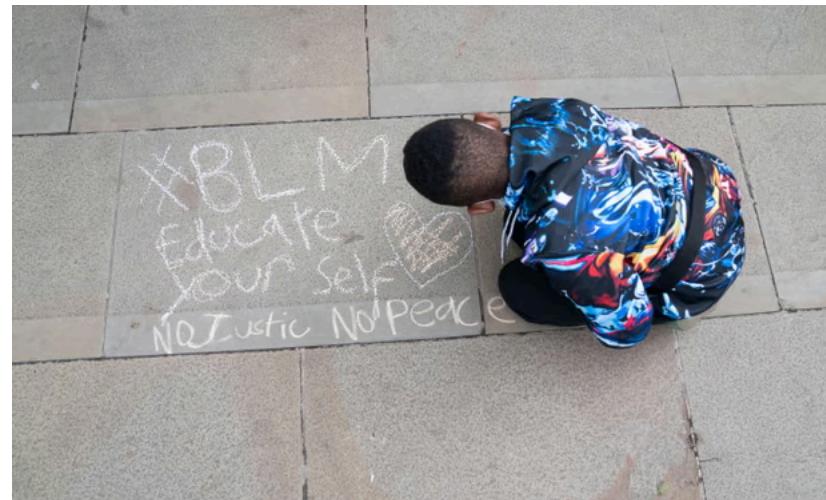


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# Less than half of black Britons feel proud to be British, landmark study says

Campaigners say findings are a wake-up call and highlight 'chronic level of racial disparities' in UK



• The Black British Voices research project was launched as a collaboration during the Black Lives Matter protests. Photograph: Jon Super/Alamy

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Just under half of black Britons are “definitely proud” or “somewhat proud” to be British, according to the largest survey of its kind to date.

The landmark study, which surveyed more than 11,000 black Britons across 16 topics including Britishness, education and the criminal justice system, highlighted the impact of systemic racism in respondents’ sense of belonging and life opportunities.

Campaigners have described the findings as a wake-up call and further evidence of the “chronic level of racial disparities” that black Britons face in the UK.

The research found that the number of black Britons who understand themselves as British (81%) is significantly higher than the number who consider themselves “proud to be British” (49%).

The findings of the 104-page report will be formally launched at the House of Commons on Thursday.

While many black Britons today feel more British than previous generations, the report notes that Englishness was a far more difficult identity to accept. Researchers suggest that for some black Britons, Englishness has become much more strongly tied to whiteness in the wake of Brexit.

The Black British Voices research project was launched in 2020 as a collaboration between the University of Cambridge, the Voice newspaper and the I-Cubed consultancy, during the Black Lives Matter protests. As well as the survey, researchers conducted eight focus group sessions and 40 interviews.

The findings show that while the latest census suggests the UK overall faces a “non-religious future” as a decreasing number of people identify as Christian, religion and the church continue to play a particularly important role for black Britons. In the survey, 84% of respondents described themselves as religious or spiritual.

The study also demonstrates a deep distrust of British educational institutions to serve the needs of black British children. The study found that 80% of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement: do you think racial discrimination is the biggest barrier to young black people’s academic attainment?

The findings show that 95% of participants believe the British national curriculum is failing to teach black history-related subjects, while fewer than 2% of respondents believe that British educational institutions are taking the issue of racial difference seriously.

The survey found that 88% of respondents said they experienced racial discrimination in the workplace, while 98% of black Britons indicated they “always” (46%), “often” (38%), or “sometimes” (14%) had to compromise who they were and how they expressed themselves to fit in at work.

At least 87% of respondents said they did not trust Britain’s criminal justice system. Racial profiling and stop and search laws were the top concerns fuelling the tensions between the police and black communities.

Of the young people who participated in the survey, 90% said they expected to experience racial prejudice in the UK as adults. And 93% of young black Britons did not feel supported by the government in relation to the challenges they faced, while 87% did not feel employers and businesses are doing enough to address the employment gap for young. Overall, responses by young Black Britons to questions about their future were 20 times more negative than positive.

Lester Holloway, the editor of the Voice newspaper, said: “This study should be a wake-up call for Britain. We have many fourth-generation Black Brits

and, as a community, we should be feeling part of this country. Yet the lived experience of racism in every area of life is leading many to not feel British.

“We cannot keep ignoring racial disparities and its impact. There needs to be a national conversation about this, and we need race back on the political agenda, so we can tackle the causes of this disconnect between Black Brits and the only country they know.”

Dr Kenny Monroe, the lead researcher on the project at Cambridge University, said: “We are mindful that historically black communities have been wary of reports conducted on race, as they attempt to limit or invalidate the reality of their lived experiences. However, the carpet of data captured within this report reliably highlights the chronic level of racial disparities and unequal outcomes that they face on a daily basis.”

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