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Nasar Meer: Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to our second plenary talk. I am Nasar Meer. I’m one of the trustees of the SA, and it’s my great pleasure to welcome our speaker this afternoon, Omar Khan, who is the Director of the Runnymede Trust.

 Omar is a governor at the University of East London and, amongst his many roles, he chairs the Advisory Group for the Centre on Dynamics of Ethnicity at the University of Manchester. He is also a member of the commission on financial inclusion, as well as a former member of the 2014 REF panel.

Omar has published many articles and reports on issues related to race and ethnicity, and citizenship and multiculturalism, and the title of his lecture this afternoon to us is ‘Analysing and Responding to Race Inequality: Why Sociological Theory matters for Civil Society Action’. Omar.

(Applause)

Omar Khan: Okay, thank you, Nasar, and it’s good to be here, and good to see some people in the room who I already know. I’m very honoured. I’m going to speak from my notes, because I have such a long hour-and-a-half slot that wanted to make sure I was as comprehensible and comprehensive as possible. I won’t take all that time, but I felt I needed to stick to my script.

 I’m very honoured to be here in Newcastle, at the Annual Conference of the British Sociological Association. As Nasar has said, I’m speaking as the Director of the Runnymede Trust, which was founded 50 years ago this year, in 1968. Before I launch directly into my speech, I thought I’d say some preliminaries about myself, and how I got to be standing in front of you here today.

 So, there’s two aspects of my background that make me seem something of an imposter here, although I know you have non-academic sociologists speak every year. As you can hear from my accent, I was born and initially educated in the United States, and, second, my doctoral work was actually in political theory, and not sociology. I first moved to the UK two decades ago, in 1996, and I’ve now just about lived here longer than I did in the United States, though I still haven’t managed to lose the American accent.

 While my speech then is, obviously, informed by my experience of growing up and studying in the United States, in terms of my secondary schooling, my thinking and work on race equality has been developed more here in the UK, most prominently at the Runnymede Trust, where I actually first started working in December 1999, in the last millennium.

I was fortunate enough then to work on the dissemination of the activities of the future of the Multi-Ethnic Britain report, which many of you will know, in 2001, and to learn from Bhikhu Parekh, as Chair of that commission, but also fellow commissioners, Tariq Modood and Stuart Hall. I was fortunate to interact with them, in terms of the dissemination of that report, and happy to talk about that further.

My landing in London wasn’t exactly an accident. My father, 3 of my grandparents, all 8 of my great-grandparents and all 16 of my great-great-grandparents, etc., etc., were born British subjects. My first academic interest, the history in politics of South Asia recommended to me to study at the school of Oriental and African Studies, where I did my master’s in South Asian studies, and is an institution whose colonial era name only partly belies its post-colonial academic outlook.

So, in between my two stints at Runnymede, I concluded a doctorate in political theory at Oxford, focussing on the justifiability of preferential policies, or affirmative action, but not in the case of the US, rather the case of India.

Political theorists, especially Oxford theorists, and especially my own audience of sociologists, I’d say, are often criticised for arguing in an excessively abstract manner and for ignoring the particular conditions, human relationships, institutions and history of actual existing societies. Hearing me now, you may be asking why you didn’t instead invite my brother, Seamus, to speak, who many of you may know is a sociologist of inequality at the University of Columbia.

Unsurprisingly, I think that political theories focus on careful exposition of principles, concepts and arguments is a useful one, but the point I made in my doctoral dissertation was a somewhat different one.

Most assessments of the moral justifiability of preferential policies have affirmative action, and the American cases they default. Even those who argue more abstractly and try to abstract away from the American case, for example, Thomas Nagel, Bernard Boxill, Tommy Shelby or Elizabeth Anderson, do tend to make assumptions that apply to the specific American case, with the attendant history of enslavement, the original US constitutional principle that black people were not fully persons, the civil war, reconstruction, Jim Crow and the particular form of racialisation that all entailed.

I happen to think that British commentators are too quick to deny any relevance of that history for considerations of, say, affirmative action in the UK. After all, it was mainly British ships that transported Africans to the British colonies of North America in the first place, but that was not and is not my main argument.

In my doctorate, I foregrounded and explained the Indian experience of preferential policies, and, later in the Runnymede briefing, I extracted some lessons from that case, in considering whether and how a similar policy might be applied here in Britain. My aim was to ask those debating the applicability of affirmative action in Britain to step away from the American case, which is often used in a particular way here to dismiss its applicability, and to think more carefully about the principles underpinning how and when preferential policies generally, such as affirmative action are justifiable, and if and how those arguments could apply in the case of Britain or other countries in Europe.

The question about policy should respond to racial inequalities, is actually the third of my three themes or challenges of my main remarks today.

Now that I’ve got those, sort of, personal preliminaries out of the way, in a way that I think informs, not just these remarks, but my work at Runnymede, I can turn to those three themes. So, I’ve got three themes in terms of the challenge of race equality 50 years on from Runnymede’s founding, and those themes are the challenge of analysis, the challenge of mobilisation and, the third and final one which I’ve just touched upon, is the challenge of policy, or how we respond.

Fifty years on from Runnymede’s founding and the more substantial second Race Relations Act in 1968, the popular press, political leaders and our public debate, typically assume, even when they don’t positively outright affirm it, that we’ve overcome racism, that we are a post-racial society.

Rather than diagnosing how we got to this position, it’s more productive, I think, to outline three challenges that I’ve just described, three challenges that we need to overcome to get beyond this position, and some tentative ideas for doing so. I will also intermittently suggest, as my title, that Nasar highlighted, suggests why academics in sociology has much to contribute to these challenges, and how those of us in the more policy or activist focussed setting could perhaps better benefit from your knowledge and work.

Conversely, and perhaps more challengingly, I’m also asking some of you to focus more on how your research might better connect how we analyse structural injustices, to the difficult questions of how we, more effectively, mobilise and respond to those injustices.

So, first the challenge of analysis. Evidence continues to show significant ethnic and racial inequalities in the UK. Over 100 black people have been murdered since the death of Stephen Lawrence. There are only 20-odd black, female professors. Black and Asian students need better marks to get into university. Half of Bangladeshi men earn less then £8.00 an hour. Violence against migrants, Jews and Muslims is rising, and the entire Muslim population is being treated as a fifth column.

So, I’m now going to turn to some slides to elaborate some of this and speak to those.

So, one of the things I wanted to get across is the nature of change of the ethnic minority, or black and minority ethnic population of Great Britain. In 1973, Runnymede published a report called ‘The Coloured Population of Great Britain’, because, in the ’71 and 81’ censuses, we did not then collect data of ethnicity. So, Runnymede took it to try to estimate from the ’71 census, the then population of England and Wales. So, in 1971, 2.4%... these are percents, sorry, of the population were black and minority ethnic. That’s 1 million people.

In 1971, someone starting their GCSE would’ve been born in 1960, and I say that because the median age of a FTSE 100 company chair is 57-years-old. So, those people started their GCSEs at a time when there were only 1 million black and minority ethnic people. I think it says something about whether or not the people who are captains of industry and heads of our organisations, their experience in the 1970s when they started school was one where they didn’t really know many black and minority ethnic people. That, I think, is a challenge if we’re thinking about using their networks to try to expand the diversity, say, of FTSE 100 boards or, indeed, of university governing boards.

So, from 1 million in 1971 in the last census, in 2011 it was nearly 8 million. So, a rise from 1 million to 8 million in terms of numbers over 40 years, and a rise from 2%, 1 in 50, to 14%, 1 in 7. So, 7 times, sort of, more likely in some ways to know black and minority ethnic people, and that is, I think, the experience of, of course, the younger generation.

Looking forward, we did a projection, I think in 2010, before the 2011 census, that suggested, by 2051, the black and minority ethnic population, and that does not include white other groups that are categorised in the census, would be almost 19 million, 27% of the population. So, from 1 million to 19 million over 80 years, roughly the lifespan of a person today, a little bit more now.

There is another way to show those data that I think is quite useful, and thinking both of how far we’ve come, but how far we have to go.

I’m going to speak to this further, but I often hear, when I was doing some work on looking at FTSE 100 companies, that, you know, it may be true that the younger population is quite diverse, but the older population is much less so, or you often hear firms saying they now need to really get on to this issue of diversity.

If they look at their graduate population, it’s really, really diverse, and they’re not reflecting that, but the reality is that, actually, it’s been quite a while that the black and minority ethnic population of the UK, and especially in London, has been diverse. If you look at the 30-44-year-old population, middle managers, senior lecturers, even young professors, 20% of that population, one in five, in the UK, is black and minority ethnic.

I don’t think you’ll find many universities, firms, schools where the leadership is anything like one in five, and then if you look at London, and then you at even the 45-54-year-old population, these are now chief execs, senior managers, boardroom… you know, this is at the peak of people’s earning and professional careers. Again, 4 in 10 of the 45-50 year old population, almost, in Britain is black and minority ethnic in London, and, again, if you go around London, you will not see very many firms where that’s the case.

Indeed, even if you look at the 65-74 year old population in London, where you do have a lot of board members, even there, it’s one in four. So, the excuse that people are giving, that there aren’t enough people in the pipeline is, frankly, not a very good one.

Sorry, another point here is that it’s all well and good to have strategies to improve the diversity of your 21-year-old population, but the reality is there’s a big missing gap in the pipeline, those in their 30s and 40s. Universities and all their employers are going to need to think very hard, not just in terms of their hiring of the new staff, but what are they going to do about their existing gaps that they’ve got for that middle management?

One of the unfortunate continuing experiences of black and minority ethnic people is that child poverty is much higher amongst these groups, and, in fact, these figures have gotten worse. The more recent data, and I’m going to speak to that, are that 59% of Bangladeshi children are living in poverty, and 49% of black children. I will speak to that later.

I think the other thing is that persistent poverty is a measure because a lot of people, when they lose a job, slip into poverty, and so if you look at poverty rates, sometimes what you’re seeing and catching is difficulties in the labour market, where people fall into unemployment. Because our benefit system in Britain is so ungenerous, if you lose a job, you to tend to, by definition, fall into poverty, unless you have lots of savings and assets and rich parents.

So, persistent poverty though, shows, over three years, that people remain in poverty, even when they are potentially in jobs. As you can see there, Pakistani and black African people are very likely to be in poverty. That means they were in poverty every time they were asked in a survey over three years. Much of that inequality is, of course, driven by what economists call ‘occupational segregation’. That’s fancy way of saying the kinds of jobs people do, and you can see there, of course, also, that other white groups, i.e. a lot of new Eastern European migrants are very likely to be paid in the lowest paid occupations, which is an interesting question for Brexit, if those numbers are, obviously, going to go down.

It’s not simply that black and minority ethnic people are in, kind of, crap jobs with crap pay. It’s also the case that they are over-qualified for the jobs that they do hold, and when they do have qualifications, yes, they’re not doing the jobs that they should be.

So, this chart shows that 20% of white graduates are doing a job that they may as well not have gone to university for, which I think is quite an issue when people are paying £9,000 for the privilege, or more, but it rises to 40% for black African graduates.

I suppose we may ask the question, should black African graduates pay half the fees if they get half the benefit? I don’t know if any vice chancellors are in the room, but, obviously, my own vice chancellor at UEL probably would not want me to be saying that, but I think it’s an open question, once you start quantifying the returns of investment on university education.

One of the things that has been a success story has been the improvement in GCSE attainment amongst some, but not all, black and minority ethnic groups, and I’ll say a little bit more about this. As I suggested with the 1971 data, that people who started their GCSEs in 1971 are still those who are, kind of, running our country. So, we need to understand the experience that they had.

The point I’m trying to get across in this slide is the long tail of educational inequality is going to take many, many decades to work through. So, it may be true that, last year, GCSE inequality has decreased, but, as you can see from this chart, it wasn’t until the early 2000s really, where you started to see the gaps close. Obviously, someone who took their GCSEs in 2003, for example, was born in 1987, and they will be in the labour market, maybe until 2050. So, we will see the long tail of educational disadvantage have a long-term effect in our labour market and in our society.

These are just the data by ethnic group, and it shows here that, while it’s true that Chinese and Indian and, indeed, Bangladeshi pupils have made huge improvements, and now out-perform white British pupils in schools, it’s also true that, obviously, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller groups are nearly being completely failed by our educational institutions, but black Caribbean and other black and Pakistani groups are still doing much worse in our schools.

One of the things that I wanted to get across actually, in both that child poverty slide and in this slide, is how policy makers not understanding these data leads to bad policy. So, on the child poverty statistics… I’ll go back to those, sorry.

The DWP proposed to get rid of income as a measurement of child poverty, or to reduce it, and, instead, to use indicators, such as alcohol abuse and family breakdown and educational attainment. I asked the DWP, “Do you think that, because Bangladeshi parents don’t divorce or drink, that their children are no longer poor?”

So, I think this shows what happens when you have a, kind of, flawed conception of what the data are and what poverty means. Similarly, you know, Bangladeshi children doing better at their GCSEs, does that mean, magically, that their parents now have more money in their pockets and can provide for better food on the table? I don’t think so.

With university participation, I was on an advisory group on that, with the Department for Business, whatever it was called at the time, Innovation and Skills, and they had set this target to increase the proportion of BAME attendees at university by 20%. I said to them, “That’s not a relevant target. That’s not the issue. The issue is which universities they go to, and their attainment, and their progression and retention.” I think you can only think that the issue in university is that black people don’t go to university, is if you went to Oxford and you are a \_\_\_[00:18:12], and you didn’t see many black people around you, again, not knowing the data leads you to have the wrong policy.

Here’s those data on degree attainment, somewhat dated because you have to pay for access to some of the more recent reports on this. People talk about the 2:1 and First attainment gap, but I think the gap on First and on Thirds is really worth looking at here, which is that white graduates are more than three times more likely to get a First, compared to black graduates. Black graduates are three times more likely to get a Third, over on the right, compared white graduates. So, huge inequalities in attainment at our universities, that are actually worse than those in our schools. So, it looks like university professors are less fair than our teachers. I’ll leave that with you to reflect on.

The other thing here that you see is even Chinese and Asian pupils who are now out-performing our white British pupils in schools are under-performing them at university. So, Chinese graduates are less likely to get a first, and last year, there were no black Caribbean graduates from Oxford who got a First, whereas 34% of white British graduates from Oxford got a First. So, 0% versus a third.

This is, I think, important in understanding what people study. So, overall, these are British domiciled undergraduates. So, these are people who are British born. This is not explained by foreign students, and these are undergraduate courses, and I felt it was important to understand which course people study, but also because it, I think, exposes the decision-making processes amongst black and minority ethnic young people. So, 20% is the average across the piece for undergraduates. These are all those courses in which undergraduates are over-represented.

As you can see, law, medicine and dentistry, business administration studies, and I would characterise many of these as qualifications that are more likely to guarantee you a job. Qualifications that are less likely for you to need to know someone who can get you an internship over the summer.

You know, when Oxford was pushed by us about 10 years ago even, about why so few black graduates were admitted, they said that’s because too many of them study for law and medicine. You know, maybe if more applied for archaeology, but I don’t think it takes any particular genius to understand why a black Caribbean mother from Hackney might not recommend to their child to do archaeology (Laughter).

So, those are the overall… I don’t usually get laughs. This is great. This is the best audience I’ve ever had. Anyway, I’m going to keep pushing on now from my speech. So, that’s my last slide on data, before I turn to the final slide I’ve got.

So, I hope that, kind of, sad rehearsal of the data show that ethnic inequalities in Britain are persistent and extensive, but, and there is a but I think, the data also suggests the nature of ethnic and racial inequalities does now vary, with some groups doing well in some areas. For example, Chinese and Indian pupils in our schools.

I think we can rebut dishonest uses of this evidence that seeks to deny racism still exists by pointing out the data that I exhibited, that even Indian and Chinese pupils are less likely to get into British universities with the equivalent A level results and that, despite those A level results, they’re less likely to get a First, earn less in their graduate jobs and are still, of course, subject to racist abuse, harassment and even violence in the street.

I’d like to say something now about how policymakers often look at these sorts of data, and, in particular, how they understand what other variables or controls, to explain racial inequalities. Now, it’s certainly true that, just because something is an inequality, that doesn’t mean it’s an injustice, and it’s further true that when it comes to injustice, racism isn’t the only wrong that needs righting. With proper statisticians here in the room, I’ll only hazard that the way policy and public debate understand the idea of controlling for other variables is misleading.

It’s perfectly true, for example, that prior educational attainment helps to explain labour market outcomes in life, and that prior convictions will influence the sentence a young offender receives from a magistrate, but it’s wrong to conclude from that, as many policymakers do, that this necessarily rules out the role of race in explaining those outcomes. Racial inequalities in, say, prior educational attainment, or prior interactions with the police and criminal justice systems are not just brute facts about the world, but are themselves, of course, influenced by racial discrimination.

I think I’ll close this so you’re not all looking at it.

So, I just wanted to highlight why this isn’t merely an academic debate, this, sort of, diversion into the use of statistical controls or variables, to try and control for racial inequalities.

It was suggested to me in a recent meeting this year in the House of Commons that I need to be more precise in discussing racial inequalities. That I shouldn’t just explain all of it as being down to racism, and that statistics show the pictures more nuanced. I hope you’ve seen that I don’t usually say it’s all down to racism, and that I do understand pictures more nuanced. Of course, poverty, class, immigration status and other variables explain, though do not justify, some of the racial inequalities that we see in Britain today, a point that I’ve been arguing for nearly two decades, and that Runnymede has been arguing for a further three decades.

So, in addition to that, sort of, non-reading of what race equality organisations actually say and demand, and the non-engagement with what it means to control for prior educational attainment, these claims that it’s not really about race, but about poverty or class or education or whatever, are often marked by a parallel failure to suggest what might be done to respond to those inequalities.

I’m happy to take up further, more critical questions on race and class, a topic of a recent Runnymede volume and a current Runnymede project. The point I want to underscore here is that, unlike many sociologists, policymakers, think-tankers and journalists in the Westminster bubble, who say that class trumps race, or explains race, are no more likely to suggest policies that respond to class inequalities than they are to recommend interventions to tackle racial inequalities.

So, that diversion into the uses and abuses of variables to explain away racial inequalities notwithstanding, I think we must still recognise that the changing evidence, the more nuanced evidence on racial inequalities I’ve outlined, has led to some confusion regarding our analysis of the cause of racial justice. So far, by analysis, I’ve mainly been talking, as you can see, about evidence or data on ethnic or racial inequalities, and that’s required or allowed me to side-step, or even equivocate, on the categories of analysis that we use when addressing race and racism.

I think if it was hazardous for me to discuss qualitative methods here, it’s probably equally unwise for me to properly address the question of whether and how we should conceptualise race and racism to a room of academic sociologists. I will recommend Claire Alexander’s recent intervention as particularly helpful in this context, not just for its careful analytical distinction, so that’s breaking black, but for connecting those distinctions to challenges that Runnymede and the wider race equality movement has not fully faced up to, and that are further refracted in our policy debates.

Today then, especially as a non-academic, non-sociologist, I address the issue of how to conceptualise race, less from the perspective of an analytically precise social theory, and more through my experience and reading of the race equality movement in Britain, just over the 20 years, almost, that I’ve been working in it, and, indeed, how the issue is discussed in public and policy debates. I’m not claiming that all these shifts of analysis and terminology have been led by or mirrored change in academic convention or disputes here in sociology, but whatever the source, it’s clear our categories of analysis are currently in a bit of a muddle.

So, consider our shift in terminology in describing the issue since the 1990s. On the one hand, terminology has become more expansive, from Black and Minority Ethnic to Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic, BME to BAME. On other occasions, the issue is described in terms of ethnic minorities, and still less often, but now more frequently, people of colour. These shifts in terminology are symptomatic of our difficulty in confronting directly the fact that our collective experience of race in Britain has indeed changed since the 1980s, even as some things, i.e. the data I showed, sadly is still somewhat the same.

So, neither of these shifts in terminology to more expansive or narrower categorisations has explicitly fostered a new conceptualisation of race or anti-racism, at least amongst race equality organisations. While the BAME category indicates the increasingly various experience of non-white people, the term ‘ethnic minorities’ allows for analysis of white ethnic minorities, especially Eastern European people and others, against whom prejudices have clearly risen since the EU referendum in June 2016.

However, that strength, allowing to discuss white ethnic minorities, is also, in many ways, a weakness, namely, it doesn’t allow us to highlight the particular difficulties that people of colour experience, it’s still less to deploy such critical terms as ‘institutional racism’ or ‘white privilege’. I think confusion regarding how to adapt our analysis to respond both to the changing nature of ethnicity and race in Britain, as well as the continued salience of colour-based racism, if I can use that phrase, partly explains why race has moved off the agenda. That is that we disagree about terminology. We don’t talk about it in the same way, and that helps to move it off the agenda.

This then is not merely an issue of categories, analysis, academic disputes, but then one of mobilisation and policy, the other two challenges that I now turn to.

So, the second challenge is a challenge of mobilisation. There are now 8 million, as I said, black and minority ethnic people living in the UK. That’s the same as the combined population of Scotland and Wales. However, those people, or the 3 million black and minority ethnic voters appear less influential than the 300,000 who voted for the DUP, and who now prop up the current Government. So, we do have an issue, in terms of mobilising our cause and making our voices heard in the political and public arena.

That shifting analysis I described above, how we analyse the term, is partly in response, I think, to actually different mobilisations amongst various ethnic groups. So, I think the relatively weaker political power of BME people collectively. Not only do some Asian groups, and this not a new story, not identify as politically black, but many have come even to reject the term ‘Asian’ too, preferring Indian, Bangladeshi, Muslim or Chinese identities, and mobilising collectively on those grounds.

Of course, it’s not only Asian groups that identify based on national origin. The same is true for many Nigerians, Brazilians, Caribbean people, various white ethnic minority groups, and while some more recent arrivals may actually instead identify as migrants or asylum seekers.

I think rather than bemoan this diverse mobilisation and try to return to a 1980s categorisation, we need to recognise the ways people do currently mobilise, and that some groups may prioritise different issues. Given the relatively small population of each community, there is an opportunity, but a need also, to bring these groups together on a wider platform. However, as Runnymede found in our End Racism This Generation campaign, so this was a campaign we ran for about two years, it’s not very easy to build and sustain a common position of mobilisation around race.

One of the things we experienced was that, for many of the young, black and minority ethnic people who came to… we had pop-up shops in train stations and I leafletted on the street in Croydon saying, “Is Croydon racist?” and then people would come into our pop-up shop, which was quite an experience You know, interacting people in that way, and then we had a pop-up shop with videos in it that explained things, statistics, you could sit down, have a cup of tea, talk to us.

For many of the black and minority ethnic young people who came in, or the committed activists who came in who are interested in this, an analysis that focusses on discrimination, racism, white privilege, institutional racism wasn’t simply some sort of academic argument, but a descriptive reality for them, emotionally and economically, and, as well, politically. At the same time as we experienced those sorts of terms, it made the less experienced, but sometimes sympathetic participants, uncomfortable, and not only the white British people who came into our pop-up shops.

One of the many unfortunate consequences of the mainstream view that we live in a post-racial society, and that we barely even talk about race at all publicly, is that perfectly reasonable assessments of the nature of race in Britain go unheard or deemed too radical. Putting it in two exaggerated terms, there is now a wide gap between how white and non-white people speak about race, and I see that not just in terms of that experience, but in talking to people in firms, in the labour market.

When I’m asked to talk about diversity, I’ll often find that ethnic minority staff will come up to me afterwards and say things that they wouldn’t say to their line managers. Many black and minority ethnic people speak and think one way about race in their homes and with their families and speak differently than in public or in the workplace, having learned that certain language is viewed as too controversial, too radical.

I think these are serious consequences for their ability to enjoy friendships and progress at work, but I think also for the honesty of our public debate, our public discourse.

In responding to this dilemma, perhaps we can be inspired and learn lessons from Martin Luther King in the 50th anniversary week of his assassination. Dr King fully realised the need for white liberal allies, even as he also focussed on black self-organisation. His vision was indeed one where white and black people could work together as equals, though it’s often simplified in public debate, but it’s worth reading a debate he had with Stokely Carmichael about black power, where he accepted that black power could increase, have benefits, because it could increase the political and economic voice of African Americans.

King further even accepted that temporary segregation, that’s the term he used, might be necessary if the form of integration on offer didn’t involve a sharing of power and authority. If the form of integration wasn’t one of equality, then temporary segregation might be a necessary step along the way. In other words, he wasn’t interested in integration for its own sake, and his struggle against racism was conducted to a vision of equality, that included not just reform, but a revolution and the distribution of power and wealth in society.

So, returning to the UK today, in 2018, I think we should not avoid calling out racism or highlighting the concept, such as white privilege and institutional racism have real explanatory power, but we must also recognise that a decade and more have seen the problem as solved. It means that many potential allies will be bewildered and even upset by this analysis and will, at least initially, require a different form of messaging perhaps, to bring them on-board.

I’m going to take two cases that I think show the further nature of this challenge in achieving an alliance on race equality. Runnymede’s long worked in Europe. I have done a lot of work with the European Network Against Racism, we were a founding part of that network, as part of a wider anti-racist movement in the continent.

In response to concerns about discrimination and deprivation experienced by Roma in Europe, the European Commission developed a Roma integration strategy, which was supposed to be adopted by every European member state, but which the UK Government has more or less ignored, but that’s not my point. My point is the Commission has since developed, following its Roma integration strategy, separate streams, strategies or workstreams, on Islamophobia, antisemitism and Afrophobia. Each one meets separately, and each one has its own particular focus and agenda.

Now, it’s, of course, sensible and correct to say there are different forms and kinds of racisms, and when we’re confronted with a particular form of racism, we should call it out and respond to it appropriately, which is to say, respond to the specific nature of that racism. Yet, there is also clearly something lost, if and when separate forms of racism are so separately addressed. In terms of losing sight of the wider principle of anti-racism, in terms of only understanding one particular form of racism, and by suggesting in the case of the European Commission’s work, that those, and only those, affected by a particular form of racism should organise against that form of racism.

In our recent Islamophobia report, we sought to balance the need to provide a particular and specific account of Islamophobia as anti-Muslim racism, while also explaining how this related to other forms of racism. Furthermore, in our recommendations, and I’m just going to pull that up, we argued for ensuring that the mobilisation against Islamophobia, and, indeed, all forms of racisms, needed to be connected, and that understanding a particular form of racism from a personal point of view may even sometimes be a barrier to apprehending other forms of racism.

I think that sort of claim will be unsurprising and even a happy one for many of you in the audience, and maybe you would even pursue it further, along the lines of Sivanandan’s famous epistle, that black is the colour of our politics, but not the colour of our skin.

So, I’m talking now about our sixth recommendation that you can see on the screen. In terms of mobilisation then, it’s obvious, both in terms of principle and in terms of political power, we need a wider umbrella to gather under. Whether we call that ‘politically black’ or ‘people of colour’ or whatever, but I want to urge some caution here too, based on that European Commission case I described, but also a second that I suppose is even more controversial, the recent case of antisemitism of the left of British politics.

Frankly, I’ve been surprised by the inability to call out and draw a clear line under the antisemitism I’ve seen on the left, including in the Labour party. It may, of course, be true that not all of those raising the issue are of good faith, but their dishonesty is no good reason for anti-racists to abandon our principles, and to fail, to name and condemn antisemitism as a form of racism when we see it. That should be our first response to any instance of racism, not least to indicate our solidarity with those who are victimised and harmed by that racism.

With the slight distance of time, we can, however, reflect somewhat further on this case. I think at least two issues seem to have complicated or worsened what ultimately became a row about the nature and extent of antisemitism on the left, and seemingly less public focus from some critics of antisemitism and other forms of racism on the right. I don’t have an answer here to what I now see as a genuine dilemma.

On the one hand, yes we should adopt a universal and principled approach to anti-racism, and, yes, we should, generally speaking, affirm that principle publicly, which, in practice, means often adding the phrase ‘and all forms of racisms’ to our utterances. Sometimes, and perhaps even usually, as I say, we’re confronted with a particular form of racism that needs challenging, and a particularised, racialised group that has been harmed. In this case, it seems both insensitive, but also to miss the point about what actually happened, to talk in generalities about the wrongs of all forms of racism.

The second issue is that in the case of British and other Jews, the general association of racism with disadvantage and deprivation that I, myself, have fallen into here, and my statistics, and I’m happy to take challenge on that, is somewhat lacking in the case of British Jews. Though there are, of course, large, relatively poor Haredi communities in Britain, and I think this has confused to anti-racists.

I won’t labour this point, not least as David Feldman and Brendan McGeever have recently made it better than me, but I think the left’s particular focus on the injustice of global capitalism does, of course, mean that many of the left disposition can implicitly or explicitly affirm the anti-Semitic trope that the Jews control global capitalism and global media. Just as significant, I think, has been the tendency to replace structural and institutional explanations with personal and moral ones. This has led to a focus on individual capitalists or individual racists, which may be good for galvanising our outrage against bad individuals but does little to tackle unjust systems or institutions.

So, it may be reasonable for someone to start from an understanding of racism based on their own personal experience, and I don’t object to that in any way. I think it’s really important that we have the personal experience at the heart of what it is that we’re doing and responding to. If we stop there, if people stop at their own personal experience and assume their particular experience of racism is, or can simply be analogised to all other forms, they’re unlikely to spot or fully understand those other forms of racism.

I know in this room, there may be fewer of you who make that sort of error, but in my experience, it’s a wider problem than we realise. At this point, I think it’s worth underscoring perhaps the main argument of my speech, that how we mobilise people and how we analyse how we understand the issue of racial inequalities are directly connected. That the way you analyse the problem will, of course, suggest different forms of mobilisation.

That then brings me to my final challenge, that of policy. So, I’m going to just shut this now.

So, policy are responding to racism, and is the third and final challenge for achieving race equality. I think one key issue is data. I mean, I do think data is important to collect. Without good data collection, not just in terms of the collection of people, but of the effects of a policy, we can’t measure and so evaluate the efficiency or acuity of a Government policy and service delivery. I think the same is true for interventions in higher education to try to improve representation. We need data to know whether what we’re doing is actually working.

The Government, I think, deserves some credit here for publishing the race disparity audit. Although much of those data were available before, they were not available all in one place and very easily.

Furthermore, while you or I might have cited those data before, we didn’t have the platform of the Government, and many would actually question the objectivity of those data. I was told, “Of course you’d say that, Omar. You’re the director of a race equality organisation,” and so people would dispute the facts because they were presented by me, but for the Government to publish this on their own official website means the only people who can object to the data in those ways are cranks and trolls. While we have a lot of cranks and trolls, I don’t think they yet determine our public discourse and policymaking.

By publishing these data, the Government also, I think, sends a signal to every Government department that those outcomes are or should be the focus of Government policy. However, data does need to be interpreted and used effectively to hold Government to account. From the budget, to welfare reform, to voting rights, to apprenticeships, to immigration, Runnymede has shown that these will have disproportionate effects on black and minority ethnic people. The Government accepts this, but it’s failed to explain or justify those effects, much less to suggest anything to mitigate this predicted and predictable increase in racial inequalities. I think this also reflects a lack of serious political leadership on race.

Another general policy push, I think, should be on targets or, possibly, even affirmative action. As I said, FTSE 100 companies have adopted a race target for their boards, in much the same way as they have done for gender, and I’m happy to talk about that further, as I was somewhat involved in discussions around that. Similarly, the judiciary may be willing or even required to improve BME representation, and it’s hard to see how the 20-odd black female professors can be improved upon, even in the medium term, without much more drastic action.

The under-representation is so severe, and the people on the next rung of the ladder, far too few. That will take 50 or even 100 years for many of our institutions to reflect society.

I often hear, as I said before, across whatever sector of the labour market, that the proportion of BME people amongst the over-50 population is lower, or, in this area, the North-East, is lower. That, of course, is true, but, as I said, the 35-44 year old population match the Great Britain average of 14% in the last census, and that census was held seven years ago. It’s far from uncommon to find chief executives, full professors to say nothing of senior managers or senior lecturers in their mid-40s. In the case of barristers, it appears the most recently qualified cohort is, if anything, less representative than the one qualified 15-20 years ago, given the rise in the BME population and given the number of BME law graduates, 37% of undergraduates in the last year.

So, situating those current data in the context of the future pipeline, if anything, suggests less optimism for the future representation in many of our professions and sectors, and especially for senior lecturers in the university, compared to senior managers or solicitors. I think universities look like they’re doing worse than the private sector. Recent data, as I said, suggests black graduates are three times less likely to get a First than white graduates, and we know all about that as a BME attainment gap, but I don’t think we connect that enough to the representation problem we then have amongst our professors and lecturers.

As you will all know, getting an ESRC or AHRC funded PhD studentship is extremely competitive, and the black attainment gap suggests that those racial inequalities in higher education, because those black graduates will be less able to win a PhD studentship, will last until the end of this century.

Indeed, the current child poverty rates, 49% for black children and Pakistani children, 59% for Bangladeshi children, suggests that Britain will still be facing the consequences of racial inequalities into the 22nd century, given the life-long scarring effects of child poverty, and that a child born in the past 5-10 years has a life expectancy that means they will see the year 2100.

So, we’re not going to get there without more serious interventions. All major British social institutions should therefore adopt a 10 year or even 20 year strategy to ensure they better reflect the diversity of society, not just in terms of hiring, but in terms of how they’re going to improve their middle management. For those opposed to any targets or affirmative action, or whatever, the question is what else do you propose? What are you going to do, or are you satisfied to wait 50 or 100 years or more to remove racial inequalities? Are you satisfied that in 2100, we’ll still be living with its effects?

Targeted policies, however, so I’m going to have a little caveat, will not be easy to implement in Britain today, and not just because they’re unpopular. So, in 2014, for example, the Civil Service Fast Stream appointed 100 BME people, which looked quite good and was a significant improvement compared to 10 years previously, but among those 100 people, only 1 was black Caribbean, and only a handful were black African, Bangladeshi and Pakistani. Instead, Indian and mixed white and Asian people did best, and were probably even over-represented compared to the population overall.

So, that suggest that outreach or affirmative action programmes that target or focus only on BME people generally may not benefit those groups most under-represented presently, and this will not be news to those of you in the audience.

Here again, we turn I think to the question of how our analysis of these issues and our mobilisation links to the question of policy. If we think that justice requires us to prioritise the needs the of the worst off or those most unjustly treated, this suggests that policy cannot simply adopt a general race lens. If an anti-racist position though must also be universal, how do we ensure that we advocate for policies that both will benefit everyone, but as well as those that target for specific forms of racism, with specific policies to address the inequalities and injustices that differentially arise from those different forms of racism?

I’m going to just move forward a bit because I know I’m taking too much time here.

So, I’m going to now, kind of, conclude, and I’d be remis if I didn’t say something before doing so though, about Runnymede’s 50th anniversary year, and any lessons we’ve had about 2018 because we’ve been doing quite a bit of work, and I’ve been involved with some other anniversaries.

So, 2018 is actually a year of anniversaries, from the 100th anniversary of partial women suffrage, the 70th anniversary of the Empire Windrush landing in Tilbury this June, the same day, almost, off by one day, as the second anniversary of Brexit. I think there’s some irony there that Brexit and Windrush have a similar birthday. The 50th anniversary of the Race Relations Act. The 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King’s assassination, and the 40th anniversary of Rock Against Racism. The 25th anniversary next week of Stephen Lawrence’s racist murder and the 50th anniversary, just a few days later, of Enoch Powell’s Rivers of Blood speech.

The popular story we tell about race and migration in post-war Britain usually goes something like this: and after 1948, Britain was ruined by war, and for the first time, significant numbers of black and Asian people arrived in Britain, invited to build our public services, especially the NHS, which was actually founded the same year that Windrush arrived, and on, of course, public transport. Those immigrants were welcomed, so the story goes, and did face racial discrimination in the ‘50s and ‘60s, but nothing like that of Jim Crow America.

The no dogs, no blacks, no Irish signs are both a key image in this narrative, but also only glosses over, I think, the extent and legality of racial discrimination against British society, affecting not just housing and employment, but personal relationships, and, of course, physical security. In the popular narrative, I think the passage of liberalising race relations legislation in the ‘60s and ‘70s and generational change, gradually eroded the worst forms of racism, and by the ‘90s and 2000s, BME Britains were offered roughly equal opportunities, so the story goes, I think.

I think the story does allow for some hiccups along the way, even in this more optimistic time, notably the Brixton riots or the murder of Stephen Lawrence, but those then appear as exceptions and indeed extreme cases. For a short period after the Lawrence inquiry report in 2000, are not usually viewed as going to the heart of who Britain is or how far we need to tackle racism and its consequences. Not just in the Metropolitan Police, but all our public, private and charitable institutions, including, of course, the university.

So, in that more popular narrative, Enoch Powell’s Rivers of Blood speech then becomes and exception to what otherwise emerges as British pragmatism and tolerance, or indeed even an affirmation of it, as Ted Heath, of course, sacked him almost immediately after the speech was delivered.

Now, obviously, that narrative is wrong and simplified in various ways, but one particular consequence or aspect of this narrative is that we’ve learned the wrong lessons, I think, about Powell, where we’ve forgotten what parts of the past aren’t even really past. Much of the discussion on Powell and race in ’68 focusses on the distinctive violence of the imagery of his speech, but actually his view that being British meant being white was and remains a much more mainstream one and is indeed the graver danger.

We read this week of Caribbean residents being threatened with deportation by the Home Office, actions that Enoch Powell would applaud. Our selective amnesia about our past means we have somehow part forgotten that people who arrived from, say, Barbados in 1961 arrived five years before that island’s independence. They arrived British and have remained British ever since, but, for some reason, the Home Office refuses to recognise this, even as it lectures migrants about integration and British values, such as the rule of law.

We appear to remember the wrong lesson of our own past in ’68 and before and have yet to finally accept the responsibility for Empire and all its intended consequences. While we give out membership to an order of an imaginary British Empire, we somehow cannot fathom that there are millions of living residents in Britain who are actual members of a really existing British Empire, and millions more like me, who can trace all of their recent ancestry to that polity that applied rights and responsibilities in a racially unequal way.

Fifty years on from Rivers of Blood, Enoch Powell would be congratulating the British Government for deporting black people to their country of birth, such is the state of our domestic and global amnesia, that my making this point is somehow revealing or controversial.

Powell’s speech and vision was mainstream for another reason too. He was first motivated to speak out against the 1968 Race Relations Act, which prohibited discrimination for the first time in housing and employment. Until that point, those signs that we speak about were perfectly legal. It was perfectly legal to tell someone to their face, “You will not get this job because of the colour of your skin.”

His objection to the Act, which, again, is obscured by this focus on the violence of his language, was that the English legal tradition guaranteed ancient liberties, among them the liberty to discriminate. In a way, Powell was right about this. There is no freestanding right to equality in our unwritten constitutional tradition, and his argument has at least as much pedigree in Britain, as does a commitment to universal, civil or human rights.

For example, at the same moment where we celebrate the glorious revolution of 1689 for endorsing civil rights, at that exact same moment, pamphleteers were objecting to the Royal African Company’s monopoly on the trading of slave African people, on the grounds that under a Magna Carta, all Englishmen, all Englishmen, not just a monopoly company, should be free to participate in that immoral trade. So, the freedom to discriminate is arguably, along with Powell, part of our tradition.

Now, during the debates in Parliament, furthermore, the Conservative opposition affirmed a version of the principle, that Englishmen were free to discriminate on the grounds of race. So, they objected to the Act. They often conceded that this was distasteful, that it was too bad that people wanted to discriminate on grounds of race, but such was the price of liberty. If we were truly in favour of liberty, we had to allow people the liberty to discriminate.

In the last few years, Nigel Farage has actually updated this, sort of, Powell-like argument, to justify discriminating against gay people, when they purchase wedding cakes or stay in local B&Bs. Here too, if people do not want to serve them, if they want to discriminate against them, it may be bad, but that is the price of liberty.

So, I’m now concluding with a quote from James Baldwin that I think is important here. History is far from a dead thing. We carry it within us. We are unconsciously controlled by it many ways, and history is literally present in all that we do. It is to history that we owe our frame of reference, our identities and our aspirations. It’s, therefore, no surprise that racism and its consequences haven’t gone away in Britain. Addressing our history isn’t about self-flagellation or blaming our past but understanding who we are today and how we can better affirm the values of liberty and equality we claim to hold.

Thanks.

Nasar Meer: Thank you very much, Omar, for a wide-ranging lecture. While people gather their thoughts for questions, a note on proceedings. After Q&A finish, our President, Professor Susan Halford, will make the award of the very deserving recipient of this year’s Philip Abrams’ book prize. So, please don’t go away, especially if you’re on the shortlist for that book prize.

 So, we have some roving mics, and Omar is with us for questions. So, please raise your hand, and we’ll get those mics to you. Please, one over here:

Male: Hello. So, after your presentation, [I feel like we had… the first one would be 00:56:11] your trust in the power of data. Data as the starting point for analogies, organisations, \_\_\_[00:56:21] issue, in four policies. Instinctively, I share that trust very much, but I’m also worried that there is a trust which is not shown outside the power of academia and think tanks.

I’m not too sure on any policymakers, the people who share that trust. I’m not even too sure if any people in broader communities share that trust. Of course, people voted on Brexit and \_\_\_[00:56:51] and Trump and \_\_\_ of that. So, there is that part of the story.

There is also another part of the story which provides \_\_\_ that campaigned for your child is leader, celebrating the fact that the lack of communication has decided to stop collecting data in the schools about \_\_\_ nationalities. Instead, it was seen as problematic. People were very concerned about who’s using the data, who’s got access to data, how data is used and was bought. So, there are a number of concerns, and a number of campaigns there are right now, campaigns which are actually identical \_\_\_[00:57:33] using this for your own [best].

Male: Right, do you want to take that one, and then we’ll take another one?

Omar Khan: Yes, that’s a big one. Yes, I think you’re right. I used to have this debates in Europe too, because Britain is one of the few countries that collects these data, and the concern expressed there was you can’t trust the state with these data. You know, historically, those sorts of data were used to round-up people and put them in concentration camps. So, you can’t be, you know, so agnostic about-

Male: Can we get you a mic?

Omar Khan: Yes. So, I should be, yes, more critical about the role the state claims, and I used to think, “Oh, that’s overblown, you know, we’re post all that,” but you’re right. I mean, if I look at \_\_\_[00:58:16], I’m quite worried. So, if he knew where all the people lived, he might round them up. I think it’s almost impossible. So, I do think it raises challenges. I don’t have a good answer for that, I’m afraid, but to the extent where the state moves more and more down that line, we have to be wary of it.

Yes, I suppose the problem and the challenge, if you want to push me further, is, you know, by the time that the state’s got there, it’s too late to stop them collecting the data. So, I don’t really have a good answer.

The only other thing I say is, really quickly, that we need an argument and a message around race that is also emotive and connected to \_\_\_[00:58:53]. I mean, Runnymede has 50 years, as I said, of reports on shelves. If they were so effective at changing people’s minds, data, I think we’d be somewhere else.

So, I think it does pose questions for us about how do you shift public opinion and how do you use other tools, other than just data and evidence to convince people.

Female: Thank you. We have a question.

Female: Thank you, Omar, for that brilliant overview. I thought it was really excellent, and I don’t hear that type of overview very often, and so I think a lot of the time that we’re trying to raise issues about race, you don’t actually have some of those facts and figures at hand. So, I think that’s really important, that we need to get hold of that stuff, and use that to [focus on00:59:40] the debate.

I think you’re right about higher education. As a black woman in higher education, I’m finding it virtually impossible to talk about race, and I think there is a real responsibility for some of these debates about race to go broader than one black person in the room. So, I would throw that out, but I wanted to ask a question to you about why do you think that… it sometimes appears that we have gone backwards.

In the area that I work, in patient safety and equality, which is one of the biggest, kind of, movements in healthcare, I am always the only black person who stands up in the room and tries to raise these issues. People look at me as if I’m an alien. It’s very difficult to talk race, to talk black, to talk discrimination, if we’re talking about wider discriminations affecting a lot of groups. Those issues just don’t exist in the areas like patient safety and equality, and some of those issues can disproportionately be affecting some of the most vulnerable groups in society.

So, why have these issues, do you think, fallen off the agenda so badly?

Omar Khan: I mean, I do think it’s partly we think of preservation. We think things are more equal than they are, but I do also think that there is an umbrella mobilisation around issues of race. I think groups have organised differently. I mean, I do wonder, could you even mobilise, you know, 50,000 people on the streets to protest a racist murder? I think the reality is we don’t have the same kinds of institutions along with that, and solidarity across ethnic minority groups, I think, is also weaker than it was.

 I don’t want to glamourize it. I mean, I think the flip side of that is that I see, in the younger generation, a bit more confidence. I did some work with NUS, and I was quite impressed with the level of political consciousness and awareness on this, and, in some ways, that’s actually made the discussion, you know, more radical, right? I think it’s interesting that the black students’ group are looking to [renege 01:01:44].

I think there’s interesting debates there. So, hopefully, that will have a positive shift for that. I think the main reason is we haven’t been having these conversations for 10 or 15 years, and now people are comfortable with it, and maybe tried to raise it in the past and they’ve been shut down. So, they’ve given up.

Male: We have two questions just here in the centre. Thank you. I think there’s one just before you. We’re working our way around.

Female: Thank you, Omar. I just want to make a point. I’m very glad that you mention people out in the British Empire, and I want to say has the Runnymede Trust ever, have you, in your work capacity, actually demanded that the OBE and MBE must stop? Also, that these awards are actually insulting for some people, that they happen is insulting?

This might be a very timely symbolic move to challenge racism, but I think just the demand would perhaps make at least some BAME members who wear these accolades with pride, actually hang their head in shame. I wonder if the British Sociological Association and members of the British Sociological Association, at least a small minority, if not, I hope the majority of them, will say that, given their collective sociological knowledge, “We need to think about this. What is this message that everybody \_\_\_\_[01:03:26]?” when these are announced? Should we not just abandon them?

Male: Okay. Whilst you gather your thoughts, could you pass the mic behind you? We’ll take two questions together.

Female: Hi, Omar. I actually saw you speak two years ago. My name is [Freja 01:03:44]. You probably don’t remember me, that’s fine, but \_\_\_ I have a question.

So, you said a couple of things. I’m trying to look for consistency in your argument, and I think it’s there. Yes, it’s post-racial and, yes, it’s really difficult to bring these back on the table. The must for change, is there any more evidence being viewed right now? Hate crime is at its highest levels among schools and colleges. Statistics are not moving a change.

My question to you is this, you mention affirmative action, on the basis of [when you finish your 01:04:20] thesis, and use \_\_\_ as an example. We know how complex that was, especially with scheduled task \_\_\_ try \_\_\_ allocations. The question is this, if we want to fast-track that change for racial equality, would you recommend affirmative action?

Omar Khan: Yes, on the MBE and OBE first, and CBE and whatever BE, there was, in 2007, work around… we didn’t look at this, and Alistair Darling did recommend changing it to the order of British excellence. I didn’t go through it for various vested reasons. Apparently, one is the Royal Family. Apparently, the Queen objected to getting rid of Empire titles, because it’s her \_\_\_[01:05:09] use. Perhaps if we had a different monarch, that might… I’ve no idea. I’m speculating.

 I mean, I think it is worth reflecting, she is the last of that generation. Actually, she was, you know, was Empress of places, you know? I think the first thing I’d say is I don’t think \_\_\_[01:05:33]. So, I would probably look at affirmative action, but the issue I raise though, the fast-track, it is quite tricky to apply, I think, in the UK because of the nature of the groups.

 I think setting targets for different groups would be what I’d advocate, but I’d also advocate for other things. So, for example, senior managers who don’t progress their black staff should not progress themselves. If you’re no good at progressing black people in your organisation, you’re a bad manager. In 21st century Britain, it’s not just a racial justice issue. It’s an efficiency of the organisation.

 As you saw, the current labour market in London is 50% BME. You can’t say, “I don’t know how to manage these people,” because then you’re a bad manager. You don’t get to progress.

 I know it’s quite technical, boring language, but KPIs and incentives could be used. If you made a vice chancellor’s salary tied to how these institutions tackle… I don’t know why it’s so controversial. I mean, it’s an outcome that they should care about, right? So, you have to incentivise whatever kind of organisation you’re talking about. You have to find the right incentive. Sometimes, it will be things like that and it might be something else. I don’t have the answers for all of that, but affirmative action is one of the tools.

 Just to be a bit controversial, but I do actually think also anti-poverty measures. So, the other thing is I would like to see race equality strategy across the piece. So, there are other policies that I would recommend, and I think, in some ways, you know, an anti-poverty strategy that was comprehensive would probably do more to reduce racial inequalities than affirmative action.

Male: We have a question in the middle, and then we have a final question, top right, unless anybody else wants to.

Female: Hi, everyone. Thanks, Omar, for that. I really enjoyed it, and I guess my question \_\_\_[01:07:26] just picks up some things that different people have said in the room. I thought how all the data you presented was quite inter-connected in a way, because people’s history, economic background, socialisation, educational privileges, kind of, accumulate into your \_\_\_[01:07:47] that propels them in different ways, in terms of their mobilities.

I was just thinking about academia more particularly, because when we’re talking about how to make a difference to some of the statistics that you were saying, I was wondering whose responsibility is this, and how can we begin to unsettle it? Also, when you look at where the BAME staff are, the division between Russell Group and non-Russell Group, ESRC funded PhDs, how funding perhaps goes to people in certain institutions and how these, in a neoliberal academic concept, gives value going forward. So, it’s almost like that history is so hard to break.

So, whose responsibility? How can we intervene, and if anyone’s got examples that they’d like to share, that would be great?

Male: Yes. Okay. Could you pass the mic to your left, if we’re passing it, because the question is over there. It’s probably quicker if you just [get up 01:08:51]. Thank you.

Female: Thank you. [Towards] leaving for business school, so the whole experience about [managing] your practice because, you know, it \_\_\_\_ policies we’ve discussed, I did want to ask about… there’s quite a lot of \_\_\_ and the fantastic work it’s doing \_\_\_ influential to sexuality. I just wondered if you had any reflection to the mere sexual nature of multiple facets that Runnymede has in the data. I guess \_\_\_ nuances of that data, the jobs and [addressing English].

Male: Okay. Sorry to make you hold these questions in your head, but I’ve just got one final one.

Female: Thank you, Omar, for your very informative talk. My name’s [Anna Malik 01:09:50]. I’m from the University of Nottingham, \_\_\_. So, my challenge has been I’ve been writing a report about British Muslims in higher education, and I had to contact the President to get [a bespoke AGM request in]. I had to sign a very long contract and confidentiality agreement to access the data. It touches on the point that I was making before about how we can access data and show it.

 So, most of the data I have now, I can’t use because they won’t let me. So, then how do you write your report to show the disparages and inequalities that are happening in higher education, and based on the damage of mission groups?

Omar Khan: Yes, if they’re not letting you, I don’t know what you can… I mean, the only thing, is any of it published elsewhere, \_\_\_[01:10:40] or anything like that have access to it?

 Yes, I mean, just going back to [Alicia’s] point as well. I’m sorry, yes, I don’t have a real answer to that. I knew that I was \_\_\_[01:10:51]. So, I was adverse to saying anything about intersexuality. So, I deliberately didn’t want to say anything but, yes, it’s clear that… we’ve done one with \_\_\_ on lesbian, LGBT young people, which is, obviously, not the best way to talk about things, let’s say. [Dehumanising], but anyway. The issue of intersexuality is \_\_\_[01:11:18], and one who \_\_\_, in particular, it shows that the effect of the budget has had worse effects on the poorest black and Asian women specifically.

 So, I think you do need an intersexual analysis to understand also, again, what kinds of policies we might do in response. It’s no good boosting our sole income generally, if women are those who are worst affected. So, yes, I learned much. I was saying before that forms of racism differ. Well, the stereotypes that apply, of course, to black and Asian women [aren’t any different 01:11:48] from those that apply to black and Asian men.

So, even the solutions… I think when you see it in the workforce, when firms see they’re doing well with X group, I think you really need to look at… I think that’s something particularly you need to look at, intersexuality, because it may be a decent place for one population to work at, but not for… the Equality Act had provision for multiple discrimination, and I think that should be brought forward, which would help bring cases.

Yes, so it’s hard, is the short answer. I think exposing those data on the data gap would be, I think, the first thing, by department, by institution. Even sociology at the University of Birmingham, the staff would have an annual meeting to look at how far they’re doing it, and if over three years, there’s no improvement, I think you have to start asking questions about which specific academic seemed to be unable to give equivalent marks.

It is strictly one I’m thinking, do we need control someone, despite my principle controls of prior attainment, but even then, I think you need to think more about using that to support people who come to university with poorer qualifications, as opposed to penalising them or assuming that those poorer qualifications are an indicator of worse aptitude.

I mean, the reality is most of our well-off children have grades that are over-inflated above their intellect and their aptitude and their ability because so much is invested in them. So, they’re dominant, if I want to put it that way, than one who \_\_\_[01:13:35]. I mean, it’s just a mathematical thing because, you know, we’ve gone through so many.

My view would be every university should be required to take the top five highest performing children on free school meals. If you’re the best child after secondary school, that is the best that you could’ve possibly done, given the resources and skills and investment [that you need 01:14:07]. You go to the best in your year. Being the best in your year in that way is much more impressive than being the 150th best. There’s just no question about it. You’ve struggled more, you’ve contributed more, you’ve produced more, you’re going to have to show more grit, if you want to use that kind of language, by the first, even if that means two Ds and a C.

END AUDIO

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