INCI BAYSAL BSc (Hons), MSc

SEEING BEYOND THE HEADLINES: AN EXPLORATION INTO THE MEDIA'S NARRATIVES AND PERSONAL NARRATIVES FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE ETHNICALLY MINORITISED IN BRITISH SOCIETY.

Section A: How are those ethnically minoritised portrayed in the British media? A systematic review.

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Summary of the MRP

Section A:

This review explored how ethnically minoritised individuals are depicted in the British media. Eleven studies were assessed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool; most were methodologically sound. The studies highlighted six themes of how people of ethnic minorities are portrayed: dehumanisation, negative racial stereotypes, threats to national security, economic burdens, voicelessness, and assets to Western society. The predominantly negative portrayal can reinforce racial hierarchies and harm mental health and social relationships. Future research recommendations are discussed.

Section B:

This study examined narratives about Black individuals in the British media and compared them to personal narratives of Black men in 'gangs.' Thematic and structural narrative analysis of eight newspaper articles and four participant interviews revealed four dominant cultural narratives (DCNs) portraying Black individuals as victims, criminals, inferior, and recipients of institutional inaction on racial inequality. Personal narratives primarily focused on experiences of inequality, discrimination, and feeling undervalued. While DCNs and personal narratives shared some themes, personal narratives challenged DCNs by expressing intellectual confidence. An alternative community narrative emerged, emphasising the importance of groups that foster understanding and value. Clinical implications include the potential use of narrative therapy approaches, to strengthen affirmative narratives that accurately reflect Black men's community identities.

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Abstract

Objective: This systematic review aimed to explore how people who are ethnically minoritised are portrayed in the British Media.

Method: A systematic search of four databases was conducted. Only papers which were relevant to the portrayal of individuals from ethnic minorities i.e., other than White, and of which were explicitly from the UK media, were included. The Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) assessed the quality of the included literature.

Results: Eleven studies were included, of which most were methodologically sound: ranging from an overall quality score between 100% to 40% on the MMAT. Six broad themes were identified: that those who are ethnically minoritised are portrayed as 1. Sub-human, 2. A negative racialised stereotype, 3. A threat to national security and White people, 4. An economic burden, 5. As voiceless and powerless, and 6. An asset to Western society.

Conclusions: The review revealed that the British media frequently presents people who are deemed other than White and are ethnically minoritised negatively, reinforcing racial hierarchies. This portrayal can harm mental health, relationships, and a sense of belonging in a White-majority society. Future research should prioritise promoting the voices of those who are ethnically minoritised so that new dominant cultural narratives that form can be more reflective of how such people view themselves.

Keywords: media, portrayal, ethnic minority, discrimination

Introduction

With the advancement of the internet, technology, and social media, almost everyone in the UK consumes some form of media in their everyday lives. The media refers to various forms of content, including newspapers, television, radio, and social media, that disseminate news, information, and entertainment to the public (McQuail, 2010). One of the media's roles is to "inform the public on important, national and international issues that affect the people of the UK" (BBC, n.d.) through the narratives they tell.

Narrative concepts and analysis posit that media narratives are considered 'dominant cultural narratives'; these are stories that are repeatedly told within major institutions that have the power to influence the values, beliefs and identities of most people living in that time and place (Mankowski & Rappaport, 2000). It has been argued that powerful people, groups, and institutions maintain dominant cultural narratives about marginalised groups primarily to maintain their own power (Mankowski & Rappaport, 2000). People belonging to marginalised groups may internalise and believe these narratives, which can greatly impact their identity, either positively or negatively, and exemplifies how power is retained by the powerful (Mankowski & Rappaport, 2000).

The Media, Power, and Racism

Research suggests that power relations are at the core of all media representation (Orgad, 2014). As such, power dynamics impact how the media content presents information which, in turn, influences the spreading of knowledge, values, ideas and beliefs that reinforce those power structures (Orgad, 2014). This means the media can present information as true or important, whilst discrediting or minimising other ideas as false or unpopular (Orgad, 2014). These dynamics can apply to various marginalising characteristics; however, this review will focus on ethnicity.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) posits that 'race' is a socially constructed concept which invents the idea of superior/inferior 'races' (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). CRT also considers racism to be systemic within institutions and law, rather than solely based on individuals' prejudice (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). This in turn embeds and justifies racial hierarchies within systems (like the media) and society (forming dominant cultural narratives), creating and perpetuating the racist ideology. The engrained nature of racial prejudice within powerful systems arguably amplifies its oppressive power. Therefore, CRT is particularly relevant as it brings some of these ideas about the media, societal narratives, and power, into a coherent framework (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

Relevant Psychological Theory

Alongside CRT, theories of stigma and group process can support understanding of the psychological processes relating to racial discrimination. Specifically, Link and Phelan's (2001) stigmatisation model proposes that stigma exists when four elements co-occur: 1) labelling, 2) stereotyping, 3) separating, 4) status loss, discrimination, and social rejection. Link & Phelan (2001) argue that these four elements occur in the context of a power differential where one group devalues another. Firstly, labelling is the social process whereby salient differentiating characteristics are identified and categorised into groups e.g., 'races'. Secondly, each labelled group is linked with certain negative stereotypes. Thirdly, the groups who are linked to undesirable characteristics (via stereotyping) are separated into 'us' and 'them', in which the undesirable group is seen as 'inferior'. Fourthly, these processes of labelling, stereotyping, setting apart, and linking to undesirable characteristics, inherently creates discrimination and leads to 'othering' of the minorities who are set as the powerless and the 'inferior'. The latter group becomes socially excluded and those in power justify the reason for the exclusion to be because of the undesirable characteristic that led to the stigma

e.g., ‘race’. More importantly, power must be present within the situation to allow this process to occur (Link & Phelan, 2001). Stigmatisation theory can support some of the psychological process behind CRT and racial discrimination (Link & Phelan, 2001), as well as shed light on how the media may exercise its power against stigmatised ethnic groups (Ramasubramanian & Yadlin-Segal, 2017).

Moreover, group process theory highlights the human tendency to seek a sense of belonging within a majority group, typically the group with the perceived power (Forsyth, 2014); that is, the White ethnicity in the UK. According to this theory, belonging to this majority group provides psychological safety and protection against rejection, with racial discrimination functioning as a rejection from the majority group (White) (Tajfel & Turner, 2004), which can significantly harm an individual’s mental health (Pascoe & Richman, 2009).

Based on the above-described theories, it would be predicted that these stigmatising and othering processes would influence the portrayal of those who are ethnically minoritised in news media, and that such stigmatised representations would, in turn, lead to internalised stigma and harm to mental health of the minority groups concerned. However, the portrayal of ethnic minorities in the UK media has yet to be reviewed.

The Current Review

Therefore, this review is interested in exploring how power operates in the UK media by exploring how those who are ethnically minoritised are portrayed. The Office of National Statistics classifies ethnicity into five categories: White, Asian, Black, Mixed or Multiple, and Other ethnic group. For the purpose of this review, people from ‘ethnic minorities’ is defined as anyone who identifies within a category other than White. Although Islam is not considered an ethnicity per se, Islamophobia has been defined “as a form of racial

discrimination" in line with UN definition of racism (Elahi & Khan, 2017, p. 7), and hence it was deemed important and relevant to this review's focus. Whilst it is acknowledged that there may be groups identified as White who are minoritised (e.g., Traveller communities, antisemitism), these were beyond the scope of this review, but equally warrant rigorous research.

To the author's knowledge, there has not been a systematically conducted review exploring how the UK media portrays those who are ethnically minoritised. There has, however, been research internationally that has explored these portrayals. Research on media representations in Canada (Mahtani, 2001), the Netherlands (Lubbers et al., 1998), the United States (Tukachinsky et al., 2015), Switzerland (Bonfadelli, 2007), and Australia (Phillips & Tapsall, 2007) consistently revealed that people from ethnic minorities were underrepresented and often depicted negatively. In Canada, such groups were often depicted as threatening and criminal (Mahtani, 2001). Swiss media commonly portrayed foreigners, asylum seekers, and migrants, particularly those with Islamic backgrounds, as "strangers," reinforcing stereotypes and societal prejudices (Bonfadelli, 2007). Similarly, Australian television news frequently characterised ethnic minority groups as "mad," "bad," "sad," or "other," which authors argued perpetuated an "us versus them" mentality against the "Anglo" majority (Phillips & Tapsall, 2007).

This review is grounded in the NHS value 'everyone counts', as it collates research that can contribute to clinical psychologists working in a more culturally informed and competent way. More specifically, it is important that UK clinical psychologists have a good understanding of the media portrayal of people who are ethnically minoritised, not least because this will be of relevance to developing contextualised formulations with service-users from these communities. The relevance of this review and its findings to clinical psychology are considered further in the discussion.

Review Question and Objectives

To begin to redress the gap in literature, the following review question was proposed:

RQ.1: How are people who are ethnically minoritised portrayed within the British media?

The objective of this review is to understand how the media portrays people of ethnic minorities.

The SPIDER (Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research type) framework was adopted to develop and define the key concepts in the review question (Table 1).

Table 1

SPIDER Framework of Key Concepts of the Review Question

Sample:	People who are ethnically minoritised (i.e., other than White ethnic groups such as Black, Asian, Arabs, and Mixed. Muslim included).
Phenomenon of Interest:	The portrayal/representation of these groups within media content (e.g., newspapers, television, social media), within the UK.
Design:	Relevant published primary research literature of both qualitative and quantitative research design.
Evaluation:	Narratives, stories, portrayal, representation, perception, perspective of the target population concerned.
Research type:	Qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods peer-reviewed studies. Studies published between 2013 to 2023.

Method

Review Design

This is a systematic narrative review based on a systematic search of the literature. Hence, it will identify and critically evaluate literature that supports the understanding of how the media portrays individuals who are from ethnic minority backgrounds.

The review adopted a social constructionist position; this argues that individuals make sense of themselves and their world through the lenses of language and the social, historical context of which information is presented (Galbin, 2014).

Search Strategy

Initial scoping searches informed the search terms. The SPIDER framework also informed and standardised the search strategy. The SPIDER tool was favoured over the PICO (Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome) tool as it is better suited to searching for qualitative papers (Cook et al., 2012). For example, the 'Evaluation' of the SPIDER framework is more applicable to "unobservable, subjective constructs" (p. 1437) such as perceptions, than 'Outcomes' within PICO. As the review question does not focus on a specific study methodology, the 'Design' and 'Research type' elements of the SPIDER framework were not included in the search strategy. This also allowed for the search to capture a wider more inclusive number of studies.

Preliminary searches included a further search criterion of "UK OR Britain OR England OR United Kingdom OR British", however, this narrowed the output significantly and appeared to exclude relevant articles, hence this was not used in the final search strategy. Three domains of the SPIDER framework were combined to form the final search strategy used (Table 2).

Table 2

Search Strategy Aided by the SPIDER Framework

Sample (S)	Ethnic OR ethnic minorities OR Black OR Muslim OR race OR Black Asian and ethnic minorities OR BAME OR immigrants OR migrants OR minorities OR religion OR ethnic group
Phenomenon of Interest (PI)	Television OR social media OR media OR news OR public OR stories OR narratives OR culture OR popular culture
Evaluation (E)	Representation OR portrayal OR perception OR perspective

The search terms were combined using Boolean operators 'OR' for terms within each search criteria (e.g., within S, PI and E), and 'AND' between each row of search criteria (e.g., between S, PI and E), in order to retrieve all studies containing any of the search terms. 'Advanced search' or 'multi-field search' options were selected, according to the database layout, to allow for several search criteria/fields (i.e., each row in Table 2) to be entered for the literature search. The 'title' and 'abstract' were selected as the field in which the search terms were screened from.

PsycINFO, Scopus, Web of Science and ASSIA databases were used for their relevance to the subject area, that is, more aligned with the psychological, behavioural, social sciences, technology, arts, and humanities. The search was conducted between the 15th and 18th of October 2023.

The range of dates were limited to studies published between 2013 to 2023; this ensured the study remained credible and reflective of the recent media landscape. The search was limited to only identify peer-reviewed journal articles.

Study Selection

Titles and abstracts were screened and assessed for their relevance to the review question, and then full texts read for final inclusion. When selecting studies for inclusion in the review, the criteria in Table 3 were used to assess their eligibility. No second reviewer was used. The reference sections of relevant articles were searched to yield further relevant studies. The PRISMA diagram (Figure 1) illustrates the review process and the number of records at each stage.

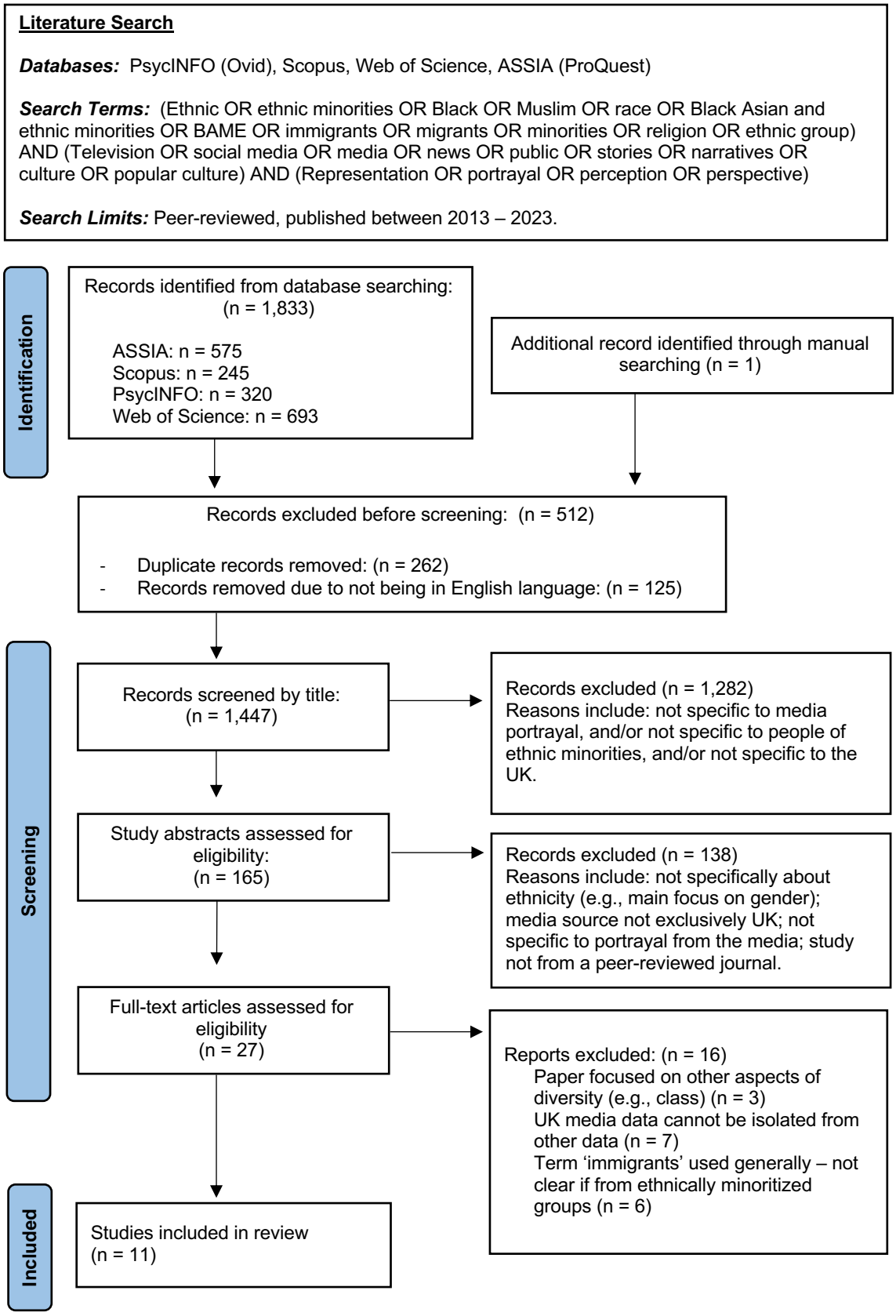
Table 3

Inclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria
Published in the English language.
Published between 2013 and 2023.
Published in a peer-reviewed journal.
Study must be based on UK media content. ▪ N.B. Where more than one country's media was analysed, only findings relevant to UK were included in this review if the information presented was clearly distinguishable from other countries' findings. ▪ Media content was taken broadly to include any type of content consumed that forms part of our societal discourse i.e., sports, entertainment, political speeches, and legal proceedings.
Study must be about individuals from ethnic minorities i.e., other than White, as per the definition outlined in the introduction. ▪ N.B. Where it was not clear whether, for example, 'immigrants' were from ethnically minoritised backgrounds, the study was not included.
All research design methodology
All type of media

Figure 1

PRISMA Diagram: Process of Selection of Reviewed Papers



Quality Appraisal

A core component of a review includes a process of critique or appraisal of the research evidence (McArthur et al., 2015). This evaluation aims to gauge the study's methodological rigor and how effectively it has considered the potential for bias in its design, implementation, and analysis.

All papers were evaluated using the Mixed Methods Assessment Appraisal Tool (MMAT; Hong et al., 2018). The MMAT is designed for use with systematic mixed study reviews (Hong et al., 2018). As this review included studies from all research designs, the MMAT was deemed suitable over other critical appraisal tools that often focus on one methodology. The evaluation criteria for the MMAT are illustrated in Table 4.

Firstly, all studies were appraised using the initial two screening questions of the MMAT: 1) Are there clear research questions? 2) Does the collected data allow us to address the research question? All studies were rated ‘yes’ for both screening questions, indicating the MMAT was appropriate to evaluate the studies (Hong et al., 2018). Secondly, an algorithm was employed to establish the necessary study design for evaluating each study (Appendix A; Hong et al., 2018). Thirdly, each study was assessed against the five criteria according to their appropriate study design (see Table 5). The MMAT overall quality scores range from 0% (no criteria are met) to 100% (all five criteria are met).

There was no second reviewer used in the quality appraisal process.

Table 4

Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), version 2018

Category of study designs	**Methodological quality criteria**	**Responses**			
		Yes	No	Can't tell	Comments
Screening questions (for all types)	S1. Are there clear research questions?				
	S2. Do the collected data allow to address the research questions?				
	Further appraisal may not be feasible or appropriate when the answer is 'No' or 'Can't tell' to one or both screening questions.				
1. Qualitative	1.1. Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer the research question?				
	1.2. Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the research question?				
	1.3. Are the findings adequately derived from the data?				
	1.4. Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by data?				
	1.5. Is there coherence between qualitative data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation?				
2. Quantitative randomized controlled trials	2.1. Is randomization appropriately performed?				
	2.2. Are the groups comparable at baseline?				
	2.3. Are there complete outcome data?				
	2.4. Are outcome assessors blinded to the intervention provided?				
	2.5 Did the participants adhere to the assigned intervention?				
3. Quantitative non-randomized	3.1. Are the participants representative of the target population?				
	3.2. Are measurements appropriate regarding both the outcome and intervention (or exposure)?				
	3.3. Are there complete outcome data?				
	3.4. Are the confounders accounted for in the design and analysis?				
	3.5. During the study period, is the intervention administered (or exposure occurred) as intended?				
4. Quantitative descriptive	4.1. Is the sampling strategy relevant to address the research question?				
	4.2. Is the sample representative of the target population?				
	4.3. Are the measurements appropriate?				
	4.4. Is the risk of nonresponse bias low?				
	4.5. Is the statistical analysis appropriate to answer the research question?				
5. Mixed methods	5.1. Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question?				
	5.2. Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question?				
	5.3. Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted?				
	5.4. Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed?				
	5.5. Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?				

Table 5

Quality Appraisal of Studies

Study	Criteria from the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool															Overall Quality Score
	Qualitative					Quantitative Descriptive					Mixed Methods					
	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	
Gill & Harrison (2015)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y											100%
Cooper et al., (2020)						Y	Y	Y	Y	Y						100%
Shabbir et al., (2013)											Y	Y	Y	CT	Y	80%
Połońska-Kimunguyi (2022)											Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	100%
Lazović (2021)											Y	Y	Y	CT	Y	80%
Aidi (2021)	CT	N	Y	Y	CT											40%
Sarac (2020)											Y	CT	Y	Y	Y	80%

Gavins & Simpson (2015)	Y	N	Y	Y	N											60%
Brooks (2017)											Y	Y	Y	N	CT	60%
Brown & Richards (2016)	Y	N	Y	Y	Y											80%
Moosavi (2014)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y											100%

Note. Categories 2 and 3 (quantitative randomised controlled (trials) and quantitative non-randomised) were removed from the table as no studies were reviewed used these study designs.

Key:

Y = Met criterion; N = Did not meet criterion; CT = Can't tell

Approach to Analysis

A narrative synthesis of the data was employed; this felt most appropriate due to the majority of papers using a qualitative and mixed methods research design. The following tools and techniques for a robust narrative synthesis were drawn from Arai et al. (2007):

- Textual descriptions – This means identifying key study characteristics and results to support the critique.
- Tabulation – This means including key extracted data to be displayed in tabular form.
- Groupings and clustering – This means organising the findings by particular characteristics e.g., intervention type, context, population, or outcomes. This review organised themes by context.

This was an iterative process by which studies were repeatedly compared between, developing, and altering themes. Both textual descriptions and tabulation are applied in the 'Overview of Included Studies' sub-section and within Tables 6 and 7. A narrative synthesis of the data is structured around common 'groups and clusters' of themes that appeared within the studies.

Reflexivity Statement

The lead researcher acknowledges that whilst their background as an ethnic minority in the UK offers valuable insights into nuanced forms of representation that might be overlooked by others, there is also an awareness of the potential for bias in interpretation.

Results

Overview of Included Studies

The database resulted in 1,833 papers in total, with 11 of them being included in the review (see Figure 1). An additional paper was identified by examining the reference sections. The aims of the papers varied greatly. The majority of papers examined the media's representation of individuals from ethnic minorities in a broader context, considering factors like geographical regions (e.g., South Asian, East Asian; Brooks, 2017; Gill & Harrison, 2015), immigration status (e.g., other than White refugee, asylum seekers; Cooper et al., 2020; Lazović, 2021; Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022), skin colour (e.g., Black; Gavins & Simpson, 2015; Shabbir et al., 2013), or religion (e.g., Muslim; Brown & Richards, 2016; Aidi, 2021; Moosavi, 2014). Some papers had a narrower focus, concentrating on smaller groupings (e.g., Yazidi women; Sarac, 2020).

Studies typically analysed newspaper articles; however, a range of other media content was also investigated including television, sport, comedy entertainment, and politics. A total of 2,915 newspaper articles, 622 television adverts and 111 cabinet minister speeches were some of the data that contributed to the findings of this review. Additional data was difficult to quantify as such, and has therefore been summarised in the list below:

- Three newspapers where individual keywords/terms were searched for (Lazović, 2021).
- Numerous stand-up comedy shows – exact number used is unclear (Aidi, 2021).
- One racialised television incident in sport – the exact legal proceedings/media reports covered in the study are unclear. The exact number of data sources used is also unclear (Gavins & Simpson, 2015).

- No specific media content/event(s)/quantity of media analysed – participants were asked to draw on their perceptions of media portrayals they had consumed, more generally (Moosavi, 2014).

The lack of clarity on some of the aspects of these studies has been highlighted within the subsequent quality assessment section.

Of the 11 included studies, five were qualitative, one was quantitative (Cooper et al., 2020) and five were a mixed method design (Brooks, 2017; Lazović, 2021; Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022; Sarac, 2020; Shabbir et al., 2013). A range of data analysis approaches were used with content analysis (Brooks, 2017; Cooper et al., 2020; Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022; Sarac, 2020; Shabbir et al., 2013) and discourse analysis (Brooks, 2017; Gavins & Simpson, 2015; Lazović, 2021; Moosavi, 2014; Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022) being the most common. Two studies used both content analysis and discourse analysis (Brooks, 2017; Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022).

The years covered in the media analysis ranged between 2001 to 2020. This varied from 42 days of analysis to 18 years, with the average duration of analysis being five years per study. One study did not specify what year the media data was from, only that it was taken from "42 consecutive late-Autumn days" (Shabbir et al., 2013, p. 430).

Table 6 provides a summary of the characteristics of all studies included in the review.

Table 6

Summary of Main Characteristics of the Included Studies

Study no.	Author (year)	Research topic and aims	Key finding(s)	Type of media	Sample	Ethnic minority group of interest	Year(s) of media analysed	Data collection method	Research Design	Method of analysis
1	Gill & Harrison (2015)	Discusses the discourse of the British media's portrayal of South Asian men as perpetrators of sexual violence against white victims.	The paper argues that the British media's portrayal of these grooming cases is not just about reporting on crime but is also shaped by broader cultural and racial narratives that frame South Asian men as a collective threat to societal values.	Newspapers	5 newspapers, 122 articles	South Asian men	2012 – 2013	Lexis-Nexis - extensive electronic database of national and international newspapers.	Qualitative	Thematic analysis
2	Cooper et al., (2020)	Looked at how asylum seekers from different regions are represented.	In 2017, UK media continued to portray asylum seekers negatively, especially those from the Middle East & North Africa region, associating them with terrorism and crime despite low actual involvement. Economic concerns dominated the	Newspapers	2,018 total articles. 974 from 15 national UK newspapers; 1,044 from 11 news websites	Europe, Asia, Africa (non-Middle East North Africa (MENA)), MENA, North America, South America[a]	2017	Lexis-Nexis	Quantitative	Content analysis

			coverage, and only 20% of stories included migrant voices, leading to a lack of empathy and understanding in the media.							
3	Shabbir et al., (2013)	Determine the preponderance of TV adverts with subtle racial bias.	The study reveals that 31.5% of U.K. TV adverts feature Black actors, but racial imagery is prevalent in 68.3% of these adverts. Subtle racial biases in adverts now exceed overt racism, with popular adverts often masking negative stereotypes.	TV advertising	622 UK television adverts	Black	*Unclear which year.* 42 consecutive days of TV analysis.	Analysis of audio and video recording.	Mixed methods	Dimensional qualitative research (DQR) content analysis
4	Połońska-Kimunguyi (2022)	Examining dynamics within press coverage of arrivals of non-Western migrants and refugees in the UK. Investigate the historical creation of 'race' and the role of discourse in the	Both left-wing and right-wing newspapers portray migrants in a way that perpetuates colonial-era racial hierarchies and frames them either as threats or passive victims. It argues that media discourse reinforces racial stereotypes and ignores historical	Newspapers	400 articles, 2 newspapers	Non-Western migrants and refugees	2015 - 2018	*Unclear*	Mixed methods	Content analysis and critical discourse analysis

		creation and perpetuation of racism.	context and migrant voices, sustaining racial inequality and colonial power dynamics.							
5	Lazović (2021)	Examine the issue by both quantitatively and qualitatively comparing the structures used to describe refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and immigrants.	British media coverage of refugees and migrants from 2015 to 2016 frequently employs dehumanizing language and metaphors, reinforcing negative stereotypes and presenting refugees as threats or burdens.	Newspapers	3 newspapers *(unclear on number of articles as individual words were searched)*	White and other than White RASIM* (only the latter is relevant to this review).	2015 - 2016	English Timestamped JSI web corpus	Mixed methods	Conceptual metaphor theory, critical discourse analysis (CDA) and corpus linguistics
6	Aidi (2021)	Review and discuss certain techniques and approaches that have been used by stand-up comedians to counter predominant and discriminatory perceptions of the “Other”.	British comedians use stand-up comedy to challenge and subvert common stereotypes of Muslims—such as the "terrorist," the "veiled and oppressed woman," and the interchangeable use of "Arab" and "Muslim." By highlighting these stereotypes' absurdities and	Stand-up comedy	Public stand-up comedy shows. *Unclear on quantity.*	Muslims	2003 - 2020	Analysis of audio and video recording	Qualitative	Descriptive analysis of stand-up comedy (not specified)

			offering nuanced cultural perspectives, these comedians aim to shift public perceptions and combat Islamophobia. It argues how comedy can serve as a tool for social critique and education, effectively addressing and disrupting harmful stereotypes in popular culture.							
7	Sarac (2020)	Illustrate the media portrayal of violence against Yazidi women and the impact on public perception.	UK national newspapers predominantly portray Yazidi women as victims of ISIS violence, focusing on their suffering and abuse while largely neglecting their agency, resistance, and activism. This victim-centric portrayal reinforces their passive role and impacts public opinion and policy by failing to fully acknowledge their	Newspapers	190 articles from 6 UK national newspapers	Yazidi women	2014 - 2019	Lexis Nexis	Mixed methods	Quantitative content analysis, Linguistic forms

			resilience and coping mechanisms.							
8	Gavins & Simpson (2015)	Analysis of an allegedly racist event by a professional footballer and its subsequent mediatised and legal ramifications.	Despite the clear racism in Terry's language, the initial legal ruling did not classify it as a racial insult, whereas the Football Association later imposed sanctions. The study reveals how language, power, and cultural context influenced the portrayal and resolution of the incident, reflecting broader issues of race and identity in football.	Sport – football match	Written legal rulings by both The Chief Magistrate and by the FA's Regulatory Commission. *Unclear on exact quantity.*	Black	2011 - 2013	Analysis of video recording, various public legal rulings, social media and print and broadcast media.	Qualitative	Discourse analysis, cognitive linguistics, linguistic pragmatics
9	Brooks (2017)	Explores the ways in which East Asian* students were represented in the UK press.	Media often depict East Asian education as inferior and focus on the economic benefits of East Asian students to the UK, treating them as valuable consumers.	Newspapers	185 articles published in a national or regional UK newspapers.	East Asian	2010 - 2015	Nexis database	Mixed methods	Quantitative content analysis, Discourse analysis
10	Brown & Richards (2016)	International Muslim students' perceptions of media	International Muslim students in Britain perceive the media's portrayal of Islam as overwhelmingly	*N/A – not within the scope of the research aims*	18 participants (17 were Arab, African, Turkish;	Muslim	2010 - 2015	Interviews (semi-structured)	Qualitative	Thematic analysis

		portrayals of Islam.	negative, associating it with conservatism, poverty, and terrorism. They criticise the media for homogenising Muslims and failing to provide a balanced view of Islam, calling for more responsible reporting.		only 1 was White (Russian))					
11	Moosavi (2014)	Examine how British Cabinet ministers of the Labour Government represented Muslims and Islam in speeches.	Politicians often perpetuated Islamophobia through generalisations, stereotypes, and negative portrayals, framing Muslims as outsiders, threats, and failures in integration. This representation often conflated the broader Muslim community with extremism, and suggested that these negative portrayals were part of a broader political strategy rather than personal beliefs.	Political speeches	111 speeches from 16 Labour Cabinet ministers	Muslim	2001 - 2007	Search on various governmental websites and news media archives. *Not clear about whether this was audio, video or text.*	Qualitative	Discourse analysis

[a]As the study reported on the nationalities of refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, and migrants (RASIM), information pertaining to other than White RASIM was included in this review. Thus, the study was able to be included in the review.

[b] 'East Asia' refers to the eastern sub-region of the continent of Asia, based on the classification system used by the United Nations. Eastern Asia is comprised of: China (including Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan), Korea (North and South), Japan and Mongolia.

Quality Assessment

Overall, most of the studies reviewed were deemed to be of good quality according to the MMAT quality appraisal tool used. Four of the 11 studies scored 100%, four scored 80%, two scored 60%, and one scored 40% using the MMAT (Table 5). The main methodological concerns were that for half of the mixed methods studies, the 'divergences and inconsistencies between qualitative and quantitative results' (criteria 5.4 on the MMAT) were unclear. Three of five of the qualitative studies did not explain the method of data collection, rather just explained what data and type was used. Further descriptions of the strengths and limitations of the studies are listed in Table 7. The partisanship of the newspaper samples was also considered in appraising potential bias. Several of the studies included samples that were predominantly from a right-wing political perspective (Cooper et al., 2020; Gill & Harrison, 2015; Sarac, 2020), thus bringing into question how representative the samples of media analysed were of the UK media in general. This will be considered further in the results and discussion sections.

Table 7

Strengths and Limitations of the Included Studies

Study	Strengths	Limitations
Gill & Harrison (2015)	▪ Two authors coded for the thematic analysis. The researchers met to discuss discrepancies in their coding to reach a consensus. ▪ There was an acknowledgement of the differing representations of South Asian men as a result of the political alignment of the newspaper.	▪ Of the five newspapers sampled, four were from right-leaning and one was from a left-leaning political viewpoint. Hence the sample may include bias and not be representative of the UK media in general. ▪ The sample was limited to five newspapers however the rationale for this was not stated.
Cooper et al., (2020)	▪ A large sample of newspaper articles was used (2,018), including a range of both broadsheet and tabloid (online) press. ▪ Three coders were used within the content analysis which yielded a high inter-rater reliability with some having full 100% agreement. ▪ The codes used within the content analysis were developed through existing literature.	▪ Most of the newspapers used were newspapers known to have a right-wing political perspective. Hence, the sample may not be representative of the UK media more generally. ▪ Only one year of data was sampled (2017), again compromising the generalisability of findings.
Shabbir et al., (2013)	▪ The research questions and sampling method were clearly explained.	▪ It was unclear as to which year the adverts were sampled from.

	▪ Pilot study conducted for viability of research design. ▪ Three coders were used in the content analysis yielding a high inter-rater reliability (<0.80).	▪ It was also unclear as to which UK TV channels the adverts were selected from.
Połońska-Kimunguyi (2022)	▪ Both newspapers used for selecting articles were from differing political orientations and therefore allowing for a less biased sample.	▪ A small range of newspapers were used in the analysis (2 newspapers).
Lazović (2021)	▪ The partisanship of newspapers was considered, including one newspaper from a right-wing, one from a non-aligned political view, and one from a left-wing, making it a less biased sample.	▪ Short timescale of data used (2 years). Despite this it was purposely picked to reflect the time of the "migrant crisis" (p.15) and Brexit.
Aidi (2021)	▪ The stand-up material analysed spanned a large timescale – 17 years. ▪ The findings were rooted in direct examples and quotes from the comedy shows analysed.	▪ The quantity of material used was not specified. ▪ The exact qualitative approach to data collection and analysis was unclear.
Sarac (2020)	▪ Drew on strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to support a nuanced understanding of the research questions posed. ▪ Both findings from the mixed methodology were integrated and interpreted well together.	▪ Political stance of the six newspapers included were bias towards a majority right-leaning perspective (four newspapers). One newspaper was non-aligned, and one was left-leaning in political perspective. ▪ Interrater coding was not utilised for content analysis.

Gavins & Simpson (2015)	▪ A broad range of media content of the concerned incident was analysed (publicised legal rulings, social media, print and broadcast media).	▪ The strategy for data collection and the exact content used in the final analysis were unclear.
Brooks (2017)	▪ The findings were rooted in direct examples and quotes from the newspaper articles analysed.	▪ Interrater coding not utilised for content analysis. ▪ The newspapers used were not stated.
Brown & Richards (2016)	▪ Participants were from a range of nationalities and gender, making the findings more representative. ▪ The findings were rooted in direct examples and quotes from the participants interviewed.	▪ It was difficult to draw direct conclusions as to whether some of the views they expressed were directly linked to the portrayal in UK media, as some participants reported consuming international media sources. This meant answering their primary research aim was compromised.
Moosavi (2014)	▪ 6 years of data was analysed. ▪ Included consideration of what was not said as well, as he argues this also contributed to the discourse about people of Muslim faith.	▪ Unclear strategy of how the political speeches were selected. ▪ Only looked at one political perspective (Labour Party), compromising the representativeness of the findings more generally.

RQ.1: How are people who are ethnically minoritised portrayed in the British media?

The 11 articles included in this review were analysed and the content grouped into prevailing themes following the approach by Arai et al. (2007). The analysis revealed six themes: that ethnic minorities are portrayed as (1) sub-human, (2) a negative racialised stereotype, (3) a threat to national security and White people, (4) an economic burden, (5) voiceless and powerless, and (6) an asset to Western society. Table 8 provides an overview of the themes, subthemes and the corresponding studies that contributed to each.

Table 8

Description of Themes/Subthemes and the Studies Contributing to Each

Theme *Subtheme*	**Description of Theme/Subtheme**	**Contributing Studies**
1. Implied 'Sub-Humanity': Creating a Racial Hierarchy	Media including political discourse dehumanised ethnically minoritised groups by using language that reduced their humanity i.e., described them in numbers, and used terms that strip them of individuality and dignity. This language reinforced a racial hierarchy that positioned such groups as inferior.	Brooks, 2017; Gavins & Simpson, 2015; Lazović, 2021; Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022; and Moosavi, 2014.
The Use of Metaphors and Associated Imagery	The use of dehumanising metaphors to describe migrants was observed by likening such groups to natural disasters, property, and animals. These metaphors portrayed people who are ethnically minoritised as dangerous, passive, or sub-human.	Brooks, 2017; Lazović, 2021; and Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022.
2. As Negative Racialised Stereotypes	The use of racial biases and stereotypes were often embedded in the media in subtle yet impactful ways. Islamophobic stereotypes were particularly common.	Aidi, 2021; Brown & Richards, 2016; Gill & Harrison, 2015; Moosavi, 2014; Sarac, 2020; and Shabbir et al., 2013
The Patriarchal Muslim/Asian Society and the Oppression of Women	Asian men were often portrayed as inherently sexist or criminal, and Muslim women as universally oppressed. Such representations contributed to harmful generalisations and perpetuated biased stereotypes.	Aidi, 2021; Brown & Richards, 2016; Gill & Harrison, 2015; Moosavi, 2014; and Sarac, 2020.

3. A Threat to National Security and White People	The use of language and imagery linked ethnically minoritised individuals to crime and terrorism and portrayed them as inherently dangerous. This portrayal contributed to a narrative that such minoritised groups pose a risk to national safety and the wellbeing of White citizens.	Aidi, 2021; Brooks, 2017; Brown & Richards, 2016; Cooper et al., 2020; Gill & Harrison, 2015; Lazović, 2015; Moosavi, 2014; and Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022.
"Muslims are Terrorists" Stereotype	The media coverage frequently linked Muslim and Arab communities to terrorism, particularly after 9/11. An example of British government discourse tended to generalise the threat from Islamic extremists to all Muslims.	Aidi, 2021; Brown & Richards, 2016; Moosavi, 2014; and Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022.
4. An Economic Burden	The media depicted social welfare benefits as a key reason for migrants move to Britain, portraying them as negatively impacting housing, public services, and job opportunities.	Brooks, 2017 and Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022.
5. As Voiceless and Powerless	Media coverage frequently excluded the voices of ethnically minoritised individuals, failing to represent their own lives and perspectives. This theme highlighted a broader issue of silencing and a lack of agency for these communities in media portrayals.	Brown & Richards, 2016; Cooper et al., 2020; Gavins & Simpson, 2015; Lazović, 2015; Moosavi, 2014; Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022; and Sarac, 2020.
6. As an Asset to the Western Society	Some media portrayals of ethnically minoritised individuals highlighted their positive impact, focusing on their economic contributions, academic dedication, and role in strengthening international relations, particularly with East Asia.	Brooks, 2017 and Sarac, 2020.

1. Implied 'Sub-Humanity': Creating a Racial Hierarchy

Five out of 11 studies identified media using dehumanising language to describe ethnically minoritised groups. Dehumanisation is defined as "the process of depriving people of human qualities, personality or dignity and the process of making human beings seem like objects" (p. 117; Lazović, 2021). In their discourse and content analysis of 400 newspaper articles, Połońska-Kimunguyi (2022) reported that the articles mostly identified 'migrants' (from the Middle East and Africa) in numeric terms, rather than their personal characteristics like names, professions, or other human qualities. Lazović (2021) found that large numbers often preceded the description of ethnically minoritised refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, and migrants (RASIM) which he noted "transformed human beings into anonymous masses" (p. 133) and "faceless numbers" (p. 134) detracting from the portrayal of real people with life stories. Examples used in newspapers included "numerous" (p. 5), "they arrive in high numbers" (p. 5), "mass exodus" (p. 6; Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022), "40,000 refugees" (p. 133; Lazović, 2021), and "a huge influx" (p. 2371; Brooks, 2017).

Lazović's (2021) discourse analysis and corpus linguistics study found verbs used in conjunction with ethnically minoritised RASIM words identified the word "dump" (p. 129). An article in the Telegraph stated, "Germany has accused Austria of dumping asylum-seekers near its border". The action of dumping is typically associated with waste or garbage, again depicting people as being 'sub-human'.

Both studies by Połońska-Kimunguyi (2022) and Lazović's (2021) utilised a mixed methods design where the different components of the study were effectively integrated to answer the research questions; they were deemed to be methodologically sound as per the MMAT (100% and 80, respectively). Both studies also included samples that considered newspapers from a balanced distribution of political perspectives, including right-wing, non-aligned, and left-wing, thereby reducing the potential for bias in the findings.

The case of John Terry, captain of the English football team, racially abusing Anton Ferdinand; a Black footballer, by calling him a "fucking Black cunt" (p. 726; Gavins & Simpson, 2015) during a televised match highlighted injustices towards people of colour. A discourse analysis of the legal proceedings found the phrase was highly scrutinised by the Chief Magistrate (a White man) as to whether the racist language used "intended to be an insult" (p. 723; Gavins & Simpson, 2015). This case concluded with John Terry's acquittal of a racially aggravated public order offence. This reflected a tendency by the media and legal system to minimise or condone overtly racist behaviour, which is in line with the definition of dehumanisation: the treatment of someone that is "degrading" or that "obscures or demeans a person's humanity" (p. 117; Lazović, 2021). Although the sample included a broad range of media content to analyse this incident, the strategy for data selection was unclear, and it was therefore difficult to ascertain which media content pertained to certain findings. This may result in more tentative findings of this study.

The discourse analysis by Moosavi (2014) found that speeches by Labour Cabinet ministers often spoke *about* people of a Muslim faith, rather than engaging in direct communication with this community. He identified ministers regularly using pronouns such as 'us/we' when referring to Britain, and 'they/them' when talking about Muslims, even British Muslims, "casting Muslims as outsiders rather than as respected citizens" (p. 669, Moosavi, 2014), a further degrading notion. An example included a suggestion from a minister that Muslim children needed to be taught "about how to live out the values of justice, peace and respect both as a person of faith and as a citizen" (p. 660). Moosavi (2014) argues this positions Muslim people as opposed to Britishness, and inferior to Britishness, as people who need to be "taught morality" and who are "in need of being civilised" (p. 660, Moosavi, 2014). This suggests that people of Muslim faith do not hold such cultural values, a narrative that is particularly dehumanising. This study was considered to be of good quality

(MMAT score of 100%), however only considered discourse from one political perspective (Labour), which limits its findings' transferability.

The Use of Metaphors and Associated Imagery. Metaphors that liken migrants from minoritised backgrounds to natural disasters were employed by several newspapers; the words "flow", "wave", "surge", "catastrophe", "flood" and "disaster" (p. 5) were used to portray people's movements (Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022) and conveyed the notion of danger (Lazović, 2021). Water metaphors like "slow the current wave of refugees" (p. 132) were also observed and indicate the uncontrollable nature of people's movements and symbolise the loss of control over immigration (Lazović, 2021). Emotive language associated with natural disasters, rather than neutral terms (such as travel/migrate/move/arrive), transform lives into an "unstoppable and uncontrollable" (p. 134) mass. It also implies the arrival of or existence of people who are migrating to an overwhelming disaster, which is particularly dehumanising (Lazović, 2015).

The metaphor that "*refugees are property or commodity"* (p. 128) was observed repeatedly (Lazović, 2015) the term RASIM was frequently coupled with "resettle/redistribute/relocate", which Lazović (2015) argued is an example of mechanistic dehumanisation i.e., that one is passive and inert. While the word 'resettlement' may not always be used in a manner that risks dehumanising people who are refugees, (UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency, 2023), Lazović (2015) identified the use here as dehumanising as it implies the "notion of passiveness" (p. 128; Lazović, 2015), where "EU officials make decisions about their future, resettling and relocating them to different places" which "strip[s people] of their benefits and human rights" (p. 128; Lazović, 2015) and autonomy.

A further dehumanising metaphor, "*refugees are animals/insects"* (Lazović, 2015, p. 132) was identified through the term 'repel' often used in conjunction with insects: "On Monday

migrants were repelled with teargas" (p. 132). The camp housing those of refugee status in Calais coined "Jungle" (Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022, p.4) further depicts refugees as 'animals', not humans.

2. As Negative Racialised Stereotypes

Five of the 11 papers referenced racialised stereotypes to depict individuals who are ethnically minoritised. However, it is noted that these stereotypes are portrayed more subtly. A content analysis of a sample of 622 British TV adverts found that 68.3% (425 of 622) portrayed racially biased imagery of Black people, that is, depicting negative racial stereotypes that suggested racial inferiority, whether overt or subtle (Shabbir et al., 2013). Of these 425 adverts, 25.2% (107 of 425) were classified as containing overt racial bias, leaving the majority of adverts (74.8%, 318 of 425) depicting subtle racial biases. Humour was noted as a way in which the underlying racial bias was minimised. The content analysis had three coders with high inter-rater reliability scores (<0.80), thus conclusions can be confidently drawn. Additionally, the study sampled from 42 consecutive days of TV analysis, which Shabbir et al. (2013) argued provides more generalisable results than from non-consecutive-day sampling for content analyses (Choi et al., 2005) – this suggests a good representative sample. Additionally, Moosavi's (2014) analysis of ministers' speeches identified frequent use of racialised rhetoric, albeit "not as blatant" (p. 670), but present, nonetheless.

The reviewed studies highlighted that most of the negative racial stereotypes were Islamophobic in nature. The negative racial stereotypes had several aspects, as follows.

The Patriarchal Muslim/Asian Society and the Oppression of Women. Five of the 11 studies reviewed implied Asian men to be 'sexist' (Moosavi, 2014) or 'natural' sexual offenders (Gill & Harrison, 2015). A thematic analysis of 122 newspaper articles about the Rochdale sexual abuse scandal found the articles focused heavily on the fact that eight of the

nine men convicted of exploiting underaged girls were of Pakistani heritage (Gill & Harrison, 2015). This construed South Asian men as dangerous sex offenders – a highly defaming generalisation. The newspaper articles were also noted to have overreported the crimes perpetrated by South Asian men. For example, in contrast, another case occurring at the same time where eight men, seven of whom were White, groomed 15 girls, the story "barely made a ripple in the national media" (p. 43). The study also highlighted the recurrent media framing of South Asian grooming gangs "preying on White girls" (p. 34) as an ethnically motivated crime, with the Mail Online suggesting they subjugate women as "second class citizens" and White women as "third class citizens" (p. 42). The methodological quality of Gill & Harrison (2015) was rated high (100% on MMAT), and the resulting themes from the analysis were rated by two coders with discrepancies reached through consensus, indicating good reliability and generalisability of the findings. However, four of the five newspapers sampled were from a right-leaning political viewpoint, which may compromise the generalisability as it is unclear whether this sample would be representative of the UK media overall.

Alongside the media narrative of the "deviant" Asian man (Gill & Harrison, 2015, p. 42), the same five papers speak to the stereotype of the "oppressed Muslim woman" (Aidi, 2021, p. 3). One student in a thematic analysis of interviews with international students of Muslim faith expressed, "I saw some coverage of Islam women by BBC Channel. They were shown as slaves who have no any rights, choice, uneducated and unsocial" (Brown & Richards, 2016, p. 357). A second student felt the media showed that Muslim men "have slaves and women are held back and got no will" (p.357) with a third student noting the BBC only showed "shots of a woman that was wearing a veil, she was completely covered…we noticed that when you watch BBC they only take those kind of shots" (p.358), thus perpetuating a certain stereotyped dynamic that men oppress women within these

communities. Aidi (2021) also identified the stereotype of the “veiled and oppressed [Muslim] woman” (p. 6) within British stand-up comedy. While it's important to acknowledge contexts where women face oppression, such as the Taliban's treatment of women in Afghanistan (Taliban Blasted for ‘Shocking Oppression’ of Women, 2023), it becomes problematic when these actions are generalised as stereotypes across other Asian communities.

Sarac (2020) examined the media portrayal of violence against women belonging to the Yazidi community and the impact on public perception. She found that newspaper articles frequently described Yazidi women as “victims” (p. 72) in 31% of articles, as “sex slaves” (p. 72) in 68% of articles, and as “survivors” in 31% (p. 73) of articles although there was a tendency to associate the word ‘rape’ with survivor. Furthermore, the study revealed a skewed characterisation of these women as “passive victims…lacking agency” (p. 77), with very little coverage of their resistance, activism, and resilience in coping with terrorist brutality. News media coverage of the persecution faced by women from the Yazidi community is crucial to raising awareness, fostering compassion, and pressuring governments to act. However, there's a risk that portraying Yazidi women as passive victims of sexual violence may undermine their autonomy and empowerment.

Although the mixed study design supported a nuanced understanding of the portrayal of women from the Yazidi community and the impact of this, the content analysis only utilised one coder, and the sample of newspapers was biased towards a right-wing viewpoint (four of six newspapers). Thus, the findings of this study should be interpreted cautiously.

3. A Threat to National Security and White People

Eight of 11 papers identified a media depiction of people from ethnic minorities as a threat to the national security of the UK. This was evidenced through references to illegality,

crime, and terrorism. Newspapers such as The Times and The Guardian employ language that portrays migrants, particularly those from the Middle East and Africa, as a potential threat to law and order (Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022). The newspaper reports on “rioting migrants” (p. 6) and “mobs” (p.6) “battling” (p. 6) with local police forces, depicting them as invasive and combative forces. The Guardian often focused on migrants' illegal activities, such as legal battles, previous convictions, and used metaphors such as, “future suicide bomber” (p.6) and “an invasion underway” (p.6), directly linking migrants to a security threat. Babies of refugee status were even found to labelled as “illegal maritime arrivals” (p.6). Lazović (2015) also found RASIM words to be frequently associated with their “illegal/undocumented” immigration status, reinforcing the association of criminality with this community.

A content analysis of 2,018 newspaper articles found that individuals from the Middle East and North African region were more likely to be associated with terrorism, violence, and crime within media reports (Cooper et al., 2020). The authors note this to be likely due to terror attacks and a series of sexual assaults allegedly perpetrated by asylum seekers in Europe between 2015 to 2017. Despite the large sample size, the vast majority of the 26 newspapers sampled were newspapers known to express right-wing views, which may bias the findings towards a more unfavourable representation of people from ethnic minorities, as was found in other studies (Gill & Harrison, 2015). Nevertheless, the content analysis, conducted by three coders, achieved a high inter-rater reliability, with some instances of full 100% agreement.

Brooks (2017) looked at the depiction of East Asian students in the UK press which uncovered a large number of articles focused on a case where a White British child was attacked by a British Asian student in 2007. The Mail on Sunday stated that “reverse racism” (p. 2371) meant teachers allegedly ignored Asian gangs targeting white children at school, which may contribute to the narrative that these groups threaten “White students who are

seen to be suffering at the hands of Black and minority ethnic students" (p.2371). The absence of newspaper details in the content analysis makes it challenging to determine the context behind the repeated coverage of the case in numerous articles.

"Muslims are Terrorists" Stereotype. People who are Arabs or Muslims, particularly after 9/11, have often been misrepresented and stereotyped as terrorists; this was observed within four of the 11 reviewed studies (Aidi, 2021; Brown & Richards, 2016; Moosavi, 2014; and Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022). Some articles described migrants of Muslim faith as a "future suicide bomber" (p. 6), assumed their support for "terrorist groups with links to Osama bin Laden: (p. 6) and described resettlement programmes as "cover for terrorists" (Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022, p. 6). All 18 Muslim international students interviewed for their perceptions of media representations of Islam mentioned the link made by the media between Islam and terrorism (Brown & Richards, 2016). While this relationship is strong, with 18 individuals expressing similar sentiments, it is unclear if all views stemmed directly from portrayals in UK media. Some participants reported consuming media from their home countries, though considering that 17 of them were from predominantly Muslim nations, it seems less probable that the terrorism-Islam narrative originated from these sources.

Aidi (2021) also found that stand-up comedy frequently referenced the common stereotypes of Muslims being synonymous with being the "terrorist" (p. 1). However, in contrast to other studies in the review, comedy helped create a space where people can be exposed to "new understandings that place Muslims in social and cultural contexts different from what they might have initially imagined" (p. 19). He argues the medium of British comedy can be used to disrupt the warped stereotypes presented as "common sense" and attempt to educate the public on Islamophobia. Although this observation and reframe can be

helpful and valuable, the study's empirical quality was deemed inadequate (40% on MMAT), hence the conclusions should be considered cautiously.

Moreover, a discourse analysis of speeches by government ministers often generalised the dangerousness of a very small number of Al Qaeda supporters and extremists with the wider Muslim community, suggesting both are of similar threat to British security (Moosavi, 2014). This conclusion was drawn from a study deemed to be of good quality (100% on MMAT).

4. An Economic Burden

Two papers addressed the media portrayal of migrants from ethnic minorities as having a negative impact on the UK's economy (Brooks, 2017; Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022). Social welfare benefits in the UK were mentioned in 86% of the sampled articles as the reason for migrants choosing to move to Britain (Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022). The majority of media stories portrayed migrants as an 'economic burden' who impact housing, public services, and employment opportunities for British people.

Brooks (2017) found through both a content and discourse analysis that British newspapers emphasised the negative impact of East Asian international students in the UK on the UK economy. Concerns by the media included: East Asian students gaining high level technological knowledge which could be transferred to UK's economic competitors; making private schools less affordable for British students; limiting the availability of university places for British students; and driving up house prices in sought-after areas.

Although the quality of both these studies varied, there is also strong evidence of the economic and social benefits brought by immigrants to the UK (Portes, 2019). This includes contributions such as boosting GDP, generating employment opportunities (Portes, 2019), and improving the quality of the healthcare and social care workforce (Hussein et al., 2011).

5. As Voiceless and Powerless

Seven of the 11 studies reviewed addressed the lack of ethnic minority voices within the portrayal of their own lives, experiences, and culture. The content and discourse analysis examining the press coverage of non-Western migrants and refugees in the UK identified that news stories "excluded them from the conversations about their lives and experiences" (Połońska-Kimunguyi, 2022, p. 6). Reference to the portrayal of such individuals not being "regarded as fully human with voice, capacity, or agency" was also made (p. 6). Cooper et al. (2020) identified that 20% of stories about RASIM who are ethnically minoritised feature their voices, compared with 80% which featured the voices of politicians and public officials. Lazović (2015) argued that quantifiers (as described previously) detract from the humanisation of individuals resulting in their voices being silenced. Sarac (2020) reported that the minority of newspaper articles portraying Yazidi women's experience of violence (27%) included these women's own perspectives on their future. Sarac makes the link that the lack of first-hand narratives means the stories of resilience, strength, and activism are barely mentioned in media reporting (8% of sampled articles). In the examined case of racial abuse towards Black footballer, Anton Ferdinand, his experience of the incident was largely absent from the media coverage (Gavins & Simpson, 2015). International Muslim students expressed a desire to correct misrepresentations of their home countries (Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia) which they perceived were depicted as uncivilised/backwards/dirty/poor, suggesting the absence of first-hand accounts of alternative, more accurate narratives (Brown & Richards, 2016).

The studies provide clear evidence suggesting that the voices of ethnically marginalised individuals are often overlooked. This finding, however, may be more transferable to right-wing media content, given that the majority of the newspapers analysed were sourced from this political orientation. Despite this, additional studies looking at other sources also

corroborated this finding (Brown & Richards, 2016; Gavins & Simpson, 2015), further strengthening its validity.

6. As an Asset to the Western Society

Two studies spoke of the media depicting ethnically minoritised individuals as an asset to the UK. Brooks (2017) reported that the majority of articles about East Asian students living and studying in the UK adopted a positive tone. This largely focused on the economic benefits to the UK, rather than to the East Asian students themselves, such as the significant economic contribution of East Asian students to the UK education sector. The media also illustrated the respect and commitment to studying and the value placed on private education by East Asian students in the UK. Two newspaper articles highlighted the ambition and resilience to achieve academic success on the part of East Asian students, in comparison to Scottish students. East Asian students in the UK were further depicted as an asset to international relations, promoting a stronger relationship between the UK and East Asian countries – commonly in reference to China.

Sarac (2020) observed a difference from the typical media depiction of Yazidi women when articles were written about Nadia Murad: a Yazidi Nobel laureate and leading advocate who publicly champions survivor narratives and rights. Sarac (2020) reported that Nadia Murad was often labelled a survivor of wartime sexual violence, despite many other women who have escaped but have not been labelled as such. Other labels by a variety of newspapers have included 'Yazidi activist', 'Nobel Peace Prize winner', and 'Ms Murad', instead of the commonly used 'sex slaves' for others. It is implied that using compassionate and human-centred language when referring to individuals is reserved for those whose personal qualities have been acknowledged and honoured by Western standards, e.g., Nobel Peace Prize.

Both studies employed content analysis to analyse newspapers. However, neither study mentioned the use of a second coder. While they contribute to recognising the benefits ethnically marginalised individuals bring to the UK, these findings should be approached cautiously due to methodological limitations.

Discussion

This review sought to understand how the British media portrays people of ethnic minorities. Eleven studies were identified. Overall, the studies evaluated were generally of good quality methodologically, as assessed against the MMAT. Four studies received a score of 100%, four scored 80%, and two scored 60%. The main methodological concerns included the lack of clarity in divergences between qualitative and quantitative results within mixed methods studies and insufficient explanation of data collection methods in some qualitative studies. Despite the high percentage quality ratings, the qualitative studies may have compromised validity due to the subjective interpretation and research bias that could contribute to the findings, as only a small minority of studies used inter-rater reliability to assure quality, for instance. This may also be a critique of the quality assessment tool used, which did not include this as a criterion.

The findings of the 11 reviewed studies revealed the British media portrayed ethnically minoritised individuals largely negatively, encompassing six predominant themes, of which only one included positive framing. These themes included the inference of those ethnically minoritised as sub-human, subjecting them to negative racial stereotypes, framing them as a threat to national security, labelling them as an economic burden, and stifling their voice and agency. In contrast, only a few instances depicted people of ethnic minorities in the British media as an asset, who can contribute to the economy and reputation of the Western world. As most of the studies appeared to have samples largely biased towards right-wing

media, the portrayal of people of ethnic minorities may vary across different media sources, such as within predominantly left-wing media.

The use of dehumanising language and metaphors by the British media to describe people of ethnic minorities is corroborated by a host of literature (Baker & McEnery, 2005; Charteris-Black, 2006), some of which examined media within other countries such as USA, Austria and Australia (Santa Ana, 1999; Refaie, 2001; Pickering, 2001, respectively). This suggests that the ideology of positioning ethnic groups as inferior/superior i.e., suggesting racial hierarchies, is evident in other White-Western societies, and not solely in the UK. This process of dehumanisation can be understood as an extreme form of 'othering' whereby one is implied to be 'less human' thus being rejected from the ultimate majority group of being human.

The stigmatisation model (Link & Phelan, 2001) stipulates that stereotypes are a means of creating a division between groups, where power is directed against the perceived 'inferior' group. The reviewed studies found that negative racialised stereotypes featured heavily in the British media, albeit in ways that were considered subtle and less explicit. A repeated stereotype included drawing parallels between the Muslim faith and terrorism. Morey and Yaqin (2011) argue that not only does this repeated association fuel racism, but it also has detrimental effects on community relationships as this stereotype shapes attitudes and endorses prejudices about people of Muslim faith. Additional stereotypes related to the perceived danger and risk associated with people of ethnic minorities were exacerbated by emphasising the potential threat to White individuals. The discourse between people of ethnic minorities and danger versus White people and victimhood suggests 'superior' and 'inferior' ethnic groups; this further illustrates the notion of racial hierarchies argued in CRT and stigmatisation theory. If White people are portrayed as victims of racial discrimination,

efforts to address racial inequality for people in minority groups become not only redundant, but also risky, and thus the principle of CRT is maintained (Gillborn, 2012).

The review highlighted some contradictions over the portrayal in the UK media of ethnically minoritised individuals as economic burdens versus economic, academic, and political assets. The few references of positive attributes about minoritised individuals (e.g., commitment to academic achievement), were often accompanied with 'qualifiers', suggesting that these positive qualities should somehow contribute to or benefit UK or Western society, usually in economic terms. This can be understood in terms of group process theory, which suggests that acceptance by the 'superior' (White) group is contingent upon providing benefits to that group i.e., economically, academically, and politically. This in turn reinforces and potentially increases the superior group's power. Nevertheless, there appears to be an implicit narrative that reduces ethnic minorities into economic objects. Similarly, Caviedas's (2015) research found that the most common narrative of ethnically minoritised people in newspapers in the UK, France and Italy, was their economic implications, over and above other narratives of crime or security. This was most evident in the UK during the Brexit debate in 2016 (Caviedas, 2015).

A key issue within the review is the extent to which the findings can be generalised to all UK media representations of people of ethnic minorities due to the sampling approach in several studies being predominantly unrepresentative. Hence, only tentative conclusions can be drawn about the findings of this review. Nonetheless, there does appear to be a strong presence of negative stereotypes in the UK media of which would warrant further research with improved methodological rigour.

Implications to Individual Mental Health

A rich body of research, including this review, highlights the role of the British media in perpetuating dominant narratives that are racially discriminating and denigrating. It also highlights that these expressions of racism occur in more subtle and chronic forms, which can be just as damaging to one's mental health than overt forms (Jones et al., 2016). Research tells us that individuals who are subject to ethnic discrimination naturally perceive this as traumatic and stressful, resulting in increased symptoms of anxiety, depression, and feelings of hopelessness (Wofford et al., 2019). Racial discrimination can also negatively influence close relationships, where the 'stress spillover' to others compromises relationship satisfaction (Randall & Bodenmann, 2009), and worsens marital quality and aggression (Trail et al., 2012).

Implications for Communities and Society

The repeated silencing of the voices and stories of people who are ethnically minoritised further ostracises this community as 'other'. It suggests minoritised voices are unimportant and unwelcome and prevents feelings of belonging in society. Moreover, it denies individuals the opportunities to challenge negative narratives that misrepresent their identity. Shifting the focus away from real people's stories, and reducing people to numbers and objects, deprives this community of their humanity and the empathy and compassion people deserve (Lazović, 2015). In addition, failing to give people of ethnic minorities the priority to voice personal narratives is further marginalising to those at the centre of these stories, and privileges the narratives of politicians, journalists, and other figures in positions of power (Cooper, 2020). This not only maintains the status quo of the power dynamics but also deepens divisions within communities by conveying the message that the lives and stories of those who are ethnically minoritised are not valued.

Implications for Clinical Practice

This review highlights the pervasive and damaging dominant cultural narratives that inform our everyday lives. As clinicians it is essential to raise our understanding and awareness of the impact that repeated racialised discrimination can have on an individual's mental health, family's mental health, and engagement in wider society. Holding this in mind, particularly in collaborative formulations, can help clinicians and services frame a more holistic understanding of the challenges people bring to therapy. One could argue that mental health services, in their role of communicating information related to mental health and well-being to the public, share similarities with the media. It also encourages clinicians to consider societal constructs and whether challenges primarily originate from systemic issues rather than individual traits. Lastly, this review emphasises the significance of creating environments where those who are ethnically minoritised can share their stories, and have them heard, validated, and celebrated.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

This review did not utilise a second reviewer when screening papers for inclusion or when appraising the quality of the papers. This makes the review vulnerable to selection bias. Those papers included did not state any researcher reflexivity and hence, it was difficult to ascertain whether the findings of some of the qualitative studies were influenced by author's own racialised experiences or preconceived assumptions. These are reasons to be more guarded in the conclusions drawn.

It is important that any future research is conducted using standard scientific methods (such as random sampling of media, independent raters, inter-rater reliability, reflective journaling) to strengthen the research evidence and conclusions about media representation of people of ethnic minorities. It is also important to conduct research that integrates wider

contexts such as history, culture, politics, sociology, anthropology, and genetics, into research about those of minortised ethnicities (Teo, 2022). Moreover, CRT advocates for the inclusion of the voices, perspectives, and first-hand experiences of racialised people in research (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). This aims to reduce the harmful and inaccurate narratives placed on racialised individuals and offers an authentic perspective of one's self-perceptions, culture, and values that they feel are reflective of their identities.

Given this, Section B of this research project aims to a) amplify the voices of those ethnically minoritised (Black men with experience being in a 'gang'), and b) highlight the disparities that may exist between how media narratives portray this population, in comparison to the personal narratives they tell about themselves.

Conclusion

Overall, the quality of research evaluating the media portrayal of those who are ethnically minoritised was largely methodologically sound, but with limitations with respect to the sampling approach and lack of researcher reflexivity. The review highlighted the British media overwhelmingly negatively portrays people of ethnic minorities as 1. Sub-human, 2. A negative racialised stereotype, 3. A threat to national security and White people, 4. An economic burden, 5. As voiceless and powerless, and 6. An asset to Western society. These narratives have psychological implications for racialised individuals who are subject to dehumanising descriptions, harmful stereotypes, and whose voices are silenced within the context of the media. Consequently, this can be detrimental to mental health, relationships, and the experience of social rejection in a White majority society. It is suggested that future research promotes the voices for those who are ethnically minoritised so that perspectives that are more fitting with how they view themselves can form new, more accurate dominant cultural narratives.

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INCI BAYSAL BSc (Hons.), MSc

SEEING BEYOND THE HEADLINES: AN EXPLORATION INTO THE MEDIA'S NARRATIVES AND PERSONAL NARRATIVES FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE ETHNICALLY MINORITISED IN BRITISH SOCIETY.

SECTION B: How do the personal stories of Black men in 'gangs' relate to the stories told about Black men within the British media?

Word count: 8,443 (plus 459 additional words).

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SALOMONS INSTITUTE FOR APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY

CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY

Note on Confidentiality

All names were changed to pseudonyms to protect participant confidentiality. This change was made during the transcription of interviews. The location of London remained included as this was considered a large area where it would be very difficult to identify participants. It also contributed to a limitation of the study's generalisability and felt important to acknowledge.

For the final version of the thesis following the viva, and before uploading to the online repository, participant characteristics such as age and employment will be made less specific e.g., use age categories and removing job roles to indicate full/part-time employment only – this is to further assure confidentiality.

Abstract

Objective: The UK's growing 'gang' issue is fuelled by negative media stereotypes, particularly associating young Black men with gang involvement. This study aimed to investigate the narratives about Black people in the British media and how this differs or aligns with the personal narratives of Black men who have experience of being in a 'gang'.

Method: Eight newspaper articles and four participant interviews were analysed using thematic and structural narrative analysis. Dialogical narrative analysis examined the similarities and differences between the two datasets.

Results: Four dominant cultural narratives (DCNs) in the UK media about Black individuals were: victimhood, criminality, inferiority, and inaction by British institutions regarding racial inequality. Personal narratives of young Black men in 'gangs' primarily described stories of two broad themes: inequality and discrimination within British society, and feelings of being misunderstood and undervalued. While the DCNs and personal narratives overlapped, they also differed in that the latter expressed an intellectual confidence rather than inferiority. An alternative community narrative emerged where participants sought groups that nurture feelings of being understood and valued, thus creating psychological safety and a sense of belonging.

Conclusions: Media narratives depict Black people as victims or criminals, whereas personal narratives from young Black men in gangs highlight discrimination and the search for belonging and understanding. Several clinical implications are discussed, including the study's usefulness to clinical formulation and community psychology initiatives. Recommendations include exploring the efficacy of narrative therapy approaches for Black men, to strengthen affirmative narratives for this community.

Keywords: media, Black men, discrimination, gangs, narratives

Introduction

'Gang' activity in the UK has become a growing social issue in recent decades. While the definition of a 'gang' has been widely debated, for this study, it refers to groups defined by UK agencies as: durable; street-oriented; seen as a distinct group; lay claim to a particular territory; engaging in crime and violence; and being in conflict with other similar gangs (Home Office, 2011; The Centre for Social Justice, 2009). Despite criticism of the term 'gang' as stigmatising and racist (Williams & Clarke, 2016), it remains commonly used in public discourse, mainstream media, and the criminal justice system (CJS). For this reason of familiarity within public policy and discourse, where this research is hoped to contribute to change, the term has been adopted. The study does, however, acknowledge its problematic use.

Violence is a defining characteristic of gang activity (Pitts, 2008), with gang-related violence peaking in the UK in recent years (HM Government, 2018). Over half of gun and knife crimes are attributed to gangs and nearly 70,000 in the UK identify as being part of a gang (HM Government, 2018), although families and communities affected by the violence far exceeds this figure. There has been a notable shift towards younger people's involvement in gangs (Densley et al., 2020). These data highlight the urgent need for comprehensive research to improve understanding and support a reduction in these trends.

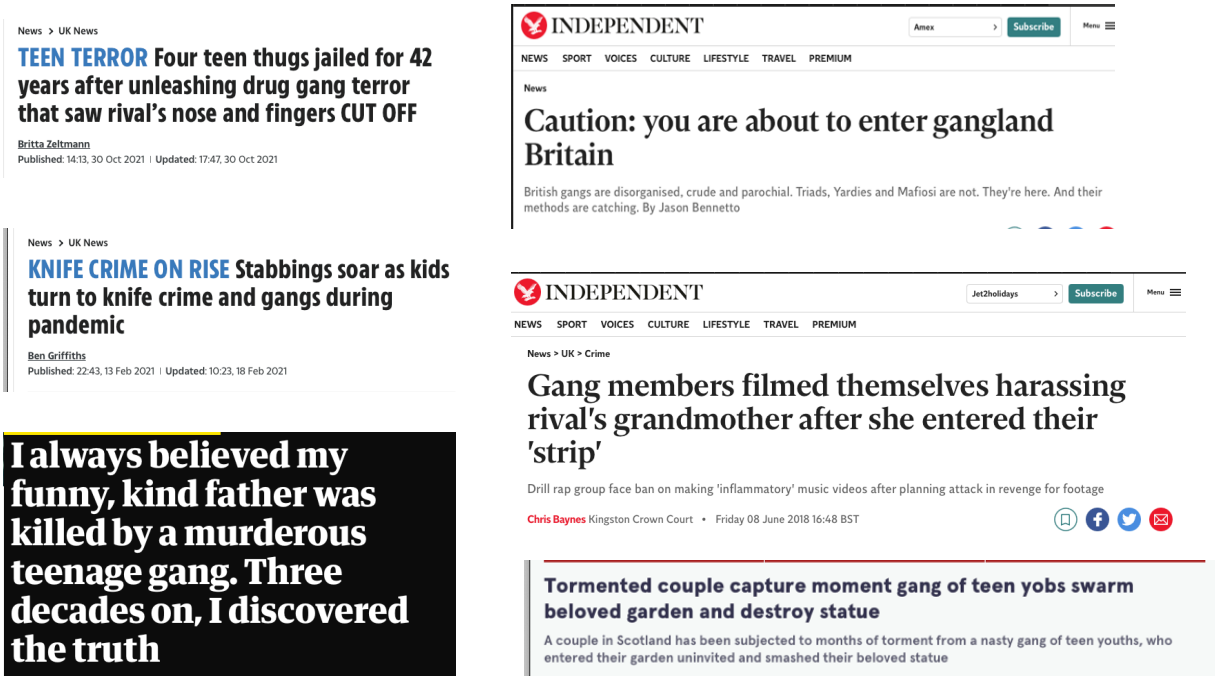
The Media and Gangs

Much of the public discourse concerning gangs remains dominated by politicians and the media (Densley et al., 2020). The use of sensationalist headlines (see Figure 1) often blames gangs for various crimes (Bolger, 2021). The most notable example was the London Riots in 2011 which were wrongly attributed to gangs (Paul et al., 2011), sparking a moral panic and branding gang members as Britain's new 'public enemies' (Hallsworth, 2011). An

investigation revealed that the "role of gangs in the riots [was] significantly overstated" (Paul et al., 2011, p.4), with only 13% of arrests being of people who were gang-affiliated, a figure which directly contradicted the Prime Minister's claims that "gangs were at the heart of the protests and [were] behind the co-ordinated attacks" (Paul et al., 2011, p.21). In addition to the conflation of street violence and gangs, there is also evidence for the over-representation of young Black men as gang members in the UK (Pitts, 2020; Williams & Clarke, 2016). Moore (2011) found that the British media contributes to negative stereotypes by portraying young Black men as synonymous with gang-related crime, particularly involving knives. This unjustly stigmatises and racialises the problem among young Black men (Williams & Clarke, 2016). Unfortunately, the narrative between young Black men and gang membership is not new. A landmark study into racism and policing of young Black men in the 1970s concluded that the media strategically constructed young Black British men as a social problem and created a normalised 'common sense' relationship between Black youths and criminality (Hall et al., 1978). This context informs the rationale for this study's focus on young Black men.

Figure 1

Examples of Newspaper Headlines



To date, research on gangs in the UK has focussed on defining, explaining, and predicting the trajectories of gangs and their members to inform public policy, with the main intention of reducing gang-related crime, and its economic and social cost (Wegerhoff et al., 2019). Gang desistance interventions remain largely unsuccessful (Densley et al., 2020), which suggests these groups are not yet fully understood. Much of the literature is quantitative research conducted by criminologists (Densley, 2013), and although such research provides helpful contributions to our understanding of gangs, it lacks focus on the individuals' stories that make up the group (Kalunta-Crumpton, 2006; Sharp et al., 2006). As such, much of this research has lacked a psychological understanding of this marginalised group, which this study aims to contribute towards. Some qualitative research has attempted to do so; this is summarised next.

Summary of Key Qualitative Studies

A grounded theory study explored how young Black men joining a gang serves as a response to feelings of abandonment or rejection by mainstream societal groups, including the media. It suggests that young Black men seek 'protection and power' by joining gangs as it provides consistency, predictability, praise, and containment (Guthrie, 2011). A discursive analysis study (Bolger, 2021) found that joining a gang allows individuals of all ethnicities to refute societal victimisation and stigmatisation. Additionally, Van Hellemont and Densley's (2018) ethnographic study of Afro-Caribbean gangs argued that gangs fulfil not only a need for belonging but also a desire to create new identities using fiction and imagination from gang representations in the media. In this way, young Black men can find escape from the humiliation and anger experienced through racial discrimination. Maitra (2020) identified that narratives of gang-members' childhood often romanticised adverse experiences to neutralise the impact of negative labelling and the strain placed upon them by society or others. These studies offer a subjective and nuanced understanding of narrative accounts from people in gangs, moving beyond quantitative data to explore the psychological underpinning of peoples' everyday realities (Kalunta-Crumpton, 2006). Psychology theory also offers some potential insights into processes related to gang membership.

Psychological theory

Groups are integral to human existence (Brown & Pehrson, 2019). Social Identity Theory (SIT) posits that individuals derive part of their identity from the groups to which they belong (Tajfel & Turner, 2000). These can include both inherited and chosen groups, such as our ethnicity, gender, and 'gang'. SIT argues that our social identity influences our beliefs and behaviour (Scheepers & Ellemers, 2019). As such, the narratives that are told within groups, and narratives told about the group from other groups, may give rise to distinct

group beliefs and behaviours. This in turn can result in the polarisation between groups (Tajfel & Turner, 2000) and lead to intergroup conflict and the reinforcement of dominant ingroup norms (Connelley, 1994). Applying SIT to group beliefs rooted in racial prejudice could explain how such prejudices are perpetuated and how societally constructed racial hierarchies are upheld (Thompson, 2019). As was evidenced in Section A, racial prejudice can be perpetuated by certain groups like the media, by portraying prejudiced narratives about marginalised groups.

Group Process Theory (GPT) may also help conceptualise the psychological function of gangs, in that people will seek to belong within groups with perceived power (Forsyth, 2014). This helps to achieve improved self-esteem and protects against the psychological harm of rejection. Thus, in psychodynamic terms, aligning with a particular group with certain group characteristics or beliefs (such as a 'gang') may serve as a psychic defence against rejection and the threat of harm from other groups. These psychological theories can provide the framework in which the findings of this study can be understood – this will be revisited in the discussion section.

The Value of Narratives

As SIT and GPT suggest, our identity does not exist in isolation, it exists in the context of relation to others in our social environments. Therefore, it seems important to consider both societal and individual narratives together and explore this relationship. Narratives form the basis of both media stories and people's lives. Carr (1997) posits that the most natural way that people understand themselves and tell others about themselves is in story form. Thus, people naturally tell stories to express their identities and make sense of who they are in relation to others. Similarly, the media can take on the role of an "institutionalised narrator" (Graef, 2019, p.2), which tells us about the social world in which

the media operate and shape. There has been limited research to date that has explored the identity narratives of people who have experienced being part of a 'gang'. Maruna (1998) argued that we are only able to understand people who are part of gangs if we analyse individual narratives and consider these in their wider social contexts.

Mankowski and Rappaport's (2000) three-tiered model of narratives considers this relationship. It argues that the media are one group that constructs dominant cultural narratives (DCNs) which influence the beliefs and identities of individuals within a society. Groups with power maintain narratives about marginalised groups, which can be oppressive (as seen in Section A), thus reinforcing their position of power (Mankowski & Rappaport, 2000). Over time, the personal stories of people within a smaller group form community narratives that can alter the DCNs. Exploring the relationship between the tiers of narratives may be useful for understanding the relationship between wider societal discourse and individual experience (Mankowski & Rappaport, 2000). This has not been studied in the context of gangs before.

The Present Study

Given the research gaps identified above, the current study aims to investigate the narratives about Black people in the British media and how this differs or aligns with the personal narratives of Black British men in gangs. To do so, the study will first seek to identify the dominant cultural narratives told by the British media about Black people. It felt important to take a broader approach to examine narratives about Black people in general, as all narratives within one's ethnic community are likely to influence personal narratives of Black British men and their involvement in gangs (Loseke, 2007). Secondly, the study will examine the personal narratives of young Black men in gangs. Lastly, it will look into the relationship between these narrative tiers to answer the research aim.

The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the dominant cultural narratives about Black people within the British media?
2. What are the personal narratives of Black British men in gangs?
3. What are the similarities and differences between the personal narratives and the media's dominant cultural narratives?

This research is timely given the poignance of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020, and the rise of anti-racist initiatives within clinical psychology (British Psychological Society, 2021). It is also grounded in the NHS values of 'everyone counts' and 'respect and dignity' as it can contribute to clinical psychologists working with marginalised clients in an inclusive and destigmatising way. Given young men in gangs experience more mental health difficulties (Naldrett & Wood, 2021; Nydegger et al., 2019) compared to those not in gangs, it is imperative that clinical psychologists and other mental health professionals recognise and consider not only psychological implications for poor mental health, but societal factors too. If clinical psychologists are truly to be working in line with a biopsychosocial model, this research should help contribute to the 'psycho-social' aspect of this. The first part of this study which looks at the representation of Black British people in the media will have relevance to clinical work with Black British people. The second and third parts will be relevant to work more specifically with young Black British men who have experience in gangs. The relevance of this study and its findings to clinical psychology are considered further in the discussion.

Method

Epistemological Position

This study took a social constructionist (SC) philosophical stance, based on the idea that human experiences are constructed within their social, cultural, and historical context (Durrheim, 1997). SC posits that language is an active tool in creating shared meanings of our world (Gergen, 1997). SC also aligns with key concepts of this research, that is: racialisation (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), gangs (Muncie, 2009), dominant cultural narratives (Mankowski & Rappaport, 2000) and how these concepts culturally shape our identity (McAdams & Guo, 2017).

Design

A narrative inquiry approach to analysis facilitated the collection of rich and nuanced data concerning individuals' narrative descriptions (Hennink et al., 2020). The study has two parts: analysis of media articles to inform DCNs, and interviews to inform personal narratives.

Narrative analysis (NA) allows for the examination of published newspaper articles and transcribed interviews, aligning well with the research questions (Willig, 2013). NA enables the exploration of identity stories (Butina, 2015) and social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 2000) by focusing on how stories are co-constructed and interpreted within social contexts (Frosh & Emerson, 2005). NA is also well-suited for investigating stigmatised narratives, which are likely to emerge within marginalised groups under study (Ballantine, 2022). Lastly, NA lends itself to analysing the relationship between personal narratives and DCNs (Mankowski & Rappaport, 2000), which is consistent with the research aim.

Data Collection and Sample

Data were collected from two sources:

1. Published newspaper articles (RQ1).
2. Interviews with Black British men with experience of 'gang' involvement, either current or historic (RQ2).

Collective Sample Size

Although there are no clear criteria for determining sample size in NA, Hennink and Kaiser (2022) suggested that 9 – 17 datapoints are appropriate for qualitative research. Given this study had a comparative element, and the timeframe associated with doctoral-level research, eight newspaper articles and four interviews were obtained. Thus, a total sample of 12 narratives were analysed: this is in keeping with Hennink and Kaiser's (2022) recommendations.

Published Newspaper Articles

Inclusion Criteria

A set of inclusion criteria for newspaper articles were developed, with corresponding rationale for each criterion (Table 1).

Table 1

Inclusion Criteria for Newspaper Article Selection

Inclusion criteria for newspaper articles	**Rationale**
Written material – with or without images.	Using written material enabled consistency in the approach to analysis.
Published in a UK-based media outlet i.e., a British newspaper.	To ensure data was relevant to Black British men, and of societal discourse in the UK.

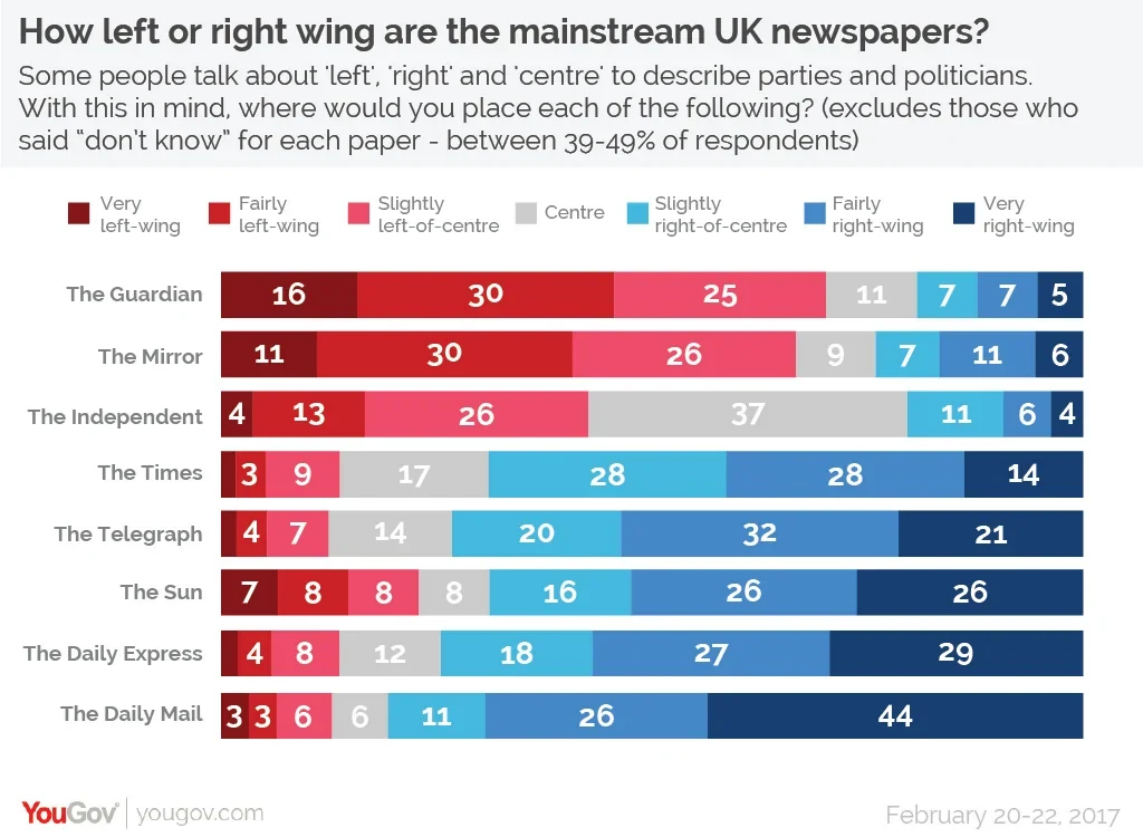
Published online.	To allow for online searching which captured a wide range of relevant articles in a time-efficient way.
Published within the last 3 years from the point of data collection (between February 2021 – 2024).	To ensure the narratives extracted were still reflective of, or relevant to, recent societal narratives.
Free-access articles.	A survey in February 2023 found that only 9% of news consumers in the UK pay for digital news (Statista, 2023), thus it felt appropriate only to include articles that could gain a larger readership.
Articles that made a comparison to White counterparts were prioritised where appropriate.	To increase validity that conclusions were specific to individuals of Black ethnicity.
Articles that were clearly stated to be in reference to those of Black ethnicity.	To ensure the language and narratives were specific to individuals of Black ethnicity.
Articles that were clearly in reference to Black people in the UK (e.g., articles referencing America or African American culture were excluded.)	To ensure the societal narratives remained true to the UK population.

Selection Procedure

Media content was accessed online using Google's 'News' filter tab and directly through news websites' search bars, sorted by 'most recent'. Articles were purposively sampled from newspapers and television news websites representing both right-wing and left-wing political biases to create a representative sample of societal narratives. A YouGov public poll (Figure 2; Smith, 2017) guided the selection process. GB News was categorised as right-wing (Fishwick, 2021) and Sky News as unbiased (Media Bias Fact Check, 2023).

Figure 2

Political Bias of UK Newspapers



Search terms used included: ‘Black people’, ‘Black people in UK’, ‘Black families’, ‘Black men/boys’, and ‘young Black men’.

News headlines were screened for relevance to the research inquiry and inclusion criteria. Due to the vast number of search results, only the initial three pages were examined (or until February 2021). This typically encompassed the most recent and widely accessed websites, such as mainstream media corporations with greater readership, making it more suitable for investigating societal narratives. Twenty-six news articles were read in full, and eight articles were selected for inclusion in the study (Table 6). Some articles were excluded because they did not focus exclusively on Black people or the UK population.

Interview Data

Participant Criteria and Recruitment

Participant inclusion criteria are listed in Table 2. Self-identification was used to ascertain the suitability of individuals, a strategy widely used in research with 'gangs' (Esbensen et al., 2001).

Table 2

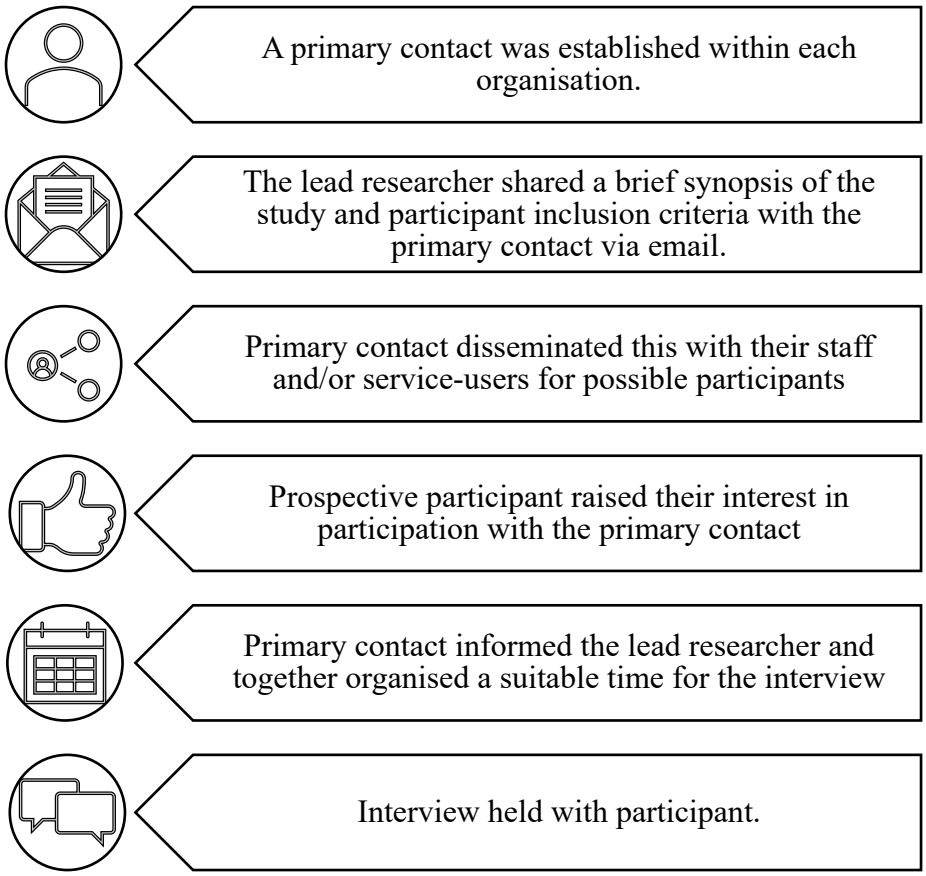
Inclusion Criteria for Participants

1. British men who self-identify as Black. ▪ Participants do not need to have a British passport but must have spent at least 5 years living in the UK as a child under 16. ▪ Participants may be from a Mixed Black ethnic background but self-identify as Black.
2. Individuals with experience of being in a 'gang' (either current or historic).
3. Aged 16 – 35 inclusive

Purposive sampling was employed to select participants based on specific characteristics relevant to the research (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Two third-sector organisations and one charity were approached to assist in recruitment. Two of these organisations were primarily led by practitioners with lived experience, providing support to youth potentially involved in 'gangs' and criminality. Figure 3 summarises the recruitment process.

Figure 3

Recruitment Procedure



Participant Characteristics

Four interviews were conducted and analysed. Contextual information was obtained via a questionnaire (Appendix B). The responses are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Participant Contextual Information

Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity*	Nationality	Years Living in UK	Level of Education**	Socio-economic Class***	Years as part of a 'gang'	Current/Historic 'gang' experience	Employment
Anton	35-49	Black Caribbean	British	Since birth	Secondary school – GCSEs or BTEC equivalent	Working class	16	Historic	Full time
Dimitri	35-49	Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	British	Since birth	Secondary school – GCSEs or BTEC equivalent	Working class	19	Historic	Full time
Tariq	25-34	Black Caribbean	British	Since birth	Secondary school – GCSEs or BTEC equivalent	Working class	3	Historic	Full time
Eli	25-34	Black African	British	Since birth	Master's degree	Middle class	4	Historic	Full time

Note. * A multiple-choice list of ethnically 'Black' and 'Mixed Black' categories were listed from the most recent Office for National Statistics census categories (*Ethnic group variable: Census 2021 - Office for National Statistics*, 2023).

** The highest level of qualification categories from the Office for National Statistics (*Highest level of qualification - Office for National Statistics*, 2023) were used as a reference to create a simplified multiple-choice list of categories.

*** Socio-economic class was self-defined by participants as either working, middle, or upper class. The 10 Office for National Statistical socio-economic classification categories (*National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) Variable: Census 2021 - Office for National Statistics*, 2023) were not used as feedback from the expert by experience found these would unlikely be understood by participants.

Interviews

All interviews were conducted face-to-face to facilitate open dialogue and utilise the researcher's clinical skills in providing effective support during potentially emotional discussions (Willig, 2013). Interviews were held in mutually agreed public spaces, such as offices or community venues, and audio-recorded using a password-protected mobile device. Dictaphones were avoided to prevent associations with police interviews that might evoke discomfort. Interview durations ranged from 42 to 142 minutes, totalling 343 minutes (mean = 86 minutes).

A narrative inquiry approach was used to elicit personal narratives (Appendix C). Example questions and prompts are listed in Table 4. Whenever feasible, the researcher used the participant's own words in follow-up questions to preserve the integrity of participants' narratives (Wengraf, 2001). Interruptions were minimised to prevent any influence on or disruption of the narratives, with prompts applied sparingly and only when participants naturally came to the end of talking.

Table 4

Example Questions and Prompts

Example Narrative Questions
Tell me the story of your childhood, and stories of any important events or experiences.
Can you tell me about any stories you heard about living in the UK as a Black family?
Can you tell me the story of life for you now?
Generic Prompt Questions (Wengraf, 2001)
Tell me more about…?
What happened before/after/then..?
Can you recall anything else?

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from a university research ethics committee on 08.01.2024 (Appendix D). A risk assessment was approved within this process which outlined strategies to manage potential participant distress (Appendix E). Participants provided written consent using a consent form (Appendix F) prior to the interview and were informed of their right to withdraw within seven days – no participant withdrew. Confidentiality, including its limitations, was outlined in the participant information sheet (Appendix G), and verbally reiterated before each interview.

Transcription software was used to generate initial transcripts from audio recordings, which were then manually reviewed and corrected. Both transcripts and audio recordings were anonymised and stored securely until the conclusion of the research. GDPR regulations were followed throughout.

Participants received a £10 gift voucher as a token of appreciation for their participation.

Expert by Experience (EbE)

An EbE with similar characteristics to the target population (young Black man) reviewed the language in the consent form, narrative questions, and participation information sheet to ensure accessibility and comprehension.

Approach to Data Analysis

Narrative analysis (NA) can vary depending on the study's needs (Reissman, 2008). This study adopted a two-stage approach to analysis. The first stage utilised thematic (Reissman, 2008) and structural (Patterson, 2013) methods, allowing for the understanding of the content of the stories, and how the story was told i.e., structure (Reissman, 2008).

Common themes and subthemes were constructed from the newspaper articles (namely DCNs) and interview transcripts, separately, using an inductive approach (Butina, 2015). A series of content and structural NA elements guided the analysis process, which adopted a deductive approach.

The second stage of analysis applied a dialogical NA approach to examine the interaction between media narratives and personal narratives (Mankowski & Rappaport, 2000). Using a deductive approach, the dominant cultural narratives identified from the newspaper articles were used as the lens through which the personal stories were read and commented on. Table 5 outlines the analytical process, following Butina's (2015) stepped approach.

Table 5

Analytical Procedure

Stage 1	
Step 1	Newspaper articles and interview transcripts were read thoroughly and repeatedly to immerse the researcher in the stories told. • The interview data was amended to include extra discursive features such as 'umms/ ahhs', significant pauses, or gestures, that the transcription software would not include.
Step 2	Each text was re-read and annotated with the following lines of enquiry being considered (Appendix H and I illustrate examples): Content: • What is the core narrative(s) messages expressed? (Mishler, 1986) • Who are the key characters in the stories? What role are they playing? • What type of language is being used? Are any words/phrases being repeated? • What is the narrative tone being expressed? (Crossely, 2000) • Are the pictures portraying anything in the story? (Relevant to newspaper articles – RQ1) (Bell, 2013).

	Structure: • Where in the lifespan are certain stories being expressed about? • What are the turning points in the stories? (Patterson, 2013). • What are the stories' complicating actions or resolutions? (Patterson, 2013). • Is there anything notable in the story's plot? This took a constant comparative approach, observing and noting resonances between texts (Glaser & Strauss, 2017).
Step 3	Recurring patterns of content were identified and organised into themes and subthemes. This process was completed separately for the newspaper articles (Appendix J) and the interview transcripts (Appendix K), resulting in a set of themes/sub-themes for each data source. The themes derived from the newspaper articles were labelled as DCNs.
Stage 2	
Step 4	The interview transcripts (personal narratives) were re-read through the lens of the following exploratory questions drawn from dialogical NA (Mankowsi & Rappaport, 2000). • Are dominant cultural narratives present within personal stories? • How are dominant cultural narratives modified within personal narratives? • What alternative community narratives developed through the personal narratives of this group?
Step 5	Lastly, the findings from stages 1 and 2 were interpreted and compiled in relation to the research questions posed. Direct quotes were included to evidence findings and maintain research quality.

Quality Assurance and Reflexivity

Narratives are co-constructed between narrator and researcher, indicating that personal characteristics and assumptions can influence the interview process and findings' interpretation (Riessman, 2008). To maintain quality, the researcher adhered to the

established narrative inquiry, avoiding spontaneous questions. This aimed to minimise the influence of personal interests and maintain focus on data relevant to the research questions. Deviant cases that did not align with prevailing themes were included to preserve validity (Creswell, 1998).

The researcher, a non-Black woman from an ethnic minority background, is also a post-graduate student and trainee psychologist, which participants were aware of. The researcher acknowledges that these differences, along with participants' assumptions and experiences with similar professionals, likely influenced the stories participants chose to tell.

A reflective diary was kept reflecting how personal circumstances might have affected the research process (Appendix L). Immediate reflections were recorded after each interview to capture physiological and emotional responses and rapport (Ellingson, 2017). Themes and findings were reviewed with two research supervisors of different ethnic backgrounds and genders for quality assurance.

Results

RQ1: What are the dominant cultural narratives about Black people within the British media?

Four dominant cultural narratives (DCN) were constructed from the newspaper reports analysed. Each narrative incorporated insights derived from thematic and structural NA methodology.

The four DCNs are:

1. Victim Narrative: Black people are victims of prejudice and institutional racism.
2. Criminality Narrative: Black people are connected to criminality.
3. Inferiority Narrative: Black people are inferior in terms of intellect, class, and success.

4. Narrative of Inaction: British Institutions are invalidating and unresponsive to racial inequality.

This section will begin with a brief synopsis of each newspaper article (Table 6), and then speak to each DCN in turn providing quotes to evidence the interpretations.

Table 6

Synopses of Newspaper Articles

Headline Journalist, *newspaper*	Journalist's ethnicity and gender	Newspaper political bias	Synopsis
Three Black men in UK say 'institutional racism' influenced murder convictions Conn*, The Guardian*	White, male	Centre-left	This story follows the cases of three Black men who, as teenagers, were convicted under the "joint enterprise" for a 2016 murder in Manchester. They argue that their convictions were influenced by institutional racism within the criminal justice system. Despite evidence suggesting racial discrimination towards the men, the Greater Manchester Police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) maintain the validity of their investigation and prosecution.
Met Police stop and search Black teen 60 times in 2 years leaving him 'fearful' of cops Williams*, The Mirror*	Black, male	Centre-left	A report from the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) details numerous instances of discriminatory and biased stop and search practices, including the repeated targeting of a Black teenager who was stopped over 60 times in a two-year period. The report highlights cases of excessive force and racial profiling, with officers subjecting individuals to humiliating and unjust treatment. The IOPC warns that such practices are eroding public trust in policing and calls for reforms to address these issues.
Young Black boys almost THREE times more likely	Black, female	Centre-left	A report highlights significant disparities in the UK's youth justice system, revealing that young Black boys are nearly three times more likely to enter the system compared to their peers. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC)

to enter youth justice system. Huskisson, *The Mirror*			criticises the government's lack of initiative in addressing this issue. The committee calls for urgent action from the Home Office and Ministry of Justice to understand and rectify these disparities. The report also highlights the significant financial cost of failing to address these issues.
Black remand prisoners held 70% longer than White counterparts in England and Wales Wilding & Syal, *The Guardian*	White, male. Asian, male	Centre-left	The article reveals data showing that Black prisoners spend over 70% longer on remand compared to their White counterparts. Additionally, Black defendants experience significantly longer periods on remand, despite also being more likely to be acquitted than White defendants. The report underscores systemic racism and injustice within the criminal justice system, as Black individuals continue to face unequal treatment and prolonged detention. The government claims ongoing efforts to address discrimination in the justice system.
Black people in UK 'living in fear' over racism, say UN experts Freeman-Powell, *Sky News*	Black, female	Unbiased/Centre	The article describes the UN experts' report on racism in the UK which showed systemic discrimination faced by Black individuals. It highlighted the fear created among Black people living in the UK as a result. Personal testimonies depicted the trauma and injustice experienced by Black people, such as wrongful arrests and mistreatment by authorities. Despite government assurances of tolerance and progress, the report exposed gaps in addressing racial disparities and calls for meaningful action to reconcile these issues.
Conservative politician claims 'all White men	White, female	Right-wing	The report detailed an allegation against a Conservative Party county councillor, Edwards, who was accused of making racist remarks in a 16-

should have Black slaves' in horrific racist rant Cutler*, GB News*			second audio clip that surfaced online. Edwards allegedly stated that "all White men should have a Black man as a slave" and described Black people as "lower class" than White people. After it was publicised, The Conservative Party confirmed an investigation but did not suspend the councillor. Edwards also referred himself to the Public Services Ombudsman and left the party.
Controversial Cambridge University fellow sparks another race row after claiming 'Black people would only be famous for sports and entertainment' in a meritocracy and says Harvard would 'have no Black professors' Haigh*, The Daily Mail*	White, male	Right-wing	Cofnas, a research fellow at the University of Cambridge argued against racial equality, suggesting that if admissions to top educational institutions like Harvard were based solely on merit, there would be no Black professors. He further claimed that in a meritocracy, Black individuals would be relegated to low-profile positions outside of sports and entertainment. Cofnas asserted that talent is not evenly distributed among racial groups. His remarks prompted condemnation from the University of Cambridge, with faculty members emphasising the institution's commitment to equality and inclusion. Cofnas had sparked controversy before with a previous paper on race differences in intelligence which also drew criticism. Cofnas remains employed by the university.
Britain is the best country to be Black in, says Kemi Badenoch as she argues the country sees people not	White, male	Right-wing	The article reported on Kemi Badenoch, the Business Secretary and Minister for Women and Equalities, speech at the Tory party conference, asserting that Britain is the best country in the world to be Black. She emphasised the government’s rejection of divisive ideologies like critical race theory. The article mentioned Badenoch’s rejection of the narratives of hopelessness and

labels in a rousing speech on race, gender and Brexit Churchill, *The Daily Mail*	victimhood often associated with Black people in the UK and compared the governments ethos on racial equality to be in line with Martin Luther King's.

Note. Journalist's ethnicity and gender were assumed from their photograph on the website.

Victim Narrative: Black People are Victims of Prejudice and Institutional Racism

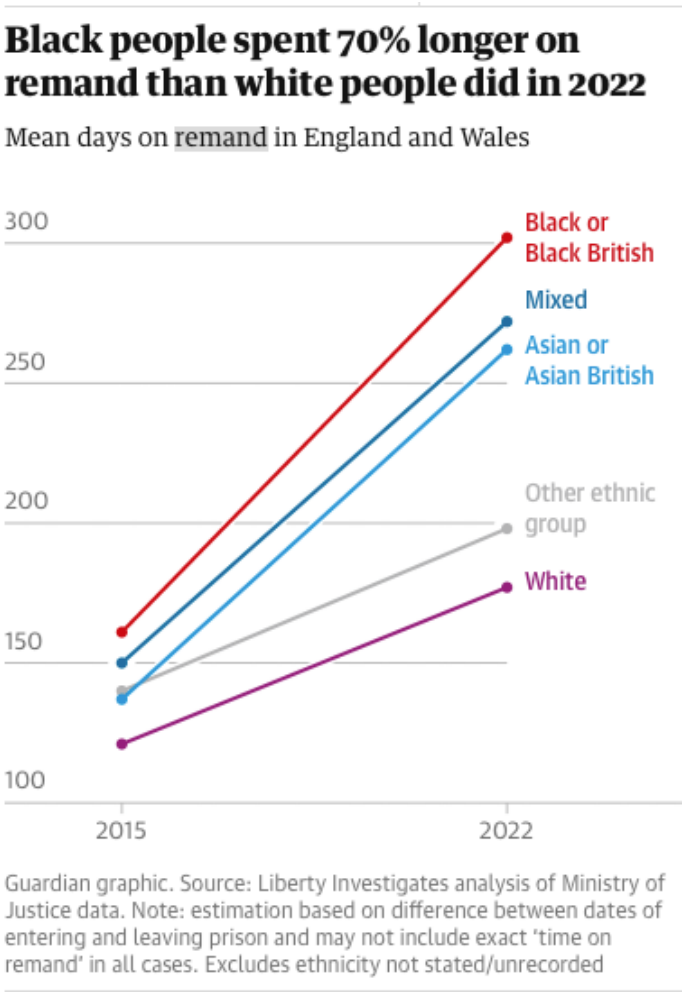
All bar one (Churchill) of the news articles overarchingly characterised people of Black ethnicity as victims of racial discrimination. Other characters featured were predominantly authoritative figures such as the police or powerful institutions like the criminal justice system (CJS) who were portrayed as the antagonist within stories. All narratives of victimisation occurred in the context of criminality.

Predominantly left-leaning newspaper articles aimed to inform the reader of the systemic racial prejudices that Black people are victim of within the CJS. For example, one article narrated the systemic bias against Black prisoners who spend significantly more time on remand (Wilding & Syal) and enter the youth justice system at three times the rate (Huskisson). The stories' resolutions were that systemic biases are *"hard-wired into the CJS"* of which Black people are victim. Furthermore, the story of three Black teenagers who were wrongly convicted of murder was resolved with the conclusion of *"collective organisational failure [being] institutional racism"*.

Article's images appeared to add to the victim narrative, for instance, a close-up photo of a policeman's waistbelt including handcuffs, a baton and a taser. Such pictures may elicit feelings of intimidation and victimisation in the context of stories about policemen using disproportionate force towards Black men. Figure 4 included in one article strengthened the victim narrative as it illustrated a racialised hierarchy where the largest inequality is seen between the Black and White ethnic groups (and arguably from lightest to darkest skin colour, generally, observing harsher consequences).

Figure 4

A Graph from Wilding & Syal's Newspaper Article (2023)



Two complicating actions were identified as most prevalent within the narratives: (1) the racial profiling of Black men, and (2) the use of excessive force by policemen. One story included a young Black child who was subjected to over 60 instances of stop and search in a two-year period, and the story of an 18-year-old Black man who was stopped while jogging home on suspicion of possessing cannabis: *"as police took him to the ground his trousers came down and officers refused to pull them back up, leaving him on the ground in handcuffs. No drugs were found"* (Williams). Another story emphasised the powerless position of a victim: *"I have never committed a crime, but I still had to experience something that*

shouldn't have happened to me." Stories often resolved with the young Black men feeling *"vulnerable, humiliated and disrespected"* by police, reinforcing the victim narrative of Black men.

As quotes illustrate, newspaper narratives frequently featured emotive and evocative language. These stories felt polarising in that characters were portrayed as oppositional: antagonist/victim roles (Black men versus authority). Moreover, stories were often underscored by a hopeless tone, implying little to no improvement or even a worsening trajectory regarding the discrimination faced by Black people in the UK: *"many of the conditions for people of African descent seem to have worsened"* (Freeman-Powell).

The word 'fear' was used in two headlines, emphasising the degree of victimisation experienced by Black people within British society. Much of the stories capturing the theme of fear was in the context of fearing unfair treatment by police, reinforcing this victimhood position: *"I'm just living in constant fear…even though I haven't done anything wrong"* (Freeman-Powell).

Criminality Narrative: Black People are Connected to Criminality

The majority of newspaper articles reported stories that associated Black men with criminality. Most narrative plots centred around Black men within the CJS or in interactions with police. The protagonist in all stories told were Black men, many of which were under the age of 18.

A *Daily Mail* article reported the story of a research fellow who asserted that Black people *"failed to develop...respect for the law"* (Haigh), voicing a personal prejudicial viewpoint. In contrast, most narratives from the left-wing media aimed to highlight the systemic prejudices surrounding Black men in the CJS, such as, narrating individuals' personal interactions with police, or using data to make claims of systemic injustice by the

CJS more widely. Another narrative was structured around a prosecutions error of attributing *"gang narratives"* to three Black teenagers on trial for murder, despite noting evidence to the contrary: *"the prosecution relied on the story that they are all in a gang, based on prejudice about boys and young people who live in our communities"* (Conn). The resolution to several stories occurred when the person was cleared of alleged wrongdoing.

Although most of the narratives were intended to be helpful in highlighting the systemic injustices Black men face in society, story plots still predominantly centred around criminality. Notably, there were no stories connecting Black women with criminality.

Inferiority Narrative: Black People are Inferior in Terms of Intellect, Class, and Success

A narrative of inferiority was constructed from two right-wing newspaper articles which narrated a protagonist's viewpoint. A *Daily Mail* article narrated the views of a University of Cambridge researcher who asserted there would be *"no Black professors…if top education institutions were to judge applicants only on merit"* (Haigh). Likewise, the *GB News* article shared the core narrative of inferiority, albeit regarding socioeconomic class: *"all White men should have a Black man as a slave…they're lower class than us White people"* (Cutler). The latter narrative only included one adjective, *"horrific rant"*, being in the headline. Otherwise, the article adopted a neutral and formal tone which lacked any additional descriptive language.

Generally, there was a noticeable lack of narratives portraying Black individuals in a successful light. One narrative did refer to Black people's success within entertainment and sports; however, this positive portrayal was greatly overshadowed by the prevailing narrative that denigrated Black individuals in terms of morality and intellect (Haigh).

Narrative of Inaction: British Institutions are Invalidating and Unresponsive to Racial Inequality.

Several narratives portrayed a perceived lack of commitment or priority from institutions such as the government, police, and the CJS in addressing racial injustice (Table 7). Typically, the narrative plot begins with an acknowledgment of racial inequality and evolves to include various stories exemplifying said inequality. Acknowledgment or admission of wrongdoing by individuals responsible for racial discrimination were often absent from story resolutions (see Table 7).

Alongside the portrayed inaction, several articles mainly from right-wing newspapers constructed a narrative aimed at downplaying or dismissing the experiences of racial discrimination encountered by Black individuals. For example, one narrative described the UK as fostering a *"culture of denial, where the conversation about racism usually involves gaslighting and the delegitimisation of very credible claims"* (Freeman-Powell).

Many articles conveyed a sense of hopelessness by depicting authorities and institutions as inadequately addressing racist discrimination. Stories' resolutions often lacked clear condemnation of racial discrimination which reinforces both narratives of victimisation and the invalidation and unresponsiveness to inequality.

Table 7

Example Quotes Demonstrating the Narrative of Invalidation and Inaction of British Institutions.

Quote	Newspaper article author
…the government had a lack [of] curiosity about the over-representation of children from ethnic minority backgrounds in youth custody and still appear[ed] to have no plan to address the situation.	Huskisson

The group of MPs accused officials as having a puzzling reluctance to provide leadership or strategy…the risk is that the buck gets passed between departments with nobody taking responsibility.	
There was no case to answer for misconduct for any of the Metropolitan Police Service officers.	Williams
The result of the complaint has been finalised. No misconduct was identified. When he told officers he believed he was being treated unjustly due to the colour of his skin, he was told he was "playing the race card".	Freeman-Powell
There's no sign of action or even special attention to the issue…especially [children] who were already vulnerable and at risk, are being treated as an afterthought.	Huskisson
The university declined to comment on whether it is investigating Mr Cofnas' conduct.	Haigh

Deviant Narrative

One *Daily Mail* article (Churchill) was identified as a deviant narrative. The protagonist's narrative, Minister for Women and Equalities, rejected claims of systemic issues marginalising Black people in the UK and stated these had been dismantled. This conflicted with other DCNs that suggest Black people are victims of systematic prejudice and disadvantage within British society: *"[They] want young people to believe a narrative of hopelessness…British society is against you… this is the best country in the world to be Black".*

RQ 2: What are the Personal Narratives of Black British Men in Gangs?

Three broad themes, and several sub-themes, were constructed from four participant narratives (Table 8). Themes one and two are highly interconnected and therefore some

overlap is acknowledged. This section will start with a narrative summary for each participant, and then speak to each theme and sub-theme. Incorporating direct quotes from participants was crucial to anchoring the research in participant's lived experiences and to amplify their voices within the study.

Table 8

Themes and Sub-themes

Theme 1.	Inequality and discrimination • I am treated unequally because I am Black. • I am hindered from progress and told I cannot be successful. • I am labelled as criminal, dangerous and threatening.
Theme 2.	Feeling misunderstood, unvalued, and unseen • I am not understood or valued by White society and institutions. • I cannot be my authentic self. • I do not feel welcome or safe within UK society. • People in power do not care about Black people.
Theme 3.	I am confident in my intelligence.

Table 9

Narrative Summary of Stories

Pseudonym	Narrative summary
Anton	Anton's narrative was one of feeling misunderstood by others. He spoke often about being perceived as threatening, even from an early age, which made him change how he acted around others and his ability to be himself. A repeated message was that "everything Black is painted as bad", although his own view was that Black people are highly intelligent and skilled. He often described society's prejudices towards Black people as "weird" and laughed

	when speaking about them, perhaps demonstrating his confusion and dissonance about how he perceives himself, versus how others perceive him.
Dimitri	Dimitri's narrative communicated anger towards others who had let him down over his life. He spoke at length about his abusive childhood, which he felt left him vulnerable to be groomed into criminality. Many stories were times he felt unfairly treated, where he learnt aggression was a means to communicate his emotional distress. He talked about forming his own gang; this felt like a way he learnt to protect himself from future incidents of mistreatment or humiliation. Dimitri was very animated throughout the interview, often using his hands, objects, and his full body to re-enact the story.
Tariq	Tariq's narrative was one of feeling sadness and uncared for, predominantly by British systems and those supposed to protect him e.g., police, teachers, youth clubs, government policies. Tariq focussed his stories on the lack of services, support, and care offered to young Black men. He often validated his claims by highlighting the treatment he experienced in comparison to his observation of how his White peers were being treated. As the interview progressed, and he spoke about his experiences of prejudice, Tariq's energy turned from sadness and helplessness, to frustration, as he reflected on difficult aspects of his life and feeling unvalued as a young Black man in the UK.
Eli	Eli's narrative captured the difficulties of working life as a Black man, with many of his stories linked to systemic barriers hindering him from achieving professional success. His key message was that White society is "against us" and "in competition" with Black society. This narrative was more co-constructed than others, and he regularly checked with the researcher as to whether he was answering the question. This may suggest his desire of wanting a 'successful' interview.

Theme One: Inequality and Discrimination

I Am Treated Unequally Because I am Black – "It's not a level playing field".

All narratives highlighted stories of inequality based on participant's Black ethnicity across various settings like mental health services, schools, and the CJS. Police officers and teachers played key characters, in which interactions with them often marked turning points where participants first recognised discrimination due to their ethnicity. For instance, Eli recalled his teacher's admonition about his behaviour, citing his being Black as the reason: *"you can't act the way you act because you're Black…its different for you"*. A turning point in Tariq's narrative was being accused by his teacher of *"wanting to be a gangster*" due to his hairstyle. Both Tariq and Eli's narratives voiced receiving advice as children that success would require them to work harder than White peers due to racial inequalities: *"have to be ten times better than this person who's White"*.

Most narratives recounted mistreatment by authority figures. Anton described police officers as wanting to inflict pain and Tariq recalled a policeman falsely accusing him of carrying drugs in his schoolbag whilst threatening him: *"I could plant weed on you, there's nothing you could do about it, no one's gonna believe you."* The narratives suggest young Black men's perception that authority figures and systems are prone to harming them unfairly.

Several narratives described stories of denigration from childhood. Dimitri spoke of the lasting impact of these experiences as an adult, such as being positioned as *"the little Black criminal"* at board meetings. Anton recalled watching TV shows that portrayed Black families as dysfunctional, which he repeatedly refuted: *"we're portrayed as dysfunctional…no, our house is functional. Very functional."* Examples of derogatory language used to describe Black people were expressed in narratives, e.g., *"obnoxious", "animals",* and *"crook".* Dimitri described a policeman as *"terrorising"* him, emphasising

the perceived severity of this experience. Such language underscores the internalised deprecation and discomfort participants experienced, which Anton succinctly captured: *"to make other people feel comfortable you must make yourself small. If you can't do that physically, you're doing it mentally."*

Table 10

Example Quotes Illustrating the Unequal Treatment and Denigration of Black People

Quote	Participant
…the punishment or the repercussions that I get might differ from someone else, just basically based off of the fact that I'm Black.	Eli
In my school, they always used to push for the White people I would say more. Like, in our school teams, quite a few of the boys, the captains were always White, but the school was predominantly Black. So, it doesn't really make sense. And not only that, I used to think, how can this White person be the captain of the team but he's not really portraying any real leadership skills.	Tariq
…the man next door to me as I've come out the house to go to the shop one day, he was a fireman…I walked past him, he said, 'you fuck off back home you Black cunt.'	Dimitri
So you know when it comes to mental health it's just the disparity of medication…When a Black person's medicated they'll probably get injected, it's not the same.	Anton

Note. See Appendix O for full list of example quotes.

I Am Hindered from Progress and Told I Cannot be Successful – "It's designed for you not to prosper".

Personal narratives highlighted systemic barriers hindering personal and professional progress. Anton and Dimitri recalled stories of how their criminal records obstructed career

aspirations, despite this being a potential asset to working with youth offenders. Dimitri noted the irony of this preventing him from advancing into leadership roles:

> *"…they started to put people in management positions that had no criminal record. Now the same thing you employed me for is what's going to hold me back…they also got a uni degree, so you've put two layers between me and that job now" (Dimitri).*

Tariq and Eli's narratives discussed the impact of racial bias and stereotypes on Black people's employment prospects. Eli questioned whether there was truth in negative narratives in the media and society that suggest Black individuals "*can't be successful"* noting they can create self-fulfilling prophecies which are *"designed for you not to prosper".* Tariq shared this narrative that he was "*probably not going to do well",* as he described his potential for success was underestimated by teachers, impacting his self-esteem and aspirations. These narratives underscore how biased beliefs may impede progress and achievement: *"If you don't think you're worth much, you ain't gonna do much"* (Anton).

Some narratives spoke of the absence of valued and celebrated successful Black figures in British culture, outside the realms of sports and music. Narratives addressed the scarcity of media representation showcasing successfully *"educated"* (Anton) Black individuals *"doing stuff of stature"* (Dimitri). Anton hypothesised that this absence serves to reinforce the perceived dominant narrative associating Black people with criminality and an inability to be successful within an academic profession.

Table 11

Example Quotes of Participants Feeling Hindered from Progress and Success.

Quote	Participant
…I think they don't want you to thrive.	Anton

…[say] they've got like a really traditional African name…without even seeing you, without even being in your presence, your opportunities are limited because of the colour of your skin.	Tariq
…from young like if you have a narrative that Black people are like this Black people are like that, as a White person you're automatically gonna think negative things about them. If you're like someone that owns a business, you're not gonna want to hire them based off of like the things you hear.	Eli
Maybe if you'd have seen more positive Black people on the TV, doing stuff of stature rather than scoring a hat-trick or three points…As a youth, I'll be honest with you, as a youth, the only Black people I remember seeing were sports stars on the back page.	Dimitri

Note. See Appendix O for full example quotes.

I Am Labelled as Criminal, Dangerous and Threatening

All participants narratives expressed feeling unfairly construed as criminal, dangerous or threatening due to being of Black ethnicity. Such stories were told toward the beginning of narratives, often in school settings and progressing into adulthood. Anton retold stories where his size was regularly misread as threatening: *"I was told [by teachers] that I was gonna kill somebody in my lifetime."* He also recalled being accused of *"extorting a fellow pupil"* in primary school, due to the peer regularly offering him a pound.

Moving to adulthood, Dimitri's narrative highlighted others' assumption of him dealing drugs due to the way he dresses and speaks: *"I'd be stopped six times… 'You got crack?' Just because of the way I dress and sound." (Dimitri).* Eli and Dimitri spoke more broadly about the narrative society holds linking Black people with criminality: *"… they're dangerous…and they carry knives" (Eli)* and *"most of the things we see about Black people growing up was jail" (Dimitri).*

Participants used emotive language in a tone of frustration to describe their belief about how Black people are portrayed by British society and the media. Language like

"demonised", *"savages"*, and *"animals"* were mentioned, suggesting perceptions of evil or associated with uncontrollable, aggressive behaviour.

Table 12

Example Quotes Demonstrating Being Labelled as Criminal, Dangerous and Threatening.

Quote	Participant
…'we feel threatened by you'. And I'm like, I'm not even doing nothing…anything I do that's not smiling and jumping around and juggling balls, is classified as threatening.	Anton
She wasn't fair and I think it was due to race with her…and then to play the whole, he was aggressive type of thing. I wasn't aggressive…I wasn't swearing, I didn't make any threats, I wasn't violent, I just kind of maybe raised my voice a little bit. And obviously the perception is: aggressive, violent, da da da, so she reported me, they tried to get me excluded.	Tariq
You'll see things on like online about like, you know, how dangerous like Black people are.	Eli
I know how they paint the picture…They want the world to believe that the majority of crime committed in England is Black-owned and it's not. We're the minority.	Dimitri

Note. See Appendix O for full example quotes.

Theme Two: Feeling Misunderstood, Unvalued, and Unseen.

I Am Not Understood or Valued by White society and Institutions

All personal narratives revealed a sense of being misunderstood as Black British men in the UK. The main antagonists in stories were police, psychologists, White society, the British media, and the government. Anton's account of seeing White psychologists was not feeling understood by them. Eli expressed similar scepticism about whether White therapists could truly understand his plight as a young Black man living in the UK. Tariq's narrative

highlighted the impact of poverty being *"one of the real issues"* why young Black men may become involved in gangs, a challenge he feels those in power do not truly understand as *"it's not their reality"*. Dimitri's narrative focused more on stories where he felt his lived experience was undervalued.

Table 13

Example Quotes of Feeling Misunderstood and Undervalued by White Society and Institutions.

Quote	Participant
I don't think they listen. So I got this theory. If you're talking to 10 people, maybe all 10 heard you, but maybe 6 understood what you said.	Anton
You think people would scream our story from the roof. This is a man that changed his life around, no they don't…when it comes to the roads, I out qualify everybody in that professional setting because you've not done a day. You don't know what it's like.	Dimitri
…how's the White therapist gonna tell a Black guy that's growing up pretty much fighting for his life and told when he was young, 'you can't do this, you can't do that, you're criminal' – life's different, it's harder for you and then you go to a White therapist and they're gonna tell you, oh no, everything's alright. Obviously from your angle, everything might be alright, but I'm a Black person, like, you don't understand what I'm going through.	Eli
…people that don't come from that walk of life, they probably won't understand because it's not their reality…maybe people need to really do their due diligence before they start commenting on things they don't really understand.	Tariq

Note. See Appendix O for full example quotes.

I Cannot be My Authentic Self – "You never get to be yourself".

A shared narrative among the personal narratives was the feeling of suppressing one's authentic self and modifying behaviour to appear less threatening to White society. Participants told stories about how cultural expressions were frequently misinterpreted as aggressive or intimidating (Table 14). For example, Dimitri and Anton discussed how hand gestures, speaking passionately, and asking direct questions were all perceived as threatening. Furthermore, Anton described that in Afro-Caribbean culture, it is common for people to gather and talk outside while standing, which others might misinterpret as a 'gang'.

In contrast, Tariq felt pressured to conform to differing expectations within the Black community, leading him to abandon his passion for performing arts. This contrasted with the less-judgmental environment he perceived among his White peers.

Table 14

Example Quotes Demonstrating Participants' Struggle with Being Authentic.

Quote	Participant
Three to four people standing together on a corner can be classified as a gang and if you know Caribbean people and African people they like to stand up and chat in a group, this is what we do! **laughs**.	Anton
…I've been in a professional meeting and the White suit has turned around, 'Mr. [*redacted*] you're very aggressive'…Remember, my people up in the Caribbean, we're very hand-gestured…so, when our passion comes out, White people look as if I'm aggressive.	Dimitri
…as a young Black boy, you can't even express yourself…I used to be good at performing arts, but I felt like I couldn't do it…But if it was a White boy, no one's gonna be laughing…You can more be free, you can express yourself more.	Tariq

…if someone doesn't look like me I have to like adapt as a Black guy because they don't understand where you're coming from … I've got to say things in a way that you would understand.	Eli

Note. See Appendix O for full example quotes.

I Do Not Feel Welcome or Safe Within UK Society

All participants' narratives highlighted feelings of not belonging within White British society. Eli's narrative was one of perceived competition and unfriendliness from his White peers towards him. One of Dimitri's core narratives was feeling unwelcome and discriminated against; these were from neighbours, and White grandfather, who he felt treated him differently to his White grandchildren. He reflected on his Mixed White-Black heritage, and his belief that *"White people aren't going to accept me."* In contrast, Tariq's narrative referenced feeling unsafe within the Black community, noting *"Black-on-Black hate"*. Anton and Dimitri's narratives referenced the historic 'no Irish, no Blacks, no dogs' sign, suggesting a lingering feeling of exclusion in a predominantly White society, despite significant progress in equal rights.

Table 15

Example Quotes Highlighting Feeling Unwelcome and Unsafe in British Society

Quote	Participant
…now on Instagram you see a lot of it…they took pictures of the 'No Irish, no Blacks, no dogs.'	Anton
…White people aren't going to accept me. So, what do you want me to see myself as? You want me to see myself as part of something that don't accept me? Get out of here.	Dimitri

I'm in competition with them, so it's like, rather than being that friendly or speaking to them or what not, it's like, they look at me a certain way…I wouldn't say it's a friendly nature.	Eli
…you see Black people, yeah, it's been institutionalised in them for centuries, it's really deep. Black people are programmed to hate each other, Black-on-Black hate is real.	Tariq

Note. See Appendix O for full example quotes.

People in Power Do Not Care About Black People

All personal narratives contributed to the narrative that those in power do not prioritise social equality for Black people in the UK. The lack of funding being prioritised to support young Black youth was raised in most personal narratives, particularly the negative impact of cutbacks to youth clubs. Dimitri spoke about his story of being advised by the Metropolitan Police to seek funding from a Black fund for his bid to support young people involved in criminality. He believed this advice reinforced the narrative that youth violence is a predominantly 'Black problem' that should be supported by Black-owned organisations exclusively. Tariq told stories regarding the government's indifference, and even "*like*" for youth violence involving Black people. He believed that authorities would respond more urgently if issues of youth violence were predominantly affecting White communities.

The narrative tone was one of anger, where participants' frustrations were noted through their tone of voice and the types of stories told.

Table 16

Example Quotes of Feeling that People in Power Do Not Care About Black Society.

Quote	Participant
I don't think they realise how important youth clubs are. It's a place where young people from different places get to meet each other. It's a place where even if there's conflict, it's done in a safe environment where people learn…it's not left to themselves outside.	Anton
That's because society wants us to be like this. They like the Black-on-Black crime, they do. Because when Black people are killing each other, they don't care.	Tariq
I had members of the Metropolitan Police, high-ranking police officers, sit down, read through a bid I wrote for them and say, 'that's the best bid we've ever seen written, why don't you take it to a Black fund?'… Ah, suits your narrative though, doesn't it? That these are all Black kids creating knife crime.	Dimitri

Note. See Appendix O for full example quotes.

Theme Three: I am Confident in my Intelligence.

A prevalent narrative developed where all participants articulated a confidence in their intellectual abilities (Table 17). Dimitri repeated the phrase, *"I am academically astute"* and spoke about being a straight A-student within the first minute of the interview. Tariq reflected on his great linguistic abilities, while Eli recalled being recognised for his intelligence. Anton also contributed to the narrative by asserting that Black people are highly intelligent, stating, *"I think a lot of us are geniuses"* and suggested that the intellectual potential of young Black children is not fully realised. Stories of intelligence were often told towards the beginning of the narrative plot, suggesting it is an important part of participants' identity.

Table 17

Example Quotes of Participants Expressing Personal Intelligence.

Quote	Participant
"I think young Black kids are highly intelligent, but we're not stimulated enough. The working school... It's too easy!"	Anton
I've always been great with language	Tariq
…they said I was smart	Eli
I'm academically astute…I was a straight A student all through my schooling years	Dimitri

Note. See Appendix O for full example quotes.

RQ 3: What are the Similarities and Differences Between the Personal Narratives and the Media's Dominant Cultural Narratives?

The data revealed numerous similarities in themes between DCNs and personal narratives, however it appeared these were expressed from slightly differing perspectives. Personal narratives revealed modifications to DCNs, including one alternative community narrative (see Table 18).

Table 18

Summary of Similarities and Differences between Personal Narratives and DCNs, and Alternative Community Narratives.

	Media narratives	**Personal narratives**
Similarities		
	Black people are dangerous and criminal	You label me as dangerous and threatening
	Black people experience prejudice and institutional racism	I am unequally treated because I am Black
	There is minimal action to tackle racial injustices	People in power do not care about me
Differences (modifications to DCNs)		
	Black people are intellectually inferior	I am confident in my intelligence
	Black people are not successful	You hinder me from success
Alternative community narratives		
We form groups with people who have similar experiences to us, that make us feel understood, and valued.		

The experience of prejudice and systemic racism was a DCN found to be present in all personal narratives. The newspaper stories were often in relation to Black people's experience of the CJS or in interactions with police. Personal narratives also storied racial prejudice by police, along with discrimination experienced from teachers, thus identifying other settings where these experiences are significant. A second similarity found between DCNs and personal narratives was the link between Black people and criminality. Most newspaper articles emphasised the overrepresentation of young Black men in the CJS and told stories of the automatic assumption of guilt young Black men face, positioning them as

inherently dangerous. Participants also shared stories of being labelled as threatening by White peers and feeling unable to act authentically due to their physicality, voice, dress, or expressed emotions being misunderstood as signs of threat. Thirdly, narrative resolutions in media and personal narratives frequently depicted minimal action to address racial disparities and injustices in UK society. Participant stories expressed disappointment in government priorities, citing cutbacks in services and inaction on issues like poverty and crime, contributing to a sense of neglect within the Black British community.

Differences between DCNs and personal narratives were noted, that is, where some DCNs were modified by personal stories. The DCN that 'Black people are intellectually inferior' was subverted by all participants who referenced being intelligent (Table 17). Personal narratives collectively suggest an internalised confidence in intelligence to offer others and society. Furthermore, all participants rejected the DCN that Black people are incapable of success. Instead, personal narratives highlighted how systemic barriers have hindered their ability to achieve their full potential. Three participants discussed that the lack of positive portrayals of successful Black men in media narratives could reinforce the perception of Black individuals as less successful (see Table 11). Eli expressed a desire to promote an opposite narrative – that Black people can achieve success, despite the prevailing negative media portrayals: "*Don't listen to [the narratives]… It's designed for you not to prosper… that's what I would say to the younger generation, which I probably didn't hear…certainly not by the media" (Eli).*

An alternative community narrative regarding young Black men in gangs formed from the personal narratives, although participants rarely shared stories about gang involvement. Two participants rejected the term 'gang' but referred to it as a *"brotherhood"* or *"my team"* instead. When it featured in stories, it was in the context of seeking belonging and safety within a group of *"like-minded people"* (see Table 19). This can be understood in

relation to other themes from personal narratives which highlighted feeling unwelcome, misunderstood, and undervalued in UK society. The desire to form groups that provide psychological safety against these rejections was suggested. This alternative community narrative reveals that young Black men with experience in gangs often view it as an adaptive response to the harmful DCNs about their community.

Table 19

Example Quotes Referencing Finding Belonging and Safety Within Gangs.

Quote	Participant
Why do you think people operate in a group? Because it's safer. It was just like-minded people just wanted the same. It wasn't like a gang per se. Well, you know, it was my team.	Anton
I guess it's like a brotherhood…I wouldn't say I was in a gang like that. I guess it was a group of friends, just kind of all stuck together, like having each other's backs…we're all like similar backgrounds, or like gone through similar things. So it's like you just gravitate towards each other. …if you've got a narrative playing a bunch of people as bad people, and maybe they're not, and they're all going through the same thing, it's going to be easy for them to all relate to each other…because they're going through the same narratives, the same way you're understanding it.	Eli

Discussion

This study explored the UK's media narratives about Black people and how this differs or aligns with the personal narratives of a sample of Black British men formally in 'gangs'. The findings will be summarised and interpreted with reference to existing literature

and psychological theory. The discussion will conclude with the study's strengths, limitations, clinical implications, and future research recommendations.

Dominant cultural narratives (DCNs) as depicted within British newspapers sampled in the current study portrayed Black people in the UK as victims, prone to criminality and intellectually and socially inferior, and portrayed British institutions as invalidating and unresponsive to the prejudice and inequality faced by the Black British community. Broadly speaking, these DCNs fell into two classes: one that positions Black people as criminals, and another as victims. Personal narratives of young Black men in 'gangs' primarily described stories of inequality and discrimination within British society, particularly highlighting feelings of being misunderstood and undervalued.

While both DCNs and personal narratives shared themes of inequality and prejudice faced by Black men, media narratives often portrayed them as inherently dangerous individuals, perpetuating societal perceptions of criminality. This criminalisation narrative was closely linked to victim narratives and narratives of inaction, in that story plots and characters were often associated with the CJS or police. Personal narratives similarly expressed awareness and frustration with this criminalisation narrative prevalent in British society, as was also evident in Agnew's (2016) research. Although newspapers play a crucial role in highlighting systemic discrimination and advocating for change, it is essential to consider the balance between narratives portraying Black men as productive prosocial members of society, and those reinforcing negative stereotypes. There is a risk that, even though the news articles are intended to be helpful and informative in advocating for change, if these stories become the prevailing narratives, they will persist as dominant societal views, maintaining the association between Black men and criminality.

Other research corroborates the perceived synonymity between young Black men and crime which extends to being conflated with 'gangs' (Bolger, 2021; Pitts, 2020). Joseph and

Gunter (2011) found that people in gangs are often imagined to be from ethnic minority backgrounds, especially Black men; Dimitri and Anton's personal narratives spoke to this. Consequently, this can be used to justify the over-policing of Black communities, leading to more racially prejudiced experiences, trauma, and othering (Williams, 2015). Also, locating the problem within the Black community may absolve powerful institutions from addressing socio-economic issues disproportionately affecting people of ethnic minorities (Williams, 2015). This may clarify why a government minister, portrayed as the protagonist in the deviant media narrative, rejected claims of systemic issues marginalising Black people in the UK, possibly aiming to uphold existing power structures.

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 2000) posits that individuals shape their identities not only based on the groups they belong to but also on how other groups perceive them. Applying such a theory to this study suggests that if dominant narratives about young Black men are largely stigmatising and harmful, they can exacerbate racial polarisation and uphold the power dynamics favouring White society in the UK (Thompson, 2019). Additionally, dominant narratives portraying Black individuals as victims, dangerous, or inferior can influence one's internal sense of self (Matsueda, 1992), which was also storied in Tariq and Eli's narratives. The resulting internalised stigma and discrimination may limit the opportunities available to young Black men (Sampson & Laub, 2003) as was revealed by personal narratives where participants felt hindered from achieving success.

Cottrell-Boyce (2013) argued that gangs are not the root problem, but rather a symptom of a larger issue stemming from racism, inequality, and poverty in society. Personal narratives of Tariq and Anton highlighted the impact of socioeconomic inequality and the lack of community support as contributing to gang involvement. Gang members in Agnew's (2016) research also attributed government oppression to gang formation. This may explain why gang desistance initiatives have been largely ineffective, as they do not address the

underlying societal inequalities. The study suggests the importance of creating inclusive environments where young Black men feel valued and understood in British society, rather than assigning denigrating narratives and enacting experiences of racial discrimination, particularly by authorities like the CJS/police aimed to protect society.

Nevertheless, a resilience and strength in which participants' personal narratives challenged prejudiced DCNs was observed, for example where participants asserted their intelligence and rejected a narrative of intellectual inferiority. Other studies observed similar modifications to dominant narratives where gang members resisted narratives of Black men as dangerous (Agnew, 2016) or victims (Bolger, 2021). These modifications support the concept of 'reimagined identities,' where individuals redefine themselves in ways that affirm an improved self-image (Case and Hunter, 2014).

Similarly, community narratives serve as essential psychological resources, especially when dominant cultural narratives fail to accurately represent individuals' lived experiences (Mankowski & Rappaport, 2000). Personal narratives seldom linked participant identities to former gang membership, indicating a lack of resonance with this aspect of their identity. This disassociation could stem from participants' perceptions of the negative connotations associated with the term 'gang,' constructed by society and the media. Instead, forming groups that foster a sense of belonging, safety and feeling understood appeared as a community narrative from personal narratives. This aligns with previous research (Agnew, 2016; Bolger, 2021; Guthrie, 2011) and group process theory which suggests that individuals form groups to enhance self-esteem and protect against the psychological effects of rejection (Forsyth, 2014). The alternative narrative of forming psychologically safe groups and communities challenged the hegemony of stigmatising, dominant narratives and proposed an alternative socially valued identity instead.

Strengths and Limitations

The study's strengths lie in recruiting a hard-to-reach population, whose narratives provided valuable insights often neglected in research. Boden (2019) argues that this community's voices are often passively conveyed in research and should be explored in depth to fully understand their experiences; a finding also identified in Section A. This study addresses this gap by capturing rich narratives of individuals and incorporating direct quotes, thus amplifying the voices of this under-represented group. The development of themes was discussed with two supervisors ensuring improved validity. While a sample size of four for constructing personal narratives may seem small, Reissman (1993) argues that narrative analysis focuses on the depth rather than the breadth of analysis, making it suitable for small sample sizes. This study's analysis incorporated structural, thematic, and dialogical narrative approaches, allowing a rigorous analysis of the data.

One limitation of this study was that responder validation was not used to check the validity of the personal stories. Secondly, all participants identified themselves as former gang-members so the transferability of the narrative findings to individuals currently involved in gangs may be limited. It is possible that experiences within gangs may have evolved since their leaving, making them less close to the immediate realities of gang life as it is now. However, this distance may also have been advantageous, by allowing participants to reflect more deeply on their experiences and the processes they underwent, offering valuable insights that might not be as easily accessed by those still actively involved in gang life. Thirdly, all participants were local to London, which may again compromise transferability. Fourthly, personal narratives may be influenced by responder bias, including social desirability and the extent to which participants feel comfortable being 'authentic', as personal narratives highlighted. Comparably, the researcher's affiliation with an educational institution and the lack of psychological safety this may evoke during the narrative interview

could have discouraged participants' openness if they had negative experiences in such settings. Finally, the media narratives were not selected by two raters and their analysis could be influenced by the researcher's biases.

Clinical Implications and Future Research

This study underscores the detrimental impact of stigmatising language, labels, and narratives on young Black men's sense of self. Psychologists should remain mindful of this when using collaborative formulation techniques, encouraging mutually agreed language to validate individuals (Friedberg et al., 2010). Similarly, avoiding narratives or terms that re-enact othering and disempowerment can help reduce power imbalances in therapy (Taylor, 2023). Comparably, there are important policy implications regarding the need to hold news organisations accountable for the language and narratives they use. If such organisations contribute to stigmatising language and perpetuate harmful narratives, they can reinforce divisiveness and racism within society. By implementing policies that ensure media accountability, it may be possible to curb the spread of these negative stereotypes and promote a more inclusive and respectful discourse in public communication. Such measures could encourage more responsible reporting, reducing the societal impact of biased or inflammatory media content.

Young Black men who offend are a hard-to-reach community who have poorer access to mental health services (Campbell & Abbott, 2013). Considering the narratives revealed in this study, which highlight repeated experiences of discrimination, community psychology approaches are proposed to be helpful. The philosophy of community psychology is that societal inequalities contribute to the creation and perpetuation of psychological issues (Thompson et al., 2018). By empowering communities, psychologists can contribute to addressing these trends and advancing positive change. This study supports these principles

by emphasising the need for co-production between services and young Black men with the shared aim of reducing the social oppression experienced (Nelson & Prilletensky, 2010), giving space for new affirmative narratives to arise. Integrating a community psychology approach into the NHS model of care can foster inclusive and helpful collaboration with this marginalised community, rather than imposing traditional clinic-based approaches.

Research indicates that community psychology approaches, particularly those emphasising psychological empowerment through community-based interventions, can enhance resilience and improve mental health by counteracting disempowering influences (Christens, 2012). Psychological empowerment refers to the psychological processes through which individuals, organisations, and communities gain greater control over their lives (Christens, 2012). This in turn promotes social inclusion, communication, and social change that empowers individuals and challenges the structural forces that contribute to psychological distress.

Apart from the significance of the study's findings, engaging in narrative research can enhance community empowerment and support initiatives for social change (Mankowski & Rappaport, 2000). Subsequent studies could expand upon these findings by investigating the effectiveness of narrative therapy approaches within this community. Such research could empower individuals to voice their experiences and create new positive dominant narratives rooted in their own stories.

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Section C: Appendices and Supporting Material

Section A – Appendix A: Algorithm for selecting the study categories to rate in the MMAT

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Section B – Appendix B: Contextual Information Questionnaire

1. Age _____years

2. **Ethnicity** (circle one)

Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African

- African
- Caribbean
- Other Black

Mixed or multiple ethnic group

- White and Black African
- White and Black Caribbean
- Other Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups

3. **Nationality** _____

4. **Years living in the UK** _____years

5. **Highest Education Level** (circle one)
   - No formal qualifications
   - Primary school
   - Secondary school – GCSEs or BTEC or equivalent
   - A levels
   - Apprenticeship
   - Bachelor's degree
   - Master's degree
   - Doctorate degree

6. **Socio-economic class** (circle one)
   - Working class
   - Middle class
   - Upper class

7. **Years as part of a 'gang'** _____years

8. **Is your gang involvement current or historic?** (circle one)

   Current Historic

9. **Current employment role** _____

   Part time or Full time (circle one)

Appendix C: Narrative Inquiry

Useful prompts generally

Follow up on Particular Incident Narratives mentioned. E.g.:
- ***Tell me more about…?***
- ***What happened before/after/then..?***
- ***Can you recall anything else?***
- ***What do you remember about…?***

Try to use the order of their raising.
Try to use the words used by the narrator.

1. **Tell me the story of your childhood, and stories of any important events or experiences.**
   Prompts:
   - What do you remember most about growing up?
   - E.g., stories about people, family, family friends, neighbourhood

2. **Can you recall any stories that were told about you by other people growing up?**
   Prompts:
   - How did people in your family and community e.g., neighbours, teachers, talk about you growing up?
   - What did you notice about the stories that Black/ White people told about you?

3. **Can you tell me about any stories you heard about living in the UK as a Black family?**
   Prompts:
   - How does this compare with your own experiences? Were these stories helpful, and in what way?
   - What stories did you hear, if any, about how you may be treated, or viewed, compared with White people?
   - What stories did your family and family friends' tell about White people during their time in the UK?
   - How did these stories shape the way you interacted with the White people and society generally?

4. **I would like you to tell me what stories, images or memories come to mind of the things you have seen or heard about Black people in the media?**
   Prompts:
   - Mass media eg. TV news, newspapers
   - Police force
   - Social media e.g. Instagram, podcasts
   - In education
   - In court/ justice system
   - Mental healthcare

5. **What societal narratives do you think the media, generally, is trying to say about Black people? And Black men in particular?**
   Prompts:

- What do you think the purpose of these narratives are?

6. **How do you make sense of these narratives told about Black people/men in the media?**
   Prompts:
   - What do you think is happening? What do you think is the hope or intention of the media?
   - How do these stories shape Black peoples' lives? Ambitions? Goals? Motivation? Relationships? Willingness to mix in society?

7. **How did/does these societal narratives influence the way you:**
   - Viewed yourself?
   - Made choices and decisions in life?
   - Followed rules as a child?
   - Followed the law as an adult?
   - Took opportunities from White institutions?
   - Perceived White people?
   - Felt towards White people in the helping profession? E.g. Therapists, doctors etc.
   - How would this be same or different if it was a Black therapist?

8. **Thinking about what you have just said, can you tell me the story of you joining a gang?**

9. **Can you tell me the story of life for you now?**
   Prompts:
   - How does the stories told, and advice given to the next generation compare with what you were told?
   - How do you manage the effect of the media narratives on how you live your life now?
   - Can you tell me the story of your relationship with White society now?

10. **How do you hope the story of your future looks like?**

I am interested to know how you felt about our conversation today…

11. **What was it like talking to me today?**

12. **Did this process help you learn anything, maybe something about yourself, or something you hadn't thought about before?**

13. **Was there anything about me as a person that made a difference to how comfortable you felt answering the questions?**

Thank you for talking with me today. I hope you found this chat together a useful or interesting experience. I will now stop the recording.

Appendix D: Ethics Approval Letter

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Appendix E: Risk Assessment

Hazard/Risk	Persons at Risk & Nature of harm	Current Control Measures	Risk Rating (High /Medium /Low)	Additional Control Measures Required	Revised Risk Rating (High/ Medium/Low)	Action by who	Action by when	Date action complete
A hazard is anything that **may** cause physical or mental harm, e.g. lone working, travel (domestic and international), sensitive research topic etc.	State here who is at risk – this could be an individual or a group of people and the type of harm they are at risk of.	Describe the measure(s) that you have in place to reduce or remove the risk of the hazard occurring.	See table below.	Describe any other measure(s) that could be applied to further reduce or remove the risk of the hazard occurring. Additional measures are mandatory should the risk outcome be rated as medium or high. If it is not possible to manage the hazard/risk such that the rating is reduced to low, please notify the Research Director or Programme Director. In such circumstances, the study will likely need to be revised.	See table below.	Who is responsible for the management of this risk	Date control measures need to be implemented by.	This should be completed once the risk has been managed.
The following yellow highlighted text provides examples that are relevant to many studies conducted at Salomons. If an example is not applicable for your study, please delete it. If an example is applicable, please review the wording, and revise where needed, to ensure that it fully fits with your study. If there are additional risks that are not covered by these examples, please add additional row(s) for these. Once you have finished, please remove the yellow highlighting.								
Lone working	Researcher personal safety	1. The interviews will occur face-to-face in a public space. 2. Participants will be met in a public space e.g., public library, church, town hall, for the interview. 3. The researcher has arranged to check in with the internal supervisor and/or gatekeeper before and after each meeting with a participant. 4. The researcher will carry a personal safety alarm to	Low					

Hazard/Risk	Persons at Risk & Nature of harm	Current Control Measures	Risk Rating (High /Medium /Low)	Additional Control Measures Required	Revised Risk Rating (High/ Medium/Low)	Action by who	Action by when	Date action complete
		alert others in an unlikely case of emergency. 5. The researcher will also carry a mobile phone to contact others/emergency services in the unlikely case of an emergency.						
Travel to/from research sites	Researcher personal safety	1. The researcher will only use means of travel that they already use in relation to other aspects of their role (e.g. clinical placement), and they will follow the same safety guidance. Therefore, the risk associated with travelling due to research will be no greater than for the rest of their role.	Low					
Sensitive research topic	Research participant distress	1. The information sheet makes clear this risk. As participants will choose the stories they share with the researcher, it is anticipated that this distress will not be significant in nature. 2. There is a plan in place to manage participant distress should it arise during the interview (please see the ethics form for further details). A list of places to seek help from will also be	Low	Participants are informed that the researcher can support them following the interview if they find things become emotionally difficult. The participant information sheet states: "If you feel that it is difficult to live life as you were after we have talked, then I can recommend some place where you can talk more about				

Hazard/Risk	Persons at Risk & Nature of harm	Current Control Measures	Risk Rating (High /Medium /Low)	Additional Control Measures Required	Revised Risk Rating (High/ Medium/Low)	Action by who	Action by when	Date action complete
		provided to participants if felt needed. 3. The research participants can withdraw from the study and have been provided with information about where they can receive further support, if required. 4. Participants will be offered the option of being happy to continue or taking a break halfway through the interview. A break will also be offered if discomfort is observed by the researcher.		your feelings." Contact details are given. Additional measures in place: - If required, the lead researcher will signpost the individual to their local mental health service/counselling service. Community organisations, such as spiritual institutions and charity organisations e.g., Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries, Mind's Young Black Men Programme, Black Minds Matter UK, may feel more helpful and accessible for participants (particularly given long wait times in the NHS and known relationships to white westernised institutions). - Participants will be offered the option of being happy to continue or taking a break half way through the interview. A break will also be offered if discomfort is observed by the researcher. - In instances where emotional upset or distress is observed (e.g., crying, restlessness, physiological symptoms such				

Hazard/Risk	Persons at Risk & Nature of harm	Current Control Measures	Risk Rating (High /Medium /Low)	Additional Control Measures Required	Revised Risk Rating (High/ Medium/Low)	Action by who	Action by when	Date action complete
				as shallow breathing), the lead researcher can draw on therapeutic skills to contain the participant's emotional distress. These could include normalising and validating their emotional response, and offering grounding/breathing techniques to support them to regulate in the moment. - In the event that the participant becomes psychologically distressed in a manner that presents as a risk to themselves, or the researcher (e.g., observed physical anger towards self, others, property), the interview will be brought to an early end. The researcher will acknowledge and empathise and contain the emotions of the participant with the aim of ensuring they are settled enough to leave independently and safely. The researcher will inform the participant that they will be in contact via phone at a later date to follow up on how they are. If the interview was not sufficient in length that data is not helpful in answering the research questions intended, the participant will be advised of this during the call				

Hazard/Risk	Persons at Risk & Nature of harm	Current Control Measures	Risk Rating (High /Medium /Low)	Additional Control Measures Required	Revised Risk Rating (High/ Medium/Low)	Action by who	Action by when	Date action complete
				and they will be thanked for their time. The lead researcher will carry a mobile phone, and a personal safety alarm (one that you pull that makes a loud alarm sound to gain the attention of others), to maintain safety.				
Sensitive research topic	Researcher distress	1. The researcher is experienced at managing their own wellbeing when interviewing participants about sensitive topics from their training and experience on clinical placement. 2. The researcher has chosen a research project that they believe is emotionally manageable for them. 3. Meetings will be organised with the internal supervisor around interview dates, to ensure a space for reflection is available should it feel necessary for the researcher. These meeting dates will be organised in advance to ensure the supervisor is available. 4. If the researcher experiences significant distress arising from the project, they will think with their supervisor about the best way forward.	Low					

Hazard/Risk	Persons at Risk & Nature of harm	Current Control Measures	Risk Rating (High /Medium /Low)	Additional Control Measures Required	Revised Risk Rating (High/ Medium/Low)	Action by who	Action by when	Date action complete
Research participants disclosing criminal activity		1. The Participant Information Sheet clearly states: "Please do not talk about illegal activity that you have not been tried for in court." 2. This statement will be verbally reiterated to participants at the start of the interview, so they are reminded of this. 3. In any instances where the researcher believes the participant may be about to speak of a disclosure of a criminal nature, the researcher will politely intervene to remind the participant not to speak of events of which they have not already been tried for. This will give the participant another opportunity to reflect on what they choose to share within the interview and reduce the likelihood of disclosures of criminal activity.	Low					
Breach of confidentiality	Research participants' personal data being	1. Electronic personal data will be stored on password protected and encrypted devices and/or file space.	Low					

Hazard/Risk	Persons at Risk & Nature of harm	Current Control Measures	Risk Rating (High /Medium /Low)	Additional Control Measures Required	Revised Risk Rating (High/ Medium/Low)	Action by who	Action by when	Date action complete
	accessed by people who should not have access to it	2. Paper based data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet/draw and transferred to secure University storage as soon as practicality possible. 3. Research data will be anonymised as soon as practicality possible. 4. The University's data protection/GDPR policy will be followed, as applicable. 5. The software used to analyse data is GDPR compliant. 6. There will be a Data Sharing Agreement between the transcriber and lead researcher to ensure confidentiality.						
Loss of data	Research data being lost or rendered unusable	1. A regular, secure backup of the research data will be stored on an independent system (e.g. research data will be stored on both NHS and University OneDrive space of which both are secure).	Low					

Appendix F: Participant Consent Form

Salomons Institute for Applied Psychology

One Meadow Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2YG

Ethics approval number: Version number:
Participant Identification number for this study: 2

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: **How do the stories of Black British men who have been in a 'gang' compare with the stories told about Black British men within the British media?**

Name of Researcher: Inci Baysal

Please tick box:

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to read the information, ask questions and I am happy with the answers.	☐
2. I understand that participating is my choice. I understand that I am free to decide I don't want my chat with Inci to be included up to **7 days** after.	☐
3. I understand that the experiences I share with you will be looked at by the lead researcher, Inci Baysal, the principal supervisor, two project consultants, and a secretary. They will help Inci to understand the results. I give permission for these individuals to read my typed-up chat. I understand that **only** Inci will know my real name.	☐
4. I agree for the interview to be sound recorded and typed to help the researchers make sense of what was said.	☐
5. I agree that any quotes from our chat will not include my name and may be used in the published reports about the research.	☐
6. I agree for the experiences I share to be used in other studies that may be done in the future.	☐
7. I agree to take part in this study.	☐

Name of Participant_____ Date_____

Signature _____

Name of Person taking consent _____Date_____

Signature _____

Please circle your answer:

After the research has finished, I WOULD / WOULD NOT like to receive a summary of the results via email.

Signature _____

I am aware that I can request a copy of the typed conversation (interview transcript) by emailing the lead researcher, Inci, on ib233@canterbury.ac.uk or by phone on 07495119090.

Signature _____

Email address:

Appendix G: Participant Information Sheet

Salomons Institute for Applied Psychology
One Meadow Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2YG
www.canterbury.ac.uk/appliedpsychology

Information about the research

Date: 05/07/2023
Version Number: v1
Research Ethics Committee Reference:

Study Title: How do the stories of Black British men who have been in a 'gang' compare with the stories told about Black British men within the British media?

Hi, my name is Inci Baysal and I am studying for a Doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology. As part of that degree, I am doing a research project. This is being supervised by Dr Kamisha Guthrie who is a Clinical Psychologist and Lecturer. I am inviting you to take part in this research.

What is the purpose of the study?
I am interested in learning about how young Black men may think and feel about themselves, and how this compares to some of the stories written about young Black men in 'gangs' in the media. I have used the word 'gangs' as this is often what society calls it.

This research may help psychologists to work better with young Black men by hearing what life is like for you and other Black men. Also, I hope this research can support the British media to change the language they use when talking about young Black men, in general. It may also help the government to re-think their policies around policing, the prison system, care system and education, for example. Lots of governments and institutions have been working on racist policy for many years with no change. I think this research can be important in challenging some of the racism that we know exists in these big institutions.

Why have I been invited?
You have been recommended as a good person to talk with about your experiences.

You are important for this research because you:

- Identify as 'Black British'
  - You do not need to have a British passport but have spent at least 5 years living in the UK as a child under 16.
  - You may be from a 'mixed race' background but identify as 'Black'.
- Are aged between 16 – 35.
- Identify as having experience of being part of a 'gang'. A 'gang' is a group of people who have a 'gang' name and are involved in illegal activity.

You are one of roughly 4 – 7 other people who I will be asking to tell their story about living life in Britain as a Black male.

What will I be asked to do?

- You will be invited for a chat with me (Inci) who will support you to share your experiences. I will do this by asking you questions about your background, life history, some experiences of being in a 'gang', and how you feel about yourself in society generally. Please **do not** talk about illegal activity that you have not been tried for in court.

- This chat will last around 60 – 90 minutes. This will be at a place where we can talk in private;

- The interview will be sound recorded so I can remember your story and look for patterns and similarities with the other stories;

Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether to join the study. If you agree to share your story, I will ask you to sign a consent form saying you agree to participate.

What happens if I change my mind?
If you decide that you no longer want to be part of the research, please let me know up to 7 days after signing the consent form. You do not need to explain the reason. I will then destroy/delete our typed chat.

Deciding not to participate from this research will not affect any current care you are receiving, as I will not inform anyone of your decision.

I hope you can appreciate that 7 days is given so that the researcher has enough time to ask someone else to share their story. Having these types of chats with lots of people can help make the study more accurate.

Expenses and payments
You will be offered a £10 gift voucher as a "thank-you" for taking part.

What are the possible difficulties of taking part?
Telling some parts of your story and discussing it together may generate some strong emotions, as they do for many people. If this happens for you, I am also here to support you with that. If the emotions become more intense and you want to stop sharing your story, we can do that. If you feel that it is difficult to live life as you were after we have talked, then I can recommend some place where you can talk more about your feelings.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
I cannot promise that talking together will help you, but I hope that telling your story will give you a sense of purpose and meaning in knowing that you may help towards making some changes within society.

Sharing your story can help psychologists, and many professionals, to better understand life through a Black man's eyes and get better at helping, even if they are White.

What if there is a problem?
If you have any complaint about the way you have been dealt with during the study, or any possible harm you might suffer, please contact me, Inci, in the first instance. You can contact me by leaving a message on the 24-hour voicemail phone number 01227 927070. Please leave a contact number and say that the message is for Inci Baysal and I will get back to you as soon as possible. You can also contact me on: ib233@canterbury.ac.uk. I will do my best to address your concerns.

Concerns and Complaints
If you remain dissatisfied and wish to complain formally, you can do this by contacting Dr Fergal Jones, Clinical Psychology Programme Research Director, Salomons Institute for Applied Psychology on: fergal.jones@canterbury.ac.uk

Will information from or about me be kept confidential?
Yes. This is how I will make sure people will keep your story private:

- Inci is the only people who will hear the sound recording of our chat.
- Only researchers involved in the study will have access to the typed chat (this is Inci, the principal supervisor and two project consultants).
- Any future research will only use the typed chat. This will have false names in it, so people do not know who was talking.
- After the project is finished, the typed chat document will be securely kept by Inci and the university for 10 years. This is the normal process and amount of time recommended when you do research. After 10 years, both the university and Inci will make sure all data is deleted and destroyed.

There are some rare situations in which I will need to tell others about something you have told me. The only time I would need to do this is if I were to become concerned about your safety or the safety of someone else.

What will happen to the results of the research study?
I will ask you on the consent form if you would like to learn about the results of the research project after it is completed. If you said yes, this will be emailed to you after the project.

It may be that the results of this study will be published in a scientific journal or shared with other organisations. This is so professionals can learn how to support young Black men by having a better understanding of your life experiences. Any quotes from our conversation that is included as part of sharing this research will not include your name.

Who is sponsoring and funding the research?
I am currently a student at Canterbury Christ Church University, so they are helping me pay for this research.

Who has reviewed the study?
Every research project at Canterbury Christ Church University needs to be approved by a panel of senior researchers who make sure the research is safe to do. The panel have said it is safe for me to do this research.

Further information and contact details
If you would like to speak to me to ask me more questions, you can leave a message on a 24-hour voicemail phone line at 01227 927070. Please say that the message is for Inci Baysal and leave a contact number so that I can get back to you. You can also email me on: ib233@canterbury.ac.uk

Please feel free to talk with others about the study to decide if you are interested in taking part.

Appendix H: Annotated Newspaper Article

This has been removed from the electronic copy

Appendix I: Annotated Interview Transcript

This has been removed from the electronic copy

Appendix J: Evidence of Theme Formation for Media Narratives

web link	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/may/26/three-black-men-in-uk-say-institutional-racism-influenced-convictions	https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/young-black-boys-almost-three-29277193	https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/met-police-stop-search-black-26758565	https://www.theguardian.com/law/2023/jun/10/black-remand-prisoners-held-70-longer-than-white-counterparts-in-england-and-wales	https://news.sky.com/story/black-people-in-uk-living-in-fear-over-racism-say-un-experts-12797572	https://www.gbnews.com/politics/conservative-politician-andrew-edwards-recording-racist	https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-13060909/cambridge-university-fellow-race-equality-controversy.html#comments	https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12586311/Britain-best-country-black-Kemi-Badenoch.html
Title:	**Three black men in UK say 'institutional racism' influenced murder convictions**	**Young black boys almost three times more likely to enter youth justice system**	**Met Police stop and search black teen 60 times in 2 years leaving him 'fearful' of cops**	**Black remand prisoners held 70% longer than White counterparts in England and Wales**	**Black people in UK 'living in fear' over racism, say UN experts**	**Conservative politician claims 'all White men should have black slaves' in horrific racist rant**	**Controversial Cambridge University fellow sparks another race row after claiming 'black people would only be famous for sports and entertainment' in a meritocracy and says Harvard would 'have no black professors'**	**Britain is the best country to be black in, says Kemi Badenoch as she argues the country sees people not labels in a rousing speech on race, gender and Brexit**
Newspaper:	The Guardian - center-left	The Mirror - center-left	The Mirror - center- left	The Guardian - center-left	Sky News - center	GB News - right	Daily Mail - right	Daily Mail - right
Journalist:	White male	Black woman	Black man	White man and Asian man	Black woman	White woman	White woman	White man
Images:	3 mugshots - not smiling/scowling facial expression. Hair deshevelled?	Dark, bare jail cell. PAC chair -Smiling middle aged White woman, dressed well.	4 pictures (all) of policeman uniforms e.g., hi vis jackets. 1 was picture of waist belt with cuffs, taser, baton holder. Instills authority/power - ?threat with gear.	Silhouette of black man inside jail cell holding into window bars	Photo chosen of young black boy - childhood picture, smiling. Non-threatening. Picture of injured wrists from cuffs - illustated story - emotive. Ms Day - black woman from UN - smiling.	Pic of politician smiling - in suit - resembles professional head shot. 2 pics of government buildings - non emotive - benign pictures	Smiling pic of professor amongst backdrop of the sea. 2 scenic pictures of Cambridge & the university	Picture of her. Picture of crowd (mainly White) clapping and seemingly endorsing the article's narrative.

Comments:	Institutional racism by British CJS	Worsening of situation for black people	Emotive language	Racial discrimination by CJS	Hopeless language used	Alleged innocence until proven guilty by language used - despite implied guilt and objective evidence	Use of the word "controversial" to describe overtly racist ideology	Rejected narrative of hopelessness. Claims there is a hopeful narrative instead
	Working class assumed	Hopeless tone	Abuse of power	Black persons disadvantaged over White	Language of victimisation of black people	Black people described as being "lower class" compared to White people - racial hierarchy implied. Only Black ethnicity named in comparison	Opens by stressing the repeated nature of 'cotroversy' - making me wonder about there being no previous consequences professionally. Remained a fellow.	Stressed that this view is favoured by picture of clapping crowd. Approval by majority. Almost all pictured are White people - mainly middle-aged and WC (assumed based on clothes).
	Emotive language used - "violent gang"	Black people not prioritised by those in power	Lack of trust in policing	Mixed-race disadvantaged over Asian. Suggestion of skin tone & hierarchy? Exclusively 'Black' prejudice	Subhuman	Othering language	Contradiction between professors views and the uni's views - yet no previous consequences. Is this an unconscious community narrative being maintained?	Lack of other Black voices present
	Miscarriage of justice	Racial hierarchies suggested	Abuse and harrassment of a child	Implied racial hierarchy	CJS as harmful	Very little emotive language/adjectives used - very matter of fact. (only in title - "horrific")	Statement that his racist ideology would equal a 'better world' - White supremacy/ colonialist values	Kemi's narrative written as "truth about race in the UK"
	Organisational failure (CJS)	Some not worthy of equality	Harm caused by police to child	Contradiction - data of institutional racism vs assertions of not	Powerless voices	No admission - absolved self of responsibility	Racial hierarchy of intelligence - narrative of Black people are less intelligent. Current Black professors at Harvard or Black people in 'high profile positions' cannot be there based on intelect/merit	Rejects victimhood narrative

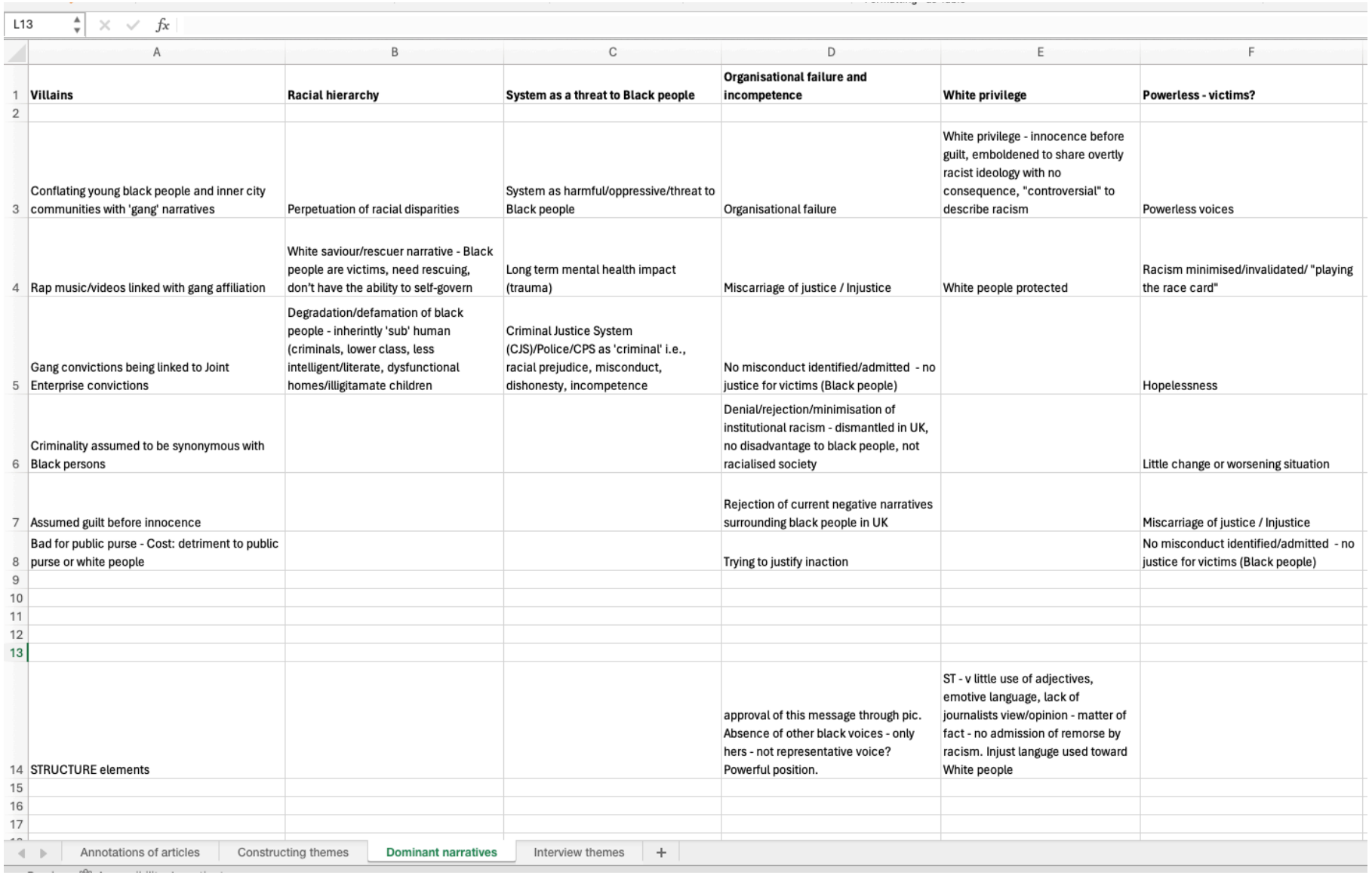
	Gang narrative pushed by CPS	Dehumanising	Police assumed guilt when innocent	Black persons assumed guilt beofre innocence compared to White	Racist experiences invalidated	Use of word "unfair" in relation to self (language of injustice) - by commenting on the process	White saviour narrative (rescuer) - they came to Africa and 'civilised' them.	Rejection of critical race theory. Claim that CRT is divisive and UK society is inclusive and hopeful for Black people
	Racialised discrimination	Admission of organisational failure/systemic racism	Long-term Impact of trauma on life	Miscarriage of justice for Black persons	Little change over time	No opinions given until outcome of due diligence followed. Lack of condemnation. ?Afforded privilege of White persons	Black persons inherintly crinimal and dysfunctional homes?	Denial of systemic factors that disadvantage Black people
	Joint Enterprise linked with 'gangs'	Contradiction of no action by the government and their need to action racial disparities	Lost trust in policing	Institutional racism	Black people positioned as lower socio-economic class		Racist beliefs phrased as "truth" and that you have to be "smart" to understand it	Claim that systemic racism has been dismantled
	Gangs' linked with 'Black boys'	Government afforded empathy - language is empathetic	Use of excessive force	Pressures on CJS	Miscarriage of justice		Call for racial hierarchies to be stronger.	UK society is not racialised
	Research says Black men disproportionately labelled as gang members	Lack of leadership and responsibility towards racial equality	Humiliation and dehumanisation	Self-proclaimed innocence	Injustice		Condradiction of each 'race' having its own 'genius' - after claiming the lack of intelligence of Black people. Suggestion this is entertainment, sports	Implied that UK society is divided by idea of 'race' - some people think narratives are hopeless, UK is against black people, victimhood. Instead, UK has now achieved equality of races, people arent racislised, or disadvantaged.
	Research says racism in legal system	Cost mentioned - detriment to White people?	Guilt assumed before innocence	Injustice of system further disadvantaging Black persons	CJS/police causing harm. Threat to Black people		Positioned White people as victims - injustice towards White people	Minimisation/rejection of real institutional racism
	Conflating rap music/video with it being gang-affiliated	Language suggests systemic failure is avoidable - can be changed	Police using threatening language	System creating racial disparity/inequality	Self-proclaimed innocence		Statement that it's the institutions desire to promote anti-woke agenda (racist prejudice) - Institutional racism	

	Police giving evidence based on racial prejudice (no evidence/fact)	Tone of hopelessness	Denial of racism	System causing harm	Presumed guilt before innocence		Denouncing institutional racism	
	Evidence given based on assumption	Perpetuation of black people in a position of powerlessness	Racial prejudice stated by police	Assumption of criminality being synonymous with other than White people	No misconduct identified		Journalist suggested disagreement - 'chillingly' added - judgement of disagreement	
	Evidence suggests innocence. Miscarriage of justice	Dehumanising & raical hierarchies implied	Implied incompetence of police	Graph illustrating racial hierarchy	Minimal consequence to authority/police/ CJS		Denial of institutional racism	
	Rap music encouraged as contructive by youth club - conflicts with CJS/media prejudices	Black people positioned as economic burden due to social services cost to government	Lack of clear guidance for police		Non threatening photo chosen. Child picture - smiling. ?choice due to Black journalist		Universitys perceived inaction - no comment, no firing	
	Incompetence by judge	Government investment towards tacking injustice	Racial discrimination		Long-term consequences of trauma		Long statement given when approached for views for the article - same racist rhetoric. Claiming he maintains his beliefs - is there a culture of not being afriad of his views being widely expressed; safety in expression of racist ideology. Makes you wonder if this is a wider accepted/shared societal narrative	
	Suggested positive personal qualities of defendents		Justification for stop and search		System creating disparities - further marginalising, disadvantaging		Black persons linked with: criminality, illiteracy and illegitamate children	
	Mother's pleas		No misconduct found		Negative impact on mental health and daily life		Contradicts himself saying African immigrants to UK are "relatively elite" - but rather starkly does not present any data	

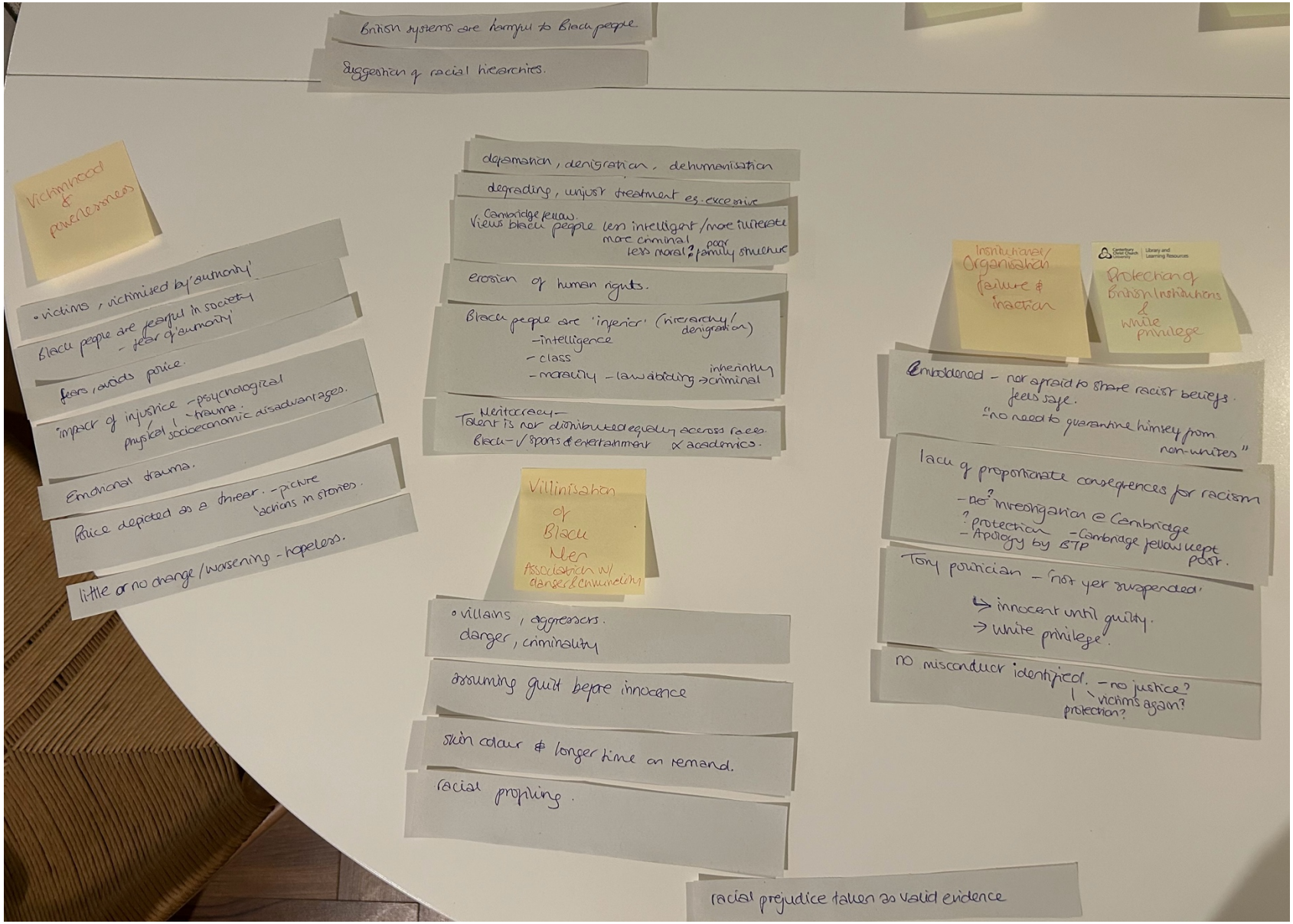
							on this - data/evidence provided for US and how Black persons there are 'bad'. Maybe a confirmation bias?	
	Mothers name the narrative of boys in certain communities being in gangs		Lack of accountability by policing. Police absolving themselves of complicity		Racial injustice		Portrayal of Blacks as academically inferior is presented as statistically factual. "indisputable"	
	Suggested CJS as criminal		Race' minimised as a discriminatory factor		"Playing the race card" - Racialised experiences minimised and invalidated			
	Denial of institutional racism		Narrative of knife crime being a Black issue		Incompetence by government - wrong focus			
	Defending against racial prejudice				Perpetuation of racial inequalities by institutions			
	No misconduct identfiied by police				Worsening of institutional racism			
	Jury scapegoated for guilty verdicts				Hopeless tone			
					Justifying inaction			
					No misconduct identified			
					Minimisation of racism as uncommon			
					Denial/minimisation of institutional racism			

I25

	A	B	C
1	**Broader narratives inferred from news stories:**		
2	Criminality assumed to be synonymous with Black persons	inherintly criminal	
3	Assumed guilt before innocence		
4	Powerless voices		
5	No misconduct identified/admitted		
6	Trying to justify inaction		
7	Racism minimised/invalidated		
8	"Playing the race card"		
9	Long term mental health impact (trauma)		
10	Perpetuation of racial disparities		
11	Hopelessness		
12	Little change or worsening situation		
13	Cost: detriment to public purse or white people		
14	Institutional racism		
15	Criminal Justice System (CJS)/Police/CPS as 'criminal' i.e., racial prejudice, misconduct, dishonesty, incompetence		
16	Organisational failure		
17	Miscarriage of justice / Injustice		
18	Conflating young black people and inner city communities with 'gang' narratives		
19	Rap music/videos linked with gang affiliation		
20	Gang convictions being linked to Joint Enterprise convictions		
21	System as harmful/oppressive/threat to Black people		
22	Racial hierarchies implied		
23	White privilege - innocence before guilt, emboldened to share overtly racist ideology with no consequence, "controversial" to describe racism	Structure - v little use of adjectives, emotive language, lack of journalists view/opinion - matter of fact - no admission of remorse by racism. Injust languge used toward White people	
24	Degradation/defamation of black people - inherintly 'sub' human (criminals, lower class, less intelligent/literate, dysfunctional homes/illigitamate children	Hierarchy	
25	White saviour/rescuer narrative - Black people are victims, need rescuing, don't have the ability to self-govern		
26	Denial/rejection/minimisation of institutional racism - dismantled in UK, no disadvantage to black people, not racialised society	approval of this message through pic. Absence of other black voices - only hers - not representative voice? Powerful position.	
27	Rejection of current negative narratives surrounding black people in UK		
28			



	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	**Villains**	**Racial hierarchy**	**System as a threat to Black people**	**Organisational failure and incompetence**	**White privilege**	**Powerless - victims?**
2						
3	Conflating young black people and inner city communities with 'gang' narratives	Perpetuation of racial disparities	System as harmful/oppressive/threat to Black people	Organisational failure	White privilege - innocence before guilt, emboldened to share overtly racist ideology with no consequence, "controversial" to describe racism	Powerless voices
4	Rap music/videos linked with gang affiliation	White saviour/rescuer narrative - Black people are victims, need rescuing, don't have the ability to self-govern	Long term mental health impact (trauma)	Miscarriage of justice / Injustice	White people protected	Racism minimised/invalidated/ "playing the race card"
5	Gang convictions being linked to Joint Enterprise convictions	Degradation/defamation of black people - inherintly 'sub' human (criminals, lower class, less intelligent/literate, dysfunctional homes/illigitamate children	Criminal Justice System (CJS)/Police/CPS as 'criminal' i.e., racial prejudice, misconduct, dishonesty, incompetence	No misconduct identified/admitted - no justice for victims (Black people)		Hopelessness
6	Criminality assumed to be synonymous with Black persons			Denial/rejection/minimisation of institutional racism - dismantled in UK, no disadvantage to black people, not racialised society		Little change or worsening situation
7	Assumed guilt before innocence			Rejection of current negative narratives surrounding black people in UK		Miscarriage of justice / Injustice
8	Bad for public purse - Cost: detriment to public purse or white people			Trying to justify inaction		No misconduct identified/admitted - no justice for victims (Black people)
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14	STRUCTURE elements			approval of this message through pic. Absence of other black voices - only hers - not representative voice? Powerful position.	ST - v little use of adjectives, emotive language, lack of journalists view/opinion - matter of fact - no admission of remorse by racism. Injust languge used toward White people	
15						
16						
17						


British systems are harmful to Black people
Suggestion of racial hierarchies.
Victimhood & powerlessness
• victims / victimised by 'authority'
Black people are fearful in society
- fear of 'authority'
fears, avoids police.
impact of injustice - psychological / trauma
physical / socioeconomic disadvantages.
Emotional trauma.
Police depicted as a threat. - picture 'actions in stories.
little or no change / worsening - hopeless.
dehumanisation, denigration, dehumanisation
degrading, unjust treatment es. excessive
Cambridge fellow
views black people less intelligent / more illiterate
more criminal
less moral poor family structure
erosion of human rights.
Black people are 'inferior' (hierarchy/ denigration)
- intelligence
- class
- morality - law abiding inherently criminal
Meritocracy
Talent is not distributed equally across races.
Black - ✓ sports & entertainment ✗ academics.
Villinisation of Black Men
Association w/ danger & criminality
• villains, aggressors.
danger, criminality
assuming guilt before innocence
skin colour & longer time on remand.
racial profiling.
racial prejudice taken as valid evidence
Institutional/ Organisation failure & inaction
Protection of British Institutions & white privilege
Emboldened - not afraid to share racist beliefs.
feels safe.
"no need to quarantine himself from non-whites"
lacu of proportionate consequences for racism
- no? investigation @ Cambridge
? protection - Cambridge fellow kept post.
- Apology by BTP
Tory politician - not yet suspended.
→ innocent until guilty.
→ white privilege.
no misconduct identified. - no justice?
victims again?
protection?

Appendix K: Evidence of Theme Formation for Personal Narratives

L29

	A	B	C	D
1	**Narrative mesages constructed from interviews:**		**Broader messages:**	
2	Criminalised by criminals (corruption)		discrimination	
3	Branded as dangerous and threatening		misunderstood	
4	Cultural misunderstandings - cant be authentic		misunderstood	
5	Self-confidence in intelligence		regaining new /rejecting current narratives	
6	experiences of belittlement and denigration		discrimination	
7	Unfair treatment across 'race' - World's against you		inequality	
8	Hindered from progress		Powers don't care	
9	White society and Institutions do not understand me or VALUE ME		misunderstood, not valued	
10	The powerful don't care		unvalued, unseen, unheard	
11	Lack of black inspirational people celebrated		not valued	
12	Jeopardised sense of belonging		outcast	
13	Finding belonging		regaining new /rejecting current narratives	
14	Emotional burden of being black		discrimination (impact of this)	
15	Deliberate act of portraying black men as criminals		discrimination	
16	Self-fulfilling prophecy of harmful sterotypes		discrimination (impact of this)	
17	Never feeling good enough		misunderstood, not valued	
18				
19	**Re-organising ideas into a coherent structure**			
20	Criminalised by criminals (corruption)		discrimination	Discrimination & Inequality
21	experiences of belittlement and denigration		discrimination	
22	Emotional burden of being black		discrimination (impact of this)	
23	Deliberate act of portraying black men as criminals		discrimination	
24	Self-fulfilling prophecy of harmful sterotypes		discrimination (impact of this)	
25	Unfair treatment across 'race' - World's against you		inequality	
26	Hindered from progress		inequality	
27				
28	Branded as dangerous and threatening		misunderstood	Feeling misunderstood, unvalued & unseen
29	Cultural misunderstandings - cant be authentic		misunderstood	
30	Never feeling good enough		misunderstood, not valued	
31	White society and Institutions do not understand me or VALUE ME		misunderstood, not valued	
32	Lack of black inspirational people celebrated		not valued	
33	Jeopardised sense of belonging		outcast, unseen	
34	The powerful don't care		unvalued, unseen, unheard	
35				
36	Finding belonging		regaining new /rejecting current narratives	
37	Self-confidence in intelligence		regaining new /rejecting current narratives	

Annotations of articles | Constructing themes | Dominant narratives | Interview themes | +

Ready | Accessibility: Investigate

Appendix L: Abridged Research Diary

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Appendix M: Feedback Summary for Ethics Committee

Monday 29th April 2024

Dear Salomon's Ethics Committee,

Re MRP: How do the personal stories of Black men in 'gangs' relate to the stories told about Black men within the British media?

I am writing with a summary of the above-titled research project. The study's abstract is as follows:

Objective: The UK's growing 'gang' issue is fuelled by negative media stereotypes, particularly associating young Black men with gang involvement. This study aimed to investigate the narratives about Black people in the British media and how this differs or aligns with the personal narratives of Black men in 'gangs'.

Method: Eight newspaper articles and four participant interviews were analysed using thematic and structural narrative analysis. Dialogical narrative analysis examined the similarities and differences between the two datasets.

Results: Four dominant cultural narratives (DCNs) in the UK media about Black individuals were: victimhood, criminality, inferiority, and inaction by British institutions regarding racial inequality. Personal narratives of young Black men in 'gangs' primarily described stories of two broad themes: inequality and discrimination within British society, and feelings of being misunderstood and undervalued. While the DCNs and personal narratives overlapped, they also differed in that the latter expressed an intellectual confidence rather than inferiority. An alternative community narrative emerged where participants sought groups that nurture feeling understood and valued, thus creating psychological safety and a sense of belonging.

Conclusions: Media narratives depict young Black men as victims or criminals, whereas personal narratives from young Black men in gangs highlight discrimination and the

search for belonging and understanding. Several clinical implications are discussed, including the study's usefulness to clinical formulation and community psychology initiatives. Recommendations include exploring the efficacy of narrative therapy approaches for Black men, to strengthen affirmative narratives for this community.

A brief and simplified summary of the findings will be shared with participants who requested this. It is hoped that the study will be published in the peer-reviewed journal Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy.

Best wishes,

Inci Baysal

Trainee Clinical Psychologist

SALOMONS INSTITUTE FOR APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY,
CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY (CCCU)

Appendix N: Author Guidelines for Chosen Journal

Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy (ASAP):
Information for contributors

To submit an article: The online submission portal for the journal may be found at http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/asap (or http://tinyurl.com/ASAPsubmit).

Content of submissions: ASAP will consider scholarly manuscripts in any area related to the goals of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI). This scope is broad; recent articles have applied the methods of the social and behavioral sciences to the study of *economic and social justice* including ageism, heterosexism, racism, sexism, status quo bias and other forms of discrimination, *social problems* such as climate change, extremism, homelessness, inter-group conflict, natural disasters, poverty, and terrorism, and *social ideals* such as democracy, empowerment, equality, health, and trust. Regardless of topic, submissions will be evaluated in terms of scholarly excellence, clarity of exposition, and relevance to the psychological and behavioral study of social problems, social action and policy.

Types of submissions: Articles in a range of formats are considered. The modal ASAP article is a freestanding piece, typically empirical, of less than 15000 words. The *Journal* also includes book reviews, thematic collections, and other material of interest to the readership. Beginning with the 2010 volume, prospective authors have the option of inviting *continuing commentary*. Submissions in this category will be subject to the standard peer review process, then, if published, will be flagged online with the heading 'continuing commentary invited.' Subsequently, peer-reviewed comments and rebuttals will be presented with the original paper in an online virtual issue as well as in the annual print editions. Guidelines for contributors of comments may be found here. Guidelines for contributors of book reviews can be found here.

ASAP now provides authors of selected manuscripts with the possibility of *streamlined review*. That is, for papers that have been previously denied publication at other selective journals, authors may submit the prior editorial correspondence (including reviews, decision letters, and a list of revisions) together with their manuscripts, with the aim of expediting the review process.

Manuscripts should conform to American Psychological Association (APA) style. Beyond this, authors are encouraged to write in clear and thoughtful prose, to summarize results in tables that are largely self-explanatory, to use figures that are conceived and scaled in a way that reveals rather than obscures, and, perhaps most of all, to remember that their potential audience is busy, often skeptical, incompletely versed in the particulars of the research at hand, and, above all, intelligent. Editorial policies are described more fully in the brief article that appears at the beginning of the 2010 volume of the *Journal*. All manuscripts should be electronically submitted on the web. Questions concerning journal policies and the suitability of manuscripts may be sent directly to the editor: Chris Aberson
Humboldt State University
Email: ASAP.Editor@gmail.com

Appendix O: Further Example Quotes Evidencing Personal Narrative Themes and Sub-themes.

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