

# Racism still rife against black and minority ethnic teachers in England

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Professor Paul Miller is pictured. Credit: University of Huddersfield

A University of Huddersfield professor has developed a theory that black and minority ethnic (BME) teachers and academics in England depend on "white sanction" in order to fulfil their potential.

Professor Paul Miller has published a new article that analyses official statistics plus evidence culled from a series of interviews, and he demonstrates that BME educationalists require endorsement from white colleagues if they are to climb the career ladder. Now, he plans further research on the role played by race in English education, and his "white sanction" concept will be explored at a special seminar to take place at the University of Huddersfield in 2017.

In his article - published by the journal *Power and Education* - Professor Miller writes that "BME academics and [teachers](#) should not need to rely on a 'white sanction' to legitimise and enable them".

"In 21st Century England, a multi-racial and multi-cultural country, any suggestion of ethnic and/or racial superiority should be vigorously pushed back and talents, skills and voices from all ethnicities legitimised and respected."

He calls for robust monitoring of existing policies to see that they are being followed.

"For example, there are many provisions in the Equalities Act which place a duty upon organisations to be more inclusive. What I want is greater policy accountability," he said, and one of the conclusions of his article is that "white sanction will prevail in contexts where government policies lack enforcement and monitoring".

Professor Miller argues that "the promotion and prospects of BME teachers and academics has more or less flatlined". He includes statistics, such as the fact that of the 8.4 million pupils at English state schools, more than 25 per cent have minority ethnic origins. Yet 87 per cent of the country's 454,900 teachers are white British.

There are approximately 18,000 qualified BME teachers, with 1,000 in

leadership roles, but only 104 of them are head teachers. The professor found equivalent patterns in Higher Education.

During his research, Professor Miller conducted interviews with BME academics and teachers at a variety of universities and schools. Some felt that racial discrimination had held back their career progression. Also, "several of the participants expressed that white colleagues were like 'gatekeepers', and there was no way you could get a job without first impressing and/or forming an alliance with them".

It was to describe this need to gain endorsement that Professor Miller coined the term "white sanction". The article described the different forms that it can take, and states that white sanction "occurs where the skills and capabilities of a BME individual are, first, acknowledged and, second, endorsed/promoted by a white individual, who is positioned as a broker and/or mediator acting on behalf of or in the interests of the BME individual".

One of the conclusions is that BME academics and teachers are "consciously and purposefully taking matters into their own hands by rallying and supporting each other through mentoring and networking".

Jamaican-born Professor Miller has widespread experience of lecturing and research within UK Higher Education. His appointment at the University of Huddersfield earlier in 2016 meant he became the first black academic to be appointed to a Professorship in Educational Leadership and Management at any British university.

His research and publications have dealt with topics such as teacher identity and migration, and corruption in education. He is co-convenor of the Race and Leadership Research Interest Group at the British Educational Leadership and Educational Research Society (BELMAS).

**More information:** The article 'White sanction', institutional, group and individual interaction in the promotion and progression of black and minority ethnic academics and teachers in England, by Paul Miller, is in *Power and Education*, first published on October 17, 2016.

Provided by University of Huddersfield

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