



Black Communities and Lived Experiences



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Faculty of Business and Law

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Social justice, Equality, Inclusion, Social mobility



My background...



- **Associate Professor in Learning and Teaching**
- Deputy Head of Subject Group Business Systems & Operations
- Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy
- Co-Lead - Inclusion, Diversity and Special Education SIG, Centre for Education and Research
- **Centre for the Advancement of Racial Equality**
- Deputy director of the Systems, Analytics and Business Intelligence (SABI) Research Group
- External Examiner for Open University & Staffordshire university
- QAA Assessor
- Contributing Writer to Times Higher Education | Author | EDI Trainer

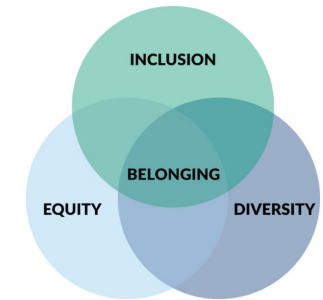
Dr Patrice Seuwou

Selected Publications:

- Seuwou, P (2023) Ten Actions Universities in the UK can take to improve the experiences of their Black students *Times Higher Education*. (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/ten-actions-improve-experiences-black-students-within-uk-universities>)
- Seuwou, P, Sarwar, D, Pilkington (2023) The Lived Experience of Black International Students at a Post-1992 University in England: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of Academic Resilience, INTED 2023 conference
- Seuwou, P, Sarwar, D, Pilkington (2022) A Phenomenological Exploration of the Holistic Experiences of Students of African Descent at a Post-1992 University in England, ICERI2022 Proceedings ISBN: 978-84-09-45476-1
- Dzineku, C & Seuwou, P (2022), 'Action to improve diversity and inclusion for Black students and staff' *Times Higher Education*. <<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus/action-improve-diversity-and-inclusion-black-students-and-staff>>
- Seuwou, P, Dodzo, N., Osho, Y., Ajaefobi, W., Sarwar, D, Pilkington, A & Daye, M (2022), Exploring the Factors that Impact on BAME students Attainment at a Post-1992 University in England, *Studies in Education journal (under Peer review process)*
- Seuwou, P, Dodzo, N., Osho, Y., Ajaefobi, W., Sarwar, D, Pilkington, A & Daye, M (2022), Widening Participation in HE: Exploring the Factors that Impact on BAME students Attainment at a Post-1992 University in England, *Proceedings of EDULEARN22 Conference 4th-6th July 2022, Palma, Mallorca, Spain ISBN: 978-84-09-42484-9*
- Seuwou, P., Ajani, R. (2022) 'Experiences and Challenges of Africans Diaspora in Great Britain and their Role in the Future Development of Africa', *African Development Perspectives: A Holistic Reflection*, Austin Macauley Publishers

Background & Motivations

- Higher education (HE) has the potential to improve the lives of the disadvantaged by enhancing social mobility (Vignoles and Murray, 2016).
- Key reformers: Wilhelm von Humboldt (1810); Cardinal John Henry Newman (1852)
- 605,100 international students (UK Parliament)
- A single cohort of international students contributes £25.9 billion net.
- The 1963 Lord Robbins report
- The 1997 Lord Dearing Report
- The 2021 Sewell report: Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities
- Substantial inequalities still persist throughout the student lifecycle



Teaching Boot and Shoe students
Northampton College of Technology c.1950's



Technical drawing
Northampton School of Art 1959



Senior Typing Class, 1960
Northampton College of Technology



Students relaxing by the Brampton
Building, School of Health 1992



CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

*Once upon a time the
University would have served
the county
of Northamptonshire's needs....*

Within the last ten years, we've seen...

- Increasing competition
- A growing number Black students on campus coming from London



Our UK domiciled FT undergraduate students identify ethnically as 55% white, 28.7% Black and Black British, 7.3% Asian and Asian British, 6.3% identify as other ethnicities or as being of mixed ethnicity, and the ethnic identity of 2.3% is unknown.

A timeline showing African descent migration to Britain

Inspired from the work of historian **David Olusoga**

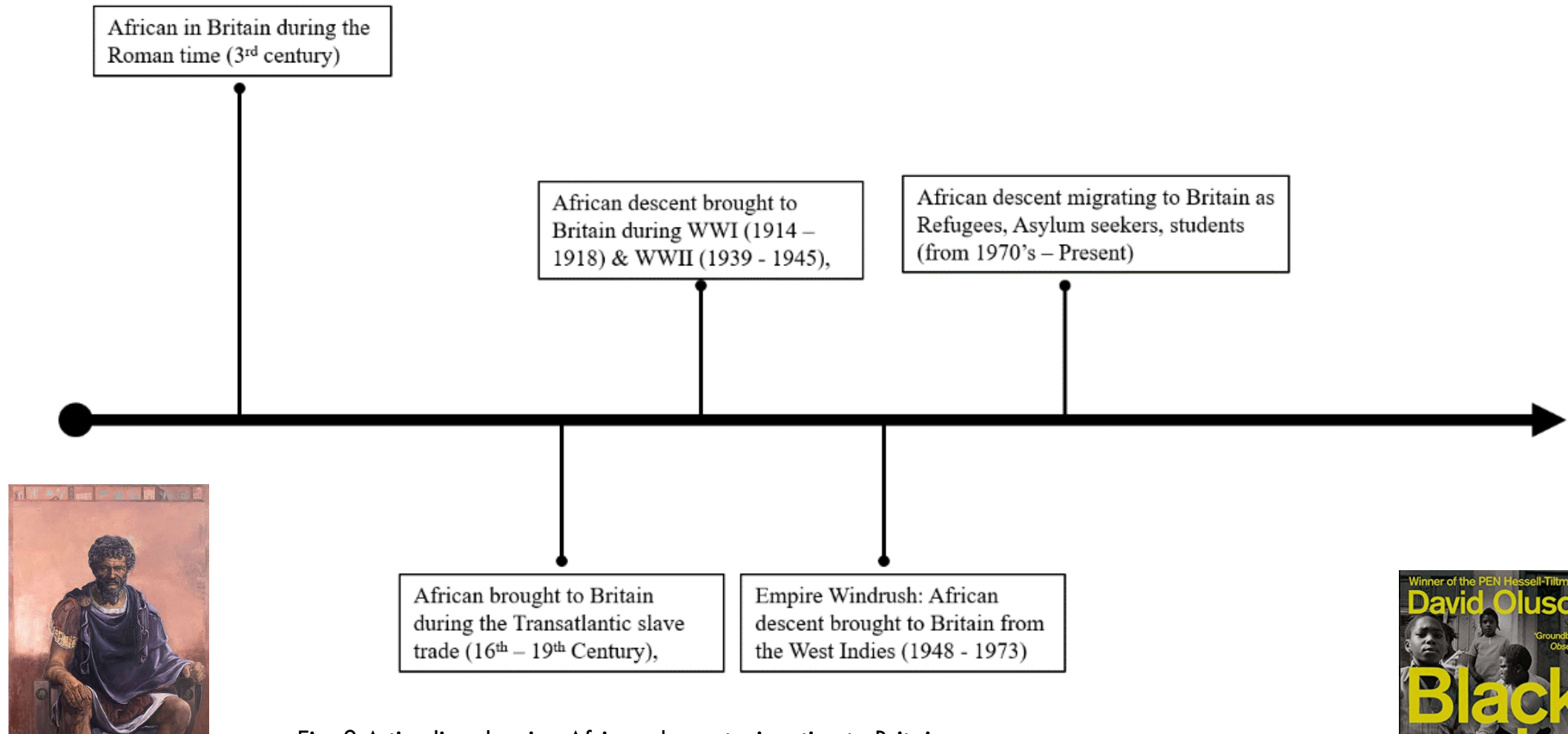
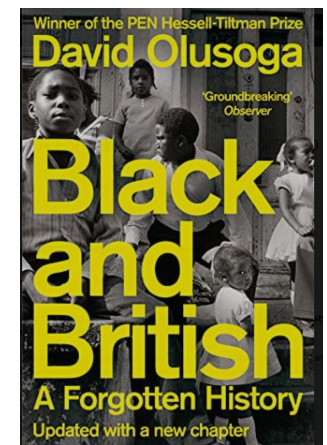


Fig. 2 A timeline showing African descent migration to Britain (Seuwou & Ajani, 2022)



According to the 2021 Census, the total population of England and Wales was 59.6 million, and 81.7% of the population was white.

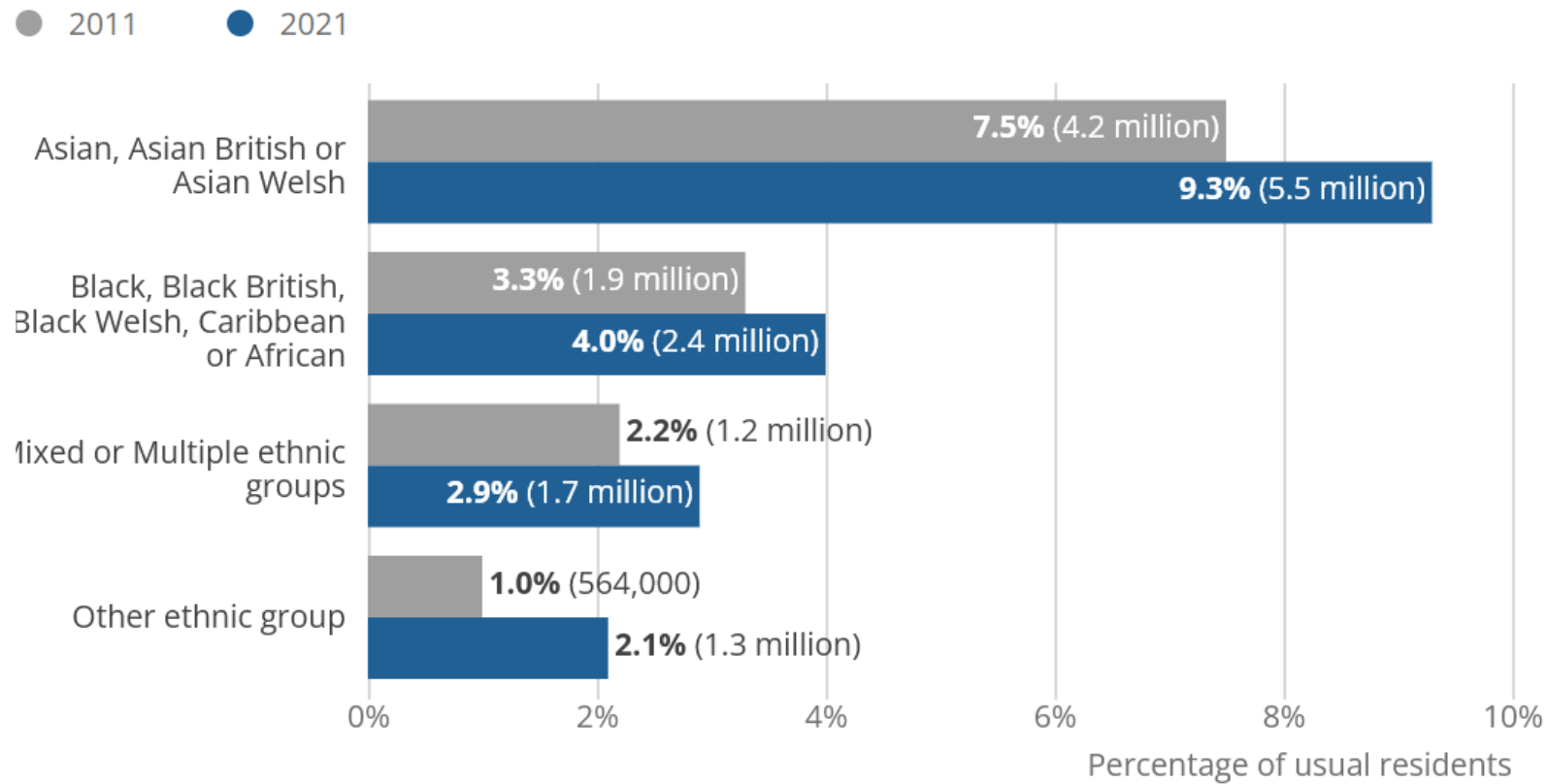


Fig 3. Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021
Ethnic group distribution (high-level categories), 2011 and 2021, England and Wales



Black communities: Not a homogenous group

- Black British students born in the UK (2nd 3rd and 4th Generation)
- Black British students born in Africa (1st Gen)*
- Black British students born in the Caribbean (1st Gen)
- Mixed race and Other Black background
- African Students
- Caribbean students

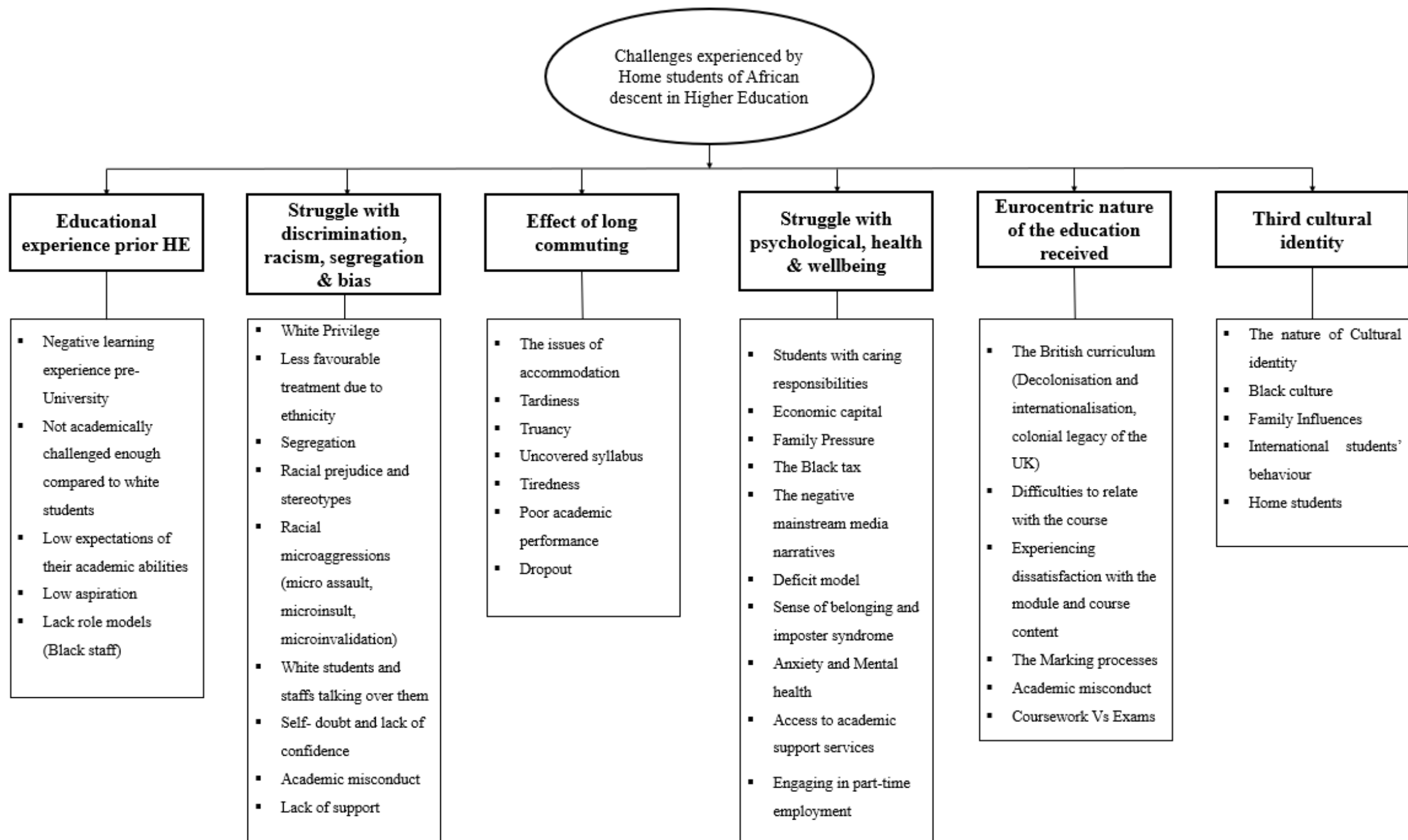
Challenges Faced by Black Students in HE

- Racism and discrimination
- Financial difficulties
- Deficit model
- Cultural adjustment
- Different education systems and assessment standards for international students
- Accommodation living black
- Academic misconduct offences
- Access to university services
- Mental health issues



Video

[Yale Study Shows Pre-School Teachers Single Out Black Boys The Most! \(1:36 mins\)](#)



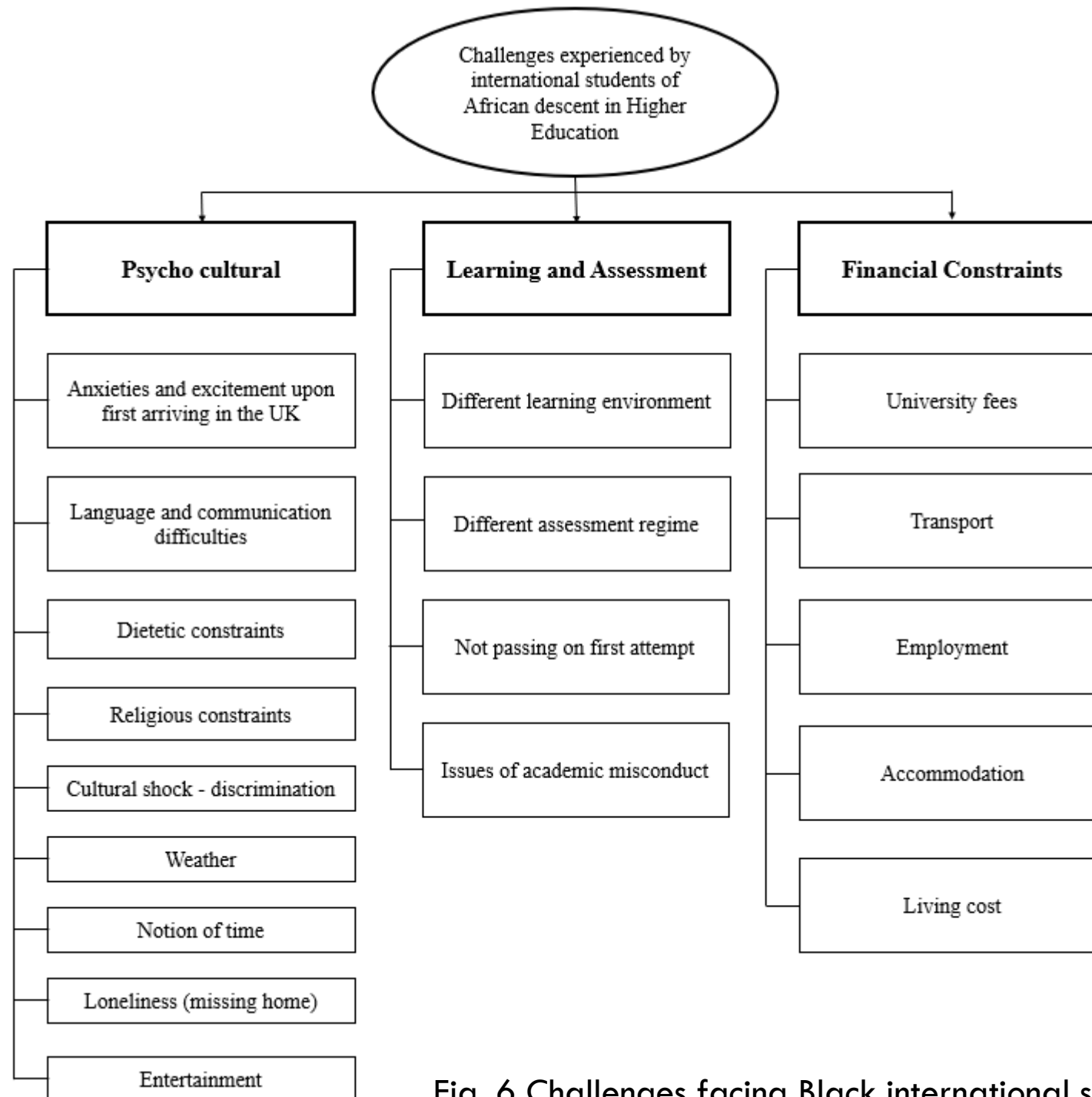


Fig. 6 Challenges facing Black international students

Effect of long Commuting

- Lack of accommodation locally
- Cost of accommodation
- Need to live with family member
- Care responsibilities

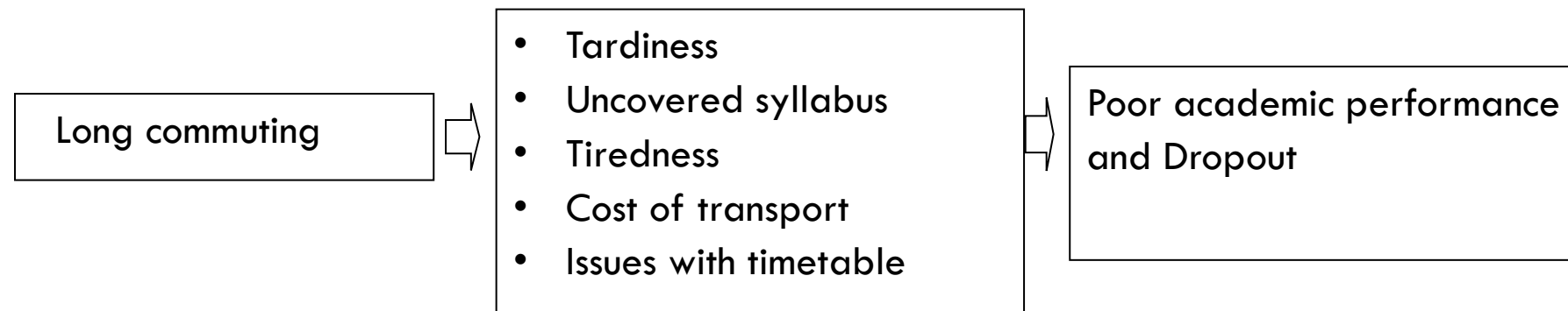


Fig. 5 Effect of long Commuting

Discrimination, racism and Self-doubt

- Black students continuously experience, **fight against and bear emotional scars from racism**, which can lead to **increased anxiety** and **poor mental health outcomes**.
- **Less favourable** treatment due to ethnicity
- No perception of **overt racism** (note of caution)
- Modification of personal behaviour **to 'fit' in**
- **White students or staffs talking over you.**
- **Code-switching**



[Subconscious racial bias in children](#) (3.54 mins)

Met has 'nowhere to hide' after damning Casey report, say campaigners

20 March 2023



📍 Louise Casey arriving at Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre for the press briefing of her review on 20 March. Photograph: WPA/Getty Images



- Dame Louise Casey's 300-page report found institutional misogyny, racism and homophobia persists within Britain's biggest police force.
- The report was commissioned by the Met in the wake of the kidnap, rape and murder of [Sarah Everard](#) by the serving police officer Wayne Couzens.
- Andrea Simon, director of the End Violence Against Women Coalition, said: "This damning report leaves the Met nowhere to hide when it comes to the depth of its problems with institutional misogyny, racism and homophobia.
- "There is however a long history of such revelations about the Met – including on undercover policing stretching back to the 1980s and beyond, to the findings of the [Macpherson report](#), and numerous police inspectorate reports since – we demand that today's report finally initiates a tangible shift in the operation of policing in the UK. If not now, then when and at what cost?"

Decolonisation/Internationalisation of Curriculum



- Decolonizing goes beyond just changing the content of university curricula. It's about adding voices in a way that connects to existing debates.
- Have marginalised voices been erased or hidden in plain sight?

In March 2016, students at Oxford University called for the removal of a statue of Cecil Rhodes and for education to be decolonised.

Black People Representation in the Media



Key Observations

- Black students find it **difficult to relate to the large proportion of course content and references used on some programmes.**
- Students sighted examples of what they considered as intentional and unintentional **'microaggressions' prior to coming to university and during their time at the university.**
- A noticeable **lack of Black staff representation** in most departments
- Academic support services **not diverse in staff**, however, very helpful to those who see them.
- Links between **family responsibilities, socio-economic background** and effects of **commuting** on attainment

The Impact Of Racism On Mental Health:

Feeling disconnected / lonely

Increase risk of depression and anxiety

Second-guessing things

Decreased hope
(in the future, justice, the government etc.)

Trauma
(both from the present and triggering past instances / generational trauma)

Increased
"Survival Mode"

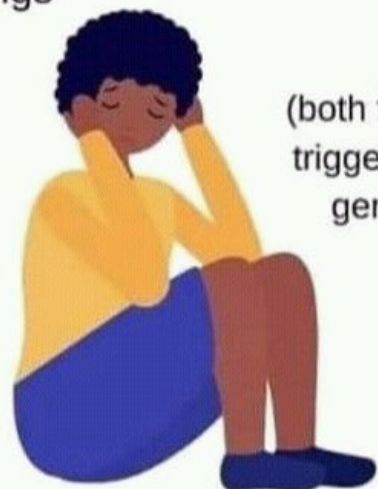
Existential
questioning
"How can the world be so cruel?"

Decreased trust

Worry

Feelings of powerlessness
(You can do the right thing and still end up with a horrific outcome)

Panic



#BlackLivesMatter

@RealDepressionProject



IF WE WANT TO ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH

WE NEED TO dig deeper

@ALYSERURIANI

Socio-cultural needs unmet

Participants identified barriers that they believed impacted upon their ability to engage fully with the rigours of university study

All three barriers or factors can be explained through relatedness and autonomy.

1. Experiencing **dissatisfaction** with the **module and course content**,
2. Having **caring responsibilities** Engaging in **part-time employment**.
3. The mainstream **media narratives**

Links between family responsibilities, socio-economic background (“**black tax**”)

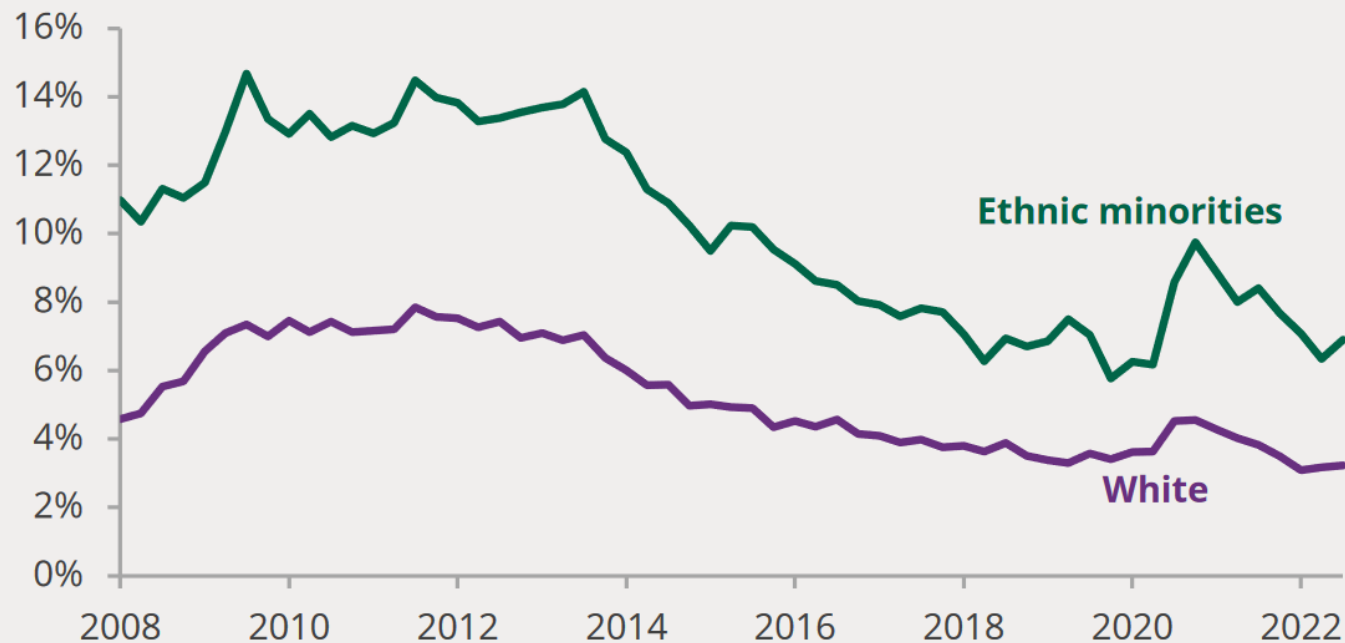


Job Applicants With ‘Black Names’ Still Less Likely to Get Interviews

Employers aren't treating identical resumes equally, new research finds.

Unemployment rate by ethnic background: UK, 2008-2022

People aged 16+, not seasonally adjusted



According to Diversity UK, the employment rate for ethnic minorities is only **62.8%** compared with an employment rate for White workers of **75.6%** – a gap of over 12 percentage points.

Source: ONS, UK labour market, August 2022

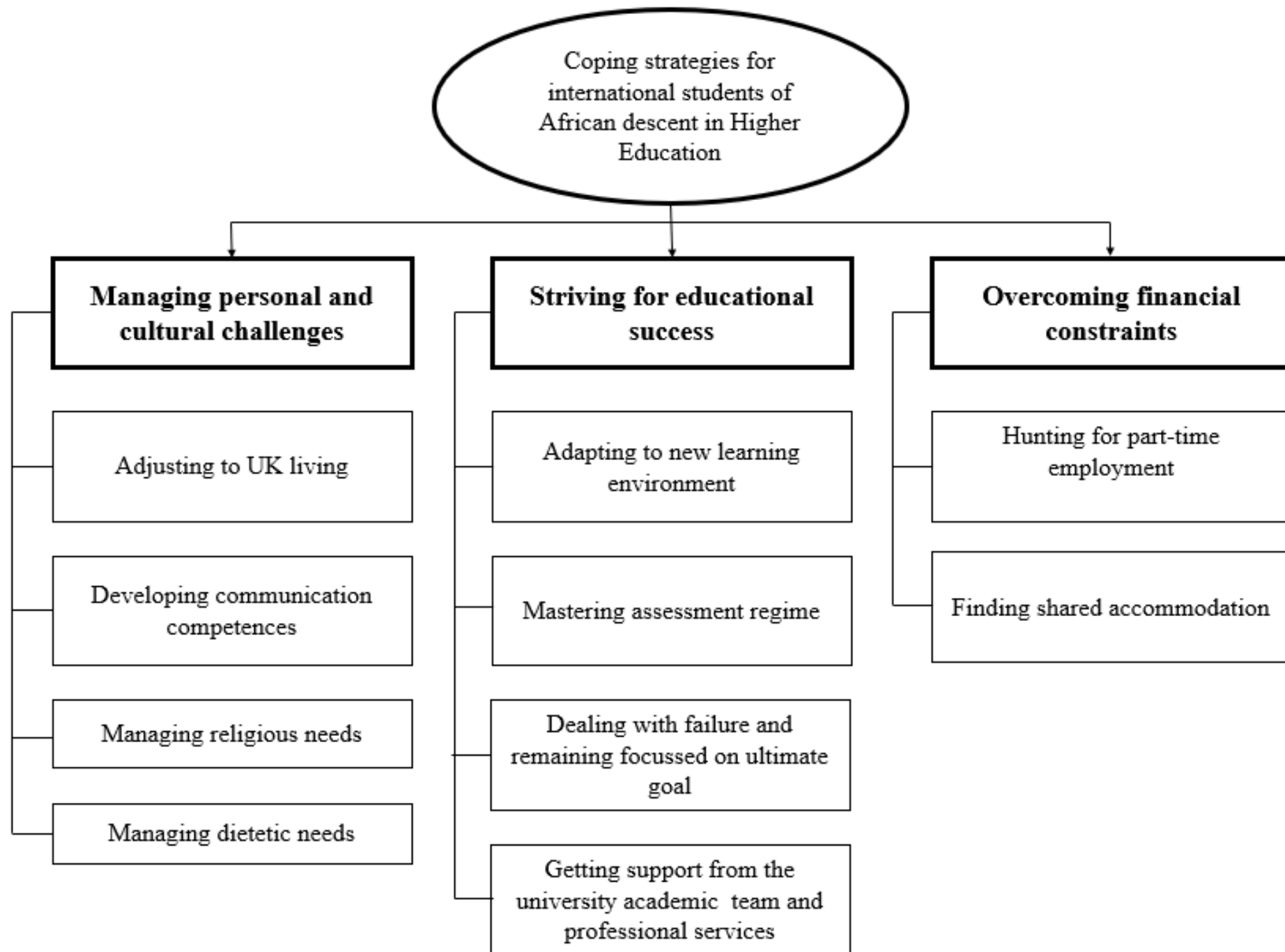


Fig 6. Coping strategies for international students.

Actions to improve the experiences of Black students in the library

- Educate yourselves on race-related issues, history and culture
- **Diversify the library's collections:** Ensure that the library's collections are diverse and inclusive, with a wide range of materials that represent the perspectives and experiences of Black students. This can include books, journals, videos, and other resources that explore issues of race, identity, and social justice.
- **Provide targeted support:** Offer targeted support to Black students, such as one-on-one research consultations, workshops on research skills, and guidance on finding and evaluating sources. This can help to address any gaps in knowledge or confidence and ensure that Black students have the tools they need to succeed.
- **Create a welcoming environment:** Create a welcoming and inclusive environment in the library, where Black students feel comfortable and supported. This can include providing diverse seating options, creating spaces for group study and collaboration, and displaying diverse art and literature.



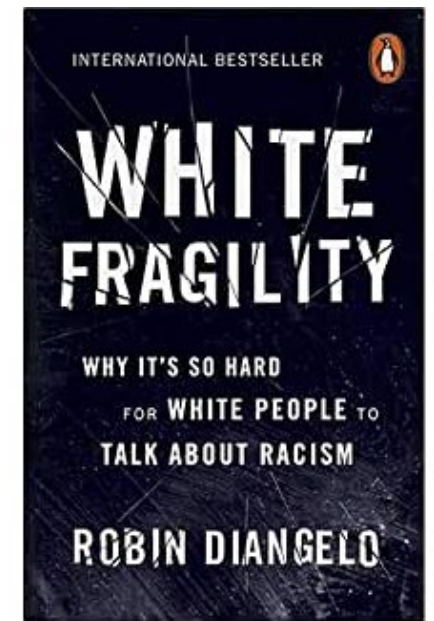
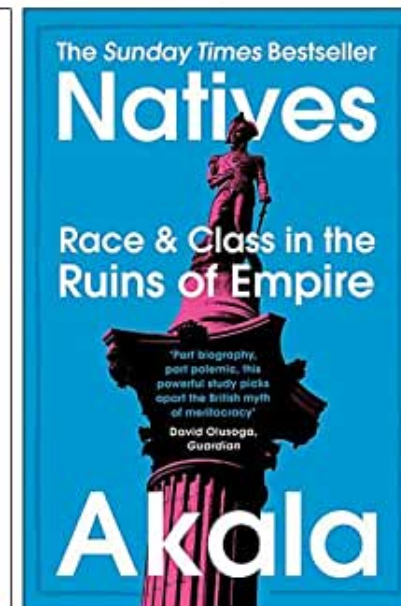
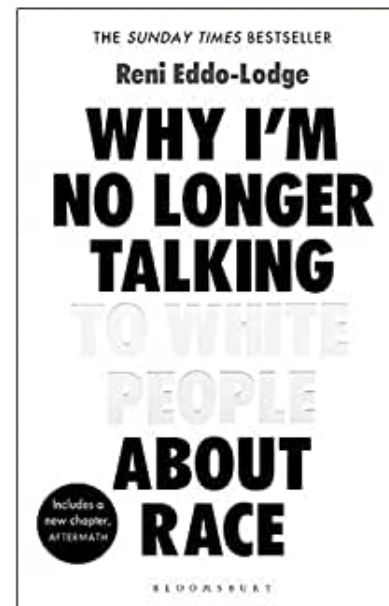
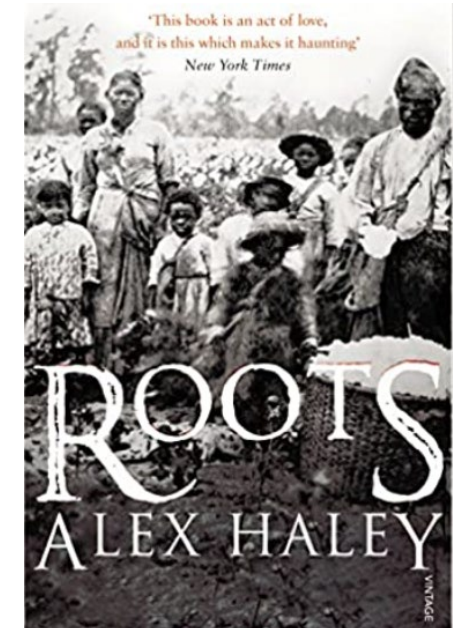
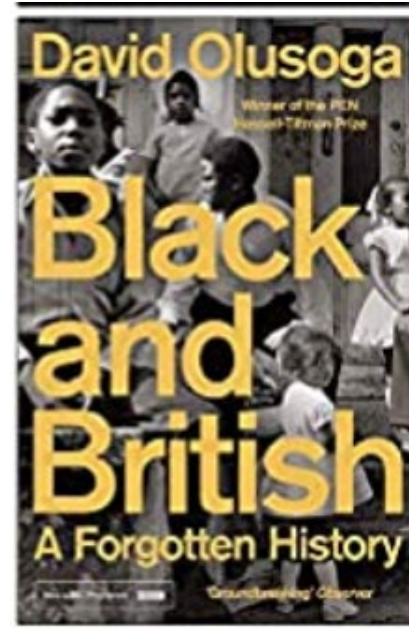
Actions to improve the experiences of Black students in the library

- **Promote Black scholarship:** Highlight the work of Black scholars in the library's displays, events, and social media channels. This can help to raise awareness of Black scholarship and inspire Black students to pursue their own research interests.
- **Build partnerships:** Build partnerships with Black student groups, cultural centers, and other organizations on campus. This can help to ensure that the library's programs and services are responsive to the needs and priorities of Black students.
- **Educate library staff:** Educate library staff on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and ensure that they have the skills and knowledge needed to support Black students effectively. This can include training on cultural competence, implicit bias, and understanding the experiences and challenges faced by Black students.
- **Recruit more role models** – more black staff members



The Journey to Allyship: Where to Begin

CARE Antiracism bookcases and book club



Union Black: Britain's Black Cultures and Steps to Anti-racism

- Santander Universities UK has partnered with The
- Open University and
- FutureLearn



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*Thank you
for listening*

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