ESRC Seminar Series: 'Ethnicity, networks and voice mechanisms in established and hard to reach BME communities: capacity building and beyond'

Friday 19th June 2009
Time: 10.00 am - 4.00 pm
Aston University, Birmingham

ESRC Seminar Series: 'Ethnicity, networks and voice mechanisms in established and hard to reach BME communities: capacity building and beyond'

This series of seminars aims to facilitate a space for debate concerning the dynamics of change within BME communities and their networks, and the attitude of traditional bodies to them, as they attempt to connect institutionally.

We believe there is a gap in the academic debate on how BME 'third sector' organisations are engaging in public policy making and what type of support is needed to maximise that engagement.

BME Communities, Voice and Agency: Mapping the Complexity of the Urban Experience

This is the fifth in the series of seminars. This series was launched in 2007 at the London School of Economics. Previous seminars have been hosted by Manchester, Leeds, The Open and Glasgow Universities.

Speakers include: Asif (Brap), Gargi Bhattacharyya (Aston University), Sarah Crawley (ISE), Nelarine Cornelius (University of Bradford), Inderjit Dehal (Department for Children, Schools & Families), Yves Guillame (Aston Business School), Miguel Martinez Lucio (University of Manchester), David Mullins & Pat Jones (University of Birmingham)

9.30	Registration and Coffee

10.00 **Welcome and Introduction:** Asif Afridi

10.10 *Ethnicity, networks and voice mechanisms in established and hard to reach BME communities: capacity building and beyond: The State of Play*
Miguel Martinez Lucio; University of Manchester

10.30 **BRAP – Rolling back the years**
Inderjit Dehal

11.00 **Beyond Survival: Inequalities faced by the BME voluntary and community sector and future responses**
Asif Afridi

11.30 **The Third Sector and BME Communities: The capacity building challenge**
Sarah Crawley

12.00 Panel Discussion

12.50 LUNCH

1.30 **Is being dissimilar from peers in a work group beneficial or detrimental to individual group member's effectiveness and social integration?**
Yves Guillaume

2.00 ***One day the tail must wag the dog"***: Considering network management as agent of change in partnership dynamics
Pat Jones and David Mullins

2.30 **Does anyone represent anyone else?**
Gargi Bhattacharyya

3.00 **Review of the day's discussion: Emerging Issues**
Miguel Martinez Lucio

3.30 **End of Seminar**

Presentation Summaries

TITLE: Overview of the Seminar Series

Nelarine Cornelius and Miguel Martínez Lucio
Social inclusion issues in relation to BME communities are not new. There is a range of literature dealing with the organisational and social dynamics of exclusion and its economic and social outcomes. One of the main concerns has been to focus on specific aspects of social inclusion such as the use of legislation in relation to particular rights and state strategies such as training programmes, for example.

Yet, regardless of the fact that tackling racism and exclusion is a broad canvass of potential and real strategies (Bhavnani, et al. 2005), the fundamental focus of the diversity and equality debate is on the way established institutions can facilitate and assist BME individuals in terms of the labour market and social services: the focus is on ensuring 'fairness'. Be it the equality debate, with its focus on legislation, or the diversity debate, with its obsession with marketing the gains of social inclusion to pre-established hierarchies, there is a fundamental gap in how BME groups and their networks are viewed. Within the human resource management (HRM) literature, much of the debate centres on organisational and managerial perspectives. Although attempts have been made to broaden our understanding through critical perspectives (e.g. Kirton and Greene, 2004), a more broader understanding of collective identity (Healy et al, 2004), or through the application of Sen's (1995) capabilities approach (Gagnon and Cornelius, 1999; Cornelius, 2002) the overwhelming interest for both scholars and practitioners centres on practice improvement: there is limited engagement with voice mechanisms in general and with even less focus on BME voice in particular.

If we are to engage with the notion of voice then we must understand its context and dynamics. First we need to start comprehending the general problem of identifying social and collective categories. Secondly, the failure to comprehend the organisational dynamics of BME communities leads to a failure to effectively discuss social need and social policy co-ordination. Thirdly, the contribution of micro level networks in social and business terms means that the broad economic and social contribution of such communities is not mapped into the policies and activities aimed at alleviating and confronting social exclusion. Fourth, we must begin to evaluate the formulaic approaches taken by government that attempt to create institutional arena for interests to be articulated that emerge from these communities.

We will say a little about previous seminars and the final seminar and Doctoral Research Workshop, at the University of Bradford, Autumn 2009.

TITLE: BRAP – Rolling back the years
Inderjit Dehal

To talk through why BRAP was established; the success/failures and difficulties of the first phase; and the lessons learnt.

Issues to be raised

- The limits of the representative model – ethnic/religious vs non ethnically aligned 'fresh' voices.

- Public organisations attempting to think radically and grasp issues about race and ethnicity but not having the courage to follow through on their commitments

- Independent self organisation vs institutionally led change

TITLE: Beyond Survival: Inequalities faced by the BME voluntary and community sector and future responses
Asif a

Issues to be raised

- Development of the BME VCS is inextricably linked to the state and race relations policy

- BME VCOs are seen as a way to 'fill the gaps' left by public service providers in relation to support for BME people, but this can mean broader race inequality problems in mainstream public service provision are left unchanged

- Responding to the current environment will require BME organisations to not just think beyond survival, but to think beyond ethnic identity. Demonstrating the impact of their work will be increasingly important, as will exploring the potential to support other excluded groups, to diversify their activities, and to collaborate with others working to promote social justice.

The support needs of BME VCOs are often different from other types of voluntary organisations. It's often assumed that they are different because of some sort of culturally-determined lack of capability, or because they have suffered from unequal development (linked to broader patterns of race inequality in society). Whilst there is some truth in the latter, arguably a more important influence on the development of the sector has been its inextricable link to race relations policy in this country.

Relying on political and financial state 'patronage' from Government has created opportunities for the sector. But often this involves the sector being assigned narrow roles – niche service provider, community representation, inclusion of hard to reach groups – public policy has not just shaped but has also arguably limited the sector's development.

This presentation outlines some of the challenges BME organisations in Twenty First Century Britain face: An increasingly competitive third sector 'market-place', reductions in core funding, and criticisms of single-identity funding for BME organisations. What does this mean for future development of the sector?

Many BME organisations are playing a crucial role in addressing race inequalities, but also many of them are struggling to keep their head above water. How can they respond to the above challenges, to move 'beyond survival', to keep doing what they are doing to help excluded groups in their community, but to also demonstrate their impact and added value, and to influence the work of mainstream public service providers? This is the 64,000 dollar question…

The Third Sector and BME Communities: The capacity building challenge
Sarah Crawley

I work locally, regionally and nationally to create innovative approaches to the sustainability of social enterprises, social firms and trading CVOs. In my talk, I will raise issues that emerge from my keen interest in policy and strategy within the third sector and my determination that the sector should adopt a full cost recovery approach while maintaining its values and grass roots approaches to delivery of services.

TITLE: *One day the tail must wag the dog"*: Considering network management as agent of change in partnership dynamics
Pat Jones and David Mullins

Issues to be raised

- The application of network management theory to interpret 'partnerships between refugee community organisations and housing providers

- The use of network management theory as a normative tool to give RCOs and other marginalised communities agency and voice by steerage towards equalise power relations between participants in networks

- Pioneering new approaches for change agents to ensure more effective partnerships in contexts of power imbalance

Inter-organisational partnerships embody both means and barriers to the resolution of complex social and economic problems. Study and evaluation of one project involving collaborative working between Refugee Community Organisations and statutory housing providers established that network management was an implicit theory in use. Further examination of the role played by the funder/lead partner suggests that this understanding could provide change agents with a pioneering new approach to redress the power imbalance in networks and provide marginalised and excluded community participants with an opportunity for agency and voice.

The presentation will start from a paper recently published in Journal of Housing and Built Environment: *Refugee Integration and Access to Housing: a network management perspective*. It draws on an evaluation and Ph.D. study of a project involving refugee community organisations (RCOs) in partnerships with housing providers and local authorities exploring the role of institutional networks in mediating integration. The article establishes that network management was an implicit theory in use and illustrates how the funder/lead partner adopted non-hierarchical steering, used a mix of small financial incentives and cognitive and social tools to reframe the perceptions of two main groups of actors: housing providers and RCOs to influence end multiple goals that had been jointly negotiated.

Beyond the paper, reflections suggest that network management theory (NMT) could be regarded as a normative tool to enable RCOs and other marginalised groups agency and voice in inter-organisation relationships. This approach would adopt a steerage position towards mutual trust and jointly negotiated solution to complex social and economic problems: essentially built on a two-fold strategy aimed at changing both the ideology as well as the interaction between actors at game and network level. The role of the funder/lead partner would be characterised by an organisational ethos committed to promotion of collective participation and empowerment of the least powerful partners. This rethinking of inter collaborative working opens up the potential for pioneering new approaches whereby change agents ensure effective partnerships and fuller engagement of excluded and marginalised community groups in contexts of power imbalance.

TITLE: Is being dissimilar from peers in a work group beneficial or detrimental to individual group member's effectiveness and social integration?
Yves Guillaume

Issues to be raised
- Diversity can have positive and negative effects on employee effectiveness

- Teamwork is one means to overcome the negative effects of diversity on employee social integration and effectiveness

- To harness diversity for employee effectiveness teamwork it needs to be accompanied by further means (such as leadership and coaching).

While diversity might give an organization a competitive advantage, individuals have a tendency to prefer homogenous group settings. Prior research suggests that group members who are dissimilar (vs. similar) to their peers in terms of a given diversity attribute (e.g. demographics, attitudes, values or traits) feel less attached to their work group, experience less satisfying and more conflicted relationships with their colleagues, and consequently are less effective. However, prior empirical findings tend to be weak and inconsistent, and it remains unclear when, how and to what extent such differences affect group members' social integration (i.e. attachment with their work group, satisfaction and conflicted relationships with their peers) and effectiveness. To address these issues the current study conducted a meta-analysis and integrated the empirical results of 129 studies. For demographic diversity attributes (such as gender, ethnicity, race,

nationality, age, functional background, and tenure) the findings support the idea that demographic dissimilarity undermines individual member performance via lower levels of social integration. These negative effects were more pronounced in pseudo teams – i.e. work groups in which group members pursue individual goals, work on individual tasks, and are rewarded for their individual performance. These negative effects were however non-existent in real teams - i.e. work groups in which groups members pursue group goals, work on interdependent tasks, and are rewarded (at least partially) based on their work group's performance. In contrast, for underlying psychological diversity attributes (such as attitudes, personality, and values), the relationship between dissimilarity and social integration was more negative in real teams than in pseudo teams, which in return translated into even lower individual performance. At the same time however, differences in underlying psychological attributes had an even stronger positive effect on dissimilar group member's individual performance, when the negative effects of social integration were controlled for. This implies that managers should implement real work groups to overcome the negative effects of group member's demographic dissimilarity. To harness the positive effects of group members' dissimilarity on underlying psychological attributes, they need to make sure that dissimilar group members become socially integrated.

TITLE: Does anyone represent anyone else?
Gargi Bhattacharyya

Issues to be raised

- It is problematic to suggest that any group of individuals can represent the views or experiences of others. Research frequently uncovers information that is interesting because it appears untypical, unexpected or unusual.

- Seeking to know or understand and seeking to influence or shape outcomes are not necessarily the same thing. There needs to be a greater understanding and acceptance of the role of these two endeavours.

- Giving voice may reveal things that we do not wish to hear – and which may not make 'good' policy. How do we understand that?

The recent electoral successes of the BNP alert us to the dangers of an uncritical celebration of 'giving voice'. In many ways, the BNP has taken on the rhetoric of community organisations that proclaim their ability to represent those who are not represented and to articulate the views of those who have been unheard.

BME groups can fall into a similar rhetoric of self-justification – and in the process fail to develop processes of accountability or a critical understanding of representation.

This presentation will initiate a debate about the difficulties that can arise from relying on ethnic claims and legitimacy. How, with the re-emergence of organised racist parties, can we register the views and experiences of BME communities in a manner that does not reinstate ethnic absolutism? as a source of authority

Pen Portraits

Asif is Deputy CEO at brap, a national equality and human rights advisory organisation based in Birmingham. brap adopt an inclusive and rights based approach to equality, drawing on their ten years of practical experience addressing inequality and promoting social justice in Birmingham. They avoid approaches that rely on promoting the needs of one group over another, as they think this approach tends to restrict, rather than enable the progress of equality. Their approach, above all else, recognises the freedoms that all people should be able to enjoy.

Nelarine Cornelius is Professor of Human Resource Management and Organisational Studies, the School of Management, University of Bradford. She is currently Visiting Researcher at the Gestion Scientifique at the École Nationale Supérieure des Mines de Paris. She has conducted research and consultancy for a variety of national and international organisations including Kent Police and Prison Service (in the areas of inequality, fairness and flourishing). She has a long standing interest in equality and diversity issues. Current projects include researching diversity and front-line practice development and BME communities, voice and city regeneration.

Inderjit Dehal is Ex CEO of BRAP and led the establishment of the organisation for its first 3 years. Moved to the then Department for Education and Skills (now Department for Children, Schools and Families) – various posts: led the development of the first national strategy to raise the attainment of BME pupils; currently heads up the City Challenge programme, an area based school improvement strategy which covers 47 (London, Black Country and Greater Manchester) of the nation's 150 local authorities.

Yves Guillaume is a Lecturer in Organisational Behavior at the Work and Organisational Psychology Group at Aston Business School. His research interests are in team and organisational effectiveness with a particular emphasis on managing diversity in teams and organisations. Yves holds a PhD in Management from Aston Business School.

Gargi Bhattacharyya is Professor of Sociology at Aston University and Director of Aston Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Language and Diversity (InterLanD). Her books include *Dangerous Brown Men* (Zed 2008), *Traffick: The illicit movement of people and things* (Pluto, 2005), *Sexuality and Society* (Routledge, 2002), *Race and Power*, with John Gabriel and Stephen Small (Routledge, 2001) and *Tales of Dark-skinned Women* (UCL Press, 1998).

Sarah Crawley: After developing and delivering community learning for seven years in Birmingham targeting hard to reach groups, Sarah went on to become a development officer for Birmingham City Council's Economic Development Department, where she later became Principal Officer working in equalities and regeneration. Sarah founded the Initiative for Social Entrepreneurs eleven years ago while developing her own consultancy business. She has provided support to the development of a range of capacity building initiatives to develop the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors and has led research to evaluate effectiveness of these approaches. This work led to the establishment of the i'SE's Professional Development Centre (the first to be based in the voluntary sector) and more recently Sarah has led I'SE to establish a Social

Enterprise Development Hub at its premises in Camp Hill, and the first social franchise in Birmingham – Aquamacs - in partnership with Social Firms UK.

Patricia Jones is currently completing her Ph.D. *Refugee Community Organisations in Partnership: the quest for recognition*, based on the Housing Associations Charitable Trust (hact)'s innovative Accommodate programme between 2004 and 2007. It focuses on refugee empowerment as outcome.

Miguel Martinez Lucio is Professor of Employment Relations at Manchester Business School, University of Manchester. His research is concerned with rights and regulations in human resource management and employment relations. He has undertaken extensive research for a variety of organisations, including UNISON, UNITE, the DTI, the TUC and the British Council. He is currently undertaken a large research project funded by the Leverhulme Trust. Miguel has an extensive publication record including many books, journal articles and published reports. His current research interests include changing regulation, collectivism, race and ethnicity, trade union modernisation and renewal and community unions and activism.

David Mullins is Professor of Housing Policy at the University of Birmingham who co-led the evaluation and co-supervised the linked ESRC CASE Ph.D. undertaken by Patricia Jones. *Better Together – the Accommodate final evaluation report* is available at http://www.download.bham.ac.uk/curs/pdf/accommodate_summ.pdf