

“You Don’t Know Me”: Polite Racism, Cultural Capital, and Afro-Caribbean Identity in Multicultural Canada

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Thesis submitted to the University of Ottawa in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Doctorate in Philosophy degree in Sociology

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Abstract

This thesis examines identity formation and mobilization of social and cultural capital among first- and second-generation Haitian and Jamaican communities in Canada. Drawing on critical race theory, intersectionality, and sociological theories of cultural capital, it integrates Tara J. Yosso's model of community cultural wealth with the concepts of polite racism, racial ignominy, and duplicity of consciousness. These concepts articulate how subtle yet systemic racial exclusion—particularly in education and the labour market—undermines Afro-Caribbean cultural assets while upholding a veneer of multicultural inclusivity.

The research reconceptualizes Blackness in Canada as a dynamic and contested identity, shaped by both historical legacies and contemporary systemic barriers. Through focus groups and in-depth interviews with Haitian and Jamaican participants in the Ottawa-Gatineau region, the thesis explores how cultural capital is leveraged to assert identity, resist stereotypes, and negotiate belonging across generations. Key findings demonstrate that cultural and social capital are not merely tools of social mobility but also sites of resistance and self-definition. First- and second-generation participants differ in their navigation of identity, highlighting a generational negotiation between cultural retention and adaptation, often under the pressure of systemic expectations. This negotiation is captured through the concept of duplicity of consciousness, which describes the lived tension between authenticity and assimilation in racialized contexts. The implications extend beyond academia, offering concrete policy recommendations for Canadian educational institutions and labour markets to better recognize and support the cultural wealth of Afro-Caribbean communities. In doing so, this research advances a more inclusive understanding of Blackness and multiculturalism in Canada.

Acknowledgements

I acknowledge my resilience—throughout this journey, I have repeatedly questioned my decision to pursue this PhD program. I have doubted my abilities, my capacities, and the identities imposed upon me. Yet, I have come to understand that the foundation of my journey lies in my ability to overcome the social, racial, and cultural parameters consciously and subconsciously imposed on us, parameters we often mimic throughout life. It is only when we face our fears and recognize that we are both the cause and the effect of our lives that we can break the cycles that would otherwise repeat endlessly.

On August 22, 2024, at 6:08 p.m., my beloved mother passed away in my arms. Her loss left me with a profound sense of emptiness and despair. However, the strength and love of my children, Levon and Kaeyla, and my partner, Lenny, have been fundamental to my ability to move forward and complete this thesis. Their unwavering support has been my anchor.

I would like to acknowledge my supervisor, Scott Simon, for his invaluable guidance and steadfast encouragement. I am also grateful to my colleagues, Dina Idriss-Wheeler and Roodabeh Dehghani, for their support, insight, and collaboration throughout this journey.

Finally, to my community and ancestors, I honour your legacies of resistance, resilience, and creativity. This research stands as a testament to the enduring power of Afro-Caribbean culture and identities. It is dedicated to all those who have paved the way for future generations, whose sacrifices and triumphs continue to inspire us all.

Preface

As a woman of Afro-Caribbean descent, my journey with the concept of Blackness has been deeply personal, intertwined with both my lived experiences and academic pursuits. Having witnessed various civil rights movements throughout my life, including the resurgence of racial discourse in Canada following the tragic murder of George Floyd, I have found myself continually drawn to questions of racial identity and its broader implications. This journey, which has spanned over two decades, has been one of discovery and reflection, where my personal story intersects with larger sociopolitical forces.

Growing up as a second-generation Haitian Canadian, I navigated a world shaped by the complexities of racialization. My own identity has been in constant negotiation—between my heritage, my social environment, and the larger societal structures that govern how we understand race. Following the intellectual legacy of scholars such as W.E.B. Du Bois and, more recently, Robyn Maynard in Canada, I've come to see how deeply the racialized world system frames the experiences of Black immigrants, including Haitians and Jamaicans, as they make Canada their home. Yet, despite the profound ways race shapes our lives, I often found myself disappointed by how seldom the most prominent thinkers in sociology addressed Blackness with the depth and nuance it deserves.

As I delved deeper into the foundational texts of sociology, I couldn't help but feel a disconnect. Karl Marx, for instance, emphasized the primacy of economic capital in determining social status, while Pierre Bourdieu later expanded this idea to include cultural capital. But neither adequately considered how racial identity—how being racialized as Black—affects one's access to these forms of capital. For me, these theories, while valuable, missed a key dimension of the human experience: how deeply race and racialization permeate every aspect of social

interaction. This realization became the driving force behind my exploration of Blackness within Afro-Caribbean communities.

What I uncovered along the way was that Blackness is not a singular, monolithic identity but rather a rich and intricate tapestry of diverse experiences, shaped by varied spaces and histories. It encompasses a spectrum of stories, cultural expressions, and lived realities that transcend simplistic binaries. Reflecting on my own journey, I realized how geographical spaces—urban centers, rural landscapes, and everything in between—shape and influence the ways Blackness is expressed and experienced. This exploration led me to focus on the interplay between these spaces and the multifaceted identities within Black communities, emphasizing the ways physical environments contribute to the richness and complexity of Black experiences.

My identity as a second-generation Haitian Canadian has played a pivotal role in how I understand these complexities. The way I experience Blackness differs significantly from that of second-generation Afro-Caribbean Canadians, and these differences matter. They influence not only how we see ourselves but also how we are perceived and treated by others. I often reflect on Cornel West’s concept of ‘the politics of difference,’ which calls for an embrace of diversity and multiplicity over uniformity. This resonates deeply with me, as my own experience has been one of navigating the intersections of identity, place, and belonging.

Ultimately, my exploration of Blackness is not just an academic exercise—it is a deeply personal journey. It is about understanding who I am, where I come from, and how my identity fits into the larger societal fabric. Through this lens, I hope to contribute to a broader conversation about race, space, and the politics of identity in Canada, while also shedding light on the rich diversity of experiences within Afro-Caribbean communities.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

You Don't Know Me

You see me step into your store,
Eyes on me, tracking my every move—
Just because I'm Black.
But you don't know me.

I walk past, and your hand clutches tight,
Your purse, your fear, a reaction to my skin—
Just because I'm Black.
But you don't know me.

I rise in success, and you assume I've schemed,
That my path was paved by trickery, not skill—
Just because I'm Black.
But you don't know me.

Though my skin and yours are not the same,
Our minds are mirrors, capable of the same light.
If you look deeper, you'll see me—
For all that I truly am.

Written, 12 years old Kaeyla Lenisa Sanchez

This thesis examines the lived experiences and identity development of Jamaican and Haitian communities in Canada, emphasizing how these groups leverage social and cultural capital to oppose systemic barriers and stereotypes. Inspired by 'You Don't Know Me'—a poem written by my 12-year-old daughter—this work highlights the intergenerational struggle against misrecognition and the reduction of Black identities to narrow, often stereotyped, frameworks. By investigating the intricacies of Blackness within a racialized Canadian society, this work aims to demonstrate how Jamaican and Haitian communities claim agency and resilience amid subtle and systemic discrimination.

Although Afro-Caribbean experiences in the U.S. and U.K. have received substantial scholarly attention, the Canadian context remains notably underexplored. This gap is especially

clear in studies that examine how social and cultural capital influence identity and help navigate systemic barriers. My thesis fills this void by investigating how Jamaican and Haitian communities in Canada respond to systemic challenges.

At the center of this inquiry is the concept of polite racism—a framework I developed from this study’s findings. It refers to a socially accepted yet insidious form of discrimination, often expressed through subtle reactions to skin tone, accents, or other racialized traits. Unlike overt racism, *polite racism* operates within the framework of Canadian multiculturalism, reinforcing systemic inequities while maintaining a façade of tolerance and inclusivity. This thesis contends that *polite racism* profoundly shapes the lived experiences and identity formation of Afro-Caribbean communities, particularly across generational lines.

The exploration of polite racism is a foundational thread woven throughout this thesis, offering a critical lens through which the systemic experiences of Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada are analyzed. Chapter 3 examines how polite racism shapes the educational trajectories of Haitian and Jamaican students, highlighting the institutional barriers that subtly undermine their academic potential and access to equitable opportunities. This is closely tied to the concept of racial ignominy, which captures the symbolic devaluation of Afro-Caribbean cultural capital within spaces that claim to be inclusive. Chapter 4 shifts focus to the labour market, where polite racism manifests through professional marginalization, credential devaluation, and the perpetuation of workplace inequities. Here, duplicity of consciousness becomes especially evident as individuals navigate the tension between preserving cultural identity and conforming to dominant norms in order to succeed. Together, these chapters illustrate how polite racism—cloaked in civility yet deeply embedded in Canadian institutions—constrains social mobility and reinforces racial hierarchies, while prompting nuanced strategies of resistance across generations.

Building on these realities, this thesis examines how Afro-Caribbean communities mobilize their social and cultural capital to challenge narrow, stereotypical representations and assert more nuanced, authentic expressions of identity. By analyzing race, ethnicity, and immigration status through the intersecting frameworks of social and cultural capital, the study offers a reframed understanding of how Blackness is constructed, negotiated, and lived in Canada. It advances an original analytical model that foregrounds both acts of resistance and the multi-positional nature of identity formation across generational and institutional contexts.

To situate these experiences, this thesis draws on Cedric J. Robinson's theory of racial capitalism, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, and Tara J. Yosso's model of community cultural wealth. Robinson's framework exposes how global economic and political systems are structured by racial hierarchies, shaping the conditions under which Afro-Caribbean communities engage with Canadian institutions. Bourdieu's and Yosso's models, meanwhile, offer complementary tools to examine how cultural resources are both mobilized and contested within racialized contexts. Together, these theoretical approaches ground the research in both macro- and micro-level analyses, revealing how Haitian and Jamaican communities navigate systemic inequities while preserving cultural resilience and asserting identity across generational lines.

On a personal level, this study is rooted in my lived experience growing up within a diasporic community. I witnessed firsthand how cultural heritage and identity shape social interactions and opportunities, and these reflections have deeply influenced my methodological approach. By adopting qualitative methods, including focus groups and interviews, I center the voices of Jamaican and Haitian communities in Canada, ensuring their perspectives are integral to the analysis. This positionality informs my commitment to understanding the complexities of race, identity, and cultural resilience in Canada.

This thesis is guided by two central research questions:

1. How do Jamaican and Haitian communities mobilize their social and cultural capital to define Blackness and construct an in-group Black identity in Canada?
2. How are social and cultural capital manifested and contested among first- and second-generation Haitians and Jamaicans in Canada?

These research objectives allow for a critical examination of how social and cultural capital contribute to the construction of Blackness within Haitian and Jamaican communities. The study also situates these processes within the broader historical context of immigration, highlighting how these groups navigate a global racial hierarchy that shapes their social positioning in Canadian society.

The findings from this research have significant implications for policy development. In education, understanding the role of cultural capital in identity formation can inform curriculum design and teaching practices that better support students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Similarly, in the labour market, the findings can influence hiring practices and workplace policies to promote diversity and inclusion. These insights underscore the importance of shaping equitable policies within school boards and workplaces, fostering a society that embraces cultural richness and equity.

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study, outlining its significance, theoretical foundation, and objectives. Chapters 2 through 4 present three interconnected academic articles:

1. Chapter 2—published as “Navigating Identity and Policy: The Afro-Caribbean Experience in Canada”—examines historical migration and settlement pathways. Chapter 3, now accepted for publication, expands on this by exploring how Haitian and Jamaican communities mobilize cultural resources across generations. Chapter 4, co-authored with

Professor George Dei, investigates dual identities and strategies for navigating systemic barriers. Chapter 5 synthesizes these findings, while the epilogue offers policy recommendations and broader implications for Afro-Caribbean inclusion in Canada.

2. Chapter 3, now accepted for publication in *Social Sciences*, builds on the analysis of Afro-Caribbean cultural capital by examining how Haitian and Jamaican communities mobilize cultural resources to construct, express, and negotiate Black identities across generational lines. This article critically engages with concepts such as racialization, symbolic boundaries, and community cultural wealth, offering new insights into the lived experiences of Blackness in Canada. The journal's interdisciplinary scope and emphasis on social equity and inclusion make it an ideal venue for reaching scholars, practitioners, and policymakers engaged in migration, identity, and racial justice research.
3. Chapter 4, co-authored with Professor George Dei, and submitted to the *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies*, investigates the dual identities of Afro-Caribbean individuals, emphasizing their strategies for navigating systemic barriers. This journal, with its focus on immigrant and refugee experiences, is ideal for engaging an audience interested in immigrant integration, social cohesion, and systemic inequalities.

Chapter 5 synthesizes the findings, offering a cohesive discussion that integrates the articles and contextualizes the results. The epilogue reflects on the broader implications of these findings, offering recommendations for policy reform and highlighting this research's contributions to the literature on Afro-Caribbean experiences in Canada. Chapter 1 lays the historical groundwork, providing an overview of Canadian immigration policies and their impacts on Jamaican and Haitian communities. This foundation is essential for the theoretical and analytical discussions in subsequent chapters. Theoretical frameworks introduced in Chapter 2—Cedric J. Robinson's racialized world system, Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital,

and Tara J. Yosso's model of community cultural wealth—provide critical tools for analyzing how Afro-Caribbean communities resist systemic biases and redefine dominant narratives of Blackness. These concepts are expanded in Article 3 through Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality framework, which examines the interplay of race, ethnicity, gender, and immigration status.

Using qualitative methods, including interviews and participant observation, this thesis situates itself at the intersection of history, sociology, and critical race theory. By integrating academic analysis with lived realities, as exemplified through both personal and scholarly lenses, it offers a comprehensive understanding of how Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada navigate and challenge systemic inequalities. The themes of resistance, resilience, and identity construction are central to this work, contributing to broader discussions on Blackness and multiculturalism in Canada.

This thesis is deeply informed by the lived realities of Afro-Caribbean individuals navigating racial prejudice, societal assumptions, and the complexities of identity formation in Canada. These themes are poignantly captured in a poem written by my 12-year-old daughter, *You Don't Know Me*. Her reflections on the persistent stereotypes and misrecognition that Black individuals face provide a personal and intergenerational lens that complements the academic inquiries of this research. The poem articulates the struggle to move beyond superficial judgments and stereotypes, a core issue that underpins the focus of the three articles included in this thesis. By integrating academic analysis with lived realities, this thesis provides a comprehensive understanding of how Jamaican and Haitian communities in Canada navigate and challenge systemic inequalities. The themes of resistance, resilience, and identity construction are central to this work, contributing to broader discussions on Blackness and multiculturalism in Canada.

1.1 Enhancing Existing Literature and Theoretical Perspectives

In this research, I build upon and critique Pierre Bourdieu's (1986) concept of cultural capital by examining how cultural assets operate for racialized groups within multicultural societies. Bourdieu defined cultural capital as "instruments for the appropriation of symbolic wealth socially designated as worthy of being sought and possessed" (1977, p. 488), which can reproduce themselves, generate profits, and persist over time (1986, p. 241). In practice, cultural capital encompasses the knowledge, skills, and dispositions cultivated by privileged groups in institutional contexts such as homes and schools, playing a key role in power dynamics and social mobility (Vassenden & Jonvik, 2019).

While Bourdieu's framework is relevant, it primarily addresses class-based dynamics and omits critical considerations of race, ethnicity, and immigrant status. His theory assumes cultural capital operates uniformly across social groups, failing to account for how racialized individuals navigate systemic inequities. I challenge these limitations by integrating complementary models, particularly Yosso's (2005) concept of community cultural wealth. Yosso expands cultural capital to include forms unique to marginalized communities, such as familial, linguistic, and resistant capital. Resistant capital, for instance, reflects the knowledge and skills developed through practices that oppose systemic inequalities, rooted in a historical legacy of community resistance (McLaren, 2015; Delgado Bernal, 1997; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). This reconceptualization frames cultural capital not only as a means of social mobility but also as a site of resilience and agency, critical for navigating barriers and fostering community engagement, such as in job interviews and institutional spaces.

Additionally, I draw on Crenshaw's (1989) framework of intersectionality to examine the overlapping racial, cultural, and immigrant identities of Afro-Caribbean communities. By applying intersectionality to the Canadian context, this analysis explores how these identities

interact within a society where overt racism is often supplanted by subtler forms of exclusion, such as *polite racism*. By challenging monolithic perceptions of Blackness, this study highlights the fluid and intersectional nature of identity formation. It demonstrates how Afro-Caribbean communities harness cultural capital both as a means of resistance and as a tool for redefining Blackness and constructing collective identities within Canada's multicultural framework.

1.1 Cultural Capital and Black Identity

Studies often associate cultural capital with middle-class whiteness, excluding non-white racial groups (Wallace, 2017). My research addresses these gaps by examining how Afro-Caribbean communities, particularly in Canada, leverage cultural capital to resist systemic exclusion. Prior studies (Desmond & Emirbayer, 2009) reveal how cultural capital tied to "high culture" often excludes racial minorities, limiting their social mobility within predominantly white institutions.

I draw on Yosso's (2005) concept of resistant capital to highlight how marginalized communities cultivate resilience through collective practices that challenge systemic barriers. For Afro-Caribbean communities, this involves preserving language, celebrating cultural heritage, and engaging in activism. These dynamics remain underexplored, particularly for Haitians and Jamaicans, whose histories of resistance provide rich contexts for understanding how cultural capital is mobilized. For these communities, cultural practices like storytelling, food traditions, and linguistic nuances serve not only as markers of identity but also as tools for navigating and contesting systemic inequities.

Through this study, I aim to build on these frameworks by exploring how cultural capital in Afro-Caribbean communities intersects with notions of Blackness, creating unique pathways for resistance and self-definition. My work seeks to broaden the understanding of cultural capital

beyond Eurocentric paradigms, situating the lived experiences of Haitians and Jamaicans within the broader landscape of racial and cultural identity in Canada

1.2 Immigration Demographics: The Canadian ‘State’ of Afro-Caribbeans in Canada-Growing Communities

This section explores the demographic significance and social experiences of Canadians of Jamaican and Haitian descent, situating them within Cedric J. Robinson’s concept of the racialized world system to frame their position in Canada’s socio-political landscape. As two of the largest non-European ethnic groups in the country, Jamaicans and Haitians exemplify how Black diasporic communities navigate systemic barriers and construct resilience through cultural and social capital. While initially focusing on Jamaican Canadians, this lens expands to include Haitian Canadians, acknowledging the shared and distinct experiences of these Afro-Caribbean groups within Canada.

Using data from the 2021 Census, the Jamaican Canadian population in Ontario has grown to 257,055, representing 1.9% of the province’s total population. Other provinces, such as Alberta and British Columbia, have also seen notable increases, reflecting broader migration and settlement trends. Similarly, the Haitian Canadian population, recorded at approximately 165,095, is concentrated primarily in Quebec due to migration trends influenced by Haiti’s political and socio-economic context. According to the Ethnic Diversity Survey (Statistics Canada, 2021), 81% of Canadians of Jamaican descent and 78% of Haitian Canadians expressed a strong sense of belonging to Canada, while 71% and 67%, respectively, maintained deep connections to their cultural heritage. These findings illustrate the *duplicity of consciousness* that both groups navigate, reflecting the tension between cultural retention and adaptation to dominant societal norms—a dynamic I developed to describe the lived negotiation of identity under systemic pressures

This survey data also highlights persistent challenges faced by both Jamaican and Haitian Canadians. Despite their sense of belonging, 51% of Jamaican Canadians and 53% of Haitian Canadians reported experiencing discrimination due to factors such as ethnicity, skin colour, religion, language, or accent. For Jamaicans, 69% identified the workplace or job applications as the primary sites of discrimination, a trend echoed among Haitians (Statistics Canada, 2021). These experiences underscore how systemic barriers shape the mobilization of cultural and social capital for both groups

Community organizations have played a crucial role in addressing these barriers for Jamaican and Haitian Canadians. Through activism, cultural knowledge promotion, and resource access, these organizations counter systemic inequities while promoting resilience and advancing opportunities. This dynamic reflects Robinson's (2000) argument that racialized communities resist and reshape systemic forces of marginalization, positioning their lived experiences within a global context of racialization and economic stratification.

By integrating these perspectives and data, this section moves from a singular focus on Jamaican and Haitian Canadians to a broader examination of Afro-Caribbean identity in Canada. It demonstrates how the shared, yet distinct experiences of these communities contribute to understanding social and cultural capital within a racialized world system.

1.3 Theoretical Frameworks- My Exploration of Afro-Caribbean Identity Formation in Canada

Polite racism: Racial ignominy and Duplicity of consciousness

This research introduces *polite racism* as a framework to explore the nuanced discrimination faced by Afro-Caribbean Canadians—a concept I developed, along with its extensions, *racial ignominy* and *duplicity of consciousness*. Inspired by Martin Luther King Jr.'s critique of racial dynamics in the Northern United States (King, 1967), *polite racism* refers to

understated racial biases that manifest as microaggressions, social exclusion, and systemic barriers, all cloaked in civility. While outwardly courteous, these interactions uphold an underlying racial hierarchy, perpetuating exclusionary practices in multicultural societies like Canada.

Polite racism provides a lens to examine racial ignominy—a concept I developed, derived from the findings of this research, as an extension of this subtle yet systemic form of discrimination. As discussed and further elaborated in Chapter 3, *racial ignominy* describes the devaluation and marginalization of Afro-Caribbean cultural capital within a society that promotes superficial diversity. Afro-Caribbean cultural practices are often celebrated in an exoticized manner but remain excluded from full acceptance in mainstream Canadian society. For instance, while Caribbean cuisine and music are embraced as entertaining novelties, they are often viewed as secondary to dominant cultural norms in professional or academic spaces. This dynamic reflects a societal discomfort with Black identity, where superficial diversity is tolerated but genuine inclusion is resisted.

Adding complexity to this experience is the concept of *duplicity of consciousness*, another framework I developed as an extension of this analytical lens. As explored in Chapter 4, *duplicity of consciousness* captures the lived tension Afro-Caribbean Canadians experience as they balance cultural retention with societal conformity. This duality involves navigating the norms and expectations of the dominant White society while striving to preserve their Afro-Caribbean heritage. For example, participants described adopting "neutral" accents or adjusting their behaviors in professional settings to avoid stereotyping, while simultaneously feeling pressure to maintain cultural traditions, such as Creole or Patois, at home. Second-generation participants often articulated the challenge of negotiating parental expectations for cultural preservation with the pressures of assimilation encountered in school or social environments.

While microaggressions are brief and often unconscious or unintentional slights that reinforce racial stereotypes, *polite racism* operates at a systemic level, embedding itself into the fabric of societal norms. It is socially sanctioned, manifesting through seemingly well-meaning behaviors or policies that subtly yet effectively perpetuate racial hierarchies. For example, policies promoting 'neutrality' often devalue Afro-Caribbean cultural practices, framing them as deviations from an assumed norm, thereby masking exclusionary practices under a guise of inclusivity and fairness.

Yosso's Cultural Capital vs. *Polite racism*

Tara J. Yosso's framework emphasizes the inherent resilience within marginalized communities through various forms of cultural capital. However, my research highlights a critical gap when applied to the Canadian context, where *polite racism* often undermines these cultural assets. Afro-Caribbean linguistic diversity, for instance, is frequently viewed through an exoticized lens, yet it is dismissed or devalued in professional and academic spheres unless it conforms to dominant norms. This dynamic reveals the *duplicity of consciousness* faced by first- and second-generation Haitians and Jamaicans, as they navigate the pressures of assimilation while striving to maintain their cultural heritage. By examining these tensions, my research extends Yosso's framework to address the unique racialized challenges within Canada's multicultural landscape, demonstrating how systemic barriers persist under the guise of inclusion.

Social Positionality and the Intersection of Identity and Capital

Afro-Caribbean migrants' experiences are shaped by the interplay of their overlapping identities—ethnicity, immigrant status, and class. These intersections influence both their access to resources and societal perceptions. The *duplicity of consciousness* is heightened as individuals navigate the dominant culture for opportunities while striving to preserve their cultural identity.

This research employs intersectionality as a foundational framework to analyze the Afro-Caribbean experience in Canada, structured around three dimensions that illuminate the complexities of identity, race, and cultural capital in a racialized society (Collins, 1998). These dimensions—intersectional lived experience, dynamic and contextual intersections, and mutual creation of categories—offer a nuanced understanding of the social navigation of Jamaican and Haitian communities within Canadian multiculturalism.

Intersectional lived experience emphasizes the importance of understanding Afro-Caribbean identities as shaped by multiple, intersecting social positions. Blackness in Canada is both a lived and racialized experience, profoundly influenced by Afro-Caribbean heritage. This approach recognizes how Jamaicans and Haitians engage with and navigate racialized systemic structures, including *polite racism*. These experiences are situated within Cedric Robinson's theory of racial capitalism, framing their unique racialized identities within a broader global racial hierarchy.

Dynamic and Contextual Intersections foreground the fluid nature of identity, suggesting that Blackness within Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada is continuously shaped by time, place, and context. The identities of first- and second-generation Jamaicans and Haitians evolve within Canada's racial landscape, influenced by historical legacies of colonialism and contemporary racial politics. This dynamic interplay accounts for shifts in cultural and social capital mobilization across generations, highlighting the need for context-sensitive analysis to understand the strategies employed to resist and redefine Blackness in Canada.

The mutual creation of categories expands this analysis by demonstrating how racial and immigrant identities are actively constructed and renegotiated within social contexts. For Afro-Caribbean Canadians, Blackness and Afro-Caribbean heritage are not static but are redefined through individual and community practices in response to societal structures. This study

examines how these evolving categories, viewed through the lenses of *polite racism* and *duplicity of consciousness*, shape the utilization, restriction, and transformation of social and cultural capital in Canadian society.

By integrating these dimensions into the framework, this research positions intersectionality as a critical tool for analyzing the multilayered processes through which Jamaican and Haitian Canadians construct, contest, and navigate their identities. This approach deepens the understanding of cultural capital by emphasizing the intersecting dimensions of race, class, and immigrant status, providing a comprehensive view of how Afro-Caribbean communities contribute to Canada's multicultural landscape while addressing systemic barriers.

Synthesizing Yosso's framework of community cultural wealth, Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital, Robinson's racial capitalism, and the concept of social positionality, this research introduces *polite racism* as a critical lens to explore the nuanced barriers faced by Afro-Caribbean migrants in Canada. *Polite racism* marginalizes the cultural assets of these communities unless they conform to dominant White norms, revealing the limitations of Bourdieu's framework in addressing racialized barriers. This theory bridges local experiences of *racial ignominy* and *duplicity of consciousness* with global dynamics, offering a deeper understanding of identity formation and cultural integration in racialized contexts.

The theory of racial consciousness - the duality of identities

The theory of racial consciousness represents a critical framework within sociological studies that seeks to understand how individuals develop awareness of their racial identity and its broader socio-political implications (Kiang et al. 2021). Grounded in critical race theory and identity studies, racial consciousness acknowledges the social construction of race and emphasizes that historical, cultural, and institutional contexts shape one's perception of racial identity. This theory contends that individuals actively engage in processes of racial self-

awareness, wherein they recognize their own racial identity and its significance within a racialized society. W.E.B. Du Bois' (1903) concept of "double consciousness" is integral to this framework, as it describes the internal conflict experienced by marginalized groups who must navigate their self-perception alongside the often-negative perceptions imposed by a dominant society. This duality fosters a heightened awareness of systemic racial hierarchies and injustices, prompting individuals to critically assess their position within these structures and advocate for racial equality and social justice.

Dynamic and Evolving Identities

Racial consciousness recognizes that racial identities are not fixed but evolve through personal experiences, interactions, and exposure to socio-political events (Peller, 1990). This dynamic process continually reshapes individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours, influencing broader social movements and activism.

Research and Applications

Racial consciousness theory has advanced the understanding of lived experiences in racialized societies, with ongoing research addressing its complexities:

- **Education, Media, and Institutions:** Scholars explore how these external factors shape and transform racial consciousness by challenging or reinforcing racial narratives and stereotypes.
- **Racial Consciousness and Collective Action:** Research highlights the connections between heightened racial awareness and mobilization for social justice, examining how personal experiences drive collective efforts (Rhode, 2010).
- **Implications for Society:** The field continues to uncover how individuals navigate dual identities, influencing their interactions, opportunities, and societal roles.

This evolving framework deepens understanding of racial identity's personal and societal impacts. By exploring how racial consciousness interacts with cultural and systemic forces, this research sheds light on the unique strategies these communities employ to navigate and resist racialized structures.

This study is grounded in a conceptual framework that combines intersectionality, cultural capital theory, and critical race perspectives. Drawing on Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality, I examine how overlapping structures of race, migration, and social class shape the lived experiences of Afro-Caribbean individuals in Canada. I introduce the concept of polite racism to describe the subtle and often normalized forms of racial exclusion embedded within Canada's multicultural institutions. Closely related is racial ignominy, which captures the routine symbolic degradation and denial of cultural legitimacy faced by Black Caribbean communities. I also adopt a sociological definition of generation, distinguishing first-generation immigrants (foreign-born) from second-generation individuals (Canadian-born with at least one immigrant parent) (Rumbaut, 2004). These concepts inform the analysis of how cultural capital is negotiated and mobilized differently in Quebec and Ontario, across communities and generations, as explored throughout this thesis.

1.4 Brief - Historical Migration and Policy: Foundations of Afro-Caribbean Presence in Canada

This section examines the historical migration of Black individuals to Canada, focusing on the pivotal influence of Haitian and Jamaican migration in shaping Afro-Caribbean communities. Cedric J. Robinson's concept of racial capitalism connects the global legacies of slavery and resistance to the construction of Black identity in Canada. The migration of Black individuals—from enslaved persons to Afro-Caribbean migrants—provides a foundation for analyzing how

Jamaicans and Haitians mobilize social and cultural capital to define Blackness and build in-group identity in response to systemic marginalization.

Table 1.1 highlights key historical migration trends and policy changes that have shaped the Afro-Caribbean presence in Canada over time. Major events, such as the introduction of the points-based immigration system in 1967 and the 1971 Multiculturalism Policy, marked a significant shift in Canada’s approach to diversity and inclusion. These reforms facilitated the entry of skilled workers and supported family reunification, fostering the growth of vibrant Haitian and Jamaican communities in urban centers like Toronto and Montreal.

Table 1.1 - History Timeline of migration trends and policy changes that have shaped Afro-Caribbean presence in Canada

Historical Period	Key Events and Significance
17th–19th Century	Enslaved individuals and Black Loyalists established Black presence; abolition of slavery (1834).
Mid-19th Century	Free Black settlers expanded western communities (e.g., Vancouver Island).
Early 20th Century	Black Americans established rural enclaves in the Prairies.
Mid-20th Century	West Indian Domestic Scheme brought Caribbean women, shaping urban Black communities.
Post-1960s	Immigration reforms enabled a significant Caribbean influx, fostering vibrant communities.

Connection to Research Questions:

1. ***Mobilization of Social and Cultural Capital:*** Historical migrations reveal how Afro-Caribbean communities drew on shared histories of resilience to build cultural institutions and social networks, fostering solidarity and redefining Black identity in a new context.
2. ***Generational Negotiation of Identity:*** While first-generation Haitians and Jamaicans adapted to new challenges, their descendants contested these inherited identities,

navigating racialized boundaries and asserting agency in constructing dynamic, multi-positional identities.

This historical analysis underscores the dynamic nature of Black identity in Canada, continuously shaped by the interplay of social and cultural resources with external pressures. First- and second-generation Jamaicans and Haitians have demonstrated remarkable adaptability, mobilizing and transforming their cultural capital to navigate systemic barriers and assert agency. These communities illustrate the fluidity of identity construction, actively resisting and renegotiating cultural boundaries in a racialized society.

1.5 Summary of Methods

Focus Group Dynamics

In my research, focus groups play a vital role in creating an environment where participants can engage in in-depth discussions and share diverse perspectives. The dynamic nature of these interactions often generates new insights and fosters a more nuanced understanding of the topics under study. Additionally, focus groups offer the advantage of quicker data collection, as multiple participants contribute to the discussion in each session.

For participant recruitment, I focused on the regions of Ottawa and Gatineau, targeting self-identified Haitian and Jamaican Black individuals between the ages of 25 and 45. A clear distinction was made between first-generation and second-generation Haitian and Jamaican Canadian Blacks. In this context, "first generation" refers to individuals born outside of Canada, while "second generation" refers to those born in Canada with at least one parent born abroad. This methodology has been consistently applied across all three articles in the study, as outlined in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 – Overview of Methods, Target Population and Objectives

Method	Target Population / Scope / Approach	Objective	Additional Information
Focus Groups and Interviews	First and second-generation Haitian and Jamaican individuals in the Ottawa/Gatineau area.	To gather qualitative data on how cultural capital is mobilized to construct a Black identity.	Conduct semi-structured focus groups.
Thematic Analysis	Analyze the qualitative data collected from focus groups using thematic analysis.	To identify recurring themes and patterns in how cultural capital is used to construct Black identities.	Software: Utilize qualitative data analysis software such as NVivo to code and identify themes.

This methodological approach not only ensures a comprehensive representation of the Haitian and Jamaican Black communities in Canada but also facilitates an in-depth exploration of their lived experiences. By focusing on generational distinctions and leveraging the dynamic insights generated through focus groups, this study aims to uncover the nuanced strategies these communities employ to navigate systemic barriers, redefine their identities, and mobilize cultural capital within a multicultural Canadian context.

1.6 Conclusion

Chapter 1 establishes the historical and policy-driven foundations essential for understanding the evolution of Afro-Caribbean migration to Canada and the socio-cultural dynamics within these communities. By tracing historical trajectories and institutional frameworks, it provides the necessary context for analyzing the strategies, resilience, and identity formation of Afro-Caribbean individuals in subsequent chapters.

This foundation seamlessly connects to the thematic and chronological progression of the thesis. Chapter 2 builds on these insights by exploring how Afro-Caribbean communities have mobilized cultural and social capital to navigate systemic challenges. Chapter 3 deepens the analysis by integrating these historical and theoretical perspectives with lived experiences, offering a nuanced exploration of how cultural capital is mobilized across generations to construct and negotiate Black identity in Canada. Chapter 4 extends this discussion by examining the dual identities of first- and second-generation Haitians and Jamaicans, focusing on how individuals navigate tensions between cultural retention and assimilation. Through the concepts of duplicity of consciousness and resistant capital, this chapter highlights the complexity of identity formation within the intersecting forces of race, class, and migration.

By situating these experiences within their historical, institutional, and generational contexts, the thesis contributes to broader discussions on migration, multiculturalism, and social equity in Canada. It underscores the relevance of this research to academic and policy debates, illustrating how Afro-Caribbean communities actively shape and redefine their identities in response to systemic barriers.

Together, the chapters construct a multifaceted understanding of Afro-Caribbean experiences in Canada, bridging past and present to highlight the intricate interplay between historical legacies, cultural capital, and identity dynamics. This study not only enriches scholarly inquiry but also advocates for more inclusive policies, advancing efforts toward equity and justice.

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CHAPTER 2: Navigating Identity and Policy: The Afro-Caribbean Experience in Canada

2.1 Abstract

This interdisciplinary analysis reviews the historical migration and settlement patterns of Haiti's and Jamaica's diasporas in Canada, showcasing the resilience and strength of these communities. It underscores how shifts from racially discriminatory to multicultural policies have not only shaped Afro-Caribbean identities but also demonstrated their ability to adapt and thrive. Through a comprehensive analysis, this article discusses these communities' socioeconomic integration and cultural impact, advocating for policies that further enhance their already significant participation in Canadian society. By highlighting the influence of Canada's evolving immigration policies and thoroughly examining primary sources, archival materials, and scholarly works, the article outlines the socioeconomic and cultural dynamics that have meaningfully moulded the Afro-Caribbean presence in Canada. The primary objective is to understand and appreciate: "How have historical migration and subsequent multicultural policies influenced the cultural identity of the Afro-Caribbean diaspora in Canada?" Revisiting the early migration periods up to the present day, this article provides an in-depth historical analysis of Afro-Caribbeans in Canada, aiming to develop more inclusive partnerships within community-based knowledge assemblages and generating an inclusive narrative encompassing the Afro-Caribbean contribution to Canada's multicultural image. Ultimately, this research supports advocating for critical policy changes that are urgent to more accurately address the challenges of the Afro-Caribbean communities. Engaging in such scholarly inquiry prepares us to offer more equitable and inclusive approaches to integrating diverse histories into the national narrative.

Keywords: Afro-Caribbean diaspora; Historical migration; Settlement in Canada; Haitian and Jamaican communities; Eurocentric analysis; Black consciousness; Community Identity

2.2 Introduction:

In the past half-century, Canada's Afro-Caribbean population has grown significantly, with over 800,000 people of Caribbean origin residing in Canada today (Statistics Canada 2019). This demographic shift reflects Canada's evolving immigration policies, which have moved from exclusionary to inclusive, reshaping the community's dynamics and cultural contributions to Canadian society. The 20th century saw significant waves of Afro-Caribbean migration to Canada, shaped by both push and pull factors. On the one hand, political instability and economic hardship—such as the Duvalier dictatorship in Haiti and global capitalist restructuring in Jamaica—forced many to seek new opportunities abroad (Whitfield 2017). On the other hand, Canada's evolving immigration policies and Commonwealth ties created structured migration pathways, particularly after the 1967 Points-Based Immigration System expanded opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled workers. These shifts laid the foundation for Afro-Caribbean communities to emerge as key contributors to Canadian society, despite facing systemic barriers—a theme explored in this paper (Audebert 2017). Additionally, Canada's political stability, economic opportunities, and its historical positioning as a Commonwealth country played a role in attracting Caribbean migrants.

This established diplomatic and economic relationships between Canada and Commonwealth Caribbean nations provided a structured pathway for migration, offering many a sense of familiarity and access to social networks already present in Canadian cities. This re-settlement was driven by the hope of securing more opportunities and better living conditions. Similarly, Jamaicans immigrated during the 1960s and 1970s to Canada during a post-colonial period marked by economic challenges and social upheaval that were exacerbated by 'global

capitalist dynamics’—a term used to describe the economic forces and power structures that shape global economic relations and marginalize the working class (Government of Canada, Department of Justice Electronic Communications 2022). Programs like the West Indian Domestic Scheme in Canada attracted many Jamaican women who left behind families to secure better livelihoods (West Indian Domestic Scheme n.d.). These push factors shaped not only migration waves but also the settlement patterns of Afro-Caribbean communities, which in turn influenced their socio-economic integration in Canada—a topic explored in the next section. The presence of Commonwealth ties between Jamaica and Canada also played a crucial role, as it facilitated migration channels through policies that privileged skilled and semi-skilled workers from former British colonies. It should be noted that it was not until the 1960s that major changes in Canadian immigration policies opened the door to other countries aside from Western Europe and provided space for skilled workers from the Caribbean to immigrate to Canada. Hence, in 1967, Canada changed its immigration laws to facilitate the movement of people from the Caribbean to cities like Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, thereby developing Afro-Caribbean communities centered on promoting identity formation and cross-cultural interaction. Afro-Caribbean communities’ contributions are significant and invaluable across various spheres of Canadian life, including healthcare, education, culture, and community growth. These contributions, deeply rooted in their African heritage and the unique cultural elements they developed in the Caribbean, have enriched the fabric of Canadian society. This article will explore the impact of immigration policies and cultural capital in reshaping the nation’s socio-cultural environment. Through comprehensive analysis, we will gain an insightful overview of the lived realities of the Afro-Caribbean diaspora, enabling researchers to engage deeply with the journey of immigration and identity formation of Afro-Caribbean communities.

This study employed a qualitative historical analysis approach, integrating archival materials, government reports, and statistical data to examine Afro-Caribbean migration, identity formation, and socioeconomic integration in Canada. The research was guided by the following questions: (1) How have historical migration patterns influenced the socioeconomic realities of Afro-Caribbean communities? (2) How do contemporary policies continue to shape Afro-Caribbean identity and social mobility? By analyzing primary and secondary sources, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the intersection of racial capitalism, cultural capital, and systemic barriers in Canada.

This study applied racial capitalism as a key theoretical lens to examine how systemic racism and economic exploitation have historically shaped Afro-Caribbean migration and labour market integration in Canada (Robinson 2021). Additionally, it draws on cultural capital theory (Bourdieu 1986) to explore how Afro-Caribbean communities navigate systemic barriers through cultural knowledge, community networks, and resilience strategies. By integrating these frameworks, the study situates Afro-Caribbean socioeconomic experiences within broader historical and structural inequalities.

By revisiting the migration narratives of Jamaicans and Haitians, this study examined why these specific groups were central to early Afro-Caribbean migration to Canada and how historical Commonwealth relations, coupled with shifting Canadian policies, influenced their settlement patterns. The aim was to develop more inclusive partnerships within community-based knowledge assemblages and generate an inclusive narrative encompassing the Afro-Caribbean contribution to Canada's multicultural image. Ultimately, this article supports advocating for critical policy changes that more accurately address the challenges of the Afro-Caribbean communities. Engaging in such scholarly inquiry prepares us to offer more equitable and inclusive approaches to integrating diverse histories into the national narrative.

2.3 Resilience and Integration: The Journey of Afro-Caribbean Migrants in Canada

To provide a comprehensive understanding of Afro-Caribbean migration to Canada, this manuscript structures the discussion in a way that not only examines key policy shifts but also contextualizes their socio-economic impact. Rather than presenting a linear policy summary, the analysis unfolds progressively—first establishing the exclusionary foundations of pre-1962 immigration policies, then tracing the gradual shifts towards merit-based systems, and finally assessing how these changes shaped integration experiences and identity formation among Afro-Caribbean communities. This approach ensures that the policy discussions remain closely tied to lived experiences, highlighting the resilience and agency of Afro-Caribbean migrants in navigating systemic barriers.

Afro-Caribbean migration to Canada, primarily to cities like Toronto and Montreal, is a testament to the resilience and determination of these communities. Among the largest non-European ethnic groups in Canada are those of Jamaican descent (Okeke-Ihejirika 2020). Despite facing numerous challenges upon arrival, including discrimination and prejudice, they have managed to establish themselves in their new home. For instance, half of all Canadians of Jamaican descent reported encountering prejudice. Fifty-one percent of Jamaicans residing in Canada said they had experienced discrimination or unfair treatment because of their ethnicity, colour, religion, language, or accent in the previous five years or since their arrival. Sixty-nine percent of Canadians of Jamaican descent who reported encountering prejudice said the discrimination had occurred in the workplace or when applying for a job (Statistics Canada 2024). Yet, despite these hardships, 71% reported feeling strongly that they belonged to their ethnic or cultural group (Statistics Canada 2024).

In Canada, the province of Ontario stands as the primary residence for the majority of Canadians of Jamaican descent. In 2001, a staggering 85% of Canadians with Jamaican ancestry

called Ontario home. Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia also hosted significant Jamaican populations, comprising 5%, 4%, and 3% of their respective populations during the same period. The number of individuals of Jamaican descent residing in Ontario was 181,000, a stark contrast to the approximately 11,000 in Quebec, 8000 in Alberta, and 7000 in British Columbia. In Ontario, Canadians of Jamaican descent accounted for around 2% of the overall population, while in all other provinces and territories, their share of the total population was less than 5% (Robinson 2021).

Furthermore, the Points-Based Immigration System (1962–1970), a discriminatory immigration policy based on race and country of origin, underwent significant changes in the late 1960s (Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2021). A notable shift during this era was Prime Minister Diefenbaker's 1962 immigration policy, which prioritized skills, education, and training as critical criteria for the admission of prospective immigrants.

Before 1962, Canada's immigration system was explicitly exclusionary, favouring European migrants while restricting entry for non-white populations, including Afro-Caribbean and African American applicants, on the basis of being deemed 'climatically unsuitable'. These policies reinforced racial hierarchies by limiting migration opportunities for Black communities (Wong and Guo 2018). The introduction of Prime Minister Diefenbaker's 1962 immigration reforms marked a shift away from explicitly race-based exclusions by prioritizing skills, education, and training as admission criteria. While this did not fully eliminate racial bias, it opened pathways for a small but growing number of non-European immigrants.

This resulted in the arrival of a small number of educated Haitians in the early 1960s who settled primarily in Montreal due to their proficiency in French (Walker 2022). This period coincided with the introduction of the Points-Based Immigration System in 1967, which focused on qualities such as occupation, education, and knowledge of Canada's official languages (Wong

and Guo 2018). The Official Languages Act (1969) formally recognized French and English as Canada's official languages, reinforcing linguistic duality as a core national identity. However, language-based integration policies had already been in place since 1947, when the Canadian government introduced programs to teach newcomers French or English. The Act played a significant role in shaping Afro-Caribbean migration patterns, particularly for Haitians, whose French proficiency provided them with a relative advantage in Quebec's immigration and labour policies. Nonetheless, for English-speaking Caribbean migrants, linguistic barriers remained an additional challenge in navigating social and economic integration outside of Quebec (Wong and Guo 2018).

It is worth noting that training programs aimed at teaching immigrants French or English to enhance their participation in Canadian society were introduced as early as 1947 (Gaffield 2015). These changes in Canadian policies and systems reflect the growing Caribbean population and a shift towards an attempt to establish an equitable and fair approach.

2.4 Historical Background, Challenges, and Community Responses

This section outlines the key historical challenges faced by Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada, particularly in terms of migration and integration. In response to these challenges, community organizations and cultural movements, such as Rastafarianism, emerged as vital tools for resilience and identity formation. The following discussion highlights both the structural barriers and the grassroots responses that shaped Afro-Caribbean experiences.

An in-depth analysis of the Great Migration and World War I revealed a dynamic era for diasporic communities, influencing Afro-Caribbean identity and their contributions to Canadian culture (Parekh 2006). The increase in migration during the post-World War II era contributed to the foundation of vibrant Afro-Caribbean communities in cities like Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver (Belshaw 2016). For example, many Afro-Caribbean communities took the initiative

to create organizations (e.g., Maison d’Haiti, Bureau De La Communauté Haïtienne De Ottawa, Centre Communautaire des Haitiens d’Ottawa-Gatineau, Jamaican association in Ottawa, Jamaican Community Association Inc., and the Jamaican High Commission Ottawa) and support groups to address systemic barriers. These groups were essential in promoting social justice activism, community involvement, and cultural knowledge. Their primary objective was to bring public attention to removing systematic obstacles that interfere with equitable access to resources. The collaboration of these grassroots organizations aimed to advance education and job prospects. Additionally, these community-led groups provided safe spaces for Afro-Caribbeans to express their cultural heritage without fear of repercussions and social marginalization. Furthermore, Afro-Caribbean communities influenced Canadian culture significantly through music, literature, art, and culinary traditions.

For instance, Rastafarianism, a political and cultural ideology, has played a central role in shaping Black identity among many communities of African descent in Europe and the US. Paul Gilroy (1987)’s book “There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation” highlights how Jamaican immigrants brought Rastafarianism to the UK and other Western countries, using it as a cultural tool to resist assimilation and affirm a bond with an idealized Africa. This is just one example of Afro-Caribbeans’ diverse and significant contributions to Canadian culture. Additionally, Rastafarianism in Canada provides a vibrant cultural exchange, enriching Canadian multiculturalism through their spiritual, musical, and artistic expressions. Notably, Rastafarianism contributed to the popularization of reggae music and played an essential role in Canada’s civil rights and social justice movements by advocating for the rights and recognition of African Canadian communities (Labelle et al. 2021). This message of Afrocentric pride and identity encourages discussions on racial equality and cultural respect within Canada’s diverse society, adding a valuable dimension to the cultural fabric of

Canada. Thus, it illuminates the dynamic interaction of immigration and cultural identity and how diasporic movements influence and reshape national settings. Exploring the history of Haitians and Jamaicans in Canada provides insight into how cultural capital—encompassing education, linguistic skills, community networks, and cultural expression—shapes the formation of Blackness in Canada. While traditional models of cultural capital emphasize assimilation into dominant structures (Bourdieu 1986), Afro-Caribbean cultural capital often operates within a framework of resistance, reinforcing identity, solidarity, and advocacy against systemic barriers.

2.5 Demographic Distribution, Socioeconomic Integration, and Structural Barriers

While this section primarily discusses the demographic distribution and socioeconomic integration of Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada, it is important to consider how systemic structures, particularly racial capitalism, influence these processes. The following analysis contextualizes economic participation and settlement patterns within broader historical and structural frameworks.

For example, Afro-Caribbeans in Canada have been integral to the labour force and social movements for centuries. The British and French colonies of Canada began with the forced labour of over 4,000 enslaved Black people in the early 19th century (Maynard 2017). Thousands of Black people fled to Canada between 1830 and 1850, where they found ‘abundant’ and ‘fairly rewarded’ work (Adams 2011). By the early 20th century, Black men in Canada were limited to low-status blue-collar and service jobs due to a ‘growing tide of prejudice’ (Adams 2011). Black women’s labour was concentrated into even more limited and lower-paying jobs than their male peers. For example, author Cedric Robinson, (2021) brought attention to this unequal treatment of Black migrants and referred to it as a form of racial capitalism—looking beyond the traditional Marxist focus on class and modes of production and uncovering how racial inequalities and oppression (including imperialism and slavery) are intrinsic to capitalism.

Nowadays, immigrants from the Caribbean and Africa arrive in Canada amidst a neo-liberal form of capitalism that includes immigration consulting firms and lawyers before they arrive and then integrate into a capitalist labour market shaped by systematic racism.

Recent Statistics Canada (2024) data reveal that Afro-Caribbean communities continue to face significant employment and income disparities, with their unemployment rate (9.4%) remaining disproportionately higher than the national average (5.8%). While 77% of Afro-Caribbean individuals aged 25–44 hold a post-secondary diploma or degree, 43% work in jobs below their qualifications, reflecting the systemic deskilling of Black professionals. Wage gaps persist, with Black workers earning 17% less than their white counterparts in comparable positions, while only 4.1% of senior management roles are held by Black professionals. Additionally, hiring discrimination remains prevalent, with applicants bearing Afro-Caribbean-sounding names receiving 40% fewer callbacks than those with Anglo-Saxon names despite identical credentials. These structural barriers reaffirm how racial capitalism continues to shape Afro-Caribbeans' labour market integration, as their contributions are systematically undervalued despite high educational attainment and workforce participation.

Cedric Robinson (2021)'s concept of racial capitalism highlights how economic structures reinforce racial hierarchies, ensuring that Black labour remains systematically undervalued. This is evident in Canada's historical and contemporary immigration policies. For instance, before the 1967 Points System, Caribbean workers were primarily admitted under domestic labour programs, reinforcing their placement in low-wage, service-sector roles. Even after policy reforms, Afro-Caribbean professionals continue to experience credential devaluation and hiring discrimination, exemplifying how racial capitalism operates not just in early migration but persists in present-day labour market disparities. The neoliberal restructuring of Canada's labour market further entrenched this dynamic, reinforcing the precarity of Afro-Caribbean

workers under racial capitalism. For instance, the historical employment patterns of Caribbean domestic workers under the West Indian Domestic Scheme and the ongoing deskilling of Black professionals in Canada illustrate how Afro-Caribbean labour is continually positioned within exploitative economic structures.

Neoliberal restructuring in Canada, particularly from the 1980s onward, has intensified the precarious economic conditions faced by Afro-Caribbean migrants. The shift toward privatization, deregulation, and a reduction in state welfare programs, disproportionately affecting racialized communities, particularly those whose migration was historically linked to labour-intensive industries. As Sunera Thobani (2007) asserts, neoliberalism operates in tandem with multiculturalism to mask the racialized economic exploitation embedded in Canada's labour market. Policies that emphasized self-sufficiency and economic class as a measure of worth placed Black migrants at a structural disadvantage, forcing many into low-wage, precarious jobs while limiting access to social mobility.

This aligns with Robinson's concept of racial capitalism, wherein Black labour is systematically devalued within a capitalist economy structured around racial hierarchies. In the context of Canada, neoliberal policies further entrenched this dynamic by removing social protections while simultaneously using multicultural rhetoric to obscure ongoing racial inequalities. For Afro-Caribbean communities, this meant continued economic marginalization under the guise of equal opportunity.

Robinson challenged the Marxist idea of capitalism as a revolutionary negation of feudalism. In its place, capitalism developed from the medieval order of Western civilization that was instilled with racialism. Therefore, capitalism and racism are a reproduction of the primitive orders that evolved in the production of goods and services in the modern world—racial capitalism involving slavery, imperialism, and oppression (Robinson 2021). This is linked to

colonization and slavery within Europe. Correspondingly, the immigration of Haitians and Jamaicans to Canada reveals a pattern of displacement and diaspora shaped by capitalist exploitation and racial discrimination. Both groups sought refuge and economic opportunities in Canada, but systemic barriers and marginalization marked their experiences. As Canada began to urbanize and industrialize at the turn of the century, Black people in Canada experienced a significant shift in the labour market. This historical narrative underscores the resilience and contributions of Afro-Caribbean communities to Canadian society.

It was not until 1982 that protection from discriminatory practices was put into place with the implementation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, offering protection for “official languages, minority language rights, and equality rights” (Wong and Guo 2018). This protection was needed in part due to racist groups and organizations promoting racism (Canadian Multiculturalism n.d.).

2.6 Policy Shifts and Community Responses

In the 1990s, there was a paradigm shift from equality rights in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms to neoliberalist idealism (Arat-Koc 1999). Before this neoliberalism era, the well-being of citizens was viewed as a collective responsibility, whereas during the era of neoliberalism, individuals became responsible for their well-being. As neoliberal policies redefined economic class as the primary marker of success, the value and recognition of Afro-Caribbean cultural capital—such as non-Western credentials, multilingual abilities, and community-driven knowledge—were diminished. Policies that prioritized economic self-sufficiency devalued these assets, reinforcing systemic exclusions in the labour market (Arat-Koc 1999). The preconceived notion was that immigrants of a higher economic class would have better employment opportunities because they tended to have more education and therefore would participate more in the labour market and be less reliant on welfare (Arat-Koc 1999). This

transition influenced how the Canadian population determined and categorized the value of the social and cultural capital of Afro-Caribbeans in Canadian society and what were the parameters of Blackness.

The 1971 multiculturalism policy strongly encouraged and facilitated the full participation of cultural minority groups in Canadian society (Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2021). The implementation of this policy resulted in the arrival of a diverse range of skilled and semi-skilled immigrants from Haiti and other Caribbean countries with varied backgrounds (Walker 2022). While the 1971 Multiculturalism Policy aimed to promote inclusivity and facilitate cultural preservation, scholars like Thobani (2007) have critiqued it as a tool for managing racial differences rather than dismantling structural inequities. Thobani (2007) argues that multiculturalism operates within a framework of white supremacy, where racialized communities are expected to conform to a state-sanctioned version of diversity that does not challenge existing power structures. This policy did not fundamentally disrupt the racial and economic hierarchies that positioned Afro-Caribbean migrants as labourers within a neoliberal economic order. Instead, it functioned to incorporate racialized groups into Canada's national identity while maintaining the dominance of Euro-Canadian cultural norms.

This perspective challenges the assumption that multiculturalism equates to racial equality. In reality, the policy reinforced systemic barriers by treating cultural differences as a matter of representation rather than redistributing power and resources. By failing to address economic and social disparities, multiculturalism became a mechanism for racial governance, ensuring that Afro-Caribbean communities remained structurally positioned in low-income labour markets and underrepresented in decision-making roles. Before 1981, the Black immigrant population in Canada was a testament to this diversity, with 83.3 percent from the Caribbean or Bermuda, 6.7

percent from the rest of the Americas, 5.1 percent from Europe, 4.8 percent from Africa, and 0.1 percent from Asia and Oceania (Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada 2021).

However, despite this demographic expansion, immigration policies remained structured around racial hierarchies. While multiculturalism was presented as an inclusive framework, it did not eliminate systemic inequities but rather regulated and managed racialized populations within a neoliberal labour economy. The vast majority of Black immigrants, particularly those from the Caribbean, were incorporated into Canada's economic system as labourers rather than as political and social stakeholders. This reinforces Thobani (2007)'s critique that multiculturalism, while celebrating diversity, ultimately maintains existing racial power structures rather than dismantling them.

This policy attempted to form a welcoming and inclusive environment for immigrants from diverse backgrounds. Once settled in Canada, many newly arrived Black immigrants began to set up services and businesses that not only provided culturally and linguistically sensitive professional, recreational, and essential services to ethnic groups throughout Canada (Walker 2022), but also made significant contributions to Canada's economy and society (Gaffield 2015). However, it is essential to note that despite the possibilities that the 1971 multiculturalism policy created for immigration to Canada, it did not meet the needs of those it aspired to serve because policymakers assumed they knew the needs of visible minority immigrants (Leman 1999). Policymakers thought the obstacles to success were cultural and linguistic, whereas in reality, the needs of new immigrants were more complex and related to equity issues such as housing, employment, education, and the tools to fight discrimination. To address this, policymakers from the host country must involve Black people in decision-making as stakeholders, knowers, and actors of their own life experiences (Okeke-Ihejirika 2020).

Another influential Canadian immigration policy of the 1970s was the 1976 Immigration Act. This Act aimed to welcome refugees, address the country's economic, social, and demographic needs, and guarantee family reunification (Arat-Koc 1999). Although the goal was quite vague, the policy provided a commitment to protecting refugees and guaranteed the implementation of family reunification policies. A milestone regarding protections for marginalized groups achieved during the mid-1990s was the implementation of the 1995 Employment Equity Act, which mandated that employers provide protection and equal opportunities for members of traditionally marginalized groups, including women, people with disabilities, Indigenous persons, and visible minorities (Wong and Guo 2018). These policies helped combat discriminatory employment practices, making the workplace more accessible to marginalized populations. Many Black newcomers who arrived in Canada between 2011 and 2016 came through the economic class program from countries such as Nigeria, Haiti, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, and Jamaica (Statistics Canada 2024).

2.7 Contemporary Implications of Historical Migrations and Policies for the Afro-Caribbean Diaspora in Canada

The Afro-Caribbean diaspora's journey in Canada, influenced by preceding events, has led to systematic policy changes from immigration to integration. The understanding that economic opportunities and political uprisings often fuel migration is key. During historical movements, diverse economic opportunities and political upheavals were prevalent, and the social cohesion and integration strategies among these migrant communities directly affected the interplay between social integration and identity formation. This history has led to intricate community networks, which new immigrants can tap into for growth and development. This potential is particularly promising for the youth, as a new culture offers them a new identity and a future filled with hope and optimism. However, it also presents challenges, primarily in culture clashes

and identity crises. The migratory situations in the past have created a context in which the evolution of the current social structure and national identity of the Afro-Caribbean diaspora in the Canadian context can be understood.

One critical factor to include is that racism and discrimination experienced by Afro-Caribbeans in Canada are two legacies resulting from interpersonal interactions and the participation of Black people in various social and political realms. Starting way back, the discrimination and inequalities faced by Afro-Caribbeans, among other minority races in Canada, first resulted from racially defined prejudicial behaviour, which has caused riots, killings, and hostility for generations since. Therefore, there is an aspect of appreciation for how the past influences people's perception of contemporary racial injustice. This is expressed among the Afro-Caribbean communities by supporting mass emancipation movements like Black Lives Matter, which advocate for justice system restructuring and equitability and contribute to such transformations to a great extent. Again, the development of immigration policies and political lobbying evidence how past politics and policies have inspired the Afro-Caribbean diaspora to influence and reboot policies to meet their interests and purposes. Some of the political and historical insights are the building blocks for understanding the community's current limitations in pushing for a conclusive instructive policy that comes with community-led transformative directives building diversity and inclusivity in their society.

Canadian authorities in the field of public policy have begun to pay more attention to the need to recognize and satisfy the needs of Afro-Caribbean Canadians. It is also essential to highlight the connection between public policy and sociology, as sociological research provides critical insights into the social structures and behaviours that inform policy decisions, ensuring that policies address the needs and dynamics of diverse communities. Moreover, public policy shapes social environments and societal norms, accenting the reciprocal relationship where

policies influence social behaviour, and sociological findings guide policy development. Hence, governmental activities and projects are designed to ensure integration and tolerance for various forms of diversity, providing a conducive environment for people of Afro-Caribbean origin to enjoy all the benefits of living in Canada and contribute to society. However, it must be recognized that it is impossible to provide a comprehensive understanding of the state of Afro-Caribbeans in Canada based only on the conducted research and the available data on the Afro-Caribbean diaspora, which refer to the dispersed population of people of Afro-Caribbean descent living outside their ancestral homeland. Ongoing research and dialogue are crucial. They allow us to develop policies and intervention programs that accurately address the challenges of the Afro-Caribbean community. For instance, Seidle (2013)'s research highlighted that even in the 1960s, Quebec's provincial government was pushing for changes in the policy framework to gain the right to approve or decline individual migrations to the province. This led to the signing of the first of four subsequent immigration agreements between Quebec and the federal government in 1971.

Canada's immigration policy has continued to evolve to offer better protection to immigrants. Despite the implementation of many legislations that embraced multiculturalism and prohibited discrimination, acts of discrimination still occur regularly in Canada, particularly against racialized people (Cheyne-Hazineh 2020). The historical accounts of Black people and the policies that impact their lives highlight the challenging context in which Black immigrants find themselves in, particularly regarding racism. The historical account also highlights the population's agency and resiliency as they rebuild their lives in the host country (Okeke-Ihejirika 2020). Social intersectional factors, mainly race and gender, have a significant impact on Black migrants as they navigate the challenging task of rebuilding their lives in Canada.

2.8 Discussion

This section examines how specific immigration policies shaped the Haitian and Jamaican diasporas in Canada, focusing on three key areas: (1) labour market integration, (2) community identity formation, and (3) ongoing systemic barriers. By tracing historical policies alongside contemporary realities, the discussion highlights how Afro-Caribbean communities continue to negotiate their place in Canadian society, balancing social integration with the preservation of cultural identity.

The immigration policy developed in 1967 also involved the creation of immigrant classes (Wong and Guo 2018). This placed prospective immigrants into one of three classes: independent, family, or refugee, helping to process prospective immigrants' applications more fairly and consistently. Some immigrants who arrived in Canada in the 1980s and 1990s were invited by family members, primarily women from Jamaica and Haiti, who were already living there (Statistics Canada 2024).

The following chart outlines the effects of specific immigration policies. For instance, the Points-Based Immigration System's implementation in 1967 marked a significant shift in Canadian immigration policy. Rather than racial or national origin, the focus was now on skills, education, and language. While the shift to a points-based immigration system in 1967 is often viewed as a progressive departure from explicitly racist immigration policies, it must also be understood as a reformulation of racial exclusion rather than its eradication. Such policies continue to privilege whiteness by setting criteria that, while race-neutral on the surface, disproportionately benefited applicants from European countries due to their access to formal education and professional credentials. The new system allowed for increased immigration from the Caribbean, but it simultaneously placed Afro-Caribbean migrants into a framework where they had to constantly justify their worth through economic productivity, reinforcing their role as disposable labour within the neoliberal economy.

This logic of racial governance ensured that Afro-Caribbean migrants were admitted primarily to meet labour market demands, not to challenge Canada’s racial hierarchy. As a result, immigration policies continued to reflect a white supremacist logic wherein non-white migrants were valued only insofar as they could serve economic needs, with little regard for their social or political rights. The presumed intention of this policy was to facilitate the recruitment of more skilled Afro-Caribbean immigrants, mainly from English-speaking countries like Jamaica. We see increases in migration over the decade after changes in immigration policies in Canada.

Immigration Policy Changes and Impacts

Table 2.1 outlines key Canadian immigration policies between 1962 and 2002 and their specific effects on Afro-Caribbean communities. The transition from restrictive immigration policies to a points-based system in 1967 facilitated skilled migration, while later reforms, such as the 1976 Immigration Act, prioritized family reunification, strengthening community ties. The 2002 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) further modernized immigration procedures, increasing protections for migrants and streamlining entry processes.

Table 2.1. Immigration reforms and their impact on Afro-Caribbean communities. Key Canadian immigration policies from 1962 to 2002 and their specific effects on Afro-Caribbean communities.

Year	Policy Description	Impact on Afro-Caribbean Communities
1962	Immigration Act: Loosened restrictions on non-European immigrants	Allowed more Caribbean immigrants, increasing community size

Year	Policy Description	Impact on Afro-Caribbean Communities
1967	Points-Based Immigration System: Skills, education, and language focus	Facilitated skilled worker immigration from the Caribbean
1976	Immigration Act: Formalized points system, family reunification	Enabled family-based immigration, strengthening community ties
2002	Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA): Modernized framework	Increased protections and streamlined immigration processes

This change profoundly impacted Afro-Caribbean communities, opening doors for greater economic integration. Skilled workers from these communities could now contribute to sectors such as healthcare and education, laying a solid foundation for community development. These policies were also shaped by Afro-Caribbean descendants such as Jean Augustine, originally from Grenada, who moved to Canada in the 1960s. She became the first African–Canadian woman elected to the Canadian House of Commons and was a champion for social justice, playing a pivotal role in establishing Black History Month in Canada (McLeod 2016). She also made significant contributions to policies related to immigration, multiculturalism, and education, inspiring a hopeful future for all.

Another notable figure is Michaëlle Jean, a Haitian-born Canadian who served as the 27th Governor General of Canada from 2005 to 2010 (Azzi 2021). Her journey from being a refugee in the 1960s to the highest office in the land is a testament to the opportunities Canada offers. Her tenure was marked by a focus on youth, Indigenous rights, culture, and women’s issues. She used her position to amplify the struggles and contributions of Afro-Caribbean

Canadians and other minorities. Her impact did not end with her term. Through the Michaëlle Jean Foundation, she continues to shape policy and culture using arts and culture to improve the lives of at-risk youth, creating programs that give youth a platform to amplify their voices and take action, and arts-based initiatives that foster creative and constructive connections (Lola n.d.).

The push and pull factors that explain these migrations help show the challenges Afro-Caribbean immigrants face. Therefore, the contribution of Afro-Caribbeans to Canadian society is far more profound and broader than one would think. For example, Professor Rinaldo Walcott from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, stated during a panel discussion that “Afro-Caribbean Canadians have been at the forefront of challenging and shaping policies around race and equity in Canada. Their efforts have highlighted systemic issues and prompted significant legislative changes in Canadian society” (John Hope Franklin Humanities Institute at Duke University 2023).

Afro-Caribbeans have made significant artistic contributions to Canadian culture, particularly in the realms of music, dance, literature, and cuisine. Prominent figures such as writers Austin Clarke and Nalo Hopkinson, as well as musician Jully Black, exemplify this influence. The 1971 multiculturalism policy, which prioritized cultural preservation, allocated funding to support festivals and educational programs conducted in languages other than English or French (Hawkins 2007). This policy facilitated greater political engagement and created an inter-generational impact by enabling the children of immigrants to benefit from these initiatives, thus enhancing their potential to achieve higher socioeconomic statuses. Nevertheless, despite these advancements, Afro-Caribbeans continued to encounter subtle forms of discrimination, such as polite racism. In response, the diaspora developed various coping strategies to navigate predominantly white-centered spaces.

Despite the evolution of immigration policies to recruit skilled immigrants to Canada, social intersectional factors including class and ethnicity do not explain the higher unemployment rate among Black migrants compared to other marginalized communities. They also do not explain the overrepresentation of Black migrants employed in caregiving roles—occupations that often have “few legislative protections and numerous exploitative conditions” because they are usually seen as lesser roles (Kihika 2013). This has implications for addressing policies related to the health and well-being of Black families, who may have to work multiple jobs (often care-related) while juggling homemaking and childrearing in new cultural contexts. Of particular note are issues related to the mental well-being of caregivers (Armstrong and Jansen 2015).

Below is a breakdown of the implications of various immigration policies for Afro-Caribbeans in Canada. The chart starts from 1967 because it is during this period that Canada introduced an immigration policy implementing a points-based system. This policy marked a significant move towards an attempt to be more equitable and focus on merit-based immigration systems to contribute to the economic development of Canada.

Immigration Reforms and Community Support

Over the past three decades, various reforms have aimed to support Afro-Caribbean immigrants by addressing socio-economic challenges and systemic barriers. As shown in Table 2.2, policy initiatives such as the recognition of foreign credentials in the 1990s, the introduction of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) in 2002, and family reunification reforms in 2014 and 2017 have shaped migration experiences. Despite these efforts, systemic barriers persist, particularly in credential recognition and equitable policy application.

Table 2.2 Sociological dynamics of Afro-Caribbean migration. Reforms and strategies to support Afro-Caribbean immigrants, including efforts to address socioeconomic challenges and systemic barriers.

Year	Reform Description	Impact on Afro-Caribbean Immigrants
1990	Recognition of Foreign Credentials (1990s)	Improved assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications, enhancing employment opportunities for Afro-Caribbean professionals. However, systemic barriers in credential recognition persisted.
2002	Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA 2002)	Established clearer guidelines for immigration processing, emphasizing security and efficiency. Increased transparency in immigration decisions, but challenges remained in equitable application of policies.
2014	Expedited Processing for Family Reunification (2014)	Reduced wait times for family sponsorship applications, allowing for quicker reunification. Strengthened Afro-Caribbean family structures but did not fully eliminate administrative delays.
2017	Expanded Eligibility for Family Reunification (2017)	Broadened eligibility criteria, enabling more Afro-Caribbean immigrants to sponsor extended family members. Facilitated greater family support networks within Afro-Caribbean communities.

Year	Reform Description	Impact on Afro-Caribbean Immigrants
2019	Bias Training for Immigration Officers (2019)	Implemented mandatory training programs to reduce biases in decision-making. Aimed to improve fairness in immigration assessments, but enforcement and oversight remain concerns.
2020	Pathways to Permanent Residency for Temporary Workers (2020)	Provided clearer routes for temporary workers to obtain permanent residency. Increased stability and security for Afro-Caribbean migrants working in low-wage sectors, though precarious labour conditions persist.
2022	Enhanced Worker Rights and Protections (2022)	Strengthened legal protections to prevent the exploitation of temporary workers. Improved labour conditions and legal support for Afro-Caribbean workers, though gaps in enforcement remain.

By implementing these targeted immigration reforms and community support programs, Canada can better support the Afro-Caribbean diaspora, fostering their full participation and integration into Canadian society while celebrating their unique cultural contributions.

8. The Sociological Dynamics of Afro-Caribbean Migration and Identity Formation

The sociological perspective provides a crucial framework for understanding the motivations behind Afro-Caribbean migration. Central to this analysis is the pursuit of an enhanced quality of life, driven by idealized representations of immigration as a solution to existing challenges. This perception is deeply rooted in colonial structures that shape social metrics, portraying immigration as a form of salvation. The notion of relocation as a panacea reflects a social

imaginary that fundamentally guides collective and individual actions, shaping societal values. Thus, the sociological lens becomes a significant tool in the study of human rights, particularly in the context of Afro-Caribbean immigration.

The reproduction of identities through immigration and social movements is a dynamic process that reflects shared culture and ancestry. The binary power dynamics (e.g., white/Black, good/bad) and the emergent cultural politics of difference reveal how Afro-Caribbean cultural capital is valued or dismissed in Canadian society. Unlike Eurocentric models of cultural capital, which privilege institutional recognition and Western social norms, Afro-Caribbean cultural capital functions as a mechanism of resilience and counter-narratives, shaping alternative forms of success and social mobility. Culture profoundly influences our understanding of the world, shaping social perception and the social imaginary, which are sustained through social practices. Du Bois (1903) introduced the concept of the veil to describe the visible differences of Black individuals, which consists of three elements: the dark skin complexion of Black people, the refusal by whites to see Blacks as true Americans, and the misunderstandings by Blacks about white Americans' views and prescriptions for them. This concept highlights the societal position of Black individuals as perceived problems within the Western world.

The concept of Blackness is complex and multifaceted, varying across different countries and influencing the production of space and the formation of Western and Eurocentric notions of place, belonging, and geographic knowledge (Finney 2015). From a sociological standpoint, Black identity is diverse, with lived experiences varying significantly. For example, first-generation Afro-Caribbean immigrants and second-generation Black Canadians often perceive racism differently. Recent Black immigrants may interpret racist acts distinctively compared to those born in Canada, underscoring the need for nuanced understanding and empathy in discussions of Black identity.

Examining laws within a country can reveal how racism evolves based on its history of colonization. Colonization fosters a form of intimacy, where systems of power and domination aim to control the bodies and minds of the oppressed. The historical trajectory of Blackness—from colonization, slavery, and capitalism to assimilation and the intersectionality of class, race, and gender—shapes contemporary North American perceptions of Blackness. Furthermore, the politics of difference that emerge upon relocating to Canada must be examined. West Indian Domestic Scheme (n.d.) emphasized that the new cultural politics of difference advocate for diversity, multiplicity, and heterogeneity, rejecting monolithic and homogeneous identities. These politics highlight the importance of concrete, specific, and particular experiences over abstract, general, and universal notions, emphasizing the contingent, provisional, and variable nature of identity. For instance, Johnes (2000) highlights Kymlicka's perspective that multiculturalism in Canada involves immigrants' rights to express their ethnic identity without experiencing prejudice or discrimination. This perspective can shape the construction of Blackness, yet it is essential to understand that Blackness encompasses a variety of experiences and representations. The spatial dynamics of Blackness, societal fears of Black spaces, and interactions involving Black bodies reflect broader contexts of racial and geographical intersections (Finney 2015).

The power dynamics associated with knowledge can be described as a "Racial Isosceles", where the intersection of social hierarchy and class status due to capitalist demands creates social inequalities. Class systems in Canada often do not accurately reflect social status, as illustrated by the differing societal recognitions of a professor versus a YouTuber. Identity has become increasingly significant in social sciences and humanities, with social identities being critical factors in understanding social, political, and economic life. Recognizing how Afro-Caribbean Black (ACB) cultural capital is both leveraged and marginalized in Canadian institutions is

crucial for developing effective Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) strategies. By analyzing the ways in which cultural capital operates within power relations, policymakers can design more equitable frameworks that address systemic barriers in education, employment, and social mobility.

By analyzing how cultural capital is formed and contested within power relations, policymakers can better address race-related systemic barriers. This understanding is essential for contributing to longitudinal studies that identify areas where barriers are established, ultimately enhancing resources for Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada.

2.9 Conclusions

This study traced the historical and contemporary experiences of Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada, revealing how immigration policies have both enabled and constrained their socio-economic mobility. While multiculturalism policies have celebrated diversity, they have also functioned as regulatory frameworks that maintain racialized economic stratification. Moving forward, addressing these systemic barriers requires policy shifts that go beyond symbolic inclusion, recognizing Afro-Caribbean cultural capital as a legitimate economic and social asset. Only through such changes can Canada move toward true racial equity, rather than mere representation.

The information presented is vital as Afro-Caribbeans have faced unique challenges in Canada, including systemic racism, discrimination, and marginalization, which have hindered their socioeconomic status and general well-being. Therefore, more profound research about the experiences and contributions of Afro-Caribbeans in Canada will be necessary to formulate policies and programs that address these challenges and facilitate their full participation in Canadian society.

Community organizations play a vital role in addressing the struggles of Afro-Caribbean Canadians. These organizations, driven by a concern for their well-being, promote cultural awareness, social engagement, and social justice advocacy. Their efforts focus on creating educational and employment opportunities that remove barriers to fair resource access. The Afro-Caribbean community has also made significant cultural contributions in Canada, particularly in music, literature, art, and culinary traditions. Celebrations of their culture through festivals are integral to Canadian multiculturalism, providing platforms for cultural expression and raising awareness about Afro-Caribbean heritage.

Scholars and policymakers need to continue to probe these narratives and, in doing so, recognize the vibrancy and heterogeneity of the experiences of the Afro-Caribbean diaspora within the larger tapestry of Canada's history and society. This discussion broadens our understanding of Canada's multicultural identity and strengthens further historical scholarship in the light of inclusivity and diversity.

This study underscores the necessity of critically examining Canadian immigration and multicultural policies through the lens of racial capitalism and white supremacy. While multiculturalism and neoliberalism are often framed as mechanisms of inclusion, they have functioned as regulatory frameworks that maintain racialized economic stratification. Based on the literature, it becomes clear that Afro-Caribbean migration must not only be understood in terms of policy shifts but also in relation to the broader mechanisms of racial governance that continue to shape Black life in Canada.

By framing the Afro-Caribbean experience within racial capitalism, this study demonstrates how systemic inequalities are not incidental but foundational to the economic and social positioning of Black migrants in Canada. The persistence of labour market segmentation, underemployment, and the devaluation of Afro-Caribbean cultural assets reflects a broader

historical pattern of racialized economic exploitation. Likewise, an expanded understanding of cultural capital, beyond Bourdieu's Eurocentric framework, reveals how Afro-Caribbean communities leverage their cultural and social networks as strategies of resistance and survival. These theoretical insights highlight the need for future research and policy efforts to address the structural barriers that continue to constrain Afro-Caribbean socioeconomic mobility. A truly equitable multicultural framework must go beyond representation and incorporate systemic changes that recognize and uplift the cultural capital embedded in racialized communities. By situating Afro-Caribbean labour outcomes within racial capitalism and migration policy frameworks, this study bridges historical and contemporary debates on Black migration, labour exploitation, and economic stratification in Canada. It offers a critical intervention into discussions on multicultural policy, highlighting the ways in which state-sponsored inclusion mechanisms obscure rather than eliminate racial inequalities. This structural analysis deepens our understanding of how policy rhetoric and economic realities interact, providing a necessary foundation for future research and policy development.

Moving forward, more work must be conducted to dismantle the structural inequalities that persist despite Canada's official multicultural rhetoric. A true commitment to racial equity requires moving beyond symbolic inclusion and addressing the material conditions that sustain racial disparities. By recognizing how policies reproduce rather than eliminate white supremacist ideologies, policymakers and scholars can work toward genuine transformation in the socio-economic and political realities of Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada.

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CHAPTER 3: Polite Racism and Cultural Capital: Afro-Caribbean Negotiations of Blackness in Canada

3.1 Abstract

Blackness, both as a racial identity and a marker of cultural difference, disrupts the hegemonic norms embedded in dominant forms of cultural capital. This article examines how first- and second-generation Haitian and Jamaican communities in Ontario and Quebec negotiate Blackness within a Canadian context. Drawing from international literature, it introduces distinctly Canadian concepts—such as polite racism, racial ignominy, and duplicity of consciousness—to illuminate local racial dynamics. Using Yosso’s (2005) framework of community cultural wealth, the study analyzes six forms of cultural capital—linguistic, aspirational, social, navigational, resistant, and familial—as employed by Afro-Caribbeans to navigate systemic exclusion. The article expands the limited Canadian discourse on Black identity and offers theoretical tools for understanding how cultural capital is shaped and constrained by race in multicultural democracies.

Keywords: Blackness in Canada; Cultural capital; Afro-Caribbean communities; Social mobility; Racial discrimination; Systemic barriers; Multiculturalism; Ontario and Quebec; Qualitative research

3.2 Introduction

This article explores the dynamic construction of Blackness in Canada through the lens of cultural capital, with a specific focus on first- and second-generation Afro-Caribbean communities. Drawing on both historical and theoretical frameworks, this work examines how Haitian and Jamaican Canadians negotiate their identities, mobilize cultural knowledge, and assert agency within systems shaped by colonial and racial hierarchies. The analysis reveals that Blackness, while always multifaceted in lived experience, is often constrained by institutional forces in Canada that selectively recognize or suppress cultural expressions. Prior scholarship on Black cultural capital has primarily emerged from U.S. and U.K. contexts. Studies such as Wallace (2017, 2019), Reynolds (2006), and Lamont and Molnár (2002) explore how Black communities develop and deploy cultural capital as forms of resistance, resilience, and identity construction in racially stratified societies. However, these studies often overlook the specificities of the Canadian context—where multiculturalism and bilingualism coexist with systemic anti-Blackness. There remains a need to examine how Black cultural capital operates in Canada, particularly across contrasting provincial contexts such as Ontario and Quebec. This study draws on qualitative interviews and focus groups to analyze how participants mobilize cultural capital while navigating systemic exclusion, offering a grounded perspective on Black identity formation in Ontario and Quebec.

Motivated by economic and political upheavals, many African Caribbean immigrants came to Canada seeking a “better life” (Gooden & Hackett, 2020). Their presence has not only influenced the sociopolitical landscape but has also played a central role in the evolving meaning of Blackness in Canada. Afro-Caribbean migration intensified during the mid-20th century, particularly through programs such as the West Indian Domestic Scheme (1955–1967), and later expanded through Canada’s points-based immigration system (Coen-Sanchez, 2025). Today,

over 257,000 Jamaican Canadians reside primarily in Ontario, while 165,000 Haitian Canadians are concentrated in Quebec (Statistics Canada, 2021). Understanding the historical trajectories and spatial distribution of these communities is essential to examining how cultural capital operates within differing sociopolitical environments. These provinces offer contrasting sociopolitical environments—Ontario shaped by British colonial legacies and Quebec by French cultural nationalism—providing a comparative lens on Black identity formation and cultural capital.

In this article, the term *Afro-Caribbean* refers specifically to individuals of African descent from the Caribbean, with a focus on Jamaican and Haitian communities in Canada. *Black* is used as a broader racial category that encompasses diverse diasporic identities, including—but not limited to—Afro-Caribbeans. While these terms are sometimes used interchangeably in Canadian discourse, this article maintains their distinctiveness to acknowledge intra-group differences shaped by nationality, language, migration history, and cultural heritage. *Blackness*, in turn, is approached not as a fixed identity but as a dynamic and context-specific process of racialization and cultural negotiation.

The focus on Afro-Caribbean Blackness is deliberate. These communities embody a specific intersection of racialization, migration, and cultural resilience that challenges traditional notions of cultural capital. Using Yosso's (2005) model of community cultural wealth, this article examines how Afro-Caribbean individuals deploy linguistic, familial, social, and navigational capital to navigate Canadian institutions. However, these cultural assets are often undermined or devalued by polite racism—a distinctly Canadian form of racial bias that masks exclusion under the guise of tolerance and civility.

This article argues that polite racism mediates cultural capital in Canada, shaping which expressions of Black identity are legitimized and which are marginalized. Through qualitative methods—semi-structured interviews and focus groups—the study reveals how participants experience what the author terms “racial ignominy” and “duplicity of consciousness,” two mechanisms by which polite racism operates. These processes both inform and constrain how Blackness is constructed, performed, and contested in Canada. Ultimately, the article positions Afro-Caribbean experiences as vital to understanding the intersections between race, culture, and systemic power in a multicultural yet racially stratified society.

This article builds upon prior work exploring Afro-Caribbean migration and Canadian multicultural policy (Coen-Sanchez, 2025), particularly the published article titled “*Navigating Identity and Policy: The Afro-Caribbean Experience in Canada*” in *Social Sciences* ([Vol. 14, Issue 3, 2025](#)). While that work analyzed the macro-level historical and institutional factors shaping Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada, the current article shifts focus to the micro-level sociocultural mechanisms through which Blackness is constructed, contested, and expressed. Together, these contributions form part of a broader doctoral research project on cultural capital and racialized identity formation among first- and second-generation Haitians and Jamaicans in Ontario and Quebec.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

In this article, *Blackness* is understood as both a lived experience and a socio-political construct that is shaped by historical, geographic, and cultural contexts. Globally, Blackness has been formed through colonialism, enslavement, migration, and resistance, giving rise to a multiplicity of identities and cultural expressions. In the Canadian context, Blackness is often situated within a multicultural discourse that obscures racial inequalities, making Afro-Caribbean identities particularly susceptible to polite racism and systemic exclusion. Here, Blackness is not

monolithic but dynamic—negotiated through language, heritage, generational status, and resistance to normative frameworks. As such, Blackness is conceptualized as a dynamic and continually evolving construct, shaped through the interplay of community agency and structural forces.

The concept of cultural capital, as first introduced by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1977), encompasses non-financial social assets that facilitate upward social mobility. These assets include knowledge, skills, education, and cultural tastes. Blackness, as a cultural identity, contributes to cultural capital in various ways, shaping experiences, representations, and resistances within societies. For example, Wallace (2018) explores how Blackness impacts the operationalization of cultural capital in local contexts, by highlighting the resistance against ethno-racial representation norms and the unique forms of cultural capital that emerge from Black communities. It is of utmost importance to recognize and respect the diversity of experiences within the Afro-Caribbean communities, as individuals may engage with their culture in unique and distinct ways.

Cultural capital is defined as “instruments for the appropriation of symbolic wealth socially designated as worthy of being sought and possessed” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 488), and has “the capacity to reproduce itself, produce profits, expand and contain the tendency to persist” (1986, p. 241). In essence, it refers to the knowledge and skill sets that are (re)produced by privileged groups—typically within homes, schools, and institutional spaces—that shape dispositions and influence access to power (Vassenden & Jonvik, 2019). Central to this framework is a relational view of social life, which emphasizes the empowering potential of acquiring and mobilizing cultural capital. To understand these dynamics, Bourdieu introduced two key concepts: (a) fields—the structured spaces where individuals occupy objective positions that guide perception

and action, and (b) habitus—the internalized dispositions through which people interpret and respond to the world (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2013, p. 275).

Social practices and interactions unfold within structured environments often referred to as *social fields*—distinct arenas governed by specific values and norms (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1991). Within these fields, individuals accumulate and deploy various forms of symbolic resources—such as language, tastes, credentials, and behaviours—that align with the expectations of their social class. These resources, collectively understood as *cultural capital*, are not distributed equally; rather, they are reproduced through institutional mechanisms, particularly formal education. As Bennett et al. (2009) explain, educational systems often reinforce privilege by rewarding students who already possess the cultural competencies valued by dominant groups. Parents who are familiar with these expectations are able to prepare their children to excel in such environments, thereby transforming cultural knowledge into credentials that facilitate social mobility.

While foundational, these theories often lack racial specificity and fail to address the nuances of Canadian multiculturalism. This article builds on these frameworks by introducing the concepts of polite racism, racial ignominy, and duplicity of consciousness to better explain how Black cultural capital is uniquely shaped and constrained in the Canadian context. Though Bourdieu's (1986) theories provide valuable insight into how culture intersects with social stratification, they offer limited explanatory power when it comes to racialized forms of exclusion

Cultural Capital and Community Cultural Wealth

As noted above, while the concept of cultural capital has significantly enriched our understanding of how privileged groups maintain social advantage through cultivated skills, knowledge, and dispositions, it remains theoretically limited in its engagement with race. This

gap necessitates a critical interrogation of traditional Bourdieusian interpretations (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) and invites the incorporation of alternative models—most notably Yosso’s (2005) framework of community cultural wealth—which foreground the lived experiences and cultural assets of racialized communities

Yosso’s model provides a critical corrective by reframing marginalized groups not through a deficit lens, but through the recognition of their distinct forms of capital. Although originally situated within a Latinx context, this framework has been effectively adapted to Black communities across different national settings. For instance, Wallace (2017) illustrates how Black Caribbean youth in South London mobilize cultural capital to resist racialized institutional norms. Likewise, Rolón-Dow (2011) demonstrates how students of colour—including Black students—in the United States draw upon familial and resistant capital to contest structural inequalities in education. Building on these foundational insights, this study explores how Afro-Caribbean communities in Ontario and Quebec—particularly Haitian and Jamaican Canadians—activate forms of community cultural wealth to navigate systemic racism, especially in its more insidious manifestations such as polite racism and racial ignominy, while simultaneously constructing complex, multi-positional Black identities.

Afro-Caribbean identity, therefore, emerges not as a passive product of institutional forces, but as an actively negotiated process of resistance. Through intergenerational networks, spiritual and cultural communities, and everyday acts of cultural affirmation, these communities challenge the normative boundaries of dominant cultural capital and assert their legitimacy within Canadian society. Yet, as participants’ narratives reveal, these assets are frequently devalued, misrecognized, or erased by prevailing social norms—particularly through subtle mechanisms of exclusion that masquerade as multicultural tolerance.

Mainstream conceptualizations of cultural capital often implicitly equate middle-class status with whiteness, thereby excluding or marginalizing racialized groups. However, as Wallace (2017) contends, cultural capital remains a useful analytic for examining the performance and negotiation of Black identities. Existing research demonstrates that racialized communities employ cultural capital not solely as a means of consumption, but as a strategic resource to assert belonging, contest racial subordination, and foster collective identity (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). Importantly, this includes forms of resistant capital—defined as knowledge, skills, and practices cultivated through oppositional engagement with systems of oppression (Freire, 1970; Delgado Bernal, 1997; Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). Such resistance is historically grounded in the defiant legacies of racialized groups, including Indigenous communities (Deloria, 1988), whose cultural persistence has long challenged colonial systems of domination.

This research adopts an intergenerational lens to examine the transmission and transformation of cultural capital within Afro-Caribbean communities, with particular attention to the enduring impact of colonial histories, linguistic heritage, and cultural traditions. Participants frequently described the strategic deployment of social networks to circumvent institutional exclusion—an illustration of navigational capital homed in response to systemic barriers

This conceptual framework guided the study’s analytical approach. It enabled a nuanced investigation of the ways in which Blackness mediates access to dominant cultural capital and influences broader patterns of social reproduction. Cultural capital, as this study demonstrates, is neither static nor universal; its construction and utility are shaped by historical trajectories, racialized experiences, geographical contexts, and the positionality of those who hold it. A recurrent finding across the data was the pervasive experience of polite racism among both first-

and second-generation Haitian and Jamaican participants, underscoring the subtle yet persistent nature of racial exclusion in the Canadian context.

3.4 Methodology

This study applies principles of grounded theory to examine how first- and second-generation Haitian and Jamaican participants experience and mobilize cultural capital within Canadian institutions. Grounded theory was chosen for its emphasis on deriving conceptual insights from participants' narratives rather than imposing pre-existing theoretical frameworks (Brady & Loonam, 2010). Although the goal was not to generate a formal theory in the Glaserian or Straussian sense, grounded theory principles guided the coding process and thematic development. This flexible approach enabled the emergence of nuanced concepts—such as polite racism, racial ignominy, and duplicity of consciousness—that authentically reflect participants' lived realities.

Data were collected through twelve focus group discussions and analyzed iteratively until thematic saturation was reached—when no new themes or insights emerged. The analytical process began with line-by-line open coding to identify meaningful units and emergent concepts. This was followed by axial and selective coding to examine interrelationships among categories and refine core themes. The analysis was inductively driven, allowing theoretical insights to emerge directly from participant narratives. To ensure analytical rigor, the researcher engaged in memoing, reflective journaling, and multiple transcript reviews. Member checking was employed to validate interpretations with participants. As all coding was conducted by the researcher, intercoder reliability was not applicable.

This qualitative research employed semi-structured focus group interviews with first- and second-generation Haitian and Jamaican participants residing in the Ottawa-Gatineau region. Participants were selected based on self-identified Afro-Caribbean heritage and generational

status to explore how cultural capital is enacted in everyday life. The sample included men and women aged 25 to 45. Focus groups were chosen over individual interviews to foster dynamic, collective discussions that revealed shared cultural meanings, intergenerational contrasts, and community-based understandings of Blackness and cultural capital (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Barbour, 2007). This format allowed participants to build on each other's narratives, facilitating the identification of communal strategies of resistance and institutional navigation. As Krueger and Casey (2015) note, focus groups are particularly effective in eliciting cultural insights that may remain unspoken in one-on-one settings.

To complement the relational dimension of grounded theory, an entity-relationship diagram (ERD) was constructed to visualize how participants' interactions with institutions, communities, and each other shaped their access to social and cultural capital. This tool proved instrumental in mapping intersections of generational status, regional context, and institutional engagement. The corresponding entity-relationship diagram (ERD), developed using Brady and Loonam's methodological framework and based on participant data, is provided in Appendix A (Figure A1)

Theoretical sampling was used to refine emerging themes (Ligita et al., 2022). Eligible participants self-identified as Haitian or Jamaican and were either first-generation (born outside Canada) or second-generation (born in Canada to at least one immigrant parent). All participants completed informed consent forms and underwent pre-screening to confirm eligibility. Sessions were audio-recorded with participant permission and transcribed.

Twelve focus groups were conducted—six with Haitian participants and six with Jamaican participants. Each group included 3 to 5 individuals and was stratified by generation to examine intergenerational differences in the mobilization of cultural capital. Participants were recruited through snowball sampling, with outreach concentrated in Ontario and Quebec to reflect regional population distributions. Haitian participants were drawn from both provinces, while Jamaican

participants were recruited exclusively from Ontario. Generational representation varied due to participant availability during recruitment.

Table 3.1 presents generational perspectives on cultural capital among Afro-Caribbean Canadians, illustrating how first- and second-generation participants draw on different forms of capital in navigating social, educational, and institutional contexts.

Table 3.1 Generational Perspectives on Cultural Capital among Afro-Caribbean Canadians

Group	Generation	Number of Focus Groups	Estimated Participants	Region
Haitian Canadians	First Generation	3	10	Ontario/Quebec
Haitian Canadians	Second Generation	3	8	Ontario/Quebec
Jamaican Canadians	First Generation	3	9	Ontario
Jamaican Canadians	Second Generation	3	9	Ontario

Note: Each focus group included 3–5 participants, totaling 36 participants overall. Group sizes varied based on participant availability and recruitment conditions

Participants responded to questions concerning how cultural identity shaped their navigation of Canadian institutions, including education, employment, and healthcare. Additional questions probed the role of cultural and social capital in shaping these experiences. Transcript analysis focused on participants' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages associated with identifying as Haitian or Jamaican, the influence of generational status, and the everyday significance of cultural heritage.

3.5 Key Findings

This section presents the primary findings derived from focus group discussions conducted with first- and second-generation Haitian and Jamaican participants. The analysis reveals that Afro-Caribbean communities possess rich and varied forms of cultural capital—including familial, linguistic, social/navigational, and resistant capital. However, these assets are frequently devalued or rendered invisible within Canadian institutional contexts. Participants consistently reported navigating systemic barriers through strategies such as code-switching, informal networking, and intergenerational resilience. At the same time, their narratives illuminate the pervasive influence of polite racism, particularly as expressed through mechanisms of racial ignominy and duplicity of consciousness, both of which shaped their identity formation and limited access to opportunities.

The findings are organized around the most salient forms of cultural capital identified in the data. Table 3.2 below outlines the key themes emerging from the focus group discussions, categorized by type of capital and perceived impact (advantage, disadvantage, or neutral) across generational and ethnonational lines. This thematic mapping reflects both shared and distinct experiences between first- and second-generation Haitian and Jamaican participants. By examining how cultural assets are activated, muted, or obstructed, the analysis captures how individuals negotiate institutional settings, community expectations, and racialized identity formation.

Table 3.2: Thematic Summary of Social and Cultural Capital Impacts by Group and Generation

Participant Group	Linguistic Capital	Social/Navigational Capital	Familial Capital
First-Generation Haitians	No impact in Canadian settings; positive in community spaces	Duplicity of consciousness; developed coping mechanisms	Emphasis on being hardworking, polite, and strategic
First-Generation Jamaicans	No impact	Duplicity of consciousness	Resilience and assertiveness; encouragement to speak up
Second-Generation Haitians	No impact for job recruitment	Code-switching; racial ignominy; strategic observation of systems	Guided by understanding of social positionality
Second-Generation Jamaicans	Some impact (accent/pronunciation issues in job recruitment)	Code-switching; racial ignominy; strategic observation of systems	Guided by understanding of social positionality

Key Takeaways include:

Linguistic Capital: Demonstrated minimal professional advantage, though socially beneficial within community contexts.

Social/Navigational Capital: Crucial in overcoming institutional and systemic barriers, especially through code-switching and cultural adaptability.

Familial Capital: Served as a foundational resource for community engagement and personal resilience.

Code-Switching and Racial Ignominy: Emerged as critical adaptive strategies in navigating polite racism and exclusionary norms.

While multilingualism is often linked to cognitive and professional benefits—such as enhanced task-switching and divergent thinking (Abrar-ul-Hassan, 2021)—participants did not perceive their linguistic capital (e.g., speaking both French and English) as advantageous in Canadian institutional settings. Echoing Bilecen’s (2023) findings on the challenges faced by international students educated in a foreign language, Haitian participants in particular noted that language proficiency did not shield them from discrimination. Instead, participants emphasized how racial and ethnic markers, particularly accent and skin color, were dominant in shaping institutional interactions. One first-generation Haitian participant, who had immigrated to Quebec in her early twenties, recalled a particularly painful job interview experience that revealed the limits of her linguistic capital in formal institutions: “I didn’t get the job because they said they couldn’t understand my accent.” This narrative illustrates how Afro-Caribbean multilingualism—often viewed as a strength within community spaces—becomes a liability within dominant institutions shaped by linguistic nationalism and racial hierarchies. Although fluency in both French and English might theoretically signal strong cultural capital, it is devalued when filtered through racialized perceptions of accent and legitimacy. This experience exemplifies *racial ignominy*, where institutional rejection is cloaked in seemingly neutral standards like “comprehensibility,” but in practice, reflects a deeper discomfort with non-dominant forms of cultural expression. The participant’s account also reflects the everyday

reality of *polite racism* in Quebec, where exclusion is expressed through civility and framed as a technical concern rather than a racialized judgment.

Geographical context was also considered in the analysis. While participants resided in both Ontario and Quebec, those in Quebec—particularly in smaller urban or rural settings—reported heightened isolation and fewer accessible community supports. This regional variation reflects differing provincial dynamics: Quebec’s emphasis on its own French cultural preservation and language policy shapes multicultural and immigration experiences differently than Ontario’s more Anglophone and British-colonial framework, which nowadays claims to embrace multi-culturalism and diversity. Regardless of region, however, all participants described encountering polite racism in various forms.

Age range was also examined (participants were between 25 and 45 years old), yet generational status—first-generation immigrant versus Canadian-born—proved more influential in shaping identity and perceptions of cultural capital. First-generation participants often emphasized the necessity of assimilation, sometimes at the cost of cultural retention, in pursuit of stability and opportunity. By contrast, second-generation participants tended to be more vocal in asserting their identities and critiquing systemic inequities. One second-generation participant explained: “My mental flexibility—due to my experiences—I am able to code-switch and navigate, and thus, survive in modern-day Canada.” This illustrates how code-switching functions both as a survival mechanism and a navigational tool in racially stratified spaces, aligning with Yosso’s (2005) concept of navigational capital as a skill developed to manage hostile or exclusionary environments.

Familial capital, passed down intergenerationally, played a critical role in shaping participants’ values and coping strategies. For example, one Jamaican participant stated: “I come from a long line of women who, in the face of being told ‘No,’ will continue to do their thing and

succeed by any means necessary”. This testimony highlights the enduring influence of intergenerational resilience and cultural knowledge as key dimensions of familial capital. Participants also noted that their cultural identities—whether Haitian or Jamaican—were publicly celebrated during cultural events and festivals (e.g., Toronto Caribbean Carnival, Afrofest), which served as vital affirmations of belonging. One participant commented, “Celebrating our cultural festivals keeps our heritage alive,” while another emphasized, “Having a close-knit community helps me feel connected to my roots.” These affirmations resist cultural erasure and foster a sense of joy and identity continuity. Still, participants expressed ambivalence about diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives, warning that such recognition often occurred within tokenizing frameworks.

Ultimately, this study reveals the diverse ways Afro-Caribbean communities mobilize various forms of cultural capital to confront and navigate structural inequalities in Canada. Despite persistent exposure to polite racism and other forms of systemic exclusion, participants exhibit resilience through strategies of cultural resistance and intergenerational strength. These findings underscore the importance of recognizing and validating non-dominant forms of cultural capital within institutional policies and practices. Crucially, the research suggests that the mobilization of cultural capital is shaped by social stratification and informed by hegemonic standards of value. The systemic marginalization of community-based forms of capital represents a significant barrier to genuine inclusivity in Canadian institutional life.

3.6 Discussion

This section analyzes how Afro-Caribbean cultural capital interacts with dominant Canadian social structures. Drawing from the study’s key findings, it explores the nuanced construction of Blackness in relation to dominant cultural capital, institutional power, and

intergenerational identity. Emphasis is placed on familial and navigational capital, highlighting the tension between resistance and accommodation in the face of polite racism..

While this study foregrounds the shared experiences of Afro-Caribbean communities across Canada, important regional distinctions between Ontario and Quebec also shaped participants' navigation of Blackness and cultural capital. In Ontario, participants described accessing larger diasporic networks and greater visibility of Afro-Caribbean cultures in public spaces, which facilitated the expression of familial and resistant capital. In contrast, Quebec's emphasis on French language and cultural assimilation introduced additional barriers, particularly for Haitian participants, whose multilingualism was often undervalued or treated with suspicion. The province's intercultural model—prioritizing integration into a dominant francophone culture—further constrained linguistic and navigational capital (Bouchard & Taylor, 2008; Coen-Sanchez, 2025). Participants in Quebec more frequently reported feelings of cultural isolation and institutional neglect, suggesting that the politics of recognition operate differently across provincial lines. These regional dynamics underscore that Blackness in Canada is not only shaped by national discourse but is also contextually negotiated within provincial frameworks that mediate access to cultural resources and institutional legitimacy.

To deepen this framework, the article introduces the concept of **transferable racial confluence**—defined as the intergenerational transmission of racialized knowledge, cultural memory, and survival strategies within the Afro-Caribbean diaspora. Drawing on Hall's (1990) conception of cultural identity as fluid and continually produced, and Gilroy's (1993) theorization of diasporic memory, this concept captures how racial consciousness is not only constructed but also shared across time and space. In the Canadian context, Afro-Caribbean communities carry forward ancestral legacies shaped by Haiti's and Jamaica's colonial histories—resistance, pride, trauma—and rework them in response to systemic exclusions such

as polite racism and institutional erasure. This confluence is at once emotional, political, and strategic. It forms a collective racial literacy that evolves through dialogue with dominant cultural norms and institutional frameworks.

Unlike familial capital, which centers kinship and the preservation of cultural knowledge within households, transferable racial confluence emphasizes the dynamic, strategic, and often collective reproduction of racialized consciousness across generations and communities. It includes diasporic interactions, community organizing, and institutional encounters that cultivate a shared racial awareness. Here, racial identity is not a fixed inheritance but a living praxis—adapted and transmitted in response to exclusion, cultural affirmation, and political resistance. A first-generation Haitian participant powerfully articulated this dynamic:

“I didn’t know what racism was in Haiti. But my mom always told me how to act around police, how to speak at work. It’s like she prepared me for a battle I didn’t even know I was going to fight.”

This quote exemplifies transferable racial confluence as a form of lived pedagogy—an embodied practice of racial preparedness and identity formation that bridges ancestral knowledge with contemporary realities. It is not merely cultural inheritance but a deliberate, strategic adaptation to racialized environments, shaped by the foresight of previous generations.

Building on Gillborn’s (2005) theory of institutional racism, this study conceptualizes polite racism as embedded in the expectations, discourses, and procedures of Canadian institutions. Practices such as race-neutral hiring, academic streaming, and healthcare dismissiveness are framed in the language of civility, yet function to reproduce systemic racial hierarchies. Polite racism is not merely interpersonal—it is a form of governance that determines whose cultural capital is recognized and whose is rendered invisible.

Though uniquely expressed in Canada, polite racism has parallels in other national contexts. Concepts such as *racismo cordial* in Brazil (Turra & Venturi, 1995), Frankenberg's (1993) color-evasive racism, and Goldberg's (2008) work on the postracial state reflect similar patterns of racial evasion and structural exclusion. This study does not claim polite racism to be exclusive to Canada, but rather explores its particular articulation through institutional aesthetics of civility, procedural neutrality, and multicultural rhetoric that obscure exclusion while maintaining its effects.

Polite racism operates through two interrelated mechanisms explored further in this article: (1) racial ignominy, and (2) duplicity of consciousness. While polite racism may manifest as subtle interpersonal slights or questioning of one's legitimacy, its most profound impacts are structural. It is embedded in policies that appear neutral but disproportionately disadvantage Black individuals—such as the devaluation of foreign credentials in employment, racialized streaming in education, or the dismissal of medical symptoms in healthcare. These practices uphold racial hierarchies under the guise of politeness and procedural fairness.

The sociohistorical contexts of Haiti and Jamaica provide essential foundations for understanding the intergenerational transmission of capital. Haiti's 1804 revolution and Jamaica's postcolonial affirmations remain vital to community narratives of strength, resistance, and pride, shaping how participants understand identity and belonging in Canada. Even more recent political events, such as Haiti's defiance of UN sanctions through the port of Jacmel in the 1990s (Paperny, 2010), are seen as part of this legacy—more than historical facts, they represent pivotal chapters in Black migration history (Robinson, 1983).

Participants brought various forms of capital to Canada, including economic resilience and social resistance. Many described maintaining stable households and supporting extended families abroad while navigating racial barriers in Canada—demonstrating high levels of

financial literacy, adaptability, and familial responsibility. Both Jamaican and Haitian participants expressed intergenerational tenacity, often rooted in matrilineal traditions of care and leadership. The strength and perseverance passed down through generations of women were frequently cited as foundational to their ability to endure systemic challenges.

A second-generation Jamaican participant, reflecting on the legacy of her grandmother and mother, emphasized how this emotional and cultural inheritance shaped her worldview:

“It is that energy that has been passed down from generation.”

This seemingly simple statement encapsulates a powerful form of familial capital—one grounded in the emotional resilience, practical wisdom, and cultural pride transmitted through Black matrilineal lines. The participant’s invocation of “energy” speaks to an affective force that transcends material circumstances. It represents not just familial memory but also a political ethic of perseverance and collective survival.

Framed within Yosso’s (2005) model of community cultural wealth, this quote illustrates how second-generation Afro-Caribbean individuals actively draw on ancestral knowledge to navigate the racialized structures of Canadian society. It also points to the continuity of resistance between generations, challenging dominant narratives that frame immigrant families as starting from cultural or social deficits. Rather than being disconnected from their heritage, second-generation participants expressed a sense of rootedness—reclaiming and reactivating familial legacies as tools of empowerment in the face of polite racism and systemic exclusion.

This analysis challenges traditional notions of cultural capital as primarily related to elite tastes or consumption habits. Instead, it highlights how Afro-Caribbean cultural capital—familial, linguistic, navigational, and resistant—is rooted in struggle, survival, and strategic adaptation. These elements are deeply embedded in Afro-Caribbean histories. Haitians carry the legacy of the only successful enslaved revolt in the Western Hemisphere, grounding aspirational,

familial, and resistant capital in national pride. Similarly, Jamaican participants draw on traditions of anti-colonial resistance and Pan-African pride (Walker, 1984; Robinson, 1983). Jamaican Patois is more than a language—it is a symbol of cultural resistance and diasporic identity (Lamont & Molnár, 2001).

Jamaican participants in particular drew on a rich legacy of resistance and cultural pride that informs their community cultural wealth. Jamaica's history of rebellion, including the enduring influence of Pan-Africanism, has fostered values of autonomy, dignity, and collective identity. These histories generate forms of resistant capital, transmitted intergenerationally through self-reliance and sociopolitical awareness. Linguistic and familial capital are central, with Jamaican Patois serving as both a communicative tool and a marker of identity, solidarity, and resistance. These elements shape how Jamaican Canadians assert their identity in the face of racial marginalization, particularly through code-switching, cultural resilience, and strategic navigation of Canadian institutions (Yosso, 2005). Code-switching—the strategic shifting of language, behavior, or expression across social contexts—was described by participants as a method of navigating white-dominated institutional spaces while maintaining their Afro-Caribbean identity in familial and community settings.

Polite Racism in Multicultural Canada

Polite racism refers to a subtle and socially sanctioned form of racial bias, often expressed through programmed emotional responses toward individuals based on their skin tone. It often operates unconsciously and is masked by civility, making it difficult to confront directly. In Canada, polite racism is challenging to identify and detect, as it hides behind smiles and welcoming gestures. *Polite racism*, as described by participants, refers to attitudes or behaviours that appear courteous or non-hostile on the surface but are deeply racialized in their implications

and effects. It is often expressed through seemingly innocuous interactions that mask racialized assumptions about belonging, success, and legitimacy.

One second-generation Haitian participant recalled an unsettling dinner experience that exemplified this phenomenon. After her family moved into a predominantly white gated community, they were invited over by a neighbour under the guise of a warm welcome. However, the conversation soon took a different turn:

“They kept asking us, like—‘So where do you work? How did you afford this house? You must’ve worked really hard to get here!’ It felt like they were trying to figure out how we fit in... like we weren’t supposed to be there.”

To the uncritical eye, such questions may appear to be routine attempts to “get to know someone.” But for the participant, these inquiries carried racial undertones, framed by the presumption that Black success in affluent, white-dominated spaces requires explanation or justification. The implication wasn’t curiosity—it was surveillance. These micro-interrogations, delivered with a smile, were interpreted as racial boundary-marking, subtly signaling that the family was an exception to presumed norms about who belongs in such neighborhoods.

This vignette exemplifies the uniquely Canadian manifestation of polite racism, where racial exclusion is softened through civility and presented as politeness or concern. Unlike overt hostility, these exchanges rely on social scripts of friendliness and inclusivity, making them harder to challenge. In this sense, polite racism operates not only at the interpersonal level, but also structurally, reinforcing the conditional acceptance of racialized people in spaces coded as white and middle-class. By theorizing these moments through the lens of polite racism, we see how civility can serve as a mechanism for racial othering within the national mythos of multicultural tolerance.

Additionally, several participants described a subtler yet equally damaging dynamic: a deliberate ignoring or invalidating of their expertise and lived experience. This form of exclusion operates not through overt rejection, but through strategic silence or polite dismissal. A second-generation Jamaican participant, now a doctoral student in clinical psychology, recounted the persistent disregard she faces within healthcare systems:

“I’m ignored heavily within the mental health and physical health care system, despite being a doctoral student in clinical psychology. I’m often told that my pain is not real.”

This testimony illustrates how racialized individuals—even those with significant academic and professional credentials—can be rendered invisible in systems that claim neutrality. Her professional status did not shield her from assumptions about Black women’s bodies and emotions, revealing a deeper structure of disbelief rooted in anti-Blackness. Such dismissal exemplifies polite racism—it is cloaked in institutional language of professionalism and concern, but its effects are exclusionary and racialized.

From this foundation, I introduce the concept of racial ignominy as an extension of polite racism. Traditionally associated with disgrace or shame, racial ignominy refers here to the normalized, often socially sanctioned shaming of Afro-Caribbean identities through subtle mockery, invalidation, and cultural degradation. These processes are frequently couched in humor or curiosity but have harmful consequences. For instance, participants described being told:

“OMG, you eat that? That food smells!”

“You guys eat with your hands?”

Such remarks, while presented as harmless, reinscribe whiteness as normative and cast Afro-Caribbean cultural practices as deviant. These microaggressions are not isolated incidents but part of a broader system of cultural devaluation. Another second-generation Jamaican participant described how even physical presence prompted assumptions:

“People would assume I grew up in a rough area because of my skin. It’s like, you’re never allowed to just be.”

Racial ignominy, then, operates at the intersection of social exclusion, cultural disrespect, and institutional invalidation. It not only imposes a burden of emotional self-regulation but contributes to the internalization of shame and cognitive distortion. This was reflected in yet another comment from a second-generation Jamaican participant, who recounted:

“White peers would say, ‘Y’all all smoke weed.’ And when I got offended, it was like—‘Relax, it’s just a joke!’”

Such gaslighting obscures the racialized nature of these interactions, shifting blame onto the person experiencing harm and reinforcing a broader system of dismissal. In theorizing racial ignominy as a culturally embedded and structurally supported mechanism of polite racism, this manuscript highlights how everyday exchanges reproduce racial hierarchies while evading critique through civility.

Building on W.E.B. Du Bois’s theory of double consciousness, the author introduces the concept of **duplicity of consciousness** to describe a uniquely diasporic psychological rupture. Subsequently, the duplicity of consciousness is relational and consequential to the false imagery associated with immigrating to Canada/the West. This concept draws partial inspiration from W.E.B. Du Bois’s theory of *double consciousness*, which describes the internal conflict of seeing oneself through the lens of a racially dominant society. However, *duplicity of consciousness* is distinct in that it reflects the tension Afro-Caribbean migrants experience between the

internalized promise of social mobility through immigration and the lived realities of racial exclusion in Canada. Where Du Bois (1903) articulated double consciousness as a dual awareness shaped by the tension between Black identity and white societal norms, duplicity of consciousness adds a temporal and migratory dimension. It captures the psychological dissonance experienced by immigrants whose imagined futures in the ‘Global North’ clash with the racialized structures they encounter upon arrival. This internal fracture—between aspiration and disillusionment—is a uniquely diasporic betrayal of inclusion. Unlike double consciousness, which emphasizes dual awareness, duplicity of consciousness underscores a sense of ontological ambush: the moment when the immigrant’s imagined Canada dissolves under the weight of polite racism and structural exclusion.

Both concepts engage with internalized conflict in racialized subjects, but duplicity of consciousness **does** not refer to a dual social identity. Du Bois’ double consciousness is rooted in the simultaneous awareness of being both Black and American in a society that devalues Blackness. In contrast, duplicity of consciousness speaks to a temporal and psychological rupture—a betrayal of anticipated belonging. The disillusionment arises not from “twoness,” but from the collapse of a projected future. This concept captures the discrepancy between hope and experience, between promised inclusion and systemic exclusion, emphasizing the migratory and anticipatory dimensions of racialized disappointment in the Canadian context. For example, several first-generation participants described moments of internal conflict—feeling that the Canada they had imagined prior to immigration did not match their lived experience. They recounted needing to suppress frustration, modify their behaviour, or remain silent in the face of exclusion in order to maintain employment or be accepted in professional settings. This emotional and psychological dissonance reflects what I conceptualize as a *duplicity of consciousness*—a rupture between the internalized promise of opportunity and the reality of

systemic racial barriers. This dual awareness, shaped by both hope and betrayal, surfaced repeatedly as participants spoke about adjusting their identity, expectations, and self-presentation to navigate Canadian institutions.

While I acknowledge that the phenomena described by duplicity of consciousness and racial ignominy may have precedents in existing scholarship and lived experience, these terms are developed here as original conceptual tools within a distinct analytical framework. Duplicity of consciousness captures the rupture between aspirational migration and racialized disillusionment, while racial ignominy highlights the intergenerational psychic toll of subtle cultural degradation. By articulating and applying these concepts to Afro-Caribbean experiences in Canada, I aim to illuminate under-theorized dimensions of diasporic life. These terms are introduced with the understanding that conceptual development is iterative, and I anticipate their refinement through future research and scholarly dialogue

Consequently, there is a widely held belief among many first-generation Haitians and Jamaicans that the only viable path to a “better life” is through immigration. This perception—deeply rooted in structural inequalities and economic hardship—was a recurring theme in participants’ narratives. It reflects the aspirational hope that, through hard work and resilience, life circumstances will improve in the host country. Yosso (2005) defines aspirational capital as the “hopes and dreams” maintained even in the face of real and persistent barriers. She notes that despite ongoing social disparities in education, African American youth and their families often continue to hold high expectations for academic achievement (p. 77).

This aspect of *hope* is used as a means to lure people from the Caribbeans to immigrate to Canada in an attempt to either “solve” their current issues or provide more opportunities when in reality, immigration merely furthers the integration of individuals in the machinations of racial capitalism, at best providing them with a different position within a system that remains

exploitative and oppressive. Racial capitalism is a concept that highlights how racial hierarchies and economic exploitation are interlinked, suggesting that capitalism has historically thrived on racial discrimination to maximize profits (Robinson, 2000). It argues that economic systems often maintain and exploit racial divisions to sustain wealth accumulation, reinforcing social and economic inequalities along racial lines (Robinson, 2000). Furthermore, racial ignominy is the betrayal of a racial confluence and is used as a means to isolate people through deferential approaches.

A transferable racial confluence, a term I use to describe the transmission of racial experiences and perceptions from one generation to the next, is a key aspect of the formation of Black identity in Canada. The first generations often experience a duplicity of consciousness- an illusion of “living a better life” that is quickly overturned by social barriers. This experience conflicts with the reputation of Canada being a “problem-solving country.” This betrayal integrates with the Western’s perception of Blackness and, in turn, influences the formation of the Black identity: How is Blackness constructed in Canada? It is through a process of encoding and decoding the prescribed racial barriers of a specific region in relation to time and space. Hence, attributing certain traits to one’s identity is a means of survival and social adaptability. This becomes the identity of Blackness. This relationship can highlight both the systemic barriers that Black individuals often face in accumulating social capital due to racial discrimination and biases, as well as the unique forms of community support, resilience, and cultural wealth found within Black communities. Understanding this dynamic is crucial for addressing inequalities and fostering inclusive environments where social capital is equitably accessible to all racial and ethnic groups.

Blackness, cultural capital, and polite racism are interrelated concepts that frame the lived experiences of Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada. Blackness is approached not as a

fixed identity but as a dynamic, context-specific process shaped by both historical resistance and contemporary negotiations of belonging. Cultural capital—especially in the form of community cultural wealth—is central to how Black Canadians navigate systems designed to privilege dominant norms. However, in the Canadian context, cultural capital is filtered through the lens of *polite racism*, which subtly delegitimizes non-white forms of knowledge, behaviour, and identity. Polite racism operates by embracing surface-level multiculturalism while covertly reinforcing racial boundaries, influencing which cultural resources are validated and which are dismissed. By bringing these concepts together, this research explores how Blackness is constructed and contested through acts of cultural affirmation and institutional resistance, revealing the nuanced ways Afro-Caribbean Canadians assert agency within a racialized landscape.

While this study is grounded in a sociological analysis of cultural capital, it is also informed by foundational Black Canadian and diasporic thinkers such as Rinaldo Walcott (2003) and Stuart Hall (1996), whose work emphasizes the fluid, constructed, and contested nature of Black identity across space and time. Their insights into racialized belonging and cultural erasure inform this article’s focus on how Afro-Caribbean Canadians negotiate Blackness within institutional contexts shaped by polite racism.

This study also acknowledges the foundational contributions of Dionne Brand (2001), Katherine McKittrick (2006), Peter James Hudson (2017), Aaron Kamugisha (2019), and C.L.R. James (1989), whose critical work in Black Canadian, Caribbean, and diasporic thought continues to inform contemporary understandings of Black identity, resistance, and epistemology.

These dynamics reveal how multiculturalism can serve as a façade that conceals structural inequities while subtly reinforcing dominant racial norms. Building on this, the

concept of polite racism also resonates with international frameworks such as Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's (2006) theory of colorblind racism, which highlights the systemic reproduction of racial inequality through seemingly race-neutral practices and discourse. Similarly, Prudence Carter's (2005) concept of non-dominant cultural capital complements this study's use of Yosso's framework by showing how marginalized groups' cultural knowledge and assets are often devalued within institutional contexts. While Carter focuses primarily on educational settings in the U.S., her argument reinforces the broader claim that cultural capital is shaped and constrained by dominant norms. Including these perspectives further situates *polite racism* as part of a broader spectrum of racialized misrecognition, while also highlighting the distinct ways such exclusion operates in Canada's multicultural context.

Familial Capital and Zones of Cultural Safety

Participants noted that community hubs—such as cultural centres, churches, and food festivals—offered spaces where they could express their identities without fear of judgment. One Jamaican participant stated, “At Caribana, I feel like I’m allowed to be myself without code-switching. It’s the one time I don’t feel like I have to explain who I am.” These spaces operate as temporary zones of cultural affirmation—sites of resistance to the subtle but persistent pressures of polite racism.

Historically, Afro-Caribbean communities in Toronto have built such spaces to preserve cultural identity and foster solidarity (Toney, 2010). These zones of familial capital are integral in sustaining traditions, intergenerational knowledge, and a sense of belonging. They operate not only as sites of cultural continuity but also as mechanisms of resistance against dominant forms of cultural erasure.

Dominant Cultural Capital and the Misrecognition of Blackness

The concept of dominant cultural capital elucidates how dominant groups and institutions set the norms that define legitimacy (Bourdieu, 1986). Afro-Caribbeans in Canada navigate these social spaces while having their cultural identities stigmatized. This contributes to the need to renegotiate identity in a context that often invalidates their heritage.

Participants grappled with combining their Caribbean heritage and Canadian expectations. First-generation individuals often lacked a prior attachment to “Blackness” as a racial category; in contrast, second-generation participants internalized and adapted to this concept through both cultural ancestry and Canadian racial politics. Wallace (2019) describes this dynamic cultural capital as shaped by metropolitan norms yet rooted in Caribbean tradition. Blackness is thus not monolithic but adaptive—an “algorithm of thoughts” comprising multi-histories and practices. It becomes a tool for survival, rooted in linguistic, artistic, and spiritual expressions that resist assimilation. Yet dominant cultural norms continue to misrecognize these assets. In education, for example, curricula often fail to reflect Afro-Caribbean histories (Coen-Sanchez, 2021), resulting in barriers to academic success and cultural alienation. In the workplace, professionalism is often equated with whiteness, and media representations of Blackness remain narrowly framed. As one Haitian participant recounted, “I had the degree, the language, but I was still told I didn’t ‘fit.’” This misrecognition is not a failure of credentials but of cultural translation—where Blackness is filtered through dominant norms and found lacking.

Navigational Capital and Intergenerational Resistance

Despite systemic exclusions, Afro-Caribbean communities exhibit a deep capacity for resilience rooted in intergenerational knowledge and adaptive strategies. Participants described developing context-specific tools—such as code-switching, cultural modulation, and informal support systems—to engage with institutions often unresponsive to their realities. These strategies reflect navigational capital: the ability to move through and around dominant structures

while retaining a sense of self. What emerged clearly was that these forms of capital were not improvised individually but nurtured through familial guidance and community insight. First-generation participants often imparted unspoken rules of survival—how to behave in professional settings, when to stay silent, when to speak up—lessons shaped by their own encounters with polite racism. Second-generation participants extended these teachings, applying them within their workplaces, schools, and social environments. This intergenerational transfer of cultural navigation skills exemplifies how resistance is taught, internalized, and reimagined. Moreover, participants shared how they co-created spaces—festivals, churches, and peer circles—where Afro-Caribbean identity could be expressed without surveillance. These environments offered not just emotional safety but critical opportunities for exchanging institutional knowledge, cultivating belonging, and reclaiming cultural agency. In this way, navigational capital operates at the intersection of personal adaptation and collective resilience. It equips individuals with the tools to engage with dominant systems on their own terms, while preserving cultural integrity and fostering intergenerational continuity.

Strengths and Limitations in Research

In qualitative research, both strengths and limitations are integral to the research process. A key strength of this study lies in its focus on the lived experiences of Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada—specifically Haitian and Jamaican individuals—through an intergenerational lens. By foregrounding race, migration, and cultural capital, the study offers critical insight into how systemic exclusion operates within Canadian institutions and how cultural knowledge is mobilized as resistance. The grounded theory approach allowed for the emergence of nuanced concepts, such as polite racism, racial ignominy, and duplicity of consciousness, directly from participants' narratives.

Participants expressed how race intersects with other identities, including gender, class, and immigration status. However, while gender was acknowledged in the sample composition—ensuring the inclusion of both men and women—it was not prioritized as a central analytic category. This decision was methodological, guided by the study’s core aim to explore how Blackness and cultural capital are shaped intergenerationally and regionally across two specific diasporic communities. As such, while gendered dynamics were present in participant narratives, they were not systematically analyzed. Future research should more explicitly interrogate how gender mediates the expression and recognition of cultural capital, particularly as it relates to institutional navigation and identity construction.

Limitations include challenges in operationalizing social capital, which involves trust, norms, and cohesion—qualities difficult to quantify. However, the use of ERD diagrams minimized misinterpretation by systematically mapping the relationship between immigration and identity (see Appendix A, Figure A1). Future studies could incorporate hybrid methods and longitudinal approaches to track the evolution of cultural capital over time and better understand its long-term impacts. Additionally, this study is geographically limited to participants residing primarily in the Ottawa-Gatineau region, with Jamaican participants recruited exclusively from Ontario. As such, the findings may not fully reflect the diversity of Afro-Caribbean experiences across Canada—particularly in major urban centers like Toronto and Montreal, where community density, linguistic dynamics, and multicultural infrastructure may shape identity differently. For example, Toronto’s expansive Caribbean diaspora may offer more robust forms of institutional recognition, while Quebec’s distinct language policies may impose unique pressures on Haitian participants. These geographic distinctions suggest that while the core themes of polite racism, racial ignominy, and cultural capital are broadly relevant, their expressions may vary regionally.

Future research should aim to include participants from a wider range of urban and provincial contexts to enhance the generalizability and depth of analysis.

Moreover, although the study included both men and women across focus groups, gender was not prioritized as a central analytic focus. This was a methodological decision aligned with the study's primary aim: to examine the intergenerational and regional negotiation of Blackness and cultural capital among Afro-Caribbean communities. While gendered experiences likely shaped participants' interactions with institutions, they were not systematically coded or theorized in this iteration. Future studies should explicitly engage gender as an intersecting dimension of identity to better understand how it mediates the recognition, expression, and mobilization of cultural capital within racialized contexts

Implications for Policy and Future Scholarship

The findings of this study underscore the limitations of Canada's multicultural framework, which, while inclusive in discourse, often fails to substantively recognize the cultural wealth of Afro-Caribbean communities. Subtle forms of exclusion—conceptualized here as *polite racism*—undermine the legitimacy of assets like multilingualism, intergenerational knowledge, and communal solidarity

This study contributes to Canadian sociology by examining how Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada mobilize cultural assets to navigate and resist systemic exclusion. It foregrounds *polite racism* as a uniquely Canadian mechanism of marginalization, highlighting how Haitians and Jamaicans draw on inherited knowledge, intergenerational resilience, and community strength—not only to survive but to challenge structures of inequality. Central to this resistance is what this study terms *duplicity of consciousness*: the tension between inherited hope and lived systemic exclusion.

These findings deepen our understanding of how systemic racism is negotiated through everyday practices. The concept of *polite racism* helps to explain how discrimination is often masked behind institutional civility, producing exclusion through silence, deflection, or tokenism. Meanwhile, *duplicity of consciousness* captures the internalized complexity many Black individuals face in reconciling their public and private identities. These concepts offer a nuanced lens for interpreting how Afro-Caribbean communities mobilize, adapt, and resist within the racialized structures of Canadian multiculturalism, even when their cultural capital remains undervalued or obstructed.

The implications are significant. Educational institutions must adopt culturally sustaining pedagogies, and employers should implement equity-informed hiring and promotion strategies that recognize the depth of Afro-Caribbean expertise. Most importantly, Black communities must be engaged as co-creators—not merely subjects—of structural reform. Future research should explore how different forms of cultural capital are racialized across regional, generational, and linguistic contexts in Canada, with particular attention to *resistant capital* as a community-driven tool for reshaping institutions and contesting monolithic constructions of Black Canadian identity.

For extended recommendations, comparative insights, and a forward-looking discussion of structural reforms, readers are encouraged to consult the *Epilogue* included in the Appendix B.

3.7 Conclusion

This article has examined how Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada—specifically first- and second-generation Haitians and Jamaicans—construct and negotiate Blackness through the mobilization of cultural capital within a sociopolitical landscape shaped by polite racism. Drawing on Yosso’s (2005) model of community cultural wealth, the study demonstrated how participants rely on familial, linguistic, social, and navigational capital to access opportunities,

resist exclusion, and assert cultural pride. These forms of capital emerge not only through traditional resource exchange but also through culturally specific networks, community support systems, and intergenerational knowledge rooted in legacies of resistance. Despite their resilience and adaptability, these assets are frequently misrecognized or devalued within Canadian institutions governed by white normative frameworks. While Yosso's (2005) framework remains a useful lens for examining the cultural assets of Afro-Caribbeans, our findings suggest that Canadian-specific racial dynamics necessitate theoretical expansion. "Racial ignominy" captures the affective labour required to manage the subtle shaming of Blackness, while "duplicity of consciousness" addresses the psychic strain of navigating inauthentic spaces under the guise of inclusion.

Polite racism, as theorized in this study, operates both interpersonally—through microaggressions and casual othering—and structurally, via institutional practices that appear neutral but perpetuate racial inequity. This includes the systemic devaluation of linguistic diversity, the erasure of Afro-Caribbean histories in education, and the social shaming enacted through mechanisms such as racial ignominy and duplicity of consciousness. Participants described being subtly questioned about their legitimacy, pressured to code-switch, and subjected to exclusion -illustrating how Blackness in Canada is simultaneously hyper-visible and invisible.

At the same time, participants expressed powerful forms of resistance capital—rooted in collective unity, cultural self-knowledge, and a refusal to conform to racialized expectations. Community festivals, faith-based networks, and intergenerational storytelling functioned not only as strategies of survival but also as acts of affirmation and defiance. These findings suggest that Afro-Caribbean cultural capital must be understood and valued on its own terms—outside of

white-centric norms of legitimacy—and recognized as a vital force in shaping identity, belonging, and agency in Canada.

This study makes a dual contribution to both theory and Canadian race scholarship. Empirically, it foregrounds the lived experiences of Haitian and Jamaican Canadians navigating systemic inequities across distinct provincial contexts. Theoretically, it expands the cultural capital framework by introducing three original concepts—**polite racism**, **racial ignominy**, and **duplicity of consciousness**—that capture the uniquely Canadian dynamics of racial misrecognition. Together, these insights offer a distinctly Canadian lens for global conversations on race, identity, and cultural capital—and call for frameworks that better recognize and validate the cultural wealth of diasporic Black communities. These insights compel policymakers and educators to move beyond symbolic inclusion and embrace structurally informed approaches that center the lived cultural wealth of Afro-Caribbean communities

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Author Note: This article is drawn from a doctoral dissertation examining Afro-Caribbean identity and cultural capital in Canada. Chapter 2 of the dissertation was previously published as:
Coen-Sanchez, K. (2025). *Navigating Identity and Policy: The Afro-Caribbean Experience in Canada*. *Social Sciences*, 14(3), 163. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci14030163>..

CHAPTER 4: The Dual Identity of Afro-Caribbeans: Challenges and Triumphs in Canadian Society

Information about the co-author should go here.

4.1 Abstract

This study examines the mobilization of social and cultural capital among first and second-generation Afro-Caribbeans in Canada, focusing specifically on Jamaican and Haitian populations. Employing an analytical model grounded in resistance and identity multi-positionality, this research utilizes Yosso's theory of cultural wealth as a theoretical framework. Qualitative data were collected through focus groups and an intake survey aimed at exploring the dual objectives of defining Blackness and constructing an in-group Black identity alongside the establishment and contestation of social capital within these groups.

The findings reveal a dynamic interplay between resistance and identity, highlighting how marginalized groups leverage their resilience to build robust social networks that challenge hegemonic norms. Significant generational differences were identified in experiences of racism, discrimination, and cultural preservation among the participants. This study contributes to the broader discourse on immigrant integration, social cohesion, and the role of cultural capital in mitigating systemic inequalities. The results underscore the necessity for intersectional approaches to comprehend the complexities of identity formation and social integration in multicultural societies. Moreover, the research emphasizes the critical importance of cultural heritage, identity, and community support as sources of strength and resilience for Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada.

Keywords: Afro-Caribbean communities, Social capital, Cultural capital, Identity multi-positionality, Resistance, Jamaican diaspora, Haitian diaspora, Blackness, Immigrant integration

4.2 Introduction

Canada is home to over one million individuals of Caribbean descent, a significant portion of whom are of Jamaican and Haitian heritage (Statistics Canada 2016). Despite this substantial demographic presence, Afro-Caribbean communities often encounter unique challenges in their pursuit of social and cultural integration within Canadian society. These challenges include systemic racism, discrimination, and barriers to employment and social mobility, which complicate their efforts to integrate fully into the broader Canadian society.

This study investigates the mobilization of social capital within Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada, focusing specifically on Jamaican and Haitian populations. The research introduces a novel analytical model that emphasizes social and cultural capital—concepts that refer to the non-financial social assets that promote social mobility beyond economic means, such as education, intellect, style of speech, and dress—through the lenses of resistance and identity multi-positionality. This model foregrounds how individuals and groups navigate multiple intersecting social identities to exert agency and challenge dominant power structures.

The study aims to achieve two primary objectives. First, it examines how these two groups utilize their social capital to define Blackness and construct an in-group Black identity in Canada. Second, it explores how first- and second-generation Haitians and Jamaicans in Canada establish and contest their social capital. Fundamentally, exploring how first and second-generation Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada, specifically Jamaican and Haitian populations, mobilize social and cultural capital to navigate and challenge dominant power structures. By employing Yosso's theory of cultural wealth and an analytical model emphasizing resistance and identity multi-positionality, the research aims to: (1) examine how these communities define Blackness and construct an in-group Black identity, and (2) investigate how

they establish and contest social capital, thereby contributing to broader discussions on immigrant integration, social cohesion, and the role of cultural capital in addressing systemic inequalities.

To address these objectives, the author employs Yosso's (2005) theory of cultural wealth, which underscores the significance of intersecting identities and multi-positionalities. The study primarily investigates how holding multiple social positions simultaneously, such as immigration status and socio-economic class, shapes the experiences and social interactions of these communities in Canada. Additionally, it examines how the cultural capital of first- and second-generation Jamaicans and Haitians living in Canada affects their sense of belonging.

The primary objective of this study is to identify and critically analyze how cultural capital shapes the construction of Blackness among first- and second-generation Haitian and Jamaican communities in Canada, and to provide new sociological approaches to identity formation and cultural capital. The findings of this study are not only significant for the academic community but also for policymakers and social activists, as they shed light on the unique challenges and strengths of Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada.

While there is substantial research on the integration of immigrant communities in Canada, much of the existing literature tends to focus broadly on economic integration and often overlooks the nuanced experiences of specific ethnic groups, particularly those of Afro-Caribbean descent. Previous studies have examined social and cultural capital primarily within homogeneous groups or across broad categories such as 'immigrants' or 'racial minorities,' failing to account for the distinct experiences of different communities. Additionally, the intersectionality of social identities and its impact on the mobilization of social and cultural capital among Afro-Caribbean populations remain underexplored. This study addresses this gap by focusing specifically on the

Jamaican and Haitian communities, offering an in-depth analysis of how these groups navigate their intersecting identities within a racialized Canadian context.

4.3 Theoretical Framework

In this section, we delve into the key theories that underpin this study, providing detailed explanations and exploring their specific relevance to the Afro-Caribbean context. The primary theoretical concepts employed are Yosso's theory of cultural wealth, social positionality, intersectionality, and racial consciousness. Each concept is intricately connected, creating a cohesive framework for understanding the social and cultural capital of Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada.

Yosso's Theory of Cultural Wealth Yosso's (2005) theory of cultural wealth challenges traditional deficit models that portray minority communities as lacking valuable social and cultural resources. Instead, it posits that marginalized communities possess unique forms of capital that contribute to their resilience and success. Yosso identifies six forms of cultural capital:

Aspirational Capital: The ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future even in the face of real and perceived barriers.

Linguistic Capital: The intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style.

Familial Capital: Cultural knowledge nurtured among kin that carries a sense of community history, memory, and cultural intuition.

Social Capital: Networks of people and community resources.

Navigational Capital: Skills of maneuvering through social institutions.

Resistant Capital: Knowledge and skills fostered through oppositional behavior that challenges inequality

In the context of Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada, these forms of capital are pivotal. For instance, aspirational capital is evident in the determination of both first and second-generation Jamaicans and Haitians to achieve academic and professional success despite systemic barriers. Linguistic capital is reflected in the bilingual or multilingual abilities of these communities, which enhance their adaptability and communication skills in diverse settings. Familial capital is crucial in maintaining cultural traditions and a strong sense of identity, which fortify the community's social fabric.

Social capital is particularly significant in forming networks that provide support and resources essential for navigating Canadian society. Navigational capital is evident in the ability of Afro-Caribbean individuals to maneuver through various social systems, including education and employment, often utilizing community-based knowledge and strategies. Resistant capital is highlighted in the collective efforts to resist and challenge systemic racism and discrimination, fostering a sense of empowerment and agency.

Social Positionality The theory of social positionality, rooted in intersectionality, emphasizes the dynamic interplay between an individual's social identity and their position within larger social structures (Collins 2000; Crenshaw 1989). This framework is essential for understanding how Afro-Caribbean individuals navigate their multiple intersecting identities, such as race, gender, and class, within a racialized Canadian context. Social positionality posits that an individual's experiences and opportunities are shaped by their unique positioning at the intersections of various social categories. For Afro-Caribbeans in Canada, this means their

experiences of belonging, discrimination, and identity construction are influenced not only by their racial identity but also by their immigrant status, socioeconomic background, and cultural heritage.

Intersectionality, a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991), provides an analytical framework for understanding how various forms of social stratification, such as race, gender, and class, interact to create unique dynamics and effects. This perspective is critical for examining the experiences of Afro-Caribbean communities as it acknowledges that their social identities are not experienced in isolation but in a complex, intersecting manner. By applying intersectionality, this study explores how the overlapping identities of first and second-generation Jamaicans and Haitians influence their social interactions and access to resources. For example, the intersection of race and immigrant status can result in compounded forms of discrimination that are distinct from those experienced by non-immigrant Black Canadians or immigrants from other ethnic backgrounds.

Racial Consciousness Racial consciousness theory, grounded in critical race theory, focuses on developing awareness regarding racial identity and its broader socio-political implications. This framework emphasizes that racial identity is socially constructed and shaped by historical, cultural, and institutional contexts (Crenshaw 1989; Hill et al. 2016). In the context of this study, racial consciousness is crucial for understanding how Afro-Caribbean individuals perceive and navigate their racial identities within a predominantly white Canadian society. This heightened awareness of racial dynamics and systemic inequalities influences their strategies for building social and cultural capital, as well as their efforts to resist and challenge marginalization.

Linking Theory to Research The theoretical frameworks of Yosso's cultural wealth, social positionality, intersectionality, and racial consciousness are not merely abstract concepts but are directly applicable to this study's innovative research objectives and methodology. By employing these theories, the research seeks to uncover how first and second-generation Jamaicans and Haitians in Canada leverage their multifaceted identities to resist marginalization and build resilient networks.

Yosso's theory of cultural wealth provides a comprehensive lens for identifying and valuing the diverse forms of capital that Afro-Caribbean communities possess. Social positionality and intersectionality offer critical insights into how these communities navigate their complex identities within a racialized society. Racial consciousness further contextualizes these experiences within broader socio-political dynamics, highlighting the importance of collective awareness and action.

Through focus groups and qualitative analysis, this study examines how intersecting identities, historical contexts, and cultural practices shape the experiences of Afro-Caribbeans in Canada. This theoretical grounding ensures that the research captures the complexities of identity formation and the dynamic interplay of social forces that influence the lived experiences of these communities.

By seamlessly integrating these theoretical perspectives, the study not only advances academic understanding but also provides practical insights for policymakers and social activists working to foster more inclusive and equitable societies. This comprehensive and interconnected theoretical framework establishes a robust foundation for analyzing the unique experiences of Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada and contributes to the broader discourse on social integration and cultural capital.

4.4 Methodology

Grounded in the theoretical framework of social positionality, intersectionality, and racial consciousness, this study employs a multi-method qualitative approach to explore the social and cultural capital dynamics within Canada's Jamaican and Haitian diaspora. Twelve focus groups were conducted, six each for Haitian and Jamaican participants, comprising 3-5 participants per group, resulting in a diverse pool of 48 participants. Participants were recruited using a snowball sampling method and pre-screened to ensure they met the study's criteria: self-identification as either Haitian or Jamaican, and being first- or second-generation immigrants aged 25-45.

Through qualitative analysis, the author redefines cultural capital to include the skills, knowledge, and practices that arise from navigating multiple social identities and resisting marginalization. The study, through an intersectional framework, also illustrates how Blackness is constructed and contested within intersecting regimes of power that challenge established norms and exert significant influence over the collective. Furthermore, the author discusses the concept of racial convergence as a process through which different ethnic groups achieve greater equality and integration within society, moving towards diminishing racial disparities and fostering inclusivity and equity. This discussion not only provides a comprehensive understanding of the current social landscape but also offers a hopeful vision for a more inclusive and equitable future.

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the social and cultural capital dynamics within Canada's Jamaican and Haitian diaspora. The primary data collection methods include focus groups and intake surveys. This multi-method approach allows for an in-

depth understanding of the lived experiences and perceptions of first- and second-generation Afro-Caribbeans.

Data Collection

With a steadfast commitment to inclusivity, this study employed a rigorous grounded theory methodology, aiming to develop theories grounded in the data collected rather than derived from existing theories (Brady & Loonam, 2010). A total of twelve meticulously conducted focus groups were held, with six focus groups comprising Haitian participants and six comprising Jamaican participants. Each focus group, consisting of 3-5 participants, resulted in a diverse pool of 48 participants. These participants were carefully recruited using a snowball sampling method and were pre-screened to ensure they met the study's criteria: self-identification as either Haitian or Jamaican and being first- or second-generation immigrants aged 25-45.

Focus Group Procedure Participants were provided with informed consent forms and were assured of confidentiality. With their permission, the focus group sessions were audio-recorded for transcription. The discussions were designed to elicit detailed insights on topics such as:

- The advantages and disadvantages of identifying as Haitian or Jamaican in Canada.
- Experiences of racism and discrimination.
- The role of cultural heritage in their lives.
- The use of social and cultural capital in navigating Canadian systems. Specific questions included: "How does identifying with your cultural heritage help you navigate Canadian systems?" and "What role does cultural or social capital play in your daily life?"

Data Analysis

The data analysis process followed grounded theory principles, involving open coding, memoing, and theoretical sampling. Transcriptions were analyzed line-by-line to identify meaningful units or 'codes' representing concepts or ideas. These codes were then grouped into themes, and the relationships between themes were examined through inductive reasoning. Data collection and analysis continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, indicating no new insights or themes were emerging from the data. Memoing documented the researchers' ideas, interpretations, and mental processes throughout the analysis.

Methodological Rigor

To ensure the credibility and reliability of the findings, methodological triangulation was employed by integrating data from both focus groups and the intake survey. Peer debriefing sessions were conducted with other researchers to discuss the coding process and emerging themes, bolstering the validity of the analysis. Member checking was also utilized, wherein preliminary findings were shared with a subset of participants to confirm the accuracy and resonance of the interpretations. These steps enhanced the trustworthiness of the study's findings.

4.5 Detailed Thematic Analysis

Community and Cultural Identity

The thematic analysis revealed a nuanced interplay of positive and negative aspects of community and cultural identity among Haitian and Jamaican participants. A strong sense of community emerged as a significant advantage, with participants frequently highlighting their communities' support, cultural continuity, and sense of belonging. This sense of community was described as a source of pride and resilience. One participant remarked, “the sense of community within the Haitian and Jamaican groups in Canada is very strong.” Another shared, “having a close-knit community helps me feel connected to my roots.” These findings align with prior

research indicating that immigrant communities often rely on close-knit networks to navigate new environments and maintain cultural continuity (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

A strong sense of cultural identity was also highlighted as a positive aspect. Participants expressed pride in their cultural heritage, which offered a unique sense of self and belonging maintained through cultural practices, language, and traditions. For example, one respondent stated, "Being able to identify with my cultural heritage gives me a sense of pride and belonging," and another added, "My cultural identity is a source of strength and resilience." This aligns with studies suggesting that cultural identity serves as a source of strength and resilience for immigrant communities (Phinney et al., 2001). Valuing cultural heritage and traditions is seen as essential for personal and community well-being, encompassing festivals, cuisine, music, and other cultural expressions. Participants underscored the importance of cultural practices, with one stating, "Our cultural traditions and practices are important to me and my family," and another emphasizing, "Celebrating our cultural festivals keeps our heritage alive."

Racism and Discrimination

Despite these positive aspects, participants reported significant challenges, particularly experiences of racism and discrimination in various life aspects, notably in the workplace. These experiences contributed to a sense of marginalization and inequality. One participant mentioned, "I've faced discrimination in the workplace because of my background," while another shared, "Racism is a persistent issue that affects many aspects of my life." Research has shown that racism and discrimination can have detrimental effects on mental health and socioeconomic outcomes for immigrants (Vang et al., 2019). Participants' experiences of discrimination, especially in employment, highlight the systemic barriers hindering their professional growth and integration into Canadian society. This is corroborated by studies documenting the difficulties

immigrants face in the labor market, often attributed to bias and lack of recognition of foreign qualifications (Reitz, 2007).

Employment and Support

Challenges in finding employment due to cultural background were also noted. Participants observed that their cultural background was sometimes undervalued, leading to fewer job opportunities and limited professional growth. For example, one respondent pointed out, "It can be challenging to find employment that values my cultural background," and another expressed, "I feel that my qualifications are often overlooked because of my ethnicity." The need for better support systems was a recurring theme, with participants emphasizing the necessity for improved educational, professional, and social support to help individuals from Haitian and Jamaican communities navigate and succeed in Canadian society. This sentiment was echoed by statements such as, "There needs to be more support for Haitian and Jamaican communities in Canada," and "Access to resources and support is crucial for our community's success." This issue is well-documented, with evidence showing that immigrants often encounter employment discrimination and underemployment (Oreopoulos, 2011). Enhanced support mechanisms are crucial for improving the social and economic integration of immigrants, as suggested by policy recommendations in existing literature (Li, 2003).

These findings underscore the complex interplay between cultural capital factors and the lived experiences of first- and second-generation Haitian and Jamaican communities in Canada. Despite facing significant challenges, these communities continue to place high value on cultural heritage, identity, and supportive community networks. The thematic analysis highlights both positive and negative aspects of identifying as Haitian or Jamaican in Canada, emphasizing the

need for better support systems to improve the social and economic integration of these communities.

Social and Cultural Capital

Resistance serves as a driving force that fosters alliances and shapes cultural practices. Identity multi-positionality, referring to the intersection of multiple social identities such as race and class, enhances and enriches both social and cultural capital. Social capital is formed through networks and connections, particularly those strengthened by resistance and the diverse identities within these networks. Cultural capital encompasses the skills, knowledge, and cultural practices that emerge and are enriched through resistance and the intersection of multiple identities. The relationships among these concepts include:

- Resistance forming alliances that enhance social networks (social capital) and shape cultural practices (cultural capital)
- Identity multi-positionality driving and sustaining resistance movements
- The intersection of multiple identities broadening and deepening social networks (social capital)
- Diverse identities enriching cultural expressions and practices (cultural capital)

Comparison of Generational Differences

A comparison of the experiences between first- and second-generation participants revealed nuanced differences. First-generation participants focused more on the direct impact of discrimination and the challenges of preserving their cultural identity in a new environment. In contrast, second-generation participants emphasized the ongoing struggle with stereotypes and

the importance of community while navigating Canadian society. Despite these differences, both groups highly valued cultural heritage, identity, and supportive community networks.

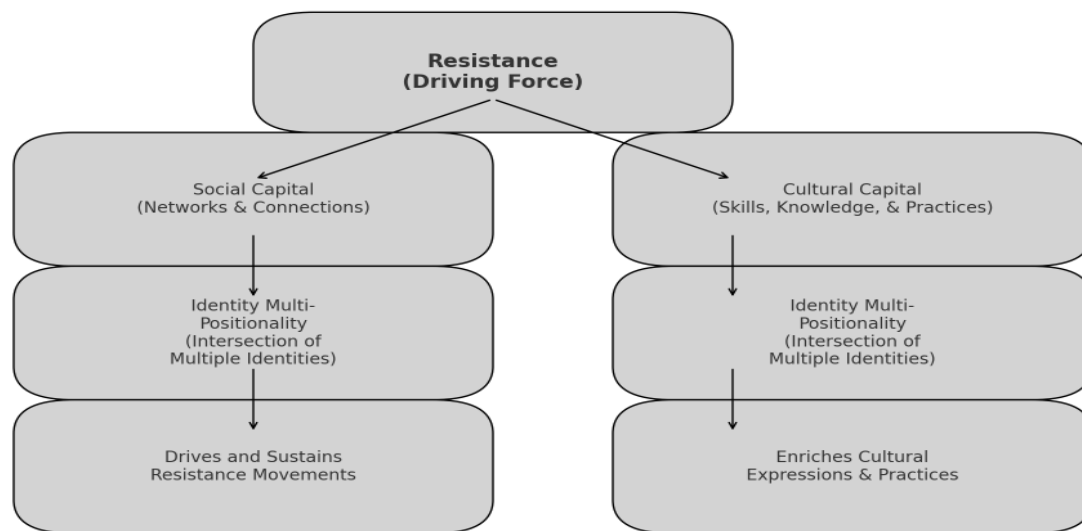
Illustrative Quotes

- **Community:** "The sense of community within the Haitian and Jamaican groups in Canada is very strong."
- **Identity:** "Being able to identify with my cultural heritage gives me a sense of pride and belonging."
- **Support:** "There needs to be more support for Haitian and Jamaican communities in Canada."
- **Culture:** "Our cultural traditions and practices are important to me and my family."
- **Racism and Discrimination:** "I've faced discrimination in the workplace because of my background."
- **Employment:** "It can be challenging to find employment that values my cultural background."

These findings highlight the duality of the immigrant experience, where strong community ties and cultural pride coexist with challenges such as discrimination and the need for enhanced support systems. This analysis underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing these challenges to foster better integration and well-being for Haitian and Jamaican communities in Canada.

To better capture the relationships among the concepts of resistance, social capital, cultural capital, and identity multi-positionality. Below is a diagram (Figure 4.1) that reviews the intersecting components in forming cultural capital. The arrows indicate the directional influence and enhancement between these elements.

Figure 4.1 - Interconnections Between Resistance, Social Capital, Cultural Capital, and Identity Multi-Positionality



Resistance is a central element that likely interacts with social capital and cultural capital. Social capital refers to the networks, connections, and social interactions that individuals or groups can leverage for various benefits. Cultural capital encompasses the knowledge, skills, education, and other cultural assets that individuals possess. The diagram suggests that resistance can be a response to or a product of social and cultural capital. For example, individuals might use their social networks and cultural knowledge to resist societal norms or to assert their identities.

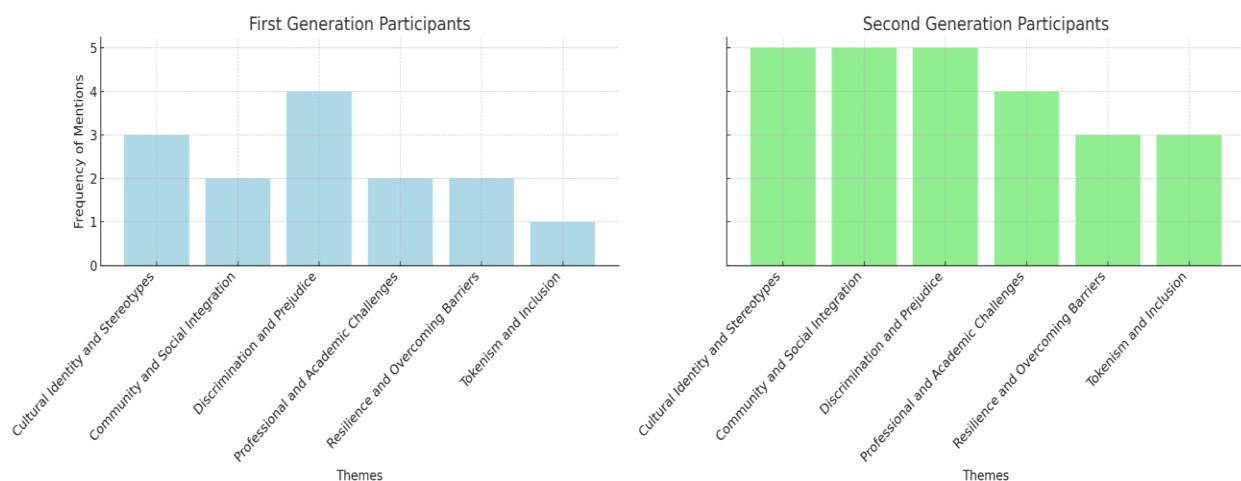
Identity multi-positionality, another key concept in the diagram, reflects the idea that individuals hold multiple identities simultaneously, which can intersect and interact in complex ways. This concept is shown to be influenced by both social and cultural capital, as well as by acts of resistance. The arrows in the diagram likely show how a strong sense of identity multi-positionality can enhance one's social and cultural capital, creating a feedback loop where these elements continually interact and evolve. This interconnectedness highlights the fluid nature of identity and the powerful role of resistance in shaping social and cultural dynamics.

These findings underscore the complex interplay between cultural capital factors and the lived experiences of first- and second-generation Haitian and Jamaican communities in Canada.

Comparison of Cultural Capital Relevance

The bar chart below (Figure 4.2) illustrates the average relevance scores for various cultural capital factors between first and second-generation participants. Each factor is rated on a scale from 1 (Not relevant) to 4 (Very relevant).

Figure 4.2 - illustrates the average relevance scores for various cultural capital factors between first and second-generation participants



First-generation participants focus more on the direct impact of discrimination and the challenges of preserving their cultural identity in a new environment. Second-generation participants emphasize the ongoing struggle with stereotypes and the importance of community while navigating Canadian society. Identification: The participants identified as Jamaican or Haitian, with a mix of first- and second-generation. Age Distribution: Participants were mostly aged between 18 and 44. Thematic Insights: Common themes around advantages included a strong sense of identity and community, while disadvantages included not being taken seriously and challenges in professional settings.

Key findings reveal that both first and second-generation participants find spoken languages quite relevant, with second-generation participants rating it slightly higher. Intercultural skills, particularly in conflict resolution, are deemed highly relevant by both groups, showing similar ratings. Social mobility, another crucial factor, is rated similarly by both groups, with a slight inclination towards higher relevance among first-generation participants. Social relationships also receive high relevance scores from both groups, with first-generation participants giving marginally higher ratings. When it comes to cultural financial knowledge, both groups rate it similarly, though first-generation participants find it slightly more relevant. Finally, cultural skills, encompassing beliefs, customs, and traditions, are highly relevant to both groups, with second-generation participants rating them slightly higher.

Another factor in the research explores the construction of Blackness and cultural capital among first-generation and second-generation Haitians and Jamaicans in Canada. Table 4.1 highlights several key themes related to cultural identity and the construction of blackness among first-generation and second-generation Haitians and Jamaicans in Canada. Both first-generation Haitians and Jamaicans place a strong emphasis on preserving their respective cultural heritages, with Haitians focusing on cultural practices and history, and Jamaicans on music and cuisine. Second-generation individuals from both communities develop hybrid

identities, blending their parents' cultural backgrounds with Canadian norms, and navigating the challenges of balancing dual identities. Blackness is constructed differently across these groups; for first-generation Jamaicans, it is closely linked to national identity and the celebration of cultural icons and traditions, while for Haitians, it is tied to preserving a unique cultural heritage and resisting assimilation. Second-generation Haitians and Jamaicans face the additional complexity of integrating their cultural elements with Canadian culture, dealing with racism, and forging a fusion of influences in a multicultural society.

Table 4.1 - Key themes related to cultural identity and the construction of blackness among first-generation and second-generation Haitians and Jamaicans in Canada

Generation	Community	Cultural Capital	Construction of Blackness
First-Generation	Haitians	Strong emphasis on Haitian cultural practices and history	Blackness intertwined with Haitian identity; focus on preserving unique cultural heritage; and resistance to assimilation.
	Jamaicans	Preservation of Jamaican cultural heritage, music, and cuisine	Blackness is linked to national identity; celebration of Jamaican cultural icons and traditions.
Second-Generation	Haitians	Blending Haitian heritage with Canadian norms	Hybrid identity; reconciling parents' cultural expectations with Canadian experiences; challenges in balancing dual identities.
	Jamaicans	Integration of Jamaican cultural elements with Canadian culture	Hybrid identity; navigating racism and identity in a multicultural society; fusion of Jamaican and Canadian influences.

Overall, there are minor differences in how first and second-generation participants perceive the relevance of various cultural capital factors. Nonetheless, the general trends indicate that both groups consider these factors important for navigating Canadian systems.

4.6 Discussion

Intersectionality of Social and Cultural Capital

This study addresses a notable gap in the literature by examining the intersectionality of social and cultural capital and its nuanced effects on the acquisition and utilization of these forms of capital among Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada. While prior research has predominantly explored the individual impacts of social and cultural capital, there has been limited systematic investigation into how multiple social categories—such as race, gender, class, and ethnicity—intersect to shape individuals' access to and use of these resources. Understanding these intersections is critical for developing a comprehensive and inclusive understanding of social and cultural capital, particularly for marginalized and underrepresented groups who navigate complex intersecting identities.

Existing studies have largely focused on Western contexts, leaving a significant gap in our understanding of how social and cultural capital operate in diverse cultural settings. Cultural contexts profoundly influence the ways in which individuals accumulate and deploy social and cultural capital. For Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada, cultural heritage plays a crucial role in maintaining a strong sense of identity and community cohesion. For example, cultural practices, traditions, and linguistic skills contribute significantly to the community's social fabric and resilience. Thus, it is imperative to explore these dynamics in various cultural, social, and economic contexts to provide a globally informed perspective. By addressing this gap, we can enhance our comprehension of the universality or context-specific nature of social and cultural

capital, shedding light on how these concepts manifest and function across different cultural landscapes.

Implications for Policy

The insights gained from this study have significant policy implications that can inform the development of more inclusive and practical strategies to support Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada.

1. **Cultural Preservation:** Recognizing the transformative potential of celebrating Afro-Caribbean cultural practices is essential. Policies should be designed to preserve and promote these practices through funding for cultural festivals, support for community organizations, and educational programs that include Afro-Caribbean histories and contributions. This approach not only enriches the cultural landscape of Canada but also fosters a sense of belonging and pride within Afro-Caribbean communities.
2. **Employment Equity:** The study urgently highlights the need for targeted interventions to address systemic racism and discrimination, particularly in employment. Policies should focus on creating equitable hiring practices, recognizing foreign qualifications, and providing career support services tailored to the needs of Afro-Caribbean immigrants. Such measures can help reduce employment barriers and promote professional growth and integration into Canadian society.
3. **Community Support:** The findings underscore the crucial role of social networks and community support. Policymakers should consider funding initiatives that strengthen community ties, such as mentorship programs, community centers, and peer support groups that can help individuals navigate Canadian society. These

support systems are vital for enhancing the social and economic integration of Afro-Caribbean communities.

By implementing these policy measures, we can work towards a more inclusive and equitable society that recognizes and values the contributions of Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada.

Summary of Findings

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the mobilization of social and cultural capital among first and second-generation Afro-Caribbeans in Canada, focusing on the Jamaican and Haitian communities. The findings reveal a dynamic interplay between resistance and identity multi-positionality, highlighting how marginalized groups leverage their resilience to build robust social networks that challenge hegemonic norms. Significant generational differences were identified, with first-generation participants emphasizing cultural preservation and second-generation participants focusing on community integration and navigating stereotypes. Both groups highly value cultural heritage, identity, and supportive community networks, which are essential in navigating Canadian society and overcoming systemic barriers.

Contributions to Literature

The research contributes to broader discussions on immigrant integration, social cohesion, and the role of cultural capital in addressing systemic inequalities. It highlights the importance of considering multiple intersecting identities in understanding the experiences of Afro-Caribbean communities. By employing Yosso's theory of cultural wealth and an analytical model emphasizing resistance and identity multi-positionality, the study provides a nuanced understanding of how these communities navigate and contest their social capital. This research fills a critical gap in the literature by offering an in-depth analysis of the unique experiences of

Afro-Caribbean communities, which are often overlooked in existing studies on immigrant integration.

Policy Implications

Firstly, the study underscores the transformative potential of celebrating Afro-Caribbean cultural practices. Recognizing the critical role of cultural heritage and identity in the lives of Afro-Caribbean individuals suggests that policies should be designed to preserve and promote these practices. This can be achieved through funding for cultural festivals, support for community organizations, and educational programs that include Afro-Caribbean histories and contributions.

Secondly, the study urgently highlights the need for targeted interventions to address systemic racism and discrimination, particularly in employment. Policies should focus on creating equitable hiring practices, recognizing foreign qualifications, and providing career support services tailored to the needs of Afro-Caribbean immigrants.

Additionally, the findings underscore the crucial role of social networks and community support. Policymakers should consider funding initiatives that strengthen community ties, such as mentorship programs, community centers, and peer support groups that can help individuals navigate Canadian society.

Lastly, the concept of identity multi-positionality and its impact on social and cultural capital underscores the need for intersectional policy approaches. Policies must consider the overlapping identities of race, gender, class, and immigration status to effectively address the unique challenges faced by Afro-Caribbean communities.

Future Research

Future research should continue to explore the intersections of multiple social identities and their impact on the mobilization of social and cultural capital. Examining these dynamics in diverse cultural and geographical contexts will provide a more globally informed perspective on the experiences of marginalized and underrepresented groups. Further studies could also investigate the long-term effects of systemic inequalities on the social and economic outcomes of Afro-Caribbean communities and other immigrant groups. By advancing our understanding of these complex interactions, future research can inform more effective policies and practices to support the integration and well-being of immigrant communities.

Limitations of the Study

The study's relatively small sample size, explicitly concentrated on the Jamaican and Haitian communities in Canada, may need to be revised to generalize the findings. This limitation restricts the results' applicability to other Afro-Caribbean communities or immigrant groups within Canada. Additionally, the study utilizes self-reported data gathered through focus groups and an intake survey. This methodological choice may introduce biases, as participants could provide responses they perceive as socially desirable or struggle to recall past experiences accurately. Furthermore, the research offers a snapshot of the experiences of Afro-Caribbean communities at a particular point in time. A longitudinal approach yields more profound insights into the evolution of these experiences and the dynamic utilization of social and cultural capital over time.

Although the study acknowledges intersectionality, there is room for a more thorough exploration of how intersecting identities—such as gender, age, and socioeconomic status— affect the experiences of Afro-Caribbean communities.

Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings emphasize the critical role of cultural heritage and identity within Afro-Caribbean communities. Policy development could focus on supporting cultural preservation and celebration by funding cultural festivals and implementing educational programs incorporating Afro-Caribbean histories and contributions.

- **Addressing Racism and Discrimination:** The study identifies pervasive experiences of racism and discrimination, particularly in the employment sector. This underscores the need for policies that promote equitable hiring practices, acknowledge foreign qualifications, and provide tailored career support services for Afro-Caribbean immigrants.
- **Enhancing Community Support:** The research highlights the significance of social networks and community support. Policymakers might consider initiatives to strengthen community bonds, such as mentorship programs, establishing community centers, and developing peer support groups.
- **Intersectional Policy Approaches:** The study underscores the necessity of intersectional policy frameworks that account for overlapping identities, including race, gender, class, and immigration status. Such approaches could address the unique challenges faced by Afro-Caribbean communities.
- **Educational Implications:** The study's findings could inform educational practices, particularly in developing curricula that recognize and value the experiences of Afro-Caribbean communities. This could contribute to fostering a more inclusive and respectful learning environment.

Despite its limitations, this study provides valuable insights into the experiences of Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada. These insights carry significant implications for policy and practice, suggesting the necessity of more inclusive and supportive strategies to enhance these communities' social and economic integration.

4.7 Conclusion

This study has provided an in-depth examination of the dual identity and the complex interplay of social and cultural capital within first- and second-generation Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada, particularly focusing on the Jamaican and Haitian populations. The findings reveal that these communities leverage their cultural heritage and social networks to navigate systemic challenges, including racism and discrimination, while simultaneously preserving and adapting their cultural identities in a multicultural Canadian context.

Through the lens of Yosso's theory of cultural wealth and the concepts of identity multi-positionality and resistance, the study highlights how Afro-Caribbean individuals and groups actively contest and redefine their social capital. This is done through the preservation of cultural practices, the creation of resilient social networks, and the assertion of a hybrid identity that bridges their Caribbean roots with their Canadian experiences.

The research underscores significant generational differences, with first-generation Afro-Caribbeans placing a stronger emphasis on cultural preservation and the direct impacts of discrimination, while second-generation participants focus on community integration and navigating stereotypes within Canadian society. Despite these differences, both generations highly value cultural heritage and community support as critical tools for overcoming systemic barriers and fostering a sense of belonging.

The study's contributions extend to the broader discourse on immigrant integration, highlighting the importance of considering multiple intersecting identities in understanding the experiences of marginalized communities. By addressing the specific challenges faced by Afro-Caribbeans in Canada, this research provides valuable insights that can inform policies aimed at promoting social cohesion, cultural preservation, and equity within multicultural societies.

Future research should continue to explore the evolving dynamics of social and cultural capital among diverse immigrant groups, particularly through longitudinal studies that can capture the long-term impacts of these factors on identity formation and social integration. Additionally, expanding the focus to include other Afro-Caribbean communities in different geographical contexts would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the global immigrant experience.

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CHAPTER 5: Integrated Discussion with Conclusion

Chapter 5 synthesizes the core findings of this research through a conceptual framework developed from the study's original contributions—namely, polite racism, racial ignominy, and duplicity of consciousness. These concepts emerged from the lived experiences of first- and second-generation Haitian and Jamaican participants and offer new analytical tools for understanding how Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada negotiate identity, exclusion, and belonging. While grounded in foundational theories such as Bourdieu's cultural capital, Yosso's community cultural wealth, and Du Bois's double consciousness, this thesis builds upon these models to develop a framework that better captures the subtleties of racialized experiences in multicultural Canada. Together, these contributions provide a nuanced lens for examining how social and cultural capital are mobilized, contested, and reshaped within a racialized society.

Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of justice and equity also informs this framework, underscoring the understanding of resilience and agency in the face of systemic barriers. Robinson's theory of racial capitalism, which inspired a historical focus, serves as a backdrop to this work, as the analysis prioritizes contemporary lived experiences over historical reconstruction to center the voices and realities of Afro-Caribbean Canadians.

The previous chapters highlight how systemic challenges, including *polite racism*, influence the mobilization of cultural capital while showcasing the resilience, adaptability, and ingenuity of first- and second-generation Haitians and Jamaicans in navigating systemic barriers. By examining how these communities leverage their social and cultural resources, this research adds depth to existing sociological literature and underscores the ongoing negotiation of identity within Canada's multicultural landscape

The implications of these findings extend beyond academic discourse to inform policy development, community practices, and future research. This study culminates with a call for proactive measures to dismantle systemic barriers and foster genuine inclusivity. The following section articulates key recommendations and contributions to the literature, offering a practical and forward-looking roadmap for actionable change

5.1 Synthesis of Key Findings

The research found that Jamaican and Haitian communities in Canada leverage various forms of social and cultural capital to shape their understanding and construction of Blackness. These forms include linguistic assets, such as Creole and Patois, and community networks that provide social support and cultural reinforcement. This mobilization enables these communities to navigate systemic barriers and respond to the subtle discrimination identified as *polite racism*. *Polite racism*, characterized by socially sanctioned, courteous yet exclusionary behaviours, marginalizes Black identity and devalues Afro-Caribbean cultural expressions unless they conform to dominant norms. Despite these challenges, these communities harness cultural practices, collective memory, and resilience as tools for maintaining an authentic in-group identity that challenges stereotype and affirms their presence within Canadian society. The study revealed that these cultural assets are not only essential for resilience but also serve as mechanisms for resistance and identity assertion, contributing to a broader and more nuanced understanding of Blackness in Canada.

The research also highlighted distinct differences in how social and cultural capital are manifested and contested between first- and second-generation Haitians and Jamaicans. For first-generation migrants, cultural capital is often expressed through maintaining traditional practices, participating in community gatherings, and fostering strong transnational ties to their home

countries. This generation utilizes social networks as a means of adaptation, drawing upon established cultural norms and values to build resilience and secure support in a new environment.

In contrast, second-generation members, born in Canada, experience a duality in their identity, described in this research as *duplicity of consciousness*. This concept reflects their effort to balance their Afro-Caribbean heritage with the development of a Canadian racial consciousness. The research found that this generation frequently faces the challenge of conforming to dominant societal norms to achieve social acceptance while striving to uphold and celebrate their cultural roots. This balancing act often leads to the contestation of their social and cultural capital, as they navigate spaces that devalue their heritage or treat it as secondary to mainstream cultural norms. After outlining the distinct experiences of first- and second-generation Haitians and Jamaicans, the following five findings emerge as central themes of this study:

1. Polite Racism as a Distinct Systemic Barrier

The research establishes *polite racism* as a central and insidious form of discrimination. Unlike overt racism, polite racism is socially sanctioned and often disguised as neutrality or civility, yet it consistently undermines Afro-Caribbean cultural contributions. This theme is evident throughout the thesis, particularly in the analysis of institutional exclusion within the labour market and the education system.

2. Generational Differences in Identity Formation

A critical finding of this study is the distinction between first- and second-generation Afro-Caribbean individuals. The first generation often emphasizes cultural preservation, communal solidarity, and transnational connections, while the second generation

navigates a hybrid identity shaped by Canadian social norms and inherited cultural legacies. This dynamic reflects the concept of *duplicity of consciousness*, capturing the internal negotiation of multiple identity positions.

3. The Contestation and Mobilization of Cultural Capital

Afro-Caribbean communities actively mobilize social and cultural capital—through linguistic pluralism, artistic expression, and intergenerational community networks.

However, these assets are often devalued or dismissed due to systemic racial structures.

This finding highlights the contested nature of cultural capital within a society shaped by polite racism and institutional gatekeeping.

4. Intersectionality and the Navigation of Identity

The thesis applies an intersectional framework that foregrounds the interplay of race, immigration status, language, and generational positioning. The concept of *duplicity of consciousness* is central here, capturing how Afro-Caribbean individuals manage competing expectations, cultural authenticity, and institutional norms. This multi-layered navigation reflects the complexity of identity formation within racialized contexts.

5. Adaptation, Agency, and Resilience

Despite structural barriers, Afro-Caribbean individuals and communities demonstrate resilience through cultural innovation, community engagement, and strategic identity negotiation. This agency is evident in how cultural capital is leveraged to resist marginalization and to assert belonging. These strategies contribute to broader conversations about race, multiculturalism, and systemic equity in Canada.

Together, these findings reveal the dynamic and multifaceted nature of cultural capital and identity formation among Afro-Caribbean communities. Beyond advancing academic understanding, they underscore the urgent need for policy reform that acknowledges and

supports the cultural wealth of racialized communities. Addressing polite racism and fostering environments that recognize cultural legitimacy are essential steps toward building a more equitable and inclusive Canadian society.

While this study offers rich, in-depth insights into the lived experiences of Jamaican and Haitian communities in Canada, it is important to reiterate the limitations regarding generalizability. As discussed in Chapter 3, the findings are based on qualitative data from a specific sample and are not intended to represent all Afro-Caribbean individuals in Canada. Instead, this research emphasizes analytical generalizability—the capacity to extend conceptual insights and theoretical frameworks (such as polite racism and duplicity of consciousness) to similar social and institutional contexts. These findings should be interpreted as contributions to broader theoretical understanding rather than statistically generalizable claims. To further contextualize these insights, the following section examines how cultural capital operates within historical and contemporary structures of exclusion, linking the lived experiences of participants to broader systemic patterns shaped by racial capitalism and institutional gatekeeping

5.2 Cultural Capital and Systemic Barriers: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Realities

The findings of this study align with and expand Yosso's model of community cultural wealth by illustrating how Afro-Caribbean communities leverage linguistic and social resources to reinforce identity and foster resilience. However, the interaction between these cultural assets and polite racism in Canada reveals a critical limitation in Yosso's model: the persistent devaluation of non-dominant forms of cultural capital unless they conform to dominant cultural norms. When these insights are integrated with Cedric J. Robinson's concept of racial capitalism,

it becomes clear that local experiences of racial exclusion are not isolated, but rather embedded within global economic structures that reproduce racial hierarchies.

This connection underscores that the systemic barriers encountered by Afro-Caribbean communities reflect long-standing institutional patterns. For instance, one participant shared: “I didn’t get the job because they said they couldn’t understand my accent,” illustrating how Caribbean-accented English—an important form of linguistic capital—can simultaneously serve as a marker of pride and a source of exclusion when filtered through dominant cultural standards.

Understanding contemporary labour market inequalities affecting Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada requires a historical perspective that connects past patterns of economic disenfranchisement to present-day systemic challenges. During the mid-20th century, Haitian and Jamaican migration to Canada was shaped by immigration policies that purported to favour skilled labour but, in practice, sustained racialized barriers in employment and mobility. Haitian migrants fleeing the Duvalier regime were often confined to low-status sectors with limited opportunities for advancement. Similarly, Jamaican women recruited under the West Indian Domestic Scheme were largely relegated to domestic work—reflecting entrenched racial and gendered exclusions.

Robinson’s theory of racial capitalism provides a useful lens for interpreting these dynamics. It reveals how economic systems have been historically structured to exploit racialized labour while maintaining hierarchical divisions. The economic exclusion faced by early Afro-Caribbean migrants—whose labour was vital to Canada’s growth but systematically devalued—continues to reverberate in present-day disparities. Today, Afro-Caribbean Canadians still encounter barriers to advancement that mirror these historical inequities.

These historical continuities demonstrate the need for present-day policy interventions to go beyond addressing overt discrimination. Subtle, systemic forms of exclusion—such as polite racism—continue to marginalize Afro-Caribbean individuals by undermining their cultural contributions and limiting access to opportunities. By recognizing the enduring influence of racial capitalism, policymakers can design targeted, equity-focused initiatives that dismantle institutional barriers and support a more just and inclusive labour market.

5.3 Expected Contributions

This research set out to create space for inclusion, stability, and mobility by centering the lived realities of Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada. Through its exploration of identity, exclusion, and cultural capital, the study contributes to improved economic, professional, and educational outcomes for Black communities by offering both conceptual innovation and policy relevance. By introducing the concepts of polite racism, racial ignominy, and duplicity of consciousness, this work provides new tools for understanding how systemic biases operate within institutions. These contributions help fill critical gaps in a literature often shaped by U.S.-centric paradigms and offer a distinctly Canadian perspective on race and multiculturalism. The following section outlines six key areas where this research offers original contributions to theory, policy, and the broader sociological understanding of Afro-Caribbean experiences in Canada:

1. Filling Gaps in Existing Literature

This study addresses longstanding gaps in Canadian race and migration studies by centering the Afro-Caribbean experience—particularly the interaction between identity, cultural capital, and systemic exclusion. While the immigrant experience in Canada has been extensively studied, the specific ways Haitian and Jamaican individuals navigate identity and state institutions have been

overlooked. This research offers a more expansive sociological narrative by introducing original concepts like *polite racism*, *racial ignominy*, and *duplicity of consciousness*.

2. Intersectionality of Identity

Using an intersectional framework, the study highlights how race, culture, immigration status, language, and generation intersect to shape Afro-Caribbean subjectivity. The concept of *duplicity of consciousness*—developed in this thesis—captures the layered tensions of negotiating Canadian belonging while honouring cultural heritage. This enriches broader sociological understandings of hybrid identities and resistance within multicultural societies.

3. Policy Analysis and Recommendations

By revealing how *polite racism* operates as a normalized, systemic barrier across education and employment, this research underscores the inadequacy of surface-level multicultural policies. It calls for structural changes, such as expanded recognition of Afro-Caribbean cultural contributions, targeted anti-racism initiatives, and support for educational and community-led programming.

4. Contributions to Canadian Multiculturalism

Canada's multiculturalism policy is often celebrated but rarely critiqued from the standpoint of Black immigrants. This study critically examines how Afro-Caribbean communities encounter a form of inclusion that is conditional and performative. The concept of *racial ignominy*—developed in this thesis—exposes how cultural capital is tolerated but not legitimized, offering a framework for reimagining Canadian multiculturalism.

5. Empirical Data and Case Studies

Drawing on rich qualitative data—including interviews and focus groups—this research amplifies Afro-Caribbean voices often absent from mainstream Canadian sociology. Case studies related to workplace discrimination, school exclusion, and identity formation illustrate how *polite racism* is lived and contested in daily life. These insights ground the theoretical contributions in real-world experiences.

6. Broader Implications for Diaspora Studies

By situating these Canadian experiences within global structures of racial capitalism and diaspora, this research contributes to broader transnational discussions of migration and identity. The concepts introduced here—*duplicity of consciousness* and *racial ignominy*—offer transferable analytical tools for examining racialized experiences beyond the Canadian context.

Collectively, these findings contribute to transnational identity studies and enrich academic discourse on diaspora and migration globally. By offering original concepts such as *polite racism*, *racial ignominy*, and *duplicity of consciousness*, this research provides new analytical tools for understanding how Afro-Caribbean communities—and other racialized groups—navigate systemic exclusion and assert cultural belonging across national contexts

5.4 Monitoring and Assessment

Effective policy implementation requires structured monitoring and evaluation. Educational institutions, government agencies, and community organizations should collaborate to develop frameworks that assess the reach and effectiveness of inclusivity measures. Metrics such as participation rates, qualitative community feedback, and longitudinal tracking can offer valuable insights into the practical outcomes and sustainability of these reforms.

5.5 Future Research Directions:

While this study contributes significantly to understanding Afro-Caribbean identity and resilience in Canada, further research should explore regional differences to capture the varied experiences across provinces and territories. In addition, longitudinal studies could examine how Afro-Caribbean cultural capital evolves over time and shapes the trajectories of future generations. Comparative studies across other diasporic communities would also strengthen the analytical reach of concepts like *polite racism* and *duplicity of consciousness*.

5.6 Call to Action

To achieve sustainable change, policymakers and community leaders must prioritize actions that move beyond performative gestures. This includes forging enduring partnerships between educational institutions, community organizations, and government agencies to ensure that systemic barriers are addressed and cultural recognition is embedded across institutional practices.

Practical Next Steps:

To promote equity and inclusion across sectors, Canada must pursue three complementary strategies. **First**, develop and deliver cultural-competency programs for educators, healthcare providers, and employers so they can better understand diverse communities and improve service outcomes. **Second**, launch curriculum-reform pilots in select school districts and rigorously evaluate their impact to ensure evidence-based scaling. **Third**, create community-led partnerships that design and run youth mentorship and leadership initiatives, grounding each program in lived experience.

These action steps echo the core argument of this thesis: that cultural capital fundamentally shapes Afro-Caribbean experiences in Canada and that systemic forces—especially polite racism—still restrict identity formation and social mobility. By valuing and

investing in the cultural assets of marginalized communities, we can drive reforms in education, labour, and policy that uphold equity, dignity, and inclusivity. The path forward demands more than passive tolerance of diversity; it requires an intentional, collective commitment to weave it into the very fabric of Canadian society.

EPILOGUE: Moving Towards Authentic Inclusivity-Recommendations and Contributions to Literature

Building on the synthesized insights from Chapter 5, this Epilogue seeks to translate the study's findings into practical recommendations for fostering authentic inclusivity. The research reinforces that while Afro-Caribbean communities possess significant cultural capital, their contributions are often undervalued due to systemic biases, including *polite racism*. Addressing these challenges requires targeted, collaborative policy and community initiatives.

Contributions to Understanding Polite racism and Cultural Wealth

The concept of *polite racism*—defined as subtle, socially sanctioned discrimination—highlights how Afro-Caribbean communities face exclusion that is both covert and deeply ingrained in societal norms. This study shows that while linguistic, familial, and resistant capital foster resilience, these forms of cultural wealth are often subject to devaluation unless aligned with dominant, often Eurocentric, standards. By building on Yosso's (2005) community cultural wealth model, this thesis reframes cultural capital as a tool for both resilience and resistance within racialized communities.

Recommendations for Policy Reforms

To advance authentic inclusivity, targeted policy interventions are essential. This section outlines several specific recommendations:

1. Education Policy Reform:

Integrate Afro-Caribbean history and cultural contributions into the national and provincial curricula. This inclusion will provide students with a more comprehensive understanding of Canadian diversity and challenge prevailing stereotypes. Collaboration between educational institutions, community leaders, and cultural experts can develop robust curricula that reflect the experiences of Afro-Caribbean Canadians, fostering empathy and awareness among students.

2. Workplace Diversity Initiatives:

Strengthen policies that promote diversity and address subtle forms of exclusion in the workplace. This includes revising hiring practices to recognize diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds as assets, rather than impediments, and developing training programs that address implicit biases. Employers should collaborate with Afro-Caribbean advocacy groups to create workplace environments that value and integrate cultural capital beyond token representation.

3. Community-Based Support Programs:

- **Funding for Cultural and Social Programs:** Increase financial support for community centers and cultural organizations to facilitate mentorship, language preservation, and educational workshops. Successful initiatives, such as the Black Youth Helpline, highlight the benefits of targeted programs.
- **Youth Leadership Opportunities:** Expand youth engagement through programs that emphasize leadership, community involvement, and cultural pride.

4. Addressing Systemic Barriers:

Implement policies that specifically target systemic inequalities in housing, healthcare, and employment, which disproportionately affect racialized communities. Data collection and analysis should be leveraged to identify disparities and guide policy changes that reduce the impact of *polite racism*. These policies should prioritize input from Afro-Caribbean voices to ensure solutions are contextually relevant and impactful.

Expanding on Policy Implications:

To ensure that this research translates into meaningful change, it is essential to propose actionable strategies for educational institutions and workplaces. Addressing the nuanced forms of "*polite racism*" requires targeted interventions that promote cultural competency and inclusive practices. Schools and universities should incorporate curricula that reflect the diverse histories and contributions of Afro-Caribbean communities, emphasizing cultural assets beyond stereotypical representations. Training programs focused on recognizing and mitigating microaggressions, and *polite racism* should be mandatory for educators and administrators. In workplaces, policies that encourage diversity should go beyond recruitment, fostering an environment where Afro-Caribbean employees can express their cultural identities without fear of subtle biases. Leadership workshops and mentorship programs tailored to the unique challenges faced by racialized employees could help dismantle the implicit biases embedded in corporate culture.

Comparative Insights:

Drawing parallels between the experiences of Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada and similar groups in other multicultural societies provides valuable context and reveals common challenges. For instance, examining the socio-cultural integration of Afro-Caribbeans in the UK or Afro-Latinx groups in the United States can offer insights into shared struggles, such as

navigating racialized perceptions while mobilizing community cultural capital. These comparative studies highlight global patterns of subtle discrimination, allowing for the identification of best practices that can be adapted to Canadian contexts. Understanding how policies and community initiatives in different regions have succeeded or failed in addressing racialized barriers can inform more robust, context-sensitive approaches to fostering inclusivity and equity in Canada.

It is also essential to recognize that policy implications may differ by region, particularly between Ontario and Quebec, due to their distinct approaches to diversity management. Ontario's multiculturalism emphasizes cultural pluralism, while Quebec's interculturalism focuses on integration into a dominant Francophone culture. These regional frameworks shape how Afro-Caribbean communities experience inclusion, access resources, and navigate identity. For instance, Haitian participants in Quebec reported linguistic inclusion but also cultural marginalization under interculturalism, whereas Jamaican participants in Ontario noted greater cultural recognition yet continued exclusion in labor and education systems. Policy reforms must therefore be context-specific, taking into account the provincial frameworks that mediate how multiculturalism is enacted. Regional equity strategies should address these localized dynamics to ensure that Afro-Caribbean communities across Canada benefit from inclusive, responsive, and effective policies.

Towards a More Inclusive Future

The call for authentic inclusivity must go beyond surface-level diversity initiatives to embrace the inherent value and contributions of Afro-Caribbean communities. Acknowledging the challenges, such as resistance to policy changes and the need for comprehensive strategies, will be essential for sustainable progress. Policymakers, educators, and social institutions must

work collaboratively with these communities to create frameworks that respect and promote cultural capital as a dynamic, positive force.

Overcoming Potential Challenges

Implementing these recommendations may encounter resistance due to entrenched systemic norms and biases. It is crucial to anticipate and address such challenges through transparent communication, continuous training, and community-led initiatives. Engaging stakeholders at all levels—government, private sector, and grassroots organizations—will help align efforts and mitigate pushback, fostering an environment where changes can be embedded effectively over time.

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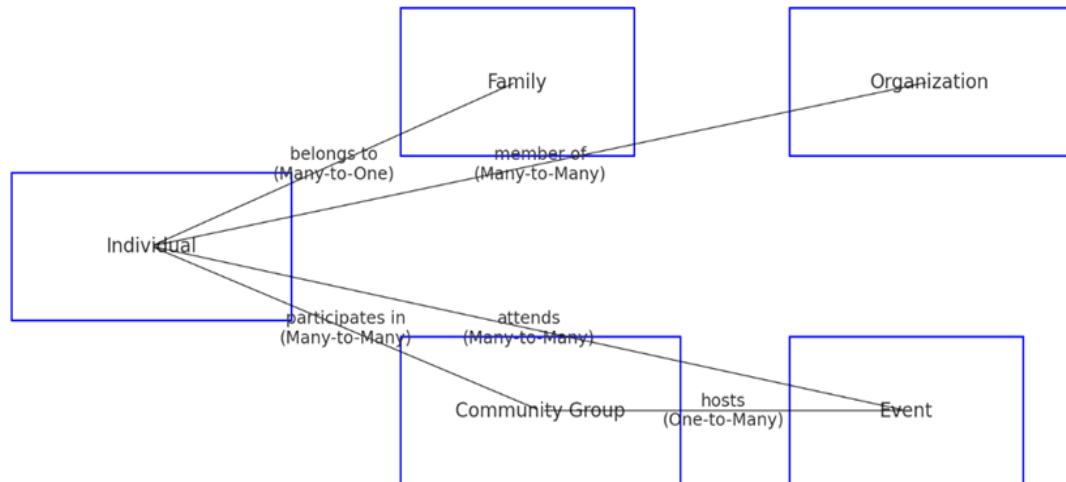
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Appendix A Figure 1

Figure A1: Entity-Relationship Diagram (ERD) Based on Participant Mapping Exercise

Entity-Relationship Diagram (ERD) for Afro-Caribbean Diaspora in Canada



Afro-Caribbean Diaspora in Canada.

The entity-relationship diagram (ERD) for the first- and second-generation Afro-Caribbean diaspora in Canada visualizes the social architecture through which community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) is developed, shared, and mobilized. This model supports the manuscript's core argument that Afro-Caribbean Canadians—particularly Haitians and Jamaicans—draw upon intergenerational relationships and institutional engagement to construct cultural capital that is often delegitimized through polite racism and systemic exclusion. Developed using grounded theory-informed coding and thematic analysis, the ERD illustrates key entities in community life—Individuals, Families, Community Groups, Events, and Organizations—and the relational ties that sustain diasporic identity. These connections represent various forms of non-dominant capital, including:

Familial Capital: Passed through intergenerational ties, especially within extended families.

First-generation participants described their reliance on familial narratives, discipline, and spiritual grounding as core survival strategies.

Social and Navigational Capital: Emerges through participation in community groups and cultural organizations, enabling individuals to build peer networks, gain knowledge of Canadian systems, and resist exclusionary practices.

Resistant Capital: Reflected in collective advocacy, diasporic activism, and cultural pride sustained through organizations and events.

The diagram also highlights generational differences in how these resources are activated. First-generation participants often lean on familial and navigational capital to overcome institutional barriers, whereas second-generation participants engage more with resistant and linguistic capital in navigating identity within predominantly white educational and professional settings. By mapping these interactions, the ERD reinforces the manuscript's broader claim: Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada do not passively absorb multicultural ideals. Rather, they strategically negotiate identity and belonging through community-based practices that respond to the duplicity of consciousness and the subtle racial exclusions embedded in Canadian institutions.

Appendix B

Building on the implications outlined in the final section of this study, this *Epilogue* extends the discussion by offering practical recommendations for fostering authentic inclusivity. It serves as a continuation of the core findings, translating them into actionable strategies rooted

in the lived realities of Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada. The research reinforces that while these communities possess significant cultural capital, their contributions are often undervalued due to systemic biases, including *polite racism*. Addressing these challenges demands intentional, collaborative efforts across policy, education, and community spheres.

Recommendations for Policy Reforms

To advance authentic inclusivity, targeted policy interventions are essential. This section outlines several specific recommendations:

Education Policy Reform:

Integrate Afro-Caribbean history and cultural contributions into the national and provincial curricula. This inclusion will provide students with a more comprehensive understanding of Canadian diversity and challenge prevailing stereotypes. Collaboration between educational institutions, community leaders, and cultural experts can develop robust curricula that reflect the experiences of Afro-Caribbean Canadians, fostering empathy and awareness among students.

Workplace Diversity Initiatives:

Strengthen policies that promote diversity and address subtle forms of exclusion in the workplace. This includes revising hiring practices to recognize diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds as assets, rather than impediments, and developing training programs that address implicit biases. Employers should collaborate with Afro-Caribbean advocacy groups to create workplace environments that value and integrate cultural capital beyond token representation.

Community-Based Support Programs:

Funding for Cultural and Social Programs:

Increase financial support for community centers and cultural organizations to facilitate mentorship, language preservation, and educational workshops. Successful initiatives, such as the Black Youth Helpline, highlight the benefits of targeted programs.

Youth Leadership Opportunities: Expand youth engagement through programs that emphasize leadership, community involvement, and cultural pride.

Addressing Systemic Barriers:

Implement policies that specifically target systemic inequalities in housing, healthcare, and employment, which disproportionately affect racialized communities. Data collection and analysis should be leveraged to identify disparities and guide policy changes that reduce the impact of *polite racism*. These policies should prioritize input from Afro-Caribbean voices to ensure solutions are contextually relevant and impactful.

Expanding on Policy Implications:

To ensure that this research translates into meaningful change, it is essential to propose actionable strategies for educational institutions and workplaces. Addressing the nuanced forms of "*polite racism*" requires targeted interventions that promote cultural competency and inclusive practices. Schools and universities should incorporate curricula that reflect the diverse histories and contributions of Afro-Caribbean communities, emphasizing cultural assets beyond stereotypical representations. Training programs focused on recognizing and mitigating microaggressions, and *polite racism* should be mandatory for educators and administrators. In workplaces, policies that encourage diversity should go beyond recruitment, fostering an environment where Afro-Caribbean employees can express their cultural identities without fear of subtle biases. Leadership workshops and mentorship programs tailored to the unique challenges faced by racialized employees could help dismantle the implicit biases embedded in corporate culture.

Comparative Insights:

Drawing parallels between the experiences of Afro-Caribbean communities in Canada and similar groups in other multicultural societies provides valuable context and reveals common challenges. For instance, examining the socio-cultural integration of Afro-Caribbeans in the UK or Afro-Latinx groups in the United States can offer insights into shared struggles, such as navigating racialized perceptions while mobilizing community cultural capital. These comparative studies highlight global patterns of subtle discrimination, allowing for the identification of best practices that can be adapted to Canadian contexts. Understanding how policies and community initiatives in different regions have succeeded or failed in addressing racialized barriers can inform more robust, context-sensitive approaches to fostering inclusivity and equity in Canada.

Towards a More Inclusive Future

The call for authentic inclusivity must go beyond surface-level diversity initiatives to embrace the inherent value and contributions of Afro-Caribbean communities. Acknowledging the challenges, such as resistance to policy changes and the need for comprehensive strategies, will be essential for sustainable progress. Policymakers, educators, and social institutions must work collaboratively with these communities to create frameworks that respect and promote cultural capital as a dynamic, positive force.

Overcoming Potential Challenges

Implementing these recommendations may encounter resistance due to entrenched systemic norms and biases. It is crucial to anticipate and address such challenges through transparent communication, continuous training, and community-led initiatives. Engaging stakeholders at all levels—government, private sector, and grassroots organizations—will help

align efforts and mitigate pushback, fostering an environment where changes can be embedded effectively over time.