The UK Race Class Narrative Report

Building solidarity across race and class to win progressive change and inoculate against the powerful few that seek to divide us

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Author

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About the Centre for Labour and Social Studies

CLASS is a leading progressive think tank working to ensure the policy is on the side of everyday people. Originating in the trade union movement, CLASS has an authentic connection to working people and a unique insight into the challenges society faces. We combine grassroots voices with intellectually compelling analysis to show an alternative way forward. CLASS works with a coalition of academics, activists and politicians to inspire the progressive movement and cement a broad alliance of social forces to support reform, and equip our supporters with the tools to popularise a new agenda.

About ASO Communications

ASO Communications applies tools from cognition and linguistics to uncover where people are capable of going and how to use our words, images and stories to move them. We have more than a decade's experience crafting, testing, and implementing narratives to achieve progressive wins in the U.S., Australia, the U.K. and elsewhere. In collaboration with Race Class Narrative Action (now We Make the Future), ASO played a major role in shaping the 2018 and 2020 election cycles in several states, helping craft and then launch statewide brands for progressive, multi-racial coalitions.

This project is supported by:

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Key Findings

The working class is truly diverse.

Working-class people in Britain are many nationalities, from Welsh to the West Indian and Polish to Pakistani; our communities contain many languages, cultures and faiths. From our big cities to rural villages, there are working-class people of all ages living across the UK and Northern Ireland. The material conditions of working-class people vary from those left struggling to make ends meet to those living somewhat comfortably. The working class includes a variety of occupations, from nurses to nannies, carers to call centre workers. There is a range of income, education, housing tenure and political beliefs. The working class is defined in part by its diversity compared to middle and upper-class groups. Still, this study finds that diverse working-class people have a lot of essential issues and values in common, contrary to what our opponents say. Working-class people across race and other differences share everyday experiences of precarity, prejudice and a lack of power and place. They share hopes and desires for their families and futures.

Yet, certain politicians, their wealthy friends and the media they own use racism, xenophobia and classism to divide working-class people.

From our analysis of the narrative landscape, we identified one coherent narrative shared by our opponents. From our testing of their narrative, we can see it is well understood, emotive, persuasive and actively divides persuadable working-class people by race and ethnicity. The race-baiting that we frequently see (i.e., 'the white working class are left behind' and 'the woke brigade shout down ordinary people and label us racist') appeals to white people while alienating working-class people of colour. We see this coherent narrative shared across the hard right, and it has been taken up by some parts of the left and the centre.

The standard way progressives talk about race and class doesn't reflect nor resonate with the ethnically diverse working class.

Neither is it strategically effective at winning people over. We are losing the debate. Instead of promoting progressive ideas and neutralising this divisive narrative, our analysis of communications from progressive actors exposes how our side falls into several common traps laid by our opponents. For example, we often legitimise damaging frames, such as echoing the sentiment that Britain is in the midst of a war of cultural values; we mimic our opponents by counterposing race and class and siloing issues. We often repeat our opponents' language to negate it, but we are giving their story more airtime by doing so. In comparison to the narrative used by our opponents, standard progressive messaging is easily forgotten, much less persuasive to the persuadable segment of the population; it garners lukewarm support from our base and is often misunderstood as actually reinforcing our Opponents' narrative.

Our tried-and-tested race class messages that come directly from listening to working class people are more persuasive, mobilising, and resonant with people across race and class around shared interests.

Our messages communicate the truth that there is a small elite making decisions against the common interests and connect the necessity of people uniting (across race and class) to secure our mutual interests – a better future. It exposes and delegitimises our opponents' tactic of division and racialised scapegoating to distract us and turn working class people against one another. Our new Race Class Narratives act as an antidote by creating an inclusive 'us' by using intersectional language and emphasising the important things we have in common: what we want and value. Moreover, our messages are effective. Our base and fellow advocates (people who work on social justice issues professionally) far prefer our new narratives, which are also more persuasive than our opponents' message and what we are currently saying to people who could potentially be moved.

Here are our two new messages

— **Future Generations**: Whether we are Black, white or brown, most of us want to make life better for the generations to come. But certain politicians, their super-rich friends and the media they own are endangering our future to benefit themselves. They are fuelling damage to our climate, selling off our NHS and slashing funding for our youth centres and schools. Then they spread lies about ethnic minorities, Muslims and people seeking asylum* to distract us from how their decisions harm us all. In the past, we joined together to create the NHS, and today, we can work together across our differences to demand secure green jobs, good education, and a better future for all of us, our children and our grandchildren.

— **Good Life:** Most of us put effort and pride into what we do, whatever our skin colour and whether we're caring for loved ones, grafting between jobs or working 9-5. But certain politicians, their billionaire friends and the media they own harm us all by hoarding extreme wealth and power. They rig the system to rob people of a decent wage and refuse to contribute what they owe in tax. Then they blame Black and brown people, newcomers and families left struggling to make ends meet for the hardships the wealthy few created. When we pull together across our differences, we can make this a country where working for a living means earning a living, and we all have what we need to live a good life – no exceptions.

Our research with 2200 participants demonstrates the potency of the RCN framework

(already proven in the US by the original Race Class Narrative project and ongoing research and implementation). The core structure of the RCN framework has three parts:

1 **Value:** Open with a shared value that explicitly includes people across race and economic status lines to build cross-racial solidarity.

2 **Problem:** Narrate the problem & locate this problem in certain powerful actors. Be specific about what they are doing and how it harms us.

3 **Solution:** Communicate an aspirational vision, being specific about the outcomes we can achieve by joining together. Emphasise how collective action helps us address the problem and implement the solutions that benefit us all.

Key statistics

We found that only 1 in 3 people say they know exactly what 'working class' means.

Our qualitative research found that many find the term confusing and define it around literally being in work leading to the exclusion of those outside of formal paid employment. Class is not widely understood as a political concept (i.e., a description of power and control, who has it, and who doesn't). However, we also found a latent awareness that society is in the grips of a class struggle – between working-class people who have to work hard to survive meanwhile the elite class are making decisions in their own interest and benefit others of the upper-middle class. We also found four underlying themes shaping the reality of working-class life: precarity, navigating prejudice, contending with racism, classism and sexism and for many working-class people the intersection of all three. Diverse working-class people also encounter an increasing lack of place and space in fragmented communities and a profound feeling of powerlessness – their choices are limited in daily life, and our leaders continuously ignore their voices. Our survey finds that 60% of working-class people felt they had little or no influence in what our government does. Following in the footsteps of our 2019 We Are Ghosts report with the Runnymede Trust, we confirmed that from shared conditions, values and challenges emerges a shared class identity.

The majority of the British public believe they should get involved in their local communities.

Almost 70% think it is important to get to know their neighbours and think that by joining together in our communities we can make positive changes in our country. Despite this strong desire, in our qualitative research, we found that people are sceptical about coming together due to a strong perception of fear and division along with race, class and political lines. We also found that, when prompted, participants identified individual prejudice, the media and politicians as a cause of these divisions.

Our qualitative research found a strong sense of disillusionment with politicians and a lack of voice and representation.

Participants identify the government as the obvious locus of power and source of positive change. Yet, over half of the public think they have very little, if any say in what the government does. Right now, people see power more readily in the hands of a few elites, – who make decisions to suit their own interests – than they do in the hands of working people coming together.

60% of the public think that people of colour (e.g., Black, Asian and minority ethnic people) face greater barriers to economic success than white people

and that focusing on and talking about race is necessary to move towards greater equality.

60% believe the system is rigged against working-class people,

and 65% of working-class people believe that wealthy people are wealthy because they are given more opportunities. Meanwhile, our qualitative research also finds a strong contradictory belief in meritocracy.

71% of the public think that the government should prioritise providing healthcare, education and the services that people need

rather than get public spending down to manageable levels and cut red tape. Moreover, 71% also believe that our benefits system must prioritise helping people who need it, even if that means a small number of people can claim benefits incorrectly. In our qualitative research, we found that participants had shared desires for the kind of society they want to live in: a united and caring society; one in which all our different identities and cultures are respected and embraced; everyone feels safe and secure.

60% of the British population are by definition persuadable.

30% of the British population are progressively aligned on race and class. Persuadables hold various beliefs and are likely to be unsure about various issues. Just 10% of the population are strongly conservative in their voting and views (i.e. they think talking about race is harmful and divisive, that wealthy people are wealthy because they work harder than everyone else).

Where the public is at

58% think that people of colour face greater barriers to economic success than white people.

28% think that people of colour (e.g. Black, Asian and minority ethnic people) who cannot get ahead are mostly responsible for their own situation

60% think that focusing on and talking about race is necessary to move toward greater equality.

32% believe that continuing to address race is harmful as talking about it only creates division

60% think that if the working class struggles in our society it is because the rules are rigged against it.

24% believe that if the working class struggles in our society it is due to its own lack of effort or initiative.

65% think that wealthy people in the UK are wealthy because they were given more opportunities than others.

22% think that wealthy people in the UK are wealthy because they worked harder than others

71% think that the best thing the government can do for the economy is to provide the healthcare, education and services people need.

23% think that the best thing the government can do for the economy is get spending down to manageable levels and cut red tape

71% think that our benefits system must prioritise helping people who need it, even if that means a small number of people can claim benefits incorrectly.

21% think that most people who claim benefits will try to scam the system. Our system must prioritise weeding out fraud even if that means some families and children go without the support they need.

70% think that unpaid care – like looking after children, neighbours and older people – should be considered 'work' and valued accordingly.

23% believe that unpaid care is important but should not be considered 'work'.

Where the public is at cont.

54% believe that they should get involved in their local community

68% think it's important to get to know their neighbours

70% think by joining together in our communities we can make positive changes in our country.

Only 6% disagree.

36% think it's important to join a trade union

24% think it isn't

39% are apathetic

80% are motivated to vote.

46% think people like them are able to have a say in what the government does (29% say some, 14% a lot, and 5% say a great deal).

53% think they have very little say, if none at all in what the government does.

Forewords

ELLIE MAE O'HAGAN:

Divide and rule tactics have existed for millenia, and have long been used by Britain's ruling class to maintain power. During the British Empire, the Raj deliberately sowed discontent between Muslims and Hindus in India after they united to fight against their British rulers. Unscrupulous people who want power know that we are weaker when divided than we are united.

In this respect, the Race Class Narrative project is not examining a new phenomenon. At the time of writing, British people are experiencing a scandal of the rising cost of living worse than any other since records began. We are picking up the pieces of the botched response to a pandemic that has cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of people, all while politicians partied in Downing Street and handed out lucrative contracts with little scrutiny. And yet instead of taking responsibility for any of these events, the sitting government has introduced a series of xenophobic policies, whether against people seeking safety in this country, or our LGBT+ friends and colleagues, in order to convince us that the real threat is one another. This has led to progressive values and ideas becoming increasingly marginalised and under threat.

It is important to understand the particular type of divide and rule tactics we are seeing in the current moment, because – as our research shows

> " A compelling story about who we are, the shared struggles we face, and the change we can make when we join together is a vital tool to unite working class people. Let's use it.

– they are proving remarkably effective. Our opponents know how to energise their base and tell an appealing story about the country we live in, chock-full of appeals to order and fairness and vivid metaphors. At the centre of this story is that the white working class (sometimes called the "traditional" or "authentic" working class) faces a common enemy: not the people underpaying them or the governments making laws that hurt them, but a strange new tribe known as the "wokemob," whose only aim is to destroy authentic British values – whatever they are – in order to establish a dangerously authoritarian political correctness.

Those of us who are progressives working on social justice issues must take some responsibility for this state of affairs. When confronted with this divisive narrative, we have not said anything of substance. Instead we've tried to avoid the issue, possibly because we are afraid of being dismissed as too "woke," or we have simply denounced our opponents' divisiveness, usually by repeating their stories in order to criticise them and failing to come up with any compelling stories of our own.

Clearly a different strategy is needed. This project lays out a roadmap to get us to a more effective place. It is not a magic bullet solution – we need everyone from organisers to campaigners to play their part in neutralising divide and rule tactics. But a compelling story about who we are, the shared struggles we face, and the change we can make when we join together is a vital tool to unite working class people. Let's use it.

DR FAIZA SHAHEEN:

Listen to politicians today and you would think that working-class white people and working-class people of colour and immigrants were enemies of each other. But this has never been the truth.
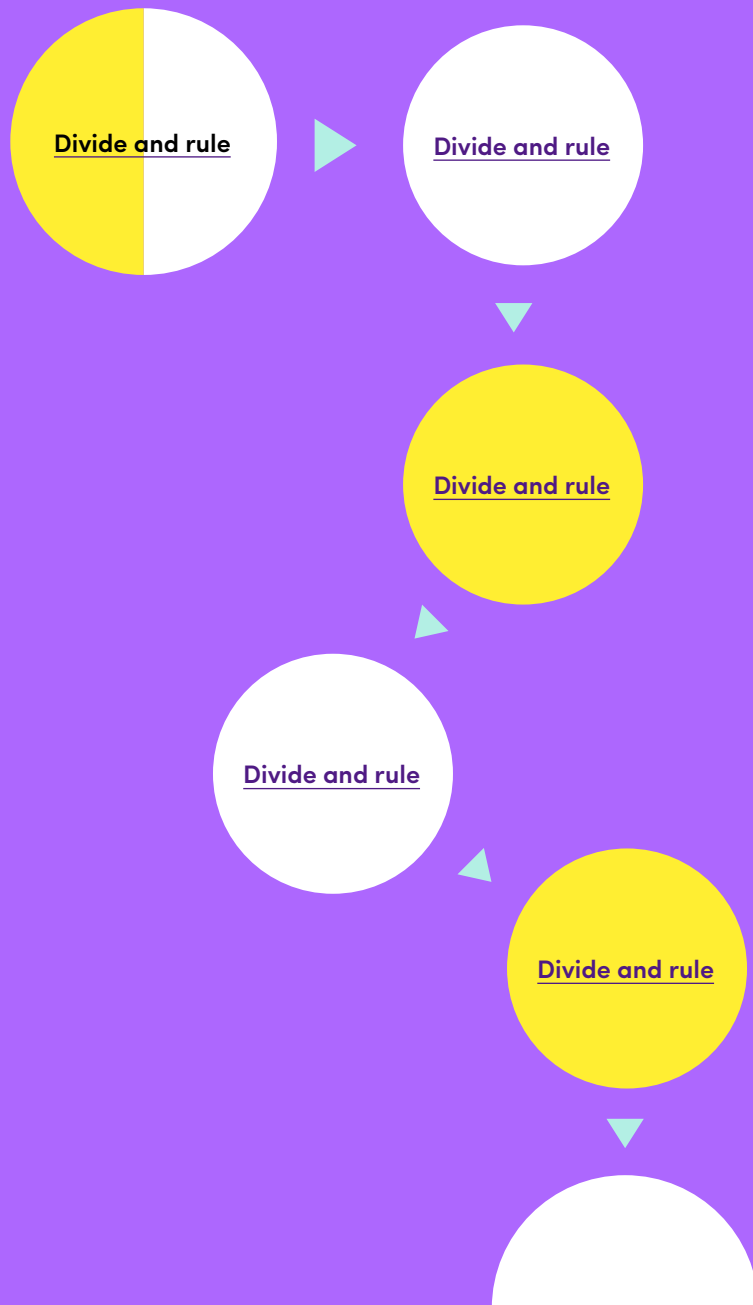
I garnered an interesting historical insight on race and class from an unlikely source recently – the unconventional period drama Bridgerton. While the show does not reflect the race dynamics of the time, but rather creates a world with racial harmony at the top of society, I couldn't help but think about the inter-racial world of working-class people at the time. Watching the show with a friend, she pointed out that rather than being the ladies dressed in silk dresses relaxing and playing cards on the lawns, we would have been out in the back of the stately homes making the tea and peeling the carrots. She was right – in spirit, we would have shared in performing duties for the rich in the UK, her of working-class Welsh stock, and myself of working-class Fijian Indian heritage. Our working-class ancestors may not have exactly been in the same kitchen, but my great-grandmother picked the sugarcane as indentured labour in Fiji, while thousands of miles on the other side of the planet her great grandmother mixed that same sugar into the tea of those she served. Our cultures and customs were not always the same, but our fates had been intertwined for centuries because we had been part of the same production line that made the British elite richer, while our families were oppressed and impoverished. And not much has changed, apart from some of those working-class people of colour are now indeed in the same kitchen. Working-class people in this country and beyond are not enemies – we are brethren.

They say, if you don't like what is being said, change the conversation. The beauty of working-class communities lies in solidarity and resistance, but we have failed to connect struggles and articulate the truth of who keeps working-class people fighting each other and why. This void has become a key barrier to greater equality – with the political right adeptly able to create wedge issues and codes such as the "left behind' or "woke mob" to wield whenever they want to distract us from them cutting taxes for the richest and underfunding the NHS. This research on narratives that bring us together is an attempt to fill this void, providing tested messages on how we can begin to change the conversation and build solidarity. It comes at the time of a global energy, food and living standards crisis, where solidarity is vital if the majority are to get the support they need and deserve. We have a powerful and truthful story to tell, it is way beyond time for us to tell it effectively.

" The beauty of working-class communities lies in solidarity and resistance, but we have failed to connect struggles and articulate the truth of who keeps working-class people fighting each other and why

Divide and rule

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CHAPTER 1

We need to talk about race *and* class

Introduction to the project

Right now, a wealthy and powerful few have weaponised the concept of "working class" in order to undermine the solidarity needed to fight for better wages, good working conditions, robust public services, justice, clean air and water, and equality.

The divide-and-rule strategy is to racialise the working class as a white cultural minority, presenting them as the victims of immigration and advances in racial and gender equality. Rhetorically, such framing obscures from view the essential questions of inequality, power, wealth and oppression. Indeed, rather than reject class, certain Conservative politicians proclaim to be "the champions of the white working-class".[1] Meanwhile, progressives are portrayed as class traitors – "the woke mob" – obsessively focused on race and ignoring the "real" working-class. While certain politicians and pundits frequently talk about the white working class, working class migrants and people of colour are rarely, if ever, referred to by their class. It is worth noting that such divisive narratives are not exclusive to those on the political right; indeed the right's narrative has been so successful that some figures in the political centre[2], and even on the left[3] subscribe to it.

We see this divide-and-rule strategy in headlines about white working class boys being left behind in schools and in government rhetoric that casts

campaigners as agitators who seek to trash our history and make baseless accusations about racism and sexism. The narrative comprises a collection of stories shared coherently by a wide range of politicians, spokespeople, media outlets, academics, etc. With repetition, over time, it has become embedded in our collective culture. Such stories are widely repeated on social media and from some white interviewees who participated in this study (for the full report, see CLASS on Class). We know it's powerful. From our own testing of this narrative, presented in **Chapter 2**, we can see it is well understood, emotive, persuasive and actively divides persuadable working-class people by ethnicity – the race-baiting appealing to white people while alienating working-class people of colour.

The whitening of the working class is yet another iteration of the 'deserving versus undeserving working class' as seen in the "strivers vs skivers"[4] stories of the 2010s and the "underclass"[5] of the Victorian era. The powerful few use divide-and-rule rhetoric to stigmatise and demonise the perceived 'undeserving' working class, in order to justify political choices and to scapegoat for problems caused by their choices. Although the boundary of who is deemed undeserving is fluid, and shaped according to the political moment, the finger is often pointed at working-class people of colour, migrants, unemployed people, those claiming benefits and striking workers. By creating moral panic[6] and pointing the finger at a perceived 'other', we are kept distracted and alienated from coming together, holding the powerful few to account and demanding the things we all need such as equality, justice, housing, education, meaningful and well-paid work.

The racialisation of working-class people as white (and often gendered as male) obscures the existence of Black and brown working-class people today. As we explore further in **Chapter 3**, we know that the working class in Britain is, and always has been, ethnically diverse. The Historian Satnam Virdee[7] unearthed the histories of racialised minority workers to reveal that the English working class was multi-ethnic from its inception, including Irish Catholics, Jews, Asians, and members of the African diaspora.

The British Empire forcibly established a global working class whose exploitation contributed to the wealth of Britain's upper classes. This centuries-long process crystalised a hierarchy defined by race and class that continues to shape the contemporary working class.

Nonetheless, the political rhetoric and reality do not match up. Today, Black, Asian and ethnic minority people are much more likely to be in low paid and insecure work. According to a report from the Trade Union Congress and Race on the Agenda (ROTA) in 2021, women of colour are almost twice as likely as white men to be on zero-hours contracts i.e., work in jobs that provide no fixed wage or hours.[8] Black, brown and ethnic minority people are also more likely to be in poverty (i.e., have an income less than 60% of the average household income) than white British people.[9] Although none of these statistics perfectly captures the demographic of the working class, each is evidence that the working class is ethnically diverse.

And yet, the standard way progressives* talk about race and class is neither reflective of the realities of the working class today nor is it effective at persuading people. Across the progressive movement, we are rarely propagating an intersectional and inclusive class analysis. Instead of promoting desirable progressive ideas and neutralising our Opponents' divisive narrative, our analysis of communications by progressive campaigners, politicians, and journalists exposes how our side falls into several common traps laid by our Opposition. For example, we often legitimise damaging frames, such as echoing the sentiment that Britain is in the midst of a war of cultural values and repeating phrases like 'white working class.' But by doing so, we inadvertently reinforce the association of the working class with whiteness. When we tested a 'greatest hits' version of the current

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* Please note that by progressive we mean a broad church of actors who have a plurality of beliefs and views, including people in civil society, politics and the media who could use their platforms to advance a race class narrative that builds solidarity rather than division.

standard progressive message – one that talks broadly about diversity and inclusion without being explicit about race, is vague about who is stoking division, and argues we cannot be distracted by a so-called culture war – it performed badly. Its main failings are that it is confusing (the term 'culture war' stood out most, but our use of it was often misunderstood to mean that talking about race is a distraction and divisive). At best, it gets lukewarm support from audiences that we must and indeed can inspire.

Chapter 4 offers a new, winning approach to building solidarity across race and class and neutralising our opponents' divide-and-rule strategies. As historian and author Emma Dabiri writes, coalition building is about identifying shared material interests amongst people. Indeed, through observing movements of the past, we can see that groups often worked together towards common goals in a context much more polarised than the present. Today we urgently need to propagate an alternative shared narrative that reflects modern class interests, shared across differences of race and place, and holds to account those who continue to act against these interests. We must attract others to our cause to have the strength in numbers we require since our current base for progressive policy priorities is not large enough to win the change we need. Our tried-and-tested messaging is proven to unify people across race and class, including the diverse working-class and lower-middle-class, around shared interests to build cross-racial class solidarity. Our race class narrative is built organically around lived experiences. It embraces many identities, especially those deliberately scapegoated and demonised. It also exposes our opponents' powerful divide-and-rule tactics: how they use racism, xenophobia, and classism to divide us and distract us from their decisions that harm us all. Our new Race Class Narrative acts as an antidote to our opponents' attempts to pull working-class people apart.

We offer the results and recommendations of this research for people across the progressive movement, whether speaking in the media, work-places or communities, to build and activate the public support we need

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to win what we need across our issues. The findings are based on in-depth interviews and focus groups with diverse working-class people in England and Wales, and a national survey with over 2000 participants.

Words alone are not enough

From the outset, we want to make it clear that we do not propose that messaging is the silver bullet solution. As a society, everyone has a part to play. We need messaging to fit into a wider strategy, alongside tools to organise and mobilise – whether that's campaigners highlighting state racial violence, trade union reps fighting for workers in BrewDog and Wetherspoons, or community organisers trying to keep a local school open. We need those who provide care to our loved ones, our cleaners and health workers, and our neighbourhood elders who have seen it all before. But we also need a coherent and shared narrative that inspires people to come together and counters our opponents' divide-and-rule strategies. A compelling story is one of the many essential tools that we must wield to unify the diverse working class and make transformative change a reality. Language is key to creating change, and the way we communicate – the words, phrases, stories, experiences we share – shapes how we understand the world,[10] including perceptions of race and class in Britain.

What we did

See Appendix for full methodology

We began this research process by conducting a language analysis to map the narrative landscape of existing stories and frames around the themes of race and class. We looked at over 500 sources from politicians, media outlets, spokespeople, academics and social media. As presented in chapter 2, we found just one overarching coherent narrative that has become the dominant narrative – a story meant to divide and scapegoat the working class using racism, xenophobia and classism. This finding only confirmed the need for new research.

The 2019 Runnymede and CLASS report, We Are Ghosts[11], which explored the working class realities in West London, revealed that ethnically diverse working-class people share everyday experiences, struggles and hopes. With social research company Survation, we extended this research beyond London. We spoke to almost 50 working-class people from all walks of life and conducted 18 in-depth interviews in Bradford, Wolverhampton, Cardiff and Rhyl. We discussed their day-to-day lives, worries, and hopes with the interviewees and discussed themes of race, class, and gender. We then returned to these locations and conducted three large focus groups to discuss class, intersectionality, power, community, and division. We trialled messaging ideas around values, beliefs, challenges and solutions. As a result, from the rich findings presented in chapter 3 emerged the puzzle pieces to construct new and authentic messages about race and class. For the full report, see our 2022 Working Class Realities Report.

With the dial testing company DialSmith,[12] we designed a national survey to test our messages and learn more about public attitudes. We used the Race Class Narrative method co-developed** by Anat Shenker-Osorio, whose team at ASO Communications worked with us on the UK RCN project. The survey reached 2,168 adults across the UK*** between August 19th and 26th, 2021. Chapter 4 presents the empirical data to support our messaging and framing recommendations.

We were guided by two critical principles throughout the research process: intersectionality and authenticity. Intersectionality, a term coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, is the theoretical framework that acknowledges that human experiences, struggles and societies are shaped by multiple social dimensions – race, class, gender, nationality, sexuality, faith, disability etc. As researchers, we cannot hope to understand the lives and perspectives of working-class people by considering economic and material realities as separate from identities. Moreover, it necessitates that our sample of working-class people reflects the diversity that constitutes the whole working class (as much as possible). Secondly, our narrative must be authentic and come directly from working-class people in all their variety – which is why this project used a mixed-methods approach spanning 18 months.

** The original US Race Class Narrative research in 2017 was a collaboration between Anat Shenker-Osorio (ASO Communications), Heather McGhee, Ian HaneyLópez, Lake Research Partners, Brilliant Corners, SEIU and Demos. ASO Communications and We Make the Future continue to do ongoing research and implementation of the Race Class Narrative. www.wemakethefuture.us/history-of-the-race-class-narrative

*** The regions included in the study are: East of England, East Midlands Greater London, North East, North West, Northern Ireland, Scotland, South East, South West, Wales, West Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber.

Theory of change:

The most effective way to persuade hearts and minds is through story-telling. But to break through the incessant political noise requires constant repetition. Here, we followed a proven strategy for developing persuasive stories, tried and tested by ASO Communications and based on learnings from the Race Class Narrative in the US. Let us briefly review each group in turn.

Energise the base

to persuade the persuadables

and marginalise the Opposition

Our Base:

### We must preach to the choir in order to mobilise it

Our Base is the portion of the population that fundamentally shares our values and beliefs. This group is not usually the focus for progressive campaigners as they are assumed to be already on side. This is a mistake! Without the newspapers, resources and media channels that our opponents have, our Base is the best platform we will ever have to spread our messages. Research shows that they enjoy the trust of the persuadables more than any media outlet, politician or campaign. If we give one person in a household the tools to speak simply and persuasively, we provide them with the power to convince everyone in that household. Hence, inspiring the Base to spread our words is how we win. Like a magnet, If we charge our Base with a compelling vision of the kind of society we want to be, this energy will attract the persuadables towards progressive values and ideas. In this report, we also refer to Advocates. Advocates are those actively working in areas of social justice towards our shared values, examples include organisers, journalists, researchers, and activists.
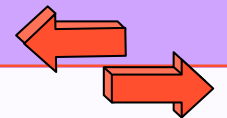
Persuadables:

We must shift the Persuadables

Some researchers and pollsters tend to think about public attitudes and beliefs on a scale. On one end is the 'Left' and at the other end is the 'Right', implying a midpoint. Often progressives are stuck in the belief that the majority of the public is somewhere in the middle, and to appeal to them requires something not too progressive or conservative. In reality, this is a misunderstanding. The majority of people are not especially engaged with politics. They do not spend much time and energy forming firmly held political beliefs. Therefore, they tend to be undecided on many issues. Their views behave more like a pendulum – swinging between progressive ideas and conservative ones, even when these ideas contradict one another – depending on what they are hearing the most and loudest from people around them. They are drawn to clarity and decisiveness and to whatever is deemed "common sense", whether from a progressive or conservative direction. In other words – they are persuadable! This is a cause for optimism; since most people haven't made up their minds, we can appeal to them.
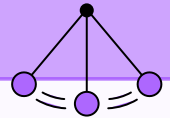
Opponents:

We must marginalise the Opposition

The Opposition is not a particular newspaper or political party. They are the small section of the population that fundamentally opposes our values and beliefs. Although not impossible, it would be tough to change their minds and certainly take much more than messaging and conversations. We propose not appealing to this group; in fact, we should try to actively marginalise them. If our message is not turning off the Opposition, then that means one of two things has gone wrong. Either we have rendered our statement so bland as to avoid marginalising the Opposition that it fails to say anything that would inspire our Base. Or, we have reproduced the damaging frames of our opponents – actively reinforcing their opposing worldview and helping them to persuade the persuadables. We distinguish between our opponents and the Opposition, in that the former are those perpetuating and to some extent creating the harmful policies and narratives explored in this report, whereas the latter refers to a small segment of the public who are ideologically opposed to our values and cannot be persuaded. However, it is true there might be crossover, some of the public may likely be actively working towards persuading others to believe our opponents' narrative.

What an effective narrative needs to do:

An essential feature of this is to understand our audiences through the framework of Base, Persuadable and Opposition. Our messages must energise and inspire the Base to want to repeat and share our messages to persuade the Persuadables, while it marginalises the Opposition. But if our words don't spread by definition, they don't work. An effective narrative must do three things:

1 **MOBILISE**: A message no one hears is, by definition, not persuasive. Thus our winning words must inspire our base to action including the repetition of proven effective messages.

2 **PERSUADE:** Our present base for progressive policy priorities is not large enough to win the change we need. We must attract others to our cause in order to have the strength in numbers we require.

3 **INOCULATE:** People don't just hear from our side. They are exposed far more to the relentless race-baiting and fear-mongering of our Opposition. In order to prove persuasive, our narrative must act as an antidote to what voters are hearing from the other side by providing our own explanation for the problem, the villains, and their motivations behind deliberate division.

So what do we know about our three groups?

In our national survey, we segmented our audience into our three groups – Base, Persuadable and Opposition – by asking them a series of questions about race, class and meritocracy. They had to choose between a Base answer, an Opposition answer and 'not sure'. Participants who chose all the Base answers were segmented into Base. Those who chose all of the Opposition answers were segmented into the Opposition. Finally, those who chose a mixture of the two were segmented into Persuadables.

Of the entire UK population, **30% are our Base**, **60% are Persuadable**, and **10% are the Opposition**.
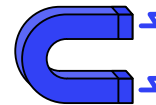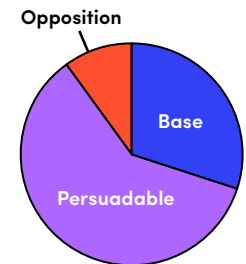
Who are our Base?

Progressive on race & class: they believe structural racism is real. They strongly support Black Lives Matter and think talking about race is necessary for an equal society. They are very sceptical that the UK is a meritocracy – believing that wealthy people are so because they have more opportunities and working-class people struggle due to the rules being rigged against them. They also believe that the priority of the welfare system is to help those left struggling to get by.

How they feel about civic engagement: They are the most motivated to vote and have the strongest belief in grassroots power – that we should get involved in our communities and that we can make change happen by joining together. But they are sceptical that we can have a say in what the government does – and more so than the other groups. When they vote, they do so overwhelmingly for the Labour party, and then Green, Liberal Democrat, SNP, and Plaid Cymru. They are most likely to be a trade union member (though most are not).

Demographics: In general, they are the youngest and most ethnically diverse; they are more likely to be a woman and well-educated.
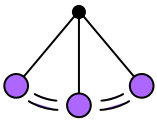
Who are the Persuadables?

Persuadables toggle between views shared by our Base and the Opposition. They hold a variety of different policy preferences and are most likely to be unsure on several social and political fronts. Around half of this group believe that talking about race is important to move towards greater equality; that wealthy people are wealthy because they are given more opportunities; that working-class people struggle because the rules are rigged against them; and that people of colour face greater barriers to economic success than white people.

Civic engagement: they are motivated to vote, though less strongly than the Base and the Opposition. They exhibit some doubt about whether we can actually have a say in what the Government does. Around a third are Labour voters, a third Conservative and one in ten votes for the Liberal Democrats. They tend not to be trade union members- with a plurality on the fence about whether trade unions are important.

Demographics: Persuadables are a mixed group, spread across age groups, and compared to the Base, more likely to be a man, less educated and more white. Working-class persuadables have slightly more progressive views than upper-middle/middle-class persuadables. Also, persuadable women are likely to hold more progressive attitudes than persuadable men.
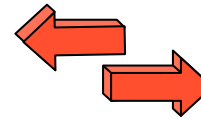
Who are the Opposition?

Strongly conservative, in both their voting and their views. Particularly strong beliefs in meritocracy – that you earn your place in society, and strong views that talking about race is harmful and divisive and that structural racism doesn't exist.

Civic engagement: Most interested in top-down routes to change – with the strongest belief in their ability to influence government, and the least interest in the potential of communities to make a change. A large majority vote Conservative. They are somewhat hostile to the idea of trade unions, with a small majority believing they are not at all important.

Demographics: The Opposition are significantly older (74% are over the age of 45) and overwhelmingly white. Members of the Opposition are more likely to be a man, to identify as English and to live in the South East or the East of England. The Opposition working class seem to be slightly more progressive than the Opposition middle class. Also, Opposition women tend to be more progressice than Opposition men.
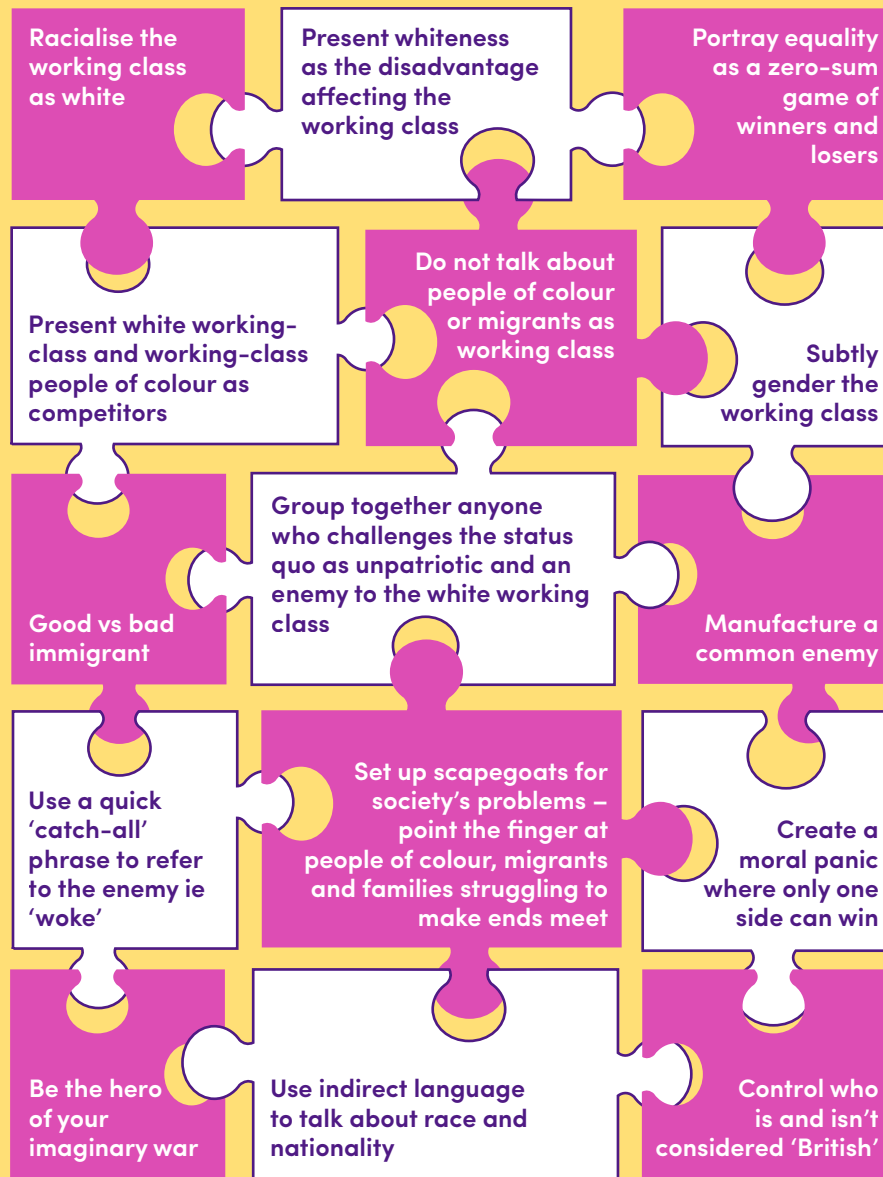
An analysis of current stories about race and class

In March 2021, we conducted a language analysis to clarify the stories about race and class and how they function.

We looked at 500+ source materials from politicians across the political spectrum, mainstream and non-mainstream media, social media, organisations, academics and commentators etc. We identified the key stories, metaphors, values, and themes that shape how race and class are understood today. As mentioned in the introduction, we identified just one overarching narrative. In this chapter, we present and discuss a summary of some of the key elements of this narrative, and we explore alternative progressive messaging. For the complete analysis, check out our The Divide and Rule Playbook report. Using our source material, we constructed two messages to test with the public, one representing the Opposition narrative, and a second representing 'Status quo' progressive messaging. The findings are presented at the end of this chapter. Spoiler alert! We are losing the debate. The image on the left is only a snippet of what we encounter daily.

Pieces of the Dominant Opposition Narrative

- Racialise the working class as white
- Present whiteness as the disadvantage affecting the working class
- Portray equality as a zero-sum game of winners and losers
- Present white working-class and working-class people of colour as competitors
- Do not talk about people of colour or migrants as working class
- Subtly gender the working class
- Good vs bad immigrant
- Group together anyone who challenges the status quo as unpatriotic and an enemy to the white working class
- Manufacture a common enemy
- Use a quick 'catch-all' phrase to refer to the enemy ie 'woke'
- Set up scapegoats for society's problems – point the finger at people of colour, migrants and families struggling to make ends meet
- Create a moral panic where only one side can win
- Be the hero of your imaginary war
- Use indirect language to talk about race and nationality
- Control who is and isn't considered 'British'

The Dominant Opposition Narrative

In short, the dominant narrative draws battle lines in Britain via race and class through the vivid use of metaphors. The Opposition's story frames Britain in crisis, but rather than focusing on the external threat of migrants entering the country, the narrative has shifted to the threat posed by a dangerous internal minority – usually characterised as "woke." Although CLASS does not take a position on the decision to leave the EU, we have observed that some actors (particularly those who were part of the Leave. EU campaign spearheaded by Nigel Farage and Arron Banks) argued that the UK was under threat from an invasion of dangerous foreign actors. For example, when the Daily Mail reported that "mass migration is allowing terrorists to sneak into the EU"[13] and Dominic Raab, the then Brexit Secretary, said that "the safer option is for Britain to leave the EU in order regain control over our borders and immigration policy."[14]

Although race, immigration and Islamophobia is still prevalent and central to the story, the Opposition has started a new chapter of race and class in Britain. The Opposition's new story centres on an antagonism between the "left behind white working-class" and their "champions" versus the "woke mob" or "the liberal Left now view white, British working men and women as their enemy. And they hate their enemy with a loathing that is visceral,"[15] who exclusively advocate for the rights of undeserving minorities, and who generally want to "do Britain down".[16] Let us take a look at a few key elements of their divide-and-rule playbook.

1 Racialise the working class as white

Firstly, it is essential to note the chapters that have come before in the divide-and-rule playbook. The racialisation of the working class as white is not new. We also saw the racialisation of the working class as white throughout the Brexit discourse. The backing for Brexit was often (but not always) portrayed as exclusively inside white working-class communities, who feared a weakening of identity

and the decline of social order due to such a "diverse and rapidly changing society."[17] Yet, this narrative pits the white working class against migrants (many also constitute the working class) as their economic and social competitors. It falsely constructed a hegemonic and ethnonationalist white British working class – erasing from view the diversity of working-class people across race, ethnicity and origin, alongside their concerns, beliefs and voting history. It also facilitated the mainstreaming of the racism and xenophobia of elites as a legitimate concern of disadvantaged white people.

2 Present whiteness as a disadvantage (and not class and wealth inequality)

Today, the 'white working class' narrative has also made a home within the equality debate. As society advances along a collective path, "white working-class boys have been left behind" while the rest of society has continued without them. The working class is racialised as white, and we see the narrative has shifted from being the victim of immigration and globalisation to being the victim of the advancement of racial (and gender) equality. Liz Truss, Secretary of State for Equality, essentially explained in her speech 'A Fight for Fairness' that the cause of white working-class struggles is due to getting 'stuck' behind "real barriers of geographical inequality and socioeconomic status" (a euphemism for class).[18] Truss claims that such barriers remain because certain groups – i.e. those concerned with protected characteristics (race and gender) – do not consider socioeconomic inequality worthy of concern. In the Opposition's narrative, inequality and socioeconomic barriers are claimed to only impact white people, implying that people of colour and non-British communities are not impacted by class and place-based injustice. This implies that the white working-class are left behind because of their whiteness (and maleness) rather than their class. By suggesting that people of colour have received help that the white working class have not, the Opposition is arguing that racial

equality advocates do not care about the class inequality that affects white people. This may even suggest to some white audiences that racial justice groups are opposed to them.

3 Portray equality as a zero-sum game of winners and losers

The Opposition suggests that equality is a zero-sum game[19] – that when one side wins, the other side must lose. It creates an artificial antagonism between white people and those who advocate racial (and gender) justice, implying that removing obstacles from one group necessarily means the non-removal of an impediment of another group. Or that quotas and targets, say for hiring practices or university attendance, is discriminating against white men. The purpose of such rhetoric is to obscure the fact that Black, white and brown people share many of the same barriers to class equality and that class inequality, racism and xenophobia can be challenged simultaneously.

4 Focus on race to ignore class inequality that affects Black, white and brown working-class people

The mention of barriers and 'falling behind' in some instances and not others reveals the hidden assumptions about race and class. Take for example, the media outcry that white working boys (not all white working-class children, only those on free school meals (FSM)) are achieving (very slightly) less than boys from some Black and Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds has been taken to indicate that something has gone wrong in the education system. This positioning of white working-class disadvantage as an ethnic disadvantage rather than as a class disadvantage serves to pitch white working class interests as in competition with minority ethnic groups. In reality the disadvantage facing white working class children is class inequality, which impacts all working class people regardless of race and ethnicity.

The political rhetoric serves to obscure many things. Firstly, the comparison of children's education is exclusively compared between ethnic groups and not the far more significant class gap or the even greater inequality between children educated at state-funded schools compared to private schools.[20] The class disparity is not treated as a cause for concern but to be expected. Such outcries suggest a hierarchy of inequality and that the norm is for white children to be outperforming ethnic minority children, and middle-class children to outperform diverse working-class children.

Secondly, the reality that many working-class Black, brown, Roma and Traveller children and girls face both at school and as they enter the labour market – with trends often reversing in terms of higher education, income and wealth distribution. Worse still, it is not even true that white working-class groups are the most disadvantaged, rather, it is Gypsy, Roma and Traveller groups who have the worst outcomes at all stages of their educational experiences[21] (including FSM and non-FSM, both boys and girls). It speaks volumes about the superficiality of concern about education inequality when this fact did not make it into the mainstream debate.

Thirdly, children on free school meals in every ethnic group do less well than their wealthier counterparts. In reality, there is a negligible difference in attainment between white FSM children and Black Caribbean or dual-heritage (so-called "mixed-race") students, with one white parent and one of Black Caribbean heritage.[22] Moreover, as Gilborn points out, politicians and commentators alike conflate the entire 'working class' (approximately 60% of people identify as working class) with those on FSM which is the poorest 15% of children.[23] Simply by replacing "FSM" with "working class", the MPs' report exaggerates the size of the issue by a factor of four. Not only that, it makes 60% of adults feel that their children are being held back unfairly.[24] This begs the question, what is the motivation behind such headlines?

These types of stories which counterpose the 'white working class' against ethnic minority children on FSM (who are not referred to as working class), is part of the strategy to demonise anti-racism as the cause of the struggles facing the white section of the working class and to keep the same people angry at the wrong target. The attention is focused on the unfair advantage ethnic minority and migrant children (and girls) have supposedly been given. This distracts us from the much more significant class gap, especially between working-class and privately educated children, what causes such class inequalities to exist and the systematic racism that working class pupils of colour face throughout the state education system. When ethnic minority working class children and immigrants are not being blamed, the Opposition point the finger at white working class people's supposed 'cultural' deficit, the family dynamics (single mother families), lack of aspiration and lousy parenting choices.****

In reality, the causes of education inequality are the government's decision to underfund public services. In particular our schools, youth centres, FHE, retention and training of teaching staff, the curriculum, the poverty of parents caused by employers paying such a low pay they can't make ends meet and more. A story that tries to lay the blame of class inequality at the feet of the Equalities Act conceals the fact that the Cameron government chose not to legislate Section 1 of the Equalities Act and thus decided against making socioeconomic disadvantage the tenth protected characteristic (Siddique, 2021).

**** See examples: "Berating universities is all very well, but if we are to do right by white working class kids, we must find a way to address the elephant in the room: family breakdown and disintegration of the community in white, working class areas." "For some kids, quite honestly from my experience, sometimes the most negative influence educationally on the kids is the parents themselves." "But what irks me is how family breakdown and disintegration of community are forgotten when it comes to discussing the underwhelming educational outcomes for white working-class children."

5   Set up a "good" immigrant vs "bad" immigrant dichotomy

During and after the EU referendum, the government has portrayed itself as "taking back control." A 'good' immigrant speaks English, is educated, has something to offer, and adheres to British values. The applicant must have a job offer that earns over a certain threshold. The state has specified that there will be "no immigration route and no exemptions for low-paid, lower-skilled workers" – 'lower skilled' is a euphemism for the working class, as skill level is often determined by pay. As such, the occupation of many working-class immigrants is not valuable or desirable for Britain; thus, they are assigned to the 'bad' or 'undesirable' migrant category. Working-class migrants are portrayed as competing for white British working-class jobs and resources. Besides, those who might require social housing or Universal Credit are frequently referred to as a burden or freeloading on the British taxpayer and a drain on public services. The new points-based system codifies the 'good vs bad immigrant' dichotomy in law.

Muslims, and by extension, anyone who 'looks' Muslim, are demonised, often portrayed as a dangerous threat to the safety of white society, as they are continuously portrayed as extremist and inherently opposed to white British Western values, whatever these values may be. Muslims are also depicted as 'bad' or 'unwanted' immigrants (even those who are British) due to the mainstreaming of islamophobia. Another scapegoat is those who are termed 'illegal' immigrants, who supposedly "cheat the rules" and "threaten the social order." Priti Patel, Home Secretary, frequently refers to "illegal immigrants" and "criminals, rapists and murderers" in the same breath.[25] The underlying racial component is evident because those accused of breaking the rules are, for the most part, Black and brown people. Demonising racialised groups of people may encourage some to consider certain skin colours and accents, as indicators of being an outsider - i.e. not British - and therefore, a threat.

By focusing on a "broken immigration system"[26] that lets in 'bad immigrants,' the state is able to sidestep accusations of racism and xenophobia. After all, the British government actively wants talented people (or "good immigrants") to come to Britain. Yet, this rhetoric disguises a clear preference based on class and race lines, hiding all these well-documented ways in which racism and islamophobia are perpetuated in the immigration system, suggesting that the rules of our immigration system do not apply to everyone equally. One only has to look at the extreme difference between the government's policy towards those seeking asylum who are racialised as white compared to those racialised as Black and brown. While the UK government welcomes Ukrainian refugees to the UK[27] and invited them into people's homes, the PM announces its new plan to deport Black and brown refugees 4,000 miles to detention camps in Rwanda. From 'good character tests' to the hostile environment policy to visa algorithms, people of colour (and not white Americans, New Zealanders, Australians, etc.) are disproportionately negatively impacted.

6   Manufacture a common enemy to create moral panic

The Opposition frequently suggests Britain is at war with an internal threat, which encourages the public to view society through an "us vs them" frame. In its simplest form, war is between two sides: the good side, the 'in-group', and the enemy side, the 'outgroup'. The rhetoric of war allows the Opposition to create a moral panic, which is where political actors (i.e., politicians, media outlets or commentators you might see on TV) define something or someone as a threat to the interests and values of society.[28] This often taps into existing public prejudices and stereotypes and demonises differences.[29] Political actors blame 'them' – the enemy – and position themselves as the defenders of 'us' (the status quo). Such a strategy benefits the news outlets that already engage in racist coverage, and attracts the attention of the entire UK media which is inevitably drawn to

sensational and dramatic stories.They also benefit people in power, who can use a moral panic to have a target to blame for when things go wrong, to distract the public, and to control the public focus of attention. Crucially, the moral manic strategy reinforces the authority of certain politician's as they often portray themselves as the only providers of the solution to the manufactured problem.

Woke brigade as the internal enemy

Our Opponent often refers to the enemy as the "woke brigade", "the Britain-hating…Left-wing troublemakers [who] are determined to ignore our history and smear our heroes",[30] and the "traffickers, the do-gooders, the leftie lawyers, the Labour party" who "defend the indefensible"[31] and want to allow "illegal immigrants, rapists and murderers" into the UK (i.e. supporters of the 'bad immigrant' group). In general, the outgroup is painted as an internal threat, anti-patriotic and anti-Britain, which wants to cause harm to the (white British) people, culture and history. However, the charge of being "woke" is not limited to the radical left: the BBC, teachers and the National Trust have all been given this label. As the report, Media that Moves: Creating anti-racist representations of Gypsies and Travellers in the UK media shows, there are many identity groups, especially Gypsies and Travellers who have and continue to be the target of a moral panic strategy; we have seen this happen to many groups and characteristics defined as the 'other' and not included in the 'us.' This has included people of Muslim and Jewish faith, LGBTQ+ people, particularly transgender and non-binary people, trade unionists, environmentalists and many more – essentially anyone who has challenged (directly and indirectly) the status quo of the moment. For example, Margaret Thatcher referred to the mass picket of workers trying to save their livelihoods at the Orgreave coke plant as "the work of violent extremists, it is the enemy within."[32]

The left's betrayal of the white working class

In addition to portraying the "woke" left as the agitator which is set on dividing people and "doing Britain down", the Opposition portrays the left as having abandoned the working class. The left, which was once the 'home' of the (white) working class, is portrayed as having betrayed them in favour of more fashionable middle class woke causes. For example, writer and commentator, Dr Rakib Ehsan said on TalkRadio:

> "the contemporary British left, don't want to talk about class… far more comfortable talking about gender recognition, racial identities, sexual orientation and unfortunately social class is being left by the wayside."[33]

The grouping and demonising narratives of 'bad immigrants', 'Black Lives Matter protesters', and 'the woke' means all racialised people are seen as potential enemies. A person's skin colour or accent becomes an indicator of the 'outgroup' and the apparent threat they pose to Britain. By keeping the boundaries of the outgroup vague, the speaker and listener have the flexibility to decide who is cast as the enemy at a particular moment. Such potent 'us vs them' divides are dangerous and can lead to abuses of whole demographics who have been labelled as a threat.

7 Use indirect language to talk about people of colour and migrants as the 'outgroup' to avoid accusations of racism and xenophobia

Rather than directly label people of colour directly as the enemy, the Opposition uses negative language toward clearly race-focused groups like Black Lives Matter activists, those critiquing Britain's colonial

and imperial past, and refugees crossing the channel. Even the use of "woke" to negatively describe the outgroup is racially charged. "Woke" originated from 1950s America to refer to those who become sensitised to issues of racial injustice. Moreover, as already noted, 'illegal' immigrants and refugees are often cast as a threat, lumped together with "rapists, murderers and criminals", while those who defend them are traitors. The use of indirect language to talk about race can strategically avoid accusations of racism.

8 Control the parameters of the British identity – who is British and who is not

The parameters of the British identity are adapted to suit the political moment. Sometimes the marker of 'Britishness' is an appeal to a whitewashed and Eurocentric version of history – manifested in statues, buildings, and place names; a set of values; an ethnic and national identity (i.e. the white British/English working-class); and more, depending on the moment. From our analysis, the pillars of national identity include loyalty and pride in the state (and the police) and Britain's imperial and colonial past. The 'good side' according to the Opposition is more broadly characterised by a vague set of ideas of 'Britishness'. Consider the following:

> "... Britain-hating nonsense about our history and our culture filling the airwaves in recent months... Left-wing troublemakers are detemined to ignore our history and smear our past heroes... Her Majesty's Government is clear about our history and our culture: the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is a fantastic nation with a first-class history...we should never bow to the activists who want to scrub our history bare .."[34]

Such statements imply a tension between being both British and, for example, vocally critical of the police or elements of Britain's history. The British identity –in terms of its history and culture – does not belong to everyone, and certainly not to those labelled as the outgroup.

9 Be the hero of your own imaginary war

The Opposition portrays itself as the 'hero' of the story. The heroes are those "who stand up to the woke mob",[35] defend Britain and champion the underdog – the white working class. The current government has portrayed itself as embattled and defiant, willing to protect the nation. For example, the then Culture Secretary, Oliver Dowden MP, said, "We must defend our culture and history from the noisy minority of activists constantly trying to put Britain down",[36] Jacob Rees-Mogg declared that "the charge of the woke brigade will be thwarted in the end",[37] and Home Secretary, Priti Patel said, "This Conservative Government will continue to stand up for the hardworking, law-abiding majority who play by the rules. And take action against the minority who do not."[38]

10 Create a moral panic where only one side can win

Like in war, only one side can be the right side. The real power behind the 'us vs them' divide is that it encourages the audience to pick a side and camouflages any complexity or nuance between the positions. The Other represents a threat which, unless stopped, will "scrub out history bare",[39] "invade the country", "break the rules", let in "criminals, rapists and murderers", and "desecrate Britain's heroes."[40] The story presents a moral dilemma and evokes a sense of crisis, creating a moral panic amongst certain (white) British people over a perceived 'loss' of their culture (however vaguely defined) and history. Such a battle requires the in-group to consolidate and protect its identity as a defensive gesture and provides the grounds for justifying policy changes and political action. Policies that people might otherwise find offensive or extreme in 'normal' times become more acceptable to the public when framed as a war.

There isn't another competing shared narrative

Although there are many progressives challenging the Opposition's race and class story, we were unable to pinpoint an alternative singular narrative, shared widely across the movement in a similar way to the Opposition's. This next section offers a critique of how some progressives have tried to weigh in on race and class in Britain. Part of the success of the Opposition's story is down to their resources to repeat their story and control the narrative. However, it is also down to the way we progressives have approached talking – or not talking – about race and class. Here are three different approaches we identified:

1 **We legitimise damaging frames,** for instance in echoing the sentiment that Britain is divided or in a war of values.

2 **We negate damaging frames,** for instance in repeating terms like 'white working class' or how our opponents 'manufacture a culture war' and 'fuel divisions' in order to argue against the way it is being weaponised. By doing so we simply give their story more airtime and we waste a precious opportunity to present our own story.

3 **We avoid talking about race and class** – sometimes being too vague in our language, sometimes talking about them in isolation as if they are separate, exclusive issues, or just staying silent. Such a tactic doesn't work. Instead, we have simply left a vacuum to be filled by the Opposition's story, which has truly dominated the political narrative.

Where progressives are going wrong

Please all and you'll please none

Many communicators firmly believe that we need to persuade and bring everyone along our journey; that challenging our opponents or any part of the public will undermine our cause or result in electoral defeat. We found that we often make bland, indirect statements that do not alienate our audience but also don't inspire anyone either. Tepid words that skirt around the issue without communicating a clear vision will not persuade anyone. We cannot want to bring the Opposition with us, their values are relatively fixed and fundamentally opposed to ours.

Stop repeating their story

We talk too much about war – especially the idea of our opponents "engineering a culture war." The term culture war is ambiguous and confusing at the best of times. By doing so we are further entrenching the idea that we are divided, that there is a war between 'cultures' and that we ought to think of each other as enemies in battle. How can we expect people to feel optimistic about joining together in our local communities and working towards progressive change when the only message being put out there is that we are hopelessly divided?

We aren't communicating a straightforward and complete story

Unlike the Opposition, we do not communicate a straightforward and complete story about the world, how it works, who the characters are, and where we're trying to go. We've generally missed narrating some or all of these elements.

We need to bring the focus back to people

Our opponents are much better at using agentive language than we are. When they make statements about how the world is and the problems we

encounter, they never miss a chance to blame who is responsible, i.e., the woke brigade, left-wing troublemakers, and Black Lives Matter. Instead, we generally use passive language as though things just happen without rhyme or reason. Too often, we focus on articulating the problems we are facing and we forget to emphasise that people (collectively) both create the system we live in and can take deliberate action to change it.[41] By doing so we are simultaneously making it unclear who is responsible and who can affect real change.

We need a shared vision for people to buy into

The Opposition is very clear about the kind of world they want to build. It will be a fair world, where no one gets special favours because of political correctness, where we are liberated from the woke mob, and we can feel proud to be British and unashamed of being white. On the other hand, we often fail to communicate a joined-up vision. Too often our communications focus on what we are against, or the horrors and harms people face. While such a strategy can elicit strong reactions, it doesn't sustain motivation over time, and some people with enough problems in their day-to-day life are likely to switch off when they hear about another. We also try to make sound logical arguments about rights and policies and inequality, which doesn't grab people in the same way that visceral emotions can. Instead, we need to paint a desirable and tangible portrait of the world we seek – an alternative to get excited about.

We do not appeal to people's values

While the Opposition appeals to people's sense of fairness, fear of disorder, and pride, we only make scattered attempts to appeal to people's values, their better selves[42] to draw on the common ground between us and our audience. As we will see in the following chapter, we know that working-class people – across race, gender, age, and region – share common values, as well as experiences, desires and worries. Instead of appealing to compassion and mutual respect, we often reinforce the picture of a

hopelessly divided society by continuously talking about division. By not appealing to common sentiments, we create space for the Opposition to position themselves as the sensible and mainstream voices of the public. Meanwhile, we are being painted as out of touch, which reinforces the way the Opposition portrays us; as alien and threatening.

We often shy away from talking about class

Some progressives feel reluctant to talk directly about class in case it is divisive and does not include working-class migrants, people of colour and those not in work. Others are concerned that it will be a turn-off for the public who will associate it with an undesirable or 'old fashioned hard left' of the 1970s. Some avoid talking about class – the working class but also the elite class- for fear of being accused of 'class war' against the wealthy and powerful. Crucially, given the lack of working-class people in politics, some may be worried to speak legitimately about working-class issues if they themselves are not from a working-class background. Moreover, when we do talk about class it is often talked separately (both intentionally and unintentionally) from conversations about race, when in reality, an analysis of one is not complete without the other. An example of unintentional counterposing of race and class is the following: "the cost of living crisis is a serious problem for working-class people, and it particularly affects people of colour." The "dependent clause" structure makes it appear that people of colour are separate from working-class people, it is also alienating to people of colour in our audience because it makes race sound like an afterthought (which it sometimes is). It has also been shown to confuse some white members of the audience who view it as a non sequitur. And without explaining why certain things are harder for people of colour, some of our audience will tend to fill in the gap using their own explanations – which they often find by reaching for racist stereotypes.

We tiptoe around race and racism

Many often avoid conversations about race and racism for fear of entering into 'culture war' territory; namely, of being seen as antagonising the opposition. But that doesn't make the conversation disappear or become less toxic. By not talking about race in Britain, especially in the context of class (and vice versa), we are contributing to the centuries-long exclusion of working class people of colour from public discourse, which overlooks the struggles that many millions of Black, brown and migrant people face. We can't talk about class without talking about race because many millions of working-class people are ethnic minorities in Britain. Indeed, the very histories and realities of class and race as both a social construct and political system of power are intertwined. Moreover, we give the Opposition space to deliberately divide working-class people and the interests and lives of white people against people of colour and migrants. Instead of talking about race explicitly, we often use vague language around 'inclusion' and 'diversity.' Without naming race, we aren't making it clear who exactly we are talking about. On the other hand, when we do talk about race, we often talk about it separately from class. This might be in part because we don't know how to talk about both in the same breath – to talk about class intersectionality both clearly and concisely is hard.

What does the public make of these current stories

We used our language analysis to construct two messages to test with the public. One captures the dominant narrative of our opponents. The second message represents the 'greatest hits' of how progressives have approached the conversation – which we have named the standard progressive message. It is important to note that we deliberately chose a standard message that depicts the mainstream approach that is most likely to be familiar to the general public. We tested these messages in a national survey to see how our target audiences receive them.

What we did

We measured people's instant reactions to the statement using dial testing, a method that involves participants listening to a short message and using a dial to indicate whether they agree or disagree with what they are hearing. The end result is a graph showing participants' second-by-second instinctive responses to what they have heard. Our audience is split into four groups, the Base, Persuadables and Opposition, and Advocates. We asked 30 Advocates to complete the message testing- people who work to advocate for progressive change and social justice, like academics, activists, charities and some political figures. The reason for this is to see whether the messaging appeals to Advocates those we hope would use it. It is important to note that one voice was used to read out all 5 messages. Due to resource constraints, we were unable to test different messengers as this would have required a larger survey and corresponding sample size. The voice we used is that of a white British middle-class southern English sounding man. We opted for what might be perceived by respondents as a 'neutral' voice i.e., the typical voice you might hear from a politician or TV news presenter, who are disproportionately white British middle-class men. Classifying a white British middle-class man's voice as neutral is in itself problematic and speaks to the issues raised by this project, but unfortunately, we believe it was the best way of ensuring that our sample were responding to the content of the messages, rather than the messenger.

After completing the dial test, we asked the participants to recall each message in their own words – allowing us to gauge how well it was understood and remembered. We asked them to highlight the words and phrases they liked and disliked with a highlighter tool. We then asked how believable they found the message and the likelihood that they would support and share it on a scale of 1 to 10. On the following page are the two statements.

The Opposition Message

The Britain has a proud history of helping women, minorities and legal immigrants to get ahead, but today it's the white working class that are left behind. We see it in towns that have been allowed to decline. We see it in schools, where white-working class boys have fallen behind the rest. The 'woke brigade' – obsessed with identity politics – try to shout down ordinary people and label us racist. They have gone too far, literally tearing down statues, trying to rewrite our history, and prioritising anyone who 'ticks the boxes'. As they talk down our country, we need to get on with the job of levelling up and unlocking potential. Britain succeeds when no one is left behind.

The Standard Progressive Message

In Britain diversity and inclusion is at the heart of our communities. It is unacceptable that if you're born into a deprived background, you'll have worse life chances. Or that structural inequalities means you'll face discrimination at every stage of your life. Whilst some people are trying to stoke divisions, they have now realised they are on the wrong side. Far from giving racism the red card, this government has given it the green light. We must keep our focus on the real issues: rebuilding our shattered economy, fixing deep-rooted insecurity and inequality, and tackling crime. We can't let ourselves get distracted by this so-called 'culture war'.

Summary of how the current messages perform with the public

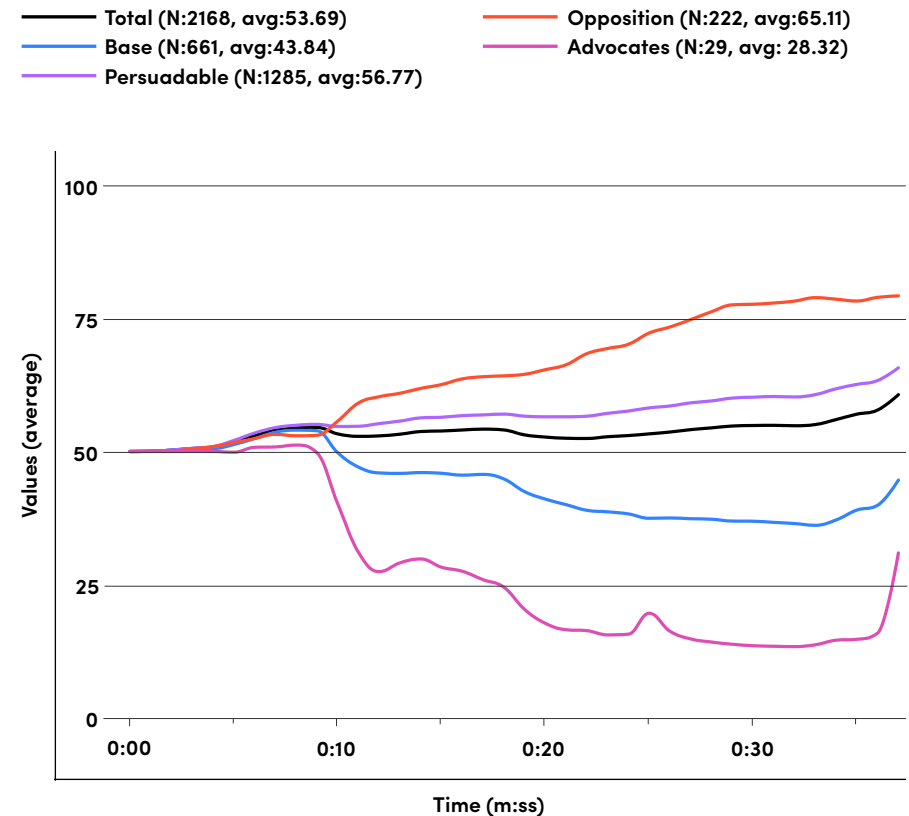| The Opposition Message	The Standard Progressive Message
✔ It is really well understood: – people identify the woke brigade as the villain – the white working class/ and the British people are identified as the harmed group – the problem in society is "reverse racism" towards white people and PC/wokeism gone too far – Many were able to fill in the gaps with extra details, showing the message fits in with their world view	✘ It is poorly understood, 1 in 3 could not grasp the message at all in the recall: – the agents of the story are not clear – the term 'culture war' is what stood out most and participants often misinterpreted it as a criticism of "wokeism"
✔ People know this is a message about race – it generates many race-related responses in the recall	✘ People were confused by what the message was conveying
✔ Their message is effective: it fires up their Opposition, sustaining and increasing throughout the message AND it marginalises the Base	✘ This message appeals to Advocates a lot, but it appeals to the Base a lot less strongly. Overall, the message doesn't marginalise the Opposition
✔ 61% of the Opposition find the message highly believable, and so do 42% of the Persuadables	✘ 46% of the Base find the message highly believable, and 37% of the Persuadables
✔ 63% of the Opposition highly support the message, and so do 39% of the Persuadables	✘ 45% of the Base highly support the message, and so do 35% of the Persuadables
✔ 45% of the Opposition are highly likely to share the message, and so would 31% of the Persuadables	✘ 38% of the Base are highly likely to share the message, and so would just 29% of the Persuadables

What we are currently saying is not working. There are 3 principal conclusions to draw from this.

1. Advocates are out of touch with the Base. The Advocates find the status quo message much more convincing than the Base.

2. Our current approach is not appealing to our own Base nearly as effectively as the Opposition are appealing to theirs. While Advocates might be motivated to spread this message, they are the only ones – a significant portion of our Base aren't even able to remember the message to be able to pass it on.

3. The Opposition message is more effective for the Persuadables according to every metric.

4. The Opposition message actively divides working-class people by ethnicity – appealing to white people and alienating people of colour.

## The Opposition Message Dial Test Result

As you can see to your right, the Opposition message is very effective. It fires up the Opposition; it is persuasive to the Persuadables and alienates the Base. The race content of the message, in particular, fires up the Opposition, with phrases like "label us racist" and "the white working class are left behind" receiving the most hits. The Opposition plateaus towards the end, suggesting that it is less motivated by levelling up and unlocking potential. Moreover, many Opposition participants added their own details to the story when later asked to summarise the message. For example, we saw mentions of Black Lives Matter, heterosexual male disadvantage, unfair preferential treatment of ethnic minorities, cancel culture and political correctness; and mentions of the British identity – none of which are mentioned in the actual message. This suggests that the message is relatable and speaks to their broader worldview. It is perhaps also a sign of how successfully the Opposition has been able to dominate the debate.

The message also works well for the Persuadables. In general, there are no major troughs, meaning nothing about the message turns off the Persuadables. The Base is alienated, dipping significantly below neutral at the mention of the white working class. It is alienated further at the mention of the woke brigade. Such a pattern is even more pronounced for Advocates. However, the message ends on an up-tick – even from the Base and Advocates. Everyone liked the phrase: "Britain succeeds when no one is left behind." In the recall, we found that many Persuadable and Opposition participants interpreted this divisive and covertly racist message as one of equality and colourblindness.

Total (N:2168, avg:53.69)
Base (N:661, avg:43.84)
Persuadable (N:1285, avg:56.77)
Opposition (N:222, avg:65.11)
Advocates (N:29, avg: 28.32)

The Opposition message actively divides the working class

The Opposition message significantly divides Persuadable working-class people by their ethnicity. As you can see from the dial below there are vastly different reactions between Persuadable white working class and Persuadable POC working class, with the latter actively alienated by the message. Persuadable Black (Black British/African/Caribbean) working class participants are more turned off by this message. Almost half (48%) of white working class people strongly believe the message compared to 31% of POC, and 43% of white people would support this message compared to 28% of POC. The phrase "white working class that are left behind", "shout down ordinary people and label us racist" received a lot of hits by white working class persuadables. Whereas "white working class that are left behind" and "white working class boys have fallen behind the rest" received the most negative hits from POC working class respondents.

Persuadable POC working class (N:87, avg:50.43)

Persuadable white working class (N:378, avg:60.03)
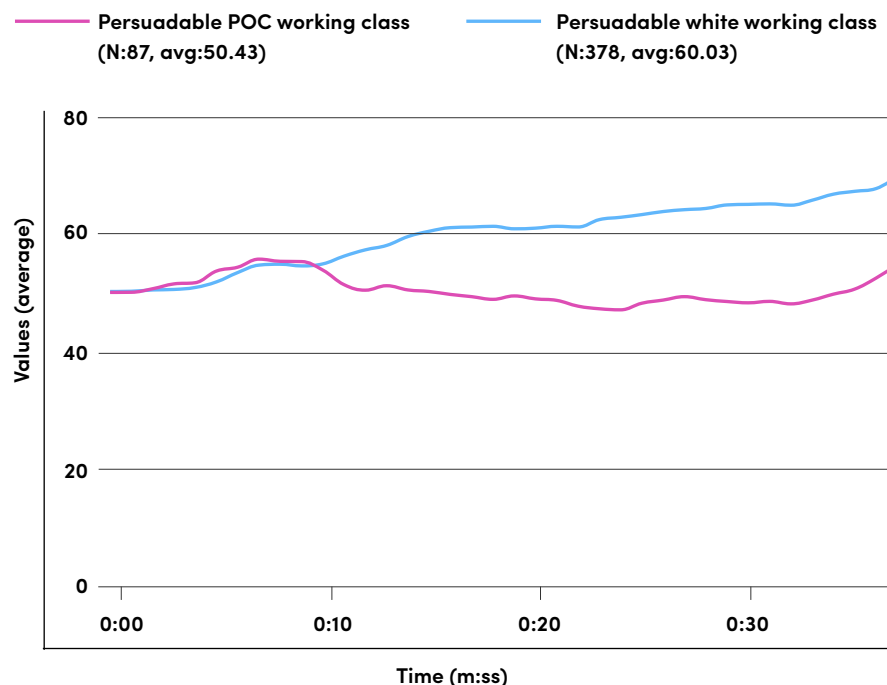
In general, we found that the message is more effective for white, male, older and those who had previously voted Conservative. In general, the older the age group, the more they like parts of the message – the "white working-class left behind" and the "woke brigade" getting more hits. Meanwhile, the white middle class are twice as likely to believe and support the message as their POC counterparts. This may, in part, be because Middle-Class POC dislikes the message more strongly than working class POC.

## Who is particularly fired up by this type of message?

White Opposition respondents like the message on all metrics more than other ethnic groups. The phrase "white working class are left behind" is particularly divisive: white people like the references, while Black and Asian respondents do not. Also, the message is preferred slightly by the white middle-class Opposition than the white working class. As such, it runs against the claim that racism, a sense of perceived loss of status and culture, is located solely in white working-class communities. In addition, Opposition men respondents more strongly like the message than women. For example, 70% of Opposition men strongly support the statement compared to 54% of Opposition women. This suggests that the race-baiting aspects of the message particularly fire-up white middle class and men in the Opposition group.

The Status Quo Message Dial Test Result

The Advocates like this message. However, as you can see on the following page, we do not see a steady upwards trajectory for the Base. Persuadables are not enthused by what they hear. Nor does the message sufficiently alienate the Opposition. We are not saying anything strongly enough to alienate the Opposition, and on the flip side, we are not firing up the Base. We know from the survey that the Opposition overwhelmingly blames working-class people for their struggle and thinks people of colour who face problems lack initiative and effort. Yet, there is no dipping below neutral

when it hears the statement, "it is unacceptable that if you are born into a deprived background… structural inequalities means you'll face discrimination." This suggests that vague language that does not explicitly talk about race and class does not cut through and convey what we want to be saying; otherwise, we would see the Opposition dial down more significantly. It is telling that the only point the Opposition dial below neutral is when the Government is explicitly accused of racism.

Legend:
- Total (N:2168, avg:62.21)
- Base (N:661, avg:67.66)
- Persuadable (N:1285, avg:61.15)
- Opposition (N:222, avg:52.11)
- Advocates (N:29, avg: 72.12)

Y-axis: Values (average)
X-axis: Time (m:ss)
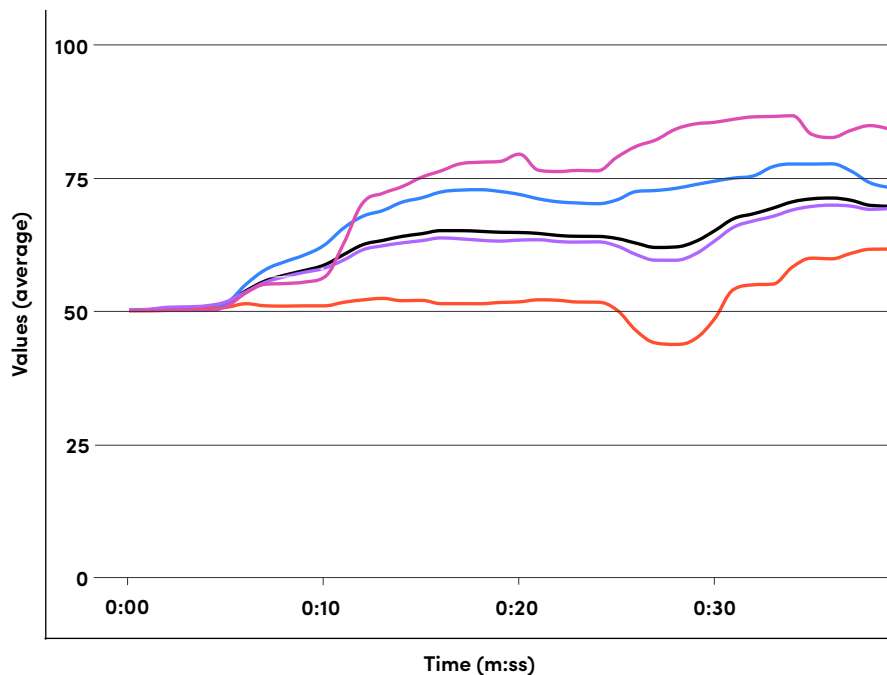
Message can be perceived as deeming racism a distraction

From calling the government out for condoning racism, the Opposition quickly bounced back at the statement: "We must keep our focus on the real issues: rebuilding our shattered economy, fixing deep-rooted insecurity and inequality, and tackling crime. We can't let ourselves get distracted by this so-called 'culture war'". The discursive shift from talking about racism to "we must keep our focus on the real issues" and then going on to talk about the economy and crime conveys to some audiences that racism and the economy are entirely separate and may signify that racism is not a real issue but a distracting side-issue. The message also insinuates that we cannot deal with racism and economic injustices simultaneously, let alone convey the reality that we cannot deal with one without addressing the other.

The message is confusing and hard to remember

When we looked at the recall, we noticed that this message is confusing, hard to remember, and vulnerable to the wrong interpretation. 1 in 3 of the participants answered "not sure" or "I don't know" or clearly misunderstood the message in the recall. For many, the key takeaway was "to avoid the culture war," that "we need to focus on rebuilding the country and not getting distracted by other issues." For too many, this is a message which conveys that talking and focusing on race creates problems and divides society. Some people interpret the message to chime with the Opposition message. One Opposition respondent said: "We need to focus on the country rather than constantly try and put rules and regulations to stop racism. You cannot tell someone not to hate you. You need to educate. Dividing the country by focusing on diversity puts them against us no matter what side you are on."

Conclusion

We have seen in this chapter that class is talked about divisively by scapegoating people of colour, migrants and racial and gender justice advocates for the plight of the white working class. The divide-and-rule strategy is to turn people against each other and racialise the working class as exclusively white, framed as the victims of racial (and gender) equality. This message is powerful. It's well understood, emotive and persuasive, especially to Persuadable white, male and older audiences. In addition, the way we are currently talking about race and class isn't working. From the message we tested of our own typical communications, we are losing. Our message is much less persuasive for the Persuadables than our opponents' message, nor does it sufficiently fire up our own Base. As we have seen through the dial testing, Advocates are out of touch with what inspires and mobilises our own Base. There are many journalists, politicians and campaigners who could be neutralising this divisive narrative, but instead, we often see them legitimise and lean into harmful frames or avoid talking about race and class full stop, leaving a vacuum for our opponents' to fill.

We need a new story

We need to redefine the political narrative on race and class in Britain today. We need a way of speaking that unifies and builds solidarity amongst the diverse working class. One that reflects the shared interests, experiences, values and desires that we have in common and ties together various challenges. We need to talk in a way that makes sense of the world around us, naming the problems and solutions using agentive language. We must communicate in a way that encourages people to come together to create a positive vision of the society most of us want. We need to get on the front foot and simultaneously inoculate people from falling for our opponent's use of racism, classism and xenophobia to divide people. For our words to work, they need to spread. We must use every opportunity we have with an audience to inspire the Base and reach Persuadable minds.
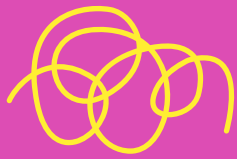
Class is not understood well, and not thought of in relation to inequality or power

Class is understood like a ladder that you can climb, one which you can potentially climb

Class is understood as a system of ranking, in which the system is rigged and people get stuck

Race, gender and nationality are perceived as presenting additional obstacles to climbing the class ladder
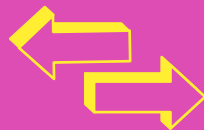
Work and one's relation to work is the cornerstone of how working-class people define the working class.

**Being working class is about working hard – a source of pride and division**

Working-class identity can be potentially divisive: working-class vs the "lower class"

CHAPTER 3
Our narrative must come from the diverse working class

Given that we want to create a narrative and way of speaking that changes the temperature on our issues and reflects the shared interests, experiences, values and desires that the diverse working class have in common, our starting point was listening to working class people of different ethnicities, genders, ages, education, income, and voting histories across the UK.

We conducted a series of interviews, focus groups and a national survey to explore their perception of what class is and what it means to be working class; how race and gender intersect and affect class; their values, beliefs and personal identity; the kind of society they want to live in; and most importantly the experiences of working-class life today. From these insights emerged the puzzle pieces to construct an authentic new story about race and class in Britain. This chapter presents a summary of some of the findings that were integral to the new race class narrative. For the full findings and discussion, see the CLASS on Class report.

18 interviews

3 focus groups of 10

1 National Survey

Who we spoke to

We spoke to 18 working-class people in 4 locations across England and Wales, and then returned to these locations to conduct 3 l focus groups with 10-11 people in each. Given the breadth of identities of working class people in the UK and our relatively modest research reach, we do not intend to represent this full range of people in our research. We cannot draw firm conclusions about how the diverse working class think, or characterise any particular groups within that (such as, say, working class women of Bangladeshi origin). What we can do is get a sense of the shared and diverse perceptions and experiences of people across many working class backgrounds. And our primary intention was to work with these people to shape the direction and content of our messaging ideas. As you read through this chapter, keep in mind that all of the findings come from specific questioning and prompts from facilitators (unless otherwise explicitly stated).

How do working class people understand class?
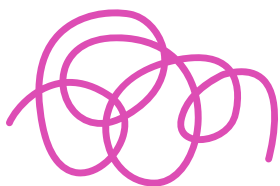
Class is not understood well, and not thought of in relation to inequality or power

Many participants found the concept confusing and contradictory – definitions often changing throughout the interviews. In our survey, just a third of people said they knew exactly what the term 'working class' means. For many of our interviewees (but not all), class is not necessarily something they see as relevant to their identity or day-to-day lives. Neither was class readily discussed in the political sense of inequality, power and social injustice.

Class is understood like a ladder that you can climb

Many understood social class as a ladder, which you can potentially climb, implying a belief in meritocracy and mobility. On some level, most participants believed that working-class people can reach 'success' through hard work, drive, and ambition and even rise through the ranks of the class ladder. However there was a consensus that although social mobility is possible for working class people, it is "rare" and "the route is much longer and more difficult" [34, man, British Bangladeshi, business development manager].[43]

Class is understood as a system of ranking, in which the system is rigged

On the other hand, participants also talked of class "a system of ranking people" which can be defined by your class, race, gender, origin etc. There was a strong sense of being stuck and that the system is rigged in favour of the upper classes who inherit wealth and positions "which keeps the money flowing in like a tap" [38, man, Indian, project manager] and "they are handed opportunities which propel them to a better position" [24, woman, Indian, graduate scheme]. Our survey found that 70% of working-class people believe that wealthy people are wealthy because they are given more opportunities and not because they worked harder or are more talented. Meanwhile, 68% believe that working-class struggles are due to the system being rigged against them rather than a lack of effort or initiative.

Racism was seen mostly in terms of discrimination and barriers to success

Most (but not all) of our participants, across different races, were to some degree implicitly aware of the structural disadvantage of racism – that your race and nationality can negatively impact your social class status. We heard many examples of how participants of colour experienced discrimination both in the labour market and education system – discriminating against names on CVs, managers only hiring white people, being passed up for promotion or paid less compared to white colleagues. Such testimonies converge with perceptions of 55% of working class people agree that people of colour (including Black, Asian and minority ethnic people) face greater barriers to economic success than white people, rising to 75% for Black and Asian working class people (including Black African, Black Caribbean, Black British and Asian people).
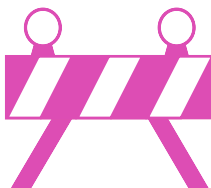
Working class is defined by work

Work and one's relation to work is the cornerstone of how working-class people define the working class. There were two recurring themes in what defines the working class, whatever their race, gender or nationality: one in which 'working class' is taken literally at face value to mean being in work and secondly, that you need to "work hard to just get by in life" [48, man, White British] as "nothing is handed to you" [36, man, White British, full-time telecoms engineer]. Although the mainstream narrative tries to associate class with vague symbols such as whiteness, going to the pub or watching certain TV programmes, we found that our interview participants associated being working class almost exclusively with reference to working, material possessions and income.

Being working class is about working hard

A recurring theme across our study was the value of hard work as integral to working-class identities. This is a source of pride for many, and they see themselves as a vital part of the community. "Working-class people put effort and pride to improve and serve their communities" [38, man, Indian, project manager] and that the working class "help to keep the country running and help their local community" [43, man, Indian and taxi driver]. One participant noted that working class people tend to be in public sector jobs, actually serving their community and another noted how "it's not the rich people you see down at the local food bank helping out" [46, man, White British, finance assistant].

Working class identity can be potentially divisive: working class vs the "lower class"

When it came to those doing unpaid care work, there was confusion and disagreement amongst our participants over whether they were working class as they are not 'technically' in formal paid employment. Many saw the non-working part of the working class as "lower class" and a few felt the need to distinguish themselves from those 'lower down' as they are in work – we heard such statements even from those who had experienced periods of unemployment, revealing a level of shame that persists in receiving benefits. The 'lower class' label also stigmatises a very small group of people, which some interviewees appeared to project onto any group perceived to be able to work but have chosen not to. There was a dynamic of race and nationality as a few interviewees made frequent references to recent immigrants, particularly Eastern European communities. We also heard that 'lower class' people are more racist and xenophobic due to jealousy of "people coming here and getting a house or benefit" [25, woman, white British, works in sales admin].

The "lower class" is the term our participants used, but over the years public discourse has developed a number of phrases to refer to those at the bottom of social hierarchies: sink-estates, chavs, the poor and needy and the underclass. Such language is often dismissive and contemptuous, and based on assumptions of deserved disadvantage. While the working class can be associated with 'honest toil', such talk is also a shield against a more frequent and more damaging comparison: to the undeserving poor. The people at the bottom of social hierarchies must always contend with the potential social stigma of their position, and with the idea that they have only themselves to blame for it. Low social position carries with it connotations of inferiority, which makes it harder for people to feel respected, valued or confident, so the label of 'working class' is never a neutral one. Advocates of the 'working class' often dwell on their decent and hard-working nature, in which respectability may be established in the minds of the audience by contrast to a shadow group – the disreputable, feckless and spendthrift undeserving poor.

## Our race class narrative must address the multiple divides

It is clear that although our opponents' are telling a story about racial equality and a culture war, the "striver vs skiver" and the "white working class versus migrant" narrative is well embedded in the public psyche. Evidently, our race and class narrative must do some of the leg work to expand the definition of work to go beyond formal paid employment and include unpaid care work and being part of a community. We also need to expand the definition of working class people to include the unpaid carers and the unemployed as well as those unable to work due to migratory status, disability and illness.

Working-class life today

Building on from the 2019 We Are Ghosts report, we have found that contemporary working-class life – in all its richness and diversity – can be understood within the 4Ps framework: the experience of precarity, of prejudice, and one's relationship to place and power.

It is important to note that participants did not readily list off examples of working class experiences, rather, they talked organically about their lives, worries and challenges to which we – as analysts – found four underlying themes to all their experiences.
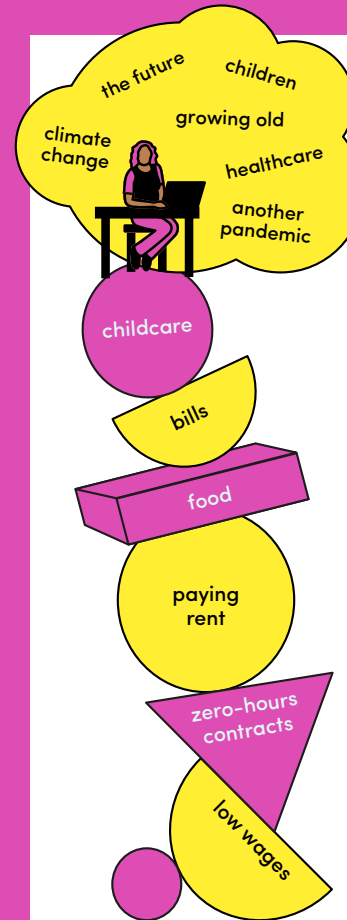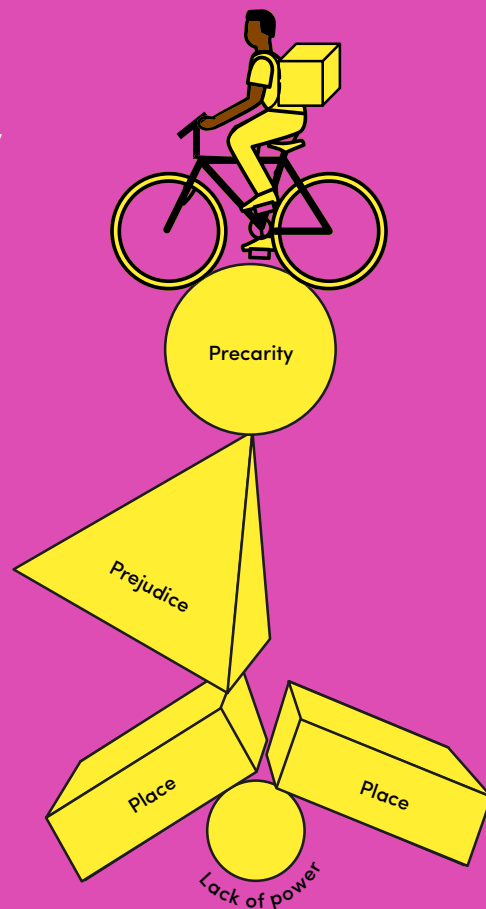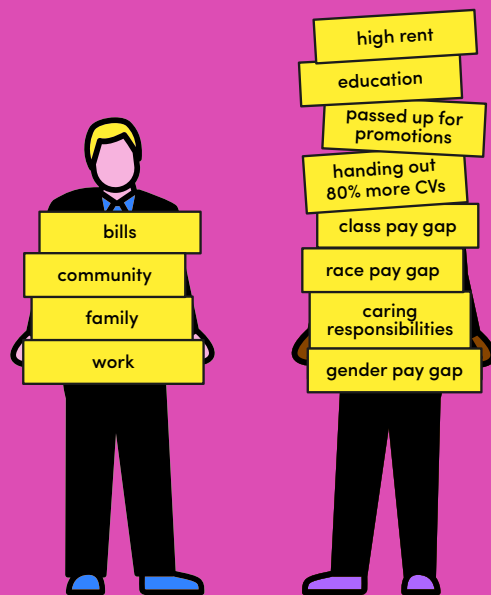
1. PRECARITY

The pillar of working class life

Grounded in the findings, we found precarity to be characterised as the lack of security and safety, both economically and physically. Most of our interviewees were employed, yet many were left struggling to make ends meet due to wages being too low and the cost of living being high and rising (food, rent, fuel, transport, care). Daily life is characterised by making money stretch. Losing employment or hours of paid work means that life quickly becomes unaffordable. We also heard how people feel unsafe; they live with anxiety of not being able to get the help they need regarding healthcare, welfare, childcare, and to stay free from physical harm (i.e., muggings, harassment, burglaries etc). A common worry for participants was their children and grandchildren, for their safety and their opportunities, given "there's nothing for them here" [50, woman, Pakistani, currently unemployed]. This sense of precarity extends beyond the present moment into what it means for the future: "I worry about the future, I want him [his child] to have a better future" [43, man, Indian, Taxi Driver].

2. PREJUDICE

Navigating social stigma

Prejudice was a common experience that affected our interviewees' lives from school to the workplace, and from the We Are Ghosts report, we know many working class people have to navigate prejudice and stigma when interacting with public services. Every single person we spoke to mentioned an experience of prejudice in some form – of others forming preconceived notions before getting to know them, most often based on class, race, gender, and nationality – although many were reluctant to share these experiences at first. This was most prevalent for POC and migrant participants who talked about being bullied and shown less respect at school, by employers and colleagues in the workplace, and by the police abusing their position, to name a few examples. Experiences of racism left some respondents feeling like they don't belong in certain parts of their community. There was also some sense of systemic and structural racism, i.e. racial profiling by the police, or managers discriminating based on someone's name/skin colour. These experiences were not just a one-off but an all too common experience for people of colour.

high rent

education

Passed up for promotions

handing out 80% more CVs

class pay gap

race pay gap

caring responsibilities

gender pay gap

bills

community

family

work

3. PLACE

Neglected and fractured communities

Across the board, working-class people felt a lack of space (i.e., community spaces) and a sense of belonging in their local communities. At the top of the list of concerns was the unaffordable rents and house prices, and the struggle with mortgage payments. Yet, the pandemic highlighted for our participants the need for free communal spaces. Interviewees spoke with urgency about the youth centres that have been shut down, and the knock-on effect this has on children and young people who "have nothing to do and nowhere to be" [50, woman, Pakistani, currently unemployed].
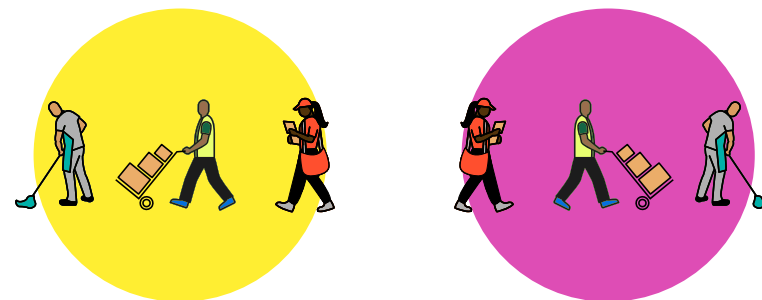
Divided communities

A wide range of divisions emerged— white working-class vs white middle class, the "lower class" vs the working class, divides of ethnicity and national origin, young vs old, Labour voters vs Conservatives, and Remainers vs Leavers, and geographical divides. The divides along race and ethnicity were in part associated with the "lower classes," perceived as areas of unemployment and recent migration, including people from the Middle East and Eastern Europe and Black communities (the latter referenced by a small number of white participants). We also heard people mention that racist attitudes divide communities rather than any differing cultural/racial beliefs: "You have some people who aren't as welcoming, sometimes even dismissive or racist due to someone's skin colour" [26, man, African, full-time customer service advisor].

Division as innate to individuals and communities

We asked interviewees where these divisions came from. In general, participants appeared to perceive divisions within their communities, rather than themselves feel divided from others. There was a sense that people "keep themselves to themselves" [20, man, Black Caribbean, Admin]. Also, they found it difficult to pinpoint the causes of divisions. Yet, the most common theme was to place the cause of division at the level of the individual and their bad behaviour, ignorance, prejudice and lack of education. There was a shared understanding that racism is learnt, "inherited through the community" and "passed down to the kids." Some white participants put the cause of division between different ethnic communities down to a lack of willingness to "integrate."

Division created by the media

Some participants also identified the role of the media in creating divisions: "the big cause for everything [division] is the media. It's how they portray people" [36, woman, White British, part-time health support worker]. One participant talked about prejudice towards Eastern Europeans, "they are not doing anything wrong themselves, it is just the perception of the people they are based on, what people read on the Internet, based on the media and stuff" [60, man, Bengali UK, part-time worker in Asda]. Some participants saw parts of the media and social media as encouraging division and prone to misinformation, creating an overall sense that it has become increasingly difficult to tell fact from fiction. A few participants identified the media's role in demonising and cultivating prejudices, particularly around migrants and benefits: " the media is crazy for that, they'll talk about immigrants flooding into the country on boats, being handed houses and benefits" [32, woman, White British, homemaker], and "highlighting what these families receive" [27, man, Indian, taxi driver]. One participant mentioned he had heard that "poor families spread covid" [38, man, Polish, engineering storeman] and that "you get a 42inch tv and an iPhone as soon

as you sign on [to claim benefits]" [32, woman, White British, homemaker]. And yet, although some of our participants were able to identify divisive media tactics, there was also evidence that these tactics do work: such frames were often repeated, as personal opinion, in parts of the discussion. This finding aligns with the 2016 report Framing the Economy, which found that the same interview participants who claim to distrust the media and recognise it is sowing division will go on to repeat common tabloid tropes.

Division created by politicians

There was some agreement within the focus groups that powerful people such as politicians are a cause of division. Some suggested that politicians cause division for their own gain "I think they do use it to deflect, and by pointing the finger and creating a buzz around something else they think people will forget what they have done" [26, man, African, full-time customer service advisor]. Participants cited examples of things the government might be trying to cover up: we heard references to the track and trace app, PPE scandals, Serco contracts, "the majority of contracts Hancock gave out" [62, man, Pakistani, check out operator], "contracts for his friends" [27, man, Indian, taxi driver] and his girlfriend, others mentioned the MPs' expenses scandal of 2009. There was recognition by some participants that immigrants and people on benefits are often the ones used as scapegoats due to their relatively vulnerable position in society: "I mean it's such an easy target to hit poor people and immigrants. Who have they got to stand up for them? They don't own a paper or anything" [27, man, White/Black Caribbean, police tech development officer]. Some participants talked about the way scapegoating makes them feel "angry and worthless" [51, woman, White British, carer]. Some also felt the injustice that "you never hear of the wealthy people having the finger pointed at them" [34, woman, Indian, temporary position as school administrator]. But again, as we heard from our interviewees, many working class people also do fall for the blame game, particularly migrants and some people of colour who are perceived to be part of the 'lower class'.

4. POWER

A lack of power and voice

Our interviewees often cited experiences where they do not have the power to exercise choice over the conditions of their own life, let alone the government or the course that society is on. Most of our participants struggled to see themselves as having the agency to effect change and struggle to see how change can come from the ground up: "It has to come from the top to go down. If you've got people with little influence who are at the bottom, that's where it's going to stay" [53, man, Black Caribbean, plumber]. Even the examples of voting or trade unions were not spontaneously raised. The community is not readily thought of as being a powerful vehicle of change. However, there were a few lone voices who acknowledged that "the people have the power" [55, woman, Indian, housewife]. As one participant said: "standing together is our real way of gaining power", and another noted that "we as a community give power to the government" [25, woman, white Estonian, part-time student and bartender].

Elites have the power

Although participants found the concept of social class confusing and not immediately accessible, participants had a strong – but inchoate- sense of a class antagonism shaping society: working class versus elites (a term not used by participants). The working class who have to graft to get by and have little say in how society is run. Meanwhile, for the most part, power is seen as something held by the exclusive few; elusive people who are thought of as "untouchable" and "out of sight," and therefore, unaccountable.[44] There is a latent awareness that there is a small group of people who are extremely wealthy and hold a disproportionate amount of power, who often make decisions that go against the common interests of working class people. Participants seemed to view elites conspiratorially and had a poor grasp of the structural mechanisms that create super-wealthy people while most struggle to get by.

Some made the link between powerful people and inherited generational wealth, knowing "people in high places", or exploiting others: "you only get there by stepping on people" [32, woman, White British, homemaker] and "most common way that billionaires become billionaires is not paying people enough, exploiting the environment and hoarding that wealth" [24, woman, Indian, graduate scheme]. It is worth noting that other studies have found that people generally exhibit a distinct reluctance to criticise very wealthy people, believing many earn the status and do good.[45] Similarly, we found some participants believed that extreme wealth and power can come from hard work and exceptional talent, for example, if you are "a tech genius" or through social media. However, given the specific nature of our discussion about class, power and who decides what in society, it is likely our participants were selectively thinking about very wealthy people who they see as harming society, rather than all wealthy people.

The Government fails to represent working-class people

Participants readily identified the government, the Prime Minister and politicians as a locus of power and responsibility to make real changes: "there's only so many communities that can pull together but if nothing from the government changes then nothing changes" [27, woman, White British, sales executive on maternity leave]. Yet, there were equally strong perceptions that politicians do not make decisions in the interest of the working class. Our survey finds that 60% of working-class people felt they had little to no influence in what our government does.[46] Many of those in power are seen as out of touch with reality: "they haven't got a clue what it's like to live on a minimum wage let alone on benefits" [59, woman, White British, housekeeper], and "that the way things are works too well for those at the top to change it" [32, woman, White British, home maker]. A couple of participants spoke about the relationship between powerful people and MPs and the role of the media, that there is a close relationship – some described it as "co-dependent", making "backhanded deals behind closed doors" [30, woman, black Caribbean, currently unemplyed]. Consequently,

many shared a profound sense of disillusionment with politicians and a sense of hopelessness that positive change is not possible with some "extremely confident nothing will change" [27, man, White/black Caribbean, police tech development officer] and others feeling "the world is a dark place" [26, woman, mixed race (Black Carribean), part-time cook]. We also heard from a few participants that the handling of massive societal challenges such as the pandemic and climate change has created a sense of fear for the future.

Community power? The Kenmure Street Case

We presented the events of Kenmure street[47] to our focus groups as an example of the community coming together – across differences of race, faith and origin – and winning. In May 2021, the community came out in Kenmure Street in Glasgow to stop an immigration raid to prevent the deportation of two men from the local community. Soon hundreds of people had turned up, chanting, "these are our neighbours, let them go." The reaction to the case in all three focus groups was both overwhelmingly positive and emotive: "what a powerful thing to see" [24, woman Indian, graduate scheme] and the "support is amazing, made me smile, makes me feel happy they were supported" [51, woman, White British, Admin]. Prior to discussing this case, participants struggled to think about examples of solidarity and to feel positive about their own power or ability to effect change. This example completely changed the tone of the conversation: for example, "hopefully showed people the power we already possess" [30, woman, Black Caribbean, currently unemployed] and "I think it was a powerful statement that shows how everyone can come together. It made me feel proud and hopeful that if I was ever in that situation, they would come and do the same" [26, man, African, full-time customer service advisor]. Another participant said, "[it was] great to see people of different races, encouraging and sticking up for others. especially in the world we live in right now" [35, woman, White and Black Caribbean, teaching assistant].

There is a desire to come together but scepticism due to a lack of cross-racial unity and fear

In our survey, we found that the majority of the working class believe they should get involved in their local communities. Almost 65% of working-class people think it's important to get to know their neighbours and think that by joining together in our communities we can make positive changes in our country. Despite this strong desire, in our qualitative research in response to the Kenmure Case, we found that people are sceptical about coming together due to a strong perception of division along with race, class and political lines. For example, the majority of the participants felt pessimistic that a show of solidarity would take place in their own neighbourhood, some were certain it wouldn't happen: "not a chance" [53, woman, Indian, playworker, nursery], "you'd be dreaming" [27, man, Indian, taxi driver], "the community is too self divided" [32, man, White British, part-time video editor], and "people would walk past with their heads down" [32, woman, White British, homemaker]. The primary reason was a lack of unity and solidarity across differences of race, faith and national origin, and racist attitudes and beliefs of their neighbours, particularly in predominantly white areas. Some cited the lack of support for Black Lives Matter actions and racist comments on local community Facebook groups as evidence. Some believed only people of the same ethnic community would show up: "people from their own backgrounds and race would support them. They would be people from different cultures not supporting them or turning to cause disruption" [35, woman, White and Black Caribbean, teacher assistant]. Another common reason was the fear of retaliation for outwardly demonstrating your political beliefs. We heard how "you need a few people with guts, and everyone else tends to follow" [30, woman, Black Caribbean, currently unemployed].

Shared values and hopes for society

We found that working class people not only share a wealth of experiences but also values, hopes and desires for their families and communities. People spoke proudly of their families and their loved ones, and a deep desire to make life better and have a healthy and happy life. People talked about faith and God and their personal beliefs in something bigger than themselves.[48]

We presented participants with a list of values and asked them to pick out their top 3 (see Appendix for full list). The values of compassion, mutual respect, security and fairness were top-rated values. Compassion is seen as that which "brings communities together" and is essential in people's lives. People were aware that life is hard, and "it is really hard to be and live alone" [25, woman, white Estonian, part-time student and bartender]. We need each other, and we need support and understanding from one another. Mutual respect was understood by our participants as respecting people and their choices and "treat others as you wished to be treated" [27, man, White/Black Caribbean, police tech development officer]. Mutual respect appeared to be seen as key to being united and working together to make the changes we want to see. However, there is a strong intuition that a small minority of people do not hold these values.[49]

The kind of society working class people desire

At the end of the discussion we asked participants what kind of society they would want to live in. Below were four prominent themes shared amongst most participants:

— To live in a caring society, where compassion and kindness are embodied and encouraged outside of our individual networks to workplaces and public services. That our public services are the way in which we collectively care for each other;

— To live in a society where we respect and embrace all of our different cultures, traditions, faiths and upbringings, and recognising that our different experiences give rise to different knowledge and ideas, that everyone brings something of value to the table;

— That everyone is safe and secure, everyone wants to have a good and happy life, and therefore we all have a share of the resources we need; and lastly,

— To live in a united society, safe in the knowledge we are not alone. That people come together across differences to be more connected and welcomed within communities.

Working-class identity is not strong right now

We asked participants to identify and describe themselves. Almost every person mentioned they are fathers, mothers, talked about their families, their personalities, personal values and faith. About half mentioned their race/ethnicity, this included a couple of white participants. While most mentioned their occupation, only a third mentioned their class.

When prompted on whether they identify as a certain class, we got a mixed response. Some readily and even proudly identified themselves as working class across race and ethnicity, but many also rejected the notion of class, stating they don't identify with it, and a couple of respondents even identified themselves as middle class. And yet, every single participant had identified themselves as working class on the initial questionnaire to participate in the study. Perhaps this suggests that while on some level people know they are categorised as working class, it may not be a salient part of their identity or something they feel comfortable to share.

Given the findings that class is not an accessible concept to most, many have quite a rigid and reductive definition of what it means to be working class, and that it does not appear to be a widely shared identity, we decided to not explicitly include 'the working class' in our tested messages. In part, this is because we were limited to test three messages, and so we would not be able to effectively test whether using 'working class' made for a more or less persuasive message. Instead, we explored this by including some questions about class terminology. See the *Race Class Realities* report for full details.

Learnings for our race class messages

1 **Class – and 'working class' – are not well understood.**

 'Working class' does not appear to be widely understood as a political concept (i.e. a description of power and control, who has it, and who doesn't). People's understanding of 'working class' rests mostly on being in work, and it is a source of both pride and division. People themselves see a distinction between the working class and the 'lower class,' such a divide can (and has been) exploited by our opponents. The divide between people who are in and out of work can be exploited by our opponents and people fall for it. In reality, there is no 'lower class'; people out of work experience the 4 Ps as much, if not more, than those in work. Consequently, our narrative work needs to expand our understanding of work and working-class identity to be inclusive of those who are not in formal employment – for any reason.

2 **There is an important, but often latent, awareness that the system is rigged**

by a powerful and wealthy few against the diverse working-class and/or people of colour and/or women, and that life is quite different for those white people in the upper and middle classes. Moreover, there is some awareness that elites (politicians, billionaires, and corporate-owned media) share similar class interests and work together. Our messages need to highlight and concretise this awareness by narrating this problem clearly and concisely.

3 **People are suspicious of politicians and are cynical about the possibility of progressive change.**

People feel disillusioned with politicians, feeling a strong sense of powerlessness and lack of voice and representation. People feel like the government is the obvious locus of power and source of positive change, but that it often acts against the interests of the majority, and

don't want things to change for the better for working-class people. There was an obvious frustration with the government's handling of private contracts to their friends and all those scandals. Right now, people see power more readily in the hands of a few elites (politicians, billionaires, and corporate-owned media) making decisions to suit their own interests than they can see it in the hands of working people coming together. Our narrative work needs to narrate and direct this frustration into a call to action of grassroots power.

4   **People are moved by examples of others joining together and winning but they are cynical about it happening in their own community.**

The case of Kenmure street demonstrated the powerful nature of past examples of how people can come together across differences and make an impact on their community. It also highlights that the strong perception of division in our communities causes cynicism about whether people can indeed come together in the first place, let alone win. Our messages need to clearly narrate that division is created to prevent working-class people from unifying around shared interests and demanding what they need. A strong call of unity across race and class must be communicated.

5   **Lastly, contrary to what our opponents say, working–class people across race and other differences share a wealth of things in common: experiences, struggles, hopes and desires.**

The 4Ps framework captures the four underlying themes of working-class realities: precarity, prejudice, lack of power and place. Moreover, the value of working hard, and yet, not being compensated justly for that work is shared amongst our participants. Working-class people care most about their loved ones, they worry about what the future holds and work hard towards a good life. In the messaging presented in the following chapter, we aim to reflect these shared experiences and desires.

New RCN Messaging that

Creates an inclusive 'us' and emphasises the important things we have in common: what we want and value.

Exposes and delegitimises the right's tactic of division and racialised scapegoating;

Communicates the truth – a small elite making decisions against our common interests;

Connects the necessity of unity across race and class to secure our mutual interests

It is proven to

Unify the ethnically diverse working-class

Persuade the Persuadables more than current messaging

Energises and inspires our Base more than current messaging

More memorable and easier to understand = more likely to repeat

CHAPTER 4

A New Story: the UK Race Class Narrative.

In this chapter, we present 6 core recommendations. We start with our new UK Race Class Narrative, based on the findings presented in chapter 3, which builds solidarity across the diverse working-class and inoculates persuadables from falling for our opponents' divide and rule strategies. We begin by presenting our two top-rated messages and a series of framing and messaging recommendations.

Our research, in collaboration with ASO Communications and Dial Smith, demonstrates how to energise and persuade a truly diverse cohort to join together to support and mobilise around progressive policies. Here we present the empirical data that shows that messaging that talks about race explicitly and frames racism, classism and xenophobia as a divide and rule strategy to prevent unity is more persuasive than what we are currently saying.

What we did

We tested our new messages using dial testing. This method involves participants listening to a short message and using a dial to indicate whether they agree (dial up) or disagree (dial down) with what they are hearing. The result is a graph showing participants' second-by-second automatic response to what they have heard. We deliberately limited each

message to around 30 seconds so participants wouldn't have time to intellectually analyse each message and instead had to react instinctively to what they were hearing. After completing the dial test, we asked the participants to complete exercises and answer questions to gauge how well it was understood, remembered, supported, liked and the likelihood the participant would share it. Participants were first presented with the Opposition message, then the Standard Progressive message, followed by one new RCN message. Doing so allows us to compare the efficacy of our new messages compared to each other and, crucially, the Opposition message and Standard Progressive message.

Secondly, we created these new messages by combining the key themes, values, and desires we heard directly from working-class people and the tried and tested Race Class Narrative (RCN) framework, developed by ASO Communications. RCN is a particular way of weaving together race and class to advance our progressive worldview and counter divide and rule politics. Their research consistently shows that speaking affirmatively about race strengthens our ability to mobilise our base and move the Persuadables while allowing us to challenge our Opposition's worldview. But, the ordering and content of our messaging matter. RCN messages follow a specific structure drawn from broader research in political communication. It is built on a structure that creates a narrative arc.

Like any strong message, ours must:

— Shape the conversation into one that suggests the intersectionality and shared material interests of the diverse working-class, rather than counterposing race and class;

— Strongly appeal to and resonate with our base, people of colour and diverse working-class people;

— Make the case that togetherness (instead of separateness) is the desirable strategy for progressives to address a variety of issues;

— Expose the racial, xenophobic and classist scapegoating of our opponents and put them on defence as the ones deliberately stoking division;

— Say what we are for. Express our desired vision for the future in order to differentiate us from what our opponents are offering and make people want to join our efforts. After all, people are motivated by what our solutions will deliver instead of just ameliorating the problem or specifics of our policy recipes.

— Be profoundly persuasive, adhering to messaging best practices that ground the conversation in terms of our values and worldview;

— And, be memorable enough for many people to repeat, and simple enough for a wide audience to understand.

Our New Race Class Narrative Messages

Message 1: Future Generations

The underlying value and motivation we found across our qualitative research is a fundamental desire to better our circumstances, to hope and work towards a good life. Most of us want a better life not just for ourselves, but for our children, families, and communities. We heard from both young people and parents, across race, about concern over healthcare, climate change, how consecutive governments choose to close down local community youth centres and underfund schools, and a desire for good jobs and education. As we heard in the focus groups, some participants identified certain politicians, some extremely wealthy people, and certain media outlets' roles in making decisions that harm us and that they try to divide us for their own gain. Such a divide and rule strategy we documented extensively in our analysis presented in chapter 3. We also mention the different groups often scapegoated for society's problems.

> **Future Generations:** Whether we are Black, white or brown, most of us want to make life better for the generations to come. But certain politicians, their super-rich friends and the media they own are endangering our future to benefit themselves. They are fuelling damage to our climate, selling off our NHS and slashing funding for our youth centres and schools. Then they spread lies about ethnic minorities, Muslims and people seeking asylum* to distract us from how their decisions harm us all. In the past, we joined together to create the NHS**, and today, we can work together across our differences to demand secure green jobs, good education, and a better future for all of us, our children and our grandchildren.

— **Total (N:2168, avg:66.09)**
— **Base (N:661, avg:71.95)**
— **Persuadable (N:1285, avg:64.86)**
— **Opposition (N:222, avg:55.93)**
— **Advocates (N:29, avg: 78.10)**

Time (m:ss)
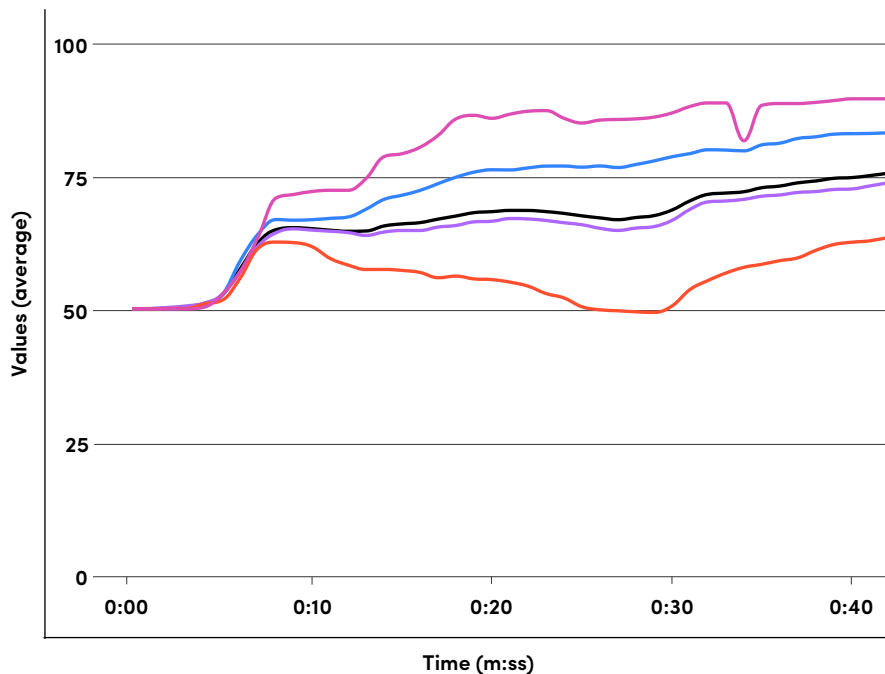
What makes this message great:

— **Strong shared value:** the future/families is what we are fighting for – proven to be a strong value to build solidarity around. The opening line fires up the Base and Persuadables, and especially the Advocates, steadily increasing throughout the message, and ending on a high.

— **Persuadables like this message best of all messages** – it has the strongest agreement, and people are more likely to believe it, share it and support it than the Opposition and Status Quo message.

— **Easily understood and simple enough to remember:** the shared value and conclusion particularly sticks with all audiences.

— **A unifying message**, it has widespread appeal to people across race, class and gender.

— **Useful message for social campaign purposes** – easy to tailor to specific campaign needs.

* The final iteration of the message you see here was improved upon slightly, based on the dial testing results. We added more direct race language to make the scapegoating of racial groups explicit. This is to guard against the pitfall of the Status Quo message of being too indirect and therefore, potentially misunderstood.
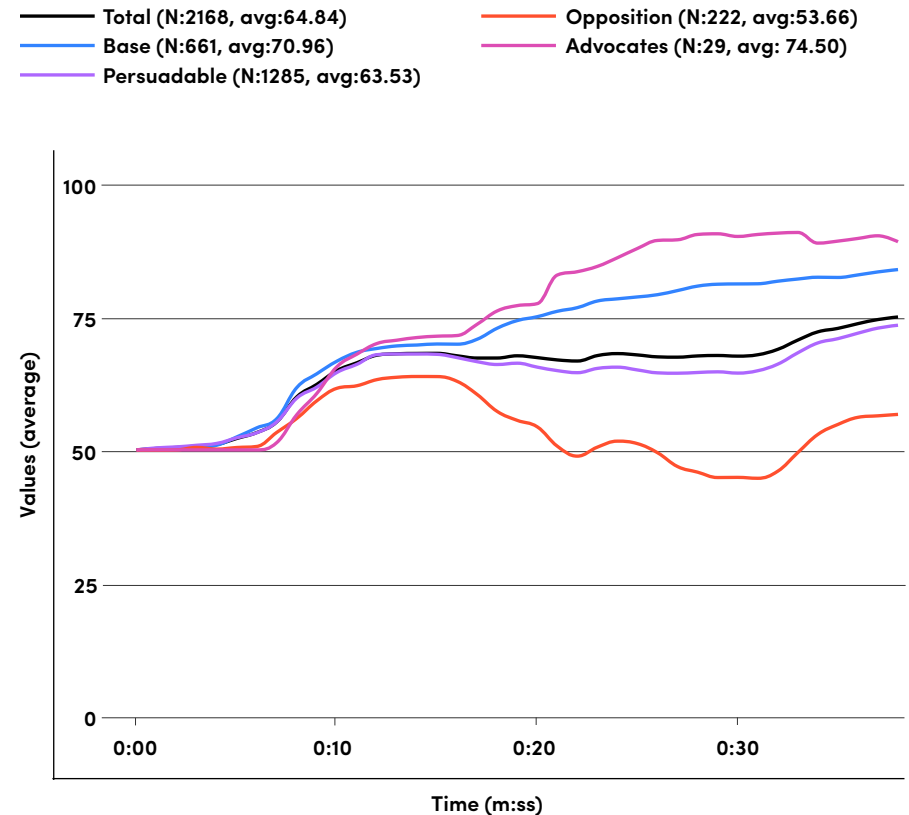
** Secondly, we removed a reference to how we came together during the pandemic as this was strongly disliked by advocates. This is likely due to the disastrous government handling of it and the fact that we are still in the midst of the pandemic. Creating the NHS is well received, but we believe other positive legacy examples could be more effective at countering cynicism and making people believe we can push for better for the future.

Message 2: The Good Life

that the concept of work is a fundamental – yet divisive – pillar of working-class identity, this story focuses on opening up the often rigid definition of work used by our opponents. Here work is defined as "putting effort and pride into what we do" (a quote taken directly from an interviewee), while explaining explicitly that this is a value shared by people of all races, genders and nationalities. Moreover, the definition is expanded to include different types of work e.g. unpaid care work, working multiple jobs (as often is the case in the gig economy), or the traditional office job. The message redirects blame from those who are scapegoated (families left struggling to make ends meet, immigrants and Black and brown people) onto the ruling class. The message presents coming together across our differences as the way in which we can make this a society where anyone who performs work should earn a real living. We are careful to also appeal to the ideal of 'Buen Vivir' – that everyone, regardless of work status, has a right to a good life. See below for the message script and to your left for the dial test result.

> Good Life: Most of us put effort and pride into what we do, whatever our skin colour and whether we're caring for loved ones, grafting between jobs or working 9-5.* But certain politicians, their billionaire friends and the media they own harm us all by hoarding extreme wealth and power. They rig the system to rob people of a decent wage and refuse to contribute what they owe in tax. Then they blame Black and brown people, newcomers and families left struggling to make ends meet for the hardships the wealthy few created. When we pull together across our differences, we can make this a country where working for a living means earning a living, and we all have what we need to live a good life – no exceptions.

* We tweaked this message slightly, by shortening the opening to make it a punchier opener. We included the reference to corporate-owned media and cronyism and made a stronger statement on race.

Legend:
- Total (N:2168, avg:64.84)
- Base (N:661, avg:70.96)
- Persuadable (N:1285, avg:63.53)
- Opposition (N:222, avg:53.66)
- Advocates (N:29, avg: 74.50)

Y-axis: Values (average)
X-axis: Time (m:ss)

What makes this message great:

— Strong shared value: the acknowledgement that most of us put effort and pride into different types of work widely appeals. The value almost equally appeals to the Base and Persuadables.

— The favourite message of the Base. They are fired-up from the opener and even more so by the articulation of the problem. This message is very likely to be shared and repeated by our Base.

— Lands very well for Persuadables, more effective than our current messaging style and it is the most effective message frame for Persuadables who have previously voted Conservative.

— Strong and clear class antagonism – in the recall we found this message to be understood by many as a class antagonism. This narrative is useful to bolster working-class solidarity around a common enemy.

— Good for trade unions and organising purposes. Provides a way to talk about work in an expanded and inclusive way and makes clear that it is the ruling class screwing us over … [write this point properly]

— Marginalises the Opposition who dip significantly into disagreement. They dial down at "Certain politicians and billionaires harm us all by hoarding extreme wealth and power" – whereas the Base and Advocates dial-up.

Impact of Race Class Narratives compared to current messaging

Not only are our messages better in terms of content, they are also measurably more effective at changing minds and changing the conversation to where we need it to be.

1 Our messaging unifies the ethnically diverse working class

Our RCN messages, especially the Future Generations message, unify working-class people across races. In addition to energising our base, persuadables – both working class people of colour and working-class white people – also score our messages highly. See to your right for a comparison of the future generations' dial result compared to the Opposition's.

Future Generations Dial
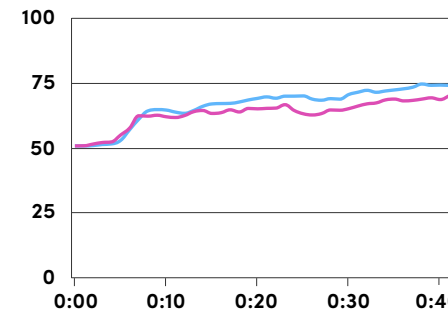
**Opposition's Message Dial**
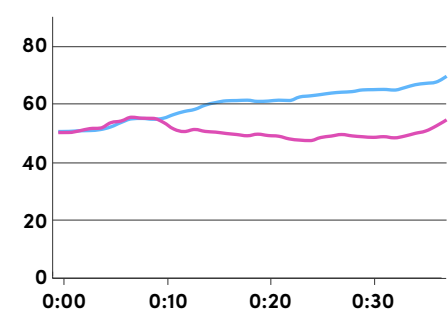
— Persuadable POC working class   — Persuadable white working class

2 The Base far prefers our messaging to what we are currently saying

From the dial, we can see that the Base unconsciously rate the messages highly, feeling inspired by the opening shared value, and fired up by the articulation of the problem. The Base rate the RCN messages better than the current standard progressive message, across all metrics.

How believable (Base)
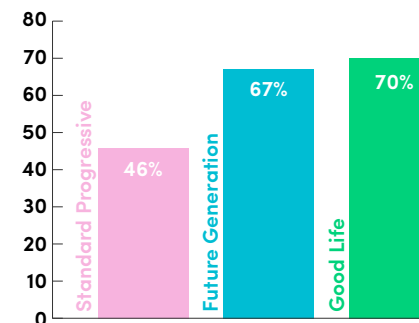
Likely to share (Base)
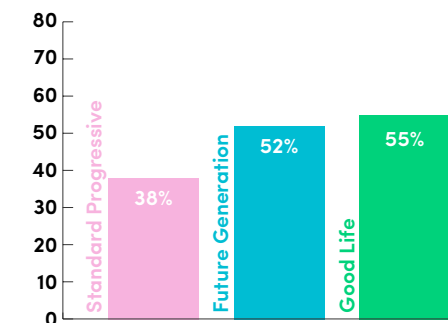
Advocates also prefer our new messages compared to the standard progressive message, and are more likely to repeat and use this messaging – e.g. 89%s say they are highly likely to share the Future Generations Message.

3 **Persuadables prefer our two recommended messages than the standard progressive message AND the Opposition's message**
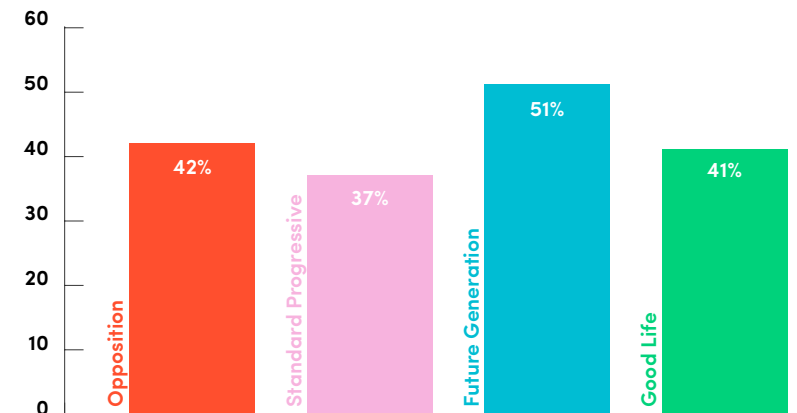
Persuadables prefer Future Generations and the Good Life message more so than the Opposition OR the standard progressive message. As you can see from the table below, our new messages are better at persuading the Persuadables than what we are currently saying. Moreover, we know that the standard progressive message is highly vulnerable to misinterpretation by Persuadables. For example, 51% of Persuadables believe our message compared to 37% who believe the standard progressive message and 42% who believe the Opposition message.

Persuadables evaluation of all four messages

Metric	Opposition Message	Standard Progressive Message	Future Gen Message	Good Life Message
Mean Agreement Dial*****	56.8	61.2	64.2	63.5
Believability	42%	37%	51%	41%
Support	39%	35%	49%	40%
Share	31%	29%	37%	34%

***** 100 indicates full agreement with the what the participant is hearing, 0 indicates complete disagreement and 50 indicates a neutral position.

How believable Persuadables find each message

The success of our messages holds for Labour voting and Conservative voting Persuadables. While Conservative Persuadables respond best to the Good Life message, and Labour Persuadables to the Future Generations message – we can bring both of these groups with us on both messages. Given that our Opposition's current message is potent among persuadables -- even 1 in 3 Labour-voting persuadables like it -- it's critical that we inoculate them by repeating our more effective RCN messages.

4 **Our messages are more memorable and easier to understand than the standard progressive message**

Base and Persuadables are more likely to remember and understand our messages than the standard progressive message, as well as support and share them. While 1 in 3 people misunderstand the gist of the standard progressive message, only 1 in 10 cannot recall the core meaning of our new RCN messages.

Use the RCN Framework

Our research with 2200 subjects demonstrates the potency of the RCN narrative framework (already proven in the US by the original Race Class Narrative project and ongoing research and implementation). The core narratives in this chapter can be used in many ways: in conversations with friends or on the doorstep while out canvassing; in the workplace and unions; in public statements, letters, and articles; in interviews and speeches; on social media or media appearances. While they can be memorized like a script, they can also be adapted to your particular needs and circumstances. Hence in this next section, we present the core RCN structure and persuasive language in detail so that you can use the guidance freely and as you see fit! Since we fundamentally believe that if our words don't spread, they don't work, we encourage readers to use this language verbatim.

The core structure has three parts

1 **Value:** Open with a shared value that explicitly includes people across lines of race and economic status, to build cross-racial solidarity.

2 **Problem:** Narrate the problem & locate this problem in certain powerful actors. Be specific about what they are doing and how it harms us.

3 **Solution:** Emphasise how collective action helps us address the problem and implement the solutions that benefit us all. Communicate an aspirational vision, being specific about the outcomes we can achieve by joining together.

Step 1: State a shared value inclusively

State the shared values that apply to "most people". We don't say "everyone" because people have a strong perception that values are not shared universally. We also want to show that the villains are out of touch with and actively undermining these broadly shared values.

→ But certain politicians, their super-rich friends, and the media they own

→ But a handful of politicians are allowing corporations to...

Name race and include class, immigration, faith and geography. Consider which dimensions are most appropriate for your context. Use the rule of three to link struggles.

→ Most of us want to make life better for the generations to come

→ Most of us put effort and pride into what we do

Step 2: Narrate the problem, naming the culprit and motive

Narrate the problem by naming the culprit first. Be clear we're talking about specific actors. If we talk about elites in general then we are too vague about who has responsibility and agency, and we can also fuel the fatalistic response that "all people in power are inevitably bad, so what's the point in trying to change anything". Also, research shows that people are turned off by what may be seen as "generic rich bashing".

→ Whether we are Black, white or brown

→ No matter our skin colour, faith or where we come from

Talk clearly about how they harm us and give tangible examples of what they are doing. If using terms like "they rig the system", be clear about how they are doing this through policies and practises (in order to not cue a fatalism response, as above).

> They exploit working people and destroy our environment, lining their own pockets while denying our families and communities the resources we need

> They rig the system to rob people of a decent wage and refuse to contribute what they owe in tax

Be clear on how they try to blame, divide, and scapegoat without repeating their lies. Name who they harm with their blaming: use direct, people-centred language to refer to these groups. Explain the motive – that they do this to deflect from how they are harming us all.

> Then they spread lies about ethnic minorities, Muslims and people seeking asylum to distract us from how their decisions harm us all

> Then they blame Black and brown people, newcomers and families struggling to make ends meet for the hardships the wealthy few created

Step 3: Solution and vision

Talk about how unity (across race and class) is the key to making change. State the mutual interests that we can come together for (below), and talk about the influence we can have over those in power when we come together.

Though we didn't include a specific solidarity example here, citing past wins and examples of coming together in the closing of your message can generate optimism, strengthen believability, and the increase likelihood of taking action today.

Deliver a powerful and positive vision for what our solutions will deliver and how they realise our shared values.

> Today, we can work together across our differences to demand...

> We can use our voices and our votes to elect leaders who govern in our interests. We can work together across our differences to...

> Secure green jobs, good education, and a better future for all of us, our children and our grandchildren

> We can make this a country where working for a living means earning a living, and we all have what we need to live a good life – no exceptions

Use Best Messaging Practices

Below we present messaging best practices to keep in mind when communicating.

Tell a complete story using the RCN framework: lead with an inclusive value, then narrate the problem, naming the actors and motive, and how and who is harmed, and close with a solution embedded in a call to come together across our differences.

Lead with shared values, not problems: narratives that start with shared values have proven much more effective at shifting opinions toward progressive policy solutions. It engages people's better selves[50] – who they aspire to be – as they confront the rest of the message. Moreover, it begins a message by establishing the fundamental things most of us have in common – essential for countering divisive narratives.

Talk about people: as we noted in chapter 3, progressives often talk about problems as if they have no clear origin or culprits. In order to effectively mobilize people to take action, it is critical to name the people in power who are genuinely responsible and why they are causing the problem. We must juxtapose the handful of extremely wealthy and powerful people who make decisions against our common interests with the many of us who can overcome barriers and implement solutions through collective action.

Avoid negation: Decades of research demonstrates that attempts to refute false information can actually strengthen people's belief in the claims.[51] Testing shows that people remember the assertion and forget that it's a lie. Instead, use the opportunity to present your own story in regards to the topic of the conversation, while calling out divide and rule tactics and their motive without repeating the lie itself.

Be explicit about the groups who are scapegoated and harmed. Always use clear, direct and people-centred language such as "Black and brown people", "people seeking asylum" and "people left struggling to make ends meet." For example, talk about "families left struggling to make ends meet" rather than "poverty" or "the poor". Talk about 'Black and brown people' rather than 'minorities'.

Be explicit about ethnicity and race. We need to actively talk about race and ethnicity in our messages in order to reflect and celebrate the intersectionality of working-class people. We must name groups of us who might otherwise be silently excluded and are often the targets of racial scapegoating (e.g. ethnic minorities, Muslims, people seeking asylum). And we must make our position on racism clear. Our base is deeply concerned about racism, and persuadables are more likely to believe that 'talking about race is necessary for us to move toward greater equality' (50%) than 'continuing to address race is harmful as it only creates division' (37%). Moreover, explicit reference to race engages people of colour while keeping white listeners on board – as it disarms our opponents from being able to suggest that advocates do not care about white people.

Create something good, don't merely oppose something bad. We must stand for something desirable not merely against something deplorable.[52] When it comes to describing our policy objectives, we tend to employ the language of "fixing" or "reforming," or "improving" which suppresses motivation and long-term engagement. Instead, describing the good thing your policy, campaign or movement exists to create helps sustain the will to fight among your base and engenders interest among sceptics. Also, a "no" without a "yes" leads listeners to think we're just playing politics as usual. It sounds like we're just denouncing whatever the other side puts out to defeat them, not making a sincere attempt to see good policy become law.

How to talk about policies?

To bring about a better, fairer and more compassionate society, we need more than just a good story. Policies are vital. However, without the political will to enact them, we need to build public support and pressure our leaders to make them a reality. We strongly recommend that when making a case for policies they are:

Embedded as part of the call to action and solution in a complete RCN story. Start with the shared value that pertains to your solution, then narrate who/what/why is stopping us from making that value a reality, and only then put forward a call to action i.e., 'when we come together across our differences' followed by the solution 'secure green jobs, good education, and a better future for all of us, our children and our grandchildren.'

Talk about the outcome of policies rather than the details of policies. For example, "people are paid enough to make ends meet" and "you're at your new baby's side," rather than "minimum wage increase" and "paid family leave". Any policy is only as good as what it allows you to do. These are the terms and experiences that make things human issues, not policy debates.

Use clear, explicit, simple and people-centred language, instead of jargon. We want to ensure our message is memorable and shareable, using unnecessarily complex language makes this goal less likely.

Use examples of unity and winning to overcome cynicism: Other research finds that referencing previous cross-racial (and/or class, nationality, gender) solidarity helps abate cynicism and increase the desire to engage.[53] The strong reaction we saw in the focus groups to Kenmure street supports these findings. Unfortunately, many of our participants had not heard of it.

One participant said, "how wasn't this front-page news?" We have found in our message testing that talking about the pandemic as a positive proof point was not well received by the Advocates. The NHS example was well received but did not motivate the Persuadables or the Base. We need better examples of solidarity to demonstrate that change is possible when people come together across race and class. Since we do not often have time in our communications to relay an entire story such Kenmure street, we need more research to find the stories that people are already familiar with that connect unity across differences to bring about real change.

Use the rule of three. When we are talking about groups of people or lists of desired outcomes and solutions, our messaging is strongest when we are specific and indicate the range we need with lists of three (e.g. "Whatever our skin colour, gender or where we come from"). Longer lists are difficult for audiences to process and they can make any omissions feel more obvious. The rule of three allows us to cover diversity in a way that is memorable to our audiences.

Use Words that Work

Embrace

Working class

Black, white and brown working class

Diverse working class

We need to be able to talk about the working class, but include differences within this. 'Diverse' was a term preferred by working class people of colour as being racially inclusive. It has the advantage also of being adaptable to talk about other differences – like where people live in the country.

Families left struggling to make ends meet

We can talk about experiences of class precarity with more everyday, accessible language.

People seeking asylum

Humanising language centres people rather than their immigration status.

[Working-class people] whether we are Black, white or brown

No matter our skin colour

Ethnic minorities

Bring race and ethnicity into the message using everyday terms to engage people of colour and talk about race in Britain. Also, it mitigates our opponents from being able to accuse advocates of dismissing/being against white people.

Replace

White working class

repeating this language risks reinforcing the racialisation of the working class as white, even if we want to use the term in order to critique it.

Everyday working people

vague signifiers like this take us away from class as a political concept, and can reinforce the idea that we're talking about people in work and excluding unemployed people or people claiming benefits. This phrase is also used by opponents to signal that the working class is white.

Poor families

Risks essentialising people as poor and plays into 'the poor' as a frame of victimhood without agency.

Legal migrants

Legal language legitimises the idea that humans can be illegal and puts legality over justice.

Everyone / All of us

we should avoid terms that are not explicitly racially inclusive.

The cost of living crisis is a serious problem for working-class people, and it particularly affects people of colour.

The "dependent clause" structure is alienating to people of colour in our audience because it makes race sound like an afterthought (because it is). It confuses white members of the audience who view it as a non sequitur. And without explaining why certain things are harder for people of colour, our audience will tend to fill in the gap using their own explanations – which they often find by reaching for racial stereotypes.

Embrace

Certain politicians, their billionaire friends and the media they own... harm / blame / spread lies

Refer to specific groups that are the agent of divide-and-rule, using active voice and the rule of three.

Certain politicians, their billionaire friends and the media they own are fuelling damage to our climate, selling off our NHS and slashing youth centres and schools

They are robbing people of a decent wage and refusing to contribute what they owe in tax

Be specific about the agents who cause the problem.

Certain politicians, their billionaire friends and the media they own blame (e.g. migrants & people seeking asylum) for the hardships the wealthy few created

ABC spread lies about (e.g. migrants) to distract us from how their decisions harm us all

Be specific who or what is the problem.

With our voices and our votes, we can demand better

Talk about how a collective response can lead to Government action.

Secure green jobs, good education, lively highstreets, first rate care, etc.

Name the outcomes that we want to work towards while making links across different policy areas.

Replace

Elites/ politicians / the media – if we are too general then we risk cueing the fatalism that nothing can change and there is no point in engaging.

XYZ are discriminated against – if we use the passive voice or fail to name agents then people can fill in the gap with their own presuppositions.

They are selfish / greedy / untrustworthy

If we make it about bad character, rather than specific harmful actions, then the solutions are less clear and we risk cueing fatalism.

Culture war / stoking divisions

Many people don't know what 'culture war' means, but it's also damaging to reinforce the idea that we are divided or at war. And it leaves it open to interpretation about who or what is the problem.

Our elected leaders have a responsibility

Although we should talk about government responsibility, we should place it within the frame of collective power, rather than lead messages with it.

We need change

If we are too vague then we don't communicate a vision that people can understand and get behind.

Next Steps: Keep spreading the message

What next for the Race Class Narrative project?

Congratulations on making it to the end of the report! We believe that if our words don't spread, they don't work: we are honoured to have you use this language verbatim or adapt it for your own needs. We have created a handy messaging guide to aid you in applying these findings to your own work.

Lastly, we would like to briefly share what is coming next for the Race Class Narrative project. Working in partnership with researchers, content creators, trade unions and community-based organisations, we will implement our research by building the capacity of communicators, organisers and spokespeople. For the next year, we will be running training and workshops with colleagues and fellow progressives. The workshops are designed to give you an understanding of using the Race Class Narrative in your communications, from a basic to advanced level depending on need. It is designed for organisers, communicators, and others interested in improving their understanding of narrative and communications principles. The workshops will also be a crucial opportunity to bring together and strengthen coalitions between progressive actors.

Get in touch! If you are interested in participating in a workshop or want to chat about the research and share your thoughts, or are interested in collaborating on further research, please get in touch as we want to speak to you!

Acknowledgements & thank yous!

Appendices

APPENDIX 1

Appendix 1: Methods

Here we provide further information into the methods used throughout this research project presented in chronological order.

1. The Language Analysis

The research strategy employed in the language analysis was a blend of critical metaphor analysis (CMA) and critical discourse analysis (CDA). In this report, we provided a brief review of the main features of the discourse rather than the entire investigation.

As the research focuses on the current UK political discourse, we collected the data between December 2019 to July 2021 (the end of the research phase). Neither specific events nor debates were sought in collecting the raw data, as this could have predetermined the findings. Instead, we used a keyword search technique to extract short paragraphs and sentences that included specific keywords, then recorded them into a database in excel. The keywords were wide-ranging. As Weber (2015) has identified, race discourse is often referred to indirectly (the same we also found true of class-related discourse). Thus, immigration studies scholars (Charteris-Black, 19; Goodfellow, 2018) suggest that associated words such as 'immigrant', 'multiculturalism, 'foreigner' could also indicate racial discourse. Keywords associated with class instead were guided by

the recent race-class discourse around the Brexit campaign (Mondon & Winter, 2020; Charteris-Black, 2019), including 'left behind' and, thanks to Raey's (2020) analysis of education discourse, 'free school meal'. Moreover, class-related issues such as 'poverty' and 'unemployment' were included. Table 3.1. below is a complete list of the selected keywords.

Table 3.1. Keyword search for race-class discourse

Topic	Key-words
race	'inequality' 'BME' 'BAME' 'Black' 'white' 'Asian' 'race' 'racial' 'racism' 'racist'
	'ethnicity' 'ethnic' 'minority' 'multiculturalism' 'woke' 'immigration' 'migrant' 'refugee' 'asylum seeker' 'foreigner'
class	'class' 'poverty' 'poor' 'working people' 'everyday people' 'disadvantaged' 'free school meal' 'FSM' 'underprivileged' 'left behind' 'white working class' 'welfare' 'universal credit'

The framework we used to analyse the political speeches is CMA, developed by Charteris-Black, and CDA. CMA aims to identify the metaphors used in persuasive discourses such as political speeches and debates and explain why they are chosen and what function they perform. CMA develops Fairclough's four-pronged approach to CDA (1995): identification, description, interpretation, and explanation. We used the MIP procedure, developed by the Pragglejaz Group (2007), to identify metaphors. Given such analyses' subjective and highly interpretive nature, it involved more than one analyst reviewing the same texts to increase reliability.

2. In-depth interviews with working-class people

We conducted two waves of qualitative research with working-class people to inform the messaging and understand the realities of working-class people today. We worked with the social research company Survation to carry out both waves of research. The first wave of the study was 18 in-depth interviews during Mary 2021. Each 1:1 interview lasted 60 minutes, following a tightly-packed interview schedule. The research goals of wave one included:

1   To understand the lived experiences of the multi-ethnic working class and how this differs based on race and gender. We strived to explore whether there is a sense of shared or different experience and perception of class/economic disparities and racial issues, both local to their communities more broadly.

2   To start exploring whether and how people think and talk about race, class and gender. We aimed to explore how vital race, class and gender are to people how race, class and gender are perceived to shape their lives.

3   To provide insight that helps us develop communication ideas (picking up on the language, frames, themes, values etc., that participants use to talk about their own experiences).

We used a screener and quota process to ensure that we spoke to participants as representative as possible of the diversity of working-class people. By diversity, we mean ethnicity and income levels, occupations, housing tenures, education level, ages, genders, political leanings etc. See table 1 below for the demographic information for the interview participants. Where possible, we matched the ethnicities/localities of interviewees and interviewers. We employed an imperfect points system to ensure we captured the range or working-class material conditions. The system helped us screen out middle and upper-middle-class people while

allowing for a range of working-class material conditions. We also employed the point system for the focus groups and survey. See page 126 for the point system.

Table 1. Interview demographic participants

Date	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Occupation	Household income	Class?	Reason why	Voting 2017–19
Wolv	26	Male	Indian	Intermediate profession	£22K	Working class	I earn lower than the average pay	Lab-Lab
Wolv	44	Male	White British	Skilled manual worker	£36K	Working class	we have to save for everything	Lab-Lab
Wolv	55	Female	Black Caribbean	Clerical	£18K	Working class	never have the money to do what I want & will always have to work	Lab-Lab
Wolv	49	Female	Indian	Unskilled	£19K	Working class	have always had to work for a living	Lab-Lab
Wolv	53	Male	Black Caribbean	Skilled manual worker	£39K	Working class	I do a manual job & have always worked	Lab-Lab
Wolv	25	Female	White British	Clerical	£26K	Working class	2 I have always had to work & cannot buy what I like	Con-Con
Brad	26	Female	Mixed Race (Black Caribbean)	Unskilled	£8K	Working class	I work for my money and I live in a working class area	DNV-Lab
Brad	39	Female	Bangladeshi	Unskilled	£20-35K	Working class	We have to work and that's the class we were born into and our incomes aren't great	Lab-Lab
Brad	46	Male	White British	Unskilled	£36K	Working class	I don't have money to hand and I don't earn a lot and I don't wear a tie to work and we just get by	Lab-Lab

Date	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Occupation	Household income	Class?	Reason why	Voting 2017–19
Brad	20	Male	Black Caribbean	Unskilled	£38k	Working Class	My family have always had to work and we would have no income if we didn't work and that's how I have been brought	N/A-DNV
Brad	50	Female	Pakistani	Unskilled	£0-20K	Working class	We have to work in order to pay our bills and live	Lab-Lab
Brad	65	Male	White British	Skilled	£30K	Working class	I was brought up that way and I have always had to work	Con-Con
Cardiff	27	Female	Black African	Intermediate profession	£0 - £19,999	Working class	Because I've had to work hard and be better than other people and rise above discrimination	Lab-Lab
Rhyl	34	Female	White British	Unskilled	£20,000 - £39,999	Working class	Because that is what we are and always have been	DNV-Con
Cardiff	60	Male	Bengali	Unskilled	£20,000 - £39,999	Working class	Because me and my family have always had to work whatever job we could get to make sure we have enough money for all bills and everything. We haven't been in a stage where we've been comfortable money-wise	UKIP-Lab
Cardiff	43	Male	Indian	Semi-skilled	£20,000 - £39,999	Working class	We have to work really hard to just stand still and unexpected bills are a headache. We stick with our community and they will always help us out.	Lab-Lab
Cardiff	39	Female	Eastern European (Romania)	Unskilled	£20,000 - £39,999	Working class	Coming from a different background we have to work really hard at being accepted	Lib-Lib
Rhyl	41	Female	White British	Semi-skilled	£20,000 - £39,999	Working class	I have to graft so hard for everything I get	DNV-Con

The social class points system

Occupation:		Pay emergency £500 bill:	
High managerial, executive, farmer	1 point	"I'd be able to pay this"	1 point
Intermediate profession, administrative, craftsman	2 points	"I would borrow from friends and family"	2 points
Skilled manual worker, semi-skilled and unskilled	3 points	"I wouldn't be able to pay this"	3 points

Household income:		Class identification:	
£50,000+	1 point	Upper-middle-class	1 point
£40,000 - £49,999	2 points	Middle-class	2 points
£0 to £39,999	3 points	Working-class	3 points

We asked interviewers to probe interviewees, particularly when participants talked spontaneously about race and class, to explore their lived experiences and perceptions. The interviewers followed a structured schedule. The schedule included the following topics presented here in order of discussion:

— **Their local community:** to describe it to someone who hasn't been there before; what are things you like most/least about your community; the challenges and opportunities you face; spaces/places you feel more or less comfortable/welcome; how do people get along; are there differences or tensions within your communities.

— **Their values:** we asked what values you care about/ what is important to you. We showed a list of values on a whiteboard, asking if any jumped out. See figure X below for the whiteboard shown to participants:

Whiteboard of values shown to interviewees

Values	
Openness	Compassion
Freedom	Humanity
Exploration	Understanding
Independent thought	Tolerance
	Empathy
Pride in personal success	Safety
Social status	Security
Prestige	Conformity
	Respecting tradition

— **Everyday life:** Day today, what kinds of things concern or worry you? What are the significant issues? Do you have any worries about the future? What sorts of things can make life more complicated? See below for the whiteboard shown to participants:

Whiteboard list of issues shown to participants

Housing	Policing
Food costs	Childcare
Employment/unemployment	Education
Access to benefits	Access to community spaces
Healthcare provision	Others?

— **Policy issues:** What sorts of things would you want politicians to focus on? (At a local level? How about at a national level?) What do you think an equal society would look like. How would you like to see society

change for the better? Are you optimistic or pessimistic about that change happening? Why/why not?

— **Personal identity:** Do you see yourself as a particular social class? Why/why not? How important do you think class identity is in Britain today? To you individually? How important do you think racial identity is in Britain today? To you individually?

— **Understanding class:** what comes to mind when you think of the working class? This was repeated with the middle class. We asked whether people can change class, whether there is any difference between being white, working-class, and being Black, Asian or minority ethnic, and between being a working-class woman and a working-class man. We asked whether one's life chances and experiences are impacted by class, race and/or gender.

3. Focus groups with working–class people

After analysing the in-depth interviews, we conducted the second wave of research where we ran focus groups online in Cardiff, Wolverhampton and Bradford. These were 2-hour focus groups with approximately ten people per group. Each group was a mixture of people of different ethnicities, ages, genders, occupations and voting histories. The focus groups were semi-structured, the topics of discussion included: we opted for text-based participation to allow for some anonymity to mitigate against participants' tendency to acquiesce. Participants had to type their answers to each question. We also decided to screen out those with particularly extreme racist and xenophobic views and anyone who was politically active in their day-to-day lives. Again we applied screeners and quotas to ensure a diverse representative sample of participants. See table 2 for the demographic information of focus group participants:

Table 2. Interview demographic participants

Post Code	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Occupation
Cardiff	54	F	Indian	Retail
Cardiff	27	M	Indian	Taxi driver
Cardiff	55	F	Indian	Housewife
Cardiff	38	M	Polish	Engineering storeman
Cardiff	30	F	Black Caribbean	Unemployed
Cardiff	27	M	White/black Caribbean	Police tech development officer
Cardiff	59	F	White British	Housekeeper
Cardiff	32	F	White British	Home maker
Cardiff	36	M	White British	Telecoms engineer
Brad	27	F	White and Black Caribbean	Residential carer
Brad	35	F	White and Black Caribbean	Teaching assistant
Brad	26	M	African	Customer Service Advisor
Brad	62	M	Pakistani	Check out operator
Brad	51	F	White British	Admin
Brad	32	M	White British	Video Editor
Brad	53	F	Indian	Playworker
Brad	46	M	White British	Finance Assistant
Brad	36	F	White British	Health Support Worker

As the focus groups were conducted online, members of the research team were able to observe the focus groups and ask questions to the moderator to ask the participants. The focus group moderator followed a tightly-packed schedule with themes similar to in-depth interviews. The plan included the following topics presented here in order of discussion:

— **Values:** we asked participants the most important things in their lives and then presented a whiteboard of values. These values were the one's frequently talked about in the in-depth interviews. We asked participants to select their three most important values. We then asked participants whether they believe people across class and race share these values. See to your right for the whiteboard of values shown to the participants.

Below is the whiteboard of values shown to participants

Values
1. **Compassion** – The importance of caring for and understanding each other
2. **Inclusion** – The importance of being free and not unfairly held back from opportunities
3. **Freedom** – The importance of being free and not unfairly held back from opportunities
4. **Mutual respect** – The importance of respecting people from all walks of life, regardless of skin colour or ethnicity
5. **Interconnectedness** – The importance of being and feeling connected with each other
6. **Stability** – The importance of feeling safe and secure in your commuity whatever situation you find yourself in
7. **Justice** – The importance of doing what's right and not exploiting or hurting others
8. **Live and let live** – The importance of tolerating others and others tolerating you
9. **Hard work** – The importance of working hard, whether we're doing paid, voluntary or caring work, putting effort and pride into what we do
10. **Solidarity** – The importance of being united and standing up for one another
11. **Fairness** – The importance of treating people fairly, without favour or prejudice

— **Community:** whether their local community is united or divided; whether these values are shared within their local communities and what are the types of things that bring people together; whether there are divisions within the community and what they might be, and the causes of said divisions, whether they are created or innate to societies.

— Understanding of class: we asked participants what they think it

means to be working class in Britain today and how they would define being working class. We also asked whether there are similar or different challenges working-class people might face. We then presented the following statement and invited participants to use ticks and crosses to indicate where they agree/disagree with the message: "what binds the working class together is the work we do – whether it's caring for loved ones, bringing home a wage, or looking out four our neighbours. Working-class people up and down this country, whatever our skin colour or ethnic background, are making our communities better places to live."

— **Elites:** we asked participants who comes to mind when they think about wealthy and powerful people; how people become very powerful and wealthy and whether ordinary people can get to such a position; and how they use their power. We also presented a list on a whiteboard of different types of elites. We asked participants to put ticks and crosses to understand which they liked/disliked. We also presented the first formulation of the divide-and-rule problem statement in the race class narrative messages. We invited participants to use ticks and crosses. We asked what they thought about the statement, whether they disagreed with any parts, and how they felt when they read it.

— **Change:** we asked people if they were the prime minister, what would they change? We discussed how society could be better than it is now, what problems they wish they could solve, and whether participants feel positive or negative about whether such changes are possible.

— **Kenmure street case:** we then presented an image. We explained that many people in a Glasgow community came together to stop two men from the community from being detained. They chanted, "these are our neighbours; let them go". Participants were asked what they think of this, whether they can imagine it happening in their community and if not, why they can't imagine it occurring.

4. Quantitative analysis: message testing and survey

With DialSmith, we conducted our survey and dial testing to test our messages and collect data on the public attitudes towards topics related to race and class. We used the Race Class Narrative method co-developed by ASO Communications, which looks at the British public through the audience groups of Base, Persuadable and Opposition. The survey reached 2,197 adults across the UK between August XX - XX, 2021. The survey contained several elements: demographic questions, segmentation questions, responses to policies and political ideas, attitudes towards civic engagement and then the message testing. There were 70 questions and approximately 16 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Each participant listened to the Opposition message, followed by the standard progressive message, and then one new race-class message. The survey used dial testing, which meant that while the participant hears the message being spoken aloud, the participant uses an online slider to give continuous, second-by-second feedback. This gives you real-time gut reactions that you can then use to probe deeper and refine your content. Afterwards, the participant was asked to recall what the message was about from memory. They were given a highlighter and asked to highlight what they liked/disliked. Lastly, participants were asked to score out of 10 on how believable they find the message, how much they support it and how likely they would share it. For the full results of the message testing, please look at our slide deck.

As referenced throughout the report, the study segments the audience into three groups: Base, Persuadable and Opposition. The segmentation is based solely on their attitudinal responses to race, class, and meritocracy questions. As you can see from the table below, the Base had to have chosen all the answers in green. The Perusadables had to select a mixture of red and green answers or 'don't know, and the Opposition had to choose all red statements. See the table on the following page for segmentation questions and answers.

Base	Persuadable	Opposition
Chose ALL green statements:	Chose mix of base, opposition or 'don't know' responses to these statements.	**Chose ALL red statements:**
People of colour (e.g. Black, Asian and minority ethnic people) face greater barriers to economic success than white people.		**People of colour (e.g. Black, Asian and minority ethnic people) who cannot get ahead are mostly responsible for their own situation.**
Wealthy people in the UK are wealthy because they were given more opportunities than others.		**Wealthy people in the UK are wealthy because they worked harder than others.**
Focusing on and talking about race is necessary to move toward greater equality.		**Continuing to address race is harmful as talking about it only creates division.**
If the working class struggles in our society it is because the rules are rigged against it.		**If the working class struggles in our society it is due to its own lack of effort or initiative.**

APPENDIX 2
Data considerations and limitations

As we mentioned in chapter 3, given the breadth of identities of working-class people in the UK and our relatively modest research reach, we were unable to draw firm conclusions about how the diverse working-class think or characterise any particular groups within the working class.

Although this report tries to acknowledge the complex nature of race and class, a larger sample would allow a fuller exploration of the intersections of race and class, in which we found other critical factors such as gender, sexuality, faith, origin, and language. Similarly, even the relatively more straightforward material aspect of social class is highly complex. The working class live in a range of material circumstances. To capture the range, one must contend with the breadth of experiences of different housing tenures, incomes, occupations, geographies, childhood circum-stances, education, social connections, etc.

We would also like to acknowledge that important topics are dealt with brevity in the Race Class Narrative Project at times. We are grappling with extensive issues that we endeavoured to explore at every research phase, such as race, ethnicity, racism, nationalism, colonialism and empire, origin, faith, class, power, elites, capitalism, gender, immigration meritocracy etc. This made for a jam-packed interview and focus group schedules, allowing

little time for deeper exploration of sensitive topics, leading to a better understanding. Moreover, many essential issues had to be left out.

Given CLASS's involvement in the London-based race class report, we wanted to extend and supplement the existing findings with a study outside London. We chose the locations of Cardiff/Rhyll, Bradford, and Wolverhampton as we tried to capture a range of localities across England and Wales. We decided to exclude Scotland from the qualitative study (though it is included in the survey). Other similar research has found that public attitudes towards immigration and people seeking asylum are significantly more positive than in England and Wales. Northern Ireland, on the other hand, was also excluded, given the different political dynamics. We landed on our four locations partly because covid-19 meant that on the ground recruitment practices were not taking place. Recruiting people of colour (who also met our specific class, gender, age, voting etc., quotas) in areas of over 80% white people was virtually impossible given our budget, time frame and lack of on the ground recruitment practices. For example, recruiters at Survation were unable to find sufficient participants in Rhyll, so it had to be extended to Cardiff.

Due to limited resources, we were only able to test three messages. Rather than test three messages with different content, we decided to test three variations of the divide-and-rule narrative arc in order to be able to compare what language is more effective. The former would have been impossible to judge whether it is the language or the content causing differing results. A consequence of this is that much of what needs to be said about race and class in the UK we were unable to test. In the same vein, we know from other research that the messenger (the person/medium communicating the message) can significantly influence the persuasiveness of the message. Again, we would have required a larger budget to test the same message in different voices, which we did not have. We opted for a man's voice with a 'middle-class' southern English accent. We felt this to be the most 'neutral' because it sounds like a familiar voice you might hear on a news channel or politician- in part. After all, white middle-class southern men are overrepresented in the mainstream media and politics.

Lastly, we were limited in our analysis of our quantitative study due to the sample size of our survey. Although we reached over 2000 people, this was not always sufficient to be able to analyse the data by multiple factors. The sample was segmented into three groups: Base, Persuadable and Opposition. Given the Base was 30% of the sample and the Opposition just 10%, this made for relatively small groups. The message testing was then a three-way split sample (every participant saw just one of the three RCN messages), making the sample of Base who saw Future Generations message, for example, even smaller. However, we were able to look at each group's reaction to the message by their class (i.e. persuadable working-class and upper-middle-class Base) or by their ethnicity (i.e. Black (Black British/African/Caribbean) Base, white Persuadable). However, the sample was too small to look at segmentation x ethnicity x class to a particular message. In chapters 2 and 4 of the report, we refer to 'Persuadable people of colour.' Only by adding all participants of colour together could we reach the minimum threshold to perform statistical tests. Moreover, our white 'other', mixed-race, Arab and Chinese samples were too small to look at separately.

APPENDIX 3 | Research Recommendations

In light of the above, we propose several recommendations for further research that is both timely and necessary for shifting public attitudes towards race and class.

Building upon the 4Ps framework, we strongly recommend further qualitative research on a larger scale into the lived experiences and perceptions of the diverse working-class using an intersectional lens. There is only a handful of literature looking at the intersections of race and class and few social research studies dedicated to understanding a contemporary working class.

Such work, in part, is necessary to begin to ground an understanding of class that is useful and makes sense of the experiences of working-class communities and people. We would also like to carry out further research understanding the dynamics of race and class across geographies (i.e., looking at regional divisions between rural villages, towns and cities), whether there are differences and similarities in experience and perception, as the language of 'levelling up' potentially increases the intensity of geographic divides.

Moreover, as we have alluded to in this modest study, an intersectional class analysis is at best latent in the public consciousness. Further research is needed on how best to communicate class vocabulary. For example, to find out whether the working-class term is more or less

effective. Our study tested some terminology, finding that people associate the working class with the Labour party more readily and working people with the Conservative Party. However, without further research, we cannot know whether people identify with the working class or such language perpetuates a politics of 'always talking about someone else.'

As we have touched upon briefly in the previous section, research is urgently required into messengers. We are keen to compare at least the impact of different voices, regional accents, ages, classes and genders.

Since the inception of this project, the UK has seen a concerted attack on the rights of LGBT+ people, with an unrelenting campaign against trans-gender people in the media and delays over banning conversion therapy. This has come hand-in-hand with a rise in hate crimes against LGBT+ people. It is clear to us that the LGBT+ community and its supporters are being subsumed into the "wokemob" umbrella, and their rights threatened. Clearly more research is needed to understand this phenomenon and how our findings in the UK Race Class Narrative project could help defeat these homophobic and transphobic attacks.

We recognise the specific nature of the messaging, which is to communi-cate the racialised and classist scapegoating of the wealthy and powerful few acting against the working class's common interest. We need more message testing to understand how to communicate other class-race related challenges, for example, educational inequality, racial justice, universal basic services, health and social care, tax reform, wages, workers and unions, protesting and policing, transgender justice, Islamophobia and immigrant rights. To name but a few! We aspire this UK Race Class Narrative project to grow in size and capacity as in the US.

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