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BAME: A report on the use of the term and responses to it

Terminology Review for the BBC and Creative Industries

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Executive Summary

The use of the term *BAME*, an acronym used to refer to people from 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic' backgrounds, has become widespread in the UK in recent years. From government reports, advocacy groups and journalistic reportage, *BAME* has become a catch-all moniker, interchangeably used as both a noun and adjective to signify, or "represent", a heterogeneous band of people who do not identify as White when describing their identities, cultures, and experiences.

Despite this widespread usage, the term has garnered significant criticism from the very people it seeks to describe. With some people viewing it as an annoying "necessary evil", to others seeing it as an insult that should never be used. A major concern, apparent in recent public responses to *BAME*, is that it homogenises culturally distinct social groups. This is significant because it is tied to a wider and long-standing struggle for cultural representation that these diverse communities have long sought to achieve within the creative sector in the UK. If one of the aims of media organisations is to increase diversity and inclusion and improve cultural representation, an homogenising term could have the opposite effect. This is particularly apparent if it is used in the singular, effectively replacing a person's own self-described racial identity.

Use of the term has also fed into concerns by some that it has been used cynically by organisations to hide the lack of representation and discrimination experienced by particular racial groups, as their problems are "averaged out" through incorporation into the broader group. This means that racial diversity targets may be met without any significant increase in representation for certain racial groups.

The relevance of this report is that there is a social problem that needs to be addressed; *BAME* is widely used in the creative sector, but public criticism of the term is increasingly mobilising. We identify strong evidence to suggest that the term *BAME* is problematic for many, and that a case can be made for considering alternative language. This is not to say that the term *BAME* can simply be replaced with an alternative term, as there is no easy consensus on what such a term might be.

Our aim in this report is to address the current, existing tensions around the use of *BAME* and ethnicity-related terminology in the creative industries as part of our broader work, research-based and vocational, to action change in the sector. The report makes a critical intervention in current debates, and hopes to drive forward a more thoughtful approach to how language about, and for, diverse communities is used in the future.

The report provides a framework for how broadcasters should think about and use ethnicity-related terminology, to engender better understanding and trust. This ranges from the relatively simple and straight forward recommendation that the single noun "Bame" (rhyming with "name") should never be used, to a proposal for a more nuanced framework of issues to consider when using collective terms in news reporting versus referencing specific ethnic groups.

Underlying the research presented here is the understanding that at the heart of the issue is a power dynamic; a power dynamic between those who have the power to label and those who are labelled. Labels and language can be indicative of wider issues of power.

However, we are also acutely aware that while language matters we must guard against this being seen as the dominant focus of debate around race and racism in the UK. It is important that issues around language are addressed but that changing terminology is not perceived to be a solution in itself. It cannot be at the detriment or cost of other issues around inequalities in the creative industries, and beyond, being acknowledged and actively tackled.

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The purpose of this report

In 2021, the BBC asked the Sir Lenny Henry Centre for Media Diversity (LHC) at Birmingham City University to support in determining the way in which to describe a group of individuals from Black, Asian and ethnic minority groups when communicating both internally and externally. The BBC required the LHC to review the terminology *BAME* in relation to the BBC's business needs and impact across the wider creative industry.

To do this, the LHC has assessed, through a rigorous process of quantitative and qualitative research, including social media analysis, creative sector and academic analysis, and audience research and interviews, the use of the term *BAME*. The aim has been to ascertain not only how the term *BAME* has been used but also the basis of concerns about its usage.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of current debates and research pertaining to the use of the term *BAME* and to offer recommendations drawing from this evidence and experience to help inform how the BBC and the wider creative industries might consider the use of the term in the future.

1. Introduction: Background Context to *BAME*

It is essential to provide some background and context to the use of *BAME* in order to review its validity and relevance as a way to describe a group of individuals from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. The arrival of the Coronavirus pandemic in early 2020, and the ensuing public health and economic crises that followed and remain to this day, not only exacerbated existing socio-cultural and economic inequities both in the UK and globally[1], but also contributed to further solidifying *BAME* as an expedient term to refer to many of the individuals and communities hit hardest by the effects of the pandemic[2].

Writing in late 2020, Peter J. Aspinall noted that 'Anyone who has been tracking the public health literature on the greater risks experienced by minority ethnic groups in the coronavirus pandemic will have been struck by the almost ubiquitous use of the acronym 'BAME'[3].' Aspinall continues, explaining how government public health agencies in particular 'use *BAME* as a modifying adjective for 'communities', 'groups', 'households', 'people', 'populations', 'staff' (Aspinall, 2021: 107). Furthermore, the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 instigated global anti-racism protests and the re-centring of the Black Lives Matter movement (an ideological and political intervention founded in 2013/14).[4] These events brought debates regarding the UK's imperial and colonial past, as well as current experiences of racism in the UK, to the fore. In June 2020 YouGov reported that 84% of *BAME* Britons (of 1,270 people surveyed) believe racism still exists in the UK.[5] This rose to 94% among Black Britons.[6] The context of the increasing use of *BAME* since 2020, has therefore coincided with what seems to be a strong level of awareness and consciousness of the presence of racism in the UK and more widely.

Drawing on data from the Hansard record[7], Aspinall sets out a brief analysis of *BAME* and *BME* in House of Commons and House of Lords Parliamentary proceedings.[8] His analysis shows that the first use of 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic' occurs in Hansard in 2004, with the term overtaking 'Black and Minority Ethnic' (*BME*) in 2020. Such findings are a useful starting point, but the formal nature of parliamentary discourse means that it is difficult to take these results as indicative of wider usage patterns across the UK.

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[1] See, for example: 'Health Equity Considerations & Racial & Ethnic Minority Groups', Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, April 2021; Vanessa Apea and Yize Wan, '49% more likely to die' – racial inequalities of COVID-19 laid bare in study of East London hospitals', The Conversation, January 2021.

[2] See: Akaninyene Otu, et al., 'One country, two crises: what Covid-19 reveals about health inequalities among *BAME* communities in the United Kingdom and the sustainability of its health system?', International Journal for Equity in Health, 19, 189, 2020; Linda Geddes, 'Health inequalities in UK are major factor in high *BAME* Covid cases', The Guardian, January 2021; Kaveri Qureshi et al., 'COVID-19 and *BAME* Inequalities – The Problem of Institutional Racism', Centre for Health and the Public Interest, July 2020.

[3] Peter J. Aspinall, '*BAME* (black, Asian and minority ethnic): The 'new normal' in collective terminology', Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health, 75, 2021: p. 107.

[4] 'Herstory', Black Lives Matter.

[5] Tanya Abraham, '84% of *BAME* Britons think the UK is still very or somewhat racist', YouGov, June 2020.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Hansard is a verbatim record of what was said in the two houses of Parliament.

[8] Peter J. Aspinall, 'Ethnic/racial terminology as a form of representation: A critical review of the lexicon of collective and specific terms in use in Britain', Genealogy, 4(3), 87, 2020: p. 4-5.

Despite its recent ubiquity, *BAME* has been a contested term for several years. In 2015, Trevor Phillips argued that:

> [P]hrases such as black and minority ethnics (BME) and black, Asian and minority ethnic (Bame) [sic] had outlived their usefulness and simply "tidied away" a mixture of real people who only shared the characteristic of not having white skin.[9]

More recently still, in an interview with the BBC in 2018, Priti Patel MP said that she found the '*BME*' label 'patronising' and 'insulting', arguing that she was 'British first and foremost, because I was born in Britain'.[10] Similarly, writing for the GOV.uk Civil Service blog, former Deputy Head of Unit & Deputy Director Policy and Strategy for the Race Disparity Unit (RDU) Zamila Bunglawala said 'Please, don't call me BAME or BME!'.[11] Bunglawala explains how, while acronyms 'can be very catchy and convenient' they can be widely misunderstood, have 'negative connotations' and be 'hurtful to people' (Bunglawala, 2019). For Bunglawala, *BAME/BME* are a good example of this:

> There is also a problem in that the terms 'BAME' and 'BME' aren't always associated with White ethnic minorities such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller of Irish Heritage groups, which we know are among some of our most marginalised and disadvantaged communities. To leave these communities out of the very language we use is to marginalise them even further. (Bunglawala, 2019)

Bunglawala states that she has never referred to her own ethnicity using 'BAME or BME', preferring to 'proudly refer to my specific ethnic identity – my background is Indian' (Bunglawala, 2019).The RDU has since stated that they do not use *BAME* and *BME* since the terms 'emphasise certain ethnic minority groups (Asian and Black) and exclude others (Mixed, Other and White ethnic minority groups)'.[12] Five petitions made in 2020 calling for the UK Government and Parliament to stop using the terms were rebuked, with the Government claiming that their guidance already states that they do not use *BAME/BME*. However, Aspinall illustrates how this is a dishonest claim since 'the statement derives from the fact that this guidance relates only to the work of the Race Disparity Unit [...] and not to Government as a whole' (Aspinall, 2021: 107).

[9] Richard Ford, 'Ethnicity labels are divisive, says Phillips', The Times, May 2015.

[10] '*BME* label insulting, says ex-minister Priti Patel', March 2018, BBC.

[11] Zamila Bunglawala, 'Please, don't call me BAME or BME!', Civil Service Blog, July 2019.

[12] 'Writing about Ethnicity', GOV.UK.

Such high-profile resistance to the terms *BME*/*BAME* is reflected in wider discussions and public surveys regarding their usage, as well as in the research that we have conducted and present here. While, as Aspinall notes, there is a 'growing usage of these acronyms [...] in the work of the media and the third and private sectors' (Aspinall, 2021: 107), several commentators and organisations across the creative and media industries[13] have called for the end of their usage. In April 2021, Hannah Ajala argued that *BAME* 'has now been used as a lazy way of grouping several ethnic minorities as one' and that she has become 'increasingly cautious about using certain terms like *BAME*, and POC (Person of Colour).'[14]

These concerns were further reflected in a recent survey conducted by Ipsos Mori and commissioned by the BBC. A survey of 1,110 people in the UK revealed that 'use of the word *BAME* was seen negatively' across all groups, with those within the communities the term refers to feeling it was 'not appropriate'.[15] Respondents were also 'confused as to [the term's] origin and the reason for its existence' as well as viewing it as 'an opportunistic/ lazy word to lump 'non-whites' together with little basis' (Ipsos MORI/BBC Audiences: 9). As we go on to discuss, these kinds of points were echoed in the data that we have collected for this report.

It should be noted however, that while there are concerns about use of the term *BAME*, our interviews revealed that many groups, including Operation Black Vote and the Runnymede Trust, see a positive utility in sometimes grouping together people who experience racism, or are underrepresented in various sectors of society due to their racial identity. This is also mirrored by employee network groups throughout the broadcast industry who, while they might disagree on the use of a collective term, see a positive utility in effectively grouping together on the grounds of their "non-White" racial identity and subsequent experience of racism and racial disparities. We discuss this in more detail later in the report.

What is clear from this introductory section on the background context to *BAME*, is that the term requires further attention, to understand better its origins, its application in the creative sector and the different ways in which it is valued by various stakeholders. The analysis presented in this report is, to our knowledge, one of the first attempts at setting out a combined quantitative and qualitative overview of how collective terms of reference are used across a broader section of news reports, articles, and social media posts in the UK. As such, this report also contributes to Aspinall's (2021: 107) recent call concerning the need for 'a wider public debate... on appropriate collective terminology for minority ethnic groups' (see also Mistlin 2021 for a related discussion).

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[13] See, for example: 'Sporting Equals Launch #ENDBAME Language Campaign', Connect Sport, March 2021; Jane Josée Link, 'All I want for Christmas is the death of lazy 'diversity' language', The Bookseller, December 2020.; Kevin Osborne, '*BAME* over – the unintended consequences', Arts Professional, April 2021.

[14] Hannah Ajala, '*BAME* term potentially being scrapped creates wider conversations', Media Diversity Institute, April 2021.

[15] Ipsos MORI/BBC Audiences, 'BBC Language Guide Background Research', April 2021: p. 9.

1.2 Research Questions

The focus of the report is underpinned by the following research questions:

1. What are the origins of *BAME* and how has this been used in the creative sector? Specifically, what are the current working practices in journalism concerning collective terms of reference?

2. How do different collective terms of reference function linguistically?

3. How are collective terms of reference used and evaluated on social media?

4. How do various stakeholders respond to the term *BAME*?

5. What does the data tell us about the discursive construction of BAME?

1.3 Methods used

The research team deemed it important to approach these research questions through combined and complementary mixed methodological approaches. We employed a range of qualitative and quantitative methods to conduct the research and produce meaningful findings. These different approaches were used to explore the different forms of data collected for this report, including policy documents, news articles and social media data, industry stakeholder interviews, and audience focus groups.

1.3.1. Policy documents

We have examined screen sector policy documents specifically regarding or related to 'diversity' in the sector. These were publicly available reports from the major broadcasters, as well as screen sector organisations and government. The language of 57 policy documents published between 2001 to present (August 2021) were analysed for their use of the terms minority ethnic, *Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic*, *BAME* and *BME* when discussing race and ethnicity.

1.3.2. Linguistic Analysis

We have conducted linguistic analysis of news articles and social media data. Because of their strong connections and sometimes parallel use, we collected data on *BAME* and *BME*, including the expanded versions of these acronyms. In order to explore these collective terms of reference across a range of news reporting and social media data (see 4.1 below), methods from a discipline known as *corpus linguistics* were Section used. Corpus linguistics is, in basic terms, the analysis of large bodies of textual data using computer-aided methods to uncover large-scale patterns of usage, resulting in a quantitative, replicable, and reliable analysis of the data that is much quicker than manual approaches.

1.3.3. Stakeholder interviews

In order to capture different perspectives on the term *BAME*, we conducted over 20 industry stakeholder interviews over Zoom across a three-week period in July 2021.

The interviewees included, but were not limited to:

Bernard Achampong – Director of UnEdited

Aaqil Ahmed - Former Head of Religion BBC

Jacqueline Baker - Founder of the B Inclusive Task Force (formerly BAME TV Task Force)

Barnie Choudhury- Senior reporter Eastern Eye

Krishnan Guru-Murthy - Senior Presenter Channel 4 News

Juliana Iooty - BBC Head of Asia Region, World Service

Rico Johnson-Sinclair - Race Equality Lead BFI

Bina Kandola - Co-founder of Pearn Kandola

Alba Kapoor - Policy Officer Runnymede Trust

Megha Mohan - BBC Gender and Identity Correspondent

Simone Pennant - Director The TV Collective

Trevor Philips OBE - Chairman of the Board at Green Park

Diane Ridley - Managing Editor ITN

Ramaa Sharma - BBC Senior Digital Editor

Lucy Sheen- Director BEATS (British East Asian in Theatre and Screen)

Eva Simpson- Senior columnist Mirror newspaper

Janice Turner – Bectu Diversity Officer

Amy Turton – CDN

Deborah Williams – CDN

Eric Wishart - Former Editor-in-Chief AFP

Sir Simon Woolley - Director Operation Black Vote

Pat Younge - Former Head of BBC Production

BBC Employee Network Groups

Channel 4 Employee Network Groups

ITV Employee Network Groups

The interviewees were chosen based on either their practical experience of using ethnicity-related language in broadcasting and/or their expertise in this area more generally around the discussion of race and racism in the UK.

All the interviewees were asked a similar range of questions including, but not limited to:

- Their personal use of the term *BAME*,

- Their organisation's use of the term *BAME*,

- The utility and appropriateness in using collective terms around race,

- Best practice in language use when reporting, or collecting data, around race.

1.3.4. Audience research/BBC VIP groups

The BBC organised an audience research group consisting of several "friendship pairs" and covering a range of different ethnic and racial groups, including south Asian, east Asian, Black Caribbean and Black African. The audience group was given a series of news reports which used a range of racial terms including *BAME*. The purpose of the audience discussion group was not to find a perfect term(s), but to explore attitudes towards existing journalistic practices and see common themes in favourite (or "least worst") options that journalists use in describing different races both as a collective and as individual groups.

1.4 Structure of the Report

Following on from the introduction, the report is organised into four sections. Section 2 discusses the significance of language and how it produces meaning in society; Section 3 provides a review of how collective terms such as *BAME* have been used in creative policy and industry literature; Section 4 presents how *BAME* and *BME* have been used in news reporting and social media; and Section 5 presents the findings of the interviews and audience research through thematic analysis. Finally, we end with recommendations based on our research and analysis.

2. Language, labels, and the politics of representation

Before discussing the origins of the term *BAME*, it is first worthwhile considering the significance of language in meaning-making and representation in culture and society. In his work on language and communication, cultural theorist Stuart Hall explains that 'language is the privileged medium in which we 'make sense' of things, in which meaning is produced and exchanged'.[16] Hall continues, illustrating how:

> Language is one of the 'media' through which thoughts, ideas and feelings are represented in culture. Representation through language is therefore central to the processes by which meaning is produced. (Hall, 2013: xvii)

One of the ways in which we form meaning through language is through categorisation of difference and binary oppositions (i.e., day/night, black/white). It has been argued that 'culture depends on giving things meaning by assigning them to different positions within a classificatory system' (Hall, 2013: 226). *BAME* is an example of this kind of apportion through classification: it is a neologism used to represent/signify members of Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. However, its meaning lies in its position as a point of difference because it is used to refer to all 'non-White' individuals. As a result, *BAME* contributes to 'Othering' which is 'the manner in which social group dichotomies are represented via language'.[17] As john a. powell explains:

> Othering is not about liking or disliking someone. It is based on the conscious or unconscious assumption that a certain identified group poses a threat to the favoured group. It is largely driven by politicians and the media, as opposed to personal contact.[18]

As other sections of this report will go on to illustrate, there is a clear connection to be made between the use of *BAME* by politicians, in government policy and in the media, but what is important to focus on here is powell's inference of the 'conscious or unconscious assumptions' that can be instigated by othering in language.

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[16] Stuart Hall, et al., *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: SAGE, 2013: p. xvii.

[17] Anjali Pandey, 'Constructing Otherness: A Linguistic Analysis of the Politics of Representation and Exclusion in Freshmen Writing Issues', *Applied Linguistics*, 14(2), 2004: p. 155.

[18] john a powell, 'Us vs them: the sinister techniques of 'Othering' – and how to avoid them', *The Guardian*, November 2017.

2.1. Language and Ethnicity

There has been a great deal of public debate over the past 20 years concerning discourses of ethnicity and identity and the general labels (or 'collective terms of reference') used to group individuals into discrete categories. In the UK, we know that the most common collective terms of reference currently being used include 'Black and Minority Ethnic' (*BME*) and 'Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic' (*BAME*). While these two terms find widespread currency in journalism, public communications, and the civil service, as well as having an administrative purpose across housing, education, healthcare, and employment, general guidelines from the Office for National Statistics, the Cabinet Office, and the recent report by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities all advise against their use (Bunglawala 2019; Aspinall 2020: 4). Focusing specifically on *BAME*, Aspinall (see also Aspinall 2002) sets out a number of reasons why such collective terms of reference are problematic with regards to questions of ethnicity;

> [The term] is illogically constructed, the use of 'minority ethnic' following 'black' and 'Asian' suggesting that these pan-ethnicities are not minority ethnic groups. Moreover, the acronym implies that the individuals captured by it are a homogeneous group and it singles out and highlights specific pan-ethnicities ('black' and 'Asian'), raising issues of exclusion and divisiveness (Aspinall 2021: 107).

And because all labels, and the groups to which they refer, are socially created, usually without consultation with the groups they are meant to apply to (Monrose & Gilgeours 2021), there are always underlying issues of power, authority, hierarchy, and control operating through them, very often intersecting with the lived realities of class, gender, disability, and religion (cf. Crenshaw 1991).

Yet despite the broad swathe of critical social commentary about *BAME* and *BME*, we know very little about the historical trajectories of these collective terms of reference or even what the overarching patterns of linguistic usage across different media outputs might be. There have been, of course, some preliminary attempts at charting usage, although these tend to be based on very restricted datasets. Aspinall (2020: 13) claims that "the full-text of newspapers, both broadsheets and tabloids, yield too few cases for reliable trends in media usage of terminology to be compiled." However, as we demonstrate in this report, there are other ways of interrogating larger bodies of textual data which go beyond online search engines. Such methods also offer an increased level of granularity and linguistic detail to any subsequent analyses.

3. *BAME* in the context of Cultural Policy

One way of better understanding how central the use of *BAME* has become within society, is by looking at how policy, and specifically here, cultural policy, is using the term. In our review of screen sector cultural policy literature, 57 publicly available documents from 2001 to 2021 were analysed for their use of the terms minority ethnic, *Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, BAME* and *BME* when discussing race and ethnicity.[19] This was in order to acquire a sense of what terminology has been used and preferred over the past two decades.

Cultural policy, we suggest, has mirrored governmental and media discourse concerning diversity. *BAME* is a well-known and oft-used term within the Creative and Cultural Industries (CCIs). It is used as both a noun and adjective interchangeably, and can be used to represent groupings for statistical analyses (in workforce and pay gap surveys), as a descriptor for initiatives and programmes intended to reach underrepresented groups (such as, the National Film and Television School's BAME Leadership Programme in partnership with Creative Skillset[20] and the BBC Academy BAME Expert Programme[21]), or resources aiming to improve access and visibility (like the BBC's 'Expert Voices BAME Talent database'[22]).

While this is not unique to the screen sector[23], this report will focus largely on the use of *BAME* within screen sector policy since this is an area of the CCIs that has been actively engaging with debates surrounding 'diversity' and the underrepresentation of minority groups for decades. Much like the general usage of 'ethnic minority', *BME* and *BAME* in policy and the media, the use of the terms in screen sector policy documents has evolved over the past 20 or so years. For example, the British Screen Advisory Council's 'Achieving Diversity in the Film Industry' report, published in 2001, used the terms 'ethnic minority/ies', and defined this as 'Black and Asian communities living within the UK including South Asians, Afro-Caribbeans, Chinese and Vietnamese, as well as other non-English language communities.'[24] 'Ethnic minority/ies' continued to be favoured throughout the early to mid-2000s in screen sector policy documents, with annual Skillset reports from the period using this terminology (see Table 3.1). Exactly who was included within this grouping was only detailed in two of these reports. Skillset's 2003 'Workforce Survey'[25] and 2005 'Survey of the Audio and Visual Industries' Workforce'[26] breaks down 'ethnic origin' to include White, Mixed, Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, Chinese, and Other' (with the 2005 report also referring to 'black or minority ethnic groups (*BME*) (Skillset, 2005: 12).

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[19] Ofcom's annual 'Diversity and equal opportunities in television' in focus reports on major broadcasters have not been included in this analysis of terms used in policy documents as the reports are an aggregate of broadcasters' data and since broadcasters can report their data by different terms the reports do not provide any additional insight into how terms are used that is not already ascertained by the broadcasters' own reports.

[20] 'NFTS looking for talented emerging film business execs from a BAME background', NFTS, September 2916.

[21] 'Production Co-ordinator – *BAME* Expert Programme, BBC Academy', BBC Careers, 2014.

[22] 'Expert Voices: BAME talent database', Broadcast, November 2015.

[23] For example: 'Theatre Diversity Action Plan', BECTU, 2018; 'Diversity survey of the publishing workforce 2019', The Publishers Association, January 2020; 'CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Awards Diversity Review: Progress Report – September 2019', CILIP: The library and information association, September 2019.

[24] British Screen Advisory Council, 'Achieving Diversity in the Film Industry', BSAC: London, 2002: p. 9.

[25] Skillset, 'Workforce Survey 2003', Skillset: London, 2003.

[26] Skillset, 'Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce 2005', Skillset: London, 2005.

Table 3.1 Overview of screen sector diversity policy documents 2000-2021.

Year of Publication	Organisation	Report title	Terminology/language used
2001	British Screen Advisory Council	*Achieving Diversity in the Film Industry*	Ethnic minority/minorities - defined as 'Black and Asian communities living within the UK including South Asians, Afro-Caribbeans, Chinese and Vietnamese, as well as other non-English language communities.'
2002	Skillset	*Employment Census*	Ethnic minority
2003	Skillset	*Workforce Survey 2003*	Ethnic minority (the break down of ethnic origin provided for survey results is: White, Mixed, Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, Chinese, Other)
2004	Skillset	*Employment Census Report 2004*	Ethnic minority
2005	Skillset	*Survey of the Audio Visual Industries' Workforce 2005*	Ethnic minority/black or minority ethnic (BME) (the break down of ethnic origin provided for survey results is: White, Mixed, Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, Chinese, Other)
2006	Skillset	*Employment Census Report 2006*	Ethnic minorities
2009	Skillset	*2008 Creative Media Workforce Survey*	Ethnic minorities/BAME/BAMEs
2009	Skillset	*2009 Employment Census*	BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic)/BAMEs
2010	Skillset	*2010 Creative Media Workforce Survey*	Ethnic origin/Black and Minority Ethnic/BAME/BAMEs
2012	Creative Skillset	*Employment Census of the Creative Media Industries*	BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic)

2014	Directors UK	*Women Directors: Who's Calling the Shots*	Ethnicity (only mentioned twice)
2015	Channel 4	*360 Diversity Charter*	Ethnic minorities/BAME
2015	Creative Skillset	*Making TV More Diverse*	BAME (defined as Black, Asian and other minority ethnic)
2015	Directors UK	*Adjusting the Colour Balance: Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Directors in UK Television Production*	BAME (defined as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic): 'Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) relates to the broad groupings of South Asian, Black and East & South-East Asian (including South Asian Muslim communities)
2016	Diverse Cymru	*Rewriting the Script: A Report into Diversity in Film and TV by Diverse Cymru funded by the Welsh Government*	BAME/Minority Ethnic/BME
2017	BAFTA	*Succeeding in the Film, Television and Games Industries*	BAME (black, Asian or minority ethnic)
2017	BFI	*BFI2022 Strategy*	Black British/British Asian (used in reference to reaching filmmakers/ audiences)
2017	CDN	*Diamond: The First Cut*	BAME (black and minority ethnic)
2017	Channel 4	*360 Diversity Charter: Two Years On*	BAME/ethnic minority
2017	Creative Industries Federation	*Creative Diversity: The state of diversity in the UK's creative industries, and what we can do about it*	BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic)

2017	Creative Scotland	*Mainstreaming: EDI*	BAME (with caveat that they used BAME in 2015 but by 2017 had 'reverted' to using 'minority ethnic').
2017	Creative Scotland	*EDI Outcomes 2017-2021*	Minority Ethnic
2017	Creative Scotland	*Equality Matters: A Review of Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion in Scotland's Screen Sector*	minority ethnic/BAME (BAME used less frequently)
2017	Labour	*Acting Up: Labour's inquiry into access and diversity in the performing arts*	BAME (not defined)
2017	Ofcom	*Diversity and Equal Opportunities in TV: Monitoring Report on the UK broadcasting industry*	BAME (Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic), Ethnic Minority
2017	Ofcom	*Diversity and Inclusion at Ofcom*	BAME (Black, Asian or minority-ethnic)
2018	ALCS & The Writers' Union	*Gender inequality and screenwriters*	BAME (not defined)
2018	CAMEo	*Workforce Diversity in the UK Screen Sector: Evidence Review*	BAME (black and minority ethnic)
2018	CDN	*Diamond: The First Cut Update*	BAME (black and minority ethnic)
2018	CDN	*Diamond: The Second Cut*	BAME (Black, Asian or minority ethnic)/Ethnic origin
2018	Channel 4	*Channel 4 360 Diversity Charter 3 Years On*	BAME/ethnic minority
2018	Orian Brook, David O'Brien and Mark Taylor	*Panic! Social Class, Taste and Inequalities in the Creative Industries*	BAME (Black and minority ethnic)

2018	Directors UK	*Who's Calling the Shots? Gender Inequality Among Screen Directors Working in UK Television*	BAME (not defined)
2018	Ffilm Cymru Wales	*Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2018-2022*	BAME (not defined)
2018	Ofcom	*Diversity and Inclusion Programme 2018-2022*	black, Asian of ethnic minority/ethnic minority
2018	Raising Films	*Making It Possible: Voices of Parents & Carers in the UK Film and TV Industry*	ethnic background' (only once)
2018	Viacom	*Viacom in the UK: Diversity and Inclusion Strategy*	Ethnicity (employee stats broken down as follows: White, Asian, Mixed and Black.
2018	Workfoundation	*A Skills Audit Report of the UK Film and Screen Industries Report for the BFI June 2017*	BAME/BAMEs/ethnic background/ethnic minorities
2019	BBC	*Reflecting the ethnic diversity of the UK within the BBC workforce*	BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic)
2019	BFI	*The BFI Diversity Standards Criteria*	Race/'under-represented ethnic group'
2019	CDN	*Diamond: The Second Cut Appendix June 2019*	BAME (not defined)
2019	Ofcom	*Guidance: Diversity in Broadcasting: Arrangements for the promotion of equal opportunities in the broadcast industry*	Minority ethnic/ethnicity (but not really covered)

2019	Ofcom	*Ofcom's Annual Gender-Ethnicity Pay Audit 2018/19*	Minority ethnic backgrounds
2019	Ofcom	*Diversity and Equal Opportunities in TV: Monitoring Report on the UK broadcasting industry*	Minority Ethnic, 'Racial group breakdown (for industry workforce stats): White ethnic, East Asian/East Asian British, South Asian/South Asian British, Black/African/Caribbean/Black British, Mixed, Other, Minority Ethnic Groups (Not specified)'
2019	Ofcom	*Diversity in UK television: Freelancers*	Ethnic minority backgrounds
2019	ScreenSkills	*High-end television UK workforce in 2018 research report*	Ethnicity (only once)
2019	ScreenSkills & Work Foundation	*Annual ScreenSkills Assessment: Executive Summary*	White ethnic background (in reference to high proportion of White workers)
2019	UK Screen Alliance	*Inclusion and Diversity in UK Visual Effects Animation and Post Production*	BAME (respondents were able to select from: White, White and Black Caribbean mixed ethnicity, White and Asian mixed ethnicity, White and Black African mixed ethnicity, Another mixed ethnicity, Black Caribbean, Black African, Any other Black background, Asian - Indian, Asian - Pakistani, Asian - Bangladeshi, Asian - Chinese, Any other Asian background, Arab, Any other ethnic background)
2019	Channel 4	*Inclusion and Diversity: Strategy and Targets*	BAME (not defined)
2020	BFI	*BFI Diversity Standards Initial Findings*	BAME/'black, Asian and other minority ethnic'

2020	CDN	*Diamond: The Third Cut (Headlines Infographic)*	BAME
2020	UKIE	*UK Games Industry Census: Understanding Diversity in the UK Games Industry Workforce*	BAME (Black , Asian or minority ethnic)
2020	BBC	*Diversity Commissioning Progress Report 2019/20*	BAME (not defined)
2020	BBC	*Creative Diversity Report: Vol 1*	BAME (Statement made (p.14): 'BAME' Audience Research Understanding the rapid growth of our black and Asian population means we can better understand who we are making content for The Creative Diversity Unit are here to help our commissioners and programme makers understand that the term BAME is a classification not an identity, that encompasses people from a wide range of ethnicities with a range of cultures, lived experiences, interests and tastes. Relationships with heritage and 'Britishness' amongst BAME audiences are nuanced and complex and our content needs to better reflect this.)
2020	BBC	*BBC Group Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20*	black, Asian and minority ethnic/BAME used for datasets
2020	BBC	*BBC Pay Gap Report*	BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic)
2021	CDN	*Diamond: The Fourth Cut*	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic

By 2008, Skillset were using the term *BAME* (although continued to define this as 'black or minority ethnic'), even defying grammatical convention to pluralise the term to 'BAMEs'.[27] Interestingly, while 'BAME' (and 'BAMEs') is used again in Skillset's 2009 Employment Census, a breakdown of the data is included under the section heading 'Representation of Ethnic Minorities', but this is the only time 'ethnic minorities' is used in the report (besides in the explanation of the acronym *BAME*). As Table 3.1 suggests, the late 2000s seems to be the point at which *BAME* became the favoured term for the screen sector to use in policy documents, although some still continued to use ethnic minority/ies and *BAME* interchangeably, with others failing to define what they mean by '*BAME*' (some use it to represent Black, Asian and minority ethnic, while others, such as Creative Diversity Network (CDN) and Brook et al., use it to mean 'black and minority ethnic' as recently as 2018). The 2015 Channel 4 '360° Diversity Charter', for example, uses both *BAME* and ethnic minority, but favours the latter (there are 32 instances of ethnic minority/ethnic minorities used, as opposed to 6 uses of *BAME*).[28]

By the mid-to-late 2010s and into 2020, *BAME* is most clearly the preferred term, with a number of reports using this term exclusively (such as Creative Diversity Network's (CDN) 'Diamond: The Third Cut', UKIE's 'UK Games Industry Census: Understanding Diversity in the UK Games Industry Workforce', and BBC's 'BBC Diversity Commissioning Code of Practice, Progress Report 2019/20').[29] However, in their 2017 'Mainstreaming Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)' report, Creative Scotland note that, although they once used '*BAME*' in their reportage, they no longer use the term 'BAME' to refer to Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, as this is regarded as hierarchical terminology. As a result, 'Creative Scotland' reverted to using 'minority ethnic' (terminology used by the Scottish Government)'.[30] This example illustrates how cultural policy parlance can be directly impacted by preferred governmental terminologies (although, this is perhaps not surprising given that Creative Scotland is an executive non-departmental public body of the Scottish Government).

In more recent reports, the use of the term *BAME* has been problematised and deconstructed. For example, in their 2019 report 'Reflecting the Ethnic Diversity of the UK within the BBC Workforce', the BBC comment on the imperfect nature of *BAME*:

> The term BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) has been used throughout this report to refer to individuals with evident heritage from African, Asian, Middle Eastern and South American regions, i.e. "non-white" but it is acknowledged that no noun/group of nouns would be perfectly suitable.[31]

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[27] Skillset, '2008 Creative Media Workforce Survey', Skillset: London, 2008.

[28] Channel 4, '360 Diversity Charter', Channel 4: London, 2015.

[29] Creative Diversity Network, Diamond: The Third Cut, CDN: London, 2020; Mark Taylor, 'UK Games Industry Census: Understanding Diversity in the UK Games Industry Workforce', UKIE: London, 2020; BBC, 'Diversity Commissioning Code of Practice Progress Report 2019/20', BBC: London, 2020.

[30] 'Mainstreaming: Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) EDI Report 2017', Creative Scotland, 2017: p. 29.

[31] 'Reflecting the Ethnic Diversity of the UK within the BBC Workforce', BBC, 2019: p. 4.

Similarly, in October 2020 CDN also published 'Race and Ethnic Diversity: a deep dive into Diamond data', a report which provided a more comprehensive analysis of the 'proportion of off-screen contributions made by all Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (*BAME*) groups to UK programmes', breaking the data down into the following categories: Mixed, Black, South Asian, East Asian and Other.[32] CDN also commented on the importance of considering the language of diversity in 'Diamond: The Fourth Cut':

> Evolution of the language we use to talk about diversity and recognising the impact of that language on the decisions we make. For example, recognising the limitations of considering racial and ethnic diversity through terms such as '*BAME*', as opposed to recognising the different contributions and needs of individual ethnic groups.[33]

As a result, in their Fourth Cut report CDN favour using 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic' throughout.

While this analysis is highly specific in nature, it provides some insight into how the terminology and usage of *BAME/BME* has developed and evolved over the past two decades, during which time key conversations and debates surrounding representation and parity of access within the creative industries have endured.

[32] Creative Diversity Network, 'Racial and Ethnic Diversity: a deep-dive into Diamond data', CDN: London, 2020.

[33] 'Diamond: The Fourth Cut', Creative Diversity Network, 2021: p. 32.

3.1. The political dimension of cultural policy

As this brief overview of screen sector policy documents suggests, one of the key ways in which the terms 'ethnic minority/ies', *BME* and *BAME* are used is to signify or describe groups within the sector which are typically underrepresented within workforces and both on and off screen.[34] As such, these documents appear to seek to measure the industry's "diversity deficit", providing organisations with figures from which they can form targets for training, employment and progression. This further demonstrates how language and terminology cannot be considered as separate from questions of cultural representation, but are deeply tied to how 'diversity' is managed and addressed in the creative sector and beyond.

The language of 'diversity' – and particularly terms like *BAME* – is inseparable from broader socio-cultural, political and historical understandings of race and ethnicity in the UK. As a result, their use in cultural policy documents which are specifically dedicated to reporting on race and ethnicity is not only inherently political, but also contributes to the meaning making of the terms within culture more broadly. As Sarita Malik notes 'policy (as an aspect of regulation) is situated as an important part of cultural practice in the circuit of culture'.[35] Accordingly, such policy documents, reports and initiatives contribute to the wider 'circuit of culture' from which broader understandings of the 'language of diversity' are developed.

The cultural discourse of diversity and race in the UK screen sector is a site of significant focus and insight. For example, the 2018 CAMEo 'Workforce Diversity in the UK Screen Sector Evidence Review' revealed that there were 80 UK-focused studies (34 academic articles, 40 industry reports and 6 miscellaneous, including books and book chapters) focused on workforce diversity in the screen sector between 2012 and 2016 alone.[36] For this review, 'diversity' was considered in terms of protected characteristics covered by the 2010 Equality Act, with the addition of social class and location (CAMEo, 2018: 12-13) and the screen sector was 'defined as comprising film, television, video games, animation programming and VFX' (CAMEo, 2018: 13).[37] The review revealed that over half of the studies included in the review (41) referenced race and ethnicity specifically, and that the majority of the studies used quantitative methods in their examinations of diversity in the screen sector.

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[34] See: S. Cobb, J. Newsinger and C. J. Nwonka, 'Introduction: Diversity in British Film and Television: Policy, Industry and Representation', Journal of British Cinema and Television, 17(1), 2019: pp. 1-5.

[35] Sarita Malik, '"Creative Diversity": UK Public Service Broadcasting After Multiculturalism', The International Journal of Media and Culture, 11, 2019: pp. 227-241 (227).

[36] CAMEo, 'Workforce Diversity in the UK Screen Sector: Evidence Review', CAMEo Research Institute: Leicester, 2018: p. 15.

[37] The 2010 Equality Act states the following as protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

The CAMEo evidence review categorised the studies according to their focus: 43 studies considered 'factors influencing workforce diversity, 26 discussed 'interventions to increase workforce diversity' and 5 provided an 'evidence case for diversity' (CAMEo, 2018: 18). Such foci arguably reflect the four key themes of creative diversity policy suggested by Nicholas Graham: 'access, excellence, education and economic value' (Garnham, 2005, cited in Malik, 2013: 231).

In terms of race and ethnicity, the CAMEo review notes that the 'industry continues to closely link works from *BAME* backgrounds with *BAME* topics and roles, thereby reproducing existing and reductive notions of race and ethnicity and preventing the genuine mainstreaming of race and ethnicity throughout the sector' (CAMEo, 2018: 38). The review relies on industry/ governmental parlance, using *BAME* throughout, but challenges how existing reports and research consider race and ethnicity in terms that relate to how the usage of *BAME/BME* has been disputed:

> It is notable that current research on ethnicity and race equates to analyses of 'White-British' versus 'Black-Caribbean' and 'Asian'. There are, of course, historic reasons for such a perspective being more dominant in the UK. However, such narrow perspectives are likely to be limited in how accurately they capture the contemporary ethnic make-up of British society. (CAMEo, 2018: 39)

In other words, the review of policy language highlights how the limitations within the industry's understanding of race and ethnicity impacts its ability to 'capture the contemporary ethnic make-up of British society', and the industry's use of *BAME* (and *BME* before it) within its broader language of diversity contributes to the perpetuation of limited and 'narrow perspectives' of race and ethnicity. This is not a new phenomenon but is part of a history of UK cultural and creative policy negotiating wider political articulations of race and ethnicity in the UK.

4. *BAME* and *BME* in news reporting and social media

Picking up these themes, and building on the review of cultural policy documents in Section 3 above, this section presents an analysis of how ethnically-based collective terms are used in news reporting and social media. One of the ways we can trace language use over time is through the linguistic analysis of longitudinal textual data. Using news sources and social media as the bases of our datasets, we present an insight into how terms are used in both journalistic news reporting and day-to-day, commonplace parlance. In doing so, we have interrogated larger bodies of textual data than would be possible through online search engines alone, providing a higher level of detail to support our overall analyses. As already noted, *BAME* was preceded by *BME* and the two terms are sometimes used in parallel or interchangeably, we have therefore considered both *BAME* and *BME* for the purposes of this analysis of news and social media.

4.1. Linguistic analysis of *BAME* and *BME*

For the linguistic analysis, two purpose-built datasets were constructed, including a selection of news articles from a variety of sources (the **News Corpus**) and social media data collected from Twitter (the **Social Media Corpus**). To create the **News Corpus** we identified *The Guardian*, *Eastern Eye* and *The Voice*, as key news sources to search, alongside a variety of articles from the online news text repository *LexisNexis*. *LexisNexis* and *The Guardian* were selected in order to have coverage across the whole of the UK, while *Eastern Eye* and *The Voice* were selected to include since their news reporting is specifically intended for Black and Asian audiences (what Riggins 1992 and Lay and Thomas 2012 call 'ethnic minority media'), to examine how terms like *BAME* were used by journalists writing for these outlets. The **News Corpus** was constructed by searching for the terms outlined in Table 4.1.1, covering common collective terms of reference, either in acronymic form (*BAME*), expanded form (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic), or both.

Table 4.1.1 Overview of search terms by media source.

Media source	Search terms
LexisNexis[38]	Black and Minority Ethnic; Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic
The Guardian	BME; BAME
Eastern Eye	BME; Black and Minority Ethnic; BAME; Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic;
The Voice	BME; Black and Minority Ethnic; BAME; Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic

The Voice was founded in 1987 and *Eastern Eye* in 2000, although it is only recently that both outlets moved to an online platform. As such, both outlets only have digitised articles available from 2016 and 2017 respectively. On the other hand, *LexisNexis* and *The Guardian* cover a much wider timeframe, from 1986 and 2000 respectively. Once the articles were downloaded all meta-data (e.g., publication date, headline, author, etc.) was removed, leaving only the main body of the article. False positives, regional variants, and duplicate articles were manually reviewed and deleted. In the case of duplicate articles, the most recent version was retained, which was usually from a newspaper's second or late edition. A general overview of the **News Corpus** is provided in Table 4.1.2.

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[38] LexisNexis is an online repository of news articles from a cross-section of UK news sources, including national, regional and local newspapers. It represents a random sample of news articles from a variety of newspapers.

Table 4.1.2 Overview of the News Corpus ordered by total number of words.

Media source	Date range	Number of articles	Number of words
LexisNexis	08/86-07/21	16,219	13,438,797
The Guardian	01/00-12/20	2,650	N/A
Eastern Eye	06/16-06/21	727	521,178
The Voice	05/17-06/21	737	438,760

The **Social Media Corpus** was built using Twitter's Academic API (Application Programming Interface) to download tweets that included the terms *BAME* and *BME* (including the expanded versions of these acronyms). Results were restricted to UK-based accounts (based on the location provided by an account's owner). To capture recent discussion within a reasonable timeframe, daily samples of tweets from January 2021 to the end of June 2021 were collected. The number of tweets and the total number of words for each search term are outlined in Table 4.1.3.

Table 4.1.3 Overview of the Social Media Corpus ordered by search term.

Search term	Date range	Number of tweets	Number of words
BAME	01/21-06/21	66,774	2,043,510
BME	01/21-06/21	7,149	199,995

Our analysis of social media posts includes the analysis of frequent words used in the same tweets as *BAME* and *Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic*. An exploratory data-driven analysis of the frequent words is used to reveal the themes and topics where *BAME* is used and any associated social reactions. In capturing the range of consensus/dissensus around this term, we can chart to what extent it is a target of public concern and how it is used online in everyday conversations. Such investigations also provide further substance to a recent observation made by Khunti et al. (2020: 1)[39], who suggest that many minority people do not identify with these acronyms, drawing on results from a recent Twitter poll where only 13% of 7,775 respondents selected *BAME* or *BME* as an appropriate term of reference (see also Khunti 2020).

Bringing all these elements together means that we can also start to make some in-roads towards highlighting the *semantic prosodies* or mental associations - positive or negative - that these collective terms of reference produce in the people who read or hear them. While this can only be exploratory, it can nevertheless suggest further avenues for future research and investigations.

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[39] Kamlesh Khunti, et al., 'The language of ethnicity: Collective terms BAME and BME should be abandoned', BMJ, 371, 2020: p. 1.

4.2. Analysis of News Corpus data

4.2.1. Change over time

One of the first steps in our analysis was to track the trajectories of collective terms of reference across *LexisNexis*, *The Guardian*, *Eastern Eye* and *The Voice*. In doing so, we can identify general trends in usage over time, when a term might wax or wane in terms of popularity, and how these trends might be influenced by real-world events.

Figure 4.2.1.1 The number of Guardian articles including *BME* and *BAME* since the year 2000.
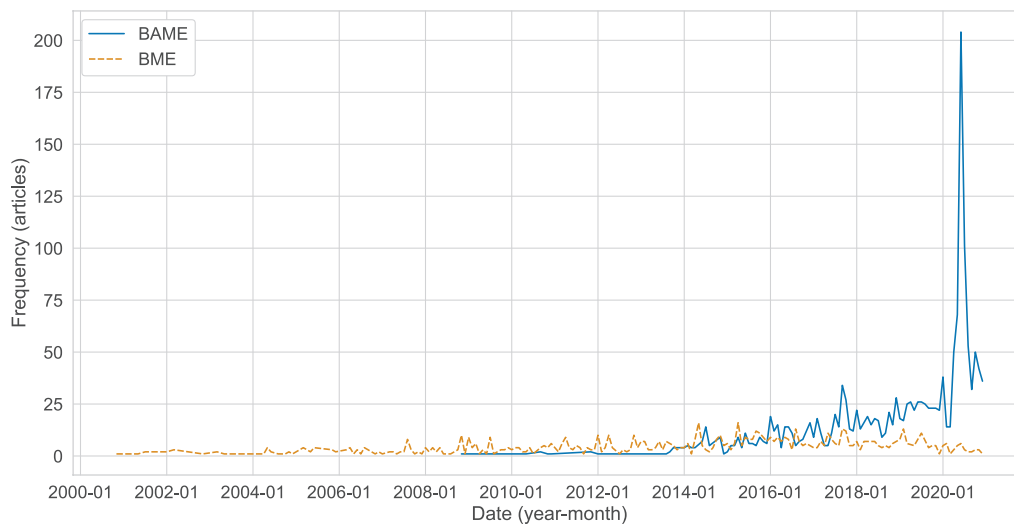
First, Figure 4.2.1.1 (above) shows the number of *Guardian* articles containing the abbreviations *BME* and *BAME* since 2000. More specifically, we can see that the frequency of *BME* increases steadily until 2014, then remains stable until 2019 where it starts to decrease. *BAME* starts being used in 2014 and follows a similar frequency pattern to *BME* until 2015, at which points its frequency increases month-on-month and becomes consistently more frequent than *BME*. A large increase is observed in mid-2020, coinciding with the Black Lives Matter movement.

Examining the *LexisNexis* database of UK newspaper articles, *Black and Minority Ethnic* has been used in newspapers since 1986, whereas *Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic* was first used at the end of 2000. Table 4.2.1.1 (below) shows the first attestations of *Black and Minority Ethnic* and *Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic* in each news source.

Table 4.2.1.1 Excerpts of first attestations in each sub-corpus.

Term	Source	Date	Excerpt
Black and Minority Ethnic	*LexisNexis (The Guardian)*	18th August 1986	"It publishes its own by-monthly [sic] magazine and supports a wide range of **black and minority ethnic** publications that cater for the needs of the multicultural community of the borough."
	Eastern Eye	June 2016	"Recipients from **black and minority ethnic** backgrounds (BAME) made up 8.2 per cent (90 people) of the list."
	The Voice	September 2018	"**BLACK AND minority ethnic** (BAME) people need to do more to make their voices heard on Brexit."
Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic	*LexisNexis (The Guardian)*	31st January 2000	"This is very welcome at a time when the effects of modernising local government has indirectly nipped the political aspirations of nearly 500 **black, Asian and minority ethnic** councillors."
	Eastern Eye	February 2016	"**BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic)** women account for just three per cent of the Met's workforce."
	The Voice	May 2018	"While stop and search may be considered an effective method for some, the relationship between underprivileged **BAME** communities and the police continue to be strained."

One striking aspect in these excerpts is the use of the *BAME* acronym in *Eastern Eye* and *The Voice*. In these cases, the letter A is used to mean *and* rather than *Asian*. It is worthwhile noting that such variation happens sporadically and that there may be divergent interpretations (and uses) of *BAME* across different newspapers.

At a more general level, *BME* occurred in more articles than *BAME* until 2019, at which point the number of articles is very similar, as can be seen in Figure 4.2.1.2 (below). From mid-2020 onwards both terms saw high use, coinciding with the Black Lives Matter movement, as well as concerns surrounding COVID-19 related health disparities across ethnic groups (as previously noted), with *BAME* becoming the more frequently used of the two terms.

Figure 4.2.1.2 The number of UK newspaper articles recorded by LexisNexis using Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) or Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) since 2000.
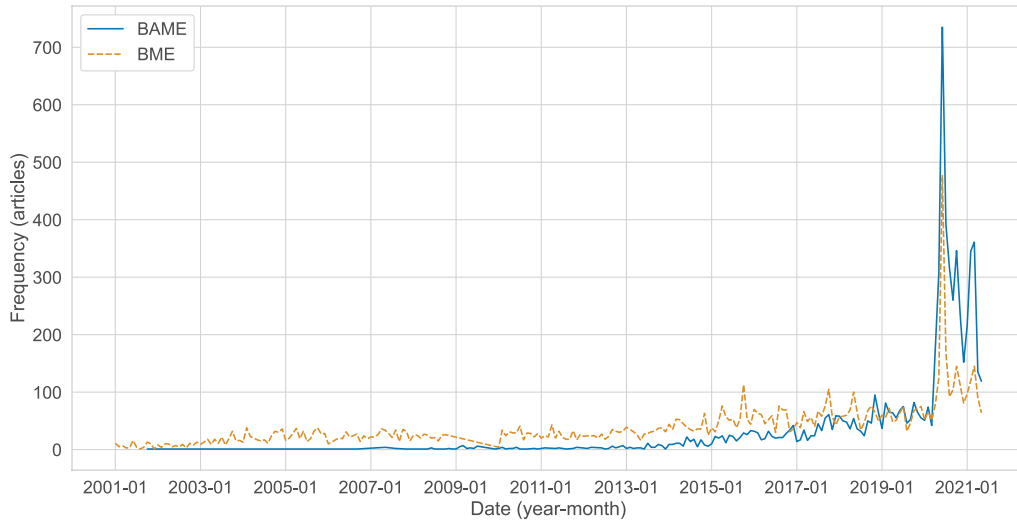
When it comes to the *Eastern Eye* and *The Voice*, Figure 4.2.1.3 (below) shows that since mid-2019, *BAME* occurs in more articles than *BME*, a change that happens approximately a year before *The Guardian* and the sample of newspapers in the *LexisNexis* dataset. Similar to other UK newspapers, both publications show an increase in the use of *BME* and *BAME* from mid-2020 onwards.

Figure 4.2.1.3 The number of articles in Eastern Eye and The Voice online newspapers using Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) or Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME).
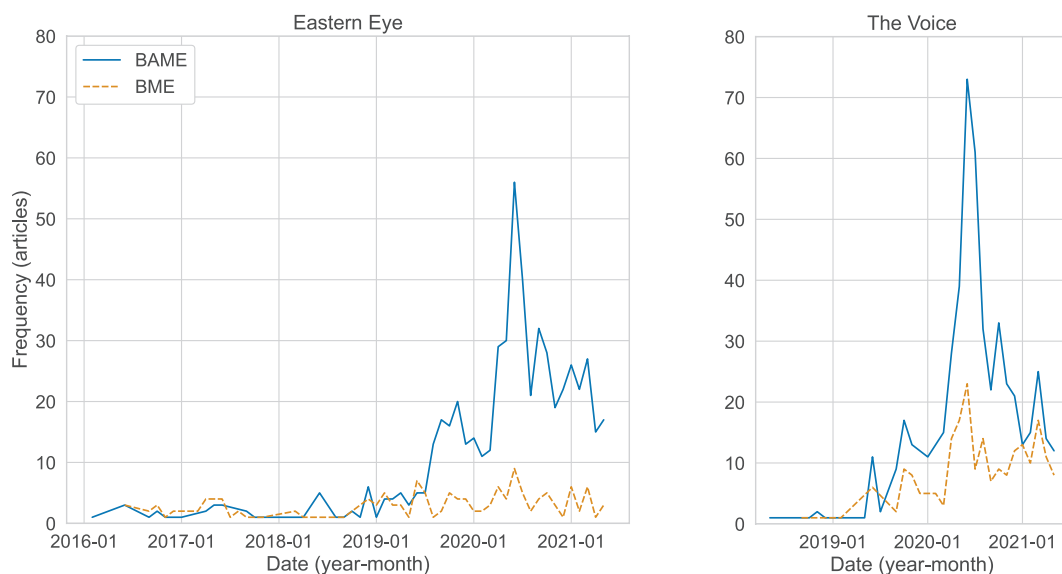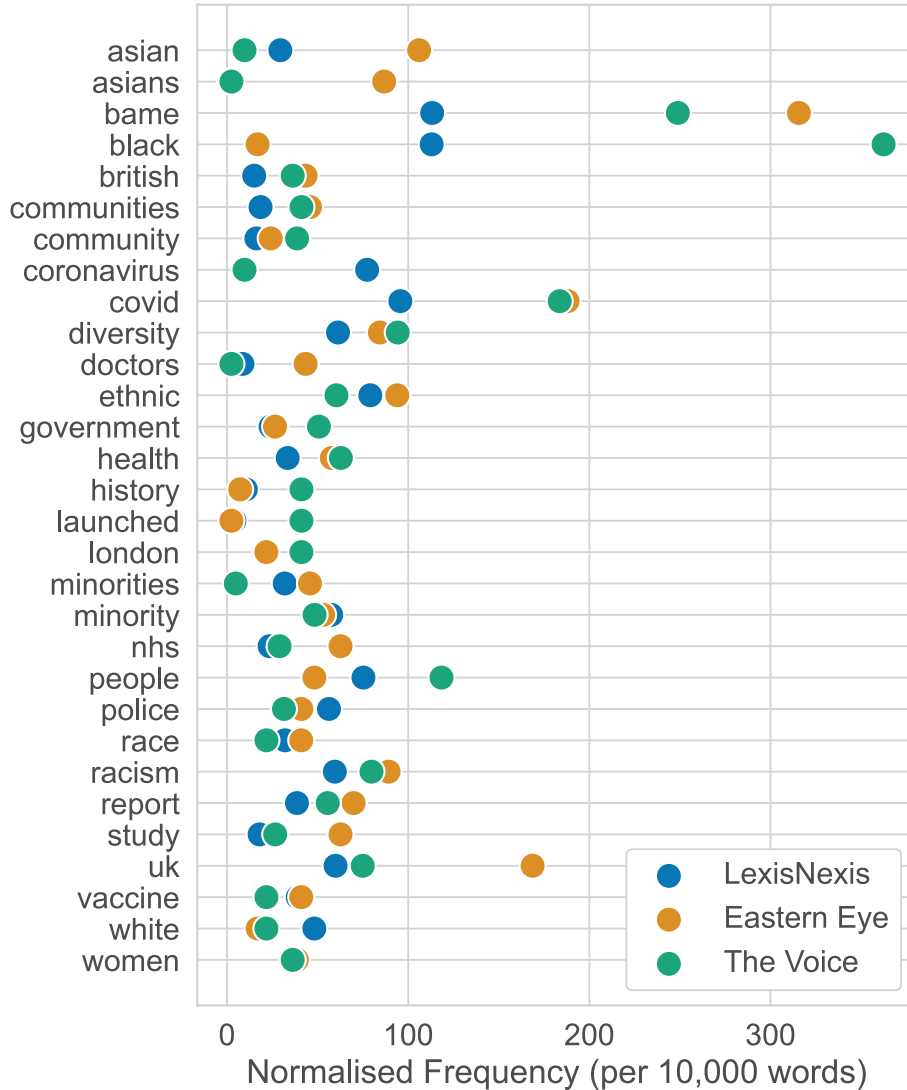
4.2.2. Frequency analysis

In this section, we present the results of the frequency analysis for the sample of newspapers from the *LexisNexis* repository, as well as the *Eastern Eye* and *The Voice* sub-corpora (results for *The Guardian* are not presented). Since the frequency lists for the *BME* and *BAME* articles were broadly similar, only the results for the *BAME* articles and headlines in each sub-corpus are presented. On the first-pass analysis, the top 40 words were retrieved, and in line with general practices for frequency analysis, grammatical words such as the, and, and it were removed, as well as words expected to occur in the majority of newspaper articles regardless of topic (including reporting verbs such as *say, said*; specific time referents such as *now, first, year*; and 'attention grabbing' vocabulary such as *exclusive, new*).

Beginning with the headlines, there is a general trend for *Eastern Eye* and *The Voice* to include the *BAME* acronym in headlines, as well as other terms related to ethnicity (e.g., *Asian, Asians, Black*). This is perhaps unsurprising given the intended audience for these newspapers. The other notable finding in the headline analysis is that *covid* appears more frequently in *Eastern Eye* and *The Voice* headlines compared to headlines in the general *LexisNexis* sub-corpus. There are two potential reasons for this. The first is that there is good evidence to suggest that COVID-19 disproportionately affected (and continues to affect) ethnic minority groups more than white groups in the UK (see Lassale et al. 2020; Razai et al. 2021 for discussions). As such, it would be expected that ethnic minority media outlets would have an incentive, as well as a social responsibility, to cover these issues in their reporting. The second explanation is that the preference for *covid* in *Eastern Eye* and *The Voice* could be an editorial decision, especially since in the *LexisNexis* sub-corpus, *coronavirus* is used more frequently. In either case, we can see that coverage of ethnicity, COVID-19, and associated health outcomes is an important topic in all three sub-corpora.

Table 4.2.2.1 Comparison of word frequencies in headlines for news articles including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic. Top 20 words for each sub-corpus shown.

We see a similar pattern emerge in the frequency analysis of the article body, with the terms *Black* and *BAME* most common in *The Voice* and *Asian* most common in *Eastern Eye*. In the *LexisNexis* sub-corpus, terms related to ethnicity tend to be least frequent, including *Asian*, *BAME*, *diversity*, *ethnic*, and *white*. There also seems to be greater use of the terms *community and communities* in these two outlets, suggesting some degree of coverage about specific groups (phrases such as *Black community*, *BAME community*, *Sikh community*, and *south Asian community*, as well as the possessive *our community/communities*, support this interpretation). Finally, rates of the word *covid* appear to converge across the three sub-corpora, although newspapers in the *LexisNexis* sub-corpus seems to show a preference for *coronavirus* in the main body of articles. Across other terms, usage is relatively consistent regardless of outlet, with only minor variations in frequency.

Table 4.2.2.2 Comparison of word frequencies in news articles including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic. Top 20 words for each sub-corpus shown.
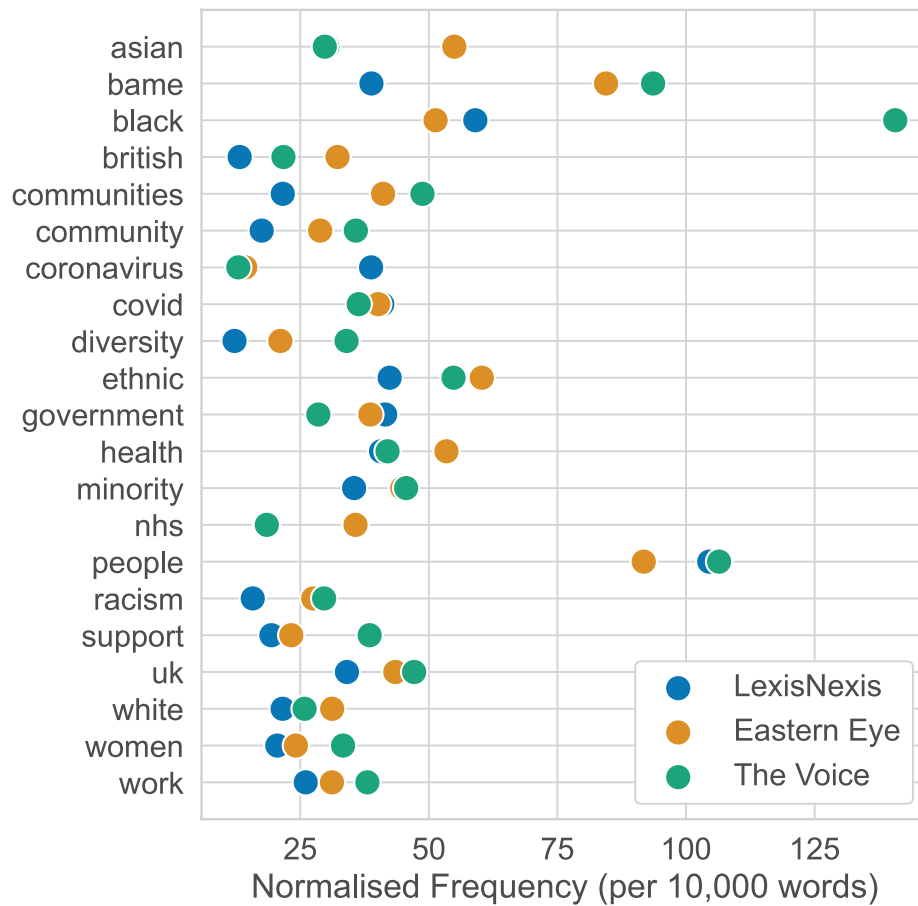
Further details of the uses of BAME, including a review of selected examples and topic analysis across all three news sources, are presented in Appendix X and Appendix Y.

4.2.3. Collocates: How *BAME/BME* are used

Collocations (words that appear in close proximity to one another) can provide us with some indication as to how the terms *BAME* and *BME* are being used in news reportage. Tables 4.2.3.1 and 4.2.3.2. show the collocates appearing immediately before and after the terms *BAME* and *Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic* in the news sub-corpora. More specifically, *BAME* is predominantly used as an adjective to modify (or describe) nouns (Table 4.2.3.1). The exception to this is shown in Table 4.2.3.2 where the term *BAME* itself is the focus, in which case it functions as a noun (e.g. the term *BAME*, the acronym *BAME*).

Table 4.2.3.1 Collocates immediately to the right of BAME.

Collocations	LexisNexis (%)	Eastern Eye (%)	The Voice (%)
BAME communities	12.00	14.74	15.15
BAME backgrounds	9.10	7.64	7.54
BAME people	8.83	5.96	5.92
BAME community	3.37	4.44	5.34
BAME groups	3.88	4.24	4.00
BAME women	1.32	1.53	3.95
BAME background	2.62	3.79	3.77
BAME staff	2.62	3.35	2.44
BAME doctors	0.43	2.56	0.35
BAME workers	1.18	2.46	1.45
BAME representation	1.10	1.33	1.68
BAME coaches	1.40	0.25	0.23

Table 4.2.3.2 Collocates immediately to the left of BAME.

Collocations	LexisNexis (%)	Eastern Eye (%)	The Voice (%)
term BAME	0.59	0.48	0.98
minority BAME	0.15	0.48	0.86
young BAME	0.32	0.19	0.86
support BAME	0.21	0.29	0.81
national BAME	0.22	0.67	0.23
said BAME	0.41	0.67	0.12
first BAME	0.15	0.58	0.00
affecting BAME	0.19	0.53	0.23
protect BAME	0.24	0.39	0.46
supporting BAME	0.10	0.10	0.46
found BAME	0.29	0.24	0.12
facing BAME	0.12	0.24	0.23
backgrounds BAME	0.23	0.14	0.06
acronym BAME	0.22	0.00	0.23
communities BAME	0.21	0.19	0.06

The nouns being modified by *BAME* (Table 4.2.3.1) are mostly collective nouns indicating groups of individuals, including terms with limited specificity (e.g. *people*, *community*, [from *BAME*] *backgrounds*) and terms which refer to genders and workplace roles (e.g. *women*, *staff*, *doctors*, *workers*, *coaches*). From Table 4.2.3.2, we can see that *BAME* and the nouns that follow it can be further modified by words such as *young* and *national*. In addition, *support*, *protect*, *affecting*, and *facing* hint that required actions and issues are being commented on in the news.

4.3. Social media data

4.3.1 Tweet content

Figure 4.3.1.1. shows the other words used most frequently in the same tweet as *BAME* during the first six months of 2021. Here we see words relating to COVID-19, ethnicity, racism, diversity, women, work/student roles, the Labour party and collective nouns similar to those discussed above.

Figure 4.3.1.1 Words used most frequently in the same tweets as BAME from UK-based accounts.
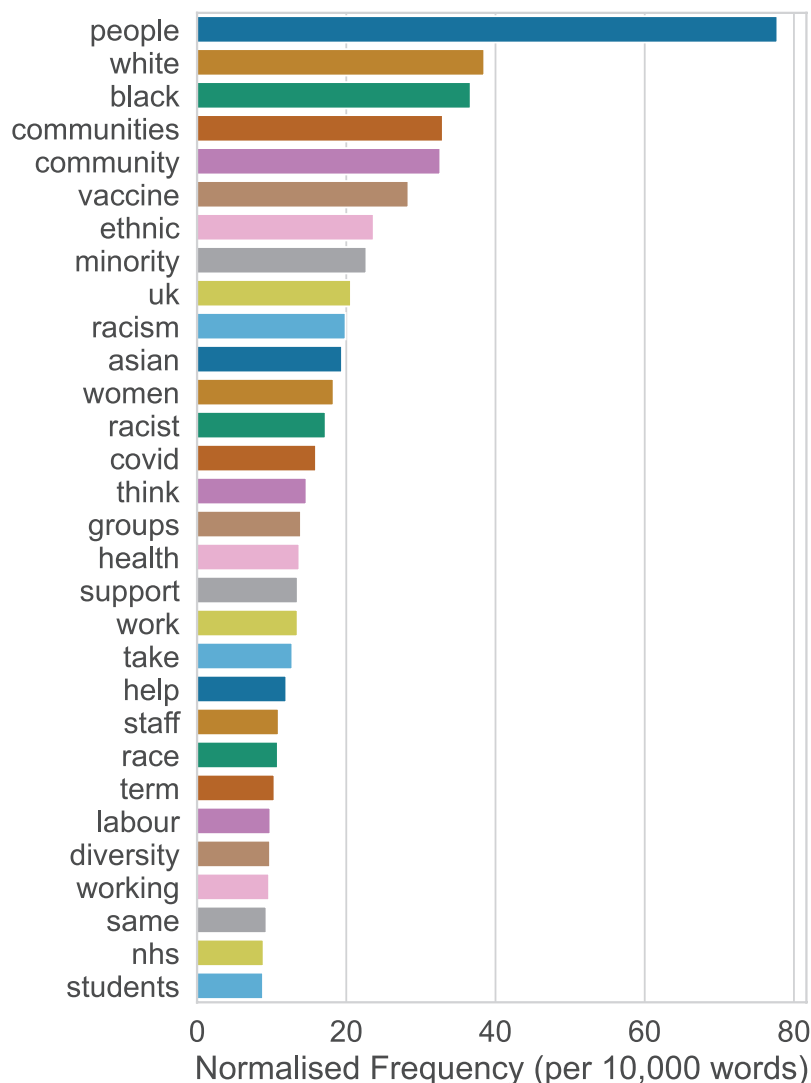
The prevalence of the word *term* also suggests that the terminology itself is being discussed on Twitter. Looking at this more closely (Figure 4.3.1.2), we find that words occurring with both *BAME* and *term* relate to the use of the terminology, racism, reports/commissions and the grouping of people. The frequent use of *hate* in this context suggests the main sentiment towards the terminology is negative, with frequent phrases including *hate the term* and *hate that term*. Furthermore, the collocates relating to use (*use, using, used*)

reveal a desire to discontinue use of the term, as shown in frequent phrases *should no longer be used* and *should not be used*. This is further supported by the presence of the verb *stop + term*, with the most frequent phrase in this context being *stop using the term*. Finally, the words that most often come before *term* have generally negative connotations, including *umbrella term*, *problematic term*, *redundant term*, *fixed term*, *racist term*, *lazy term*, *catch-all term*, and *blanket term*.

Figure 4.3.1.2 Words occurring in tweets containing BAME and term.
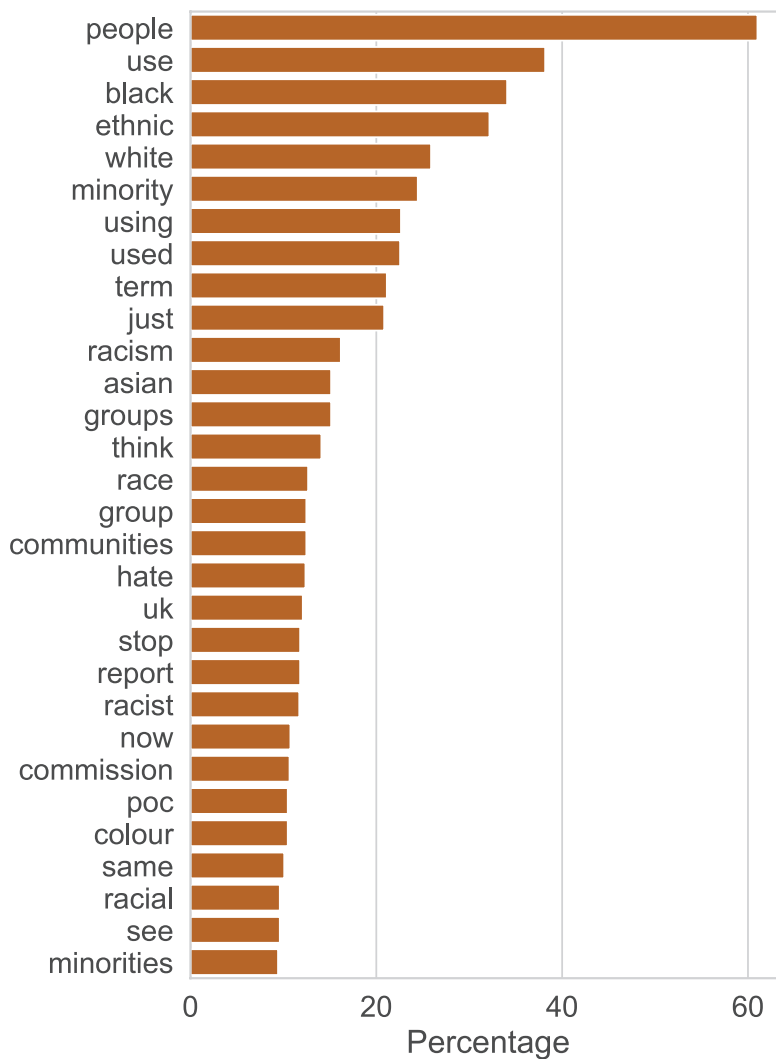
Also, in the context of *term* and *BAME* we find *report* and *commission*. The associated tweets contain evaluations of reports from authorities and organisations in which the terminology is mentioned. In the majority of cases, reports which use *BAME* receive criticism, whereas reports which suggest stopping use of the term receive praise. Tweets containing *same* include comments about people and experiences not being the same, not just for those who may be grouped under the *BAME* heading, but for all people who may be grouped under a collective term. The term *PoC* is also discussed and sentiment towards it is mixed, often described as either being preferable to *BAME*, or as being no different to and manifesting the same problems as *BAME*.

4.4. Summary of Linguistic Analysis

In news reporting, we note that *BAME* has steadily increased in use since 2014, reaching similar usage levels as *BME* in mid-2019 and is now more frequent than *BME* in all of the sources we explored. In terms of topic focus, we observe associations of *BAME* with recent societal issues, including the Black Lives Matter movement and the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, a stronger association with community and ethnicity-related words seems to occur in *The Voice* and *Eastern Eye* than in other news sources, regardless of topic. Linguistically, *BAME* primarily functions as an adjective in news reporting, often modifying collective nouns which refer to groups of individuals (e.g. *BAME community/people/women/staff*). Finally, the investigation of *BAME* on Twitter revealed an awareness of the issues with terminology, with mostly negative sentiment towards use of the term and the grouping of people under collective terms in general.

5. Industry Stakeholder Interviews and Audience Research

5.1 Key findings from the interviews we conducted on *BAME* terminology

We conducted over twenty interviews with creative practitioners and experts in this area, ranging from journalists to presenters to policy workers and academics. Overall, we found that there is a general acknowledgement that more precise language is needed when talking about people who do not identify as White as a group and any use of a collective term needs to be used carefully and only when absolutely necessary. There also seems to be a general acceptance that *BAME* is no longer fit for purpose as a collective term in describing a group of people who do not identify as White, and if used needs to come with several caveats.

It should be noted that there were a few interviewees who push against the utility of having any collective term at all and that grouping people who do not identify as White together is counterproductive. According to this position, apparent amongst our interviewees, there is no place for any collective term (although this was a minority position).

We have summarised our findings here, grouping and discussing interview responses in terms of the key themes we identified through analysis.

5.1.1 Using a collective term

Although the majority of interviewees said they used to use the term B.A.M.E. (pronouncing each letter in the acronym), many also stated that the use of the term '*BAME*' (rhyming with "name") as an umbrella term is totally unacceptable. The difference between 'B.A.M.E.' and 'BAME' was possibly best summed up by former Head of BBC Production Pat Younge, who said:

> "There is a big difference. B.A.M.E. is Black and Minority Ethnic, I'd say B.A.M.E. is like EBIT, (the accounting term) Earnings Before Interest and Taxation, B.A.M.E. to me is a, is a thing; Black and Minority Ethnic. BAME is not a word."

Many respondents stated that they instead now verbalise each word in the acronym, saying 'Black, Asian and minority ethnic'. The leading argument for this was that it is better to recognise the constituent groups included within B.A.M.E. rather than use a single, umbrella term. This was the approach taken by Simone Pennant of the TV Collective:

"We (the TV Collective) use the term Black, Asian and minority ethnic, even though the minority ethnic is a little bit challenging, but we tend to try and use them as individuals rather than BAME."

Sir Simon Woolley of Operation Black Vote also took a similar approach stating, "Black, Asian, and minority ethnic, always. And I know it's a bit long winded [...] but it seems to me to be respectful when I say it."

Indeed, many interviewees indicated that COVID-19 has provided a clear context to demonstrate how collective terminologies do not work. For example, if COVID-19 is affecting one ethnic group more than other ethnic groups, then this needs to be explicitly stated, rather than relying on the collective terms of *BAME* and 'ethnic minorities'. The BBC's gender and identity correspondent, Megha Mohan, clearly illustrates this point with a complaint the BBC received about its coverage of the issue:

"(The complainant) had an issue that the BBC had done a headline saying that COVID had disproportionately [...] affect[ed] BAME people. And the reason he gave, quite correctly, was that 80 out of 1,000 people who were dying in hospitals at that time were Caribbean Black, and... British Indian people were not part of that number. So to have had a headline saying, 'BAME being disproportionately affected', abdicated the onus on journalistic integrity even to be like, why are Black Caribbean people being disproportionately affected by COVID as opposed to this whole BAME catch-all?"

Many interviewees said this also applied to specificity within racial groups, i.e., African Caribbean and African British (in the context of educational outcomes for example). And to the term Asian which all the interviewees broke down into "South Asian" and/or East / South East Asian.

5.1.2 A question of trust

Our interviews with industry stakeholders indicated that there is also the nervousness of *BAME* (or any collective term) being used to hide failures in achieving targets for representation of certain ethnic minorities or address specific issues of racism affecting specific groups. Depending on the organisation being discussed there were misgivings that collective racial terms are used to hide specific underrepresentation of certain groups and obscure organisational failings. Several interviewees illustrated this point by saying "organisations are quick to announce hitting "*BAME* targets" but what does that mean if there is still massive Black underrepresentation or east Asian representation."

Jacqueline Baker of the B-Inclusive Taskforce (an employee network group) voiced her misgivings around how the term is (mis)used:

> "I also think, in terms of broadcast data… [some broadcasters] release data that doesn't specifically drill down into who specifically was hired and what communities they're from, and that's for all broadcasters and all productions, then you don't really get a true picture of where the problems are. You know, if it's mainly Black people that aren't being hired, how do we know that if their data just reflects white or non-white? We don't know that, it makes it more difficult, and I think that's probably purposely done, if I'm being totally honest with you. Because you can hide the reality when you use large groups and don't go into specifics."

In contrast, an example of best practice that a number of interviewees (specifically from broadcaster employee network groups who did not want to be quoted directly) referenced Sky's announcement in January 2021 that the broadcaster had set a target for '20% of employees at Sky in the UK & Ireland to be from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background by 2025' and that a quarter of this (5%) 'should be filled by Black employees'.[40]

The problems of using *BAME*, or any collective term, to set and meet targets was also highlighted by Aaqil Ahmed, the former Head of BBC Religion, who noted:

> "[I]f you're just meeting a target, an arbitrary target, a wide target, without all of that intersectionality linked in, that detail, then you're not meeting the right target, are you? Channel 4 will be a failure in Leeds if the diversity of the people is not primarily Pakistani and African Caribbean, in my opinion."

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[40] 'Sky sets ambitious 2025 target to increase its ethnic diversity and representation', Sky, January 2021.

5.1.3 Throwing the baby out with the bathwater

Many groups, HR professionals and academics were nervous about losing a collective term altogether. Both the Runnymede Trust and Operation Black Vote (OBV) felt it would hinder their ability to combat institutional and structural racism.

Alba Kapoor of the Runnymede Trust felt that the absence of a collective term would fragment any struggle to highlight structural racism and address its core causes, stating:

> "I think it's absolutely vital that we don't lose a sense of collectivity amongst people of colour in the UK. I think losing that would have a real detrimental impact on meaningful anti-racist work in this country. There are examples in which different communities experience different things and that cannot be ignored, but there's a, sort of, intersection between class and race there that exists across the board, but the reality is, is that barriers by and large remain the same and that outcomes by and large remain the same for ethnic minority groups and that the meaningful action can only be done, sort of, collectively."

Most HR professionals and academics also thought a collective term is a useful tool in monitoring the workforce and monitoring racism and representation. The fear was that for practical purposes without examining the "non-White" workforce as a specific collective group the numbers would simply be too small to shape effective diversity and inclusion policies. This was a position taken by Bina Kandola, Co-founder of Pearn Kandola:

> "When you're looking at data, and organisations like to have statistics, you're going to have to have the sample sizes to get anything meaningful... So we do need to have some sort of collective term."

Although it should be noted there was no consensus as to what this collective group should be termed.

At the same time even the strongest proponents of the use of a collective term did not think its use was mutually exclusive to using more specific terms, and a mixed approach was best. Janice Turner, the head of diversity at BECTU, neatly summarised the mixed approach many favoured when asked to give an example:

> "I mean just off the top of my head, you could say let's see, ethnic minority workers are discriminated against in the workplace as shown by the following studies, the studies also show that Bangladeshi workers are the most underrepresented."

5.1.4 Specificity and intersectionality

The concerns raised by interviewees surrounding the use of collective terms intersected with arguments for specificity. Lucy Sheen of the British East Asian Theatre and Screen group argued that without specificity collective terms could actually be exclusionary rather than inclusive:

> "I'm sure that the mainly white male, probably Oxbridge educated, people in positions of power within the arts, think it is a very inclusive term, but it's not. It's another way of labelling people, and basically, by labelling them, it's the conceit that we're actually seeing you, but it's not, it's actually blocking you out. It's actually putting you in an amorphous monolithic thing and being able to side bar you. I think that's what that does."

While the issue of more granularity and specificity was made by numerous people, Aaqil Ahmed, former Head of BBC Religion, was the only person who brought up the issue of intersectionality and noted that the specificity of approach also needs to be applied to intersectionality where appropriate. This is important when looking at issues that might disproportionately affect a subsection of a racial group, for example mental health of Black women compared to mental health of Black men. Or where a particular protected characteristic cuts across racial groups, for example Islamophobia might affect Muslims of all races but disproportionately impact Muslims of South Asian backgrounds. As Ahmed explained:

> "So that's one particular thing that I think is a problem with the term BAME, without actually being able to explain what that can mean. And I think religion is a very important thing here, as is class. These are two issues which if you have the phrase BAME and it's defined in the classical term that people define it, which is it's about skin colour, then issues around class, but particular issues around religion that don't come into it at all."

5.1.5 New terms

When it comes to considering new or alternative terms, we would reiterate the previous point that most interviewees stated that they preferred specificity wherever possible and collective terms should only be used when appropriate. However, our interviewees indicated that it may be preferable to move away from catch-all terms like *BAME* and use 'ethnic minorities', or some variation or adaptation of it, in future.

ITV News has already dropped the use of "Black and Asian" from the term "Black Asian and minority ethnic" and now generally uses the term "ethnic minorities". Di Ridley of ITV News explained how they came to this position:

"Essentially, we chatted it through with staff members of that forum (employee network group), and we talked about, you know, why would you use that term (*BAME*)? What does that term actually say to somebody?... So we talked about if we did need to use that, a collective term, and we discussed, which one would we use? And the term that most people felt was relevant, was "ethnic minorities"or "minority ethnic". So, if we were going to use a term, that a collective term was felt was necessary, then that is what we would use."

However, Director of Operation Black Vote, Sir Simon Woolley, expressed concerns about this, worrying that using 'ethnic minorities' alone hides the racial aspect implicit in the term 'Black, Asian and minority ethnic', and includes ethnically White minorities:

"If you remove Black Asian Minority Ethnic, particularly Black and Asian, and you have a catchall Ethnic Minorities, wow. It's a political gamechanger but in a dangerous way, because whilst you have the Black and Asian and Minority Ethnic [...], it forces you to look within that, predominantly through the lens of non-white and lay bare the inequalities that are subject to those individuals... If you lose all of that in your ethnic minorities, for example, then you're dealing with Scottish and Irish and Polish. Then you say, you look at the ethnic minority data and things are not too bad. Look, the data then would suggest that for ethnic minorities living in the UK things are not too bad at all, broadly speaking."

Although this is not how ITV News seems to be using the term, the concern seems to have some justification as highlighted by discussions with the BFI and CDN.

Although neither organisation officially class white ethnic groups to be racial minorities, both organisations in their interviews for the report used the term "ethnic minorities" to include White ethnic communities such as Poles and Russians, for example, with the CDN referencing ethnic cleansing of Europeans. While this might not be

either organisations' official position it illustrated Woolley's concern that the term could be used to include East Europeans, depending on context. The commonality in the BFI and CDN's position, and the associated confusion, might be explained by staff moving between the two organisations. This again is part of a wider concern throughout the sector as individuals move through media organisations in similar roles. In interviews, both the BFI and CDN talked about "underrepresented ethnic communities" as being a possible replacement for BAME. Both seemed to think of BAME exclusively in racial terms while "underrepresented ethnic communities" was a broader category. Again this is not a comment on either CDN or BFI's official stance but further highlights Wooley's concern of how "ethnic communities" can be interpreted not to be an exclusively racial term.

The Office of National Statistics overlays categories that we may commonly refer to as "ethnicity" and "race". The term "White" covers 'Scottish', 'Other British', 'Irish', 'Gypsy/Traveller', 'Polish', 'Any other White ethnic group, please describe' (although there is some variation in these categories between the different nations – England, Scotland, Wales and N. Ireland). Importantly under the Race Relations (NI) Order 1997 it is only the 'Traveller' community that is "specifically identified in the Order as a racial group against which racial discrimination is unlawful."[41]

5.1.6 Using the term "minority"

Some people used the term "people of colour" during interviews and in conversation, but did not see it as appropriate in official documents or reporting. There was also discussion around the appropriateness of the term "minority". For obvious reasons journalists who covered international news interviewed for the report, including Megha Mohan, who predominantly reports for the BBC World Service, and Juliana Iootty, Head of BBC Asia Region, thought the word made little sense reporting race globally. But domestically there was also push back against the word as illustrated by comments by Rico Johnson-Sinclair who said: "Ethnic minority isn't correct, 'cause globally we're not the minority, we're actually the majority."

This position is reflected in the increasing use of the term "Black and global majority" (or a variation of it) by some arts organisations including RADA and the Casting Directors Guild (see also Campbell-Stephens, 2020).

[41] Office for National Statistics, Measuring Equality.

5.1.7 Nervousness around race and racism

Ultimately, however, there is little widespread agreement on a new term to replace *BAME* - except with the obvious 'Black Asian and minority ethnic'. ITV's employee network group noted that the introduction of any new term could increase nervousness that White people already have around ethnicity-related terminology and so would do more harm than good - especially as any terms are imperfect.

There are concerns though that it is precisely because of this nervousness that *BAME* itself has become so problematic, as it is used as a way to avoid conversations around race and racism. Bernard Achampong, the director of the independent radio production company UnEdited, described it in the following way:

> "BAME, almost is a shorthand for not talking about what you really want to talk about. If you want to talk about Black women in London, or Black women in the UK, then let's find a way of being comfortable about talking about Black women in the UK. If we talk about people of African and Caribbean heritage, well let's do that, rather than BAME women, 'cause that doesn't quite tick the box."

Therefore, while not opting for a new term may ease concerns over increasing any nervousness of using ethnicity-related words, this does not mean nervousness does not still exist and can be detrimental in how the term is applied and (mis)used. This is an issue the industry may want to tackle which goes beyond the issues of language that this report focuses on.

One or two individuals wanted to do away with any collective term altogether. While acknowledging that people who do not identify as White experience racism, some felt the experience is so different between individuals that it hinders more than it helps understanding. The argument is illustrated by the example that while Black people and East Asian people both experience racism, the forms it takes is "so different" that putting both groups of people under a single term hinders understanding of the different types of racism they both face. This in turn hinders the implementation of effective policies to address racial disparities.

5.1.8 General Comments

There was also the concern that any collective term centres "Whiteness", since *BAME* becomes representative of the 'other', while White remains the normative standard. One example given included the fact that if one looks at police stop and search statistics this disproportionately affects some ethnic groups more than others and including all people who do not identify as White actually hindered our understanding of the size and nature of the problem faced by certain specific groups. It is also questionable why "*BAME*" statistics are thought of relative to White people when it might be more useful to compare Black people's experience relative to South Asian or White people's statistics relative to East Asian.

Finally, it is worth noting that, during our interviews with stakeholders, even those who questioned the utility of collective terms would use them in general conversation. Often the debate was less around the term and more around the misuse of the term. The complaints around the terms often revealed more about the level of trust-or mistrust-individuals had with how the terms would be used. In talking to employee network groups, for example, there seemed to be a clear correlation between approval of an employer's use of a collective term and the level of trust employees had in the organisation to present their statistics "honestly".

5.2 Audience research

The BBC organised an audience research group consisting of several "friendship pairs" and covering a range of different ethnic and racial groups, including south Asian, east Asian, Black Caribbean and Black African.

The audience group was given a series of news reports from the BBC online and Channel 4 (including both video and written material). The news reports used a range of racial terms including *BAME* which the participants were asked to watch at home. The participants were then brought together online via Zoom to discuss the news items and the use of racial terms. The friendship pairs then went into "breakout rooms" with a facilitator to discuss a BBC news report that they had not seen before which included the terms "*BAME*", "Black, Asian and minority ethnic" and "Black".

The purpose of the audience discussion group was not to find a perfect term(s), but to explore attitudes towards existing journalistic practices and explore which terms used in news reports to describe different races as a collective and as individual groups were most favoured. This is obviously important as journalists have to find practical workable solutions in their reporting even if they are not seen as "perfect".

The BBC research group emphasised that the audience group was too small to infer any wider significance for the population as a whole. However, it was a useful exercise to see how audience members responded to the themes that had emerged from our interviews.

5.2.1 Key findings from audience research

The audience groups showed consistent themes and a surprisingly high degree of agreement with the interviews. Clear dislike and/or confusion was demonstrated around the term *BAME* with some people actively responding that they did not want to be labelled "*Bame*".

There was a clear preference for specificity over generalities as people wanted clarity over which racial groups were being referred to and how this might be relevant to them. This desire for clarity also extended to some racial terms including the term "Asian" and whether it referred to south Asian or east Asian.

What was also apparent is that in the abstract there was a general reluctance towards collective terms, but when viewed in practice and the relevance of the usage was explained, such a strong resistance did not seem to exist. This illustrated how there is a preference for the reason that a collective term is being used to be obvious and transparent. While there was some push back against collective terms such as "ethnic minorities" and "Black Asian and minority ethnic" there was a general acceptance of the terms if they served a purpose. The same was not generally true for acronyms.

Finally, it should be noted that despite the fact the participants had been told what the subject of the session was and had been given "homework" beforehand, there was a level of ambivalence and even a sense of novelty around many of the issues raised. This would indicate that while racial terminology is an important issue once it is raised, it is not something that they think about a lot. This was not true across the board with the Black African participants and "Guardian reading" east Asian friendship pairs being far more engaged with the issues. However, it did serve to put into context how discussions around language may be limited to a small but vocal minority, while the majority seem to require clear, understandable and inoffensive language. For reasons already explained '*BAME*' and '*Bame*' fail to meet some of the basic requirements that are needed by either the majority of the audience or the possible vocal minority.
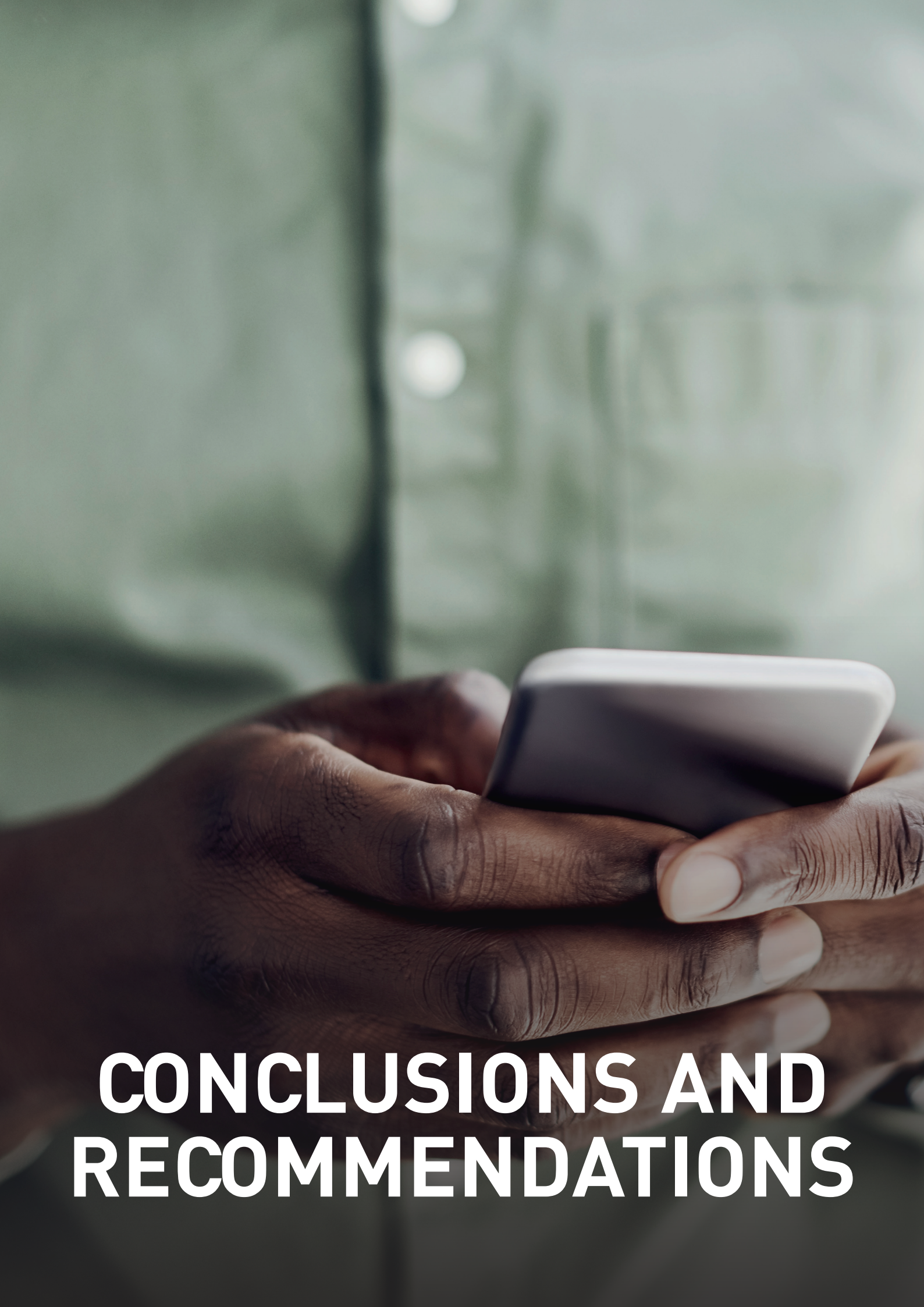
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This report has evidenced how the relationship between language, naming, and representation is complex. It is a relationship mediated through the interaction between individuals, communities, institutions, government agencies, and more. Words matter, and the labels and categories used to talk about different groups in civil society can have profound ramifications in terms of individual life chances, access to social capital, and the level of cultural inequalities prejudice one might face (see Selvarajah et al. 2020: 1, for a discussion concerning the discriminatory outcomes of racial categorisation in the USA and South Africa).

Through our study of *BAME*, language is shown as a complicated terrain that produces multiple responses. In drawing to a conclusion, we would like to highlight some key findings emerging from across the qualitative and quantitative research that we have conducted.

The first is that *BAME* has become the preferred dominant term to which to refer to Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups and this has especially been the case since 2020. This intensifying and expansive use of the collective term has also coincided with important sociopolitical developments, such as the more widespread awareness of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and the ethnically-marked health and other inequalities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Interestingly, both these developments have required the need for a more nuanced and culturally astute understanding of specific ethnic demographic groups. BLM has pertained to some of the specific forms of disadvantage experienced by African and Caribbean communities, for example, in terms of the way they are policed, and the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the relative health vulnerabilities of the Black and South Asian community who are more likely to work in jobs with higher COVID-19 death rates.

Just these two recent examples highlight the importance of recognising the differences and specificities within the *BAME* category and cast doubt on whether a catch-all term is fit for purpose. Our news corpus data analysis also reveals how the 'A' of *BAME* has sometimes been used to refer to Asian and, at other times, used to refer to 'And', leading to further ambiguity about how it is applied in context.

It is perhaps no surprise then that the data has found widespread ambivalence towards, and even rejection of the term. This is clear from the social media responses and from the interview and audience research. Notably, the source of the concerns and basis for rejecting it, also varies. In fact, this only goes to highlight the heterogeneity (rather than the homogeneity that the term is widely critiqued for using), amongst the Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities that our research has foregrounded in the interviews and audience research. Our interview data suggests that there may not be a 'like for like' alternative to *BAME* and an awareness that there will likely be some who would object to declassifying/dismissing the term *BAME*. Moreover, many groups and HR professionals and academics are nervous about losing a collective term altogether. The risk is that it may hinder the ability to combat racism. Others, such as some policy workers and academics indicate how the term can be a useful tool in monitoring workforce and monitoring racism. It is also pointed out that the debate around *BAME* is very UK specific with international news organisations not using *BAME* as it makes little or no sense outside of the UK.

The important issue is for people to be cognisant of **why they are using a collective term and to think through how this can help or hinder the understanding of a particular situation or issue.**

It is clear that there are situations in which the use of a collective term can help the understanding of an issue and even shape useful policy decisions. However, it is also clear that there are circumstances where the use of a collective term can hinder understanding and more specificity is required.

It should also be noted that the perceived "misuse" of a collective term has caused a breakdown in trust in how and when collective terms are used. Therefore, it is not merely an issue of changing language use but of how trust is rebuilt around the use of any collective terms. Our recommendations suggest the need for clear transparency (see recommendations below).

Finally while many of these are general arguments around the use of any collective term grouping people who do not identify as White together, the term *BAME* in particular now has specific negative connotations associated with it and for this reason particular care needs to be taken when it is used.

Recommendations

Terms we would highly recommend against using

While we would generally shy away from any hard and fast rules in language, the use of B.A.M.E.[42] in some contexts was either viewed as so offensive or confusing that we would highly recommend against its use, even if this only affects a small segment of the audience.

The word "Bame" (rhyming with "name") should never be used verbally and we would recommend against the use of the term being written "Bame".
This is because one of the major criticisms of the term is that it is being used as a noun to replace people's own self-described or self-identified racial identities. This criticism still exists even when the different letters in B.A.M.E. are spelled out but this at least acknowledges that the term is made up of different groups. A single noun exacerbates the fear that people's identities are being homogenised and not recognised.

Use of the term B.A.M.E. in the singular.
In our research we did not come across anybody who described themselves as B.A.M.E. when describing their racial identity. Even the strongest advocates for the use of collective terms for people who do not identify as White never described themselves in the singular as B.A.M.E. Collective terms are for describing groups not individuals.

Use of the term B.A.M.E. in headlines.
Despite widespread use of the term there is still widespread misunderstanding as to what the term actually means to broad sections of the audience. Used in headlines, the term does not enable deeper understandings of often complex stories. We also believe that headlines lack the subtlety and nuance to be able to use the term without causing serious insult to some members of the audience (see below for when it might be used and in what context).

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[42] Although we have used 'BAME' throughout this report to reflect the current general usage of the term and how we have used it in our specific analyses, in our recommendations we suggest the industry should instead use the acronym 'B.A.M.E.' (when necessary). We have, therefore, put this recommendation into practice in our own writing in the final pages of this report.

Can we ever use the term B.A.M.E.?

Despite criticism of the acronym we do not advocate a ban on the use of the term either for external or internal communication.

The term might be used in reported speech, or when referencing a report that uses the term.
The term is still widely used in society, and while many people are unhappy with the term, it is not seen as a racial slur akin to the N-word or P-word. We therefore believe it is appropriate to use the term in these circumstances.

Always use "Black Asian and minority ethnic" before using an acronym BAME and possibly use B.A.M.E.
Using the term in full acknowledges, in part, the constituent groups that make up the collective group that do not identify as White, going some way to address the homogenising of all "non-White" ethnic groups. It was failure to recognise the different constituent parts that often seemed to cause offence. It is therefore for this reason media organisations might want to use "B.A.M.E." instead of "BAME", to reinforce the idea it is not a single noun or homogenising term. However, in most news reporting once the subject of the piece has been made clear it is usually not necessary to then resort to the B.A.M.E. term with different sentence construction being employed to talk about an issue "disproportionately affecting different racial groups" or "racial disparities" etc.

Specificity valued over generalities

Specificity is always valued over generality where possible. This not only demonstrates a respect to different ethnic groups that make up our diverse population, but invariably gives a greater insight into the issues facing specific groups.

When using the term people need to ask themselves why they are using a collective term as opposed to specific terms for different ethnic groups.
For example, if a journalist is trying to illustrate the overrepresentation of White people in certain positions of power, and the overall lack of people who do not identify as White, then a collective term may be the most appropriate. However, if the journalist is discussing racial disparities in school expulsion rates which disproportionately affect Black Caribbean children as opposed to east Asian children, not only is the term "Black Asian and minority ethnic" inappropriate, it weakens the journalism.

When using the term "Black, Asian and minority ethnic" it is best to combine it with racial and intersectional specificity.
Even when it may be appropriate to use a collective term it is best to combine it with racial specificity to address concerns around people who do not identify as White being viewed as one "amorphous blob". For example, it might be appropriate to talk about the general underrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people in the House of Lords, however this risks the people being referred to being "othered" and/or homogenised. For this reason it may be appropriate to mention that "While Black, Asian and minority ethnic people are underrepresented in the House of Lords, the most underrepresented racial group is thought to be the Traveller and Roma community". This level of nuance acknowledges the wider issue while clearly demonstrating that the journalist does not view the group as one homogenous whole.

The problem should not be viewed solely as one of language but also one of trust

In many of the interviews, even among the strongest advocates for the use of a collective term for people who do not identify as White, there is a recognition that the term has been "misused" to hide and obfuscate failings by organisations in increasing representation of specific ethnic groups or address the racism faced by specific ethnic groups. We believe that the best way to address this lack of trust is through clear transparency.

When using a collective term it is best practice to explicitly reference at least one racial subgroup within it, ideally it would be two at either end of the spectrum contributing to the statistics in the group.
The referencing of two subgroups clearly demonstrates that the journalist or organisation is not attempting to hide uncomfortable truths which might make up the larger collective term and engender trust that the heterogeneity within the collective term is recognised. For example, an organisation may want to publish the fact that it has met its 20% target for people from Black, Asian and minority backgrounds at senior levels, however to engender trust we would recommend that the organisation then states that the majority of this target was achieved through an increase in staff from the "mixed" category and south Asian and Black staff are still significantly under-represented.

Acknowledging the information that is not available.
Due to the overarching desire for specificity and the lack of trust when there is no specificity we should be transparent as to the reasons why. This will allay fears about bad motives behind the reporting of information and also acknowledge the fact that specificity is always more desirable. For example a journalist may want to say "People from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds are 50% more likely to contract COVID-19 - the statistics provided by NHS England did not break it down any further and so we do not have the information for specific racial groups." Alternatively, in internal communication an organisation might want to say "15% of promotions were of people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic background, due to data protection the numbers are too small to break that down into specific racial categories."

What is the best collective term to use?

For the most part we still recommend the use of the term Black, Asian and minority ethnic with all the caveats as outlined above.

This is primarily because we are concerned that introducing a completely new term, or "banning" the use of a widely accepted term may increase a nervousness and insecurity that already exists around ethnicity-related language.

Therefore, elaborating or modifying existing terms may be the best way forward.

Using the term "Ethnic minorities".
There is a definite move towards using the term "ethnic minorities" both in terms of our audience feedback groups and by ITV News. However there are concerns that the term, by not explicitly referencing Black and Asian people, is not seen as a racial term and would include White ethnic minorities. This ambiguity as to who falls under this term was demonstrated by some organisations, who saw it as a replacement for B.A.M.E., seeing it as applying to White eastern Europeans. This was despite the fact that the same organisations did not think White eastern Europeans were covered by the B.A.M.E term. For this reason we recommend that if the term "ethnic minorities" is being used, it is made explicit whether it is referring to different ethnic communities or if it is being used in a racial context.'

Using the term "People of Colour" (PoC).
There is confusion over the word "colour" with some people confusing it with "coloured" which is viewed by many people as highly offensive, while other people felt 'People of Colour' (PoC) was an American import. The use of the term 'People of Colour' can relate to the level of trust in the person or organisation using it. If it was an organisation or person that people trusted, then use of the term is seen to be generally acceptable. The same seemed to be the case for the use of the term "brown". Therefore, while 'People of Colour' might be acceptable in reported speech, we would not recommend it for UK broadcasters as it can be a polarising term. Similar arguments exist for BIPOC (Black Indigenous People of Colour) with the added complication that the term "indigenous" which, while relevant in the US, has a different history in the UK.

Using Other New and Emerging Terms Such as "Black and Global Majority".
There are a number of new and emerging collective terms and we believe that there is merit in many of these. However, there is currently no general consensus of a preferred collective term amongst people who do not identify as White. One of the criticisms of the use of B.A.M.E. is that it was not a term that emerged from, and by, the people it describes but was imposed on them. For this reason, we believe it would be wrong for any broadcaster to choose a term that has yet to receive widespread acceptance amongst the people it attempts to describe.

Recognising White nervousness around language.
Many journalists who do not identify as White believe that there is already a nervousness around ethnicity-related language for their White colleagues. For this reason we believe that a "non-radical" approach might be best with an "expansion" or variation of B.A.M.E. (e.g. use of "ethnic minorities" or "Black, Asian and minority ethic") might be a better approach than coming up with a completely new term. The last thing we would want is for journalists to avoid discussing race and ethnicity all together due to nervousness of "getting it wrong". However, this nervousness cannot be used as an excuse to avoid difficult conversations or use language that obscures the issues being discussed - especially around issues of racism.[43] Ultimately, institutional nervousness should not be the determining factor in the language which is used: it is for people being described to define themselves.

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[43] The relationship between White people and how they discuss issues of race and racism has been extensively discussed by the sociologist, Robin DiAngelo, in their 2018 book *White Fragility*.

Recognising the broader picture

Discussing ethnicity in appropriate, nuanced ways is important in any process of engendering trust with an audience, shaping effective policy and enabling constructive communication. However, there is also a clear concern in some quarters that some organisations have focused on issues such as language in order to avoid addressing other issues such as employee representation, ethnicity pay gaps and a raft of other inequalities besetting the UK media industry.

It is therefore our recommendation that any work on language should be presented as part of a broader policy initiative to tackle racial disparities in the creative industries.

Ongoing debate

It cannot be stressed enough that language is dynamic and will change depending on the social and political circumstances in which it is being used. For this reason, any conclusions and policy suggestions contained within this report are temporal and subject to change.

It should also be noted that we firmly adhere to the principles of self-definition. Groups and individuals should be able to define themselves and if and when a common consensus emerges for a collective term for people who do not identify as White from these people themselves this should be adopted. Similarly, if a consensus emerges against any collective terms, this should be used. Ultimately it should always be for the people being defined to decide how they should be described as opposed to any broadcaster or organisation deciding this.

We would recommend that racial terms and use of ethnicity-related words is revisited regularly by broadcasters and involves consultation with those that it seeks to describe.

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Appendices

Appendix X: Concordance lines

A brief review of randomly selected concordance lines for BAME across all three sub-corpora is presented below, providing a sense of the term's contextualised usage. More specifically, we can see that BAME is used to modify terms like applicants, children, community, and group.

Table 1. Randomly selected concordance lines for BAME in LexisNexis, Eastern Eye, and The Voice headlines.

Source	Left context	Node word	Right context
LexisNexis	Target is for more	BAME	applicants and improved whistle-blowing procedure
	Nurses from	BAME	background 'more than twice as likely to be discriminated against by a manager or colleague'
	Proportion of	BAME	children in UK youth custody at record high
	NHS targets Bolton's	BAME	community in vaccination drive
	Coins will hail BAME	BAME	heroes
Eastern Eye	Met police should hire 40 per cent of new recruits from	BAME	backgrounds as part of 'race action plan'
	Virtual round table on	BAME	business owners' Covid-19 response
	Vital that	BAME	groups are part of health action plans, says academic
	Phoenix Fund to provide £1 million grant to	BAME	groups in England
	Mental health stigma in the	BAME	community

The Voice	Research by the UCU has found that black and minority ethnic.	(BAME)	academic staff at UK universities are paid less than their white counterparts
	is so important to highlight the full range of diversity at Oxford and to remember the contributions of our	BAME	alumnae
	the recently announced proposed grades system could negatively impact students from	BAME	and poorer backgrounds.
	not one of the 79 referees on the national list is from a	BAME	background
	SOCIAL enterprise group has launched a	BAME	focused initiative, in a bid to highlight black, Asian and minority ethnic women in the travel and tourism industry.

Appendix Y: Topic modelling

The Topic Modelling results presented here are the outcome of an automated clustering of the news articles based on their textual content. With the clusters being constructed from words in the texts themselves, they often represent topical groupings. Table 2. shows ten topics extracted from each news sub-corpus in the form of lists of words (the output of the algorithm), with labels manually assigned to each word cluster (in bold). It is worth noting that the list of topics is not exhaustive and there is some degree of interpretation in assigning topic labels based on the clusters.

Table 2. Topic clusters extracted from the news articles containing BAME.

LexisNexis	Eastern Eye	The Voice
Vaccines vaccine vaccination vaccines jab people vaccinated nhs trials uptake covid	**Vaccines** vaccine vaccination vaccines people jab said covid nhs communities vaccinated groups	**Vaccines** vaccine nhs vaccines trials ethnic people registry communities minority black
Health Risks risk health likely people higher white times groups death ethnicity	**Health Risks** nhs health doctors risk patients staff care government virus bma	**Health Risks** health government report communities workers ethnic people black coronavirus risk
Organ Donation organ transplant donation blood donors donor register kidney organs nhs people	**Organ Donation** organ donation transplant donor decision blood donors nhs donate register	Organ Donation organ donation transplant donors blood kidney community people waiting donor
COVID-19 coronavirus cases lockdown deaths government virus health people care testing		**Women's Health** women travel nhs pregnant maternity rcm mothers midwives risk girls
Police / Law police officers force forces search stop policing crime people recruitment	**Police / Law** police met officers search force stop said racism black forces people officer	**Police / Law** police black stop people officers searches policing force search racism justice

LexisNexis	Eastern Eye	The Voice
Football football league players clubs premier coaches fa game coaching club		**Football** league football premier players racism clubs game coaches fa fans room club **Sport** sport sporting equals sports communities activity england bame sector physical diversity
Media / Industry bbc diversity women pay staff industry senior gender ethnic tv	**Media / Judiciary** bbc racism staff judges bullying diversity senior judiciary asian complaints Industry / Jobs workers likely ethnic white people bame report compared minority groups jobs	**Media / Industry** bbc industry diversity creative business talent programme film inclusion media
Education students schools university children school pupils education universities teachers student	**Education** students university universities racism staff student report education curriculum subjects	**Education** students university education black teachers curriculum schools school staff history
Support Services / Mental Health support services people women community council communities local help mental	**Support Services / Mental Health** services london mental business community award people british health diversity	**Support Services / Mental Health** mental health services people young support children inequalities nhs pandemic
Racism racism labour report race commission black party racial people ethnic		

LexisNexis	Eastern Eye	The Voice
	Election party labour election mps mp parliament shadow conservative vote candidates	
	Domestic Abuse abuse women domestic victims violence support children bill services girls	

The three sub-corpora share a number of topics related to COVID-19, health issues, media / industry, education and support services / mental health. Differences can be seen with two sport related clusters found for The Voice, whereas none were found for Eastern Eye (although some articles related to sport can be found in the Eastern Eye sub-corpus). The Eastern Eye data reveals two additional topics related to elections and domestic abuse. The Voice results include an additional topic related to women's health. The LexisNexis data revealed a topic specifically related to racism, which contains a number of articles related to the findings of published reports. In contrast, the word racism can be seen in multiple topics in the Eastern Eye and The Voice clusters.

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