**'Trade Unions and BME groups:
Dimension of employment and network relations'
Manchester Business School – April 17th 2008
Venue: Manchester Business School, Harold Hankins Building Room**

The development of BME networking and new forms of communication and representation have to be understood in terms of the role and context of traditional networks and voice mechanisms within the workforce. The role of trade unions was highlighted in the Manchester conference of April 2008. It brought to the table a set of questions as to how unions engage with and work with BME workers and their networks. The participants were drawn from trade unions and from the academy.
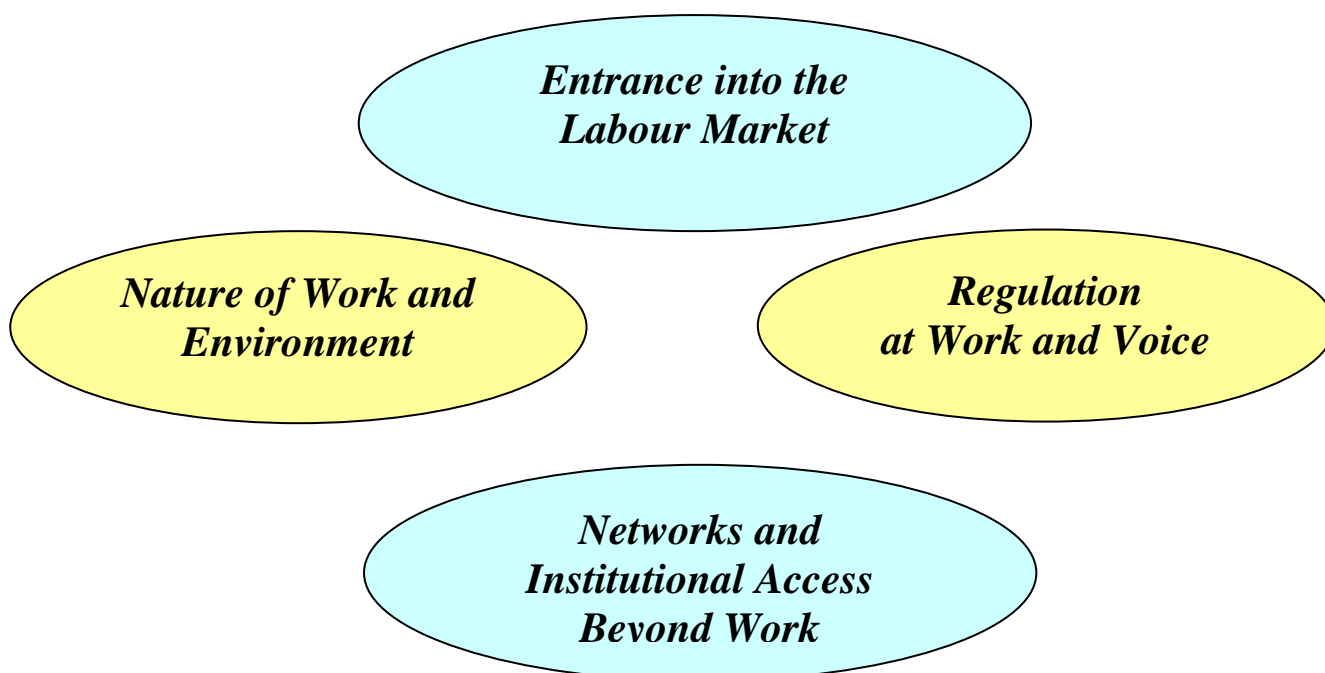
The papers presented were as follows:

Trade Unions, Networks and the Labour Market – the case of qualifications

Miguel Martinez Lucio, Robert Perrett, Jo McBride and Steve Craig – Manchester, Bradford and Wigan and Leigh College

The presentation highlighted a series of issues related to the question of qualifications and the recognition of skills. The experience of migrants in the United Kingdom varies in relation to their different communities, histories, and ethnic and cultural dimensions and this report is but a snapshot of some the issues and initiatives emerging in relation to skills related issues. The presentation focused on migrants who are recently arrived and who have not moved to the United Kingdom with a permanent job contract or professional position. The argument presented is that migrants are confronted with a context of social exclusion and poorly regulated labour markets that creates a serious gap in terms of what they are doing within the labour market and what they are actually capable of doing, with most working below their qualifications and skill thresholds. The report identifies that one of the major problems is a lack of consistent 'joined up' thinking between regulatory actors and agents who deal with such issues. This leads to an inability to create a more inclusive and supportive approach in terms of allowing migrants to reference and build on their skills and qualifications. The presentation pointed to the way the new learning agenda within the labour movement has engaged with such issues and provided a new template for trade union strategy.

Migrants face employment circumstances along the lines of the four dimensions outlined below.

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                    │   Entrance into the  │
                    │    Labour Market     │
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 │  Nature of Work and  │          │     Regulation       │
 │     Environment      │          │  at Work and Voice   │
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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │    Networks and      │
                    │ Institutional Access │
                    │     Bevond Work      │
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The de-regulated and un-co-ordinated aspects of these dimensions can inhibit the ability of a migrant worker to develop themselves and access and use their experiences and qualifications, assuming they have them, as part of a process of self-development and enhancing their wellbeing. The situation is worse for those who do not have any qualifications or background as they are left to work with even less options and expectations. They do not have alternative reference points they can attempt to mobilise. In general, migrants faced problems across all the four dimensions highlighted above. On the occasions where there was some support it was through informal and local community networks and not formal institutional ones which were not clearly mapped for them. Trade unions have made attempts to fill this gap and to engage with migrant communities - whilst trade unions have been relatively ambivalent with aspects of migration during parts of their history there is a greater commitment to focusing on social inclusion issues and strategies. This links in with a period of ten to fifteen years when trade unions have focused much of their energies on learning and training strategies. The extent of such intervention from trade unions on the learning agenda and migrant support is extensive. However, there are challenges in terms of how such relations and interventions are generalised. There are also challenges in the relatively un-coordinated nature of the regulatory environment around training issues. Hence such initiatives are not strategically underpinned and supported in a sustained manner by public bodies. Also, trade unions lack a consistent community presence able to sustain the local links with BMW groups around such initiatives in the longer term.

In Search of Links and Communication: Engaging with New Migrant Communities

Ian Fitzgerald University of Northumbria

Following the May 2004 EU accession of A8s workers, the UK has witnessed undoubtedly its largest ever single in-migration, with Poles the largest ever single ethnic group (Salt and Millar, 2006)[1]. Interestingly, the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) accession monitoring reports[2] state that the north of England has had a larger number of registered A8 workers than have registered in London and the South East.

Migration has often been dramatic for many small northern towns and villages and whilst some Polish workers have begun to form new 'communities' others have found community formation more difficult. Here small numbers of Polish workers have found themselves living in disparate locations far away from each other. Opportunities for both groupings to meet and form any lasting community links have often been either through church services or via the growing Polish media. Discussion here is based on a series of TUC projects that have identified trade union engagement with these newly arrived Polish workers in the north (Fitzgerald, 2009; 2007a; 2006; 2005)[3]. The method used has been a key respondent and action research approach. This has meant undertaking over 60 interviews with key contacts who are engaged with A8 and Polish migrants and having some active Polish community engagement.

On a wide note trade union engagement with ethnic minority communities outside of the workplace has been discussed by a growing number of writers (for example Datta *et al.*, 2007 and Lier, 2007)[4]. Whilst others have identified the increasing use of community based services by migrant workers (Heckscher and Carre, 2006)[5] and in

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[1] Salt, J. and Millar, J. (2006) 'Foreign Labour in the United Kingdom: Current patterns and trends', *Labour Market Trends*, ONS, October 2006.

[2] Boarder and Immigration Agency (2008) *Accession Monitoring Report A8 Countries May 2004 – September 2008*, a joint Border and Immigration Agency, Department for Work and Pensions, HM Revenue and Customs and Communities and Local Government online report.

[3] Fitzgerald, I. (2009) *A moving target: The informational needs of Polish migrant workers in Yorkshire and the Humber*, Leeds: Yorkshire and the Humber TUC; Fitzgerald, I (2007a) *Working in the UK: Polish migrant worker routes into employment in the North East and North West construction and food processing sectors*, London: TUC; Fitzgerald, I. (2006) *Organising Migrant Workers in Construction: Experience from the North East of England*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Northern TUC; Fitzgerald, I. (2005) *Migrant Workers in the North East of England*, Newcastle upon Tyne: Northern TUC.

[4] Datta, K, McIlwaine, C. Evans, Y. Herbert, J., May, J. and Wills, J. (2007) 'From coping strategies to tactics: London's low –pay economy and migrant labour', British Journal of Industrial Relations, 45, 2: 404-432; Lier, D.C. (2007) 'Places of work, scales of organising a review of labour geography', Geography Compass, 1, 4: 814-833.

[5] Heckscher, C. and Carre, F. (2006) 'Strength in networks: employment rights organizations and the problem of co-ordination', British Journal of Industrial Relations, 44, 4: 605-628.

the USA workers' centres (Fine, 2007)[6]. The extent of the UK A8 migration took all by surprise and left many at a local level having to 'fire-fight' the numerous issues that have arisen. This has led to unions working jointly with a range of community service providers and some local councils and businesses. In the north the author has identified three main avenues that unions have used for this engagement: (1) Through community locations and often via jointly organised events (see also Martinez Lucio and Perrett, 2007)[7]. Here diverse information has been provided and initial contact established with groups of Polish workers. Events have been undertaken with a range of community based service providers and local councils and following these initial meetings unions have sought more sustainable linkages. (2) Via the established links offered by the Catholic Church and the long established ZPWB (Federation of Poles in Great Britain). Here either the church has been used as an initial meeting place or been used intermittently for engagement, whilst the ZPWB has supported unions with Polish community contacts. (3) Lastly, via the developing Polish media, for example with intermittent contact with the some Polish web site administrators. Interestingly, since the accession a growing number of Polish language web sites, focused mainly on the 'new' locations where Polish workers live, have been established (Fitzgerald, 2007b)[8].

Whilst 'community' engagement with Polish workers in the north is evident in a number of trade unions, including the TUC. It is too early to know if this will become an established part of core organising. The tensions, though, are becoming clear as unions debate whether to introduce the newer Polish community initiatives into the established core of union organising. With questions, for example, being asked about who might join the union and if this membership can be serviced in a cost-effective way. In effect, though, there are no shortcuts to engagement with an ethnic community however this is formed and successful organising at a workplace is ever more difficult to achieve.

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[6] Fine, J. (2006) 'Worker Centers: Organizing Communities at the Edge of the Dream', Ithaca, NY and Washington, DC: ILR/Cornell University Press and Economic Policy Institute.

[7] Martinez Lucio, M. and Perrett, R. (2007) Social inclusion and representation strategies in the workplace and community: Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) workers and innovative trade union responses, Leeds: Yorkshire and the Humber TUC.

[8] Fitzgerald, I. (2007b) *Polish internet resources for the UK and Eire*, unpublished document, March 2007.

London's Living Wage Campaign: a missed opportunity for unionising black and minority ethnic workers?

Jane Holgate (Working Lives Institute – London Metropolitan University)

This presentation used the London living wage campaign to explore the tension between community organising and union organising and looked at the relevance this might have for the unionisation of black and minority ethnic workers. Using the living wage campaign allowed for the explore an number of themes, such as what has been missing from the debate on union organising and secondly, to consider whether unions, in the way that they currently operate and as they are currently structured, are best suited to the needs of today's multi-ethnic, multi employer, multi-sited, privatised and the contracted-out type of employment that many people now face.

Most of the literature on community organisation is from the US, yet there are a small number of writers in the UK increasingly thinking about how trade unions might organise to engage diverse groups of workers who have often been marginalised in the UK union movement.[9] Looking at the literature on union organising as a whole, or general industrial relations literature on mobilisation theory, then work has tended to focus on how workers become mobilised into activity – but this is generally in the context of the workplace. There has been very little consideration of how wider social networks operate or influence the way people become collectivised or mobilised into activity through their identity. As such, the community aspect of organising is not an area that has received much consideration.

The geography of unionisation has changed considerably over the last 30-40 years. We only need consider employment and work in today's globalising labour market to see that workers, particularly recent migrant workers, have multiple jobs in different sections of the economy, there is also greater job mobility, more contracting out, more workers being transferred from employer to employer – such that it is difficult to know who the actually employer is – and this is a particular problem among agency workers. In essence, many more workers are in vulnerable employment situations where unions, on the whole – but with some exceptions – are either not able to reach these groups of workers or who do not have the resources available to direct strategic organising campaigns to bring these workers into union membership. Again, the geographies of employment, and the relationship to lived space have changed

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[9] Fitzgerald and Stirling (2004) Black Minority Ethnic Groups Views of Trade Unions.
Holgate (2009) Contested terrain: London's living wage campaign and the tension between community and union organising.
Holgate and Wills (2007) Organising Labor in London: lessons from the living wage campaign.
Jamoul and Wills (2007) 'Civil society, faith organisations and political engagement.'
Martínez Lucio and Perrett (2006) 'Linking up? The different realities of community unionism.'
Wills (2001) Community unionism and trade union renewal in the UK: moving beyond the fragments at last.

considerably, and unions have not yet come to grips with how to deal with these changing circumstances.The presentation therefore focused on social networks and community – particularly the notion of community unionism – to think through thinking these issues and more specifically what this means for the unionisation of BME workers in un-organised, non-unionised sections of the labour market.

Trade Unions, BME Communities and the Gender Dimensions:
(Geraldine Healy, Queen Mary College)

The following summary comes from a report presented by the Geraldine Healy and colleagues which relates to the issues outlined in the talk -A Double Disadvantage? Minority Ethnic Women in Trade Unions Harriet Bradley, Geraldine Healy and Nupur Mukherjee Bristol University and Queen Mary, University of London)

This report investigates the experiences of minority ethnic women in four trade unions. It is set against a backcloth of vigorous initiatives on tackling racism in trade unions alongside a growing increase in racism and xenophobia in the UK and Europe. The four unions chosen were the Communications Workers' Union (CWU), the lecturers' union (NATFHE), the public services union (UNISON) and Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers' Union (USDAW), unions which represent a wide range of occupational groups. The research involved interviews with national union equality officers, interviews with minority ethnic women activists, analysis of documentary sources and attendance at various black workers' conferences and networks. It was clear that the Stephen Lawrence Task Group had raised the importance of tackling racism in trade unions and provided a range of resources to support union members. The unions were at different stages of development in their equality initiatives, but all had introduced a combination of separate structures and positive action measures. These structures were important in recruiting and involving black members; the challenge lies in ensuring that their influence reaches the main decision-making structures of the unions. The women interviewed provided a rich picture of why they joined their union and how they became involved. Their commitment to the union and their belief in its importance in protecting people at work was a strong theme. Their experiences of racism and sexism pervaded their working lives. They faced segregation, low and unequal pay, isolation, racism, sexism and harassment. Many expressed the belief that they suffered a 'double disadvantage', with sexist and racist treatment often coming from different directions. Our analysis suggests that their disadvantage is more complex and that they are suffering 'multiple discriminations' resulting in degrees of exclusion from both union and employer structures. The minority ethnic women in the study also demonstrated the personal benefit they have received as a result of their union involvement in terms of training, personal development and some saw the union as an alternative career. Their commitment to community and collectivism is illustrated, with many women active in a range of community based organisations. The women were actively working to shape their lives and resolutely challenging discriminatory practices. The report concludes with policy recommendations for both trade unions and employers to improve the position of minority ethnic women in their unions and workplaces. We

are mindful that there is still a long way to go to ensure the visibility and voice of black women. The importance of maintaining the momentum of recent equality initiatives on ethnicity is vital in the light of enduring hostile factors within organisations and society.

Two paths for the study of discrimination in management

Eric Pezet Ecole des Mines, Paris

There are different fields of research which have explored this question of discrimination and they have to be taken into account in management research. Law has developed a lot of work about equality and discrimination. There is a lot of important research in the field of cultural studies. I think that there is another aspect on which management research can have a much more important output. That is that of the ***technology of discrimination in organizations***. I have been very impressed recently by a presentation from Alan McKinlay at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes in Paris. McKinlay who works on Fordism showed an archive which was a table in which people were classified with reference to their nationality, their religion and their race. This historical proof showed different things. First, this work affects an idealised history of Fordism. What Mc Kinlay describes about the management of a US firm is much more close to the film by Martin Scorsese, "*Gangs of New York*" that the ideal "economic man" ideal type of Fordism. The second aspect which is more pertinent for our topic is that all of these criteria of classification, nationality, religion and race, were used by management at Ford. They help to distinguish between people. In a way management recognize cultures in the sense that management can name them and differentiate them. Let us notice that this table is a tool. It is a means to make visible a population and to segment it so as to govern it more easily. Management research can develop a different approach to discrimination than that of cultural studies. A common target can exist in the fact that this research is made in order to give voice to minorities. There is the common conviction that the present situation is not satisfying. But two differences could appear in the programs of research. First, management research could focus on the fact that there are common strategies in different countries and different cultures. Later on, when I will give examples to illustrate my subject, I will take them from France's past and present. You might think that France is very discriminatory country. In fact I believe that Germany and Spain, even the UK could provide such examples of behaviour. Instead of considering that discrimination is everywhere, it could be interesting to try to find general questions of interests in every area. Globalisation appeals to these general questions. As it will be illustrated later on, it is not a renouncement of culture neither a negation of culture. Management identifies culture very precisely but it tries to position different cultures in a hierarchy. And that is the problem. I have just said that the cultural approach is not necessarily the most pertinent approach for management. Despite that I will take my reference from French history and society. If work is done at a certain level of generality it is possible to take from national history some question that could be of interest for the study of globalisation. The first point I will develop is that history is a useful path for studying the relationship between management and ethnicity. For that, I will refer to research about Algerian workers in France and I will also refer to a survey about black people. The second point I will

focus on is that the study of management tools can be efficient means for understanding better the technology of discrimination in management.

The first research I will refer to is the work of Laure Pitti, about the Algerian work force in France in the automotive industry, between nineteen forty five and nineteen sixty two. Algerian people are one of the visible minorities in France. These minorities are Arabic people, black people, Asian people, Berber people, Indian people and Pakistani people. I remind you that Algeria was a French colony until nineteen sixty two. Algerian workers are associated with the automotive industry in France. There is little historical work about their immigration. They migrated to France until the mid seventies. They came in two periods. The first period is nineteen forty six to nineteen fifty six and the second period is nineteen sixty eight to nineteen seventy one. In France it is commonly accepted that they migrated in the sixties. In fact Algerian people arrived before this. They came to France in large numbers after nineteen forty seven for three main reasons: nationalist victory in the municipal vote, colonial repression and the economic situation. They have been hired by the most important firms such as Renault, Peugeot and Citroën. They also have been employed in the hardest, that is, the most difficult and dangerous jobs. They worked mainly in some workshops: pressing, foundry, ironworks and rubberised products. Most of the time, when they were hired, their skills were not taken in account. They rarely progressed and the most reasons given were that they are "unreliable" and have no experience in automotive industry. These arguments were wrong because a third of the Algerians who worked for Renault for example had industrial experience before. These workers were considered so different from others that social workers were especially dedicated to North African people. It was said that they had to educate people who aspired to be real men of the twentieth century. They had to work for the civilizing mission of France. About this aspect of colonisation in French policy there is an interesting book, that of Paul Rabinow entitled, *"French modern: Norms and forms of the social environment"*. The attitudes of the Unions towards Algerians depended on the attitude they had towards the independence of Algeria. The Confédération Générale du Travail which was the dominant union in France generally and in automotive industry specifically was in favour Algerian independence. Renault , especially the plant in Paris at Billancourt, has been a place where there was resistance to France's policy towards Algeria. You can imagine that the police informers were also been present in this place.It is quite easy to forget this now because they where mainly unskilled workers, and also because there have been so many social reforms. The unskilled workers are surprisingly called ouvrier spécialisé in French, this can be translated skilled or craft workers. Until recently, this category remained in the work classification grid in France as the first level of the hierarchy. It is a level where nobody should be. Is it possible to understand the management of the automotive industry without studying this population of workers and how they have been governed.

The second set data I will refer to comes from a survey about black people in France. First, it has to be said that black minorities have received official recognition quite recently. Slavery was abolished in France one hundred and sixty years ago, in eighteen forty eight. The French Parliament adopted in two thousand and one a law recognising that slavery is a crime against humanity and since two thousand and six, the tenth of May a commemorative day for the abolition of slavery and the celebration of Black culture. The French Council of Black Associations is a recent creation. In

two thousand and seven, this council ordered a survey in order to see if black people felt they were discriminated against in France and to what extend. Thirteen thousand people were surveyed. Nine per cent of them declared themselves to be members of a visible ethnic community. In France three point eight percent of the people who are eighteen years old or more declared themselves members of the black community. That is to say one point eight million people. About discrimination, forty three percent of them deemed never be discriminated against and twenty five percent to be rarely discriminated against. Nineteen percent and twelve percent declared that they were discriminated against from time to time and frequently discriminated respectively. When those who declared themselves to be discriminated against were asked where they experienced discriminated sixty two percent said in public places and forty two at work. The results show that this question of discrimination remains very important. If we follow the survey about this aspect of discrimination at work, the survey shows that this discrimination takes the shape of refusal to hire: this is what eighty percent of the people think, and also appears in the form of promotions being refused (this is what eighty seven percent of the people think). To finish with this survey I would like to mention another question asked. When people who considered they were discriminated against asked which institution would protect there rights they gave the following answers. I will not mention all the institutions but the most significant for my point. Seventy two percent thought their rights are respected at school. This answer is interesting because education is considered in France as the main means for the integration of people into society. Fifty nine percent considered that justice system protected there rights. Only thirty five percent of the people considered that firms are places where their rights are protected.

To conclude this first part, the example of the history of Algerian workers in France shows that Historians have a lot to teach management researchers. Behind this situation, there is a history of colonialism which is in the backdrop of this possible behavior. But further more, these behavior are not an accident in the history of management, they are a constituent of the history of management. The other reference, the survey about discrimination of the black community show how contemporary these issues remain.

The concept of "government" is employed here in a Foucaldian way. Government is a way of influencing behavior. It is the way used to conduct conduct. It is not only a question of domination or subjugation. It is a question of subjectivation. How people become subjects. How they are driven to consider themselves in a particular way. What we need to know especially is what where the technologies used in management which makes these groups became "invisible". People are required to become invisible when they are asked to adopt a norm of behavior. I would like to insist on this aspect because the effect of invisibility on ethnicity is a present effect. It is possible to study these behaviors indirectly through the technology of management used. In this second part I would mention two behaviours: vigilance and a possible detour. I will be brief about vigilance because it seems that it is the most widely studied aspect.The first comprises research about the evolution of the tools of human resource management. Some firms still have a classification of people which discriminate against them. In France, but in England too I guess, some independent and public association test the procedures of recruitment of the firms to observe possible discrimination. Information system has not been studied in that way. What could be studied are the people who do not appear in these systems. Some become

invisible to regular management because they do not appear in the data bases. This research is about the implicit neglect and resulting rejection of people. As it has been said managerial government is about the conduct of behaviours. So this orientation of research has to be about the mechanisms by which people are personally affected by discriminatory management practices. That is the second aspect I would like to develop. For that, I would like to give the example of mentoring which are management techniques which reach people in a very personal way. This is a practice by which experienced workers or managers help less experienced ones. There is formal and informal mentoring in firms. Formal mentoring can be focused on affirmative action in order to help minorities. This strategy is not perfect because it is sometimes seen as a stigmatization of minorities. It is considered as a way to show that they are in fact different. There is also informal mentoring which is not organized by the human resources department or by the hierarchy. This one is also interesting. The study of informal mentoring is being developed together with Nelarine Cornelius. It seems interesting because we ask what people try to find in informal mentoring. The question is not so much about the extend to which mentoring useful for the firm that what are the mentees trying to find that they need for their work and that management practice doesn't provide for them. An important dimension of the concept of mentoring is the psychological support that the mentor gives to his or her protégé. The knowledge about this specific support would give information about how people see themselves. Research which has been published in a book I have edited and which is entitled "*Inquiry about asceticism of performance*" shows that at L'Oreal, the well known cosmetic firm, even in accounting, people have to control themselves in order to look as they should: they refer to their appearance and their weight particularly. A study about mentoring in the firm is a way to capture all the advice that is given in order to help the protégé to progress in the firm. One possible research project is to study practices of mentoring among this population. That would help us to understand and describe more precisely what happens in order to act on it. Among the aspects that could be observed let me mention the skills they lack, the psychological difficulties they encounter and the professional targets they set themselves. It could also be interesting to compare it with the results obtain from a survey in the majority community.

To conclude, I would underline the fact that discrimination is a field of research that seems to have a general interest for management because the different elements induce the risk of discrimination for more and more people. The second reason is that the reasons for discrimination could change as the organization changes. An ability to observe discrimination is a way to create a scientific observatory of the mutation of discrimination. As you see my two paths forward are history and mentoring!