

Conceding White Superiority, Embracing Black Victimhood

No route to progression for African and Global
Majority (AGM) people in academia

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Demanding Rights in HE

It is these structural and institutional barriers and how we transcend them and resist their impact upon us, our wellbeing (physical, mental and spiritual) and our careers that I want to address in this presentation.

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'the higher education sector is increasingly afraid of its shadow when it comes to discussing issues to do with race, racism and colonialism'.

<https://bylinetimes.com/2021/06/23/selective-free-speech-academics-discussing-race-face-the-real-cancel-culture/>

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They thus become active agents of change, acting with moral purpose and with active self-interest within their institutions to right racial wrongs and eliminate racism in all its manifestations, rather than acting as allies in our struggle for racial justice.

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It seems to me to be as obvious as daylight that to make combating racism in HE dependent upon 'white allies' is to disempower ourselves and make the delivery of our fundamental rights and entitlements contingent upon the disposition and interventions of whites who are sympathetic to our cause.

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In this regard, the immortal words of Malcolm X over 50 years ago still have resonance today:

"I have these very deep feelings that white people who want to join black organizations are really just taking the escapist way to salve their consciences. By visibly hovering near us, they are "proving" that they are "with us." But the hard truth is this isn't helping to solve America's racist problem. The Negroes aren't the racists...."

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'Where the really sincere white people have got to do their "proving" of themselves is not among the black victims, but out on the battle lines of where America's racism really is—and that's in their own home communities; America's racism is among their own fellow whites. That's where sincere whites who really mean to accomplish something have got to work.'

The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Alex Haley and Malcolm X (Ballantine: 1964): pp. 383–384.

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‘We believe the groundswell of protests in the US and the UK (in the wake of George Floyd’s murder) represent a crucial moment for us - as people directly affected by these issues - **to call on the sector for help in eliminating racism**’. (my emphasis)

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*..... Specifically, the aim of the research is to **identify the characteristics and motivations of white allies** in order to support those colleagues who are earlier on in their journey but are keen to learn how to be actively anti-racist.*

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A white ally can be described as someone who is white who speaks out on behalf of or takes explicit action to support or advocate on behalf of those from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.

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** 11. Has your workplace held workshops or training which has included content about **how to be a white ally** in the last 18 months?*

** 12. Has your workplace hosted talks that have included content about white allyship in the last 18 months?*

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** 13. In your view, have the training or talks about anti-racism and white allyship in your workplace been as a result of the death of George Floyd in May 2020?*

** 30. What could your organisation do to encourage more white people to become allies on race?*

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** 31. Do you think it is possible for white people to become active race allies?*

* 32. What, in your view, makes a white person a good ally?

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Context of the University's Operation

- Its relevance for functions
- Relevance for consultation & communication
- Relevance for impact assessment

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Functions

- A 'function' is everything the University does in discharging its duties as a public body and a provider of services to its learning community and to society generally.

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Equity Values and Anti-discrimination Principles

- The University needs to affirm that its approach to meeting the requirements of the legislation is to see the latter as a lever for building a culture of equity as a core underpinning value and defining feature of the institution and ensuring that:

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- all students, staff and members of the learning community can work in an environment free of structural, cultural, institutional and personal forms of discrimination and exclusion
- all students, staff and members of the learning community are made aware that they have personal responsibility to create and sustain such an environment

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It is the task of senior managers to seek to embed equity values and anti-discrimination principles and practice across all the University's functions and make them organic to the culture of the Institution and the way it does its business as an organization.