform the content of the dissertation, particularly in terms of identifying the most important areas for inclusion that could address the research questions, desk research, and supporting literature review. Although these themes featured most in the interviews with participants some of the areas did not feature within the final dissertation and this was predominantly due to the scope of the research study, which focused on race and ethnicity, identity and belonging, racism, institutional racism, and challenges as a practitioner.

These themes were as follows:

- Race and ethnicity
- Identity and belonging
- Racism
- Institutional racism
- Racial hierarchy
- Institutional commitment*
- Networking*
- Challenges as a practitioner*
- Future considerations*
- Intersectionality

A number of these themes, namely those marked with an asterix (*) elicited few and mixed responses, which were related to individual institutions. Some participants offered their

opinions on what their institution or the overall sector could do to address race equality. Using Layder's (1993) research map this could have provided perspectives relating to context but there was insufficient content to elicit a meaningful discussion around these topics and did not provide responses that answered the research questions. In terms of intersectionality, I was unable to gather sufficient data that could provide good quality insights on this topic as this was not included in the research schedule but did arise through general conversation and to probe further when the topic of intersecting identities arose.

I had asked all participants from an ethnic minority background whether they were members of their institutional ethnic minority staff network to understand how engaged staff are with affinity groups and whether they offer the support needed in the workplace, despite this broader topic not being included within the research questions. Most participants answered in the negative. Although this is a significant finding, I decided to exclude this topic from the overall findings because it did not answer the research questions. However, the responses gathered from participants around network membership could have provided insight around the aspect of 'self' using Layder's (1993) research map, and the literature review did not include a discussion around support mechanisms used by ethnic minority staff within the workplace in this instance.

A qualitative inductive analysis is a method to condense raw textual data into summary format to establish links between the research objectives and the finding derived from the empirical data (Thomas, 2016; Patton, 2015), which was gathered from participants through the semi-structured interviews. On establishing these themes an inductive analytical strategy was employed to make sense of the data collected and to interpret broad issues that arose through the interviews and identify the appropriate themes that warranted inclusion within the dissertation. Quotes were subsequently added into the spreadsheet to create a narrative from each participant covering each broad subject heading where this existed. Adopting a reflexive approach to this research allowed me to examine my own preconceptions about how I interact and view the social world or being aware of how I arrived at a particular perspective (Johnson and Duberley, 2000; McAuley, Duberley and Johnson, 2007). For Bourdieu (1977; 1984; 1990) reflexivity entails systematic reflection by the social scientist to make the unconscious conscious and the tacit explicit to reveal their formative social location and corresponding habitus that can influence any account (Johnson and Duberley, 2003). To

ensure that I would not become influenced by my own habitus in the selection of data and in my interpretation of it, I approached the analytical function of the study in an objective manner by including all data that was related to the themes detailed above, regardless of the data. There was much data that could not be included within this dissertation and therefore some distinction needed to be made to ensure that the most relevant participant lived experiences and perceptions could be included that could answer the research questions detailed in Chapter One.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the research methodology employed during this study and has provided a framework outlining the research design and methods utilised in achieving the aims and objectives of the research. This study was undertaken to explore the differential outcomes for black staff in UK higher education institutions and understand the perceptions and lived experiences of black staff to identify the contributing factors for those outcomes.

By using a qualitative approach to this research, it has been possible to focus on the meaning participants attach to social phenomena, understand the world around them and reflect on why they may see the world around them as they do. As practitioner-researcher I too have used reflexive practice to better understand the concepts explored within this research and apply my learning to my professional practice. There have been some obstacles to overcome in gaining these insights, such as the length of some interviews and the time-consuming nature of manually analysing the empirical data gathered to identify themes. However, on reflection these obstacles have been far outweighed by the opportunities afforded by that personal data analysis, which has generated a multitude of perspectives that I feel may not have been gathered in such detail. Using an interpretive methodology has allowed me to make meanings from the themes that have arisen from the interviews to meet the aims and objectives of this research study and answer the research questions set out in Chapter One.

The subsequent chapter will explore the desk research that considers the strategic drivers in UK higher education to advance race equality and how this has developed over time, including the evolution of equal opportunities to diversity management and the role of change agents. Later, the chapter will contextualise these concepts to UK higher education and there will be a closer look at the workforce demographics according to ethnicity.

5 Workplace equality and diversity practice in UK higher education

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided the philosophical position taken to approach this research study as one that is constructionist. The topics being explored relate to UK higher education employees, and as such, each participant contributed to the interviews by sharing their personal stories and perspectives about their workplace, their lived experiences and provided accounts of their personal and working lives that were *their* lived realities at the time. As practitioner-researcher my role was not to elicit facts, but to provide a platform for their voices to be heard and to offer an interpretation to these accounts within the context of my own lived experiences and understanding of the world, the supporting literature and desk research, which informed the topics under discussion.

This chapter will address the first research question, namely, to understand the strategic drivers to advance institutional race equality and how this has progressed over time. In answering this question this chapter outlines the historic and contemporary development of equality and diversity theory and practice in the UK and contextualises this within a higher education setting, i.e., the context in which the participants are operating. The way in which these concepts have been socially constructed over time have been influenced by and reflect societal fluctuations within national constructs, as well as beyond our state borders. These concepts have been incrementally shaped by legislation together with policy and business practice and continue to develop within our modern organisations to suit employers and stakeholders alike.

The evolution from equal opportunities towards diversity management has been demonstrated through a shift in organisational approach and engagement with the agenda, and the chapter will explore the differences in these perspectives and how that might advance or inhibit change. At a macro level, social, political, legal, business, and ethical considerations have shaped the equality and diversity landscape, and at meso level, it is the organisational understanding of these factors that will influence the approach taken by senior leaders and other actors in embedding practice. The theoretical and practical implications of organisational thinking around equality and diversity rely on institutional change agents and

there will be an exploration of the issues that arise for this body of advocates, including questioning whether HR and equality and diversity practitioners are as active around the topic of race as they are with other protected characteristics[5].

The chapter will also consider how the UK higher education sector has embraced equality, diversity and inclusion, how this has evolved over time and will consider the rationale behind focusing on specific areas of equality and diversity whilst attending to all protected characteristics. Assisting change across UK higher education are sector-specific agencies with their own agenda and priorities that address equality and diversity for the benefit of both individual higher education institutions and promoting good practice across the sector. These agential priorities may shift attention away from areas that require further focus in terms of individual institutional priorities and may take an opposing direction of travel to the needs of the individual institution.

Finally, there will be an examination of the current workforce demographics in relation to the focus of this research; ethnicity, to provide a framework to the remainder of this study, which will focus specifically on race. There will be a description of the ethnic demography of our UK higher education institutions to understand the challenges the sector faces in diversifying its workforce to reflect and meet the demands of an ever-increasing diverse student body. The data presented will highlight the overall workforce profile according to ethnicity, and will consider pay differentials and retention, all of which will have an impact on the overall representation of ethnic minority staff in UK higher education.

The following section will begin by defining the terminology often used in practice and charting the evolution of workplace equality and diversity, how this has been shaped by international influences, and exploring the distinctions between these concepts and their impact on different organisations.

5.2 Contextualising equality and diversity

Equality and diversity are terms that have been coined in the UK to champion aspects of society that encompass equality of opportunity, multiculturalism, human rights, and anti-discrimination. The terms are often used interchangeably in practice but are distinct in the

[5] Protected characteristics are those which are specifically protected under the Equality Act 2010 and include age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation

theories that underpin them and how they are applied in an organisational setting. These terms also chart the evolution of people-centred policy and practice in organisations through the latter half of the 20th and early 21st centuries.

The contemporary meaning of equality can be defined as the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities (Oxford English Dictionary, 2021). The concept of equality has shifted through modern times as a tool for political and social reform and has cut across economic, political, and social spheres. Equality has been attached to the socialist critique of poverty, supported the idea of social justice, and shifted from its attachment to class, status and wealth to the relationship between different groups and individuals in society (Institute for Public Policy Research, 1997).

In relation to the individual, the concept of equality is not new and yet, the irony is that early application was gendered. It was in the US that the first statement was made according to the status of men. The phrase ‘all men are created equal’ was included by Thomas Jefferson in the U.S. Declaration of Independence in 1776, and that phrase was not only significant during the American revolutionary period, which led to subsequent probing into the validity of slavery but is also thought to have continuing importance in modern American society (Green, 1976). In the struggle for civil rights, prominent activists would use the Declaration of Independence as a means of arguing the case for equality for women and African Americans (Library of Congress, 2021). During the French Revolution, equality, along with freedom and fraternity, became the basis for the *Déclaration des droits de l´homme et du citoyen* of 1789 (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 2021). Furthermore, the concept of equal treatment would become a principle of the Treaty of Rome in 1957 and would establish the application of the principle that men and women should receive equal pay for equal work (Article 157, TFEU 2009). These principles would permeate broader civil and social rights thereafter. A modern perspective on the concept of equality might result in the acknowledgment that people are not in fact equal and as a result cannot be treated equally, however we can consider ourselves to command equal dignity and respect and this is now an accepted and assumed Western standard.

In 1961 the Kennedy administration introduced the concept of equal opportunities to the United States via affirmative action to ensure equal treatment in employment on the grounds of specific characteristics and would set the scene for subsequent developments promoting

equality of opportunity. The contemporary framework for equal rights in the UK can also be traced back to the 1960s, where advances were made in direct response to the civil rights movement in the US. The UK journey has subsequently been shaped by developments in anti-discrimination legislation and research.

The 1990s saw a shift from moral and social justice arguments for equal opportunities to an emphasis on a more deregulated business self-interest (Riley et al. 2013; Dickens, 1994; Liff and Dickens, 2000) paving the way for a renewed focus on organisational diversity. Equal opportunities is a term used in the UK, with roots set firmly in compliance with anti-discrimination legislation and is often expressed as the moral or social justice case for diversity (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2013). This concept was especially promoted in public sector organisations due to higher levels of scrutiny imposed through legislation, e.g., Equality Act 2010 and public duties. This approach has influenced organisations to focus on the collective pluralistic needs or outcomes of groups, rather than concentrate on individuals. According to Dickens (1999) a state intervention is central to an equality agenda because the market tends to produce discrimination, not equality. This approach can dilute the issues faced by individuals and can mask the inequalities arising through the intersections of multiple characteristics. A focus on equality has provided an organisational environment that occupies itself with understanding the barriers that different groups might experience (Healy, Kirton and Noon, 2011) and provides an important step for organisations to implement a system of measures that can evidence the multiple barriers employees, and service users, can face.

The focus on equal opportunities was also undermined by the negative publicity created in the late 1980s amid outcries of 'political correctness gone wrong' (Shultz, 1993), which had the effect of discouraging people from engaging with equal opportunities and which created a culture of fear surrounding appropriate terminology. Political correctness was a term coined during the 1980/90s that was defined as "the avoidance of forms of expression or action that are perceived to exclude, marginalise or insult groups of people who are socially disadvantaged or discriminated against" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2021). It is concerned with language, policies, and actions however, it eventually became synonymous as a term to describe an ideological straitjacket (Philpot, 1999; Crawley, 2007). A survey commissioned by the then Commission for Racial Equality revealed that political correctness was thought a

contributing factor to the decline of Britishness. Respondents commented that political correctness was seen to be anti-British because it was perceived to undermine the democratic idea of freedom of speech (Ethnos, 2006[6]).

No respondents took issue with the idea that language is a powerful tool to achieve social change, yet almost all respondents were angry that they felt they could no longer express what they took to be legitimate concerns and criticisms in relation to ethnic minorities (Ethnos, 2006). The prevailing political climate around language and freedom of speech concerning matters of race influenced the way in which equality could be tackled by organisations, and levels of resistance translated from society into the workforce. Dickens (1999) argues that the state as regulator standing back would result in equality being edged out only to be picked up within management prerogative. A period of less enforcement of affirmative action would ensue, and with subsequent political administration changes in the late 1980s, a path had been forged that would let go of past measures to redress the imbalance of past employment discrimination and herald the beginnings of diversity management (Kelly and Dobbin, 1998).

Schwabenland and Tomlinson (2015) describe the anxiety felt among practitioners whilst operating in the equality and diversity field within UK voluntary sector organisations, demonstrating unease in operationalising diversity practice, signalling that political correctness as a perceived 'straitjacket' has not disappeared. In higher education, a recent article (The Week, 2020) described how German university academics felt that a climate of political correctness in universities and colleges is stifling academic debate with a survey showing that four in five academics believe that far-right groups, such as the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party should be able to air their views without fear of reprisals.

A report published in the late 1980s highlighted the need to develop organisational culture and policy for the changing demography of the U.S. workforce to consider the growing numbers of women, black and minority ethnic and ageing employees. The report, *Workforce 2000*, (Johnston and Packer, 1987) warned that the American workforce would over the

[6] The definition used in the survey described it as: "Carefully chosen language can encourage, promote or establish certain social outcomes and relationships, or the idea that language that excludes or insults a particular group in society should be resisted, or the belief that the resulting changes from these two efforts can benefit society".

subsequent decade grow more slowly, become older, more female, and increasingly disadvantaged, adding that only 15% of new entrants to the workforce would be made up of native white males. This report would become the catalyst for considering the impact of a more diverse workforce and how American industries could take advantage of this. At the same time, the prospect of workforce diversity would create an industry dedicating itself to organisational diversity that has continued to gather momentum ever since. The engagement with diversity management in the UK developed as the business benefits were established in the United States due to the shifting composition of the labour market and supply and demand of labour (Gilbert and Ivancevich, 2000). This slowly provided a shift away from the concept of equal opportunities in UK organisations towards the creation of a business case for attracting and managing a diverse workforce.

Healy, Kirton and Noon (2011) identified that diversity is now part of the discourse of modern business and public organisations, although there may be different organisational drivers. The business case for diversity has been criticised as it can undermine the notion of equal opportunity. Even within an organisation that appreciates the business case for action, any approach taken would be selective and there is no guarantee that the business case would concur with the needs of disadvantaged groups of employees (Dickens, 1999). Similarly, Noon (2007) argues that the business case for diversity is associated with management rhetoric that focuses on individualism, identifying personal traits as more important than social group characteristics and ignores and suppresses the legitimacy of social justice arguments.

Diversity as a concept has been presented as being an understanding and acknowledgement of difference (Kandola and Fullerton, 1998), where diversity is multi-dimensional, taking account of different personal characteristics that are visible, as well as more hidden features, e.g., religion. Mazur (2010) states that these dimensions are not isolated, they interact with and influence one another, and emerge or are displayed differently in different contexts, environments, and circumstances. There is substantial literature posing the advantages, including better problem solving and higher productivity, and sometimes disadvantages, such as cultural clashes and bias, of a diverse workforce (Kandola and Fullerton, 1998; Trenerry and Paradies, 2012; Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2013; Bassett-Jones, 2005; Mazur, 2010; Riley, Metcalf and Forth, 2013; Özbilgin, et al. 2016; Smulovitz, et al. 2019). There are also considerations required in terms of diversity management and Ivancevich and

Gilbert (2000) identified that a ‘gameplan’ that includes diversity thinking, discussion and analysis would require patience, full participation and carefully conducted research that would entail expanding the discussion beyond race, ethnicity, and gender.

From a Human Resource Management perspective, there are two approaches that organisations can take in terms of the relationship between themselves and employees which is pertinent to diversity management. The unitarist approach is the view that the organisation as a unitary structure is based on harmony and trust between employer and employee. The emphasis is placed on their common values and objectives, which unite the parties in a common enterprise. This approach suggests there is no inevitable conflict because parties share common interests in the organisation (Van Buren, 2020). Conversely, a pluralistic approach sees the organisation as comprising different groups with common and divergent aims and objectives. These differences require employees to exercise voice to defend their interests because there are inevitable conflicts between employer and employee (Geare, et al, 2014)

Taking into consideration the differences inherent within an organisational workforce, diversity management has been defined as a management philosophy of recognising and valuing heterogeneity in organisations with a view to improve organisational performance (Özbilgin and Tatli, 2011). Mazur (2010) argues that diversity is a subjective phenomenon created by actors based on their own different social identities who categorise others to be similar or dissimilar to themselves. Ng (2008) contends that it can be problematic to approach diversity management effectively if there is insufficient senior commitment and lack of acknowledgement within the organisation that people are more attracted to and prefer to associate with people who are similar to themselves. Organisational leaders and decision-makers will also exercise discretion as to whether and how to manage diversity as their decisions will be affected by their own commitment to the agenda and their values and beliefs (Bassett-Jones, 2005). Ng (2008) argues that organisations that voluntarily pursue diversity management do so where business objectives coincide with group-based needs, e.g., women or ethnic minorities. In support of this, Syed and Özbilgin (2009) argue that unless diversity is addressed through a comprehensive cultural transformation at multiple levels, diversity management in organisations would be cosmetic and uneven. One can easily observe through the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 how there have been global calls for organisations

to tackle systemic race inequalities (McCulloch for Personnel Today, 2020). Actions taken by organisations, if any, following the death of George Floyd in May 2020, may be prompted by organisational and reputational risk associated market forces and there has been criticism that businesses should engage beyond adding a hashtag to their external communications campaigns (Davies for The Guardian, 2020).

The discussion thus far has focused on the broader organisational scope of equality, diversity, and inclusion however, this has been distinct within the public sector environment where the driver for change has centred around the legislative requirements implemented by means of public duties. To support this, Greene and Kirton (2009) suggest that the public sector has arguably a better record on equality and diversity because of its proximity to UK equality legislation and given the dual role of the state as employer and legislator. There may also be additional pressure to be better because the public sector is heavily unionised (Greene and Kirton, 2009). The first public sector duty, relating to race, was implemented because of the Macpherson report (1999), the disability equality duty came into force in 2006, followed by the gender equality duty in 2007. In terms of race, the duty amended the Race Relations Act 1976, imposing certain obligations on UK local authorities specifically to make appropriate arrangements with a view to securing that their various functions were carried out with due regard to (a) eliminate unlawful racial discrimination; and (b) promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups (McColgan, 2015). The power of this duty brought about a significant change in the way local authorities considered their policies and practices, and as a result the Equality Framework for Local Government came into existence to provide closer scrutiny of the main functions within local authorities[7] (Local Government Association, 2018).

The contemporary Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is contained within s.149, Equality Act 2010, replacing the earlier duties in April 2011 and is applicable to England, Scotland, and Wales. The PSED would become operational across the wider public sector, including UK higher education. The PSED as it stands today is specific to public authorities. Public authorities are named within Schedule 19 of the Equality Act 2010, and in broad terms an organisation that falls within the definition is one that exercises public functions (EHRC, 2014).

[7] Knowing your communities; Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment; Involving your communities; Responsive services and customer care; and A skilled and committed workforce

In doing so, the PSED now asks for attention to be given to all nine protected characteristics and those public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

There is an expectation on public sector organisations to fulfil their PSED requirements by collecting and analysing workforce data across the different protected characteristics. This is with the aim of understanding whether organisations are, for example, recruiting employees who are disadvantaged or under-represented; promoting people fairly whatever their protected characteristic; checking that women's and men's pay is comparable in similar or equivalent jobs or because the work they undertake is of equal value in relation to factors such as effort, skills and decision-making; and making progress towards the aims set out in their equality policy if they have one (EHRC, 2014).

At face value this approach is broadly consistent with Ivancevich and Gilbert's (2000) point that attention should be given to diversity more broadly, however as Syed and Özbilgin (2009) observed, diversity management may not be fit for UK purposes as it is currently articulated, nor does it achieve equitable employment outcomes for diverse employees. There is little empirical evidence that current diversity management practices are adequate to foster race equality at work and Janssens and Zanoni (2014) assert that these practices are ineffective because they focus directly on individuals' cognition rather than address the structural dimensions of privilege, domination, and disadvantage. Greene and Kirton (2009) also make a valid point in stating that diversity management is more difficult within a public sector environment linked to the complexities of the notion of 'customer' and in terms of the resource constraint and budget rationalisation, which is affected by government policy and can deprioritise organisational equality and diversity efforts. To support Syed and Özbilgin (2009) further in terms of their observation, the broadening of the PSED has in practice resulted in the direct focus enabled by its predecessor duty towards specific protected characteristics to become lost. The Black Lives Matter movement has exposed that there has

been insufficient progress on race and an even more focused approach is required to address persistent racial inequalities that exists within the employment sphere.

In 2015, NHS England introduced a Workforce Race Equality Standard citing that a motivated, included, and valued workforce helps deliver high quality patient care, increased patient satisfaction and better patient safety and to ensure employees from black and minority ethnic backgrounds have equal access to career opportunities and receive fair treatment in the workplace. Thereby acknowledging that amidst a comprehensive approach to equality and diversity, a large and complex public sector organisation such as the NHS, felt it was relevant and appropriate to add specific focus to one protected characteristic (NHS England, 2018). In hindsight this is ironic considering the unequal outcomes of ethnic minority people during the COVID-19 pandemic, where disproportionate numbers of ethnic minority people were likely to contract and/or die of the virus. A report by Public Health England (2020) stated that discussions with stakeholders showed that COVID-19 did not create health inequalities, but rather the pandemic exposed and exacerbated longstanding inequalities affecting ethnic minority groups in the UK (Public Health England, 2020).

The attempts made by NHS England to implement the Workforce Race Equality Standard provides an example of a hybrid approach (McGrandle, 2017), involving diversity management *and* moral imperative, to ensure that equitable employment outcomes are addressed. However, this approach is one that has been driven by the desire to tackle race equality by NHS England rather than be mandated through legislation. Following Public Health England's report (2020), it will remain to be seen whether NHS England will revise their race equality standard in future.

In UK higher education, a study of academic recruitment and retention issues in English universities suggested that the diversity debate did not have a high profile amongst academics (Deem, 2007), and may account for the position in the sector today. An earlier study provided a similar outlook to the limited progress made against race equality and ethnic diversity within the public library services in the UK (Durrani, 2002) due largely to the absence of an effective champion. This highlights that there is a disconnect between the theoretical concepts outlined by Ivancevich and Gilbert (2000) given that the diversity management agenda focuses primarily on individual worker attributes, whereas an equality approach considers equality of opportunity, as well as equality of outcome. This has certain implications for the

practical basis upon which the PSED was introduced to the UK public sector to address the acknowledged inequalities relating to particular personal characteristics, as well as the need to diversify public sector organisations to reflect the communities they serve. This aspect will be explored further in this chapter by considering how race as a protected characteristic has been addressed in UK higher education. Like NHS England and their race equality standard, the UK higher education sector does have its own Race Equality Charter, which will be discussed in further detail in section 5.5 of this chapter.

Oswick (2011) explored the patterns and trends of diversity-related work and identified that diversity remains a popular academic discourse, which has been the case in relation to diversity management (Özbilgin and Tatli, 2011; Kandola and Fullerton, 1998; Syed and Özbilgin, 2009; Tatli, 2010). Tatli (2010) observed in her exploration of the diversity management field that there has been a polarisation in the approach to diversity management, between group-based discrimination in employment and the performance related outcomes of diversity. The shift from equal opportunities towards diversity management as a backlash against affirmative action programmes in the US identified by Kelly and Dobbin (1998) has been mirrored to some extent within the UK, especially in terms of the popular misconception surrounding positive action and positive discrimination within employment (Noon, 2010).

The following section will consider how the UK higher education sector has approached equality and diversity and the way it has embedded these principles through individual institutions and sector-specific agencies.

5.3 Equality and diversity in UK higher education

The UK higher education sector is not unique to other public sector organisations in the way it has developed and implemented diversity-related policy and practice. The organisational context differs slightly in that UK higher education institutions have developed into more neoliberal establishments where they are income generating, and therefore more able to reinvest in ways that may not be possible if solely funded by the public purse. However, in his critique of the apparent unquestioned neoliberal context of contemporary organisations, Monbiot (The Guardian, 2016) argues that ‘the organisation of labour and collective bargaining by Trade Unions are portrayed as market distortions that impede the formation of

a natural hierarchy of winners and losers. Inequality is recast as virtuous: a reward for utility and a generator of wealth, which trickles down to enrich everyone. Efforts to create a more equal society are both counterproductive and morally corrosive. The market ensures that everyone gets what they deserve'. He goes on to say that this 'neoliberal philosophy' has been accepted and internalised by society, arguing that '… those who fall behind become defined and self-defined as losers'. This is a compelling argument when one considers the inequality that exists for black staff within higher education institutions (see workforce data in Chapter 5). To develop Monbiot's debate further, he is describing society as a collection of neoliberal selves. The neoliberal self is a person who weighs up the pros and cons of a situation from the perspective of 'how does/will it affect me?'. According to McGuigan (2014) when writing about the neoliberal self, he suggested that inequality is no bad thing, since there must be winners and losers of any genuine competition. An interesting consideration in institutions where it would appear that much of the inequality of opportunity is one dimensional.

However, engaging with the notion of winners and losers from an organisational diversity perspective would require a consideration of positionality within Bourdieu's field, which was discussed in Chapter Four of this dissertation. Bourdieu's (1986; 1998) argument is that different forms of capital position people within the field and these positions are relational vis a vis others. If you take a capital portfolio approach, 'loss' is only in relation to the symbolic nature of that capital and therefore, the winner/loser arguments stem from a privileged position. There have always been losers, however in the context of race, the discomfort is that the historical winners (white people) may now be the potential losers as organisations focus their attention on tackling racial inequalities. In the US this fear resulted in 'reverse discrimination' challenges to affirmative action such as the Supreme Court case, *Regents of the University of California v Bakke* [1978], where this argument stems from white privilege. Positioning this from an organisational perspective, HR professionals and diversity practitioners would be uncomfortable in acknowledging 'losers' as this might also imply white HR/diversity practitioner perspectives where the status quo may be under threat.

There are multiple and complex challenges to consider in prioritising various policies and initiatives that litter the organisational setting to keep up with ever-changing approaches and practices. The organisational characteristics of higher education institutions, particularly those with strong traditions of professional autonomy and freedom in decision-making, can

make this environment challenging to successfully implement policies and strategies to address race within the broader equality and diversity context (ECU, 2011). Despite this, the general assumption is that the public sector is a more inclusive and diverse working environment and is supported to some extent by Greene and Kirton's (2009) assertion that the public sector has a better record at equality and diversity. In advancing equality and diversity for marginalised groups within complex organisations there will naturally be winners and losers, and this is likely to cause disquiet and unrest amongst the losers, especially if they come from the dominant racial group.

In the late 1980s a review of equal opportunities policies was conducted in higher education to establish how it compared to other public sector organisations (Williams et al, 1989). That study found that few higher education institutions had any policies in place. By the late 1990s, a survey found that nearly all universities had equal opportunities policies in place (Commission on University Career Opportunity, 1997), however the report expressed concern that those policies needed to be actively pursued, and there were several organisations where policies were not being implemented. Hoque and Noon (2004) referred to these types of policies as 'empty shells', where an equal opportunities policy may have been adopted by an organisation but not enacted through action plans or enhanced opportunities for disadvantaged groups, such as targeted recruitment.

Hoque and Noon (2004) also observed that there was no greater likelihood of a public sector organisation having an equal opportunities policy in place, but where they did do so, it was less likely for that policy to be an 'empty shell'. This was potentially due to public sector organisations being unionised, having specialists in place, e.g., human resources and equality and diversity officers, and with the potential for increased public scrutiny. Also, the authors found they could predict the incidence of equal opportunities policies according to workforce characteristics. In the context of race for example, workplaces where more than 10 percent of its workforce was from a minority ethnic background were more likely to have a policy related to ethnicity than those with fewer than ten percent (Hoque and Noon, 2004), demonstrating that an ethnically diverse workplace can to some extent be the catalyst for the promotion and implementation of inclusive policy and practice.

There has been a significant shift in the way that higher education institutions have increased the visibility of equality and diversity and this direction of travel has been assisted through

heightened prominence by government funded and subscription-based agencies that support UK higher education institutions. The growing focus on the importance of equality, diversity, and inclusion in the provision of education to the public, as well as the need to reflect the communities that UK universities serve through its workforce has become embedded in the strategic vision of these agencies as well as many higher education institutions. For example, student diversity has been largely driven by Government policy to increase the participation of the black and minority ethnic student population, especially in low participation communities, through the setting of national targets[8] (Turner, 2019; Connell-Smith and Hubble, 2018). Diversifying the student population has largely been a successful enterprise by universities over the years, yet Bhopal (2018) reminds us that the outcomes of those minority ethnic students may not be as successful as their white counterparts.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), since superseded by the Office for Students (OfS) in 2018, funded and regulated universities and colleges in England. They recognised that a diverse and inclusive organisational culture made for a more effective and productive workforce (HEFCE, 2018). HEFCE also had in place its own Equality Objectives and annually reported against its Equality and Diversity Scheme. Its 2016 report stated that the rationale for enhancing equality and diversity in higher education is based on two tenets; a *business case* to embed equality of opportunity and foster diversity that creates conditions for an excellent higher education system; and a *social justice* case where the agency is uniquely placed to support the higher education sector. Their approach to equality was to guide, encourage and test that equality is being considered across the sector, whilst recognising that each institution is responsible for its own compliance (HEFCE, 2016).

The articulation of HEFCE's rationale for equality and diversity summarises the way that higher education institutions approach the agenda in practice. It is one that considers the business benefits of diversity, together with the legal rather than social justice case, to reduce barriers and improve the rate of engagement from a range of stakeholders. Neither HEFCE nor OfS incentivise nor enforce higher education institutions to proactively address race equality, diversity and inclusion in ways that are similar to the constraints in place for the Athena SWAN (gender) awards, which inhibited institutions being shortlisted for research

[8] Set in 2015 to increase the number of black and minority ethnic students entering higher education by 20 percent by 2020

funding. This is discussed later in this chapter. The OfS also have equality objectives in place to 2022 (Appendix 1) which, not surprisingly, have a primary focus on prospective and existing students within higher education. There is little focus on their workforce and less of an indication within the document of how OfS will work to ensure these objectives are achieved.

Another prominent higher education-focused agency is the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), which merged with other higher education agencies to become Advance HE in 2018. The ECU was funded by HEFCE from 2002-2015 to focus on sector-specific work related to equality, diversity, and inclusion. From 2015 it changed its funding stream to rely on a subscription model that required individual higher education institutions to pay an annual fee on a sliding scale based upon the institution's income. The ECU's mission was to work in partnership with universities, colleges, and other sector bodies to advance equality, promote diversity in their staff and student bodies and build inclusion into all aspects of higher and further education (ECU, 2018).

The ECU provided practical solutions through guidance, research, statistical reports, training, and consultancy to support the higher education sector in their work to advance equality, diversity, and inclusion. In addition to these services, the ECU also coordinated the gender equality (Athena SWAN) and Race Equality Charter (REC) awards, to address the cultural and systemic issues that can create barriers for people with these characteristics. At the time of writing, there are 164 Athena SWAN members holding 962 awards between them (July 2021) and 80 REC members and 17 award holders (July 2021). Both charters have key principles in which institutions commit to become a member (Advance HE, 2021).

These award initiatives are not mandatory, except in 2011 the UK Chief Medical Officer announced that the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) would only expect to shortlist medical schools for Biomedical Research Centre (BRC) and Unit (BRU) funding if the associate academic school holds a Silver Athena SWAN award. This was later expanded to include Patient Safety Research Centre funding in 2012 (Advance HE, 2020). The link between NIHR funding and Athena SWAN has recently been removed (Oloyede et al, 2021). There has been no such incentive with the REC, which may account for the far fewer institutional members and even fewer award holders. Research undertaken on behalf of the University and College Union (Bhopal and Pitkin, 2018) investigated the impact of the Race Equality Charter mark across UK higher education and highlighted that the charter enabled institutions

to focus more on race, however there was still more to do that could address ethnic minority underrepresentation in institutions and called for more senior accountability in championing race equality.

There are other agencies with an interest in UK higher education that promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the sector; Universities UK (UUK), whose primary function is policy, advocacy, analysis and research; the Higher Education Academy (HEA), whose purpose is to champion teaching excellence; and the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE), whose function involves developing and improving the management, governance and leadership skills of existing and future leaders of higher education. The LFHE have several programmes that support the equality and diversity agenda in the sector. Their focus is to address the under-representation of women and minority ethnic leaders through mentoring programmes. The Bell Review (2017) recommended that the number of core agencies taking subscriptions from institutions (particularly in England) should reduce from nine to six over the succeeding two years. This meant that from August 2018, a new agency, Advance HE, brought together the functions of the ECU, the HEA and the LFHE.

In addition to these sector agencies, it is important to mention the role that the Trade Unions have in promoting and advancing equality, diversity, and inclusion. There are two recognised Trade Unions within UK higher education; University and College Union (UCU) that supports members employed on academic contracts; and Unison, which supports members employed on professional and support contracts in universities. UCU claims to put equality at the heart of its activities on behalf of its members, yet only some branches or local associations have equality officers to assist members if they experience difficulties (UCU, 2018). However, the Trade Union does have comprehensive resources and guidance available online, as well as member networks for particular interest groups. UCU also conducts research on issues affecting the academic workforce. Unison also promotes equality and diversity and have resources and guidance available together with local and national interest group networks.

This section has identified the range of internal and external actors and agencies across the UK higher education sector with an interest in the design and implementation of change using equality and diversity concepts as a catalyst. The following section will consider the role of equality and diversity practitioner as change agent and explores the opportunities and challenges available to this practitioner cohort.

5.4 The role of the equality and diversity practitioner as change agent

The theoretical and practical implications of embedding organisational equality and diversity have received modest academic attention despite acknowledgment that internal change agents are required in the design and implementation of diversity management policies and initiatives (Tatli and Özbilgin, 2009; Tatli et al, 2015). According to Tatli et al (2015), equality and diversity officers play a key role in negotiating change and it is of significant academic and policy importance that the roles of these agents are understood in initiating and promoting change. On this basis, it could be argued that sector agencies could play a more proactive part to progress equality and diversity in the higher education sector by mobilising a team of diversity specialists to work with institutions.

The environment within which equality and diversity practitioners operate can be extremely complex. More than two decades ago, Agócs (1997) provided important context by highlighting the difficulties change makers experience whilst dealing with individual and organisational resistance. This resistance can take multiple forms and manifest itself across multiple layers, including behaviours that decision-makers employ to actively deny, reject, refuse to implement, repress, or dismantle change proposals and initiatives. The institutionally embodied form of resistance is expressed through organisational structures and processes of legitimation, decision-making, and resource allocation and this can have a significant impact on the operational effectiveness of the ability, capability and credibility of equality and diversity practitioners in the field in which they operate. If that practitioner is female or of ethnic minority background, they would find themselves working within the very structures and conditions that create and perpetuate their disadvantage, and therefore the playing field is never level (Agócs, 1997). Agócs (1997) described a typology of the forms of institutionalised resistance as:

1. Denial of the need for change:
    a. Attacks on the credibility of the change message
    b. Attacks on the messengers and their credibility
2. Refusal to accept responsibility for dealing with the change issue
3. Refusal to implement change that has been agreed to
4. Repression: action to dismantle change that has been initiated.

Wiggins-Romesburg and Githens (2018) view resistance to diversity as a dynamic interplay of individual and collective behaviours, with individual resistance rooted in unconscious motivation and organisational resistance rooted in the collective behaviour of individuals. Interestingly, there are several similarities in Agócs' (1997) typology of resistance and DiAngelo's (2018) explanation around the way white fragility can manifest itself when an individual is faced with an accusation of racism, particularly in terms of attacking the messenger, denial and undermining the importance of racism.

In Healy and Okielome's (2007) study of the UK NHS, they provided a framework to locate equality actors into a four-fold classification:

1. Management sponsored diversity actors (in particular equality/diversity officers) employed to ensure at least the minimum compliance with the law but may seek to employ a more radical agenda of culture change and management sponsored networks: for example, Black networks.
2. Trade union sponsored actors: for example, Black workers' conferences, women's conferences, self-organising groups.
3. National identity networks, independent of management and trade unions, which focus on country-of-origin identity.
4. Community networks, which are community alliances.

This section of the chapter will solely focus on management-sponsored diversity actors in the first classification. Equality and diversity practitioners' roles can complement or even replace some of the further classes identified above, e.g., Trade Unions (Healy and Okielome, 2007; Tatli and Alasia, 2011). Where these other actors are placed within or have alliances with an organisation, equality and diversity practitioners will at some point engage with those stakeholders in their role.

Organisations may also identify a senior champion to drive the organisational equality and diversity strategy (Ng, 2008), however Healy and Okielome (2007) warn that high profile equality roles might be seen as the public face of strategic action, while at the same time may also disguise strategic inaction. At an operational level, an important factor for effective change relies on the organisational placement, and the level of seniority, of the practitioner as this may help to legitimise the role and the change agenda more broadly (Tatli and Özbilgin,

2009; Tatli and Alasia, 2011; Tatli, et al, 2015). Due to the organisationally disruptive nature of equality and diversity roles, power is required to fundamentally challenge the status quo (Healy and Okielome, 2007) and it is power that can enable change to happen through the constructive confrontation of entrenched individual and institutional views, attitudes, and behaviours.

Tatli et al (2015) considered the opportunities and constraints experienced by equality and diversity officers through situatedness, relationality and praxis. The study found that practitioners in this field experienced lack of resources, which might indicate an absence of senior-level commitment. The equality and diversity officers' perceptions also included lack of prestige, lack of seniority and lack of authority, which made it difficult for officers to be seen as credible and influential agents for change within their institutions (Tatli et al, 2015). It has been acknowledged that equality and diversity practitioners suffer from greater job-related stress than their peers (Kandola, et al, 1991). This may be due to their persistent attempts to navigate often complex organisations to lead strategy development, design, delivery, implementation and monitoring of organisational change (Tatli and Özbilgin, 2009), whilst experiencing resistance throughout the journey to achieve organisational change; and persistence attracts resistance. Ahmed (2012) states that the more resistance, the more persistence is required. Furthermore, practitioners must steer themselves between the contradictions that arise between the sponsorship provided by senior management and the potential risk from a lack of will from others in the implementation of change, particularly if that involvement does not form part of their usual role (Acker, 2000).

Equality and diversity practitioners require capability to address the full agenda of equality *and* diversity, which of course is complex. This involves having the requisite knowledge and skills to apply a narrative that the organisation finds palatable, but also the tenacity required to persist when there is a lack of support (Ahmed, 2012). This can be exacerbated by the absence of any specific qualification criteria for fulfilling an equality and diversity role, which may result in organisations appointing practitioners with little/no previous experience in the area. Practitioners may therefore be inclined to accept the hegemonic norms and values of their organisation without challenge, which in turn will adversely impact the practitioners' capacity to be effective (Tatli, 2011). Tatli (2011) continues to remark that the perception of an 'unqualified' practitioner may impair the legitimacy of the diversity management field and

practitioners within that field at large making it much more challenging for practitioners to gain status within their institution, enabling access to senior leaders, and which can secure buy in from internal stakeholders.

The academic discussion surrounding the field of equality and diversity practitioners has advanced to consider further aspects of power, structure and agency to analyse the opportunities and challenges arising for these practitioners as change agents through the lens of Bourdieu (Özbilgin and Tatli, 2011; Tatli, 2011; Tatli and Alasia, 2011; Tatli and Özbilgin, 2009; Tatli, et al, 2015), and was considered in Chapter 3 through Bourdieu's concepts of agency, field, habitus, capital and symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984, 1990, 1998).

This section has considered some of the challenges affecting equality and diversity practitioners, despite a lack of sufficient research into this area. However, it does provide an insight into the challenges that might impact the effective design and implementation of equality and diversity strategies and policies within organisations. The practitioners' role can also be impacted by the organisation's own priorities, given that the agenda is so broad it is difficult to apply an equal amount of effort to all groups. As a result of this, there has been a focus on specific characteristics, e.g., gender or race etc, not only in research, but in practice. Acker (2006) critiqued that often research is focused on a specific characteristic, and rarely considers the intersections of identities, such as gender, race, and class. Focusing on one category obscures and oversimplifies other interpenetrating realities, and in terms of race, this encapsulates multiple social realities, which are inflected by gender and class differences (Acker, 2006; 2012). This has been demonstrated by some of the initiatives implemented across a range of organisations aimed at increasing the representation of women on Boards, in male-dominated industries and more specifically to higher education, the implementation of Athena SWAN and REC awards. The following section will consider the rationale for focusing on race within the broader equality and diversity context within higher education and how the sector is advancing equality in this area. The literature review will highlight the evolution of equality and diversity within higher education and track those considerations through to the environment within contemporary institutions.

5.5 Locating race amid a broader equality agenda in UK higher education

The *Dearing Report* (The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, 1997) recommended that higher education institutions should identify and remove barriers that inhibit recruitment and progression for social groups and monitor and publish their progress towards greater equality of opportunity. The report identified that people from minority ethnic groups were at a structural disadvantage in the academic labour force, and experienced harassment and negative stereotyping as well as discrimination in recruitment, selection, and promotion processes (JNCHES and ECU, 2003). The report's recommendations, which included the development of race equality policies; increasing the representation of ethnic minorities; and improving the quality of statistical data, became embedded within the *Equal Opportunities in Employment in Higher Education: 'Framework for Partnership'* agreement between the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) and the national higher education Trade Unions. This agreement was initially implemented in 2000, however was revised in 2003 and renamed the Partnership for Equality: Action for Higher Education (JNCHES and ECU, 2003).

Concurrently, a study undertaken later on that decade (Carter et al, 1999) began to highlight that a third of institutions did not have a race equality policy in place; that three quarters of institutions routinely monitored recruitment applications by ethnicity; that more than 25 percent of minority ethnic academics had personally experienced discrimination in recruitment; that 55 percent of British ethnic minority staff believed that there was discrimination in employment in higher education; and that ethnic minority staff and research students expressed resentment at being stereotyped because of their ethnicity (Carter et al, 1999).

The recommendations made in UCEA's (2000) report was interpreted by the University of Leeds (Turney, Law and Phillips, 2002) soon after its publication, as 'institutional racism', by identifying weaknesses in the foundations that higher education structures are built upon; the policies, processes, culture, and attitudes that underpin the workings of any higher education institution. Further qualitative studies undertaken into the experiences of black and minority ethnic staff in higher education have found that there is a lack of patronage and support, (Jones, 2006); therefore, having the effect of denying cultural capital to staff of

colour (Chapter Four discussed capital). Later studies identified multiple barriers, harassment and disadvantage experienced by black and minority ethnic staff in UK higher education (ECU, 2011: Rollock, 2011,2019; UCU, 2016, 2017; EHRC, 2019), which were discussed in Chapter Two.

Career progression, recruitment, attitudes, organisational culture, and meeting the needs of ethnic minority staff in higher education are all crucial elements to creating an inclusive working environment. Deem (2007) highlighted that from an organisational perspective the concept of an equitable higher education institution, where there is no discrimination "does not sit easily with managerial, business-focused approaches to the running of higher education" (Deem, 2007: 619), due to competing priorities within higher education governance models. Deem continues to point out that for many senior academic staff, a meritocratic system of higher education has been one where their own careers have been developed, which may result in some staff being less willing to challenge the system that has supported them (Deem, 2007).

A study identified hidden inequalities for staff in higher education (Institute of Employment Studies, 2005), which included a pay differential between minority ethnic staff and white staff; a higher proportion of white staff involved in academic and research areas than black and minority ethnic staff; and higher proportions of black and minority ethnic staff with shorter length of service than white respondents to the study, indicating that qualitative data would be beneficial. There were also high levels of mistrust from black and minority ethnic respondents in relation to the collection of ethnicity data in comparison to white respondents. A further study looking at the recruitment and retention of academic staff in higher education (Metcalf et al, 2005) failed to report in any detail about the experiences of black and minority ethnic staff. This sizeable report had little to offer in relation to the levels of satisfaction of black and minority ethnic staff in higher education across all aspects of recruitment and retention, including recruitment practices, promotion, or indeed career development. Considerations of ethnicity within the report have been contained in the sections dedicated to equal opportunities and the section dedicated to discrimination offers no more than a minor focus on pay differentials.

A briefing from the Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity (CoDE) at the University of Manchester (2014) showed that black and minority ethnic people of working age in England and Wales

were more likely to have degree level qualifications than white British people. The groups with the highest proportion of people with degree level qualifications were Chinese (43%), Indian (42%) and Black African (40%) (CoDE, 2014). Despite this, they are less likely to gain access to higher education as an employee as the statistics later in this chapter indicate. Further research will be required to establish how the higher education sector attracts and recruits prospective black and minority ethnic candidates, and whether this is a contributing factor to the under-representation of minority ethnic staff at all levels and across all roles. Added to the suggestions of systemic racism in the higher education sector, it may also be useful to understand the reasons why minority ethnic employees leave their institutions as this may not always be articulated at the time of departure through exit interviews.

There has been a plethora of press activity over the past decade in relation to the under-representation of black and minority ethnic academics and the levels of racism within the sector, with headlines such as "*14,000 British professors – but only 50 are black* " (Shepherd for The Guardian, 2011) and "*Race discrimination in academia 'has not improved' over past 20 years*" (Gibney for Times Higher, 2013), "*More than half of BME university lecturers and staff have suffered racial abuse at work*" (Garner for The Independent, 2014), *"UK universities condemned for failure to tackle racism"* (The Guardian, 2019), demonstrating that the issues experienced by people of colour within institutions is persistent and systemic and shines a public spotlight on the sector's inability, or perhaps unwillingness, to address this problem as a recent article headlined "Cambridge may drop BAME mentoring of white academics" suggested The Guardian (2020).

In the background there have been some developments to address race as a separate agenda within the broader context of equality. Once again highlighting the need to focus on specific protected characteristics to reduce employee disadvantage. If the higher education sector had solely focused on diversity as an approach, these disadvantages may not have been identified because of the focus that diversity management has on individualism. As mentioned previously, Advance HE (previously ECU) coordinates the Race Equality Charter (REC) mark, which was rolled out to the higher education sector following a pilot exercise in 2015, involving 21 institutions. The REC is underpinned by five fundamental principles, which are detailed in Appendix 2.

The REC requires institutions to carry out a self-assessment of their organisation across a range of functions that consider both the staff and student populations using quantitative and qualitative data. The analysis covers the self-assessment process; the institution and local context; staff profile; academic and professional and support staff recruitment, progression, and development; the student pipeline; and teaching and learning. The process of analysis and submission is very similar to that employed with the Athena SWAN award scheme, however the REC is only applicable on an institutional basis, whereas Athena SWAN awards can also be sought at departmental level once the institution has gained an award.

The REC requires institutions to pay regard to race, whilst still focusing on a broader equality and diversity agenda, and institutions are expected to consider the intersections of other characteristics together with race in terms of their staff and student populations. This is a positive step although this is contingent on the institution identifying the relevant intersections and having the data available to undertake the analysis. According to ECU's *Race Equality Charter Awards Handbook* (2016) there is an expectation that intersectionality is considered increasingly as progress is made with the institution's race equality work. For first-time bronze applicants, this consideration might be aspirational, for example to begin building in mechanisms to understand and explore intersectionality.

Despite focused attempts to address race equality in UK higher education institutions using REC, there is still much work required. A recent review of the impact of REC (Oloyede et al, 2021) has identified recommendations for improvements to the scheme. In 2019, the Equality and Human Rights Commission launched an official inquiry into racial harassment in higher education. Their inquiry looked at the different types of racial harassment experienced by students and staff, the routes for reporting racial harassment and how effectively those reports are dealt with. The report (EHRC, 2019) highlighted how institutional systems and processes affect the outcomes of minority ethnic staff and students affected by racial harassment working and learning in UK higher education institutions and made several recommendations that cover three themes that arose from the research. These surround protections, transparency, and scrutiny, by increasing university transparency on how they are tackling harassment; effective redress and how available, accessible and effective routes to redress are; and changing university culture, where university leaders understand harassment and governing boards carry out due diligence and where appropriate, take action

on tackling harassment in line with the PSED by taking more responsibility for preventing and addressing harassment. The report makes ten recommendations across these three themes to higher education institutions, external agencies, and higher education funding councils. In the wake of these recommendations, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of seminars (webinars because of the Coronavirus lockdown in 2020) on the subject of race in the higher education sector and this will no doubt be as a direct result to the events of 2020, with a view to discussing and operationalising the issues raised.

This section has considered the advances in approach taken across the UK higher education sector that have had, and continue to have, an impact on race equality but which indicate the level of progress achieved in the last two decades. The following section will explore and reflect on the UK higher education workforce demographics with a focus on ethnicity across several aspects including overall representation at different levels, salary bands, pay reporting and exit from UK higher education to identify the unequal outcomes for black staff working in institutions.

5.6 The baseline of ethnic diversity in the UK higher education workforce

The first real attempt at drawing together the findings of existing research and to establish a baseline for the experiences of the black and minority ethnic workforce in higher education by a sector agency came with a literature review (ECU, 2009). This resource aimed to provide an outline that did not solely rely on data, which has been reported through the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) for more than a decade, but that reported on staff experience. Higher education institutions are expected to follow prescribed data collection requirements for the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) to gather demographic information relating to UK higher education staff and students across different protected characteristics (HESA, 2020). The diversity categories used by HESA are informed by those used in the UK population census, which has become the benchmark across the public sector and beyond.

The findings from this report showed a low representation of black and minority ethnic staff (8.6 percent academic and 6.9 percent professional and support staff) of which overall only 6.1 percent of staff were UK nationals as opposed to 22.3 percent who were non-UK nationals (based on 2006/7 HESA data). There has been little shift in demographics from an earlier

ethnic analysis undertaken using 1996/7 HESA data (Carter et al, 1999), which showed that black and minority ethnic academic staff accounted for just 5.5 percent of the total academic staff population.

The ECU (now Advance HE) found that the higher the grade, the lower the black and minority ethnic staff representation and mirrors the findings in the Carter, et al (1999) analysis that showed higher concentrations of black and minority ethnic academics at lecturer level. A study of staff perceptions of equality policies in higher education institutions also showed that black and minority ethnic staff tended to be found mainly in lower-level support roles or temporary posts (Deem and Morley, 2006). The report supported that overall black and minority ethnic staff received lower levels of pay on average than white staff and were less likely to benefit from permanent or open-ended contracts (ECU, 2009).

The most recent census statistics (ONS, 2011) show that the black and ethnic minority population represented 14% of the total population in England and Wales. The working age employment rate in the UK (2018) showed that 77.2 percent of the white population was in work compared to 67.3 percent of the black African/Caribbean population (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2019) and that 9.7 percent of the black African/Caribbean population aged over 16 years were unemployed compared to just 3.3 percent of the white population (ONS, 2019). According to the last available Annual Population Survey, 6 percent of the black African/Caribbean population identified as being employed in the 'Managers, directors and senior officials' category compared to 11 percent of the white population in the UK (ONS, 2018). These data have been further supported by a comprehensive Government-commissioned review undertaken in 2017, which highlighted numerous concerns around the underemployment, overqualification and economically disadvantaged state of ethnic minorities in Britain (McGregor-Smith, 2017). According to the Race Disparity Audit (revised March 2018), relative to the UK population overall, people living in households headed by someone in the Asian, black, or other ethnic groups were disproportionately likely to be on low income. 16 percent of black households were in persistent poverty (Cabinet Office, 2018). The report also found that black households were more likely to be single parent households, limiting the number of potential earners and in terms of actual household income, black households and those from other ethnic groups were most likely to have a gross weekly income from all sources of less than £400 (Cabinet Office, 2018). The Chartered Institute of

Personnel and Development (CIPD) also reported on the barriers experienced by ethnic minority workers in achieving career progression and noted that black employees (29 percent) were more likely than white British employees (11 percent) to say they had experienced discrimination in the workplace (CIPD, 2017).

From a broader UK public sector perspective, the Race Disparity Unit (Cabinet Office, 2019) released a summary discussing how ethnically diverse public sector workforces are, the changes in diversity over time and whether diversity targets had been set. The main findings were that NHS medical staff (44.4 percent) are the most ethnically diverse workforce and that firefighters (4.1 percent) were the least ethnically diverse. NHS medical staff have the highest percentage of leaders from ethnic minorities, accounting for two in five consultants. However, most consultants (30.7 percent) are from an Asian background compared to 2.9 percent who identify as black. Contrasted with 16% of the working age population in England and Wales in 2017 that were from an ethnic minority background, of the twelve workforces included in this report, four had a percentage of ethnic minority staff that was higher than this. There had been little change in the ethnic diversity of public sector workforces between 2014 and 2018 (Cabinet Office, 2019).

In the private sector, the Parker Review (2017) made several recommendations including that each FTSE 100 Board should have at least one director of colour by 2021 and that each FTSE 250 Board should have at least one director of colour by 2024. In its update in February 2020, the Parker Review Committee reported that 172 directors of colour held 178 director positions across the FTSE 350 companies. This amounted to 6.8 percent of all FTSE 350 directors, including directors where ethnicity is unknown. The report highlights that 59 percent of companies did not meet the target of having at least a director of colour on their Board, and there was a particular lack of ethnic diversity observed among FTSE 250 companies (Parker Review, 2020).

In terms of the UK higher education workforce, the most recent data available through the staff statistical report for 2018/19 (Advance HE, 2020) shows that the representation of black and minority ethnic staff has marginally shifted, and of the total workforce in UK higher education that declared an ethnic background[9], black and minority ethnic staff accounted for

[9] Note that Advance HE statistical data only reports against declared ethnicity and does not provide figure as a proportion of the whole sector workforce, which may be less than stated

14.5 percent (including non-UK nationals). In England alone, this was slightly higher at 15.7 percent of the total English higher education workforce. Among the total UK national staff, 10.3 percent (11.6 percent in England) were from a black and minority ethnic background, as opposed to 30.7 percent (31.5 percent in England) who were non-UK nationals in the UK workforce[10]. A UCEA report (2019) concerning the UK higher education workforce stated that the ethnic diversity of the academic workforce is in fact masked by the significantly increased ethnic diversity of non-EU international staff members (UCEA, 2019). This observation has been demonstrated in these most recent workforce data as UK ethnic minority academic staff represented 7.2 percent, whereas non-UK academic staff represented 9.6 per cent. There has not been similar commentary around the ethnic diversity of professional and support staff in UK institutions. However, these data show an overall under-representation of ethnic minority staff as 9.1 percent who are UK staff compared to only 3.1 per cent that are non-UK staff. Considering that this employee cohort would be recruited from surrounding populations to UK institutions, theoretically it should be more likely to draw higher proportions of ethnic minority candidates for these roles.

In 2018/19 there were higher proportions of UK national black and minority ethnic staff (23.7 percent) who were employed on fixed-term contracts than white staff (19.4 percent) across all contracts and black and minority ethnic academic staff are almost twice as likely to be employed on a fixed-term contract (31.4 percent) than their professional and support staff colleagues (18 percent). The representation of UK national black and minority ethnic academic staff has risen by just over two percentage points since 2003/4 from 4.8 percent to 7.2 percent in 2018/19. The representation of black and minority ethnic UK national staff in professional and support roles in our institutions has seen a slightly greater shift, with a rise of just over four percentage points since 2003/4, from 4.8 percent to 9.1 percent in 2018/19.

Of the academic staff that are recorded as employed in category SOC1 (Managers, directors, and senior officials) in UK higher education 5.2 percent (n=25) are from a black and minority ethnic background. Of these there are no academic staff with a declared black ethnic background. In terms of UK national professional and support staff employed at this level, 6.6 percent are from a black and minority ethnic background (n=705). This represents 3.6 percent

[10] Note: it is not possible to make comparisons between English regions as this data is not available from Advance HE

of total black and minority ethnic staff compared with 5.9 percent of total white staff employed at this level (Advance HE, 2020). An article featured in The Guardian headlined with '*British universities employ no black academics in top roles, figures show*' (Adams, 2017) highlighting that figures recorded zero black academics in the elite staff category of 'managers, directors and senior officials' for a third year in a row. From these latest figures, that headline has remained static.

In relation to the ethnic diversity of subject areas across UK higher education, there is a slight difference according to SET (science, engineering, and technology) and non-SET disciplines, with 11.7 percent of UK national black and ethnic minority academics in SET compared to 9 percent in non-SET subject areas. For SET disciplines, archaeology is the least ethnically diverse subject area and overall Asian staff make up most ethnic minority UK academic staff, whereas UK black academic staff make up only 1.4 percent of this cohort. Within SET, the highest proportion of UK black academic staff are located within nursing and allied health professions (25.8 percent) and clinical medicine (20 percent). In non-SET subject areas, classics is the least ethnically diverse and the highest proportion of UK black academic staff are represented in business and management studies (32.4 percent) and law (9.2 percent) (Advance HE, 2020).

Table 3: UK national staff by age group and ethnicity (Advance HE, 2020[11])

	BAME			White			All staff	
UK nationals	No.	↓%	→%	No.	↓%	→%	No.	↓%
≤25	2,875	8.5	14.7	16,720	5.7	85.3	19,595	6.0
26-30	3,740	11.1	12.0	27,520	9.4	88.0	31,265	9.6
31-35	4,515	13.4	11.7	33,975	11.6	88.3	38,495	11.8
36-40	4,930	14.7	11.7	37,140	12.7	88.3	42,070	12.9
41-45	4,455	13.2	11.3	34,910	11.9	88.7	39,365	12.1
46-50	4,430	13.2	10.1	39,430	13.5	89.9	43,860	13.5
51-55	4,020	12.0	9.0	40,775	14.0	91.0	44,800	13.7
56-60	2,765	8.2	7.6	33,795	11.6	92.4	36,560	11.2
61-65	1,400	4.2	6.8	19,120	6.5	93.2	20,520	6.3
≥66	515	1.5	5.5	8,780	3.0	94.5	9,295	2.9
All UK nationals	**33,645**	**100.0**	**10.3**	**292,175**	**100.0**	**89.7**	**325,820**	**100.0**

Analysing the age profile of ethnic minority staff in institutions may provide some context to the overall lack of ethnic diversity at higher levels. Table 3 shows that black and ethnic minority staff are represented in higher levels compared to white staff up to the age of 45

[11] Taken from Equality in Higher Education: Staff Statistical Report 2020, Advance HE

years. Although this may not wholly account for the lack of ethnic minority representation at higher levels of academia, there are specific hierarchical structures in terms of progression for academic staff, which may to some degree be associated with age.

From the total UK national staff at professorial level, 9.1 percent are from a black and minority ethnic background. This equates to 9.7 percent of the total black and minority ethnic UK academic staff population compared to 11.2 percent of the total UK national white staff at this level. The headlines become clear from the disaggregation of these figures, where specific ethnic groups can be explored further. For example, in 2018/19 from the total black UK national academics, 4.5 percent are at professorial level, equating to just 100 academic members of staff. There are a further 45 black professors who are non-UK nationals. When considering the intersection of ethnicity and gender, there are a total of 490 female ethnic minority professors in the UK, 355 of these are UK nationals. Of the total female ethnic minority professors, only 35 are from a black ethnic background, of which 30 are UK nationals. This compares to 1,575 ethnic minority male professors, of which 1,035 are UK nationals. From this cohort, 105 are from a black ethnic background of which 70 black male professors are UK nationals.

Table 4: UK academic staff by professorial category and ethnic group (Advance HE, 2020)[12]

		Professors			Non-professors			All staff	
		No.	↓%	→%	No.	↓%	→%	No.	↓%
W	White	13,845	90.9	11.2	109,485	89.4	88.8	123,335	89.6
BAME	BAME total	1,390	9.1	9.7	12,995	10.6	90.3	14,390	10.4
A	*Asian*	*555*	*3.6*	*9.5*	*5,300*	*4.3*	*90.5*	*5,855*	*4.3*
B	*Black*	*100*	*0.6*	*4.5*	*2,105*	*1.7*	*95.5*	*2,205*	*1.6*
C	*Chinese*	*335*	*2.2*	*16.7*	*1,660*	*1.4*	*83.3*	*1,995*	*1.4*
M	*Mixed*	*205*	*1.3*	*7.9*	*2,385*	*1.9*	*92.1*	*2,585*	*1.9*
O	*Other*	*200*	*1.3*	*11.5*	*1,545*	*1.3*	*88.5*	*1,745*	*1.3*
All	**All UK staff**	**15,240**	**100.0**	**11.1**	**122,485**	**100.0**	**88.9**	**137,720**	**100.0**
W	White	3,915	85.3	9.3	38,225	67.6	90.7	42,140	68.9
BAME	BAME total	675	14.7	3.6	18,340	32.4	96.4	19,020	31.1
A	*Asian*	*270*	*5.9*	*3.9*	*6,690*	*11.8*	*96.1*	*6,965*	*11.4*
B	*Black*	*45*	*0.9*	*2.2*	*1,875*	*3.3*	*97.8*	*1,915*	*3.1*
C	*Chinese*	*200*	*4.3*	*3.6*	*5,290*	*9.4*	*96.4*	*5,490*	*9.0*
M	*Mixed*	*50*	*1.1*	*2.6*	*1,840*	*3.3*	*97.4*	*1,890*	*3.1*
O	*Other*	*115*	*2.5*	*4.2*	*2,645*	*4.7*	*95.8*	*2,755*	*4.5*
All	**All non-UK staff**	**4,590**	**100.0**	**7.5**	**56,565**	**100.0**	**92.5**	**61,155**	**100.0**

To put the statistics into perspective: UK national black staff account for 21.4 percent of the total black and minority ethnic UK national workforce in UK higher education (Advance HE, 2020). UK national black staff are the second largest ethnic group from the UK national workforce that declared their ethnicity, yet black academics are less likely than any other

[12] Taken from Equality in Higher Education: Staff Statistical Report 2020, Advance HE

ethnic group to be represented at professorial level, making up just 0.6 percent of UK national professors. In terms of black staff that are employed in professional and support roles, the largest concentration of UK national black staff (34.1 percent) are employed in administrative and secretarial occupations. UK national black professional and support staff (17.3 percent) are more likely to be represented in SOC9 (elementary occupations) than any other ethnic group (Advance HE, 2020). The data has shown that the sector still has some way to go in ensuring that there is an even distribution of black staff across all levels, particularly in senior levels of academia.

In response to the under-representation of racially minoritised staff within senior levels of UK institutions there has been a growing body of academic work relating to the challenges experienced by minority ethnic staff at higher levels and the difficulties experienced once at these levels (Arday, 2018; Rollock, 2019). A report for the LFHE found that many black and minority ethnic academics felt that they met the criteria for promotion and progression yet had been overlooked in favour of others with equal or lesser qualifications (Bhopal and Brown, 2016). These experiences were also reflected from respondents in the call for evidence to the McGregor-Smith review (2017) indicating that this is not a problem unique to UK higher education. All the women interviewed for the LFHE research stated that their ethnicity played a part in the way they were perceived in their role as a senior leader, whereas men were less likely to think so. In addition to this, many of those interviewed felt that there needed to be more formal, transparent processes in place to support black and minority ethnic academics, that included formal mentoring and an understanding of the key issues affecting this academic cohort in seeking leadership roles (Bhopal and Brown, 2016).

In support of previous research that found that black and minority ethnic staff were more likely to receive lower pay then their white colleagues (ECU, 2009), Table 5 reveals that over a decade later lower proportions of minority ethnic staff are employed within the highest salary range (>£50,000) however, this is particularly pronounced for black academic staff than for staff from any other ethnic background. This outcome was especially marked for black UK national academic staff working part-time, where only 12.3 percent were within this salary range.

Table 5: UK academic staff by mode, salary range and ethnic group (Advance HE, 2020)[13]

UK nationals

		White			BAME total			Black		
		No.	↓%	→%	No.	↓%	→%	No.	↓%	→%
Full-time										
<£30k	Under £30,000	2,410	3.1	88.6	310	3.1	11.4	45	3.0	1.6
£30-50k	£30,000-£50,000	36,010	46.8	87.7	5,070	47.9	12.3	890	63.1	2.2
>£50k	Over £50,000	38,440	50.0	89.8	4,380	49.0	10.2	480	33.9	1.1
All	**All salary ranges**	**76,860**	**100.0**	**88.7**	**9,760**	**100.0**	**11.3**	**1,410**	**100.0**	**1.6**
Part-time										
<£30k	Under £30,000	4,690	10.1	89.2	565	10.5	10.8	75	9.6	1.5
£30-50k	£30,000-£50,000	30,085	64.7	90.9	3,020	64.8	9.1	620	78.1	1.9
>£50k	Over £50,000	11,700	25.2	91.8	1,040	24.7	8.2	100	12.3	0.8
All	**All salary ranges**	**46,475**	**100.0**	**90.9**	**4,630**	**100.0**	**9.1**	**795**	**100.0**	**1.6**
All modes										
<£30k	Under £30,000	7,100	5.8	89.0	880	5.8	11.0	120	5.4	1.5
£30-50k	£30,000-£50,000	66,095	53.6	89.1	8,090	54.1	10.9	1,510	68.4	2.0
>£50k	Over £50,000	50,140	40.7	90.2	5,420	40.1	9.8	575	26.2	1.0
All	**All salary ranges**	**123,335**	**100.0**	**89.6**	**14,390**	**100.0**	**10.4**	**2,205**	**100.0**	**1.6**

For staff employed on professional and support contracts, there was a marginally higher proportion of black and minority ethnic staff in the salary range between £30,000 to £50,000 than white staff, and once again, the lowest proportion of black professional and support staff in the highest salary range than staff from any other ethnic group. Similar to the outcomes of part-time academic staff, a significantly lower proportion (1.2 percent) of black part-time professional and support staff were within the highest salary range compared to their white colleagues.

Table 6: UK professional and support staff by mode, salary range and ethnic group (Advance HE, 2020)[14]

UK nationals

		White			BAME total			Black		
		No.	↓%	→%	No.	↓%	→%	No.	↓%	→%
Full-time										
<£30k	Under £30,000	54,975	47.3	89.5	6,465	47.1	10.5	1,735	48.2	2.8
£30-50k	£30,000-£50,000	47,085	40.5	88.2	6,295	41.3	11.8	1,590	44.2	3.0
>£50k	Over £50,000	14,195	12.2	91.8	1,270	11.6	8.2	275	7.7	1.8
All	**All salary ranges**	**116,250**	**100.0**	**89.2**	**14,030**	**100.0**	**10.8**	**3,600**	**100.0**	**2.8**
Part-time										
<£30k	Under £30,000	36,305	69.0	90.2	3,965	70.2	9.8	1,145	81.7	2.8
£30-50k	£30,000-£50,000	13,905	26.4	92.5	1,125	25.6	7.5	240	17.1	1.6
>£50k	Over £50,000	2,375	4.5	94.7	135	4.2	5.3	15	1.2	0.7
All	**All salary ranges**	**52,590**	**100.0**	**91.0**	**5,225**	**100.0**	**9.0**	**1,400**	**100.0**	**2.4**
All modes										
<£30k	Under £30,000	91,280	54.1	89.7	10,430	54.1	10.3	2,880	57.6	2.8
£30-50k	£30,000-£50,000	60,990	36.1	89.2	7,420	36.6	10.8	1,830	36.6	2.7
>£50k	Over £50,000	16,570	9.8	92.2	1,405	9.3	7.8	290	5.8	1.6
All	**All salary ranges**	**168,840**	**100.0**	**89.8**	**19,255**	**100.0**	**10.2**	**5,000**	**100.0**	**2.7**

The median salaries for academic and professional and support staff show that there are differential outcomes for different ethnic groups compared to white staff. For both staff cohorts, Table 7 demonstrates that on average black staff are paid less than their peers (£33,199), however it is black professional and support staff that are paid the least median salary when compared to their peers.

[13] Taken from Equality in Higher Education: Staff Statistical Report 2020, Advance HE

[14] Ibid

Table 7: Median salaries of UK staff by activity and ethnic group (Advance HE, 2020[15])

			Academic staff	Professional and support staff	All staff
			£	£	£
UK nationals	W	White	47,263	28,660	36,261
	BAME	BAME total	45,892	28,705	36,261
	A	*Asian*	*45,902*	*29,323*	*35,459*
	B	*Black*	*43,267*	*27,830*	*33,199*
	C	*Chinese*	*50,132*	*31,752*	*42,701*
	M	*Mixed*	*43,267*	*27,863*	*35,211*
	O	*Other*	*47,263*	*30,117*	*40,322*
	All	**All UK staff**	**46,824**	**28,660**	**36,261**

In relation to whether there is a pay differential between white and black and minority ethnic staff in UK higher education Table 8 shows that the gap has reduced to just 2 percent in 2018/19. However, this overall position is influenced by the negative pay gaps evident for Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, which may be as a result of some ethnic minority staff employed in institutions within those jurisdictions being employed at higher levels and commanding higher salaries. The ethnicity pay gap is largest (14.9 percent) in London institutions despite there being a larger concentration of minority ethnic staff in the capital than anywhere else in the UK. Unfortunately, there is no data available to ascertain pay differentials according to specific ethnic groups. Comparing mean and median pay gaps, it is professional and support staff that suffer a larger pay differential than their academic colleagues and this has further influenced the overall UK pay gap figure. It is possible that the structured academic grades operated across the higher education sector may influence the pay gaps evident for academic staff.

[15]Taken from Equality in Higher Education: Staff Statistical Report 2020, Advance HE

Table 8: Median/mean salary and pay gap for UK staff by country of institution, activity and ethnicity (Advance HE, 2020)[16]

		Median salary			Mean salary		
		White	BAME	Pay Gap (%)	White	BAME	Pay Gap (%)
		£	£	%	£	£	%
Academic staff							
ENG	England	47,263	45,892	2.9	50,829	49,726	2.2
LON	*London*	*48,677*	*45,504*	*6.5*	*54,793*	*50,671*	*7.5*
EWL	*England (excluding London)*	*47,139*	*45,892*	*2.6*	*49,830*	*49,225*	*1.2*
NIRE	Northern Ireland	50,132	50,132	0.0	52,458	54,731	-4.3
SCOT	Scotland	48,677	48,677	0.0	51,632	50,427	2.3
WAL	Wales	42,036	48,677	-15.8	47,839	51,964	-8.6
UK	**UK**	**47,263**	**45,892**	**2.9**	**50,756**	**49,867**	**1.8**
Professional and support staff							
ENG	England	29,335	28,850	1.7	32,442	31,313	3.5
LON	*London*	*37,412*	*33,359*	*10.8*	*41,214*	*35,437*	*14.0*
EWL	*England (excluding London)*	*27,512*	*25,482*	*7.4*	*31,000*	*28,265*	*8.8*
NIRE	Northern Ireland	26,243	22,017	16.1	30,269	26,931	11.0
SCOT	Scotland	27,025	26,243	2.9	30,772	29,094	5.5
WAL	Wales	27,025	24,771	8.3	30,175	28,116	6.8
UK	**UK**	**28,660**	**28,705**	**-0.2**	**32,081**	**31,185**	**2.8**
All staff							
ENG	England	37,181	36,009	3.2	40,308	38,967	3.3
LON	*London*	*43,327*	*37,412*	*13.7*	*48,220*	*41,033*	*14.9*
EWL	*England (excluding London)*	*35,211*	*34,189*	*2.9*	*38,722*	*37,632*	*2.8*
NIRE	Northern Ireland	34,866	43,267	-24.1	38,542	45,545	-18.2
SCOT	Scotland	34,189	38,460	-12.5	38,721	41,345	-6.8
WAL	Wales	35,211	39,609	-12.5	37,837	42,666	-12.8
UK	**UK**	**36,261**	**36,261**	**0.0**	**39,964**	**39,174**	**2.0**

Although it has not been possible to provide more detailed analysis according to specific ethnic groups and their mean and median pay gaps, it is possible to provide data concerning the median salaries for staff across academic and professional and support roles by ethnic groups. It is clear from Table 6 that there is a significant median gap between white and black staff, and in particular academic staff, from the information provided.

Table 9: Median/mean salary and pay gap for staff by gender and ethnicity (Advance HE, 2020)[17]

		Median salary			Mean salary		
		Female	Male	Gender Pay Gap (→%)	Female	Male	Gender Pay Gap (→%)
		£	£	%	£	£	%
BAME	BAME total	34,189	38,434	**11.0**	36,002	41,559	**13.4**
W	White	34,394	39,609	**13.2**	37,283	44,687	**16.6**
BAME/white Pay Gap (↓%)		**0.6**	**3.0**	**N/A**	**3.4**	**7.0**	**N/A**

In the absence of pay gap information across different ethnic groups, Table 9 provides information from an intersectional perspective and shows that there is a small median salary gap (0.6 percent) between white and ethnic minority women. However, there is a 3 percent

[16] Taken from Equality in Higher Education: Staff Statistical Report 2020, Advance HE
[17] Ibid

gap between white and ethnic minority men. In terms of the mean salary, there is a gap between white and ethnic minority women of 3.4 percent, and there is a larger gap reported between white and ethnic minority men of 7 percent. This indicates that there is an ethnic penalty related to salary outcomes and this is compounded by gender, particularly as overall there is a 13.4 percent mean gender pay gap between ethnic minority men and women and an even larger mean gender pay gap of 19.5 percent between ethnic minority women and white men. Heath and Cheung (2006) define ethnic penalty as the sources of disadvantage that leads an ethnic group to fare less well in the labour market than the similarly qualified dominant ethnic group. To support this, a UCEA report (2019) stated that ethnic minority staff in UK higher education earn less than their white counterparts and that there are significant differences between broad ethnic minority categories with black staff systematically earning less than all other groups (UCEA, 2019).

Thus far, these data present a profile of under-representation of minority ethnic staff across the UK higher education sector and especially if one considers that the profile of the UK ethnic minority population would have expanded since the UK census in 2011. This is further exacerbated by the proportion of those staff employed on fixed-term contracts and receiving lower pay overall than other colleagues. Despite black staff representing a significant cohort among minority ethnic staff, black staff are less likely to hold professorial positions than any other ethnic group and are less likely to be positioned within the highest salary range (>£50,000 per annum) than any other ethnic group.

Table 10: UK academic staff by leaving status and ethnicity (Advance HE, 2020)[18]

		BAME			White			All leavers	
		No.	↓%	→%	No.	↓%	→%	No.	↓%
UK employment									
HEI	UK other HEI	300	27.0	11.7	2,280	25.4	88.3	2,580	25.6
OEI	UK other education institution	40	3.7	13.0	270	3.0	87.0	310	3.1
RES	UK research institute	25	2.3	13.6	165	1.8	86.4	190	1.9
STU	UK students	75	6.9	16.6	390	4.3	83.4	465	4.6
MED	UK NHS/medical or dental practice	155	13.8	28.6	385	4.3	71.4	540	5.3
PUB	UK public sector	35	3.1	8.2	390	4.3	91.8	425	4.2
PRIV	UK private sector	80	7.2	10.8	660	7.4	89.2	740	7.4
SELF	UK self-employed	40	3.5	8.3	435	4.8	91.7	470	4.7
VOL	UK voluntary sector	5	0.4	9.3	40	0.4	90.7	45	0.4
All	**All UK employment**	**760**	**68.0**	**13.1**	**5,015**	**55.9**	**86.9**	**5,770**	**57.2**
Non-UK employment									
HEI	Non-UK HEI	25	2.1	12.4	160	1.8	87.6	185	1.8
OEI	Non-UK other education institution	5	0.4	14.7	30	0.3	85.3	35	0.3
RES	Non-UK research institute	10	0.7	14.5	45	0.5	85.5	55	0.5
STU	Non-UK student	0	0.1	..	5	0.1	..	5	0.1
MED	Non-UK health service	0	0.0	..	0	0.0	..	0	0.0
PUB	Non-UK public sector	5	0.4	..	10	0.1	..	15	0.1
PRIV	Non-UK private sector	5	0.4	12.1	30	0.3	87.9	35	0.3
SELF	Non-UK self-employed	0	0.0	..	5	0.0	..	5	0.0
VOL	Non-UK voluntary sector	0	0.0	..	5	0.1	..	5	0.0
All	**All non-UK employment**	**45**	**4.1**	**13.7**	**290**	**3.2**	**86.3**	**335**	**3.3**
No longer in employment									
NREG	Not in regular employment	245	21.9	10.6	2,065	23.0	89.4	2,310	22.9
RETI	Retired	60	5.4	3.9	1,490	16.6	96.1	1,550	15.4
DECE	Deceased	5	0.6	6.0	110	1.2	94.0	115	1.2
All	**All no longer in employment**	**310**	**27.9**	**7.8**	**3,665**	**40.9**	**92.2**	**3,975**	**39.4**
All Destinations									
All	**All leavers**	**1,115**	**100.0**	**11.1**	**8,965**	**100.0**	**88.9**	**10,080**	**100.0**

In terms of the data related to staff retention, the data can only indicate a snapshot at a fixed point in time and is unable to provide the full picture of the factors that contribute to the sector workforce profile. What is clear is that the growth of black and minority ethnic staff over more than a decade is insufficient against the rate of attrition shown in Table 10. This is especially marked among academic members of staff, showing that a higher proportion of black and minority ethnic academic staff left UK higher education than their white colleagues, including to go to another non-UK higher education institution. Research undertaken by ECU suggested that black and minority ethnic academics were likely to leave UK higher education due to their research being in black history or ethnic diversity and did not feel that this research area was particularly valued in UK higher education institutions (ECU, 2015).

5.7 Addressing race inequalities in UK higher education

The current dichotomies between the moral, legal and business case for equality and diversity and those present between race and ethnicity are not helpful in researching racial inequalities

[18] Taken from Equality in Higher Education: Staff Statistical Report 2020, Advance HE

for UK higher education. The frame in which they are set limits the capacity for higher education institutions, and those charged with effecting change within them, to become fully cognisant for why workplace racial inequalities persist. The concept of equal opportunities provides the prospect of focusing on race solely within a broader equalities agenda, however at a macro and meso level it relies on numerous facilitators to advance outcomes for black staff. Namely, these are legislation; policy; and senior management commitment to maintain a sustained effort in reducing disadvantages in the workplace. In practice, institutional priorities are not always aligned to the needs of individuals and Sian (2017) argues that this can result in a lack of engagement with race equality or in addressing racism, particularly where it affects the workforce.

The Equality Act 2010 in isolation offers a framework for employers to ensure that they do not discriminate or that they take steps to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. The legislation also provides a remedy for employees where they believe this has happened. However, legislation does not eliminate workplace racial inequalities in UK higher education institutions, continuing to be evidenced since the legislation came into force (ECU, 2011; Rollock, 2011; Pilkington, 2011, 2013; Philips, 2012; University and College Union, 2016, 2017; EHRC, 2019). The legislation is unable to address dual discrimination, where there might be intersecting characteristics, e.g., race and gender. Within the context of UK higher education, institutions are obliged to meet the requirements of the PSED and although not addressed in this research, further exploration is required to gauge institutional interpretation of the PSED and to understand the extent to which institutions are meeting their responsibilities to race. This is particularly relevant considering that the EHRC[19] assessed the publication of information and equality objectives shortly after the due dates for initial publication in 2012. The reports showed that university performance was mixed and was either average or slightly below average, suggesting that there was considerable scope for improvement, particularly in terms of publishing more information on staff and potential service users, assessing impact and recognising and addressing gaps where they are apparent (EHRC, 2012; 2013). Monitoring for compliance should be supported by the sector agencies

[19] Equality and Human Rights Commission

to ensure good practice and to address the issues raised through these assessments across institutions in future.

There are various issues relating to policy implementation (Hoque and Noon, 2004; Pilkington, 2011), particularly where there is inconsistent awareness and knowledge of relevant policy and/or the policy is not implemented fully or effectively. Conversely, there can be detrimental and unfair impact from the hyper-formalisation of procedures, which can result in what Noon et al (2013) described as 'circumvention by compliance' through the robotic, defensive, and sometimes malicious implementation, that may undermine the original purpose of the procedure and cause further inequality. Added to the difficulties of the practical application of legislative frameworks in organisations, the approaches used through diversity management concentrate primarily on diversifying the workplace and assumes principles of meritocracy, where a person's background is believed not to preclude success. For this reason, Syed and Özbilgin (2009) argue that diversity management is unable to achieve equitable outcomes for diverse employees and unless a comprehensive approach is taken to reform multi-level processes and practices, employment opportunities and outcomes will continue to persist.

In its attempts to address inequalities across the UK higher education sector, including how some of its practices might be contributing to these outcomes, there has been an amplified implementation of unconscious bias training across the sector. This intervention has been increasingly endorsed across other sectors and industries and featured as a recommended tool to tackle race inequalities (McGregor-Smith, 2017). Unconscious bias training is being delivered across the higher education sector together with other learning and development interventions that address equality and diversity with varying degrees of success (Swan, 2009). There is no evidence to demonstrate whether senior leaders are included in this activity across institutions. Noon (2017; 2018) has critiqued the 'latest fashion' in self-awareness stating these measures would likely have little impact on the pernicious nature of everyday racism in the workplace.

Noon (2017; 2018) also pointed out that there is no guarantee that knowing about bias will eradicate it and the no-blame approach used within unconscious bias training is reliant on an individual firstly acknowledging their bias, and secondly, being willing to modify their behaviour. Within institutions themselves there are various methods of delivery for equality

and diversity learning interventions that include both face-to-face and an increasing reliance on e-learning, which is more cost effective. There is no evidence to support or contradict the role that equality and diversity e-learning interventions contribute to challenging individual attitudes and behaviours. However, anecdotally, after years of these interventions being in place in most, if not all, UK institutions there is a likelihood that Noon's (2017; 2108) critique of unconscious bias training can be applied to broader equality and diversity training. In a recent move by the Civil Service, unconscious bias training has been phased out from its programme of equality and diversity learning interventions because of the lack of evidence that it can make a difference to organisational equality outcomes (Coughlan for BBC, 2020; Cabinet Office, 2020; Personnel Today, 2020; CRED, 2021). More recently, the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities report recommended that organisations discontinue the delivery of unconscious bias training (CRED, 2021). However, further research is required to understand the extent to which equality and diversity learning interventions are being offered across UK institutions, whether those interventions are mandatory, and to understand the level of take up. Certainly, an evaluation is required to ascertain whether current learning interventions are having the required effect on reducing discrimination or disadvantage towards groups of people based on race.

Following on from the discussion in Chapter Four, academics have used, and continue to explore the use of Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a more radical approach to address anti-racism within the UK context. CRT has been used to scrutinise contemporary institutional life (Gillborn, 2005; 2006, Rollock, 2011). Historically, CRT's two main principles are firstly aimed to address 'white supremacy' to describe the oppression based on race rather than the concept of racism; and the second that 'race' not social class was the primary contradiction in society (Cole, 2009). These principles have advanced and expanded over time and now include the notion that racism is normal, not aberrant and is embedded within the fabric of society; that racism reinforces and advances the interests of whites and helps to maintain the status quo (interest convergence); that race is socially constructed; and that although CRT is primarily focused on race, the intersections with multiple aspects of identity are important in understanding the extent of inequalities (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Gillborn, 2006; Delgado and Stefancic, 2007, Rollock and Gillborn, 2011). CRT employs storytelling and counter-storytelling

by integrating experiential knowledge from people of colour to expose the way racism is omnipresent in society.

Akin to what is recognised as a business case for diversity, Bell (1980) developed the concept of *interest convergence* to suggest that white people will support racial justice only when they understand and see that it is in their own interest to do so, when there is a "convergence" between the interests of white people *and* to progress racial justice. Bell asserted that the U.S. Supreme Court ended the longstanding policy in 1954 of "separate but equal" in *Brown v Board of Education* since it presented to the world that they supported civil and human rights. From this, it is possible to assert that diversity management fits the concept introduced by Bell as organisations voluntarily pursue increasing organisational ethnic diversity only when business objectives coincide.

The approach used through CRT is useful in unpicking the complexities of racial inequalities using the premise that racism exists across all aspects of society and that it is commonplace and most often hidden in plain sight. The use of storytelling offers an instrument to expose the perspectives of lived experience, to highlight the effects of everyday situations that are legitimised by dominant groups. However, as both Ladson-Billings (1998) and Gillborn (2006) have expressed, a more radical perspective and even more radical solutions are required to address racism in education. These radical solutions must involve addressing the white hegemonic systems that sustain and extend workplace racial inequalities and will necessitate a renewed perspective that is able to keep pace with the evolving nature of racism in UK society and within the UK higher education sector.

The renewed calls for more radical action lack a clear perspective of how the issue of 'white supremacy' or white privilege can be addressed in our higher education institutions with a specific focus on staff. In 2019, The Guardian investigated their evidence of widespread racism in UK universities (Batty, 2019) and suggested that there was an 'absolute resistance' to tackling race discrimination. Bhopal (2018) suggests that the academy works to protect its own image of white privilege by excluding minority ethnic staff from positions of power and that whiteness within the academy operates in the form of white academics having access to a 'network of knowns', which allows for access strategies to be established to progress. Anecdotally, the same can be assumed for the position of professional and technical staff in institutions, although there is no research focusing on this specific staff cohort in UK

universities. The solution Bhopal (2018) proposes that institutions outline how they address inequalities and for a specific recognition of the value of diversity, is insufficient if white privilege within institutions is not acknowledged as a contributing factor to the differential outcomes for black staff in UK higher education. Acker (2006) asserted that people in dominant groups generally see inequality existing somewhere else, and not where they are, and this is exacerbated by the entanglement of privilege with gendered and racialised identity that makes privilege difficult to unsettle.

It is the denial and/or avoidance of white privilege that maintain the order of things within higher education institutions and white staff are unlikely to be willing to relinquish their positions of power or privilege. In support of this, Bhopal (2018) believes that as long as white identity and white privilege are not threatened, white groups are supportive of diversity and inclusion. In other words, universities can promote themselves as being fair if their white privilege remains intact and unthreatened. Additionally, class is likely to be an issue within the institutional context, and which tends to be hidden by talk of management, leadership, or supervision among managers (Acker, 2006). Recently, UUK proposed a series of recommendations for UK universities in response to the EHRC's inquiry into racial harassment that included increasing staff and student understanding of racism, racial harassment, microaggressions and white privilege through training developed from an anti-racist perspective (UUK, 2020). It would be interesting to explore whether the predominantly white senior leadership teams within institutions are engaged in discussions about white privilege and the role they play in maintaining the status quo. UUK have stated they will carry out a review of the impact of their guidance to the sector and identify areas for further improvement by summer 2022.

5.8 Conclusion

The concept of equality has existed in society for some time, and it was not until the latter part of the 20th century that it became to mean what we understand it to be today. Its origins can be traced back to the US Civil Rights movement that was able to influence societal change and bring about remedies through affirmative action. It was these initiatives, with aims to reduce disadvantage on the grounds of race, which would bring about change throughout the 1960s and 1970s. This change resulted in a backlash throughout the 1980s in a move towards

a more neo-liberal political environment that sought to reduce bureaucracy and lessen regulation. This ideology crossed the Atlantic to the UK and brought about a move in organisations from an equal opportunities approach, with its roots in compliance with anti-discrimination legislation, to a voluntaristic diversity management approach.

Diversity management was embraced in the UK since it brought a greater focus on the business benefits of managing people as individuals and this is a concept that senior management could relate to and/or is easier to realise greater organisational buy-in. To some extent this was successful, however critics have raised concerns that a diversity management approach alone is unable to achieve equitable employment outcomes for diverse employees, making it a plausible suggestion that organisations approach the business benefits and employee outcomes in a hybrid model. The research suggests that neither one approach nor the other is effective in contemporary organisations.

As discussed in this chapter, taking a dual approach, and using the principles of equality together with diversity management, theoretically takes a balanced stance in creating diverse workplaces as well as giving due regard to equality of opportunity. However, this is limited to just these areas and does not ensure equality of outcome (Kaler, 2000), which could be achieved by refocusing on the role agents play within organisations at multiple levels to influence the efficacy of policy and strategy that addresses not just equality and diversity, but equality of outcome on the grounds of race. Within these existing frameworks, the emphasis is placed on either groups of people (equality) or on individuals from different groups (diversity), however from either perspective there is a lack of focus on the role an organisation plays in constructing inequalities and reproducing disadvantage.

To some degree the UK public sector has adopted equality *and* diversity approaches in its efforts to address disadvantage as well as diversify its organisations. The UK public sector has not traditionally adopted the individualistic diversity management approach seen more commonly within the private sector and this may be due primarily to the increased regulatory environment within the sector. Public sector organisations are required to evidence how they pay due regard to the way they tackle disadvantage, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. UK higher education institutions must equally comply with these requirements, yet workplace inequalities continue to persist. There have been a range of activities to focus institutions' attention on equality and diversity in the last decade,

specifically to tackle gender and race equality, as well as maintaining attention across the broader spectrum of organisational equality and diversity.

These activities cannot take place without internal actors, and it is human resources and equality and diversity practitioners, as well as other external change agents that support the sector in their approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion. The provision of equality and diversity practitioners is uneven across UK higher education institutions, and this is further exacerbated by practitioners' need to navigate a challenging internal environment, where there is individual and organisational resistance. Equality and diversity practitioners may lack capital, agency, and capability to effect change in their institutions particularly if they lack senior level support and this may be even more challenging if the practitioner belongs to a marginalised group themselves as they operate within the structures that create and perpetuate their disadvantage.

In recent years there has been a renewed voluntaristic focus on race equality, and this has been further encouraged by the introduction of the REC, however the initiative lacks organisational incentive and take up is low. Statistics show that there is clearly a need to focus specifically on race with continued evidence of low workforce representation of faculty of colour. This is particularly evident at senior levels across academic and professional and support staff alike.

There are deeper inequalities beyond workforce representation, where further research might offer an insight to the recruitment practices of higher education institutions to understand the recruitment success rates according to the ethnic background of applicants. Existing black and minority ethnic staff are more likely to be employed on fixed-term contracts, receive lower levels of pay and are more likely to leave their institution than their white colleagues. The concern here is that the rate of attrition surpasses the level of growth, necessitating urgent action in the UK higher education sector to address this. The following chapter will explore the extent to which the perception of racism might be a contributing factor to the outcomes of black staff in UK higher education.

The literature continues to report that there are ongoing persistent race inequities across the sector and although these can be seen for ethnic minority staff, it is particularly marked among black staff. These studies expose that the approaches taken within institutions to

address equality and diversity for minority ethnic groups are ineffective. As such, the discourse on workplace race inequities requires reformation and refocus, so that in practice CRT is placed at the heart of institutional strategy and policy making. Considering organisational structure and agency would enable institutions to consider how power informs the structures within the organisation that influence agents in the production and reproduction of structures within a workplace setting. The concepts of structure, agency, and forms of power (explored in Chapter Four) are applied to the interpretation of the empirical data in Chapters Six and Seven.

6 The opportunities and challenges of fitting in

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter considered the evolution of equality and diversity practice and how this has become a feature of contemporary organisational strategy and practice over the past fifty years in the UK. The field of equality and diversity is cyclical in nature, in that it was primarily constructed to tackle inequalities for specific groups and over time has broadened to consider the needs and outcomes of multiple groups, and then returned to focusing on particular groups once again, with race and race equality remaining a leading concern throughout this period.

This research has offered multiple complex topics for investigation, which require the findings to be explored over two chapters. The findings have been analysed by drawing together the previously published literature set out in earlier chapters alongside the quantified workplace context outlined in Chapter Five, together with the emerging themes from participant interviews that are relevant for this chapter and are explained further below. The analysis of participant accounts will also take into consideration the macro, meso, and micro-level aspects depicted in Layder's (1993) research map whilst reflecting on the horizontal spectrum between history and power drawing on the concepts of Bourdieu (1977; 1984; 1990; 1998) to gain a better understanding of the complexity of institutional workplace relations with a view to identifying solutions for sectoral leaders and practitioners in tackling workplace race inequalities in the future.

The aim of this research study is to explore the lived experiences of staff in UK higher education concerning the topic of race, with the objective to understand how these experiences create differential outcomes for black staff in the institutional workplace. To meet this aim, this chapter will consider how the social space in which black staff operate affects their sense of identity and belonging, the coping strategies employed to deal with this, and how the use of racialised language and terminology impacts on their working environment. The themes discussed in this chapter identified perceptions and experiences that addressed notions of race and ethnicity and terminology used in institutions that can either empower or disenfranchise staff. This chapter will also explore the views and beliefs

around identity and how these inform and influence an overall sense of belonging to their peer group and immediate colleagues and whether this sense of belonging is different to their institution.

In the first instance and to set the scene around the topic of equality and diversity, this chapter will begin by providing an account of the overall perception from participants in terms of the importance of diversity in the UK higher education sector and whether this was a consideration at the point of entry into higher education as an employee. This will be followed by an analysis of participants' understanding of and explanations around race and ethnicity, feelings towards terminology used to describe matters of race, the way institutions monitor ethnic identity across their workforces and will explore whether these organisational approaches have an impact upon a sense of institutional belonging on the participants.

Language and terminology about race and references made about racial identities have become an increasingly debated subject in recent times (DiAngelo, 2018; Eddo-Lodge, 2018) and this has become especially topical during the Black Lives Matter campaigning during 2020 (BBC, 2020). This has rightly caused outrage among black communities in the US and UK and in response, emotions have run high across different communities (Wall for The Observer, 2020; Edwards for BBC Wales, 2020). In parallel, these recent events have raised the profile once more of societal racism and feelings of guilt, shame and ignorance have become exposed through social media channels highlighting the polarity of views from rage on one extreme to 'all lives matter' at the opposite end of the spectrum. These reactions confirm the assertions made around conversations that can prematurely break down because of opposing views or a lack of understanding about the issues, which may cause anxiety, heighten tension and defensiveness and cause discomfort (Campbell, 2016; Lingayah, Khan and McIntosh, 2018; DiAngelo, 2018).

In discussing the notions of race and ethnicity this chapter will explore the perceptions of participants in terms of racial hierarchies, which might be visible within institutions and how this might manifest itself in the academy. The next section will provide a view of the landscape in terms of how participants feel about the concept of diversity and whether this was an important factor when initially considering entry to the UK higher education workforce and whether their feelings about this have changed during their employment in the sector.

6.2 Perceptions on workplace diversity

This section begins by setting the scene at a macro level within UK higher education and the sector's relationship with conceptualising and realising equality and diversity. In terms of the sector's journey in developing and implementing diversity-related policy and practice it is not unique in its challenges to prioritise policies and initiatives in the attempt to keep up with evolving practices. The organisational characteristics of higher education institutions can make this a challenging environment in which to successfully implement policies and strategies to address race equality (ECU, 2011). Despite these challenges, the UK public sector does promote equality and diversity in a proactive way and one which features representing the society it serves as a driver in promoting this agenda.

Anecdotally, people might believe the public sector to be very diverse and in pockets of the public sector this is indeed the case (Cabinet Office, 2019). The public sector may be ethnically diverse in pockets, but not within the higher levels of those institutions that make up this sector (ibid). It is often assumed that employees of ethnic minority heritage will, because of their background, have an expectation for, and an interest in workforce diversity. To explore these further, ethnic minority participants were asked whether this was an important consideration before applying to work in their institution. Being able to understand the motivations of institutional staff prior to entry to the UK higher education workforce was important to establish whether the concepts of equality and diversity played an important role in their decision making, their perception of whether they would have a fruitful career in this sector and whether as a person of colour they would feel valued as part of a diverse workforce.

The responses were initially surprising and quite unexpected, mainly due to my own expectation that diversity *would* play an important part of imagining oneself within institutional life, particularly if an employee belonged to an under-represented or marginalised group. I made this assumption because I imagined that a person that belonged to a marginalised group would feel it was important to see themselves within a diverse organisation, and this was purely based on the importance that *I* place on this organisational attribute.

Some accounts from participants that had previously studied in UK higher education acknowledged that from their own student experience in the UK, there lacked academic staff diversity, and that based on this they were able to manage their own expectations around institutional diversity. For most participants this was not the case, and regardless of role, e.g., academic or professional and support, they stated that organisational diversity *did not* play a part in the decision-making process for joining their current and/or initial institution. In fact, there was an expectation that the institution *would be* diverse and therefore, not an area to dwell upon further. An explanation of this was well captured in the following comment:

> I don't think it was in terms of whether or not I would feel comfortable...I was young and foolish, looking for a job basically, so…no, I didn't think about it at all.
>
> *Participant 5, mixed-race female senior professional staff, Post-1992*

When asked to elaborate on whether she thought about diversity presently, the participant provided a different answer with justification why she felt this way:

> …I do think about it more, yes. I think it worries me more because of how this institution seems to replicate itself in pockets on all sorts of levels…and I do observe some staff, I sense sometimes there is strain and stress to do with the fact that they don't fit in. I know that myself actually. I don't quite fit in to…the norms, perceived as the norm in that particular department.
>
> *Participant 5, mixed-race female senior professional staff, Post-1992*

Approximately 95 percent of participants had stated that they did not consider the diversity of the institution they had joined prior to taking up post. Like Participant 5, several other participants had mentioned that finding a job was more important than limiting oneself in the job market and it was only once in post, it was the lack of diversity in higher education that acted as the catalyst for considering, and for some becoming involved in, equality and diversity in the future. For some, being part of the minority meant that diversity was constantly at the forefront of their thinking in terms of how best to navigate the system. One participant stated that she had not considered diversity during her initial job search however, would do in future, except not in terms of ethnic diversity:

> I would say that if a department was all white…that wouldn't put me off at all because I've been in lots of situations and that's not an issue. If a department was all male, then that would be an

> issue. I wouldn't not accept a job if I applied for it, I think I would perhaps feel…possibly more inhibited.
>
> *Participant 4, mixed-race female academic, Russell Group*

In some ways, this comment can be interpreted in quite a positive light that for this participant the ethnic composition of her department would not be the main concern, but that gender would be. This may reflect the way that Participant 4 identifies and whether she sees herself in terms of gender first and ethnicity as a secondary consideration or if she perceives that her gender inhibits her more within the academic space than her ethnic background. Participant 4's comments might identify issues relating to women navigating a male-dominated social space (Bourdieu, 1990; 2001a) and how this impacts on what Bourdieu described as the division between the sexes and more specifically, the distribution of labour according to these perceptions of a woman's role in the workplace. Unfortunately, this aspect of identity was not explored during this interview and therefore it is not possible to explore this aspect of intersectional identity further in this instance.

It appears that Participant 4 has considered her identity in terms of her working life and that she is cognisant of the structures (Bourdieu, 1977) within which she operates and is utilising her agency (Giddens, 1984) in her decision-making in terms of considering the gender profile of a prospective department. However, this participant did state that she would not decline a position if it were to arise even if she were the only woman in the department and would clearly need to consider how she would navigate that space.

Encountering this matter early in the interview process did inform the way subsequent interviews were carried out to elicit a more in-depth account of the identity hierarchies held by participants. Overall, Participant 4's view was not shared across participants from a minority ethnic background, and it was especially not reflected among those with a black/black British background. To elaborate on the point of identity further, one participant shared a specific experience where she was asked to comment on an issue from a black woman's perspective. Her account demonstrated a powerful point where she felt it was impossible to be acknowledged in the context of her own identity in the academic space as a black woman:

…I just need to feel as if it's possible…because…it's very possible to be a white woman. But to be a woman of colour within the academic space within higher education…that was the first time that someone had asked me that expressly and I just burst into tears.

Participant 27, black female academic, Russell Group

The account from Participant 27 demonstrates that UK institutions should provide marginalised groups with a platform to be heard. Not just in terms of the experiences of all people of colour within the academic space, but as women of colour navigating a white hegemonic, and in some disciplines and academic hierarchy, male-dominated social space. Here is where CRT and the use of storytelling to reveal and explore the lived experiences of people working in UK higher education institutions is a critical mechanism for institutions wishing to advance race equality. In this case, being asked for her opinion as a black woman was extremely powerful.

Coincidentally, a much higher proportion of female participants (80 percent) had self-selected to take part in this study. This was unexpected and where possible aspects related to the intersections between race and gender were explored throughout the course of investigation. The study has not become occupied with the complexities of multiple identities and how the outcomes of participants may have been affected by the intersection of race *and* gender or any other characteristics and is acknowledged as a significant area for further exploration. There were several comments relating to this aspect of workplace and life experience and some of these will be addressed in Chapter Seven surrounding perceptions of racism in UK higher education institutions.

There were a few participants that had commented on their experiences and perceptions of diversity as students, as well as working within especially diverse student populations within UK higher education. Bhopal (2018) suggests that diversifying the student population has largely been a successful enterprise by universities over the years, yet she reminds us that the outcomes of those minority ethnic students may not be as successful as their white counterparts, the following comment captured these sentiments particularly well:

I was somewhat prepared I suppose because having done undergraduate studies I noticed that none of the staff teaching me, bar one, were of the same ethnicity as myself, so I went into the same environment knowing that, you know, there's some barriers that you're going to have to

> cross here and knowing that I was going to be kind of isolated in my experience because there weren't very many other people like me.
>
> *Participant 16, black female academic, Post-1992*

Like Participant 4 earlier, Participant 16 articulated how she was able to use her acquired institutional habitus and 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1998) albeit from a student perspective, to inform her expectations of life as an academic within her institution. Participant 16 used her agency to prepare her for the challenges of isolation that her experiences as a student has highlighted. The conversation with this participant raised the dichotomy that some institutions have become adept at attracting and creating ethnically diverse student populations, however this has not been replicated within the workforce, regardless of an institution's geographical location. This frustration was felt by many participants, particularly in terms of the ethnic diversity of staff at higher levels of institutions and what might perpetuate the persistent problem of the ethnic minority staff under-representation. One participant neatly suggested that:

> I think traditionally it's been easy to say OK, we don't have BME people in senior positions in HE because they don't go to university, no they're not getting the firsts and 2:1's, they're not entering academia. That's just not the case anymore. They're just not being promoted…
>
> *Participant 23, white female practitioner, external agency*

The seemingly obvious issue being identified by the participant is the lack of emphasis on addressing ethnic minority representation within the higher education workforce. The suggestion within the comment is the connection between outcomes of ethnic minority undergraduate students with the under-representation of ethnic minority staff in the workforce. As a result of this, there may be ensuing impact on the proportion of ethnic minority candidates applying for roles within the higher education workforce, particularly in academia. However, there may be a connection between students' observations of a lack of ethnic diversity academic staff as per Participant 16's comments. This assumes there is a dearth of ethnic minority candidates for academic roles in UK higher education institutions, which is not possible to ascertain without analysing each institution's recruitment data.

There are persistent issues around the attainment gap between white and ethnic minority students, which was raised in Chapter Two, and which may negatively impact on ethnic

minority students continuing their higher education. Participant 23 has raised some pertinent concerns. At face value, the former point (ethnic minority students under-achieving) is being proposed as an excuse to uphold the latter situation (insufficient high calibre candidates applying for jobs). With a continued organisational, and societal struggle (Lingayah, Khan and McIntosh, 2018) to address matters of race, further attention is required to understand what lies beneath that reticence to drive this agenda forward. The lack of workforce ethnic diversity is not a new problem and studies (UCU, 2016, 2017; Bhopal, 2018; Rollock, 2019) on workforce representation have focused primarily on the demographics of academic staff, however systemic under-representation of minority ethnic staff can still be observed across professional and support staff, particularly at senior levels (Advance HE, 2020).

It is possible, as a recent report on racial harassment in the UK higher education sector suggests (EHRC, 2019), that an institution's inability to start and maintain conversations about race within its workforce is a contributing factor to the problem and the next section will continue to explore some of the related aspects that may also contribute to creating barriers to advancing ethnic representation as well as tackle racial equality in our institutions.

6.3 Racialised language and terminology

To make sense of the assumptions we might make about people's understanding about race and ethnicity, and to gauge the extent to which the terms acted as a help or a hindrance within their institutions or agencies, participants were asked what they understood these terms to mean. Academic literature suggests that the terms used are problematic and exclusive (Modood et al, 1997; Smith, 2002) and part of this study has sought to understand whether the terminology used affects institutional capability to address matters of race or ethnicity within a workplace setting and whether it affects an institution's ability to advance race equality. There were also questions to be explored around the extent to which ethnic minority staff within UK higher education are affected by racialised terms and whether it impacts upon their own sense of identity within their institution. Moreover, whether this sense of belonging is further impacted by the institution's understanding, commitment, and investment towards staff of colour in dealing with matters of race. This latter aspect will be explored further in Chapter Seven when considering perceptions of racism and the ways in which institutions are tackling matters of race.

In practice, the language of race and ethnicity can be problematic, in that it has become acceptable and mainstream to use both terms interchangeably (Sandhu, 2018; Saeed et al, 2019) without entering into discussion about their histories, their evolution, or their difference. From discussions with participants, including those from a minority ethnic background, some found it difficult to distinguish between the two terms and this was particularly the case where the participant was born outside the UK. Interestingly, those born and brought up outside the UK had a different perception of their own ethnic identity, such as not having been previously marginalised because they represented the majority population in their home country as opposed to being 'othered' as a minority in the UK (Ahmed, 2012; Hirsch, 2018; Olusoga, 2017; Eddo-Lodge; 2018; Bhopal, 2018). As this participant vocalised, it was evident that she was faced with developing new strategies to navigate within a society where her visible difference could impact her career aspirations as this was not something she was familiar with in her native African country:

> ...diversity was not something that I thought of but…when I first came [to] this country…by this time people had told me so many stories about how the chances of me getting into higher education in this country are so slim... And they based it on nothing else but the colour of my skin. It was quite confusing because I wasn't used to it, it wasn't something I came with... And so, all this whole confusion of being in England and, all of a sudden, I have to talk race, it's really just…something new.
>
> *Participant 21, black female academic, Post-1992*

This participant's experience resonates with Hirsch's (2018) comments around identity in Nigeria and how ethnic background will mean less if you are part of the ethnic majority. This account offers a different perspective to those participants that either came to the UK as children or were born in the UK and have been socialised to accept and expect being or becoming racially marginalised in UK society, particularly where personal histories have been passed down to participants through older generations of relatives. As such, the perceptions and understanding of these terms may be affected by an individual's UK history, identity, and upbringing, which could provide individuals with a greater understanding of racial inequalities, and consequently, equipped to deal with systems and structures. It could be argued that this provides black British citizens with embodied cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1998) that will create certain dispositions that will define an individual's habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) in

a positive way that would inform strategies to navigate systems and structures to gain further capital, or in a negative way, where an individual could begin to resent or mistrust the systems around them and begin to withdraw from their social space resulting in further isolation (Wilson and Jones, 2008; Solanke, 2018).

Our institutions are made up of a variety of personnel from diverse backgrounds that may never have been exposed to or been affected by matters of race and levels of understanding may have been created and/or exacerbated by a lack of awareness raising on matters of race at an institutional level. Yet further clarification is required to understand whether people of colour are affected by the terminology and whether the academic debate has impacted on institutional practice. Anecdotally, there is certainly a disconnect between academic theoretical expertise and organisational practice around race and ethnicity within institutions, e.g., equality and diversity practitioners within institutions do not tend to work together with academic subject matter experts to devise bespoke solutions for their institutions, hence this research study. This may be further impaired by the positioning of equality and diversity practitioners within institutions, as they are often employed within Human Resources departments and therefore may find themselves detached from academic research of this type unless specific effort is made to engage with academic material as well as industry or field-specific considerations. The latter material is the most likely that equality and diversity practitioners would turn to in the first instance.

Participants were asked a variety of questions related to experiences of working in UK higher education as well as opinions about issues that might shed light on the real or perceived barriers to achieving race equality in the sector. In respect of terminology used to talk about race and ethnicity, which might include policy, legislation or data collection through workforce monitoring, the findings indicate that a significant number of participants generally have no objection to the use of terms such as race and ethnicity. There was a core of participants who expressed that use of these terms are problematic in the way that they isolate and exclude individuals and groups, as well as create a false impression about those who might fall within or outside the definition of these terms. Examples of such comments include:

> If you try to use a language that is going to be acceptable to people outside the box, people inside the box will feel patronised. Similarly, if you use a word or a term that's associated with people in the box, where they feel comfortable, then it alienates those on the outside.
>
> *Participant 1, black female practitioner, Russell Group*

> ...we're stuck with the word race as part of a social landscape, as part of a political landscape but I think in terms of an experiential landscape it misses the trick. It means that..it's almost as if race can be the excuse rather than the denominator by which we delineate individual experience.
>
> *Participant 17, black female academic, Post-1992*

This feedback somewhat supports the academic debates that conclude that the concepts of race and of ethnicity are problematic because of their social construction (Cole, 2009; Modood, Berthoud and Nazroo, 2002; Smith, 2002). Despite an overall acceptance that this is the case, the problem does not necessarily lie in their construction, but about the way the terms are used in practice. Generally, there was acquiescence to the terms when used to advance discussions about racialised discrimination and harassment; provide an understanding of the context; their interchangeable use dependent on the audience; and where their use was valid to address issues that were important within institutions. Whichever way the terms are used it was felt that it was impossible to appease everyone inside or outside of the sector, or even people of different ethnic backgrounds.

This view was supported by several participants. Corroborating the literature discussed in Chapter Two, participants felt that the term race was loaded with negative historical connotations and that the term was perceived to be related only to people of colour rather than to everyone:

> ...I do think there are problems with both of those terms, and I think really the better thing is to exclude race because of its history, and to...lean more towards a self-defined ethnicity, which we accept as problematic because it is based on experience, it's based on capital, it's based on all sorts of things but let it speak for itself and accept that in all its heterogeneous ways.
>
> *Participant 16, black female academic, Post-1992*

The challenges apparent with identity and acknowledging the socio-political pressures surrounding this topic create difficulties for large and complex organisations that are predominantly white that may lack confidence with dealing with a diverse workforce and creating spaces within institutions to talk about race. As mentioned in Chapter Two, race sends people into a deep dark place where there is a real fear and discomfort when talking about race and racism (Dirlik, 2008; Rollock, 2012) and where people close ranks (Cole, 2009). This challenge was described by a participant about her experiences working with higher education institutions:

> …there can be a tendency to conflate race with black…race itself is bound up in a historical situation…I think people run away from it…
>
> *Participant 19, white female practitioner, external agency*

This view was further supported by another practitioner participant based within a university who shared her experience of providing safe spaces for staff to discuss matters of race:

> …for some individuals, they have never been given the opportunity…to discuss it and drill down about what it is and what it means because they think the finger…of…guilt – I don't know what it is – whatever they presume will happen if you start discussing this word, I can see it in their face, in their eyes.
>
> *Participant 30, black female practitioner, Post-1992*

Here, Participant 30 touched on an important aspect that generic equality and diversity 'training' does not address, perhaps due to the significant scope of the agenda that it attempts to tackle. However, there is more to be said around facilitating discussions with staff around the topic of race, and this is particularly pertinent for white staff who may not have ever been socialised to this (DiAngelo, 2018). Also, creating spaces for ethnic minority staff using the principles of CRT to share their lived experiences or to provide anonymised accounts to expose institutional life from the perspective of a person of colour can bring to life issues of race and racism to a wider audience for discussion, greater understanding and the first steps to creating a more inclusive and anti-racist movement within institutions.

In relation to the social construction of race, multiple participants expressed their deep disapproval to acronyms that are used to describe people of colour. It was acknowledged that an acronym widely used to describe minority ethnic cohorts, e.g., BME (Black and Minority

Ethnic) also exists outside the higher education sector as well as other variations of this, such as BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic). The subject of racialised terminology and the use of acronyms has been debated over the past few years with calls to discard them altogether (Sandhu, 2018; Saeed et al, 2019).

Participant 30 continued by providing her perspective on the acronym 'BME', which is widely used in the UK higher education sector:

> Oh, I can't stand that. Sorry! [Laughs] What does it mean? Again, it's denying me authentication because I'm just part of a group that does not have any distinguishing features, you've just made me invisible basically. I know some people say 'well it serves a purpose' but the more you use it, the more it has less of a human content... It's not real, they're not people, it's like people, individuals use the phrase 'migrants', 'refugee', after a while there's no human connection with that, it's just a phrase and a word and then you can say what you like because you don't think you're hurting anybody because it's like a soulless entity…
>
> *Participant 30, black female practitioner, Post-1992*

The tendency to use abbreviations such as these has caused a normalisation of language relating to race as shorthand referring to people from minority ethnic heritage as a homogenous group and can be interpreted in this context as symbolic power and implies symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1998). It is terminology that has been legitimised through practice by dominant groups to refer to those that are in a dominated group. Bourdieu (1977) expresses that any language of the establishment that can command attention becomes an authorised language and therefore becomes legitimate. Consequently, power can operate through the subjective misrecognition of the terms BME or BAME. Misrecognition is key to the act of domination and Kamoche et al (2014) argued that 'cultural arbitrary' is a condition that expresses the arbitrary imposition of power by misrecognising its effects and purpose, which reproduces and legitimises the use of this terminology. Another participant openly challenged the use of the term by stating:

> BME and BAME, which also makes me want to regurgitate yesterday's dinner....I just think, 'do you know what? I'm not an acronym, and I didn't give you permission to call me an acronym and that's not OK' and it bothers me that…it's an acronym that's just flung around with little consideration… I have no issue with either race or ethnicity…the problem with both of them is

that they are seen to only be pertained to people of colour. So, white people are seen not to have a racial identity…

Participant 27 black female academic, Russell Group

Paradoxically, some participants had appeared to come to terms with the use of these acronyms to describe themselves and other people of colour. During interviews many participants used the acronym 'BME', which further legitimises the use of this terminology within their institutional setting, acceding to symbolic power and symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1990; 1998). The legitimisation through habitus in the use of such terminology has created a structure into which people of all ethnicities have become socialised. Giddens (1984) stated that rules are reproduced consistently so that they take on an objective form. In this sense, socialisation to these rules can be used as an instrument of power by the dominant group to maintain their advantage, which can be guaranteed if the dominated group are complicit in their subordination (Jones and Bradbury, 2017). Randle, et al (2014) similarly describe the practice-acceptance-internalisation-practice cycle that results in structures being reproduced and reflected through conformity with those norms and their reproduction. Similar to the point made by Participant 30 in relation to creating space to discuss race within institutions, there is no reason not to include discussions about racialised terminology and its impact on dominated groups in the social space.

Using this phraseology might be a manifestation of how people of colour have become institutionalised, or to use the phrase from Bourdieu, have become influenced by the structured structures that are structuring structures (Bourdieu, 1977; 1990). The act of accepting and utilising these terms to describe oneself and others of minority ethnic background as a homogenous group is a production and reproduction by social agents of colour and enable those who are not affected directly by the terminology to continue to use it. Similarly, people of colour may be constrained to stop using these terms for lack of agency (Giddens, 1984). These participants have taken on the institutional language which has become normalised, and upon which has through production and reproduction, become embedded through practice. Perhaps this appropriation of language by people of colour is being used as a mechanism to facilitate their navigation through the system which uses language, and specific terminology, to other, homogenise and dehumanise ethnic minority staff within institutions. One could interpret the use of these acronyms as a symbolically

violent act that reduces people of colour to a homogenous cohort that lacks specific and nuanced identities and deflects attention away from the differential experiences and outcomes of individuals of diverse ethnic backgrounds that lie within this grouping. Legitimising these terms through practice also sustains a position where white people can continue to see themselves outside of a racial or ethnic context.

Bourdieu (1977) articulates this in a way that suggests that certain dispositions existing in a group setting are exercised amongst the group in practice and are therefore reinforced and confirmed and subsequently become the foundation of collective belief (Randle et al, 2014). Translated in terms of the language used among higher education colleagues, through practice, duplication, and reinforcement, it has become acceptable by the majority to use acronyms such as BME, BAME, etc. when discussing people of colour and matters of race. To take a stance that is contrary to that which has been established though collective practice, for example, if a person of colour were to state openly that they were unhappy about being referred to as a BME person, could potentially place that person of colour in an unsafe situation in terms of their position within the field of academia and within their group of peers. As a result, the language has become customary and therefore established within the structured structure of the institution itself.

In accepting and reinforcing this position, and by replicating the use of racialised terminology people of colour are, unwittingly, replicating the symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1998). It is evident from participants' responses that staff of an ethnic minority background, who may or may not approve of the terminology, accept their use through practice. This may be through choice, or through lack of agency. Perhaps this is also an attempt to gain social capital through coming to terms with the system within which they must navigate and therefore Giddens' (1984) concept of a dialectic of control is pertinent here whereby a subordinate agent can influence the dominant forces to accrue other capitals. This impacts upon their habitus, and to make their place in their field, might ultimately lead to gaining greater capital (social, cultural, and symbolic power) if they are perceived to integrate with institutional norms and practices.

There were further complexities surrounding terminology used by institutions in attempting to categorise staff in terms of race or ethnicity. Some participants with minority ethnic heritage did not have an objection to the use of ethnic categories such as black/black British

etc. Although one participant shared her exasperation about the way in which political correctness has hindered talk around race because it has contributed to people becoming afraid (Philpot, 1999; Crawley, 2007) by the language used:

> I think people are scared of it. I think because things have got very PC to the extent that it's too PC sometimes, you know when you heard [sic] nonsense – people can't use the word 'blackboard', oh please give me a break…
>
> *Participant 25, black female professional, Russell Group*

Additionally, some participants expressed frustration and mistrust about the way institutions interrogate staff about race or ethnicity through diversity monitoring, despite organisations, such as higher education institutions needing to use workforce data to meet their Public Sector Equality Duty (ECU, 2009; EHRC, 2014). This mistrust is in part caused by the absence of a communicated rationale to collect such data when the institution might appear to do nothing with it. The frustration has been borne from the categorisation of staff into distinct racial groups and that the forms and systems being used had not caught up with the complexities of people, particularly where there were conflicts around identity, such as being born in Britain with non-British heritage. These frustrations were expressed in the following comments:

> …I'm black British, sometimes you don't see that…I'm not from Nigeria, I was born here…
>
> *Participant 11, black female professional, Post-1992*

> I put African Caribbean. I am not a colour, you know, my ethnic origin is African Caribbean and I always write that. If there's not a box I just put 'other'. So, when we're collecting information for HEFCE etc., we have a lot more blanks than we used to do, that has risen, the people putting 'other' or 'not wishing to answer that question' has risen. And I think it's because they're not confident to say, 'this is…', or they don't know what they are, how to record themselves.
>
> …there's a gap in terms of how we identify, how we define ourselves, so people of colour, because of your experience, I'm just going to be general now, because of their experience, might not wish to define themselves, as like myself, African Caribbean, because African has negative connotations for them and the Caribbean might have negative connotations for them, but they don't see themselves as black British either…
>
> *Participant 30, black female practitioner, Post-1992*

Another participant shared a perspective around the language used to describe ethnic background and that being able to identify as black can be an empowering and powerful notion to possess. This reclamation of blackness felt like this participant was using her embodied cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1998) to inform the strategies she employs in being able to navigate within her field and in the social space of her institution:

> A friend of mine once said to me that she doesn't like being called black. She is a black person. And I said 'hmm, that's really interesting because I never felt deep about being called black. But now that I see the divide between black and white, I don't mind being called black because now, for me, black is almost like power in itself.
>
> *Participant 22, black female academic, Post-1992*

The characterisation of ethnic identity can be viewed as a further example of symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1998). For example, higher education institutions follow data collection requirements set by external agencies, such as the HESA to collect information relating to UK higher education staff. In turn the data categories are based on the UK population census. The UK census has become the benchmark across the public sector and beyond and therefore has been legitimised at the very highest level of society, who are most likely to be white and male (Parker Review, 2020; McKinsey, 2020). Furthermore, the symbolic power wielded using racialised terminology delegitimises the identities of the dominated group(s) by legitimising the dominant culture (Mander,1987).

When participants were asked to suggest alternative terms, participants offered 'people of colour', 'global majority', 'visual minorities', 'culture' and 'heritage', yet some recognised that practically, it might be difficult for an institution to monitor effectively if staff were given the option of self-defining their ethnicity in this broad way. This was a surprisingly pragmatic view, as I had expected there would be a more vehement rejection of a symbolically powerful structure in terms of the systems used to assist organisations to benchmark themselves against other like organisations and/or against the UK population. In hindsight and as an interpretation of the responses on this topic, participants' comments appeared to assume a feeling that the system is perhaps too big to tackle and that there were more pressing matters, such as differential outcomes and experiences of racism that needed to be addressed first and foremost. At the very least, the data and their categorisation, was deemed

to be a helpful method to identify matters related to workforce demographics and outcomes for particular ethnic groups.

This section has considered the views and perceptions of participants in terms of the way that society and its institutions marginalise people of colour using terminology. In speaking to varied participants, it was apparent that there were mixed feelings about the terms used, whether in a positive or negative sense and yet through practice, many participants supported these marginalising structures by using the very terminology that they were opposed to. This may reflect participants choosing which battles to fight, and this in comparison to other concerns, is insignificant. However, this may also be an indication of how society has normalised language and practice around race to the extent to which people of colour can no longer see that they are complicit in the systems of oppression that surround them.

Importantly, the problem that language and terminology brings is inextricably linked to the identity of racially minoritised staff in UK higher education. It is in this next section that the topic of identity and belonging is explored further to understand in more detail the experiences of participants within their institutions.

6.4 The struggles of workplace identity and belonging

This section will consider the perspectives from ethnic minority participants in terms of their own identity and whether they feel they can be their authentic selves within the workplace. Racial identity is complex and can be influenced by multiple factors including the way a person has been brought up, whether an individual has been socialised with positive reinforcement about their own ethnic background (Steinbugler, 2015) and whether their parents and wider familial network have discussed matters of race or racism (Shelton, 2008). The way a person perceives themselves can also be affected by experiences in adulthood and the interactions they continue to have through their personal relationships and work experiences (Steinbugler, 2015).

Participants discussed how to varying degrees they had internalised the institutional structures in which they operate, demonstrating certain agential dispositions, which have influenced their decisions and practice in the workplace, e.g., choosing to speak or dress in a particular way. Bourdieu (1977) suggested that agents actively and knowingly implement

certain measures in a given situation as a result of reflecting on or anticipating the consequences of their own or others' actions. As a result of this internalisation, some participants have structured structures around identity, which create structuring structures in terms of the way in which they and other people of colour should present themselves and act within the institution. This is an important game to play for participants to gain advantageous positioning within their field and amongst their peers.

Initially, identity had not been an explicit topic that had been included within the interview schedule with participants, however the matter was raised in the first interview around the subject of 'blackness'. This participant was curious to understand whether others felt the same way and whether specific aspects of black identity, whatever this equated to, was left behind when at work. The participant's enquiry and comments about this was sufficient grounds for including a question on this topic with subsequent interviews and a range of interesting interpretations and perspectives were forthcoming thereafter. The participant's interpretation of blackness in this interview was as follows:

> I would perceive [blackness] as being the way that I will speak with other black people, not at work...even if I had my hair relaxed and it was long and straight and I…didn't wear anything ethnic, which I don't anyway, but that to me would be people thinking…probably an African person would see that as leaving their blackness at the door, and not coming in their attire. Not wearing anything with any ethnicity. Leaving their blackness and coming in with a suit and tie, suit and trousers, whatever.
>
> *Participant 1, black female practitioner, Russell Group*

Participant 1 spoke about blackness in ways that were more physical, and therefore subjectively demonstrable according to taste and this would differ for each individual. To some extent there is an element of stereotyping that an African person would wear 'ethnic' attire as a matter of course. The comment relating to the way that she would converse with other black people echoes Fanon's (1967) statement that black people will interact differently with other black people than with whites and this theme is repeated in Participant 7's account below and can be interpreted as people of colour feeling more authentic in these environments. As the interviews progressed it was clear that 'blackness' meant different things to different people, revolving around language, the use of different dialects, clothing styles, accent and customs:

> …when I'm home I speak a little Jamaican patois, [or] if I'm joking with somebody here, I might do that. If somebody gets me really angry it comes out. So, my dialect or whatever, so that's something that I would leave at the door because obviously this is my normal voice, and I don't speak any different at home. But, at home I'll break into something else. So, you learn within the structures and the politics of certain things. And I line manage about ten people, so that's again a different scenario, so what not to say, what to do…because it will get you into trouble.
>
> *Participant 7, black female senior professional, Russell Group*

Here, the participant was clearly aware of her workplace environment, insomuch that there are certain cultural expectations that she perceives as the norms and values to be complied with whilst at work. Participant 7 is active and knowing and employs this knowledge in practice by adapting her behaviour and playing the game to fit in with the objectified structures of her field and habitus Bourdieu (1977, 1998).

For the following participant, he felt very clear that there is nobody stopping a person of colour maintaining their identity. However, there was a time and a place for everything and that there are certain values to uphold within a workplace setting to function 'without fuss':

> It's not about colour, it's about social identity. ...when in Rome do what [the] Romans do. Don't come to Rome and tell them that they've got to be Muslim or black or whatever you want them to be. That's nonsense. If you want to work, if you want to live in England, you don't have to leave your music behind, your food behind, the way you interact socially, your dominoes behind and the rest of it. Even your clothes and your thing. In a working environment you have to accept that…you've got to leave certain parts of that behind as well, so that this social group can operate and function without fuss. Now, that means you can't come in here, in my opinion, I might be wrong, but in my view, you've got to accept certain values. You can eat, breathe, live, sing, you can do what you like. We'll embrace it. But don't bring the negative values in here.
>
> *Participant 13, mixed-race male senior professional, Post-1992*

Participant 13 did not elaborate on his meaning of negative values; however, his comments did resonate with the literature relating to the negative perceptions about blackness (Mapedzaham and Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017; Solanke, 2018). Recalling our conversation, the participant felt that he had achieved or rather overachieved the expectations made of him, because he has worked hard and progressed from growing up on a sink estate in London to a

director level role in a university. The participant also articulates his views about others needing to leave parts of their identity behind at work to operate 'without fuss', which demonstrates that he has internalised the structures of the institution, which he then projects on to other members of the same social group (Bourdieu, 1977). According to his perception of UK society's expectations of black people and perhaps his own lived experiences, he felt that the black community needed to complain less and do more, stating:

> ...stop being fixated with the unfairness of the general situation. We are not proactive, we are not outspoken, except when there's a protest and anger. We don't support ourselves. We don't support our children. We don't support our community.
>
> *Participant 13, mixed-race male senior professional, Post-1992*

Participant 16 aired her negative view around the term blackness, expressing that it is not a term used amongst her friendship group and described its use as unhelpful, which once again was reflected in the literature about negative perceptions relating to being black (as above):

> ...I suppose what they're talking about though is leaving their identity, everything that is subsumed within the notion of a black identity. It's not language I use. It's not language that is frequently used around me or even with people that I associate [with] that are of the same ethnicity as myself. They tend to refer to themselves actually by their heritage and maybe that's why I lean towards that. ...obviously there's issues of power, structural power here, but you don't hear white people coming in and saying I'm bringing my whiteness or I'm leaving my whiteness. We don't hear that, and…that is around what is the dominant presence and the dominant privilege. I don't think that using terms such as blackness helps us.
>
> *Participant 16, black female academic, Post-1992*

The point made about power and structure is a relevant one since blackness can be interpreted as a concept, which is socially constructed (Mapedzaham and Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017) in opposition to whiteness. However, the distinction between the two concepts is that whiteness has become an objective structure through power and domination. The rejection of an objective form of the notion of blackness is clearly an aspect of this participant's habitus, where cultural heritage and the nuances of these provide greater scope for subjective expression and therefore, not constrained within fixed parameters of *what* and *how* a black person should be.

Perhaps to a certain extent, Participant 16 has internalised the negative aspects of blackness as fitting the stereotypical caricature of black people and therefore not wishing to engage with the positive attributes, which for some participants included aspects of language and personal presentation. The literature covering racial socialisation (Shelton, 2008) by black parents referred to messages and strategies employed to teach their children about black culture, racial pride and black achievements and this may account for the reason why this participant views this particular term so negatively.

Another participant shared how she presents herself at work and the level of consciousness required to 'pass' as an integrated member of staff within the institution:

> There are times obviously because of the meetings that I attend, I will obviously just be the only individual who's black at that meeting. So, yeah, I have to – not say play down – but, you know, there's my mannerism and how I speak and whatever, but obviously when I'm with my colleagues it's a different thing, it's more laid back…So, yeah, I'm two people basically. …I'm always conscious....I am the black [name] with the black family, the black child…but when I'm in the workplace, I am a little bit of black, in fact 5% black, but 95% of the time I'm this other person. ...I think I couldn't possibly as a black woman come into work, say for example with my head wrapped, you know, with a turban or...I just couldn't, because I just think they're going to look at me and think typical…I couldn't possibly come into work in this environment and act like a Jamaican say for example, [spoken with a Jamaican accent] 'yeah, you alright hon', you know, could you imagine at the meeting '[spoken with a Jamaican accent] yeah, man, me hear what you're saying'! I just couldn't do that! I feel bitter but, at the same time, I say to myself, I've got a daughter, and…it might not be in my lifetime, but maybe my daughter might be one of the ones that's going to benefit from what I'm going through…
>
> *Participant 17, black female professional, Post-1992*

The views provided around black identity, whether positively interpreted and assumed or not, present a further dimension to the complexities of institutional identity for people of colour. Although some of us may assume a workplace persona at some point in our working lives, it appears that this might be more burdensome on minority ethnic colleagues if they need to be careful about the clothes they wear, the way they style their hair (and this is particularly an issue for black women) and the way they talk to others, including their accent as well as inflection. These aspects of hidden behaviours will have a significant impact on, and has the

power to influence, a person's success (Hirsch, 2018) in achieving a sense of belonging within the institution if they stand out too much.

There is too the added complexity for those of mixed heritage and the ability to straddle more than one ethnic and cultural background. One participant shared his interpretation of race and ethnicity and the difficulties that have arisen with terminology and his ability to relate to, and be accepted or embraced by, both sides of his own ethnic identity:

> Race [and] ethnicity are very watered-down words you know. I mean we're so used to them that they don't really mean anything. But if you talk about sub-terms, such as in my instance my mother is white and my father is black, so there are sub-terms…like mixed race, half-caste, whatever you want to call [sic]. These are the two main ones. They are deeply offensive, you know, and even black people offend you when you say as a mixed-race person, you know they treat us blacks like this and they say, 'well you're not black' you know. They see progress, a lot of them, the poorly educated ones see progress as betrayal...if you're in a management role, supervision role…then you'd have more rebellion, more open hostility, obstruction from your own people than you would from other races because it's this Uncle Tom thing, you know, 'oh you're alright because you're mixed-race'.
>
> *Participant 13, mixed-race male senior professional, Post-1992*

The participant alludes to conflicts he faces with other people of colour, where he perceives that he is being 'accused' of colluding with white people in his senior role within the institution. There appears to be a frustration about his own feelings of belonging insomuch that he acknowledges his mixed heritage yet feels rejected by people of colour due to the historical conflict that lies between blackness and whiteness. The participant signals the capitals he has accrued (Bourdieu, 1998), which elevate his status within the institution. Comparing himself to other people of colour in the workplace where power struggles and conflict arise where game playing (Bourdieu, 1977; Randle, et al, 2014) is required to fit in to the white hegemonic structure of the institution as well as appease the expectations of others who share the same or similar ethnic background. These complex issues associated with multiple ethnic identities and experiences are not explored in detail within this study, however, the workplace opportunities and challenges of mixed heritage employees would benefit from further investigation in future.

As discussed in the literature, social acceptance is a basic need for all individuals and is essential to developing and maintaining meaningful relationships and to derive a sense of workplace belonging (Baumeister and Leary, 1995; Leiter, 2012; Mohamed, et al, 2014). The reluctance to break social bonds causes individuals to preserve attachments with others that can result in substantial personal sacrifice. In order to understand how individuals managed this part of institutional life participants were asked to comment on their level of belonging within their institution.

A high proportion of participants responded negatively to a sense of institutional belonging, often citing a sense of marginalisation and isolation, although this was more likely to be the case where the staff member had worked for the institution for a long time, causing feelings of detachment towards the rest of the institution. Feelings of detachment towards the social space will result in significant adverse impact that may constrain an individual's ability to navigate their field (Bourdieu, 1998). This will ultimately affect their habitus and acquisition of capital (Bourdieu, 1986) where social interactions become more limited through marginalisation and increased isolation. From a positive perspective, many participants responded that their feelings of belonging were strongest within their immediate teams, and feelings of detachment were more intense when participants had negative workplace experiences and where trust had been lost with co-workers.

> I feel a sense of belonging to my team. We have a very strong team ethos. We look out for each other…my experience of the current senior management is that they don't give a damn who you are…so they're not intimately involved.
>
> *Participant 5, other ethnic background female professional, Post-1992*
>
> …I feel a sense of belonging in my department but not outside it…
>
> *Participant 10, black female professional, Post-1992*

It is not clear from these comments whether the lack of belonging is attributable to ethnic identity alone or whether it is due to the organisational structure of the institution. It is not uncommon in higher education for teams to work in silos, and this may intensify negative feelings that creates a chasm between immediate team and the rest of the institution. The siloed nature of institutional teams will certainly have a substantial negative effect where an individual's field is dependent on the relationships within their team, and this may be

particularly intensified from a scholastic perspective if their career in academia is dependent on research output, which includes partnerships with other academic staff within the same institution.

One participant reflected on her generally positive feelings of belonging to her team as opposed to the rest of the institution in the following way:

> My sense of belonging really, it's within the team that I teach with…Because we have common respect for each other, we contribute to what we are doing, so I belong to that little group…I just feel that with my small group, they acknowledge my skills, they appreciate my contribution, they clearly can see that…I am a person who is critical, who can think, who can actually contribute to student life and their learning experiences, as it were. Whereas, in the bigger picture of the organisation itself…I'm just there to do a task, I'm only recognised when something has gone wrong with the task.
>
> *Participant 21, black female academic, Post-1992*

Feelings of partial belonging might be as a result of the subtle cues that occur within the academic environment described by Chen and Hamilton (2015), which can lead to under-represented minorities questioning their sense of belonging within these domains. In these environments minority ethnic staff might become stigmatised by dominant group members, resulting in social isolation and exclusion in formal and informal groups and networks.

The theme of detachment, marginalisation and isolation (Stainback and Irvin, 2012) was reflected by many participants who felt that they were often the only person of colour within their work area, and at meetings etc. and therefore felt they would be treated as the spokesperson for their entire race (Solanke, 2018). This creates a significant burden for some who fear that their performance is used to judge not just themselves, but others like them. The following reflection provides an insight into the strategies used by the participant drawing on her agency to protect herself against the feelings of social and emotional isolation:

> It's a strange space and it's a space that contributes to a growing sense of unbelonging [sic]. I am the only member of staff that does not have an office in the department. So, there is that sense of…social isolation as well as a kind of unconscious sense of isolation. ...I treat it in a way that allows me to compartmentalise how I feel when I get in. What it means is that there's a kind of an emotionless part of me that walks in through the door. So, if that's what they mean by leaving blackness at the door, maybe that's it. It's not about blackness for me, it's about

> my...it's my vulnerability that I leave behind because if I bring it with me, it will be destroyed. So those sensitive inner parts of me, I keep them very protected. So, the version that they get of me is the 2D me, not the 3D.

Participant 16, black female academic, Post-1992

The participant offers a perspective on her social space, which according to Bourdieu (1977; 1991) are a system of mutable structures that distribute different forms of power or capital, and which define the rules and resources that become legitimised within that space. It is unclear whether the lack of an office has been imposed. It appears that Participant 16 has either accepted the structures that have been presented, and may indicate her lack of capital (Bourdieu, 1998) in that social space, which could be a combination of social and cultural capital, or that she lacks agency to challenge the situation she finds herself in. Despite this, the participant is clearly aware that she is limiting who she is in the workplace, and this is an active part she is playing. Therefore, demonstrating agency as a form of protest. This may have more detrimental impact on her career and workplace experiences as she has begun to self-isolate as a form of self-preservation, yet without fully considering the effect this might have on her ability to acquire further capital through networking with peers in that social space.

Furthermore, Participant 16 raises an important issue in terms of expectations placed upon people of colour in the workplace. This brings to life the points made on hypervisibility (Kanter, 1993; Ibarra, 1993, 1995, Solanke, 2018) that place minority ethnic staff at a higher risk of being othered, increasingly scrutinised and subject to exclusion or even self-exclusion, reducing employee engagement and impairing employee authenticity and productivity. One participant felt she was over-scrutinised once she had reached a higher level within the institution:

> …If I'm at a certain level I'm invisible, but the minute that I'm a bit further up I get challenged…and I found that I was being challenged a lot more than my counterparts.

Participant 15, black female professional, Post-1992

In the literature, Solanke (2018) spoke about the hyperinvisibility that the absence of people of colour within senior levels of academia creates, which as Participant 15 recounts transformed to hypervisibility once she had crossed a particular structural threshold within

the hierarchy. An increased scrutiny will inevitably produce anxiety and may attract boundary heightening and an escalation in the critical evaluation of performance (Kanter, 1993; Smith 2013). It is possible that the hypervisibility that Participant 15 speaks of may be related to her sex, her ethnic background or the intersection (Crenshaw, 1989) of both. Bourdieu (2001a) spoke about symbolic power and the notion of women participating in social spaces that have been traditionally reserved for men. Therefore, this participant's experiences could be interpreted as over-scrutiny of her leadership attributes and whether these meet the cultural arbitrary of the domination of men over women in this domain. One can add to this the participant's ethnicity where there are statistically few black women in leadership positions in UK higher education. There were a number of participants that provided accounts of their workplace experiences where this was the case:

> …you feel like you've got to work harder than…your non-ethnic [sic] peers to achieve the same status… or opportunity…and I've had to do that all my professional life. That's been my driver and that's why I've achieved, but at the same token sometimes you go, 'well why do I have to work so long?' Why am I having to bend over the extra mile? …if I do have a day where, 'you know what, I'm going to leave at five or leave at half six'. Why do I feel guilty? You know, when other people clearly don't.
>
> *Participant 13, mixed race male senior professional, Post-1992*

The comments made by Participant 13 were echoed by several participants and this perception appeared not only in accounts about their own experience but is information shared inter-generationally to prepare the next generations. There was no evidence that this experience was specific to any gender, as similar accounts were reflected equally by women, however the impact on black men may be heightened because of associated negative stereotypes. These accounts echo the literature (Shelton, 2008, Steinbugler, 2015) around strategies parents may employ in racially socialising their children about life in white-dominated workplaces. This was reflected by one participant who spoke about her own experience in the institution and the advice given to her son:

> I would say as a black person, I've had to personally work damned hard. Harder, than most people have had to work. It's the same with my son. He's had to work jolly hard to be the best of the best because, as I've always said to him, 'you're young, you're black and you're male, people will look at you first'.

> You know, and he gets it…I said, 'you don't have to be rude…you don't have to do that because you've lost your value then…you don't have to be nasty, be yourself, but always be aware that you have to work harder than everybody else because there's a stereotype – young, six foot two, black male, oh God…before you've opened your mouth'.

Participant 25, black female professional, Russell Group

The topic of stereotyping arose in many of the discussions, either as a direct reference, such as that from Participant 25 or when discussing assumptions made by others in the workplace. The experiences shared were in all cases negative or adverse in their impact. The assumptions being made were based on their ethnic identity and took various forms, including microinvalidations, such as being misrecognised, etc. In the following statement, the participant spoke about arriving early for a student conduct panel, which she was invited to attend as a new panel member:

> …I was told…'can you wait out here and we'll call you in when we're ready for you'… …I thought, did she think that I was the student that did the plagiarism?

Participant 14, Asian female senior academic, Russell Group

> My name is very unusual. People are very surprised when they see me. I remember once working…in one of the departments…and for months…I was speaking to this consultant on the phone and he came in the office one day for something, never met each other or anything, and there was a young lady who was English sitting there, she was the temp and then there was me and he came in, he went straightaway to her and said, 'are you [name]?' and she said, 'no, this is [name]' and the look on his face was like…and he actually…said, 'you're [name]?!'. I said 'yes'.
>
> My response to him was 'no I don't have two horns and I do not smell of sulphur' – that's what I said to him! That has happened blatantly…and for me that's really sad because when I'm dealing with anybody I don't even care what they look like or what they sound like…but I think also the preconceived ideas of you could be ghetto. No, seriously, you could be ghetto, you're a black chick, you could be ghetto. The stereotypes are there and it's very, very subtle.

Participant 25, black female professional, Russell Group

These examples not only highlighted the prevalence of racial stereotyping (Gamst, et al, 2011) but also provide an insight into the seemingly innocuous interactions described in the literature as microaggressions (ECU, 2011) or micro-incivilities (Kandola, 2018). As a response

to this, individuals can experience social identity threat, that induces the state of psychological discomfort when confronted by an unflattering group or individual reputation (Nelson, 2009), such as those assumptions reflected in the above comments. This threat can become particularly heightened where that reputation can be confirmed by one's behaviour – adding a significant psychological burden if the individual is being judged by their peers. The impact of social identity threat can include disruptive effects on performance in the short-term, e.g., interview, examination, etc. Over time, this can prompt defensive behaviours, such as disengaging from activities or teams and can result in a self-fulfilling prophecy whereby the person begins to resemble the stereotype (Nelson, 2009).

It might be assumed that stereotypes made about ethnic minorities originate from others that do not share the same ethnic identity. However, there were some unexpected comments made by ethnic minority participants towards others of the same ethnic background that reflected certain attitudes towards British-born ethnic minorities:

> ...with progression for black people or ethnic minorities I think it opens up a new dimension where people may not see themselves as 'I'm not going to get that opportunity because people are going to be racist to me', so there's that mental block in the minds of maybe black people… Most of the people don't have internal locus of control, where they blame everything on the outside. Everything is external to them rather than people making the first move…because I tell people if you're born here and I have come all the way from Ghana and I'm trying to get myself opportunities, and you're here telling me that people are putting blocks in your way, then it doesn't work. I will say yes, and then holding people back in the system will be those that are born here, because the black people that I know that are born here, the system holds them back. But black people, let's say immigrants, the system doesn't hold them back, because where we come from, let's say Ghana or Nigeria, you're not given things, so I find over here there are so much [sic] opportunities. ...my auntie's children, they were always saying there are no opportunities. I'm saying there are opportunities, because I look at…the big picture from way down they think the Government owes them something… It's about attitude.
>
> *Participant 2, black male academic, Post-1992*

Participant 2 raises interesting points that require further exploration. His observations about British-born black people, although a generalisation, may signal social aspects that the participant, who was born and brought up in Ghana, may not have experienced. Some

participants spoke about racial socialisation (Shelton, 2008, Steinbugler, 2015) and equipping their children with the tools to navigate within a white-dominated society and contained within this may be discussions around race and racism that might be encountered. Socialising around the expectations of racism, may place individuals in a state that they could mistrust institutions on race-related matters and therefore internalise the structures that constrain certain groups of people.

Participant 2 does not appear to interpret the structures (Bourdieu, 1977, 1991) as inhibiting, rather he is using his agency (Giddens, 1984; Bourdieu, 1977; 1984), which has been informed by his habitus, to seek out opportunities to gain various capitals (Bourdieu, 1977; 1998). Interestingly, the workforce data presented in Chapter Five of this dissertation shows that non-UK black academic staff (3.1 percent) have an overall higher representation within institutions than their UK black counterparts (1.6 percent) and are proportionally more likely (0.9 percent) to hold professorial positions than their UK-black academic counterparts (0.6 percent).

Another participant reflected on his experiences of attitudes during the recruitment process and hiring prospective candidates where potential issues might arise:

> ...there is this core mistrust with employing black people and it doesn't matter if you're a racist or not. Everybody, even black people who are managers, who employ other people, they may have candidates who are black, they're worried. What if this guy's a difficult person you know? How am I going to handle that because you know they can get pretty militant, and they can get the unions and they get race relations on to us? We don't want that.

Participant 13, mixed-race male senior professional, Post-1992

The participant's reflections capture how complex and powerful the social construction of race is and how these problematic concepts continue to be internalised by people of colour (Mapedzaham and Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017; Hirsch, 2018). Stereotyping and other negative attitudes about black people are not solely held within dominant groups and this may be intensified further by class or socio-economic background and/or taste, which Bourdieu (1984) refers to as distinction and where differences in power become inscribed into symbolic or cultural differences. What has become clear following the analysis and interpretation of such a rich data source is that there are certain rules that apply to presentation, conduct, and

navigation within an institution. All these actions will have an impact and a consequence that may feed further negative preconceptions and/or place an individual in a position where they need to adjust their mental or physical state to cope with the ongoing threat.

This analysis offers an alternative view on the diversity versus equal opportunities debate where there is conflict between an organisation's will to diversify the workplace, yet there are significant issues to contend with to ensure recruitment processes are conducted in a fair, transparent and unbiased way. The account from Participant 13 highlights that bias, whether intentional or not, can be a product of different lived experiences and that perpetrators can be from diverse backgrounds. It is imperative that institutions are cognisant of this in their efforts to increase diversity across their workforce and manage that diversity throughout the employee lifecycle.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter has reflected on the feelings, perceptions and experiences of participants that took part in this study by exposing aspects of fundamental institutional life in a way that is not often discussed; our language, our identity, and our need to connect. These are perhaps aspects that most of us take for granted. The findings reveal the participants' vulnerability, which appear hidden in plain sight.

The analysis within this chapter has focused predominantly on the research elements of situated activity and the self (Layder, 1993). In terms of these elements, the exploration has considered the social interactions of participants from their accounts to make sense of, interpret and understand the lived experiences of black staff in UK higher education. This has been possible by referring to and considering the secondary statistical workforce data, the relevant literature around structure and agency, social theory, racial socialisation, identity and by comparing and contrasting the experiences of participants against these theories. At the level of the self, the analysis of the primary data collected shows that experiences are diverse, and outcomes may be affected by place of birth and racial socialisation, gender, role and level within the institutional hierarchy. The richness and value that the primary data provides because of this participant diversity cannot be ignored and this chapter has made an insightful contribution to our knowledge and understanding around concepts that have not been discussed previously within a UK higher education context, particularly when

considering the lived experiences of professional and support staff in the sector, where accounts are largely absent.

Participant accounts have contradicted my own initial assumptions that people of colour make conscious decisions to join public sector organisations because of their diversity. This is particularly noticeable in terms of academic faculty, and particularly those that studied in UK institutions, who managed their expectations regarding their institutions knowing that academic staff are not ethnically well represented. For both academic and professional staff, there was general acknowledgement that senior levels were the most barren for ethnic minority representation. Most participants supported the notion that it was this lack of ethnic diversity that became the catalyst for further interest and involvement in equality, diversity and inclusion work within their institution, some becoming actively involved in institutional projects or within trade unions.

In relation to racialised terminology, there was good quality discussion surrounding the complexities around the notions of race and ethnicity, their distinction, their histories and the challenges associated with the way language and terminology is employed. Overall, participants' views were consistent with the problems identified within relevant literature (DiAngelo, 2018, Eddo-Lodge, 2018; EHRC, 2019) and there was almost unanimous agreement that the mention of race within an institutional setting instilled fear. As a result, institutions were more likely to avoid the topic and did not provide space for staff to discuss matters related to race and in some cases, it was felt that this was fuelled by the pressure to maintain political correctness. There was, however, an overall acceptance that the terms race and ethnicity were used interchangeably, which according to the literature (ECU, 2009; EHRC, 2014) has been normalised over time through the methods employed by institutions through diversity monitoring exercises.

In addition to this, the broader understanding of this terminology can be explained to some extent by the legislative context that has informed our thinking as a society in terms of 'race relations'. To a great extent, practitioners in the fields of equality and diversity and human resources, have been influenced by 'race' as a protected characteristic (Equality Act 2010) and thus driven organisations to engage with this term. Consequently, the term race can be justified from a practitioner perspective, and this has become normalised as a result. Within

a higher education context, there is no guarantee that there will be a greater understanding and/or appreciation of the broader issues surrounding race and ethnicity.

The role of policy development and implementation within institutions sits generally within the corporate centre, and therefore may not be informed by research directly. It is also relevant to note that despite a relatively healthy proportion of black staff employed in administrative or secretarial occupations in UK institutions (Advance HE, 2020), anecdotally there is limited ethnic diversity in the corporate departments within institutions (see Chapter Five). The lack of diverse decision makers within the corporate centre will also mean that diverse perspectives may not be considered with the development of new policy and strategy despite good practice requiring the completion of equality analysis[20].

With all UK institutions involved in monitoring workforce diversity, some participants reported feeling suspicious about the collection of ethnicity data. These perceptions are often fuelled by a lack of transparency on the rationale for data collection considering that ethnic minority representation has remained static and differential outcomes persist. That being the case, some questioned the point of data collection if it was making no difference. Participants acknowledged that diversity monitoring had not kept up with contemporary expressions of individual identity but recognised that making the system over-complicated might be unhelpful in making a real difference.

An aspect of questioning that attracted intense disapproval from some participants was on the topic of terminology, specifically through the acronyms BME and BAME. The use of these terms was seen by participants as making individuals invisible, disregarding their different histories, background and experiences and dehumanising people of colour in our institutions. The irony is that people of colour have become complicit in supporting this symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1990; Jones and Bradbury, 2017; Randle, et al, 2014). The extent to which some participants used these terms without considering the impact of their use was unexpected and highlighted a personal assumption that more participants would reject them.

At the core of this chapter is identity and unsurprisingly, this is an important factor for participants within the context of their institutional life. This topic raised a number of complex issues that included perceptions, attitudes and interpretations of 'blackness' and how this is

[20] Also known as Equality Impact Assessments

understood and manifested in the workplace and at home. Some participants related blackness as self-expression be that through language, mannerisms and style of presentation. Participants commented that they could be authentic in the company of other people of colour (Fanon, 1967) and this can be expected within the context of institutional structures that produce and reproduce white, middle class cultural norms and expectations within the workplace. However, some rejected the notion of blackness because it stripped away the nuances and diversity of black people, making this problematic. Literature (Mapedzaham and Kwansah-Aidoo, 2017) suggests that blackness in opposition to whiteness is problematic and reflecting on this and participant commentary this concept echoes the historic ideals developed of good-bad binary that white is good, and black is bad (Jordan, 1974; Olusoga, 2017; Hirsch, 2018). Many participants spoke about how they scan their social field and make decisions so that they appear to fit in (Bourdieu, 1977, 1998). Whereas others internalised the institutional structures, objectifying them so that they inform their expectations of other people of colour and establishing new rules and structuring structures that impact on the field and habitus.

Another complexity to the discussion around identity, were the perspectives of those with mixed heritage and the difficulties encountered with self-identity, their sense of belonging to any particular social group and how they were perceived by others, including majority *and* minority ethnic groups. The unexpected accounts from a mixed heritage participant about his experiences of conflict within and between different ethnic groups appears to make operating within the structures of the institution challenging. Not only are strategies required to work within a white-dominated space, but other strategies are required to work with minority ethnic staff, without feeling accepted by either group (Bourdieu, 1977; Randle, et al, 2014). As such, an individual's accrual of capitals (Bourdieu, 1998) within an institutional setting can also create conflict between whiteness and blackness. This highlighted the excessive strain on self-identity and the human need to belong considering the challenges that will arise from both/all sides of that individual's identity, including prejudice.

Certainly, the topics discussed emphasise how important self-identity and perceptions of identity in the wider institution are to the decisions people of colour must make to navigate and operate within the given structures. These structures are objective to participants because they consistently spoke about the expectations around how one should act, dress,

speak and this understanding was shared across this cohort. This shared understanding is evidence of an objective structure that is in operation regardless of the type of institution (Russel Group or Post-1992) in which they worked, and therefore this indicates the production and reproduction of an institutional habitus (Horvat and Antonio, 1999), which could be argued is sector wide. Consequently, these structures create differential outcomes and an ethnic penalty for black staff because they must create strategies to operate within this environment. If black staff are unable to effectively play the game (Bourdieu, 1977) and decide to move to another institution, it is most likely that the culture would be the same and would impact negatively in the pursuit of progression within their field, and this is apparent from recent research relating to UK black female professors (Rollock, 2019).

The absence of institutional spaces and opportunities to discuss matters of race and ethnicity means that their differences and histories are not explored and remain neglected. Accounts from equality and diversity practitioners in the field support that this would increase institutional confidence to tackle race and racism. Some participants born outside the UK explained that their first exposure to race has been in the UK, which drew attention to their own ethnic difference, and this has caused those participants to feel confused and unsettled about their career prospects and made them feel othered in a way that had not been present before.

In conclusion, this chapter has explored the environment where minority ethnic staff operate and how their identity and sense of belonging are fundamental in facilitating their institutional journeys. The next chapter will advance the investigation further to make sense of participants' experiences and accounts of racism in the UK higher education sector, how racism is manifested within contemporary institutions and the way participants develop strategies to continue to operate within these workplace environments.

7 The lived experiences of race and racism

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter considered the impact of the social space in higher education institutions and how the structures, which have become objectified through production and reproduction by social actors have impacted upon black staff. The structures have been created by, and for, dominant ethnic groups requiring black staff to develop strategies for their effective navigation through the institutional structures. This requires sense-making, interpretation and reasoning within their habitus and constant deliberation and judgement to map out actions that do not attract adverse attention, heightened scrutiny and/or further isolation.

In this second findings chapter primary data have been analysed by drawing together previously published literature. The analysis also considers the macro, meso and micro level aspects of Layder's (1993) research map whilst considering history and power, which play a significant part in the production and reproduction of systems and structures across these levels through social actors in the social space. In considering participant accounts, the analysis and interpretation of the empirical data will draw on the concepts of Bourdieu (1977; 1984; 1990; 1998).

The aim of this research is to explore the lived experiences of staff in UK higher education on the topic of race, with the objective to understand how these experiences create differential outcomes for black staff in the institutional workplace. This chapter will advance the exploration of the previous chapter by focusing on how participants understand racism as a concept, if and how they are able to identify racism in the workplace, and understand the strategies developed by individuals to navigate the institutional structures and systems effectively. This chapter will specifically address the research objectives: 2) to consider staff perceptions of the manifestation of racism in the workplace; 3) determine the impact of racial inequalities on black staff in UK higher education; 4) consider perceptions of the existence of institutional racism and its effects within a higher education context; and 5) explore the presence of an ethnic penalty faced by black staff in UK higher education.

Institutional racism, as discussed in Chapter Two, is a deeply controversial subject and there has been very little exposure to this topic from a UK higher education perspective despite the shared public sector interests. A recent official inquiry (EHRC, 2019) into racial harassment in higher education looked at the different types of racial harassment experienced by students and staff, the routes for reporting racial harassment and how effectively those reports are dealt with. The report highlighted how institutional systems and processes affect the outcomes of minority ethnic staff and students affected by racial harassment and made recommendations to higher education institutions, external agencies and higher education funding councils. This report is particularly relevant in this research as it forms part of the multi-level analysis that provides insight to the sectoral context relating to racial harassment that describes the setting within institutions where racial harassment is present, provides situated activity around the meanings and understandings of social interactions that relate to racial harassment and considers accounts of participants (Layder, 1993). This chapter will consider these and other aspects that relate to racial discrimination, institutional racism, and participants' experiences in this research study.

The topic of race has the power to drive people and organisations away (DiAngelo, 2018, Eddo-Lodge, 2018). It is not the discussion *about* race and ethnicity but the perceptible lack of engagement with the topic by the majority ethnic group grappling with concepts that are often alien to them. DiAngelo (2018) suggests that white people have not been conditioned to think of themselves as racial beings and it is perhaps because of this, that conversations about this subject often lack the engagement of dominant ethnic groups within organisations. Crawley (2007) asserts that the social environment has encompassed a one-dimensional view of race, which has become repressed by the straitjacketing or silencing of articulations on race and ethnic minority people. The silencing of race talk has created an anxiety among white people within a racial discourse, which is unable to escape a dialogue that includes voicing experiences of racism by those who experience it. Consequently, when voices are heard they express and draw attention towards negative experiences, perceptions and opinions about race that act as a catalyst for fear, denial and trepidation (DiAngelo, 2018; Eddo-Lodge, 2018; Bhopal, 2018). That fear, denial and trepidation does not solely lie in the domain of white people as the remainder of this chapter will reveal and these concerns are both complex and multi-dimensional and have been evidenced through the narratives as a consequence of the

Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 (Wright for Daily Mail, 2020; Wall for The Observer, 2020; Davies for The Daily Mail, 2020; Waterson for The Guardian, 2020; Skopeliti for The Guardian, 2020; Edwards for BBC Wales, 2020).

The analysis and discussion will begin by considering how racism is understood and explore examples of the way it manifests itself within contemporary UK higher education. This will be followed by a deconstruction of the manifestation of racially prejudiced attitudes and behaviours including considering the comments and lived experiences of those participants within the study who have in multiple and complex ways discussed their understanding of it, and how they have come to terms with these experiences at work. Relevant concepts and theories will be applied to make sense of these workplace experiences to help identify how individuals and organisations might develop and implement solutions as a sector and locally within institutions.

7.2 The invisibility of workplace racism

The narratives that surround the historic and political development of race and ethnicity in the UK (discussed in Chapter Two) often include references to racially motivated prejudice. Allport (1954) suggested that a person's prejudice is unlikely to be merely a specific attitude toward a specific group. While prejudice is formed through learnt stereotypes, racism is a manifestation of prejudice (Gamst, et al, 2011) and according to DiAngelo (2018), we are all prejudiced. The difference lies in the way we express or act upon it. These manifestations or enactments can occur at institutional, societal and individual levels in overt (traditional) or covert (modern) ways (McConahay, 1986; Rowe, 1990; Essed, 1991; Henry and Sears, 2002; Sears and Henry, 2003; Noon, 2017). Although overt acts of racism tend to occur less frequently, they do still happen, and one participant in this research provided a brutal example about her experiences delivering training to staff across the UK higher education sector:

> I see all types of racism…and I've seen it from the very explicit someone having 'nigger' written next to their name on a sign in sheet and this was in 2009...and it was the same individual, and I have no idea who the individual was, but it was the same individual who wrote 'Paki' on the sign in sheet next to another person's name.

Participant 19, white female practitioner, sector agency

Another participant provided the following insight around the subtle changing face of racism:

> …I've had it in my face, people would shout stuff in my face. They don't shout stuff in your face now. They will just either shun you or they don't include you.
>
> *Participant 1, black female practitioner, Russell Group*

Participant 1 describes how the more subtle, covert mode of racism can be misrecognised because these acts or omissions can be made up of small events that are hard to prove (Rowe, 1990). The following quote provides an insight into the subtleties of racism where this perspective suggests that actors may unwittingly engage in racist acts:

> I think it's more unconscious as well. I don't think people are aware of it for the most part. I think it's the way, it's the assumptions we make, the criteria we use for the lack of support that we give, even though we think we give support, we don't. I think it's a very, very complex and deep-rooted problem and most of it is well below the surface…I think subtle is right but I'm not even sure that it is covert. I don't think people are covering something up. I don't even think they realise they're doing it...they think they're very liberal and open and tolerant and are, you know, but taken together the whole set of assumptions and ways that we do things actually result in it being extremely difficult…kind of unwelcoming and closed off...
>
> *Participant 29, white male senior manager, Russell Group*

Participant 29 reveals a thought-provoking argument about the covert nature of racism, suggesting that acts or omissions are *not* 'covered up' and this may be as result of individual and institutional behaviours that have become normalised over time through routine practice (Bourdieu, 1977). The field here is also relevant because the participant describes the perception that colleagues are 'liberal', 'open' and 'tolerant', providing a description of perhaps how UK higher education as a social space wishes to be perceived. DiAngelo (2018) explains that aversive racism is a manifestation of racism that well-intentioned people are most likely to exhibit and exists subconsciously whilst allowing an individual to maintain a positive self-image. Therefore, aversive racism becomes legitimised because of perceived attributes that social actors have in this space, which contribute to the conservation of institutional structures and white solidarity (Bourdieu, 1998). As an observation, Participant 29 is from a white ethnic background, and this may inform his perception that the

manifestation of these behaviours might be unwitting, yet this account could be interpreted as a manifestation of white fragility (DiAngelo, 2018).

Herein lies the challenge that faces UK institutions to understand the unconscious (or otherwise) series of behaviours that may constitute forms of racism, particularly when senior levels of the institutional hierarchy are constituted primarily of white males and therefore may not recognise behaviours to be racist. These behaviours can include neglect, incivility, ostracism, and inequitable treatment (Fox and Stallworth, 2005). As asserted by Sue, et al (2007) racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of colour. Webb, et al (2004) suggest that being treated as inferior, denied resources, limiting social mobility and aspirations are not perceived as 'symbolic' forms of violence, rather their situation seems to be 'the natural order of things'. If the natural order of things is a culture that has formed amongst dominant groups within an organisation, then it could be understood that these forms of violence are created on a micro level and constituted on a macro level becoming normalised by being produced and reproduced through practice (Bourdieu, 1977). Participants in this study talked about experiences that had occurred during their time in higher education, and that often due to their subtle nature, they felt unable to link these experiences to their ethnic background, despite having a "gut feeling" about the root cause:

> …it's hard to explain, but it's definitely a gut feeling…it is about race, but to pinpoint and say it is racism is hard, but it is definitely about race…from my experience, I just remember a line manager that I had who promoted other colleagues, or she will inform them of development opportunities, but I was always kept in the dark, yeah? It's a gut feeling …it's hard to explain, but it's definitely a gut feeling. And racism is not just black/white, it can be Asians and black. It's very difficult. I have to really ask the question 'is that a racist...or is it somebody who just doesn't understand or somebody who's paranoid or scared that you're going to take their job and so that was their reaction?' So, it's very difficult.
>
> *Participant 17, black female professional, Post-1992*

> Racism is subtle and nuanced. So, what you find is white staff being given access to opportunities, access to networks, access to support, access to supervision, whatever, that black staff won't necessarily have similar access to. So, we don't have the networks. What that

> means, we have to be brokered into the networks and unless someone is prepared to open those doors for us, we can't put the foot in the door because the door will be shut on the foot.
>
> *Participant 16, black female academic, Post-1992*

> …it's not about somebody being brutally, like, face to face racist towards you, but it's just using their power of privilege to continually disadvantage you. They will still smile with you, they will talk with you, they will exchange little messages with you, but you are never part of their life in that sense, not as individuals, not as a collective, not as anything. It's all very under the cover.
>
> *Participant 21, black female academic, Post-1992*

It is possible that the situation Participant 17 is describing may be the manifestation of (un)conscious bias, however it is often impossible to know or understand the motivations of others in their decision making or their willingness to support or sponsor another with workplace opportunities. There is another angle to this account in terms of this participant's agency and their ability to challenge the fact that others were being promoted or supported, rather than remain a passive observer.

The quotes above highlight that participants have a feel for the game within their respective institutions and understand the habitus in which they operate (Bourdieu, 1977, 1998), despite what they believe to be racism manifested through subtle acts or omissions. Yet knowingly, they continue to operate within the field, which they recognise as being burdened by these conflicts, challenges and struggles (ibid) with and between different social actors, effecting the development of social connections, and resources that can be gained through them (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). The perceptions of these three participants also describe how symbolic power is being utilised by social actors in these institutions without words and which are imperceptible, insidious and invisible (Thapor-Björket, et al, 2016). This symbolic violence explains how social hierarchies and inequalities are maintained by forms of symbolic domination, where the dominated unknowingly and unwillingly contribute to their own domination by accepting the limits imposed (Bourdieu, 1990, 2001). The participants are therefore constrained by the structures they operate within and would be faced with choices of disrupting the status quo through challenge or to leave the institution, both of which may be impossible to do because of the consequences.

Another participant provided his opinion on how staff demographics would indicate race-related issues. Although initially suggesting that overt racism had disappeared, he recounted an experience of inappropriate and overt language used by a senior staff member whilst working at a previous institution:

> I've worked in [Russell Group institution], [local government], I've worked in so many different universities and you just walk into a room, and you go well hang on, I know what to expect when I walk into a room. I've never worked here before, but I know when I walk in there it's going to be that I'm the only black guy. Does that mean that there are no other black people who can do these jobs? So, the statistics don't lie, but the overt racism has gone. I was in a meeting with another [institution], my boss at the time was a female mixed-race lady…and we went into a meeting with the college secretary, one of the most powerful people in [Russell Group institution] and his board room, we sat either side of him at the board table and we explained…a difficult problem that we've got...and he sat there, and he looked, stared for a moment and he went, "wow, this is a real nigger in a pile". [My boss] looked at me and I looked at [my boss] and we looked down and...and we looked at him and he didn't even know he'd offended us.
>
> Now, he was like ex-military, you know…very upper class, aristocrat sort of thing and we walked out there, and I said, 'did you hear what he said?' She said, 'he didn't mean it.' Yeah, but in every other way he's a gentleman, he's not really...and we both walked away thinking how could you say that to someone? Did he walk away after the meeting and think, 'oh shit, I shouldn't have said that.' But he didn't look like that... And that's…relatively trivial…I mean… because the real sense is that, how does it affect your life, how does it affect your work, how does it affect your opportunity? And that racism (huff) I've seen it probably far too many times to mention…
>
> *Participant 13, mixed race male senior professional, Post-1992*

This participant's reference to statistics relates here to workforce demographics and that he interprets this as evidence that higher education has a difficulty with ethnic diversity despite overt racism largely disappearing within institutions. This is a pertinent point because the absence of overt racism and organisational ethnic diversity are not mutually exclusive. From this account it is clear that overt acts of racism do still occur, even within the most prestigious institutions. This example reflects the normalisation of clearly offensive language, as casual racism, and used in such a way that completely disregarded the audience and demonstrates

a microaggression (Sue et al, 2007) or microincivility (Kandola, 2018). Examples such as that described by Participant 13 could easily be explained away by institutions as unconscious bias, particularly if one is to consider Participant 29's comments about the unwitting nature of people's behaviour. Participant 13 did not provide details of the age of the college secretary that used this derogatory term, but it could be assumed that this man was white and of more advanced years to be in the position that he was in. As such, power plays a significant role in the reason why this participant and his boss felt that they could not challenge his use of language for fear of reprisals.

Bourdieu (1977, 1991) expresses that the social space is made up of mutable structures of the distribution of power and this helps to unravel the issues within this scenario, insomuch that the senior person alluded to by Participant 13 used his position within the institution to define the rules of engagement, which have been legitimated through his position in the hierarchy within that space. This act was not only one of overt racism, but also symbolic violence due to the validation given to the language used by a person in a powerful position within the institution, becoming authorised language (Bourdieu, 2001a). Interestingly, his colleague was very quick to excuse his behaviour, and this may indicate that she possessed sufficient knowledge and reflexion about the social space to inform their decision to take no further action for fear of negative repercussions. Interpreted in an alternative light, the choice not to act in the moment perpetuated the dispositions that reproduce racial inequalities. However, the distribution of symbolic capital in this scenario was balanced against the participant and his colleague to be able to transform the social space (Bourdieu, 1998).

The evidence emerging in the higher education sector in recent years (ECU, 2011; Pilkington, 2013; University and College Union, 2016; Rollock, 2019) shows that institutions and their minority ethnic staff are not immune from negative workplace experiences. Despite recommendations made as a consequence of research by sector agencies and trade unions (see Chapter Five), there have been few initiatives in higher education to address these findings. The social space within institutions may be a contributing factor in masking racism and from the example given above, there are complex dynamics that maintain the status quo even where racism is explicit. There are other issues to consider, which includes whether individuals can identify less obvious or hidden racism and whether people of colour feel confident enough to call out racism. One participant offered their perspective on the matter:

> I think people are mortally offended if you might suggest that anything they do, say or think could be considered racist, and I think that it's difficult to even confront ourselves what our own unconscious biases can be with regard to race.
>
> *Participant 19, white female practitioner, sector agency*

It appears from this reflection that confronting racism is problematic, and this is further frustrated by our inability to identify acts of racism especially those that are small and covert within an organisational setting. Analysing this further, there are links here to the comments made by Participant 29 who suggests that social actors in the institutional space perceive themselves to be liberal, open and tolerant, making accusations of racism so offensive. This social identity threat is a response to everything the dominant group believes themselves to be (Nelson, 2009) and is further supported by DiAngelo (2018) and her observations around aversive racism among white progressives. However, since they are the dominant group, they are able to use their symbolic power and white fragility (DiAngelo, 2018) to deny these actions, whether unconsciously or unwittingly, and maintain the structures within the institutional social space (Bourdieu, 1998).

Within this institutional habitus it is difficult for dominated groups to transform the social space. Yet, Stainback and Irvin (2012) suggested that 'token' workers are more likely to name a negative workplace experience as racial discrimination. To understand this aspect further, ethnic minority participants were asked whether they would be likely to report that they had experienced a negative workplace experience perceived to relate to their ethnic background. Contrary to Stainback and Irvin's (2012) theory most participants felt that it would not be in their interests to report any incidents that might be related to race or that they felt uncomfortable with using such 'harsh' terms.

> …I couldn't do that…I couldn't be so blatant…you want to have a good relationship…you wouldn't want to spoil it, so you just keep quiet…
>
> *Participant 10, black female professional, Post-1992*

> [I wouldn't challenge it] …because I'd be seen as a troublemaker…and to get on in life you need not to be a troublemaker…it's career suicide.
>
> *Participant 18, black female senior professional, Post-1992*

> …As much as I want to talk race, I'm aware of the people I'm dealing with and I know that if I mention the word race, it's going to be such a big thing, even without saying anything, I will be accusing someone of being a racist, so I'm quite aware of being politically correct, which I hate.
>
> *Participant 22, black female academic, Post-1992*

These examples provide powerful testimony of the difficulties associated with discussing racism in these social spaces. Their comments support the literature that there is immense psychological burden to maintain positive workplace relationships and therefore, being socially accepted (Baumeister and Leary, 1995) in their field and habitus. The reluctance to speak about racism assists the conservation of the structures that have become internalised, which inhibits race talk (Bourdieu, 1977, 1998). Layder (1993) expressed that the self and situated activity were not elements that could be easily disassociated and with these participants' accounts it is easy to understand why this may be the case. These individuals are invested in their fields, social spaces and the resources that might be gained from these social interactions. However, the structures that have become produced and reproduced act as inhibitors to their agency because the language of race and racism is not authorised language within the institutional setting (Bourdieu, 1977) and is used to silence the voices of people of colour through symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2001b). The institutional structures are so powerful that people of colour will not or cannot feel as though they can raise negative workplace experiences because they are being constantly invalidated through denial (Augustinos and Every, 2010; DiAngelo, 2018) and misrecognition (Kamoche et al, 2014) and this perpetuates the myth that racism does not exist within UK higher education.

In the main, participants felt that it was often difficult to prove that incidents might be racially motivated and that it would be career damaging to pursue a claim of race discrimination or race-related bullying and harassment. One academic stated very clearly why she would not attempt to 'rock the boat' and these sentiments were shared by other participants*:*

> …we're not rocking the boat enough. But many of us are scared. We're scared because it's our jobs, it's our livelihoods. You know, when you've vested your career in something to rock that boat means you've got to be prepared to face some consequences. I think because of the current employment climate that we're in, rocking of the boat is less of an option for many people…and you know what it's like as well, you know higher education is a bit incestuous. People know each other, people talk to each other, so if you're going to rock that boat hard

> enough you better know that you're going to stack shelves in Sainsbury's or something. Higher education is out of it for you. So, unless you're going to go into your own consultancy, or you're going to go abroad or what have you, it's career change time if you rock that boat. So, I think it's a survival tactic to put up and shut up.
>
> *Participant 16, black female academic, Post-1992*

One participant, who is a local Trade Union representative within her institution spoke of her unease and frustration in dealing with prospective cases that may have a racial element to them:

> Even in the union, as I said, you know, we talk about racism and we talk about what you should and shouldn't do, often I'm very careful. Now, within the union we have a section where if a member of staff comes and says, 'right, I've been racially abused blah blah' or whatever, we refer straight to [the] solicitors and they will look at the case and make a decision.
>
> *Participant 17, black female professional, Post-1992*

When asked to talk about how that made her feel the participant added the following:

> [Sighs] There's a bit of anger because it's like it's a no-win situation. Well…personally, I just think you'd be targeted, you'll be known as that's the individual who raised that race case, or whatever. If…you went down that line, you're doomed anyway, that's it, finish. I've seen many colleagues have come to me and raised an issue, they don't go as close to say it's racism, but they touch on it and the majority of the times they've left the university, because life is not easy after that. Because the management gang up, you see.
>
> *Participant 17, black female professional, Post-1992*

These accounts support the literature asserting that people of colour are reluctant to attribute negative workplace experiences to racism and that individuals will employ strategies to avoid the subject (Pearce, 2019) since making accusations of racism has become taboo (Augoustinos and Every, 2010). Furthermore, it is possible to interpret these avoidance tactics as examples of how new racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2015) is manifesting itself in UK higher education institutions.

Those academic members of staff who felt they could not report or complain about negative workplace experiences, perceived that their journey through higher education would be much easier if it were not tainted by issues relating to their identity. The 'incestuous' nature

of the sector can be interpreted to demonstrate how minority ethnic academics might become silenced if they wished to pursue a long and fruitful career in their chosen field. To contextualise this concern, more than seven out of ten staff who said they had experienced racial harassment said they experienced micro-aggressive acts and demeaning behaviour, the most common perpetrator of racial harassment of academic staff being other academic colleagues (EHRC, 2019) and so it is no wonder that academic staff feel that by reporting racism would in some way jeopardise their career. The sentiments voiced by professional and support staff participants of that study reported that the main perpetrators of racial harassment included other professional and support staff, line managers and students (EHRC, 2019).

From the perspective of equality and diversity practitioners in this study there were some significant concerns raised around the type of advice or guidance that could be provided to staff experiencing negative workplace incidents. There were several comments that highlighted many of the practical implications of advising and/or supporting prospective claims of racism. These included:

> ...it's very subtle now, so it's very difficult for people to pinpoint it and hence why not many people come forward to say that it is racism...you even second guess yourself to thinking that it's racism. On occasions I've had conversations with people where I've said to them, they've automatically jumped on the 'race card' and I've said, 'no, you really need to sit back and think, because if you keep wearing out the 'race card' it won't have its credibility anymore', and some people have taken that as offence thinking that I don't believe in them. I've said that I do believe that something has happened but don't necessarily have to say that it's that...
>
> *Participant 1, black female practitioner, Russell Group*

My interpretation of this account is that Participant 1 is cognisant to the problems that might arise from claiming racism within her workplace setting and this may be reflective of the participant's own ethnic background and habitus. Therefore, her own experiences and knowledge may inform the strategies she employs to navigate the system, and as a result, advise others to follow. This is an example of the way structures are reproduced, and although this advice comes from a well-intentioned position, they may maintain the existing structural inhibitors that silence people of colour. The remark concerning the 'race card' is noteworthy because this alludes to the myth that people of colour are prepared to complain of racism all

of the time, which as discussed above has no basis (Pearce, 2019) and has been further supported by participants' comments included in this chapter, representing most participants in this study.

There were other frustrations in dealing with race matters in institutions, particularly in terms of institutional commitment, and included 'distraction by data' and other tactics employed to delay actions, such as gathering further information or the need to produce reports to various institutional stakeholders. One practitioner captured this situation well and used the analogy of a sandwich to describe and recognise the lack of progress and apathy to tackle race equality in her institution:

> A bit like a sandwich, OK, bottom layer doesn't care – I'm getting paid – whatever. Middle layer, oh OK, I can put lots of seasoning, lots of flavour, etc., a bit of policy, a bit of change management, etc., hmm, yeah and season it. And then the top layer can be I can have it toasted or sprinkled, but that's if the top layer wants to be involved in the sandwich. You need a top on the sandwich in order to drive it through or to be eaten, kind of, if you like your sandwich with two layers on it. But sometimes what happens is the top layer doesn't commit…So it's OK as moving around and sprinkling and putting gherkins on, whether we like them or whatever, or not, but unless the top layer commits to make a full sandwich you're always going to be in that middle ground…Unless somebody closes down and says, 'this is what we're going to do', you're always going to have that…'oh let's add some more topping' and that's why I figure the reports are, 'let's do another report', 'let's do some fact finding', 'oh, have we got the figures for that?', 'let's do some more number crunching and some more number crunching', 'let's go ask the students', 'let's set up a people of colour focus group and ask them again and again and again and again.
>
> *Participant 30, black female practitioner, Post-1992*

What Participant 30 describes is reminisce of DiAngelo's (2018) description around white people's discomfort to talk about race and racism and that strategies employed by dominant groups include deflection and may manifest itself through the lack of senior commitment discussed by Tatli, et al (2015). The situations described by this participant completely resonate with my own experiences as an equality and diversity practitioner and are unfortunately commonplace.

From a practical perspective, the challenges of advancing race equality in higher education institutions should not be limited to the actions of lower or middle managers and equality and diversity practitioners. One senior manager spoke candidly about his perception of higher education and the near-impossible task of sanctioning behaviours that are not overt:

> It's funny, well it's not really funny, there's a sort of assumption that universities are open, tolerant places where free and open debate takes place…but actually I don't find them like that at all. I find them highly sort of privileged and elitist and exclusive...But it will probably take…some kind of a scandal really to make it an issue. The thing is that most of the time it's not overt…so it's difficult to sanction stuff, which is subterranean, so it's much more about changing culture and changing attitudes.
>
> *Participant 29, white male senior manager, Russell Group*

Comparing the previous comments made by Participant 30, in terms of the difficulties with engaging management in providing commitment and direction to tackle race, with the comment made by Participant 29, can be interpreted as the challenge of sanctioning subterranean attitudes and behaviours is too great a hurdle to surmount. The latter's feelings of waiting for a scandal can almost be inferred as pushing race matters to the periphery in anticipation that at some point in time a matter would arise that would necessitate urgent and direct action to avoid outrage. A similar view was shared by an equality and diversity practitioner:

> The sector is trying, but I'm not sure that there is a firm enough will to do it and I keep saying that I think we probably need a Stephen Lawrence event. I know it sounds horrible, but I think you need something of that magnitude that is going to wake people up and realise we can't carry on the way we are.
>
> *Participant 1, black female practitioner, Russell Group*

There is something very troubling about these perspectives; from the uppermost levels of the institutional hierarchy there appears to be a lack of responsibility and accountability for addressing long-standing and persistent issues in higher education. From a cynical perspective this could be interpreted as the white saviour entering centre stage when the situation has become untenable on one end of the spectrum, set against a clear frustration among equality and diversity practitioners in the way they see their institutions performing in terms of their

commitment to, and action to change institutional culture and practice – a cry for help. From accounts it appears that there is a lack of collaborative approach to tackling racism; one that is strategically driven by the institution at the highest levels and implemented through managers, with the support of staff groups and equality and diversity practitioners and cascaded across the whole university community.

It is possible that in the move from a collective equal opportunities (pluralist) approach (Geare, et at. 2014) towards the more divisive unitarist approach of diversity management has created an organisational environment, which assigns responsibility on an individual basis rather than taking a collective stance of zero tolerance to racism, which many organisations may espouse within their bullying and harassment policies. A unitarist approach which emphasises common values and objectives (Van Buren, 2020), may create fear for those who claim that there might be conflict and therefore will be less likely to 'rock the boat'. Ironically, society now finds itself in a similar position to where it was following the death of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 and the last few months have been largely occupied with narratives around racism and the Black Lives Matter movement. Time will tell whether the protests of 2020 and the organisational commitments made to tackle race equality during this time will yield the advances promised.

From a CRT perspective, it can be assumed that as a microcosm of society, racism is embedded within UK higher education and racial inequalities are maintained through systems and structures that appear normal and unremarkable (Rollock and Gillborn, 2011). Secondly, from the accounts provided in this section it is clear that white supremacy plays a significant role in maintaining the systems and structures and constrain people of colour to speak up or act against racial inequalities or racism. Amid these barriers, staff of colour continue to experience varying levels of microaggressions, and it is this aspect that will be investigated further in the next section. In exploring the perceptions and experiences of racism within our institutions we will also consider the impact on people of colour as a result of those inappropriate behaviours, and the different coping strategies employed considering the self-imposed and structural barriers to report such experiences.

7.3 Perceptions and experiences of workplace racism

In the previous section we explored some of the challenges that affect minority ethnic staff in UK higher education institutions to identify modern workplace racism. Most participants when asked whether they had experienced racism in their institution answered that they had not. Yet, in almost all interviews those same participants proceeded to talk about wide-ranging situations and incidents describing diverse microaggressions. This provides evidence of the extent of misunderstanding and misrecognition of modern racism at work, including by those who are the targets of inappropriate behaviours or attitudes. This finding was completely unexpected and contrary to my own assumption that people of colour would be able to identify racism when it happened, would take action to address it, and would report it. This offers a different perspective on the multiple and complex differential outcomes that affect black staff; not only are these outcomes exhibited statistically in terms of black staff representation and pay inequality across our institutions (discussed in Chapter Five), but their lived experiences in the workplace are being exposed through this dissertation as well as previously published literature. Particularly within senior levels, black staff are statistically less likely to be paid at the same rates as their white colleagues and may also be disproportionately disadvantaged by workplace policies. This latter point will be explored further in the chapter.

The literature highlights that racially minoritised staff in UK higher education are less likely to be recruited (Pilkington, 2011), are more likely to experience microaggressions and be isolated, ignored, racially stereotyped and micro-managed (ECU, 2011; Rollock, 2011; Pilkington, 2013; UCU, 2016, 2017). As people of colour attain greater social status, more education and higher incomes the prevalence of racial microaggressions does not lessen (De Cuir-Gunby and Gunby, 2016). People of colour also experience microinvalidations and microinsults, which include behaviours that deny the importance of race, or which convey the myth of societal meritocracy. Microinsults are actions that convey insensitivity or rudeness, or directly demean a person's ethnic heritage. Perpetrators of microaggressions are often unaware of their behaviour (Sue et al, 2007; 2008) and an example of this is provided by Participant 13 earlier in this chapter. These examples have all been experienced in varying degrees by many of the participants interviewed for this study.

The previous section discussed the difficulties ethnic minority participants encounter within the institutional social space around matters of race and racism, particularly in explicitly naming racism for fear of upsetting their colleagues and becoming marked as a troublemaker, which could be career limiting. Participants talked about their attempts to downplay their experiences (Harries, 2014) and this presents racism as highly unusual and exceptional (Augoustinos and Every, 2010). In exploring with participants whether accusations of racism are taboo and if experiences of racism were hidden for fear of victim status, it became clear from minority ethnic participants that this is the case. This was exacerbated by an inability to recognise their experiences as racially charged or motivated. Many participants who had grown up in the UK, recounted stories of their youth and of being on the receiving end of overt racist abuse, one participant stating that at least they knew where they stood with such comments. Another participant shared a childhood experience that has informed how she now deals with negative race-related experiences:

> I think it's probably from my childhood, if I went home and said, 'mummy, the neighbours are calling me a gollywog', and she'll say, 'well, what did you do about it?' 'Well, I cried.' 'Why are you crying - are you a gollywog?' 'No'. Well…my mum was like, 'don't talk to me about stuff like that because that's not what you are'. So…if I accept or identify or talk about it, it means I'm showing a weakness, that it's actually affecting me, so it shouldn't affect me, so I won't talk about it.
>
> *Participant 18, black female professional, Post-1992*

This participant's comments felt full of pain and resentment that to protect herself and not to be perceived as weak by others that she must psychologically detach herself from her own lived experiences. Detachment coping mechanisms such as that mentioned above appeared a common coping strategy mentioned by black participants in this study and are characterised by not wishing to discuss issues they are facing and diminishing their experiences of racial microaggressions (De Cuir-Gunby and Gunby, 2016). Another participant expressed her reticence in using the terms racism or discrimination and found it hard to reconcile why a person would want to be identified in some way to their ethnic background, demonstrating that there are multiple and complex reasons that may affect a person's willingness to acknowledge negative workplace experiences especially when it was linked to this aspect of identity:

> I wouldn't call it racism. I don't want to use the word discrimination either or maybe non-identity, maybe, not being, like so you don't exist sometimes. I do not know what term to use. I find racism a very strong term to use. The word racism, it is always so negative, why would people want to be recognised by your skin colour or your ethnicity...
>
> *Participant 9, Asian female academic, Post-1992*

The feedback provided by Participant 9 and other participants cited in the previous section is a frequent finding in that while an individual might readily accept or acknowledge that they have experienced negative or unequal treatment, people are often reluctant to attribute this to racism (Pearce, 2019). To support this, some participants had expressed that they did not wish to isolate themselves further by making these types of accusations and once again, demonstrates that participants use their agency but are constrained in deciding which strategies will enable them to navigate their institutional terrain (Giddens, 1984; Bourdieu, 1977).

In exploring the different lived experiences of microaggressions among the minority ethnic participants, one participant talked about her experiences of attending committees within her university and the strategies she employs to ensure that she is heard in that forum:

> I've had to before sit in front of the chair [of the Committee] to make sure he doesn't ignore me…I've also had the opposite where I'm trying to say something…and I'm there putting my hand up like I'm at school…
>
> *Participant 7, black female senior professional, Russell Group*

Taken in isolation, this instance may not indicate that there is any sinister behaviour occurring within this setting. The participant had felt frustrated at being ignored over time and therefore, as a result needed to find a solution that would elevate her position, even in a literal sense, to become more visible and therefore, more included within that group. Viewing this as an isolated incident may also be part of the problem ethnic minority staff face in being able to articulate negative workplace experiences because of the very nature of microaggressions (Rowe, 1990; Sue et al, 2007). A similar account was provided in a recent study of the experiences of UK black female professors, where an account from a participant stated that she had her hand up in a meeting for half an hour before being 'allowed' to speak by a senior white male member of staff (Rollock, 2019).

The experiences above could be interpreted as examples of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1998; 2001a) because these actions are not specifically overt in terms of a physical act. The power brandished by the Chair of the committee in restricting contributions forces the participant to keep her hand up for a prolonged period of time, in full view of her peers, enforcing a state of powerlessness, and symbolically less valuable. There is a gendered power dynamic within this scenario, which compounded with the participant's ethnicity creates a situation where the participant is required to develop strategies that can contend with the symbolic power wielded to support the dominant structures (Bourdieu, 2001a). This act could also be interpreted as one that reinforces behaviours found within a school classroom setting, by infantilising the individual in a way that might not be imposed on other (white) colleagues. Not giving permission to speak in a way that might be available to white colleagues may normalise this behaviour across the peer group over time. In turn, this might impact the participant's ability to develop or access further opportunities to build capital within her organisation. Bourdieu (1991) stated that capital partly defines the degree to which a person is accepted, which is relevant here, making the receiver complicit in accepting the rules of engagement, which have been set by the dominant group. The participant has taken some remedial action to symbolically show that she is not accepting the behaviour by moving to a more prominent position, however in doing so the participant is taking on an extra burden to prepare for these meetings, not just on content, but psychologically to contend with the culture within this environment. This same participant went on to add that:

> ...when I think about it, I've been in meetings and because of the profile of the committees that I sit on sometimes I'm the only black person there, and I'm very tired and I don't want to say anything and I thought but you can't leave the meeting and you haven't said a word because then you'll be stereotyped as that black woman that doesn't have nothing [sic] to say, and I've got to find something to say...I feel I have to have a voice.
>
> *Participant 7, black female senior professional, Russell Group*

In this account participant 7 indicates how visible she becomes being the only person of colour in the room and with a perception of raised expectations that she is not only representing her part of the business within the institution but is expected to represent her whole race (Solanke, 2018) and therefore feels she must perform for fear of adverse peer assessment. Something that DiAngelo (2018) argues is not expected of white people. Kanter (1993)

described token subjects experiencing feelings of isolation and ostracism. Their increased visibility in the workplace can further produce anxiety regarding what is expected from them and their work performance. As well as increased visibility, Kanter (1993) identified that token subjects are also likely to encounter boundary heightening and stereotyped portrayals (Kanter, 1993; Smith, 2013). Consequently, experiences like these will intensify feelings of anxiety and isolation that Kanter (1993) identified. An example given by one participant demonstrated that a person is often unable to know how boundaries have been heightened and, in this situation, it was not until another colleague brought the issue to their attention that the participant could consider the reason she was unable to gain promotion, which resonates somewhat with the point made by Healy et al (2011) in relation to what they argued were the 'shifting sands' of rationalisation for the lack of women's progression which are reflected in the gendered and racialised order of organisations:

> [an Italian colleague] turned [a]round one day to me and he's the first one who mentioned it, he said, 'actually, don't you realise these people are racist?' I never thought of it like that and that's how either honest I am or naïve I am. And when I broke it down, I thought actually yes, why can't I get promotion, I've been top of my banding since October 2011. I've had a job review, if people really wanted to fight for me, they would…I've done above and beyond in my job, why can't I get rewarded for that? I don't want to hear, 'oh well you don't meet the criteria', OK, make me reach the criteria because I've put myself above and beyond…

Participant 25, black female professional, Russell Group

Another participant provided an example of ways in which her visibility is increased because of passive aggressive techniques employed by others to highlight an issue, in this case by copying in a senior colleague to emails:

> ...I think what really upset me was that she actually put the head of department, copied them there, so that I look like I didn't know what I was doing.

Participant 21, black female academic, Post-1992

Like most participants who described examples of microaggressions, there was very infrequent reporting, either to call out the behaviour that was deemed inappropriate with the perpetrator or through more formal mechanisms. Examples of the reasons for not wishing to speak about racism or reporting incidents have already been provided in the previous section,

and those reasons are understandable due to the perceived scale of the consequences that could be faced. However, one of the unexpected consequences of not reporting is that it could further serve to entrench the unconscious nature of symbolically violent acts and would perpetuate the cycle of microaggressions that could become normalised within the institution (Johnson et al, 2008; Randle et al, 2014). On raising this point with participants, there was a general acknowledgment that this was possible, however perceptions strongly indicated that the stakes were just too high to risk reporting. Moreover, racial microaggressions can leave people of colour feeling subordinate to their white counterparts, which may result in a passive and potentially destructive form of coping where their plight remains hidden.

The EHRC's (2019) report into racial harassment in UK higher education found that more than half of staff respondents did not report racial harassment. Respondents reported having no confidence that the institution would address the matter, staff did not know how to report, staff could not judge whether the complaint was serious enough and found it difficult to prove what had happened. Others also feared the consequences of reporting, such as a negative consequence to career prospects and being seen as a troublemaker (EHRC, 2019). Worryingly, these actions pass largely unnoticed despite the perception that an experience might be related to race, and which are difficult to deal with by line managers and HR professionals because of their 'subterranean' nature.

From the thirty-one participants interviewed, only one participant shared an experience which described a serious overt racist incident in his institution. The perpetrators were a group of students and the acts included imitating the participant inappropriately by 'blacking up' during a social event. The participant found the incident extremely upsetting and due to complaints made by third parties the matter caused a significant confrontation within the institution, and which required an official investigation. Although the incident and aftermath were deeply shocking, the participant decided to stay in the institution and address the issues that had arisen as a consequence of the formal complaint. The participant wished to be involved in developing solutions that would advance race equality:

> …I wanted to stay here and actually be part of the process to look at racism, possible racist practices and basically see if I can be involved in highlighting and implementing any changes…
>
> *Participant 26, black male academic, Russell Group*

The participant is socialised and established in his field as an academic within his institution. He had felt that because of this he had gained various forms of capital throughout his career, and as such felt that there was a role to play in addressing the issues that had developed in the workplace. It appeared that the participant has internalised the external structures, together with the expectations for operating in that environment, however, he found it difficult to truly progress within the institution because of the structures that are in place. The participant feels he has agency in this situation and understands his habitus to meaningfully contribute. Despite feeling sufficiently empowered to act in response to the incident, he expressed that his overall experience in the institution resulted in a lack of overall capital within his department because he could not gain progression as he had hoped. His feelings around the complaint provided him with a different perspective on how he could become useful in supporting the university and use this opportunity to gain further agency and capital, as he felt that there was scope for the co-creation of strategies to address race equality.

This situation places the participant in an interesting position; a person who has been the target of racism assisting the institution as an agent of change. Additionally, this participant had commented on his identity as a Russell Group academic, which can be perceived as carrying higher symbolic status in UK higher education, and that he was now at odds with the way he has traditionally seen himself within an institutional environment, and which had been until the incident, devoid of ethnicity. This has been contrary to how he feels others perceive him:

> …through the majority of my career, I've always wanted to be colour neutral, to be seen for my science background, not to be separated off into a particular group of my colour because that's what I've always sort of strived for. Of course, people I work with, the powers that be, haven't been able to make that distinction…over the years I've always partly sort of ignored my identity in order to fit in within this environment. There's a part of this what's happening within the School this year, I've been asked why have I always been so careful in the things that I do – well I've always tried to do things correctly, what I do in my job, that I don't stand out too much. I stand out anyway but psychologically, mentally, I've always tried to not stand out. I think I've always strived to follow the rules, to do things correctly, to work within structures, not be a maverick and maybe I should have been more of a maverick. Stand out a lot more and actually pushed and jumped over barriers more aggressively...I leave the so-called blackness behind when I come into my working environment.

Participant 26, black male academic, Russell Group

The participant's comments appear to suggest that he has been left with no other alternative but to face up to a part of his identity that he has psychologically suppressed throughout most of his career. His reference to trying not to stand out can be likened to the advice given by Participant 25 to her son (Chapter Six), that as a black male he will attract negative racial stereotypes. The incident was the catalyst for this shift in self-perception and now feels that he should use his full identity as a *black* scientist to advance matters of race within the institution. However, in now acknowledging his blackness he felt that this could negatively impact upon his ability to function as an academic as well as take certain actions that could promote ethnic diversity. He expressed that this would be a difficult decision for him to make considering that there are few academics of colour in his institution, yet he now felt compelled to stand up and be counted as a black academic, although this is the way he has always been perceived by others throughout his time in the institution.

This example demonstrates the adverse consequences of being forced to tackle racism, either directly experienced on a one-to-one basis, or in the case of Participant 26 an indirect target of racism where the act in question involved a negative portrayal of him to others. An assumption might be made that all people of colour feel that they can be their authentic self in the workplace, whatever that might involve. However, this participant has by all accounts attempted to create another self, an alter ego, to ensure that he is able to navigate the system with the least friction or challenge. The participant has therefore been confronted with the need to re-establish his identity physically, psychologically, and professionally to forge a new beginning within his field, his team, and the wider institution.

The experiences of Participant 26 were the most extreme and overt example of racism identified through discussions with participants in this study. There is however a shared outcome from the examples given and despite the majority illustrating different forms of concealed racism and microaggressions. These accounts have all highlighted how the systems and processes that are in place to deal with staff and student conduct, grievance and disciplinary procedures, create challenges for those needing to engage with them in order to deal with complaints of racial discrimination, bullying and harassment in the workplace. It is these systems that will be explored further in the following section to understand whether institutional policies, processes and practices help or hinder the capability of organisations to

deal effectively with workplace racism of any sort, the way those systems and processes are applied and how they impact on ethnic minority staff in UK higher education institutions.

This section has explored the perceptions and experiences from participants of racism within their respective institutions. These accounts provide further evidence that not only do overt acts of racism continue within the UK higher education sector, but there are multiple trivial acts or omissions that amount to microaggressions. The following section will explore another form of racism, but which is perpetrated not by individuals per se, but through the macro structures within institutions.

7.4 Perceptions of institutional racism

In considering the complexities of institutional racism and the continuing reluctance within the UK higher education sector to address it in practice the research findings will begin to explore perceptions of institutional racism within UK higher education from a diverse range of participants. These findings will provide an insight into the ways that institutional racism is perceived to manifest itself within the UK higher education sector and the impact it may have on the outcomes for black staff in our institutions.

The literature has revealed that, since the last iteration of institutional racism in the UK through the Macpherson report (1999), there has been limited research in this area, particularly with a focus on higher education. However, those academics that have contributed to the debate (Wight, 2003; Gillborn, 2008, Pilkington, 2011; Ahmed, 2012; Sian, 2019) have commented on the way the definition attempts to condemn the conduct, attitudes and behaviours of individual social actors as well as placing the organisation central to the debate where processes implemented by an organisation may have disadvantageous effects on ethnic minorities. Placing higher accountability on organisations ensures that the reproduction of racism is considered since racist discourse can become embedded within institutional processes through practice (Pilkington, 2011).

Macpherson (1999) defined unwitting racism as arising from a lack of understanding, ignorance or mistaken beliefs together with well-intentioned but patronising words or actions. It can also arise from racist stereotyping of black people as potential troublemakers. Chapter Six and earlier sections of this chapter outlined participants' lived experiences in their

institutions where they described such situations. Macpherson (1999) added that such attitudes can thrive in a tightly knit community, such as a university, where there can be a collective failure to detect and outlaw this class of racism.

For the purpose of this study, the definition used within Macpherson (1999) has been used to ensure that participants were clear about the terminology used within that definition to facilitate discussion. This definition is as follows:

> The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people (Macpherson, 1999:28).

To understand whether institutional racism was perceived to be present in UK higher education institutions participants were asked to read the abstract above during their interview and asked to provide their perspective on this in terms of their current and/or previous institution, and where relevant, the higher education sector as a whole. Participants took the time to read through the definition and reflect on whether they believed that their institutional practice (or sector where appropriate) corresponded with the definition given and to describe how it manifested itself. The following example set the scene well in the context of higher education:

> Well, if we break down the quote, the collective failure of an organisation I'll change to collective failure of the sector to provide appropriate professional services to people. We know, I mean the degree attainment gap is just a classic, that's the failure of the sector to provide an appropriate professional service to people based on their ethnicity or race. Detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour. I think if you look at all of the existing research and current research coming out on the way that BME academics and students feel it's often about the attitudes of their institution and the behaviour of colleagues. Unfair processes, goal posts moving, particularly in promotions. I'd say it fits this definition entirely. I suppose the bit that's up for debate is whether it's unwitting. Is it unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness? If it is, you can change unwitting prejudice, you can certainly change thoughtlessness and ignorance because you can educate people. I suppose there's always the debate about conscious/unconscious bias.

Participant 23, white female practitioner, Sector agency

Another participant who is a senior leader within his institution commented on the difficulties the terminology presented to institutions, particularly in terms of understanding its meaning and translating this in a way that could be operationalised. Despite saying this, he agreed that institutional racism was present in UK universities and would not be able to defend an accusation of this:

> Well, I think that being much clearer about the terms would actually help; I mean I will probably get onto all of this but my feeling in universities has been that, essentially universities are institutionally racist, institutionally sexist as well. It's certainly all of the universities that I've operated in and…I take it and assume that it's the case in all UK universities. And…you just do not see an ethnically diverse population amongst the senior management teams of UK universities... I still think...if somebody asked me to defend universities against the charge of being institutionally racist, I couldn't do it. I'd find that very difficult. I wouldn't be able to get up and defend that view publicly very easily in a sort of water-tight way. I could put my arguments that's all. And I don't want to be unfair to people either…maybe I'm wrong, that's possible, and also would it create the wrong impression, I don't know. Maybe it's better to think of other ways of putting this than them being as blunt as that? On the other hand, I might be wrong, maybe that is the only way of doing it.

Participant 29, white male senior manager, Russell Group

The comment made by Participant 29 reflected Solomos (1999) who identified that there were no clearly defined actions within the description of institutional racism in Macpherson (1999) and echoes Souhami (2014), who observed that there lacked new development to tackle institutional racism in the police service at conceptual or practical level, attributing this to a lack of understanding of how it might work as an instrument of change. There have since been a number of scholars that have offered further insight to the contrary in this area (Gillborn, 2008; Ahmed, 2012). Despite conceptual and practical misconceptions around the notion of institutional racism there is scope to assume that this is a systemic problem in UK higher education following the remarks from this senior-level participant. Disappointingly, when asked to expand on what actions could be taken to address institutional racial inequalities, Participant 29 stated that money could be used as an incentive because people

could not be forced to do things, therefore alternative motivation would be required. He continued by saying the following:

> …it's very difficult to apply sanctions that would affect you academically for something that is not an academic matter. So, what else do you do, you know? We don't really have many sticks to beat people with and it's not always a good idea to do that anyway. The way to give it real teeth is to say if you get this race equality mark, or if you don't have it, there are certain things you can't apply for or you don't have access to, and you'd have to think really carefully about what that is. But it could either be money that's already there that presently have access to that they would be denied or something new that you put in place that is there for that purpose.
>
> *Participant 29, white male senior manager, Russell Group*

If this is in fact the case, and institutional racism is systemic in UK higher education institutions, then understanding why institutions have not raised consciousness around the topic is necessary. The Metropolitan Police Service was at the centre of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry and subjected to the recommendations made through the Macpherson report (1999). However, the nature of the public sector and its service user population should have sparked a review of all public services as a result. The comments made by Participant 23 relating to the differential outcomes for black student attainment is a primary example and one that has been well documented over the last decade in UK higher education (Connell-Smith and Hubble, 2018; Bhopal, 2018; Turner, 2019).

The literature review in Chapter Two identifies that race and racism is a difficult topic to address and a reticence to tackle racism appears to include the rejection of the notion of institutional racism, reflected through the absence of activity in this area. Through denial, institutions need not address it. The development of theoretical understanding by scholars and antiracist activists do not appear to have informed the sector's ability to address institutional racism from within and the topic has been largely omitted in discussions around race at an institutional level. Most recently there has been a movement to decolonise the curriculum in institutions, such as the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of Oxford, University College London, etc, nevertheless this has been an endeavour that has been student-led and student-facing rather than in relation to the workforce, which appears to be silent. For example, there has not been a parallel ethnic diversification of the workforce to support this move and so this exercise might be viewed cynically by critics. One participant

offered their view on the difficulties associated with the UK higher education sector exposing itself to the possibility that its systems and processes might be inequitable:

> ...I think there is a sense, especially when we're coming in talking about institutional racism because it's not a 'you think this way, you are prejudiced' etc. it is built into the structures and the processes. What we're asking people to do is challenge the very thing they do. They've decided they want to be in academia, they've gone through the system, they understand the system, they've kind of been 'Stockholm Syndrome'd' into the system and it puts you in a very vulnerable position to go, 'is this system right and is this system effective?' So, it is through our access activities, through our admissions activities, it is the way we learn and teach. It is the fact that we do have a dominant white curriculum that we…and even pedagogically, it's a very western wealthy way of teaching…so collective failure of an organisation to provide appropriate and professional service because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin...we've created a sector...that is based on the needs and wants of the white middle class to upper class society...it is a collective failure but it's a collective failure because it's a collective ignorance. I think you can see that in things…from the outright discrimination to the fear and the worry and the concern. I also think thoughtlessness is a really good term there for both the sector and the institution generally, and thoughtlessness can sometimes…come across as quite a negative term, but again it's just that if you don't know and if you haven't thought about it, then it's not going to translate. So, I think that when you've got an environment that is flat out, and it is institutionally racist, you're not welcoming, you're not supporting your students to be as engaged or to reach the potential that they have, and I think you're also doing a disadvantage to the majority students because you're not giving them that broadening experience that kind of enrich[es] their learning. You're not actually encouraging to do what we ask our students to do, which is think critically and experience…and be open to new things.
>
> *Participant 19, white female practitioner, Sector agency*

Macpherson (1999) emphasised that it was not the policies of the Metropolitan Police Service that were racist, but that it was in the implementation of policies and the actions of officers acting together that racism became apparent. Pilkington (2011) observed in his case study that a university was reluctant to accept a race-related policy because it was perceived as political correctness gone mad. Although Pilkington (2011) referred to a race equality policy, the account given by the following participant highlights that it is the manner that

organisational policies are implemented that can conceal the nature of the complaint, particularly if the matter was related to race:

> I know it's an instance of a [white] student's abuse of a [black] member of staff. Now…what was interesting was the institution's reaction towards it. It tried to go down a conciliation route instead and understand that the student is a good student…and so it is a dignity at work issue, which seemed to…be a certain type of thoughtlessness, which I would argue was institutionally racist. So, this wasn't a dignity at work issue it was a racism issue...the point is it still responded very badly to any insistence that it still has a bad policy. The thing is if it happens again, even though they've tried to change the policy, there is no guarantee that they're going to treat it any better than the last time, which is kind of sticking your fingers in your ears and saying, 'la, la, la' a lot. It's a refusal to apologise, it's a problem, rather than an isolated incident. It could be a continual problem...I think it's in the institution's best interest to not acknowledge it, you know, otherwise they're going to be known as that institutionally racist institution. Rather than that institution that solved the racist problem. So, it's in their interest to minimise…or push to the periphery any instances of racism.
>
> *Participant 6, Black male academic, Research institute*

One participant, who is an HR practitioner, provided insight from a perspective of proximity to the development and implementation of institutional policy. Her feeling was that by default she would not accept that institutional racism existed, but acknowledged that policy could be implemented according to 'local practice' and that this would need to be addressed if this were the case:

> Maybe it's my role and obviously if I was in another role maybe people would feel more comfortable, but because I'm in HR, I think that just by default I just wouldn't [agree that institutional racism existed in the institution]. Looking at our policies, making sure that our policies are compliant with the law, because the law is there to protect us. Making sure that there are local practices to make sure that that is stamped out because the policies and procedures are there for a reason to ensure fairness. Now, if everybody has got their own local thing going on that's where you get this, so it's to make sure that everybody knows that…the university's rules and regulations, this is there to protect the university from challenge, so we need to follow that and we need to follow it consistently.
>
> *Participant 15, black female HR practitioner, Post-1992*

The participant viewed this issue as one of compliance, which may highlight a misrecognition of institutional racism at an organisational level and how policy might be interpreted by managers and staff, including those within Human Resources. This is a fundamental problem if institutions are to eradicate institutional racism. These comments may imply that institutional policies are not detailed enough or leave too much room for interpretation by those who are tasked with implementation. Alternatively, Noon et al (2013) argued that the hyper-formalisation of policy can result in undermining the original purpose of the procedure, which can result in the 'circumvention of compliance' through robotic, defensive and at times, malicious use of procedures as a means to an end. Reflecting on this conversation, one could question how it would be possible for Human Resources to become aware of a policy being implemented in subtly different ways that could result in differential outcomes for a person of colour, particularly where participants are less likely to complain about racism in this study and within the literature (Chapter Two). This indicates that Human Resources teams must do more to ensure that policies and practices are applied properly, consistently and without bias, as well as guarding against what Noon et al (2013) stated was the fetishisation of procedures that are perceived as good, fair, thorough and necessary. One participant commented that on a conceptual level her institution did understand the meaning of institutional racism, and suggested that the lack of acknowledgement may be attributable to a denial of racism:

> I think they have the intellect to understand what it means on a conceptual level but possibly that they think it's no longer an issue or it doesn't affect them because they think that…doesn't really affect them because they're not prejudiced or racist.
>
> *Participant 4, Asian female academic, Russell Group*

Another participant stated that she felt that the lack of institutional understanding may derive from the lack of ethnic and cultural sensitivity among senior managers:

> ...I don't think that as an institution [institution name] has enough, potentially enough experience with understanding people of colour and what their needs and what their issues might be to be able to potentially avoid that...I think it's not just whether you're white or not but also depending on your experience…I think most of the people at senior management that I know, but I mean I could be completely wrong, but I think they don't even have experience. So, they are white but also, they don't necessarily have any experience that involves working with other kinds of group cultures.

Participant 14, Asian female academic, Russell Group

The account given by Participant 14 concurs with the comments made by Participant 29 (page 190) around assumptions senior leaders make, which result in unwelcoming environments. The suggested lack of conceptual and practical understanding ties in with Wight's (2003) point in terms around lack of clarity of cause and effect, and structure and agency from the definitions of institutional racism given in both statements from Scarman (1981) and Macpherson (1999). His point being that in both, although they refer to structural racism (institutional) the cause is linked to what he describes as methodological individualism, such as the unitarist approach of diversity management, which emerges and is reproduced within a structural context, however the behaviours portrayed in these definitions are purely agential. Wight (2003) suggests that Scarman's definition is at the level of agents, that Macpherson's definition is at the level of habitus (Bourdieu, 1977), and the structural level will be considered within this chapter. On this latter aspect, he suggests that overt racism is a form of practice that intends racist outcomes and unwitting racism is that which has racist outcomes but where none were intended. To contextualise this and explore these concepts further, one participant gave a very personal account of ongoing issues she was experiencing in gaining support from her department for her race-related doctoral research and began to consider this experience through the lens of institutional racism:

> ...firstly, there's a collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service. So, going back to my situation, the appropriateness and professional-ness [sic] of my whole PhD application. Utilising the systems that this organisation has in place, or the department, at least has in place, which are poor…because the systems are crystal clear and keep changing every flipping year, those systems then can be changed. Now again, whether it's overtly or covertly is another matter, but they definitely changed to disadvantage. There were four people on that panel. I go to the meeting with the panel and the whole panel should be there. The whole panel's not there, it's just the Dean and the Head of School scolding me. Basically. They don't do that for everybody. 'We would do this for anybody.' That's a lie, because if that's the case, all four members of the panel would be there and…all four would have that conversation with me. That was not the case. Now, if the panel can be changed at will, where is the consistency? Because of my colour, culture and ethnic origin, I would say all three. Again, because of my area of enquiry was completely and totally dismissed…when I did go back to the second round of funding for that meeting, my manager and senior manager said, 'I know it's

> difficult [name]'…so one level of management is doing…something different to the other level of management and at no point has the senior management gone to the management level for me and told them that what they have done was incorrect. All blame was put on to me and at no point, even now, has my manager or his manager ever had any question asked about the advice that I followed...That's institutional racism right there.
>
> *Participant 20, black female academic, Post-1992*

From the above scenario it is not possible to ascertain intentionality despite there being a specific policy in place stating that a panel would be convened, and in theory should be applied equally to all individuals. The outcomes for Participant 20 reflect how informal processes dominated the formal procedure and resulted in distortion and unfairness yet was positioned to the participant as a legitimate decision (Noon et al, 2013). This account described that the policy was not implemented as published. Applying Wight's (2003) theory here might indicate that the panel's unwitting racism, manifested through microaggressions, had racist outcomes. However, this is problematic since there were two individuals making a decision at this panel and it could be argued that it would be too easy for the individual panel members to claim lack of intentionality despite racist outcomes. Taking this stance allows the individuals making the decisions in this instance *and* the institution not having to be accountable for this participant's outcome leaving no case to answer if the participant had chosen to challenge the decision.

This is a good example of how policies might be manipulated in a thoughtless manner and without considering that outcomes may disadvantage people of colour because of the way they are implemented. From a structural perspective, the policy is an objective structure and if it were applied equally to all staff in the same way, it would be fair and transparent. However, the way in which the policy has been implemented, which from this account was not as written, has been used in a form of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 2001a) against the participant with disadvantageous effect.

In addition to this, the decision makers in this instance were the Dean and the Head of School, which provides an added element of objective structure, that is the institutional hierarchy. This is a manifestation within the social space, where the participant is socialised to accept the hierarchy within the habitus and field in which she operates, the distribution of power or capitals which define the rules and resources (Bourdieu, 1977; 1991). These decision makers

thought it was appropriate to continue with the panel meeting without meeting the requirements of the policy and must have felt empowered to do so on behalf of the institution. Their actions demonstrate that they are using their symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1998) to produce, and potentially reproduce, structures in a way that suit their needs without fear of reprisals.

It is plainly important for an organisation to understand how as an entity it can affect the outcomes of the workforce by the way it constructs and implements its policies, services and practices. Institutional racism is that which, covertly or overtly, resides in the policies, procedures, operations and culture producing certain kinds of practice (Wight, 2003). Wight (2003) appears to contradict his point relating to human agency by stating that it requires, as a condition of possibility for action, materials that make action possible and what makes those actions possible is the structural context that is inhabited and inherited from the past, concurring with Bourdieu's (1977) notion of habitus. This also corresponds well with the notion of playing the game to gain capital. There is a complexity here that constructs and reconstructs workplace culture and practice and participants in the game are not necessarily able to see that practice might be racist, but through practice they acquiesce to and grant permission to others to replicate behaviours. With this in mind, there is scope to establish what is meant by 'institution' in terms of accountability and this should be aligned in the same way as accountability for the PSED, which lies with the institutional governing bodies and senior leaders.

The comments made by participants communicate a perception that often the institutional culture and subsequent behaviours, however unwitting, continue to disadvantage ethnic minority people. Bourdieu (1977) stated that each agent, wittingly or unwittingly produces and reproduces objective meaning and because subjects do not know what they are doing, what they do has more meaning than they know. Observations from participants' perceptions of the existence of institutional racism show that on considering Macpherson's (1999) definition, a significant majority of participants agreed that it was present in multiple forms within their institutions. There were no overt accusations from participants that their institutions were intentionally racist, however there were many suggestions that institutions applied policies and practices in ways that could and did affect the outcomes of people of colour in an inequitable manner:

> ...I suppose you know just looking at this definition in its raw form and the first thing is you know it's a collective thing OK. So, racism cannot thrive, in my opinion, if just one person is doing it. There have to be a number of other people that assent to…that way of thinking. So, what we have in the institution is a whole group of people if you like, a group in the widest sense that ascribe to these kinds of practices…So, that's a collective kind of thing so everybody, whether they are outwardly or inwardly endorsing that and the fact that people see these things happening...discrimination by commission or omission, so you're either doing it or you're seeing it and you're not necessarily saying anything about it because either it doesn't affect you or you're too scared for yourself.
>
> *Participant 16, black female academic, post-1992*

On the point of unwitting production or reproduction of behaviours, one participant discussed her personal experience of the grievance process in her institution and how the system is developed to deter claims of racism:

> You know it's going on…you must be friends with the person doing it or going in the pub and chatting about it, you know, you're just as guilty as the person doing it…if not worse because you're hiding it. You see what I mean? So, people have got to stop this nonsense about, 'oh well I didn't know', like I said, 'I didn't realise [name] why you were off sick'. Was it you? Own it. And people don't want to own anything anymore.
>
> Out of sight, out of mind…or HR don't want to deal with it because it's too much paperwork. Like in my case, let's pay her off, she'll go. Well, I ain't [sic] going nowhere! Why should I leave a perfectly well-paid job with a team which 99% I actually enjoy working with just so that people can think that they could treat me like crap – it's not happening my friend. And that's why…I had to get an employment lawyer. Shouldn't have to do it.
>
> I think sometimes the grievance procedure's there just to put you off doing anything about it. Because it's a bit like the Police investigating the Police, they're all friends, they're all HR, they're all management. So, you know, God, and then you fill out the form and then there's something else, I have a colleague who's Indian who actually left, and she went the grievance route, she still didn't get any help anyway. In the end, she left. But then I thought hell, no, I want every day you look at me in my face, you know don't play with [name]. And I got myself a black lawyer too, because you have to be taught it's not the one. If you could come and you say OK, these are the reasons why, but you did covert nastiness behind my back and…then smiling in my face. Really? OK.

Participant 23, black female professional, Russell Group

When asked to provide an explanation of why she thought these practices were allowed to continue the participant offered the following around her perception of what information is reported to senior leadership about the way institutions operate:

> …because of course the top person is in their glass ceiling, so they don't know what's going on – you understand me? But perhaps if the top knew what was going on they'd be thinking…because the top is supposed to be the figurehead and representing everybody else, there is a saying that I've heard, 'if the head of the stream is dirty the whole stream is dirty' – they need to be held accountable and it shows that if your team at the bottom are not doing their jobs and covertly hiding stuff, you're just as guilty too – I'm sorry! Because when you go out there and you're promoting your place and you're saying 'oh we're this fantastic organisation' or so on…you're going under falsehoods because actually they're not.

Participant 23, black female professional, Russell Group

The negative perceptions from participants about this topic demonstrate that there is real concern about how higher education institutions provide an appropriate and professional service to people of colour. The accounts given by participants provide an insight into the operational life within institutions that have not been offered previously, particularly in the manner policies, services and practices are implemented in a way that might disadvantage black staff. These accounts and their interpretation propose that much more attention is required to tackle bias and address negative attitudes and behaviours that can be meted out through institutional policy and practice.

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the complex nature of racism in contemporary UK higher education. The empirical data shows that racism is not always what society traditionally understands it to be – overt, and there is still evidence here that overt acts of racism continue in institutions. Despite this, racism has evolved to become more concealed within acts or omissions and are far more commonplace within the institutional social space. Racism has become so hidden that it is difficult to recognise and therefore, as participants have identified, it is more complicated to prove.

This chapter sought to understand whether the changing face of racism has made it challenging for individuals and institutions to tackle and the testimonies provided by participants in this study have confirmed that it is extremely challenging, both on a personal and professional level. Participants suggest that race in our institutions is still too difficult a subject to handle and that there is a lack of capability to articulate effectively what it looks like from an individual *and* collective perspective. This is regardless of the university's mission statement and geographical location and exposes an inability in UK higher education to confront the effects of racism, whether overt or otherwise, across the workforce. Participants have highlighted how the new racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2015) this chapter has discussed is hidden in discreet acts, microaggressions, microinvalidations and microinsults (Rowe, 1990; ECU, 2011; Rollock, 2011, 2012; Pilkington, 2013; UCU, 2016, 2017). The actions are so small and inconsequential that ethnically minoritised staff are unable to always recognise them, yet cumulatively their impact is immense. If the targets of such acts are misrecognising these, there is no wonder that white staff, especially those who can act as change agents within institutions, are unable and/or unwilling to acknowledge that they remain a problem. As DiAngelo (2018) states, if racism cannot be seen, then it does not exist.

This is not to say that misrecognition is a valid excuse, it is however a factor in understanding why racism continues in UK higher education institutions. If a person of colour has experienced disadvantage at work and felt that this might be related to their ethnic background, participants were resistant to share those experiences for fear of the consequences. Not only did those participants become silenced by their own fear, but they began to deny that it was linked to their ethnic background altogether (Augoustinos and Every, 2010). This exposes a weakness in institutional culture that is unwilling, and therefore, unable to move beyond recognising that individuals are capable of racial prejudice and therefore contrary to the self-image of a liberal, well-meaning environment such as higher education (DiAngelo, 2018). The structures that surround race and racism are so embedded that they have become objectified. They have become produced and reproduced by the dominant groups within institutions through the use of symbolic power and symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1998). Thus, invalidating the lived experiences of black staff, which deflect accusations of racism and which form part of the institutional habitus. As such, these

structures have been internalised by black staff, who lack social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1998; Randle et al, 2014) to enable transformation of the social space.

Racism is not solely an agential problem and this chapter touched upon the way in which institutional operations can have differential impact upon ethnic minority employees. This can apply to the policies, services and practices the institution has in place and which can be used by employers and employees alike as weapons to silence and subdue, such as disciplinary, grievance, promotion, etc. and which affect the outcomes of black staff more acutely than staff of any other ethnic background. In exploring the concept of institutional racism, most participants were quick to suggest that they perceived their institution to be institutionally racist and the sentiment was shared by staff at all levels, including those participants that represented sector agencies, confirming UUK's recent acknowledgement to this effect (Mohdin for The Guardian, 2021). This is a damning indictment and did not only reflect how institutions operated in relation to their workforce, but also in the way that institutions provide adequate and professional services to diverse student populations.

The operational issues surrounding race also impact equality and diversity practitioners' ability to become effective change agents within their institutions and how they are often frustrated in their efforts to take appropriate actions that can advance the race equality agenda. Fears that playing the 'race card' will undermine future claims gives the impression that we have acknowledged that racism exists in our institutions. However, there appears to be an unspoken code that dictates that complaints or challenges should be used sparingly, and practitioners should consider whether they are inadvertently silencing people for fear that race fatigue will spoil it for everyone else. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, this coded terminology creates a structure that symbolically dominates those in less powerful positions within the social hierarchy (Bourdieu, 2001a).

The final chapter of this dissertation will bring together the relevant literature and findings from this research study to consider how UK higher education institutions can address matters of race and racism. In doing so there will be an opportunity to explore how sector agencies, institutions and their minority ethnic staff, human resource and equality and diversity practitioners can work together to co-create solutions that will bring about a culture change in the workforce.

8 Conclusion: The differential outcomes for black staff

8.1 Introduction

The higher education sector is trusted by UK society to develop the critical thinking of our future workforce. This research has demonstrated that it does not apply the same level of criticality on the topic of race or racism on itself as a sector – there is a disconnect between the literature and institutional practice. In failing to do so, the sector absents itself from acknowledging the role it plays in maintaining racism, and this may in part be due to the benefits derived from conserving the position of white superiority and white domination. The latter being reflected in the ethnic profile of senior leadership across institutions (Advance HE, 2020).

My unique perspective as a practitioner-researcher has enabled me to apply my insider-outside knowledge, experience and expertise in the field of equality, diversity and inclusion to this in-depth qualitative research, not only in terms of tackling institutional race equality, but also in appreciating the institutional space as a social space of diverse interactions. I have seen first-hand that institutions have not been sufficiently focused on tackling racial inequalities. With concerted endeavours to address attraction, recruitment, and retention, particularly regarding black staff, and including sustained efforts to create and maintain inclusive work environments, this will have an impact on the representation of ethnic minority staff in UK higher education and draw upon the lost pool of talent. These activities should also include setting organisational measures to drive change at organisational, school and departmental levels.

As a part of the public sector, UK higher education has not done enough to be transparent to employee, student and public scrutiny and it is apparent that institutions are not consistent in this regard. From experience, HR functions are often not willing to participate with equality and diversity practitioners to undertake policy review, particularly in areas that might expose inconsistencies or disadvantages for different groups thus requiring difficult conversations, explanations, and actions. This often makes it difficult for equality and diversity practitioners to collaborate as equals with HR practitioners on these projects, despite equality and diversity practitioners often being employed within HR teams. We as practitioners, are seldom trusted

as critical friends to the organisation, therefore being treated with caution or suspicion – we are the outsider-within. This is not helped by the lack of status, seniority, and senior buy-in, therefore overall lacking in social and cultural capital within the academy. No wonder the field of equality and diversity is regarded as a high-stress environment and one that causes such high rates of burn out.

The exploration of identity within this research was not initially factored into the research objectives. However, this became a core feature for the findings discussed earlier in this dissertation, and which appeared to be fundamental to the outcomes for black staff. Reflecting on participants' accounts in relation to concepts, such as blackness, identified that not only has this been problematised within the academy, but that reconciling their blackness is a significant psychological burden carried by black staff, whether positively or negatively, in the academic social space. I interpret this not only as a differential outcome for black staff, but as a psychological ethnic penalty that is different to the material and economic disadvantage experienced (Heath and Cheung, 2006), and which are different to the experiences of staff with other ethnic backgrounds.

It is clear from the ethnic profile discussed in Chapter Five that black staff do indeed experience differential outcomes in the workplace, through under-representation across academia and at senior levels, which may be due to multiple factors, some of which could not be explored through this research, including attraction strategies, recruitment success rates for different groups and levels of avoidable attrition. However, the lived experiences shared in this research provides valuable insight to the contributing factors to the lack of representation of black staff, not only within specific academic disciplines but also across the sector and its hierarchy. Participant narratives emphasise the lack of opportunities, racial stereotyping, the failure of institutions to effectively tackle racial bullying, harassment and discrimination, which I interpret as institutional racism. It has been a positive step that UUK also believe this to be the case (Mohdin for The Guardian, 2021).

This research has considered varied literature on the topics of race and racism, including those that have focused on UK higher education (ECU, 2011; Pilkington, 2011; Ahmed, 2012; UCU, 2016, 2017; Bhopal, 2018; Rollock, 2011, 2012, 2019; EHRC, 2019). Racism is not a new phenomenon in the sector and attention on racial inequalities has been constant and a growing concern. As an important and relevant research topic, this dissertation makes a

distinct contribution to this growing body of work, not just for its inclusion of participants' lived experiences, but in the way these have been interpreted and analysed to consider the factors that may have contributed to the prolonged silence, stigma and fear to challenge the status quo. Considering accounts through the lens of structure, agency, habitus, field, capitals and symbolic violence, this research demonstrates that there are multi-level, multi-dimensional (Layder, 1993), complex and insidious contributing factors to the perpetuity of racism within our institutions. These accounts paint a bleak picture, not just from ethnic minority staff, but also those identifying with the dominant ethnic group. These voices reflect disquiet on the topic of race, which sadly is not unique to higher education as the literature explored in this research attests. Much of that literature is devoid of individual voices and it is these narratives that will be most valuable to the sector in facilitating change.

The aim of this dissertation was to explore the lived experiences of black staff in UK higher education and how those experiences create differential outcomes within the institutional workplace. Following consideration of published literature, the desk research into the UK higher education sector and participants' lived experiences, this research concludes that black staff working in UK higher education experience differential outcomes in employment. In facilitating the journey to this inference, the research objectives were to:

1. Understand the strategic drivers to advance race equality and how this has progressed over time
2. Consider staff perceptions of the manifestation of racism in the workplace
3. Determine the impact of racial inequalities on black staff in UK higher education
4. Consider perceptions of the existence of institutional racism and its effect within a higher education context
5. Explore the presence of an ethnic penalty faced by black staff in UK higher education.

This dissertation draws on literature from varied disciplines that consider the multi-layered concepts, which contribute to this topic and provide a comprehensive understanding to achieve the research objectives detailed above. The following section will consider the implications of this research on the higher education sector and provide commentary to how the research objectives have been addressed through this dissertation to meet the overall aim of this research.

8.2 Implications of the research on the UK higher education sector

The dissertation reflects the interpretation of the narratives from participants to explore the lived experiences and differential outcomes for black staff in UK higher education. In analysing the empirical data and interrogating the supporting literature, various themes surfaced that shed light on the complexities faced by black staff within institutions. A notable finding is that the outcomes experienced by academic staff bore a remarkable resemblance to those of professional and support staff, notwithstanding their distinct career structures and responsibilities. Participant accounts and perceptions also show no difference between institutions, e.g., Russell Group versus Post-1992, nor is there a distinction in the experiences of staff according to geographical location; a higher proportion of minority ethnic staff or working in an institution where the local population is ethnically diverse did not preclude negative workplace experiences because of ethnicity.

The following section will revisit each of the research questions posed in this dissertation to provide a synopsis of the findings. In summarising, there will be recommended actions to be taken by individuals, senior leaders and their institutions, relevant sector agencies, HR and equality and diversity practitioners.

8.2.1 Understand the strategic drivers to advance race equality and how this has progressed over time

As noted in the literature (ECU, 2011; UCU, 2016, 2107; UCEA, 2019; EHRC, 2019) and recent media attention (Adams, 2017; Hall, 2017; Batty, 2019; Howard, 2020) surrounding race-related issues in UK higher education, there is a sector-wide imperative to address racial disadvantage because of the prominent role higher education plays in UK society. It appears that this external pressure has made more impact over the years than the legislative obligations placed on public sector organisations, such as universities. This might indicate that either senior leaders in universities (and relevant practitioners) do not fully understand their obligations against the PSED in relation to race, or institutions do not fear being challenged for inaction and in some cases non-compliance (EHRC, 2012, 2013, 2019). This may also indicate the lack of will to enforce action on the part of the EHRC against universities that do not comply with the PSED.

In practice organisational risk aversion has become embedded within institutions, demonstrated through reticence to focus resources on race for fear of attracting negative attention. As a result of this, initiatives designed to address racial disadvantage are met with resistance or couched in a broader diversity context that can benefit others and/or the organisation in other ways (Bell, 1980). Participant feedback also suggests that institutions may prefer damage limitation when issues arise, indicating reactive institutional practices. Alternatively, the resistance to tackle race in isolation can be interpreted as deflection by dominant groups (DiAngelo, 2018) because drawing attention to race might attract complaints of negative workplace experiences from people of colour, which would require some form of action. From experience, interest convergence can be a strategy employed by equality and diversity practitioners to incorporate matters of race by stealth to engage dominant groups with the subject, however this is practitioner dependent and therefore not consistent practice across the sector.

More recently, the strategic and operational drivers have become propelled by sector initiatives, such as the Race Equality Charter (REC). From experience, the REC can rouse suspicion and anxiety at senior management levels because it requires institutions to probe into workforce data and the experiences of ethnic minority staff and students, which must be submitted to peers for assessment. This may also account for the limited take up of this charter, and Advance HE must make more effort to raise the confidence of senior leadership teams to raise participation rates across the sector. These issues were also identified in a recent review of the REC (Oloyede et al, 2021).

Unfortunately, the REC does not have the same level of kudos within the sector as Athena SWAN, which although has been in existence for far longer, had until recently the added incentive of restricting research funding for institutions without a bronze level award. Advance HE must accelerate plans to demonstrate that race equality has equal standing to gender (see recommendation two), and recommendations made by Oloyede et al (2021) to include intersectional (gender/ethnicity) considerations at Athena SWAN silver level could instigate change. Oloyede et al (2021) identified that black staff have tended to benefit least from the impacts of REC and white women have largely benefited from Athena SWAN. It therefore remains to be seen if this recommendation will reap the anticipated outcomes.

Another important feature of the discussion concerning race in higher education surrounds the way institutions collect and utilise workforce data. There were mixed reactions to the categorisation of race and ethnicity and frustration and mistrust around the way data is used within institutions. Comments included allowing staff to self-identify enabling individuals to be authentic in the workplace rather than categorise oneself in the nearest classification. Because staff are sometimes unable to identify with the categories on offer, some staff declare that they are from 'any other ethnic background', which may not be helpful to institutions from a monitoring point of view. Agencies and institutions should consider adapting the questions they ask about ethnicity that take into account the ways individuals identify in terms of their cultural heritage rather than against colour-coded categories. Approximately 6.5 percent of the university workforce does not declare their ethnic background at all, and a lack of declaration is more likely to be the case in non-UK nationals (Advance HE, 2020).

It is to the higher education sector's benefit that Advance HE invests its time and resources into producing a comprehensive set of workforce data that annually reports across all protected characteristics. This should be maintained and where possible continue to be developed to support institutions to benchmark their own workforce profile against the rest of the sector. Considering that higher education holds some of the most reliable data on student and staff demographics than any sector, it fails to use this trend data to effectively tackle ethnic minority under-representation. Institutions must be encouraged to use these data to inform their own race equality action plans to effect change.

From a practitioner perspective, this could be easily addressed by institutions investing time through regular internal campaigns to raise awareness of diversity data collection, how the data support institutional objectives, and who is able to access the information. In addition, what is *not* reported on is as significant, and the annual statistical reports produced by Advance HE only includes declared ethnicity and does not include the proportion of the workforce where employees choose not to declare or where there is no record.

As a result of these findings the following actions are recommended:

1. Sector agencies and institutions must work together to support the professionalisation of equality and diversity practitioners in a way that HR

practitioners are supported through relevant qualifications, e.g., CIPD. A community of practice should be set up to support the continuing professional development for practitioners in this field.

2. Sector agencies must put in place a team of equality and diversity specialists that can effectively work with institutions on the topic of race, to share good practice, set and maintain consistent standards within the sector and who are empowered to challenge institutional practice, naming and shaming where relevant.
3. Advance HE should develop and deliver briefing sessions in collaboration with institutional practitioners to equip senior leadership teams with the necessary skills to champion and advance race equality in UK higher education.
4. Advance HE must accelerate progress in engaging institutions with REC and realise equal status to the Athena SWAN award.
5. That Advance HE delivers a programme of activity that systematically equips equality and diversity practitioners with the requisite skills, knowledge and capability to effect change in the sector in relation to race.
6. Advance HE must revise the Athena SWAN charter by requiring institutions and departments to consider as standard the intersection between gender *and* race and consider the differential outcomes faced by women of colour.
7. Institutional HR functions must review the collection and analysis of workforce data, including the demographic monitoring of the Board of Governors or Senate. Institutions must provide clear explanation around the reason this information is important to the institution, together with a rationalisation for the categorisation of ethnicity to increase confidence to declare. There should be greater clarity for staff around how they might wish to identify to make data gathering and analysis more worthwhile.
8. Equality and diversity practitioners (individuals and teams) should be located in more strategic positions within institutions because of the scope and importance of their work. This will require direct reporting to the Vice Chancellor's/Provost's Office providing independence from HR functions. The work of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) teams should be directed through the creation of comprehensive EDI strategies that have been agreed by the whole institution, including the Board of Governors or Senate.

8.2.2 Consider staff perceptions of the manifestation of racism in the workplace

Many participants in this study spoke candidly about their experiences of racism through microaggressions, yet the majority either denied that it had happened or were unable or unwilling to make the link between those experiences and their ethnic background. These feelings of denial and misrecognition appear to have been coupled with internalised feelings of shame, guilt and fear (Pearce, 2019; Ahmed, 2012) and rather than take action, participants explained how they employed coping strategies (Stainback and Irvin, 2012; Kim et al, 2017). More alarming were the responses from senior leaders and equality and diversity practitioners who felt unable through misrecognition, denial, institutional distraction tactics, or reluctance, to support a claim of racism for fear of being perceived to overplay the 'race card'. These comments provide evidence that talk of racism is taboo, which creates barriers for black staff and institutional equality and diversity practitioners to deal with matters of race.

DiAngelo (2018) argues that aversive racism exists under the surface of consciousness, where individuals will enact racism that will enable themselves to maintain a positive self-image. As a sector, consideration should be given to the blind spots that lie within institutional cultures that denies the existence of racism, which may be further impaired by the perceived liberal, educated, and progressive nature of the sector. Our incapability to deal with difficult conversations adds a further barrier in offering the transparency and openness required to inform contemporary solutions. The UK higher education sector must demonstrate that the responsibility and accountability in developing these solutions is held by us all and transcends all ethnic identities. If real change is to happen, then those within dominant groups have the greatest role to play in creating radical strategies where actions are owned by the most powerful and lead the direction of travel to eradicate the differential outcomes experienced by people of colour.

In understanding the extent to which black staff were able to identify racism and whether they felt confident in addressing matters of race, this research discovered that besides overt acts of racism, a significant proportion of participants did not feel confident in pursuing a complaint because of the insidious nature of acts or omissions experienced (Bourdieu, 1990; Johnson et al, 2008). Ironically, almost all minority ethnic participants provided examples of

racial microaggressions but did not recognise those as warranting the same consideration as overt acts (Rowe, 1990) and in essence these participants had downplayed their experiences of racism (Harries, 2014), which may signify a reluctance to be perceived as a 'victim' or for sheer exhaustion. This can be interpreted as reluctant or constrained agency for participants who recounted these experiences, essentially to maintain a degree of dignity, control, and self-care. Disappointingly, many participants commented that they had become immune to microinsults, microinequities and microaggressions because to deal with every incident would for some mean a daily ordeal, and this would be unsustainable and psychologically damaging, although many recognised on exploring their experiences further that their lived experiences were already adversely affecting their mental health and wellbeing due to their cumulative effect. This further supports the notion that black staff experience a psychological penalty, that is fundamentally different to the ethnic penalty described by Heath and Cheung (2006) and is a new contribution to knowledge relating to the experiences of minority ethnic employees in UK higher education.

Similar findings were reported recently in relation to racial harassment in higher education (EHRC, 2019). As a result of these responses, it is critical that institutions and their HR and equality and diversity practitioners remain vigilant because of the implications around an employers' duty of care for employee health and wellbeing in the workplace. It can also be interpreted from participants that institutions are not operating sufficient campaigns internally that raise awareness of what bullying, harassment and discrimination, including microaggressions, are and how they manifest in the workplace.

As a result of these findings, the following actions are recommended:

9. Institutional governing boards and senior leadership teams must be publicly accountable for the monitoring and measurement of reports of racism and any targets that are implemented to measure progress. Institutions must develop at least one Equality Objective that is related to race. It is essential that the outcomes of such monitoring exercises are reported annually, communicated across the institutional community for transparency, and progress included within the statutory public reporting requirements of the PSED.

10. Senior leaders must have a performance objective that addresses matters of equality, diversity and inclusion and more specifically linked to the elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimisation. These objectives should be aligned with any institutional objectives to eliminate race discrimination and harassment and progress reported to the Board of Governors on a regular basis.
11. Senior leaders and HR teams must take decisive action around the remedies available to ethnic minority staff in reporting race discrimination or harassment. HR teams should convene expert panels in race-related matters who are able to make unbiased, independent decisions around the facts of each case so that minority ethnic staff have more confidence in institutional processes and systems.
12. Institutional processes are required to facilitate the recording of racial microaggressions, whether anonymously to gauge the extent of incidents and/or in a more formal way that allows staff to seek a remedy through internal processes. As well as monitoring incidents, diversity data must be gathered to understand the demographic profile of staff making such reports so that an accurate picture can be formed.

8.2.3 Determine the impact of racial inequalities on black staff in UK higher education

The literature asserts that race can be a difficult subject to navigate and discuss (DiAngelo, 2018; Eddo-Lodge, 2018; EHRC, 2019), particularly for those who do not regularly engage with the topic. Despite academic debate arguing that the language of race is problematic, participants did not feel that terms such as race and ethnicity were of particular concern if the terms could be used to advance the race equality agenda. Some participants, including practitioners, commented on how often race is conflated with people of colour, and that limiting conversations about the topic meant that white people do not engage, contributing to the heightened sensitivities around the subject (DiAngelo, 2018).

In terms of language used to describe race-related topics, some participants raised an objection to the acronyms often used to describe people of black and minority ethnic background, e.g., BME, BAME. Participants that commented thought that the abbreviations dehumanised people of colour. This feedback was thought-provoking because these terms have been normalised to describe ethnic minority people for some time. Prior to beginning

this research, I had not considered the impact of this terminology in the context of my professional activity and now refrain from using these terms and encourage others to do the same.

Continuing with the notion of language and how it may empower or constrain (DiAngelo, 2018; Eddo-Lodge, 2018) views around blackness were understood by most, but reviled by some. This contentious term facilitated a discussion with black staff about dialect, appearance, mannerisms and other personal attributes bringing to life the challenges faced within the academic environment. One where some participants felt hyper-aware of how they were portraying themselves and hyper-anxious about how they were perceived, which could attract negative attention, therefore manoeuvring around the social space would entail modifying aspects of their behaviour to fit in (Steinbugler, 2015; Solanke, 2018). The accounts from many participants portrayed a despondency in coming to terms with not being authentic in the workplace and this can be interpreted as blackness being problematic in white spaces (Mapedzaham and Kwansah-Aidoo (2017), and which can be interpreted as symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1990).

An important and unexpected empirical finding from this research revealed the importance of identity on the lived experiences of black staff in UK higher education. The subject provided further perspectives on how different groups of black staff perceived other black staff and this was particularly pronounced through comments made by those who were born outside the UK concerning those born in the UK, and where participants were of a mixed-race background (Hirsch, 2018), e.g., stereotyping groups that were different from themselves (Steinbugler, 2015). This was despite a strong sense from minority ethnic participants that they felt stereotyped in one form or another and that this had a negative impact on their workplace experiences (Kanter, 1993, Ibarra, 1993, 1995). The evidence gained through this research has found that stereotypical attitudes are not solely experienced by people of colour at the hands of dominant ethnic groups, but also from within the same/similar ethnic groups.

The participants' notion of identity was closely linked with their sense of belonging to the department and institution. For many being valued by their immediate team strengthened their sense of belonging within it, however this was not mirrored in relation to the institution, with many reporting feelings of invisibility (Solanke, 2018). This was further intensified by the lack of ethnic diversity within the rest of the institution thereby increasing feelings of isolation

and paradoxically heightened visibility because of their difference (Solanke, 2018). Participants perceived that with this attention came a heightened expectation that the individual would be required to outperform or become accountable for every other person of colour in the institution, and this supports Solanke's (2018) work on hypervisibility and hyperinvisibility. This caused increasing levels of anxiety, particularly in those participants employed in senior roles within their institutions who felt under more scrutiny than their peers (Wilson and Jones, 2008; Solanke, 2018). Consequently, it appears that identity is not only bound in the self, but in the field and the habitus (Bourdieu, 1977), causing individuals to participate in a game where the rules have been long established and entrenched by the white hegemonic culture that exists within UK higher education. Participation is not voluntary if one wishes to progress in their chosen field. Deconstructing the participants' lived experiences by applying Bourdieu's notion of power through habitus, field, capital and symbolic violence (1977, 1984, 1990, 1998) provided a novel insight to describe how the institutional systems and structures can enable and constrain across multiple levels and is a meaningful contribution to knowledge and practice. Thus, enabling practitioners to view their institutional processes and practices in an alternative way to better understand the disproportionate impact of these systems and structures on ethnic minority staff.

Identity and belonging are inextricably linked to levels of confidence people of colour, and particularly black staff, feel in recognising racism when it occurs and taking action to challenge it. However, herein lies part of the problem and which is the residual impact of some of the perceptions and experiences described by participants. Black staff are constantly reminded that they are the minority within a minority by virtue of there being such few black staff in academic and professional and support staff roles, and this is particularly acute in senior levels of our institutions. Not seeing oneself represented at multiple levels undermines identity and belonging within a white-dominated environment, which has seen an increase in research and media attention (Times Higher, 2013; The Independent, 2014; The Guardian, 2019, 2020; EHRC, 2019). Despite this, the sector is resistant to act. Consequently, the collective inaction continues to fuel perceptions among black staff that the threat of destroying professional relationships or being labelled a troublemaker is far worse than enduring the impact of racism (Baumeister and Leary, 1995).

As a result of these findings the following actions are recommended:

13. Advance HE to design and deliver a mandatory sector-wide programme encouraging 'active bystanders[21]' to create more inclusive workplace cultures and uphold a zero-tolerance stance to bullying, harassment and discrimination.
14. Institutional policy makers to review and implement, if not already in place, a mechanism which allows staff to report anonymously and provide additional external support, such as an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), where individuals are able to gain specific independent advice. HR functions must use the data gathered from EAP usage to determine appropriate actions to tackle bullying, harassment and discrimination.
15. Institutions to develop and implement focused learning interventions on the topic of race covering the history, language, locating white people within the wider race agenda, white privilege and white fragility. These should be mandatory and delivered to all staff, beginning with senior leaders and governing boards.
16. Institutions to facilitate sessions for ethnic minority staff to talk openly about their lived experiences at work. These conversations should be facilitated by at least one senior leader with the support from HR, equality and diversity practitioners, and staff networks so that racism and racial microaggressions can be discussed without repercussions and to normalise conversations about racism. The outcomes of these sessions should inform institutional strategies and policies.

8.2.4 Consider perceptions of the existence of institutional racism and its effect within a higher education context

Establishing the existence of institutional racism in the context of UK higher education is a new contribution to knowledge, and especially where participants have been asked explicitly whether they perceive this to exist within their institutions or within the sector. To reduce doubt or misunderstanding on the topic of institutional racism, participants were presented with the definition as described by Macpherson (1999).

> *The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through*

[21] Active bystander strategies can be employed to safely intervene or challenge inappropriate behaviour

unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.

(Macpherson, 1999:28)

Most participants (approximately 95 per cent) responded that institutional racism did exist, and that it manifested itself in a multitude of ways. This finding provides a significant insight to the perceptions of staff and stakeholders by revealing the role UK higher education institutions play in affecting the outcomes of black staff and other people of colour that are employees and/or students.

The topic of institutional racism has attracted much debate since the term was resurrected in Macpherson (1999), focusing primarily on the dichotomy within the definition in terms of structure, described as the collective failure, and agency posited through actions such as unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping (Wight, 2003; Gillborn, 2008). These terms are most commonly associated with agential acts or omissions, and therefore has contributed to confusion in operationalising the concept within relevant organisations (Souhami, 2014) and through claims of no defined actions to address institutional racism (Solomos, 1999). Gillborn (2008) highlighted the dual responsibility and accountability within the contemporary definition used in Macpherson (1999), which extends beyond the actions of individuals through conduct, attitude and behaviours to include the organisational processes which disadvantage people of colour. Ahmed (2012) argued that solely blaming individuals for their actions underestimates how racism is reproduced.

In exploring the perceptions around institutional racism in UK higher education and its effect on institutional capability to tackle racial inequalities, these findings offer the opportunity to consider how operationally institutions function in terms of the implementation of policies, processes and practices that disadvantage people of colour. To date, there has been little activity within the sector to explicitly address this concept and this may be as a consequence of misunderstanding institutional racism when it refers in part to the collective nature of operations yet focuses on individual acts or refusing to look for or accept that institutional racism may be present. This may be indicative of shared organisational habitus (McDonough, 1998; Horvat and Antonio, 1999), since the denial of institutional racism is sector wide and can be interpreted as symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1990; 2001b) since the denial creates the

illusion that institutional workplaces are fair and equitable to ethnic minority staff despite this research supporting the contrary. The discussion has identified how the acts of individuals can be produced and reproduced to become part of the cultural fabric of an institution, and although its policies and practices might seem benign in their articulation and appear at face value to be equally applicable to all, the way in which they are implemented may be inequitable.

In contrast to the literature, participants were quick to dissect the definition in terms of the structural and agential considerations and found no difficulty in understanding and contextualising how aspects of their own institution's functions corresponded to these features. Examples of such operationalisation included the student attainment gap, the negative workplace experiences of black and minority ethnic staff, access, admissions, learning and teaching, curriculum content and pedagogy, unfair process, the moving of goal posts particularly within the promotions process, etc. There was no shortage of examples that participants could see affected the outcomes of staff *and* students. A conclusion that can be drawn from these examples is that the apparent confusion or lack of defined actions to address institutional racism postulated by Souhami (2014) and Solomos (1999) is not reflected through participant accounts.

In considering the concept of institutional racism from the perspective of 'institutional' symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1990) this can allow for a reconstructed definition of Macpherson (1999) so that it is simpler to operationalise within organisations. As such, I would propose an adapted form of the definition in Macpherson (1999) to the following:

> *The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service, equal opportunity or equal outcomes to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can manifest through attitudes, behaviours, unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping and can be seen or detected in the implementation of processes, practices and services on behalf of the organisation.*

This revised definition acknowledges that every individual actor within an organisation can hold or demonstrate attitudes, whether unwitting or not, and can implement a series of actions, or indeed omissions, on behalf of the organisation and regardless of level of seniority, that may disadvantage people of colour. It is this recognition that will place the organisation

as a collective responsible and accountable for the outcomes of ethnic minority employees and service users at the hands of its workforce. This presents a model that is not dissimilar to the notion of vicarious liability already present in the UK legislative framework.

Policy implementation is only one aspect of institutional action to address differential outcomes and it is also the way that it tackles racism, or the potential for racial disadvantage. Accounts by some participants raised concerns that it would take a serious incident to be the catalyst for change, rather than taking a proactive approach for setting a more inclusive workplace culture. This indicates that the lack of ethnic diversity among senior decision-making groups in institutions is having an operationally detrimental impact, mainly while leaders do not have the cultural sensitivities required to address matters of race and racism within institutions. It is apparent from participants' responses and the management profile of institutions (Advance HE, 2020) that people of colour are not given a voice to inform institutional policy and strategy in relation to race equality.

Participants felt there was a general lack of engagement and denial across the sector that institutional racism was a problem. If institutional racism occurs through unwitting prejudice, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping, these matters could be addressed through education. An HR practitioner highlighted the difficulty of delivering institutional policy and monitoring implementation at local level, which raised a noteworthy concern around an institution's ability to ensure that policies were being implemented in a fair, transparent and consistent way. In my own professional opinion, I have not yet worked in any organisation where there is systematic monitoring to ensure that policy is implemented in a fair and consistent manner, yet it is in this area that institutions could make the most significant impact by working with minority ethnic staff in the review and development of institutional policy as critical friends.

As a result of these findings the following actions are recommended:

17. That sector agencies, together with UK higher education institutions review and implement a programme of systematic appraisal of internal policies and practices that impact staff, e.g., recruitment, promotions, probation, disciplinary, grievance, bullying

and harassment, etc. This should include equality analysis[22] to ensure that due regard is given to social groups during the development, review and revision of policy, services or practice. This exercise must include data analysis regarding policy usage and collaboration with equality and diversity practitioners, staff networks and trade unions to support the review process and consultation.

18. That Advance HE creates specific guidance for managers and senior leaders on operationalising institutional racism, by adopting the definition proposed within this dissertation to facilitate progress. This support should be cascaded throughout institutions, particularly for personnel involved in decision-making roles and with direct contact with students. The guidance should clearly set out the responsibilities on governing bodies, senates and senior leaders in eradicating institutional racism and, where necessary, identify targets that enable the institution to advance race equality. To support this, HERAG should be tasked with monitoring the progress of the sector in tackling this issue, working in collaboration with Advance HE to provide a 'state of the nation' report on an annual basis.
19. Institutions must publish annually details of their workforce profile according to ethnicity, including across different grades (academic and professional and support), identifying any concerns arising from that data, how they are increasing their ethnic representation, how they are advancing equality of outcome and lowering attrition, etc. Issues identified through these analyses should inform the creation of appropriate action plans and the setting of SMART equality objectives.

8.2.5 Explore the presence of an ethnic penalty faced by black staff in UK higher education

There is no doubt that the statistical data relied upon within this research (Advance HE, 2020) indicates that black staff employed in UK higher education institutions experience differential outcomes when compared to staff of all other ethnic groups in terms of their representation in the workforce at all levels, their retention, and their pay and that this affects both academic and professional and support staff. The findings of this research show that there are a range

[22] Also known as Equality Impact Assessment and is a process that allows organisations to demonstrate they are meeting the requirements of the PSED and how they pay due regard to the impact a policy, service or practice has on different groups of people. This should be undertaken before and during policy, service or practice development and whenever policies, service and practices are being reviewed and updated.

of workplace issues faced by black staff that are not experienced to the same extent by their peers from other ethnic groups and this indicates that institutional structures and the way those structures are produced and reproduced by dominant groups contribute to these differential outcomes and indicates the presence of an ethnic penalty to black staff.

In speaking with participants, there was a genuine feeling that a racial hierarchy operated within institutions, and this was evident in the absence of black staff within senior levels and is supported through sector demographics (Advance HE, 2020). It also cannot be ignored that black women face additional barriers where 'glass ceilings' and 'sticky floors' may inhibit opportunities for progression, and these outcomes are fuelled by racial and gendered stereotyping, creating differential outcomes and ethnic penalties for black women, which mean that they tend to occupy junior positions, are more likely to feel isolated, not just because they may be the only black person in a team but may also be the only woman. Black women will also be more likely to receive lower pay than their white female counterparts as a consequence of gender segregation in roles (again sector demographics show a high proportion of black staff in administrative roles), which result in lower lifetime income.

Participants have provided moving and sometimes concerning accounts of their experiences, and although there have been some similarities with staff of other ethnic groups those accounts highlighted the weighty differences that negatively impact black staff, and which strongly supports the assertion made in this research that black staff suffer an ethnic penalty that is not present to the same extent for other racially minoritised groups. This assertion is clearly supported by the secondary statistical data (UCEA, 2018; Advance HE, 2020), which this study has relied upon.

This research provides evidence that black staff face a psychological penalty concerning the barriers experienced in discussing matters of race for fear of being further ostracised, excluded or that is career limiting. These barriers are so significant that black staff choose not to report (EHRC, 2019) and will often tolerate ongoing inappropriate behaviours and attitudes, which have a significant detrimental impact on their mental health and wellbeing, their relationships with colleagues and peers, or they will choose to leave their institution all together (ECU, 2015). In addition to this, the psychological burden carried by black staff by virtue of their own identity places a distinct psychological penalty on this cohort of staff in navigating white-dominated academic spaces (see discussion in Chapter Six).

As a result of these findings the following actions are recommended:

20. Institutions must move away from viewing ethnic minority staff as a homogenous group so that the complexities and nuances of individual and specific ethnic group experiences can be considered more effectively. There is sufficient longitudinal trend data that shows the continued under-representation of black staff, particularly at senior level, higher attrition and lower pay than white staff. It is essential that institutions use this data to benchmark their own performance against the sector and implement programmes of activity to address these differential outcomes.

8.3 Situating the self as practitioner-researcher

This research has rightly focused on the subjects most touched by the topic of race and racism within UK higher education and how this impacts the outcomes of black staff. I have used Layder's (1993) research map to inform the context, setting, situated activity and the self in relation to the lived experiences of this cohort. However, there is no denying that throughout this research journey, there has been a significant impact on my 'self' during this time.

In hindsight, I embarked on this exploration naively thinking that I would remain detached from the topic in the interests of remaining neutral and objective. This research and my conversations with the participants, who I am grateful to for sharing their stories and accounts of life in UK higher education, has affected me profoundly and I have never been detached from this research. In fact, it has been all-consuming. Not just as a practitioner, or researcher, but as a human. Cunliffe (2003) asserts that reflexivity 'unsettles' as we constantly construct meaning and social realities as we interact with others and discuss our experiences. Cunliffe continues to argue that in taking a radical reflexive approach that we must go further than questioning the truths of others to question how we as researchers and practitioners make truth claims and construct meaning. These statements reflect the personal and professional journey I have taken throughout this research journey.

This study and my interactions with participants have deconstructed what I thought I knew and informed the reconstruction of the way I view the world, the way I see others, has increased my sensitivity to hidden forms of racism in the workplace and my ability to critique

organisational systems and processes. The social constructionist approach (Burr, 2015) I used to approach this research has also been applied in reflecting on my own practice as a diversity professional and informed who I am, how I interact with and create new realities with others. This learning, albeit painful at times, has made me a better practitioner in seeking more effective workplace equality solutions and enabled me to share that knowledge to equip and empower colleagues to do the same. This experience has provided a significant contribution to my practice. However, I completely underestimated the psychological impact this work would have, not in relation to the work required to complete a doctoral research programme, but in internalising the lived experiences of those who shared their stories with me. As a result, guilt, shame, anger, frustration, mistrust, suspicion have been the range of emotions and feelings that have travelled with me throughout this time. Despite this, I believe that the extent of my feelings and emotions are only a fraction of those experienced by some of the research participants. From an ethical perspective I battled the inclusion of any personal account, resulting in this reflection featuring at the end of this dissertation, as this research is not about me as a white woman practitioner-researcher, who does not need to think about how my colour or ethnic background affects my lived experiences in the UK. This research is directly for those who participated and indirectly for those who are affected by the issues I have explored.

I have stated that this work has made me a better practitioner, and it has. It has allowed me to build the skills, knowledge, and competence to tackle complex workplace challenges in relation to race. The impact has been almost immediate, particularly through the data gathering stage of this research as it enabled me to listen, hear, reflect, and respond through practice. As a result, I have implemented several changes that I have recommended in this chapter, albeit in another part of the public sector. What I have learned is that black and minority ethnic staff must have a voice in their organisation, be empowered to act, and know that they can be heard without prejudice or fear of reprisals. Talk of race and racism must be legitimised within higher education organisations if they wish to grow and effectively tackle workplace race inequalities. Organisations must listen, hear, reflect, and respond together with their staff to co-create solutions that can build trust and confidence – something that we take for granted in our employee-employer relationship.

The final section of this chapter will conclude the dissertation with a summary of how this research makes a contribution to knowledge and practice and identify where further research might be required to address the areas which could not be covered through this study.

8.4 Conclusion

This research has considered the perceptions and experiences of racism, the inconsistent and unfair implementation of policy and practice, and the under-representation of black staff at all levels of the institution. It is evident that together with the perceptions of the existence of institutional racism, that they are all connected. The significant under-representation of black staff in UK higher education further exacerbates the problems that affect this staff cohort, and this is particularly acute within senior decision-making roles. This research provides a significant contribution in terms of the lived experience of black academic *and* black professional and support staff, who have been largely absent from this debate through previously published literature. This research provides a voice for those colleagues affected by the issues discussed in this dissertation, many of whom feel silenced, intimidated and marginalised within their institutions.

In terms of practice, this research is an original contribution to practice in business administration and has brought together the views and experiences of other equality and diversity practitioners in the field and provided noteworthy insight into the challenging environments that practitioners find themselves in. Their low status within the institutional hierarchy and their organisational positioning, create difficult and stressful workplace conditions, with limited resources and often with little senior support or sponsorship. If UK higher education institutions are serious about equality, diversity and inclusion for staff and advancing the sector's position in relation to race equality, more value must be placed on the important role that these practitioners play in changing institutional culture. Institutions must provide these practitioners with the necessary support and sponsorship that is required to be valued practitioners within these complex environments.

Despite my own ethnic identity being different to most of the participants interviewed during the data gathering phase of the research, those participants gave honest, frank and often

disturbing accounts of their experiences that provided uncomfortable food for thought to me personally and professionally. Throughout the research journey, I have personally felt responsible for my race in considering participant accounts and this has affected me profoundly. I have reflected on the ways that I may have contributed to others' negative experiences in the workplace, and how I may not have done enough for those who sought my advice in the past. This research journey has contributed to my knowledge and practice in a way that my occupational activities could never have achieved in isolation and has informed my practice throughout my time in higher education and the roles I have held since leaving the sector. This journey has increased my own awareness about the level of privilege I hold because I am white, and as a result I am using my white privilege to actively challenge the role we all play in supporting the structures that disproportionately disadvantage black people and uphold the systems of racism. Those structures exist in the organisational policies and practices that we rely on, and they are being used in a way that have created and maintain differential outcomes for black staff in UK higher education.

My research journey has consistently informed my practice, not solely in the way that I am better able to critically analyse information, but in the depth of knowledge I have gained from the generous contributions made by the participants of this study surrounding the topic of race. I am an active advocate of race equality in my current role leading a team of specialists in a large and complex public sector organisation. I have become a subject matter expert around race and ethnicity and share my knowledge across the organisation to increase awareness of race, ethnicity, racism, microaggressions, institutional racism, white privilege and white fragility and how the latter can perpetuate the former. In doing so, I am driving efforts to create an anti-racist organisation through learning interventions and other activities that supports leaders and peers to advance race equality.

The death of George Floyd and ensuing outrage reminded me of the aftermath of Stephen Lawrence. One equality and diversity practitioner stated that there needed to be another incident like this again before something would happen. This shocked and disappointed me at the time, years before it would happen again. This time it was recorded, and this time the world was watching. I hope this will be the event to bring an end to racial injustice and inequities. I also hope that this research has done justice to those who contributed by sharing

their feelings, opinions, and experiences. Some of these were clearly painful and will have made those participants feel exposed and vulnerable.

This dissertation’s aim is that the evidence provided following the analysis and interpretation of participant perceptions and experiences is used to inform institutional strategy, policy, decision-making, policy implementation and practice to make a positive impact on the lives of black staff in UK higher education.

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Appendix 1 Office for Students (OfS) Equality Objectives 2018-2022

Objective 1 – The OfS will dvelop, implement and consult on our equality and diversity objectives, evidence base, impact assessments and action plan to ensure successful implementation of our PSED.

Objective 2 – The OfS will conduct and publish rigorous and influential analysis, research and insight into the E&D (including the protected characteristics and socioeconomic disadvantage) issues across the student lifecycle.

Objective 3 – The OfS will challenge the sector to significantly reduce gaps in access, success and progression for students from all backgrounds and identities and across all disciplines.

Objective 4 – The OfS will work to address the risk of some students not receiving a high-quality higher education experience.

Objective 5 – The OfS will work to reduce the risk that some students are prevented from maximising their outcomes through their higher education experience and therefore not maximise their potential in terms of employment or further study.

Objective 6 – Fostering inclusive leadership and an inclusive and open culture.

Objective 7 – Supporting staff to build diversity and inclusion into their work.

Objective 8 – Behaving as an inclusive employer which attracts and retains the widest pool of talent where all staff have the opportunity to unlock their potential.

(Office for Students, undated).

Appendix 2 Advance HE Race Equality Charter principles

- Racial inequalities are a significant issue within higher education. Racial inequalities are not necessarily overt, isolated incidents. Racism is an everyday facet of UK society and racial inequalities manifest themselves in everyday situations, processes and behaviours.
- UK higher education cannot reach its full potential unless it can benefit from the talents of the whole population and until individuals from all ethnic backgrounds can benefit equally from the opportunities it affords.
- In developing solutions to racial inequalities, it is important that they are aimed at achieving long-term institutional culture change, avoiding a deficit model where solutions are aimed at changing the individual.
- Minority ethnic staff and students are not a homogenous group. People from different ethnic backgrounds have different experiences of and outcomes from/within higher education, and that complexity needs to be considered in analysing data and developing actions.
- All individuals have multiple identities, and the intersection of those different identities should be considered wherever possible (Advance HE, 2020).

Appendix 3 Call for expression of interest

On 13 April 2016 at 13:40, Rodriguez, Min <m.rodriguez@herts.ac.uk> wrote:
APOLOGIES FOR CROSS POSTING

Please forward to anyone you think might be interested.

Doctoral research project: Race equality and black staff in UK higher education institutions: An exploration of barriers to progress.

Call for expressions of interest to take part in this study.

Protocol number: cBUS/PGR/UH/02322

A diverse workforce is crucial to innovation and creativity in organisations (Özbiligin and Tatli, 2011), yet evidence continues to show that Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) staff are under-represented in UK higher education (ECU, 2015). This is despite the year-on-year increase in the ethnic diversity of the student population in higher education. Since 2003/4 the proportion of BME students has increased from 14.9% to 20.2% in 2013/14. In contrast, the proportion of BME staff in higher education institutions has only increased from 4.8% in 2003/4 to 6.7% in 2013/14 (ECU,2015).

The slow diversification of the higher education workforce has attracted studies and media attention highlighting the continued recruitment of BME staff at lower levels of the academy, yet the outcomes differ according to different ethnic groups (Singh and Kwahli, 2015; ECU, 2015). Latest statistics show that of UK black academic staff, 4.5% are professors, compared to 11.2% of all white academic staff (ECU, 2015). In relation to pay, 19.7% of white academic staff earned in the top academic pay spine range of £57,032 and above compared to only 8.9% of black UK academic staff in this pay spine.

This study aims to understand the barriers to progress of race equality in higher education and more specifically how this continues to adversely affect black staff. I would particularly welcome expressions of interest to participate in the research from Black staff working in higher education (professional/technical and academic), as well as equality and diversity practitioners, HR managers, senior managers (with line management responsibility) and trade union representatives of any ethnic background with experience in developing or implementing race equality policies.

Involvement in this study will be through confidential one-to-one interviews and will begin from May 2016 through to July 2017. If you are interested in taking part in this important study, please contact Min Rodriguez m.rodriguez@herts.ac.ukfor more details.

Best wishes

Min Rodriguez
Head of Equality
Equality Office
University of Hertfordshire
LB161, College Lane
Hatfield
Hertfordshire
AL10 9AB

Appendix 4 Interview schedule for black staff

Question	Prompt	Reason for question
What attracted you to higher education?	Was diversity a key attraction? Were you inspired in some way?	**Icebreaker -** To establish whether the interviewee made a conscious decision to enter HE or whether it was the role.
Do you feel a sense of belonging to your institution?	Do you feel part of your institutional community?	Literature has suggested a lack of belonging and I want to know if this is a live issue for a range of black staff.
Do you think the terminology used 'race/ethnicity' helps or hinders the advancement of equality of opportunity in this area?	Any suggestions how this could change in the future?	Lots of debate about terminology and I want to establish whether this is relevant in practice.
What do you understand racism to be/look like in today's institutions?	Have you experienced it/ or witnessed it happen whilst in HE?	Literature suggests that racism is not always overt and has shape-shifted over time. In practice I have dealt with staff that have complained of bullying, harassment and discrimination, but are not explicit that the treatment is linked to race/ethnicity. I want to understand whether this is due to overall understanding of racism or if there is a fear behind claims of this type.
How committed is your own institution in dealing with matters of race/ethnicity?	Does it engage in any activity to promote race/ethnicity? Have they been effective? Why do think this is?	I want to understand whether in practice race equality policies are seen as 'empty shell' or if there is activity to reinforce the commitment of the institution.
=5Does the way you feel about how your institution deals with race/ethnicity affect your sense of belonging to it or mindful of your identity within the institution?	Are you conscious of your own ethnic identity in the workplace?	I'd like to understand whether issues in the workplace affect the individual's sense of belonging and/or whether they are mindful that their identity affects their place in the institution.

Are you aware of the term 'institutional racism'? Interviewee will be shown a card with the definition of this, taken from the Macpherson report.	Do you think institutional racism exists in your institution based on this definition?	This aspect has not been addressed explicitly in HE. I want to understand people's perception about this and whether it affects their level of engagement at work.
What impact has the leadership team had on the advancement of race equality in your institution?	Do you feel there has been sufficient resource? Do you feel engaged with the process?	I would like to get a sense of how much institutional leadership are involved in advancing race equality and whether it is effective in directing implementation and in engaging black staff.
Who in your institution is responsible for implementing race equality policies/initiatives?	What activity has taken place and how often? Is this effective and are staff engaged? Who do you think should lead on race equality?	I wish to understand where the responsibility lies in the institution and what works and what doesn't in order to affect future practice.
Do you think the issues around low representation, career progression/development of Black staff are taken seriously within your institution?	What initiatives are taking place to address it? Are these initiatives effective?	I would like to build an understanding of the perceptions of black staff in relation to their own representation and career enhancement within the sector and what might be done about it.
What are your views on the value of BME Staff Networks?	Are you part of this network? What do you/your institution get from this network? Does your institution support it or obtain feedback from it?	Staff networks are difficult to set up and maintain and often are stand-alone entities that do not feed into institutional policy yet there is an appetite for them. I want to understand why people do/don't use them and how they might be used better to advance race equality.
What do you think has/hasn't worked in advancing race equality in higher education?	If you could change some of those aspects what would they be?	In the interest of changing black staff experience and the way institutions address race equality – I want to understand what has/hasn't worked and gain an opinion to what could change.

Appendix 5 Interview schedule for practitioners/managers

Question	**Prompt**	**Reason for question**
Tell me about your role and how you are involved with race equality in higher education?		**Icebreaker** To establish the key aspects of their role and the relevance to race equality
To what extent do you feel the terms 'race/ethnicity' help or hinder the advancement of equality of opportunity in this area?	Any suggestions how this could change in the future?	Lots of debate about terminology and I want to establish how practitioners feel this might help work in this area.
What is your understanding of what racism looks like in your/today's institutions?	Have you experienced it/ or witnessed it happen whilst in HE? What actions/initiatives have you taken or been involved in to address it?	Literature suggests that racism is not always overt and has shape-shifted over time. In practice I have dealt with staff that have complained of bullying, harassment and discrimination, but are not explicit that the treatment is linked to race/ethnicity. I want to understand whether this is due to overall understanding of racism or if there is a fear behind claims of this type.
How confident are you in dealing with matters of race?	How might knowledge and confidence levels be approached amongst managers and practitioners in the sector?	I want to understand the level of knowledge and confidence about race in higher education.
As an advisor/manager in the sector, what opportunities or challenges do you face in dealing with matters of race/ethnicity? Locally or across the sector.	Do you experience difficulties in advancing the agenda? Are staff engaged with race?	It is often difficult to engage dominant groups in discussions about race, however, are there things we can learn from practitioner/manager experiences?
How committed do you think your own organisation is to dealing with matters of race/ethnicity?	Does it engage in any activity to promote race/ethnicity? Have they been effective? Why do think this is? How does this transfer to your sector stakeholders? (non-HEI participant)	I want to understand whether in practice race equality policies are seen as 'empty shell' or if there is activity to reinforce the commitment of the institution.
Are you aware of the term 'institutional racism'?	Do you think institutional racism exists in higher education based on this definition?	This aspect has not been addressed explicitly in HE. I want to understand people's perception about this and

Interviewee will be shown a card with the definition of this, taken from the Macpherson report.	Do you think institutional racism exists in your organisation based on this definition?	whether it affects their level of engagement at work.
Do you feel that there is sufficient focus/resource in the area of race equality in the HE sector?	Do you feel there has been sufficient resource? Do you feel engaged with the process?	I would like to get a sense of how much institutional leadership are involved in advancing race equality and whether it is effective in directing implementation and in engaging black staff.
Do you think the issues around low representation, career progression/development of Black staff are taken seriously within your institution?	What initiatives are taking place to address it? Are these initiatives effective?	I would like to build an understanding of the perceptions of black staff in relation to their own representation and career enhancement within the sector and what might be done about it.
What are your views on the value of BME Staff Networks?	Are you part of this network? What do you/your institution get from this network? Does your institution support it or obtain feedback from it?	Staff networks are difficult to set up and maintain and often are stand-alone entities that do not feed into institutional policy yet there is an appetite for them. I want to understand why people do/don't use them and how they might be used better to advance race equality.
What do you think has/hasn't worked in advancing race equality in higher education?	If you could change some of those aspects what would they be?	In the interest of changing black staff experience and the way institutions address race equality – I want to understand what has/hasn't worked and gain an opinion to what could change.