'PEOPLE GET KILLED CAUSE OF THERE [THEIR] SKIN. IT CANNOT BE STOPPED': A MIDLANDS CASE STUDY CONSIDERING EXPERIENCES OF RACISM AMONGST PUPILS IN UK SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND THE COMMUNITY

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Abstract

This paper investigates UK pupil experience of racism and race-hate-related extremism. World Café research was conducted with 57 school and college pupils aged 14–17 years from a city in the Midlands. The college students mainly reflected upon their secondary school experience. Follow-up questionnaires captured demographics. Just under half of the participants were black and minority ethnic (BAME) pupils, and the rest were white British. Race-hate victimisation ranged from verbal abuse to physical assault, including Islamophobic abuse (including headscarves being removed) and attacks with weapons. Some experiences indicated underlying far-right extremist ideology. Teachers were perceived as favouring white pupils when incidents occurred, with some teachers described as 'racist'. As well as racial hate between white and BAME pupils and between BAME pupils of different origins, inter-school racial conflict was apparent. Schools with higher BAME pupil populations were negatively labelled by pupils from white majority schools. Both BAME and white pupils reported being victims of racial abuse, but BAME victimisation was more apparent in school. Race-hate in schools was reflected in the community and exacerbated through social media communication and media reporting. The British government needs to better address racism and race-related far-right extremism in schools in conjunction with community efforts.

Keywords
Racism; education; white supremacy; Islamophobia; inter-school conflict; World Café

Introduction

Key UK institutions in a child's life, including schools and the police, have been shown by Phillips (2011) and other scholars as demonstrating racial discrimination towards black and minority ethnic (BAME) people. Reflecting upon the Equality Act 2010, Pearce (2014) highlights that the coalition government removed the obligation for schools to record racist incidents, reducing national understanding of the extent of the problem. However, guidance on the Equality Act promotes recording discrimination complaints and encourages schools to articulate progress towards identified equality goals, giving schools the discretion to identify priorities (Government Equalities Office, 2011). Guidance for schools explains that documents required for Ofsted inspections include reports on racist incidents (HM Government, 2019). There is also a requirement for schools to report concerns about extremism under the Prevent Duty, and some extremism concerns are related to race-hate (HM Government 2011; 2015a; 2015b). Reported crime does not capture all crime committed (Croall, 2011). As such, it is likely that the extent of racism and race-related extremism is greater than that recorded in schools' reports. Self-report victimisation information helps in understanding some of the hidden picture of incidents (Radford et al., 2013). My research team and I asked young people about their experiences of race-hate and race-hate-related extremism, and for problem-solving ideas. This paper highlights some significant policy, practice and research observations within UK secondary education pertaining to anti-racism following the Macpherson (1999) report to contextualise the findings from our study.

Significant events and issues

The high-profile racist murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 and the associated Macpherson (1999) inquiry spurred mandatory changes to eliminate racism. The murder occurred outside school premises and hours, yet Ofsted (1996:51) records it as a significant incident regarding education. Stephen, a black sixth-form pupil, was murdered by a group of white young males (Lewis, 2003:121). Prior to this, headteachers such as Honeyford had argued that anti-racist policies facilitating multi-cultural education should be abandoned because they implicated all white people as racist (Lewis, 2003; Solomos, 2003). State-funded schools after the inquiry were required to address racism (Gillborn, 2008). 'The move was hailed a turning point in British race relations', but the impact has been 'short-lived' (Gillborn 2008:118). Warmington et al. (2018:410) interviewed British school and policy experts on race equality and found 'a largely pessimistic view of 1993–2013 as a period in which the race equality in education policy built in momentum, touched the policy mainstream – and then failed'. Statutory obligations addressing race-related issues in education came into effect with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act (2000), but interventions declined after 2003 (Warmington et al., 2018:415).

Twenty years after the publication of the Macpherson (1999) report, this paper provides evidence of racism in the UK education system. The term 'institutional racism', coined in late-1960s America (Phillips, 2011), was used by Macpherson (1999:43 section 6.15) to describe the racism that was permeating public sector organisations, including those in education. 'Institutional racism' recognises the institutional behaviours and systems that create race inequality and oppression. Race inequality is apparent in the composition of teaching staff in education and, more acutely, within senior leadership (Johnson, 2017).

Organisations should reflect the community being served (CIPD, 2017) at all hierarchical levels (Prasad, 2001). Some have argued that there is an issue of white supremacy concerning promotions into managerial positions (Powell and Butterfield, 1994; 1997; 2002). Gillborn (2006:318) asserts that 'white supremacy is conceived as a comprehensive condition whereby the interests and perceptions of white subjects are continually placed centre stage and assumed as "normal"'.

Marxist sociologists conclude that the education system promotes capitalism and the interests and values of the ruling class in getting pupils work-ready (McKenzie, 2001:48-49). Research by Flemmen and Savage (2017) evidences similarities between white middle-class and white working-class adults concerning 'nationalist' far-right racist ideology through an analysis of 35 qualitative interview transcripts that formed part of a wider study. Education creates clones of the middle and ruling classes and is a vehicle for social control. The privileged are advantaged due to cultural capital and skills that help them navigate the education system, whereas those in the working class are less likely to know the social rules that enhance achievement. Reay's (2017:153-154) UK research on the working class in education supports this, highlighting that 'BME groups, such as African Caribbean in the UK, have, like their white, working-class peers, learnt to live with educational failure compounded, in their case, by racism'. Although 'model minority' pupils, such as Chinese and Indian pupils (Reay, 2017:154), can perform well in assessment, typically BAME pupils underachieve, particularly those from West Indian and Afro–Caribbean heritage (McKenzie, 2001; Phillips, 2011). Black Caribbean boys are more likely to be in special schools and be over-represented in mainstream exclusion (Rhoades, 2016:94). Consistent underachievement trends led to Gillborn referring to 'institutional racism' as the cause, because in early years education (age 3–5) the difference is less stark, so systematic issues must be impacting upon achievement (cited in Phillips, 2011:180). In cases where schools link with families effectively to enrich education and belonging, there were corresponding improvements in Afro–Caribbean pupil performance (Rhamie and Hallam, 2002). The focus has moved away from race-hate issues in the classroom and on to addressing poor academic performance, with Ofsted scores and league table ranking becoming an obsession (Warmington et al., 2018). Prioritising assessment performance has led to some schools denying access to gypsy and traveller children due to their notoriously poor educational attainment, leading to accusations of institutional discrimination (Cudworth, 2008).

Systemic reasons for BAME pupil underachievement

BAME pupils may lack motivation to perform due to perceptions of poor career opportunities within education. The under-representation of BAME staff on school teaching teams (Johnson, 2017) indicates sector employment limitations. If teachers are not addressing race-hate incidents in school (Pearce, 2014) then 'Cumulative exposure to racial discrimination has incremental negative long-term effects on the mental health of ethnic minority people in the UK' (Becares et al. 2016:A101). Poor mental health resulting from on-going exposure to racism could impact upon academic performance. Emotional trauma may lead to absenteeism, affecting learning. Young South Asian Muslim pupils talked about absenteeism and not going on educational school trips due to racism (Crozier and Davies, 2008).

Motivational factors for learning include what is taught in schools. In 2013, Michael Gove, the then Conservative education secretary, reviewed the National Curriculum and determined that only British authors should be included in English literature, which meant that texts such as *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a resource often used to discuss racism, would be excluded (Tomlinson, 2019:197). Criticism pertaining to race inclusivity in the history curriculum is also acknowledged by Alexander and Weekes-Bernard (2017). Education curricula and resources do not provide a historical context for pupils to understand colonisation and racial oppression; nor do they provide enough BAME role models (Tomlinson, 2019). The move to propagating British values and the British Empire can reinforce othering (Tomlinson, 2019). Gillborn (2005) highlights that white policy makers can lead to white supremacy in schools. White teaching staff are less likely to understand how 'whiteness' has been normalised (Greene and Abt-Perkins, 2003).

Teacher competence impacts upon pupil performance (Johansson et al., 2015). Teachers need adequate training to be able to address racism and deliver associated curricula, and one form of training is through observing others. However, Pearce (2014) found that racial incidents were not dealt with sufficiently by experienced primary school teaching staff, sometimes with no reprimand to the abuser, leaving victims open to future abuse and hindering new teacher learning on how to address racism. In the 1980s, staff training courses went alongside the multi-cultural and anti-racism agenda, allowing reflection upon personal prejudices to stimulate change, but the mandatory obligation for such training has diminished (Solomos, 2003:110). The race-hate agenda has been absorbed into counter-extremism and anti-terrorism strategies (HM Government, 2015a; 2015b) and in-depth Prevent Duty training is not an all-staff requirement. Poor implementation of Prevent, along with associated philosophical issues, have marginalised Muslim communities (Abbas, 2019; Busher et al., 2019), suggesting ineffective training and/or policy.

Often, education reflects an 'immigrant-host model', highlighting British supremacy and aiming for assimilation (McKenzie, 2001:158). For example, school dress codes are not sympathetic to cultural difference (Phillips, 2011:184). Williamson and Khiabany (2010) discuss the politicisation of 'the veil' and how it has become symbolic of racist views connecting Muslims to terrorism and indifference to British society, which have been exacerbated by press reporting – a view that is supported by Allen (2015). On the basis of research by Crozier and Davies (2008), Phillips (2011:181) purports that teachers are concerned about South Asian Muslim boys and their 'fundamentalist belief', 'self-segregation' and 'violence', with teachers constructing negative views of 'Asian gang culture'. South Asian Muslim youths are expected to behave 'white' to assimilate, rather than having their cultural differences respected (Crozier and Davies, 2008).

Observations from policy, practice and research within secondary education in the UK highlight racial discrimination, white supremacy, white bias and institutional racism (Gillborn, 2006; 2008; Phillips, 2011). The Macpherson (1999) report moved the anti-racism agenda forward, albeit temporarily. Despite guidance on sharing reports about race-hate incidents with Ofsted inspectors, and in spite of the Prevent Duty obligation to report on extremism concerns, there is still uncertainty about the extent of racism and extremism in schools and in society in the UK. With teachers not responding to racist incidents effectively,

there are questions about whether all incidents are recorded. Education policy is largely shaped by white policy makers, and young people have not been asked what they think could be done to address racism and race-hate-related extremism issues in the classroom and in society in order to shape policy and practice.

Research context

This paper presents primary data collected while the Brexit negotiations were taking place in 2018–2019. Brexit raised questions for pupils, with some asking their teachers whether they would be 'forced to leave' the UK (Tomlinson, 2019:214). Russell Hobby (the general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers) stated in an open letter to parliament that pupils were 'fearful of a potential rise in racism and community conflict' (cited in Richardson, 2016:online). Following the referendum, race-hate violence increased (Burnett, 2017). Brexit-related media coverage described immigrants and refugees as potential terrorists (Burnett, 2017), which has been a growing concern since the 9/11 and 7/7 terrorist attacks, and such coverage has led to increased Islamophobia (Crozier and Davies, 2008).

Media and social media can shape views in society, including racist ideology. Young people can be on social media apps for more than two hours per day (Cramer and Inkster, 2017) and they can experience cyber-bullying (Poore, 2013; Cramer and Inkster, 2017). For example, football, a sport played extensively in British schools, is known for racial abuse within social media communications (Kilvington and Price, 2019). Social media is also a pedagogical tool used in classrooms (Poore, 2013). However, a digital divide is apparent for pupils from low socio-economic backgrounds (Poore, 2013), which is likely to include a large proportion of BAME pupils. It is likely that social media usage exposes young people to racist ideology, and more understanding is needed to inform digital safeguarding. This research project was undertaken in a digital age during which there were uncertainties about the UK's future and race-hate crime increased.

Methodology

This project aimed to elicit young people's views on racism and race-hate-related extremism and experiences, to discover the extent of issues inside and outside the classroom and for young people to contribute ideas to address the problems. Self-reported victimisation data can capture incidents that are not reported officially, with recognition that differences in data-collection methodology impact upon results (Radford et al., 2013:802). Therefore, triangulating our findings with school report data was not perceived as worthwhile. Our research regarded young people as 'reliable witnesses in commenting on their own lives', capable of truth-telling, but with the acknowledgement that memory recall can impact upon the detail of victimisation accounts (Stanley, 2011:459). Concerns about young people's self-report data have traditionally been related to accuracy (Croall, 2011). We opted to utilise the participatory approach of World Café, which has underpinning values akin to the view that participants are capable truth tellers (Brown and Issacs, 2005). World Café can facilitate a world view of attitudes, experiences and solutions from participants (Brown and Issacs, 2005). It is used within community development and health, and more recently it has been used in criminological research (Page and Temple-Malt, 2018).

World Café research was conducted in three educational settings with young people aged 14–17 years in a UK Midlands city, with a total of 57 participants recruited via opportunity sampling. In each World Café, between 12 and 24 participants were present. The two mainstream schools and one college involved in this study identified suitable participants through access to a class, or identified a cross section of pupils. Parental consent was organised through the educational establishments and participant consent occurred at the beginning of each World Café.

The sessions started with a brief presentation on racism and race-hate-related extremism and some prepared case studies on real-life local incidents to stimulate group discussion. This allowed foundational knowledge to be shared; thus, mirroring classroom activity to reduce potential participant anxiety. The moral dilemma of data collection consuming classroom teaching time was addressed by turning the sessions into a lesson (Stutchbury, 2013). The pupils sat around tables covered with tablecloths, which were used to capture the participants' comments. The group discussions involved participant rotations, where participants move to different tables to gain 'world views' from conversations (Brown and Issacs, 2005). Rotations also provide data validity checks and theme identification. Researcher sensitivity is required regarding the number of rotations in order to ensure that conversations are not closed down (Page and Temple-Malt, 2018).

To accommodate literacy issues, undergraduate student research assistants acted as table-hosts and scribes (Page and Temple-Malt, 2018), in addition to the participants writing and drawing their own responses. Through a process of consultation with the participants, the table-hosts verbally shared summaries of group discussions after each research question was completed in order to facilitate a common understanding of the emerging themes. Follow-up questionnaires aimed to capture basic demographics and anything that the pupils did not want to share in the group. Approximately half of the participants were from BAME backgrounds and described their heritage as Pakistani, Polish, Asian, British Muslim, African, Kurdish, mixed race or Malaysian Chinese, and 54% self-identified as white British. BAME representation was greater than in the general population of the city where the research was conducted. There was a gender mix, with 64% of participants identifying as female and the rest identifying as male.

If a pupil opted not to participate in the research during the World Café, they took part in a teacher-led discussion and their data was not captured. A teacher was present in the World Café sessions to facilitate an immediate school support referral mechanism. However, we were conscious that this could affect disclosure levels due to the power relationship between teachers and pupils, as acknowledged by Crozier (1994). A written and verbal debrief took place to signpost participants to relevant support agencies.

Findings and discussion
Presented in this paper are the common threads that were identified through themed analysis of the verbal summaries of group discussions shared in the World Café, the written tablecloth data and the follow-up questionnaires. Detailed data-processing and analysis was carried out by the principal investigator and the BAME research assistant, which provided a check for white bias in the interpretation and representation of findings. This occurred

through discussions pertaining to participant responses when reviewing the tablecloth data. The main themes are:

- experiences of racism and extremism in schools

- perceptions of teacher white bias and ineffective policing of race-hate crime

- experiences of race-hate and extremism within the community

- the need for better education on race-hate and race-hate extremism

- the need for better news reporting and social media race representation

- the impacts of racism (particularly upon mental health)

- debate on whether racism can be addressed in society, along with ideas for how to improve the current situation.

School experiences

College students reflecting on secondary school experiences stated there was 'a lot [of racism] in school: maybe the issue is cultural hate?', implying intolerance of different cultures. They also said, 'When racism happens in school most schools neglect the situation', concurring with Pearce's (2014) findings of poor schoolteacher responses to racism. However, a couple of pupils involved in a school project responding to racist incidents claimed that 'racism is not a big problem, but it does happen'. In this instance, we perceived this as 'denial of racism' because the majority were talking about racism issues, which is also referred to in Kirkham's (2016) study.

White-on-BAME racism was described. One BAME pupil said that when 'playing football… [at school] people will kick me instead of kicking the ball'. He went to a 'mainly all white' high school and was 'bullied for not being white' and the 'school did nothing… I now have anxiety due to this'; as a result, he moved school. Racism associated with the UK football scene has mostly victimised BAME players and fans (Cleland and Cashmore, 2016a; Kilvington and Price, 2019) and this could be providing an unhelpful role model for young people, influencing behaviour on school pitches. Measures of tougher policing, penalties and CCTV surveillance at professional football matches have contributed to reducing racism on and off the pitch (Cleland and Cashmore, 2016b). Akin to this approach, pupils in our study supported the notion of harsher punishments when racism occurs:

- 'There should be more consequences for being racists – put people in jail [one] night to show them what consequences of racist behaviour can lead to'

- 'Can they bring back the death penalty'? – 'People wouldn't be stabbing each other; they would be scared'

- 'School needs to be stricter, so expel rather than [three] days off, which people like'

- 'Harsher consequences could stop racism'

Islamophobia was largely perpetrated by white pupils. One female Muslim school pupil shared an unreported incident of having her 'head scarf pulled off' by a 'white boy'. Another said the 'Slip-on headscarf has been removed in school twice'. Others described similar occurrences in the community. Our findings concur with Williamson and Khiabany (2010) and Allen (2015) regarding head coverings and veils being race-hate targets that reflect Islamophobia.

Participants described interschool racial conflict. For example, 'other schools that are mainly white make comments about us'. The school was perceived as a 'crap school because it has lots of different races'. Schools with higher BAME pupil membership were being negatively labelled by white pupils from other schools. Neighbourhoods with higher ethnic diversity in the city (where this research took place) tend to be more deprived. Racial prejudice could be linked to middle-class derogatory behaviour, demonstrating support for Flemmen and Savage's (2017) findings of racist ideology among the middle class. However, pupils did not discuss the social class of racial abusers. We found that the movement of pupils to schools outside their geographic area was largely due to bad experiences (e.g. bullying or racism), rather than Kirkham's (2016) suggestion that there is a desire for multi-cultural exposure at the initial school selection.

There was evidence of different BAME groups in opposition, displaying racial hatred. Pupils described how 'Asians and Czechs hate each other and there are ongoing feuds in this school'. The tensions between these two groups were also apparent through adult interaction in the community. The interplay of racism is complex and cannot be summed up as white supremacy alone. There is also an interplay between community and school occurrences of racism, which needs to be untangled for tensions to be resolved.

A concerning factor was that pupils indicated that weapons were used in racial conflict. Pupils talked about how 'white boys' were 'more likely' to 'carry weapons' as a form of self-protection while 'Asians' were more likely to be 'carrying knuckledusters' and if found 'they would get excluded' from school. They confirmed that there were 'weapons in school'. This raises alarms about history repeating itself, with consideration of pupil deaths caused by knives (Lewis, 2003).

Teacher white bias and policing crime

Pupils highlighted disparity in how pupils were treated by teachers, with a harsher approach taken to BAME pupils. Pupils talked about racist 'fights in schools', but that 'white lads didn't usually [get] excluded'. This perception supports the value of schools and Ofsted analysing exclusion data and goes some way to explaining why, according to Rhoades (2016), black Caribbean boys are over-represented in mainstream exclusion. Pupils said that Asians were treated unfairly: 'Asians picked on more at school than whites and often teachers look out for Asian gangs'. In the follow-up questionnaire one school pupil wrote, 'the school mostly

pick on Asians and blacks than the whites and checks [Czechs]. They [white pupils] get away with most stuff… all the Asians have been split up'. The language of 'they' indicates separation, othering and even racism (Kirkham, 2016). These examples concurred with literature that discusses how teachers stigmatise Asian pupils with concerns about gangs (Crozier and Davies, 2008; Phillips, 2011).

Pupils in our study directly stated that some teachers were 'untrustworthy', 'one-sided' and 'racist'. One BAME pupil said, with agreement from others, '…some teachers are racist. When racist incidents happen, teachers don't always challenge it, i.e. pupils don't get expelled.' They talked in a whisper so that the white teacher who was present could not hear, seemingly nervous about being reprimanded for disclosing perceived racial discrimination by staff. The police response to the Stephen Lawrence murder was poor: a significant symptom of institutional racism (MacPherson, 1999). Teachers failing to address racism could be perceived likewise. Teachers need to better address race-related incidents and rectify white bias. Crozier (1994:219) highlights the importance of not 'denying pupils' own experience' when pupils perceive racist teacher actions because ultimately teachers are more powerful. However, it would be useful to research teacher perspectives on the issues and ideas presented by pupils – to help build understanding, rather than as an accuracy check.

On occasions when teachers had requested police assistance, pupils felt this had 'not had an impact on [the] extent of existing racial hatred'. The police were perceived as addressing race-related incidents poorly: 'I got chased with a knife and used my skin colour as an excuse in [place name omitted] – the police did not do anything about it'. Pupils said they were 'Too scared to tell teachers about hate, racial hate crimes' and implied that they are not reporting all race-hate crimes to the police. This evidences that school report data, as with official statistics, under-represent reality.

Issues in the wider community

Racial conflict in school mirrored what was happening in the community, where there were both adult and young racial abusers, victims and witnesses. One group of school pupils talked about 'gangs' in the community also being in school. Gangs were 'either white, or black, not mixed' and they were 'named after postcodes'. Pupils described a sense of 'betrayal to the group if they mix with the "other"', but this was more apparent with 'white gangs'. They went on to describe how 'racism' was 'not at [the] forefront, but does happen (not main motive of violence)'. Membership of gangs suggested racial segregation, with racist violence being a by-product rather than a driving force. This description provides some understanding of why teachers might feel concerned about groups of young people in schools. However, it does not explain why Asian gangs are more targeted by teachers, as found by Crozier and Davies (2008) and in our study.

Experiences of racism in the community included some white pupils being 'chased from certain areas' with 'sticks', 'knives' and 'knuckledusters' where there were 'higher concentrations of certain ethnic group(s)', highlighting that white people are not the only perpetrators. However, this could be indicative of retaliation for white supremacy. BAME pupils talked about experiencing racism when living in white majority neighbourhoods and, more generally, when walking in the city. For example, 'people have driven past, wound

[the] window down [and] shouted "Paki' boys" at us'. Sometimes incidents were fuelled by alcohol and/or drugs: 'people get drunk… and come to the mosque and shout racist abuse'. In addition to descriptions of Islamophobia, it was apparent that other BAME groups were targeted, including those of 'mixed race background'. It was also stated that 'Malaysian / Chinese – get racist slurs to them about eyes being slanted'. Pupils suggested that family socialisation impacts on whether a young person has a racist ideology, as well as exposure to music with racist inference and the media, including social media.

Pupils reported that racism came up in 'casual conversations' such as 'Asians steal our jobs' and immigration is 'bad for the economy' and immigrants 'don't belong here'. College students described how friends with 'foreign' surnames had struggled to gain employment, so they had changed their surnames on applications, which seemingly corresponded with gaining interviews. The following are some examples given by participants of community encounters with racism and race-hate extremism:

- 'People get beat up for being of a different race when walking through parks'.

- 'Nazi signs on public bins near primary schools' and community leisure facilities.

- When attending 'football matches' and 'bars' there are 'lots of racial slurs'.

- 'Political views' being voiced on 'public transport not regarding other people['s] viewpoints about immigration and not being respectful'.

Pupils commented that diversionary activities in society would help to reduce racist incidents. They argued that 'activities and groups for people' and 'more support groups' could help address problems. One college student said, 'People are just bored and need to find a hobby instead of taking it out on other people'.

Racism and extremism education

Pupils felt that teaching was insufficient on what constitutes racism and race-hate extremism and that it is 'not discussed in school due to faith/culture upsetting [and] getting in trouble for hurting someone's feelings'. Participants went on to state: 'it needs to be explained what racism is. It is not taught in school, so we don't really understand it. It's not just the colour of the skin', or the racist terms being used to describe people. A concern highlighted by Tomlinson (2019) was that by nationalising the curriculum, the understanding of racism would be reduced, which might explain the lack of knowledge displayed by some pupils in our study. Participants felt that learning about different religions was important in tackling racism, but 'Not just in RE [religious education]'. Some suggested early intervention regarding education: 'Teach them when they are younger – because moulding them when they are older is harder.' Mostly, the pupils felt that more education was necessary, supporting views raised by the pupils in Kirkham's (2016) study. Education needs to explore terms and definitions alongside an appreciation of systematic, historical and political endeavours so that critical thinking and understanding is achieved.

The literature suggests that whiteness impacts one's understanding of racism (Cleland and Cashmore, 2016a, 2016b). This has been found to be true for white teaching staff (Greene and Abt-Perkins, 2003). Our study identifies that this is plausible for young people, because a couple of the white pupils said they had been called 'racist' at school but didn't understand why and felt that people use 'racism' labels to their advantage. If racism is not being sufficiently explained within the curriculum, pupils may not realise why comments or behaviour is perceived as racist.

Social media and news reporting

College students argued the media is 'very "white-washed"' because 'not many ethnic minorities are exposed or used' within the casting of roles. Pupils said, 'Social media [and] media in general influences views on racism because everyone sees it'. Another group said, 'When you see something all of the time you start to believe it – stories are shared on social media, they are biased, one-sided, fake and can show the beliefs of who is writing it.' They stated that racist and extremist viewpoints were more apparent via social media such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube and from 'people watching the news'. Whilst young people seemed savvy about recognising distorted news, they also said 'constant' social media messages become 'more believable'. Consistent exposure to racist ideology via social media could be perpetuating racism in society and grooming extremism.

Young people said that the 'media' and 'news' had a 'focus around Islamic extremism'. It was articulated that the media 'is more concerned when it's Asians committing terrorism/crime rather than a "white" British person'. Pupils talked about seeing a media report alleging that Donald Trump had 'burnt the Holy Quran'. Further examples were given of Islamophobia in the media: 'There was a day in April 2017/2018 – a day to attack Muslims on social media on Facebook as "spam"'. This highlights how social media can be a vehicle for racist campaigns and racial abuse. Media-related racism took wider forms than Islamophobia. For example, one college student talked about how their community Facebook page described 'eastern Europeans – saying "they are all thieves" – shows stereotyping'. Pupils also noticed 'refugees being bullied in the news', which is in agreement with Burnett's (2017) findings.

School pupils talked about watching a TV show which showcased 'someone beaten up because of their skin colour' and said that the *One Show* made it clear that 'they did not agree with this'. In this context, media representation was used as a force to combat racism, which participants felt should happen more:

- 'we should use documentaries and TV shows to educate people more'

- 'we need more education [and] awareness what extremism [and] hate crime – use social media & radio'

Effects of racial abuse

Pupils disclosed personal experience of victimisation in school and in the community. One male BAME pupil highlighted having 'anxiety' caused by racist abuse and a poor school response, corroborating with evidence that mental health declines with ongoing racial abuse (Crozier and Davies, 2008; Becares et al., 2016). Pupils talked about 'Fear of being

beat up' and 'anxiety'. One BAME pupil shared that stress and anxiety resulting from being a victim of racial abuse and the poor school response had caused hair loss: 'This school could use a lot of improvement. I now have Trichotillomania because the school hasn't done anything about racist comments or comments in general'. Pupils in Crozier and Davies' (2008) study talked about not wanting to go to school due to racism, which our study concurs with. One pupil also talked about experiencing a confidence decline: 'Because I was from Afghanistan, I received a lot of silly, horrible, racist comments but did not know how to deal with the comments and that lowered my confidence in telling people where I was from'. Responsiveness and support from the school is imperative for those who have experienced racism to better reduce the emotional impacts on victims.

Hope for the future?

The younger pupils were pessimistic about the possibility of eradicating racism in society, but the outlook from the college students was more positive. Some school pupil comments included:

- 'people get killed cause of there [their] skin. It cannot be stopped'

- 'we don't think racism can be eliminated completely'

- 'no solution, too far gone, to[o] set on opinion. Everyone's different, government can't change views'

Conversely, the college students suggested that it would 'take a while to change. We'll be adults' and that it might 'get worse before gets better'. There was a strong sense that racist views in society are entrenched and that the government is unable to change racist ideology. However, some felt hopeful because 'The young generation has a different view and could change society – modern outlook on life (community)'. Some participants expressed that older people (including relatives) were more racist and less open-minded than their peers. Antonsich et al. (2019) also highlight that a younger, race-relational generation is emerging.

Discussion on the research methodology

Reflecting upon our research in action, we noted that BAME pupils in this study were forthcoming about their experiences, as were white British pupils; so the methodology and researcher composition did not hinder data collection. The research team was mainly female with one BAME researcher and one male; this may have helped female participant engagement. A limitation was related to the rotations impacting upon pupil disclosure. Pupils originally chose peers to sit with, and engagement in the conversation reduced when rotations occurred. The age group of the participants might have had a more acute impact upon what Garner and Sercomb (2009:81) refer to as 'social relation' effects. When rich conversations occurred, sometimes this was captured in brief bullet point form (Page and Temple-Malt, 2018) making data analysis more challenging. The follow-up questionnaire data mostly re-iterated the tablecloth data, suggesting that the World Café group conversations were not unduly hindered by the research team dynamics or the rotations.

The questionnaire facilitated basic demographics being captured, but using self-identification of ethnicity resulted in issues with detailed grouping accuracy.

The pupils were given opportunities to share their views and experiences of racism, as well as their thoughts on how to address the issues, knowing that the findings would be anonymised and shared with selective school leaders, local authority leaders in their city, the Home Office and the wider academic field. In the follow-up questionnaire, young people purported positive views about taking part in a World Café and the discussion topics. A strength of using World Café when young people know each other is that honesty levels can be challenged by peers. For example, two boys presented an exaggerated version of an incident, which was corrected by their peers, allowing for discussion to produce a more truthful account. The participants largely presented as capable of sharing truthful experiences, as per Stanley's (2011) viewpoint.

However, this is a small-scale qualitative research project based in one city in the Midlands. As such, generalisations to the UK are restrictive. More research is necessary with young people inside and outside mainstream education, as well as with teachers and other professionals, to gain further insights into plausible solutions and the extent of racism and race-related extremism.

Conclusion

As demonstrated in the literature, efforts to tackle race-hate, inequality and institutional racism within the UK education system have not had a lasting impact following Macpherson's (1999) report. Solutions to systematic education issues identified in the literature review would help to reduce racism, such as: increased BAME representation in teaching, school leadership and policy making; better links between schools and families to enrich learning; the revision of associated policies; a curriculum that better explains racism and provides BAME role models; mandatory anti-racism training for teachers that helps with better implementation of equality, safeguarding and Prevent duties. Through engaging directly with the experiences and views of 57 young people, our study adds insights to existing understandings. In particular, regardless of their ethnicity, young people can be victims, perpetrators or witnesses of race-hate in the UK. Safeguarding young people in relation to race-hate requires increased diligence, inclusive of social media safeguards to prevent racism and grooming in relation to race-related extremism. Young people voiced concerns about race-hate violence and 'weapons' being carried in school and community contexts, and they referred to 'stabbings'. Therefore, failure to address racism and race-related extremism is putting lives at risk.

Previous research on pupil experiences of racism focuses on interpersonal interactions in schools. Our study took this further by exploring community experiences inclusive of race-hate-related extremism. Race-hate-related extremism was encountered in school and community settings, as well as on media platforms. Pupils highlighted the media's portrayal of Muslims as likely extremism suspects and described observation and personal experiences of Islamophobia as a result of these negative associations. They perceived that teachers give harsher punishments to BAME pupils, particularly Asians (the majority of whom are Muslim in the location where our research took place). Participants mostly

encountered race-hate extremism that was associated with, but not exclusive to, views from the far right (including Nazi signs graffitied on school and community premises and property).

We discovered that racial tension is pervasive in the lives of these young people and that simultaneous intervention is required in school, in the community, on social media and in news reports in order to address racism. Although white British pupils experienced race-hate victimisation, more accounts were shared of BAME pupils being targeted. BAME pupils were the focus of abuse at the interschool level, where pupils from white majority schools negatively labelled schools with higher levels of ethnic diversity. BAME-on-BAME racism was also reported by pupils. A further contribution to knowledge by our study is an understanding of how ongoing, unchallenged racism in schools impacts upon pupils' mental health; this indicates that there is a need for more resources to support victims. Pupils perceived that some teachers were 'racist' and displayed white bias when addressing, or failing to address, race-hate issues. This has detrimental implications for the well-being of BAME pupils and can lead to pupils changing schools. This could account for the continued underachievement of BAME pupils within education and highlights the importance of anti-racism training for teaching staff and in-depth analysis of school exclusion and race-hate incident data. We found evidence that not all incidents were disclosed to schools (or the police) by pupils. As such, regular consultation with a multi-ethnic cross section of young people about what is happening would be beneficial. It is important to recognise that dealing with racist incidents ineffectively is symptomatic of institutional racism (Macpherson, 1999).

A strength of this research was that it sought young people's views on how racist incidents could be dealt with. Young people in our study highlighted solutions for how racism and associated extremism could be better addressed by harsher punishments at school and in the community; support and diversion activities for young people and adults; more education on racism and race-hate extremism within the curriculum and society; and media messages that support the anti-racism agenda. Education and training for staff, pupils and the community needs to explore the historical, political and systematic contexts of racism and race-hate-related extremism, in addition to grappling with terminology to provoke reflection and change. In the pupils' view, tackling racism would be a challenge due to the extent of the problems that they have experienced.

Utilising young people's views, along with those of other professionals working with young people and the community (including teachers) in policy development, and ensuring BAME representation from each of these groups, could address the criticism that white policy makers can lead to white supremacy in schools. This may help to ensure that emerging generations are protected from racial abuse in the classroom, in the community and on social media.

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