

# We need good administrators but the Guardian's wrong to..

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The [Guardian published an article yesterday](#) on the UK's most powerful people. The headline said:

*Revealed: Britain's most powerful elite is 97% white*

The article noted that the list includes:

- \* Politics and the civil service (the cabinet, Scottish and Welsh devolved administration ministers and the mayors, leaders and CEOs of selected English councils).
- \* Business and professional services (including FTSE 100 CEOs and the heads of law, accountancy, advertising, consulting and publishing firms).
- \* Policing, defence and the judiciary.
- \* Media (editors of newspapers and lifestyle magazines and heads of the TV broadcasters).
- \* Education (vice-chancellors of the 50 top universities).
- \* Sport (premier league managers and heads of sporting bodies).
- \* Arts bodies.
- \* Health (CEOs and chairs of the 50 largest NHS trusts by admissions).

I have to say that I simply do not accept the premise that these are the most powerful people in the country, let alone the elite. It is many years ago that my mentor during my teenage years (although neither he nor I would have recognised the term or that relationship at the time) told me that if I wanted to change the world (and I think he' perceived, quite correctly, that I did) then I should be a poet. And if not a poet then a writer. The last thing I should be, he said, was a politician. They were invariably, he said, at best the interpreters of other people's ideas, always destined to fall short of anyone's hopes in the process. It was the poet who inspired the vision, and that was where the real lay, and not with the administrator.

But the administrator is exactly the type of person that this power list includes. There are the arts administrators, but not the artists. The politicians, but not the political philosophers. The business advisers but not the business people. The editors, but not the columnists.

This is not then the elite of this country. It may be the power brokers. It may be the holders of the purse strings. And I am not surprised by the lack of ethnic diversity in that group. But let's not confuse these people with the elite. They have a certain sort of power. But not much of the sort that changes things, or leaves legacies; let alone the type that delivers recall of lives well lived.

I don't dispute we need good administrators. But let's not confuse them with the elite, please. They're something quite different.