INSIDER-OUTSIDER

The Role of Race in Shaping the Experiences of Black and Minority Ethnic Students

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UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

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October 2019

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FOREWORD – SOFIA AKEL

Attainment Gap Project Coordinator and Researcher
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My initial interest in racial justice stemmed from my time as an undergraduate at Lancaster University, where I increasingly became aware of the issues facing Black and minority ethnic students. It was around this time that the movement to decolonise universities was spreading among student activists across the UK and internationally. This led me to form the Lancaster University chapter of *Why is my Curriculum White?* This sparked what later became a career in race equality in higher education. I have worked in a number of Students' Unions in various capacities, including as an elected sabbatical officer where I was fortunate to learn from students who helped raise awareness and demand change on racial justice. This learning has continued in my Students' Union role and current research role at Goldsmiths College which informed this current study.

The topic of race often provokes discomfort and defensiveness. While, for the most part, this research has been welcomed, it is also true to say that it has been met with suspicion and resistance in some quarters. It is hoped that the recommendations to emerge from this study are understood as part of a wider enterprise to make the entire Goldsmiths community one that is comfortable and welcoming for all students and staff that enables us all to succeed. I believe that this is an important ambition that all can sign up to.

I would like to thank the Students' Union for funding this research and Goldsmiths College for helping see it through to completion. Thank you also to the many students who took the time to candidly express their experiences with me. I recognise the emotion labour in your accounts. Thank you to Ebonie Wilson for your assistance in analysing the qualitative data. At the Students' Union (SU) I would like to thank the BME Staff Network for your solidarity. In particular, I would like to thank Mona Mounir for being a continued source of strength in the fight for racial equality, you are a truly formidable, unapologetic pioneer of equality; The Sabbatical Officer team of 2019-20 and Taylor McGraa for your support, positive energy and balanced ear. You are all an asset to the student movement. I am also extremely grateful to Jamal El-Kalawy for your unwavering support, generous ear and guidance, especially through the challenging moments. I would also like to extend thanks to Dr Nicola Rollock for supporting my personal and academic development and for taking the time to offer guidance and feedback on this report. It is a truly wonderful to work alongside a fellow Black female in the academy, you are a force for change. Finally, to all the students and staff continually fighting for racial equality – in solidarity, always.

"Your silence will not protect you."

Audre Lorde

FOREWORD – DR NICOLA ROLLOCK

(Goldsmiths, University of London)

Insider-Outsider is a report which began in Goldsmiths Students' Union before moving to the College for completion and publication. It is based on the findings of a research study examining the role of race in the experiences of Black and minority ethnic students and their sense of belonging and comfort within the university space of Goldsmiths.

The findings, collated through a series of focus groups, a survey and one-to-one interviews, make for a sobering read. While the College may pride itself on having a relaxed, inclusive culture of creativity and edginess where all are welcomed, the findings reveal that this is far from the truth for students from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. These students are compelled to battle everyday racisms not just in social spaces and the corridors of our institution but in the very lecture theatres in which they are being taught. If nothing else, this should shame us all – even those espousing a commitment to social justice and union activism – to reflect and to be prepared to learn and work differently.

Insider-Outsider is published at an important time in the College's history. The data was collected shortly before the 137-day occupation of Deptford Town Hall by Goldsmiths Anti-Racist Action (GARA) students and activists which gained attention not just within the walls of the university and across campus but also within national press. The report and the occupation highlight how much work we have to do as an institution to understand racial justice and put it into action. They show also that we must become better listeners and hear the voices of our Black and minority ethnic students so that they are able to enjoy their experiences at the College, feel supported by the Students' Union and, ultimately, have the same opportunities for success as their white peers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the first known piece of research on this scale seeking to explore the question "What is the role of race in shaping the experiences of Black and minority ethnic (BME) students?" within the context of Goldsmiths College and Goldsmiths Students' Union. The research studied the experiences of 5% of the BME student population of Goldsmiths College through a survey, six individual interviews and three focus groups. Insider-Outsider sought to examine the role of race in shaping respondents' experiences in an academic and social setting. Including their views on how race may impact their attainment, community cohesion and confidence in the aforementioned institutions. Due to the nature of voluntary engagement with Students' Unions (SUs) generally, this report predominately focussed on students' experiences within the College where all respondents have engaged (to differing extents) by virtue of their studies. The research question was disaggregated into the following four research sub-questions:

1 – Decolonising and Representation – What are BME students' experiences of decoloniality and representation in academic settings and staff structures?

2 – Racism and Microaggressions – What are BME students' experiences of racism and microaggressions in both social and academic spaces and how does this impact them?

3 – Race and Attainment – What are BME students' views on the role of race in affecting academic attainment?

4 – Hate Crime Reporting and Student Mental Health Support – How does BME students' experiences and views on hate crime reporting and student mental health support impact their confidence in the institution?

DECOLONISING AND REPRESENTATION

Liberal Institution or Mistaken Identity?
Participants expressed disparagement and caution in their experience of the way in which the College and staff tended to position themselves as inclusive and socially just. Further, some detailed a number of cases where white peers who might think of themselves as operating in an inclusive manner were unable to acknowledge the restrictions of their views when it came to race.

As a result, some participants discussed feeling unable to express their ethnic identity at Goldsmiths, highlighting that Goldsmiths encourages the expression of other forms of identity that is not extended to race.

Academic Course Content
Over 80% of students reported that their courses were representative of the white experience, achievements and works, whilst only 28% believed that their course content is representative of BME experiences. As a result, only 27% felt represented by their courses. Representation, diversity and inclusion are often buzzwords in higher education, however true embedded representation is of immense importance to over 80% of respondents. This goes beyond 'diversifying' reading lists, many students cited that they cannot relate to their course material, but found it refreshing on the rare occasion that they could. However, in cases where relatable course material is discussed, for example race, some BME respondents found themselves vulnerable to racially-charged discussions in the classroom, often led by their white peers.

Not only did 74% of students believe that their course is rooted in Eurocentrism, 40% believed that they must conform to their lecturer's academic opinions in order to secure good grades. This highlighted the strategic processes that BME students deploy to overcome racial barriers in attainment. Therefore, not only are students left feeling omitted and thus their experiences undervalued by the course content, they must also subscribe to Eurocentric schools of thought in order to progress.

Academic and Professional Services Staff
With ethnic representation being very important to 80% of respondents, many are aware of the lack

of ethnic diversity in senior management, with only 5% believing that it is diverse. One respondent noted the tiresome nature of seeing the over-representation of BME staff within security and maintenance roles, yet not in academic roles and beyond.

By contrast, white students are able to enter higher education with a higher degree of representation from staffing to curriculum, spanning as wide as the Students' Union. Where scarcely half of BME respondents believed that Goldsmiths Students' Union prioritises race equality and the needs of BME students. It was the intention to carry out research involving BME staff members at Goldsmiths Students' Union, though this research was not supported. However, ex-BME staff members approached me to contribute their views on a voluntary basis and these are included in this research. Three people gave their views in this capacity, citing institutional racism during their employment there.

> " I've lost faith in the union and their "values," I felt targeted as a BME staff member on a fixed term contract.
>
> *Annissa*

The lack of relatable role models in a variety of roles within the institution can have a detrimental effect on the BME student experience, in which they are not able to relate with people in positions of authority and seniority. Of the academic staff body who are BME, many became mentors and provided additional support for BME students, where the institution fell short. Respondents expressed being fortunate to have a BME tutor, in light of perceived scarcity.

Therefore, both BME academics and students have had to deploy additional emotional labour and strategy in order to support one another through an institution where their experiences and voices are marginalised.

RACISM AND MICROAGGRESSIONS

From the findings, it became evident that racism permeates a plethora of avenues of university life, from the academic to the social. An increasing number of racist incidents across the sector

26%
reported experiencing racism from students and staff members

have been reported by the press. At Goldsmiths College experiences of racism, microaggressions and Islamophobia were recalled by a number of participants. 26% reported experiencing racism from students and staff members, citing the use of racial profanity. A Black, female student for example, recalled being 'fetishised' and sexually harassed by a member of staff due to her ethnicity (the staff member has since been removed). An additional 43% have experienced racialized microaggressions. Microaggressions are "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, or environmental indignities, whether international or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of colour" (Sue et al. 2007). In an academic setting this is often in relation to intellect, however this can also include treatment where a number of students are 'over-policed' by staff who exercise suspicion – 19% of Goldsmiths BME student respondents have experienced this.

Academic Environment
Respondents detailed entering a racial battleground in the classroom in which learning spaces became playgrounds for the exercising of racial microaggressions, covert forms of 'othering' and the suppression of Black and brown voices. Many respondents experienced being interrupted or overlooked when attempting to contribute to academic discussion. When given the opportunity to speak in seminars or lectures, some respondents found their contributions under disproportionate scrutiny by white peers and staff. Furthermore, a number of respondents described the lack of protection and safety in the classroom, where racist language and microaggressions have gone unchecked by the relevant staff member e.g. lecturer, citing language such as n***** being used without warning and overly referenced by staff and students. Therefore, there are a number of highly triggering situations that BME respondents have found themselves up against.

As a result, many noted becoming consciously strategic in navigating academic spaces, where

code-switching, moderating one's identity and tactical withdrawal from race-related discussions are survival mechanisms.

Social Environment
37% of students felt excluded from participating in university life due to racial discrimination, further supported by only 31% who feel a part of the Goldsmiths community.

Respondents have experienced 'othering,' isolation and exclusion rooted in racism in the social sphere of university life. International BME students spoke of discrimination in student halls and lack of representation in social events within the Students' Union, thus leading to feelings of alienation and exclusion.

Furthermore, 34% of BME students have attempted to modify their ethnic or cultural identity at Goldsmiths in order to 'fit' more closely into prevailing western norms. This includes changing their name, appearance, choosing not to wear religious garments for fear of reprisal, and altering their accent. As a result, many respondents do not feel a part of the wider College community, where many students build life-long friends and memories.

RACE AND ATTAINMENT
Whilst Goldsmiths College boasts an ethnically diverse student body (45.5% BME) that is increasingly outpacing the sector, their attainment gap figures reflect the sector-wide extent of racial bias in attainment.

At Goldsmiths College, the following attainment gap breakdown in the academic year 2017-18 by ethnicity were:

- 25% attainment gap between Black and white students
- 22% attainment gap between Asian and white students
- 7% attainment gap between Other (including Mixed) and white students

Respondents were highly cognisant of the link between their ethnicity and their grades, with 21% believing that this had directly impacted their assessment outcomes. Whilst an additional 25% of respondents believed that their intellect has been disproportionately scrutinised due to racial discrimination. Additionally, respondents felt trapped by their ethnicity, as some reported feeling pressured to produce work that related to their racial

identity, whilst others felt that this was revealing of the author and thus resulted in racially biased marking. Consequently, over half of respondents felt that they must work twice as hard in order to secure the same level of academic success as their white peers.

HATE CRIME REPORTING AND STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Hate Crime Reporting
The majority of BME survey respondents do not know where to report a hate crime at Goldsmiths College - a total of 79%. Despite this, many students displayed varying levels of confidence in coming forward to report racial hate crimes. 33% of students 'strongly agreed' and 'agreed' to having trust in Goldsmiths College and 42% in Goldsmiths Students' Union to handle reports of racism appropriately. 41% 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' to having confidence in reporting racism to Goldsmiths College, with only 43% agreeing to the same within Goldsmiths Students' Union. What was clear from the data is that overall students expressed more confidence in reporting racism than they did microaggressions, where only 27% felt confident reporting this to the College and 36% to the Students' Union. This could be due to a number of reasons, such as microaggressions being harder to evidence and in the cases of some respondents hard to articulate. However, throughout this report it is clear that students have continually felt disillusioned and anxious regarding the negative role that race has played on their experiences at Goldsmiths, therefore the lack of trust and confidence may relate to more broader experiences of race on campus.

Wellbeing and Counselling
Data from the research revealed the extent of the role of race in students seeking mental health and wellbeing support from Goldsmiths College, with many recalling racial and cultural insensitivity, ignorance and racially-charged comments from their practitioners. The majority of students in both interviews and focus groups therefore demonstrated a lack of confidence in the College to provide students with wellbeing or mental health staff support, where students should not have to consider the role of race in in relation to their treatment. Respondents described this as negatively impacting effective and meaningful professional support.

Furthermore, a number of respondents described seeking private wellbeing and counselling services in order to receive treatment from a BME practitioner, with the aim of having a relatable

professional who is more likely to have a higher level of cultural competency and racial sensitivity. This further highlights that appropriate mental health support is vastly important, in so much that students would consider paying for this as opposed to ineffective free support offered by the College.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are separated into Goldsmiths College and Goldsmiths Students' Union specific suggestions. However, this research and recommendations can be used more broadly by higher education institutions who are looking to curate their own institution-specific research and tackle institutional racism.

These seek to address the experiences of BME students relating to the four key research sub-questions above, providing recommendations to advance Goldsmiths College and Goldsmiths Students' Union in the area racial justice. These recommendations will also support the institution in addressing their attainment gap, by looking at the multifaceted ways that race manifests itself and hinders the academic success of BME students.

BACKGROUND

Insider-Outsider explores the role of race in shaping the experiences of Black and minority ethnic (BME) students enrolled at Goldsmiths College and also considers their experiences with the Students' Union. In particular, *Insider-Outsider* examines students' views on how race may impact their degree attainment[1], their sense of belonging and confidence in the institutions. The focus on BME students' experiences, including attainment, is important as BME students face a 13.6% degree attainment gap in first/2:1 classifications compared to their white counterparts in UK higher education (Advance HE 2018). Therefore, it is vital to understand the role that race may have in shaping their experiences both socially and academically.

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM IN UK HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

As this report will explore, there are a number of systemic ways that racism manifests in higher education. With a growing body of literature in this area, government and legislatures are becoming increasingly aware of differences in outcomes for BME students within the academy and this, it is argued, has to be understood in the context of their experiences while there.

In 2018 alone, six high-profile cases of racism at UK universities were brought to public attention in the press. These incidents took place at Lancaster University, Warwick University, Sheffield Hallam University, University of Exeter, University of Kent and Nottingham Trent University. A number of these cases went viral, with senior academics and politicians condemning UK universities for their failure to tackle racism against staff and students (Batty 2019). At Warwick, a number of students were sanctioned for participating in a group chat which included extreme rape threats, antisemitism and racist language. Consequently, two students were banned from campus for a decade but had their ban significantly reduced to one year. According to the BBC (2019), this means that four out of the five Warwick students will be eligible to re-join classes in September 2019.

The Guardian, who have been extensively reporting on racism in HE, recently reported that at least 996 formal complaints were made about racist incidents in the past 5 years by staff and students across 131 universities (Batty 2019). Of these, only 367 were upheld. It is highly likely that these figures only show a fraction of the extent of racism given the likelihood of under-reporting. As was found during the course of the Insider-Outsider study, students are often reluctant to come forward for a number of reasons.

Finally, the Equality and Human Rights Commission launched an inquiry into racial harassment in higher education in 2018. The inquiry explores routes for reporting racial abuse and the efficacy of institutions in dealing with these. An open call for evidence closed in February 2019 and the outcomes will be published Autumn 2019.

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM IN UK STUDENTS' UNIONS

Students' Unions are not exempt from perpetuating similar forms of covert and overt systemic racial inequality, just as universities are not. SUs are often left out of the call to decolonise and tackle internal issues of racial inequality. Ilyas Nagdee, NUS Black Students' Officer (2017-2019), who represented over one million BME students, argued[2]:

> We speak a lot about racism in our universities and we have a better understanding of how it manifests, operates and entrenches itself. We need to start that conversation on SUs.

Goldsmiths College have witnessed their own challenges in engaging effectively with race and racism. This was brought to the fore by the occupation of Deptford Town Hall carried out by students who made up

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1 This report refers to the 'degree attainment gap' throughout but acknowledges the increasing problems with this term as placing the onus for change on students themselves. There are increasing moves within the sector to replace the term with the 'degree awarding gap'.
2 Personal communication

Goldsmiths Anti-Racist Action (GARA) occupation. This action was the result of failings by both the College and Students' Union, and catalysed when a BME student was racially abused during their campaign for the SU elections. Discord has also been documented at Unions elsewhere. For example, a case relating to a BME student officer at Lancaster University Students' Union was widely reported by media outlets including the BBC (2018). The officer publicly decried the handling of a case of racism, antisemitism, sexism, and verbal sexual violence, citing a lack of confidence in the institution's ability to handle the case as the reason for bringing this to the public. As a result, the University claimed to have acted and investigated the case. However, the officer indicated that many BME students continued to feel disillusioned by the Union and University (December 2018)[3]. Subsequently, the BME officer was investigated and removed from their post, in contrast to the white perpetrators who were allowed to continue in positions of student leadership within the Students' Union.

Representation also continues to be a problem in students' unions across the sector. For example, the NUS report Race Matters (2015), which offers the most current sector data examining structural racism in SUs, found that only 4% of senior managers were BME compared to 95% white in the year 2011/12, a figure that is comparatively lower to other sectors.

BME STUDENT ATTAINMENT IN THE SECTOR

The number of UK domiciled Black and minority ethnic (BME) students entering higher education has continued to grow over the last ten years. Black students have seen the largest increase with a 2.6% rise from 2003/4 to 2016/17 (Advance HE, 2018). In fact, BME students are overrepresented in higher education when compared to national demographic data (Noden, Shiner and Modood 2014: 7). However, a key difference in the experience of BME and white students in higher education is attainment. BME students are less likely to obtain a first or 2:1 degree classification compared to their white counterparts. The latest data indicated that there is a gap of 13.6%, despite an increase in the overall proportion of white and BME students receiving a first/2:1 since 2015/16.

It is important to note that the degree awarding gap differs by region. For example, it is largest in England, where Advance HE reports 80% of white graduates received a first/2:1 compared to only 65.9% of BME students - a gap of 14.2%. This gap is 4% smaller in Scotland and Wales, although there are lower numbers of BME students in these countries compared to England.

The categorisation 'BME' is one that reduces a diversity of cultures and ethnicities into one homogenous category. Disaggregating the data for this group reveals considerable variations in outcomes. Advance HE report that whilst the attainment gap differential overall is 13.6%, Black African students have the largest gap with a 24.9% differential compared with white students. Below are the attainment gaps per ethnicity as found in the Students Statistical Report (Advance HE 2018):

- Black African – 24.9% differential
- Black Caribbean – 20.8% differential
- Asian Indian – 5.1% differential
- Mixed Race – 5% differential
- Chinese – 4.5% differential

Black students are most affected by the attainment gap, with Black African students facing a gap that is more than five times the lowest differential – a gap which is still significant at 4.5% for Chinese students.

Inequality in education precedes universities for ethnic minorities, in particular Black students. The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) have admitted failing in their processes where Black students are 22 times more likely to have their university applications investigated compared to white prospective students (Busby 2018). UCAS have stated that they are unclear of the cause of this. However, this may be indicative of racial bias in the application process into higher education.

3 Personal communication

Over the past three to four years there has been a marked increase in student activism calling for their institutions to exercise transparency over their attainment gap and to eradicate racial bias in degree attainment. Pressure is now being put on institutions to tackle this from the higher education regulator the Office for Students (OfS), as well as from reports such as #closingthegap from Universities UK (UUK) and National Union of Students (NUS). OfS have called for universities to eliminate their attainment gap between white and Black students by 2024-25 and entirely by 2030-31 (OfS 2018). This requires higher education institutions to establish Access and Participation Plans setting out their individual targets and their ambitions to reduce the gaps in their institutions.

BME STUDENT ATTAINMENT AT GOLDSMITHS COLLEGE

Goldsmiths College boasts a continued increase in enrolled BME students which is higher than the sector average for the Asian, Black and Other (including Mixed) cohort. Data from 2017-18, show that 45.3% of new starters are BME, totalling a 45.5% BME student body overall (Goldsmiths College 2019). However, within this both Asian and Black students do not achieve good outcomes[4] compared with their white student counterparts.
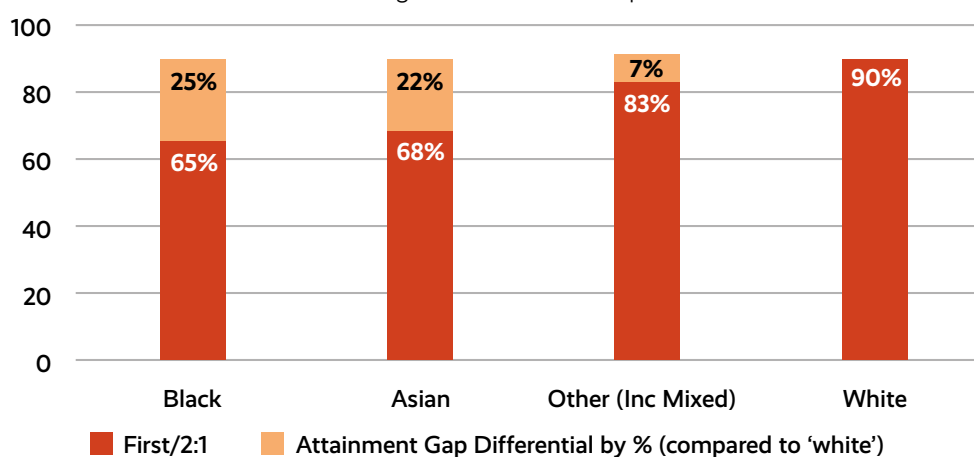

Figure 1: 1st/2:1 Attainment by Ethnicity at Goldsmiths College

As figure 1 shows, the largest percentage gap exists between Black and white students, with a percentage of 25%, followed by 22% for Asian students and 7% for Other (Inc. mixed). This report posits that Goldsmiths College's attainment rates reflect the pattern of inequality that is found sector-wide, with Black students consistently obtaining lower rates of firsts/2:1, followed by Asian students (not including Chinese) and Other/Mixed Race respectively.

DEBUNKING THE DEFICIT MODEL AT KINGSTON UNIVERSITY

Many conversations that seek to understand the attainment gap have led to discussions of a deficit within the students themselves, where it is suggested that the student needs "fixing" rather than institutional reflection (Hughes undated). This line of inquiry in itself can be misleading and damaging as it places the onus onto BME students, as proprietors of their own inequality. This line of inquiry is known as the deficit model. Kingston University have taken a different approach to understanding and narrowing the degree attainment gap through their area of study when examining their degree attainment. This approach uses the valued added metric, which allows the University to establish the probability of a student graduating with a first or 2:1. This can also be broadened out to capture probabilities for an entire cohort. For example, in 2014/15, using the value added score they were able to identify that white students were outperforming their expected metric, compared to BME students who were performing lower than their expected outcomes (Kingston University 2014). This debunks the racialised myth that BME students do not have the intellectual capacity to perform well, as it shows that something is happening during their university careers which is enabling white students to out-perform based on expected outcomes compared to BME students.

4 The term 'good outcomes' is used to describe a 1st or 2.1 degree classification.

As aforementioned, the largest gap in attainment is by ethnicity, therefore this report posits that the attainment differential is not unexplained as OfS suggests (OfS 2018: 4), but potentially is due to differences in the ways BME students experience university compared with their white peers.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE ATTAINMENT GAP

The road of inequality does not end once a student receives their degree classification; the consequences of the attainment gap can be far-reaching. Typically, students will go on to seek employment within the first six-months of graduating university or pursue additional education. In the context of graduate schemes, typically the requirements for applications are a first/2:1, this is very similar with postgraduate degrees. However, if we look at Goldsmiths College, where there is a significant attainment gap as reflective of the sector, we can see that there are lower numbers of BME students receiving a first/2:1 which may exclude them from a plethora of opportunities after graduation.

Zwysen and Longhi (2017), state that whilst ethnic minorities in the UK are more likely to have obtained university degrees compared to white British students, conversely in the labour market they face 'substantial disadvantage.' They found that UK domiciled ethnic minority graduates are between 5-15% less likely to be employed than their white British counterparts six months post-graduation. The evidence indicates that this disparity persists for over three-years after graduation. Pay is also important here. Students who remain unemployed after graduation can expect to earn 20-25% less later in their careers. When looking at earnings in detail, Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were likely to early between 3-7% less than white British women with comparatively similar backgrounds and qualifications (Doward 2017).

METHODOLOGY

This research sought to answer the following question: *What is the role of race in shaping the experiences of Black and minority ethnic (BME) students?* It did this by examining the following sub questions:

1 –What are BME students' experiences of decolonialisation and representation in academic settings and staff structures? This question is interested in how experiences of decolonialisation and representation within the participants' course content affects their engagement with course material and their connectedness to their studies, including their views on tokenistic diversity. Additionally, this question broadly explores staff diversity within the institutions and how this impacts students' connection with staff.

2 –What are BME students' experiences of racism and microaggressions in both social and academic spaces and how does this impact them? This includes looking at how racism, microaggressions and Islamophobia (in relation to Muslim respondents) can impact a plethora of key university experiences, including their willingness to engage socially with their peers, contribute to lecture/seminar discussions and how their experiences of racialized treatment from both staff and students may lead to disillusionment and withdrawal.

3 –What are BME students' views on the role of race in affecting academic attainment? This explores students' views on how they perceive their ethnicity to affect their academic attainment in university, looking at ways that this may express itself in grading and expectations of intellect.

4 – How does BME students' experiences and views on hate crime reporting and student mental health support impact their confidence in the institution? This seeks to explore students' knowledge or experiences of hate crime reporting procedures. Additionally, looking at the experiences and views of BME students regarding the mental health support available across the institutions, including their views on ethnic diversity and cultural competency in this area. Overall, looking at how these experiences may impact their confidence in the institution.

RESEARCH METHODS

A survey comprising of closed and opened ended questions, collected 195 overall student responses. Additionally, three semi-structured focus groups were carried out, with an overall total of 10 students. A further six face to face semi-structured individual interviews were also carried out (see figure 2). While this is not an exclusively quantitative study and therefore does not seek to be representative, it is worth noting that this study examines the experiences of 5% of the Black and minority ethnic (BME) students currently enrolled at Goldsmiths College. This is a relatively small-scale study, however, it is the first known report at Goldsmiths College to focus on the experiences of BME students in this way. As such, Insider-Outsider can form a useful basis for beginning to improve understanding in this area.

	TOTAL NUMBER OF BME STUDENT RESPONDENTS
SURVEY	195
INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS	6
THREE FOCUS GROUPS	10

Figure 2: Total number of BME student respondents involved in the research

The demographics of the overall sample group spanned across a range of BME identities (see figure 3), domiciles, religions and sexes. Women were over-represented in the research with 77% taking part, compared to 22% male and 1% 'other.' Additionally, UK domiciled students were predominately represented compared to internationally domiciled students, with levels of participation at 69% and 31% respectively. In terms of religious identities, Hindus and Sikhs were underrepresented compared to participants who identify as Christians, Muslims, those with 'no religion or belief,' spiritual beliefs, atheism and those with 'other religion or belief.'
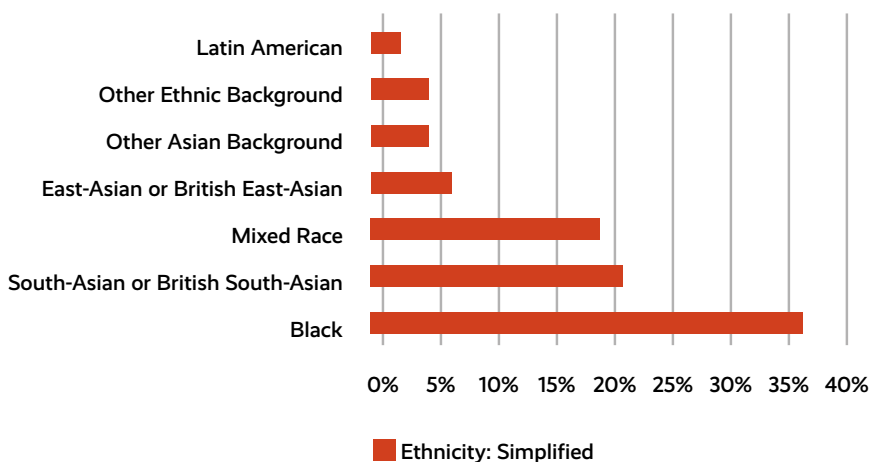

Figure 3: Ethnic Breakdown of Participants

Black[5], South-Asian or British South-Asian and Mixed-Race identities formed a large proportion of the total demographics. Figure 3 is a simplified breakdown of the ethnic categories that students were asked to self-select into. Additional care was taken to ensure that these groups were not presumptive of homogeneity, but not too specific that it may compromise anonymity, for example the typically used 'Asian' category has been broken down into three key areas: South-Asian or British South-Asian, East-Asian or British East-Asian and Other Asian Background.

Students from across 18 different departments took part in the research, offering a broad range of perspectives from different disciplines. Of all the participants 2% were in their Foundation Year, compared to 56% in Undergraduate Studies, 42% in Postgraduate Taught and Post Graduate Research (combined for anonymity) and 1% in 'other' studies.

DATA COLLECTION

Data collection took place between January to the beginning of March in the academic year 2018-19. Potential respondents were invited to take part in the research through marketing via informal student networks and official Students' Union and College communications. It was imperative that the focus on BME students was highlighted in all materials seeking to recruit respondents to the study to ensure that participants self-identified. As with many terms that make homogenous categorisations out of very diverse groups, there can be conflicted understandings of terminology and self-identification. Therefore, in line with Advance HE, this research adopted the term BME. Whilst recognising the limitations of this term, this decision was made in light of seeking to produce comparable data to sector wide research.

The data collection questions were informed by the research question. However, given the potential sensitivities of the topic, the theme of mental health and wellbeing was considered more appropriate to explore in a face-to-face setting and as such was not included in the survey. It was vital to provide a safe and

5 The term 'Black' in this table refers to people of African heritage and the diaspora, including the Caribbean.

comfortable space for students to discuss their experiences. Therefore, participants could choose to take part in sessions in a private location on campus, or a private location off-campus. Great care was also taken to ensure that the space itself was comfortable, with a selection of refreshments provided. It is important to note that during this process it became clear that a number of participants had not felt their voices heard previously and requested for extensions of time in their focus groups or interviews to discuss their experiences at length, with some asking for a follow-up session.

ETHICS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Respondents were asked to disclose their student ID or email addresses in order for enrolment verification to take place. This looked only at their enrolment status as students at Goldsmiths College, to ensure that this study obtained present-day data on the student experience. This data was immediately removed after the verification process was complete in to preserve anonymity.

Each session was completely transcribed, with the names of participants replaced by pseudonyms prior to both manual and software analysis (NVivo) to identify key themes and similarities in students' experiences. Due to the sensitivity of this research, every care was taken to ensure the safety of the participants, respecting their boundaries and emotional labour taken in recalling, at often times, traumatic and heavily emotive situations (see Appendix II for further information).

FINDINGS

The data revealed a number of key and often shared experiences of Black and minority ethnic students within Goldsmiths College and Goldsmiths Students' Union. Respondents provided clear, thoughtful and candid insights into their experience, offering detailed recollections of experiences of racialisation in academic and social settings. Some accounts proved to be highly disconcerting, especially when regarding members of staff in positions of care. Many respondents detailed the survival strategies that they have come to learn and deploy in order to navigate racist structures whilst others recall attempts to avoid racialised treatment through the minimising of their cultural and religious identities.

The findings from the research are presented in a format consistent with the four key sub-question headings, derived from the main research question:

1 – Decolonising and Representation – What are BME students' experiences of decoloniality and representation in academic settings and staff structures?

2 – Racism and Microaggressions – What are BME students' experiences of racism and microaggressions in both social and academic spaces and how does this impact them?

3 – Race and Attainment – What are BME students' views on the role of race in affecting academic attainment?

4 – Hate Crime Reporting Student and Mental Health Support – How does BME students' experiences and views on hate crime reporting and student mental health support impact their confidence in the institution?

DECOLONISATION AND REPRESENTATION

This section explores the findings in relation to the key research sub-question: What are BME students' experiences of decoloniality and representation in academic settings and staff structures? This question is explored through key emergent themes from the research relating to academic course content and academic and professional services staff. Participants detailed at length the role that decolonialisation and representation plays in their engagement with course material and their interactions with staff members. While there are variations in the way decolonialisation is defined, in the context of education and this report, it refers to:

…an expression of the changing geopolitics of knowledge whereby the modern epistemological framework for knowing and understanding the world is no longer interpreted as universal and unbound by geo-historical and biographical contexts.
Baker (2012: 2)

Questions of who, when, why and where knowledge is produced are key questions in discussions on decolonial education.

This research did not intend to look into the experiences of BME staff members at depth, however, it became clear through the data collection process that many students favoured building student-academic relationships with their tutors when they shared an ethnic identity. It also became clear that a number of BME ex-employees of Goldsmiths Students' Union wished to share their experiences in relation to their student counterparts and the Union. Therefore, additionally this section briefly touches on the staff experience.

Liberal Institution or Mistaken Identity?

Goldsmiths College prides itself on its values of inclusion and social justice, as well as its passion for "advancing equality and celebrating diversity" (Goldsmiths College Website) however participants expressed disparagement and caution with regard to this image:

> The thing with Goldsmiths is, especially in terms of gender expression and freedom of expressing yourself, I feel represented. I think? But in terms of my background and my ethnic origin, I don't feel as represented, as I could be. Because it seems like for some topics, Goldsmiths is a very liberal school, but I think there could be more efforts to include minority students.
>
> Awa

> [On Goldsmiths] a place that is, you know, fanning from the roof tops that they're so liberal, accepting and diverse.
>
> Karim

> At Goldsmiths it does paint itself as a very liberal place, and it is to some extent, but it is also full of like, white students who have these seemly liberal views but when you get into it they're not as liberal as you might think and they don't understand that, even if they think they do.
>
> Maira

Awa touches on an important issue regarding representation, detailing that while some may feel able to express themselves and feel represented, this is not a privilege that is afforded to all. Highlighting the acceptability of favoured forms of expression, such as gender (in her example) over less represented, or acceptable forms of expression such as ethnic identity. Karim facetiously comments on the College's reputation, implying scepticism and rejection of these proclamations. Therefore, there is a critique of the idea that liberalism is inclusive for all. Maira echoes this saying that while some may think they are being liberal they might not be when examined more closely.

Academic Course Content

Representation itself can also be considered somewhat of a buzzword in higher education, however this word in particular is one that carries so much promise, but also much to be desired. 80% of respondents stated that ethnic representation in universities is of great importance to them. However, only 28% of all participants felt that their course content was "representative of the lived experiences, achievements and works of Black and minority ethnic people," compared to 49% who disagreed with this statement. These figures are particularly stark when compared to the question of white representation in the curriculum, with over 80% of students agreeing that their courses are "representative of the lived experiences, achievements and works of white people," with only 7% in disagreement.

Greater representation in the curriculum should provide all students with the opportunity to personally relate to their subject content, whilst also giving students the opportunity to learn outside of their lived experiences. Currently only 27% of respondents felt represented by their course content. If representation was apparent this could result in greater engagement and graduates who have a better understanding of the world around them outside of the Eurocentric gaze. Typically, during this research, students who reported feeling represented by their course material, had greater experiences and perceptions of their course overall and felt more engaged with course content:

> This week I just went to a lecture today about decolonising the theatre discipline and it was really cool that that was on and there was a Nigerian playwright that we were reading, so that was really refreshing. But it was one week in all of the weeks and everywhere else I am reading plays written by white men and criticisms of those plays written by white men, maybe women sometimes!
>
> Chimwemwe

However, Chimwemwe described that whilst her course may feature decolonial discipline or Black voices, this was seen as an add-on to the existing course material and lasted only one week. She went on to explain that outside of this "refreshing" divergence, most of the content reflects white male voices. This exemplifies the excitement students may feel in seeing themselves represented in the course material, contrasted with the frustration and disengagement they may feel once that passes. Chimwemwe's comment is similar to those expressed in a recent publication Taking Up Space, which examines the experiences of Black women in academia and offers a manifesto for change. The authors - Ogunbiyi and Kwakye - reflect on their experiences at a different UK HEI regarding the lack of embedded representation in academic course content:

> There would be one lecture on Africa, one lecture on Asia, one lecture on Latin America, but then you would have British history, which would be broken down into different areas... very specific.
>
> **Ogunbiyi & Kwakye (2019: 69)**

In some cases, students in this present study reported having to create their own educational spaces, trips and events in order to provide or access the ethnic representation they desired. Students ultimately sacrificed personal time and labour in seeking to re-claiming space, by putting on events that platform their voices. As well as being emotionally draining, this detracts from the primary reason they are attending university, which is to study. In the following extract, Henry explains why he perceives initiatives to support these types of activities ineffective:

> You can't just put a stop gap measure and say "oh I'm going to give you this money, here's £500 go do something," because next year when that student leaves you're going to have the same issue again. And so, rather than, putting a plaster and band aid over it, why don't you look at it from a structural point of view and say "let's fix this structural problem and let's fund this and let's find avenues where we can ensure that these stories are being represented" and then you will see less displacement. Less mental health issues. Less students avoiding the University, essentially stop coming to the classes and then that's it they're completely disengaged with everything else, literally. I think that's quite sad. I think a lot of BME students have had to fight for their rights to be here, number one and secondly to then come here to not feel welcomed as well, that's really going to impact negatively on their state of mind and their wellbeing. I understand the reasons why they disengage because the University doesn't see the stories or their histories as being as important enough to listen to or put into a structure where they feel included ....
>
> **Henry**

Henry also expressed concerns over the diversification of academics' voices that fall short of decolonisation, in that voices outside of the British pedagogical framework are excluded from the curricula. He explains that whilst BME voices are platformed on his course, these voices adhere to the same framework of knowledge in providing exclusively western, Eurocentric perspectives:

> I'm not totally unhappy with the curriculum because I'm doing [name of degree] so, in that sense, my feel is quite different. They do try to centre BME authors, writers, academics, which is great but at the same time, I think it's still centred around Western born, educated BME academics and writers, right? So, I haven't even seen any writings and readings by someone in India for instance. I think that knowledge can be sought in other cultures as well, it doesn't have to be centred around the English language too.
>
> **Henry**

Diversity is not only the ethnicity of the voices you include or exclude, it is also the presentation of these voices, the diversity of opinion and perspective that respondents often considered was missing. Therefore, as the findings have shown, students have commonly experienced what might be regarded as tokenistic diversity, with little attention paid to the presentation of the diverse voices and perspectives. In Radhika's experience, for example, her class screened the film Black Panther only after a complaint regarding the lack of representation was issued. She described finding the content of the curriculum "extremely" white and European, where films featuring racist Blackface[6] was screened to the class:

> [Speaking on their course content] …it's extremely white, like most of the time it will be about, white European film the whole time and there was even like films with Black-face and, those were shown as examples? And I was like "oh okay, this is history, so you can show it" but at the same time, there's other countries that obviously have a history with films and why are we not seeing literally any of it? I think someone complained so they showed Black Panther, but like? That was it.
>
> Radhika

Perhaps unsurprisingly 74% of respondents found their course materials to be rooted in Eurocentrism. Additionally, almost half of respondents have found themselves pressured to conform to the same line of argument as their lecturer, with 40% believing that they must conform in order to get good grades. This presents a complex challenge where for diversity and representation to prevail, it comes at the expense of students' grades. Where respondents are felt pressured to compromise, thus adhering to Eurocentric schools of thought, this effectively preserves the Eurocentric status-quo. A classroom environment should meaningfully engage with a plethora of voices, representative of not only the white-gaze,[7] extra care should be taken to avoid exclusively selecting particular BME voices that conform with the overall white intellectual status quo. Additionally, students should be encouraged and taught how to form their own line of inquiry, to become independent academic thinkers.

The data also suggested that references to BME authors were often only made in the context of discussions about race. For example, Aaliyah details how many BME academics find their work exclusively in academic discussions that relate only to racial identity, issuing caution against the conflation of this with representation. Further explaining how pigeonholing academics is not synonymous with representation, especially where their voices are excluded is discussions that go beyond identity politics.

> The only time we can see voices of colour is when they are speaking about race or when they're writing about race or things that have to do with race, otherwise white people can do that, and we can just have them do that. I have a module on race, that was fine, that was quite representative there were quite a lot of like theorists of colour on there. But no, even still it seems like we'll sort of pigeonhole theorists of colour into specific things. I don't feel it is really representative? Because there are theorists of colour who can write on many different issues but I would never hear about them from my reading list, I would have to do that myself.
>
> Aaliyah

This has been reflected in recent discussions, where the writer and commentator Uwagba (2019) recently argued that BME authors are often only commissioned to write about race and identity.

Throughout education, from SATs to degrees, BME students seldom see their histories, perspectives and experiences represented in the vast expanse of curricula that they are taught during compulsory education. However, when representation is apparent, it is often sporadic in nature, and typically an 'addition' or an

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6 Black face is defined as dark makeup worn (historically by a white performer in a minstrel show) in a racist caricature of the appearance and character of a black person (based on Merriam-Webster definition)
7 The lens through which white people may perceive the world around them, as shaped by their white privilege and experiences.

'optional module' to an existing compulsory topic – denoting lesser importance. These curricula rarely portray positive imagery of ethnic minorities, often detailing their subordination and oppression through the eyes of the British Empire. This can have a significant effect on the psyche of Black and brown students.

Academic and Professional Services Staff

This study asked BME participants a series of questions regarding the perceived levels of ethnic diversity, the representativeness of senior staff and the College's prioritisation of race equality. 62% of participants believed (answered: yes/a little bit) that Goldsmiths College has an ethnically diverse staff body. However, when asked the same question relating to ethnic diversity at senior levels, only 5% answered yes. Senior College management is currently and exclusively made up of white staff members. Therefore, many perceived the College to be segregated into racially homogeneous groupings, where BME staff are over-represented in administrative roles such as security and cleaning, whereas white staff are awarded the higher positions.

> From my first impression, like what I can see, [sighs] predominately, a lot of the workers doing like cleaning and security, are people of Latino, Black and African representation. You think compared to institutional academics like, the academic staff seem to be majority [pauses] white, European, British. Maybe, there are a few exceptions, in terms of having a like, Latino or Black person, but as a whole I would say probably not. My first impression is that it's not representative of minority ethnic people, no.
>
> **Marcus**

Marcus clearly outlines seeing a hierarchy, within which the parameters are drawn by race, where BME staff fulfil administrative and maintenance roles that have less influence and decision making-power in the context of the broader institution. Radhika described the effect that racial homogeneity in positions of success can have on your self-belief and ability to reach aspirational heights:

> If you see no one who looks like you, who is being a successful mathematician or scientist or going to space, you're not going to see yourself there. And immediately you see a white, cis man and you assume you are not able to get there. So that actually makes it harder for you to believe in yourself in that space - it makes it harder for everybody else to believe in you in that way or see that you can get to that place. Representation, not only affects the way you see yourself but the way everybody else sees you as well.
>
> **Radhika**

Radhika goes on to explain that where students are able to see themselves represented in academia, "most of the minority students" gravitate towards that particular staff member for support. This might be done as an attempt to by-pass racialised treatment and potential barriers in order to navigate the academy successfully. Below exemplifies not only the need for representation, but also the additional emotional labour and pressure that BME staff members often take on as they become one of few support systems for a large number of BME students, where the academy has failed.

> Then there's one, out of about 50 tutors, there's one woman of colour tutor and she's my tutor. But there's a lot of pressure on her and there's a lot of pressure on [name] who's the new seminar teacher whose is amazing. She knows everything and more and most of the minority students gravitate towards her obviously because they need support and they need to have certain conversations that nobody else wants to hear.
>
> **Radhika**

Black and minority ethnic academics are severely underrepresented in higher education and particularly at

senior levels (Advance HE 2018; Rollock, 2019). The Advance HE study showed that UK and non-UK BME staff are overrepresented on insecure contracts, compared to their white counterparts who are more likely to have open-ended or permanent contracts, be in senior management positions and on higher salaries. Only 4.6% of Black academics are awarded a professorship, compared to 11.2% white academics - overall only 9.7% of professors identified as BME. This gap becomes evidently wider when looking at representation in academic senior management, where double the proportion of BME academic managers (0.4%) are white (0.8%).

Therefore, in the context of Goldsmiths, it is apparent that a number of respondents' perceptions of ethnic representation closely echo the data relating to the broader sector. However, while this research did not focus on the experiences of BME staff within the College, student respondents highlighted the additional emotional labour that they felt BME staff undertake in supporting racially minoritised students. It is therefore recommended that future research into the role of race at Goldsmiths College researches in-depth the experience of BME staff members.

Goldsmiths Students' Union
Respondents perceived Goldsmiths Students' Union as being representative of BME students in their events (69% agreed) and in their concern about ethnically diverse representation (69% agreed). However, only 54% believed that the Union actually prioritises race equality, with a smaller percentage at just 51% believing that the Union prioritises the needs, concerns and issues of BME students. These figures, when looked at together, provide a disconcerting glimpse into respondents' experiences.

As referenced in the section Social Environment (p. 33) 37% of BME student respondents felt unable to access social spaces, including events due to racial discrimination, therefore this becomes a dilemma where many felt ethnically represented in the events but also unable to access said events because of their ethnicity. Thus, this highlights the significance of embedding racial equality that goes beyond surface level:

> Ethnically, it [the Union] seems way more sensitive to these issues than the University at large. When I look at the schedule there are events that appeal to like LGBT, Black, BAME, Muslim community, so from my perception it looks more representative. I don't really go to these events, but from a superficial perspective, they look way more representative than the University ....

> Marcus

> Coming from a particularly South East Asian context and background, there's definitely no representation at all, which is why I applied for funding to run [redacted for anonymity]. I think it's quite sad that you have such a big group of International students and a lot of them come from China. A lot of them come from East Asia. Yet there isn't anything for them. A lot of it has to be student led, because there isn't anything for them they sort of just cruise by the year without really thinking about it and without really immersing themselves into the University culture. The SU says for example "oh but we need projects" and while I agree with that, once those students leave and once I leave there would be that gap again. So, it's almost like it needs to be structural rather than just an ad hoc thing where students can organise it, we'll pay you this much, but if there is no ongoing plan and structure around these very glaring issues, you are going to keep facing the same issues year in and year out basically.

> I think that with the Students' Union, no there isn't enough representation for Asian students. They have a sort of international student representative in the SU who is a part-time officer.

> Henry

Henry discusses at length, the unsustainability of Goldsmiths Students' Union's reliance on BME students to facilitate ethnic representation arguing that without this representation would not exist. He states that comments from the Union such as "oh but we need projects" are used as scapegoating mechanisms, to avoid

responsibility on filling the gap that Henry states will emerge again once engaged students complete their studies. It is particularly important that he noted representation for Asian students, who he later describes as feeling ostracised and segregated by the society (in the context of Goldsmiths), so they withdraw and form their own bonds in strength and solidarity.

Nagdee (March 2019)[8] stated that whole teams meet around the clock for Fresher's and Varsity but not when it comes to events during Black History Month, indicating a lack of commitment to projects focused on Black and minority ethnic students and their experiences. This mirrors Henry's experiences in the context of the Students' Union, where all managers are white, which is important in the context of representation. He describes having to dedicate time, on a voluntary basis, to such activities. There is a disproportionate amount of pressure on BME students to host such events. Consequently, SUs often falls short at being a strong voice for BME students as evidenced by the data. A respondent noted seeking support directly from elected BME officers, including sabbatical officers who are regarded as staff members, in relation to organising representative events and bringing forth general issues. As with the previous section regarding the undue burden on Black and minority ethnic staff, this was also an issue in the Union:

> If I wanted [support] I think the first port of call would actually be the BME officer here, because she's really friendly and we get on really well as friends. That's because she takes it on her to get to know all the students as well, so I think that plays a big role - I think in particular I commend that officer and also the campaigns officer as they tend to reach out.
>
> Henry

It is posited by NUS that students' union environments are ones in which the experiences of BME staff are not understood or welcomed with 18% of their staff research respondents having experienced racism while working in their union's (Race Matters 2015). Below are some anonymously submitted quotes from ex-BME staff members of Goldsmiths Students' Union, who were keen to voluntarily share their experiences:

> Overtime I have come to realise that BME staff are treated different at Goldsmiths Students' Union. There isn't any room for progression and the fact that BME staff in the BME Network feel like they have to meet every week to discuss things just shows how bad it is here for BME staff.
>
> Grishma

> When a colleague joined, who is BME, there seemed to be an immediate stigma attached to them, I saw many white managers be difficult with them and considering their role included BME students, something didn't feel right about it.
>
> Chloe

> I've lost faith in the Union and their "values," I felt targeted as a BME staff member on a fixed term contract.
>
> Annissa

The role of race in shaping student-staff relationships and experiences have consistently been described by respondents. It is therefore recommended that future research into the role of race at Goldsmiths College researches in-depth the experience of BME staff members.

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8 Personal communication
9 The National Union of Students' Black Students' Campaign use the term 'Black' to denote those of African, Arab, Asian and Caribbean heritage. For the purpose of consistency, the term BME has been used in its place, denoting the same ethnic groups.

RACISM AND MICROAGGRESSIONS

This section explores the findings in relation to the key research sub-question: *What are BME students' experiences of racism and microaggressions in both social and academic spaces and how does this impact them?* This question is explored through key emergent themes from areas of the research that sought to explore students' experiences of racialised treatment. In particular this looked broadly at respondents' experiences of racism and microaggressions at Goldsmiths and how this permeates into academic and social settings where the perpetrators are both staff and fellow students. This section also seeks to understand how racism can have an effect on students' willingness to engage socially with their peers and contribute to lecture/seminar discussions.

26% of respondents reported having experienced racism during their time at Goldsmiths. This included hearing the use of the words *n****** and *p**** as well as experiencing racial harassment from students and staff alike. A number of examples related to the glamorisation and unrestrained desire of white peers to be allowed to make use of the word *n******. Respondents described white students calling each other *n****** as a form of greeting while others openly debated who should have permission to use the word. This places Black students in particular, at risk of entering racially charged environments and subject to immense discomfort. This term, among other racist and abusive epithets, is extremely triggering for many who hear it. Respondents also recalled a number of unsolicited incidents in which white students and in some instances, staff disregarded the emotions and personal boundaries of Black and brown students, and called on them to be the spokesperson for their race, in the guise of 'shedding light' on the use of racist language:

> I was walking through the Richard-Hoggart Building and there was this white guy who was yelling at the top of his lungs about how the n-word is just a collection of sound patterns and he's in a group, there's three of them, one of them is Black and he's just standing there like "I can't handle this, I'm just going to shut down" like the face was just complete blank expression and this white girl was right next to him was just like, had a very tortured expression. But he's really going at it, just like in the middle of a hall and there's tons of people walking around it's really awful actually.
>
> **Chimwemwe**

Additionally, many of the respondents noted ways that they themselves were on the receiving end of racism. One student was very candid in their detailing of racial sexual violence from a member of staff who was in a position of responsibility and took advantage of this. The full details of this cannot be reported here due to reasons of confidentiality but the respondent noted in addition to the aforementioned:

> He also stereotyped me and my work and commented that I didn't seem "very Black" due to my other essays not focusing on Black experiences and instead on topics like sport and alternative music scenes.
>
> **(Anon)**

> I do receive some casual racism from other students when socialising, especially from those who have not been surrounded by Black people before or aren't from ethnically diverse cities. Ignorant comments are often made which are racist but often don't know better. I was called a n***** for the first time in my life at a university party of Goldsmiths' students by some drunk white guys. That made me really upset and question my position as a person, as I've lived in London all my life and never experienced that.
>
> **Bennis**

It is experiences such as these that leave BME students feeling unsafe and unsupported by the very institutions that are touted to be places of learned people, where they can nourish their talent in readiness for their careers. It is also cases like this that lead many to choose not to disclose or report incidents of racism, as in this case, they have experienced this behaviour from a trusted member of staff:

> A racist word was said by one of the teachers, I did not understand as I am not British, but one of my colleagues did. She made a formal complaint, that led to an investigation where I had to testify.
>
> **Kenji**

A racist incident was also the trigger point for the occupation of Deptford Town Hall. A student who had self-nominated to take part in the Students' Union sabbatical elections found racist graffiti on their campaign material. After forming a complaint, she was left feeling unheard, unsupported and subsequently disillusioned by those in positions of responsibility and care. The ensuing occupation lasted for 137 days with students issuing a set of demands to senior management aimed at improving racial justice at the university (see Appendix I).

In the case of this research, it is evident that BME students have faced a number of forms of racism. However, as data showed, almost half (43%) of respondents experienced a subtler form of racism, one that can often go undetected by those who are not on the receiving end. These are called racial microaggressions, a term that that was first proposed by Chester M. Pierce in the 1970's (DeAngelis 2009). Sue et al. (2007) defines racial microaggressions as:

> …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. Perpetrators of microaggressions are often unaware that they engage in such communications when they interact with racial/ethnic minorities.

It was evident from the focus groups and interviews that many students were describing microaggressions but lacked the tools to identify it as such, however after disclosing the definition of racial microaggressions, many agreed that this was reflective of their experiences. In the survey a definition was provided for participants for reference. A number of students recalled witnessing or being on the receiving end of these within an academic setting such as a lecture or seminar room.

> A lecturer commenting about people speaking in 'difficult' accents - it made me feel self-conscious about the way I speak. I feel that in the beginning of my course, I was not very sensitive towards microaggressions and would a lot of time just blame it on myself and thus resulted in me feeling less able than my white peers.
>
> **Skye**

> The term that often gets thrown around to describe Black people, especially Black people from cities is 'urban.' I hate the term urban, because as a native South Londoner who is Black, often times white people who haven't grown up around Black people will describe me or other Black people as "urban." When it is used as an adjective to describe Black people's behaviour it is often just a subtle way of saying 'that's very Black of you.'
>
> **Jamal**

I am frequently asked where I am from, not in reference to London (where I grew up) but as a question of my heritage. This can represent genuine curiosity, but frequently I feel it suggests a subliminal tendency to believe I must be foreign as I am non-white. Occasionally the question that follows if I respond by saying 'London' is 'Where are you really from?' or 'Where are your parents from?' - my mum is British born Chinese, so like me is also English in nationality.()...) due to the high population of international East-Asian students at Goldsmiths (especially on my course, I suspect that this question may be compounded with the assumption that I am one of 'them' due to my ambiguously similar surface level appearance and heritage. Finally, some of my friends have a tendency to make sweeping stereotypical generalisations such as in asking me if I am good at maths, ping pong or violin and I feel sometimes that I am not allowed to call them out on these microaggressions as they are my friends and they say it as a 'joke'. Some of my friends also have a tendency to ask me questions about aspects of Japanese or Korean culture etc, which do not refer to me as I am half Chinese, showing their ignorance towards the diversity and breadth of the East-Asian diaspora.

Carina

A student told me they were uncomfortable by the amount of Black students at Goldsmiths.

Matthew

When I lived in Loring Halls a lot of white supremacy was evident in how the white students behaved [not disclosed] and grouped with each other or culturally appropriated ethnic cultures to their own personal benefits in aesthetics - a definite lack of education - as well as how some white students behaved [not disclosed] towards the cleaners was not acceptable.

Yewande

Universities are an extension of society, not an exception to society. Therefore, prejudices from wider society can often seep into academic environments. In the survey students were asked if they felt that they were ever treated with suspicion due to their ethnicity - 19% reported that they had experienced this, from both staff members and fellow students, however the majority pertained to the former.

I was late and the lecturer asked me if I was in the right lecture then asked me what my name was as if I had lied and my name would prove me right/wrong even though I had never spoken to him before. I was the only Black male in the room.

Zaire

[An unknown staff member] was kind of passive aggressive and I don't think someone advisory should do that and she should understand my stuff... not very trustworthy.

Zhang

Those who experience oppression throughout their lives tend to become more attuned to identifying the behaviours and are sometimes more sensitive to situations in which this emerges. As such, many develop methods, tools and approaches to deter or handle situations in which they are on the receiving end of racism. As discussed in the section Social Environment (p. 33), students modify their behaviour and names for example, in order to reduce the likelihood of being othered[10], thus singling them out. This is also the case when it comes to acknowledging the ways in which BME students may be profiled and treated with suspicion at Goldsmiths due to their ethnicity. Below a student outlines the additional steps that they take in order to simply access university space without harassment:

10 The action of othering is to alienate, separate oneself from, or to exclude a person or group of people based on perceived or highlighted differences.

> I feel like there's probably self-preservation tactics that you develop over time that just prevent that thing from happening as much as possible. Within my first weeks at Goldsmiths I made friends with the security people, I talked with people at the information desk and we're buddies now - you set yourself up as "Hi! You're going to know me, I'm going to be here and you're going to be comfortable with that.
>
> **Kofi**

Kofi described the survival mechanisms that he had developed, in order to help him navigate and pre-empt situations in which race may play a role in his experience. In the given example, he describes making himself known to security personnel, perhaps as a response to previous experiences.

Islamophobia

Islamophobia, was a common experience described by Muslim respondents, that emerged from the focus groups and the interviews. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims define Islamophobia as:

> Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness (2019: 50).

The multifaceted identities of Muslims are reduced down to stereotypical tropes rooted in racism, religious oppression, suspicion, mistrust and exclusion. Of the students who reported facing islamophobia on campus many spoke about the intersections of oppression, as BME, Muslim women. Themes of white saviourism[11] and lack of boundaries such as non-consensual physical touching, in which BME Muslims are not given autonomy over their bodies and identities were commonplace.

> [A friend on Goldsmiths Campus] had a hijab and the white man pulled her hijab, I think because it was like showing a little bit, and he pulled it down! And that's just not ok, and then as a Black woman you walk around University you think "if that can happen to her, it can happen to anyone" do you know what I mean? It's a knock-on effect, so because it can happen to our friend it can happen to anyone and if they can't support her, they're not going to support me so there's no point in reporting it.
>
> **Maira**

Muslim female respondents detail being subjected to disbelief in their faith, rooted in the stereotypical belief that women are oppressed in Islam. Below respondents discuss the white-saviourism complex that they rejected from white students and staff. In which they have been accosted with unsolicited questions that presume patriarchal oppression in their belief, disregarding their perceptions and objections:

> I have a key example of this. It's the white feminist. She sees me as someone who is oppressed, even though I am saying I am not. She becomes my mediator in saying "do you ever take your scarf off" or "why do you never take your scarf off?" or "does your mum let you go out?" like really stereotypical things and it's like, it makes me fear - imagine if I was a girl who chose to wear the veil at Goldsmiths.
>
> **Sara**

---

11 This refers to white people who feel compelled to help BME people, but within a context that can be perceived as self-serving. This is rooted in racial superiority where white people, whether explicitly or implicitly, believe that they possess the skills to 'save' BME people as they cannot do it themselves.

> Peers questioning me about how much liberty I have as a scarf wearer and if I was forced to wear it, (constant discrimination and scrutiny against my religious identity). Also, staff ignoring me in class when I raise my hand or deliberately not looking my way for the duration of my seminar due to my Asian background, but always keeping close eye contact with white/European pupils throughout, only asking them if they understood the lesson, making me feel subordinate and inferior to them.
>
> **Aroon**

Other respondents were concerned about wearing their veil on campus due to fear of reprisals thus feeling unsafe to express their religious identity with many having to take large measures to ensure their safety, such as taking taxis to and from campus and modifying their behaviour to make non-Muslims feel safe.

Typical racist tropes such as referring to Muslims as terrorists, which is often used as a justification or a scapegoat for Islamophobia, came up a number of times in the interviews. These findings mirror those of a survey carried out by the NUS who found that women who wear Islamic garments, such as the Niqāb or Hijab, reported higher levels of concern of abuse or attacks (Busby 2018). The Independent also reported that 56% of victims of Islamophobia in the UK during 2017 were women, citing that they were more likely to be attacked if seen wearing distinctly Islamic garments, as more than a third of the victims reported were seen wearing (Agerholm 2017).

> Some of my friends wear the veil outside of Goldsmiths but they're scared to wear it in Goldsmiths because of how they would be perceived to be radicals. I know for a fact, it actually saddens me that if they were to walk in a Niqāb that everyone would stare at them in a lecture and they would feel that burden of "oh, I'm a terrorist because I'm wearing this veil that I've chosen" and often I will get questions from people who are not ethnic minorities, like "you know you can just take it off, it's fine" like they will just suggest that I'm oppressed and even though I'm saying I'm not, I'm not oppressed, this is my choice, they would just choose to have this view of me. It's really frustrating and I definitely think that is a microaggression that saddens me over time, that again I have to keep confirming my identity and keep having to fight in a way for my religion, that this is me.
>
> **Sara**

> I know girls that when wearing the veil, it's like, they see themselves as social activists, fighting the Western norms and values of what their identity is. No matter how much I say this to a white feminist, I feel empowered by covering myself up, I like that I can choose to, I like that I can.
>
> **Sara**

Many of the experiences shared by respondents are reflected and shared by other Muslim students across the higher education landscape in the UK. Looking at sector-wide research into Islamophobia in higher education, one-in-three Muslim students live in fear of Islamophobic attacks on campus, with more than half of Muslim students disclosing that they have experienced harassment and abuse online (Busby 2018). The aforementioned NUS survey (2018), found that 79% of students who had been subjected to abuse on campus, felt that this was due to their religious Muslim identity. Additionally, the Prevent Duty, which proclaims to safeguard people from becoming or supporting terrorism (OfS 2015), has left many Muslim students feeling disproportionately targeted. A third of NUS survey respondents felt negatively impacted and an additional 43% felt unable to express themselves, particularly when their views related to political student action.

Teaching and Learning at Goldsmiths

A commonplace, shared experience across many respondents, was their awareness and consequent pressure to debunk stereotypes of their ethnic group in relation to academia. Many felt the need to create opportunities for themselves to platform their voice within the lecture theatre:

> In certain classes I have felt that I have been overly scrutinised and questioned relative to other students and graded according to prejudices held about my race and age.

Marvin

> A lot of white people at this university believe that because I am Black I am stupid. When I raise Intellectual comments in seminars I am met with looks of surprise and shock.

Raymond

It is in these settings where many feel that they must consciously and strategically engage with the course material in ways that benefit their white peers. Strategies such as code-switching, remaining uncritical of white peers' perspectives and not presenting their true self, are just some of the adaptive approaches deployed in an attempt to level the imbalance of power dynamics in the classroom – where white voices are platformed and Black and brown voices are subordinate. When asked during the survey: 'Have you ever felt that your intellect was disproportionately scrutinised at Goldsmiths College due to racial discrimination?' twenty five percent agreed to having experienced this:

> Yes! I've had to code-switch to make my peers feel conformable.

David

> I just cannot be myself openly.

Nikesh

> I refrain from speaking in seminars when my opinion differs and take account of my ethnic origin because when I did so, I was caught in an argument that my ethnic opinion does not appear to matter.

Ijeoma

The findings reveal that some respondents make use of a range of survival strategies (Rollock 2019) in order to navigate their studies and to minimise exposure to racism. Thus, this hinders educational spaces becoming places for critical analysis, learning of peoples' experiences and perspectives – all key elements of higher education and the workplace. Ijeoma, highlights the effective of this in discouraging her engagement in seminars. The onus should not be on BME students to mould a lecture theatre into one that values their cultural-racial perspectives that protects all engaging in discussions where racial power dynamics have no place. Even when respondents do choose to openly express their identity in their work and classroom, many have been met with resistance:

> I went through my first year being told, (I had like a cis, white man as my tutor for the first year) he couldn't help me with my work because he didn't understand. And it wasn't like I came to him like "I'm making work about Black culture" I said "I'm making work about my life and my identity" and exploring that, and he was like "sorry mate, can't help you here" so I'm not getting my nine-and-a-half grands worth of education because the course doesn't represent people like me and we're in London.

Aaliyah

> If I write about Muslims and postcolonial theory, I'm told to re-situate it in colonial theories.
>
> Radhika

Representation is a catch-22 in higher education. You may have an institution that boasts diversity and encourages students to form academic arguments, free to express their identity and experiences but with the caveat that you may face challenges from a staff body that lacks diversity and thus the expertise to support students' work in a way that is also meaningful to them and their sense of identity and belonging. Therefore, what students are told and what is reality, diverge at the door of the lecture theatre. Within this same context, BME students may find their experiences at the helm of scrutiny from their white counterparts, where they believe that they are disproportionately scrutinised, with every contribution that is made:

> A few times, I cannot exactly recall them all. But it is a wariness. It's as if we are only acknowledged as worth an opportunity for the sake of ticking a diversity box, our actual merit is not celebrated, respected or recognised in the way our white counter parts are.
>
> Jonathan

> [It is] white males in my lectures who always feel the need to question the validity of my experiences and answers.
>
> Paul

Additionally, students who engage in lecture and seminar settings, report being overlooked by lecturers in favour of their white student counterparts. Many have even found themselves ignored when contributing to the class, whilst the same line of argument is rewarded when espoused by a white student:

> Often, I have said something in a seminar and a white peer will repeat my same point but will get praise and acknowledgment. Also, I have noticed that my white peers often speak over and speak more in seminars than me and my people of colour peers. This may be because they are more comfortable in these academic settings but also have not had to prove their intellect and their place to be in the room.
>
> Zayn

> Sometimes when my opinion was the same as another white student, my voice was tended to be ignored but the white student's was heard.
>
> Foluke

> Spoken over by white men and women students and tutors.
>
> Jaspreet

> After explaining my concerns, white members of staff then "whitesplaining" to me — I.e. slowly re-explaining what I had just said and acting as if I didn't know what I was talking about with regards to race.
>
> Neesha

> It makes you feel like you're being bullied.
>
> **Rachel**

The lecture theatre does not become a place for education to flourish, but a racial battleground in which BME students have to fight for their voice to be heard and are consequently met with disproportionate scrutiny. If they seek to contribute to discussions, they lose, if they choose to observe they also lose. It may, therefore, come as no surprise that over 50% of survey respondents subsequently feel that they must work twice as hard to achieve academic success when compared to their non-BME counterparts. This, as Vanessa explains has an impact on her willingness to participate in some classes:

> I am the only mixed-race person in my classroom. Often times I am the one who has to make a comment to give a heads up to someone that is saying something that sounds offensive to Black people or people from different social backgrounds or underdeveloped countries. I've missed seminars because I couldn't bring myself to face some people talking about certain issues e.g. Black British culture and Afrofuturism. In the past, someone made a sign with their hand asking me to stop talking or after I gave an example from a Black perspective, the person just repeated what I said completely changing the content of the offensive comment made before. No apologies, no 'my mistake, I didn't know that'.
>
> **Vanessa**

In certain modules where race is a focal point, such as a discussion on slavery, Emmanuel notes that ignorant casual racist comments are voiced. However, students have highlighted that often, in even contextually relevant cases, the opportunity for peers to discuss race without restraint is abused. Respondents recalled examples of lecturers and fellow students using triggering and racist language under the pretext that it was an educationally based discussion. For note, this is not an argument for the banning of educating on triggering topics, however in these settings the respective lecturer should employ emotional intelligence in taking steps to be sensitive, whilst ensuring the protection and safety of students. A content or trigger warning should be issued to students prior to discussions in which identity is a focal topic or point of contention, after which staff should refer to the term in an introductory capacity, subsequently putting measures in place to ensure that these settings do not become an exploration of using words that would otherwise be deemed unacceptable. In the absence of this, BME students find themselves adopting a moderator role, in which they are left to challenge racism in the classroom alone:

> Often in class I'm the only Black person, where microaggressions are associated and or casual racist comments in class. There was a comment used without thought just as a counter argument that "Black people wanted to be slaves," or in second year "Black people want to be white, that's why they straighten their hair." These comments come from so much ignorance on Black people and how they are treated and viewed in society, and the struggles and adaptations we make just to be accepted in a western society and to be honest, make white people feel comfortable so we can just get along. Often times discussions of race in class isn't monitored and any opinion is allowed without boundaries. It can feel very isolating, especially when I am defending myself against a class of 30 with my opinions, then everyone feels quite uncomfortable afterwards because I stood up for myself.
>
> **Emmanuel**

It is clear that lecturers must be held accountable for the type of space that they allow students to occupy, they are not simply providers of education, when holding that space students are entrusting them with their safety. Yet seemingly this has frequently gone amiss. One student detailed an exchange in their classroom, where they felt bullied and publicly scrutinised due to their Muslim identity as the only Muslim student in the classroom, which went unchallenged by their seminar leader.

In front of a lecturer as well, who should get in trouble, if he's just sitting by and watching that happen, he's a part of that too. That's violent, that's really violent.

Nadia

But I felt like, a way to get around it is if you're going to talk about a touchy subject like, I don't know, immigration or racism or that thing, just start by saying "look this is going to be a touchy subject so everyone should respect other people's opinions" but I feel like, if they said that, it would maybe resonate with some people. I feel like a single thing could be done to prevent those conversations from happening.

Maira

As a result of these experiences, students have been calling for student-facing staff members to be trained on how to manage situations in which there is an imbalance of power rooted in racial or religious oppression. Additionally, calling for accountability, as many have experienced the staff member in a position of responsibility, simply observing hostile exchanges, that leave BME students feeling undermined, unvalued, isolated and subsequently withdrawn.

I feel like lecturers should be trained on how to deal with situations like that, before they go to the classroom, minority students are being traumatised because they haven't put anything in place like this. So, you know all sorts of things are going on in the classroom, it's unbelievable it's happening at Uni. I went to a school where it was really rough and there was a lot of racism and that was secondary school right, this is University. I'm not there anymore, I'm here, but I think that every lecture should be given a bit of training, even if it's just a day. Teach them about what micro-aggressions are and that's it. From then on, they should know what to look out for and know what to say when it gets into a situation like that, that presents a lot of harm. That would really make a difference to like, the BME attainment gap, people wouldn't be dropping out every day because they have experiences like, that's not very nice, it's really horrible.

Maira

To further exemplify, a student listed the number of ways that they have experienced racial microaggressions and loaded discussions in the classroom:

1. A classmate referring to the works of Fanon as 'not so academic' and questioning why the text was included in the reading list.

2. A classmate referring to Brazilian Indigenous tribes as 'savages and uncivilized'.

3. A classmate saying that if a chair was left in the Amazon 'Brazilian tribes' would find it and set it on fire because they wouldn't know what that is.

4. A classmate saying that 'it's possible to distinguish civilized people from uncivilized by checking who uses a knife and fork to eat'.

5. A classmate questioning the Professor why he had chosen a text talking about colonisation in the Caribbean for a lecture.

6. A classmate saying that Black people keep on living in 'a terrible situation because they are not politicised'.

7. Someone in one of my core modules replying to one of my comments saying that 'dehumanisation' is not an appropriate word to describe the process of colonisation in the Caribbean and South America.

> The examples given above were all said by different people in different lectures.
>
> Faisal

Not only the content of one's course must be examined for representation and voice, but also the environment in which these courses are explored. Hostile learning environments are not conducive to inclusive and representative practices that an increasing number of academics are attempting to implement in their subject areas.

As this section explored, in the case of race and academia, stereotypes such as a lack of intelligence and infantilisation of knowledge are dominant. There are many ethnic stereotypes rooted in centuries-old suspicion and scaremongering, for example certain ethnic groups are frequently branded as criminals. Figure 4 shows stereotypes relating to women from different racial groups based on secondary research from Binna Kandola:

White Women	Black Women	Asian Women
• Communal	• Angry	• Competent
• Warm	• Religious	• **Intelligent**
• Kind	• Tough	• Quiet
• Caring	• Loud	• Reserved
• Sensitive	• Boisterous	• Shy
• **Educated**	• Strong	• Subservient
	• Dominant	• Mild-tempered
	• Confident	• Strong Work Ethic
	• Assertive	• Family-Oriented
	• Hostile	
	• **Unintelligent**	

Figure 4 – Stereotypes of women from different racial group (Kandola 2018: 71)

In this figure, white women are considered educated and Asian women are considered intelligent, compared to Black women who are considered unintelligent, with a large proportion of other negative markers attached. Respondents, such as those outlined here, demonstrate a high level of awareness of the role that race may place in others' perception of their intellect.

Social Environment

When asked if participants felt a part of the Goldsmiths College wider community, only 31% said yes. Further, 37% of respondents felt excluded from participating in social aspects of university life due to their experiences of or concerns about potential racial discrimination. It is important to note, as discussed briefly in *Decolonising and Representation* (p.17), that 61% of participants believe the College hosts events that are representative of BME perspectives and experiences compared to 69% in the Students' Union. Therefore, whilst students may be feeling represented in certain areas of social university life they nonetheless do not necessarily feel inclined to participate:

> My floor mates at a Goldsmiths student hall would gossip about 'international students', when it is clear from the content that they are talking about 'Asians'. And they do it even when I am in the same space, though having my back towards them, as if I must be unable to hear them. And another Asian student told me she experiences the same thing too, and she isn't comfortable about it.
>
> Huang

This can have a knock-on effect with students feeling isolated as Henry details below, where students form their own racially homogenous groups in solidarity and support, following their ostracization in social spaces.

People say "oh but you hang out with Asians only", like yeah because we feel really ostracised and segregated by the society, that's why we come together as a means of solidarity. We don't have to explain ourselves, we can take our compositions beyond a superficial level. That's the reason why we come together. It is a form of solidarity. Just as the Black students here come together, I think it's really healthy, because they live in a society that is oppressing them and their life experiences and their stories so why would they not come together as a form of strength and solidarity?

Henry

[On making friend of same ethnicity] You meet people in the lectures and become friends. University is a wild place and people say some wild things. I feel really grateful to have that, because I know a lot of people don't, because University can be like a really isolating space for anyone, but especially for a Black woman like me walking around in this space, it's like, what? It's a really strange environment.

Awa

In a study by Danoff-Burg, Perlow and Swenson (cited in Smith 2015: 39), looking at hope and coping with race-related stress in African-American college students, they found that students who feel low hope or disillusioned, benefitted from actively seeking social support, as an adaptive coping strategy for dealing with underlying racism. It is clear then that the College needs to think more innovatively about how to address racial discrimination so that the university becomes a comfortable and safe space for all.

Survival Strategies

As a result of racialised treatment within social settings, some respondents detail consciously choosing to present a moderated version of themselves in the hopes of creating a deterrent to racially-charged targeting. 34% of respondents describe having to modify their ethnic or cultural identity to fit more closely into prevailing white Western societal norms:

Often times I'd modify the words I use or my accent to my 'white voice' to make people feel more comfortable. My parents purposefully gave me a white name at birth to give me more opportunities as an adult.

James

There is a sense of lack of representation of my culture being shown and so I feel the need to change to 'fit' in.

Kris

In my home city, everyone has an English name in order to replace our Chinese name when communicating with western people, so do I. This was not only considered convenient for western people to recognise us, but also for us to be more 'westernised' in order to make friends with them.

Zhao (Cindy)

Changed my name to my easier to pronounce name. Changed my personality to overly positive to not make people think I was aggressive or had an attitude.

Jiao

> To fit in more and avoid the harsh and ignorant stereotypes for my racial group.
>
> **Amit**

> When I first came to Goldsmiths I adopted a more standard English accent but now I don't care about cultural differences. In fact, moving here and engaging with sometimes ignorant, privileged students has made me embrace my ethnicity even more than before.
>
> **Ope**

> I pronounce my words a lot clearer when speaking to campus staff and I prefer email communication as I feel I'm taken more seriously that way as I have an anglicised name.
>
> **Rhiannon**

> When attending interviews for jobs or universities, I have straightened my hair in order to seem "less Black". As my hair has been accused of being unprofessional. Intentionally not wearing trainers or jogging bottoms etc, as these are seen to be the stereotypical clothing for Black people.
>
> **Wendy**

> I often go to the prayer room at university, I have been made to feel embarrassed and asked unnecessary questions about going to pray. This makes me feel embarrassed about my beliefs and judged.
>
> **Hadiyya**

Additionally, BME students who have been born and raised in the UK, report that their Britishness is called into question by their peers, with 35% having experienced scepticism regarding their nationality. These are forms of othering which serve to alienate and isolate individuals. These racial microaggressions (Sue et al. 2007; Pierce 1970) have the effect diminishing the confidence of individuals. This can lead to racial battle fatigue which is defined as "the result of constant physiological, psychological, cultural and emotional coping with racial microaggressions in… racially hostile and unsupportive environments" (Allen and Danley 2007: 40).

Social spaces at universities are great opportunities for students to experience some respite from their studies, make life-long friends and build social capital. However, when students are faced with a multitude of barriers to their inclusion, some experience disillusionment, withdrawal and isolation, as seen in the quotations above.

RACE AND ATTAINMENT

This section explores the findings in relation to the key research sub-question: *What are BME students' views on the role of race in affecting academic attainment?* This question is explored through discussions with participants relating to their perceptions of the role of race in their attainment, to be read in association with the chapter *Racism and Microaggressions*.

54% of respondents indicated they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I have to work twice as hard, to get just as much academic success as my white peers." That is over half of all BME student participants who believe that there are barriers to their academic success at Goldsmiths due to their ethnicity. A further 21% reported that they believe their ethnicity has played an active role in the grades they received:

> I feel that lecturers'/examiners' expectations of BME students is not very high and this is reflected in their attitude when responding to BME students during lectures and seminars which I feel is different from students they either like or a white European.
>
> **Makai**

> Although I respect the value of every opinion donated to my work, it would perhaps be a more pleasant and impartial environment for myself and other BME students if there were more people of colour (POC) voices in the mix. I can only speak for myself, but I frequently feel - and imagine other BME students also do - as though my work is misunderstood, especially when I have to discuss the work I am currently making about my race and culture with my three white-British personal tutors. I've had many conversations about the pressure POC artists feel to make art about their POC-ness. It feels at times as though we don't have the same liberty as white students to make work about anything and be credited for it. These are very subtle and low-level Eurocentric cultural biases that dominate the art industry, that I believe can only be fixed at Goldsmiths by improvements in the diversity levels of students and staff on the course.
>
> **Rayan**

As evidenced from the above quotations, some respondents feel academically trapped by their ethnicity which they feel is connected to how their work is understood and assessed. Additionally, Rayan expressed that he is expected to produce work that is only reflective of his ethnic identity, while comparatively white students have academic freedom to pursue any area of interest. Respondents also expressed concern about marking with the view that low expectations are held toward BME students and their perspective is not valued. 25% of respondents perceived their intellect to have been disproportionately scrutinised due to racial discrimination. In the extract that follows, Zehra explains how identity markers can still be assumed in anonymous marking:

> The style and content of submitted work often betrays who the author is especially if the class/group is small. For instance, I have recently been awarded a degree for a thesis on schizophrenia, however I failed an exam question on the same subject (44%). How is this possible? I can only assume that the examiner did not like what I wrote and that I wrote something from a BME perspective.
>
> **Zehra**

In the example given by Zehra, there could be a number of possible causes as to why this grade differential occurred, however what is clear is that foul-play is perceived and this is an important reflection as this is synonymous with many other respondents' experiences. In that many have come to expect that race will in some way affect their attainment, which from the data we can derive common themes of undervalued perspectives, scepticism and a lack of trust in the institution to not allow race to play a role in their experiences.

Below Khalil speaks on being sanctioned by staff members for discussing decoloniality in his work:

> "I make race related work based on personal experiences. I've often not been able to have open conversations about my work as I've been told by staff members that I'm racist towards white people for talking about decolonisation and racism."
>
> **Khalil**

However, one respondent – Idris – described how he felt that offering a personal perspective, based on his racial identity, was rewarded. Although, this is caveated with a further musing on whether he received a high grade due to guilt or empathy from his teacher:

> Once I stated in a reflective essay how I felt as the only Black person/mixed raced person in class and how hard it is to be related to. Alongside how no one else can truly understand my point of

> view or my views against the syllabus - that was the highest grade I've got from that particular essay, possibly that module (90%). I feel possibly that affected my grade because I don't know if it was objectively my work or guilt associated towards my ethnicity as that lecturer would know exactly who wrote the essay as I stated being the only Black person in class.
>
> Idris

HATE CRIME REPORTING AND STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

This section explores the findings in relation to the key research sub-question: How does BME students' experiences and views on hate crime reporting and student mental health support impact their confidence in the institution? This question explores students' knowledge and experiences of the hate crime reporting procedures. Additionally, it seeks to explore the views and experiences, where possible, of respondents who have either considered or sought mental health support through Goldsmiths College and Goldsmiths Students' Union. Additionally, Overall, this question aims to understand how the aforementioned experiences impact students' confidence in both institutions

Hate crime reporting

The majority (79%) of BME survey respondents stated that they did know where to report a hate crime at Goldsmiths College. Confidence in coming forward to report incidents varied:

41% strongly agreed or agreed to having confidence in reporting racism to Goldsmiths College

27% strongly agreed or agreed to having confidence in reporting microaggressions to Goldsmiths College

It is also important to note that perceptions of trust and confidence may derive from the broader climate and experiences of race that students have faced at Goldsmiths, which may or may not be directly related to the reporting mechanisms themselves. This section includes the experiences of respondents who have also gone through official hate crime reporting channels as well as detailing the broader levels of trust and confidence that students have in their institutions. Only 33% of respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' to having trust in Goldsmiths College to actually handle reports of racial discrimination appropriately while the percentage was slightly higher at 42% in relation to the Students' Union.

Respondents were also asked a series of questions relating to reporting racism and microaggressions at Goldsmiths Students' Union. Only 42% of respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' to trusting the Union to handle reports of racial discrimination appropriately. Students were also asked to rank their confidence in reporting racism:

43% strongly agreed or agreed to having confidence in reporting racism to the SU

36% strongly agreed or agreed to having confidence in reporting microaggressions to the SU

The data reveal that less than half of the sample group felt confident in reporting racism and microaggressions to either the College or the Union. This is an important finding in the context of the events that triggered the student occupation of Deptford Town Hall (Appendix I).

Further, a smaller percentage of respondents had confidence in reporting racial microaggressions. As explored in the section Racism and Microaggressions (p. 24), these are can often go undetected by those who are not

on the receiving end due to their frequency and brevity. Therefore, these experiences can be harder to articulate and to evidence at a level that institutions may regard as fit for investigation.

In cases where students do report racism many tend to come up against an all-white disciplinary or investigative panel, have to take on the additional emotional labour of justifying and explaining their interpretation of racism and are often looked upon to provide solutions to the universities in which they are enrolled. Awa details a case where a friend of hers directly confronted racism within her seminar, as a result her seminar tutor took to branding the friend as "disruptive" and recommended that she join a different seminar group. This was reported and went through mediation but Awa reflected on the lack of help available to her friend, the damage that it caused and the uncertainty of who they could report issues of this nature to. Both were left feeling disillusioned as a result of the clear lack of understanding from the institution who refused to allow extenuating circumstances in this situation.

> In a seminar they were discussing a text, where they were referring to Black people as "negroes" and then one white woman student continued to refer to Black people as negroes during the seminar. My friend called her out and was like "sorry, I don't feel comfortable with you saying that in this space" and the seminar tutor backed up the white woman saying, "but it's in the text though so we're going to continue". She contested this and ended up getting an email from this tutor saying to her "you're kind of disruptive and I think it's good for you to move seminars, I won't tell anyone about it but just do it quietly" and it had to go through mediation, she is crying, she's upset, she's feeling pushed out of this space. But where was the help for her? There was nothing in place, who can we go to for these sorts of issues? At the time there was nobody. Fighting this battle on top of her essays by herself. It's really damaging and people just don't even look at that as an issue that she has to face because she still got those grades though. They won't take that as an extenuating circumstance, that's just part of your experience here, so it can be really severe a lot of the time as well.
>
> Awa

What the above examples show is that often BME students are confronted with positions where they must choose to either put their bodies, their education and their mental health on the line in the pursuit of racial justice, or to allow racism to prevail, unchallenged within the academy. This is an incredibly difficult ultimatum, one that no student should be expected to bear the brunt of, as it is the institutions responsibility to ensure the safety of all its students.

In the context of broader HE, as referenced in the section *Background Literature, The Guardian* reported nearly 1000 known formal complaints made in the past 5 years by staff and students across 131 universities where only 367 of these were upheld. It is highly likely that these figures only show a fraction of the extent of racism. These figures, in addition to the findings of this report are concerning as there may be a number of cases of racism that have gone unreported due to lack of upholding or perceived inadequate management of reported racist incidents.

Wellbeing and Counselling

There are a number of support services available to students at the College, from disability services to crisis support. However, this research focused specifically on exploring BME students' experiences of the mental health support available. Therefore, related services at Goldsmiths College include counselling, online self-help programmes, wellbeing advisors and night time support. Many of these offer specific support for a range of presenting concerns including academic pressure, anxiety, domestic violence, bereavement, depression, sexual violence and trauma (Goldsmiths College Website).

There are also a number of support services available at the Students' Union, ranging from academic assistance to housing. Students can also access the advice service which offers confidential support with academic

appeals and complaints. However, in terms of wellbeing support, the SU website signposts students to services provided by the College. Therefore, this section focuses on experiences within Goldsmiths College as opposed to the SU.

Of the students who participated in Insider-Outsider's interviews and focus groups, where this topic was considered more appropriate, 19% voluntarily disclosed a mental health difficulty, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety. Whilst 21% of survey respondents disclosed the same. Due to limitations of this research, it was unable to look in detail at BME mental health at Goldsmiths, however respondents provided detailed, thoughtful and candid reflections on their related experiences.

In order to explore the process that respondents go through in order to seek mental health support, through the College or elsewhere, students were asked who they consult with when in need of wellbeing support. Many reported confiding in their friends with personal issues prior to considering or pursuing formal arrangements through the College, whilst a minority reported never needing support of any kind. Respondents were mainly concerned with efficiency, waiting times, perceived lack of resources and the additional stress that a protracted process may add before they were able to begin counselling sessions:

> Let's say you're going through a stressful time and you just need to speak to someone, all of the paper work, all of this, there's only an hour and fifteen where you can drop in, and you go in and there's 8 people there and you have to come back next week. The labour behind getting support you need in itself is like a part-time job.
>
> Radhika

Not all respondents had sought professional support. However, of those who had received support from Goldsmiths College's wellbeing professionals, a number of key themes and experiences were raised. These related to cultural competency, racial bias and the ethnic diversity of wellbeing staff. Below, Aaliyah details her experience of counselling with a white member of staff at Goldsmiths College, where she felt that her race played a central role in framing the conversation, as the prominent stereotype of the 'strong, Black woman' was forced upon her.

> [On counselling with a white member of staff] So, I remember not talking about racism but I was shaking my hair cos I was feeling really insecure, she was treating me weird, it was a really strung experience on top of essays, and then she was like "oh, I don't understand, what do you mean, when you walked in you looked so confident, like I really thought" and she was trying to push that strong Black woman narrative onto me and I really thought like, I'm here breaking, I'm in therapy because I'm here struggling. And she was like "oh you seem so strong, what's going on?" and I was like "okay, yeah cool" and I had been talking about how people treat me differently so I was like "yeah, you're a white woman like, we walk into spaces differently, as a Black woman I walk into spaces differently" and she was like "I just don't understand" and it's just like, that communication. Where a lot of the time I feel like I'm educating you and you just don't get it.
>
> Aaliyah

It was apparent from the candour of students such as Aaliyah, that race also permeates into spaces of support, where students who are already dealing with mental health issues, must also navigate a lack of cultural understanding and racial stereotyping in the process. As a result, respondents who have experienced this are unable to focus on the issue at hand, as their evident cognisance of racialised perceptions and racialised treatment creates additional emotional labour. In which students find themselves endeavouring to break down the barrier of understanding caused by a lack of racial and cultural competency.

> It was a white guy [support staff], it was okay, he kind of listened but I mean, you could see he was thinking very carefully about what he was going to say. When I came back I started seeing a Black

woman counsellor. It was important for me to have her because I don't have time to explain racism and stuff like that, I don't have time for that, so it was good for her to understand what I was saying, that was very helpful. But again, I had to pay for that, when things are free you are just given a white person because they are the default and I didn't want the default.

Tasha

Another student recalled discussing a topic unrelated to their ethnicity in their counselling session but felt their counsellor linked their experiences to stereotypical troupes regarding their religion and ethnic heritage, as a female Muslim from South Asia. Experiences such as these have led a number of respondents to seek private external support from professional BME therapists and counsellors.

When asked if having a counsellor or wellbeing professional who is BME is important to respondents, many agreed that this is something that they actively pursue, even if there is a cost attached to it:

I think that's quite important, cos they can understand things without you having to say them, whereas with someone else who has a different background you might have to explain more, then you feel like you're not really getting like help cos they don't fully understand and your view point.

Jasmine

I would probably still go [to a non-BME counsellor], but I would just like have it in the back of my head.

Lola

I went outside of Uni… I found a Black woman [counsellor/therapist] and that really helped me, but I can't afford her so…

Awa

As these extracts demonstrate, respondents have varying reasons as to why they seek BME wellbeing professionals, however they each emphasise the importance of having relatability in their counsellors and therapists. Lola stated that they were not against speaking with a white counsellor but admitted that they will still be conscious of the racial dynamics, which could be counterproductive in the pursuit for effective help. Below, they describe an experience had with a white College wellbeing professional, in which the additional labour in explaining their cultural heritage was required:

I'm Caribbean and education is always like a pivotal part in my core culture and sometimes failure isn't an option, especially in terms of success and things of that nature. So, trying to explain those cultural differences as well to a white woman who just said some jarring things to me before, like is just… it's… that's why I don't bother or I think "oh I can't talk to you about that stuff" because, you're just not trained. Like you haven't got the cultural capacity to deal with those issues and that's fine, but what's not fine is you trying to project that onto me which I found really, not disheartening cos it's like low key the norm?

Lola

Maira raised similar issues arguing that an adequate level of training, such as cultural and racial competency, would be essential in order for professionals to be relatable irrespective of their race. Not all students sought formally trained support when it came to mental health issues with a number of respondents choosing to go to their personal tutors instead. The commonality amongst those who chose this, was that they found

their personal tutors relatable in terms of ethnicity and therefore an understanding of shared experiences is assumed. However, this was caveated with a degree of 'luckiness' expressed by respondents who acknowledge the lottery and rarity of having a relatable personal tutor.

> In my case I just go to my personal tutor, just because I like her as a lecturer and she has helped me a lot with my work so I trust her a lot and she is Japanese so I kind of understand, I feel like she understands the struggle of being completely new.
>
> **Anne**

This highlights the significance and mass importance of having ethnic representation in mental health services on campus, including bi-lingual staff members where available, as for students whose mother tongue is not English, may find additional barriers in articulating their state of health.

> [I go to] my personal tutor as well [for support]. She is South Asian and she is actually amazing. She helps me with everything and anything.
>
> **Maira**

As research has shown, BME staff often volunteer additional labour and time to support BME students serving as relatable role models who may be more likely to understand their experiences. Research from Advance HE has highlighted the barriers that BME academics themselves face in navigating higher education (2018), including research by Rollock (2019) on Black female professors. In the sector, data from a recent poll carried out by the Insight Network and Dig-In (cited in Guardian 2019), which surveyed almost 38,000 UK students, found that 50% of students reported thoughts of self-harm, with more than 1-in-5 students reporting a current mental health diagnosis. Therefore, adequate support is essential for all students.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to examine the question "What is the role of race in shaping the experiences of Black and minority ethnic (BME) students?" This was explored through four key sub-questions which aided in forming a detailed understanding of the role of race in shaping the experiences of BME students within the context of Goldsmiths College and Goldsmiths Students' Union. These sub-questions were:

1 – Decolonising and Representation – What are BME students' experiences of decoloniality and representation in academic settings and staff structures?

2 – Racism and Microaggressions – What are BME students' experiences of racism and microaggressions in both social and academic spaces and how does this impact them?

3 – Race and Attainment – What are BME students' views on the role of race in affecting academic attainment?

4 – Hate Crime Reporting and Student Mental Health Support – How does BME students' experiences and views on hate crime reporting and student mental health support impact their confidence in the institution?

The respondents in this study shared accounts that were candid, detailed and often distressing. They revealed that race plays a central role in shaping their experiences. These findings are captured in summary form in the diagram on the following page (p. 44).

Throughout this research students have demonstrated a high level of cognisance and understanding in the role that their race plays in their experiences within the College and Students' Union. As such many described the additional emotional labour required of them to make their voices, perspectives and issues heard and valued. The findings detailed predominately negative experiences where race was seminal in creating racially-charged power dynamics and situations which left many feeling anxious, undervalued, disillusioned and disempowered which consequently had a negative effect on their confidence and trust in the institution toward the goal of racial justice.

Furthermore, *Insider-Outsider* found that BME students are faced with a challenge. They must both navigate the incidents of racism described in this report and try to succeed academically. They must decide whether this navigation involves avoidance, tolerance or fighting the racism with which they are confronted. This is an unreasonable expectation that thwarts their ability to succeed and has the potential to negatively impact on their well-being and mental health. Therefore, it is clear that institutional racism manifests itself within a plethora of key stages of the academic lifecycle, within the context of both Goldsmiths College and to an extent Goldsmiths Students' Union.

Goldsmiths College prides itself on its values of inclusivity and diversity, however this research indicates that these values do not translate into the BME student experience. Institutional racism can have long and far-reaching implications on those at the receiving end and the onus is on leaders of institutions to tackle racism within its ivory tower.

It is hoped that the student experiences highlighted by this research and the associated recommendations, will be used positively and constructively by Goldsmiths College and Goldsmiths Students' Union to tackle racial inequality and ensure racial justice for Goldsmiths students present and future, while recognising the inequalities experienced by past students.

SUMMARY OF THE EXPERIENCES OF BME STUDENTS AT GOLDSMITHS COLLEGE

- Belief entering inclusive space
- Ethnically diverse student body
- Lack of BME academics and senior management in College and Students' Union

- False 'liberal reputation'
- Lack of ethnic diversity
- Poor handling of race issues in lectures from staff
- Racism, microaggressions & Islamophobia impacting experiences
- Feeling silenced or need to defend issues about race
- Concerns about potential racial discrimination reduced likelihood of attending social events
- Poor understanding of hate crime reporting procedures
- Lack of trust in College and Students Unions' to handle racism appropriately
- Seek BME counsellors outside of College who are seen to better understand experiences
- Need to develop strategies to minimise experience of racism
- Sense of having to work twice as hard as white counterparts
- Experience higher rates of drop-out than white students

- Differences in degree outcome between Black and minority ethnic and white students

RECOMMENDATIONS: GOLDSMITHS COLLEGE

In line with the findings of this research, this section outlines some key recommendations for Goldsmiths College. As students' experiences predominately related to their experience within the College, the majority of recommendations relate to the College. However, a number of recommendations are applicable to Goldsmiths Students' Union, these are outlined in the following section.

The issue of racial inequality in higher education is not exclusive to Goldsmiths College, however this is an issue that is deeply entrenched across UK higher education institutions. In order to tackle inequalities, such as the attainment gap, it is imperative that race equality becomes embedded throughout the institutional core values, strategies and curricula.
A key amount of work is needed in order for the College to earn, build and maintain trust and confidence with Black and minority ethnic student groups. Through these recommendations Insider-Outsider hopes to provide some initial steps that the College can adopt to begin tackling institutional racism and restoring racial justice.

Decolonising and Representation

1. Research Associate - currently the Academic Lead is contracted to work one day a week. This therefore limits the time that the role holder is able to work on the BME Attainment Gap. Therefore, hiring a research associate to assist the current role holder, enabling the maximisation of the Academic Lead's time is highly recommended.

2. A dedicated team to focus on racial justice at the College. For ease of reference in this section, this group will be referred to as the Racial Justice Action Group. This team should have overall responsibility for supporting academic attainment, teaching and learning, management and race equality should be assembled to work collaboratively on racial equality within the College. It is recommended that this team works closely with the Students' Union.

3. Institution-Wide Race Equality Audit & Annual Updates – the research reported in Insider-Outsider is important but small scale. It is highly recommended that an institution-wide audit into race equality in Goldsmiths College is carried out.

4. Review of Governance - as explored in the data, representation is of immense importance to a majority of respondents. Currently the Senior Management Team is made up of an ethnically homogenous group of white staff members. Whilst this may not be rare across the sector, Goldsmiths should be the exception, in line with its values of inclusivity and diversity. Additionally, Goldsmiths boasts a very diverse student body, but this is not reflected in the decision-making teams higher up in the college.

Teaching and Learning

5. Curriculum Audit – Many felt that their curriculums were not representative of the experiences, works and achievements of Black and minority ethnic peoples. Furthermore, many respondents considered their courses to be Eurocentric and representative of white people. It is recommended that each department conducts a curriculum audit, which will inform departmental strategy. This is in line with the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (2017/2021) aim 1 – Liberate Our Degrees. It is believed that this can have a positive effect on tackling the attainment gap as this report has shown that representation to an extent has had a positive effect on engagement.
    a. This audit should look at the demographics of the voices which are given prominence within the lecture theatre and reading lists or assignments.
    b. Each department should take part in the audit, to tackle this institution-wide.

    c. Each department should lead on their respective department's audits with the support of the Racial Justice Action Group and attainment gap Research Associate.

    d. To be conducted in phases, for example a pilot in Autumn Term, followed by an institution-wide rollout.

6. Student Consultation in Module and Degree Creation Scrutiny Groups – When new modules and degrees go through the creation and subsequent scrutiny process, it is important for students to have a chance to be involved in the process from the beginning, helping to shape their learning and course content. Whilst there are Students' Union representatives already in this process, there could be more consideration on how to meaningfully engage students more purposefully and consistently in the process at a department level.

7. Curriculum Co-Creation - Universities such as Leeds and Edinburgh have created opportunities for students to get involved in curriculum and module design. This is a good step in ensuring a level of a representation and multiple perspectives, where both the staff and students can engage in two-way, mutual learning. However, it is advised that students be remunerated for their time as consultants where possible.

8. Module Feedback - It was clear from the data collection process of this research that a high number of respondents have strong views on their course content but had felt previously unable to express these. Therefore, it is recommended that the collection process of module and course feedback includes options for students to feedback on areas of representation and diversity.

    a. Each module and course should ask questions related to representation and diversity in their feedback forms.

    b. These questions should be centrally formed, in order to have consistency across the institution and comparability.

Racism and Microaggressions & Race and Attainment

In order to initiate work on tackling the attainment gap and embedding racial justice, a deep understanding of racial inequality in higher education is required of staff members. This includes personal reflection and learning to orient staff members both reflectively and contextually within the broader issues. Evidence from numerous studies shows how we as individuals can be complicit in exercising biases in many forms from racial to gendered.

This therefore means that academic colleagues and students may or may not be consciously aware of how they allow their biases to creep through into the lecture theatre and the workplace. As highlighted in this research, respondents call upon the institution to train staff members to adequately deal with issues of racism in academic settings and wellbeing services, including learning how their own behaviours can perpetuate issues of racial injustice.

Training Recommendations

9. Race Equality Training Day
It is recommended that all staff members take part in a day of orientation, empowering staff members to tackle issues of racial inequality head on.

    a. This training day should seek to inform staff of racism in HE, including the attainment gap, from causes to remedies, whilst enabling self-reflection and learning through psychological approaches to tackling educational and workplace biases such as unconscious bias and race equality training.

    b. This training should be mandatory for all staff members, including both professional and academic – accountability mechanisms should be in place to ensure all staff members have taken the training. To be rolled out in phases across the College, with student-facing staff and senior management to be trained initially.

    c. The training day should be curated by the Anti-Racism Training Steering Group, with the intention of being rolled out in the academic year 2019/20

    d. This training should be continuous and updated annually to adapt to the changing climate of race relations in HE and cater for incoming staff.

10. Department Specific Race Equality Training
    It is recommended that an additional, department specific, training session is rolled out. This should be in conjunction with the Race Equality Training Day, seeking to enable staff to understand race equality at a more localised and contextual way, in relation to their departments and subject areas.
    a. This training should be mandatory for all staff members within a department, from administrative to academic.
    b. This training should be curated by the Anti-Racism Training Steering Group, with the intention of being rolled out in the academic year 2019/20.
    c. This training will include elements of creating an inclusive and safe classroom experience, including the use of trigger warnings and handling sensitive topics. Additionally, staff should be trained on how to manage issues of racism as they arise within their lectures and seminars.

11. Anonymous Marking
    All marking should be anonymous wherever possible and all internal markers should be trained in Race Equality and Unconscious Bias, with the view to extend this to external markers where appropriate.

Student Mental Health Support

A number of respondents preferred to receive mental health support from a BME practitioner, with some instances of students going private. This was due to a number of reasons including but not limited to: knowledge of racial discrimination, representation and cultural competency. Therefore, the following recommendations are made in light of this.

12. Every practical and reasonable measure should be taken to recruit BME mental health and wellbeing practitioners, including counsellors.

13. Every practical and reasonable measure should be taken to recruit bi-lingual practitioners, especially in the languages represented throughout the international BME community.

14. All existing and incoming mental health and wellbeing practitioners should be trained in Race Equality and cultural competency.

Hate Crime Reporting

15. Hate Crime Reporting mechanisms are unknown to many students, information on this should be more transparent and easier to access for students.

16. Many respondents do not have trust or confidence in the College to handle racist incidents adequately, this may indicate flaws in the current reporting mechanisms (in addition to broader negative racialised experiences). Therefore, a review into the current procedures is recommended in ensuring that its fit for purpose and safe for BME students.

17. All panels that deal with student complaints, appeals, etc should comprise of a representative and diverse panel regardless of the issue at hand.

18. These panellists should receive training on unconscious bias, cultural competency and racism in higher education.

RECOMMENDATIONS: GOLDSMITHS STUDENTS' UNION

In line with the findings of this research, this section outlines some key recommendations for Goldsmiths Students' Union. As students' experiences predominately related to their experience within Goldsmiths College, the majority of recommendations relate to the College. However, a number of recommendations are applicable to the Students' Union, these are outlined in this section.

A key amount of work is needed in order for the Students' Union to earn, build and maintain trust and confidence with Black and minority ethnic student groups. Through these recommendations Insider-Outsider hopes to provide some initial steps that the Students' Union can adopt to begin tackling institutional racism and restoring racial justice.

Decolonising and Representation

1. Staffing - Budget should be allocated to hire more than one, permanent full-time staff member to work on race equality within the Students' Union. The scope of this work should look at how racism manifests itself in both the externally (student) and internally (staff) facing spheres of the Union.

2. Policy - a strategy on embedding racial equality in all SU work should be developed.

3. Collaboration – the Students' Union must demonstrate wiliness to work in collaboration with the College in order to advance race equality.

4. Formation of a Students' Union Sub-Committee on Race Equality
    b. A Union sub-committee should be formed with the purpose of investigating, challenging, and tackling racism within the Union. This should comprise of professionally trained Human Resources personnel, Sabbatical Officers, staff from within the Union and student representation, as well as relevant staff from Goldsmiths College such as the Attainment Gap Lead.

5. Union-Wide Race Equality Audit & Annual Updates
    It is highly recommended that an institution-wide audit, looking into race equality in Goldsmiths Students' Union is undertaken as soon as possible. This is reflective of the findings where students detail a lack of confidence and trust in the union regarding embedding racial justice and fighting racial inequality. This audit should build on Insider-Outsider's research, with scope for a more representative sample and new research areas such as the BME staff experience.

6. Budget - additional budget should be allocated to fund annual union-wide research to monitor the progress of the Students' Union' in regard to tackling racial inequality and providing active representation on tackling the attainment gap. Enabling a yearly update, to inform annual strategic planning and budget allocation.

7. Review of Governance - Currently the Senior Management Team is made up of a gendered and ethnically homogenous group of white male staff members. Whilst this may not be rare across the sector for students' unions, this should not absolve unions of their responsibility to represent students which should be reflected in their staff structure. Meaningfully diverse representation is essential to the supporting of students from around the world. Goldsmiths boasts a very diverse student body, but this is not reflected in the decision-making teams higher up in the Union. Therefore, it is recommended that this is explored in further detail in the above recommended Union-wide race equality audit. Below are some suggestions of how this could be completed in practice:
    a. A review of governance, looking into staff diversity and representation throughout the Union

should form part of the aforementioned audit. In particular, those of senior managerial positions.

    b.   This review should be in partnership with Human Resource professionals and the aforementioned Race Equality Sub-Committee, which will feed into a strategy on increased meaningful racial representation.

Racism and Microaggressions

8.   Race Equality Training - It is recommended that all staff members take part in training on the topic of race equality and that this training is mandatory for all staff and elected officers.

Student Mental Health Support

9.   Every practical and reasonable measure should be taken to ensure that the Union continue to recruit BME advisors for students within the Students' Union.

10.   Every practical and reasonable measure should be taken to recruit bi-lingual student advisors, especially in the languages represented throughout the international BME community.

11.   All existing and incoming student advisors should be trained in Race Equality.

Hate Crime Reporting Mechanisms

12.   Hate Crime Reporting mechanisms are unknown to many students, information on this should be more transparent and easier to access for students.

13.   The Students' Union should carry out a review of how it handles racist incidents and complaints with a view to identifying ways of improving BME confidence in these processes.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

Black
The National Union of Students' Black Students' Campaign use the term 'Black' to denote those of African, Arab, Asian and Caribbean heritage. For the purpose of consistency, the term BME has been used in its place, denoting the same ethnic groups.

Blackface (*Based Merriam-Webster Definition)
Dark makeup worn (historically by a white performer in a minstrel show) in a racist caricature of the appearance and character of a black person.

Black and minority ethnic (BME)
This research adopted the Advance HE categorisation of BME, which lends itself to "non-white" individuals only. Whilst recognising the limitations of this term, this decision was made in light of producing comparable data and consistency to sector wide research.

Code-Switching (*Based on Merriam-Webster Definition)
The switching from the linguistic system of one language or dialect to that of another. For example, In the context of race this could be emulating received pronunciation in order to combat stereotypes regarding racialised perceptions of intelligence. In practise this could be matching the linguistic system of the person with whom you are conversing with as to not stand-out.

Goldsmiths Anti-Racist Action (GARA)
An organisation of Goldsmiths College students who occupied Deptford Town Hall from Tuesday 12th March, until Friday 26th July as direct action against institutional racism.

Higher education Institutions (HEI's/HE)
This report uses 'HEI's' to refer to publicly funded universities.

Islamophobia (All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims)
Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.

Racial Microaggressions (*Sue et al. definition 2007)
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. Perpetrators of microaggressions are often unaware that they engage in such communications when they interact with racial/ethnic minorities.

National Union of Students (NUS)
NUS is an association of Students' Unions across the United Kingdom, with around 600 Students' Unions affiliated to NUS, ranging from further education colleges to universities. Representing students on a national scale.

Office for Students (OfS)
The independent regulator of higher education in England.

Othering
To alienate, separate oneself from, or to exclude a person or group of people based on perceived or highlighted differences.

Racial Battle Fatigue (Allen and Danley 2007)
The result of constant physiological, psychological, cultural and emotional coping with racial microaggressions in… racially hostile and unsupportive environments.

Students Unions (SU's)
This refers to the democratic organisation responsible for providing representation on student affairs within higher education.

Universities UK (UUK)
UUK is a collective of 136 universities across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, that is led by their member institutions with whom they act on behalf of.

White-Gaze
The lens through which white people may perceive the world around them, as shaped by their white privilege and experiences.

White Privilege
Refers to the systemic privileges that are exclusively afforded to white people as a result of their skin colour, rooted in colonialism, racial-power dynamics and inequality.

White Saviourism (*Based on The Metro Definition)
This refers to white people who feel compelled to help Black and ethnic minority people, but within a context that can be perceived as self-serving. This is rooted in racial superiority, where white people, whether explicitly or implicitly, believe that they possess the skills to 'save' BME people as they cannot do it themselves.

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APPENDIX I
GOLDSMITHS ANTI-RACIST ACTION (GARA) – THE OCCUPATION OF DEPTFORD TOWN HALL

It would be remised for a report of this nature to not mention and describe the formation of Goldsmiths Anti-Racist Action (GARA) and their occupation of Deptford Town Hall from Tuesday 12th March, until Friday 26th July.

GARA occupied Deptford Town Hall in protest of the "lack of anti-racist action from Senior Management" (GARA: 2019) at Goldsmiths College. During the 2019 Sabbatical Officer elections run by Goldsmiths Students' Union, a candidate had their posters vandalised with racist language. GARA note that whilst this fuelled the occupation, it was not the sole reason for the protest. Racism, anti-Blackness, microaggressions, insensitive lecturer's/seminar leaders, omission of experiences in course content, and lack of action from management are cited as key reasons that led to the occupation.

GARA called for Goldsmiths College's senior management to meet a number of demands outlined by the collective, ranging from mandatory anti-racism/oppression training to reforming the hate crime reporting centre. As a result, both GARA and Goldsmiths College's senior management team (SMT) began discussions and negotiations spanning over a number of months, with Goldsmiths College stating that they have responded comprehensively (The Guardian 2019).

Following the legal action that Goldsmiths College had taken to reclaim the building, a final round of negotiations brought the occupation to a close on Friday 26th July - the longest BME-student led occupation in UK higher education's recent history. The conditions of the end of the occupation, were contingent upon Goldsmiths SMT signing a contract, agreeing a number of commitments to racial justice. A number of commitments were signed, including the allocation of £500,000 to support the facilitation of the commitments and on-going work on racial equality over the next year. As a result of their success, GARA vacated Deptford Town Hall and Goldsmiths College agreed no claims or actions (legal or otherwise) would be taken against them during the occupation (Goldsmiths College 2019).

*The official communications between GARA and Goldsmiths College can be found on GARA's social media platforms and the Goldsmiths College website.

APPENDIX II
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Below are the 5 key ethical considerations that were accounted for in the research design and implementation processes:

- Minimising Risk of Harm:
  - The context of this research by virtue of its personal nature may put the participant in an emotional situation that can potentially cause emotional distress. Therefore, I will be providing measures to make the environment as comfortable as possible for them, including providing a pack on places to seek support following our conversations.

- Obtaining informed consent:
  - Each participant will sign a form before beginning the interview or focus group where they give their consent to take part in the process. This will include the purpose of the study and consenting on the way that the data will be used etc.

- Protecting anonymity and confidentiality:
  - Each participant across all three methodologies will have the option to explicitly request anonymity of their namesake. Their identity will be protected by restricting the number of people who has access to the raw data, with any data that isn't anonymous being disposed of at the conclusion of the research.

- Avoiding deceptive practices:
  - Each participant will be given enough information at the beginning of their participation in order for them to make an informed consensual decision to be involved. However, the exact details of the report will not be included as to account for an unconscious responder bias, but each student will be informed that this will help to give the institution a clearer picture of the BME student experience, etc.

- Providing right to withdraw:
  - Each participant will have the right to withdraw from the study at any point of the research for example:
    Interviews: They can withdraw before, during or after
    Focus Groups: They can withdraw before, during or after
    Questionnaires: They can withdraw after starting, leaving the questionnaire incomplete or requesting for their information to be withdraw after the fact.

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