

Title

Cultural Diversity in shaping heritage for the 21 Century- the London perspective

Structure of Speech

45 minutes allocated to speech and 30 minutes discussion

Abstract

1. Using three key models of good practice, the paper will set out the key socio political and ethical issues and events that have and continue to shape the cultural diversity of the museums and heritage sector over the past 10-15 years. The paper would approach this from a practical and living experience point of view for the following reasons.
 - (i) First there has been so much written and spoken about the theories, ideologies and academic analysis of the politics of race and heritage but very little guidance and help offered to translate the theoretical framework into every day practice;
 - (ii) Second the topic is an enormous one and therefore I have narrowed it down to one or two highly relevant examples of best practice which could be used in supporting Norway's further work in addressing cultural diversity in its museum sector in various ways;
 - (iii) Third London has a unique history, one of the few if not the most diverse capital in the world. It houses the world's cultures in its museums and in its wider historical environment and landscapes as well as having the worlds population as residents and citizens. So what better than to focus on London's best practices as **well as the pitfalls which Norway should avoid**;
 - (iv) And finally this is a personal story as much as a professional one told from a lived experience. London has been my home since 1969 and during the last four decades or 40 years I have contributed to race relations as an activist, a professional, a Londoner and British citizen. In the 40 years I have worked across the public sector, the health services, local government, central government, independent sector, Non –departmental Government Bodies. I have championed race equality and cultural diversity In all of these services.

2. The paper comprises four parts. .

(i) **Part one – Context setting**

Under this section I am going to briefly sketch out the following.

- Central, regional and local government structures and the independent and voluntary sector responsible for planning and providing cultural services, and in particular museum and heritage services across London;
- London's heritage landscapes in particular the large number of museums across the capital etc.;
- London's population profile: using the 2001 census figures, I will provide some highlights on the patterns of inequalities experienced by the different ethnic minority communities stemming from institutional and other forms of racism and discrimination.

(ii) **Then, in part two, I will look at the following.**

- Using Doudou Diene's work, I will compare the trends of cultural diversity and racial inequalities set out in part one with international trends. Mr. Diene is a Special Rapporteur for the United Nations on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. He is a philosopher and a political scientist and renowned promoter of understanding among cultures. I will use his work to briefly illustrate the trends at international level which bear some resemblance to the London experience and vice versa;
- How these racial inequalities are reflected in the heritage sector by examining the patterns of employment and service delivery as well as partnerships with the African and Asian minority communities and the response from the museum and heritage sector, in particular to the key events that have challenged the institutional racism, and racial inequalities in museums and archives. I will present 2 of the 3 case studies here;

- ❖ **Case Study 1** - The Diversify programme which is a national Positive Action programme being implemented by the Museum Association in partnership with some of the London museums for the past 10 years. More specifically how the 1976 Race Relations Act, in particular the **Positive Action** provision (**not positive discrimination as it is commonly misunderstood or interpreted**) has been used to facilitate this. I will outline the outputs and possibly outcomes and the future of the programme. I may introduce another example of a Local authority museum doing a similar type of programme here and the benefits and disbenefits of such programmes.

 - ❖ **Case Study 2**- The Gain programme is aimed at diversifying governance in particular the Museum Boards/Trustees. This is a partnership programme between the Arts Council of England, Sports council, the Mayor's office/greater London Authority etc. aimed at developing skills of potential applicants/candidates in the minority communities to be able to take part in the museum democratic process and also training for museums trustees to raise their awareness on the need to improve race equality and cultural diversity at all levels of the museum.
- (iii) **The third part** – will focus on the barriers/resistance to change to date and the reasons for them and (possibly what is needed to overcome them)
- (iv) **Part four – The London's way forward** - I will introduce **Case Study 3 – the London Mayor's Commission for African and Asian Heritage** which took evidence on the state of African and Asian Heritage in the London heritage sector and its successor the **Heritage and Diversity Task Force** which was established to embed cultural diversity in the museum and archive sector .
- (v) **And finally in part four, the concluding section**, I will try and draw comparisons between London and Norway which has half of London's population and pose some questions for the audience to mull over for a few minutes before taking questions from the floor.

Throughout the talk, I will try and focus on key examples of policies, processes and practices aimed at improving the delivery of cultural diversity in the areas of governance; work force; service /business delivery; establishing effective

equitable partnerships with the Black and Ethnic Minority communities in London and the development of audience. I will context these areas in three key case studies.

Also as the focus of the Mayors Commission and Task force work relate to African and Asian heritage only (I will explain the reason for this), my references will be to these two groups but wish to stress and reassure the audience that the issues of inequalities in heritage are shared by other minority groups as well. Therefore, the processes and policies being developed are relevant to all minority groups in London.

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