

Abstract

This research examines the intricate dynamics of leaderless organising within social movements, with a focus on the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement in the UK. Employing an ethnographic approach, the study explores the emergence, structure, and strategic tactics of BLM's leaderless model. Grounded in Critical Race Theory, the research aims to elucidate how the movement has achieved significant momentum and sustained action without traditional hierarchical leadership. Ultimately, the findings will deepen the understanding of leaderless organising in contemporary social movements, offering valuable insights into the potential for collective action and transformative social change beyond conventional leadership models.

Introduction

Critical Race Theory (CRT) offers a profound framework for analysing race and racism within social movements, revealing the intricacies of racial dynamics and the mechanisms through which systemic racism is both challenged and perpetuated (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Central to CRT is the assertion that racism is not merely a matter of individual prejudice but rather a deeply embedded system of power that permeates legal, social, political, and economic institutions (Gillborn, 2008). CRT posits that racism is not an aberration but a normalised feature of society, influencing institutions, policies, and social interactions (Bell, 1995). This study applies CRT to understand the leaderless organising of the Black Lives Matter movement in the UK, highlighting the role of interpersonal trust in collective decision-making processes.



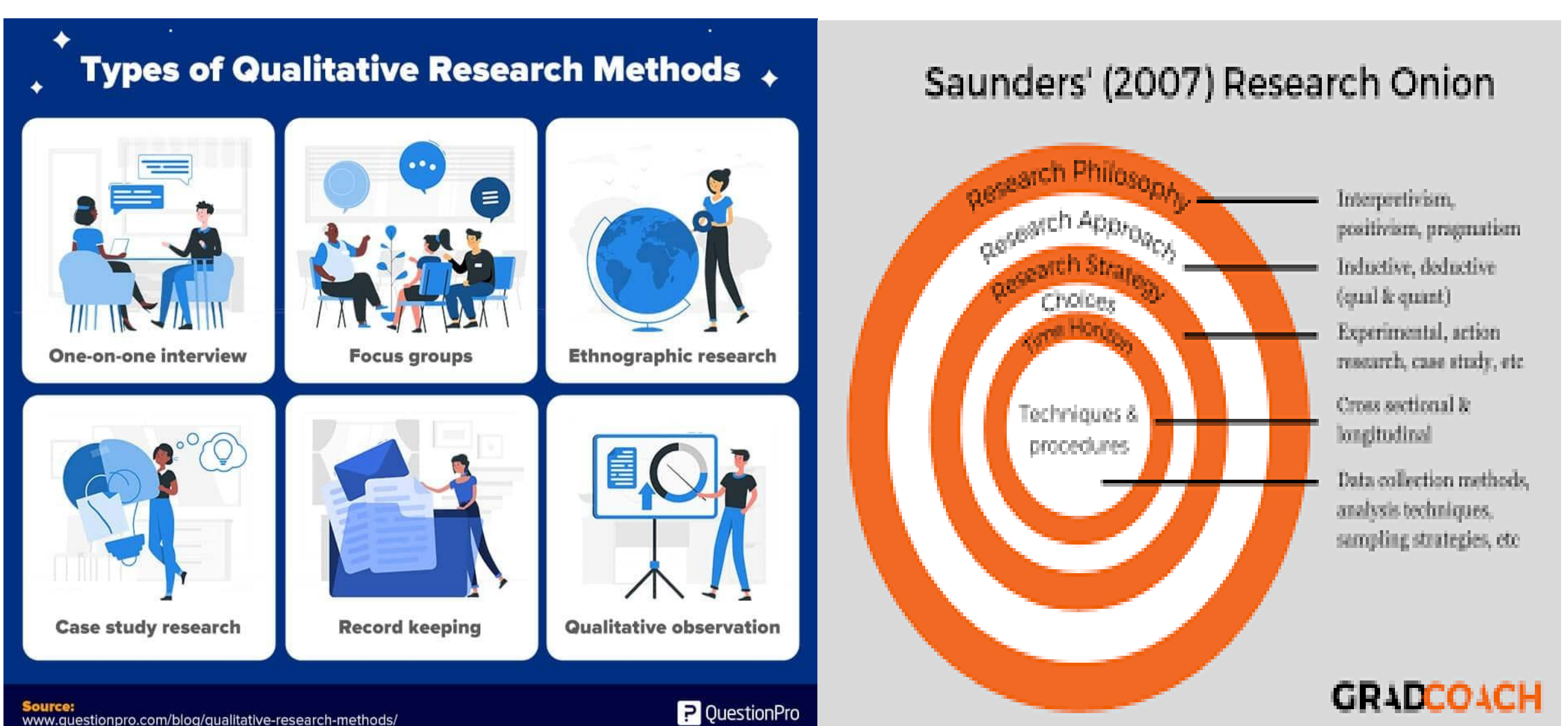
Research Questions

1. How do the principles of Critical Race Theory explain the strategies and narratives employed in the leaderless organising of the Black Lives Matter movement in the UK?
2. How does interpersonal trust affect and shape the decision-making processes within leaderless social movements, particularly Black Lives Matter UK?



Methodology

This study employs an ethnographic approach to investigate the leaderless organising within the BLM UK movement. Methods include participant observation, in-depth interviews, and analysis of organisational documents and social media content. The research will focus on how interpersonal trust facilitates collective decision-making processes and supports the distribution of leadership within the movement. Data will be analysed using thematic analysis, guided by the principles of Critical Race Theory, to identify key patterns and themes related to trust and decision-making.



Limitations

- First, due to the complex and dynamic nature of leaderless organising, there may be limitations in capturing the full range of factors and dynamics that influence these social movements.
- Second, the limitations of the research include the potential difficulty in obtaining primary data from Black Lives Matter UK participants due to concerns over privacy or security, as well as the potential for researcher bias in interpreting qualitative data (Maxwell, 2012).



Figure 1. BLACK LIVES MATTER UK.



Figure 2. EXTINCTION REBELLION UK



Figure 3. OCCUPY LONDON

Conclusions & Expected Findings

The findings of the research aims to uncover the impact of leaderless organising on the BLM movement's ability to achieve its social change agenda. The study expects to provide insights into the complexities and opportunities associated with leaderless organising within social movements, contributing to a deeper understanding of decentralised leadership and its implications for social change efforts.

References

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