

University of Plymouth

MSc Criminology- School of Society and Culture

CRIM732 Dissertation: To what extent has the proposed racialised media narrative influenced white women's perceptions of Muslim men as sexual predators?

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Abstract

Currently, scholarship researching the racialised media narrative of Muslim men as sexual predators is yet to provide qualitative data testing its significance on shaping public opinion. Research from the likes of Cockbain and Tufail (2020) largely rely on illustrative examples, especially those addressing the infamous ‘Asian grooming gang’ scandals of the early 2010s, to conclude that liberal media outlets have legitimised a racial stereotype in wider public opinion. Taking this conclusion, this study attempts to test the significance this proposed media narrative has had in shaping the perceptions of Muslim men as sexual predators using qualitative evidence from the discourse’s primary target audience; white women. Sampling white women aged 18-65, this project uses participant responses from semi-structured, in-depth interviews to ascertain its position.

Throughout, the project explores three themes that help to achieve this overall objective. The first tries to establish whether the proposed racialised narrative has been recognised by the participants, which is used comparatively with the participants personal opinions in the second theme. Finally, the results are situated amongst broader scholarship from other branches of criminological study, including feminist scholarship, to address the literary gap and contextualise the topic accurately, establishing racialised media’s influence. Overall, the project found participants clearly felt an increased anxiety regarding Muslim men that originated from images of sexual violence and hegemonic masculinity depicted in the media. This representation, however, appeared to play an aggravating role that built upon pre-existing concerns and frustrations, including fears of gendered sexual violence and political isolation.

Introduction

The research topic forming the foundation of this project concerns the racialisation of the Muslim population as sexual predators within media representation. Much literature concerning this strongly suggests the Muslim community within the UK has become ostracized through a process of systematic racialised media coverage that has disseminated the concept of a seemingly legitimate stereotype (Tufail, 2015). They often use incidents infamously known as ‘Asian grooming gang’ scandals (*Yorkshire Post*, 2010), most notoriously Rochdale in 2012, in which a group of Muslim men systematically raped underaged white girls over an extended period (Tufail, 2015). Liberal and mainstream platforms have continually highlighted the Muslim identity of the perpetrators and white ethnicity of their female victims. They have, thus, facilitated the public adoption of a diluted form of a typically far-right view; that Muslim men are more often predisposed to sexual violence (Cockbain and Tufail 2020; Gill and Harrison, 2015). Scholarly conclusions by Cockbain and Tufail (2020) or Gill and Harrison (2015) for instance, are easily evidenced through illustrative examples. Notably Norkfolk (2011) and O’Neill (2011) of *The Times* ran with headlines such as ‘Revealed: Conspiracy of Silence on UK Sex Gangs’ and ‘Silence Fostered by a Fear of Being Branded Racist’ when reporting on cases of systematic child abuse, such as that of Rochdale in 2012. These articles consistently drew attention to the Muslim faith of the perpetrators and their white victims. Scholarship suggests these articles exemplify contemporary public opinion that holds the Islamic faith responsible for inciting sexual violence. Even examples in other forms of widely consumed media further exemplify a similar narrative, including the television programme *Three Girls*, which dramatizes the events of the Rochdale sex scandal with regular references to the Islamic identity of the perpetrators (IMDb, 2017). Indeed, this reinforces and develops Hall’s (1978) notion of the floating signifier, that now incorporates faith as a racial group. British Pakistani or South

Asian Muslims, henceforth referred to as BPM, have become the new folk devil, and supposedly racialised media is the cause (Gill and Harrison, 2015; Alexander 2000).

Much scholarship, however, is yet to measure its significance among white women, who are suggested to be the most likely victims, as well as contextualise its influence among broader social factors, including political isolation and fears of gendered sexual violence (Trilling, 2012; Winlow et al, 2016; Valentine, 1992). This project's overall objective sought to measure the extent this media narrative has influenced white women's perceptions of BPM men as sexual predators. In doing so, it aimed to situate its results with original evidence that places the role of racialised media amongst broader social factors. White women, aged 18-65, living in Dorset, which has a low Muslim population and so exposure would largely be through media consumption, were sampled and interviewed using a semi-structured in-depth format. Participants were split into group Alpha (aged 18-30) or Bravo (aged 31-65) to additionally assess if there was a generational difference between their responses. Their answers were coded and interpreted according to specific thematic objectives that constructed this research question.

Firstly, the participants' own media consumption was assessed to establish if they recognised the racialised narrative suggested (Cockbain and Tufail, 2020). This formulated a testable variable in which their personal opinions could be compared. The theme broke down the questions into how they believed white women and BPM men are represented in the media, be that entertainment, news, or otherwise, and how these populations compared on an intersectional basis. Namely, participants were asked how these populations contrasted with others along racial and gender focuses. The second objective inquired about the participants' personal attitudes regarding the Muslim male population using other groups, such as white females, as a discernible comparison. Therefore, the project allowed a qualitative analysis that assessed similarities/differences between what participants expected in the media and

their own opinions, allowing racialised media's influence upon the participants' personal attitudes to be determined using observable data. The final objective contextualised the previous analysis amongst broader research. Other lines of questioning within the interviews investigated how participants' perceptions of BPM men measure against themes of gendered fears of sexual violence and feelings of racial political isolation, both of which potentially manifest in frustration towards Muslims and pervasive fear of sexual violence from all men (Valentine, 1992; Trilling, 2012).

Based on the literature consulted, this study hoped to provide an original and nuanced assessment, employing elements of intersectional analysis and research from other schools of criminology, including feminist scholarship. Current literature on this specific focus of racialisation has stated that it intended to demonstrate the dangers of a racialised media narrative publicly legitimising a stereotype. This project hoped for the same, but also to situate the focus within broader social study to demonstrate the process by which the Muslim community has faced ostracization in society.

This dissertation now outlines the scholarship and any primary material that was consulted in forming this project's theoretical framework within a literature review. Following this, its methodology has been explained, which details a qualitative focus within a specified sample frame. Any methodological limitations have been consulted and any actions taken to prevent invalidating the results have been summarized. Any ethical concerns have also been highlighted and adhered to in accordance with legal and established parameters. The final section reports the yielded data, through summarizing the hypothesis, as well as analysing and discussing the data's implications according to the stated objectives. The project is finally contextualised within the field of study and any recommendations or theoretical limitations are outlined in its conclusion.

Literature Review

Literature discussing the racialisation of BPM men as sexual predators unilaterally attributes its origins to popular media discourses. The field, however, neglects the importance of measuring media's impact using subjects who remain the target audience, white women. It favours a focus on minority community perspectives or using examples of racialised media as evidence (Cockbain and Tufail, 2020 ; Gill and Harrison, 2015). Although important, to gain a complete scientific picture of this case of racialisation, all parties must be considered. Moreover, the data must be contextualised with broader scholarship to situate it's social relevance and accurately measure its significance. Therefore, this review outlines the key literature informing this project's scope, either through their overt scholarly contributions or through theoretical gaps in their conclusions.

Beginning with the work that provided the theoretical basis for the entire project, Hall's (1978) outline of how skin colour is a societal feature with no fixed meaning was paramount. Race is untenable and adapts to contemporary social discourses, demanding a social-historical-cultural definition rather than a biological one. Race, thus, operates as a discursive category or 'floating signifier', which is something familiar to this project, given British media discourse is examined here to assess how its intended audience now subsequently view BPM men. Indeed, Hall's analogy of race acting as a language was useful when developed in a literal sense, especially when examining the influence of phrases with loaded meanings, such as 'grooming gang', as is later discussed (Cockbain and Tufail, 2020). Solomos (1993) also provided useful support regarding British black men in the 1970s, similarly suggesting media discourse consistently racializes criminality, in this case mugging. This comparison, which applies Hall's 'floating signifier', demonstrates racialisation's danger of systematic racism, including a preoccupation of dogmatic police patrols being seen increasingly in predominantly black areas. Moreover, Dollar (2018) argued racialisation (and

class) can influence drug laws through their politicisation, with laws concerning opioid usage receiving medicalised reactions due to associations with white, middle-class families. Crack cocaine, however, often has a publicized racial and violent focus in US media, which consequently results in disproportionate arrests for nuanced criminal differences. So in addition to providing theoretical support, Solomos, Dollar, and Hall's work alike illustrated the necessity for this project to curb the alienation of Muslim communities. Hall's work, however, remains partially dated. Although the notion of the 'floating signifier' was theoretically paramount, Hall's work was produced well before this project's empirical focus, which relied on widely accessible media discourse, such as social media. Whilst this is not a criticism of Hall's work, it suggested when applying his theory, this project needed to rely on modern examples.

When assessing the media coverage of the infamous cases of 'Asian Grooming Gangs' (*Yorkshire Post*, 2010), this project established the popular discourse supposedly shaping public opinion of infamous cases at the time. Mostly, they suggested a racialised narrative complimenting scholarly conclusions that BPM men are presented as sexual predators, whilst white women are shown as particularly vulnerable. This project's scope was thus refined, as these examples demonstrate. Discussions of grooming scandals, such as Rochdale and Rotherham, by Norfolk (2011) and O'Neill (2011) ran with headlines reading 'Revealed: Conspiracy of Silence on UK Sex Gangs' and 'Silence Fostered by a Fear of Being Branded Racist'. The discussion focused on the systematic targeting of white girls by BPM men, who were permitted to continue their abuse due to institutional fears of racism. Both narratives suggested these men were culturally predisposed to abuse. Coverage from mainstream news outlets like *The Daily Mail*, suggest a potential wide production and consumption of racialised reporting. Comparative examples of almost identical scandals committed by white men further emphasised their significance. *The Daily Mail* (2010)

reported on such a case, however, never suggested a cultural or racial link with crime, nor mentioned the race of the criminals and victims. These sources provided a measurable standard supporting the project's first line of enquiry. Participants were, thus, questioned upon how they expect to see these respective populations represented in the media and how this compared with this proposed narrative.

Gill and Harrison's (2015) and Tufail's (2015) work was instrumental to this project given its topical relevance. Gill and Harrison (2015) concluded the current moral panic surrounding Muslims was incited by newspapers and other news outlets, especially following Asian grooming gang cases, most notoriously Rochdale. Their article argued a prevalent theme in media was hegemonic masculinity, which was attributed to Muslim culture and proved to be a legitimate threat to white women. Therefore, their conclusions suggest coverage from 2012 to 2013 depict South Asian men as sexual predators. Other scholars have likewise discussed this notion even before the scandals became publicised, suggesting media has routinely ostracized Muslim communities (Oueseley, 2001; Cattle, 2001). Sian et al (2012) too endorsed the argument that the media emphasised BPM men prey on white girls and link perceptions of sexual abuse to race and culture. Gill and Harrison (2015), thus, also suggest a testable focus for the project. Although the article convincingly outlines the role media has had in inciting racialisation, this project provides qualitative data to test its significance among white women, who are suggested to be likely victims of BPM men.

Similarly Tufail (2015) narrowed the project's focus by examining the racialised rhetoric of newspapers concerning the threat of Muslim hegemonic masculinity to women. It directly compared, using the earlier examples, racialised and non-racialised coverage of almost identical cases committed by white perpetrators. Their conclusion that sensationalist media has facilitated an alienation of BPM also provided an opportunity for the research question to be tested in an area in which most interaction with BPM would be through media

consumption. Bhattacharyya's (2008) argument also suggested this process is not exclusive to incidents like Rochdale, but rather the racialisation of Muslims has been seen periodically, referencing the 'war on terror' as another example fostering extremist labels. This literature again directed a specific focus in both how the participants feel cultural differences and perceptions of sex are represented (as they are allegedly consistently racialised), as well as their comparative personal attitudes, which should have supposedly correlated.

Cockbain and Tufail (2020) really frame the previous literature's importance. They argued traditionally far-right perspectives, like that of the English Defence League (EDL), are evidenced in a diluted form in sensationalist dialogue of media and politicians. The central theme seen was that gangs have a disproportionate number of BPM men who systematically abuse underage white girls. Using examples from *The Times*, they stressed popular outlets conveyed that Muslims presented a threat to national stability due to alarming statistics and using racially loaded phrases such as 'a tidal wave of offending' or 'grooming gang' (Norfolk, 2011), literally demonstrating Hall's (1978) notion of race performing as a language. They too suggested mainstream politicians publicly declared similar attitudes, using Labour MP Sarah Champion's call for a formal enquiry investigating the relationship between Muslim culture and grooming gangs. Cockbain and Tufail (2020), supported by Kumar (2014), demonstrated this adoption of rhetoric into popular mediums publicly legitimised racialised stereotypes. This was argued to have translated into structural racism with increased police presence in Muslim areas (Drew, 2016). This project, therefore, aimed to test how well cemented a racialised view is with the primary target audience; white women.

Although no sources provided more relevant discussion, these articles lack the needed modern focus and potentially over-rely on the role traditional media (newspapers) play. Other platforms should be discussed, including social media websites and entertainment, such as

Twitter or television programmes. This project, therefore, discussed other forms of media both in interviews and in the body of this article. Williams et al (2020) reinforced this through their conclusion that hate speech on Twitter can inflate real world views and discrimination. Therefore, controversial tweets by public figures like media personality Katie Hopkins concerning incidents such as Rochdale (BBC News, 2015a), partially typify widely consumed media much like the newspapers discussed by Gill and Harrison (2015).

Additionally, television programmes such as *Three Girls* or *Silent Witness: And then I fell in Love* (IMDb 2017; IMDb 2012) illustrated a racialised narrative perpetuating white female vulnerability and Islamic sexual violence on a mainstream platform, reinforcing the examples used by Cockbain and Tufail (2020). Although the examples discussed here were not all mentioned by the participants, they exemplify the type of content possibly consumed and incidentally illustrate how widespread this racialised narrative has been. They, thus, contributed to the earlier focus on how this has been publicly received and internalised.

The Quilliam Report by Rafiq and Adil (2017) represented further contextual significance as it legitimised stereotypes with supposed scientific backing. It represented a major and seemingly credible, due to its authorship being two Pakistani men, boost for the Islamic stereotype and the racialisation of sexual crime. Despite it maintaining a poor scientific standard (Cockbain and Tufail, 2020), it was nonetheless substantial in concluding an overwhelming 84% of UK grooming gangs are of Asian/Muslim descent. Such a statistic, although academically refuted, was widely used by news outlets and far-right groups alike, the latter of whom overtly weaponised the report, fostering “legitimate” Islamophobia. This statistic has been quoted among various mainstream politicians and media platforms alike, evidencing its significance. Although it is unlikely the participants had heard of the report or statistic, its conclusions construct part of the racialised narrative and may have facilitated mistrust, which is what this project intended to assess.

One contextually important source considered was the Home Office (2020) report, which officially refuted such statistics, concluding the primary population engaged in systematic grooming are proportionately white British men. Given the tone and content of examined media coverage, it was important to assess whether new coverage challenged earlier assumptions. This project, however, has been unable to find sufficient amounts of discussion challenging earlier calls for an investigation or any inferences of a causal link between Muslim culture and sexual violence (Norfolk, 2011; Bunyan, 2012). As a result, it was likely the participants recognised BPM men to often be represented as sexual predators, which further informed a theme for analysis that could be compared with any respective personal attitudes. Therefore, the report's contextual significance (or lack of) cemented this line of questioning.

As stated, this project not only aimed to test racialised media's significance with qualitative data, but also aimed to contextualise it within broader themes. To understand women's anxieties of other members of the public, feminist scholarship needed consultation, given the project's nature was concerning female perceptions of sexual threat. This project appropriately situated the discussion both in the interviews and analysis, especially when asking whether white women feel their perceived vulnerability is exclusively attributed to gender differences or whether race is also consequential. Valentine (1992) provided a comprehensive foundation for this enquiry, suggesting that despite statistical evidence showing young males to be the most likely victims of crime, women are more fearful of public spaces due to fears of sexual violence. There is a 'mismatch between the geography of violence and the geography of fear' as women are statistically in more danger in domestic settings (Valentine, 1992, p.22). Valentine's analysis is pertinent as they suggested exaggerated crime statistics and structural gender differences make women fearful of victimization, especially in public settings (Madan and Nalla, 2016). This needed to be

considered to ascertain whether there is a fear of sexual violence from BPM men due to racialised perceptions or due to gender differences. Such a conclusion is largely unilaterally supported from studies such as Keane (1998) or Riger et al (1978), who both argued fear of crime, especially sexual, severely limits all women's lifestyle options and mobility. Riger et al also contributed to the project by suggesting reasons for intense fear of sexual crime are due to its intrusive and psychologically damaging nature. Therefore, interviews asked why, if they do, participants are fearful of public spaces and what role racialised media plays in this.

Kearl (2010) supplemented the enquiry when discussing how women use strategies to avoid abuse, such as avoiding certain travel routes. Kearl's topical relevance continued a similar line of questioning through examining whether those strategies are more often used in encounters with BPM men. These sources, however, rarely consider differences in women's fear felt through an intersectional lens. They often do not distinguish the role whiteness plays in white women's anxiety. Similarly, these studies do not consider the racialised element of men and often homogenises women's fear by lacking any consideration for differences between populations. Therefore, this project adds to this apparent scholarly gap and supplements it with more in-depth intersectional research.

The final part of this review focuses on the last theme that hoped to further contextualise the role of media in addition to gender based sexual violence. Trilling (2012) narrowed the focus through inciting another line of questioning ready for the interviews. Trilling's exploration of white working class perceptions of their own race was a theme that should be applied to this study. After exploring how politicians and media groups themselves have potentially created fertile ground for far-right sentiment to run wild, similar lines of questioning can follow to help test the accuracy of Trilling's conclusions. For instance, when conducting interviews, this project wished to establish how white women believe their own position as a race and as a gender is represented within political circles. Trilling's focus on

the disillusionment of the white working class in the Labour party, due to what has been described as political opportunism and an abandonment of traditional values (Trilling, 2012; Haider, 2018), too incited a further line of questioning regarding how white people believe they are represented politically. Ascertaining the participant's own perceived racial position was vital in assessing whether their perceptions of Muslims were politically motivated. Although Trilling's work was not unfair in any of its claims, it was found in places to rely on the writer's own subjectivity and not on its research. For instance, when discussing whether white people are discriminated against for their skin colour, Trilling answered with a politically focused answer believing this idea to be farcical, less substantiated than the rest of his research (Trilling, 2012). Therefore, although Trilling expanded the focus with further theoretical foundation, they were used in conjunction with other research.

Winlow et al's (2016) conclusions were also then considered; that a decline in the Labour party's support by white working class people has facilitated a move towards more partisan political parties and movements preaching varying degrees of Islamophobia (whether overtly or not). Reinforcing Trilling's (2012) and Haider's (2018) assertions, the main beneficiaries of such disillusionment have been groups such as the EDL and UKIP, who preach suspicion of Muslims under the guise of "protecting" British people, especially white girls (Cockbain and Tufail, 2020). Given UKIP's increasing popularity, especially with 12.6% of the 2015 general election vote (BBC News, 2015b), such feelings of disillusionment can be suggested to be nationally widespread and thus anti-Muslim sentiment subsequently common. The relevance to this project would suggest there certainly is need for investigation into public opinion, in this case white British women, that there are alternative scholarly explanations potentially challenging arguably overstated conclusions from earlier sources.

Additionally, Winlow, Hall and Treadwell's work puts the purpose of this work into perspective. They defended their work against claims that suggests it gives publicity to the far-right views of the EDL, which is something that ran parallel with this study. This work does not intend to normalise feelings of prejudice in its analysis, but rather expose the current views to make sense of social reality. As they have stated 'if social scientists are to assist in the task of making sense of that reality, we can't simply restrict ourselves to the nice topics' (Winlow, Hall and Treadwell, 2016, p.5). Likewise, to get a full perspective of this topic, study cannot be restricted to participants just belonging to Muslim communities and must also consider perceptions from white communities, even if they do have elements of prejudice.

This review has outlined the literature consulted to inform this project's scope. The main contributions that narrowed its focus are that the media can evidently contribute to racializing BPM men as sexually violent and white women as consequently vulnerable. This suggestion therefore needed to be tested in both its reach and its significance through measurable qualitative responses. Moreover, the current literature has yet to situate the question of media's significance with other relevant social studies. Feminist literature introduces the element of gender violence, yet often homogenises perceptions, and so this study can help to address the gap in both fields using an intersectional and broader scientific scope. Additionally, the latter literature in much the same way contextualises the role of racialised media, and it's basis was subsequently used to accurately measure its importance incorporated with other social study.

Methodology

An integral part of scholarship's understanding of the racialisation of BPM men has yet to be considered. Qualitative responses from white women, who appear to be the primary targets for the rhetoric (Gill and Harrison, 2015; Valentine, 1992), tested the impact the media narrative has had on their perceptions of Muslim men, which was the aim of the project. Detailed accounts of experiences and personal opinions obtained through in-depth interviews catered to the study's demand for an interpretivist ontology and qualitative methodology (Bryman, 1984). This section will thus outline the appropriateness of the methodology used for this study's purposes.

Methods and Data

Given the study's focus on media consumption rather than personal interaction, a location with a greater chance of Muslim interaction being through media consumption was selected. Dorset, with a Muslim population of 0.11% compared with the national average of 5% (Office for National Statistics, 2011), perfectly met this criteria. Operating within the constraints of a smaller project, a sample size of six white female participants was decided to ensure enough data was used for the analysis without overloading the project and inhibiting a thorough evaluation of their responses (Robinson, 2014).

Participants willing to discuss potentially controversial subjects were more easily sampled when they were approached alone within public establishments, such as pubs and cafés. Indeed, all establishments selected were reputable, within busy high-streets and were inspected online to ensure they were commonly used by the general public. They were ensured to not be hotbeds for far-right activity, which if sampled would diminish the project's external validity in applying conclusions to the general public. As such, the nonprobability strategy adopted was that of convenience sampling with an approachable and willing sample

universe whose responses warranted generalisation (Robinson, 2014; Skowronek and Duerr, 2009). Additionally, to ensure representativity, an element of purposive stratified sampling was used. The sample was stratified into generational categories, specifically white women aged 18-35 and aged 36-65, with a target of three participants from each demographic (Appendix 4). Moreover, the occupation of the participants was recorded to ensure diversity and thus maximise the transferability of the responses to the general population (Robinson, 2014; Nyumba et al, 2018). My sampling strategy overall was focused on ensuring a representative sample with a smaller number of participants to allow for an in-depth analysis, which wouldn't be overwhelming against the limited resources and time available.

In keeping with the overall aim to supplement the current field with rich, original data, the project employed an interpretivist, qualitative methodology. The study therefore used in-depth, semi-structured, one-to-one interviews. Although open-ended base questions were used, such as 'how are Muslim men represented in the media?', the interviews followed a discursive nature. This permitted further use of probing questions to elaborate relevant responses unrestricted by a fully structured format (Crowther-Dowey and Fussey, 2013). Although this may limit the objectivity and standardisation across the data, the core discussions remained consistent through constant reference to established base questions. Considerable time was taken in deciding the type of data collected, however, undertaking a more positivist focus, such as a questionnaire, would not allow the in-depth level of discussion needed to fully understand the complicated topic of media's significance, thus an interpretivist paradigm guided this body of research. The questions asked during the interviews were open ended to allow for richer data and were conducted within a private part of the establishments in which they were sampled, thereby avoiding any intimidation of a professional environment. In doing this, the participants remained relaxed and more

comfortable to discuss sensitive issues due to a lack of interruption (Dempsey et al, 2016; Elmir et al, 2011).

All interviews were recorded for later transcription using the audio-recording software 'Voice Memos'. Immediately following all interviews, contemporaneous notes concerning noteworthy moments of body language and tone potentially relevant to any analysis were made. This was found to be more appropriate than conducting notes during the interview as it would minimise any risk of distraction or interrupting the flow of discussion (Crowther-Dowey and Fussey, 2013). Conscious of my own hypothesis of media influence, all conversations were transcribed verbatim to attempt to negate any selection bias or risk any relevant information being lost and not analysed (Brinkmann, 2013).

Data Analysis

As the study follows an interpretivist paradigm, yielding complex qualitative data, it relied on a semiotic analysis, and rarely the tone, of the responses, which could then be coded based on opinions through inductive reasoning (Appendix 3). This aimed to establish any commonalities or differences between the participants' responses, and so accurately informed the overall influence racialised media has had on white women's perception of BPM men (Brinkmann, 2013). The first theme explored established whether the proposed racialised media narrative (Gill and Harrison, 2015; Tufail, 2015) was evidenced in participant expectations. Gill and Harrison's (2015) study concluded BPM men were consistently painted as folk devils in news coverage, whilst Tufail (2015) has argued that sensationalist reporting and political attention has portrayed specifically white women as frequent victims of sexual violence. Adhering to this project's overall aim of assessing media influence, it first determined both the types of media participants consumed and how they felt white women and BPM men tend to be represented, especially compared with other populations. This

provided a testable variable to compare with current scholarly conclusions, as well as with the second theme to establish a measure of influence through qualitative similarity.

Following this, the second theme aimed to discern whether perceived representations in media discourse have actualised in the participants' personal attitudes. Namely, the patterns analysed were commonalities and differences in thoughts of BPM men and sexual violence, and their own population's subsequent vulnerability. This supposedly sustained toxic narrative of seemingly popular sources has facilitated a racial stereotype resulting in structural racism (Cockbain and Tufail, 2020; Wosniak and McCloskey, 2010). This theme tested how well solidified the understood discourse studied in the first theme has become in public opinion. As such, interview questioning enquired about personal opinions regarding their own vulnerability as white women and their perception of BPM men as sexual predators, additionally tested using various scenarios asking participants how they would feel interacting with both BPM men compared with other populations.

The final theme, and the most important contextually, was how media's impact is situated more broadly. This theme attempted to yield potentially the largest amount of data that would place racialised media's significance amongst other factors explored in literature. The questioning followed feminist scholarship addressing the fears women have of public spaces and sexual violence already. Valentine's (1992) conclusion of a mismatch between the geography of fear in both domestic and public settings suggests women, regardless of their race, are already cautious of all men. Indeed, early socialisation, according to Tanusree (2011), reinforces the fear women have of men due to attitudes instilled in young girls about the gendered dangers of being in public, suggesting media cannot be the only source. Moreover, fears of sexual violence are not necessarily a product of media influence, as simply sexual assault's intrusive nature, alongside gender reinforcement can limit trust of unfamiliar persons (Riger et al, 1978; Keane, 1998). Additionally, questions concerning

themes of political disillusionment, as suggested by Trilling (2012) and Winlow et al (2016), also followed. This hoped to assess how white women felt their racial demographic was represented, which, according to scholarship, may involve feelings of isolation and racially directed anger towards Muslim populations. In exploring these themes also, the assessment of media influence was situated appropriately, and thereby avoided underestimating or overstating its significance through contextual examination.

Ethical Considerations

After gaining ethical approval (Appendix 1), numerous measures were taken in the methodology to adhere to the British Society of Criminology's (BSC) ethical guidelines, in addition to any related legislation and practice standards from the University of Plymouth. When all participants were sampled, they were not pressured to participate and all agreed willingly. Those who agreed were briefed on what the study would involve, however, the project's aims were not entirely divulged prior to the interview, as this could have resulted in artificial answers (Allmark et al, 2009). It was made clear both verbally and in their signed ethical consent forms (Appendix 2) that although the participants could not know the exact objectives, they were made aware they would be fully debriefed following the interview on their contributions and the project's details. Moreover, they could freely ask questions prior, throughout and after and thus were able to provide informed consent. In addition to this consideration of consent, the signing of the ethical consent form further reminded the participants of their rights as subjects, including protection from physical and psychological harm and the right to withdraw at any time without question (BSC, 2018; Appendix 2). This was reinforced as, after the participants knew the nature of the study, they were reminded they could withdraw their data at any time using my contact information available on their copy of the ethical consent form. Furthermore, I stressed afterwards that any individual

concerns could be addressed if they wished to contact me, even if this involved complete severance from the study, in which all data concerning that person would be erased.

Given the study's sensitive nature, in which participants may have discussed controversial opinions, I ensured that only necessary personal information was included in the transcripts, which included their county of residence, vocation and age. Other non-essential information, including their names or local references were redacted from the transcripts. Additionally, all recordings were stored on encrypted files, only accessible to myself and were deleted following their transcription in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, 2018). All participants were also given pseudonyms to ensure further confidentiality. This was all made clear prior to the participants' involvement (University of Plymouth, 2021; GDPR, 2018; BSC, 2018).

Measures ensuring the safety of myself and the participants were also considered. To avoid confrontation with other individuals, all interviews were conducted in private to prevent any disturbance (Allmark et al, 2009). Furthermore, if participants became upset or irate at any line of questioning, especially when discussing potentially traumatic experiences, the interview would either stop or move onto another topic. To ensure my own safety, all establishments operated in were pre-emptively informed about the nature of the study and were asked to remain vigilant in the event my protection was compromised.

Bias and Limitations

I am aware of the vulnerability the project has faced to selection bias in its sampling strategy. Although the sample universe broadly included white women aged 18-65, the strategy employed was in immediately accessible establishments. Additionally, selection relied on subjects being alone and appearing amenable to being approached, resulting in a possible subjective exclusion of participants who may have met the criteria to another researcher. To

avoid any indirect endogenous selection bias (Elwert, 2014), however, I ensured a variety of participants unrestricted to one social sample by varying the establishment visited and by considering their vocations and age. Sampling such a variety enabled a data set more transferable to the wider white female population.

Moreover, when approaching prospective participants, I often dealt with repeated rejection, which further restricted the study's potential generality to the opinions of those who would be willing to participate (Robinson, 2014). As such, initial interactions with potential subjects relied on a degree of negotiation, such as meeting at a later date or purchasing them food or drink. Although this does not invalidate the data, it does mean this factor needed to be considered when reading the responses to ensure they were not subject to participant bias (Brinkmann, 2013). Any instances in which participants attempted to enquire about my personal opinion to help inform their own were disregarded and I ensured my own opinion was never discussed, thereby not diminishing the responses' originality.

Due to resource and time constraints, the sample size may also limit the degree the results warrant generalisation. However, this project's aim was to supplement current scholarship with elaborate, original qualitative data. Given the resources available and in keeping with a pragmatic approach focused on thorough data analysis, the sample could not exceed an appropriate number that would yield optimal volumes of data for this study's purposes (Bryman, 1984).

As the approach used was an in-depth, semi-structured interview, it was naturally susceptible to leading questions and researcher bias (Ritchie et al, 2013). The interview followed a discursive format and so some probing questions asked were not subject to the same scrutinous moderation the prepared base questions were to ensure their objectivity. During the interview, the risk of this was minimised through constant reference to these moderated preliminary questions throughout to maintain a thematic focus and participant

autonomy (Cannell et al 1981). Upon reading some of the transcripts, however, there are a few incidents in which the phrasing of some questions unintentionally facilitated a particular answer. Eliciting this answer artificially, thus, severely impacted the validity of the responses (Fisher, 2009). Therefore, to overcome this unfortunate limitation, all incidents deemed to unintentionally lead participant answers were disregarded from the study.

Results and Discussion

Hypothesis

Current scholarship, as outlined in the literature review, would suggest the participants would have been almost completely receptive to racialised media's narrative. Cockbain and Tufail's (2020) argument that discourses of 'Muslim grooming gangs' exist not only in far-right but also in liberal and mainstream media discourses, whilst engineering a pseudo-feminist narrative legitimising stereotypes through human-interest avenues, supports this. Examining this discourse on multiple platforms, this project asserted BPM men certainly are, at least somewhat, homogenised as sexual predators and paedophiles (IMDb, 2017; Norfolk 2011; O'Neill, 2011). As such, this project's hypothesis for the three themes examined followed a conclusion suggesting white women believed their population was consistently presented as vulnerable to sexual exploitation primarily from Muslim men, although this would likely be more intense in older participants (Bravo) due to them being old enough to remember the height of the grooming gang crises around 2010. The project thus predicted the participants would be very receptive to the media influence; having feelings of anxiety surrounding Islamic hegemonic masculinity and perceived sexual threat due to the male's and their own race (Gill and Harrison, 2015; Tufail, 2015). Their feelings would be at least somewhat more suspicious of the Muslim population, because of their evolved representation from terrorists to sexual predators in light of new socio-political circumstances (Sian, Law and Sayyid, 2012; Hall, 1978).

It should be stressed, however, the media influence on the participants was also predicted to operate among other factors. Media influence of the fear of BPM men was an exacerbating process built upon present fears of sexual violence from men, instilled through early socialisation and male-centric urban construction perpetuating mistrust and limiting female movement (Tanusree, 2011; Valentine, 1992). It was expected, based on the literature,

this would be apparent in all participants. Additionally, as suggested by Trilling (2012) and Winlow et al (2016), feelings of white political isolation could have possibly fostered frustration towards the Muslim population. This would likely occur primarily in group Bravo, due to frequent media suggestion at the height of the Rochdale crisis that white females were institutionally vulnerable to abuse unhindered from fears of authorities appearing racist. Although this may be a contributing factor in group Alpha, it was expected this would be less intense.

Participant Expectations of the Media

Data Results

During the study, it became apparent all participants, based on their own consumption, expected to see white women as vulnerable and exploited characters in various forms of media when concerning criminal situations. Indeed, Sofia, when asked how she often saw females represented, stated ‘as a victim’, exemplifying her view by stating media suggests ‘you can’t walk the streets at night because you’re a woman’. When asked, however, whether the women’s race changed what participants expected, all but Victoria stated white girls in particular are often shown to be vulnerable. Barbara stated, ‘I also think [it’s] especially white English girls’ and Rachel noted ‘thinking about it, I don’t think I’ve seen many black victims, like Silent Witness, I know is mainly white’. Katrina stated when further asked whether she expected a difference between white girls and those from other populations; ‘I think white women are more vulnerable than blacks because I think they can protect themselves more’.

The perception of men, however, contrasted dramatically. Men, regardless of race or religion, were universally expected to be seen as perpetrators of violence or sexual abuse. Victoria believed ‘men tend to be the perpetrator’, which was reinforced by Sandra who stated the only example of a male victim she could recall was from the fictional show

Hollyoaks. Otherwise she said 'it's very much always the man that's the weirdo'. There was little variation across the spectrum of participant responses regarding the expected representation of men, however, when examining the race of men, slight variations emerged. In both group Alpha and group Bravo, two of the three participants expected to see BPM men, especially compared with white men, as sexual predators and paedophiles. Barbara stated based on her own reading 'this might sound prejudice now, but I would expect the attacker to be Muslim, Pakistani, something like that' reasoning that she hears much about the treatment of women in their culture. Similarly Rachel said 'there's a lot of things you hear about them that make us feel quite uncomfortable... that are very against women'. Both Sandra (Alpha) and Katrina (Bravo), however, stated they believe Muslims are primarily depicted as terrorists and secondarily sexual predators, with Katrina, for instance, stating 'they're the ones that are always attacking, you know, with bombs and that', reasoning much of their argument from news stories reporting on so called Islamic State and more recently Afghanistan.

Moreover, using a specific example as an additional measure, when asked whether participants were aware of Rochdale or any alike cases, group Alpha had a notably lower awareness than group Bravo. In group Alpha, only one participant, Sofia, had heard of Rochdale through the programme *Three Girls*, but was unaware there were numerous alike cases. The opposite applies for Rachel, who said she remembered some cases coming about but could not recall any specifically. Group Bravo, however, were unanimously aware of Rochdale and/or other alike cases. The greatest awareness came from Barbara who autonomously discussed Rochdale in relation to how she expects Muslims to be represented. After stating that Muslim men tend to be shown as sexual predators she stated 'I've read quite a few books and watched a few telly programmes about some of those cases up north, Rochdale, Middlesbrough I think... It was those Muslim men'.

Analysis

The results from this section served to assess whether the proposed racialised media evidenced in scholarship and illustrative examples was apparent in the participants' own experience of media consumption. In doing so, it can then be used as an independent variable to which personal attitudes and other factors can be measured and compared. Beginning with intersectional representations of women of all populations and white women, it was clear all participants felt women are often depicted as victims of criminality regardless of their race or culture, however white women are particularly more vulnerable to abuse, especially sexual. Given the media emphasis on Muslim men preying on white girls, linking public opinion of sexual violence to race and culture of both white women and Muslim men (Sian, Law and Sayyid, 2012), it suggests this perspective has been received from media representation. Both scholarship and illustrative examples alike thus have popularly reinforced that the representation of white women is as victims of sexual abuse. A focus on the demographic characteristics of victims in widely consumed mainstream mediums, whether through entertainment or news platforms, was evident in participant responses (Wosniak and McCloskey, 2010; Gill and Harrison, 2015). Indeed, Rachel's example of the BBC's crime drama *Silent Witness* having primarily white female victims, neatly demonstrates current scholarship's analysis of media discourse even outside their scope of traditional media outlets, i.e. tabloids, examined in the literature review (IMDb, 2012).

Similarly intersectional analysis according to male and Muslim male representation once again showed a nuanced distinction, but overall suggested a positive relationship between the proposed media narrative and what has been perceived. According to most of the participants, Muslim men are typically shown to be perpetrators of sexual offences especially directed at white women, based on evidenced hegemonic masculinity and frequency in perpetrator representation. This reinforces what some scholars have suggested even prior to

the infamous Muslim sex scandals, that constructions of Islamic misogyny has continuously been fostering images of a Muslim predator (Cantle, 2001; Ouseley, 2001; Alexander, 2000). Gill and Harrison's (2015) and Tufail's (2015) conclusions of a racialised media narrative therefore are mostly supported in their analysis of content through these qualitative responses. Moral panics are clearly, whether deliberately or not, attempting to be incited in the coverage, which is most easily evidenced in illustrative examples of news bodies, which consistently operate through the lens of moral panics (Cohen and Young, 1973; Cohen, 1972). Earlier discussed headlines, such as Norfolk's (2011) 'Conspiracy of Silence on UK sex gangs', which consistently emphasises the race and Islamic origin of the perpetrators, or Rafiq and Adil's (2017) "scholarly" statistic that popularly posed 84% of grooming gangs are of South Asian/Muslim descent, reinforces this through its suggestion of a racial vulnerability and cultural predisposition to sexual abuse, legitimising the stereotype in even moderate bodies (Kumar, 2014). Indeed, the participants themselves, particularly the older participants in group Bravo, even used depictions of Rochdale and other alike cases in their reasoning for their perception of how Muslims are represented.

This suggested narrative, however, has not been entirely received in both groups as two participants, although secondarily suggesting depictions of sexual predators, felt constructions build images related to terrorism and violence. Although much of the justification for this view centred on their readings of recent happenings in Afghanistan (Davies, 2021; BBC News, 2021), which certainly weakens the effectiveness of this measure, it does not invalidate scholars' suggestion of a very racialised narrative. Both participants still felt Muslims were depicted as sexual predators victimising white women and girls. Although their perceptions individually may be less focused on the project question, they still support established conclusions.

Overall, the responses of the participants clearly support this project's hypothesis that, based on media content, all participants would varyingly feel white women are shown to be particularly vulnerable to sexual violence from Muslim men. Group Bravo, as expected, were shown to have an increased awareness of the various Asian grooming gang scandal than group Alpha and used this to justify their reasoning for their expectations. Although unexpectedly, group Alpha did not illustrate a less intense expectation of this narrative, despite less awareness of the infamous Rochdale cases, suggesting constructions supporting Cockbain and Tufail's (2020) or Tufail's (2015) conclusions are present even in media sources outside their scope of investigation, *such* as television drama *Three Girls* (IMDb, 2017). As such, all participants demonstrated a reception of racialised discourse to which their personal attitudes can be compared to measure its influence.

Measuring the impact of racialised media on white women's perceptions of Muslim men

Data Results

Beginning first with how participants perceived their own vulnerability to sexual violence, both from Muslim men and all male populations, all participants suggested their race played no part in increasing or decreasing their anxiety. Victoria perfectly exemplified the attitude universally in stating 'I don't feel I'm any more or less vulnerable... according to my colour', rather going on to say 'I think as a woman I am vulnerable'. All participants felt their gender alone increased their vulnerability to sexual violence, with Rachel stating 'I don't go anywhere really by myself because I'm a woman' adding, as all participants did, there was a significant difference between men and women in terms of vulnerability.

The racialised element regarding attitudes of prospective dangers from Muslim men, although to varying extents, was clear. When questioned about perceived vulnerability to

abuse from BPM men, all participants suggested they felt anxious when in contact with BPM men. When asked how intensely the anxiety is felt in comparison with other male populations, two of three of the participants from group Alpha felt a degree of more moderate anxiety; 'I know it's not all of them, but I would just feel a little safer in a room of white men'. The other participant, Rachel, stated she did not feel more anxious according to race, but feared the whole male population. All of the participants explained the reason for their anxiety, whether comparatively more or not, was due to what you often see or hear in news platforms about women's position within Islam and pertinent consequences of alleged hegemonic masculinity. Sofia stated 'its taught in their religion... women are almost sort of slaves' using the example of the film *Taken* (featuring a white girl kidnapped by a group of South Asian men) to illustrate her reasoning. Group Bravo felt slightly more intense feelings of anxiety concerning the nature of BPM men in two out of three cases. Victoria expressed moderate stress but emphasised she does not often feel a distinction between male populations. Similar to group Alpha, she, however, feared Islamic women's treatment and said although the currently small Dorset population does not concern her, 'if it were to become bigger, I think there would be conflicting cultures and I would worry'. Similarly, Barbara stated the way BPM men treat women is abnormal and although she is aware it is only a minority, mentioned Rochdale in her justification to say they 'see [women] completely differently perhaps to an Englishman'. Katrina, however, held more overt opinions. Katrina stated 'I just find them strange, can't really trust 'em' explaining their, as she described, more extroverted and invasive mannerisms can be threatening. As with Alpha, group Bravo explained their feelings are partly due to what they often hear on the news, with Katrina stating 'it's only going back again to what I see on the telly and that's enough to frighten me to come face to face with one of them'.

When asked two hypothetical scenarios designed to make a racial distinction, the responses of the participants certainly supported the previously outlined opinions. In this scenario, they were asked whether they would be more likely to cross the road or take any action when on the same side of the road as a group of white men and Muslim men. Both Victoria and Rachel felt they would not be more or less inclined to cross the road regarding the race of the men, however, they would be worried and cross in the presence of a group of men. All other participants stated they would be likely to cross the road in either case, but are more likely when passing a group of BPM men. All justifications of anxiety and action centred around fears of sexual violence and harassment beyond all other concerns.

The second scenario yielded much the same data when asked to say if they would feel any difference in comfortability when alone with a taxi driver who was a Muslim male, Muslim female, white male or white female. All participants stated a clear difference between the male drivers and the female drivers, emphasising a clearly increased comfort with the females. Both Victoria and Rachel stated they wouldn't feel a difference due to the race of the driver but would fear being alone with a male 'whatever race or religion in general'. Barbara stated there would be no difference between the race of the women but ranked the Muslim male lower than the white male based on a fear of men, which has been exacerbated by 'stories from the North about them Muslims attacking women'. The rest of the participants ordered from most to least comfortable: the white female, the Muslim female, the white male and then the Muslim male. They all suggested this was rooted in a fear of sexual violence from men that seems to be more likely with BPM males especially. This was more intense with Katrina who stated she would ask the Muslim male to 'get me home fast and I'd be on the phone to my husband'. Sofia and Sandra certainly stressed this was only a minor difference with Sofia stressing 'I'd feel like 50% comfortable with a white man and I would feel 45% comfortable with a Muslim, so it's a very small difference.'

The final sample of data to assess a comparison between media narrative and personal attitudes was to ask unprompted what the participants picture when they hear the word 'sexual predator'. These results yielded varying data occasionally inconsistent with previous responses, however, all participants stated they would picture a male. Both Rachel and Sandra stated there would be no racial element involved in their descriptions, with Sandra saying, 'if there was no description I wouldn't know, just a guy I think'. Victoria answered stating she would either picture a Muslim man or an old white man 'but [she] honestly could not say which she would think of first'. Katrina stated she would think of an older white male added 'I think Muslims are more kind of terrorists in my eyes'. Both Barbara and Sofia reluctantly stated they would think of a Muslim male. All participants reasoned when questioned that they believe their answer comes from both stories in the media (entertainment or news), from personal experiences and hearsay, with Barbara stating 'it's just what I've always heard in those stories about Rochdale and that and from like probably my Mum and what have you'.

Analysis

As has been suggested, part of the depiction of BPM men is their perceived predisposition to sexual violence directed towards white women, something which was recognised by the majority of the participants. Personal responses, however, suggest only their gender plays a role in their supposed vulnerability, whereas race plays no concern. This challenges scholarly conclusions that political coverage, in addition to publicised official reports, have greatly aroused fears due to seemingly racially directed abuse (Tufail, 2015). Pseudo-feminist narratives racializing the victimization of sexual abuse seen in media representation are evidently not as pervasive in their impact (Cockbain and Tufail 2020). Racially motivated participant anxiety of Muslims, be that intense or moderate, appears to be rooted at least to some extent in media coverage. As all participants stated their personal feelings were based

on what they saw depicted mainly in news outlets, this project's hypothesis is partially supported. A narrative that has framed BPM men according to a sexually aggressive stereotype has clearly been adopted and has manifested in a fear of the Muslim male community (Gil and Harrison, 2015; Sian, Law and Sayyid, 2012). It can be reasonably suggested, given the mediums that participants stated (namely well know news outlets), therefore the media plays a significant role in the racialisation of Muslim men for white women.

Further evidence, although correlational, of this translation from a media narrative to personal opinions comes from the difference between group Alpha and group Bravo. A noticeably higher rate of racially motivated anxiety concerning Muslim men existed more often in the older participants than the younger. Barbara and Katrina's explanations can be explained potentially through a greater exposure to the racialised narrative concerned, especially given Bravo universally had an increased rate of awareness of the 'Asian grooming gang' scandals, with Barbara explicitly using Rochdale as part of her justification. It can therefore be understood that, comparatively, exposure to media discourse has resulted in a racialised perception. Gill and Harrison's (2015) argument that cases involving perpetrators of South Asian, Pakistani or Muslim heritage, particularly when their origin was stressed within the articles, garnered more attention is therefore supported. News coverage was consistently referenced as an explanation for these anxieties regardless of age, suggesting understood narratives play a significant role in the perception of Muslim men. Demonstrative examples in the media exemplify the types of narrative consumed. Dewsbury's (2012) headline 'A small minority of Pakistani men DO believe white girls are fair game' or Norfolk's (2011) discussion concerning institutional failings to investigate Islamic offenders due to fears of being branded racist, broadly suggest a causal relationship between Muslim men and sexual violence. This, however, is not an absolute process as many of the

participants, especially in group Alpha, stressed they were aware of that Muslim offenders do not represent the entire community and did not agree entirely with the racialised narrative given. Although this is likely partially due to younger participants having a decreased awareness of Asian grooming scandals, participants still likely are influenced by alternative sources, as two of the participants noted no difference in fear of sexual violence between Muslim and white men. This will be explored in the next theme.

As all the concerns surround themes such as the treatment of Islamic women, the dominance of BPM men and feelings of increased likelihood of flirtation and sexual aggression, all participants can be shown to have been influenced significantly by their media consumption. Scholarship writes that hegemonic masculinity has been thematically engrained in media narrative of the Islamic community, before the scandals were even reported on (Ouseley, 2001). Indeed, earlier literature observed a long developing Islamophobic sentiment that served to homogenise Asian family life and communities in populist outlets (Alexander 1999; Webster, 1997). In many cases, the narratives, exemplified with the coverage of the sex scandals, heavily feature cultural misogyny and a violent treatment of women (Tufail, 2015). As Sofia mentioned when explaining her view, the film *Taken* demonstrates how this theme has persisted (IMDb, 2008). Both scenario responses also showed a clear alignment to media representations of Muslim men given a reasonably high rate of fear of sexual violence concerning Muslim subjects. Group Bravo, given their increased exposure to more direct discussions surrounding the crises, further support the role of media influence given the higher rate of stress. It should be emphasised, however, that given some of the participants made only a distinction based on gender further suggests this media influence is not absolute and definite.

Furthermore, suggestions that media does not fully influence opinions of white women come from responses to how participants picture a sex offender. Although Barbara

specifically mentioned her consumption of stories surrounding Rochdale contributing to her picturing a Muslim male, the result yielded showed images of a Muslim male equal that of white males and males whatever race. Given all participants stated their reasoning surrounded what they hear in media coverage, media certainly played a role, but, they also stated their reasoning originated from other mediums, such as personal experience as well. Moreover, two participants made no racial observation and attributed their picture broadly to a male subject, suggesting a broader fear of men generally (Tanusree, 2011). Thus, although the results support this project's hypothesis somewhat as comparatively, media representation and personal attitudes sometimes correlate, especially in group Bravo in which exposure has been more intense, not all participants agreed on the intensity their feelings. Moreover they acknowledged other sources of their fear, meaning attitudes towards Muslim communities may need to be widely contextualised to a greater extent than this hypothesis predicted.

Contextualising the role of the media in influencing opinions of white women

Data Results

It was unilaterally found that all participants feared being in public spaces due to the perceived risk of sexual violence from men regardless of their race. Although a racial distinction was made with varying degrees of increased anxiety being exposed to BPM men, all participants stated a general fear of male sexual violence. Both Victoria and Rachel, who stated although they recognised a fear of hegemonic masculinity within Muslim culture, discussed 'I don't think I really worry about [Muslim] men more than white men, I just worry about being raped by men generally'. Other participants, despite outlining a racial distinction, too feared public spaces due to fears of sexual violence from men. When asked about why they feel worried in public environments, five out of six participants stated their gender leaves them more vulnerable to sexual violence from men, with Sandra arguing 'I feel that just as a female, and it's the same for any woman... there's just a bigger chance something

like that is gonna happen'. Although solely Barbara stated there was no difference between the likelihood of men and women being attacked, she emphasised women are more likely vulnerable to sexual attacks and agreed with the rest of the group as to why that is. Their opinions were based primarily on the physical and psychological differences between men, as well as personal experience. Katrina said '[men] can protect themselves better than women I think', whilst Victoria added 'its not just physical power but psychological as well, especially in instances in which where men try to express dominance'. Barbara as well drawing on her own personal experience when rationalising her fears stated 'I was sexually attacked... we all had a few drinks like you do at Christmas time... I fell asleep on the couch, next minute this guy was attacking me'. In all cases, regardless of age, fear of sexual violence was very prominent in the participants. This was further evidenced through the fact all participants discussed that either their movement or ability to relax, especially compared with men, were significantly restricted. Sofia recalled she will often 'take another route home if it seems dark and dangerous' and in public spaces she will often 'worry about being attacked and so [she] will do stuff like phone a friend or at least pretend to phone them so a*****s will leave me alone'.

Another line of inquiry asked attempted to understand if feelings of political isolation, as suggested by scholarship, had manifested in negative feelings towards the Muslim population. Responses indicated a very clear unanimous frustration of political isolation of the white population through means of positive discrimination and seemingly favourable attitudes towards the Muslim community, this was seen more prominently in group Bravo. Both Rachel and Sofia described feelings of political abandonment and envy towards the Muslim community with Rachel stating 'I know it sounds bad, but I can't help but think white people just aren't cared about anymore because we're the majority'. Barbara, Katrina and Sandra stated there was an ever-increasing bias institutionally that had failed the British

population. Barbara in particular used Rochdale as an example to show how ‘white people are s**t on, you only need to look at Rochdale and that to see that, they didn’t wanna get involved because they’d look racist’. Additionally Victoria and Barbara mentioned a specific grievance towards Muslim communities, although Victoria discussed this as part of a broader theme of foreign-nationals generally. They argued there is a clear double standard between white people and Muslims, especially concerning the differences in the treatment of women and integration. Barbara stated ‘we have to follow their rules don’t we, I have to cover up in their country, but they come here and they don’t have to do s**t’, whilst Victoria argued ‘I have no problem with them personally, but I hate the lack of integration, it’s a society, you can’t just cut yourself off’.

Finally, when asked overall what they believe the role media has had in shaping their opinion of Muslim men as sexual predators, all participants acknowledged the media influenced their view to varying extents. Katrina stated, although she discussed other influences throughout, ‘I don’t see ‘em that much, so I just go by what I see on the telly’. The rest of the participants, however, all acknowledged there were certainly other sources explaining their anxiety of men and Muslim men. Rachel stated that gender differences between boys and girls when younger reasserts the need for women to remain fearful; ‘I would worry if a girl was coming home alone, but a younger lad I wouldn’t be as concerned, it’s just normal really isn’t it?’. This was a common interpretation, as participants stated their fear of men generally affected why they feared Muslim men as well. Sofia also added that her own ignorance of the Muslim faith played a role, referencing her own school education, ‘in RE or sociology, when learning about Islam, we only got to know how women were treated, nothing else really’.

Analysis

This analysis serves to contextualise the earlier analysis of media influence and situate it within the scope of other potential influences. The results clearly suggest racialised media, in the view of this project, facilitates a perspective of Muslim men as sexual predators, however, do so in conjunction to or on top of deeper rooted factors. The examined fear of sexual violence indicates in all cases women are fearful of male sexual violence, particularly in public settings. Suggestions by Tanusree (2011) and Valentine (1992) that suspicion and mistrust of the male population by women is reinforced through socially produced fear are supported. Participant reasoning, such as physical intimidation and differences as well as perceived male psychological tendencies of sexual dominance, suggests that regardless of the race of the male, their gender alone situates them within the label of potential sexual predator (Valentine, 1992). Moreover given the pervasive nature of sexual violence, all participants held this as a chief fear when questioned about being in public settings and was a significant motivation for limiting both their movement and personal freedoms (Ferraro, 1996; Keane, 1998). All participants, stated they often worried for safety in public settings and so, much like the responses evidenced in Kearn's (2010) work, often took precautions, such as avoiding areas or using tactics such as phoning a friend.

Indeed, personal experience has shown to be a contributing factor to this fear of sexual violence as shown through Barbara's recollection of her own traumatic encounter. Tanusree (2011) concluded fears can also come from personal experiences, which can contribute significantly to reinforcing gendered fear. The participant's own experiences influence their own perception of men and even if they do not personally experience it, the sentiment is disseminated through other forms. Through hearsay, rumours and of course media discourses (racial or not) that reinforce male stereotypes, women's perceptions are engineered to fear men (Brands et al, 2013; Valentine, 1992). Furthermore, as mentioned by

Rachel, enshrined gender roles within society reinforce a limitation on the movement of women justified through a suspicion of men (Valentine, 1992). Young girls' spatial range when reaching adolescence are often restricted by parents due to fears of sexual violence, whereas boys often have theirs' expanded. Overall, it cannot be denied for a plethora of reasoning that sexual violence and the perception of Muslim men is built on a foundation of male suspicion and cannot exist solely due to media influence.

Another view explored is how the white population is frequently abandoned in favour of minority populations according to the participants. As suggested by this project's hypothesis, group Bravo more frequently held increasingly overt frustrations towards the Muslim community, however, all participants shared to varying extents the feeling of annoyance. Although, as suggested by Trilling (2012), Winlow et al (2016) and to a lesser degree Haider (2018), there was no evidence of party abandonment of the white population. Animosity, especially in group Bravo, centred round a similar theme of institutional favouritism by the government and media that manifested, at least, envy towards the population. Despite earlier expectations of coverage, all participants stated a clear agenda of positive discrimination, both in media and often workplace settings, has created feelings of isolation and frustration to the Muslim community in the UK. This is exacerbated when Barbara, for instance, referenced the permittance of further abuse by the perpetrators of the Rochdale scandal due to the fact authoritative bodies did not wish to be involved for fears of appearing racist (Veevers, 2012). This was shown to greatly contribute to how the participants felt about Muslim men and certainly contributed to negative perceptions of their conduct. It is not lost on this project that in order for these stories to be disseminated, news media plays a role in fostering such opinions (Bunyan, 2012), however, these factors must be analysed through the lens of a perceived institutional failing, which has facilitated feelings of racial abandonment, exacerbated through instances like Rochdale. Moreover, this

disillusionment is made ever worse for group Bravo who felt the treatment of women in Islam a double standard in the UK due to the population continuing their practices, despite British practices being heavily restricted in Islamic countries. The participants once again felt grievances that hegemonic masculinity within Islam is permitted to continue and seemingly associate them evermore with the abuse of women.

In addition to previous reasoning, one other theme became apparent, which was religious unawareness. This again reinforced previous arguments that Muslim men are associated with hegemonically masculine tendencies (Gill and Harrison, 2015), as Sofia stated her education only informed her of the negative treatment of women within the faith. In addition to gender differences and political isolation, this unfamiliarity with the faith only seemed to reinforce perceptions of Muslim men as sexual predators of women and so helps contribute to the reasons underpinning this association.

Contextualising these results

Overall, these results have clearly indicated the role racialised mainstream media has played in fostering a view of BPM men as sexual predators has been that of aggravation, which was partially predicted through this project's hypothesis. Although Cockbain and Tufail's (2020) convincing work suggested media has had an almost absolute influence in shaping public perceptions, when tested and contextualised, this is shown to only be partially true.

Illustrative examples, such as *Norfolk* (2011) or *Silent Witness* (IMDb, 2012), have certainly been received by the participants within Dorset, however, have not been completely internalised. Increased exposure to more extreme cases, as shown in group Bravo, certainly correlated with more anxious perceptions, however fears of Muslim males in most cases were only moderately more severe. When assessed against other factors, contributed by feminist scholars such as Valentine (1992) or researchers of the far-right (Winlow et al 2016), it becomes apparent white female perceptions, whether more intense or not, exist from a

broader cause of fears of the entire male population, political isolation and to a lesser extent religious unfamiliarity. Media influence has certainly exacerbated already present anxieties, however, cannot be exclusively blamed for female perceptions, as much scholarship has implied.

This project thus, through this conclusion, adds to scholarship's knowledge through exploring the impact of media through a contextual lens that uses qualitative responses from an underexplored group in this field. Racialisation works surrounding this topic have focussed on primarily demonstrating the role of media through illustrative examples of racialised or the experiences of Muslim communities. This work provides original data contextualising the role of racialised media and concludes its aggravative role in amongst other wider factors.

Conclusion

The focus of this project was to establish whether the proposed racialised media narrative argued in scholarship has influenced the perception of BPM males as sexual predators in the view of the general public (specifically white women in this case), as has been so fiercely suggested by Cockbain and Tufail (2020). It answered how the role of media compared with broader social focuses, particularly the role of gender based sexual violence as well as feelings of political isolation of the white population. Original qualitative data was obtained through in-depth interviews that intensely questioned the white female participants along three thematic objectives. The first was to assess whether the proposed racialised media narrative was as widespread in its reach of the public. Participants were asked how they felt particular populations were represented and how they compared with others. The second theme asked them to contrast what their own expected media narrative was with their own personal attitudes to other populations with a primary focus on the role of BPM men as threats of sexual violence. In this way, the data yielded a comparable measure in which their consumed media narrative could be evaluated. The final theme situated the discussion within the broader context of other criminological research topics. It aimed to determine how the role of racialised media's significance fared against the role of fears of gender based sexual violence and political isolation. All responses were analysed and coded according to these themes. The results make it clear the role media plays is one of further aggravating already present frustrations or anxieties. As predicted, the older participants' expectation aligned more closely to the proposed media narrative due to greater awareness of the 'Asian grooming gang' scandals (*Yorkshire Post*, 2010), however, all participants clearly recognised the outlined discourse. The personal attitudes of the participants to varying extents agreed with the media narrative. Although this once again was seen more greatly in group Bravo, the views of the participants were not exactly the same as the media and so its significance is not

absolute. All participant responses, acknowledged there were other impacts that clearly built the foundation of both fears of sexual violence and frustrations towards the Muslim community through irritations of seemingly favourable institutional focuses on the Muslim community. In addition, unexpectedly religious unfamiliarity reinforced already suggested themes of hegemonic masculinity which fostered anxiety with Muslim males. All participants feared sexual violence from men regardless of their race, however there were small to moderate distinctions with Muslim men from some of the participants. Older participants more frequently stated their abject frustrations to the Muslim community concerning political isolation, however all at least hinted they were annoyed at perceived institutional failings and discussed concepts suggesting religious unfamiliarity. Overall it can be concluded the role racialised media plays in influencing white women's opinions is one that exacerbates what is already present more broadly. Deeper set influences discussed by scholars like Valentine (1992) and Winlow et al (2016) build much of the foundation for which media develops public opinion.

The field has often focused on the role of media independent of other significant influences. It has also often used raw examples of racialised media to illustrate its conclusion, whereas this project has provided original qualitative data helping to support the conclusions of articles by Gill and Harrison (2015) for instance. The wider implications of this work bring the focus of this topic into an inter-disciplinary scope of analysis and serves as an example that not only tests current conclusions, but situates them within a broader lens of social relevance. It has demonstrated, therefore, that whilst the media's role should not be understated, it may exacerbate pre-existing factors, which may require further investigation to understand how the BPM male population have been racialised and subsequently ostracized.

This investigation is not without its limitations. The unfortunate international political climate concerning Afghanistan's instability was occasionally discussed autonomously by

some of the participants (the latter half of whom were interviewed after the instability was reported on). In all cases, participants discussed this within a negative scope and so the answers were subject to current tensions (Davies, 2021; BBC News, 2021). This was unsurprising given the heavy focus of reporting upon the position of women in Afghanistan under Taliban rule (Fouche, 2021). This may have diverted the line of questioning from the original research purpose and so affected the ability of the study to measure the impact of racialised media of a sexually violent nature directly and accurately. This, however, does not invalidate the research given all participants discussed the original subject anyway and this was considered in the analysis of the first theme. It does perhaps invite a further line of investigation for future study that, as Hall (1978) suggested, the Islamic identity may be starting to become racialised through a different narrative.

Given the sample universe only included participants living in Dorset, the ability for these results to be transferred and generalised to the entire white female population of the UK is limited (Robinson, 2014). The geographical restrictions of the sample thus limit the application of these results realistically from the wider population, therefore all discussions here, as has been mentioned, only refer to the population living within Dorset as population demographics are different in different areas of the country (Office for National Statistics, 2011). This would mean perceptions of the Muslim population may differ in areas with larger demographics and exposure. Although this could be regarded as a limitation, this project would suggest it contributes and potentially opens up a new avenue of potential research. Further study could examine similar focuses within other locations of the UK to compare with the results of this study and evaluate the possibility of generalising the data.

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Appendices

Appendix 1- Application for Ethical Approval of Research

MSc Criminology

2020-2021

Application for Ethical Approval of Research



**UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH**
School of Law, Criminology
and Government

NOTE: Do not begin research without getting ethical clearance. Research involving human subjects cannot begin until after this application has been approved by your supervisor and the 2nd member of staff designated to review your application, and the form has been returned to you with both of their signatures.

Name of Student: Rhys Terry

Name of Supervisor: Chris Pac-Soo

1. State the aims and objectives of the research project below, including your research question.

Research Question: Has popular media and political discourse facilitated a racialised view of Muslims with regards to 'Asian Grooming Gangs' among white, English women?

Aims:

Establish perceptions of Muslims from the perspective of white women.

Build an understanding of how these girls perceive their own whiteness in relation to how Muslim men may pose a threat.

Establish how these opinions have been shaped and measure the impact of popular media and political discourse.

Objectives:

Interview several white women of varying ages, preferably in areas that were subject to high profile 'Asian grooming gang' scandals to establish any opinions.

Get a large sample of published political discourses and popular media to achieve representative data that can be used as a measurable variable.

2. Provide a brief description of your research methods below. Be sure to indicate any ethically sensitive aspects of the methods as you lay them out.

Note: If you are researching human participants, include information pertaining to target and sample populations and sampling techniques, including recruitment strategy.

Note: If you are using existing data (e.g., secondary data sets), textual sources (e.g., official documents, policy documents, full-text documents, news sources, etc.) or visual images, state your strategy for identifying, sampling, and retrieving the material.

I will be using opportunity sampling to achieve the objectives as set out. When conducting interviews with roughly eight human subjects, I will be exclusively using white females 18 years of age and over who I meet in agreed-upon establishments or areas. I will conduct a 30 minute semi-structured, in-depth interview which will establish their opinions towards their own race and Muslims in the community.

3. Ethical Protocol: Human Subjects

If your dissertation project involves research involving human participants, complete all of the fields below (do not leave any of the fields blank – if a particular ethical guideline does not apply to your research, state 'not applicable' and provide a short explanation if that is the case).

A. Informed consent, voluntary participation, and right to withdraw

I will ensure that all participants are clearly informed about the purpose of the study and that they do not feel pressured to be involved or remained involved even after signing their ethical consent form. I will also provide them with some professional contact information for them to let me know if they would like to withdraw their responses even after the interview has taken place.

B. Protection from harm (for both you and the potential participants)

I will remain in contact with my lecturer by providing updates of my safety every 30 minutes using my phone. I will also only be in the agreed upon-safe areas and thus avoid areas that may present a danger to my safety.

C. Privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity

I will use pseudonyms for all participants as well as for the locations so there is no chance of them being identified. Additionally, all data will be stored on encrypted files and kept only on my work laptop, never being shared with anyone else.

D. Openness and honesty, deception, and debriefing

Following the interview, the participants will be fully informed about the contents of the study as well as reminded about their rights to withdraw even after the study has been completed.

4: Ethical Protocol: Secondary Data, Images, Documentary Sources, etc.

If your dissertation involves secondary data, text, or imagery, indicate how your research will identify the need for, and obtain, the following permissions. Also, if you are using secondary data sets, indicate how you know that the information was gathered in an ethical way. If any of the fields below do not apply to your research, leave blank.

A. Permissions for use of secondary data, including any confidentiality, anonymity, and consent issues.

Note: You must also complete relevant parts of section 3 if the data refers to individual identifiable human subjects (e.g., case data from agencies, etc.).

B. Permissions, if necessary, for secondary use of research instruments (e.g., questionnaires).

C. Information obtained to ensure that secondary data was gathered ethically.

D. Consideration – and permission, if necessary – of copyright issues.

Declaration

To the best of our knowledge and belief, where applicable, this research conforms to the ethical principles laid down by the University of Plymouth and by the British Society of Criminology.

Name of Student (Printed): Rhys Terry

Name of Student (Signed): Rhys Terry

Date: 11/07/2021

Name of Supervisor (Printed): Chris Pac-Soo

Name of Supervisor (Signed):



Date: 13/07/2021

Name of 2nd CCJ Staff Member Approving Application (Printed): Iain Channing

Name of 2nd CCJ Staff Member Approving Application (Signed): *Iain Channing*

Date: 13.7.21

Appendix 2- Participant Ethical Consent Form



Ethical Consent Form

Project topic: The influence of racialised media on perceptions of Muslim communities

Name of researcher, contact details and university affiliation:

Rhys Terry

Email: Rhys.terry@students.plymouth.ac.uk

Phone no.: [REDACTED]

University of Plymouth

Your rights as a participant:

In accordance with the British Society of Criminology's ethical guidelines, you as a participant possess rights which will be listed here:

- When participating in a study, you should be a willing participant who has been informed about the nature of the study, what the study will involve and how your contributions will be used in the study's conclusions. In this study, your role will involve being interviewed about your personal opinions concerning the topic of media content and perceptions of Muslim communities. Although this form will not detail the specific objectives of the study prior to the participation, you will be fully debriefed following your interview.
- At any time prior, during or after the process you have the freedom to ask any questions concerning the study and to withdraw your data. Even if this decision is retroactive, you may use the contact information provided to express any concerns or confirm your complete severance from the project, in which all information you provided will be destroyed. This is because at no time before, during or after the study should you be subject to any physical or psychological harm.
- You, as a participant, are guaranteed complete anonymity and confidentiality in accordance with the British Society of Criminology's guidelines and relevant legislation, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, 2018). As such, the only accurate information that will be shared is your county of residence, age and occupation. Other non-essential information, such as your name or any local

references, will either be redacted from any transcripts or be replaced with pseudonyms (this will include your name).

- All responses provided will be transcribed after recording. The relevant recordings will be deleted after this process and the written document will be stored on an encrypted file only accessible to the researcher. At any time, if you wish to access your data, this can be requested and granted.

Agreement to participant in the project:

You should only state your agreement to participate in this study if you have read, fully consented and accept participating will involve the following:

- I have read and understood this form and fully comprehend my rights as a participant.
- I understand and consent to what this study will involve and have had the opportunity to ask questions. This includes:
 - Being recorded whilst undertaking an in-depth interview and having my answers transcribed and used in the conclusions of this study.
- I am participating in this study willingly and have not been coerced into participating at any time.
- I understand my right to withdraw from the study at any time without given reason and know that my data will subsequently be erased if I wish for this to happen.
- I understand that I have the freedom to decline to answer any questions if I do not wish to share my response.
- I understand that I have the right to complete protection from any physical or psychological harms.
- I understand that my data may be used in an anonymised manner for further investigation and future study.

I confirm my agreement to take part in this project on the basis outlined above and that holding my copy of this form is my responsibility:

Name of participant (BLOCK CAPTIALS) _____

Date (dd/mm/yyyy)_____

Signature_____

Name of Researcher (BLOCK CAPTIALS) _____

Date (dd/mm/yyyy)_____

Signature_____

Appendix 3- Sample of Participant Transcript and Coded Data

Rhys: Okay, so you mentioned about like kind of how you see them, you know they are an image so? Going on the idea of image, how do you think white women are represented in like when I say the media I do mean, I mean the news, I mean social media, I mean entertainment, I mean any kind of media, and so, so how do you think they are represented?

Sofia: As a victim, as the main one, it's the fact that in all scenarios, because you're a woman, you're gonna be, you're gonna have it harder in life. You're gonna be spoken down to when you're applying for a job you might well not be picked compared to someone else, so they are a victim in that situation. You can't walk the streets at night because you're a woman. And stuff like that. Then you do get very rarely like it sort of seems that in the media. So if you take the news, social media and stuff with that a lot of the time, they're trying to get women to be not necessarily, only the victim, but to be the victim and kind of pushing them to report, stand up for themselves or do this. But in all sense of the word even if they're trying to make themselves sound like they're not the victim, there's always this patronising sense that we are considered the victim no matter what scenario we are in.

Rhys: Okay, so. Again, my question there would be, I asked white women, is that the same with all women in this sense in the media or is that? Is there a difference between race?

Sofia: I think there is when it comes to representation of different women in culture. Sorry, let me say that again, in different representation of different cultures of women in the media. So I would say that for let's say let's take some sort of campaign against sexual harassment or some sort of news story, a lot of the time you see it's a white girl in a club, or a white girl being groomed or white girl this happening to them. But then when it comes to race crimes, hate crimes and stuff against women, it would be black women and a lot of the time it's Muslim women for hate crimes and stuff. So it's the kind of different branches of the different types of victimisation. So for white women it's a lot of time, it's they're a sexual victim. For black and Muslim, a lot of the time they're a hate crime victims. So no matter what women are victims, but it's in different branches of crime that they are victims to.

Rhys: Okay. Now same question, men? How do you think white men are represented? This sort of goes on your earlier comment, but how do you think other populations are represented?

Sofia: Yeah I would sort of say that black men are seen sort of as thugs and if you take any kind of if you look at news, social media, media in the sense of TV shows and other film or whatever they have been black men. From, forever, as long as you can remember they really have been described as thugs so they could steal stuff. All the time you know the stereotypes and then with Muslim men, a

lot of the time they'll grab you and take you away, if you're a woman so you know, like rape gangs and stuff and hide you away. But then white men, they're kind of seen as a power hungry, selfish, only obsessed with money businessman and they're kind of there's kind of like a ranking. In the sense that white men are automatically seen as having... their crimes are not lower class crimes. They are posh crimes. If you know, I mean in the sense of their all to do with money, tax evasion, embezzling, money laundering stuff is always the white men, but all the crimes that would be considered a kind of more, I don't think it's less high class, but you know what I mean. As in like kind of grittier. Yeah yeah that's what I mean. Yeah, grittier crimes are the rest, the white men all just seem to be powerful in all senses of the word, no matter whether they be a criminal or not.

Rhys: So could you just expand a little bit on that? So you think white men, kind of are a little bit more associated with white collar crime and things like that. Black men are shown as thugs, could you expand a little bit more on what you think with Muslim men?

Sofia: It's sort of... Muslim men. If you were like, you know, going to train stations or going out during the day. You wouldn't, If I... from a woman's perspective, I wouldn't ask them for directions. I would ask a white man or ask another lady because there would be a fear like when you look at films like taken and stuff. They're all Muslim men, I'm pretty sure like I can't remember, but they give films like that when they were girls getting taken or a lot of people know in their culture, women are considered a lot lower than men, so they will get touched. They'll get raped. They'll have all this lot I just wouldn't want to risk it. The way I would see men with a lot of crimes against women and stuff yeah.

Rhys: So your idea of them and their representation is the idea that they are predators? Sexual predators?

Sofia: Yeah.

Rhys: I see okay. So that was my question about how you think they're represented now. What is and I would like you to be perfectly honest, what are your attitudes towards Muslim men? Especially in comparison with populations like white men?

Sofia: I feel safer in a room full of white men, than as safe in a room full of Muslim men. If you know a little bit about their culture in the sense that you know the stereotype culture. You know I, I know for a fact that not all Muslim men are like this, but I would just feel a lot more comfortable with in a room full of white men, because I know they would hopefully share my same values like that women are equal to men. And women aren't like lower but I know with Muslim men and a lot of time it is taught in their religion. It's taught as they are being grown. You know, as they grown up, women are sort of almost as slaves to men and they're not seen on the same level. I wouldn't feel comfortable.

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	1) How do they feel white women and Muslim men are represented in the media?	2) Are they aware of the Rochdale crisis or any alike scandal?	3) What are their attitudes towards BPM men in comparison with other populations?	4) Scenario 1: Roadside Scenario 2: Taxi drivers	5) What do they picture when they think of a sexual predator?	6) How do they feel as a white woman they are more or less vulnerable to any dangers of sexual violence?	7) How do they feel white people are represented in politics?	8) Role of the media on their view of Muslim men as predators	Summary of Participant
Sofia (Group Alpha)-	<p>White women always considered a victim in the media, walking alone in the dark, applying for a job, etc. even to a patronising extent.</p> <p>When it is stuff against sexual violence it is always white women, race crime its black and Muslim women in another kind of victimisation</p> <p>Consumption primarily through social media television and to a lesser extent the news</p> <p>Black men as thugs, Muslim men as sexual predators, white men as power hungry embezzlers- uses the example of <i>Taken</i>.</p>	<p>Was aware about Rochdale and said that it was based on the programme <i>Three Girls</i>, however wasn't aware of the full extent of the national scandal.</p>	<p>Wariness about approaching or being alone with Muslim men and feels safer with white men than Muslim men due to the cultural differences and fears about how women appear to be almost slaves in their religion.</p> <p>Worried about how the fact that she is the very thing that they hate more than anything (a western independent woman).</p> <p>Very closely aligns with media representation, but is aware that not all Muslims are threatening and only some of them are.</p>	<p>Scenario one: With white men she would be uncomfortable and take precautions and avoid their path by stepping into the road.</p> <p>If it was night it wouldn't matter who they were, she would cross the road.</p> <p>With Muslim men she would cross the road and she was aware that was because of films she has seen like <i>Taken</i>.</p> <p>Scenario 2: First white female as she poses the least threat and is most familiar, then a Muslim female (the only difference being due to what you see and hear about women being used to lure girls in for grooming). Then a white male but would be on the phone with someone (they don't try to talk to you), then a Muslim man because of the same reason there is a difference between the women but also fears of direct sexual assault.</p> <p>Only a minor difference between the races</p> <p>Due to a lack of control in the situation and the fact the taxi driver can trap them in</p> <p>The main reason for gender difference is due to fears of sexual violence and believes that the difference between race is also sexual violence.</p>	<p>Pictures a Muslim man, long black beard, dark deep set eyes. Said that's no one's fault but the media's who always show that and a white woman as the victim.</p>	<p>Doesn't feel there is a difference between the race of women in terms of vulnerability to danger but there is one between men and women.</p> <p>Thinks that women in public spaces are instantly more vulnerable to being raped or sexually assaulted/harassed by men, especially in the dark, than being mugged, etc.</p> <p>Believes it's all men, but especially more black and Muslim men, whereas white men, she pictures, could attack you, but are more likely to commit white collar crime.</p>	<p>Feels alienated, especially given the representation and opportunities given to Muslims as white people have sort of been swept aside.</p> <p>Their opinions don't matter because they're the majority.</p> <p>Certainly makes her frustrated at minority communities. Not completely racist sentiment but just envious feelings.</p>	<p>Feels their opinion about Muslim men is largely from the media due to their location being Dorset and a lack of exposure to them.</p> <p>Also ignorance in education; only learning in Religious Studies about Islamic treatment of women.</p> <p>Believes media's opinion, especially western, often makes the antagonist foreign and in many cases Muslim.</p>	<p>White women always shown as victims in everything and Muslim men always shown as sexual predators.</p> <p>Wariness about Muslim men due to the position of women in their society; closely aligns with media image of a sexual predator, but only a small difference between white and Muslim men. Clear anxiety surrounding Muslim culture and risks of systematic abuse.</p> <p>Doesn't feel her race but her gender matters in terms of vulnerability from all men, but especially Muslim men. Feels politically isolated due to her race making her envious of Muslim communities. Definite media influence negatively, but also ignorance of religion and that women are taught to already be suspicious. Clearly media exacerbates already present factors.</p>

Themes:

- 1) Whether the proposed racialised media narrative aligned with the expectations of what participants expect to see in the media
- 2) Personal attitudes about the subjects own racial and sexual vulnerability to Muslim men as sexual predators
- 3) Significance of the media in influencing white women's opinions and whether there are any other factor

Appendix 4- Table of Participants

Group Alpha	Group Bravo
Participant Name: Rachel Age: 30 Occupation: Health Care Assistant	Participant Name: Victoria Age: 54 Occupation: Nurse Practitioner
Participant Name: Sandra Age: 23 Occupation: Customer Service	Participant Name: Barbara Age: 53 Occupation: Care Supervisor
Participant Name: Sofia Age: 21 Occupation: Media Student	Participant Name: Katrina Age: 57 Occupation: Hospitality

*All participants county of residence is Dorset