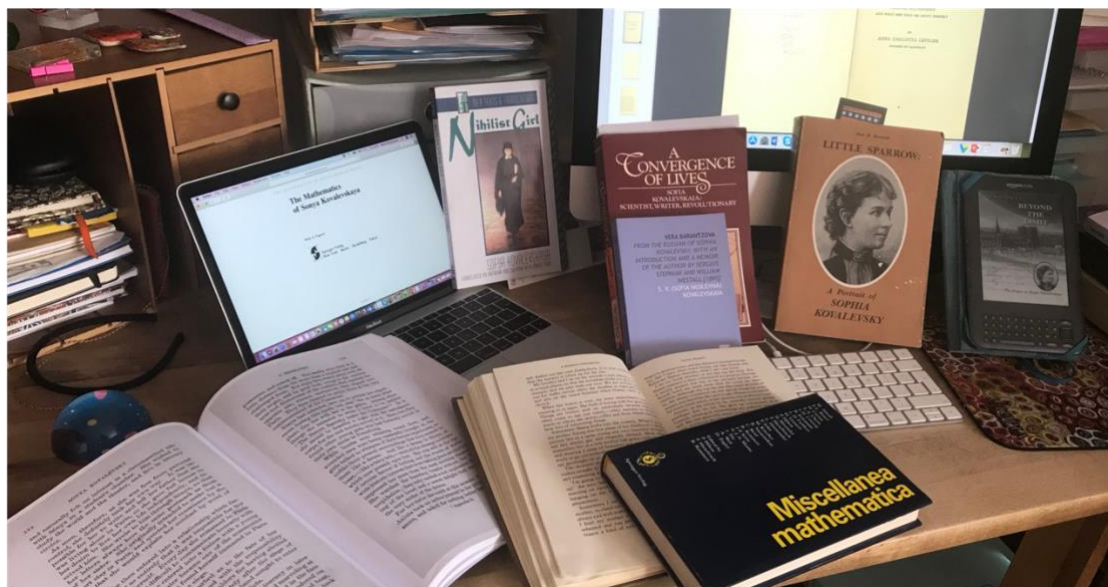University of East London

Pioneering Futures Since 1898

EDUCOM UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH ANNUAL YEARBOOK

Writing to become other

ACADEMIC YEAR   2020-2021

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INTRODUCTION

Raskolnikov took the magazine and glanced at his article. Incongruous as it was with his mood and his circumstances, he felt that strange and bittersweet sensation that every author experiences the first time he sees himself in print; besides, he was only twenty-three.

Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*

It is with great pleasure that we introduce the EDUCOM Undergraduate Research Annual Yearbook. Over the years we have had the pleasure of reading some excellent pieces of work from our students, discussing about their achievements, and celebrating their successes. This annual yearbook is an opportunity to start publishing and therefore archiving this excellent work. Our students embraced it enthusiastically from the very beginning and we are sure that they will continue to do so.

The volume is not just a showcase of our students' excellent work. It is also an opportunity for them to see their first piece of work published and feel like Dostoevsky's hero 'the sensation that every author experiences the first time he [or she] sees themselves in print'. This first published work could further be included in future portfolios supporting academic, as well as job applications.

Moreover, editing a journal of undergraduate research is a way of demonstrating how research and teaching are interwoven in our pedagogical practices, as well as the vision and directions of EDUCOM. As university teachers, we teach and do research within an academic community, EDUCOM and the University of East London. It goes without saying that our students are a big part of this community of scholarly work.

We read together, discuss, analyse and challenge ideas and viewpoints and then of course we write about them, whether in the form of a book, a chapter, a journal article, a research dissertation or an essay. Writing is always a collective practice, even when we produce single authored works. There is always a community that inspires us, supports us and in short creates the conditions of possibility for academic knowledge to emerge, take shape and be shared.

This volume comprises four sections: a) research dissertations, b) third year essays, c) second year essays and d) first year essays. The topics vary depending on the department, programme and module that the dissertations and essays are located in. Since this is the first issue, and the idea first occurred in the sociology team, there are more dissertations and essays from the social sciences in general and sociology in particular. We firmly believe however that as this new publication develops and gets established, there will be more contributions from all EDUCOM programmes and modules.

In launching this first volume of the EDUCOM Undergraduate Research Annual Yearbook we want to thank our Dean, Richard Harty for enthusiastically endorsing this initiative from the very beginning, as well as our colleagues for engaging with the project and encouraging their students to contribute. Our biggest thanks go to the contributors of this volume for their excellent work, as well as for their willingness to participate. Thank you, Eloise Calderbank, Ioana Ciurdea, Shauna Dacres, Charlie Dove, Jade Essuman, Nazneen Hamilton, Zeba Lunat, Selma Smajlaj, Emily Wadsworth, Natasha Ward, Ruth-Hayden Wason and Benedetta Zenari. This volume would not have been possible without you.

We hope that you will enjoy reading this volume, as much as our students enjoyed writing their work and we took pleasure in bringing the whole volume together.

The Co-editors

Dr Toni Brennan

Prof Maria Tamboukou

RESEARCH DISSERTATIONS

HOW FAR MIGHT THE USE OF AN INTERSECTIONAL LENS IMPROVE POLICIES TOWARDS HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING INSECURITY IN THE UK?

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BA Hons International Development

Module: AI6200-Research Dissertation

Acknowledgements

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in this dissertation has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

Abstract

Since the homelessness sector was founded fifty years ago, the number of people living in housing precarity and sleeping rough has increased and the scale and severity of the problem calls for deeper thinking for a solution (Sparkes and Downie, 2020, pg. 21). Concerns about the growing numbers of people in the UK experiencing housing precarity and homelessness are well researched. However, the inequalities caused by intersecting identities in relation to the vulnerability of individuals to sleeping rough and housing insecurity has been neglected in literature and also in UK policy. Titled 'How far might the use of an intersectional lens improve policies towards homelessness and housing insecurity in the UK?', this dissertation utilized the method of secondary research to investigate such connections. Previous UK policies (derived from aspects of immigration laws, housing schemes and welfare provision) have been reviewed to highlight the inadequacies of single-axis, ungendered and unracialized policies. A process for intersectional incorporation into policy formation is recommended for UK policy-makers, as well as lessons learnt from the Finnish Homelessness Strategy for future areas of policy creation. This dissertation found that there is a connection between individuals with intersecting identities and the vulnerability to homelessness and housing insecurity. Through the implementation of intersectional policies in the UK, a reduction in housing and economic inequalities across all social groups and genders can be achieved.

Terms & Definitions

Housing insecurity - encompasses several challenges, such as having trouble paying rent, overcrowding, moving frequently, staying with relatives, or spending the bulk of household income on housing. (Frederick et al., 2014, pg. 965)

Homelessness - a household has no home in the UK or anywhere else in the world available and reasonable to occupy. Homelessness does not just refer to people who are sleeping rough, it also encompasses:

- rooflessness (without a shelter of any kind, sleeping rough)
- houselessness (with a place to sleep but temporary, in institutions or a shelter)
- living in insecure housing (threatened with severe exclusion due to insecure tenancies, eviction, domestic violence, or staying with family and friends, known as 'sofa surfing')
- living in inadequate housing (in caravans on illegal campsites, in unfit housing, in extreme overcrowding)

(Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2013)

Sleeping rough - people sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments), people in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or 'bashes').

The definition does not include people in hostels or shelters, people in campsites or other sites used for recreational purposes or organised protest, squatters or travellers (Public Health, 2019).

Social Housing - Social homes are provided by housing associations (not-for-profit organisations that own, let, and manage rented housing) or a local council (Shelter, 2020).

Intersectionality - is an analytic sensibility, a way of thinking about identity and its relationship to power. Originally articulated on behalf of black women, the term brought to light the invisibility of many constituents within groups that claim them as members but often fail to represent them (Crenshaw, 1989), as 'single-axis' approaches towards the inequalities of gender or race fail to recognise the 'complexity of social structures and subjective experiences' (Carastathis, 2014, pg. 307-308).

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Background

The purpose of this dissertation will be to analyse how the incorporation of an intersectional lens into UK government housing policies can improve policies towards homelessness and housing insecurity in the UK. The issue of homelessness has previously been understood through various lenses, including a human and social rights lens (Kenna, 2005), a political economy lens in the form of a critique of neoliberalism (Rothe and Collins, 2016) and health and wellbeing lenses (Engender, 2020). But this project will investigate how the use of an intersectional lens can create more inclusive policies and aid all areas of the UK's population in achieving housing security. In the past, British homelessness research has been dominated by small-scale projects undertaken to meet short-term political objectives, referred to as 'quick and dirty' methods (Culhane, Fitzpatrick and Treglia, 2020, pg. 102).

Tackling the social issue of homelessness and housing insecurity is difficult, due to the complexities that surround the current data and definitions of homelessness, as well as deeply engrained structural problems. Quantitative data of the size, scale and who makes up the homeless population and those living in housing precarity is limited and definitions 'stop short of what is required to end rough sleeping itself, because to do so requires us to prevent other forms of homelessness too' (Sparkes and Downie, 2020, pg. 21). Differentiations between the types of homelessness, as well as pathways into and out of homelessness, are lost in many vast definitions. Data collection is often inhibited by single-axis frameworks, as well as issues of the invisibility of certain types of people within the homeless population and the criminalisation and prosecution of rough sleepers (Giannini, 2017, pg. 34-35). Furthermore, past single-axis policies have paid little acknowledgement to those who are 'multiply-burdened' (Crenshaw, 1989, pg. 140) on the margins of society, rendering them ignored, invisible and discriminated against at political, legal and socio-economic level. Consequently, people facing intersecting inequalities have restricted access to the help they need and are more likely to face housing insecurity and homelessness. 'Housing is a basic human right and is central to everyone's daily lives' (Engender, 2020, pg. 4). Homeless people have roughly a five times higher chance of dying than people of the same age and gender living in the least deprived area in Scotland (Culhane, Fitzpatrick and Treglia, 2020, pg. 102) and poor housing contributes to poor wellbeing and health.

Homeownership in England is at its lowest level in thirty years (Shelter, 2020, pg. 1), resulting in a wide-scale dependency on social and private rented housing. Inadequate creation of social housing, coupled with the 'undersupply of private housebuilding, has consequently led to a rise in homelessness and the number of households living in temporary accommodation over the last five years (Shelter, 2020, pg. 2). In 2016/2017, 59,100 households, in the UK were considered to be 'statutory homeless' and of those 61% were white households. This is concerning as 80% of the UK's population are White British, indicating an overrepresentation of ethnic minority households in this figure. It has been found a person's ethnicity is one of the key characteristics that increase the likelihood of experiencing homelessness (Shankley and Finney, 2020, pg. 161-162) and practices of discrimination and racism are present in housing administration, further exacerbating BAME group's access to housing security. It is

estimated that at least one in three households of some ethnic groups (Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Black African) live in 'overcrowded conditions' compared to one in twenty white households (Shankley and Finney, 2020, pg. 149), which has been found to have negative effects on physical and mental health and wellbeing.

The Grenfell Tower tragedy stands as a symbol for the rising inequalities and injustices in the UK concerning government policies towards the quality and availability of social housing (Madden, 2017, cited in Shankley and Finney, 2020, pg. 162). Furthermore, the recent changes to the Immigration Act, where rough sleepers who are not British nationals will face deportation, displays the discriminative and unsympathetic view of the UK government towards people carrying the burden of their race and nationality, instead of aiding them in getting secure accommodation. This will have a significant impact on the homeless population of London, where more than half of rough sleepers are foreign nationals (Lister, 2020). From a gender perspective, women's access to safe and adequate housing is linked to underlying systemic and structural gender inequalities.

1.2 Rationale & Significance of the Problem

Regarding the efforts of the UK government to tackle homelessness over the last half a century, much critique has been made. One critique states that in the past, a 'deliberate narrowing down' of the definition of homelessness was executed to exclude minorities and women in order to 'reduce the size of the homeless population' (Watson and Austerberry, 1986, cited in Engender, 2020, pg. 7). Furthermore, people experiencing homelessness are subsumed into a marked category – usually that of 'the dishevelled man in a duffel coat on the street' (Burman, 2012, cited in McCarthy, 2013, pg. 46). Differentiations are ignored and the notion of homelessness is associated with the notion of a white male which, in the UK, has been accepted as universal. Statutory and academic masculine discourses are not applicable to women, BAME, LGBTQ and other minority groups, creating 'a sense of passivity and inability' in those facing homelessness to do anything about their situation (Watson, 2000, cited in McCarthy, 2013, pg. 47). A result of this is that policies are often lacking the multi-dimensionality they need to be most effective. Previous ways of thinking and policies have been suggested to be gender-insensitive, exclusionary and single-axis focused.

In the UK, 14 million people, a fifth of the population, live in poverty (Alston, 2018, pg. 1). Over recent decades, dramatic changes have occurred to the UK's housing landscape, leading to further exacerbation of the housing disadvantage for young people and minorities, coupled with the impacts of weakening welfare protection. The prolonged implementation of austerity since the 1980s by the UK government has led to a widening of the gap between the rich and poor. United Nations Special Rapporteur, Professor Philip Alston, stated the 'great misery' brought by the reforms have been 'inflicted unnecessarily, especially on the working poor, on single mothers struggling against mighty odds, on people with disabilities who are already marginalized, and on millions of children who are being locked into a cycle of poverty from which most will have great difficulty escaping' (Alston, 2018, pg. 2). The private rented sector is associated with high vulnerability to housing precarity and ethnic minorities and single women depend heavily on this sector. Race and ethnicity are marginalised from housing

debates, and consequently black and minority voices are excluded from housing planning and provision.

1.3 Research Methodology

This project will only undertake secondary research due to complications related to primary data collection. Due to the current context in the UK regarding the Covid-19 epidemic, conducting one-on-one interviews with members of the homeless community will not be possible and due to the context of homelessness, access to digital means of data collection is not possible for research participants. Furthermore, the method of conducting interviews is not best suited to this project because of the need for a wide range of participants with varying inequalities. Furthermore, secondary data collection can supply the project with a much larger sample size of people due to the ability to extract data from sources such as the national census and from organisations that have already collected a wide range of data.

This dissertation will analyse the information found through secondary data collection through an intersectional perspective. This is a multidimensional perspective that will contribute to a greater understanding of the barriers encountered by people facing multiple inequalities living in the UK when trying to exit homelessness or achieving housing stability. It will aid in the recognition of social, economic, cultural and political obstacles to analyse how this understanding can be used in the creation of future policies. In addition, secondary data collection will allow me to evaluate current theoretical approaches and UK policies addressing homelessness to imagine possible future policies that are rooted in an intersectional perspective.

In order to fully provide a new, informative angle towards addressing homelessness and housing insecurity in the UK, the following research questions will be answered throughout this dissertation:

  i.   What is the connection between people experiencing intersecting inequalities and the issues of housing insecurity and homelessness?

  ii. How are homelessness and housing insecurity been politically and theoretically viewed in the past and understood currently?

  iii. How have past single-axis, UK housing policies impacted individuals experiencing intersecting inequalities?

  iv. How can the concept of intersectionality be written into future UK policies and legislation?

1.4 Scope & Limitations

This research will examine the impact inequalities have on a multiply-burdened person's ability to exit homelessness and housing insecurity in the UK. This dissertation will only focus on the UK, with close attention being paid to the context of London, where the ethnic minority population is at its highest. Due to the limited time and resources available within an undergraduate degree, this project will only concentrate on the inequalities of gender, race and ethnicity. If more time and resources were available, more areas of inequality such as (dis)ability and sexuality could also be addressed. This research is focused on a HIC (higher income country), the UK, as issues of housing security and homelessness are prevalent in 'developed' countries where a high quality of life would be thought to be experienced by the whole population.

As this dissertation is written for an undergraduate degree, the amount of time and areas of research that can be covered are limited. If more time were available, a comparison could be made with the United States in order to evaluate the different policies that have been implemented and the impacts on the situation of multiply-burdened citizens. Another limitation is that all data used will be from secondary sources. Interviews to uncover individual experiences of inequalities and housing insecurity would be rife with ethical dilemmas and due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the arrangement of interviews is not possible.

1.5 Positionality Statement

As an International Development student, I have a keen interest in topics such as equality, neoliberalism and the feminist intersectional lens; thus I am drawn to current issues such as homelessness and housing insecurity. I find these topics especially interesting in the context of the UK, a country praised for being one of the most 'developed' in the world, yet it has such widespread inequality. I wanted to develop a deeper understanding of how the impacts of gender and race create even more difficult situations for those in housing precarity and why single-axis approaches to these issues are being implemented by the UK government. I understand that research is subjective to the way I, the researcher, am influenced by my perspective, values and social experiences. The issue of positionality is essential in safeguarding the validity of my research, therefore I must 'centralize' my subjective position in this research, instead of attempting to diminish it, as I agree with the statement that 'subjectivity plays an important role in making sense of human behaviour in the social world' (Davis, 2018, pg. 2). Impartiality will be conducted throughout this dissertation, but it is imperative to consider my identity as a British, white female from a lower-class background and the influence it may have on this research.

1.6 Outline

To complete this dissertation to its full potential, Chapter 2 reviews past and current political and theoretical literature, from four different approaches, on the topic of housing insecurity and homelessness. The supposed causes of homelessness will be analysed, and how this impacts how homeless populations are viewed. Furthermore, the proposed solutions to homelessness that have been suggested by each approach will also be analysed. Continuing, Chapter 3 will analyse how past policies that have not been created to be race or gender-sensitive, have created disproportionate, negative impacts for individuals experiencing intersecting inequalities. Here, the institutional and systemic disadvantages being placed on the UK's women and BAME communities will be explored and as well as the relationships these disadvantages have with the vulnerability to housing insecurity and homelessness. Chapter 4 will demonstrate how intersectionality can be implemented and evaluate approaches to combatting homelessness implemented in Finland. Finally, Chapter 5 summarises the findings of this dissertation and recommends future areas of research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This dissertation is concerned with analysing how far the use of an intersectional lens might improve policies towards homelessness and housing security in the UK. To conduct this investigation, a review of the preceding theoretical and political ideas and research on homelessness is in order to indicate barriers and important areas of acknowledgement towards creating future, intersectional housing legislation. Therefore, this review examines the literature on four varying approaches, offering differing theoretical stances and their explanations for the following two questions: (i) What are the supposed causes of homelessness and how does this implicate how the homeless population are viewed? (ii) What are the proposed solutions to homelessness? The four core theoretical approaches on homelessness that will be analysed are the functionalism approach, the structuralist approach, the rights-based approach, and the feminist approaches.

2.1 What are the supposed causes of homelessness from each approach and how does this implicate how homeless populations are viewed?

Cronley (2010, pg. 324) states that the functionalism perspective rests on the idea that homelessness has a direct connection with the notion of individualism and self-reliance and that the success and failure of an individual is a matter of their responsibility. This perspective consequently breeds the social stigmatisation of a homeless individual being someone who is 'deviant or dysfunctional' (Ravenhill, 2014, pg. 31), as the causes of homelessness are based on an individual's personal problems, like mental health illnesses and substance addiction. Ravenhill (2014) and Coates (1990) draw from the theory of functionalism, which concentrates on societal structures and the manners in which society remains stable. Coates states that the homeless hold an 'elusive power' that invokes a response from the wider society. He draws upon the Jungian viewpoint that describes the homeless population as 'the shadow, the darker, harsher side of life and humanity' (1990, pg. 19), as well as being influenced by Max Weber's interpretation of the Jungian outlook as an example of:

> 'the Western world's profound evil, stemming from its ignorance, from its insistence on not being shown tragedy, pain, illness, death. What a culture resists seeing is what it gets shoved before its eyes. So, these ghostly homeless have come to haunt us' (Coates, 1990, pg. 19).

Coates makes the claim that society needs (and perhaps maintains) a visible side of harsher societal life, to create society's sense of 'ontological security', maintained through a passive, oblivious attitude towards homeless-ending initiatives, as the security comes from the 'knowledge that people are worse off than ourselves' (Coates, 1990, pg. 19).

By contrast, writers such as Ravenhill (2014, pg. 30) have criticised this approach by noting that to make each homeless individual responsible for their homeless condition is 'unhelpful and misleading' (2014, pg. 30) and instead of concentrating on the individual and their relationship with society, the way that social structures affect an individual should instead be the focus. Therefore, structuralist approaches analyse the

societal structures that together influence a person's life, and according to Ravenhill (2014, pg. 31), structures that 'organise and regulate' life are the root of social problems, such as housing insecurity and homelessness. This indicates that through this concept, those struggling with homelessness and housing insecurity are viewed as 'victims' of the restrictive structures, not dysfunctional people who do not make suitable life choices, as seen in the functionalism approach. A structuralist inspection of homelessness investigates the impacts of welfare, housing, deinstitutionalization, unemployment and poverty as being the main causes of housing insecurity and homelessness.

Kenna's (2005, pg. 8) rights-based approach argument analyses housing from an even broader perspective, rather than at a structural or individual level. He contends that 'the right to housing is a basic human right', despite a person's age, gender, race, sexuality or nationality, and defines homelessness as 'the absence or denial of those housing rights' (Kenna, 2005, cited in Fitz and Watts, 2010, pg. 106). Consequently, people facing housing inequality and homelessness are viewed as national and international citizens that are being failed by their governments – governments who are obliged to provide protection and care for all humans. Viewed through a rights-based lens, the causes of housing insecurity are seen to be due to the impact of globalisation, because of the increasing pressures from large transnational corporations to reduce public services and public rights, across the globe (Kenna, 2005, pg. 8). On account of the squeeze on public spending and services, Kenna argues that there are many countries (especially in Europe) where states are not guaranteeing 'adequate and affordable' housing that is 'available to all', and that the provision of such housing is being transferred to the market. The failure of the delivery of housing to all and the increasing number of 'immigrants, migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees' is stated to be a rising concern for housing rights advocates.

Though a body of literature exists on the structural impacts on an individual's vulnerability to experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity, there is a gap in the literature as to how societal structures affect specific members of the population, in particular, those facing intersecting oppressions.

This gap has most recently been examined within intersectional feminist theory, where the impacts of interlocking oppressions on exposure to homelessness and housing insecurity have only started to be explored. The main reasons for female homelessness are suggested to be due to the higher rate of 'socioeconomic marginalisation, poverty and poor life chances' that women experience in comparison to men (Domergue et al, 2015, cited in Bretherton, 2017, pg. 6), as well as escaping from domestic violence. Furthermore, the patriarchal nature of gender roles, in which men are constructed as breadwinners of the family and financially supporting women, consequently, affects the access women have available to housing (Watson, 1984, pg. 63). Women's trajectories through homelessness differ from men's because of being processed (by homelessness and welfare systems) in a different manner from men, meaning that solutions to female and male homelessness cannot be homogenous. This is supported by the claim that:

> 'If women are experiencing homelessness due to domestic or gender-based violence at much higher rates than men, the idea that their needs and their pathways through homelessness can really be consistent with those of men, does seem rather a large assumption to make.' (Bretherton, 2017, pg. 6).

Unfortunately, this assumption is prevalent in current European homeless policies and may be an explanation to why often women hold a greater reliance on themselves and their social support systems (relying on relatives, friends, and acquaintances) rather than State-led welfare systems.

When evaluating the literature discussed above, the most valuable approach in relation to this dissertation appears to be intersectional feminist approaches, due to the omission of the effects of oppressions have on individuals in other literatures. This indicates that those facing homelessness are too often viewed as a homogenous group, in which general causes of and solutions to homelessness are presented, with little assessment of the specificities which, as argued in this dissertation, lead to the creation of ineffective policies which do little to benefit the lives of those experiencing homelessness and housing. The feminist perspectives on homelessness focus on the invisibility of women from the many different aspects of homelessness research, from definitions to population size studies, while stressing the differences between male and female homelessness. For example, Bretherton (2017, pg. 3) states that in European homelessness research, women are often invisible or underrepresented, due to how homelessness is defined, and the different paths women take while experiencing homelessness. Because of this, homelessness is usually associated with men which is unhelpful in the creation of anti-homelessness agendas and policies as the different triggers, trajectories, and experiences of homelessness between men and women are often ignored. Female homelessness is often interpreted as a 'function of how women, in general, are responded to by the societies in which they live', as she stresses the significance of the role of the patriarchy and misogyny in framing the definitions, solutions and contexts in which female homelessness occurs. (Bretherton, 2017, pg. 3). This, in turn, is argued to shape how society and welfare systems respond to women's homelessness, especially regarding the social and cultural construction of women's roles, such as in the labour market or their roles in the family. Female homelessness can therefore be 'seen and defined as being a social problem generated via these wider, structural and cultural, patriarchal forces' (Watson, 2000, cited in Bretherton, 2017, pg. 4). The intersectional feminist approaches examine the simultaneity of oppressions, such as gender and race, as well as other inequalities such as disability and sexuality. This approach highlights that many community services are 'not designed to support women with multiple disadvantage' (Homeless Link and Women's Resource Centre, 2020, pg. 10) and the negative effects of homelessness and housing insecurity are often intensified by the intersection of race and gender, for Black women and WOC (women of colour), and these women commonly face mistreatment from the services they interact with in order to access the support they need.

There is general agreement on the impact of social structures, such as race, gender, class and status within the economy (which are often created and perpetuated by neoliberal agendas). The majority of the studies depart from the theory of social construction, in which the social structures and social mindsets influence how UK society is organised, how society influences such structures and how the structures affect the lives, choices and opportunities of different types of people in the UK. In the literature of Kenna (2005), Bretherton (2017) and Mills (1996), neoliberal agendas, like the emphasis placed on the market and the reduction in the provision of social welfare, have been identified as the root of structural problems in which housing instability is reproduced and many of the solutions offered by these authors place importance on the State being more active in the creation of housing, wealth distribution and provision of public services to provide aid and security. There is also consensus on how homeless people

are stigmatized by the UK population. This could be partly due to the homogenisation of the homeless population and perpetuation of arguments such as that homeless people are homeless because of their own negative life choices, which in turn decreases initiatives that actively seek to end homelessness, letting the State off the hook.

2.2 What are the proposed solutions to homelessness from each approach?

The functionalism literature on homelessness and housing insecurity has paid attention to the significance placed on the individual when trying to exit homelessness. Hopper (2003, cited in Cronley, 2010, pg. 324-5) articulates that State institutions rest emphasis on the 'correction and rehabilitation of the individual' through the notion of kinship, redistributing responsibility for welfare onto families and friends. The functionalist viewpoint is most common in the United States (where much of the research of these literatures is based), yet is still very relevant in the context of the UK, as it provides an explanation for the reasoning behind the perceptions on the homeless community created by the wider Western society. Furthermore, Mills (1996, pg. 394) articulates the repetitive focus on the individual and their problems or poor life choices are 'tools' used by 'welfare reformers … to build public support for restrictive and punitive reform measures' and perhaps also to take the pressure off the neoliberal agenda. In relation to Coates' (1990, pg. 19) reflection on the Jungian viewpoint discussed previously, he argues the supposed need for a darker side of society in order to provide a sense of 'ontological security', and this impacts the solutions available to end homelessness, as the majority of people are 'apathetic', 'indifferent' and 'even hostile' towards the homeless, meaning they are less likely to pursue and support sleeping rough ending initiatives. Despite practical solutions not being suggested by this approach, it is nevertheless useful in identifying how such issues in society are perpetuated and why homeless people are stigmatised, highlighting the difficulty of approaching and tackling these problems when they are heavily ingrained into the fabric of common social thinking. This can aid in the development of policies and programmes to change public opinion and open a new, open-minded dialogue about the causes of homelessness and attitudes towards those facing housing insecurity and living on the streets. However, this approach can be critiqued on its overemphasis placed on the impact of individual factors and its overall neglect of the effects of structural influences, for example declining wages and the inadequacy of affordable housing. Furthermore, Cronley (2010, pg. 330) contends that the significance placed on the individual prioritises 'small-scale, community-based solutions', which consequently disrupts public policy efforts towards 'long-term solutions and structure-based reform'.

Apart from the functionalist approach on homelessness, there is consensus that solutions to homelessness should primarily be State-led. In contrast to the functionalism approach, structuralists argue that because of the vastness and rigidness of the social structures present in today's society and their intricate interconnectedness, solutions are often dependent on top-down measures, whereby the State is expected to improve aspects like falling wages, employment and welfare provision. However, the lack of and effectiveness of such solutions are often side-lined by neoliberal and austerity agendas, where the emphasis is placed on the market to provide more housing, employment, and pathways out of poverty. Parsell and Marston (2012) stress the importance of 'models of early intervention' (pg. 34) from which prevention can occur

through 'societal changes that improve the material conditions of people so they no longer experience poverty' (pg. 38). Preventive measures, such as reducing 'relative poverty, increased and more equitable wealth distribution, … and a greater capacity to influence the supply of housing', to allow more people to become more 'financially equipped' to avoid homelessness (Parsell and Marston, 2012, pg. 38-9), is a significant benefit of the structuralist approach. Preventive solutions, in time, would reduce future dependency on welfare provision. However, a shortcoming of the structural approach is the ability to overlook 'the individual's ability to be independent of these structures' (Ravenhill, 2014, pg. 32), as the individual's agency in decision making, planning and risk-taking in their environment cannot be completely ignored. Thus, it is important to understand the connection and convergence between such structures and the independence of individuals when analysing vulnerability to housing insecurity. Furthermore, another disadvantage of the structuralism approach is that increased reliance on the State for welfare and rights to housing risks 'disempowering' individuals, portraying them as 'passive recipients of state beneficence, rather than active, autotelic responsible citizens' (Watts, 2014, pg. 794).

The rights-based approach is aligned with the structuralist approach, in regards to the pressures of neoliberalism on housing policy, as Kenna (2005) argues that the implementation of housing rights provides a 'potential counterweight' to the impacts of neoliberal policy, as Fitz and Watts (2010, pg. 106) claim it supplies policymakers with a 'different marker of success' by empowering homeless people and their advocates through a 'right of action', instead of it continuing to be framed simply as a political or bureaucratic issue, in which reliance is placed on 'administrative or discretionary managerial action' (Kenna, 2005, pg. 9). Success has been achieved in contexts within the United States, through social movements and campaigns where achievements have been made by framing the issue of homelessness within the legal rights approach. However, despite providing a legal framework for social change, the actual implementation of these 'human and housing rights' is facing heavy competition against the 'neo-liberal climate' focused on 'profits, market competitiveness, efficiency and cost-effectiveness' (Kenna, 2005, pg. 9). Furthermore, the actual enforcement of housing rights is 'weak' (Fitz and Watts, 2010, pg. 106) and the rights-based approach can only reach its full potential when the human rights obligations are incorporated into State policies at an international, national, regional and local level. For this to occur, Fitz and Watts (2010, pg. 106) argue that current enforcement mechanisms need to be 'utilised and improved', accompanied by an alignment of existing international, national, and regional frameworks.

The solutions for homelessness and housing insecurity recommended by the intersectional feminist approaches are to conduct further research and improve the systematic data collection mechanisms to 'comprehensively understand the situation on a broader scale' (Homeless Link and Women's Resource Centre, 2020, pg. 44). This will support the development of the female homeless population portfolio, including where homeless women reside, building knowledge of their paths into homeless and the most effective trajectories for exiting homelessness. Feminist scholars have also stressed the need for women-only support systems to provide 'long-term, intensive, flexible support' in the provision of safe and appropriate accommodation, and to make these services more widespread to avoid 'good quality support' from being a 'postcode lottery' (Homeless Link and Women's Resource Centre, 2020, pg. 44).

There is agreement on the solutions and the implementation of these solutions to homelessness and housing insecurity within the literatures discussed. Many of the authors (including Kenna, 2005, Bretherton, 2017 and Mills, 1996) agree that solutions are dependent on top-down initiatives, as the State should not be leaving the market to create the resolutions needed. Instead, it is argued that the State should be actively doing more to help those currently facing housing insecurity and to prevent future instability by creating better foundations for economic prosperity for those vulnerable. These authors argue that it is simply not viable to let the market create the foundations of economic stability needed, as it has proven to fail already and the majority believe that the neglect of these interventions is due to neoliberal pressures to cut back public expenditure. However, State-led homelessness programs are often falling short and without pressure from civil society, often produce minimal outcomes.

This discussion has attempted to highlight the main trends in the literature relating to the issues raised in this dissertation on homelessness and housing insecurity. The contrasting views on how the homeless community is perceived and the main causes of homelessness have been identified, and common trends such as the significance of societal structures on an individual's level of vulnerability have been identified. The feminist approaches have provided the most important foundation for analysis and intersectional perspectives which build on the feminist conceptual approaches by relating to multiple oppressions, like gender and race. This analysis reveals that the intersection of multiple oppressions is extremely important to consider throughout the research being conducted in this dissertation and that to enhance future homelessness and housing insecurity policies, there appears to be a strong case for adopting an intersectional lens.

Chapter 3 Past Policy Review

3.1 Introduction

A history of implementation of previous policies addressing housing insecurity and homelessness, as well as aspects of the welfare system, have caused discriminatory outcomes and have disproportionately disadvantaged minorities in the UK. The notion of a homeless individual in the UK is usually associated with that of a 'bearded dirty male' (Radley et al, 2006, cited in Engender, 2020, pg. 47) and there is little reference to the differentiations between different types of homelessness in UK housing and homelessness policy. This causes housing precarity, homelessness and poverty to not be considered as racialised or gendered issues (McCarthy, 2013, pg. 46) and often leaves those most vulnerable to the negative side effects of these policies to be invisible and the disadvantageous impacts being unknown. Recent attention on policies and practices that trap women and ethnic minorities in cycles of poverty and instability has highlighted that in the creation of these policies, the potentially discriminatory impacts are not being sufficiently considered. This chapter first reviews a selection of policies that have had a direct negative impact on those experiencing single and intersecting oppressions in the UK. Some of these policies are still in place today, while others have been retracted due to their negative impacts. The evaluation of these policies will identify flaws in UK policy creation processes and will aid in the creation of recommendations for future policies, created through an intersectional lens. So far, little recognition has been made towards incorporating the theoretical framework of intersectionality into policy development, implementation, and analysis. This chapter argues that given these policy shortcomings, there is a strong case for the adoption of an intersectional lens more explicitly into policy design.

3.2 The Benefits System: Universal Credit & the Benefit Cap

The benefits system in the UK exists to provide assistance and financial support to those undergoing stressful financial circumstances caused by unemployment, disability, earning a low wage or raising children. Regressive changes to benefits and taxes have occurred since 2010, and costs of austerity measures have fallen disproportionately on 'those least able to bear it' (Alston, 2018, pg. 18). Women are inordinately dependent on the housing benefits and Universal Credit (UC), due to paying a higher proportion of their income in rent and accounting for 90% of single parents in the UK (Gingerbread, 2018, cited in Alston, 2018, pg. 18). Therefore, the benefit cap (a limit on the total amount of benefits someone can receive) negatively impacts the financial stability and lives of women more in comparison to men. Single parent women and women escaping domestic abuse are often penalised by the benefit cap. For women escaping an abusive partner in employment, going from a 'working household', which is not subject to the benefit cap, to an 'out-of-work household', puts economic strain on these women and causes further distress. Furthermore, other aspects of the benefits system that have been created without considering the impacts of gender have resulted in further problems for women within the benefits system, such as the sending of single payments to an entire household may entrench 'problematic and often gendered dynamics within a couple including by giving control of the payments to a financially or physically abusive partner' (Alston, 2018, pg. 18).

Philip Alston (2018, pg. 4) - the United Nations special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights - stated that 'no single program embodies the combination of the benefits reforms and the promotion of austerity programs more than Universal Credit'. UC is a monthly payment delivered to a single member of a household. It encompasses several areas of welfare support, like housing benefits and tax credits (Race Equality Foundation, 2016, pg. 2). It's been suggested that the UK Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), is more concerned with the creation of economic savings, than with providing essential social support. Many people rely on the income provided through UC to assist in the paying of rent, and 27% of private renters in the UK receive housing benefits or the housing element of UC – equivalent to 1.2 million households (White, 2018, pg. 2). The UC system often pushes people into a deeper financial crisis, due to long waiting periods before being able to access the money that is granted. Obstacles are presented for low-income households when claiming and accessing UC, as this must be done online. Many lower-income and vulnerable households are 'effectively offline and without digital skills', and only 47% of low-income households have broadband internet (Ofcom, 2017, cited in Alston, 2018, pg. 8). Women, the elderly and non-English speaking people are the least likely to be able to overcome these hurdles. Public libraries are now the main source of digital assistance in the UK, but the cuts to their budgets and the rise in the number of those in need of UC suggests a further decline in the ability to access the support people desperately need. Claimants for UC can be sanctioned (resulting in the withdrawal of the benefits supplied), for a maximum of 1095 days, if a claimant has failed to meet the obligations placed on them by the Job Centre (Child Poverty Action Group, 2015 cited in Race Equality Foundation, 2016, pg. 3). Due to a higher level of digital exclusion, as well as the added strain of language barriers, found in BAME communities, BAME claimants are more likely to the sanctioned for failure to meet the UC commitments.

In addition, research has found that BAME communities are disproportionately impacted by UC, as they are more likely to be living in poverty, meaning they are more likely to receive benefits (Race Equality Foundation, 2016). The negative impacts of UC are also experienced by BAME children, as their families tend to be larger on average, meaning that a reduction in the size of the payment, sanctions or payment delays increases 'the number of minority ethnic children living in poverty' (Race Equality Foundation, 2016, pg. 5). UC credit places an emphasis on finding employment, an option that is often not available for single parents with young children. The Race Equality Foundation (2016, pg. 5-6) states that the Work Programme, a government programme to provide 'support for people who are long-term unemployed – or are at most risk of becoming so' (The Work Programme, 2012), is failing BAME people. This is due to contractors spending 54% less on 'harder to reach groups' (Race Equality Foundation, 2016, pg. 5), meaning that BAME households are more likely to remain unemployed or be in low paying and insecure employment. Women and members of BAME communities are often dependent on UC incomes for paying rent and supporting their families. This dependency on governmental welfare support is rising due to an overwhelming concentration of women and BAME people living in privately rented accommodation, an area of the housing market that is heavily associated with vulnerability to housing precarity (Shankley and Finney, 2020, pg. 149). Private renters spend on average 41% of their household income on rent and 57% of private renters admitted to struggling to cover their housing costs (White, 2018, pg. 1). It is becoming harder and harder for people to afford a market rent without help

from the housing benefit, creating cycles of vulnerability and instability which are transferred intergenerationally.

3.3 Right to Rent

The Right to Rent scheme was introduced under the 2014 Immigration to create checks to ensure that if landlords rent to an individual who does not have 'leave to remain' in the UK, they can be prosecuted for committing a criminal act and perhaps receive a civil penalty of the sum of £3,000. Researchers concluded that this procedure has created discrimination and exclusion within the private rented housing market towards those 'who cannot immediately produce documents' (Social Scientists Against the Hostile Environment, 2020, pg. 22). Recent immigrants to the UK are much more likely to be placed in temporary accommodation, (especially asylum seekers and refugees) and when many try to move on from temporary accommodation and into a privately rented home, they are faced with discrimination. Shankley and Finney (2020, pg. 153) argue that this adjustment to the UK housing policy was 'part of broader changes sought to make the UK a more hostile environment towards migrants and ultimately steer undocumented migrants towards leaving the country'. The High Court ruled that this scheme was 'incompatible with human rights laws' due to it directly causing racial discrimination in the rented housing sector (Shankley and Finney, 2020, pg. 153), as well as having limited impacts on controlling immigration. The Home Office stood by the claim the racial discrimination being experienced was not caused by the scheme and have done nothing to combat the evident discrimination, apart from adding this short statement to the Government website giving guidance to landlords:

> 'Check all new tenants. It's against the law to only check people you think are not British citizens. You must not discriminate against anyone because of where they're from.' (GOV.UK, 2021)

Despite discrimination not being the intended outcome of this scheme, it has undoubtedly bred an unfriendly arena of exclusion and discrimination that targets ethnic minorities, and the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (2020, cited in Gentleman, 2020, n.p.) argues that the state is 'plainly responsible for the discriminatory effects of its actions, whether intended or not'.

3.4 No Recourse to Public Funds

'No recourse to public funds' (NRPF) is a condition placed on individuals who are 'subject to immigration control, defined in section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (NRPF Network, 2017), and prevents them from being able to claim public funds, such as housing assistance and benefits. This condition has been found to be particularly 'damaging' for families and children in 'crisis situations' (Social Scientists Against the Hostile Environment, 2020, pg. 17) and although there are alternatives for families under the condition for NRPF, the processes in which to receive support are often extensive, complex and often hindered by social services being unaware of their duties regarding this area. The consequence of this often leads to people being made homeless and experiencing a high sense of social exclusion (Social Scientists Against the Hostile Environment, 2020, pg. 17). A reason for this sense of exclusion could be

suggested to be because of the absence of support being given to NRPF immigrants in accommodation project services, as these services focus on working with those eligible to claim the Housing Benefit, as less than 0.5% of service users are people with NRPF, according to the Learning and Work Institute (2020, pg. 41). The main driver in 'extreme housing exclusion' is the lack of or absence of statutory support, therefore resulting in migrants (especially asylum seekers or undocumented or economic migrants) being the main social group that experiences high levels of social exclusion. This condition and the creation of a feeling of being socially excluded being experienced by immigrants directly affects the faith these individuals have in being able to access support in a time of crisis, and this is reflected in the numbers of people who approach local authorities for help.

3.5 The Deportation of Non-UK Rough Sleepers

A highly controversial programme that was launched by the Home Office used homelessness charities and local councils to obtain personal information from rough sleepers that came forward when seeking out support, which could result in the deportation of non-UK rough sleepers. In 2018, the hidden agenda behind the Rough Sleeping Support System (RSSS) was exposed by the Observer newspaper. It was uncovered that this service was a 'covert strategy to deport rough sleepers after acquiring personal data without their consent' (Townsend and Walawalkar, 2021). The RSSS was promoted by the Home Office to be an opportunity to access an express service for migrants and undocumented asylum seekers to receive help in establishing their immigration status and then consequently be able to access public funds to help with their desperate economic situations. After being challenged by a range of organisations, the Home Office 'amended' the RSSS in September 2020 by adding requirements for 'fully informed consent' to be given to local councils and charities by the service users. By signing a 19-page user agreement, rough sleeping individuals give consent to deportation being one of the four possible outcomes (Townsend and Walawalkar, 2021). Much contestation has arisen surrounding obtaining consent, 'given the vulnerability of rough sleepers, language barriers, and the power dynamic between client and caseworker' (Townsend and Walawalkar, 2021). The revival of this programme has faced heavy controversy and has been criticised by the United Nations Refugee Agency, the Refugee Council and the British Red Cross, and an increasing number of councils and charities pledged to boycott the new rules as they will 'punish and criminalise some of the most vulnerable (Taylor, 2000). The councils of Islington and Haringey stated that they would not collaborate with the Home Office as it compromises the relationships of trust between their officers and the sleeping rough community. It has been warned that this policy will create a 'chilling effect' on the willingness of migrant rough sleeper to approach support services and which could lead to a rise in rough sleeping numbers (Public Interest Law Centre, 2020, cited in Taylor, 2000).

3.6 Conclusion

The policies reviewed above derive from aspects of immigration laws, housing schemes and welfare provision and all have been created through a single-axis, ungendered, unracialized perspective. The omission of multi-dimensionality has subordinated the most vulnerable members of society and created even tougher environments for housing security to be achieved and an arena where existing inequalities are being constantly 'repeated and reinforced' (Engender, 2020, pg. 6). The reviewed policies have identified a lack of constructive support available to the vulnerable in the UK. Furthermore, the knock-on effects of certain policies (whether related to immigration or State welfare provision) have also been identified, such as employment restriction, exclusion and confidence reduction, as well as their connection with housing security. Women and BAME communities are side-lined, ignored and experience a long-term deficit of economic power, which has future impacts on mental health, well-being and confidence within society and in the UK government. Furthermore, the support that is provided is tailored to the 'majority' in the UK. £20 million is spent every year by the government on the housing benefit in England alone (White, 2018, pg. 2) – a remarkable amount of finance which could be decreased every year if the social housing stock was increased. The continuation of damaging austerity measures and intolerant treatment of minorities has created a hostile environment, where upward mobility is inhibited, especially for those experiencing intersecting inequalities and their families. 'Restricted wealth and asset building capacity can be traced to intersecting histories of systemic racism (e.g., segregation, redlining, exclusion from public assistance programs), sexism, colonialism, and intergenerational poverty' (Bullock, et al, 2020, pg. 837). Given these inadequacies of the reviewed policies in addressing such inequalities, the next chapter will offer recommendations for incorporating an intersectional lens into future policy design and implementation. Recommendations will be made to offer further support to those facing oppression that is not reducible to a single category, in order to provide them with more economic stability and housing security.

Chapter 4 – Intersectional Implementation and Lessons Learnt from Approaches to Combatting Homelessness in Finland.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the current anti-discrimination framework in UK law and then explores the ability of an intersectional approach to offer a more in-depth account of discrimination, in relation to social structures. Next, The Intersectionality Policy Process Analysis created by Bishwakarma, Hunt and Zajicek (2007) will be presented as a foundation for intersectional policy creation. Finally, the Finnish Homelessness Strategy will be evaluated, and recommended for policy adoption in the UK.

4.2 'Multiple Discrimination' and Intersectional Discrimination

In the past, the UK's initiatives on tackling various types of discrimination have been through the implementation of 'single-dimensional' equality and discrimination acts that deal with the inequalities of gender, race and class separately (Kantola and Nousiainen, 2009, pg. 461). In UK anti-discrimination policy, 'multiple discrimination' was a recognition that people can experience discrimination on the basis of more than one identity category (Kantola and Nousiainen, 2009, pg. 461). Despite this acknowledgement of the fluidity and multidimensionality of experiencing discrimination, the overall system of structural inequality has remained unchanged, due to the production of:

> 'additive models of politics leading to competition rather than coordination among marginal groups for fringe levels of resources rather than systemic reform that could transform the entire logic of distribution.' (Hancock, 2007, pg. 70).

This is one of the main arguments supporting the importance of the implementation of intersectionality into governmental practice. Intersectionality emphasises the significance of social structures in the ways 'domination, subordination and subjects' are constructed in specific 'locations and contexts' (Grabham, et al, 2009, cited in Kantola and Nousiainen, 2009, pg. 462). The current multiple discrimination framework relies on the tools of non-binding, 'soft law' (recommendations, action plans and reports) and the application of 'hard laws' is only seen in single-ground directives, for example, gender directives. This has resulted in 'weak or non-existent' (Kantola and Nousiainen, 2009, pg. 461) enforcement of discrimination initiatives. Soft law programmes prioritise economic and employment considerations, as the labour market is viewed as the most common arena for multiple discrimination to occur. This has been critiqued by feminist scholars as a plan to create economic growth through a rise in labour market participation and because it consequently generates narrow gender-equality debates and little else (Kantola and Nousiainen, 2009, pg. 466-8).

The concept of intersectional discrimination is often opposed by policymakers and side-lined in favour of the more desirable 'multiple discrimination' framework, due to intersectionality's complexity, as distinguishing a case of intersectional discrimination involves the recognition of a completely new ground of discrimination. Courts are

unwilling to alter the list of the grounds of discrimination that is recognized by the law, meaning that explicit exclusionary policies and practices are forbidden, yet the 'racialized-gendered maldistribution of life chances' remain the same or are worsened throughout time (Spade, 2013, pg. 1035). Spade (2013, pg. 1035) argues that racism has been defined so narrowly as to 'exclude it from blame in the most widespread adverse conditions facing people of colour' (POC), to maintain the operation systems of white supremacy and heteropatriarchy. These operation systems have contended to reform law when resistance to the conditions of subjection is experienced, but just enough transformation to stabilize and maintain the 'status quo conditions' that centre the 'white propertied male subject' and marginalise minority populations. The intricacy of the grounds of discrimination system and the overall organisation of government and society in the UK makes the implementation of the intersectional discrimination framework extremely difficult.

However, despite the difficulties, intersectionality holds 'transformative promise' (Hankivsky and Cormier, 2011, pg. 217). Intersectional policy has the power to identify how inequalities are experienced by different social groups by examining how social identities interact in the creation of experiences and meanings within and between groups (Hankivsky and Cormier, 2011, pg. 217). The concept of difference is central to an intersectional approach to public policy. Yet, unlike other approaches, difference is not classified by single identity markers. Hankivsky and Cormier (2011, pg. 218) state that single identity markers, like gender or race, result in a 'false classification' of individuals that do not represent their 'lived realities'. Individuals' experiences and subject positions alter in 'intersecting social locations' in response to the outcomes policies create. Therefore, it is important to remember that, in policy development and implementation, policy is not neutral as the way it is experienced is not universal by all populations. Consequently, one-size-fits-all approaches are not effective. Intersectionality refrains from tackling inequality without using additive models, where policy is created through the focus on one identity category, such as race, and then other categories are added on. Additive approaches towards inequality are the most common in UK legislation, and it is suggested that these types of approaches are 'inadequate for getting at the layered interrelationships between wider social inequalities and individual experience of discrimination' (Parker and Young, 2008, pg. 27), as well as the limitations caused by the ability of policymakers to pick their categories of interest without considering how they intersect with other inequalities.

4.3 The Intersectionality Policy Process Analysis

The Intersectionality Policy Process Analysis is a method of creating policy through an intersectional lens, devised by Bishwakarma, Hunt and Zajicek (2007). They suppose a process, consisting of four stages, that emphasises the importance of the inclusion of the target populations throughout all stages of the process, to avoid the creation policies that are 'worked out *for* rather than *with* politically excluded constituencies' (Bishwakarama, Hunt and Zajicek, 2007, cited in Hankivsky and Cormier, 2011, pg. 222). A typical policy cycle is used, partnered with recommendations of how to ensure the policy is intersectional.

The first stage of the process is the Agenda Setting stage, in which the issues of homelessness and housing insecurity are identified and defined by agenda-setting 'stakeholders'. It is important to identify the variety of stakeholders knowledge, biases and understanding of inequalities, as these will shape the process of policy creation, as

well as identifying how the problems of homelessness and housing insecurity are experienced by different social groups and how identities interact to 'create a situation of disadvantage' (Hankivsky and Cormier, 2011, pg. 222). Stage two consists of the formulation of the policy in which proposals and recommendations are put forward that encompass an intersectional perspective and the foreseeable effects the policy may have on the members of subordinated groups. Data collection can occur to account for 'the simultaneous operation of various dimensions of inequality' (Hankivsky and Cormier, 2011, pg. 222) that intersect within the issues of homelessness and housing insecurity. Some have critiqued this intersectional policy process, stating that national policies cannot include every social group within the policy narratives, yet Bishwakarma, Hunt and Zajicek (2007, pg.19) state that despite the numerous challenges, a 'more complex view of social reality' is required in the formulation of effective policy. The implementation of the policy comes in the third stage, in which the creators advocate for members of the communities that will be impacted by the policy to be involved within the implementing agency or administrative unit. The final stage is perhaps the most important, as it consists of an evaluation of the policy's achievements and whether achievements have been made in an intersectional nature. If the policy has had disproportionate impacts (positive or negative) on different identity groups, the policy needs alteration.

This process has been critiqued for its top-down nature; however, previous research (as seen in Chapter 2) suggests that for widespread and substantial change to be encountered, initiatives need to come from the government, as access to adequate housing is viewed as a fundamental right (Kenna, 2008, pg. 8). Furthermore, the process holds great potential for the future creation of intersectional UK homelessness and housing insecurity policies, as The Intersectionality Policy Process Analysis can be implemented into the transfer of policy ideas from the Finnish Homelessness Strategy (FHS) into UK policy proposal.

4.4 Towards a more inclusive approach to homelessness: What lessons can be learnt from Finland?

One promising example of the achievements that can be made through a nationwide, political consensus being implemented by the government to combat homelessness, is a more progressive policy adopted by Nordic countries. For example, the Finnish government created a two-staged initiative that was implemented over the period between 2012-2015, with a particular focus on the reduction of long-term homelessness. A widespread reduction in short-term and long-term homelessness was achieved, as well as increased sense of social cohesion and greater housing security being experienced by low-income Finnish households.

Inspiration for combating homelessness and housing insecurity policies can be taken from the Finnish programme, as there are many similarities between areas for improvement. First, the high level of consensus and coordination between all levels of government and all major administrative bodies was a major achievement of the Finnish Homelessness Strategy (FHS). The implementation of this type of coordination in the context of the UK, between government, local authorities and administrative bodies would provide a platform for a 'coherent integrated national strategy' (Pleace, et al, 2016, pg. 427) to be put in place, so change is experienced across the UK. Preventative services were a focus of development in the FHS, through the provision of support in strengthening housing skills (to prevent homelessness occurring from unmet support

needs), as well as the provision of housing support, which can offer advice on difficult housing situations, such as illegal eviction. Measures in preventing homelessness have direct correlations with a reduction in the numbers of rough sleepers, as assistance and support can be given to individuals before they are forced onto the streets.

Furthermore, efforts were made by the Finnish government to reduce the number of 'concealed' or 'doubled up' households – households where an individual, couple or family are sharing accommodation with 'acquaintances, friends or relatives' because of their lack of access to adequate, affordable housing (Pleace, et al, 2016, pg. 428). To reduce the number of concealed households, the Finnish government increased preventative services and discharged efforts to grow the affordable housing stock. In the UK, the true extent of female homelessness is unknown, due to the tendency of women facing homelessness to rely on sofa-surfing rather than temporary accommodation services (Engender, 2020, pg. 8). Therefore, women are more likely to live in overcrowded conditions, as well as BAME families, as at least one in three ethnic households live in overcrowded conditions in the UK, compared to one in twenty for white households (Shankley and Finney, 2020, pg. 149). Hence, a focal point of the UK government's intersectional homelessness and housing insecurity strategies being on concealed households would be beneficial in increasing the provision of support for low-income women and BAME families and increase their access to adequate housing suitable for the size of the family.

Notwithstanding the gains made by Finland, it should also be acknowledged that there are important differences between the UK and Finland's housing, population and public services landscape. In relation to the efforts of the Finnish government in increasing the availability, affordability and adequacy of Finland's social housing stock, social housing accounts for a significant proportion of Finland's total housing stock. This differs considerably from the housing landscape of the UK. After the Second World War, large-scale public investment massively increased the social housing sector, but the 1980s saw a large percentage of social housing being sold off, to raise government funds in times of austerity. The Right to Buy scheme allowed social housing tenants to purchase their home at a 'heavily discounted price', and the profits raised by this scheme were not used in the replacement of the housing that was sold (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2015, pg. 8-9). Since then, levels of the construction of social housing have decreased due to grants from central government falling from 39% to 14% (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2015, pg. 11-12). Such differences between the UK's and Finland's social housing sector offers a challenge towards the implementation of the FHS into UK housing policy, as a much higher amount of social housing is needed to support people in the UK experiencing homelessness or housing precarity. Furthermore, the FHS was not created through an intersectional lens and therefore, does not take into consideration the unequal outcomes that could differ between social groups. However, the FHS still provides a valuable framework for reducing homelessness and housing precarity and could be extended and enhanced via the adoption of an intersectional approach, so vulnerable, previously excluded minorities can be acknowledged and protected through the increase in support services and affordable social housing.

Chapter 5 –Conclusion
5.1 Summary of Findings

The findings of this dissertation demonstrate that using an intersectional lens can improve UK policies towards homelessness and housing insecurity. The primary objective to distinguish how far the use of an intersectional lens can improve policies towards homelessness and housing insecurity in the UK was achieved through utilising four sub-questions:

i. What is the connection between people experiencing intersecting inequalities and the issues of housing insecurity and homelessness?

ii. How are homelessness and housing insecurity been politically and theoretically viewed in the past and understood currently?

iii. How have past single-axis, UK housing policies impacted individuals experiencing intersecting inequalities?

iv. How can the concept of intersectionality be written into future UK policies and legislation?

In relation to the connection between people experiencing intersecting inequalities and experiencing homelessness and housing precarity, the background and the rationale for researching this topic provided in the introduction demonstrates that there is a correlation between women and BAME communities and the private rented accommodation, low-paying occupations, dependency on financial governmental support and high levels of and vulnerability to homelessness and housing insecurity. The research presented in this dissertation highlighted that negative trends associated with the insecurity of the UK's housing landscape, such as declining levels of homeownership, dependency of a large proportion of low-income households on the Universal Credit system and the significant levels of residency in social and privately rented accommodation, is experienced disproportionately by women and BAME community members, in comparison to the majority population.

When addressing how homelessness and housing insecurity have been politically and theoretically viewed in the past and in the current climate, the literature reviewed highlighted that in the past, there was a tendency to believe that homelessness was a result of poor life choices of 'dysfunctional' or 'deviant' individuals (Ravenhill, 2014, pg. 31) and this stigmatization is still present in the UK society and government reflected though the emphasis on temporary accommodation shelters that attempt to provide a 'bedrock upon which such individuals could be rehabilitated and returned to society' (O'Sullivan, 2020, pg. 102). Opposing theoretical views suggested that instead of individual factors causing homelessness and insecurity, the causes are instead structural, including unemployment, poverty and the inadequacy of welfare provision. Similarly, feminist approaches suggest the structures created by the role of patriarchy and misogyny (Bretherton, 2017, pg. 3) have produced the conditions in which women experience homelessness and housing precarity. Moreover, the rights-based approach argues the influence of neoliberalism on the distribution of wealth and provision of affordable housing is stated to be the main causes of homelessness and the lack of resistance to neoliberal pressures from the government, indicates that people experiencing these social problems are being failed by their government (Kenna, 2005, pg. 8). The solutions to homelessness and housing insecurity suggested in the reviewed

literatures tend to agree on the importance of State-led initiatives, as change needs to occur through structural reform.

The significance of structural reform is supported through exploring the impacts of past single-axis, UK housing policies on subordinated individuals. The benefits system in the UK has not been tailored using an intersectional lens to ensure that women and minority groups are not disadvantaged when they experience stressful economic situations. Furthermore, immigration policies such as the Right to Rent scheme and No Recourse to Public Funds policy have created discriminatory outcomes for BAME individuals and it has been suggested that these policies have been implemented deliberately to create a 'hostile environment' for immigrants (Shankley and Finney, 2020, pg. 153). The policies reviewed were concluded to have worsened the situations of women and BAME individuals in the UK and create environments that instil the exclusion of the most vulnerable. The final research sub-question concerning the implementation of intersectionality into future UK policy has been answered through the provision of an intersectional policy process, created by Bishwakarma, Hunt and Zajicek (2007), in which identity groups that will be impacted by a policy are recognized and included within the creation process. This process example can be inserted into UK policy creation processes or can offer a platform of inspiration into producing inclusive, non-disadvantageous homelessness and housing insecurity policies.

5.2 Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of the dissertation have demonstrated that an intersectional lens can potentially radically improve UK homelessness and housing insecurity policies. These findings are important for future policy and practices as the issues of homelessness and housing insecurity are not seen as gendered or racialized problems by the UK government, which simply exacerbates the deprivation and stigmatization faced by homeless women and BAME people. The findings of this dissertation have the ability to influence the field as they bring further attention to the importance of identity and intersecting inequalities in connection with housing inequality in the UK. Income inequality is rising in the UK and if supportive and preventative measures are not put in place, the current situation will be exacerbated, more households will face housing insecurity and the costs of welfare provision will continue to increase; understanding the disproportionate impacts on those with intersectional identities needs to become central to policies that address homelessness and housing insecurity, which potentially may lead to inclusive, multi-axis polices that ensure the fair treatment of all social groups and genders in such a way to support the most vulnerable.

From conducting this research project into how far an intersectional lens improves policies towards homelessness and housing insecurity in the UK, the following recommendations are made for areas of focus for policy reform and future policy creation. Firstly, it is recommended that the UK government works with organizations that have conducted research into the disadvantageous impacts of Universal Credit and the Benefit Cap on women and BAME individuals. This can aid in reforming the benefits system so that the needs of all genders and social groups are met fairly and the financial support provided can positively impact claimants' situations. Secondly, the short-term, quick-fix strategies towards UK homelessness and housing precarity need

to be replaced by long-term measures that keep people out of homelessness and provide long-term security. A reduction in temporary accommodation and shelters needs to occur, being replaced with 'locally-based prevention services' (O'Sullivan, 2020, pg. 100), to avert pathways into homelessness. Parsell, et al (2017, cited in (O'Sullivan, 2020, pg. 103), concluded that congregate shelters are costly and ineffective, whereas increasing support provision 'is effective and cost off-sets may occur'. The costs of shelters can be reinvested into the revitalisation of support services, as well as the social housing sector. The increase of adequate and affordable housing coupled with better access to support services is likely to lead to a decrease in those sleeping rough and fewer people reliant on those shelters. The increase in social housing in the UK will be the most significant and challenging project to take on, but the UK has made great achievements in the provision of social homes in the past. The creation of more housing is the most significant and effective recommendation that can be implemented. The inclusion of minorities in intersectional policy-making and reform processes is highly likely to ensure a reduction in housing and economic inequalities. This could rupture the cycle of deprivation and social exclusion that minorities face. Intersectional adoption is likely to enhance social cohesion, trust in the government, enhancing health, wellbeing and life satisfaction and making the UK housing climate more inclusive and egalitarian.

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EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON SOCIAL MOVEMENT INVOLVEMENT AND ACCEPTANCE:
UK FOCUS ON THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT

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Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my supervisor Susannah Pickering-Saqqa for her guidance and support throughout this dissertation process. Her knowledge and advice pushed me to challenge myself intellectually and deepened my interest in the subject. I would also like to thank the individuals who participated in my research project for demonstrating their passion, sharing their perspectives, and invoking my thought process.

Declaration

No portion of this work referred to in this dissertation has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institutes of learning.

Abstract

This study applies an information, communication, technology for development (ICT4D) lens, examining the impact that social media can have on the involvement and acceptance of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement here in the UK, from the perspective of individuals represented by the movement. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three participants, who had been in the UK during the summer of 2020. Using a thematic analysis this dissertation has identified key themes that have helped evidence the impact of this relationship. The findings have shown that whilst the participants see the overall relationship between the frameworks to be positive, they see social media as having a negative impact on the movement's involvement and acceptance. Additionally, this research project has helped to determine if the recent increase in individuals posting about social movements on social networking sites is a new trend or if individuals are becoming conscious of social issues.

List of Terms:

BLM – Black Lives Matter.

ICT4D – information, communication, technology for development.

LGBTQ - lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and Queer.

SCOT - Social Construction of Technology

SNS – social networking sites.

TA – Thematic Analysis.

ToS – Terms of service.

U.S. – United States.

UEL – University of East London.

UK – United Kingdom.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This dissertation examines the impact that social media can have on the involvement and acceptance of social movements. This is an important subject to examine as it impacts how social movements utilise social media as a tool in the future and can ultimately impact the development agenda. There is a gap in the literature whereby individuals have failed to address how those represented by a movement feel social media have been impactful to this relationship. This research project aims to address this concern by interviewing black individuals about their perspectives on the relationship between social media and the BLM movement. To help understand this relationship, a literature review has been conducted surrounding social media and social movements. Studying ideas from De la Porta, and Diani (2006), Eren-Erdoğmuş and Ergun (2017) and Poell and Dijick (2017). Moreover, this dissertation explores theories such as Herbert Blumer's adapted stage of a social movement lifecycle (Christiansen, 2009), the lifecycle stages of cyber protests (Sandoval-Almazan and Ramon Gil-Garcia,2014), and clicktivism (Morozov, 2009).

Before we can address these ideas, this dissertation needs to define and explain the appropriate notions of this study. The term social movement stems back to 1789 and was first used by Sociologist Lorenz von Stein. He developed his analysis of the term from the 'mid-nineteenth century bourgeois-industrial society' (Christiansen, 2009, p.27). The term later became popular in Europe and North America, aided by the industrial revolution. Following World War II, the term became concerned 'with social inequality and environmental degradation' (Christiansen, 2009, p.27). Today, however, social movements have adapted to include social, cultural and, lifestyle movements with a range of aims and concerns across the globe.

Originally, social movements were spread by word of mouth, however, after the invention of the printing press social movements started using media outlets to facilitate their aims. In short, this started with the invention of copy machines and, eventually, led to mobiles phones and the internet (Van de Donk et al, 2004, p.1). As technological advances were made, it became easier and cheaper for social movements to communicate, organise, and inform individuals at a distance.

The second concept to unpack is social media. Many scholars such as Edosomwan et al (2011), Ritholtz, (2010), and Jones (2015) have disputed the beginning of social media arguing between phone phreaking, the creation of the telegraph, and the invention of the internet. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p.60), define social media as 'a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content'.

In addition, this dissertation uses the term acceptance throughout to refer to social acceptance. Chen and Hamilton's (2015, p.587) define social acceptance as the 'egalitarian beliefs and interactions among group members, perpetuated by group norms and practices, and felt by both majority and minority group members.' In

illustrating this term, this dissertation can paint a clear image of what is meant when discussing the acceptance of a social movement.

An ICT4D conceptual lens has been applied to this research project. This lens offers the researcher a broader insight into how technology can impact and alter development, thus benefiting the findings of this study by providing a greater understanding of the relationship between social media and social movements. The results are also helpful for social movements as they identify the positive and negative undertones of this relationship from the perspective of an individual being represented by a movement. This is useful as it will help social movements to better understand the individuals, they represent but will also provide insight into the areas that work well and those that do not. For example, a positive aspect to this relationship could be that social media offers social movements a space to educate and inform. The movement having identified this, could then pursue ideas that capitalise on this aspect of their relationship further, for instance, by developing themselves on additional platforms such as Tik-Tok. Additionally, realising negative aspects, such as clicktivism, may lead the movement to adapt the content it generates and shares. The following chapter raises additional points, questions and theories that help provide a holistic view of the relationship between social media and social movements.

Research Approach

This research project was conducted by analysing existing research, investigating the relationship between social media and social movements. The objectives of this research are to: i) examine current literature on the relationship between social media and social movements; ii) to formulate primary research on how individuals being represented by the BLM movement feel social media has been impactful towards its involvement and acceptance; iii) to examine the argument over whether individuals are 'doing good or looking good' (Enghel, and Noske-Turner, 2018); and, iv) to establish what the future relationship between social media and social movements could look like.

Research Questions

To achieve these objectives, this dissertation aims to address and answer sub-questions. These help to ascertain the impact that social media can have on the involvement and acceptance of social movements. These are as follows:

1. What does current literature suggest about the relationship between social media and social moments?
2. Are we witnessing an increase of individuals becoming more conscious and interested in social issues or are they just following a social media trend?
3. What does the future relationship for these frameworks look like?

Theoretical Approach

This project utilises an ICT4D conceptual lens. This lens combines the use of technology and development in one structure. It allows the researcher to explore how the digital world can aid and change the discussion of development. Therefore, it

seemed the most fitting to help identify how social media impacts the acceptance and tolerance of the BLM movement.

Research Strategy

This dissertation employs a case study approach as it analyses the BLM moment in the context of the United Kingdom (UK). Taking a case study approach allows for a broader analysis of the question at hand and, helps to establish more conclusive evidence based on understandings and explanations.

Secondary research has helped to facilitate relevant theories, approaches, and ideas to this case study. The focus of secondary literature within this broader relationship is: (i) to identify the current relationship between social movements and social media; and (ii) to examine arguments raised within and about this relationship, such as the online and offline debate (Poell and Dijick, 2017) and the deliberation over clicktivism. Examining these arguments helps to conclusively illustrate what the future relationship between these frameworks could look like.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of this dissertation is small, with only three participants, and is limited to the UK. It is also restricted by the time frame and resources associated with an undergraduate degree.

This dissertation was subjected to ethical approval therefore, issues and obstacles that could pose as limitations for this research needed to be addressed in advance.

Other limitations arose, however, related to the literature being reviewed. For example, there was no previous literature that examined Enghel and Noske-Turner's (2018) "doing good or looking good argument" in relation to social movements and social media trends. Another limitation is that theories of social movements such as Herbert Blumer's stages of a social movement's lifecycle (De la Porta, and Diani, 2006, p.150) are not inclusive. For example, had this dissertation concerned itself with lifestyle movements, it would have been harder to categories these into Blumer's stages.

Covid-19 has limited this research project as its restrictions required interviews to take place online using Microsoft Teams rather than in person. This is a limitation because it made building rapport with interviewees more difficult than had the interviews taken place face to face.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

To understand the relevance and significance of this research project, a review of current literature has been consulted. This review examines the broader literature on three concepts: 1) social movements, 2) social media and, 3) the relationship between social movements and social media, with a sub-section drawing attention to the conceptual lens ICT4D. This review aims to highlight the gaps in the literature and the need for this project. Additionally, it helps to demonstrate how ICT4D influences the development agenda through social media.

Literature Review on Social Movements

There has been much controversy and debate amongst scholars over the definition, approaches, and lifecycle stages of social movements. This section will address those approaches that have the most relevance to the case of BLM. Touching upon Aberle's (1966) typologies of a social movement, Herbert Blumer's four stages of a social movement's lifecycle (De la Porta and Diani, 2006), the definition of the term, and finally, its four aspects.

Aberle (1966, cited in Eren-Erdoğmuş, and Ergun, 2017, p.226) declared four types of social movements 'alternative, redemptive, reformative, and revolutionary'. He believed that movements should be categorised into these groupings depending 'on who[m] the movement attempted to change and how much change is advocated by the movement'. For example, the alternative and redemptive categories focus on individual change; this can be minimal or radical. Moreover, reformative and revolutionary groupings can also have minimal or radical effects but at a broader level. The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community advocating for gay rights depicts a revolutionary movement. Many view this typology model as inclusive, however, critics such as Masuda (1998 as cited in Christiansen, 2009, p.34) argue that social movements possess a combination of these characteristics and therefore cannot be boxed into one typology. The BLM movement arguably demonstrates such; for example, it can be individual and redemptive in educating individuals about black oppression. However, it can also be considered broad and reformative in advocating institutional change within the justice system.

Additionally, Herbert Blumer's stages of a social movement's lifecycle (De la Porta, and Diani, 2006, p.150) is another approach that has bearing to the BLM case. Blumer reasoned four lifecycle stages that movements follow are: 'social ferment', 'popular excitement', 'formalization', and 'institutionalization' (De la Porta, and Diani, 2006, p.150). Academics have since refined and renamed these stages though their central themes remain consistent. These now stand as 'Emergence', 'Coalescence', 'Bureaucratization', and 'Decline' (Christiansen, 2009, p.16). This model has been heavily criticised by the likes of Taylor (1989) and Sawyers and Meyers (1999) amidst others who contend the stages to be too rigid and not inclusive. For example, it would be difficult to categorise new lifestyle movements under such headings. More so, this

model is criticized due to movements not following these stages. For instance, social media have allowed individuals to communicate, mobilise and engage through online platforms meaning that movements often skip stage 3, 'Bureaucratization'. Movements have also been seen to move backward through stages. Van de Donk et al, (2004, p.3) critiques this argument further, questioning if a 'natural life cycle' for social movements exists.

Thirdly, there is no definitive definition for the term social movement, it has largely been defined according to the characteristics, perspectives and theories scholars regard prominent. For example, Turner and Killian (1987, p.223) define a social movement as 'a collectivity acting with some continuity to promote or resist a change in the society or organisation'. Turner and Killian have highlighted collective action as a fundamental characteristic of social movements and have therefore defined the term according to the Collective Behaviour Perspective. Contrastingly, Tilly (1984, as cited in Diani, 1992) identifies the term as having more of a political nature and defines it under the Political Process Theory. In total, four perspectives/theories have dominated and helped to shape the definition of social movements; these are as follows: The Collective Behaviour Perspective (Turner and Killian, 1987), Political Process Perspective (Tilly, 1984 as cited in Diani, 1992), Resource Mobilisation Theory (ZaId and McCarthy, 1977), and New Social Movement Theory (Touraine, 1981 and Melucci, 1989, as cited in Diani, 1992). These definitions are not without their critiques, for example, Turner and Killian have been criticised for focusing too heavily on the organisational aspects of a social movement. Tilly, however, has been criticised for analysing the how rather than the why of social movements. The BLM movement can be seen as having elements from all four perspectives.

Contrastingly, the multitude of definitions for the term social movement have been beneficial in helping scholars to determine and highlight four agreed-upon aspects of social movements. Scholars may slightly differ in the terms used for these four aspects; however, the themes remain consistent. These four aspects are as follows:

a) networks of informal interaction; b) shared beliefs and solidarity; c) collective action on conflictual issues; d) action which displays largely outside the institutional sphere and the routine procedures of social life.

(Diani, 1992, p.7)

More recently, research focused on theses aspects has been heavily concentrated on how they are portrayed and played across social media. To understand how these aspects have penetrated the social media framework we first need to understand the relevant literature surrounding social media.

Literature Review on Social Media

This section of the literature review consults and examines the use of algorithms and governance within the social media framework, demonstrating the impact these have on the reach of social movements.

The definition of social media raised in chapter 1 uses Web 2.0 to determine what falls within the social media framework. Web 2.0 was established in 1999 under this

definition, the first social networking site (SNS), Six Degrees, would not be considered within the social media framework as the site was created in 1997. SNS like Six Degrees allowed individuals to create profiles, connect with friends, share content, and leave comments. Today, having developed significantly, SNS now have additional features such as marketplaces and trending topics. Mark Zuckerberg created Facebook in 2004, for Harvard University students (Edosomwan et al, 2011); today Facebook is the world's largest social media platform with over 2.7 billion monthly active users as of 2020 (Clement, 2020). This demonstrates the reach that social media sites can have.

Much like adverts, social media are evolving to become more personal. The personalisation of social media 'is shaped by the techno-commercial architecture of platforms' (Poell and van Dijck, 2017, p.555). For this to happen, algorithms are formed and adapted, leading to the creation of trending tabs and recommendations based on what individuals choose to share, hashtag and like. Whilst the personalisation of social media through algorithms is seen to be a good thing it also has its flaws. For instance, content that is often shared is 'processed through platform algorithms, which tend to privilege items that rapidly generate a lot of user engagement' (p.556); these items then must receive higher spikes to again be generated as trending. This is problematic for a range of sectors including activist groups and social movements as evident with the Occupy movement in 2011. '#OccupyWallStreet and #OccupyBoston' (p.556) were trending across the U.S., except for the state for which they were advocating; initially, individuals claimed that Twitter was 'manipulating its trending topics'; however, it was later revealed that this was due to 'algorithmic mechanism' (Poell and van Dijck, 2017 p.556) and hashtags not reaching a new peak.

Another rigorously researched area of social media stems from its governance. This is concerning how platforms 'curate the content and police the activity of their users' (Poell, and van Dijck, 2017, p.553). Social media platforms govern through their 'Terms of Service (ToS)' and their 'community standards' policies. Under these policies, social media architectures have the right to remove content, accounts, groups and, give out user information when sensitive and dangerous information is concerned. Overall, policies and standards are viewed positively as they help to eradicate trolling and hate crimes. Despite this, they can be seen as defective, especially where activism is concerned. For illustration, the video posted of George Floyds' death was removed from Facebook for having not aligned with the community standards and policies. Activists raised complaints and the video was later re-released.

Following on from the literature reviewed so far, we can now delve into the relationship between social movements and social media.

Literature Review on the relationship between social movements and social media

The third section of this literature review will briefly explore a range of significant approaches to the relationship between social movements and social media. In beginning this, we explore how social media have advanced existing ideas regarding social movements, investigating the lifecycle stages of cyber protests and understanding how the social movement aspects are encompassed within social media.

Amidst scholars, debates have arisen over whether this relationship between these concepts is positive or negative. Arguments have emerged about online vs offline activism, the clicktivism dispute, and the doing good or looking good deliberation. Following this a sub-section on the conceptual lens ICT4D has been added.

First and foremost, Sandoval-Almazan and Ramon Gil-Garcia, (2014, p.369) manufactured a four-stage lifecycle process to help understand the movement of cyber protests. This consists of four stages: '(1) Triggering event, (2) media response, (3) viral organization, and (4) physical response'. Much like the social movement lifecycle stages above, this model has been criticised as not all cyber protests have triggering events or receive enough momentum to gain traditional media response or viral organisation. Additionally, this approach could be critiqued as cyber protests may choose to keep engagement online or may never reach the physical response stage. It would be fair to contend that this is an area that needs additional research and refining. However, it does offer insight into how social media have impacted existing ideas about social movements, and the stages and formation of cyber protests.

Having now understood the context and origins of social media, this project can now explore how the four aspects of social movements have penetrated social media platforms. The first way this has happened is by social media giving social movements a podium in which they can create 'networks of informal interaction'. This has allowed them to communicate, inform, and organise. In giving social movements this platform, they have been able to reach individuals with 'shared beliefs and solidarity', who are then mobilised to create 'collective action on conflictual issues'. Collective action within social media has been heavily researched by scholars. Clay Shirky (2008 as cited in Kidd and McIntosh, 2016, p.787) for example, argues there is a three-step hierarchy to group activity that consists of 'sharing, cooperation, and collective action'. He believes, social media has enabled these steps to move closer together, which in turn has facilitated social movements to produce collective action. It is harder to distinguish how the final aspect 'action which displays largely outside the institutional sphere and the routine procedures of social life' has penetrated social media platforms. An argument could be raised however, that social media have fostered collective action. This action is strong but does not imply a process of destructuralisation and reorganisation. This validates the effectiveness of social media platforms in helping social movements obtain and achieve their aims.

Additional research is needed as technology and social media advance. For instance, it raises questions such as, are social movements planning on developing networks of informal interactions on new apps such as Snap-chat and Tik-Tok? Can these create the same effects as existing platforms such as Facebook and Twitter? More so, will social movements utilise existing communication platforms such as Skype and Zoom that could offer them a new form of informal interaction?

This brings us to the discussion of the debates. The first argument that arises is whether a distinction can be made between 'online' and 'offline' activism (Poell and Dijick, 2017, p.2). Smartphones have enabled individuals to post time-sharing content about offline protests to users online. Most scholars now argue that this distinction cannot be made as online activism can spur offline activism and vice-versa. A prominent example of this is the 'Occupy Sandy' movement where messages spread 'with the real-time communication of social media' (Hwang and Kim, 2015, p.479) informed volunteers

about where relief was needed. Additionally, this can be witnessed again in America on the day of the Ferguson protest march; individuals tweeted their accounts of the protest on the ground and this spurred online activism. This is evidenced through a spike in the use of the #Blacklivesmatter (Freelon et al, 2016, p.34). Revealing why making this distinction is now, near impossible. Much like Sandoval-Almazan, and Ramon Gil-Garcia's (2014) argument, the online/offline debate fails to consider that not all social movements will contain physical engagement.

Following this, a debate is raised around social movements using social media as a tool and how this creates clicktivism/slacktivism. These terms are used interchangeably to refer to a range of actions such as liking, tweeting, and google bombing. It also includes approaches of 'financial clicktivism' (Schwittay, 2019) such as Kiva and the signing of petitions. All these activities are viewed as methods of engaging in the political arena. Despite the terms being used interchangeably, Christensen, (2011); Morozov, (2009) and Vie, (2014) argue that clicktivism is one form of slacktivism and not a separate entity. For this dissertation, clicktivism will be used to reference social media activities of low engagement that facilitate social change and activism. Numerous scholars have been divided over whether clicktivism can be considered a method of political engagement. Academics such as White, (2010); Hay, (2014); Obar et al, (2012) and Gladwell, (2010) claim that clicktivism should not be considered a form of political engagement as it lacks legitimacy, and little is achieved from this online participation. Scholars from the other side of the divide such as Rotman et al (2011) and Karpf (2010) reason that clicktivism raises awareness of issues, offering them a cost-effective, low-risk platform that was previously unavailable. Furthermore, clicktivism is so extremely ingrained in society today that it would be tremendously difficult to remove. Therefore, further research is needed to explore this topic and raise questions as to whether we should instead be re-evaluating what legitimacy within the engagement of the political arena is, to make it more inclusive to new technologies such as social media.

Both sides of this debate fail to consider how individuals being represented by a movement feel that social media are impactful. This dissertation aims to address this concern, by identifying the impacts that this relationship could be perceived as having by those the movement is representing. Whilst the movement may perceive its relationship to be positive, those being represented may view that a) the issue does not need raising or b) that voicing it is doing more harm than good. More so, understanding how this relationship is perceived will help to identify what the future relationship should look like. For example, should social movements return to more traditional methods of protesting? Or if the relationship is viewed positively, should social movements be exploring new avenues of social media to expand into?

Consideration of these questions raises further questions such as, are individuals becoming more socially conscious of social movements, or is sharing and posting about social movements a new social media trend? In other words, this is the doing good or looking good argument. This argument has been made by several scholars, including Enghel, and Noske-Turner (2018) however, it has not yet been used to determine if posting about social movements on social media is a new trend to make oneself look good. Despite not having specific literature directly linking this argument to social media and social movements, through Kogen's (2018) work, comparisons and assertions can be drawn. For example, Chouliaraki (2013, cited in Kogen, 2018, pp.121) denotes how 'humanitarianism becomes about the 'self' rather than the 'other,' and

where 'doing good to others' is more about 'how it makes the do-gooder look and feel'. This relates to the social media argument as, the feeling that the individual gets from posting could be the driving reason for them posting about a social movement in the first place. Koehn and Ueng (2010, p.3) refer to this as 'moral window-dressing'. Despite this, Kogan (2018) takes a broader stance on this view, arguing instead that our concern should be what is being posted. For example, we should consider if the post is educational or if it promotes effective solutions. Only by answering these kinds of questions does Kogen (2018) assert that we can decide if an individual is posting to do good or look good. This is an argument that needs increasing research, and a topic that this dissertation aims to address. It is important to distinguish this as it impacts the involvement and acceptance of social movements and helps to establish what the future relationship between social movements and social media might look like.

ICT4D:

A variety of different conceptual lenses have been used in the past when looking at the relationship between social media and social movements, for example, there are those which have focused more on social movements and their characteristics, such as The Collective Behaviour Perspective, Political Process Perspective, Resource Mobilisation Theory, and New Social Movement Theory. There have also been those that are more focused on the social media and technological aspects such as Social Construction of Technology (SCOT), Actor-network, and Institutional theory.

However, this dissertation applies the conceptual lens of ICT4D. In its most basic form, ICT4D is the use and application of digital devices in the international development sector. Sending messages over social media in the Occupy Sandy movement is a clear example of ICT4D in use. In addition, the practice of drones to send food packages or medical supplies in war-torn countries and the use of social media to share information about social change are illustrations of ICT4D in application. Many scholars such as Ismail *et al.* (2018) and Nuseibeh *et al.* (2019) converse over this approach, however, Heeks (2008, 2012, and 2019) is arguably the most prominent figure. ICT4D can impact and influence the development agenda as a spike in conversation about a social issue can focus attention to this topic.

Conclusion:

This discussion has attempted to highlight the main trends in the literature. For example, the lifecycle stages to social movements and cyber protests, the ToS and community standards of social media platforms, clicktivism, and the doing good or looking good argument. This analysis reveals that a broad amount of literature has been produced on the relationship between social movements and social media. However, there is still a substantial amount of literature that needs to be developed to help conclusively identify how individuals represented by movements such as BLM feel this relationship has been impactful. More so, this literature will help to determine what the future relationship between social movements and social media could look like. For instance, this literature may help to ascertain what constitutes engagement within the political arena and if people are becoming more conscious of social issues or if this is a new trend.

Chapter four examines the extent to which individuals represented by the BLM movement see this relationship to be impactful. It also gathers their opinions and

perspectives on aspects such as clicktivism and the doing good or looking good argument. With these in mind, it helps to create and illustrate what the future relationship between social movements and social media should and could look like based on their assessments. Before examining this however, chapter 3 first outlines the methodology for this research project.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology for this dissertation, which has been constructed using primary and secondary research. Secondary research was conducted prior to the primary research taking place and can be observed through the literature review framed in chapter two. Upon examining the literature, I noticed a gap in the research, whereby individuals represented by social movements had not been asked if they believed the relationship between social movements and social media is impactful. This study needs to be conducted to depict if those represented by the movement view this relationship as positive or negative, ultimately, shaping the future relationship between these frameworks. I decided to examine this with my research project, employing the BLM movement as a case study. The objectives of this research were threefold. Firstly, to explore if and how individuals portrayed by social movements feel social media are impactful. Secondly, to examine if the recent increase in posting about social movements is a new trend or if individuals are becoming more socially conscious of movements. Thirdly, to establish what the future relationship between social movement and social media frameworks could look like. To meet these objectives, I conducted three semi-structured interviews containing open and closed questions with individuals represented by the BLM movement. This section of research breaks this process down, further examining the theoretical framework, the methodology, sampling strategy, and limitations in conducting this study.

Theoretical framework

This study applies a thematic analysis (TA) and an ICT4D conceptual lens to the data collected. Once interviews had taken place, the data was transcribed and compiled into a single document. A TA was then applied to the data which allowed the researcher to focus on the content of participants' statements: 'identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data' (Bennett et al, 2019, p.10). The data was then manually coded. Themes were listed, statements were categorised for analysis, and additional notes were made. An ICT4D lens was employed when identifying patterns to pay particular attention to how the relationship between social movements and social media can foster development. In utilising this lens, I was able to explore themes such as participant intentions in sharing content relating to the BLM movement and how events trigger the developmental agenda.

Methods

As stated, secondary research was conducted in the creation of the literature review. This compiled data, themes, ideas, and arguments from a range of academic sources. Upon writing the literature review, I had to be strict and concentrate my efforts on including information and approaches concerning the BLM movement, due to word restrictions placed on an undergraduate dissertation.

Regarding the primary data, qualitative research was chosen in the form of semi-structured interviews. However, before primary research could be conducted, the study first had to be subjected to and approved by the UEL's (University of East London) ethics board. To gain approval a risk assessment outlining ethical considerations such as data protection, and the recording of the interview on Microsoft Teams first had to take place. This assessment offered existing and additional control methods that could be used, ensuring ethical considerations were met. For example, an additional control method for the recoding of interviews was to take notes as the interviewee was talking. This way information could be gathered whilst still ensuring the wishes of the interviewee were met. Alongside these, a participant information sheet and consent form had to be constructed. The participant information sheet outlined the interview process and discussed withdrawal from the project, anonymity of data, and concerns about the researcher's conduct. This was followed by the consent form, requiring the participant's signature to demonstrate they understood the information raised in the participant information form, and to permit being a part of the research and to being recorded.

Qualitative research was chosen for this study as it permitted the researcher to discover how participants 'interpret situations and what their perspectives are on particular issues' (Woods, 2006, p.3). Qualitative research was deemed the most fitting use of data collection as it offered explanations and opinions rather than numerical data. Semi-structured interviews were chosen over structured interviews as they offered advantages such as 'enabling the interviewer to improvise follow-up questions based on the participants responses' (Kallio et al, 2016, p.2955). Additionally, with the Covid-19 restrictions in place, having a semi-structured interview allowed for rapport to still be built whilst not taking away from the structure and aim of the interviews. Building rapport between the interviewee and researcher is key to 'generate rich data' (Guillemin & Heggen, 2009, p.291), enabling in-depth and open conversation whilst respecting the views and opinions of the participant.

Sampling Strategy

In the beginning phases of developing this dissertation, I planned to contrast two movements, the BLM movement, and the MeToo movement. However, due to the word constraints of this research project, I chose to focus primarily on the BLM movement. This was due to my passion and interest in the area, because of the vast literature that existed surrounding the movement and the prominence that the movement had received in the summer of 2020.

Before I could contact individuals, this study first had to formulate relevant documents and undergo approval from UEL ethics board. Once approved, I contacted Alumni students from the international development program, seeing if they would be willing to partake in my research. To find individuals with a degree in this field, I used my supervisors' connections through the LinkedIn platform. I created a list of individuals' names to contact based on my supervisor's connections, consisting of thirteen names; this was generated in the order that LinkedIn had listed the connections on my supervisor's profile.

Originally, this study planned to be conducted with individuals aged between 18-30, as they were deemed an age more active on social media but did not require parental consent. Though a limitation arose with the platform not stating ages. Therefore, I made

the conscious decision to ignore this criterion, as to not limit the number of participants that I could contact from the list I had acquired. Knowing that I was unlikely to hear back from all participants, I contacted my supervisor to ask if there was anybody that she recommended messaging from her contacts that would be more willing to partake in this study. I received **five** additional names; these were chosen as my supervisor had spoken to these individuals earlier that week and therefore, they would be more likely to reply. Three of these five names were already on my original list, giving me a total of fifteen individuals to contact.

A brief message was sent to all fifteen prospective participants explaining who I was, why I was contacting them, and a little information about my research project. I heard back from five people. After speaking to one of these individuals, they opted not to participate due to their inactivity on social media. Following some back-and-forth conversations with the remaining four participants about the research project and what it entailed, they agreed to participate.

The next step was to send all four individuals the participant information sheet and consent forms. These were sent as an attachment to an email that offered more information about the interview process such as the fact that were eleven questions and the interview would last roughly 45 minutes.
This email also permitted the participants a chance to review the questions prior to the interview taking place, ensuring they were comfortable with what was being asked. Two of the four participants received the interview questions to look over before their interviews were conducted.

Interviews took place over four weeks with the first being conducted on the 19th of March 2021. Despite having four signed consent forms, I only conducted three interviews as I set the 9th April 2021 as a cut-off date for interviews to be conducted. Unfortunately, one participant had still not messaged me regarding their availability for the interview, so the study went ahead with three participants. This date was set because of the limited time frame that an undergraduate dissertation receives.

Prior to the interviews taking place, I again had a conversation with the participants to check that they still consented to being part of this project. This was to verify they were still happy to be recorded and to confirm that they understood what would happen to the data being collected and their right to drop out of this research project. The interviews were conducted 1-to-1 via Microsoft Teams and lasted roughly 45 minutes. Initially, I planned to ask a mixture of 11 open and closed questions, with the potential to ask sub-questions if I felt the individual's answer could be expanded upon.

I created little prompts and comments on my version of the interview document which offered additional information/explanations. These were used if and when clarification was needed. This was to ensure the individuals all received the same information which helped when assessing their responses. After conducting the first interview, and evaluating the questions and responses, I added an additional three questions to help gain a better understanding of the participant's perspectives, leaving me with a total of 14 questions.

The next step was to create transcripts from the interviews. I focused on transcribing the interviewee's side of the conversation, using the questions to refer to what I had asked.

When I asked a question based on an individual response that was not on the question list, I either wrote out the question and why it had been asked, or made an additional comment about where the conversation had led. Once the transcripts were written they were sent to the participants to be reviewed. At this stage, the participants were given the option to remove, amend or add any additional comments. After the participants and I were happy with the transcripts, I began compiling the data from all three participants into a single document.

Each question was followed with each interviewee's answer. These were colour coded so there would be no confusion over each participant's answers. Common themes, patterns, and contrasting views were then pulled from the data, creating my thematic analysis. These findings were pulled out from an overview of questions rather than detailing each question individually. This was done to offer greater depth as I found that often the participant's answers to the questions would overlap. They would also unintentionally answer a question that I had yet to ask in response to another question.

Limitations

Several limitations and challenges arose in the run-up to the interviews taking place. The first challenge that I faced as a researcher was that without buying a monthly subscription to the LinkedIn platform, I was only able to view a small number of profiles. Due to this project being an undergraduate dissertation and not funded, I decided to remove my age criterion so as not limit the number of individuals I had to contact.

In contacting individuals, another limitation occurred. The platform only allowed me a small number of characters to send messages. Therefore, message had to be extremely brief, outlining who I was, my reason for contacting the individuals and offered a short sentence about my dissertation. I finished the message by asking the individual whom I was contacting to connect with me if they wished to know more about my project and potentially be involved.

Building rapport was another challenge as already stated with the Covid-19 restrictions. To rectify this, I took on a semi-structured interview approach. This allowed me to follow a structure but ensured that I could also be loose with my questions. In turn, allowing participants more breathing room to talk about something else that had relevance to BLM or social movements themselves. Whilst this was overall a good choice, it did have limitations as I found out when evaluating how my first interview went. For example, sometimes I would unintentionally direct the conversation to the answer I was hoping the participant would give. I soon became aware that I was doing this and limited how much I would speak so as to not impose my views on the interviewee.

Conclusion

Now that I have outlined and established the theoretical framework, methods, sampling strategy, and limitations to this research project, the following chapter will offer background and context to the BLM movement and organization. It will then delve into the findings and analysis of this research project drawing out common themes, patterns, and contrasting opinions to help establish the impact that social media can have on the involvement and acceptance of social movements, regarding the BLM case study.

Chapter 4

Case Study

Introduction:

This chapter explores a brief history to the BLM movement and organisation. In doing so, it discusses racial frames, the context to the organisation, its aims, structure, and key names. This dissertation concerns itself with illustrating how social media have impacted the involvement and acceptance of the BLM movement within the UK, from the perspective of individuals being represented by the movement. To demonstrate this impact, this chapter focuses its attention to reviewing and analysing the findings of this project, examining themes drawn out from the interviews using a TA. The researcher exemplifies common ideas, contrasting opinions and additional questions raised by participants, to help identify this impact. To conclude, this chapter summaries the findings from participants' responses.

History to the BLM movement and organisation:

Throughout history, white racial frames have dominated 'social institutions, public consciousness, and political bodies' (Nummi, et al, 2019, pp.1043). These frames include racial stereotypes, racial narratives, racialised images, emotions, and a predisposition to discriminate (Feagin, 2013). In response, a black counter frame emerged. This frame has included a variety of names and movements throughout history such as the '250 slave uprisings' documented by Herbert Aptheker (1943, as cited in Nummi, et al, 2019, pp.1044), or Ida B. Wells Barnett, the anti-lynching activists, the Black panthers party, Rosa Parks and the civil rights movement and now the BLM organisation. All constitute the BLM movement.

Following the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting and death of Trayvon Martin, the BLM organisation was established. Founded in 2013 by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi after Garza took to Facebook, venting her frustration following the acquittal. Her message read "Black Lives Matter" (Craven, 2015). Inspired, Cullors added a hashtag and began spreading the phrase across social media platforms. Tometi had just watched Fruitvale Station, a film about the death of Oscar Grant at the hands of a police officer in 2009, when she heard about the acquittal. Seeing Garza and Cullors' posts on social media, Tometi contacted the ladies and discussed the need for this notion to have a platform (Craven, 2015); and so, with it, The Black Lives Matter Global Network Foundation was born.

The BLM Global Network Foundation is a non-profit, decentralised, grassroots civil right organisation, constructed of 'local chapter-based, member led' networks (Nummi, et al, 2019, pp.1045). The organisation currently has over '40 chapters' (Black Lives matter, 2020) active in America, Canada, and the UK. The BLM movement itself, however, has spread even further across the world.

Here in the UK, the BLM organisation was founded in 2016 and is relatively new, processing its legal requirements. In the summer of 2020, the organisation established a GoFundMe page. However, to access the funds raised, the foundation had to register

as a 'community benefit society' (Gayle, 2020). Unfortunately, its name was already taken and instead it had to be renamed the 'Black Liberation Movement UK'. Despite having a different legal name, the foundation continues to work 'in collaboration with the wider BLM movement' and 'organise under the name Black Lives Matter' (Gayle, 2020).

The organisation strives for 'a world where Black lives are no longer systematically targeted for demise' (Black Lives Matter, 2020). Their goal is to 'Support the development of new Black leaders, as well as create a network where Black people feel empowered to determine' their own destinies in their communities. The organisation draws attention to the way that black individuals are treated unfairly 'and the ways in which institutions, laws, and policies help to perpetuate that unfairness' (Britannica, 2020). Furthermore, it aims to tackle police brutality and rebuild an inclusive black liberation movement.

Despite the organisation being founded in 2013, the movement gained little traction until the following year, after the unfortunate deaths of Eric Garner and Michael Brown at the hands of police. As of June 2014, and prior to these deaths, the phrase #BlackLivesMatter had been used in '48 public tweets'. By August however, after these deaths, the number 'skyrocketed to 52,288' (Freelon et al 2016, p.9). In the years since, the movement has gained momentum in conjunction with the deaths of back individuals through police brutality. For example (Cosmopolitan, 2020), Freddie Gray (2015), Isaiah Lewis (2019), Breonna Taylor and George Floyd (2020).

Findings and Analysis:

The first theme illustrated by the interviewees was the apparentness of ICT4D in the relationship between social media and social movements. This was evident in conversations about how the organization began and its aims. For example, participant 1 stated that she "heard about [the organisation] through social media". Whilst participant 3 acknowledged that one of its main aims was to "use social media as a tool to ensure that [black] voices were heard". Within the first 10 minutes of conducting these interviews, it was obvious that ICT4D was visible in this relationship. Discussions surrounding the organisation relate to Herbert Blumer's (De la Porta, and Diani, 2006, p.150) refined stages of a social movement's lifecycle. For instance, the 'Emergence' stage (Christiansen, 2009, p.16) is apparent through conversations about how the BLM organisation began. ICT4D is demonstrated in application through Participant 1 gaining knowledge of the organisation through social media and participant 3 discussing how it utilises social media as a tool, raising awareness and providing individuals with a voice, further exemplifying that ICT4D is apparent.

Raising awareness was the second theme illustrated, evidenced by participant 1 who claimed that the BLM movement would not have received the attention it did in the summer of 2020, had it not been for Twitter. This was an idea supported by participant 3, arguing that without "all these social media platforms, we would have never known the magnitude of what's going on". To illustrate the reach of social media, participant 1 discussed how magnified Martin Luther King's, I have a dream speech, could have been, had Twitter existed in the 1960s. These examples illustrate a positive impact on

the relationship between social media and social movements. Moreover, it again portrays the use of ICT4D in application.

Another positive theme raised in this relationship is that social media can be an educational tool. One question queried participants intentions with sharing content about the BLM movement. Participant 2 addressed that he uses his platforms to share "petitions and stuff like that so that people can get involved and just [to] share materials that people can learn from when it comes to understanding about race and understanding about the black struggle". On the other hand, Participant 1 discussed that her intention was similar to Alicia Garza's. Rather, she was venting her frustration and tiredness of the reoccurring situation. Furthermore, the discussion of educational content relates to Aberle's (1966 cited in Eren-Erdoğmuş, and Ergun, 2017, p.226) typologies of a social movement, identifying the BLM movement as having an 'alternative' typology, by seeking to change an individual's behaviour through educating them. This section also identified emotions as another prominent theme. For instance, when speaking about the content they shared, participants 1 and 2 discussed the impact this had on their emotions. For illustration, participant 1 stated how she made the "decision for [her] wellbeing that [she] can't participate as much as [she] would want to because it affects [her] emotions, and [her] mentality and it gets [her] very upset, makes [her] get very frustrated". This was in conjunction with participant 2, who claimed he 'hesitated in sharing the video of George Floyd because [he] thinks it creates trauma, trauma in people in general, [but] especially the black people". The educational theme illuminated how sharing content not only demonstrates ICT4D being interwoven in the relationship between these frameworks, but how it can be a positive aspect in this.

In addition, the idea raised in paragraph 1 of social media lending a voice to individuals has also been underlined as a positive aspect. To illustrate this, Participant 3 reiterated the story of John Boyega discussing his own experiences, in Hyde Park of growing up black. Towards the end of his speech, Boyega considered how he might be without work, having now shared his own experiences. However, he gained the courage to share his story, hoping that it would contribute to raising awareness about black oppression. The gathering in Hyde Park was organised over social media platforms and shared content from the gathering offline to individuals online, sparking conversation on the topic. This relates to Poell and Dijck's (2017, p.2) argument that there is no clear distinction between online and offline activism. This is further demonstrated when considering that the BLM organisation began from a tweet. Another theme this point correlated to was the self-realisation that each interviewee experienced. Participant 3, for instance, claimed that John Boyega Hyde Park speech resonated with her that celebrities can also identify with these struggles and have empathy for the situation. More so, participant 1 validates this realisation when stating "[Breonna Taylor] was an EMT [Medical Emergency Technician]. She was literally a person who was a frontliner. She had hopes and dreams; She was literally someone like me". This paragraph further reveals ICT4D in application and how social media lending a voice to individuals can be a positive aspect associated with the relationship between social media and social movements from the perspective of an individual represented by the BLM movement.

Whilst applying an ICT4D lens to this case study has allowed the researcher to pull out positive themes to this relationship, it has also portrayed negative aspects. For example, participant 1 associated the relationship between social media and social movements as arguably ineffective. She cited the injustice for Breonna Taylor and the lack of support

from businesses outside of SNS to exemplify this point. In addition, a common negative connotation arose between participants 1 and 2 which raised the question as to whether movements such as All Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter should be given equal standing to the BLM movement. Participant 1 spoke extremely strongly to this argument expressing that the Blue Lives Matter movement discusses an individual's job whereas BLM is a "human rights social justice movement". Additionally, she argues that comparing these movements discredits the awareness and history of the BLM movement. These points outline the negative themes from the relationship between the two frameworks and illustrate how ICT4D can be seen as hindering development.

Secondly, all the participants identified that social media much like traditional sources of media see a dip in the engagement of a movement. For example, after the death of a black individual at the hands of the police, the BLM movement is sparked, gaining more attention both in everyday conversation and within the development agenda. However, this eventually dips (or declines in a sense, again relating to Herbert Blumer's lifecycle of a social movement) leaving just the core individuals fighting for the BLM movement. To Sandoval-Almazan and Ramon Gil-Garcia, (2014) the deaths of these individuals represent stage 1 of a cyber protest, the triggering event. Contradictory to this idea however, participant 2 also argues that this can be seen as a positive theme to the relationship. He states for example, that whilst the movement dips, it also spikes, and this spiking brings the BLM movement to the forefront of conversation. Citing the day of his interview as a prime example of such. Participant 2 was interviewed on the 29 March 2021; this was the day George Floyds trial began. This event generated a spike in conversation about black lives and brought the attention and focus back to the BLM movement. Participant 2 further states that these spikes are useful as they help to raise awareness of the BLM movement and educate individuals on topics surrounding black oppression. Furthermore, an argument could be made relating to Poell and van Dijck, (2017) that the movement does not necessarily dip but rather that the hashtags do not receive enough attention to create a higher spark and thus be generated as trending. In conclusion, examining this impact, has illustrated that whilst a dip in social media engagement can be viewed as a negative theme, it can also be identified as positive. A point can also be raised that whether this theme is viewed negatively or positively it generates an impact. Once again, this example portrays ICT4D in application and as being intertwined in the relationship between social movements and social media.

To gain a better perspective on the impact that social media can have on the involvement of social movements, interviewees were asked their perspectives on clicktivism. Both the ideas of clicktivism being a low form of political engagement (Vie, 2014) and it is being a beneficial cost-effective way to raise awareness (Karpf, 2010) were outlined to participants. In response, participant 2 claimed that clicktivism exists because of the way social media is structured, arguing that 'the engagement side of social media has created [an] avenue for people to want to be seen'. Therefore, he argues clicktivism to be a low form of political engagement as individuals use it to show themselves as being involved within a social movement without having to be physically involved. Contrastingly, participant 3 contended that she believed clicktivism was originally a form of low political engagement, however, she contends that today, individuals are more socially conscious, insisting that individuals are "taking a step back now to read and understand before they click" and share. Participant 3 thus finds clicktivism to be a beneficial tool for engaging in the political arena. One interesting

theme that arose in the process of conducting a TA was that all three participants agreed that there are more beneficial methods of change than protesting. For instance, participant 1 states

> "I think just financially giving to the Black Lives Matter movement or any organization that is a part of it, I think that would make me feel like I'm doing more for the core of Black Lives Matters movement, than to just be in the UK holding a sign on the streets and then we all go back to our lives the next day."

This is an idea echoed by participant 2 who sees protesting as "protesting, just for protesting sake". Rather he would "try to use other channels to enact potential change, and [he] think[s] that goes in line with politics, using your vote, making sure you hold your representative accountable". Therefore, the findings of this research draw that whilst those represented by the BLM movement itself debate over clicktivism being beneficial or not, they do agree that it does promote involvement in the movement and more so, that this promotion is arguably more effective than protesting on the streets. Furthermore, this supports the idea that we should be re-evaluating what legitimacy within the engagement of the political arena is, to make it more inclusive of social media and other forms of technology.

The notion that participant 2 makes about individuals wanting to be seen correlates with Enghel, and Noske-Turner's (2018) doing good vs looking good argument. To determine if individuals are doing good or looking good, one question asked interviewees their perspective on whether individuals are becoming more socially conscious or if posting about social issues on social media is a new trend. This argument was debated between the interviewees. Participants 1 and 2 agreed that posting about social issues was a new trend. They conversed on how individuals often take photos in front of BLM signs, to generate likes on their SNS and demonstrate themselves as being a part of the movement without having to be a part of the movement. Participant 3 however argued that 'the Black Lives Matter movement has sparked a change around the world" that has encouraged people to stand up for what they believe in. Therefore, people are becoming more involved and posting about social issues to raise greater awareness to them. Thus, the impact of social media on the involvement and acceptance of social movements according to those represented by the movement itself, is that the rise in posting about social movements is a new social media trend.

The final question asked the interviewees if they thought social media has positively impacted the acceptance and tolerance of social movements. The general gauge for this was yet again mixed. Participants 1 for instance argued no, whilst participant 2 questioned how you measure involvement and acceptance. Stating that "cancel culture" has incited a fear whereby people do not want to be seen as being on the wrong side, linking with an earlier point made by participant 1 about businesses speaking support for the BLM movement but not doing anything to demonstrate this support. Furthermore, this idea of cancel culture was also raised by participant 3 when discussing how John Boyega was originally worried about the implication that sharing his story could have on him finding work. Not veering from the argument, however, participant 3 argued that social media had positively impacted the involvement and acceptance of social movements. Corroborating this with the idea that ToS hold social media platforms accountable. Participant 3 denotes how Twitter removed Donald Trump's tweets when they did not adhere to or align with their 'ToS 'or 'community standards'. This idea contrasts with Poell and van Dijck's (2017, p.553) argument which

claims the 'Tos' and 'community standards' as limiting social movements rather than benefiting their involvement and acceptance. The responses to this argument illustrate why determining the impact that social media has had on the involvement and acceptance of social movements is difficult and cannot be answered on this question alone. However, it again evidences ICT4D in application and echoes whether this theme is regarded as positive or negative it is still impactful.

Summary:

The overarching response from participants being represented by the BLM movement was that the relationship the movement holds with social media is ultimately positive. However, this is not to state that it does not have its downfalls. Regarding the impact that social media can have on the involvement and acceptance of social movements, the impact is more complex. Throughout the analysis of this chapter, it was evident that all three participants had strong, connective, and contrasting perspectives to the questions being raised. Despite this, the findings have illuminated that social media have broadly speaking, had a negative impact on the acceptance and tolerance of movements. This is supported by the argument claiming clicktivism to be a low form of engagement. This is additionally endorsed by the participants' opinions that individuals posting about social issues on SNS is a new social media trend. Chapter 5 outlines these findings further and the areas where additional research is needed to further support this claim.

Chapter 5

Conclusion:

The findings of this research demonstrate a positive relationship between social media and social movement. However, when examining the impact that social movements can have on the involvement and acceptance of the BLM movement this impact is perceived negatively by those the movement represents.

As outlined in Chapter 1, the research questions of this dissertation were to address: 1) what the current literature suggests about the relationship between social media and social movements. 2) To explore if we are witnessing an increase in individuals becoming more socially conscious and interested in developmental issues or if they are following a new social media trend and, 3) to establish what the future relationship for these frameworks could look like.

The first research question examined the literature surrounding the relationship between social media and social movements. It outlined that this relationship is extremely intertwined however it did raise areas where further research needs to be conducted. This was supported by my findings that showed a strong application of ICT4D evident in this relationship and concluded that the participants generally reviewed this relationship to be positive.

The second research question explored Enghel and Noske-Turner's (2018) argument over doing good or looking good. This study applied this argument to help ascertain if individuals are posting about social issues as they are concerned about them themselves or if they are following a new social media trend. Based on the opinions of my three participants represented by the BLM movement, this study was able to conclude that individuals are posting about social issues as a new social media trend. Whilst this might be the case, research needs to be conducted on a larger scale that is more inclusive of following Kogen's (2018) approach, considering what and why people are posting, rather than the fact they are posting in the first place.

The third research question aimed to analyses what the future relationship between social media and social movements could look like. The findings of this research project are contradictory: on the one side, individuals represented by the BLM movement are supporting a positive opinion towards this relationship, and on the other side of the debate are arguing that the general impact of social media on the involvement and acceptance of the BLM movement has been negative. Therefore, establishing the future relationship of these components is complex. Based on the findings of this project, I would argue that this relationship needs to continue; however, it needs to be adapted so that social media have a positive impact on the involvement and acceptance of the movement from the perspective of those the movement represents.

Moreover, the findings of this research project support White (2010); Hay (2014) Obar et al, (2012), and Gladwell', (2010) view that clicktivism is a low form of political engagement. However, the participants do assert that whether this relationship is negative or positive, it cannot be discredited that it is impactful. A negative or positive connotation would generate conversation about the BLM movement and therefore alter the developmental agenda and bring the movement to the forefront of the conversation.

Interestingly, those in this study identified that protesting is a weak form of engagement. This study found that all three participants, for example, would rather show their support and engagement for the movement in other ways such as through donating funds. This then raises the question as to whether clicktivism is a stronger form of engagement than protesting? Moreover, it supports the argument that we should re-evaluate what legitimacy within the engagement of the political arena is to make it more inclusive.

Additional research in these areas, research conducted on a larger scale and research conducted with additional social movements will help to illustrate a more conclusive argument to the impact that social media has had on the involvement and acceptance of social movements from the opinions of those represented by the movement itself. Finally, keeping an ICT4D conceptual framework to this argument will be beneficial in helping to identify how technology can impact the developmental sector.

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"LIKE PEOPLE FETISHIZE LEATHER AND THINGS OF THAT NATURE": YOUNG BLACK MEN'S EXPERIENCES OF RACIAL FETISHISM IN THE HETEROSEXUAL DATING SCENE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

Society is riddled with the concept of the black man as hypersexual. With phrases such as "Once you go black, you never go back!" and the commonly used term 'BBC'; which is an acronym for the words Big Black C*ck, it raises the questions of where all of this is coming from, how black men feel about it and whether this could have an adverse effect on the existing treatment of black men by their white counterparts and society in general. This research was conducted with the anticipation of addressing these questions through the exploration of racial fetishism in a historical and contemporary context. Interviews with four heterosexual black men from the UK, who self-reported having experienced racial fetishism in the dating scene were held in order to gain a current perspective on the issue. A thematic analysis of the interviews highlighted four interconnected themes: stereotyping, objectification, self-esteem, and identity. Implications and limitations of the study are discussed.

1 - Introduction

Oxymoronically, the male black body has been the focus of scrutiny and fascination. In present-day society, stereotypes can be the making or the downfall of a black man. It is where a black man can be killed for his apparent aggression and criminal nature, yet he can also be exalted and admired for his supposedly animalistic sexual dexterity. This unrelenting monolithic notion of the male black body is rooted in a colonial agenda that black men are dangerous sexual deviants. To some, this seems to be part of the appeal. "if you're a Negro … you're the target for everybody's fantasies…" (Eckman, 1968, p3). In a study conducted by Michael B Lewis in 2011, he found that "Attractiveness specifically was greater for Black male faces than White male faces and among mixed-race faces. Blackness correlated with increased attractiveness." (p.159). However, this is contrary to the historical depiction of blackness, where black men were likened to apes. Young (2018) discusses this whilst referencing Saint-Aubin (2005) and states that "Black men were noted as being closer to apes than they were to humans, with anatomies that were "coarse, rude, and asymmetrical," (p.38). Saint- Aubin also notes that physicians in the nineteenth century had concluded that black men had "virile organs," were "easily aroused" and "sexually aggressive" (Saint-Aubin, 2005, p.260).

This research will discuss and examine the demonization and racial fetishism of the male black body. The aim of this research is to shed light on the issue of racial fetishism, how it affected black men historically and how it is affecting black men in contemporary society.

Another aim of my research is to form the potential connection between the fetishism of black men and the demonization of the black men that is leading to their demise in modern- day civilization. As a black woman, I consider racial fetishism to be taxing in our community. Due to this, I had initially planned to delve into the hypersexuality of the black body in general. As a woman with some personal experiences of this, I decided that this would be an appropriate topic to base my research on and would be one that I would complete seamlessly. However, I decided that I wanted to challenge myself. I not only wanted to teach readers something new with my research, but I also wanted to learn something in the process.

Being that I am a black woman, I was briefly familiar with the historical treatment of black people despite the lack of black history being taught in the UK school system. However, there was not a lot I knew about the treatment about black males specifically, and how much this has a mirroring effect on how they are treated currently.

The issue of the hyper-sexualization of the black body is one that is long-lived and enduring, contributing towards the dehumanization of black people. This is not only problematic, but it is regressive in a supposedly revolutionary society, and it is especially pernicious because sexual fetishization is often shrouded in positive language and purportedly affirming. After seeing white women at 'Black Lives Matter' protests that are intended to combat systematic racism and the unlawful killings of black people, holding signs declaring "I love black d**k so you will hear me speak!" and "stop shooting, I want mixed kids!", it became frighteningly clear not only how pertinent racial fetishism is towards black men, but how important this research is. Naturally, as a black woman, I found the concept of my male family members and friends being dehumanized in this way, particularly amongst the rise of violence

alarmingly towards black men to be totally formidable. This, along with the fact there was a gap in research and literature surrounding the impacts of sexual fetishization of black males in the United Kingdom, awarded me with even more of an incentive to discover exactly how racial fetishism is impacting young black men. After research, I was able to discover a range of perspectives on racial stereotypes from the voice of black men in the United States, one being that black men "hated how people saw them; they detested being reduced to a crude stereotype and wanted to ignore the stories and "move on"." (Young, 2018, p.2). However, this begged the question; "How do black men in the United Kingdom feel?", I aimed to answer this question with my research. I intended to accomplish my objectives by researching the topics of racial fetishism, the stereotypes that are affixed onto black men, and the representation of black men, with the aim of obtaining all of the relevant literature to support my research. I also interviewed black men of this demographic in order to obtain the most authentic depiction of the implications that the subject matter has on young black men in the UK. This dissertation includes a literature review on the history of the depiction of the black male body, in conjunction with contemporary references on racial fetishism and how it is affecting black men. A section on methodology referring to how data collection was carried out and how the interviews were analysed precedes a chapter on the findings of the research. Finally, the conclusions chapter includes reflections on the project, on its limitations and on possible new lines of enquiry sparked by the current study.

2 – Literature Review

From the perspective of whiteness, the Black body is criminality itself. It is the monstrous; it is that which is to be feared and yet desired, sought out in forbidden white sexual adventures and fantasies... (Yancy, 2008).

Even before slavery, the black body has been demonised and hypersexualised based on societal stereotypes. In this case, more specifically, the black male body. As an investigative article in The Guardian (Hackman, 2016) argues, "In America, black men have historically been depicted as aggressive, hypersexual, and violent – to be controlled, to be exploited, to be tamed. The result of that construct and the accompanying racist fear and forced subjugation it justifies has been counterintuitive: black men in America are in fact deeply fragile and constantly at risk" (n.p).

These attitudes towards the black male body are usually provoked by the 'Mandingo' and the 'brute' stereotypes. In 1873, Victorian statistician Francis Galton had made a claim that there were 'anatomical differences' between white men and black men suggesting that black men had larger penises than white men (Galton, 1873). This contributes to the origin of the 'Mandingo' stereotype.

The 'Mandingo' stereotype depicts the black man as a savage and a sexual deviant with a large penis. "The Mandingo stereotype is based on rhetoric used during slavery asserting that Black men were primitive and hypersexual" (Weaver, 2016, p.59). The size of one's manhood was synonymous with masculinity, which is something women desire. Foucault (1990) describes sexuality as "an especially dense transfer point for relations of power," (p. 103). It could be perceived that in this case, power is being held by the black man because of his stereotyped impressive sexual prowess. This potentially posed a threat to white masculinity. In his book 'Martinque', Cournet (1948) posited that "The black man's sword is a sword. When he has thrust it into your wife, she has really felt something. It is a revelation. In the chasm that it has left, your little toy is lost..." (pp. 13-14). The black man's penis being described as a 'sword' represents the common idea that the black man is something to be feared. His penis is a weapon, only meant for destruction. The use of the term 'Little toy' seems to refer to the white penis, thus suggesting that once a white man's wife sleeps with a black man, the wife will never wish to return to him, deeming the white penis as insignificant. (This aligns with the current saying "once you go black, you never go back").

The fear of this and the insecurity felt by the white man due to the alleged potency of the black man's power and sexuality, caused the white man to subjugate and overpower the black man in any way possible. Okundaye (2020) details this by claiming that "The fetishization of black masculinity has also positioned white men as our sexual rivals..." (n.p.) This perceived rivalry mostly exists in the minds of the white woman who fetishizes the black man and the white man who feels threatened by this. This also suggests that white women may be perceived as passive objects, belonging to white men and that white women who are attracted to black men are being "taken" from the white man.

This gave rise to the 'brute' stereotype. The 'Black brute' stereotype renders the black man as someone that is destructive, criminal, and animalistic. He is a danger to society who targets white women and is a force to be protected from. "Black brutes are depicted as hideous, terrifying predators who target helpless victims, especially white women" (Pilgrim, 2012). Writer, George T. Winston (1901) also wrote "When a knock is heard at the door [a White woman] shudders with nameless horror. The black brute is lurking in the dark, a monstrous beast, crazed with lust. His ferocity is almost demoniacal. A mad bull or tiger could scarcely be more brutal. A whole community is frenzied with horror, with the blind and furious rage for vengeance'' (pp. 108-109). This mentality caused something called the 'black peril' which referred to the fear colonial settlers had, of these 'black brutes' sleeping with white women. American physician Dr William Lee Howard (1903) once wrote in a medical report, *Medicine*, that "The attacks on defenceless white women are evidence of racial instincts that are about as amenable to ethical culture as is the inherent odour of the race.... When education will reduce the size of the negro's penis as well as bring about the sensitiveness of the terminal fibres which exist in the Caucasian, then will it also be able to prevent the African's birth right to sexual madness" (p. 424).

Due to the fact that black men were considered to be disgusting, aggressive and hypersexual beings, it was deemed impossible for white women to actually consent to any sexual activity with black men, because according to the Arkansas court in 1855, "only white women who 'had sunk to the lowest degree of prostitution' would yield 'to the embraces of a negro, without force". Furthermore, interracial sex (only between a white woman and a black man) was considered to be a crime. The black peril in turn, resulted in the death penalty for the rape/ attempted rape of white women by black men. "Positioning Black men as sex-crazed fiends made it easier to enforce accusations of rape and murder, contributing a rise in lynching…" (Weaver, 2016).

It was not uncommon for white women to take advantage of this notion of 'The black peril'. An example being the death of Emmett Till, a 14-year-old black boy who was lynched in 1955 for offending a 21-year-old white woman, Carolyn Bryant, who had claimed that Emmett had made both verbal and physical advances at her whilst in a grocery store. As Black men were seen as hypersexual beings, these claims were seen as plausible despite Till only being a 14-year-old child. This ultimately led to his brutal and violent murder. Bryant later admitted that her claims of Till making verbal and physical advances were untrue. Till's untimely murder symbolises just how the life of a black man was seen as worthless, inferior, and better off dead. Emmett Till's lynching was a high-profile case perhaps due to the young age of the defendant, but not unique. Only three years before, Fanon (1952) had pithily described the lot of the black man: "...I am a brute beast, that my people and I are like a walking dung-heap that disgustingly fertilizes sweet sugar cane and silky cotton, that I have no use in the world" (p.98).

Along with the demonisation of black men, comes the fetishization, dehumanisation and objectification. Frantz Fanon (1952) discusses this and says "…one is no longer aware of the Negro but only of a penis; the Negro is eclipsed. He is turned into a penis. He is a penis". This means that the black man is not seen for who he is, but for his sexual organs. This also suggests that this is all the black man has to offer and all he is good for. A contemporary example of this are images, taken at "Black Lives Matter" rallies in protest of systematic racism and police brutality, which has been increasing at an alarming rate. The images consist of white women holding banners which declare:

"I love black d**k so you will hear me speak!" and "Stop shooting, I want mixed kids!". This discourse that reduces black men to their genitals is deployed in what is ostensibly a proclamation of solidarity, but solidarity is limited to only black males and motivated by what they can offer sexually.

Marriott (2010) discusses Fanon's (1952) examination of the topic pertaining to the threat and the sexualisation of black masculinity. He claims that "Fanon finds dozens of examples of this fetishistic substitution, in whose attachments the black remains both tantalizing and frightening..." (pp. 215-216). A medical journal in the south of the United States suggested the notion of "Castration Instead of Lynching," as a form of punishment for the 'sexual crimes' by black men, thus sustaining the notion that black men were rendered useless without their penis. The black penis is weaponized and so as to 'Dis-arm' the black man or take away his 'weapon' and his power, is to take way the penis.

The fetishization of the black male body in contemporary times allegedly includes the relentless pursuit of black male athletes by young white women. These women are described as "Snow bunnies". Amy C. Wilkins (2012) details this topic and interviews young black male athletes about their perspective. One young man in particular says that "the amount of white women who are just kind of tossin' themselves at black athletes is abundant." (p.176). Wilkins continues to quote the young men who go on to say that "I just think white women are attracted to black men because we're exotic. And we have . . . great natural physiques." One participant asserts, "I know a lot of girls who . . . swear up and down by black men. They will never date another white man in their life. I guess we're good at having sex, good in bed" (p.176). This is an indication of black men internalizing the sexual stereotypes. This can be dehumanising for the black men who do feel as though they 'fit' the stereotypes because it reduces their self-worth to their bodies and suggests that sex is the only thing those black men have to offer. Furthermore, this can be detrimental to the black men who feel pressure to fit the stereotypes and are left feeling inadequate when they do not.

The alleged sexual prowess of black men is not always the only cause of the fetishization of black men, a common cause is their ability to produce mixed race babies. An example of this is the instance in 2017, where a white female police officer attempted to smuggle a syringe full of semen belonging to a black inmate to impregnate herself through artificial insemination, due to her desire to "have a chocolate baby" (Smith, 2017). Another example of women fantasizing about the complexion of mixed-race children, is a 'tweet' that American media personality Kim Kardashian-West made back in 2012. "Mom- want any coffee? Me- yes please Mom- how do you take it? Me- Half coffee half milk. Just make it the colour of what my kid would be"- thereby referring to the mixed-race children that herself (of Caucasian and Armenian heritage) and her black husband, rapper Kanye West, would produce. This 'tweet' compounds the discourse of the 'exotic mixed-race baby'.

Robertson, Reid, and Simpson (2020) discuss the effects of the fetishization of black men and of mixed-race children. They say, "You see Blackness vilified in the media, but you're also aware that for many people, a mixed-race baby is just about the trendiest thing to have right now. It's a disconcerting feeling, knowing that your genetic make-up is equivalent to a fashion trend, a fetishized assortment of aesthetic features for would-be mums to browse and add to their Pinterest board…" (n.p.)

Where black men in modern society are concerned, these damaging stereotypes still exist. Black men are still portrayed as dangerous beings. It seems that 'Black peril' still continues to be a threat in today's society and black men are still seen as 'black brutes'. This ironically causes black men to become targets and consequently results in them being the victims. The persistence of the "mandingo" stereotype yields the sexual fetishization of the black male body. In a society where police brutality and systematic racism is prevalent towards black men, particularly from white male police officers and white male citizens - the murders of George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery are examples - it is possible that the stereotypes that fuel the fetishization of black men contribute towards the demonisation of black men, leading to their demise. Current research on the topic of the fetishization from the perspective of black men, much like Wilkins'(2012), deals mainly in the context of black men in the USA. Unfortunately, research from the perspective of black men in the UK is limited. The current study, which consists of interviews with four London-based young black men who feel they have experienced sexual fetishization, aims to fill this gap and give these men a voice.

3 - Methodology

Research approach and Method of data collection

The aim of this research was to highlight the issues of racial fetishism in today's society and specifically, how this is affecting black men in the UK.

 A qualitative approach was used for this research and semi structured interviews conducted to collect data. I chose this method because in order to accomplish the aim of my research, it was important to delve into the experiences of black men first-hand. Mariampolski (2001) discusses the importance of qualitative research by describing it as a "strategy for going beneath the surface." He also states that qualitative research" yields a holistic overview" and "provides insights into emotions and motivations" (pp. 55-56). The data collected had to be centred around the emotions and personal opinions of the participants, and the qualitative approach was the best way to achieve that with interviewing as a method of data collection.

Data was collected using a semi structured interview. I conducted four separate semi-structured interviews with four participants consisting of black men who felt that they had experienced racial fetishism.

According to McCracken (1988), 'Qualitative methods may have the power to take the investigator into the minds and lives of the respondent, to capture them warts and all' (p.10). My research will be that much richer if I am able to dig into the minds of my participants, to obtain information on their thoughts of the effects of the relationships they have had where they felt they had been fetishized, however, I am aware that the findings of 'digging' into the minds of my participants will still be through my own perception.

I tried to make the interview process feel as natural as possible, to prevent participants from feeling interrogated. Open ended questions were asked to enable participants to speak as freely as they could without feeling restricted or coerced by any questions asked. As Sesno (2017) notes, "People have a lot of reason to shut down. They may be hiding or ashamed of something. They may be suspicious of you because of your position or your history together" (p. 272).

As I wanted the data I collected to be authentic, I had to make sure that the process felt more like an informal conversation rather than an interview, in order to make the participants feel more comfortable sharing their experiences. A semi-structured interview is the ideal method of data collection for this research as it is like a guided conversation. Ritchie et al. (2014) describe questions asked in guided conversations as 'Perspective- widening' questions. According to Ritchie et al. (2014), these questions "invite the participant to consider dimensions or subtopics which the researcher wishes to hear explored, rather than ones which have been generated by the interviewer" (p. 149).

A similar study on interracial intimacy and intersectional identities among black college men was conducted by Wilkins (2012) using this interview technique to collect a rich cache of data. This study, like mine, deals with the complexities of interracial relations.

This article also uses thematic analysis to examine any reoccurring themes in the study. During data collection, I wrote analytic memos on emergent themes.

Participants

I recruited a friend to act as my gatekeeper to help find participants for my research. He put the word out in his social circle and was able to find two participants who were perfect candidates for my research. Those participants, in turn, recruited another two participants.

My participants were all young heterosexual black men between the ages of 23 and 30 who have previously had relations with women outside of their race and felt as though they were only desired by these women because of their race.

My participants were: Richard, a 30-year-old man who is a musician; Joe, who is 27 years old and is an estate agent, Dennis who is 28 and works as a housing assistant and George who is 25 and is a photographer. (All of these names are pseudonyms to maintain anonymity).

Procedure and ethics

"Ethics concerns the morality of human conduct. In relation to social research, it refers to the moral deliberation, choice and accountability on the part of researchers throughout the research process." (Edwards, & Mauthner,2002, p15). To keep my participants fully informed about their involvement in my research and to ensure that they were comfortable with the entire process, I made sure to provide them with an information sheet, which details everything about the research, prior to the interviews. Due to COVID-19 implications, information sheets and consent forms were sent and completed via email.

Due to COVID-19, my interviews were conducted on Skype. I believed this was an appropriate method for my research due to COVID-19 restrictions. This also worked out as an advantage because distance was not a barrier to my research. This would have been a possibility before, due to travel constraints. As Lo Iacono, Symonds, and Brown, (2016) note, "Internet based methods of communication are becoming increasingly important and influencing researchers" (p.1). Although initially, I would have preferred to have interviewed participants in person, in order to detect their body language and emotions more accurately, I was still able to do this successfully via Skype.

Documents, such as participant information sheets and consent forms, were proposed to the University of East London for authorization prior to sending them and having them signed by participants and co-signed by myself, before interviews. Confirmation of consent was also captured in the recordings.

All Interviews were conducted and recorded on Skype, using a cellular device. While this is a video-chat platform and as previously mentioned, I could see participants body language and facial expressions, all interviews were captured only on audio. Once my data was collected, I transcribed it.

Data analysis

I used a thematic approach to analyse my participants' interviews. Thematic Analysis is a method that is often used to analyse data in primary qualitative research (Thomas & Harden, 2008). I looked for common themes in the data received, to help me sort through the similarities in the responses to explore the topic in some depth. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), Thematic Analysis should be a foundational method for qualitative analysis, as it provides core skills for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis. Being able to collect similar themes allowed me to come to my conclusions on how racial fetishism affects young black men. Four themes emerged from the analysis. The themes I found to be reoccurring from were "stereotypes", "objectification", "self-esteem", and "identity".

4 - Findings

Stereotypes

Both Richard and Joe recognize the common stereotypes that are associated with black men and imply that they are merely generalizations and not something that pertains to all black men.

"The rumour is, that black men are well endowed- "(Richard, 30)

Richard's use of the word 'rumour' could be an indication that he does not necessarily believe this to be true, although he clarifies by saying:

"Yeah, but I wouldn't know anything about that because I don't really look at other black men."

This indicates that in order for him to confirm whether there is any truth to the rumour, he would have to see proof; this is a potential attestation to the fact that even if Richard thought this was true in his case, he would not believe the rumour about it applying to all black men, purely based on the common conception.

Similarly, Joe agrees,

"Probably the general assumption that black guys have big d**ks and things like that." (Joe, 27).

Again, the fact that Joe labels this notion as an 'assumption', suggests that he sees this stereotype as exactly what it is, a stereotype.

Whereas George and Dennis both take a different stance and embrace the labels as facts, rather than stereotypes.

"...people will make stereotype's, comments like…you know…big penises…better at sex…stuff like that- things of that nature…however…you know…Is it a stereotype? You know? That's the question…is it? Or is it just facts? Is it just facts?" (George, 25).

The fact that George questions whether these common beliefs are stereotypes or whether they are just facts, is a strong indication that he considers them to apply to him personally. Comparably, Dennis mentions that black men are *'physically'* and *'mentally stronger'*, mentions the size of the black man's genitals, and their sexual performance. (Dennis, 28).

In a more unambiguous manner, Dennis expresses that these stereotypes not only pertain to him, but they do indeed pertain to all black men.

As maintained by Stagnor & Schaller (1996), stereotypes are defined as "widely held cultural beliefs and expectations, generalized attitudes, or evaluations about individuals who share a social group, such as ethnicity, race, gender, social class or nationality" (p.3). The theme of being stereotyped racially or ethnically, was prevalent in my data collection. According to Brigham (1971), ethnic stereotyping is the unfounded and unjustified generalization made about an ethnic group, concerning characteristics of that group (p.31).

When you are told that you are something for so long, you begin to believe it. Although in this respect, the intent behind the stereotypes is to be seemingly complimentary, it raises expectations on black men which might lead to some feeling pressurized in relationships. In view of the fact that George and Dennis address the stereotypes on such a broad spectrum, (they do not simply refer to themselves, but they refer to black men as a whole), it could be perceived that both George and Dennis have internalized these stereotypes. As reported by Bonnot and Croizet (2007), "It has long been argued that stigmatized individuals can ultimately internalize the stereotype" (p.857). The Internalization of stereotypes can be described as "the incorporation of negative societal views in the self-concept: People first become aware of societal stereotypes (e.g., their group reputation); then some of them tend to endorse these stereotypes (i.e., they believe the stereotype is true about their group) (p.857).

Alternatively, or additionally, it is a possibility that George and Dennis are embracing these stereotypes in an attempt to 'reclaim them' by eradicating the negative connotations that were used to vilify black men in the past and using this as a form of empowerment. It is similar to the modern use of the word "Nigga", largely used by black men to refer to themselves or to their friends as a term of endearment. This is a 'reclaim' of the word 'Nigger', a derogatory term historically used to refer to black people. This falls in with what Laferrière (1994,) states when he says, "I wanted to use the old insults until they became so familiar, they lost their sting. I wanted to wallow in it, immerse myself in racism, I wanted to become the black the way Christ was the man" (p.195).

Although they each had a different attitude towards this, when the topic of stereotypes arose, my participants were all in agreement about exactly which stereotypes pertained to black men. This is a clear indication of how common this is. Though two of my participants made it clear that they found these stereotypes to be factual and two acknowledged that these were just stereotypes, the stereotypes that seemed to be the most reoccurring, were the size of the black man's penis and about the black man's sexual performance. Fink (2000) discusses this and mentions that "The white woman, on the other hand, is generally considered to be attracted to the black male's Otherness, his exoticism, and his supposed sexual prowess" (p.11).

Objectification

In his interview, Richard discusses his contempt for the denial of his "personality and subjectivity" (Calogero, 2012) by saying:

 "I don't want to be known for my physical attributes; I want to be known for the content of my character. You know?" (Richard, 30).

Hooks (1994) highlights this issue by clarifying that "black males have always been seen as more body than mind" (p.130).

In Addition, Richard mentions that in past interracial relationships, he was made to feel uncomfortable due to references being made to his genitals.

 *"Er…yeah references were made to my…a reference was made to my attributes basically." (*Richard, 30).

Hargons, et al. (2018) discuss the "portrayal of Black sexuality" (p. 105) and how it is described by Calabrese et al., (2017) as "primitive" and "promiscuous". Depictions like this fuel the sexual objectification of black men. Richard's response to the question of 'how the sexual stereotypes surrounding black men' made him feel, was:

"How did that make me feel? That made me feel like…I don't know just made me feel like…yeah like im just wanted for one thing, that was the sole purpose of the person's assumptions." (Richard, 30).

Joe and George especially, both specifically discuss being made to feel like objects by women who fetishize them. Though George seemed to have some relaxed views on the stereotyping of black men, he also expresses that occasionally, he has felt objectified by some of the stereotypical comments that have been made to him.

"Sometimes...erm…made me feel uncomfortable…er for a better use of a word. Objectified…but erm…yeah sometimes type of thing. Sometimes…" (George, 25).

Joe answers with:

"Erm…sometimes yeah it makes me feel objectified like I stand out" (Joe, 27).

In response to whether they considered racial fetishism to be an issue in today's society, once again, all of my participants, with one exception vocalized that they did consider it to be an issue. George stated that being fetishized made him feel like an inanimate object and compares racial fetishism to leather fetishism.

"Erm...yeah, I do think it's an issue...I think it's an issue…because it - like I don't want to say like specifically for black men- just black people…but like, we haven't always been in the best position so then, for you to be fetishized, it's almost like you're a thing rather than what you are. Do you get what I'm saying? Like people fetishize leather and things of that nature and you fetishize... Like a person...like a race…like it's an object...so- "(George, 25).

Joe says something similar with his response and explains that racial fetishism causes him to feel like an item which sole purpose is to pleasure others, with no emotion or feelings attached.

He says:

"Erm…I…yeah it is an issue. I think people need to understand that racial fetishism and fetishism are two completely different things. It makes us feel objectified yet again, almost like a…I don't know…like a sex doll… like I've got no feelings…like a product" (Joe, 27).

As noted by Calogero (2012), "To objectify is to make into and treat something that is not an object as an object, which can be used, manipulated, controlled…" (p. 574). More specifically to this study, Calogero explains that sexual objectification "refers to the fragmentation" of an individual "into a collection of sexual parts and/or sexual functions." The act of sexual objectification denies them of their "unique personality and subjectivity" causing them to exist as "merely a body".

Objectification was probably the most prominent theme in my interviews, with every participant with one exception, expressing their feelings of being objectified and wanting to be seen as more than an object.

The objectification of the black body is not a foreign concept. Farley (1997) argues that "whiteness is a sadistic pleasure and that the black body is a fetish object" (p. 461). This is in accord with the sexual objectification of black men, as they are treated as sexual objects rather than human beings.

Anderson et al (2018) expand on the objectification of black bodies by maintaining that "Across the globe, history is replete with examples of Black people being viewed and treated as less than fully human" (p. 461).

Interestingly, when describing the portrayal of black men dating women outside of their race, Dennis says:

"we're taking over their territory…" (Dennis, 28).

Dennis says this in reference to how white men may feel when black men date white women. This reveals that it is not only black men who fall victim to objectification where racial fetishism is concerned. The women fetishizing the black men are also objectified. The women outside of the black race who are pursuing these black men, are seen as commodities that can be 'taken' from the white man. This patriarchal system of women being viewed as objects that belong to men dates back historically to when a wife was considered her husband's property (Paul, 1989).

"…all these white women want to go with a black guy, so the white men out there don't like it" (Dennis, 28).

Self esteem

The topic of self-esteem emerged from my interviews. It seemed as though two of my participants had high self-esteem because they felt that these women were interested in them because of all that black men have to offer.

When questioned on their thoughts on what made them desirable as black men, the answers that particularly stood out to me were George's response:

"… skin tone…bodies…attitude...like a vibe like an essence… "(George, 25)

and Dennis' response of:

"… as black men, we're physically stronger and I think most of us have got a good size-you know… thing down there, so I think, you know, we're good at sex and all of that, we're physically stronger, we're mentally stronger and all of that so I think that's the attraction to us." (Dennis, 28).

Judging by their answers, it would seem that both George and Dennis take a lot of pride in themselves and who they are, and that who they are as black men, is seen as desirable by women.

Morris Rosenberg believed that self-esteem was a "favourable or unfavourable attitude toward the self" (1965). This can also be affected by how you are seen by others and how others treat you. Self-esteem is also described by Heatherton and Wyland (2003), as a mindset about the self, which is associated with personal beliefs about skills, abilities, social relationships, and future outcomes (p. 220).

Historically and presently, black people face a copious amount of racism and social injustices frequently. Essed (1990) expresses the effects of racism by saying "to live with the threat of racism means planning, almost every day of one's life, how to avoid or defend oneself against discrimination"(p. 260). For black men specifically, this, along with all of the negative stereotypes attached to them, can become gruelling and is destined to have an effect on their self-esteem. One of my participants, Richard, details this in one of his answers and says,

"Yeah, and being that black men were treated…umm… as cattle…during slavery for like 500 years, that has...er…an effect- yeah that has a detrimental effect on black men in general" (Richard, 30).

Due to this, and even the current attitudes and violence towards black men because of stereotypes, the concept of black men seeking the elevation of their self- esteem or validation, is not a surprise, nor is it incomprehensible, especially to receive this validation from women of the racial groups that they receive scrutiny from.

Fanon (1967) explores the notion of black men seeking out the affections of white women in order to be seen as white, due to the poor treatment of black men. "I wish to be acknowledged not as a black but as a white. Who but a white woman can do this for me? By loving me she proves that I am worthy of white love. I am loved like a white man" (p. 63).

After being labelled as "dumb, violent, dangerous criminals" (Oliver 2003) for so many years, to now being desired for their "*good vibes*", "*bodies*" (George, 25), physical and mental strength and the fact that they are "*good at sex*" (Dennis, 28), it is no wonder that racial fetishism can have a seemingly good effect on the self-esteem of black men. It provides black men with the reassurance that they cannot be as bad as they are depicted, due to receiving these positive affirmations from women outside of their race.

When asked whether they consider the fact that some women date black men based purely on stereotypes was an issue, one answer that I found to be interesting was from Dennis.

Dennis (28) expresses that,

"everybody wants somebody innit? So, if they think that- you know because of the fetishizing, they're going to want to be with you, then it's not a problem as such, innit? So, I really don't see it as a problem. Erm…but some people might do, though."

It could be perceived that in some cases, the black man's desire for a boost of his self-esteem is so fierce that the intention behind it may not be important. So much so, that they will choose to overlook the possibility that being sought after based on stereotypes, could be problematic. Where racial fetishism is concerned, the enforcement of stereotypes can be disguised as compliments, which make people, in this case black men, feel special.

When asked how he felt about how he, specifically felt about women wanting to date him because he is a black man, Dennis responded with

"I think it's something to do with - you know, being a man, and if you think that you're better than another man, it always makes you feel good, innit? So, although they're saying- you know, they're saying these things, and this is what they like about us black

men, it does make us feel good and a bit more…er…better than the other races in some sense" (Dennis, 28).

Dennis later explains that,

"people outside the whole thing, relationship thing will see black men and see all of this happening and probably think that - you know, because we are the way we are, and we… we're taking over their territory, innit? So, people might feel a little bit intimidated so probably that's why, that's why people feel like that because you know - all these white women want to go with a black guy, so the white men out there don't like it." (Dennis, 28).

It is not uncommon for men to feel the need to compete with one another. Historically, this was considered to be in aid of reproduction. This is explained by Arnocky and Carré (2016) who claim that "For ancestral men, outcompeting same-sex rivals for access to desirable and varied mating opportunities would have benefited their total reproductive success" (p. 49). The detrimental portrayal of black men, initially instigated by white men, can be seen to be a manifestation of interracial male rivalry. "White men created the image of Black men as yet another contrast necessary for their own self-image" (Segal, 2007, p. 140). Dennis' use of comparative adjectives when describing what he thinks is desirable about black men could also be an indication of this male rivalry.

"we're physically stronger" and *"we're mentally stronger"* (Dennis, 28), as opposed to simply saying "we are physically strong" or "mentally strong".

Due to the ego of the black man being beaten down and bruised by the white man, there is something about the idea of superiority and 'winning' the competition against the white man, that would boost the self- esteem of the black man. Thus, in the use of comparatives by Dennis, the white man is the unspoken but ever-present comparison.

Identity

The theme of identity and self-esteem appear to coincide in my interviews as both identity and self-esteem can be down to how one sees themselves. Both Dennis and George, when asked what they thought women found desirable about black men, described how they saw themselves and black men in general. George mentions black men's skin tones, bodies, attitudes and their vibe and essence. (George,25). Whilst Dennis describes the physical and mental strength of the black man, refers to the size of the black man's penis and mentions their sexual performance (Dennis, 28).

Dennis and George were able to give insight into their sense of identity through the answers that they gave. Through analysis, it became evident that they identified through the stereotypes that come with racial fetishism.

What I found to be interesting, was Dennis' response when asked whether he really believed that black men were all of the things that he had mentioned. He responded with,

"I do you know. I do you know because erm…most the erm…the women outside of my race that I've spoken to, these are some of the issues that they raise, innit? And I think - I think that's what it is" (Dennis, 28).

It appears that in some cases, stereotypes can give a sense of identity. Dennis' response to my question of whether he really believed what he said about black men, was not

that he believed this because of his own personal beliefs or self-confidence, but because women who fetishize black men have told him these things about black men. This could be an instance of black men basing their identity on how they are perceived by women who fetishize them.

As stated by Wong et al (2012), stereotypes can have "pervasive influences that affect the daily lives of racial/ethnic minorities" (p.75). When discussing the common stereotypes that are often affixed onto black men, George questions the existence of the stereotypes by saying:

"...however, you know...Is it a stereotype? You know? That's the question...is it? Or is it just facts? Is it just facts?" (George, 25).

Following this statement, it became clear that George personally identified with the stereotypes and because of this, he suggests that they are simply facts.

Dennis shared a similar sentiment, however, when asked, he also clarified that he would "*probably not*" feel as good about the stereotypes pertaining to black men if he felt that they did not apply to him.

In the same way that the stereotypes can award black men with a sense of identity if they felt that the stereotypes applied to them, they could also erase their sense of identity if felt that they did not fit the image that the stereotypes encourage. Furthermore, it is possible that not identifying with certain aspects of the stereotypical 'black man' can promote feelings of inadequacy. This can ultimately be detrimental to the mental health of black men.

When speaking on his own personal experiences of growing up as a black man and being stereotyped, activist and film-maker Daniel Edmund (2019) details that "either I was expected to fit in with how others believed black men to be, or I was told with surprise that I acted 'different'. Sadly, common misrepresentations of black masculinity can also influence black men themselves." (n.p.)

According to Chryssochoou (2003), the term 'identity' can be defined as "a particular form of social representation that mediates the relationship between the individual and the social world". Chryssochoou claims that "Identity makes the link between social regulations and psychological organizations (i.e., identifications/self-categories) and constitutes the organizing principle of symbolic relationships" (p.225).

Fontaine (2003) posits that "black males with high racial identity were more likely to value their racial-self and culture and experience greater self-esteem and less psychological distress due to adopting adaptive coping strategies to manage psychosocial distress, with a better ability to acculturate." In contrast she also claims that "black males with low racial identity are likely to hold more negative internalized racist beliefs, devalue and are disconnected from their own racial group and cultural identity, and experience more psychological problems such as anger, anxiety and depression" (p. ii).

5 - Discussion

Overview of findings

In this research, stereotypes, identity, objectification, and self-esteem all seem to be in accordance with one another. All of the reoccurring themes that emerged from my interviews seem to relate to the issue of identity, and are arguably all different facets of the main issue of identity. Stereotypes can give a sense of identity; once you are constantly reminded that you fall into a certain category, you can begin to embody it (objectification). The most substantial findings that materialized from my findings was the topic of self-esteem. I discovered that a black man's perception of racial fetishism and racial stereotypes can be dependent on their self-esteem. Not only this, but these things can have serious consequences on their self-esteem, depending on which position that they take. The relentless stereotyping of the black man's attitudes towards sex and his body is now becoming the standard in which the black man identifies himself. I found that self-esteem can either be improved or destroyed once identity is formed through stereotypes. If felt that if the stereotypes apply to the individual black man, he could deem the stereotypes as "facts" (George, 25). However, the boost of self-esteem in which black men are awarded with through stereotypes can be seen as a contradiction as the men are being pursued for what they represent, rather than for them as individuals. Finally, in today's society, irrespective of their position on the stereotypes that cling to black men, it would appear that a majority of black men are still uncomfortable with the concept of racial fetishism and would rather be desired for what they offer as individuals, rather than preconceived ideas of them as black men.

Reflexivity

Upon reflection, I recognize that the topic of my research is controversial and could be misinterpreted as being against interracial relationships in general. I also realized that some of my questions could have been perceived as invasive. I was mindful of both of these issues in my interactions with my participants so as not to appear prejudiced in any way, or to make my participants feel uncomfortable. As a black woman, I feel as though there was some unspoken common ground between myself and my participants, although, it is possible that my participants tamed some of their answers slightly and that had I been a black male, there would have been a greater sense of relatability and my participants would have felt more comfortable to express themselves a little more liberally. I was hoping to make more connections in the interviews between the personal dating situation and the wider societal and political implications by 'casting the net wider' with the interview questions to elicit the participants' thoughts on the connection between the personal and the political, but in the end, this aspect remained somewhat unexplored in the interviews.

Overall, I achieved what I set out to find in my research. Some of the data I collected was not what I was expecting, for example how accepting some of my participants were of the stereotypes that adhere to them, especially considering the fact that my gatekeeper sought out participants who "felt fetishized in their interracial dating". Due to this, I expected some discomfort from my participants. However, this opened my mind up to more possibilities about how racial fetishism affects black men. This process was one that will affect not only my life in general but even my interactions with black

men. Because of the way that black men are still depicted in society and on current media outlets for example, it is easy for one to get caught up in the stereotypes and start to see black men in this negative light. Although as a black woman, I never agreed with the enforcement of these negative stereotypes of black men and had some knowledge of the impacts of the stereotypes; learning about the origin of these stereotypes in more detail really gave me a sense of enlightenment and hopefully did the same for others.

Strengths, limitations, and suggestions for further research

What worked well in production of my research was the recruitment of participants. I appreciated the range of participants who took part in my research. The men I interviewed were all different in their own way and yet either produced very similar answers, or answers that could not have been more opposing. I found this to be a good representation of black men in the UK because they are all different. My main limitations in this project were COVID-19 restrictions and the complications that this caused, along with the limited time allowed by an undergraduate dissertation. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, I was unable to meet with participants, meaning interviews had to be conducted via Skype. Although the interviews were successful, I still would have preferred to have met with my participants to gauge their expressions and body language even better than I was able to virtually. However, there were some benefits of my interviews being virtual, one being the location of participants. Most of my participants lived a distance away from me, therefore, meeting up would have been a challenge. To gain a fuller understanding of the fetishization of black men in the contemporary UK context, in future the project may expand to consider the gay dating scene, with slogans for apps such as 'Date gay Black, Latino, Asian & other people of colour!'. There seems to be a large market for gay men who want to date 'ethnic men'. Up until recently, there was an 'Ethnicity' filter on popular gay dating app 'Grindr', which enabled men to 'match' other men based on their ethnicity. This research could also be expanded by interviewing black men of different ages, bi-racial black men or even perhaps the women who only date black men to gain their perspective on racial fetishism.

Conclusion

In this dissertation, I found that a majority of black men are in agreement that racial fetishism is an issue in society, However, their views on the sexual stereotypes that adhere to them can be dependent on how they identify with them, for example, the generalization that all black men are well endowed. If a black man feels as though he is well endowed, he is less likely to oppose of the stereotype, despite not knowing whether or not it pertains to other black men, potentially because it boosts his self-esteem. That said, if a black man does not identify with the stereotypes, this could potentially cause a crisis in identity and feelings of incompetence. The aim of this research was to shed light on the issue of racial fetishism, how it affected black men historically and how it is affecting black men in contemporary society. I believe I have accomplished this with my research and with my interviews conducted with young black men in the UK. I learned that once one decides that they prefer something or in this case, someone, they paint them all with the same brush. To prefer black men is to assume that they all possess the qualities that you desire, this is stereotyping. As noted, I would have liked to have developed the connection between the personal and political

more in my guided conversations with the participants because stereotyping, whether outwardly negative or "positive" is still stereotyping and is arguably the same process that dehumanizes and leads to the demise of the black man. The more that black men are given the right to their individuality, the more progressive society will be.

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ETHNIC MINORITY REPRESENTATION IN PICTURE BOOKS AND THEIR USE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PRACTICE: AN EXTENDED LITERATURE REVIEW

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Module: ED6033-Early Childhood Research Dissertation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to start in the name of God, the most gracious and the most merciful.

Thank you to all of the exceptional Early Childhood team that have helped me on my journey in completing my BA – in particular, Ben Taylor, Hattie Campbell, Micky LeVoguer, Francesca Zanatta, Louise Arnold, Charlotte Page, Jenny Robson and Jonathan Allix.

Also, I would like to give a big thank you to my dissertation supervisors Evgenia Theodotou and Rebecca Blake for all of their patience and support.

A special acknowledgement goes to Ruksana Beigi who has been not only an exemplary lecturer and mentor but a source of strength, motivation and inspiration. Your support and guidance has been invaluable and will stay with me always.

Thank you to all of my colleagues and friends I made along the way, especially my dissertation partner-in-crime Julie-Anne. Thank you for making the journey bearable by always being there, listening to my rants and raves, and always being positive – you are brilliant and a true friend.

My parents and family – Thank you for always being there for me and trusting and supporting my decisions.

My mother- and sister-in-law – Thank you for being the sparks that inspired me to follow in your footsteps to achieve my academic dreams in adulthood just as you did at UEL.

My sister - Thank you for putting up with my stress-induced moods, my continuous unavailability and rushing you off the phone. Thank you for making me laugh even when it felt unnatural for me to do so and for your never-ending words of encouragement even when you needed them yourself. You are the kindest, most loving and caring soul and for that I am forever grateful.

Finally, my husband. I am rendered speechless when I think of how much you have meant to me during this process. Your encouragement for me to follow my dreams. Your absolute and blind faith in every one of my thoughts, decisions and actions. Your unwavering patience during all the times when I could not step away from the computer and staying by my side even late into the evening. Your providing stability for us during my time out from working to pursue this academic goal. Motivating and comforting me whenever you could see me feeling disheartened. Whenever I was at my weakest, you gave me your strength. None of this would have been possible without your relentless and unconditional loyalty, support, encouragement and love. For always understanding and for being my best friend. This dissertation is dedicated to you.

ABSTRACT

Ethnic minority (EM) representation in picture books should provide children with reflections of their own lives and cultures as well as opportunities to look and step into the cultural experiences of others (Bishop, 1990, in Arnold and Sableski, 2020). Culturally relevant literature is a powerful pedagogical tool in providing children with the means to build connections between their identities and educational process (Lopez-Robertson and Haney, 2017). This dissertation is an extended literature review which investigates EM representation within EC picture books and explores how these books are being utilised within EC practice through an analysis of previous research studies on the content of picture books in relation to EM representation, and the utilisation of these books by EC educators within their work with children aged 3-8 years. It analyses and discusses themes relating to EM communities and their representation within EC picture books, such as underrepresentation, dominant cultures, misrepresentation, and cultural authenticity. It also explores research into EC practice by analysing previous findings pertaining to EC educators' perspectives and use of diverse picture books. Lastly, it discusses a knowledge-based curriculum and culturally relevant pedagogy.

Keywords: picture books, ethnic minority, representation, multicultural, children's literature, early childhood.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate ethnic minority (EM) representation within early childhood (EC) picture books and explore how these books are being utilised within EC practice. In order to achieve this, this dissertation aims to examine previous research on the content of picture books in relation to EM representation, and the utilisation of them by EC educators within their work with children aged 3-8 years.

Picture books are typically characterised as such due to them being relatively short in length and containing illustrations on every page (Ciecierski et al. 2017). They often integrate pictures with written words to provide a multimodal experience (Zohrabi et al, 2019). Picture books are seen as an essential resource for children to learn new information, ideas, and language (Strouse et al. 2018) and give even the youngest children the opportunity to grasp concepts through illustrations before being able to read the text (Garner and Parker, 2018).

Koss (2015) asserts that the content within picture books is paramount. Bishop (1990, in Arnold and Sableski, 2020:20) suggested that EM representation in literature should offer "windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors" to children to enable them to see a reflection of their own lives and be able to look and step into the cultural experiences of others. Literature should give them opportunities that broaden their knowledge of the world and their place in it (Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE), 2020). Larrick (1992) states that if children do not see themselves in the books that they encounter then they may assume that they are not important enough and gain a dislike of reading. However, Boyd et al (2015) argue that if children see only those that look like them then they may gain a sense of superiority and entitlement.

According to Temple et al (1998, in Mendoza and Reese, 2001), an important characteristic of good quality picture books is to which degree they convey the truth of children's everyday lived experiences. Davenport (2021) suggests that picture books can be used as tools to raise awareness of social issues like racism and champion social justice. However, often depictions of multicultural communities in picture books can be derogatory and this can have the opposite effect (Fleming et al, 2016).

Previous research has shown that children have the capacity to recognise racial differences from EC (Connolly, 2003) and are able to detect subtle messages about race in picture books when constructing their ideas about the world (Aboud, 2008, in Winkler, 2009). Hirschfeld (2008, in Winkler, 2009) states that children from EM communities show evidence of being aware of and being negatively impacted by stereotypes about their ethnic and racial group. Erikson's (1963, in Crowley et al, 2012) fourth stage of psychosocial development, industry vs. inferiority, explains a crisis of identity that children must resolve in order to feel individually competent and suggests that children from EM communities may face a more difficult battle if issues like racism are not tackled effectively. Adichie's (2009, Tschida et al, 2014) single story theory describes monocultural literature as dangerous as it perpetuates a single narrative of the world which enforces stereotypes and trains children to see the world in a limited and damaging way.

In January 2019, 33.5% of pupils attending primary schools in the UK were from EM communities, an increase from previous years (DfE, 2019). Vygotsky's (1978, in DeNicolo and Franquiz, 2006) sociocultural theory suggests that fostering quality education requires that educators make available culturally relevant literature. Lopez-Robertson and Haney (2017) state that multicultural literature is a powerful pedagogical tool in providing children with the means to build connections between their identities and educational process through opportunities to explore their everyday lived contexts. However, according to Fleming et al (2016) few educators have relevant knowledge about the books available to them or how to utilise them.

In order to investigate EM representation in picture books and their utilisation in EC practice, the three questions which are being posed in this dissertation are:

1) To what extent are EM communities being represented in EC picture books?

2) How are EM communities being represented in EC picture books?

3) How are culturally diverse picture books utilised within EC practice by educators?

Awareness of positionality and reflexivity are essential when conducting research (Carter, 2018). Bryman (2008, in O'Hara et al, 2011) states that by being objective, the researcher is acknowledging that there are social phenomena, such as findings and facts, that are beyond our own control or influence. Objectivity will be paramount during the analysis of the findings within the literature review in order to give integrity and reliability to this dissertation (O'Hara et al, 2011). This dissertation aims to contribute to debates surrounding the uses of culturally diverse literature in EC and has implications for educators in the EC field, policy makers and anyone interested in issues pertaining to literature-based culturally relevant pedagogy.

METHOD FOR LITERATURE REVIEW

This dissertation is a non-empirical extended literature review investigating the representation of EM communities in children's picture books and the use of these books in EC education. This type of dissertation entails procuring and analysing academic sources and connecting them together in a meaningful and reasoned way (Efron and Ravid, 2019). Sources can be written academic literature that appears in journals, books and dissertations, amongst others. The credibility of these sources must be considered carefully (Thomas, 2017). Bryman (2016:91) refers to a systematic review as one which is similar to an extended literature review as the reviewing of previous research is the main exercise for this type of dissertation, as opposed to a narrative review which is most often a precursor to empirical research.

After selecting the topic of interest, it was challenging when synthesising the focus of the topic. Formulating research questions was easier after setting parameters in my chosen topic and keywords began to emerge (Efron and Ravid, 2019). Buzan (2011, in Mukherji and Albon, 2018:14) suggests creating a mind map in order to explore multiple aspects around the topic. This proved useful and created further concepts and

keywords that could be used in the search for relevant literature. Databases and search engines like Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC), Google Scholar and the university's virtual library were indispensable resources for the acquisition of appropriate literature. Some of the key words that produced the most appropriate sources were 'ethnic minority', 'representation', 'children's literature', 'picture books', 'multicultural', 'early childhood'. Different combinations of these words were used to expand the search and a thesaurus was also utilised in order to obtain more keywords to search with. It soon became apparent which were the most researched themes within this topic. *The Journal of Early Childhood Literacy* proved to be extremely useful in providing relevant peer-reviewed articles.

The initial literature search confirmed the relevance of the chosen topic to the EC field and revealed the discussion around connected issues for the dissertation (Roberts-Holmes, 2018). Rudine Sims Bishop emerged as a key pioneer of researching EM representation in children's literature and much research on this topic is underpinned by her theory of 'Windows, Mirrors, and Sliding Glass Doors' (Bishop, 1990, in Arnold and Sableski, 2020:20). Relevant literature was organised and stored in separated folders relating to each research question on the laptop. This was then recorded on a spreadsheet evidencing the emerging themes to make retrieving it easier, similar to a scoping study (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005, in Clark et al. 2019).

However, limitations on the quantity of relevant literature meant that search terms had to be reworded in order to discover further relevant sources. When findings for research from empirical research studies were not relevant, they were analysed for useful literature that may still be utilised and were stored separately. The research collected was critically assessed by examining each aspect to ascertain the credibility of the findings, highlighting any flaws (Efron and Ravid, 2019). A critical analyses approach was adopted to combine different levels of engagement with literature dependent on the relevance and importance of the texts in relation to the research questions (Wallace and Wray, 2006:125).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethnic Minority Representation – The Numbers

Botelho and Rudman (2009) assert that children's literature should serve as an affirmation of the diversity of our society, but according to Boyd et al (2015, in Braden and Rodriguez, 2016) the diversity of books rarely reflects the figures shown in a census. Historically EM representation in picture books has been hard to find even within a multicultural society and this was evident in research carried out by Larrick (1992). Her survey of more than five thousand children's books between 1962-1964 found that only 6.7% included any references to EM communities. Larrick's research (1992) was conducted solely in Ohio, USA and so the low percentage of EM representation may have been influenced by the political context of that time period and the reverberations from slavery and segregation (Gilton, 2020). Unfortunately, Larrick (1992) did not detail the target ages of the books she researched and so information for

the EC age range is undeterminable but nevertheless provided a picture of children's literature from that era.

Like Larrick's (1992) study of 1962-1964 books, but thirty-five years later, Mosely (1997) conducted research also in the state of Ohio, USA, by examining picture books at an elementary school whose student body consisted of 99.3% African American students. The findings revealed that 43% of the books in the school library featured African American characters. Mosely (1997) concluded that this meant that the diversity of the picture books in the school was unsatisfactory in meeting the needs of the children. However, when Bishop's theory (1990, in Arnold and Sableski, 2020:20) of 'windows, mirrors and sliding doors' is applied here it would imply that the children are provided with mirrors to see themselves reflected in 43% of the literature in the school with the remaining literature providing them with windows and sliding doors in order for them to observe and step into others' cultural experiences. According to Koss (2015) picture books can be seen as written artifacts that provide cultural values and messages about the world which can aid children in learning about communities different to their own.

Annual research documenting multicultural children's literature across the USA conducted since 1985 by the Cooperative Children's Book Center School of Education (CCBC, 2021) provided data stating that in 2019, only 29% out of 4035 books that were examined contained EM representation. However, in 1985 the numbers were considerably lower with just 0.7% of books representing EM cultures (CCBC, 2021). This shows an even lower amount than Larrick's 1962-1964 study (1992) even though that was conducted more than twenty years earlier. However, CCBC (2021) do not specifically outline the representation in picture books but children's literature as a whole.

The 'Reflecting Realities Report' (CLPE, 2020), an annual survey into EM representation within all of UK children's literature, revealed that representation of characters from an EM background specifically in picture books was 30% in 2019, similar to the findings of the American survey (CCBC, 2021). However, in 2018, the American survey found 29.7% EM representation, whereas the UK survey reported only 9%. Unfortunately, the CLPE survey (2020) analyses all children's literature and does not provide information about the numbers for early childhood specifically and so data for this age range is inconclusive in relation to this dissertation.

The number of children from EM backgrounds attending UK primary schools continues to grow and was 33.9% in 2019 (DfE, 2020). This shows a higher percentage of children from EM backgrounds in schools and a slightly lower percentage of books available for them to access which represent their cultures. Although there is an improvement of EM representation from previous years, Adam and Harper (2016) assert that it is vital for children to consistently access books that are representative of ethnic diversity as they provide pathways for children to consider important issues which help to break down misconceptions of EM communities.

Crisp et al (2016) determined that EM representation made up only 5.7% of the books examined from twenty-one preschool classrooms in Georgia, USA. Although being limited to just twenty-one early childhood settings, their findings implicated that the lack of diverse books may indicate a wider problem facing many other EC settings across America (Crisp et al, 2016). However, in a study by Adam (2021) the same

conclusion was made when examining book collections in four EC settings across Western Australia. Motivated by concerns regarding the availability of ethnically diverse literature for children, Adam's research (2021) found that of the 2413 books examined, only 18% contained any EM representation, despite the settings being in multicultural communities. Much like Botelho & Rudman (2009), Adam (2021) stresses that EC book collections need to be more representative of the diversity in society.

Connecting with books may be easier when you see yourself in what you read, and the underrepresentation of EM characters can mean that many children may not have the opportunity to make meaningful connections in order for them to have a strong sense of identity and gain success in the future (CLPE, 2020). However, a pre-service teacher in Baker's research (2014) states that when growing up as a British Asian child she never encountered any British Asian characters in books that she read at primary school. She is nonetheless pursuing a successful career in education and ensures she provides books representative of the children in her class regardless of her experience in childhood.

Dominant Culture

There has been much acknowledgement in many research studies on the lack of EM representation in children's literature which then uncovered the dominance of White representation (e.g., Adam, 2021; CCBC, 2021; CLPE, 2020; Crisp et al, 2016; Larrick, 1992; Mosely, 1997). Larrick (1992:1) labelled the world of children's literature "all White" due to the dominance of White representation when she conducted her research and Koss (2015) agreed with previous research and reported that White representation in the 455 picture books she examined was overwhelmingly high at 66%. She stated that the dominant White culture in these books gives the message that normalises 'Whiteness' and that to be White is to be superior (Koss, 2015:37). Discussions pertaining to dominant culture in children's literature in the Western world include the problematic practice of 'othering' which normalises White culture and places all others as different from the norm (Bishop, 1997, in Schultz, 2010). Othering can lead to viewing EM communities in picture books as exotic, special or strange, as Adam (2021) found in her research.

Rasinski and Padak (1990) asserted that children's picture books are a powerful way for children to gain cultural awareness and appreciation but Crisp et al (2016) state that if the worlds that are depicted in children's literature are predominantly White, this can create limitations in respect to those who fall outside mainstream (White) narratives. It seems much work is to be done in order to challenge dominant discourses of culture that children's literature often presents (Crisp et al, 2016). In a study by Pahlke et al (2012:1164), it was found that the majority of parents calling for 'colour-blind' policies where race is not acknowledged and citing racism as being obsolete were White American, whereas African American families endorsed strategies like employing multicultural books in order to address racial discrimination and inequalities in society.

Neito's (1992) definition of multicultural literature asserts that it is for all students not just those who are part of an EM community, but according to Kurz (2012, in Bowler, 2020), children who are White are more likely to find books that enable them to see themselves reflected in the story due to dominance of the White narrative. However,

Boyd et al (2015) warn that if children only see themselves in picture books then they may make conclusions that are damaging to those who look different to them and think that only they are worthy of being depicted in picture books. Tschida et al (2014) interpret dominant cultures in children's literature as fostering ethnocentrism and urge that books should aid children in moving beyond the limits of their own lives to spend time paying attention to those of others.

Although the emphasis has been on dominant White culture, it is interesting that in a study conducted in the Republic of Korea (ROK) by McIver (2018), the dominant culture found in the children's picture books was Korean. This research reviewed picture books from twenty EC settings, and it was found that representations of communities that were not Korean were in the minority and Korean culture was dominant (McIver, 2018). McIver's (2018) conclusions were that 97% of the ROK population is Korean and the picture books studied could be seen as reflecting the majority population, as is dominant White representation in the USA and the UK. However, his argument was that providing mainly Korean representation could give non-Korean children a feeling of inferiority and only offer a monocultural experience (McIver, 2018).

Misrepresentation

Another debated issue pertaining to depictions of EM communities in children's picture books is the ongoing trend of misrepresenting or negatively portraying EM communities, including offensive stereotypes and insulting caricatures (Morgan, 2011). According to Libnoch and Ridley (2020) picture books that portray EM communities positively encourage awareness of diverse people and places, promote awareness of social justice issues and foster empathy and compassion. Children's picture books can present new perspectives about unfamiliar groups of people and cultures which can then facilitate necessary dialogue in order to expand children's worldviews and cultivate positive environments (Dallavis, 2011, in Gultekin and May, 2019). However, some picture books produce negative stereotypes and misrepresent EM communities (Gulketin and May, 2019).

Prior to the 1960s, representations of EM communities were largely absent or depicted in negative and stereotypical ways (Mendoza and Reese, 2001). In her 1962 study, Larrick (1992) found that not only were there only 6.7% picture books with EM representation, but the ways they were represented was negative and offensive. Yoo-Lee et al (2014) found in their in-depth analysis of forty-five picture books more than fifty years later the presence of negative stereotypes of ethnic minority communities, in particular of the African American community. Larrick (1992) expressed that African Americans were offensively depicted in many of the picture books as slaves, servants, sharecroppers and migrant workers, and in Yoo-Lee et al's (2014) research they were depicted in stereotypical settings like a prison, a baseball changing room, the subway and a slave plantation. Bishop (2012) commented on the Black community as historically being shown as inferior beings there to be ridiculed in children's literature due to the socialisation of the authors in a racialised society.

Part of the rationale for the CLPE (2020) surveying children's books is to bring to attention any racist, prejudicial and discriminatory content and ideas which may be

present in the literature. The moral values of children's literature can be a concern for educators and parents due to the transmission of values, beliefs and ideas that can be unconsciously or consciously absorbed by children (Cai, 2002, in McIver, 2018). Therefore, the interpretation of EM communities in picture books may have a powerful impact on children's views of themselves or others', especially if the portrayal is negative (McIver, 2018). Freeney and Moravcik (2005, in McIver, 2018) add that children are particularly vulnerable to stereotyping in literature when they do not have direct experiences, knowledge or interactions of and with a racial or ethnic group.

Not all stereotypes are necessarily negative, however, as Rodriguez and Kim (2018) more recently discovered when they examined twenty-one children's picture books that featured Asian American representation. They found that there were some positive stereotypical portrayals of Chinese Americans highlighting the community's strength as hard-working successful immigrants and restaurant chefs, commenting that this was an improvement upon pre-twenty-first century narratives which were much more derogatory (Rodriguez and Kim, 2018). It is unclear how many books in their study included these stereotypes as they did not explicitly state this (Rodriguez and Kim, 2018). In contrast to this, Harada (1995, in Yoo-Lee et al, 2014) examined thirty-five picture books depicting Asian Americans and found 90% of the books were free of any derogatory stereotyped characters. In Mosely's research (1997:23), she pondered on a dilemma when she found that Asian American characters were depicted with 'round faces and slanted slits for eyes' and as these were illustrations by Asian American creators, she found herself debating whether it was acceptable as a researcher to disagree with cultural insiders and question whether these depictions would perpetuate negativity.

Stereotypical gender roles were prevalent in the examination of fifteen Latinx picture books in a study by Braden and Rodriguez (2016) where the females in a third of the stories were placed in traditional homemaker roles. Although fifteen picture books may not be a large-scale study, it should be considered that a reason for the low quantity of books examined could be the lack of representation of this culture in picture books, as CCBC (2021) figures confirmed, with Latinx representation making up only 5% of all books published. Sampling one example of Latinx literature, Martinez-Roldan (2013) led a detailed examination of one particular picture book and described how Chihuahua dogs were used to represent Mexican people and called this a parody which may cause feelings of degradation in the children of that culture. Chaudri (2017) posits that the handling of racism in some books by excusing them and not critiquing them can contribute to the normalising of these depictions. Malcolm and Lowery (2011) examined the representations of the Caribbean in the six picture books they could find in their local libraries in Florida, USA, noting them all to be one-sided and providing a distorted view of the region. They suggested that more diverse depictions of EM communities within children's picture books would provide a more nuanced understanding for children throughout their literary journey (Malcolm and Lowery, 2011). It would also ensure that stereotypes are not relied upon, preventing children from forming limited understandings about people from communities other than their own (Chetty, 2016).

Cultural Authenticity

Bishop (1990, in Arnold and Sableski, 2020:20) established her theory of "windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors" in which she stated that EM representation in literature should offer children opportunities to see a reflection of their own cultural lives and be able to look and step into the cultural experiences of others. She believed that all children need both kinds of books as the reflections of themselves in literature would validate children and strengthen their sense of identity whilst the windows and sliding doors would help them to understand others' cultural experiences and ensure they do not feel an exaggerated sense of self-importance (Tschida et al, 2014). A major component of her theory was the call for culturally authentic representations of EM communities in children's literature in order for this to happen (DeNicolo and Franquiz, 2006).

Yoo-Lee et al (2014) state that cultural authenticity in children's literature is an issue of ongoing debate and complexity, however they offer up their definition of it being absent from negative stereotypes and present with the values which are consistent within a particular culture. According to Botelho (2015) culture is what describes the social activities of its members which help them make sense of their world. They also state that whilst doing this they are very often reduced by others to the everyday attributes which are associated with their identities. Bishop (2003) claims that cultural authenticity is how successfully an author or illustrator is able to reflect the culture of those communities who he or she is trying to portray, whilst CPLE (2020) assert that the characters in a culturally authentic book should be relatable individuals who are well developed and living real everyday lives. Howard (1991, in Fox and Short, 2003) states that authentic literature enables children from the culture being portrayed to be affirmed and children from a different culture to learn about realities of that culture that can help them to confirm that there are more similarities among us than differences. Rochman (2003, in Smith and Wiese, 2006) notes that although authenticity matters, there is no decisive formula in achieving it. Yokota (1993, in Smith and Wiese) maintains that cultural accuracy should be the primary concern when creating and judging literature to be authentic.

According to Rodriguez and Braden (2018), cultural authenticity is a tool which can be used to help children recognise and deal with real issues by accurately representing the realities of their own cultural experiences in the books they explore, however in their study they found that only five out of thirteen children's picture books were representative of EM children's lived realities of immigration. Similarly, Adam's (2021) larger study, an audit of 2413 children's picture books across four EC settings in Western Australia, revealed that only a small percentage (2%) contained portrayals of EM representation that was culturally authentic. This could implicate these settings as failing to provide high quality literature as Temple et al (1998, in Mendoza and Reese, 2001) point out that an important characteristic of high-quality literature is to what degree it portrays the lived human experience for children to be able to relate to.

A lack of a clear definition for cultural authenticity complicates accurately evaluating cultural authenticity in picture books, however Yoo-Lee et al (2014) claim that only an insider of the culture being portrayed is able to determine if the representation is authentic because they have experienced and are part of the culture which is being portrayed. Ford (1994, in Mosely, 1997) disagreed with this and insisted that cultural outsiders write books that are just as good as insiders and that books for all children are

more important than defining a particular culture. This is challenged by Rodriguez and Kim (2018) who claimed that when they found accurate cultural authenticity in the books for their study it was within the books which were written by cultural insiders. Botelho (2015) seconds this by stating that creators who are cultural insiders can provide authentic nuanced portrayals of EM characters, languages and experiences. However, Harada (1995, in Yoo-Lee et al, 2014) found in her study of Asian American depictions in picture books that non-Asian creators performed just as well as their Asian counterparts in accurately portraying Asian culture and 80% of the characters depicted were realistic. Harada's (1995, in Yoo-Lee et al, 2014) interpretation of cultural authenticity in her study could be relied upon by applying Yoo-Lee et al's (2014) theory of Harada herself being an Asian American cultural insider. On the other hand, the Asian American label encompasses a variety of Asian cultures including South East Asian cultures from India and Pakistan which share fewer similarities to East Asian cultures and so Harada may not be the most informed person to be able to interpret these cultures as Rodriguez and Kim (2018) pointed out in their research of Asian American cultural authenticity. They remarked on the vast differences between Asian cultures and the barriers they faced when attempting to evaluate those which were unfamiliar to themselves (Rodriguez and Kim, 2018).

When Yi (2014) conducted her study through a content analysis of fourteen children's picture books to examine the immigration experience for ethnic minorities in Korea, she found that all of them portrayed some genuine true-to-life elements of experiencing immigration and the complications facing families experiencing it. Very interestingly she also acknowledged that the small selection of children's picture books she analysed should not be a representation of the wholeness of the Korean immigrant experience (Yi, 2014). This is an important consideration and can be applied to EM representation as a whole by acknowledging that just one or two perspectives or narratives will not be sufficient in forming realistic and authentic ideas about EM groups or communities (Tschida et al, 2014). Mo and Shen (1995:8) also highlight the role of 'intercultural conflict' within literature which describes the possible issues which may arise due to a creator's interpretation of a culture and the receiving of this interpretation by those from that particular culture, which if perceived as derogatory or incorrect can be insulting and offensive.

Diverse Books and Early Childhood Practice

Teachers and EC professionals are educating increasingly diverse groups of children (Klefstad and Martinez, 2013). In the UK, the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum (EYFS) (DfE, 2017) states that children must receive quality learning experiences that respond to their individual needs to ensure no child gets left behind. Socially just education which elevates, recognises and respects children's cultural values and backgrounds is becoming increasingly articulated in education policy and theory, not just in the UK but worldwide (Adam, 2021). However, according to Chen and Browne (2015:16) there can be a 'cultural mismatch' due to the majority of educators being White, monolingual (English-speaking) and middle class. An example of this is in teaching statistics for the USA which show that this is true for 85% of the teaching workforce whereas 48% of the children are from EM backgrounds (Chen and Browne, 2015).

In a study of educators' perceptions on practice in the USA conducted by Crowley et al (2012), when asked about integrating literature that represents EM communities, one teacher responded by stating that teachers are very seldom provided with the relevant resources to be able to support children in understanding and exploring cultural differences. Another teacher remarked that they financed their own classroom book library due to there being little to no relevant multicultural literature for their students to engage with (Crowley et al, 2012). The CCBC survey (2021) reports that in the last year only 29% of children's books published contained EM representation. This is an insufficiently low number and can make it considerably more difficult for educators to find relevant books which represent the variety of children's cultures in their settings (Chaudri, 2017).

In an observation of twenty-four educators across four early childhood settings in Australia, Adam (2021) investigated to what extent they utilised picture books featuring EM representation within their teaching. She identified key concerns in the lack of availability of culturally relevant books within the settings and the limitations of the educators' understandings and confidence in how to effectively use ethnically diverse picture books with the children (Adam, 2021). An example she gave was how the books were often utilised in a manner which promoted 'othering' of those from EM communities by focusing on the differences and special aspects of the EM community rather than promoting similarities between those and dominant (White) cultures (Adam, 2021). In a similar vein, children at an EC setting in the Republic of Korea were encouraged to recognise differences between their culture and that of African children in their picture books, but they were also assisted in critically discussing these differences whilst being respectful and so the children were also able to discover the human commonalities connecting both cultures (Kim, 2016).

Adam (2021) also found in her study most of the educators showed limited understanding and confidence related to considering the potential of exploring picture books featuring EM communities to promote cultural diversity and demonstrated limited understanding when selecting and utilising these books during book sharing practices with the children. The educators observed were all White and monolingual (English-speaking), which could be seen to then agree with Chen & Browne's (2015) theory of a 'cultural mismatch'. These findings are in contrast to Blakeney-Williams and Daley's research (2013, in Adam, 2021) who found that even with an absence of EM representation in the books being utilised by White English-speaking monolingual educators, valuable cultural connections were able to be made by the educators in discussions with the children in their setting.

Rosenblatt (1994, in Crowley et al, 2012) argued in her reader response theory that each reader experiences a unique transaction with the text they read because each reader brings their own background knowledge. In research conducted across multiple provinces in Canada by Johnston and Bainbridge (2008) where they explored sixty-eight picture books featuring EM communities to ascertain the perceptions of twenty-seven EC preservice teachers, they found that the majority of them failed to recognise the stereotypical manner in which some EM backgrounds were portrayed. If Rosenblatt's theory (1994, in Crowley et al, 2012) is applied to this instance, it could be fair to state that the disconnect may have been due to there being no connection between the teachers and the books because of cultural differences. Copenhaver (2000, in Lazar and Offenberg, 2011) states that fear of the unknown and lack of knowledge can prevent many educators from entering into direct discussions about race issues with

children. King (1991, in Oslick, 2013) when writing about her experiences with preservice teachers declared that by failing to be critical about cultural and social issues that they were practicing an unconscious form of racism that discreetly accepts dominant culture. However, in Baker's (2014) interviews with preservice teachers in the UK, it was apparent that they were able to recognise books with less than authentic EM representation through their responses where they admitted to challenging poor depictions of EM communities in books within their settings and in this instance only one preservice educator was from an EM background.

Rogers and Mosley (2006, in Lazar & Offenberg, 2011) opined that educators who consistently missed opportunities to interrogate children's understandings of social and racial issues had underlying problems admitting to their own White privilege. However, Lazar and Offenberg (2011) found that after attending a graduate programme addressing structural racism, a greater percentage of teachers were more willing to facilitate conversations around this topic with children whilst exploring picture books featuring EM communities and the issues that the characters faced in the stories. Conflictingly, teachers in Erbas' (2019) interviews were of the opinion that there should be no distinction made between books that address EM cultures and those that do not because they believe everybody has culture. Leontik (2014) agrees with this notion and posits that culture is a consequence of human socialisation and that all humans are unique and equally valuable regardless of which culture they represent. Mckissack (2016, in Love, 2020) argues that suggestions are not for White characters to be replaced by those from EM backgrounds but that there must be room for diversity of characters in books within all settings for children to access.

Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Ladson-Billings (1992, in Glass, 2019:57) introduced the term 'culturally relevant pedagogy' to describe a child-centred teaching method which seeks to empower children by focusing on their strengths, experiences and integrating their cultures into their education, especially through the use of multicultural literature. An early years knowledge-based curriculum is more likely to develop interest and motivation in reading and establish a lifelong love of learning (Chenoweth, 2015, in Williams, 2020). Muhammad (2020, in Williams, 2020) states that one of the key components for a knowledge-based curriculum is multicultural children's literature that is connected to both children's local communities and the wider world, told by a range of voices representing those who have been historically marginalised in order to offer opportunities to question and debate dominant narratives.

Hefflin (2002) observed an EC teacher who tailored her literacy teaching to include cultural elements of her students' ethnic backgrounds in her book choices. Hefflin (2002) found that the children engaged and performed more fully and enthusiastically with this culturally relevant approach than compared to the teacher's original approach. Chen and Browne (2015) also found this to be the case when children in an EC setting participated in sessions where they read and discussed picture books featuring EM backgrounds. Their enjoyment and enthusiasm were recorded as heightened; however, these sessions were segregated from the rest of the class with a smaller focus group of participants which may have meant the children received more attention than in the larger classroom, thus facilitating more opportunity for interaction (Chen and Browne,

2015). There was also no information detailing if the EC setting opted to include more picture books featuring EM communities into their classrooms after the study, although the recommendation was made that educators should provide more books for children in order for them to make more cultural connections (Chen and Browne, 2015). Robertson and Haney (2017) state that by incorporating this into education, children from EM backgrounds may see and feel a link between their home and educational lives. In addition to this, by facilitating critical conversations educators can access children's knowledge and understandings about social and cultural ideas as demonstrated in Mantei and Kervin's (2014) research. They found that by encouraging children to use multicultural picture books as a focus for critical discussions around EM communities and cultural issues, that the children were able to then act as creators of their own critical content around race when engaging in literacy-based art sessions (Mantei and Kervin, 2014).

EC professionals play an important role in assisting children to acquire social and emotional skills through the use of picture books (Garner and Parker, 2018). An example of the utilisation of picture books featuring EM representation to do this was in a study by DeNicolo and Franquiz (2006) where they observed an EC teacher who facilitated child-led literary circles. In these literary circles, children could sit in small groups and take part in critical encounters, discussing the cultural and social issues that they found most important within the literature. The teacher took the role of facilitator and mediator to ensure all children's voices were respected (DeNicolo and Franquiz, 2006). The teacher ensured she chose picture books that were age appropriate and representative of the EM groups in her class, including bilingual books featuring Spanish for the large group of Latinx children who were not confident in English. Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson (2008, in Oslick, 2013) offered considerations for selecting literature with EM community representation and their primary suggestion was to ensure cultural experiences told from the perspectives of the target group.

Good quality picture books can contribute to complex conversations about social and emotional issues for and about children from EM backgrounds (Garner and Parker, 2018) and a knowledge-based curriculum can help children engage in critical thinking about themes familiar to them and those around them (Williams, 2020). According to Katz (2003, in Winkler, 2009) such conversations are associated with lower levels of prejudice and bias in children. Given the potential of quality picture books featuring EM representation for fostering the awareness of and empathy towards others' perspectives, EC professionals have a responsibility to provide the truth to children about all human beings (Mendoza and Reese, 2001). EC settings' book collections being more representative of the diversity in society and improved training for educators to assist them in using and selecting such books will likely improve practice that could benefit all children (Adam, 2021)

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical practice has set the standards for trustworthy and protective research (Mukherji and Albon, 2018). Ethics are ingrained throughout the whole research process as the guidelines of conduct for all those undertaking research (Walliman, 2015:148, in Carter, 2018). They ensure that participants' rights are upheld and respected (Donley and Grauerholz, 2012). Additionally, ethical research standards are designed to protect the researcher from allegations of misconduct (Alderson and Morrow, 2011). Adhering to the code of ethics aids in ensuring that the researcher's findings are considered credible (O'Hara et al. 2011).

Farrell (2005) describes research with children as a risky undertaking due to the protective care employed unto them by law and so researchers must employ ethical responsibility of children's protective rights. Often the research cannot begin without ethical approval from an educational institution (Blaxter et al., 2010). Some vital considerations are informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, however different methods used may bring about further dilemmas which will then need to be considered in context (Gallagher, 2009).

Many of the empirical research studies chosen for this dissertation did not detail the ethical considerations taken, however it was apparent from the nature of the studies that ethical practice was present. Of those that did, there was mention of anonymity with pseudonyms used, ethical approval, confidentiality, and informed consent of participants and their right to withdraw. Even though this dissertation did not involve data collection with live participants, ethical practice still remained at the forefront of the research process (O'Hara et al. 2011).

There was a consciousness of power as a researcher, the recognition of possible misuse of that power and ensuring that all methods utilised were moralistic (Alderson, 2014). Some selected research studies required direct research with educators and children and the researcher's position of power may have influenced the participation and giving of consent by the participants. Consent can be a complicated issue in research and direct/indirect coercion is possible but participants' right to refuse and/or withdraw should be always valued throughout the process (Alderson, 2014).

When selecting a topic, it was important to consider some topics may be problematic as they may contain sensitive issues which could arouse negative reactions (Walsh, 2005). It was vital to be aware of my positionality regarding the research topic (Sargeant and Harcourt, 2012). I am aware that my interest in the topic of EM representation in picture books stems from my experiences, being from an Asian background and struggling to find books as a child which represented my culture. I am also aware about my privileged position as a researcher. Wasserfall (1997, in Mukherji and Albon, 2018) states the importance of reflexivity. I have endeavoured to avoid manipulating or selecting biased evidence to fit my opinions whilst recognising that all that my experiences and beliefs can still unconsciously have an impact on my research process.

According to the 1978 Belmont Report, vital considerations to be included in all research are to ensure the autonomy of the participants, ensure non-malfeasance and provide justice (Greig et al. 2013). Non-malfeasance has been of great importance, but I am aware that the risks of researching EM communities and their representation may cause some harm or upset to those who may disagree or be shocked with my findings. Phrasing is also a very sensitive area as I do not want to cause any offence. Some

benefits to my research are that it is a current issue which answers valuable questions to produce new knowledge and add to the field of EC.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this extended literature review was to investigate EM representation within EC picture books and explore the utilisation of these books by educators within EC practice. In order to achieve this, this dissertation specifically examined and analysed research studies which provided information as to how and to what extent EM communities are being represented in EC picture books and how these books are being utilised within EC practice by educators.

Through an extended literature review of previously conducted research, this dissertation identified a consensus and worrying continuation of historical underrepresentation of EM communities within EC picture books (Adam, 2021; CCBC, 2021; CLPE, 2020; Crisp et al, 2016; Mosely, 1997). It also acknowledged that there has been and still is a disproportionate dominance of White representation throughout children's literature (Larrick, 1992; Koss, 2015). However, where EM representation is present in picture books, negative stereotypes or offensive depictions have been discovered and EM communities are often misrepresented (Braden and Rodriguez, 2016; Malcolm and Lowery, 2011; Martinez-Roldan, 2013; Yoo-Lee et al, 2014). Many research studies debated cultural authenticity as a barometer of positive EM representation and found that often it was lacking in children's picture books (Rodriguez and Braden, 2018; Rodriguez and Kim, 2018).

This dissertation also analysed previous research conducted on the use of diverse picture books by educators in EC practice. It was found that picture books representing EM communities are not only insufficiently available in some EC settings but that often educators are not confident or knowledgeable enough around social and cultural issues contained within them to provide children with a literary experience relevant to their cultures (Adam, 2021; Crowley et al, 2012; Johnston and Bainbridge, 2008; Lazar and Offenberg, 2011). Using diverse picture books to provide culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1992, in Glass, 2019:57) was discovered in the research as an approach yielding positive responses from children within EC practice.

The completion of this dissertation presented challenges which were not anticipated, such as the time invested in procuring and selecting research studies and the continual editing process of the completed thesis. Hindsight has provided the awareness of commencing this dissertation earlier, allowing more time for completion and being more realistic about the workload involved. This dissertation provides a valuable contribution to the EC field and also to the sociology and psychology fields of study due to the implications that the use of picture books featuring EM communities has shown through the research examined, like raising awareness of racism and social justice (Davenport, 2021; Katz, 2003, in Winkler, 2009; Mendoza and Reese, 2001). It is clear from analysing previous research that EM representation within picture books and the utilisation of them in practice within EC settings merits further study. For further future research at Master's level, it would be valuable to conduct empirical research relating to EM representation in picture books and how they are utilised in EC practice at a local level in order to contribute to existing policy.

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GENDER STEREOTYPES WITHIN THE ASIAN COMMUNITY: AN INSIGHT INTO THE LIFE OF INDIAN WOMEN.

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Abstract

This research aimed to examine the role gender stereotypes play within the Asian community and their effect on the younger generation, specifically exploring the intersectional construction of gender stereotypes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three members of the same family, from different generations, to achieve my aim of demonstrating the differences in generational mentality. Qualitative online surveys were also published to gain a small-scale statistical foundation which proved to strengthen my research as it allowed me to access more participants within the Asian community. The categories of each question were separate but were linked to the overall conclusion of the effects of these stereotypes. The data gathered from the interviews were thematically analysed, with four specific themes which were identified through the participants responses. It was discovered that the different institutions within the Asian community equally contributed to the construction of gender relations, for example, the institute of marriage, religion, social influences and cultural education. The results further demonstrated that with modernity impacting society, changes in mentality were inevitable and gender stereotypes have a growing negative impact on the younger generations' mental health, causing them to divert away from cultural values. From this, I aimed to bring awareness to the Asian community of the consequences of enforcing these stereotypes and expectations and allow the younger generation to express their views vocally.

Acknowledgments

Introduction

"Just like charity begins at home, we have to start making a change from our home and society. We need to work together to make this world a better place for women."

(Union Minister of India and Indian Politician Smriti Irani)

As modernity develops, the position of women and gender equality has progressed in many parts of the world, largely in Western societies. One of the intersecting reasons for this progressive change is a cultural shift and the rise of neoliberalism in the 1970s and 1980s. The most common understanding of neoliberalism is associated with the idea of a 'free market economy'. Neoliberalism also acts as a form of governmentality or regulation and an ideological framework of ideas and values that emphasise consumerism, individualism and freedom of choice. Larner argues that these different dimensions of neoliberalism have an important implication for 'envisaging of political strategies that might further aspirations for social justice' (Larner, 2000, p.6). The development of gender equality has sparked claims that we are now living in a 'postfeminist' society (Robinson and Richardson, 2015, p.23) in which many of the issues that feminists have highlighted in the past are no longer relevant. McRobbie (2004) echoed that not only are the histories of earlier feminism at risk of being erased, but so are the understandings of social mechanisms of power that cause gender inequality and the role of social institutions that sustain forms of gender privilege and reproduce gendered worlds (Robinson and Richardson, 2015, p.24). Yet, this is predominantly argued in relation to Western societies, whilst failing to acknowledge other parts of the world and how gender inequality continues to persist.

In all forms of societies, we are constantly surrounded by debates and examples of gender inequality. This can be seen from the struggles over girls' access to an education, which has led to the kidnapping of schoolgirls in Nigeria, to more violent attacks, such as the attempted murder of Malala Yousafzai, by the Taliban in Pakistan 2012, to cases of rape of women in India. This actively challenges the concept of 'postfeminist' as gender inequality still remains on a global scale. All societies exhibit a form of gender or sexual division of labour, however, as societies undergo a mass economic change, the nature of inequalities also change, so does the distribution of labour between men and women (Young, Wolkowitz and McCullagh, 1984, p.3). This vigorously demonstrates the difference in gender inequality between Western societies and third-world countries. Third-world countries are typically dominated by culture, meaning society's norms and values stem from cultural values. Yet, Western societies are largely multi-cultural as well as multi-faith, allowing all individuals to have complete autonomy on how to raise their children, with the involvement of cultural values.

Culture acts as a form of socialisation, meaning it serves as the primary agent for transferring cultural norms to members of the community (Johnson, 1995, p.316). Parents teach their children to internalise and develop an understanding of culture.

Asian communities are typically traditional and base their social interactions and opinions upon cultural values. These values are passed down through generations acting as a social institution for transmitting social norms. This has a dominant effect on individual members of the community. Indian culture has persistently justified and continued the patriarchal system by raising men to believe they are superior to the women in the family. Women are expected to obey the rules set by the men in the family (Ramasubramanian and Jain, 2009, p.253). The idea for this research dissertation was triggered by personal experiences which were accelerated during the COVID-19 lockdown. The older generation has continuously taught us that Indian women only have one duty: to care and provide for the men in the family. This includes duties such as cooking, cleaning, serving food and looking after the children. From a young age, me and my sisters were taught to cook traditional Indian meals by our mother. The patriarchal ideology is very much evident in my household and throughout the Asian community. The men in the family would further reinforce their gender superiority by frequently dwelling and commenting on the little mistakes a woman makes, or by telling their daughters or sisters to help their mother in the kitchen whilst remaining seated watching TV. This links to Connell's theory of hegemonic and complicit masculinity, where men either claim a dominant position in social life, or do not embody hegemonic masculinity but benefit from the patriarchal dividend (Connell, 2005, p.832).

Inequality can also be predetermined by your birth. The birth of a child determines their status, illustrating a divide in the community between status and economic wealth. Author Mira Seth argued that 'the girl child was perceived as a burden' (Seth, 2001, p.93). This was because they believed that women could not provide financially. In all cultures, after the birth of a son or a daughter, gender roles are quickly assigned, and this can be seen through the example of toys. Female toddlers are typically given dolls, kitchen sets, makeup toys and male toddlers are given cars, guns, machines toys to play with (Blakemore, Berenbaum and Liben, 2008, p.4). However, in Asian culture, the boy child is favoured more over the girl child creating a bigger divide between genders. This impacts how boys perceive their position when comparing themselves to girls, which continues the chain of social oppression for Indian women.

In this dissertation, I examined the role gender plays in Asian communities, study its effects, and raise the question of whether gender stereotypes have changed between generations. I further examine the changes in mentality between generations and ask what sparked these changes. This involves considering modernity as a factor, as well as the role of education and career prospects, in effecting such changes. However, the main question is: do these changes affect the enforcement and expectation of gender stereotypes for the newer generation? Or do they still maintain the divide between genders?

1.1   Aims:

The aim of my research is to examine gender stereotypes within the Asian community in the UK.

1.2   Objectives include:

- To identify the differences in mentality around gender stereotypes within the generation gap.
- To consider possible positive effects of gender stereotypes within the Asian community in the UK.
- To investigate negative effects of enforcing gender stereotypes.
- To explore changes in gender stereotypes and identify the cause for this change.

1.3   Research Questions:

1. Why is Asian women's freedom restricted in comparison to men?
2. Has our parents' ideology affected our beliefs?
3. Do these stereotypes differ in different societies, i.e., in India and the UK?
4. Why are crimes against women high in India?
5. Has modernity affected gender stereotypes in the UK?

Literature Review

In this section, I will review key literature associated with my research title: Gender stereotypes within the Asian community: An insight into the life of Indian women. General reading was formed by using books related to gender inequality, women's development, and women's position in Islam. Moreover, google scholar, JSTOR academic databases and general blogs and articles have widened my knowledge on what has already been written about gender stereotypes and inequality within the sociological field, and provided me with a better understanding about current impacts. The review of the literature has also allowed me to identify any gaps within literature that require further discussion and investigation i.e., the impact of enforcing gender stereotypes on the younger generation. In this section, I have organised the literature material by themes, which provides a more concise and systematic framework.

Gender Roles

Legally, the divide between genders is more apparent in India than in the UK, and this in unlikely to change (Parashar, 1992, p.26). Examining the power dynamics in an interpersonal relationship is also important, as it demonstrates the divide between gender roles (Connell, 1987). Power refers to those who make the decisions and who have financial control over resources. In a traditional Indian family, power commonly rests with the man, whereas in a modern family, power is arguably dispersed equally. Men traditionally view themselves as the 'breadwinner', but with the importance of economic wealth and social status increasing, the pressure of maintaining this position intensifies. This is due to the fact that it is considered 'shameful' for a man to rely or profit from his wife's earnings (Jeffery and Jeffery, 2006). However, research shows that language used by 'modern' men still illustrates the continuous chain of oppression (Twamley, 2012); consider for example, simple phrases such as 'allowing' or 'letting'.

Studies on the relation between sexuality and equality have been focused on gendered cultural scripts, which women and men draw on before entering an intimate relationship (Holland et al, 1992; Holland et al, 1998). Connell also discusses 'labour' in family households; this refers to the distribution of household work and the expectations of labour between gender roles (Connell, 1987). These expectations are evident amongst the Asian community. Although modern women desire to have a career and have an equal marriage, Indian men still prefer to marry a 'traditional' woman, who prioritises family over work (Twamley, 2012). When you marry an Indian man, you marry the entire family: the mother-in-law, the father-in-law, the grandparents (Burney, 2020). Gender roles are made 'within the framework of the extended family and its interest, rather than the interest of the two persons directly involved' (Lateef, 1990, p.125). Indian daughters-in-law are typically not respected or treated well in their marital family, generally by their mothers-in-law (Roy, 2017). This is due to the fear of devaluing the mother-in-law status in the eyes of her son (Vera-Sanso, 1999, p.579).

Reputation

Maintaining reputation is important as it receives social benefits (Nowak and Sigmund, 1998). In the Asian community, coming from a family with a good remarkable reputation is favourable, as it shows your 'worth' (Power and Ready, 2018, p.446). Benefits include being sought out as a preferable partner, having impact on others' opinion, being well-looked after when ill, having numerous people attending your funeral after passing. Within traditional Asian communities, the self is fundamentally defined in relation to the collective identity with family identity forming a significant component of the self-identity (Bochner, 1994, p.278). Consequently, when a member of the community attempts to speak their own mind or go against cultural norms i.e., gender stereotypes, they are deemed as disrespectful, disobedient and are viewed as shame brought upon the community. Individuals from collectivist cultures often tend to keep their personal issues to themselves or within the family, especially if their opinions go against the conventional cultural teachings (Chadda and Deb, 2013, p.307). Involving outsiders to help solve issues within the family, such as a therapist, may possibly be perceived as a potential threat to their reputation, as it is a form of intrusion in the family's private affairs. Collectivist values make each member of the community and family responsible for their actions, behaviour and life decisions (Chadda and Deb, 2013, p.307).

In relation to gender stereotypes, when a woman moves away from cultural teachings, that state she should respect the men in the family and learn to be obedient, it brings shame to the Asian community, mainly for the older generation. This is due to the fact that it is the parents' duty to teach their children to "behave". Furthermore, it impacts how others view the family as a whole, for example, future marriage proposals and in-laws. When you marry into an Indian family, it is tradition to move in with your husband's parents. The purpose of this was that your new mother-in-law would teach you how to be a woman and guide you in your womanly duties; this would involve cooking, cleaning, learning how to raise children and be a traditional Indian wife (Mohammed, 2020).

Crimes Against Women in India

Reputation also has its negative implications on the younger generation and lower classes. In India, being a male with a high family status allows you to be unaccountable for your actions. Crimes against women are commonly a form of assertion of dominance. Indian society often blame female victims as they are perceived as the weaker sex and a soft easy target (Seth, 2001, p.234). This can be seen from the older generation's comments of how the younger girls choose to dress. An example of this is the Delhi gang rape in 2012, where Jyoti Singh, a 23-year-old female student, was brutally gang raped by six men on a bus in South Delhi, India, where she died thirteen days later due to the injuries she sustained (Lodhia, 2015, p.89). This case triggered large protests in India against sexual assault to women, yet many members of the Asian community blame Jyoti Singh for her own death and rape (Lodhia, 2015, p.94). This

was because of how she was dressed (in jeans and a t-shirt) and the fact that she was out late with her boyfriend. Some defended the six men by stating that "violence is one of the few things that can command respect" (Desai, 2014). Another reporter noted that "India's buoyant economy has thrust tens of millions of women into the workforce and universities, making them visible targets for resentful men who have been left behind trapped in poverty and ignorance" (Ghosh, 2013). Scholar Ratna Kapur (2012) wrote that young, professional women generate a sense of displacement.

Religion vs Culture

Religion also plays a part in depicting gender roles, for example, it is taught that if you marry into a Muslim family, your husband decides if you wear a hijab (headscarf) or not (Burney, 2020). It is common for the older generation to confuse religion with culture, therefore mixing the two ideologies together. In Islam, women hold a higher status than men, as it is believed that 'paradise lies under the mothers' feet' (Seth, 2001, p.27). However, culturally their status is restricted to maintain the power dynamic, and this can be seen through the division of labour (Seth, 2001, p.27). The norm of men being the financial provider of the household is evident in Islamic teachings. For example, if a woman was to work outside the home, the money she earns is hers, but the money a man earns belongs to the house and the wife (Roald, 2001, p.177). The principle that women's responsibilities are within the domestic sphere, such as childcare or housework, is widespread among Muslims, thus impacting the views of Muslim Asians (Roald, 2001, p.179). Culture also chooses to ignore certain *Sunnah Al Filiyya,* which is the second form of Sunnah: the actions of the prophet. For example, Aisha (R.A. – may God be pleased with her), the wife of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W. - may God's prayers and peace be with him) once said that

> "the prophet ((ﷺ would keep busy by serving his family and when it was time for prayer he would go." (كَانَ يَكُونُ فِي مِهْنَةِ أَهْلِهِ) (cited in Sahih al-Bukhari 676: Hadith 70).

This illustrates that the prophet (gnikam serohc citsemod htiw efiw sih pleh dluow (ﷺ this a sunnah (Abid, 2014). However, Indian culture has selectively ignored this and taught the men in the family that it is the woman's job to cook, clean and serve the family and the men should not interfere with this role. From the point of Islam, women have no obligation to domestically serve her husband or any other man (Ali, 2018, p.38), instead this has been culturally enforced with the use of false 'religious' justification.

Indian culture also tends to separate men and women, not just by their duties but by behaviour. Some believed that men and women had their own typical behaviours as Muslims but believed that women were predominantly significant (Ali, 2018, p.39). This can be seen from religious female figures such as, Fatima (daughter of Prophet Muhammad, S.A.W. - may God's prayers and peace be with him), who was an educated,

modest, kind, devoted mother and wife as well as an exemplar for women. Yet, women were not treated equally but were rather devalued publicly within the community. This can be observed through limited opportunities presented to Indian women and the roles attached to their gender, which largely relates to domestic care. Moreover, remarriage due either to divorce or widowhood is permitted under Islam, but Muslim women cannot easily remarry due to the prevailing social prejudice against remarriage (Lateef, 1990, p.165). Thus, despite the clear intention of Islamic Laws and secular laws that seek to enforce changes in the status of women, culture deems otherwise. The status of Muslim women is greatly affected by political, social and economic conditions in India and by cultural customs and practices, that have been modified over time (Lateef, 1990, p.187).

Research Contribution and Criticisms

Whilst theoretical and empirical investigation has conveyed an illustration of gender stereotypes within the Asian community, it has primarily failed in conceptualising the enforcement of these gender stereotypes. Most, if not all, of this literature is focussed on the men's role in gender stereotypes or opportunities provided to men that should be made for all. For example, educational rights, political rights, and social equality. However, it fails to acknowledge the positive role women play in the domestic realm. Gender inequality is largely viewed upon as men being more powerful than women, but this research illustrates the opposite. Without women, the sector of livestock and private realm will collapse (Khan, 2018, p.18). Women are the centre of a home and the family; they are the pillars or rural areas but yet are still deprived of equality privately and publicly.

Consequently, this research dissertation aims to add to existing literature of gender stereotypes and inequality within the Asian community, by illustrating how gender stereotypes have evolved between generations and how the enforcement of gender stereotypes has influenced the younger generation. Gender stereotypes within the Asian community are a taboo, as well as a controversial subject and when brought up for discussion, they are instantly shut down or hardly paid attention by members of the community, especially when brought up by a woman. It is important to shed light on this topic as it is hardly recognised and typically ignored by those in the Asian community. I hope to change this by critically addressing what specifically needs to change within the Asian community. Optimistically, if the Asian community recognise the significance of my research, then it may cause a need to create change. Moreover, this research will give a voice to Indian women who have experienced gender division privately within the home and/or publicly within the community, and a chance to represent themselves equally to men. Thus, this research took a qualitative approach in identifying and exploring gender stereotypes and how generational perception has changed.

My research aims to contribute to prevailing academic literature by focussing on the implications of gender stereotypes on the younger generation which I feel like has not been examined as of yet. I hope my research will prove to be beneficial as I will be

writing about a generation that I grew up in, which held a mixture of both traditional and modern Asian values.

Concepts, Debates and Theories

Concept One: Religion

The first concept I examine is how religion may act as a possible factor for constructing gender stereotypes. Social convention will interact with culture and organise religion to construct a person's identity and outlook on gender (Bhattacharyya, 2002, p.48). The concept of religion helped me analyse the impact and effects of how gender roles have been structured and constructed to 'please God.' This entails debates surrounding arguments about whether these concepts impact modern communities and the younger generation perception of gender roles. Marxist theories argue that religion acts as an 'opium' for the people; this means that it dulls the pain of exploitation and oppression (Surin, 2013, p.10). This can be linked with gender stereotypes as some attempt to use religion as a justification of a systematic oppression. Some have used Islamic teachings to validate the superiority of men, for example, in the Qur'an, it is stated that both men and women are created from the same 'entity', but it does not state who was made first (Roald, 2001, p. 121). Therefore, the teaching of Adam and Eve illustrate that men were created first and women were made from men, thus being interpreted to validate the hierarchal relations. In Christianity, it is taught that Eve was created from Adam's rib and thus has an inferior status, however, the Quran does not subscribe to this view (Engineer, 1992, p.43).

Another section of this concept that I examine is how people ignore specific Islamic teachings and only focus on the teachings that help support their argument (Roald, 2013). For instance, the phrase 'men and women were made to stand side-by-side with one another' has been disregarded by many as it does not support the systematic oppression against women.

Concept Two: Functionalist Socialisation

Functionalist Socialisation is the process of learning societal norms and values. Socialisation is taught by social institutions, such as family, education, religion and workplace (James, 2013, p.1). This is an important factor in forming gender stereotypes and associating roles, as society teaches us what is correct and what is not. Within a family institute, our parents' ideologies affect our views and opinions. This stems from functionalist theories as it proposes a set structure for how society operates (James, 2013, p.2). Culture is also transmitted through the process of socialisation as it develops a social identity which relates to gender roles (James, 2013, p.27: Woodward, 2000, p.17). From examining this concept, I aimed to demonstrate the division of mentality, which involved depicting the differences between generations and how our views on gender stereotypes have changed across time.

Concept Three: Romance and marriage

Within the Asian community, there is growing anxiety amongst the older generation about their children's marital future. This is a concept that I examine very closely throughout my research process, as the institution of marriage is a defining aspect for many individuals in the community. Many identify marriage as the start of one's life; mostly because of the idea of raising your own children and becoming solely responsible for them, along with your partner. Anxiety for the older generation surrounding marital relations continues to rise as modernity impacts society. This means that as society develops, women become more independent and place their chosen career goals above a possible marriage proposal. This causes a new phase of 'elongated singlehood' where women are choosing to push their age of marriage (Bhandari, 2020, p.11) for example, instead of marrying young between 18-23, some choose to push it to 27-30, which causes anxiety for the older generation as many of them believe this is too late and no one would want to marry an older/mature woman. Arranged marriages is another aspect of this concept that I examine further during the research stage, as I wanted to explore the theory of why people choose this method of marriage. Moreover, the gendered connotation of a modern couple is also an area of focus and why some women in the Asian community continue to follow the principle of hypergamy, meaning that some women's primary requirement when finding a suitable and potential husband, is to find someone 'higher' than them in educational qualifications and economic standing or professional success (Bhandari, 2020, p.20).

Concept Four: Masculinity

Whitehead (2002) notes, masculinities are plural, continue to develop over time and are embroiled with variables such as ethnicity, race, cultures, age and class (Robinson and Richardson, 2015, p.97). In the sociological field, masculinity is a broad concept as there are many variations, including: hegemonic masculinity, toxic masculinity, complicit masculinity, subordination and marginalisation. Within these variations, there are also different themes such as misogyny, sex, marital status, social status depicted through the media and dominance which can lead to violence. Connell (2000) points out that in multicultural societies, there are also multiple definitions and dynamics of masculinity (Robinson and Richardson, 2015, p.98). Such diversity between men also exists in different settings, meaning that men enact the concept of manhood in different ways, for example, depending on the context. Connell gives the example of "transnational business masculinity" which she defines as a form of masculinity marked by egocentrism, yet it is important to recognise that this group of men is not a homogenous one. For example, in East Asia, there is more of a tendency for this group of men to be involved in business by a "commitment to hierarchal relations and a social consensus" (Robinson and Richardson, 2015, p.98). This is very common in the Asian community where there are family businesses, and the men are in control of them due to hierarchal relations.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design employed for this research was qualitatively based. Some qualitative feminist researchers openly claim that qualitative methods are more feminist than quantitative (Kasper, 1994, p.263). For example, DeVault (1999) claims that qualitative methods give a voice to female respondents and allow women to help determine the direction and focus of the research (Skelton, Francis and Smulyan, 2006, p.70). Choosing qualitative research methods was best for my dissertation as this topic is based on intersectional constructions of gender relations and being able to research this area means it is impossible to implement controlled variables, which is largely found in quantitative research (Gilbert and Stoneman, 2016, p.283).

My research approach was influenced by interpretivist methodology on social phenomena. However, some have argued that interpretivism is an invalid form of investigating social problems as the validity it produces is questionable. This is usually the positivist viewpoint as their research design provides certainty (Weber, 2004, p.2). Nevertheless, positivists should not underestimate the strength of validity, in relation to interpretivism, as human behaviour and mentality is much more complex than we can already comprehend. Thus, interpretivist methodology adopts a relativist ontology in which a single phenomenon may have a variety of interpretations instead of a truth that can be determined by a process of measurements and fixed variables (Pham, 2018, p.3: Sabharwal, 2007, p.583).

Another advantage of using a qualitative research design is that it avoids over-generalisation. Being able to understand phenomena deeply in a social context plays a vital role sociological research as it provides a stronger validity in exploring social issues. Some may criticise interpretivism and its ontological stance as it tends to lean towards subjectivity instead of objectivity (Mack, 2010, p.8), meaning it has a weaker justification in comparison to quantitative data. Therefore, to address some of the issues of this criticism, my research methods include online surveys as well as semi-structured interviews, which has allowed me to gain a broader perspective of the research problem under investigation.

My research design consists of a generational case study, which was focused on examining human interaction and mentality related to the topic of gender stereotypes within the Asian community. The case I was looking into was the repercussions of gender stereotypes, specifically the impact on the younger generation, whilst looking into social institutions such as marriage, religion, family and the process of socialisation. My research aimed to explore the on-going expectations of being an Indian woman in Britain and to understand how this has impacted the lives of these women. I have conducted this study on three different generation within the same

family, which has enabled me to generate a clearer and in-depth understanding of the changes of mentality in relation to gender stereotypes.

One advantage of using a case study design is that it helps me to answer the complexities of my research question which is focused on individual experiences and perceptions (Stake, 1995, p.64). As illustrated by interpretivist ideology, humans are complex beings and all individuals view society differently from one another, thus using a case study design allowed me to uncover multiple views and layers on one case. Moreover, another advantage of using a case study design was that it allowed me to use multiple research methods (Denscombe, 2010), which further supported my research as it provided me with access to wider group of participants. Conclusively, my research took an inductive approach as it was not based on testing a sociological hypothesis (Bryman, 2012) but rather contributing to existing research surrounding gender division within the Asian community, by voicing in academic literature the impact of enforcing gender stereotypes on the younger generation and the continuing cycle of oppression for Indian women.

Sampling

Using purposive sampling is more efficient in qualitative data than quantitative. This is because in quantitative studies, purposive sampling becomes selective and bias, meaning the researcher chooses one form of study subject in preference to others (Smith, 2009, p.9). In qualitative research, purposive sampling is a form of 'non-probability sampling' (Bryman, 2012, p.418) meaning it would need to ensure the participants were relevant to my study. Initially, my research sampling plan included interviewing four participants from the younger generation and four participants from the older generation. However, due to government guidelines around COVID, I thought it would be best to interview family members. This proved to be more beneficial as conducting a three-tier generational interview meant the illustration of mentality would be more evident. I also decided to conduct these interviews within my family as rapport was apparent. This also allowed me, as the interviewer, to feel comfortable in asking personal questions and maintaining control during the interviews. Another benefit of conducting these interviews in my family was knowing the limits. One of the ethical considerations is asking too many personal questions, however, due to the fact that I know each participant on an intimate level, it had allowed me to be cautious of my questions. This was also a form of convenience sampling as it gave me direct access to the participants.

Research Methods

I decided to use two types of research method to support my research project: Online Qualitative Surveys and Semi-Structured Interviews.

Online Qualitative Surveys

The first research method I used was publishing an online qualitative survey, which involved 22 closed-ended questions and 5 open-ended questions. To create my survey, I used Google Forms and participants were given a link to access the survey. Google Forms allowed me to create this survey for free, which provided convenient and allowed me to save the survey for future reference. Google Forms also collects all responses and allows me to decide how to analyse the data, for example, I was able to analyse the data by creating an overall statistic for each close-ended question, or I could analyse the data by coding each question separately or by each response submitted by a participant. A disadvantage of using an online survey in my research was that it proves to be difficult to control who completed and submitted a response to my survey. However, I ensured that my online participants remained relevant and applicable to my research study by adding a disclaimer before accessing the link. This disclaimer stated that only Asians/Indians should complete my survey as my dissertation is focussed on the Asian community.

Gathering a statistical foundation for my research was highly important as it gives strength to my own conclusions. The survey was published on all social media accounts, allowing anyone within the community to participate. The internet is a widely accessible to many individuals as it is a form of mainstream technology, thus acting as a useful method for gathering data (Gilbert and Stoneman, 2016, p.342). The survey included straightforward questions about division of gender roles, rising expectations in the Asian community and identifying a generational gap in mentality. The categories of each question were separate but were linked to the overall conclusion of the effects of these stereotypes. Publishing online surveys proved to be beneficial as it allowed me to access more participants within the Asian community, locally and nationally, which I would not have been able to reach if I only conducted interviews (Bryman, 2012). Altogether, I was able to collect 217 survey responses, with 90.3% being UK citizens and the other 9.7% participants from India and other countries.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The second research method I conducted was a three-tier generational semi-structured interview. This type of interview involves a set of pre-made open-ended questions with the opportunity to ask additional questions depending on the participants response (Bryman, 2012). I had 14 set questions that were based upon my concepts and academic literature that I had researched, but I was also able to ask more questions as some answers needed elaboration and based upon the responses of my participants, some led

onto different topics which I thought would be interesting to gather an insight into. According to academic researchers, an advantage of using semi-structured interviews was that it allowed me to be more flexible and explore deeper into some of the responses to gain a more detailed understanding (Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick, 2008, p.293). Asking open-ended questions is important when conducting a semi-structured interview as it avoids leading the participants. By doing this, the interviewer would fail at trying to research a social phenomenon as social settings are uncontrollable and more complex than close-ended leading questions. Furthermore, as this is a personal topic, it is best if the participants feel comfortable to answer my questions without feeling pressured for a strict set answer. This also encourages a two-way conversation further adding less pressure on the participants. The main advantage of conducting semi-structured interviews is that the type of questions asked would allow for a more in-depth conversation whilst keeping the respondents on topic (Gilbert and Stoneman, 2016, p.282).

Each of my interviews were conducted in the time frame of February 2021 until March 2021 and ranged from 35 minutes and 15 seconds to a maximum of 1 hour and 6 minutes. Initially, I planned for each interview to last for 45 minutes but as my grandad was older, it took him longer to construct a response to each question due to the fact that his mental capacity and intellect are slightly slower in comparison to my other participants. Yet, there were a lot of valuable responses that he shared during his interview that proved to be very crucial to my research. Each interview was audio-recorded after I asked for permission from each participant and explained to them that only I would have access to their recordings. I then began to explain to purpose of my study and why this was important to me. The interviews were transcribed following the interviews allowing me to clearly analysis my observations.

Analysis

A disadvantage of delaying the making of analytic decisions until after the interviews have been conducted is that it may mean that different interviews take different paths, (Gomm, 2004, p.194) therefore it may be impossible to find examples of variants on the same theme in all the interviews. This is why I decided to conduct a thematic analysis of each interview, which had allowed me to identify similar themes that all participants related to during the interview. Thematic analysis has assisted this research result as I was able to examine the data, set to establish patterns of phrases which may convey levels of meanings and to find commonalities from the participants responses. This has stemmed from each of the participant's personal and social situation (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.86). Thus, to construct the analysis, I displayed the results and compare and contrast them by using relevant literature and the knowledge I have sustained and developed throughout this research. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.78) emphasised the importance of thematic analysis to be a "*foundational method*" as the researcher has the ability to categorise reoccurrences between each interview and can be used across a variety of research methods. This method of analysis was crucial to my research as it provided a flexible opportunity for me to draw a variety of conclusions from the data to either support or refute my assumptions, which is also known as an *inductive approach* (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.83). An inductive approach is often

referred to as a 'bottom-up approach' by many sociologists, but I acknowledge that while I aim to establish different themes from my data to gain a concise argument, I have a predetermined biased argument based on my epistemological viewpoint (Braun and Clarke, 2006). For the survey, I filtered the responses, began coding the answers and conclude with an overall percentage for each question, which gave me a statistical basis for my research.

Ethical Considerations

When conducting a sociological research, it is important to consider the ethical limitations and authorisation. For my chosen research field, it was important to gain consent from participants to use their responses in my study. Before officially beginning the interview process, I explained my intended research and clarified the topics that will be discussed. From this, I asked if they wish to be a part of my study and gained an official form declaration which was a signed consent form, including the rights of my participants.

Possible risks identified were that participants may feel uncomfortable in talking about certain areas in relation to personal experiences, however, this was undertaken by ensuring the participants were aware that they did not have to answer any questions asked, if they did not want to. This was written in the consent form and where they were also verbally told this at the start and throughout of the interviews. For my online surveys, I made the participants aware that by proceeding with the survey and submitting it, they were consenting to allow me to use their responses in my research. I further ensured that the online participants that their identity would be protected, and all responses would remain anonymous.

After completing my field work and dissertation, I will delete all copies of my participants interviews and only keep my dissertation for further research possibilities in the future, whilst asking for consent from my participants first. If my participants wish to access the results of my research, then I will happily send them a copy of the final product.

Findings

This section will be categorising the main findings from both the online qualitative surveys and the semi-structured interviews. Through a thematic analysis and an inductive approach, I have successfully identified four themes that correlate between all of the responses given by the participants. Additionally, this research is formulated on the use of thematic analysis or also known as content analysis. The purpose of content analysis is to investigate the messages delivered within the results of primary data (Weber, 1990, p.9). Moreover, pseudonyms have been used to disguise the identity of all my participants during this research for confidentiality and ethical purposes.

Theme One: Construction of Gender Stereotypes

From conducting a qualitative survey, 63.1% of my online participants claimed to have experienced gender division within their household. All of them noted to have higher expectation in comparison to the men in the family, and carrying out duties such as cleaning, cooking and taking care of the children. Similarly, this was further illustrated through the responses of my participants. For example, Participant One stated that growing up "we had no social life, after school or work, because we had to cook and do chores" and that from a young age they had inhabited the "the role of a housewife", yet her brother had no expectations when he was young; no rules or chores were set for him. After her response, I believed it was important to gain a deeper understanding into why she believed her life was set up like this, and she answered that it is because from a woman's perspective, it is their duty to take care of the house – "we make a home" – thus, the role of a housewife was enforced onto her from an early age. Similarly, Participant Two also stated that learning to cook was a big division between herself and her brother, as they were raised to believe that it is the woman's duty to cook for the house and that men "get a free pass". She also claimed that education was not taken seriously for her when compared to her brother, again due to the gender norms and stereotypes attached to her. Her priority was the house. Participant Three was slightly different from the other two participants as she stated that she did not experience gender division whilst growing up as her only brother was born after she got married, but after she spoke to her younger sisters, her brother was not expected to do anything, and her mother did not like it when he did try to help out with chores or cooking.

One defining question I asked during the interviews to all participants was '*Is culture a key aspect within this family, and why?*' All participants had a different response to each other. Participant One firmly said culture was not made to be an important aspect of her life, as it was not embedded. She went on to say

> "Culture is important but not in my family. Culture is a way of life, but everyone has a different way of thinking and a different viewpoint on life. I grew up more British than Indian."

Likewise, Participant Two said that if she climbed Mount Everest, she would put up a British flag rather than an Indian flag as she feels she was raised to be more British than Indian. On the other hand, she recognises that culture has been embedded in her life through traditions and family events such as weddings. She claims that "culture means family" and that is how she was raised. Participant Three responded by expressing that culture was a key aspect in her family as she lived with her grandparents and that they taught her everything about culture. Hence, it was important for her to raise her children within the cultural sphere. Yet, she found that it was futile and possibly damaging to raise her children within a strong cultural setting; she emphasised that

> "as I grew up, I wanted to raise my children my own way. I despised the way I grew up, so I wanted to change that. I did not want my kids to be raised with no independence or no freedom. I did not have a choice with my life, so I gave my kids a choice".

Moreover, in relation to construction of gender stereotypes, other than cultural construction, Participant One strongly emphasised that gender is a mindset that has been embedded into our minds before our generations.

> "It comes from history, for example the government: women are paid less; men are put at a higher standard than women even when we do all the hard work. If you look at adverts, why is it a woman advertising fairy liquid or pots and pans, and men advertise cars and phones etc."

To conclude, the construction of gender stereotypes largely stems from cultural influences whilst relating to social norms and values. Gender stereotypes have been implicated by all three participants in the exclusion from certain rights within all aspects of life and the obvious division in roles between both genders within the shared household.

Theme Two: The Effects of Reputation

Social reputation is one of the key intersectional construction tools for gender stereotypes, and due to its role within the Asian community, it has a robust influence and impact on behaviour and perception across all generations. This has been identified by all participants through their responses, for example Participant One pointed out that growing up in the Asian community, she was constantly being "watched" due to the

fact that her parents gave her the freedom to be who she wanted to be, thus she was still restricted and forced to conform to the gender stereotypes in hope to not damage the reputation of her family. This brought up the discussion of local community gatherings held at youth centres, which aims to gather all members of the community together to 'catch up'. Participant Two argued that "community gatherings are an important event, but it is used in the wrong way". When I asked her to elaborate on what she meant by this, she stated that community gatherings are often used for the older generation of women to look and quietly judge the younger generation of women. This largely involves a lot of gossip which further indicates what Participant One was discussing during her interview; nothing is hidden within the community – "someone is always watching".

Participant Three further noted that she observed the effects of reputation and the image of the community had on her after marriage and the birth of her children. She felt she was being judged by her elders in the community or by family members for giving her children the opportunity of independence and freedom. This forced her to act differently in public around her children in order to meet the expectations set by the older generation. She claimed that if she did something wrong or against social norms, "they" would look down upon her, reinforcing the feeling of constant observation.

The significance of which family you come from within the community and the surname you inherit from your father was also acknowledged by all participants as an important factor in maintaining gender norms. Each family has a unique place in the community; some are well-liked, while others are continually judged or looked down upon. This is supported by my qualitative survey, as 95.4% of my online participants agreed with the notion that social reputation, within the community, has an overwhelming effect on gender stereotypes. Through the interviews, Participant Three, for example, claimed that her parents were highly respected by the majority of the community, as shown by the large number of individuals who came to pay their respects and prayed together at her mother's funeral. To this day, her father still holds a high status and has maintained his reputation as a strong and influential member of the community, thus it became important to her not to damage his reputation. Participant Three expressed that her father "gained his status by being a stubborn and robust man and by raising 10 daughters and a son". Having a daughter within the community is greatly valued as it becomes a potential alliance between two different families through a marriage proposal, so having 10 beautiful daughters was momentously praised. Therefore, Participant Three felt pressured to maintain her father's reputation, thus woefully conforming to gender stereotypes. This was similar to Participant One and Two's responses as they are both daughters of participant Three. For them, they have three younger sisters, so they felt they were all being observed by members of the community as there is a possibility of five potential marital relations between five different families.

To summarise, reputation is evidently a fundamental aspect within the Asian community and has an influential impact on maintaining and implementing gender stereotypes on the younger generation. Fear of damaging the reputation of their family

has forced individuals to act accordingly to the gender stereotypes applied to their gender.

Theme Three: The Institution of Marriage

The institution of marriage acts as a base for the community as it creates ties between families and builds new generations that would ideally continue the community's morals, beliefs and values. From the surveys, 89.4% of my participants claim that gender stereotypes and roles intensify after marriage, as they take on the title of 'wife' and 'daughter-in-law'. This was further supported with my interviews as through all three interviews, the perception of marriage has changed and developed, highlighting the success of my intended research design: a qualitative case study design using a three-tier generational semi-structured interview. This has illustrated how mentality changed across time. For example, Participant One stated that although she is not married, she has been prepared for the "married life or trained to play the housewife role". She referenced her last two relationships and what she learnt from her partners about the relations between man and woman. She claimed that dating has illustrated the difference between culture and religion:

> "one told me to 'be' and 'act' like a woman in a controlling aspect, expecting her to obey his every command with no hesitation. The next one taught me that religion teaches equality, and that culture should not play a role in a marriage; it should be based on upbringing."

From her perspective, culture and marriage should be separate due to the fact that implementing cultural values into an important aspect of life may cause a negative dispute between partners. This was similar to Participant Two's response as, when asked the same question in relation to marriage and gender roles, she asserted that between her and her husband, cultural views on gender roles do not have an impact on their marriage as they do not allow it. Her marital relationship consists of an equal partnership and understanding; however, in terms of the family she married into, their mindset continues to remain traditional. She illustrated that when you marry an Indian man, you marry the family; his mother becomes your mother, his father becomes your father and so on. She stated that "as a daughter-in-law, no one would ask about me and that I hold no value in the family" and that her role in the family is to cook, clean and take care of all the members in the family. Yet, she noticed that although this is a traditional and cultural mindset, it is gradually changing. This is due to her relationship between her and her husband which will continue to remain equal.

On the other hand, Participant Three conveyed a more robust and traditional illustration of the institution of marriage within the Asian community. Through her responses she stated that she was "raised to be a housewife", similar to Participant One and Two, and she followed that in the earlier years of her marriage. Participant Three said that her mother-in-law and father-in-law lived in India, meaning they did not have a physical

and first-hand impact on her marriage as she did not live with them. However, her eldest sister-in-law took the role of a mother-in-law, as they all lived in London together, and this impacted her mentally and physically as the cultural expectations of an Indian housewife and woman were implemented bitterly and excessively. She stated that although her in-laws lived in India, they would still enforce the cultural gender stereotypes upon her, for example, she specified that "my father-in-law would call her sister-in-law and tell her to watch my behaviour and to look after my husband". This further reinstitutes the notion of someone constantly watching over your behaviour. Participant Three further went on to illustrate that growing up she had an image of what married life was going to be, which was mostly traditional:

> "I thought married life meant looking nice for your husband when he comes home from work, having dinner ready, house clean and kids looking sharp, essentially being the perfect obedient wife".

She carried out these traditional gender roles until after she realised the effects it has on her and her children. She expressed that her marriage started to break down during the first 10 years, as she noticed the burden of being a housewife to a traditional Indian man. She illustrated that during these years of marriage, it was the most stressful and worst period of her life. She also illustrated a routine that was set during her marriage:

> "my husband would go to work in the morning, six/seven days a week, come home around dinner time, eat, go to bed and repeat the next day … my routine would be: wake up in the morning, get the kids ready for school, drop them off, come home to clean, pick up kids, drop kids off to the mosque, come home, cook dinner, pick up kids from mosque, wait for my husband, eat dinner, bath kids, put them to bed, clean, go to sleep and repeat the next day."

She stated that she hated this traditional life that she had been living as felt stuck in a life she never thought she would be in. That is why during these 10 years of marriage, she started working part-time in a school as a teaching assistant and is now working as a senior lunch manager at a local primary school. Although married life remains traditional in its assigned roles, she aimed to model a more independent life for her daughters, hoping for them to live a happy and calm life. Yet, she admitted to unintentionally assigning gender roles upon her kids during their day-to-day lives. For instance, when I ask her if her household was equal in gender roles, she hesitated and admitted that it is not entirely fair in its assigned roles. She stated that:

> "in terms of gender roles, my daughters do most, if not all, of the household work and I can see how that may be my fault. I think because my whole life I was raised in a time where only women do the work and no one outspokenly challenged that, not like how it is in

today's society. So yeah, my daughters cook and clean and my son does not, but that was how I was raised."

In conclusion, the institution of marriage is a major illustration of how gender stereotypes continue to have an impact on the younger generation. As demonstrated through the participants' responses, gender stereotypes and assigned roles are gradually changing, yet they still remain as they were culturally embedded within the older generation's mentality.

Theme Four: The Role of Islam

Within the Asian community, Islam acts as a guide for many people and the majority of the older generation derive their cultural understandings from religious teachings. However, it is very common for cultural values and religious teachings to get mixed up, causing a misunderstanding between the two. This argument is supported through my qualitative survey as 98.2% of the responses agree that religion and culture often get mixed unintentionally. This is further supported by my participants as Participant Three, who is from the older generation, stated that they were told what gender roles were and that they followed by generation, meaning that if the generation before them mixed up religion and culture then they would still follow that as that was what they were taught. She further stated that it was not until recently where she acknowledged the difference between religion and culture as her children pointed it out. When I asked her for a general example of the misunderstanding between the two, she talked about Islamic funerals. She highlighted that when a Muslim woman passes away, they have an open casket in a mosque for their loved ones to say their goodbyes and pray, but only certain people can see the corpse. For example, all women can see her but for men, only her *mahram* (a member of her family with whom marriage would be considered illegal) can see her; all other men are not allowed. This example was a big controversial debate within the Asian community, as traditional culture stated that only a woman's son, brother, maternal uncle and paternal uncle can see her corpse and her husband or sons-in-law cannot. This was because they believed that once a person passes away, their marital relation breaks, meaning her husband is no longer her *mahram*. But Islamically, this belief is incorrect, death does not break a marital relation, only a legal and Islamic divorce does. Yet, culture choses to ignore this and continue with such cultural understandings.

On the other hand, for Participant One and Two, who are both from the younger generation, they argue that culture and religion in general do get mixed up within the community but if you are educated enough in religion then it should not affect your personal values and understandings. When asked for an example, they both talked about the construction of gender roles. For example, they both used the example of prophet Mohammad (S.A.W. - may God's prayers and peace be with him) and how he would help his wife, making this a neglected *Sunnah* within the Asian community. They also stated that in Islam, "serving one's husband is not compulsory on a wife", in other words, a wife is under no obligation to clean, cook, sew, wash, solely care for the

children and hold other responsibilities to her husband, yet culture places all the responsibilities on a woman, just because of her gender.

Conclusively, culture choses to ignore Islamic teachings to suit the needs of their community, which can be seen through the participants' example.

Discussions

Gender Roles

As discussed earlier in the literature review, gender roles refer to who plays what role in an interpersonal relation or within a shared household. Many scholars and sociologists argue that this relates to a power dynamic, which often rests with the men in the family (Connell 1978, Jeffery and Jeffery, 2006, Twamley, 2012). This is further supported by my research as all participants agreed that culture teaches men to maintain their power in relation to financial claims and assigning roles to all members of the family. Connell (2005, p.832) argued that hegemonic masculinity was distinguished from other masculinities, most notably subordinated masculinities. Connell further went on to argue that men who do not embody hegemonic masculinity but benefit from the patriarchal dividend, the advantages of men in general from the overall subordination of women, could be regarded as showing complicit masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p.832). Hegemony does not necessarily mean violence, yet it could be supported by force, for example through culture, social institutions and persuasion. This research has supported the notion of complicit masculinity as all participant illustrated a time where they would be told by other men or women to help those in the kitchen to serve the men, meaning those men who stay silent still benefit from gender dividend. Moreover, through conducting a survey, the concept of hegemonic and complicit masculinity is widely evident as 50.2% of my online participants claim to feel less valued within the community because they are a woman, and 39.6% of the participants feel more valued in the community because they are a man.

Reputation

Reputation within the Asian community is a huge area of discussion, as illustrated throughout this dissertation. Within the Asian community, maintaining the reputation of one's family is crucial for the flow of the community as it acts as an intersectional aspect of life, which can be illustrated in the literature review and findings. This research has supported this concept as Participant One stated that she was constantly watched by members of the community due to the fact that her parents gave her the freedom to be independent. Yet, the pressure of maintaining a positive and respectable image to the family name was difficult and was forced upon her at a young age; this is common for most Asian girls within the community. This is supported by Bochner (1994, p.278) who stated that the self is fundamentally defined in relation to the collective identity with family identity forming a significant component of the self-identity. This is further supported from a statistical stance, which has been gained by conducting an online survey: 82.5% out of 217 responses claim that their gender places them in a specific role within the community and 95.4% of the participants claim that this is due to social reputation, which impacts the gender stereotypes assigned to them.

This also supports Chadda and Deb (2013, p.307) who state that communal values and principles hold each member of the community accountable for their behaviour and actions, which will have a detrimental impact on their family name.

Marriage

The institution of marriage is a vital part of society within all cultures, particularly within the Asian community. Within the community, it is common for one's marriage to be arranged and this links with the concept of reputation and social class, as these are highly important concepts for the community. For instance, it has been estimated that around 90 percent of all marriages are arranged and initiated by family members and that young adults feel content with this arrangement (Jaiswal, 2014, p.12). This is supported by this research as participant three stated that her marriage was arranged by her parents, who found a man in India and initiated their marriage. Similarly, Participant One also states that although she is not married yet, she would like to have her mother's help and support in finding a respectable and suitable match. As illustrated through the findings, 82.5% of my online participants feel as though their gender places them in a specific role within the community and after asking for a written response, the majority agreed that this is due to the institution of marriage and how being a daughter-in-law reduces your status within your in-laws' family. This is further supported by Participant Two's response, as she claims she has no value in her marital family. This supports Roy's (2017) study on Indian daughters-in-law, as he states a similar theory that Indian daughters-in-law are typically not respected or treated well in their marital family, generally by their mothers-in-law, which is similar to Vera-Sanso's (1999) theory. Vera-Sanso states that daughters-in-law are treated harshly by their mother-in-law due to fear of devaluing the mother-in-law status in the eyes of her son (1999, p.579)

Conclusion

This research aimed to disclose how gender stereotypes are implemented and how they impact the minds of the younger generation. The Asian community is a very traditional and strong institution within society, which in some sense can be positive. For example, maintaining cultural values, traditions, close tight-knit family and more. Yet, many of these cultural values stem from a patriarchal system and have been deeply embedded within the community's mindset. Many members of the community aim to justify their gender dividend teachings from a biological deterministic viewpoint. This includes the idea that men and stronger, mentally and physically than women, making them more rational and unemotional, which 'should' give them the right to act accordingly. However, they fail to acknowledge that patriarchy is a man-made social construction that places men above women:

> "Masculinity is not an object but a set of processes and relationships, a place in gendered relationships and the effects of gender practices in bodily experience, personality, culture" (Connell, 2001, p.71).

What the Asian community need to understand is that society is constantly evolving, meaning sticking to a robust and traditional mindset could be damaging to the younger generation. As illustrated through my findings from the online survey, 90.3% out of 217 online participants, argued that gender stereotypes have a negative effect on individuals within the Asian community. One participant claimed that

> "it limits women to do what they (the community/men) want and is misogynistic. It's very controlling and unfair to women and causes a very serious effect on our mental health as it makes our lives more difficult."

This clearly illustrates that the Asian community needs to adapt and let go of their patriarchal values. Over 73.3% of my online participants argue that gender roles are not needed in the 21st century as women can do the same roles as men, and men can do the same roles as women. Many members of the community would argue that to let go means to let go of culture and tradition, but patriarchy and toxic, hegemonic and complicit masculinity should not be a part of culture. Through my findings, 93.5% of my online participants state that the younger generation is moving away from culture due to its patriarchal values.

Evaluation and Reflections

The research design was suitable to this project, as by carrying out semi-structured interviews, the data gathered was highly relevant, proved useful and very interesting. Collectively, this data demonstrated the impartial nature of the research. Using semi-structured interviews gave the participants the space to articulate their personal views and experiences of what it is like growing up as an Indian woman within the Asian community. Furthermore, thematically analysing the data gave way to a representation of comparison and contradictions among the participants' statements. I was able to successfully draw out themes from the transcription of the interviews and written notes, allowing me to see correlations and contradictions with the literature explored in the beginning chapter of the literature review. The literature review was an insightful and intellectually stimulating process of this research and has assisted me in expanding the potential of my research questionings, as it broadened my knowledge and understanding of this area of discussion. Collectively, my research was a mental and professional challenge as it allowed me to strengthen my skills as a sociological researcher.

If I could conduct the primary research again, I would like to have constructed more in-depth interviews, which would have lasted longer and with more open-ended questions. After the completion of my interviews, I understand that my input and added questions were arguably a bit directive and controversial. Nonetheless, this did benefit my data and interviews as I attempted to gain a more well-rounded and deeper insight into the life of Indian women. Nevertheless, I am confident that semi-structured interviews and online qualitative surveys proved to be useful and have provided me with rich information for the purpose of this research.

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THIRD YEAR ESSAYS

ROMANTIC LOVE AND INTIMACY THROUGH A GENDERED POSITION

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This paper attempts to provide a critical account of the notion of love and intimacy, strictly regarded from a gendered position. It will be discussed how the ideology of romantic love and its daily presentation contrasts with the lived reality of the active participants engaged in an intimate type of relationship, aiming at depicting the concept of romantic love from a psychosocial understanding. It will be argued that the social narratives of love expose various dynamics of gender interrelations that have further implications both at an individual and societal level. The difference between how a woman and a man position themselves in relation to the notion of love and how the latter is understood will be further explored in terms of gender roles, power relations and their dynamics, structural inequalities and overall gender asymmetries. How one experiences love against an idealised backdrop of romantic love seems to reveal how gendered attitudes and behaviours are, in fact, contributing to maintaining an ideal that most often has little in common with the lived reality of intimacy.

To begin with, the notion of romantic love has been challenged from a wide psychosocial perspective. In her book "A Psychosocial Exploration of Love and Intimacy", Joanne Brown postulates that the idea of romantic love can be regarded as a discourse, where "feelings are seen as social practices" (2006, p.46). Brown argues that romantic love is, in fact, an ideology that is presented throughout societal discourse and media representations. Deconstructing one by one the various approaches to love, namely the socio-cultural understandings, philosophical and psychoanalytic explanations, Brown claims that romantic love is an 'unrealisable state of mind' and an 'undesirable' social practice (2006, p.9). Furthermore, Brown argues that romantic love involves, in an equal manner, a functioning role (2006, p.30). By offering a brief historical account of how the idea of romantic love has made its appearance, Brown emphasises that "romantic love is predicated on choice, self-definition and marrying for love" (2006:31) and relates it with the modern times. Drawing upon Giddens' work, she goes further in explaining that the new romantic discourse is revolving around everyday practices in terms of intimacy. The modern talks about love are calling attention to how one will experience love based on the socio-cultural ways of referring to it, from a narrative viewpoint. In his work, Giddens addresses the account of romantic love by looking at the dualism of an individual within a society (Brown, 2006, p.50). Touching upon the de-traditionalization of intimate practices that are grounded on the publicly discussed gay relationships, Giddens claims that we are facing a change in the 'meaning-making of intimate relationships' (1992; cited in Brown, 2006, p.140), where

the sense of self plays a significant role. In other words, Giddens implies that through this new type of love, one will look at accomplishing an idealised relationship, where personal fulfilment should be sought. It is not anymore about finding a partner that provides economic stability or about finding 'the one', but rather about having that personal intimate relationship that enables one to reach the emotional fulfilment or self-realisation (Giddens, 1992, p.40).

As regards what romantic love entails in terms of gender differences, it appears that Giddens (1992) suggests that women are those who benefit most from this new discursive type of love. In other words, he considers that with respect to the romantic love conceptualisation, women have become central to its understanding, due to their now-acknowledged role within a household and the appearance of the motherhood concept (Giddens, 1992, p.42). The new narratives of love put in connection the role of a women as a mother and as a wife, hence new values in understanding an intimate relationship are propagated by the romantic love discourses. However, Brown and many feminist scholars have critically questioned this supposition, arguing that although this new love is somewhat democratising and empowering for women, it is still created in such a manner that it maintains the ideological support of the 'unequal dependence' (2006, p.43). Otherwise stated, Brown suggests that second waves feminists are critical of the idea of romantic love, arguing that it is presented as a hard to reach "social practice and a state of mind" (2006, p.44), as mentioned earlier. By employing a narrative approach, with a socio-cultural way of seeing romantic love, Brown details how one gets to be influenced by the discourse of romance. She also considers the fluidity of discourse in this regard and further highlights how "love ideals do not have a consistent meaning throughout time", "to the extent that love is seen as a socially constructed ideal" (Brown, 2006:54).

Similarly, Mary Evans in her book "Love: An Unromantic Discussion", focuses on deconstructing the notion of romantic love as she highlights the negative outcomes that such belief will produce in terms of social implications. Evans emphasises the paradox from this change of societal discourse claiming that "... romantic love, may have allowed women a greater say in the establishment of heterosexual relationships, but the valorisation of romance has often threatened the stability of those relationship" (2003:128). By employing Giddens' work as well, Evans proposes the idea that he is neglecting the existence of the structural inequalities that could be found in the relations between women and men (2003, p.125). This is not to say that Evans denies the 'democratisation' of love, but rather she stresses how the new rhetoric of modern love has changed to a small extent, and not entirely, the many aspects of gender relations (2003, p.4). Adding to Langford's (1999) feminist approach, Evans presents two different portrayals of love. On the one hand, we have Giddens that puts forward an optimistic view of the modern love, as explained earlier. On the other, she mentions Langford's (1999) account of romantic love that claims that gender inequalities still persist in this new organisation of love (2003, p.125). Evans believes that "the number of couples for whom this idealized version of romantic marriage actually corresponded to the lived reality of domestic life is probably small" (2003:39). She claims that there is a gender difference in giving a meaning to the notion of marriage.

Evans explains that there is a dissimilarity regarding the expectations and aspirations between women and men when it comes to understanding what the notion of marriage involves for both genders. As a way of illustration, she presents evidence on how women interpret the marriage as personal fulfilment, whereas for men it is indicated

that a more materialistic achievement and sexual relations are pursued (Evans, 2003). She looks at the film "Love Story" and challenges the presented idea that a woman in love should be able to accept countless negative actions from her partner's side, all in the name of love. "Unconditional love between lovers can provide selfless care and support; equally, the expectation (or the aspiration) of unconditional love can underpin and legitimate abusive and violent patterns of behaviour" (Evans, 2003:105). A more radical analysis of the marriage would imply that the marriage can be seen, or it can be attributed to it, as an institutional role, where an intimate couple can be interpreted as a social institution. Second-wave feminists, echoed by activists and scholars, have fiercely critiqued the "institutionalization of marriage as the dominant form of intimate relationship, and of women's restriction and oppression within the private sphere" of a household (Roseneil, 2020:9). Beyond that, it has been argued that women and girls end up internalising the idea of marriage. The socialisation process has been admitted as weighing considerably in this regard, as it appears to be a means of reality distortion where a given constellation of traits are presented as a guideline of happiness for women in a marriage (Bernard, 2002, p.116). Evans (2003) also brings to public attention how media representations promote idealistic behaviours or attitudes towards love, that most of the times are not so easily achievable and, in the end, prove to be stirring up negative emotions in an individual. In addition, through the heavy influence of media, there is a constant portrayal that addresses and represents gender, especially idealised versions of women (Robinson & Richardson, 2015), such as beautiful, caring mothers.

By the same token, Jamieson critiques Giddens' theorisation by claiming that this public acknowledgement of the variety of 'practices of intimacy' within a couple has brought forth the gender inequalities, as cited in Robinson & Richardson (2015, p.215). Jamieson notes that in the public sphere, there might be a general 'taken-for-granted' supposition that a healthy relationship will imply fairness and equality within its members. Nevertheless, this appears to be available only at a superficial level as research in this area seems to indicate otherwise. Differently put, members of a couple have given each other a sense of 'mutually caring partners', hence creating the illusion of equality, in defiance of the uneven sacrifice that is exercised for the common good (Jamieson, 2002, p.263). Furthermore, according to Jamieson, it appears that men still have more power than women in relationships (2002, p.263) and this seems to play its part in the aforementioned gender inequalities, as Robinson & Richardson maintain (2015, p. 12). The notion of power balance and its repercussions over an intimate couple relationship has been widely discussed in the academic community (Robinson & Richardson, 2015, p.12; Evans, 2003). Hines postulated that feminist scholars have employed analysis over the power relations, intending to provide key understandings in what creates and further reproduce those gender differences (cited in Robinson & Richardson, 2015). If it would be to consider same-sex relationships, one might discover that in this type of dynamics exist fewer issues in terms of power or gender roles. To illustrate this, Heaphy et al (1999) conducted a small study and the results were not as surprising as one would think. Their results indicate the fact that even in the absence of a clear guideline regarding power balance and gender behaviour in same-sex relations, the love narrative is still intertwined with the notion of power (Heaphy et al, 1999). Therefore, it appears that even same-sex couple function based on the societal norms and discourse of what love presupposes, regardless of the intimate practices that they engage in.

According to Roseneil et al, throughout history, the gender norm has always had a hierarchical structure, being deeply rooted in the patriarchal thinking that regulated the form and nature of those who were in an intimate relationship (2020, p.21). The openness in public speech regarding intimate relationships and the socio-cultural norm that will play the guidance role cannot necessarily be considered as 'democratising or dismantling of patriarchal arrangements' (Jamieson, 2011: 6.4 paraphrased in Robinson and Richardson, 2015, p.25). From the self-identity perspective, even though the notion of the home leads one to think of family relations, it is generally admitted that it is also recognized as "a woman's place" (Blumen et al, 2013, p.10). To be more specific, "the home has been conceptualised of women's oppression, where patriarchy takes a variety of forms, from direct domestic violence through economic dependence to socio-cultural vulnerability" (Blumen et al, 2013:10). This statement provides a basis for the multiple inequalities that a woman must deal with even within her house, the most notable being the fact she will do the majority of the housework (Heaphy et al, 1999) for which she is not getting paid (Blumen et al, 2013).

The housework division that occurs on the basis of gender differences is a long-debated notion amongst sociologist and feminists alike. Walby argues that housewife-mothers, meaning women considered from the perspective of the role they play in the intimacy of the home, are at disadvantage in the power structures of 'wealth, power and prestige' (2002, p.91). For academics employed in activities that analyse stratification systems, it looks like this aspect is somewhat neglected. Too little evidence on the topic of women's labour clearly indicates the lack of applied interest by the academia in this regard, as Walby asserts (2002, p.92). Therefore, Walby points out, the sexual division of labour still remains fundamental in defining the patterns for gender relations and respective inequalities (2002, p.93). One of the most distinctive features of this type of work, as Delphy and Leonard propose (2002, p.170), is the variety itself of what being a wife consists of. Put it more precisely, the authors make a clear distinction between emotional, physical and sexual work that a woman performs in her role as a wife. This interpretation of domestic work lays the ground for further exploring what domestic, emotional and caring labour carry as a meaning and what repercussions it entails for women. A closer look at the personal interactions that conduct daily domestic life will reveal how gender inequalities emerge as a result. This view is sustained by Hochschild (2002), who further claims that the specific tasks of duty, particularly caring, is usually associated with women's participation. Emotional labour implies, as the name suggests, the existence of emotional factors in the activities that are fulfilled by a housewife, such as physically taking care of a child, and providing them with emotional support in an equal manner (Folbre and Nelson, 2000).

Moreover, two different angles of feminism have interpreted the phenomenon of unpaid domestic work from quite contrasting approaches. Firstly, radical feminism considered that the patriarchal system is the main beneficiary of such gender structural ties. It is indicated that "men exploited women through unpaid domestic labour in the home, which, in turn, restricted the woman's ability to gain positions of power in society" (Robinson & Richardson, 2015, p.15). The second view, that of the Marxist feminism, considers that capitalism is at the heart of women's oppression. The very existence of unpaid domestic work, in conjunction with the economical stratification of the society, points out the structural disparities that lay between women and men in their interpersonal relationships. Nevertheless, the common ground between the two feminist interpretations remains the observable outcome in terms of women's subordination. All this inequality between domestic work in an intimate couple has further implications at

a personal level if we engage from a female perspective. Coltrane (2000), in his extensive analysis of over 200 books and scholarly articles, was interested in unravelling the domestic practices and their further implications. He discovered that within households where there is a more balanced sense of sharing duties, women tend to be less depressed and experience higher marital satisfaction (Coltrane, 2000). Thus, it seems that the subsistence of structural inequalities appears to heavily influence a women's wellbeing within the intimate relationship of the household. Likewise, it has been shown that the decrease of the coercive nature of traditional demands for women, such as caring for the entire household, can also benefit the recipients of care (Folbre and Nelson, 2000).

To sum up, these insights into the realm of lived love to which the gender interplay was applied have revealed that if one attempts to understand love from a psychosocial perspective, it will be confronted with the gender inequalities at the structural level. The idea of romantic love or true love is heavily influenced by media representations and the societal discourse that exists around it. The meaning of marriage in conjunction with true love entails the presence of societal expectations and personal aspirations, such as finding the one, create a family together and live happily ever after. However, the sad reality is that the lived experience of love or marriage is not actually quite the same with the ideological notion, as many academics, feminists, activists and scholars from different fields have argued in their work. Regardless of the psychosocial changes within society's perception of romantic love, it is safe to say that there are still a number of issues to be addressed and challenged, with the final aim of obtaining an honest multi-faceted description of romantic love and intimacy that will benefit the female actors on a long-term. Whether we consider the power relations and women subordination in a romantic relationship, or whether we take into account the uneven distribution of the housework within a marriage, it goes without saying that the concept of love is not only about bliss moments and there is a plethora of evidence and different approaches to support this claim.

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YOUNG WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN COUNTY LINES: A CRITICAL EXPLORATION

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Introduction

This essay seeks to examine a key concern in its interrogation, exemplifying the absence of social interventions for young women participating in county lines. This essay seeks to provide an exploratory analysis of young females' involvement within county lines. This examination will be carried out in two segments. First, we will explore the notion of "Gender and crime" (Kruttschnitt, 2013) through the element of "deviance" (Heidensohn, 2010) in women offenders drawing upon theorists in the field, which will be informed through a study illustrating a quantifiable and enriched account of adolescent-female deviation. Then, second, investigate the aspect of "gender based-violence" (Robinson and Richardson, 2015, p. 118) through "sexual exploitation" and "criminal exploitation" (Brown and Mutebi, 2020, pp. 2-3) in conceptualising female participation in county lines. Lastly, the essay will provide a conclusion in summarising the evidence presented.

"County Lines" is a term associated with the setup of "organised crime networks" (Wigmore, 2018, p. 5). Such nexus employs youths, male and female, to carry drugs across boundaries into rural county areas to supply "Class A drugs, primarily crack cocaine and heroin" (Home Office, 2018) to paying clients. Typically, a nexus spring-boards from central cities to those areas; the main tool of the nexus is a "mobile phone line" (Wigmore, 2018, p. 5), and those young individuals recruited into the nexus trading illegal drugs are usually profiled. According to the National Crime Agency (NCA), the nature of "county lines" is not just localised, but a nationwide problem; nexuses profile "Looked After Children and other children known to children's social care or youth offending teams" (HM Government, 2016, p. 3).

To commence, we will first examine the concept of young females and their connection to criminality, in doing so conceptualising the theoretical notion of deviation by exploring findings that have emerged by calculative inquiry and through in-depth analysis.

According to Steffensmeier and Allan (1996, p. 463), females have typically "been members of gangs" as a way of resolving the issues "of gender, race and class" which they experience and thus becoming a part of the nexus. Typically, the narrative of women's participation in "gang" has been understated and has pared down "the roles and motivations of girls gang members"; women are depicted in a fashion that stereotypes them as "personal property to sexual chattel to neurotic "tomboys", according to Laidler and Hutt, (2001, p. 657). Adolescent females participating in nexus and males are suggested to be "gender extremes" (Peterson, 2018). Research indicates that unstable "home life" plays a vital role in "loneliness and low self-esteem" encountered by an adolescent female along with "a psychological reaction against the absent or inadequate father" in the view of Giordano, (1978, p. 126). Here it could be contended that the male parent experiences rejection from his offspring due to neglect. It is contended "that female delinquency is mainly linked to the changes" which are experienced, induced by the "personal" issues; according to Cohen (cited in Giordano, 1978, p. 126) "delinquency in females may" be connected to the inefficiency to construct "a good relationship" with a male-counterpart.

Arguably, due to the reduced presence of the male parent in the life of young women, the notion presented "by Cohen", (cited in Giordano, 1978, p. 126), could provide a rationale in conceptualising the element of a dysfunctional family unit being the causal component in adolescent female "rebellious" (Kivisto, 2011, p. 117) mannerism. Thus, those variations are argued to have the root cause in how young-females develop relations and engage "with the opposite sex" (Giordano, 1978, p. 126). Interestingly, (Giordano, 1978, p. 126) states that "males" longitudinal objectives are orientated towards attaining "success and acquiring material possessions", however, "females" are mainly focused on attracting guys. Therefore, this notion can be connected to "Merton's Social Strain" (Kivisto, 2011, p. 117) in attributing the aspect of "innovation" which explains "female" deviancy typically associated with "sexual" charm. The representation of women being deviant in the vast majority of the corpus of literature illustrates that due to females' lack of capability to deal with their "personal", they are perceived as unable to carry out "their proper sex role or suffer from ill treatment in the dysfunctional domestic sphere" (Giordano, 1978, p. 126).

While there are studies on "the delinquency of boys who are members of gangs", there exist just a handful of statistical investigations which has evaluated the participation "of girls gang members in delinquency" (Haymoz and Gatti, 2010) along with the aspect of being victimised. A study carried out in Italy and Switzerland found those individuals who were "Members of deviant youth groups" represents "5.7% of Italian" subjects, in comparison "4.7% of the Swiss" subjects, however within individual states, approximately "a third of gang members were girls"; generally females involved in nexus "commit more delinquent acts than both girls and boys" that are non-nexus involved (Haymoz and Gatti, 2010). Nexus involved females are usually more significantly exposed to victimisation "than girls and boys" that are non-nexus affiliates with no association to "a deviant youth group", according to Haymoz and Gatti, (2010). The theoretical perspective of Herzog and Oreg (2008, p. 47) indicates the hegemonic position of the "patriarchal cultures" that typically render female to be debilitated, "docile" (Foucault, 1977, p. 135), unsophisticated, and impuissant, along with being irresponsible (2008, p. 47). However, "male offenders" are regarded to be self-sufficient and dependable, whereas typically, women are seen as "victims of an

environment" (Herzog and Oreg, 2008, p. 47) due to not having satisfactory advice and oversight.

In Chesney-Lind's (1989) account, the dominant hypothesis based on "delinquent behavior" typically is "androcentric", which is orientated around men. The structural design "of female delinquency…on girls offending" indicates there had been an intensive concentration on marginalised "males in public" orientation which inherently revealed females' "victimisation and the relationship between that experience and girls' crime" (Chesney-Lind, 1989) to be comprehensively neglected. The shortcoming within the youth "justice system" concerns the "sexualization of female delinquency and the criminalization of adolescent females to build back their lives" (Chesney-Lind, 1989). The structure of "chivalry theory" or the concept of "true chivalry" introduced by Edwards (1989:168) puts forward that due to the judiciary showing compassionate resolve "towards female offenders", this form of method is argued to be a system that displays "protective and benevolent societal attitudes towards females" (Herzog and Oreg, 2008, p. 47). It is induced that authentic steps were taken by the youth "justice system" to play a pivotal part "in women's oppression" (Chesney-Lind, 1989) which from a traditional perspective seek to fortify the behavioural manner of adolescent females, this to satisfy the expectations of the power of patriarchy irrespective of the insulting nature and / or tyrannical ways.

Next, we explore the notion of "violence against women" (Walklate, 2008) through sexual and criminal exploitation concerning young women's engagement in county lines and to understand the implications on those individuals.

Posey et al (2020) reviewed 30 years of scholarship published in the journal *Women and Criminal Justice* through the lens of gender, feminism and intersectionality. In contributing to the already existing corpuses, this examination into females' involvement in county lines can be argued to reaffirm the intersections in respect of females and criminality in contemporary society. The authors argue that "patriarchy" is responsible for the enduring accounts of females "caught up in the system as the victimized, accused and convicted" along with females staff-members working "in the system…(and men) academics who studies both groups" (Posey et al., 2020). Research conducted by Steffensmeier and Allan, 1996, p. 463) portrays girls in nexus as subordinates who either encourage or pledge their loyalty to the nexus and are often invisible in their positions.

According to Walklate, "two of the most serious crimes in our society" those being the aspect of "sexual violence and childhood sexual abuse", are most often perpetrated against women as a result of the imbalance of power between genders; persons who are victimised end up with long-term "health and wellbeing" implications (2008, p. 39). The denotation of VAW (Violence Against Women) was initially marked in "the 1993 United Nations Declaration", which was revised with regards to the linguistics and terminologies in its application (Robinson and Richardson, 2015, p. 118). In conceptualising the terminology "VAW", this can be illustrated by:

> any act of gender-based violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately…manifested in a continuum of multiple, interrelated and sometimes recurring forms…physical, sexual, and psychological emotional violence and economic abuse and exploitation,

experienced in a range of settings, from private to public and in today's globalized world, transcending national boundaries (UN, 2006: para.28 and 104 cited in Robinson and Richardson, 2015, p. 118).

These multiple aspects of violence can be found in a case reported by Farrell (2020), who investigated "the evil county lines trade" within which he revealed the story of a young female "teenage drug runner who peddles crack cocaine and heroin on the streets of Southampton". In Farrell's (2020) account, this adolescent female "is 16 year old" who in his view "has the face of an angel…and could pass for a primary school pupil". Farrell (2020) noted that this young female did not fit the profile "of a drug dealer", however, this individual was described as a "vital part of the county lines process". This young adolescent was exploited by county lines while "in care", leaving behind a fragmented family unit with both primary caregivers suffering from addictions, one with "heroin" and the other with a "gambling" addiction; this young person fell pregnant at the age of "13" and during this time she was "running errands" for county lines..

This young person experienced domestic abuse from her "child's father", who was also participating in a "gang", she was estranged from her primary residence after break-down in relation with her parents, at this stage with a "six-month-old baby", eventually this young female was deemed "too young and unstable to care for her child", resulting in the baby residing with the male-parent relatives (Farrell, 2020). By the time this young person was "15 years old" and residing under the care of local authorities, she started socialising with senior boys who influenced her into taking part in "drug running", this young female transporting illicit substances using a "train from Victoria to…the south coast", in turn collecting "£200-300 in a day". She reported that she was "robbed of her drugs" and as a result she absconded, as she was unable to produce the "shortfall". Consequently, this young girl was "stabbed" by "the dealers in Southampton" (Farrell, 2020). Violence where individuals become injured in relation to currency, nexus "dealers" are the ones who inflict harm but also orchestrates robberies and are compelled into a contract of "debt-bonding", this in respect of the person who "lost our drugs, you lost us money" subsequently rendering this individual to enslavement indebted "to the gang leaders and unable to escape". This is what Farrell (2020) concluded about this case and similar cases.

From the perspective of Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London, there is an evident need to take stock and acknowledge the functions which "young women play in gangs" and by not acknowledging this aspect leaves "them vulnerable to harm", as reported by Eshalomi (2020, p. 5). One organisation that contributed to the Eshalomi study reported that females impacted by "gangs" had informed them "that criminals consider young women to be less suspicious to the police" (Eshalomi, 2020, p. 5). It is conceptualised that females taking "bigger roles within gangs" bring with it "bigger risk", also it is unusual that females would get a fair share in the stakes "or respect within the gangs" as females (Eshalomi, 2020, p. 5).

Generally, it is said that females play a supporting role in the nexus "or branches of male gangs" according to (Miller, 1980, Swart 1991) in respect of economical ventures, "girls are excluded" in the view of Bowker et al (1980) and Steffensmeier and Allan, (1996). To illustrate, females might be exploited "by gang members to transport items for county lines operations", as county lines regard females as being "less visible to

those authorities looking for gang association" (Rights Lab, 2021; Eshalomi, 2020, p. 5) therefore enabling females to go undetected without being culpable for investigation. In addition, the element of "non-metropolitan police force" are inexperienced in managing issues such as "county lines", according to HM Government (2016). Consequently, adolescent females are thus exposed to criminal exploitation "by male gang members", to some degree, this due to society "failing to spot the signs of gang associated girls", in the view of Eshalomi, (2020, p. 5).

From the report of Steffensmeier and Allan, approximately "90%" of "ganging is" dominated by "male" participants, which is the structural nature of the nexus (1996, p. 463). Figures presented by the NCA indicates that "males" account for "91% of" youths connected "to county lines" (2019, p. 2). In attempting to conceptualise the latent denotations of what the statistical figures say, it can be contended that this approximation has not altered over twenty-five years, and the male-dominated nexus remains strong, although with a slight incline of female involvement in nexus during the late era. In a report on "Modern Slavery: National Referral Mechanism", the figures on "Referrals by gender and exploitation" classification from the Home Office indicates in "2020-April to June" there was a likely "2,209…victims" (2020, p. 5). It was reported that in the last period "of 2019 since January 2020" the aspect of "county lines" had been categorised as a "sub-type of labour exploitation", however, minors who had been identified as "victims,…for sexual exploitation (88% and 90% respectively) were females" while minors criminally exploited generally had been "males", making up "93%, i.e. 661 individuals" (Home Office, 2020, p. 7). An examination revealed that frontline staff working with "young women are known to attend hospitals with invisible injuries like mental health related trauma"; due to the lack of noticeably wounded females are over-looked, therefore, no indication of "gang violence", consequently, "unlikely to be recorded by public sector agencies" according to Eshalomi (2020, p. 3). The "underreporting… by police record" illustrates that the "Gang Matrix", a system used to monitor nexuses by law enforcement "only record 6 gang associated women and girls… representing only 0.2% of the total cohort" in comparison "to 99.8% for men and boys" as indicated by the Metropolitan Police (2021) and Eshalomi (2020, p. 3).

In providing a critical stance, it can be argued that the earlier figures presented, which suggest a rise by 1% in female and crime in a quarter of a century, in correlation to the six nexus involved females, could be contended that this may not truly represent the reality in the field as females operate covertly. Thus, it can be conceptualised that because of the shaded gap in statistical figures, social intervention for females is not on the social agenda.

In protecting "gang-associated girls and young women," there has been development over the past few years resulting in localised communities acquiring a greater conception "of a previously hidden cohort of vulnerable women" (HM Government, 2016, p.4). A collaborative approach induced that associations now are in position to distinguish and help "vulnerable gang-associated girls" either "as victims of abuse or" (HM Government, 2016, p. 4) assisting the departure from the nexus lifestyle.

It is contended by Eshalomi (2020, p. 3) that due to the fact that "young women" residing on the margins of society who perhaps require assistance related to "gang violence" live in the shadows with no means of identification, their plight remains

invisible. According to Eshalomi's assessment, subsidising geared excessively towards assisting "young men", however, for adolescent females, their ability to present to "services" is reduced, usually as those individuals are unable to "vocalise their needs" (2020, pp. 3-4).

This aspect presents debatably a gap in knowledge in the sense that those individuals operating covertly may be doing so and carrying out functions of the nexus in vulnerable circumstances. Thus, they are unable to "desist" (McNeil et al., 2012) from criminality due to a lack of social interventions arguably oriented by females for females designed with a "lived experience" (Liddar, 2020) approach relatable in navigating criminal justice system, in breaking the cycle of female criminality and providing a holistic line of support in assisting rehabilitation. One charity, Refuge, was found to provide a holistic service acting as a hub which is designed, offering "women, girls and men experiencing violence and abuse" in relation to "one-on-one casework, groups work, outreach, independent advocacy and peer support"; this help is restricted to one area in the capital of England in providing a life-line to those individuals encountering "gender-based violence" (Refuge, 2017). Another organisation, Working Chance, is devoted to females in providing "tailored employability support for women with convictions" whilst creating a link between decision-makers and "employers" (Working Chance, 2021) in breaking the revolving door to female offending. Eshalomi (2020, p. 4), in her report, argues to combat "gangs and gang violence" requires an inclusive approach in meeting the requirements of those impacted together with "gang associated girls" with the intent to get their voices heard.

Conclusion

To conclude this essay, firstly, the investigation sought to understand adolescent females' association to criminality through employing theoretical perspectives and using available mixed-method research. The second aspect examined the concept of gender-based violence intersecting through sexual violence and forced criminality of females involved in county lines. Traditionally, women have been part of nexuses, however, in a late-modern society, this notion is sustained as women are said to solve problems in relation to identity, ethnicity, and social status by joining nexuses.

The theories embedded within this examination identified that females involved in nexuses tend to experience sex extremism in their societal functions deriving from a dysfunctional home unit, in which they experience alienation and lack of self-confidence induced by the diminished relation with the male parent. Consequently, this impacts an adolescent female's ability to form a bond with men, therefore, contributing to young females deviating behaviour in society. One study showed that girls participating in nexuses are significantly more likely to become victims than boys.

Many studies revealed that patriarchy and the subordinate position of women underlie their multiple victimization. In the sub-culture of crime, women operate covertly, a strategy of the county lines nexus as females are seen less dubious. An investigation identified a young female who resorted to county lines offending after experiencing a fragmented domestic sphere and who later became a victim of domestic violence. Officials are aware of the dangers females in county lines face whilst acknowledged that the problem is nationwide and needs confronting.

Thus, a multi-agency method is required to provide social assistance to females engaged in county lines, as the support that exists is geared towards men, and statistical analysis correlates with this notion. Thus, it is evident that there is a gap in the social system in assisting females in county lines exposed to exploitation. However, it was found that schemes are available and designed to support both children and young individuals, both female and male but is limited to a particular place in respect of escaping the nature of gendered abuse. It was recommended that rehabilitated females may be best placed in supporting adolescent females to break away from crime.

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THE CONSTRUCTION OF MASCULINITY: BIOLOGICAL OR SOCIAL?

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The term masculinity simply refers to the behaviours and social roles, within a given society, attributed to men. From a sociological viewpoint, masculinity is a broad concept that continues to develop over time. This is largely because there are many variations including: hegemonic masculinity, complicit masculinity, toxic masculinity, subordinated masculinity and marginalised masculinity (Connell, 2005). This is supported by Whitehead (2002) who states that masculinities are plural and are embroiled with variables such as race, ethnicity, class, age and cultures (Robinson and Richardson, 2015, p.97). Some argue that masculinity is a biological given, a position that views the differences between men and women as innate, immutable and universal. In relation to masculinity, it is argued that men are physically and mentally stronger than women, meaning they are more rational and unemotional, giving them full autonomy and domination in the social, economic and cultural spheres. However, this essay will argue that the ideology of masculinity is not a biological construct, but rather a social construct that stems from cultural values and teachings. To illustrate my argument, I will be using Connell's theory and analysis of hegemonic masculinity as she views heterosexual men as entrenched in the system of patriarchy. I will also analyse the gender model embedded into our society, which is made up of three structures: labour (the sexual division of labour), power (the overall subordination of women) and cathexis (the practices that shape and realise desire). However, in this essay, I will focus on the division of labour and how culture supports this.

Culture is transmitted through the process of socialisation, which is the practice of learning societal norms and values. This is taught through social institutions such as family, religion, education and the workplace (James, 2013, p.1). This is an important factor in constructing masculinity and associated roles, as culture and society teaches you what is deemed acceptable and what is not. This creates a social identity which relates to gender roles, as socialisation places you in a specific role within society (James, 2013, p.27: Woodward, 2000, p.17). For example, the division of labour is often taught through culture and places women in the private sphere, where they care and maintain the home whilst the men are out in the public spheres, where they financially provide for the home. Socialisation begins at an early age, which can be seen through gender socialisation, where a baby's sex is determined by their genitals. Alongside

gender socialisation, there are various qualities and attributes that children are taught from a young age, which is essential as they would need to gain an extensive comprehension of the expectations, norms and values within their culture (Swart and Grauerholz, 2012, p.6). This is because socialisation teaches you to become functioning members of society:

> "to be 'socialized' suggests that one understands the rules, customs, languages and symbols that characterize a particular culture and can draw upon these appropriately in social interaction" (Swart and Grauerholz, 2012, p.3).

In many cultures, masculinity refers to the subordination of women, for example in East Asia, women are expected to obey the rules set by the men in their family (Ramasubramanian and Jain, 2009, p.253). Parents teach their children to internalise this mentality and develop an understanding of their culture. Moreover, the power dynamics is often distributed through socialisation. Those in position of power are those who have financial control over capital and resources as well as control in the majority of the decisions. Men have historically viewed themselves as the breadwinner, but as economic prosperity and social status increases, the demand to retain this role intensifies. This is because it is regarded as "shameful" for a man to depend on or benefit from his wife's earnings (Jeffery and Jeffery, 2006). Yet, research reveals that vocabulary used by 'modern' men continues to reflect the oppressive chain (Twamley, 2012) for example, basic phrases such as "letting" or "allowing". This mentality stems from the socialisation process as culture teaches men to place themselves on a higher pedestal than women, causing men to feel embarrassed if they fail to meet these expectations. This further demonstrates my argument that masculinity is a social construction rather than a biological construct as a biological justification for masculinity fails to acknowledge modernity as a factor. This means that across time, women are becoming less financially dependent on men, affecting men's role as a breadwinner. A biological validation for the concept of masculinity proves to be futile as it becomes old-fashioned and less applicable to modern societies.

On the other hand, some will argue that biology still plays a vital role in organising the gender model as women are best suited to specific roles. The obvious biological example is that women physically bear, and nurse children and men do not. Linking this to another biological justification for gender roles, men and women hold different levels of hormones, specifically, testosterone in males. Mazur (2009) pointed out that gender differences are often attributed to males' higher levels of testosterone, which causes their higher level of aggression in comparison to women. This is often used as an explanation for why women should be the primary caretakers of children as it involves being gentle and nurturing. Men tend to not think about staying home or becoming the primary carer as it would damage the gender model. However, this biological argument for gender roles fails to acknowledge that men can mother and that a few of them do (Connell, 2002, p.88). Using biology to justify gender roles is an absurd reason for why men cannot take care of children. The real reason why men choose not to take the primary caretaker role is because of the apprehension attached to

it. Some believe that "doing "feminised" care work challenges the men's sense of themselves as men" (Hanlon, 2009, p.192).

This evidently illustrates that masculinity is a social construct as men are taught to "be men" through culture and societal norms and values. These values and customs have a considerable impact on how individuals view themselves compared to others. In relation to gender, masculinity and femininity have been conceptualised as opposite ends of a single dimension. For example, femininity refers to modesty, cooperation, caring for the weak and nurturing, whereas masculinity refers to heroism, assertiveness, aggression and acquisition of wealth. This means that if a man was to suddenly show traits of femininity, then this would question his position as a masculine man. This is supported by Freud's hypothesis that masculinity and femininity coexist in both men and women, such as hormone levels causing men to be physically more aggressive than women, and that gender is not fixed by nature but rather constructed through a long and conflict-ridden process (Connell, 1995, p.9). Conversely, biological evidence for gender differences certainly does exist but its interpretation remains constructed. Society chooses how to convey these differences and teaches it through the process of socialisation.

Furthermore, Connell's theory on hegemonic masculinity proves that masculinity is a social construct, as Connell identifies another variation of hegemonic masculinity which is complicit masculinity. This is simply defined as men who do not embody hegemonic masculinity but still benefit from the patriarchal dividend, in other words, the advantage of men in general from the overall subordination of women (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p.832). It is argued that male domination is a dynamic system which is constantly reproduced and reconstituted through gender relations (Carrigan et al, 1985, p.598). Thus, hegemonic masculinity is formed at the top of a hierarchy of masculinities, which is inseparable from social relations that invest in and construct masculinity. This supports my argument that masculinity cannot be a biological construction as it does not prove why men, who do not embody hegemonic masculinity still benefit from the patriarchal system. The reason why these men continue to benefit for this system is because it has been socially constructed and it is taught that men are superior to women; this mentality is taught through generations, continuing the chain of subordination. By culture, women are forced to lower their expectations, values and demeanour to meet the cultural expectations. This means that women must conform to the patriarchal system, allowing all men to benefit from this system, regardless of whether they embody a form of masculinity. Again, this has no relation to biology but rather the socialisation process of cultural norms and customs.

Similarly, toxic masculinity is further proof that masculinity is a social construct and not a biological construct. Toxic masculinity refers to when men feel the need to conform to gender norms, for instance, by acting like a "bully", restraining all emotions except anger and acting dominant in society over women or other men, which is typically displayed through microaggressions. This is supported by Connell as she states that masculinity changes as we speak and is not based on someone you are: "masculinity is not an object but a set of processes and relationships, a place in gendered relationships and the effects of gender practices in bodily experiences, personality, culture" (Connell, 2001, p.71).

This illustrates that some men that exhibit toxic masculinity are constructed through social relations and societal expectations, which damages their mental health as trying to maintain this hierarchal relation is a challenge. Society in general constantly develops, meaning social expectations should also change alongside it. This can be seen through the changes in femininity as women are becoming independent, financially and personally, yet the expectation of masculinity continues to remain as a social expectation, resulting in toxic masculinity.

Comparably, as mentioned before, masculinity holds men to maintain expectations, most notably as a 'breadwinner'. This can be seen through Willis' (1977) classic study on *Learning to Labour*, which followed 16 working class boys in Birmingham. This study was focused on the intersectional relations between class, age and gender, which concluded with sociological findings to illustrate the rejection of the middle-class education curriculum and values. Willis (1977) also concluded his argument by claiming that schools must become more inclusive with regards to gender and class. This study proves that masculinity is a social construct as the idea of becoming 'breadwinners', constructed by societal expectations, ultimately led to the working-class boys' failure, leaving the boys disadvantaged within society as they failed to meet societal academic expectations.

More so, mass media act a tool for constructing and reinforcing gender images and the differences between femininity and masculinity (Milillo, 2008). This can be seen through television commercials as cosmetic advertisements illustrate women as soft and suggests their main task is to look good (Yoder, Christopher and Holmes, 2008). Other advertisements illustrate women being ecstatic when their house is clean, or the laundry is done. Judging society by mass media, it is easy to assume that a woman's goal in life is to look good and to have a clean house. This is similar to mass media's portrayal of men and masculinity. Commercials depict men as tough, fit, drinking beer and driving cars, which can be seen through magazines intended for teenage boys. These magazines are filled with articles on cars and sports, advice on career achievements and other endeavours. Thus, supporting my argument that masculinity is a social construct as it places women and men into two separate lanes at the opposite ends of each other. However, studies shows that mass media do not have a controlling role in organising individuals into specific roles, for example, the "new man" theory, which emerged in the 70s. Traditional masculinity has been revised by the new man, "so that he embodies the sort of anti-sexism which is characterised by his attempt to form non-oppressive relationships with women, children and other men" (MacKinnon, 2003, p.13).

This is understood in relation to consumerism which entails practices of masculinity in the media and life-style magazines. The new man concept disavows sexism and female objectification and attempts to blur the distinction between leisure and work. This can be linked to fatherhood and reproduction, which involves an increase of the discourses about fathers' rights and the new father image.

Likewise, mass media in relation to sports also construct a dominant heterosexual, hegemonic masculinity. Connell argues that "in western countries … images of ideal masculinity are constructed and promoted most systematically through competitive sport" (Connell, 1987, p.83).

However, this homogenous conception of an ideal masculinity has been criticised, for example, Messner (1992) outlines that it does not construct a single dominant masculinity. One of his reasons is that there is a challenge to sport and heterosexual masculinity posed by the rise of female athletes (Robinson and Richardson, 2015, p.103). However, in society heterosexual masculinity in sports is still evident within children and schools. For example, phrases such as "you throw like a girl" are widely spoken among children, further reinforcing heterosexual masculinity.

Finally, as discussed earlier, men and women have different hormone levels, meaning that men are biologically more aggressive than women. Some use this a justification on why crime is predominately a male issue. However, biology is not the only justification of this behaviour, as social constructs such as middle-class values, force some lower-class men to commit criminal activities. This is supported by Cohen's theory on status frustration, as he argues that issues arising are largely problems of status and self-respect among the working-class children as a result of a socially constructed inability to meet the standards of a middle-class established culture (Cohen, 1958, p.20). Conversely, Miller (1962) differs from Cohen's theory but still argues that crime among men is a social construct. Miller does not see deviant behaviour occurring as a result of the inability for the lower-class to achieve success, predetermined by the middle-class culture, but rather explains crime in relation to the existence of lower-class subcultures. He believes that lower-class groups possess their own culture which is fundamentally different from those middle-class culture (Matza and Miller, 1998, p.1). One of the subcultures within the lower-classes culture, is '*toughness*', which relates to the concern of masculinity. Maintaining a higher status within these subcultures is just as important as achieving a middle-class goal. For example, men in these subcultures will find courage in the face of a physical threat and reject timidity and weakness, in order to maintain their reputation. However, criticism of this theory involves Bordua who argues that Miller's theory presents a picture of the lower-class living their lives isolated from mainstream society (cited in Matza and Miller, 1998, p.2). Nonetheless, this criticism does not contradict my argument but rather supports it further. This is because it continues to illustrate that masculinity within all cultures and subcultures is still a social construct that holds certain expectation of men. In this context, men are expected to portray and maintain a strict reputation in all aspects of life, forcing some men to turn to crime to achieve this goal and expectation.

In conclusion, masculinity is a social construction rather than a biological construct that places men in a higher position than women. Masculinity is a form of gender which is variously defined as an identity, social role and a form of power and is typically associated with men. Masculinity is the polar opposite of femininity which is largely associated with women and portrays them to act more nurturing and gentler than men. This forces men to obtain the opposite and being related to femininity may challenge their position as men in society. Masculinity also creates a gender model in most society, which places women in the domestic sphere and men in the public sphere. Thus, creating gender roles and stereotypes. Women are expected to care and look after the children, cook dinner, clean the house and look pretty, whilst men are expected to provide financially for the house, do all the handwork, look tough and fit, and overly assert themselves in all aspects of society. Biology attempts to justify and validate the patriarchal system by stating that men are physically and mentally stronger than women, thus creating a patriarchal dividend. Nonetheless, humans are complex beings, meaning it is hard to justify the entirety of masculinity solely on the basis of biology. Society is a constant evolving entity that constructs everything in it, including people.

Norms and values are a part of this construction, making masculinity a social construction. Biology may try to prove my point futile, but I believe that the biological construction argument relates to gender rather than masculinity. Gender is indeed a social construct, but sexuality and masculinity are shaped by society and culture.

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GENDER INEQUALITY IN SPORTS

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This essay will argue how sportswomen are undervalued compared to sportsmen due to gender inequality. Even though women are entering sports and achieving at a high level, gender inequality is still present. Sport has turned out to be an excellent profession for talented youth. However, the problem is that it is gendered. Social norms have a tremendous impact on sports. A factor that significantly contributes to gender inequality in sports starts from birth. Children learn different social norms and gender stereotypes by observing their primary caregivers, who in their turn have been inculcated these stereotypes by their caregivers. Parents tend to place their children in sports according to their gender. Boys positioned into sports that require strength, such as boxing, football and wrestling.

In contrast, girls are more likely to be positioned in sports that are more gender appropriate such as volleyball, swimming or dancing. For example, if a boy is talented at football, he is more likely to be encouraged to take it further, but when a girl is talented at football, she should give it "another thought". Meaning, biological differences assign gender roles within society.

Busfield and Campling (1996, p.31) define *gender* as "a practice organised in terms of, or in relation to, the reproductive division of people into male and female". As a challenge to biological determinism, gender as an analytic category was introduced to help understand the social and cultural origins of male and female characteristics and behaviours. Biological sex opposed social gender, which denoted physical differences in the reproductive organs between men and women. Subsequent differences in the qualities and behaviour of males and females held to be a result of social conditions which could not be reduced to biological disputes. Moreover, Oakley (2016) demonstrates that men and women are not two distinct groups: each person takes its position on an ongoing scale. Oakley (2016) explains how diverse cultures identify differences between males and females and explores how far observed variations are dependent on genetics and psychology and how far culture conditions them. In sports, these differences between sexes are biologically determined as well as culturally. For example, when I was growing up, my brother and I were talented in sports. However, I

was not encouraged to participate or follow my dreams. I was pushed to quit and concentrate more on my studies. In contrast, my brother is now a successful long jump athlete and Champion of Europe and the Balkans. He was encouraged by the family and the institutions that invested time and money to represent our country internationally.

Biological determinism is defined as the belief that human behaviour is controlled by genes or parts of their physiology (Oxford Reference, 2021). Culture rigorously affects a person's upbringing. Regarding sports, culture affects a woman's participation in sport, her training, and her competitions. Gender differences or gender inequalities draw on the assumption that women's bodies are weak and unstable. Women's bodies are naturally destined to give birth and look after children. The body is a project where strength and performance mean male, and beauty and charm mean female. Thus, women should limit themselves to the private sphere and leave intellectual and robust practices to men; hence, men are preferred over women in sports. Men are seen as more potent in all biological aspects in comparison to women. Men are instructed to be stronger, be in control and active in sports; they show competitiveness. The idea that who wins is stronger than the other reinforces masculinity. Also, through sports, essential areas within this kind of masculinities are being developed.

In recent years, more and more women are coming into sports. According to Title IX, a US law passed in 1972 to guarantee gender equality in education, women athletes have the right to equal opportunities in sports and other institutions that receive government funding (Women's Sports Foundation, 2019). Title IX does not exclude women from any sports. Women are free to participate in all sports, including football. Title IX offers equal opportunities for men and women. Men and women participate in different kinds of sports. There are sports where men dominate and other sports where women can enter more easily, or they are more accepted. Up until recently, for example, boxing was something that women would not normally do. In contrast, there are areas of sports that very few men do. Many questions arise, why do we have fewer men who are dancers and so many more women? Men tend to participate in on-ice dancing because it is considered a sport suitable for men. There are boundaries of different hobbies and occupations, which help men sustain hegemonic masculinities (Carrigan et al., 1985).

Previously, only men played, and women were to sit and watch. This idea was another example that illustrated people's sexism: women were not allowed to do something that men could. However, over the last century, things began to change. Women participate more in sports, including professional leagues, but many sports are not considered fit for women. Sports like wrestling, basketball and many others require men's strength. These kinds of sports are not seen as appropriate for females as they appear masculine (Verma, 2016, p.61). For example, my cousin, a female footballer, found it difficult to join a team for many reasons. One because women's football was so underrated that there was not a team. Second, when she finally joined, she was bullied for having footballer's legs which made her look masculine. All these factors contributed to her questioning herself and her body image growing up. As Singh and Naidoo (2017, p.1414) state: "women who succeed at the aggressive sports are often called butch, lesbians or manly instead of just being women in sports". Often, stereotypes of this kind lead to women engaging in socially constructed gender roles rather than following their dreams.

Masculinity is socially constructed, even when one's biological sex is male. Being masculine means being physically and mentally robust, rational and unemotional (boys do not cry) (Woodward, 2006). Men tend to live up to these expectations and represent themselves as such in life and sports. However, not all men are included in these categories. Masculinities are not equal, and such a form of identity is not easily performed or desired by many men (Neibergall and Sánchez, 2020). On the other side, women are expected to live their lives based on the stereotypes of women being nothing more than girls, wives, and mothers. Masculinity emerges as the effect of practices through which women and men engage in gender relations. Men identify as the breadwinners, athletes and leaders. In contrast, women identify as mothers, homemakers and engage in feminine jobs and sports.

According to Smith and Kimmel (2005), 'Hegemonic masculinity can be described as the configuration of the gender practices, embodying the solution currently agreed to patriarchal legitimacy, which guarantees masculine domination and women's subordination'. Hegemony in sports should not be understood as patriarchy, nor it means aggression, or a concept strengthened by force. Rather hegemony has been strengthened by cultures and institutions (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). In other words, culture and institutions favour men over women when it comes to participating in sports. The idea of sports being for men has been passed on from one generation to another, leading to men participating more in sports. For example, a participant in Seymour and Mills' (1989) book on the golden age of basketball, stated: "every man likes baseball, and if he doesn't, he's not a boy". Such a statement leads to the idea that even if a man is not interested in sports, sometimes he pretends to because he thinks that is the right thing to do. This shows that hegemonic masculinity is a form of masculinity that claims and sustains a dominant position in social life. In sports, men are expected to show their physical strength to avoid positioning at the bottom of the hierarchy. Men who do not maintain their expected gender role are considered weak or gay (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005)—leading to masculinities being hierarchal, fluid and contestable. In contrast, a talented woman and wants to participate in sports must fight for her passion and train for extra hours to match a man's physical activity. Hegemony contributes to gender inequality in sports, gender pay gap, women are denied the benefits, and are subject to discrimination (Alvarez, 2019). According to Alvarez (2019), "women's soccer team, widely more successful than the men, make less than half of what men earn". Hegemonic masculinity in sports means the disparities between genders (compatible with a societal construct) remain normal and contribute to the continuation of patriarchy.

Even though more women participate in sports, they are expected to remain feminine and are expected to feel lucky to chase a career in sports; they are also expected to remain silent regarding their pay. These inequalities perpetuate the belief that women are inferior to men. However, everyday female athletes succeed in sports, but because of gender inequality and patriarchal societies, female athletes are not valued for their talents and hard work just because they are females. Hence, hegemonic masculinity works to maintain male dominance in society (Richardson and Robinson, 2015). For example, Serena Williams is the best tennis player of her generation. However, society introduces her as the best female tennis player. In comparison, a footballer such as Cristiano Ronaldo is introduced as the best football player (Bridges, 2016). Gender inequalities are prevailing and influence women's inclusion in sports organisations in

decision-making and their contribution to sports. Traditional gender stereotypes can determine how many hours female caregivers have available, which may affect the amount of time they spend on sports. Meaning, women are often forced to spend less time training to prioritise their families. Women do more than men in all spheres, but still, they are undervalued and underpaid.

The gender pay gap between men and women is present in sports as well as in other industries. Singh and Naidoo (2017, p.1414) stated that "the difference between the world's highest-paid male and female athlete, namely Mayweather and Sharapova, is $270.8 million". Men get all the sponsorships needed as well as a higher wage to encourage them to achieve better. In contrast, the wage of women and the hardship of gaining a sponsor discourages them from pursuing their goals and objectives. It is unfair to women to be facing a gender pay gap even after everything they have achieved in sports through the years. Women are always facing obstacles in sports because they are always trying to prove themselves. Women are fighting against gender inequalities and breaking stereotypes. For instance, "twenty-eight players of the American Women's National Soccer Team sued the US Federation for gender discrimination on 8 March (International Women's Day) 2019, claiming uneven wages and working conditions" (McCoy, 2021). Women globally have shown and proved themselves to be equal to men or even better than men. Sportswomen are getting paid less even when they win World Cups. Even when they win matches, more fights and more competitions nationally or internationally, they are still being undervalued.

Gender inequality in sport affects sports participation and career paths. Coaching is another area where women are underrated. In sports, women lack leadership roles because sports industries are gendered. Both systems work under a hegemonic masculine norm. Sports establishments have institutionalised masculinity as the operating philosophy in sport, which considers male participation a privileged activity, reinforcing masculinity and masculinity as the appropriate leadership attributes. Also, the gender gap in sports organisations has become an institutionalised phenomenon (Junior Report, 2019). Across the Olympic and Paralympic Committees, in European and national Sport Governing Bodies and in national sports federations, the most recent statistics indicate relatively few women in the leadership roles. Women's under-representation in sports leading positions is because men dominate sports environments. Also, traditional gender stereotypes and gender-blind and prejudicial cultural standards and processes within institutions underestimate women's leadership roles.

During elections, colleagues vote for the managers, often tending to nominate new representatives with identical features as themselves (Elling et al., 2018). Women can be better than men in leadership roles, too, but because of gender inequality, women are underrepresented. Going back to the example mentioned above about my cousin, a female footballer, she has now graduated and is seeking a career as a women's coach. She holds all the qualifications and experience needed. However, she is unable to get a coaching career.

In contrast, male candidates who do not hold her qualifications can coach because they used to play football in their early years. Hence, the institutions consider them more capable of coaching than her. Moreover, my other brother played basketball as a teen for 4-5 years. While studying for a degree, he decided to get a job as a youth coach in basketball, and he was able to. If a woman had followed his footsteps, she probably

would not have been able to get a coaching job. In addition, Moawad (2019, p.28) asserts that some Spanish female basketball players and footballers face contract termination without compensation during pregnancy. Many players agree and sign those contracts without disclosing or protesting about this coercive provision because they risk losing their careers.

Gender inequality affects sports careers significantly, even when women are more qualified and experienced than men. According to Singh and Naidoo (2017, p.1414), "there is a stereotype that women lack traditional features of leadership skills compared to men". Also, society develops such norms and ensures a gender hierarchy on what men and women should believe, should follow and should achieve. These stereotypes have been embedded into each generation. Moreover, another issue that arises while analysing the gender pay gap in sports is how advertisers use female athletes to promote the perfect body image. The main issue is that those female athletes are used in marketing for their looks and gender rather than their talents. To illustrate, Serena Williams showed her determination by participating in the French Open a few months after giving birth to her daughter. Due to health conditions, Williams was required to wear a tight black catsuit. While Williams made a fantastic performance, what was focused on in the media was her catsuit. She was supposed to show her strength in that tournament, but this was taken away by her appearance and sexy outfit (Oates, 2019).

Williams's example illustrates the sexism within sports and gender inequality because cultural misfocusing is at the core of the disparity between genders. Society views women's sports differently from men's sports, even though historically, women produce better football than men (Hurley, 2021). Social media plays a great role in how women are portrayed, and the coverage women's sports get. If the media gives significant coverage to women's sports regarding their worth and talent in sports, rather than women's skins and bodies, gender inequality will start to shift. Also, sports as a social context can influence how athletes construct their gender and gender identities. Therefore, making sense of their identities would impact how they view themselves and how others view them. Meaning, the masculine concepts that sports is associated with would begin to change, and women's sports would be more valued.

In conclusion, sport is regarded as one of the most popular activities and cultural practices. It has plenty of benefits both mentally and physically as well as financially. However, sport is a highly gendered institution and a significant organisation for the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is maintained by the male members of society, who view sports as suitable for men only. Women are identified as unable to participate in sports that require physical power, a sport associated with a masculine image that reinforces men's superiority and the inferiority of women. Women are participating in sports more than ever before; however, their efforts and talents are undervalued. According to the concept of biological determinism, men and women should behave according to their assigned gender roles - women as mothers and homemakers while men work and participate in sports. Men are seen as superior to women and have the leadership skills that women lack; hence, women are paid less than men and lack leadership positions in the sports industry. Society needs to value women's worth to tackle gender inequality. Even though feminist movements and legislation such as Title IX helped the inclusion of women in sports, they are still undervalued even when they perform better than men.

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EXPLAIN HOW CONCEPTS FROM GENDER AND SEXUALITY STUDIES THAT WE EXAMINED AND DISCUSSED IN THIS MODULE CAN HELP US UNDERSTAND BODIES AND EMBODIMENT

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Gender and sexuality are well researched topics and have been examined by scientists and scholars alike, often in relation to biological and social understandings of the body. This essay explores how the body has been historically and contextually constructed using philosophical, biological, and sociological concepts. Particular attention has been given to women's bodies throughout the essay, which have been continually subjugated throughout history as the subordinate gender.

During the enlightenment period of the seventeenth century, philosophical thinker René Descartes introduced the theory that the mind and body are separate substances, known as dualism (Rosemund, 1998:2). Cartesian dualism posits that the mind is a spiritual and immaterial entity which experiences consciousness and emotions, whereas the body is physical so can be located and observed. The mind and body are thought to have distinct properties and are not mutually exclusive, meaning one can exist without the other. Ellis and Tucker (2015:52-53) note, however, that the mind is central to bodily movements and has 'power of independent volition', influencing how the body is harnessed and utilised. Therefore, an individual's gender is independent of the body and does not reflect their biological composition. Instead, the body is the medium between gender identity and gender expression (Boston Women's Health Book Collective, 2011:261). However, Bordo (1993:2) refers to mind-body dualism as a 'double-edged construction', of which the mind is present in the body, but the body does not represent the mind in its entirety. With this in mind, embodiment may be considered the expression of how an individual perceives and interprets their sense of self in relation to the context of society. Mind-body dualism has historically been likened with the male-female gender binary. Men were associated with the rational mind, while women have been associated with the body (Spelman, 1982:110). This persistent distinction has created an uneven power distribution between men and women which has unequivocally influenced biological and social understandings of the body and gender roles in favour of men.

Scientific thought has historically referred to sex and gender as interchangeable entities assigned at birth. Male and female describe the two biologically distinct sexes which are identified based on the external observation of genital organs. A male has a penis

and testes while females have a vagina and ovaries. Scientific explanations of sex and gender have sought to create the impression the two sexes are natural and biological opposites. However, children who are born with a sexual anatomy which fits less clearly within the biological definition of male or female are labelled intersex (Richardson, 2015). Intersex people may also have a different variation of reproductive organs or combination of chromosomes that do not match the typical XY (male) and XX (female) genetic structure. Despite not fitting into to a clear sex category, intersex people will often be raised as either male or female and may undergo surgery to reflect the gender chosen for them. Importantly, however, Richardson (2015) argues that male and female bodies are not 'naturally occurring facts of life'. Instead, the dichotomy has been given meaning through social practices and the perpetuation of gendered roles. The male-female binary places gendered expectations on the individual's future which is central to their life course (Paechter, 2007:6). This may become difficult for those who do not fit neatly within the specified guidelines. Children are then socialised into gender-specific behaviours related to their ascribed sex, supporting the notion of biological determinism that sex mirrors gender.

The social body is first introduced during primary socialisation which defines a child's given gender in familiar relationships and interactions. The home environment has a highly impressionable effect on a child's conception of gender before entering education where they are divided into more formal categories of male and female. Gender is instilled in children through communication and activities which reflect social and cultural expectations. As Paechter (2007:6) notes, learning to become male or female is the process of internalising acceptable behaviours related to either masculine or feminine characteristics. Famously described by Simone de Beauvoir (cited in Richardson, 2015:21), 'one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman', implying femininity (and masculinity) have social, not biological foundations. Gender is often linked to expression and performativity, suggesting gender is a physically embodied form of an individual's identity (Paechter, 2007:12). Facial expressions, mannerisms, personality, and clothing style are some of the ways in which gender can be visually expressed. These characteristics are typically associated with either masculinity, femininity or may be neutral. Habitual re-enactment of gender expression affirms to the self and others how the individual perceives their gender identity. In the English language, gendered pronouns are used to make a distinction between male and female, reinforcing the social prominence of gender in daily life (Woodward 2015).

Social binary systems irrefutably produce a power dynamic between the two parts. Masculinity and femininity are positioned in opposition with each other in order to create visible and identifiable differences between male and female. Generally, the gender binary has always favoured men, in contrast with women who have endured a position of inferiority. Power relations and inequality are intimately related with the social construction of gender and sexuality which are embedded in societal expectations and institutions such as marriage and religion (Morgan and Scott, 1993:10). Furthermore, society is structured to support and substantiate heterosexual relationships which are situated in a more powerful position than other sexualities. Heteronormativity has functioned to suppress and silence other sexualities. Rich (1980:632) postulates non-hetero sexualities are depicted as deviant, disgusting or completely unseen in society. Once such reason for this is that they are not biologically (as) able to reproduce in comparison to heterosexual relationships (Bhattacharyya, 2002:27).

Biological understandings of the body have repeatedly substantiated the contrasting difference between men and women. However, until the eighteenth-century, men and women were thought to have the same sexual anatomy and reproductive organs (Morgan and Scott, 1993:5). It was understood men's genitalia were external and women's were internally located. Before this discovery, men and women often wore similar attire with little gender distinction, emphasising the rise of socially constructed bodies in contemporary societies. For example, both men and women wore skirts and gowns throughout ancient history and as recently as the sixteenth century. Furthermore, the colours blue and pink have only carried gendered specific connotations in the past hundred years. Originally, pink was associated with boys which was considered a gentler version of the traditionally powerful red. Conversely, girls were associated with baby blue which was thought to be a more delicate colour to match their softer nature (Giudice, 2012:1321). A reversal of colour and associated gender took place in the 1950's and remains today as blue for boys and pink for girls, a division which visibly separates and reinforces the male-female gender binary.

Gender inequality has historically been attributed to women's physically weak and unstable bodies (Shilling, 1993:37). Menstruation was said to command a woman's behaviour, reducing her ability to think rationally. Moreover, women are often defined in relation to their biological potential, particularly as child bearers and mothers, a popular feminist complaint (Morgan and Scott, 1993:11). Marriages during pre-industrial societies were inextricably bound with control of women and their bodies. Before the 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act, women were unable to divorce their husbands unless they had evidential proof of cruelty, rape, or incest (The Guardian, 2009). This reality meant women could not escape marriages of which their expectations were to provide sexual access, procreate and nurture children within a family setting. While marriages provided economic stability, women were expected to fulfil homemaking and childcare roles which was seen as their natural responsibility (Woodward, 2004:21). Women's unequal position in society created a dependence on men for safety and stability.

Since then, there has been growing movement of support for the improvement of women's rights, healthcare and equality. For example, in 1948 the National Healthcare Service was introduced which provided healthcare to citizens of the United Kingdom, instead of solely men with insurance (The Women's Timeline, 2014). Prior to this, women were reliant on their husbands for economic support as they were less likely to work or receive an income due to their primary responsibility of childcare. Furthermore, in 1964 the Married Women's Property Act law was granted allowing a woman to keep half of any savings she had made from the allowance given by her husband (ibid:2014). This example illustrates women received a permitted income each month from their husbands, placing them under their economic control by not being able to provide for themselves. Then, in 1994 after 15 years of campaigning by activists, rape in marriages was made a crime. Prior to this married men assumed their wife's body was their physical possession which they were able to use at their disposal. In each of these instances, there is an underlying theme of women's dependence on men and a lack of control over their own bodies which have longstanding effects. Recently, particularly in the past sixty years, women have fought for equal rights and social inclusion which has improved their quality of life and ability to be independent.

In Michel Foucault's notable text Discipline and Punish (1991), Foucault considers the body as a social entity under the state's control. Foucault (1991:136) refers the body as

docile due to its ability to be trained and transformed into a disciplined member of society. Historically, corporal punishment was used to discipline those who did not conform to authority. Physical punishment has since been deemed inhumane in most modern societies. Instead, surveillance and discipline are used to regulate daily life through systems of power (Shilling, 1993:66), such as authority figures and law enforcement. For Foucault, these systems are embedded in individual behaviour and become omnipresent, creating a cycle of self-surveillance. The panopticon disciplinary system is a famous prison structure and analogy used to demonstrate how power operates inwardly on individuals. In a panopticon layout, cells are located in a circular configuration around a centrally located observation platform with a constant beam of light shining onto the prisoners. Prisoners are unable to identify when a prison guard is watching them, encouraging them to regulate their behaviour at all times (Paechter, 2007:19). This concept may be likened to what Bordo (1993:27) refers to as *the gaze*. The gaze is an individual's awareness of themselves in relation to others which unconsciously governs their actions and behaviour. Like discipline, the gaze is self-regulating and encourages individual reflection in daily life in accordance with societal structures and social norms.

A characteristic of modern societies, particularly in the western world is the growing interest and visibility of the body. The advent and expansion of technology and social media has provided an increasingly accessible platform for health, fitness, and beauty sectors to promote an image of the perfect body, typically represented by cis-gendered, white men and women. Beauty ideals are communicated through all avenues of the media, particularly by celebrities who act as role models for younger generations. These ideals are internalised by audiences and become dominant societal aspirations (Boston Women's Health Book Collective, 2011:167). Furthermore, in modern societies there is a heightened level of expectation on individuals to take responsibility for their own well-being and success.

Giddens (1991:77) uses reflexivity as a useful concept for understanding the body as an active tool for self-reflection, awareness, and improvement. Reflexivity is a highly ingrained daily function which monitors the self in accordance with perceived personal identity. Thus, individuals develop the ability to routinely reflect on their choices and personal contribution in their own lives. The body is an important part of reflexivity, holding a physical presence of information about an individual's identity which is constantly being transmitted to others through visible indicators such as appearance and demeanour (Shilling, 1993:3). Body projects is the term used to describe the body as an instrument of an individual's control which should be continually maintained and worked upon in accordance with personal identity. Eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, and getting enough sleep are some of the habits which underpin a conventional healthy lifestyle. Scientific research is often used to provide an empirical foundation and justification for a healthy body, despite biological limitations including body size or disability. Beyond health, body projects are informed by standardised beauty ideals and fashion trends which are continually being reinvented. Plastic and cosmetic surgery are being used more commonly to alter or enhance physical bodily features, often in relation to popular culture trends. According to the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons report (Aesthetic Medicine, no date), 92% of cosmetic procedures completed in 2019 were performed on women with the lead surgery being breast augmentation. These statistics are telling when compared with contemporary representations of femininity and the need to appear desirable.

The increased exposure of the social body has also prompted the rise of the body as a commodity, an item which can be bought or sold. The media are largely accountable for this escalation which is driven by capitalist profit. Companies benefit from selling consumer culture goods and are marketed on websites such as Facebook, YouTube and Instagram who have millions of active users. Social media users are presented with a continual flurry and bombardment of visual social representations of masculinity and femininity. Bordo (1993:23) refers to contemporary societies as 'image-dominated cultures', the representations of which are then internalised by their audiences. Incidentally, these images change the cultural representation of what men and women believe they should like (ibid:25). These images create subliminal meaning which Shilling (1993:57) notes are linked with the self-worth of women. In order to be acknowledged by men, women must regard themselves as a commodity whose value is based on their perceived attractiveness, encouraging women to focus on their external presentation. Furthermore, McKinnon (cited in Rich, 1980:641) suggests the need to appear attractive to men is also found in the workplace. In general, women have lower paying jobs and recognise appearing sexually attractive to men, who hold the economic power, will contribute to improving their employment status.

A noteworthy example of the objectification of women can be seen in pornography, an industry which has expanded considerably since content has become readily available via the internet. Rich (1980:641) agues the portrayal of women in pornography is degrading and influences the consciousness of those who watch, instilling a message that women are objects to be consumed. In pornography, context is rarely provided for sexual encounters, encouraging audiences into thinking women are readily available (ibid:641). Furthermore, vulgar language and physical violence are some of the behaviours used which are depicted as acceptable, sometimes even enjoyed by the receiver. Pornography websites have memberships subscriptions, which transforms the actors into a commodity (Barbosa, Romani-Dias and Veludo-de-Oliveira, 2020:585), further accentuating the body as an object of consumer control.

Another striking example of women being objectified is in strip club settings. Women dance sexually and provocatively remove their clothing in exchange for money for the enjoyment of the viewer. Strip clubs are sometimes referred to as gentlemen's lounges; however, the widely understood definition of a gentleman is a man who is chivalrous and courteous towards women, a clear contrast to how women are treated at strip clubs, without dignity or respect. Objectified women may value themselves solely on the basis of their appearance, scrutinising their body weight and size in relation to male desire rather than their own understanding of what constitutes beauty (Blood, 2005:38). Consequently, Rich (1980:633) notes women are encouraged to become consumer victims to achieve a well-proportioned body and symmetrical face. Dieting, fitness regimes or beauty therapies are some of the trends a consumer victim may undergo to appear attractive to the opposite sex. When starting at a young age, there is a heightened risk of the adolescent generation developing impaired menstrual, nutritional, and intellectual functioning (Bordo, 1993:61). Coincidingly, there has been an increase in eating disorders and anorexia in the past hundred years. Girls and women make up 90% of diagnosed cases, owing to societal pressures to be slim. However, there is an increased visibility of obesity in Western cultures, which Shilling (1993:57) suggests is used to reject societal expectations of women by embodying a fuller figure.

This essay has examined social and biological constructions of gender and sexuality in relation to the body. First, the concept of dualism was used to offer a clear division

between the mind and body, supporting the idea gender identity and sexuality are located in the mind, while the body is used to physically express oneself (Paechter, 2007:11). Foucault's contribution of the 'docile body' amplified the state's control in maintaining disciplined members of society. Furthermore, while women have sought rights and control over their bodies in recent history, they have also been defined as sexual objects (Morgan and Scott, 1993:10). The increasing visibility of the body in social spaces has encouraged a heightened awareness for individuals to appear attractive. The body has been continually commercialised in the media to appear aesthetically pleasing, encouraging individuals to be mindful of their own body image. Reflexivity and body projects were drawn upon to demonstrate the embeddedness of self-reflection and concern with individual improvement in contemporary culture. These social pressures have been particularly prominent for women, causing them to undergo cosmetic procedures or partake in beauty therapies to improve their appearance.

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EPISTEMOLOGICAL POSITIONS, DEHUMANISATION AND COMPULSORY HETEROSEXUALITY

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Gender discrimination is a phenomenon that, despite being in contradiction with postfeminist theory, (Robinson and Richardson, 2015:238) is still exceedingly prevalent in many venues of our current society, if not in all of them. The beginning of misogyny and sexism has been pinned to ancient times, showing that even though there appears to have been matriarchal forms of social structures in few examples, the hegemony of male power is a constant across times and cultures (De Beauvoir, 2010:127). In this essay I will compare some historical examples of misogyny and sexism to the common image of dehumanized women, and how that discourse has been maintained for the benefit of heteronormativity in current society. A brief analysis of biological essentialism and its comparison with social constructionism will follow, with an emphasis on how history is essential to the understanding of the socially constructed categories as we know them today. Through the lens of Dalal's article on the roots of racism (2006) I will argue on some similarities with gender discrimination. Race is in fact a socially constructed category of people, and the processes of belonging to a certain category rather than another seem to trace back to infancy and early development. I will finally illustrate how heteronormativity is reinforced and maintained also thanks to processes of category assigning and commonly accepted discourses of biological essentialism.

Objectification and Dehumanization

"There are many monsters on the earth and in the sea, but the greatest is still woman" once said Menander, a Greek dramatist (De Beauvoir, 2010:126). Nietzsche's aphorism no. 144 (2009) reads 'When a woman has scholarly inclinations, then something is usually wrong with her sexuality. Infertility itself tends to encourage a certain masculinity of taste, for man is, if I may say so, "the infertile animal."'. These quotes seem very far away in the past, but to find misogynist comments we need to look no further than 'she's such a b***'. These are only a few examples of the repertoire of misogynist sentences, papers, comments that have been made in history. In these cases, we see women depicted as monsters and animals, as if they were frightening and abhorrent creatures, but most importantly, not humans. In her book and attendant lectures on Post-Traumatic Slave Disorder, DeGruy (2005) explained how White

Americans employed this same method to disassociate themselves from the brutalities they were inflicting to Black slaves. They published pseudo-scientific papers and books on the subject, explaining how Black women did not feel the same pain as other women when beaten or raped, or how Black men did not require the same amount of sleep as White men, and could therefore work all day to the point of exhaustion, all in order to make people perceive them as non-human, and therefore legitimize the violence and abuse inflicted on them. The same method has been employed in the objectification and dehumanization of women. According to the objectification theory, women's worth, values and competence is often unconsciously measured by simply looking at their appearance. Women therefore learn that their bodies represent them. However, according to some studies, the same thing cannot be said to happen to men to the same extent (Heflick et al., 2011:573, Wollast, 2018:79).

A rich body of research on dehumanization and objectification of women has been conducted specifically on sexualization. Vaes et al. (2011:774-775) argue that when women are objectified, their role from the outsider is understood from a consumption lens. What purpose can she serve, what is her value, how is she a consumable good? From a sexual point of view, women are often portrayed on the media or in pornography as sexual objects, specifically for the consumption of heterosexual men. They therefore become sexual objects, and this leads to their dehumanization and loss of individuality, and it can be argued that stripping a person of his/her human characteristics is denigrating. Interestingly, in the study Vaes et al. discovered that only women and not men were dehumanized when sexually objectified, showing evidence of the moral judgment attached to women's sexuality (Vaes et al. 2011:784). We can see the relevance of Vales et al.'s (2011) argument with the above quote by Nietzsche. Women are portrayed as sexual and procreative objects, and their interest in education must mean some alleged physical imbalance in their natural functions, and they are compared to 'the infertile animal'. There is nothing left of women's humanity. According to Bernard and Wollast (2019:2) one of the effects of sexual objectification-led dehumanization is victim-blaming or lesser responsibility given to the perpetrator in cases of sexual assault or rape, especially because of the negative moral value attached to female sexualized bodies. In order to understand why women's sexuality is attributed moral value, we first need to take into consideration the epistemological assumption of biological essentialism, and the discourse it creates around being 'naturally' man or woman.

Biological essentialism

The role of the body in understanding reality has been thoroughly studied and theorized. Biological essentialism tries to make sense of the world through a strict scientific and anatomical lens. Women and men are different because of their genitalia, and that makes them who they are. Consequently, women's role is to procreate, and they biologically have certain characteristics like being caring, emotional and submissive, in order to be better at child rearing. Men, on the other hand, can spread their seed to as many women as possible, in order to pass and maintain their genetic heredity, and therefore display behavioural traits like being assertive, strong and unemotional. Biological essentialism therefore only focuses on the body as the only factor that determines masculinity and femininity, and explains behaviours, characteristics, personalities and preferences, dismissing the sphere of the social into the construction

of reality (Robinson and Richardson, 2015:143). Butler (2006:72) argues that this is causally linked with the concept of compulsory heterosexuality. If women's goal is to procreate and take care of the offspring, and if men's goal is to maintain their genetical heritage, heterosexuality must consequently be the only possible connection. All the rest is therefore 'unnatural' because it goes towards the extinction of the species. Even though biological essentialism has been disproved and, as Stanley points out (2002:35), cytogenic textbooks have made clear in the last 15 years that gender is a matter of upbringing, gender dynamics are still often played out in biological terms. We are also constantly reminded of what society deems as the 'norm' by the institutions that form our society. To mention one of the main examples, marriage, which was only recently allowed for same-sex couples in only a few countries. It can be argued that despite science has disproved biological essentialism, some of its core assumptions are often reinforced in society (O'Connor, 2017:496).

Social constructionism

At the opposite side of the epistemological spectrum of gender and sex, there is social constructionism, which argues that gender (or what constitutes being man or woman) is totally created by society through interaction, language, processes of imposition and reinforcement of values and features which all work to the creation of meaning. Butler (2011:xiv) argues that the concept of nature needs to be historically positioned, in order to understand the relation between sex and gender. We cannot understand contemporary social dynamics and gender positioning without at least attempting to trace them back in history. In order to do so, De Beauvoir's (2010) historical account of the female condition comes to our help. She describes how in primitive societies individuals were forced to go through the struggle of survival against the elements, animals, and illness. However ignorant of the reasons behind procreation, female's lives were often dictated by multiple pregnancies, which were also often their cause of death. With the creation of the concept of property, posterity becomes the prevailing attribute, and consequently female's procreative role in society becomes prestigious (De Beauvoir, 2010:101). However powerful, De Beauvoir argues that the female was always seen as the 'Other', especially for her formidable power of reproduction, and that her relationship with the male sex was never one of reciprocity. Because of her special condition, she was always dependent on men and 'the only question is if, after marriage, she is still subjected to the authority of her father or her oldest brother—authority that will also extend to her children—or of her husband. In any case: The woman is never anything more than the symbol of her lineage' (De Beauvoir, 2010:106).

Tracing the historical account of female position in ancient society, it becomes easier to understand why her gender attributes are what we perceive them to be in our current society according to social constructionism. Social constructionism is the epistemological assumption that meanings of things are socially created. When talking about gender, this means that all the practices that we claim to belong to a gender or the other, are not a naturally intrinsic characteristic of the biological sex but are created in time and through practices. According to Lorbel and Farrell (1991:112-113) such practices begin from birth with the assigning of a sex or the other, depending on one's physical attributes, and it continues in practices as subtle as picking certain clothes with 'feminine' or 'masculine' colours, or gifting the baby certain toys depending on the baby's sex, and ultimately treating 'boys' and 'girls' differently, and communicating

different expectations to them on the way they should behave, according to their assigned sex. They therefore come to understand the world according to the category that they were taught they belonged to. Most people comply with these expectations, also because it is easier to do so than to go against them. Going against the norm is in fact difficult, or sanctioned, in order to maintain an orderly division of work and production and to have a predictable social order (Lorbel and Farrel, 1991:114-117). To make an example of the latter, heteronormativity is so much considered the norm that most countries do not allow same-sex marriages, resulting in excluding same-sex couples from benefitting from certain civil rights. In some countries, being homosexual is a crime punished with prison. Butler goes one step further, and investigates not only the construction of gender, but of sex. If we talk of gender as constructed on the basis of sex 'then sex does not accrue social meanings as additive properties but, rather, is replaced by the social meanings it takes on; sex is relinquished in the course of that assumption, and gender emerges, not as a term in a continued relationship of opposition to sex, but as the term which absorbs and displaces "sex," the mark of its full substantiation into gender or what, from a materialist point of view, might constitute a full de-substantiation' (Butler, 2011:xv)

Understanding misogyny through Dalal's 'Racism: Processes of Detachment, Dehumanization, and Hatred'

A paragraph of this paper deserves to be dedicated to Dalal's (2006) paper 'Racism: Processes of Detachment, Dehumanization and Hatred'. He analyzed the most intrinsic processes of the formation of racism within the human psyche, and I found it illuminating in explaining not only racism but discrimination as a phenomenon. I translated his paper on racism to the concept of misogyny because of one main similarity: the fact that it is widespread in society and across societies. It is not the analysis of the hatred towards a single person, which could be attempted to be explained psychoanalytically, but it seems to be deeply ingrained in a huge proportion of the population. And even the individuals who are not openly misogynist seem to display internalized misogynism at times (Vaes et al. 2011:784). In his paper, Dalal explained that the root of racism cannot only be found in psychoanalysis through the exploring of traumatic experiences that some individuals will have been through during their lives and especially infancy, and that might translate in a disorganized psyche and aggressive or racist behaviours, because it fails to answer to the question: 'why so often Black people (for Black here I mean non-White) and not people with red hair? Why so many people come to hate some specific categories of individuals?' Individuals will unconsciously project their inner insecurities and 'badness' onto others, but this still fails to explain why so often Black people, women and other marginalized categories become the recipient for people's projections (Dalal, 2006:133-134). The paper goes on to explain that the formation of a person's psyche is not only a psychological process but also a social process. Society is formed by a multitude of groups, which exist in connection to one another through power relations. Since the time one is born, the understanding of such power relations and the introjection of what one belongs to and what one does not belong to will contribute to the formation of the individual. The caregiver's behaviour towards the infant is informed by their specific position within these societal power relations. The infant will not be raised outside a social reality, but intrinsically socially positioned. The individual is therefore formed in connection with the social (Dalal, 2006:147). If we come to understand ourselves through which

categories we belong to, if follows that there are categories we do not belong to. But how do we choose which categories to differentiate between? The boundaries of the 'us' and 'them' are extremely fluid in the myriads of distinct groups. So, in order to maintain us anchored within a certain group, our emotions trick us into the idealization of a group and the denigration of another and make people from the same group appear much more alike than they truly are. I will now conclude with a quote that sums up Dalal's explanation of discrimination: 'first, we cannot not divide; second, in order to belong and to be included, we are obliged, in that same existential moment, to exclude; and third, the lines along which we divide are by no means natural, however self-evident they might appear to be at times' (Dalal, 2006:159).

Compulsory Heterosexuality as consequence of gender positioning

Following Dalal's explanation of discrimination, I would like to make sense of the female experience. I am talking here of 'female' because my opinion is that not all people born with female genitalia are women (Robinson and Richardson, 2015:65). When a person is born with female genitalia, her caregiver will make sense of her position in the world through the category 'woman'. In this case, the category woman works in power relations with the opposite category 'man', as the weaker of the two. However codepedent they might be, they hold different attributes. According to Dalal's theory (2006) we idealize one category and denigrate the other, and in this case 'woman' happens to be the denigrated one because the one in a weaker power position, even if one belongs to it. This way, we could explain not only misogyny, but also women's internalized misogyny. In his article, Dalal did not explain the internal processes of belonging to one of the discriminated groups. However, it is interesting to notice that women often act in ways that reinforce the power imbalance between the two categories instead of recognizing the pattern and fighting against it. It could be argued that there exists an internalized sense of inferiority brought about by the social positioning that happens in infancy when we are assigned to a specific social category or categories. It is very difficult, therefore, to recognize how this social positioning is socially constructed, and therefore even harder to escape it. According to Rich (1980:633) heterosexuality is the main attribute that society imposes to the category 'woman'. She argues that, following the path of biological essentialism, women are often entangled in practices that reinforce their socially constructed goal of a woman: reproduction. Consequently, they are sanctioned when they associate themselves with practices that deviate from compulsory heterosexuality. Historically women who were seen as deviant because of practices such as resisting marriage or being educated were persecuted, like in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth century's witch hunt in Europe (Rich, 1980:635). In contemporary society femininity is maintained in a more subtle way. For example, women are often judged (by men and women) when they go to work without make-up on, when they do not have a partner, when they prioritize a career instead of having children, even when they turn down unsolicited compliments from men. It still seems that a good part of women's existence is in function of their reproductive duty. Attributing women's value to their reproductive capacity and/or willingness ultimately strips them of their individuality, by making them reproductive objects. Furthermore, it exacerbates grades of privilege/discrimination withing the category 'woman', since a woman often cannot choose the way she looks in order to be more likable to the other sex, she cannot choose her sexual preferences and her reproductive capacity. Unfortunately, even though objectification and discrimination

are in some case overt and explicit, Anderson (2014:xii) argues that in most cases it is something that women as well as men do unconsciously, because even women come to understand the world in a gendered way. However often unconscious, Anderson (2014) states that such forms of discrimination still have catastrophic consequences in all strata of society, from education to the workplace to the family.

Conclusion

Starting from the phenomenon of dehumanization and objectification, or the way the discourse around women often takes shape in our culture, the way they are portrayed in the media, in porn, and often in the way they are spoken of, I attempted to dig deeper into the roots of such discourses. A huge body of academic work proved that differences between objectification and dehumanization between the sexes exist, and I attempted to trace them back to biological essentialism and the popularity it won in the commonly shared view of society. Biological essentialism gave a seemingly scientific explanation for the differences in behaviour and characteristics of the two sexes, and its popularity started its decline with the emergence of social constructionism. The latter epistemological assumption, taken to its extreme, shakes the foundation of society as we know it today by theorizing that we not only created meaning around genders, but also around sexes. The boundaries between the two ultimately come to blur, as we take social constructionism to its entirety. In order to understand the mental processes that create discrimination, and in this case gender discrimination, I argued it is essential to look not only at the social, but at the psychosocial, and the formation and assigning of different categories to different individuals in early development. Dalal's (2006) paper helped me in doing so. It is in fact psychosocially that we can understand gender positioning, and we can come to understand one of its consequences, if not the main: heteronormativity and its role in the maintenance of a predictable society.

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SECOND YEAR ESSAYS
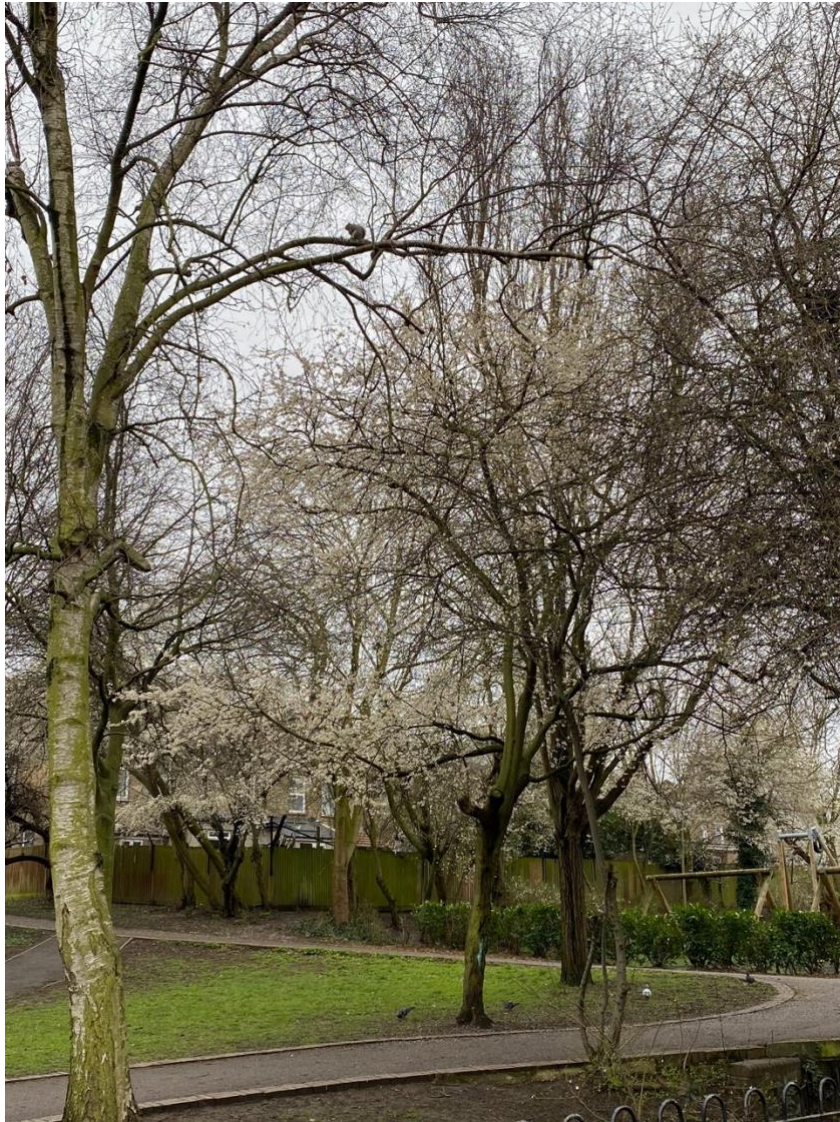
ANTAGONISM IN DEMOCRACY IS MORE EFFECTIVE TO ACHIEVE 'DEEP DEMOCRACY' AS IT ENLARGES AND COMPLICATES ARENDT'S 'DEMOCRACY AS ACTION'

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Module: SY5008-Social Theory II

In this essay I will be arguing that modern democracy maintains a façade of former genuine democratic principles whilst being increasingly controlled by privileged elites. To avoid generalizations, I will be referring to democracy in the UK, providing a historical trajectory of how exclusion of 'the Other' by the British Empire has prevented political inclusion until the modern era. I will use Iris Marion Young's (2002) concept of 'deep democracy' to demonstrate that any form of political exclusion prevents democratic societies living up to their promise. I propose that Hannah Arendt's (1958) conception of inclusive political action explains how the lack thereof has equalled a society where

> men were not equal, they could neither understand each other and those who came before them nor plan for the future and foresee the needs of those who will come after them (1958, p. 175)

In order to build a 'deep democracy' which is inclusive and representative of everyone's needs, I argue that Chantal Mouffe's (2016) concept of antagonism enlarges and complicates Arendt's 'democracy as action.' Arendt suggests that in existing democracies there is a reinforcing link between socio-economic inequality and political inequality that allows the elite to use previously democratic processes to maintain privilege and perpetuate injustice, allowing them to maintain power. Political action occurs within the post-colonial and neoliberalist modern state, and an antagonistic approach is necessary to provide counter-hegemonies. Mouffe notes that antagonism is unavoidable in political and individual relations, and presents an alternative democratic theory called 'agonism', a system which allows and emphasizes positive outcomes of conflict. I propose the term 'democracy as agonism' which provides a clearer route to an inclusive 'deep democracy' compared to Arendt's 'democracy as action' because antagonism can diminish and disrupt the power relations which sustain inequality. 'The constitution of an 'us' is the demarcation of a 'them' and an agonistic democracy allows for conflicting actions between adversaries, not enemies. Arendt relies on principles of individual and collective action to achieve what Young (2002) refers to as 'deep democracy', this essay will argue that antagonism towards existing injustice reveals the democratic exclusions in a way that simple action cannot. An agonistic democracy

allows us to be inclusive of everyone, even groups with opposing cultures and principles.

Arendt argued that there is a problem with democracy because it has been used as an instrumental means, rather than an end unto itself. To solve this problem, Arendt presents a theory of action and highlights freedom, meaning the possibility of new beginnings, and plurality, meaning the presence of others to witness actions, as being vital to creating a democracy which serves no other cause than its own. Arendt uses the term 'vita activa' to refer to a life devoted to public-private matters as distinguished from 'vita contemplativa', a life devoted to a theoretical understanding of the world. For Arendt, the vita activa is categorised into three fundamental categories – labour, work and action. The human condition of life is maintained with labour, such as growing food, sourcing water and building shelter. The second way of life within the vita activa refers to work, which Arendt describes as the 'working life of the free craftsman and the acquisitive life of the merchant' (Arendt 1958, p. 12). The category of action in the vita activa is the most important way of life according to Arendt; action corresponds to the status of freedom and plurality as instruments to deliver 'democracy as action' as opposed to the vita contemplativa which 'disregard[s] the phenomenological categories within a political life' (Shymkiw, 2010, p. 4). Arendt defines the public sphere as a place to be heard and seen, as compared to the private sphere where 'passions of the heart, thoughts of the mind, delights of the senses' (Arendt, 1958, p. 50) take place. The public realm in a deep democracy is formed with permanence of freedom and plurality and 'without this transcendence into a potential earthly immortality, no politics, strictly speaking, no common world and no public realm, is possible' (Arendt, 1958, p. 55). It could be argued that democracy has been used as a means for elites to satisfy their needs in the private sphere, and in order to ensure democracy is an end unto itself, the public sphere must be guided by a permanent ethos of freedom and plurality. Arendt's democratic vision is based on the equality to act, to be seen and to be heard within the public realm where 'differences of position and the resulting variety of perspectives notwithstanding, everybody is always concerned with the same object' (Arendt, 1958, pp. 57-58). Although Arendt does not mention antagonism, a democracy which is constructed through the actions of different perspectives could be considered inherently antagonistic.

Action as democracy relies on actions to be seen and positioned in the different perspectives of the collective to be considered in democratic processes. The legitimacy of democratic decisions depends upon how much those affected by the decision have had the opportunity to influence the outcome and have been included in the decision-making process. Iris Marion Young (2002) presents a vision of a 'deep democracy', where ideals of equality and inclusion remain permanent, which can be compared to Arendt's democratic concepts of freedom and plurality. Both Young and Arendt use critical theory to 'reflect on existing social relations and processes to identify what we experience as valuable in them' (Young, 2002, p. 10). Prior human action determined the environment and democracy in which newcomers are born, and it is their action as a collective which will determine the democracy ahead. Reflecting on the existing environment can alter the changes in democracy as peoples' positions in relation to government alters, and hegemony can be challenged. Young (2002, p. 1) provides the

example of when she created a petition calling for a question to be put on the May ballot in Pittsburgh asking voters to approve a Police Civilian Review Board. They were tasked with collecting 11,000 signatures, of which 9,000 were denied, yet Pittsburgh campaigners still managed to pass the referendum despite court action attempting to block it. The Police Review Board was created to hold police accountable for unnecessary violence, transforming the democratic environment by improving justice in the criminal system. This example shows that when a collective reflects upon the existing democratic structures, they can position themselves against the hegemony, creating a democracy which considers its position to all. Young (2002) identifies inclusivity as the barrier to deep democracy, with which collective problem-solving is possible and is likely to promote justice because people can be open to new opinions and be persuaded by the wisdom of other people's claims. The issue of inclusion in democracy denotes that some are excluded, and to be a part of Arendt's democracy as action, antagonism may demand a larger audience for the action to persuade others. Democratic processes should be centred everywhere and to everyone, and despite policies aiming to improve inclusivity, the excluded are often only included into existing hegemonic norms. It can therefore be argued that claims of inclusivity in modern democracy only create equality in theory. If democracy as action in an existing political environment has the potential to achieve deep democracy, understanding the history trajectory of democratic exclusions can reveal what counter-hegemonies are required today.

The theories presented in this essay present inclusion as the key factor in the determination of a deep democracy, which is defined by the EU as:

> an understanding that democracy is not merely a matter of changing governments, but about building the right institutions and the right attitudes for a given societal context…including respect for the rule of law, freedom of speech, respect for human rights, an independent judiciary and impartial administration' (Ashton cited in Bossuyt, 2013, p. 108)

In my view, modern democracy has evolved from violent colonial practices which act to exclude the Other. Colonists were not inclusive to the people they colonised; violence and coercion was used to form a hegemony of Eurocentric norms, values and beliefs legitimised with a racial and cultural typology to identify the Other. Despite modern 'democracy's universalist and inclusionary claims' (Gordon, 2010) exclusionary democratic processes are social genealogical products of the historical colonial hegemony produced by the British Empire. Democracies co-existed with colonisation, the Western liberal regime forced and coerced indigenous populations using violent practices that breached their own democratic values. These actions were legitimised with hierarchical typologies; black people were evolutionally inferior, women did not deserve power, disability was a mark of moral sin. It can be argued that exclusionary colonial practices within the democratic system determine that democracy is a façade and claiming to be so functions to maintain exclusionary practices which only serves to privilege those who already have power. Essentially, the Other of the Empire included any groups of people who did not agree to or benefit the cultural hegemony and the same exclusionary practices are still legitimised in democracy today. For instance, after the 2008 economic crash, the UK government implemented austerity measures, cutting public services and social welfare. Oxfam (2013) reports that 'when all austerity measures are taken into account… the poorest tenth of the population are by far the hardest hit… by comparison, the richest tenth will have lost the least'. It could be argued

that colonial practices created a hegemonic belief that democracy should be tailored to the needs of the economy; the elites who benefit most from them legitimise exclusions to prevent others from accessing the riches of the Empire. The unequal power relations in democracy today are a reproduction of the hegemony that legitimised exclusions in the colonial period, and according to Mouffe (cited in Hansen et al, 2014, p. 4) a counter-hegemony relies on 'the possibility for different views to express themselves in an agonistic struggle.' Exclusionary practices were used to prevent an agonistic struggle so the dominant hegemony could be maintained.

As we have noted, Arendt's democracy as action depends on freedom and plurality in the public sphere, and Young's vision of inclusive deep democracy must be envisioned in the post-colonial and neo-liberalist society. Exclusion in democracy today is a result of institutions reproducing colonial hegemony based on oppressive racist, ableist and sexist ideologies. Colonialism was deployed by democracy as a way of achieving geopolitical and economic goals, as well as social and political objectives (Gordon, 2010). Mouffe argues that what is seen as the accepted 'natural order' is the result of a 'hegemonic nature of every kind of social order [made from a] configuration of power relations' (Mouffe, 2016) which means that every order is therefore changeable with counter-hegemonies which can be delivered by social movements. The identification of 'me' can only be described in its opposition to a 'them'; these differences have formed social hierarchies throughout history and that hegemony is maintained in liberal democratic societies. Identity is based on our relation to others, and this reveals conflict and antagonism between identity groups that threaten each other's existence, for example indigenous populations and white settlers. Therefore, democracy cannot be without antagonism because with political identification comes the acknowledgement of difference.

 Existing approaches to political theory rely on rationality to reach a consensus among difference without acknowledgement to people's inherent antagonistic nature. This links back to Arendt's action theory where she argues that action in the private sphere cannot be seen and therefore democracy cannot be structured based on the actions of everyone. However, private passions can be 'transformed, deprivatized and deindividualized, as it were, into a shape to fit them for public appearance' (Arendt, 1958, p. 50). The acknowledgement and allowance of antagonism is what allows conflicting passions to be considered in the public sphere without coercion into a hegemonic culture. Democracies attempt to arrive at a rational consensus about democratic decisions, for example the Brexit referendum, where the conflicting groups (leave or remain) aim to persuade the masses of their view. The public are given the authority to make decisions without proper ability to participate and given little understanding about the impact of their vote. Mouffe calls for an agonistic democracy, where conflicting ideas are challenged but conflict is legitimised and opposing groups are

> not seen as enemies to be destroyed, but as adversaries whose ideas would be fought, even fiercely, but whose right to defend those ideas will never be put into question (Mouffe, 2016).

The ambition to achieve a national consensus on political decisions may derive from colonial exclusionary practices which have reproduced themselves and become hegemonic within political and economic systems. Consensus excludes the possibility of other actions in the vita activa to create counter-hegemonies. Inclusion and plurality

are present in all democratic principles – self-determination, equal participation, the authority to vote for representatives and for those representatives to act without bias. The disparity of wealth in the UK reveals glaring inequalities within the current democratic system, and without antagonism the hegemonic status quo will be unchallenged. Young's (2002) petition to create the Police Review Board in Pittsburgh stood as a counter-hegemony against the long-standing status quo that police could commit racist and violent acts without repercussions. During the founding years of colonial America's police force, one of the officers' main duties was to preserve the slavery system (Waxman, 2017) and violent tactics were deployed to control unwanted groups in a democracy. To prevent counter-hegemonies, exclusion is legitimised with discriminatory hierarchies which create the hegemonic belief that certain people are less valuable and should be treated as enemies.

Democracies are becoming increasingly politically polarized, left- and right-wing ideologies have absorbed the centrist ideologies. The evolving political landscape has become a battle ground, Surridge (2020, p. 1) describes it as

> two large camps which are hostile to each other, with little common ground or shared interests. But these simple binary divisions mask currents of complexity beneath the surface.

I argue that a democracy that is formed in an agonistic setting can retrieve the complexities beneath the surface. We are given two options by the state, e.g. to leave or remain in the EU, or vote for the Labour or Conservative party in the general election. There is a deceiving nature in the methods of current democratic participation and if unchallenged they will lead to disasters. For example, before the 2016 Brexit vote, Boris Johnson created advertisements that read "We send the EU £350m a week: let's fund the NHS instead" yet later clarified that he did not mean that £350m a week would actually be allocated to the NHS (Lichfield, 2017). This shows that heads of State are willing to make liberal claims to create the appearance of a democracy that is concerned with the welfare of the health of the people, but the claims are deceiving because they serve another purpose. It could be argued that these tactics are deployed to create consensus guided by the neo-liberalist and post-colonial interests, such as the growth of the economy and immigration control. Consensus among a population is not the sign of a deep democracy, as it does not necessarily conclude that the consensus has been reached through a 'public address [that] acknowledges the presence and point of view of diverse social segments in the political public' (Young, 2002, p. 7.) In order to radicalize the liberal democracy, Arendt's 'democracy as action' must transcend into 'democracy as agonism' to ensure that Young's 'deep democracy' is reached. Agonism as a model of democracy gives the public clear differences and clear alternatives, one alternative to the current liberal democratic system is radical democracy. Liberal democracies cannot be 'deep' because there is no inherent antagonistic nature to challenge the hegemonic order which continues to exclude the Others of democracy (Mouffe cited in Hansen et al, p. 4).

In conclusion, the political polarization in Britain is a result of there being no common symbolic space for adversaries to have an agonistic struggle. Young's vision of a deep democracy is only possible when there can be a pluralization of hegemonies which remain issues of the public sphere. It has been shown that colonial processes of exclusion are present in liberal democracy and despite inclusionary policies and equality legislation, the most disadvantaged are being privileged the least in an age of

massive economic growth. Agonism means disagreements can exist but instead of the public becoming polarized, opposing groups can legitimise each other's claims and action will become pluralistic. The determination for consensus between the 'Left and Right mean that conflict cannot find a form of expression through representative institutions and democratic parties' (Mouffe, cited in Hansen et al, 2013, p. 6). An inclusive democracy means that actions can be seen and heard by others, making up 'democracy as action', but this only achieves the façade of genuine democratic principles in the form of liberal democracy. Liberal democracy transforms action into a statement of political ideology but does not necessarily act on those inclusive principles, as seen in the claims about NHS funding in the Brexit referendum. Our actions make it known that the NHS needs more funding, and this is used as a political tactic to achieve an end that is guided by values and interests of the elite. The difference between 'democracy as action' and 'democracy as agonism' lies in the ability to create counter-hegemonies against the neo-liberal and post-colonial hegemony that is still embedded in modern democratic institutions.

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FIRST YEAR ESSAYS

OUR IDENTITIES ARE PROJECTS IN THE MAKING

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BA Hons-Sociology
Module: Constructions of Identity

There are many different ways in which identities are viewed as a project. It relates to many different notions that we have discussed in the module which I am going to explain with some visual examples.

The word project has many different meanings. It could be something that is being worked on, personally or physically, like a work in progress, and something that could be worked on individually or collaboratively. In relation to the body there are many things that could be relative to this.

Identities as projects could be interpreted as identities that start off as one thing but as things develop it changes into something else and the cycle continues. This fluidity embedded within identities is integral to their view as a project because something cannot be a project without change or a journey in my opinion.

The picture above is a great visual representation of identities as projects and the fluidity that attaches itself to identity formation. The picture depicts an image of an unknown person, but with different outfits, potentially in different stages of their life. This could represent the way in which our tastes change, which then impacts the development of our identity. Even though the colours of the outfits are different, the outfit remains the same, which could be a nod to the fact that even though our identities are projects and everchanging, elements of them remain the same throughout this process. You may even go back to an identity from time to time, in certain situations, like the two red faced people in the image perhaps. The matching colours on parts of the figures could also represent the similarities of parts of our identity with others, but still maintaining uniqueness by being different, in other ways.

 This image could be related to Bourdieu's notions of habitus and cultural capital. The concept of habitus was developed by Bourdieu to 'demonstrate the ways in which not only is the body in the social world, but also the ways in which the social world is in the body' (Reay,2004, p.432). The people in the images could be portraying themselves in colours that represent their favourite musician or football team for example. These things that the colours (outfits) are representing are an object or thing of the social world that we then identify with. One of the defining features of the habitus is that 'it is embodied' (Reay, 2005, p.432). It could be argued wearing a certain thing that represents your interests, then makes one embody certain behaviours. This could be for example, wearing a suit and the way that makes one carry themself. These aspects could also play into someone's 'cultural capital' (Reay, 2004, p.441).

 I previously wrote of a project being something of a work in progress and changing. The body is always physically changing, much like the social world, in which things change consistently; tastes and interests also change. We know from Bourdieu that identities can be constructed through personal interests and tastes too because 'it gives us "a visible social identity"' (Webb et al, 2002, p.156) like tastes and awareness of arts. Identities, because of our changing tastes and interests, will alter again and become something else. One of the figures in the image may grow tired of the colours they represent and may never want to identify with that again. They may identify now, with a different sport team for example, and represent that through their physical appearance. For Bourdieu, 'the meaning of "capital" is very wide […] and includes material things (which can have symbolic value)' (Harker, et al, cited in Webb, et al,2002, p.22). This quote adequately emphasises the symbolic value of the outfits I am trying to draw attention to and also the way in which we can see our identities as projects in the making.

PART OF ME DIED IN ORDER TO SURVIVE

**I MAY GROW AGAIN,
BUT I'LL NEVER BE THE SAME**
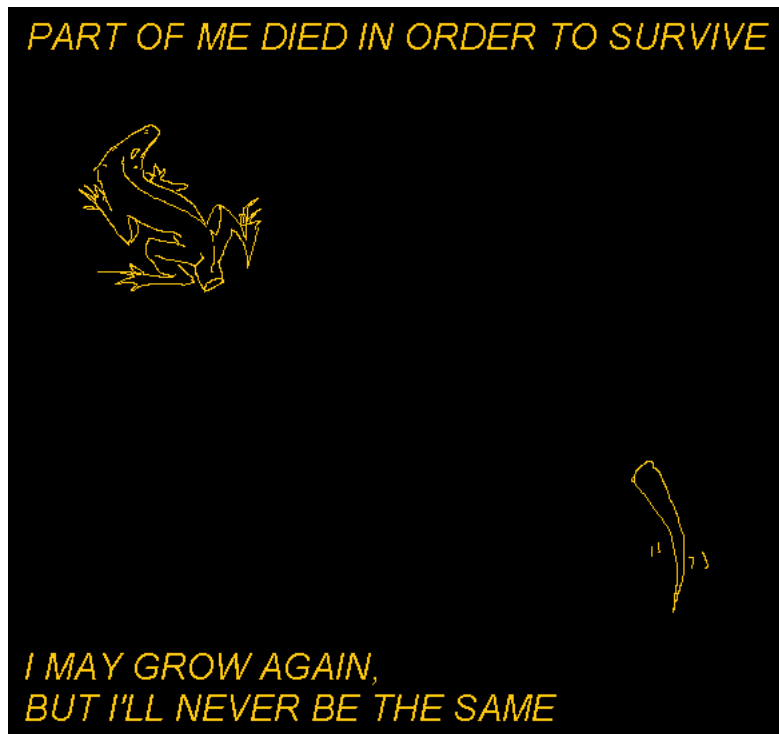
This image and my perceptions of it could be applied to the notion of Yarning and strong stories delivered by Tileah Drham Butler. Yarning is a process used by Drham-Butler, who 'facilitates counselling' (Drham-Butler, 2015, p.26), to 'relate and connect'(Drham-Butler, 2015, p.28) with the Nyoongah culture. The image depicts a lizard that drops its tail, which happens as a defence mechanism to distract predators so it can make a quick getaway. The 'part' of the lizard that 'died in order to survive' could be perceived as a part of an identity that has been cut off or suppressed because of society, which can be related to the exploitation and discrimination toward aboriginal Australians. 'I may grow again but I'll never be the same' can be related to the way in which our identities, much like projects are built up, are developed and shaped through lived experiences, past and present.

Narrative practice is a useful tool to portray the body as a project. Yarning is used as a way to relate to indigenous Australian cultures. (Drham-Butler, 2015, p.28). According to Drham-Butler, yarning and narrative practices allow us to 'discuss problems through history and draw on our own knowledge to change the impact problems have on our lives' (Drham-Butler, 2015, p.28). Because of this, we can see how 'negative identity conclusions' (Drham-Butler, 2015, p.29) can actually become extensions of who one thinks they are.

Indigenous Australian communities for example, have experienced trauma throughout generations of their existence. As a result of colonisation, 'Aboriginal people around Australia continue to live with the legacy of discriminatory legislation that split families and culture and institutionalised people. (Laycock et al,2011, cited in Drham-Butler, 2015, p.26). Their home is now made for the western world. The unwelcomed nature of the western society to these communities is excluding. Inevitably, this has an effect on the way members of indigenous Australian communities view themselves, and particularly aspects of their identity related to their heritage. This can instil a lack of self-worth, promote self-hatred and contribute to mental health issues within the community.

Yarning and the use of strong stories combat and counteracts this and help perceptions of oneself change. In turn, assists the changing of their views on their identity and thus allowing the identity to grow and carry on its journey. This can be related to identity as a project in the making because the techniques help change and develop through the stories of the individual of who they are trying to reach.

Drham-Butler states that 'narrative practice enables people to explore their identity as a story' (Drham-Butler, 2015, p.29) and this is of high value in my expressing of my thoughts. A story is something that can be viewed as progressive, much like the comparison I made at the beginning of this essay. Identities can be viewed as projects in the making because yarning and strong stories allow identities to move on, be fluid or change, which allows identities to be projects in my definition. Identities are also something we relate to stories. The question, "what is your story" often means "who are you?", and in other words, what or who do you identify with.

This last image will introduce Shilling's idea of the body as a project which reflects how identities are projects in the making. The body can be considered a major reflection of our identities. Shilling argues 'There is a tendency for the body to become increasingly central to modern persons' sense of self identity' (Shilling, 2003, p.1). This is because, as previously mentioned, bodies can be viewed as physical manifestations of what is inside. The image I have chosen depicts a person looking in a mirror and asking, into the reflection, 'is this me?'. I feel as though this can represent the way that we portray our wanted identities on the outside but that may not reflect what is inside.

Shilling also talks about how the body has become a feature of consumerism and advertising which has made more people 'concerned about the health shape and appearance of their own body' (Shilling, 2004, p.1). Eurocentric beauty standards today are subconsciously drilled into people's minds. Shilling states that body projects 'vary along social lines, especially in case of gender, but there has in recent years been a

proliferation of the ways in which both women and men have developed their bodies.' (Shilling, 2003, p.4).

Part of shaping identities in this way and thus being viewed as a project 'for many modern persons entails accepting that its appearance, size and shape and even its contents are potentially open to reconstruction in line with the designs of its owner.' (Shilling, 2003, p.4). This means that because our bodies can be changed, this can also be seen in our identities. Take the example of someone trying to lose weight, they may have a certain identity because of their physical appearance. When they start to lose weight through whatever means that may be, they may take on a new identity because they may feel more like 'themself'. How this relates to a project is the way in which over a period of the time, the body which affects identity become 'malleable entities' that are moulded by the 'vigilance and hard work of their owners' (Shilling, 2003, p.5).

In recent years, science has allowed many 'degrees of intervention into the body.' (Shilling, 2003, p.3). This has meant, as far as projects go, that bodies have not yet reached a limit to how much they may be artificially altered, through plastic surgery perhaps. (Shilling, 2003 p.3). This statement could so play into why I think identities are projects and this is because with no limit to the physical looks of a body it brings into question to variety of places an identity can evolve to. Perhaps the person in the image is confused about their identity because they have tried to shape it in a specific way. This could have been artificially, and when they look in the mirror, they are surprised at who they see because they now feel unlike themself.

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