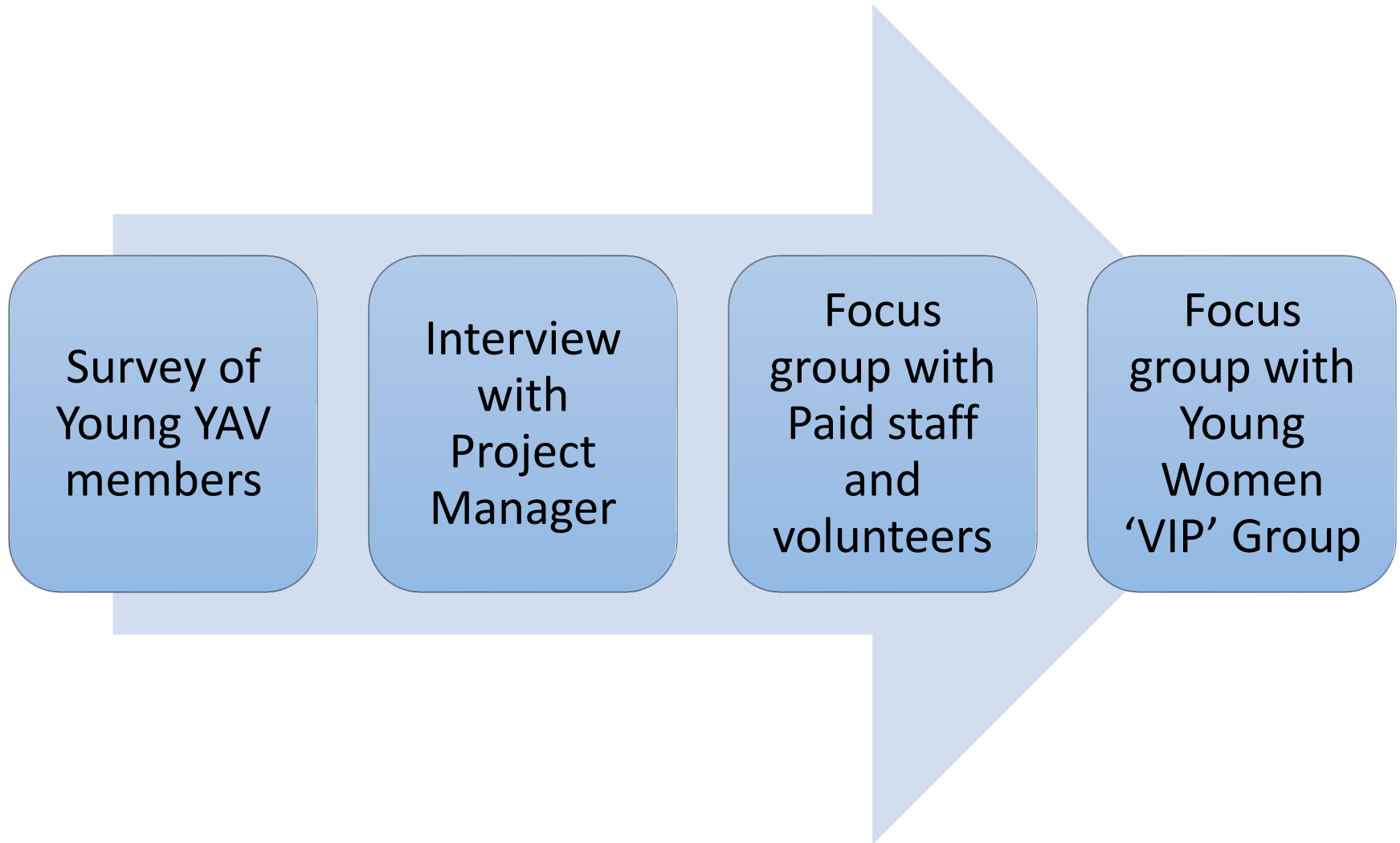


Young People as Cultural Critics: Resisting Mono-Cultural Landscapes

Dr Rick Bowler

Dr Amina Razak

The Research- Phase 1



Our Main Arguments

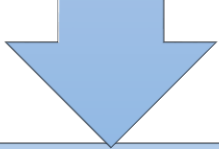
Young Asian Voices (YAV) have clearly helped their young members develop profoundly moving and deeply critical readings of the world.

The young women's resistance to the everyday racisms they experience in the mono-cultural landscapes of post Brexit Northern England illuminate their roles as cultural critics and convivial bridge builders.

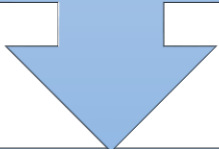
These young women and YAV as a youth project should be listened to by all policy makers in the region.

Context and Complexity

'Racism is a slippery subject, one which evades confrontation, yet one which overshadows every aspect of our lives...' (Aveling, 2002: 119)



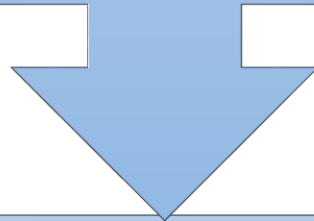
Whiteness is *'the unmarked and 'raceless' body politic of the nation'* (Randell-Moon, 2012:1)



'The context for youth work in contemporary times, particularly in Northern England, is a brutalised one' (Hughes et al, 2014: 3)

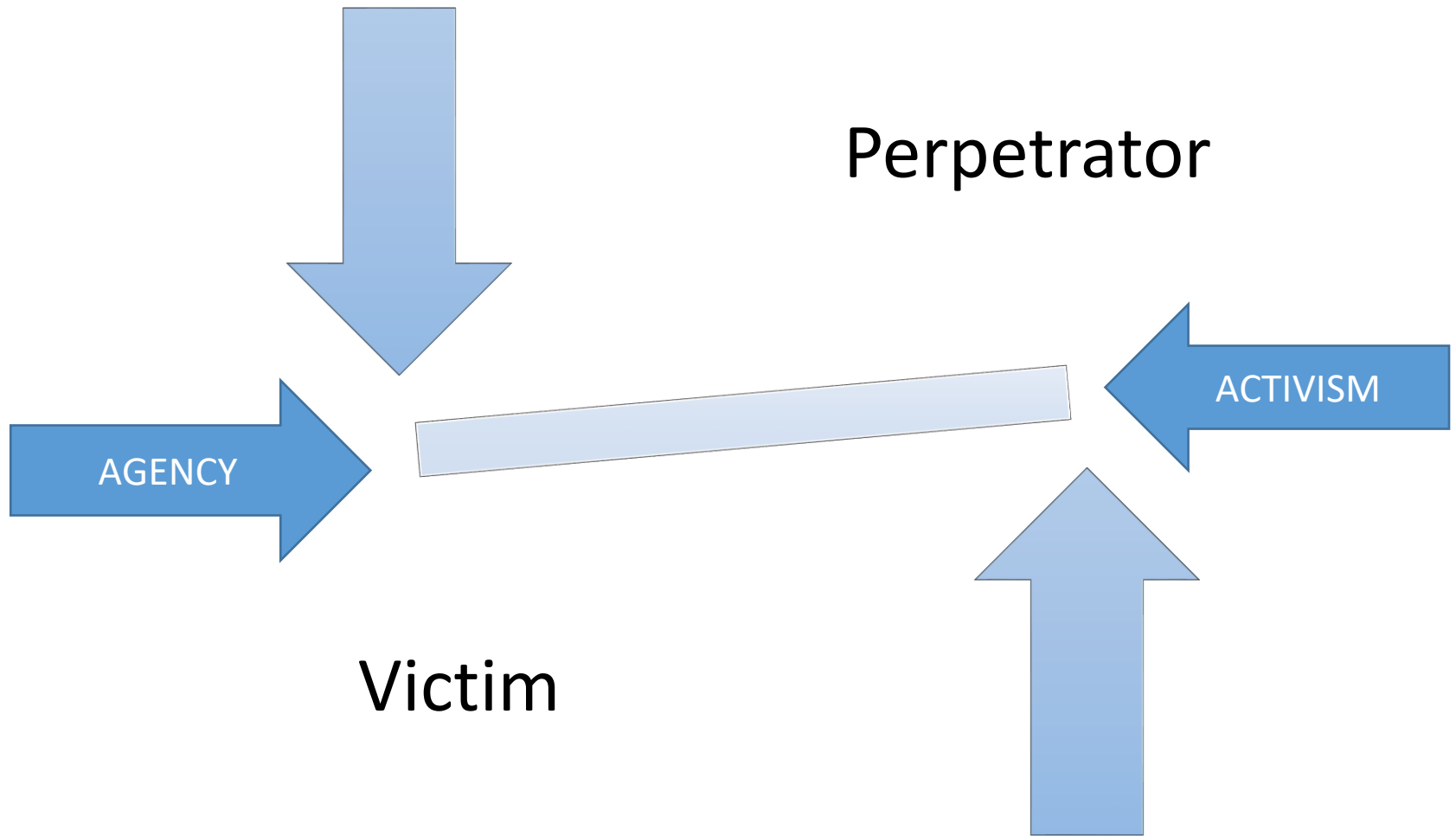
What's 'resisting mono-cultural landscapes' got to do with Hate Crime?

Race hate crime in North East soars to record levels in post Brexit period: Incidents in Northumbria force area up 48% in three months after EU referendum compared to same period before vote (Kelly, 2017)



“I was like at the bus stop . Right . And there was a boy with this bike . I don't know . Like our age . He grabbed on my scarf and tried to pull it”

What's this got to do with Hate Crime?



Focus group discussions

- Interviewer: 'What do you mean by sharing culture?'

YP1: 'I work at the hospital and none of them knew about me and I'm the only Asian so they ask me a lot of questions. They are unaware of like [...] Islam or about our culture [...] in general'

YP2: 'Yeh, same in my placement. They don't know like about Eid and Ramadan'

YP1: 'or why I am wearing a headscarf or something'

YP3: 'basic knowledge like that'

- Interviewer: Just when you are on placement

YP2: Yeh, even in college

YW3: 'why do you wear that scarf around your head – those questions – do you sleep with it (A lot of laughter from the group)

YP2: 'they don't even know like, about halal – like, the difference'

- Interviewer: Other white students?

YP2: 'yeh [...] and quite a lot of staff don't know either

YP2: 'I was asked if I was Hindu or Bengali and then the question was, what is Hinduism and what is..'

YP4: 'You can be Bengali and Hindu'

YP3: 'they think it is an ethnicity'

YP2: and then there was questions on both of them and they had no knowledge of both'

Interviewer: do you feel comfortable with the questions you are asked?

YP4: 'religion sometimes gets like Ahhhh! (she makes a face of disgust)

YP5: 'because they ask it rudely'

Focus group discussions

- Interviewer: What do you mean rudely?

YP3: 'have you ever had pork before, do you, how can you not eat bacon?, It's just like

YP2: 'how can you live without bacon. I like fish fingers (group laughter)

YP5: 'The first thing they say is I'm not trying to be racist, that puts you on guard, you'd be like, what are they going to say?'

- Interviewer: Have you ever felt the question has been racist in any way?

Several YW: 'Yeh'

- Interviewer: Can you give us some examples?

YP2: 'do you sleep with it on' (group laughter)

YP5: 'do you shower with it'

- Interviewer: With your headscarf on?

ALL YP: 'Yeh'

Focus group discussions

- Interviewer: So do you mean you know more about white British culture that they know about your culture?

YW4: 'yeh that's what I'm trying to say'

YP2: they kind of make you question yourself . why don't you wear a scarf . I'm like

YP3: so do you wear it all the time

YP4: do your parents make you wear it . do your parents press you

YP2: why does she wear it . why does she not

YP4: are you trying to rebel against your religion

YP2: why don't you . does your mum not make you . I've seen girls around college that do . and then you have to kind of answer . why . where you really should . cos in our religion you should . you're kind of like yeh you should but I don't . it kind of makes you feel bad

Focus group discussions

YP3: 'there's not really like an area where I'm not scared. To be honest every area is scary for me'

YP6: 'go back to your country you Indians. He [white man] was walking away but he was looking back at us and shouting, wasn't he'

YP8: 'sometimes when you're in groups it makes you feel better. You're not alone. When you're alone you actually physically feel scared'

YP5: 'sometimes you feel that they [white people] might attack you'

- interviewer: so how does this kind of affect how you travel, where you go?

YP9: 'for example when I'm in my Asian areas I feel safer. [...]

YP10: 'cos your comfortable on your street but like, say I went on your street [a predominantly white area where one of her peers lives] I would feel scared [...] cos I know there's more chance of a guy walking past, or a girl and making a racist comment'

YP11: 'yeh, do you know at work the other week this old woman came in and she refused, she wouldn't let me serve her. She said she didn't want to be served by me [...] I had my head scarf on [...] as I was serving her she goes, don't touch my stuff'

YP6: 'I was waiting for my brother to pick me up, just outside of college, some guy drives past and he shouts' Oi you dirty paki terrorist and he drives past. And I'm like OK! At least stop (group laughter)

YP11: 'one white guy, he jumped down the hill and then punched my dad twice. And then a couple of Bengali lads were coming around the corner. And then he just ran off. My dad didn't call the police. What are they going to do? We were all really annoyed. He should have rung [the police] but then again they're not going to do anything'

Conviviality

The young women at the heart of this talk and at the forefront of the work of YAV articulate an approach to 'Britishness' that is convivial.

Their desire for intercultural and inter-faith dialogue across the social divides in their City needs resourcing.

The young women know how their lives have been formed by British 'White' and 'Asian' cultures but their white peers appear captured by the mono realities of white world knowledge.

These mono-realities (re)produce ideas about identity that are essentialist. They block progress to intercultural possibility.

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