
Integrating intersectional action for change

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Overview

- Thinking about intersectionality
- Intersectionality in action
- Systems in higher education
- Narrative, journey and mapping
- Acting on intersectionality

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What does intersectionality mean?

History

- A **metaphor** surfaced by Black feminist scholars in 1980s ([Crenshaw, 1989](#))
- Articulated that the Black women who experienced domestic violence in the States were exposed to gender **AND** racial discrimination in the social and legal systems in which they sought liberation.
- **Multiple** disadvantages

Intersectionality

“think of an LGBT African-American woman and a heterosexual white woman who are both working class. They “do not experience the same levels of discrimination, even when they are working within the same structures that may locate them as poor,” Carty and Mohanty explained, because one can experience homophobia and racism at the same time. While the other may experience gender or class discrimination, “her whiteness will always protect and insulate her from racism.” ([Coleman, 2019](#))

Race and intersectionality

- Intersectionality stems from anti-racist and critical race theory literature and evidence.
- Metaphor that serves to be critical bridges between histories, identities, structure and systems.
- Centres race inequities and inequalities for analysis and action.

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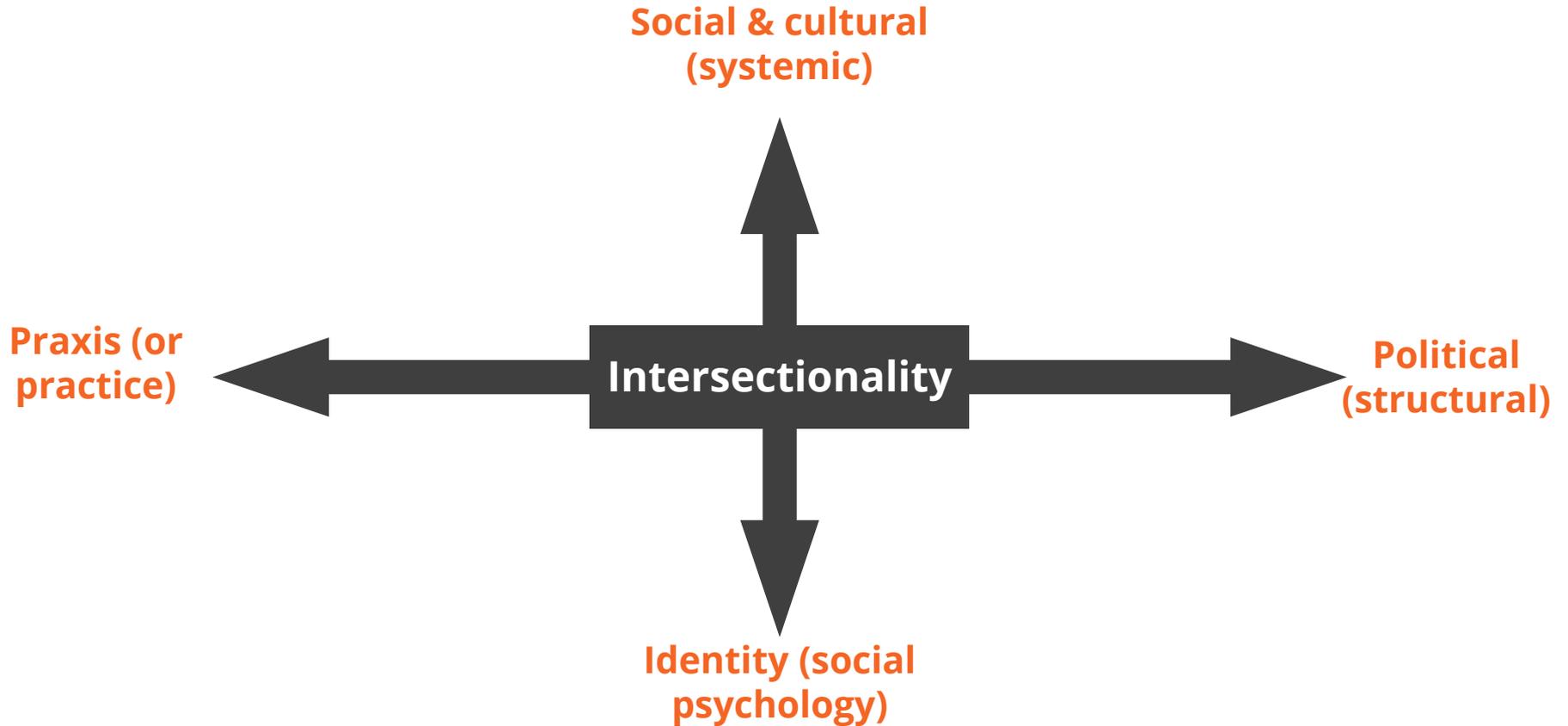
**How do we make sense of
intersectionality?**



Issues with intersectionality

- Competition of inequalities
 - 'And' rather than 'or'
 - Mysticism
 - Skepticism
 - Focus on Identities
 - Implementation
-

INTERSECTIONALITY AND POSITIONING



Higher education systems

Higher education structures

“It’s not in the universities’ interest and nationally people don’t want to see this kind of discussion take place because it requires us to revisit the UK’s relationship with empire and have an honest conversation about race construction and racism which is very different than what we are told and taught. The British empire and European imperialism was founded on a white supremacist ideology which exploited the bodies and labour of Black and brown people in the colonies. Decolonising is about de-centring Eurocentric knowledge production. It’s acknowledgement of alternative forms and centres of knowledge and contribution to the world, especially from revolutionary academics and thinkers who aren’t old white, middle-aged men” ([Batty 2020](#))

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Reflect

**What does colonialism
mean to you in higher
education settings?**

UK universities condemned for failure to tackle racism

Guardian investigation reveals widespread evidence of discrimination in higher education

'A demeaning environment': stories of racism in UK universities



June 27, 2019 8.42am BST

Statue of Cecil Rhodes, Oriel College, Oxford. Steve Parsons/PA Archive/PA Images

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"So how's it going at work?" It's a common question. The question which normally opens a nice warm catch up betw friends. But if you are a non-white academic, the question

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Navigating Institutional Racism in British Universities

Authors: Sian, Katy

Free Preview

Uses critical auto-ethnography alongside rich qualitative interview data
Provides a new and important addition to the growing international literature on the experiences of BME academics in universities
Utilizes critical race and postcolonial feminist theory

There is still too much racism at universities

Comment



Faima Bakar Monday 16 Mar 2020 7:12 am

Analysis | It is high time British universities took institutional racism seriously

Last week's EHRC report into Racism in UK Higher Education paints a horrifying picture of depth and scale of institutional racism in British Universities. It is sadly a missed opportunity writes Clive James Nwonka.

WHITE WORLD: UNDERSTANDING RACISM



Institutional racism in British universities

Staff experience

**Student
experience**

**Research
systems**

**Teaching
systems**

Pedagogy

Implementation

-Academic
-Non-academic
-Contract

-Undergraduate
-PG taught
-PG research
-
Social/societies

-Research
funding
-Research
contracts
-Research
excellence
-Research
collabs

-Teaching
funding
-Teaching
contracts
-Teaching
excellence
-Teaching
collabs

-University
identity
-Curriculum
design
-Professionalism

-Governance
-Operations
-Strategy

Principles of action

Principles

- Intersecting inequalities
- Voice and experience
- Inclusion
- Evidence
- Collaboration
- Participation

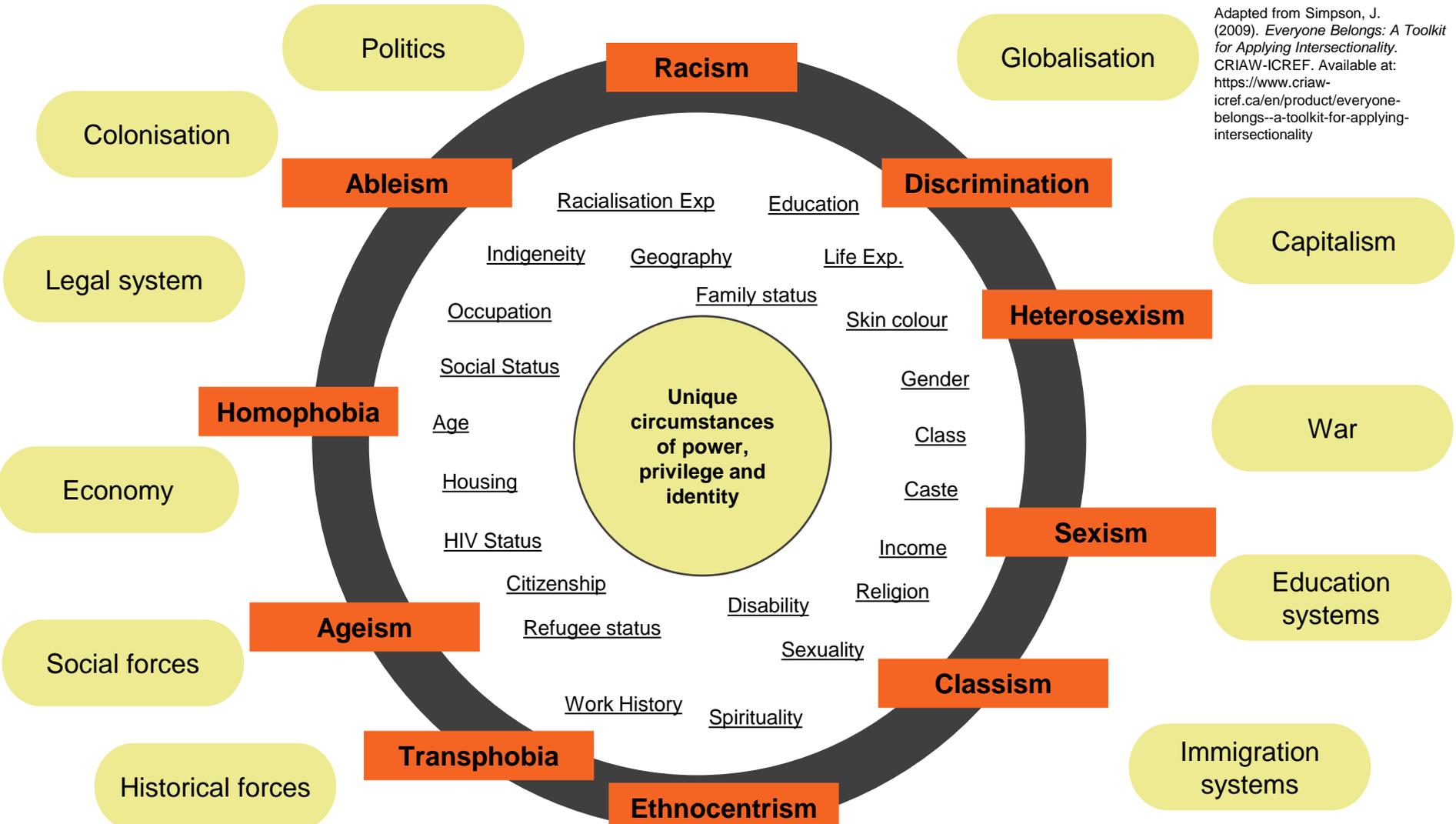
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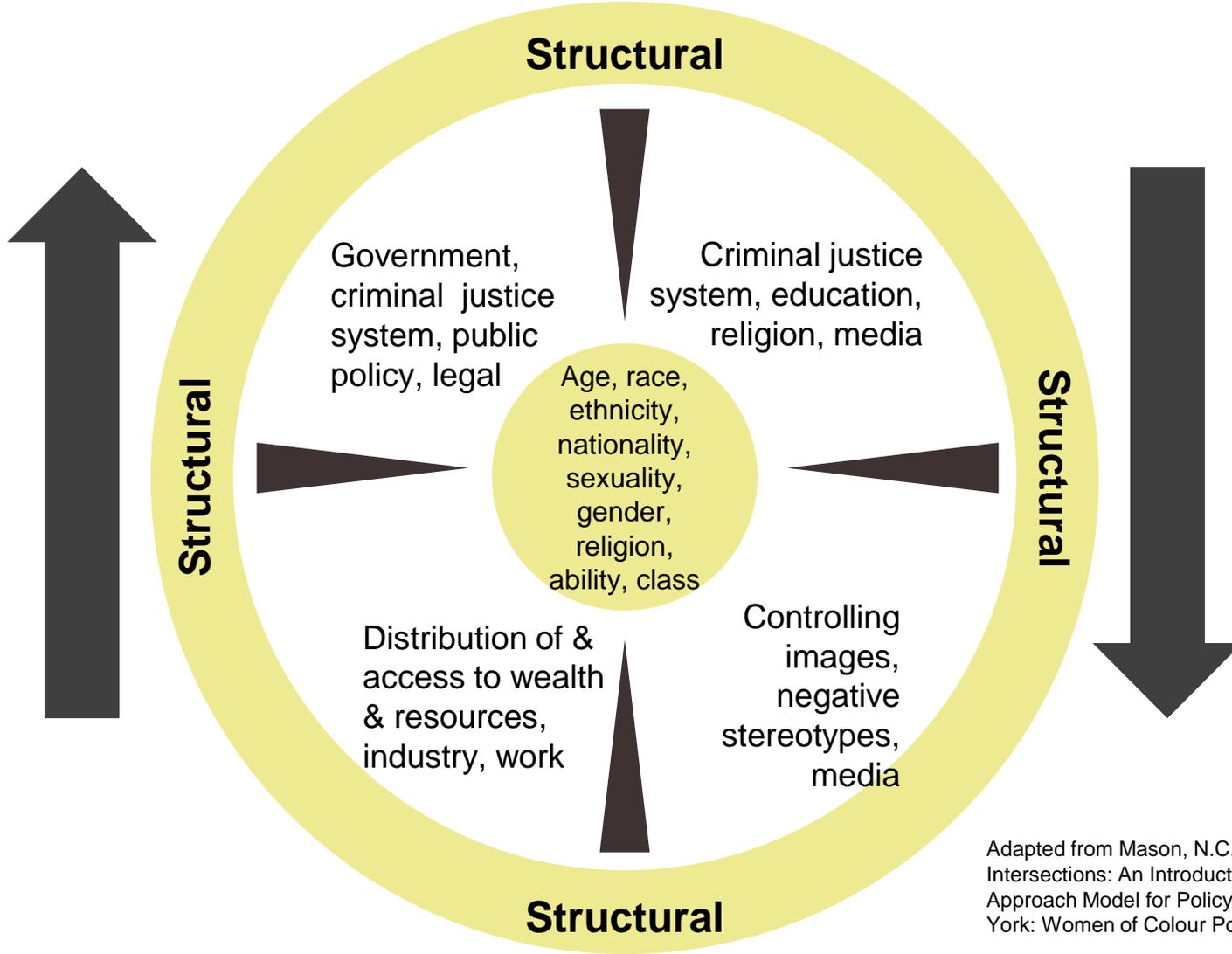
**How do we go from
metaphor to intervention?**





Adapted from Simpson, J. (2009). *Everyone Belongs: A Toolkit for Applying Intersectionality*. CRIAW-ICREF. Available at: <https://www.criaw-icref.ca/en/product/everyone-belongs--a-toolkit-for-applying-intersectionality>





Adapted from Mason, N.C. (2010). *Leading at the Intersections: An Introduction to the Intersectional Approach Model for Policy & Social Change*. New York: Women of Colour Policy Network.

Narrative, journey and mapping

Narrative

- Big stories
- Small stories
- Positioning



Journey mapping

- Method deriving from diaries
- Typically used in commercial, marketing and technology fields
- Evidence to inform product and service design

Education journey mapping

“Education Journey Maps moved beyond ‘a sense of the physical spaces that we traverse through, (instead) maps can shed light on the ways in which we traverse, encounter, and construct racial, ethnic, gendered, and political boundaries’ (Powell, 2010, p. 553). In this research, Education Journey Maps allowed for interrogating the space between individuals and social structures” ([Annamma, 2016](#))

Journeys and intersectionality

- Journeys are filled with stories, moments, experiences, voices and spaces.
- Complement the complexity of intersectionality
- Journey points can enable effective intervention and action

Turning and pain points

- Turning points can be described as moments in which a journey changes for an individual and/or community. These can be significant life, societal or even political events.
- Pain points are the challenges or barriers that an individual faces through their journey.



Intervention design

Opportunities for action

- Identifying opportunities in a journey for intervening and acting upon can nurture change.
- Understanding the histories of people can help inform how we move forward to celebrating diversity and enabling inclusion.

Intervention design

Discover

Is the evidence/theory underpinning the intervention intersectional? Does the data reflect different voices, experiences and structures? Are there opportunities to influence those to invest in the intervention?

Define

Is the definition of the action, intervention meeting the requirements of the most marginalised and deprived?

Develop

Is the development of the intervention/action developed with others? Is it participatory?

Deliver

Is the delivery and implementation of the action/intervention reflective of the previous phases?

Example

- Micro-aggressions in higher education from a staff perspective
- Interventions might include the following:
 - Training
 - Reverse mentoring
 - Reporting system for microaggressions

Is this right?

- Continuously engage in critical reflection on the design and delivery of any intervention to advance race equality:
 - Is this appropriate?
 - Is it acceptable?
 - Is this feasible?
 - What is the cost?
 - Can this be sustained?
 - How will it embed in the institutional system?

	Training	Reverse mentoring	Reporting
<p>Intersectionality considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the training refer to intersectionality? • Does it refer to multiple intersecting identities and their experiences? • Does it account for the higher education structure where staff could seek help? • Is the training generic or bespoke to the institution? • Does the training take into account the histories of how racial aggressions have evolved? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the mentors supported and safeguarded during challenging conversations? • How are mentees positioned? • Is the relationship transactional or transformative? • How are the mentees positioned in this relationship? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the reporting system speak to those experience multiple intersecting inequalities? (i.e. does it consider their characteristics, is there opportunity for the staff to receive feedback on what happened, are support bespoke to the needs of the individual met?) • Can reporting take a multi-agency approach? • Who will be held to account on ensuring a complaint is dealt with fairly?

Breakout Rooms

Breakout rooms

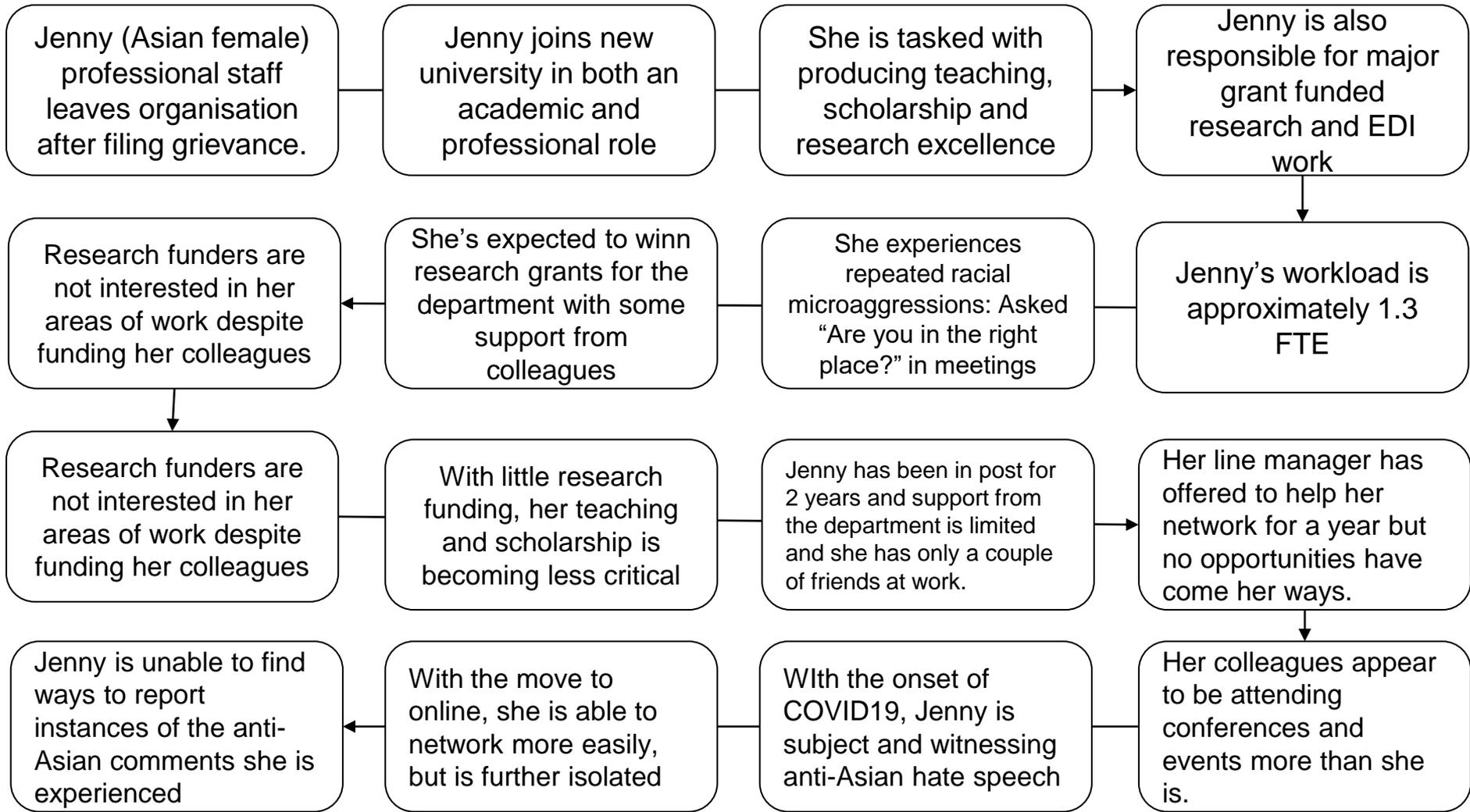
- 1 staff journey
- 1 student journey

Discussion points

- What are the turning points for the staff and/or student?
- What are the pain points for the staff and/or student?
- What inequalities are these individuals experiencing?

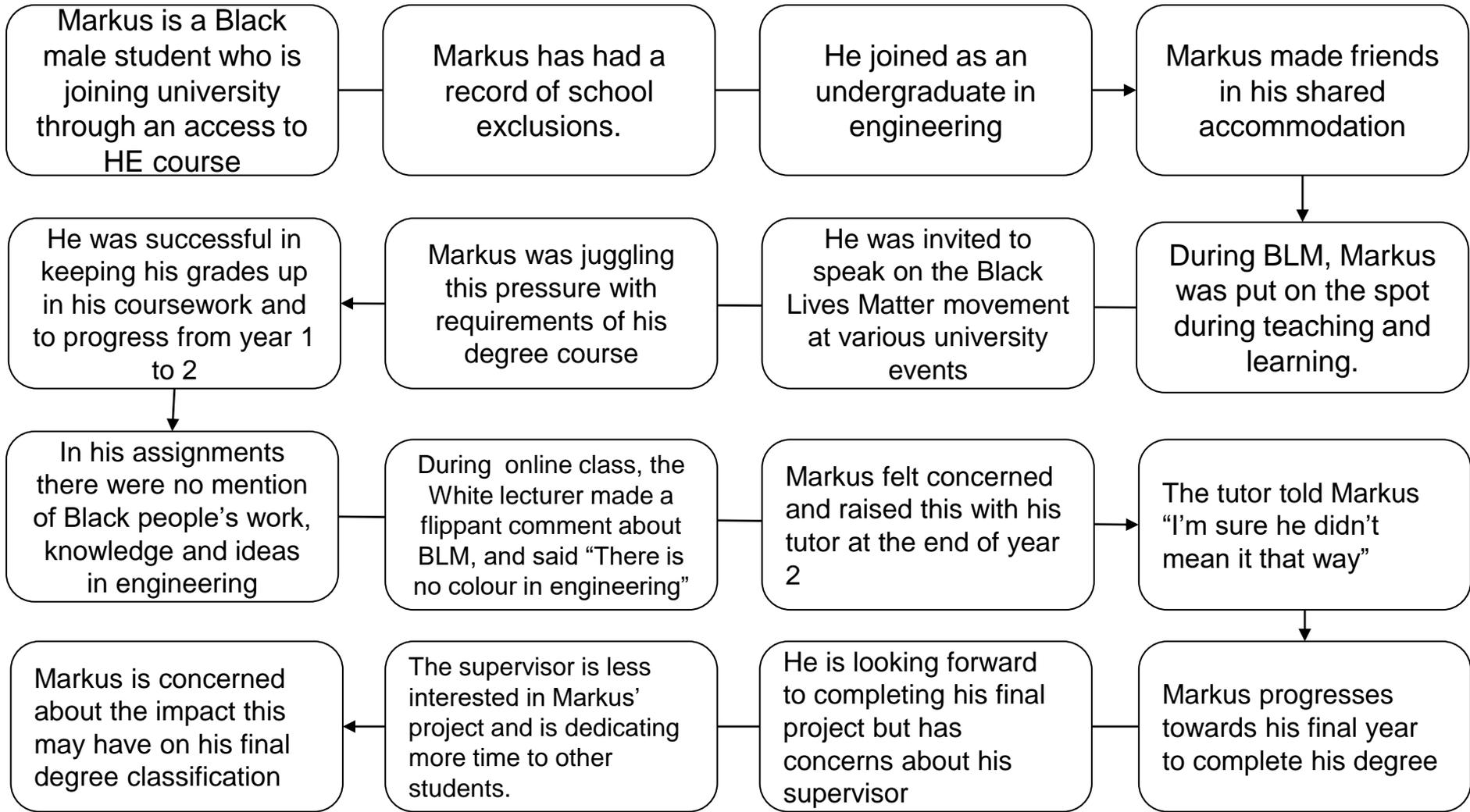
Staff Journey

- Based on collated stories from within HE
- Anonymised and de-identified



Student Journey

- Based on evidence and data from schools and higher education.
- Compiled from three students' journey's in higher education



Discussion points

- What are the turning points for the staff and/or student?
- What are the pain points for the staff and/or student?
- What inequalities are these groups facing? How do they intersect?
- What possible interventions might you consider to address these pain points?
- How might they be intersectional?

Messages

- Understand the journey's communities make before, during and after higher education
- Intersectionality is less about theorising, more about action
- Draw on innovation and design tools to make changes to the system

Thank you

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