Is Politics Racist?

11 April 2017, Tuesday, 6.00pm -8pm
Venue: Leith Academy, 20 Academy Park, Edinburgh EH6 8JQ

#IsPoliticsRacist

Organised by:
ELREC- diversity in public life

Supported by:

www.diversityinpubliclife.wordpress.com
Programme

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<tr>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>Registration/ reception with tea/coffee &amp; refreshment</td>
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<td>6.15</td>
<td>Welcome : Foysol Choudhury MBE, Chair of ELREC</td>
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<td>6.30</td>
<td>Dr Timothy Peace - BME Representation and participation in Scottish Politics</td>
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<td>6.45</td>
<td>Dr Parveen Akhtar - Ethnicity-based political mobilisations in British Politics: Successes and Challenges</td>
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<td>7.00</td>
<td>Panel debate/discussion : Nick Greener, Moderator</td>
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<td>7.40</td>
<td>Question and answer</td>
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<td>Vote of thanks</td>
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Aims of the event
The event aims to identify ways to foster engagement of Black Minority Ethnic (BME) communities within the grass root political institutions. The event also aims to raise awareness about participation and representation of BME communities in the political process and public life.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO COMPLEATE FEEDBACK FORM!

For any info/ contact:
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Coordinator, Diversity in Public Life project
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ELREC, 14 Forth Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3LH
Dr Parveen Akhtar

Dr Parveen Akhtar is a lecturer in Political Science and international Relations at Aston University and member of Aston’s Centre for Europe (ACE). Previously she was a recipient of the highly competitive British Academy Research Fellowship, held at the University of Bristol. In 2010 she was a visiting scholar at Lahore University of Management Sciences before which she was an Economic and Research Council (ESRC) postdoctoral fellow at the University of Bristol (2008-2009).

Dr Akhtar completed her ESRC funded PhD at the University of Birmingham during which time she held research positions at the Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna (2007); the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, Amsterdam (2006); Sciences Po, Paris (2006) and the School for Postgraduate Interdisciplinary Research on Interculturalism and Transnationalism, Aalborg (2005).

Dr Akhtar has published widely on Political Participation, Islam, Migration and Social Change in journals including; the British Journal of Politics and International Relations, the Political Quarterly and European Political Science. Her monograph, British Muslims Politics, was published by Palgrave in 2013 and nominated for the BSA and Philip Abraham Prize. Dr Akhtar’s work has an international audience and she has presented her research in over 40 conferences in 15 countries. She makes regular contributions to public and media debates, including the Guardian, the Economist and BBC Radio 4.

@DrParveenAkhtar

Dr Timothy Peace

Dr Timothy Peace is a Lecturer in Comparative European Politics at the University of Stirling. He is the author of Muslims and Political Participation in Britain (Routledge) and European Social Movements and Muslim Activism (Palgrave).

He has conducted research on the political participation of ethnic minorities in Britain and France and has studied the local politics of East London, Bradford and Birmingham. He also works on social movements and is an affiliated member of the Centre of Social Movement Studies (COSMOS) at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Florence. His next research project is a study of refugee integration in Scotland, Sweden, Italy and Cyprus.

Prior to joining the University of Stirling he was a Marie Curie Fellow at the University of Padova in Italy. He has also held postdoctoral positions at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) and the University of Edinburgh. Tim has written blog posts on his research for The Conversation, Political Insight and the Washington Post. He has also been interviewed by media outlets including Al Arabiya News, The Herald, The Scotman, Lapido Media, The National (UAE) and To Vima (Greece).
Biography: Panel members

**Vita Zaporozcenko**

Vita Zaporozcenko originally from Latvia, Vita first moved to Scotland in 2009 and has fallen in love with its openness, diversity and acceptance of everyone.

She studied at University of Aberdeen where she was heavily involved in the students’ association. Vita was a member of the Equal Opportunities Committee for three years - for one of which she was the Vice President for Equal Opportunities.

Her political interests include equality, education, housing and health matters. She is a first time candidate running to be a councillor in the Leith Walk ward for the Scottish Liberal Democrats.

@vitazapo

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**Cllr Cameroon Rose**

Councillor Cameron Rose was elected for the Southside/Newington ward in 2007 and again in 2012. Born in the Scottish Borders, he had spent most of his adult life living in Edinburgh where, for 30 years he was a policeman.

He is a father of five children, with an increasing number of grandchildren and he is also involved in the leadership of his local church. He keeps fit cycling over 2000 miles every year - mainly in and around his ward. He has particular interests in international relations, global warming issues and ancient history.

Four years ago he was elected leader of the Conservative councillors in Edinburgh and is standing in May for a third time.

@cameronrose

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Diversity in public life is working towards increasing participation and representation of BME Community in Public Life & the Democratic Process. See more: [www.diversityinpubliclife.wordpress.com](http://www.diversityinpubliclife.wordpress.com)
Biography: Panel members

Amy McNeese-Mechan

Born in Portland, Oregon, Amy has lived in Scotland for over 20 years, as well as in the U.S., Puerto Rico, and Japan, and spent time travelling and working around the world, particularly in India, Indonesia, Mexico, and Italy. She worked for both the Japanese & Scottish governments and now works in the public sector. Her doctorate is in social anthropology from the University of Edinburgh School of Political & Social Sciences. She was Unison Convenor of Communities & Families and is a member of Unison’s Scottish Women’s Committee. Amy is a member of the Edinburgh Women for Independence group. She is currently International Relations Officer for Unison City of Edinburgh. She believe the political arena should reflect the diverse society it represents: black/ethnic minority, female, disabled, young and old. Amy is Political Education Officer for her SNP branch and is currently a city council candidate for Leith Walk ward.

@AMcNeeseMechan

Cllr. Gordon Munro

Gordon joined the Labour Party in 1982. He was a Trade Union representative on Edinburgh Anti-Apartheid Committee and the Chile Solidarity Campaign. He has been involved in anti-racism from 1977 when Rock Against Racism was set up right up to date working with Show Racism the Red Card in Leith. He has written for the Leither magazine on the need to stand up to racism and received hate mail in return. A member of Trade Union Unite; the Cuba Solidarity Campaign; the International Brigade Memorial Trust all of which are an indication of his Internationalist approach. He is a councillor for Leith Ward and standing in may election.
Peter McColl is co-convener of the Scottish Green’s Elections and Campaigns committee, responsible for the oversight of political strategy, election campaigns and selection of candidates for election in the Party. He has run a number of successful campaigns, including the 2009 and 2014 European campaigns, the 2012 Edinburgh Local Authority campaign and the 2016 Holyrood campaigns, all of which resulted in record performance by Greens.

He was Rector of Edinburgh University from 2012-15 and was responsible for a variety of campaigns, including those for financial support for refugee students, better and cheaper student accommodation and an end to zero hour contracts.

He has worked in the voluntary sector, and for the Common Weal think tank. He writes regularly for Open Democracy and other online publications.

@PeterMcColl
Diversity in Public Life project is an extension of ELREC’s Equalities Engagement works, mainly focuses on increasing participation of BME community in public life and the democratic process across Edinburgh and Lothians. The project is funded by the Scottish Government – Promoting Equality and Cohesion Fund.

Since May 2015, the project has undertaken various activities to meet its goals. Last year, we conducted a survey to identify the issues that limit the participation of BME community into public life. Current work involved the provision of intensive support to the target community through a scheme, the Public Life Champion (PLC). Events and workshops jointly hosted by key public agencies have coincided with last Scottish Parliament election and the EU referendum. The project has supported 15 candidates from BME community in relation to their nomination in the recent Community Council election around East Lothian and Edinburgh Council. Ahead of next local authority election, a number of initiatives are currently on going to get more BME people engaged in the election.

Equality engagement project also supports public bodies to engage with diverse communities and community organisations to positively advance the Public Sector Equality Duty in Edinburgh and the Lothians. The project provides capacity-building support to the diverse community groups towards fostering their engagement with the mainstream organisations, political process and public appointments. For more information about our work please visit our project website: www.diversityinpubliclife.wordpress.com.

If you wish to sign up to the Public Life Champion Scheme, contact us by e-mail: mrahman@elrec.org.uk
Part of the diversity in public life project, a survey was conducted last year to identify barriers which restrict minority ethnic community entering into public life. Around 200 people have taken part on this survey, lived or worked around Edinburgh and the Lothians, most of them from Ethnic Minority background. Here are some fascinating facts and figures:

- The survey results show there is a little awareness of the elected representatives and local democratic process among the Lothian’s black and ethnic communities. Less than a third respondents are unaware of who represented them. 71% people don’t know who are their MSP, 67% are not aware of their councillors.

- It has also been well established that people from BME community are less engaged with the mainstream politics in Scotland. Our survey shows more BME people are interested into politics in general but a fewer belong to any Scottish political party. Traditionally, people from different ethnic origin are interested in political process and campaigning. In total 68%, respondents have showed interest into politics but 88% are not a member of any Scottish political party.

- In 2012 local government election, in total 2 BME candidates were stood up at the election among 4 Lothian councils. Only one BME candidate has elected in East Lothian. The total BME population of Edinburgh is over 8%, but no representation of in the council.
- In May 2016 Scottish Parliament election, total 6 BME candidates were stood up in the both regional and constituencies across the Lothian. Among them 2 from Labour, 1 from SNP and 1 from Lib Dem and 2 candidates from RISE. There were no BME candidates stood from the Green or Conservative party. There are two MSPs and a MP from ethnic minority in Scotland.

- At present, there are only 17 Councillors from minority ethnic community out of 1223 councillors from all over Scotland. Only 4 BME women elected out of 17. In 2012, in total 32 cadidates were stood for the election across the 7 local authorities; East Lothian, Dundee, Dumfries and Galloway, Aberdeen, East Dunbertonshire, North Lanarkshire and Glasgow.

- Diversity in public life survey shows, the key barriers are – lack of awareness about democratic and political process, prejudice and discrimination within the political organisations and lack of support provision and encouragement.

Thanks - Mizan Rahman
IS POLITICS RACIST?

Date: 11 April 2017,
Tuesday at 6pm – 8pm,
Venue: Leith Academy, Academy Park,
Edinburgh EH6 8JQ

Diversity in public life project will host this debate and Q & A ahead of next Council Election 2017

Key discussion points:
- Why are minority ethnic community groups still under-represented in political process?
- What can be done to engage better, and encourage participation and representation of BME community in political process?
- What political parties should be doing to encourage involvement?

Speakers:
- Dr Timothy Peace, Dept of Politics, Stirling University: ‘BME representation and participation in Scottish Politics’
- Dr Parveen Akhtar, Lecturer in Politics and International Relations, Aston University: Ethnicity and Politics

Audience need to submit their questions (if any) at the registration. This is a free event but booking is required. (Crèche available, subject to pre booking.)

To book online: http://bit.ly/2mV4njw

Contact: Mizan Rahman, ELREC. Tel: 0131 556 0441
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