THE HIGHER EDUCATION RESPONSES IN THE UK TO THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT IN 2020

Niaz CARY-PERNON, EMMA
• Introduction
  • Black Lives Matter = transnational
  • A constructivist framework
  • Actors and sources: the Russell Group universities’ official statements in response to Black Lives Matter
  • The creation of dynamics influencing new or pre-existing projects in order to promote inclusion and fight racism
  • The outline: characterizing the Russell Group universities’ responses + analysing the actions contributing to improving the education system in the UK
1. The Russell Group universities’ responses to the Black Lives Matter movement

1.1. Releasing statements, showing solidarity
   - 17 individual and public responses
   - 10 general + 8 personal approaches
   - Components of some universities identified (e.g. Exeter, Merton, Nuffield, Pembroke, the Queen’s and St Antony’s + the University of Oxford)
   - 2 Russell Group categories whose communication strategies = distinct (e.g. The University of Cambridge via the University and College Union OR the University of Glasgow and the Queen’s University of Belfast … absence of an official statement)
1. The Russell Group universities’ responses to the Black Lives Matter movement

1.2. Traditional or critical perspectives

- 20 institutions = a traditional approach (the Black Lives Matter movement as apart from the structural powers producing violence and inequality)
- 4 structures = a critical perspective (how national forces and related hierarchies of power force marginalized people to revolt)
- Black, BAME and ethnic groups = interchangeable + no intersectionality
• 2. Defining responsibilities: the social role of education

• 2.1. Transnational argumentation

• The social role of education

• Universities as moral communities

• The notion of justice = broad + justice through education (13/24, specifically the University of Edinburgh “launching a cross-disciplinary hub … for research and teaching on race and ethnicity, which is the product of more than two years of academic work and engagement...”)
2. Defining responsibilities: the social role of education

2.2. Fighting racism ‘from below’

- Through open dialogue with those affected by the global process of racism
- Collaboration between university structures (e.g. the Equality, Inclusion and Diversity team) and specific ethnic groups
- Working with “critical friends” (Black and/or BAME students and staff)
- Low proportions of Black students to be considered
- Historical links to racism (e.g. the University of Manchester, Newcastle University or the University of Nottingham)
- Projects in progress
- An abstract universal idea of racism VERSUS emancipation as part of a process of open discussion, along with local and concrete measures (the emblematic example of the University of Warwick)
• Conclusion

• The Black Lives Matter movement as a catalyst for an eruption of activism
• Leading the Russell Group universities to reflect publicly on their responsibility for challenging racism in the UK
• The issue = generally addressed from a traditional perspective aiming at analysing the issue and studying options to solve the problem of racism
• Concrete measures and progress = varied and slow
• The efficiency of the strategies?