Black African Immigrant Graduate Students' Identities and Education: The Influence of African Indigenous Knowledge within Canada's Multiculturalism.

by

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Abstract

This study explains the influence of African Indigenous Knowledge in the education and identities of Black African Immigrant students within Canada's Multiculturalism. Black African immigrant student's identities are formed and shaped by their Indigenous experiences, which influences their socio-cultural development in Canada. Canada recognizes and promotes diversity and inclusion through the Federal Multiculturalism Act (1988), which preserves and enhances the multicultural heritage of all Canadians. This exploratory research explains how the exclusion of African Indigenous knowledge in the education of Black African Students impacts them; whether a shift to acknowledge and validate African Indigenous Knowledge would create a better educational impact for Black African Immigrant students; and how multiculturalism enables the diverse population to understand their Human Rights and support the reclaiming of self and identity. The study also looks at how the strategies adopted by the Indigenous people of Canada to reclaim their identities could inform the actions of Black Africans.

This qualitative research study uses an Indigenous Research Methodology to apply critical theories that are grounded in Indigenous knowledge systems. The data collection methods included semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with a total of nine participants consisting of first and second-generation Black African Immigrant Graduate Students in Alberta, Canada. The data was collected virtually due to the COVID-19 health restrictions and analyzed thematically using qualitative techniques to understand the unique experiences of the participants from diverse African perspectives.

The study uses anti-colonial Indigenous discursive theory, multiculturalism framework and Critical Race Theory (CRT) to explain and analyze the participants experiences. The anti-colonial Indigenous discursive theory helps to explain the participants experiences with African Indigenous knowledge and to analyze the continuing impact of colonialism on Africans despite the change in

their geographical location. Multiculturalism is used as the framework to explain and bring forward the interests and concerns of Black African Immigrants in Canada. CRT helps to theorize the Black African student's experiences with racism within the Canadian socio-cultural context and analyzes its impact in their education.

The findings revealed the different ways that African Indigenous knowledge works through various systems to influence the identities and education of Black African immigrant students in Canada. Canadian multiculturalism is critiqued as unresponsive to the needs and interests of Black African immigrant students and not supportive of their identity reclamation. The participants proposed recommendations to support Black Africans in Canada based on observed strategies that are used by the Indigenous people of Canada for their identity reclamation. The findings will serve as an educational resource for all immigrants in Canada who are on diverse pathways to bring about change in their communities; provide recommendations on inclusive education that demonstrates Canada's efforts to advance multiculturalism; create awareness and awaken consciousness of immigrant students to options for more successful educational integration; and add to the empirical evidence that position African Indigenous Knowledge as a source of factual knowledge. African Indigenous Knowledge is a significant part of the identity of Black African Immigrant students and the acknowledgment and validation of those knowledge systems within a multicultural society creates a better educational experience.

PREFACE

This thesis is an original work by Hilda Fankah-Arthur. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, under the Project Name "*Black African Immigrant Graduate Students' Identities and Education: The Influence of African Indigenous Knowledge within Canada's Multiculturalism.*", No. Pro00102957, on March 30, 2021. This study received two renewed approvals under the same project name: first renewal ID No. Pro00102957_REN1, on March 3, 2022, and second renewal ID No. Pro00102957_REN2, on February 15, 2023.

DEDICATION

To my family, particularly my beloved husband Patrick Kwabena Arthur, and our three lovely children: Princess-Marian Arthur, Empress Arthur and Duke Arthur. I am very grateful to them for their support, love and patience as I journeyed through this academic pursuit.

To my parents, Regina Abena Fankah and George Kofi Fankah (deceased) for their unwavering support and commitment to my educational advancement.

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Chapter One:

The failure to validate African Indigenous Knowledges as relevant to the educational experiences of Black African Immigrant Graduate Students (BAIGS) in Canada creates fundamental issues that impact their identities and education. The identities of Black African Immigrant Graduate Students are shaped and formed by their Indigenous experiences, which Dei and Kempf (2006) identify as necessary if we are to understand our essence as spiritual beings. According to Ukwuoma (2016) "African Indigenous knowledge is a tool for self-identification for Africans" (p. 115) and it's relevant today in spite of the domineering role of Western education. He further asserts that Indigenous knowledge has guided Africans in various spheres of life prior to the advent of Western education in Africa and elsewhere. African Indigenous Knowledge gives grounding and a sense of belonging to BAIGS which can influence the experiences of the next generation of Black Africans in Canada. Second and third generation Blacks in North America feel invisible and increasingly struggle with having to navigate their multiple or hyphenated identity being third culture or bicultural (Ejigu, 2019, p. 137). Immigrants more favourably received by the host society, or those who do not encounter discrimination, are expected to experience a faster socioeconomic advancement and a smoother adaptation process, regardless of the human capital they possess (Portes and MacLeod 1999, as cited in Abada et al., 2009, p. 6).

Unfortunately, the Canadian education system is part of the institutions where students of color such as Black African immigrant graduate students experience racism and discrimination. This experience tends to affect their participation and the choices they make regarding their education because their options are limited, whereas the available opportunities are skewed to a different category of people that belong to the dominant or [self-acclaimed]

superior race. The Black African immigrant graduate students are excluded from basic academic necessities, which are critical to their educational advancement most times by virtue of their race. Critical race theory helps us to understand that racism is normal and not aberrant and that the experiential knowledge of what marginalized people know as existent in their lives is real.

Codjoe (2006) noted that the most critical factor that contributes to the success of Black African students is the role played by a supportive environment that reinforces knowledge and pride in Black cultural identity. He identified the individual, family, and socio-cultural community as factors that contribute to the successful education of Black Africans (p. 38).

Most Black African Immigrant Graduate Students (BAIGS) migrate with inherent knowledge in the African ways of knowing and doing from the home country, even though colonized to a great degree. Indigenous Knowledge is what has shaped and formed the foundation and identities of most African students who migrate from Africa to Canada. African identities and educational experiences are shaped and informed by interactions in colonized systems andstructures from Africa, which does not leave room for practical Indigenous knowledge application. Unfortunately, these colonial practices from Africa are brought forth into Canada by BAIGS and it influences the choices and options adopted in their education and socio-cultural lifestyles.

After years of anti-Black immigration strategies to discourage Blacks from migrating to Canada, the first multiculturalism policy was adopted in 1971, which subsequently led to the Multiculturalism Act of 1988. According to Srikanth (2012) the intent of the Canadian policy on multiculturalism is to eliminate racism and discrimination in all walks of life and guarantee to the minorities the right to maintain and promote their cultural identities (p. 17). Although the multiculturalism policy in Canada encourages everyone to maintain their heritage cultural identity while adopting a common Canadian identity, African Indigenous Knowledge is yet to be

included in the education of BAIGS. Considering Canada's support for multiculturalism as a strategy to preserve and enhance immigrant's heritage and identity, my interest is to use multiculturalism framework, anti-colonial Indigenous theories and critical race theory to explain how colonialism has displaced African Indigenous Knowledges and relegated the Black race as inferior, thereby influencing the identities and education of BAIGS from Africa and in Canada. I assert that the education of BAIGS and the opportunity to advance the African community in Canada is impacted by the lack of consciousness and confidence in BAIGS' cultural heritage or identity. This has been influenced by colonial experiences from back home, as well as in Canada, that have failed to emphasize the value and role of African Indigenous knowledge in the development of the African society or beyond geographical boundaries of Africa. In Canada, the colonial educational system prepares BAIGS to participate in the capitalist and individualistic society without giving them the opportunity to draw on and apply African Indigenous Knowledge in their education.

African Indigenous knowledge helps individuals to understand their roles in the community and prepares us to participate fully in the advancement of the African community while setting a good foundation for the next generation of Black Africans in Canada. Inasmuch as the rediscovery of the original African identity may require recovering stories, epistemological foundations, and language in ways that are not currently available to us now, this study awakens consciousness of African students in Canada to start theorizing and "reconciling what is really important about the past with what is important about the present and reprioritizing accordingly" (Smith, 2012, p. 40).

According to Berry's (2015) multicultural hypothesis, people's understanding of their ethnic identity is what causes them to accept other people's unique identities. Thus, one of the main premises that hold multiculturalism as valuable to the liberal democratic values of

Canadian identity is the belief that identities are mutually complementary (Kymlicka, n.d.). Insofar as multiculturalism involves imposing on Canadian public institutions a duty of accommodation, the lack of support for the application and use of African Indigenous knowledge in education could represent a denial of BAIGS' multicultural accommodation. This violates the premise of mutually complementary identities and the liberal democratic expectation of multiculturalism, particularly, for Black people in Canada.

Organization of This Research

This chapter gives the background and context for this research study. I situate myself within my African Indigenous background and share my colonial educational experiences from Ghana. I then introduce the research purpose and questions I am proposing to answer. I conclude the chapter with the expectations and significance of this study.

Chapter Two introduces the frameworks that are used to theorize and explain the thinking and/or analysis within this research. The frameworks are anti-colonial Indigenous discursive theory, and multiculturalism framework with reference to critical race theory. The tenets of these frameworks are described in terms of how they help in analyzing the identity and educational experiences of Black African immigrant graduate students.

Chapter Three is the literature review representing a comprehensive summary of previous research that informs this study. I draw on research related to African identity, African Indigenous Knowledge, and Black African immigrant graduate student's identities and educational experiences in Canada. I also review literature on the colonial relations with Africans and its impact on education as well as the relationships between Blacks and Indigenous people(s) of Canada. I close the chapter off by presenting some work on multicultural education in Canada.

Chapter Four contains the methodology and data collection processes that were used to

generate the data for this study. I begin by positioning myself as a Black African, an indigene to the land in Ghana, in West Africa. I respectfully draw on and use Indigenous Research Methodology by reflecting on my experiences based on my background and the interactions with my relations. I use the definitions and descriptions of Indigenous Research Methodology by Indigenous scholars and others for this research. This chapter also includes a brief description of the participants for this research and the methods that will be used to generate and analyze data, and to ensure trustworthiness in the knowledge produced by this research. It also includes the personal preparation and reflection I went through as I journeyed through this work; the steps for the collection of data.

Chapter five contains the analysis of the data and the findings from this study.

Chapter six is the final chapter, which is dedicated to the conclusion. This chapter contains the final discussions on the findings leading to the answers to the research questions, as well as the recommendations, and suggestions for future research.

Situating Myself - Indigenous background

As a Black African Immigrant student from Ghana, West Africa, I was privileged to have acquired the "*Kwahu"* Indigenous ways of knowing and doing from birth. I spent the first few years of my life in a semi-rural setting where I was introduced to the cultural beliefs and norms which guided my daily activities.

Even though food was available through the 'organized markets' my father preferred to grow vegetables and fruits in the home backyard and always insisted that we learn how to cultivate the land and utilize the resources around us for fresh and readily available food. We reared animals such as goats, sheep, rabbits, chickens, and grass cutters as our source of meat mainly for home consumption. Whenever we got hurt, bruised, or wounded in the processes of

daily life, there was always a leaf or a plant that could be used for first aid or medical response. Although my father had trained professionally as a mining engineer, we benefitted as his children from the knowledge that he had acquired through his Indigenous upbringing, as well as the farming and agricultural skills that he passed on to us at every opportunity.

My mother, who is a nurse by profession, has unique baking skills, which she sometimes commercialized to gain extra income for the family. She explained how she had learned how to cook and bake through observation and constant practice with her mother and other family members. She also had knowledge of farming and created cooking ingredients and other basic family products from natural resources. She made *"gari"* (a local delicacy) from cassava grown in the home backyard; she made soap locally known as *"don't touch me"* by combining oils and other home products. She illustrated the logic behind our daily activities in riddles, songs, and proverbs and always seized on an opportunity to sharelife lessons or valuable experiences through stories. Learning at home by doing and connecting with family was not stressful; the knowledge was diverse and could be applied in almost every aspect of life.

One amazing project I witnessed my parents work on together was the construction of a traditional baking oven locally known in our language as "*foonoo"*. The main materials they used were clay bricks, sand, water, and other natural resources. The oven was heated using firewood which was readily available in the woods nearby and this oven could bake anything.

I spoke and used the local dialect *"Twi"* effortlessly at home and continually built on my vocabulary as I engaged in the daily activities and constant communication with family/community members. I also observed and participated in the various traditional protocols that were practiced during family/community gatherings, ceremonies, and festivals.

It was quite evident then, and even now, that when people are distracted through

colonialism or by colonial practices and are most desirous of the "bourgeoisie" lifestyle, they often resort to their Indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage at special and serious occasions like naming ceremonies, traditional marriage engagements, funerals, etc. The connections to cultural heritage and original identity creates a deep sense of pride and belongingness to the homeland.

Educational experience in Ghana

As a Black African immigrant woman from Ghana, I am quite privileged to have gained schooling and teaching experiences both from West African Educational School System (from preschool to undergraduate level) and graduate level education in North America. Formal education in Ghana, after having emerged from colonial structures and struggled through nationhood and independence, introduced me to established systems of colonial schooling which did not validate the informal knowledge that was being acquired outside of school. The schooling system experienced from elementary through to undergraduate level in Ghana introduces students to colonial educational practices that do not present the diverse Indigenous knowledges represented by the student bodies as valid within the schooling context. There is, however, the opportunity to learn to write and read in at least one Ghanaian language (Twi or any of the other Ghanaian languages) in elementary and high school, and this could be pursued to a higher level if the student so desired; the Ghanaian languages, however, are not compulsory, neither has it been used as the main language of instruction at the elementary or high school level. Students are punished for speaking or communicating in their local dialect in school outside the Ghanaian Language learning period.

Despite Ghana's independence from the British since March 1957, our educational system is still under colonial influence and is structured according to the Western schooling

system. Much of this is driven by Ghanaian need for global acceptance and the interest for international capital. The dismal failure of the post-colonial state of Ghana to change the existing system to reflect contemporary social realities has created a disconnect between education and employment needs of the people. The education system and the content of the curriculum is not a reflection of the skills required to address the issues that are currently prevalent in the Ghanaian society. The elementary and secondary school (now high school) curriculum is aligned with the British curriculum and the examples that are used to illustrate and explain concepts are usually foreign to our locality. Linda Smith (2012) in citing Grace's (1985) argument on the dangers of reading to Indigenous people noted that "when they tell us only about others they are saying that we do not exist"; "they may be writing about us but are writing things, which are untrue"; and "they are writing about us but saying negative and insensitive things which tells us that we are not good" (p. 36). The colonial educational system left me feeling disengaged with school material and unable to make direct connections between what was learned in school and its application in the world that existed around me. To most colonized Africans who have been educated under such foreign curriculum, the educational value of schooling is relevant only in that it has prepared the person to exist outside their natural African self and inequitably provided minimal tools to survive in another world, western or colonized. According to Dei (2004) education cannot be recognized as a responsible human agency or resource when it is unable to equip people to address their needs and to solve problems in contemporary society (p. 2). He further asserts that "a great majority of the Ghanaian populace have yet to have basic educational and development needs met through formal schooling" (p. 6).

"One of the greatest mistakes of the education in the part has been this, that it has taught the African to become a European instead of remaining African. This is entirely wrong and the government recognizes it. In future, our education will aim at making an African remain an

African and taking interest in his own country." ---Sir Gordon Guggisberg (Governor of the

Gold Coast -now Ghana- in 1920)

Over the years, as I went through college and university, I felt increasingly that the education I

received taught me more and more about Europe and less and less about my own society. ---

Dr. Kofi Busia, Prime minister of Ghana 1969-1972

Higher levels of formal schooling[1] in Ghana are located remotely from local communities and students are required to leave family, cultures and communities to attend a boarding school. This experience leaves students disconnected from the land. According to Dei (2004) educational practices or systems that exclude Indigenous knowledge perspectives fail to reflect the aspirations and desires of diverse people. "Fortunately, in some communities, scholars interested in promoting education are pioneering new analytical systems based on Indigenous concepts and their interrelationships" (Dei 2004, p. 7).

My graduate education in North America began as a continuation of the colonial disconnected learning experience, where the western knowledge system was the status quo. At the doctoral level, I was introduced to Indigenous knowledge systems. Learning about Indigenous Knowledges and using Indigenous perspective to reflect on issues led me to a deeper understanding of Indigenous Knowledge issues, and to more effective ways of viewing issues impacting Black African Immigrant communities. My understanding of Indigenous knowledge systems led me to find relevance and value in beliefs and norms that formed the foundation of my cultural identity and constituted the core of my African being. This visceral experience was activated through a heightened consciousness that evolved as a result of my interaction with the Indigenous people of Canada; this heightened consciousness also foregrounded my increasingly deepened connection and spiritual bond to my homeland Ghana.

Recognizing, understanding, and reclaiming the role of Indigenous knowledge in relation to

knowledge acquired through western schooling has created a logical pathway to connect western education to real life experiences. My experience and struggles of learning from two fragmented knowledge streams have led me to re-envision the different trajectories and learning that can comprise successful schooling experiences for Black African Immigrant Students in Canada.

Research Purpose

Considering the influence of African Indigenous Knowledge on the cultural identity and the education of Black African Immigrant Graduate Students, this growing population[2] in Canada has not been given the opportunity to explore the use of their Indigenous Knowledge in the colonial westernized education. Indigenous knowledges have generally been excluded from our school systems with limited empirical evidence to illustrate the legitimate value of such knowledges in their own rights and their relevance for critically interrogating hegemonic knowledge systems. The main purpose of this qualitative study is to explore and understand the influence of Indigenous Knowledge on the identity and education of BAIGS within Canada's multiculturalism policy. I intend to unveil knowledge that was previously ignored but could close the gap that has resulted from imperialism, colonialism and the subjugation of Indigenous knowledges. My goal is to find out how heightened consciousness and insight into the role of African Indigenous Knowledge in the identities and education of BAIGS can support the advancement of Africans in Canada while foregrounding our identities and enhancing the contributions of the next generation of Africans.

A strong premise I hold is that BAIGS who are disconnected from the use and application of their African Indigenous Knowledge are being deprived of their true sense of identity, which impacts their approaches to formal education. Education is expected to help all students, including BAIGS and upcoming generations of Africans in Canada, to know and develop

themselves in order to be properly equipped for attaining their aspirations or desires and being resourceful in their communities and in the world at large in different geographical contexts. I intend to find out how the knowledge that defines and forms our identity as Africans can be useful and significant in our education, can inform policy, and can help us address the issues we face in Canada as African families, communities, and peoples.

Against the backdrop of widespread arguments on multiculturalism, many of which claim that it fails to truly give all Canadians the opportunity to retain their cultural heritage and identity, I intend to explore and understand the experiences of BAIGS in Canada by studying and critically analyzing the role of African Indigenous Knowledge in their separate and individual identities and educational experiences, and the impact this knowledge might have on the next generation of Africans in Canada.

Research Questions

The questions that will drive this study are:

1. How does African Indigenous knowledge influence the identities and educational experiences of Black African Immigrant Graduate Students (BAIGS) and how might these students impact future generations of Africans in Canada?

2. Does multiculturalism policy in Canada support Black African Immigrant Graduate Students in their reclamation of self and identity through education, and how might this impact Black African Immigrant communities and future generations of Black Africans?

3. Can a deeper understanding of the Indigenous connections between Black African Immigrant Graduate Students and Indigenous Peoples of Canada contribute to the former's reclamation of Black African identities? How might this understanding foster

more effective educational experiences for BAIGS in Canada?

Research significance

According to Statistics Canada (2021) 4.3% of the total population was Black representing 1.5 million people. The census also revealed that among Black immigrants, 23.7% are new immigrants who were admitted into Canada from 2016 to 2021, while 17.8% immigrated from 2011 to 2015, and 22.3% from 2001 to 2010. The remaining share of Black immigrants (36.1%) came to Canada before the 2000s. In 2016, Canada's Black population doubled in size between 1996 and 2016 with first generation Black people representing 56.4% of the Black population. 65.1% of the Black Immigrants in Canada migrated from Africa. According to the population projections from Statistics Canada, the Black population would continue to increase and could represent between 5.0% and 5.6% of Canada's population by 2036 (Statistics Canada, 2016). This shows the increasing presence of Black African Immigrants in Canada.

International students from Africa constitute 11.1% of the total international student population (statistics Canada, 2014). According to the 2016 census, close to 7 in 10 Black adults had a postsecondary diploma.

Fortunately, Canada recognizes, appreciates and celebrates diversity through the Federal Multiculturalism Act (1988). In direct alignment with the Act, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms serves to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians. Although Canada endorses multicultural educational policies, the extent to which representation of multiple peoples' cultural experiences and various knowledge systems are reflected in the Canadian education system is questionable. Published data on African Indigenous knowledge, especially within the Canadian context, is limited, representing a neglect of an influential factor in the development of identities and educational experiences of the BAIGS population. A gap

exists between studies related to the role of Indigenous Knowledges in Africa and research on the identities and educational experiences of African immigrant students in Canada. This study bridges the gap in the literature and presents connections that exist between African Indigenous Knowledges and BAIGS' identities and education in Canada. This can serve as empirical evidence for all immigrant populations in Canada and awaken consciousness to the significance of Indigenous knowledges in people's lives and community initiatives. It also provides insight into how specific BAIGS' understanding of the influence of African Indigenous knowledges on their identities and education in Canada can impact the next generation of Black Africans in relation to their own African heritage and identities. A heightened consciousness and deepened understanding that is based on empirical data regarding the contribution of African Indigenous knowledge to self and identity informs policies related to Black African Canadians and lead to changes that support the advancement of the African community in Canada.

Findings from this study present evidence of the impact of deficit education that fails to recognize the influence of African Indigenous knowledges on the identities and educational experiences of BAIGS. Additionally, the results from this study present new evidence on the relational connections that exist between African Indigenous immigrants and the Indigenous peoples of Canada. The findings also serve as educational resource for all immigrants in Canada who are on diverse pathways to bring about change in their communities. Recommendations on for an inclusive education presents an opportunity for educators and all other agencies in Canada's post-secondary educational system to support the advancement of BAIGS and enhance awareness. The awakened consciousness of immigrant students as a result of their recognition of the significance role of African Indigenous knowledge gives rise to options for more promising educational experiences. The insights and perceptions of the participants from the findings add to the empirical evidence that position African Indigenous Knowledge as a source of factual knowledge. This study presents evidence on how a shift in the educational experience for Black

African immigrant graduate students can contribute towards the development and advancement of Black African Canadians through different agents (individuals, academy/post-secondary educational institutions, and government/policy-makers) within Canada's multicultural society.

This study has been conducted at a time of heightened international focus on various forms of oppression and denial of human rights, particularly in relation to minority groups such as African descended people (Proclamation of the International Decade for People of African Descent, 2014), and Indigenous peoples of Canada and others around the globe. The findings contribute to the overall tools of survival for Black African immigrant graduate students in Canada.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework

This research study adopted an anti-colonial indigenous discursive theory set within a multiculturalism framework and referenced Critical Race Theory (CRT) to explain and analyze the data and findings. The anti-colonial indigenous discursive theory supported the conceptualization of the educational and socio-cultural experiences of BAIGS prior to their migration, as well, to their educational experiences with colonialism in Canada. The critical analysis of the experiences of BAIGS both in Africa and in Canada, in relation to the experiences of the Indigenous people in Canada, to some extent, showcased the distinctive impact and different forms of colonialism and imperialism manifested across Africa and Canada. While Canada's multiculturalism is critiqued as being "a philosophical and political response to the problems caused by increasing adversities and ethnic tensions in the modern states" (Srikanth, 2012, p. 21), it also carries inherent opportunity to argue for recognition of African heritage and identity (to validate African indigenous knowledge, for example) in order to create a more promising educational experience for Black African immigrant graduate students in Canada.

This study will look at the relationship between Black African immigrant graduate students and Indigenous people of Canada; the use of a multiculturalism framework does not dismiss or disregard Indigenous peoples' arguments that their lives and rights cannot be included within the policy of multiculturalism. Inasmuch as multiculturalism provides a limited opportunity and space to represent the issues that impact BAIGS education in Canada, it also fails to adequately address the unique problems, experiences and concerns of the Indigenous peoples in Canada. Indigenous peoples of Canada are the original inhabitants of the land, and hold unique, inherent rights acknowledged constitutionally. Nonetheless, and despite this historical

acknowledgement of Indigenous peoples' ancient legal occupation and rights within Canada, as Srikanth (2012) states, "conscious attempts were made to deface Aboriginal identities and assimilate the Aboriginal identities and assimilate the Aboriginal communities through residential schools and religious conversion" (p. 19). In conducting the relational analysis between BAIGS and Indigenous people of Canada within a multicultural framework, as part of this study, I am not representing Indigenous peoples nor their views on the federal policy of multiculturalism. Further, this work does not reference in any way Indigenous views on the criteria, definitions, or descriptions associated with "ethnic" or "minority" groups in Canada.

My use of Critical Race Theory is limited to analysis of the experiences of Black African immigrant graduate students, a minority group in Canada. The history of Canada indicates the existence of racism as demonstrated through colonialism, discriminatory multiculturalism policy, legal slavery, Residential Schools and many other incidents. The experiences of BAIGS in Canada are influenced by different agencies and racism operates at multiple levels including institutions, systems and individuals. Beagan et. al. (2012) in describing the existence and nature of racism in Canada noted that "while the particular forms racism takes vary by time and place, usually articulating to current socioeconomic conditions, there are nonetheless distinct, discernable practices related to skin colour, guided by a politics of white privilege" (p. 104). As Brigham (2013) noted, most adult learners in Canada focus their education on social justice looking into the issues of diversity in relation to race, gender, culture, ethnicity, etc., but this can be a contentious and challenging process as Canada sees itself as a multicultural society that embraces pluralism (p. 119). However, William et. al. (2022) reiterates that the Canadian society is racist and often prefers to adopt a 'colourblind' approach, which exacerbates the situation because it fails to recognize the differing lived experiences of people of colour. They assert that racialization in Canada is not limited to differential treatment by the dominant members within the society but also by other people of colour. William et. al. noted that even though an individual

may be a racialized minority or Indigenous person, they can still harbour racism" (p. 18). Racism is embedded into our society and all who have been socialized within it from childhood eventually develop thought patterns that make it seem normal (Waxman, 2021). Considering that both critical race theory and multiculturism share the overarching goal of addressing racial inequality, discrimination, and promoting social justice. Of note is the fact that these two frameworks, as used in this study, interconnect in ways that inform each other. By so doing, they provide a more holistic understanding of the social complexities deriving from the racial and cultural issues, and thereby offer more comprehensive solutions for promoting equity and justice.

Anti-colonial Indigenous discursive framework

Anti-colonialism is a broad term used to describe the various resistance movements directed against colonial and imperial powers (Tyner, 2006, p. 11). An anti-colonial Indigenous discursive approach recognizes the importance of using locally produced knowledges emanating from cultural histories and daily human experiences and social interaction to create social understanding (Dei, 2014). Dei further asserts that the discussion on colonialism is relevant and central today because colonialism is ongoing and it can be seen through "examples of colonial and neo-colonial relations produced within our schools, colleges, universities, homes, families, workplaces and other institutional settings" (Dei, 2006, p. 1). Additionally, the imposition and domination did not end in Africa with the return of political power, and colonialism continues with the way knowledge is produced and received as valid or invalid in schools, as well as the ways that identities receive recognition from school authorities (Dei, 2006).

"The anti-colonial framework is a theorization of issues emerging from colonial relations. When employed as a methodological approach, it interrogates the configurations of power embedded in ideas, cultures and histories of knowledge production and use" (Fanon 1963,

Foucault 1980, and Memmi 1969, as cited in Dei, 2004, p. 15). The anti-colonial approach helps

one to see marginalized groups as subjects of their own experiences and histories and presents

local communities as valuable sources of knowledge in theorizing and practicing educational

reform and change (Dei, 2004). According to Kempf (2009) anti-colonialism cast a critical gaze

wherever imposition and domination occurs; it is guided by the knowledge of the oppressed and

informed by the accountability of the oppressor (p. 15). "We must see an Indigenous anti-

colonial discursive practice as resistance to the historic and continuing spiritual, emotional,

psychological, physical, economic and material wounding or damage that dominant [Western-

informed] narratives and practice of development have and continue to foster on the African

human condition" (Dei, 2014b, p. 16).

Anti-colonialism within this context will be defined as the reclaiming of self and the tool for

challenging and resisting colonial practices or colonialism that has denigrated and rendered

African Indigenous knowledge valueless and invalid. First-generation BAIGS' educational

experiences have evolved through various transitional phases from Africa to the current

situation in Canada and it can be explained through the anti-colonial lens. For second and

future generations of BAIGS, the continuing influence of colonialism in Canada as well as

the impact of historical colonial events in Africa requires the use of anti-colonial framework

in the analysis of their identity reclamation.

Anti-colonialism helps to deconstruct dominant discourses and epistemologies that

undermine other knowledge production systems like African Indigenous Knowledge and

identities such as that of BAIGS. Colonialism, which promotes privatization and

individualism, takes the space for community relations that is fostered through

Indigenousness or the cultural ways of knowing and doing. The education of BAIGS within a

colonial system that fails to recognize and encourage the existence of other knowledge

systems prepares students to move away from their communal collaborations to

individualism. A deeper understanding of what influences the identity of any BAIGS and their responsibility to the larger African community will serve us a guide in pursuit of more promising educational goals and create a positive pathway and good example for the next generation of Africans in Canada. "The colonial and postcolonial imposition of Western-style property rights continues to bedevil African development, as governments and civil societies attempt to strike a balance between the values of Indigenousness and those of modernity" (Dei, 2000, p. 81). According to Shiza & Abdi (2014) pursuing anti-colonial and anti-racist intellectuality helps to reclaim and recover Indigenous knowledges, but not to simply counter oppositional or alternative knowing. This study will adopt anti-colonial Indigenous discursive theory to help conceptualize the influence of colonialism on the identities and educational experiences of BAIGS while arguing for the inclusion of African Indigenous Knowledge in their education within Canada's multicultural context.

Dei & Asgharzadeh (2001) present an anti-colonial discursive framework, offering a critical and comprehensive understanding of the complexities of today's society (citing Zeleza, 1997; Partpart, 1995, p. 299). In this study, an anti-colonial discursive framework will help to analyze and explain the intricacies surrounding the identities and educational experiences of BAIGS as evolving from the colonized practices from their home country, causing (and continuously challenging) them to devalue the African Indigenous Knowledges. Dei & Asgharzadeh (2001) further assert that anti-colonial discursive framework helps to effectively theorize issues emerging from colonial and colonized relations by incorporating Indigenous knowledge (p. 298). The historical relationship between the colonizer and the colonized continuously shapes and informs identities of subjects like BAIGS by recreating colonial ideologies and mythologies (Tuhiwai-Smith, 1999 as cited in Dei, 2006), which causes Indigenous students to doubt the validity of their Indigenous knowledge systems. Others (see Aronowitz and Giroux, 1985; Gergen, 2001) argue that knowledge is spawned or reproduced

within a particular segment based on power and class and since schools play an important role in process, they should be tasked with the responsibility to help students appreciate and acknowledge other forms of knowledge systems.

Anti-colonial discourse can ignite Indigenous knowledge consciousness and clarify the epistemological power of the colonized to resist dominating and oppressive educational practices. It subverts imposed and dominating practices that have taken over the minds and thoughts of subjects affecting their individual and collective identities and their faith in African Indigenous Knowledge, necessary for intellectual liberation. As Audre Lorde (1979) states "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (as cited in Smith, 2012, p. 20). Therefore, using an anti-colonial discursive framework and adopting an Indigenous research methodology foregrounds the research from a place of Indigenousness and helps to look beyond what is most common and most often deemed acceptable within colonial or western research and education.

Critics of anti-colonialism and supporters of post-colonialism sometimes deny or overlook, respectively, the present-day forms of colonialism and neo-colonial practices that dominate marginalized groups in areas such as race, gender, nationalism, class and ethnicities; however, acts of domination, cultural imposition and exploitation are perpetuated continuously in society and through educational institutions in their methods of knowledge production (Dei, 2006).

Multicultural framework

Multiculturalism is used as a framework in this study to bring forward the interest and concerns of BAIGS in Canada. The definition of multiculturalism remains discursive because of the myths and stereotypes that surround the topic. Multiculturalism in Canada has evolved over

time, in response to the changing diverse immigrant populations that are represented in Canada, from focusing on ethnicity by celebrating differences, to managing differences through race relations, and gradually to taking steps to support and advance constructive engagement that is inclusive of diverse populations (Kymlicka, 2015).

According to Kymlicka (2015), Canada's attempt to address the issues on Quebecois nationalism and the request for bilingualism led to the establishment of the "Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1963, with the mandate to explore ways of strengthening equality between the British and French" (p. 18). This created concerns from the European ethnic groups who argued for recognition for their roles as well in building the country. "The whole idea of multiculturalism arose as an 'afterthought' tacked on to a series of government reforms intended primarily to accommodate Québécois nationalism. And the goal of these multiculturalism reforms was primarily to gain ethnic group support for (or at least neutralize ethnic group opposition to) what the government perceived as the real issue: namely, defusing Quebec separatism. The idea of 'multiculturalism within a bilingual framework' was, in effect, a slogan hastily devised to name a political bargain: in return for not opposing efforts to accommodate Quebec nationalism, ethnic groups would be given a measure of official recognition of their own, and modest financial support to maintain their identities" (Jaworsky, 1979, as cited in Kymlicka, 2015, p. 19). Canada, therefore, passed the multiculturalism policy in 1971 and legislated the Multiculturalism Act in 1988; the focus and goals of multiculturalism have evolved and adapted over the years to the needs of the Canadian population. The Act, which provides a legal framework to guide federal responsibilities and activities, makes it obligatory for the Canadian government to work for preserving, enhancing and sharing the multicultural heritage of Canada by eliminating barriers in participation of all individuals and communities in public life" (Srikanth, 2012, p. 17).

Kymlicka (2015) identified different phases in the history of multiculturalism in Canada

from the 1960's to the 21st Century. At inception, the multiculturalism policy in 1971 focused on ethnicity multiculturalism with emphasis on "celebrating differences" amongst the early European immigrants in Canada. The influx of visible minorities[4] who faced unique challenges - such as settlement, integration, naturalization and barriers due to racism - different from what was experienced by European immigrants caused the multiculturalism policy to shift focus to incorporate anti-racism and immigrant integration policies. "For the decade of the 1980s multiculturalism policy was one of equity multiculturalism with the focus on "managing diversity", the reference point being "structure" and the mandate of "race relations." For the 1990s it was civic multiculturalism, "constructive engagement," "society building" and "citizenship." And in the 2000s multiculturalism policy was one of integrative multiculturalism with the focus on "inclusive citizenship", the reference point being "Canadian identity" and the mandate of "integration". Using more colloquial terminology Canada's multiculturalism policy has evolved from song and dance in the 1970s, to anti-racism in the 1980s, to civic participation in the 1990s, and to fitting in in the 2000s" (Guo & Wong, 2015, p. 4).

Mensah (2002), however, draws on the works of Liodakis and Satzewich (1998), Tepper (1997), and Fleras and Elliott (1996) to suggest that "'multiculturalism' has four main connotations in Canadian social discourse. First, multiculturalism can be conceptualized as a demographic reality: the Canadian population consists of people with a multicultural background. Second, it can be viewed as an ideology: it involves some normative prescriptive about how Canadian society ought to be, especially regarding ethnic and racial relations. Third, it connotes a competitive process: groups of people struggle for access to scarce social, economic, and political resources. And finally, multiculturalism can be seen as a government policy that seeks to manage race relations in Canada." (p. 204). He also asserts that the initial concept for multiculturalism was to present all cultures as having equal status with each other; allow everyone to fully participate in Canadian culture without discrimination; and foster individual

confidence in their own identity, which would lead to respect for others and national unity. According to Este, et al. (2018) the pervasive dynamics of multiculturalism hides "the right of all members to actively and equitable participate in social, political, economic and cultural aspects of Canadian Society. Multiculturalism has not created equality; its myth perpetuates dominance by White settler communities" (p. 55). However, the egalitarian concept of multiculturalism is one of the factors that causes contention and raises concerns among the Indigenous people. Treating all cultures, including the Indigenous peoples, as having equal rights and status without formal acknowledgement and recognition of Indigenous people's inherent Constitutional rights and unique position as the original inhabitants of the land is antagonistic.

The reaction to multiculturalism in Canada remains ambivalent among different government bodies or groups of people including Black immigrants and the Indigenous peoples. Shiza (2016) asserts that "multiculturalism, as a policy and in practice, tends to reinforce structural differences and ethnic inequalities" (p. 195). The Indigenous people argue that Canada's multiculturalism policy is "an attempt to 'minoritize' them, that is, to reduce them to 'just another minority group' in the Canadian mosaic (Abu-Laban & Stasiulis, as cited in Mensah, 2002, p. 223). These nuances can be analyzed by reviewing the events that underpins the relationship between the Indigenous people and the Canadian government within the birthing period of the multiculturalism policy in 1971. The Statement of the government of Canada on Native people (White paper) issued in 1969 sought to assimilate the Indigenous people into the general Canadian society by proposing to abolish the Indian act, which to some extent, recognized formally among other things the rights of Indigenous peoples to treaty-making processes along with parallel obligations of the federal government. Although the White Paper was countered by the presentation of the Red Paper in 1971 by Indigenous people represented by the National Indian Brotherhood, the activities within this period represent a particular flow of ideological perspectives that were being fostered within Canada when the

multiculturalism policy was introduced.

Burnet (1984) and Peter (1981) present how multiculturalism serves as a tool for containment and ensures that ethnic minorities are steered towards specific occupational structures and residential arrangements, which limits their full participation in Canadian society (as cited in Mensah, 2002, p. 227). Mensah further acknowledges other arguments that multiculturalism tokenizes (creating a symbolic worldview of diverse cultures) important aspects of minority cultures while distracting them from "challenging the social and economic inequalities, as well as the entrenched class system and its attendant imperialist privileges and, thereby, helps to perpetuate Canada's vertical mosaic" (Kallen,1987; Peter, 1981 & Ramcharan, 1982, as cited in Mensah, 2002, p. 227). He argues that the symbolism of the minority ethnic cultures can be critically analyzed through a conceptual framework that recognizes, to some extent, the inherent understanding that multiculturalism affords people like Blacks the opportunity to address socially and politically constructed stereotypes. Inasmuch as multicultural policy poses contentious ideological stance in terms of its impact in the Canadian society, Mensah (2002) asserts that the policy has given Black people the "legitimate platform and coherent conceptual framework upon which ethnic minorities can articulate their points of view and their collective and individual concerns" (p. 228). He argues on the premise that multiculturalism, for instance, gives Black people the opportunity to engage in actions to mitigate against distasteful discriminatory actions and anti-racism that creates barriers to full and equal participation in the Canadian society; Mensah admits that this is done under very restrictive and controlled levels with a limited degree of social efficiency (p.228). Black Africans who claim Canadian identity usually explain their position and understanding of place within the context of Canada's multiculturalism (Codjoe, 2006), even though they carry the burden of having to explain their 'Canadianess'. This, coupled with the contentious egalitarian characteristics of the multiculturalism policy, as illustrated by Lawrence and Amadahy (2009),

highlights the need to explore the position of Blacks in Canada.

Using the multiculturalism concept helps to review how the multiculturalism policy, which allows for the preservation and enhancement of individual cultural heritage can influence BAIGS reclaiming of their self-identities through African Indigenous knowledges to gain a positive educational experience in Canada.

Critical Race Theory

I draw on critical race theory (CRT) to support, frame and theorize this research and thinking about race and racism in the socio-cultural and schooling experience of Black African immigrant graduate students in Canada. CRT is instrumental in analysing the findings of this research at a time when some national leaders and policy makers in the United States feel threatened by and are calling for the banning of CRT in public and education. I am using CRT despite the ongoing dialogue and attacks on it because I interpret these actions as silencing mechanisms of the oppressor. I juxtapose the situation to Delgado's argument that the dominant group justifies its power with stories – stock explanations – that construct reality in ways that maintain privilege. CRT recognizes the realities of the experiences of Blacks and other marginalized groups by according them the opportunity to acknowledge their experiences of racism as acts of oppression. CRT helps to minimize the burden that racism presents to the oppressed, often causing us to internalize the stereotypes that are projected upon us. As a theoretical frame, CRT supports marginalized people to express their practical experiences of racism as part of their ongoing struggles.

In a Canadian context, Brigham (2013) presents two realities of race relations. Firstly, she asserts that race ideology is deeply rooted in Canadians' attitudes and beliefs and has become a taken-for-granted way of relating and doing things; secondly, Canadian society in general is racialized with whiteness as the norm (p. 121). Supporting this, Delgado (1995) describes CRT as

highlighting the fact that racism is normal, not aberrant (as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1998). Ladson-Billings (1998) further explains that the strategy to using CRT is to unmask and expose racism and its various permutations. Racism is not simply a matter of individual acts of prejudice or discrimination; it is a systemic and structural issue deeply engrained in societal structures. To address racism effectively, it is crucial to recognize its normalcy within societal structures and to engage in critical self-reflection and collective action. Understanding that racism is deeply embedded in institutions and systems is a starting point for challenging and dismantling it. A second characteristic of CRT is the use of storytelling to "analyze the myths, presuppositions, and received wisdoms that make up the common culture about race and that invariably render blacks and other minorities one-down" (Delgado, 1995, as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 11). Ladson-Billings further notes that the primary purpose of these stories is to "add necessary contextual contours to the seeming 'objectivity' of positivist perspectives" (p. 11). Third, CRT critiques liberalism as failing to understand the limits of what exists within the legal paradigms, and thereby not presenting the needed mechanism to serve as a catalyst for social change. "CRT argues that racism requires sweeping changes", which are not available through liberalism (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 11). A fourth characteristics is that Whites have been the main beneficiaries of civil rights legislations such as the policy of affirmative action, which favours more White women (thus, advancing White families) than other races. CRT, therefore, proposes that a more fruitful tack is to find a place of intersection or interest-convergence where the interests of Whites and people of color overlap (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

The proponents and early supporters of CRT (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Crenshaw et al., 1995; and Delgado & Stefancic, 2000) recognize race as a social construct and assert that it is a critical factor in determining educational inequity. Racism is a substantial issue that affect the existence and livelihood of Black Africans in every aspect of their lives and race can be employed in the analysis of educational issues. CRT draws our attention to the fact that racism is normal, not

aberrant, and that racism is an ingrained feature of our landscape (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000). Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995) noted that the educational success of Africans happens outside of the public school system and further assert that the issues that affect those students both outside and inside the school system are as a result of institutional and structural racism.

> CRT acknowledges that society is not race-neutral but structured in ways that directly and indirectly sustain white supremacy and perpetuate the exclusion of, disadvantage and exploitation of people of African-descent and their communities. CRT is not a one-dimensional approach to the issue of race, but recognizes that oppressed people can experience oppression through various aspects of their identities. (Lopez & Jean-Marie, 2021, p. 56)

The presence of racism in society, particularly in educational spaces or institutions, cannot be overlooked as non-existent. Therefore, "the aim of theorizing anti-Blackness is not to offer solutions to racial inequality, but to come to a deeper understanding of the Black condition within a context of utter contempt for, and acceptance of violence against the Black" (Dumas, 2016, p. 13).

Chapter Three: Literature Review

Section One: Identity and Education

African Identity, Indigenous Knowledge and Black African Immigrant Graduate Students

Africa is a continent of fifty-four countries "divided into five segments: North Africa (with six countries), West Africa (with 18 countries), East Africa (with 14 countries), Central Africa (with six countries), and the Southern part of Africa (with 10 countries)" (Mokhoathi, 2022, p. 95). Despite the colonial influence in the creation of the national boundaries, which is not always seen as positive, the people are cognizant of the different characteristics that make each nation, tribe, group, or peoples unique. At the continental level, there are different customs that are practiced in the North, West, East, Central or Southern sectors or the different parts of Africa. The countries within the different regions have their own cultures that guide them in their various traditional ceremonies, such as the naming, marriage and funeral ceremonies in Ghana. Other practices have been developed based on historical colonial practices, for instance, the adoption of English or French as official languages, religiosity, etc. are based on the relationship with the former colonial masters. As Mokhoathi (2022) noted, Africa is a vast continent, and the cultures are not the same and they vary from one group to another (p. 103).

Historically, the term 'African' constitutes the people who live within the continent who are not necessarily classified by race or phenotype but are believed to be from different ancestral origins (Mokhoathi, 2022, p. 95). In Mokhoathi's (2022) reflection on Thabo Mbeki's speech of 'I am an African', he asserts that:

> …. identity is not always natural. It is not only constitutive of the geographical setting, where one is born; rather it is inclusive of the historical processes that inform the developments of self- knowledge. In this regard, being an African goes beyond the mere privilege of being

born in Africa; instead, it is the knowledge or apprehension of self in relation to other factors including historical developments. (p. 97)

Gagnon (2011) discursively categorizes Indigenous Africans as a distinct population that is shown to have a specific relationship to the land or territory they inhabit or a distinct culture often inclusive of language, practices, and art, and have not had their culture totally succumb to post-colonial global-consumerist culture (p. 324). Gagnon's description characterizes the identities and the Indigenous realities of most Africans resulting from the continuing effects of colonization and the different ways that it manifests itself today to impact the culture and way of life of the people. Tabouret-Keller (1997) noted that "language acts are acts of identity" (p. 315). He further asserts that 'the link between language and identity is often so strong that a single feature of language use suffices to identify someone's membership in a given group (p. 317).

According to Oyserman et al. (2012, p. 69, as cited by Mokhoathi, 2022) "Identities can be focused on the past—what used to be true of one, the present—what is true of one now, or the future—the person one expects or wishes to become, the person one feels obligated to try to become, or the person one fears one may become. Identities are orienting, they provide a meaning-making lens and focus one's attention on some but not other features of the immediate context" (p. 99). Mokhoathi (2022) recognizes that African philosophy and identity focusses on personhood and all other factors that describes an African in different context is supplementary (p. 102). According to Shizha & Abdi (2014), Indigenous knowledge defines and is a response to the way people live in a given socio-cultural context over a period of time. And it is via this experience that people construct the way they explain, control and manage their lives, as well as how they relate to their attendant social and physical environments. Semali & Kincheloe (1999) assert that Indigenous knowledge reflects,

the dynamic ways in which the residents of an area have come to understand themselves in relationship to their natural environment and how they organize that folk knowledge of

flora and fauna[5], cultural beliefs, and history to enhance their lives. (p. 3)

Indigenous knowledge is described as the everyday life experiences of Indigenous people that is usually acquired orally and through the direct contact and interactions with our environment (Nnadozie, 2009, as cited in Manyau, 2018, p. 8). Manyau (2018) simplifies the description of Indigenous Knowledge as "the consolidated and validated knowledge of a particular group of people within a particular community or society; aimed at solving community problem" (p. 8). The concept of Indigenous Knowledge is usually associated with primitive but the people who have learned how to live and do things based on local and traditional connections have rationalization to support the role that Indigenous knowledge system plays in everyday life. Adeyemi & Adeyinka (2003) make reference to the functionalism principle as a philosophical foundation of African Indigenous Knowledge, which prepared (in the pre-colonial era) and equipped children and youth to take on specific roles within the community and society, whereby bridging the gap between study and work. "Indeed, there was no unemployment in African traditional societies" (Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003, p. 432). In the context of African Indigenous knowledge system, members of the community were prepared to function as part of the community by learning to play their role and gaining benefits from their contribution.

These descriptions of African Indigenous knowledge inherently make reference to the land and place; family and community connections; the individual as part of a collective; and the people working together to contribute towards the functionality of their communities. In Betasamosake Simpson's (2014) description of land, she asserts that it is a part of the earth with space where spiritual beings reside and "coming to know is an intimate process, the unfolding of relationship with the spiritual world." (p. 15). He further asserts that land is the context of all the wisdom that is produced as a result of the interactions between all the relations. Knowledge and wisdom are embedded within the activities that take place on the land. Although knowledge is believed to flow from the ground up (as people live through the different stages of life), no one person on the land is

believed to hold all the wisdom that is needed to guide everyone. Everyone is expected to gain the knowledge they need over time through their interaction with the relations on the land, but access to such knowledge in both the physical and spiritual realm is ultimately dependent upon intimate relationships of reciprocity, humility, honesty and respect with all elements of creation, including plants and animals (pp. 9-10).

> The land, aki, is both context and process. The process of coming to know is learner-led and profoundly spiritual in nature. Coming to know is the pursuit of whole-body intelligence practiced in the context of freedom, and when realized collectively it generates generations of loving, creative, innovative, self-determining, inter-dependent and self-regulating community minded individuals. It creates communities of individuals with the capacity to uphold and move forward our political traditions and systems of governance. (Betasamosake Simpson, 2014, p. 7)

However, although Indigenous Knowledges are usually connected to a place or land, it is not only valuable for the culture in which it develops but also presents solutions to community problems globally. "In fact, Indigenous knowledge is part of the global knowledge system" (Ukwuoma, 2016, p. 111) and should, therefore, be acknowledged as such. Betasamosake Simpson (2014) further asserts that, the process of coming to wisdom within an Indigenous epistemology "takes place in the context of family, community and relations." (p. 7). However, he noted that the older generation are conscious and intentional about positioning themselves as learners and they base their teachings on their own unique [spiritual] experiences in order not to interfere with other beings' life pathways. He added that it is considered *arrogant* and *intrusive* for one person's experience to be considered the ultimate norm for the collective (p. 11).

According to Linda Smith (2012) "some scholars have argued that the key tenets of what is now seen as Western civilization are based on Black experiences and a Black tradition of scholarship have simply been appropriated by Western philosophy and redefined as Western epistemology"(p.

46). In expanding on what Foucault refers to as cultural archive, Smith (2012) explains that what we believe to be Western knowledge is actually a storehouse (histories, artifacts, ideas, texts and/or images) which "contains the fragments, the regions and levels of knowledge traditions, and the 'systems' which allow different and differentiated forms of knowledge to be retrieved, enunciated and represented in new context" (p. 46).

For this study, African Indigenous knowledge is described as the knowledge of the local African peoples rooted in the rich histories, cultures, and traditions through time. It is the knowledge that is deeply rooted in the understanding of the African society, nature and culture, as well as an experiencing of the social and natural worlds. (Dei, 2014). The term African Indigenous Knowledge is used discursively to represent the differently unique African knowledge systems from different countries, tribes, and cultures within the African continent. This is not to assume in any way that all Africans have one particular Indigenous Knowledge system but recognizing the similarities and commonalities that are shared among the peoples and the diverse African Knowledge systems. Reference is made to Linda Smith's (2012) description of Indigenous populations, which recognizes the shared experiences of African peoples who have been subjected to the colonization of our cultures, social, economic and political sovereignty by a colonizing society that has come to dominate and determine the shape and quality of our lives even after it has formally pulled out (p. 7). I respectfully acknowledge the ethnic and cultural diversity of African peoples as well as the different histories that have shaped and formed our foundation. I am also cognizant of the fact that some common elements in African Indigenous knowledge systems can be found in variant forms among Indigenous people in other parts of the world (Dia, 1991 as cited in Dei, 2000, p. 74).

According to Semali & Kincheloe (1999) "It is important to avoid the essentialistic tendency to lump together all Indigenous cultures as one, yet at the same time maintain an understanding of the nearly worldwide oppression of Indigenous peoples and the destruction of

Indigenous knowledges (p. 16).

As complex as the question of indigeneity may be, we believe that the best interests of

Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples are served by the study of Indigenous

knowledges and epistemologies. An appreciation of Indigenous epistemology, for

example, provides Western peoples with another view of knowledge production in

diverse cultural sites.Such a perspective holds transformative possibilities, as they come

to understand the overtly cultural processes by which information is legitimated and

delimited. (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999, p. 17)

Nevertheless, it must be noted that Indigenous resources are not static over time and

space, but they continually evolve to emphasize the need for individual sensibilities and social

consciousness for advancement. "Although localized and context bound, these knowledges

evolve and can transcend boundaries. They should not be understood as boxed into a time and

space. All knowledges are in constant motion and the fluidity of interactions of different

knowledges makes every knowledge dynamic" (Dei, 2014, p. 255). Purcell (1998, as cited in

Dei, 2014) asserts that although Indigenous knowledges were uprooted through colonialism,

these knowledge systems have continued to persist and adjust in new environments (p. 255).

"Even as local peoples present their Indigenous cultures for external consumption, they are

able to combine an intimate knowledge of their societies with the complexities and

particularities of modern world systems (Errington and Gewertz, 1989 as cited in Dei, 2014, p.

264).

Shiza and Abdi (2014), however, asserts that:

The experience of colonialism and imported knowledges creates a common bond between

the formerly colonized countries. This common bond has important epistemic and learning

signposts that continue to serve as reference points as well as practices of resistance to

Africa's onto-epistemological and educational deformations where colonialism

deliberately attempted to extinguish all elements of African traditional knowledge systems

that were established to actively respond to the continent's progress and general well-

being. (p. 2)

In the African Indigenous world, community collaboration is fostered and encouraged, and

an *individual* makes sense only within the concept of the community. As Mokhoathi (2022)

explains "the individual, as vital force, exists through others, as a member of the community.

There is, therefore, some form of co-dependence between the individual and other members of the

community" (p. 102). According to Dei (2000) "within African Indigenousness, the dichotomy is

not between the *individual* and the *community*, but between the *competitive individual* isolated

from his or her community and the *co-operative individual* enriched by the community" (p, 76).

Coleman (1990, cited by Abada et al, 2009) emphasizes the significance of closure in tightly knit

ethnic communities, where parents get to know other parents and children and share similar

values, obligations, and social supports. Such closure facilitates supervision which can be

effective in discouraging delinquent behavior and providing aspirations for young immigrants.

Zhou (1997) also contends, "the greater the involvement to one's community, and the tighter the

ethnic community, the greater the conformity to the group's expectations, which in turn can help

immigrants and their children overcome their structural disadvantages" (as cited in Abada et al,

2009, p. 5). Immigration scholars also provide evidence that a bilingual background, in

Indigenous language, may provide immigrant children the necessary resources to succeed in

education as it provides them greater access to community networks and encourages effective

communication with their parents (Dinovitzer et al., 2003; Glick and White 2003; Mouw and Xie

1999, as cited in Abada et al., 2009, p. 7). Anderson (2015) also noted that "knowledge of more

than one language has cognitive and academic benefits" (p. 1). Anderson further asserts that

individuals use and manipulate language in different ways to help define and clarify their

worldview.

Some Black African Immigrants Graduate Students migrate from Africa with knowledge in their Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing (either knowingly or unknowingly) as well as cultural experiences that influence their everyday activities including education. They are aware of their identities as Africans in the context of their experiences from Africa and most often connect their heritage or historical background to their home country. As Trask (1993) rightly observe, "sometimes because of the power of capital we may not easily understand our own cultural degradation because we are living in it, and as colonized peoples, we are colonized to the extent that we are unaware of our oppression" (as cited in Dei, 2014, p.276). Unfortunately, African students think less of their African Indigenous knowledges when they are exposed to western education, and this has a negative effect on the perceptions of the younger generations (Ukwuoma, 2016). However, Indigenous knowledge and local experiences are expected to prepare these students to understand the world around them from their respective worldviews and to help them approach issues from that Indigenous perspective.

According to Dei (2000) the links between development and Indigenous knowledge are most prominent when we examine the micro-level interaction of social, political, spiritual, cultural, and economic activities and institutions in rural communities. Local peoples experience and interpret the contemporary world in ways that are continuous and consistent with their Indigenous worldviews (p. 71). Additionally, it has been argued in African contexts that the search for general solutions to human problems (i.e., development) must proceed from an understanding of local specificities, which is Indigenous knowledges (Taylor & Mackenzie, 1992 as cited in Dei, 2000, p. 71). Dei (2000) asserts that "African peoples must re-appropriate their cultural resource knowledge if they are to benefit from the power of collective responsibility for social development (p. 72). Indigenous knowledge systems and strategies

were instrumental in alleviating economic hardship and ecological stress during the crises of 1982 and 1983 in Ghana. The people employed Indigenous epistemologies to organize support among themselves and used subsistence strategies to overcome the economic setbacks (Dei, 2000). When BAIGS are consciously awakened to the influence of African Indigenous knowledges "they can critically interrogate and utilize relevant knowledges from their own histories, Indigenous traditions and culture to devise lasting and working solutions to their current problems" (Dei, 2004, p. 252). This can impact their interactions with the next generation and the foundation that would be established to advance the Black African community.

Indigenous knowledge has been recognized as a transformational tool and "a rich social resource for any justice-related attempt to bring about social change. In this context Indigenous ways of knowing become a central resource for the work of academics whether they be professors in the universities or teachers in elementary and secondary schools" (Freire and Faundez, 1989, as cited in Semali & Kincheloe, 1999, p. 15). Semali & Kincheloe (1999) assert that Intellectuals should soak themselves in this knowledge, assimilate the feelings, the sensitivity of epistemologies that move in ways unimagined by most Western academic impulses.

Keesing (1989, as cited in Dei, 2014) asserts that colonial intellectuals have been "heavily exposed, through the educational process, to Western ideologies that idealize primitivity and the wisdom and ecological reverence of those who live close to Nature" (p. 270). Indigenous scholars, in most instances, are presented with an idealized romanticized past on the basis of false anthropological knowledges that are instrumental in exoticizing other cultures (Scanlon, 1964, as cited in Dei, 2014). "In this context, exercising intellectual agency means engaging in a process of recuperation, revitalization and reclamation of African

Indigenous knowledge as a necessary exercise in empowerment (Dei, 2014, p. 270). The role of Indigenous Knowledge in academia is, however, not simple to establish because Indigenous Knowledge focuses on the ways of knowing, seeing, and thinking that are passed down orally from generation to generation and it is unique to every Indigenous community or group of people. The difficulty in validating Indigenous Knowledge partly comes from the rules of evidence and the dominant epistemologies of Western Knowledge production, which deems the former as irrelevant in academia. "We find it pedagogically tragic that various Indigenous knowledges of how action affects reality in particular locales have been dismissed from academic curricula. Such ways of knowing and acting could contribute so much to the educational experiences of all students; but because of the rules of evidence and the dominant epistemologies of Western knowledge production, such understandings are deemed irrelevant by the academic gatekeepers" (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999, p. 15). However, "the fact that different bodies of knowledge continually influence each other shows the dynamism of all knowledge systems. Yet the Indigenous knowledge is never lost. The interplay of different knowledges is perhaps one of many reasons why Indigenous knowledges must be taught in the academy" (Dei, 2014, p. 254). The education systems must provide the bridge to find the balance between what defines students' identity and what they pursue in life through their education.

One of the strategies that was used by the colonialist to exploit Africans was to "break up the tribal system which gives solidarity and some political and economic strength to native life" (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012, p. 50). The tribal system was part of the African Indigenous knowledge system, which fostered collectivity and ensured that there were family and community connections amongst the people. Seepe (2001, as cited in Emeagwali, 2014) explains that African Indigenous Knowledge is about reopening crucial files in the form of

accumulated knowledge that were closed in the process of colonialism, which are, however, relevant to self-esteem, sustained Indigenous inventiveness, endogenous technological growth, and employment generation.

Although some Black African immigrant graduate students may not directly acknowledge their connections to their Indigenous knowledge systems, they migrate with cultural lifestyles and individual epistemologies, which are grounded in their Indigenous knowledge systems. However, Cesaire (2000, as cited in De Walt, 2009) noted that fear has been cunningly instilled in millions of Africans, especially (wo)men, from developing countries, who have been taught to have an inferiority complex associated with their Indigenous identity. "This can be seen often in the university experiences of students of color in which their cultural, religious, linguistic histories (among other aspects of their identity) run counter to the prescribed and valued knowledge and customs of the university" (p. 208). Emeagwali (2014), however, points out that "no society or segment should be ostracized and relegated to a status of inferiority" (p. 3). "Indigenous Knowledge must be part and parcel of the decolonization process and a challenge to modernization and neoconservative triumphalism, as well as to Western attempts at epistemological disenfranchisement of millions of people around the globe" (Chilisa, 2012, p. 3).

Abdi (2016) draws on Nyerere (1968) and Rodney (1982) among others to emphasize that "pre-colonial traditional education was not only effective in its learning and pedagogical platforms, it was also relevant and well-designed for its recipients" (p. 46). However, the denigrating colonial epistemological relationships, even after the fall of formal colonization, is still intact for African students in Western countries and continue to affect their learning context in Canada (Abdi, 20016, p. 46). According to De Walt (2009) colonial universities serves as systems for breeding and harvesting intellectuals, thus "while the individuals

(intellectuals) may think they are gaining an insurmountable amount of knowledge, they are often unaware that they are being drained of that with which they arrived: cultural and intellectual capital" (p. 201). "The assertion of local voice is a necessary exercise in resisting domination and colonial imposition" (Dei, 2014, p. 252).

Black African immigrant graduate students experience identity clashes as they attempt to balance and connect their original/Indigenous ethnic background with the acquired national identities, which Ebgo (2016) refers to relatively as Cultural Base1 (CB1) and Cultural Base 2 (CB2), respectively. According to Ebgo (2016), "CB1 refers to the worldviews or cultural capital acquired through familial and home socialization, while CB2 has to do with the dominant culture that all students must acquire through schooling for full immersion and participation in society" (p. 101). BAIGS are exposed to the dichotomized identity and the challenge of having to navigate the colonized African descent identity and the colonizing immigrant identity in Canada. This dichotomy reflects Du Bois's theory of "double consciousness", which is described as "the sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Du Bois, 1986, as cited in De Walt, 2009, p. 209). Unfortunately, BAIGS's inability to balance these cultural differences can create learning and culture-related challenges that sometimes lead to educational disengagement among them (Ebgo, 2016). According to De Walt (2009) "Du Bois's notion of double consciousness effectively sets the stage for addressing the ways in which people of African descent can see themselves within this society and its institutions, through the fusion of these two-selves (p, 210).

Education in Canada

In order to understand what has shaped and continues to influence the identities and educational experiences of BAIGS, it is important to explore the colonial educational practices in

Canada. Fundamental issues rooted in the failure to validate African Indigenous Knowledge as relevant influences the identities and education of Black African Immigrant Graduate Students (BAIGS) in Canada. Educators and Policymakers are looking for strategies that support the advancement of diverse populations in Canada, and BAIGS represent a significant basis of that growing interest. In fact, important information and deep study about a wide range of diverse ethnic groups is identified today as a necessary ingredient of quality education (Gay, 2004; Codjoe 2006). Unfortunately, schools in Canada constitutes some of the spaces in society where Black people are subject to oppression in the form of anti-Black racism (Lopez & Jean-Marie, 2021). Anti-Black racism is a reality for Black African immigrant graduate students in Canada. Their experience with racism is reflected in their interaction with agents (professors, school administrators, and non-Black students from the dominant race) within the educational institution as well as their access to resources and opportunities. According to Lopez & Jean-Marie (2021):

> Education and schooling continues to be site of anti-Blackness and anti-Black racism. Black students and families are often constructed as the problem, pathologized, students bear the brunt of harsh school discipline, and families are not perceived as resourceful and knowledgeable. (p. 54)

Dumas' (2016) contends that:

> Deeply and inextricably embedded within racialized policy discourses is not merely a general and generalizable concern about disproportionality or inequality, but also, fundamentally and quite specifically, a concern with the bodies of Black people, the signification of (their) Blackness, and the threat posed by the Black to the educational well-being of other students. (p. 12)

> In a study conducted by Jennifer Kelly (1998) titled "Experiences with the 'white man' Black student narratives" she noted that a majority of the high school students interviewed

perceived the Alberta Education curriculum to be Eurocentric – in other words it presents Europe as the universal in terms of lived experiences. Bell et al. (2020) in their assessment of Black student's experiences in the academy also noted that,

> Students who have not been pushed out and continue into graduate studies describe encountering covert racism from spaces that preach liberalism: struggling to find supervisors, being discouraged from pursuing critical research, and being held to higher academic standards than White students. (p. 13)

According to Dei & Kempf (2013) and Shizha (2016), the relatively poor educational outcomes of first, second, and third-generation African students are greatly influenced by the challenges they face in schools due to systemic racism. Dei (1995) further asserts that anti-racist education, amongst other things, would "draw on the intersections of the issues of race, class, and gender to explain the African experience in Canada. It would also problematize the use of institutionalized power and its rationality for dominance in the Canadian school setting" (p. 164).

The education of BAIGS is impacted by the lack of confidence in their cultural heritage or identity, which has been influenced by colonial experiences from back home as well as in Canada. BAIGS are not equipped and given the capacity to draw on African Indigenous Knowledges and apply these to their education in Canada. Codjoe (2006) observed that "the theoretical knowledge about education of African-Canadian children advanced in Ontario by such Black theorists as Carl James (1990), Enid Lee (1992) and Patrick Solomon (1992), to name a few, are rarely read or cited by Euro/Anglo-Canadian scholars in critical ways that challenge the status quo". In fact, Codjoe further asserts that there is minimal educational literature about Black students in Canada (p.34). Codjoe (2006, citing Perry 2003) notes, "the idea of [Black] intellectual inferiority is still taken for granted by many people, despite the illusion of openness toward acceptance of all races in our society. For no group has there been such a pervasive, persistent, well-articulated, and unabated assumption of mental incompetence" (p. 35). He

acknowledges that the academic underachievement of Black Africans is not a phenomenon that can be explained without a deeper understanding of the historical and socio-cultural views that inform it. Ladson-Billings & Garcia et al (1995, cited by Codjoe 2006) recognizes that the academic success of minority students goes beyond the classroom to include cultural and sociopolitical competence and is embedded in a series of interactions between and across classroom, school, and home, all of which operate within the broader societal context (p. 38). Codjoe (2006) noted that the most recurring theme that contributed enormously to the academic achievement of the Black African students he worked with was "knowledge and pride/affirmation in Black cultural and racial identity" (p. 38). He challenges the assumption that assimilation is the answer to Black academic underachievement and rather supports the self-affirmation and pride in one's heritage while still functioning within Canadian multicultural society (p. 41).

Black students who have the opportunity to cultivate comfortably in a multiethnic school environment and are supported by educators who affirm, maintain, and value the differences that students bring to school as a foundation for their learning tend to do better academically (Codjoe, 2006). He further asserts that Black students connect more and are inspired to learn when they find information about Black pioneers who had done great work in society and have articulated the Black experience well for them to build upon (p. 44). Codjoe (2006) noted Black students do not have to act White in order to advance in the western society and clarified that ethnic identity is central to the psychosocial well-being and educational success.

Unfortunately, research in certain parts of Canada has shown that there is underrepresentation of Black professors in the schools to support the Black students. The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT, 2018) reported that just 2% of all university teachers across the county were Black whereas their "not a visible minority" counterpart comprised 78.9% of professors. Cameron & Jefferies (2021) also noted that Black educators and faculty members are

under-represented across Canadian universities, and they remain undervalued, despite their immeasurable contributions to academia and the Black community" (p. 12-13). According to Bell et al. (2020) some of the challenges that Black students face in the academy include,

> Isolation, inability to find doctoral advisors and mentors in one's department, being warned about pursuing diversity and discrimination scholarship, having journal targets devalued, having external mentors questioned, and being held to higher standards than others are a few of the many common experiences of Black people in the academy. (p. 44)

Shiza (2016) conceptualizes "African Canadian youth's academic disengagement to be a result of cultural dissonance, racism, and discrimination perpetrated by the Canadian education system" (p. 187). Glogowski & Rakoff (2019) also noted that there is discrimination towards Black students in the school system, which is evident through the differentiated treatments and the opportunities that are extended to them (p. 8). Glogowski & Rakoff further identified lack of trust from teachers and school administration as some of the issues that impact Black students and further noted that "low expectations exacerbate the challenges faced by Black students in an education system plagued by mistrust" (p. 9).

Shiza (2016) further asserts that African student's identities are shaped by their cultural values and ideologies, which Dei (2002) also refers to as the student's individual reality or realities of the learner. Black students who know their heritage and are proud of their Africa identity build strong self-esteem, which helps them to build resilience to withstand and overcome issues like racism in society (Codjoe, 2006, p. 45). "Knowing the self is important in order to appreciate the challenges and how we respond" (Dei, 2014, p. 252).

Codjoe (2006) draws our attention to the fact that the persistent racial inequalities in school achievement have elevated culture as a terrain of racial debate in North American public schools. Indeed, 'the continuous deculturalization of the [Black] child and the neglect of

[Black]cultural values in the curriculum' have been identified as one of the most injurious

factors that explain the comparatively poor performance of Black children in the public school

system. Deculturalization, in this sense, 'is a process by which the individual is deprived of his

or her culture and then conditioned to other cultural values … It is important to note that

deculturalization does not mean a loss of a group's culture, but rather failure to acknowledge

the existence of their culture and the role it plays in their behaviour' (Boateng, 1990; Meier et

al., as cited in Codjoe, 2006, p. 49). However, Berry (2015) proposed a multiculturalism

hypothesis, which asserts that people will be in a better position to accept others when they are

secure and grounded in their own identities. Thus, "multiculturalism hypothesis is expressed in

the policy statement as the belief that confidence in one's identity will lead to sharing, to

respect for others,and to the reduction of discriminatory attitudes" (Berry, 2015, p. 40). He

further asserts that, individual who are well engaged in both cultures receive support and

resources from both groups to build their social capital, which offer the route to success in

plural societies - referring to this as integration hypothesis (Berry, 2015, p. 45). Such

integration was found (Berry, 2015; Nguyen& Benet-Martinez, 2013, p. 45) to have a

significant and positive relationship with both psychological adaptation (e.g., life satisfaction,

positive affect, self-esteem) and sociocultural adaptation (e.g., academic achievement, career

success, social skills, lack of behavioralproblems).

    It is only through the decolonization of our minds, if not our hearts,

    that we can begin to develop the necessary political clarity to reject the

    enslavement of a colonial discourse that creates a false dichotomy

    between Western and Indigenous knowledge. It is through the decolonization

    of our minds and the development of political clarity that we

    cease to embrace the notion of Western versus Indigenous knowledge,

    so as to begin to speak of human knowledge. It is only through the

decolonization of our hearts that we can begin to humanize the meaning

and usefulness of indigeneity. (Berry, 2015, p. 45)

Section Two: Relationship

Colonial Relations in Africa

The colonial experiences in Africa have resulted in the westernization of education theory and practice in most West African countries (Higgs, 2012). Imperialism in its colonial and neo-colonial phases continues to control the economy, politics, and cultures of Africa (Wa Thiong'o, 2008). Colonization and imperialism continue to have long standing impact on the African continent despite the acclaimed political independence of most African states. According to Ocheni & Nwankwo (2012), the effects of these phenomena have disrupted the Indigenous identity, culture, technology, economy, education, religion, craft, etc. of Africans still living on the land or in the diaspora. During the colonial era, the colonialist pressurized and forced Africans to abandon what was needed to support the local African economy in order to provide resources that will satisfy the capitalist and industrial needs of Europe/western economy. Africans were forced to relinquish their resources and serve as labourers to work in foreign spaces and in ways that were different from their ways of knowing and doing. The African pattern of economic development was distorted, and they were not allowed nor encouraged to engage in manufacturing. They were rather encouraged to focus on producing raw materials which the Europeans bought at very low prices, and they sold the goods that were manufactured out of the raw materials back to the Africans at expensive prices. The political and economic strength of the Africans were taken away and they were compelled to surrender their will to the colonialist and give away their resources including labour.

Ocheni & Nwankwo (2012) in describing the colonial approach and the exploitative strategy that was adopted in Africa from the colonialist perspective noted that:

If the colonialists did not take full control and direct production in the economy, the African

people who are the producers might decide to produce yams more than palm oil, because

this might be what was in high demand within the local economy. (p. 47)

Through forced labour the colonialists were able to maintain direct control and

effective occupation of the African territories. Their control and effective occupation of the

African economy and political administration were unchallenged. The colonialists

appropriated the surplus labour of Africa for their own profit and development. The African

labour force was dehumanized and incarcerated. (p. 50)

Ocheni & Nwankwo further assert that "Africa was compelled or forced to accept the

international division of labour which assigned her the compulsory role of production of

agricultural raw materials required by the industries in Europe" (p. 48). As part of the exploitative

strategies, the colonialist used taxation (a system that was very foreign to the local Africans),

monetization (introducing the colonialist currency, which replaced the African barter system), and

payment of low wages to destabilize the Africans and exploit them to the point where the Africans

kept on becoming poorer while the colonialist profits were increasing. For example:

Since the currency used in the African colonial territories was controlled by the colonialist,

they determined the character and nature of development of the African economy and

political administration. In fact, monetization of the African economy and introduction of

currency institution was an effective imperialistic instrument used by colonialists to

maintain effective control and domination of African territories. (Ocheni & Nwankwo,

2012, p. 50)

From a post-colonial lens, these colonial practices have resulted in the current situation in

Africa where most of their foods are imported, which is putting most African countries at economic

disadvantage in the global market. Africans were forced and discouraged from engaging in

activities that will economically and politically position them to bargain equitably with the west or

Europe. Furthermore, the impact of neo-colonialism on Africans is evident in our experiences both in Africa and the diaspora. Different economic, political, social and cultural strategies are used by the west to influence and control Africans. One of the many impacts of these actions, from a human capital perspective, is the repatriation and emigration of brilliant and educated students from Africa to pursue education in Canada and contribute towards the economic growth of North America and the west. This is a rippling effect of colonialism. The home countries of Black Africans have been impacted negatively by the economic, political and socio-cultural effects of colonialism, which has forced them to leave their home country in Africa (the Indigenous land) to pursue the colonizer.

According to Dei (2006), the imposition and domination did not end with the return of political power to the African leaders; colonialism continues with the way knowledge is produced and received as valid or invalid in schools, as well as identities that receive recognition from school authorities. "Schools also transmit the existing culture to the next generation and to new members of the society as well as new knowledge that is produced in universities and in industry; cultural transmission also involves cultural diffusion. For example, Western culture, values, and schooling practices, including curricula, have been spread or diffused to the Indigenous communities living in many parts of the majority world through colonization and its aftermath" (Abdi, et. al., 2005, p. 6). Dei (2006) asserts that the discussion on colonialism is relevant and central today because colonialism is ongoing and it can be seen through "examples of colonial and neo-colonial relations produced within our schools, colleges, universities, homes, families, workplaces and other institutional settings" (p. 1).

Shizha (2010) also argues that the colonial educational system that BAIGS are exposed to from their colonized African countries defines and portrays African Indigenous knowledge as inferior to Europeans or western knowledge and Indigenous peoples have deliberately been taught to hate their cultural identities and to internalize the racial stereotypes of the colonizer (p. 117). Abdi (2016) elaborates on this phenomenon by explaining that "in order to subjugate

people, the oppressor would understandably attribute to them presumed deficiencies that prevent their recognition as beings of an agency who are endowed with intellectual capacities that are as good as those of others in the wider society" (p. 45). Unfortunately, many Indigenous scholars and professionals are intimidated and afraid to challenge the Eurocentric knowledge system even when they know that the values from their Indigenous knowledge systems are indeed repositories of valuable primary knowledge (Emeagwali, 2014). The inability to stand up and defend Indigenous values gives way to what Shizha (2008) describes as the operation of colonial projects, which are meant to subjugate and suppress Indigenous people's historical commemorations. Such colonial projects position the academy as "the epicenter of colonial hegemony, indoctrination, and mental colonization" (Shizha, 2010, p. 115).

According to Abdi & Ibrahim (2016) "African Canadian learners face what we may term a democratic education deficit where the rhetoric claims education is for them, but in reality, it is not really of them" (p. 5). They argue that African Canadian children are mandatorily placed in schools where they are qualitatively disconnected from the instructional intersections that have been constructed for them without an effective identification of the factors that interplay to impact the education of this ethno racial group. "Therefore, we submit that the success of African Canadian children in the country's classrooms will depend on the cultural relationships these children establish with the education system, a system which, thus far, does not sufficiently have their interest at its center" (Abdi & Ibrahim, 2016, p. 7).

Satzewich (1989) also noted that the 'racialized' immigration policy of Canada against Blacks (before some adjustments were made in 1962), explicitly alluded that Blacks were biologically and culturally incapable of adjusting to the Canadian climate or to the capitalist and competitive economic society; unassimilable, and responsible for the emergence of 'race relations' problems in the country. To challenge and undermine these outrageous racist assumptions, Black Canadians have resorted to education as a tool to command respect and to

secure a good livelihood as well as to demonstrate intellectual parity with Whites (Cooper, 2016, p. 21).

> We regard the education of colored people in North America as being one of the most important measures connected with the destiny of our race. By it we can be strengthened and elevated-without it we shall be ignorant, weak, and degraded. By it we shall be clothed with a power which will enable us to arise from degradation and command respect from the whole civilized world; without it, we shall ever be imposed upon, oppressed and enslaved; not that we are more stupid than others would be under the same circumstances, indeed very few races of men have the corporal ability to survive, under the same physical and mental depression that the colored race have to endure, and still retain their manhood. (Bibb, 1851 as cited in Cooper, 2016, p. 19)

According to Amadahy & Lawrence (2009) Blacks in Canada have been marginalized and categorized as sub-standard both from historical and contemporary context to the extent that "when indigeneity is raised, among Black activists and writers, overwhelmingly it is in a context which takes colonialism and genocide to be a tragedy of the past - so that ongoing colonialism in the present is taken-for-granted as normative, inevitable, and indeed, invisible" (p. 124). They further argue that some enslaved Blacks in Canada have internalized this colonialism to the extent that they "do not tend to lament the loss of Indigeneity and the trauma of being ripped away from the land that defines their identities" (p. 127).

Inasmuch as African Indigenous knowledge systems are not properly recognized and acknowledged in the current lifestyles of most Africans in North America, it exhibits itself in what we do either knowingly or unknowingly. It is represented in our thoughts, what we eat, our dressing, the decisions we make and the choices we resort to. These characteristics have been highly influenced by colonialism, which has denigrated African Indigenous knowledge as inferior or irrelevant and also positioned it as invalid or lower-class knowledge. "In serving the

needs of students from ethno-cultural and racial minorities, there must be significant changes in curriculum, initial teacher education, and ongoing professional development. The school system has a responsibility to identify barriers to success and, where it can, take action to remove those barriers' (Report of the Royal Commission on Learning, 1994, as cited in Codjoe, 2006, p. 49). In this regard, 'issues of the euro-centric nature of the schools' curricula, pedagogical practices that systematically exclude alternative viewpoints, and the resulting forced cultural amnesia that marginalized students have historically experienced should all constitute part of any [transformative] discourse on schools' (Walcott & Dei, 1993, as cited in Codjoe, 2006, p. 49).

Black and Indigenous people's relations in Canada

Indigenous people are the original inhabitants of these land, and they hold formally acknowledged national Constitutional rights in the place we all call Canada. The relationship between Blacks and Indigenous people go as far back as the sixteenth century (1605) when Mathieu da Costa, known to be the first Black person to have arrived in Canada, served as an interpreter for the Mi'kmaq nation (Abdi & Ibrahim, 2016). Mathieu is identified in history as the first Black man to set foot in Nova Scotia (Saney, 1998). The Black population in Canada is heterogeneous, consisting of descendants of those who came through the slave trade, those who migrated from the United States during and after the civil war, and those who have migrated from Africa, Caribbean, and other countries in more recent decades (Lampkin, 1983 as cited in Mensah, 2002, p. 3). The African Nova Scotians who constitute descendants from free and enslaved Black Black Loyalists, Black Refugees, Maroons, and other Black people are acknowledged as a distinct group of Black people in Canada (Saney, 1998). These people and their descendants inhabited the original 52 land-based Black communities in that part of Mi'kma'ki that came to be known as Nova Scotia. Their history is rich and complex, marked by periods of enslavement, colonization, and resistance. The African Nova Scotians are recognized

for their initial and continuous contribution to the settlement and growth of the Black population in Canada (Clairmont & Magill, 1999). Inasmuch as this work does not delve into a deep analysis of the relations between the different Black peoples and/or groups represented in Canada, it does acknowledge the inherent connections, complex and multifaceted, that exist amongst all Blacks. The African Nova Scotians hold a significant historical place for Blacks in Canada and their contribution to the overall experience, growth and advancement of Black African immigrants needs to be explored. For instance, Munroe Anderson's (2018) exploration on the spirituality in education for African Nova Scotian learners reveals different ways that African Nova Scotians' experience and ways of knowing and doing in their everyday lives exemplifies the use of African Indigenous knowledges in Canada.

Despite sharing distinct histories of cultural genocide, common injuries, and dehumanization through racism, the relationship between Indigenous people and Blacks (whether with the enslaved Blacks, generally referred to as 'old stock' or 'displanted'[6], or those who migrated from different countries) have not been well explored to provide a deeper understanding of their connection to each other. While the enslaved Blacks have been accused of participating in colonialism for accepting lands that have been taken from the Indigenous people, the Black immigrants are perceived as ignorantly tagging on as settlers and contributing to the stereotypical behaviors carried out against the Indigenous people.

However, Lawrence & Amadahy, (2009) have noted that Blacks and Indigenous people co-existed and worked together as slaves on plantations to the extent that some Blacks were adopted as members into Indigenous clans such as the Rotinosoni's. They further assert that Blacks and Indigenous people were able to live together because of their cultural similarities in spiritual worldview, land practices, kinship structures and the shared recognition for relationships within communities (pp. 126-127). For instance "the powerful yearning for reconnection with ancestral roots felt by many diasporic Black people, and the strong affinities

between North American Indigenous knowledge spirituality and African Indigenous knowledge and spirituality suggest that building connections between Black and Indigenous communities, in the America and Canada may be a crucial source of empowerment for Black people." (Lawrence & Amadahy, 2009, p. 124).

Mensah (2002) has also stated that the ethnic-minority status that is common between the Indigenous people and Blacks causes them to understand and empathize with each other against the oppression and discrimination from members of the dominant majority (p. 226). At another level, however, Lawrence & Amadahy (2009) assert that Black people's struggle for power as settlers in Canada is because some are unable to connect to any Indigenous heritage (p. 126). This internalized colonial characteristic is inherently evident among several generations of enslaved Blacks, who have lost their indigeneity in the process, and BAIGS who, nevertheless, have Indigenous connection to their African heritage and homeland.

Black African immigrant graduate student's allegiance and association with Canadian government can, however, proceed with better recognition and acknowledgment for the Indigenous people in Canada. This can be done by positioning ourselves within Canada both as People Of Color (POC) and also as "settlers" on Indigenous land. With the growing interest in the relationship between Blacks and Indigenous people among graduate students (Black Indigenous People of Color), a deeper understanding of this dichotomized relationship gives Black African immigrant graduate students the opportunity to participate more respectfully in the reconciliation process with the Indigenous people of Canada. Thus, they can, for example desist from further perpetuating the colonial practices that continue to sideline and marginalize Indigenous people and recognize all immigrant's role as "treaty people", by association with the Canadian government. This research looks at the relationships between Black African Immigrant Graduate Students and Indigenous people in Canada. However, the analysis of this relationship and its influence on the identities and

education of Black African immigrant graduate students cannot be exhaustive without a general or holistic overview of the positioning of all Blacks in Canada.

Black Africans who are well informed of the colonized history of Canada are cautious of their claim as Canadians, recognizing that the true owners of the land are the Indigenous people in Canada (Codjoe, 2006).

My initial reaction after learning about the colonized history of the Indigenous people of Canada, and after having been previously introduced to the stereotypical colonial information, was disappointment. I am, however, glad that education at the graduate level is giving me the opportunity to learn and to understand, to some extent, the colonial relationships between the Indigenous people and Canada, and how the former relentlessly draw upon their Indigenous Knowledge - relationships, spirituality, connections to the land, etc. - to rejuvenate and build their strength to keep surviving. The overwhelming positive connection and bond that I, as a Black African immigrant graduate students, have experienced with Indigenous people has caused me to reflect on the underlying commonalities of Indigenous Knowledge shared amongst Indigenous peoples, and to further explore how our relationship or connection could support the education of Black African Immigrant Graduate Students in Canada.

Section Three: Multicultural Education

"Multicultural education has been linked to the goals of the original federal multiculturalism policy which promotes ethno-cultural retention, fosters appreciation of the cultural heritage of others, and assumes increased intergroup harmony" (Lund, 2003, as cited in Kirova, 2015, p. 240). However, "the ability of multicultural education to become a vehicle for achieving justice, liberty, and equality that pervade the social, economic, and political life of society (Giroux, 2001) has been challenged since its inception" (Kirova, 2015, p. 241). Critics

argue that multicultural education fails to challenge the organizational structures or institutions that are expected to address issues relating to racial differences and racial discrimination; hence, the existence of a gap between the theory and practice of multicultural education. "Critical theorists assert that multicultural education locates discrimination in individuals' lack of sensitivity and knowledge and assumes that it can be changed by efforts to reduce prejudice, promote cultural awareness and knowledge, and achieve equal accessibility" (Kirova, 2015, p. 245), which is usually not the case. The ideology for change should be focused on collective attempts and collaborative measures to address systemic and structural barriers and place the onus for responsibility of this issue on society instead of adopting the individual responsibility approach. Antiracist education, on the other hand, challenges systemic racism by employing policies and practices to directly and/or indirectly operate and sustain the advantages of people in certain social races (Henry et al., 2009, as cited in Kirova, 2015, p. 245).

Abdi (2016) explains that critical multicultural education has the potential to safeguard the "real" learning rights of all learners instead of the symbolic multicultural education that stays with the superficialities of life. He further asserts that critical multiculturalism goes beyond just acknowledging the physical presence of the diverse students to include the educational context and relationships such as "historic-social, philosophic-cultural, and, certainly, the onto-epistemological locations of so-called 'ethnic' pupils in particular, who come from the African Canadian community and from other groups, such as Aboriginal peoples, who have been previously cognitively colonized" (p. 49). The educational experience of multicultural groups should not be limited to our understanding of the current situation but a holistic exposure to historical truth. Abdi noted that people are products of their historical circumstances, but they are also agents endowed or not endowed by their current circumstances. (p. 49)

To what extent does the schooling system know the context the student is coming from, the socio-cultural and personal spaces he or she crosses to reach the new spaces of education,

and how he or she can actively see the connection between their own background and schooling? (Dewey, [1938]1997, as cited in Abdi, 2016, p. 50). "Despite the differences among multicultural educational policies across Canada, a synthesis of the components of multicultural education identifies three specific goals: '(1) equivalency in achievement; (2) more positive intergroup attitudes; and (3) developing pride in heritage'" (Kehoe & Mansfield, 1997, as cited in Kirova, 2015, p. 241).

Kirova (2015) suggest that "these goals are to be achieved using a number of strategies including, but not limited to, teaching English as a second language while encouraging retention of heritage languages; removing ethnocentric bias from the curriculum; providing information about other cultures, which follows the criteria of teaching about similarities, institutionalizing in-school cultural celebrations as well as those of the Anglo-Celtic majority; and acquainting all students with their own and other cultures through the exchange of literature, art, dance, food, clothing, folk rhymes, religion, and so forth" (p. 241).

According to Ebgo (2016), Canada's multiculturalism policy, which promotes identity retention, presents a general perception that it is an inclusive society where racial discrimination is either non-existent or has little or no impact on one's access to the advantages society has to offer, including access to the right kind of education (p. 99). Unfortunately, "the schooling system itself and its attached policy priorities are not necessarily intended to uplift those learners who need such support the most, but rather are meant to affirm the learning subjectivities of those who fit its linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic categorizations" (Abdi, 2016, p. 52). The goal is "not about impractically privileging some over others; it is rather about selectively privileging the previously unprivileged in the schooling system with new, inclusive ways of thinking, teaching, and learning" (Abdi, 2016, p. 55).

Shiza (2016) also asserts that education and schooling within Canada's multiculturalism is contentious and questionable because "the school curriculum in mainstream or Canadian

public schools favours the ideology of the dominant Anglo-Canadian culture while marginalizing minority cultures" (p. 187). Moving forward, Kirova (2015) asserts that "the emerging post-multiculturalism discourse indicates that some significant shifts in understanding and articulating central concepts such as culture; power; and cultural, national, and civic identity can no longer be based on narrow definitions of ethnicity or country of origin" (p. 247). Rather, multicultural education should focus on developing broader horizons where we negotiate new ideas and vocabularies to enable us to make comparisons partly through transforming our own standards by validating cultural, social, and gender differences and developing individual identities (Kirova, 2015, p. 247).

> In order to avoid the conventional trap of addressing newcomers just in-terms of some presumably fixed ethnic identity, an awareness of the new super-diversity suggests that policy-makers and practitioners should take account of new immigrants' plurality of affiliations (recognizing multiple identities, only some of which concern ethnicity) (Vertovec, 2010, as cited in Kirova, 2015, p. 249).

Chapter Four: Methodology

This chapter discusses the approach used to conduct the research. The study adopted a qualitative research, which "is an umbrella term for an array of attitudes towards and strategy for conducting inquiry that are aimed at discovering how human beings understand, experience, interpret, and produce the social world" (Sandelowski, 2004, cited in Hammersley, 2013, p. 1). Qualitative research covers a heterogenous field and cannot be defined by one or two characteristics. However, qualitative research allowed for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being investigated and provided the opportunity to communicate experiences that could not be captured or meaningfully expressed in numbers. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 6). In conducting this study, I focused on the voices and perspectives of the participants taking care to share their views in a way that represents the nuances in their experiences and remain cognizant that the type and depth of data generated, and the interpretation of the data was mediated by my own background and experiences.

Background, Place, and Experience

As a Black African woman with cultural upbringing that is grounded in African Indigenous Knowledge, I used qualitative research methodology, which gives me the opportunity (and possibility) to position my research within the western academy. I come from the Akan tribe in the Ashanti region of Ghana and even though I spent most of my adult life in the urban city, my siblings and I were raised in ways that kept us grounded in our traditional practices, language, morals, values and beliefs. I was taught the importance of building and maintaining good relations with the people in our community, respect for everyone especially towards our

elders, love and kindness towards those in need, sharing and hospitality, learning and speaking

our local language which connects us to the land, and to be hardworking – putting in our best at

whatever we find ourselves doing. These constituted some of the traditional ways of knowing

and doing which yielded fruitful results wherever I applied them. My continued interaction with

the people who were in my community has contributed to the process that allowed me to expand

and contract within the social, political, historical and spatial dimensions (Martin, 2003). Even

though I have relocated from Ghana to North America, my way of knowing still influences my

relationships with people and guides me in carrying out my responsibilities to society, self and

others.

The diverse African communities, although very distinct in the traditional and cultural

practices, share commonalities that are grounded in African Indigenous Knowledge systems.

This study, which analyzes the influence of African Indigenous Knowledge required a

methodology that presents the appropriate principles for conducting research that was

respectful of people's Indigenous protocols and designed to benefit both the researcher and the

participants. Indigenous Research Methodology provided the opportunity to do meaningful

research within an Indigenous paradigm. Using Indigenous Research Methodology to analyze the

experiences of Black African Immigrant Graduate Students in Canada helped to elevate the strong

connections that exist within the African Heritage while cautiously taking steps not to essentialize

the distinct traditional and cultural practices that exist amongst all Africans. As a first generation

Black African Immigrant Graduate Student, I am cognizant of how our ontology and epistemology

can be distorted when we relocate and become educated in the Western world. I also have

practical experiences of the issues that affect Black African Immigrant Graduate Students and how

that influences our identities and educational experiences.

The existence of African Indigenous Knowledge as an ontological truth does not

automatically guarantee an epistemological understanding of how it influences the experiences

of BAIGS in Canada. BAIGS, therefore, carry a distorted view that African Indigenous Knowledge and its research methodologies are not valuable and cannot be utilized in the process of educational transformation. Additionally, Grande (2015) draws our attention to the fact that there is a divide between "on-the-ground" struggles of marginalized groups and application of research theories because of the relentless pressure to address the more immediate socio-political urgencies of the community (p. 2). She asserts that schools continue to be a forceful weapon used by dominant powers to create boundaries to control and mold the minds of people and weaken their Indigenous identity in order to assimilate them into the mainstream society (p. 36). She, therefore, suggests the application of critical theory and pedagogy to support Indigenous students. Considering that this research awakens consciousness and encourage educational practices essential to decolonization of the mind of BAIGS, this qualitative research study was conducted using an Indigenous Research Methodology (IRM), which provided an

 opportunity for Indigenous students and/or researchers to apply critical theories that are grounded in Indigenous knowledge systems.

Indigenous Research Methodology

There are multiple ways to approach qualitative research, but I used Indigenous Research Methodology (IRM) for this study. The discussion and possible definition of Indigenous Research Methodology is still ongoing and, in my understanding, IRM is the methodology that recognizes the importance of acknowledging the ontology and epistemology of the research participants or the community within which the research is conducted. IRM is about demonstrating empathy, respect and ethical treatment of participants (Singh & Major's n.d; Weber-Pillwax 1999; & Wilson 2001). The underlying principles that guided this work in the application of IRM included, but were not limited to (1) recognition of Indigenous knowledge as

legitimate, (2) relational accountability and respectful research that aims to benefit and improve Indigenous communities or the researched group, (3) collectivity and reciprocity, and (4) the use of Indigenous methods in research.

According to Martin (2003) recognition of our worldviews, our knowledge and our realities as distinctive and vital to our existence and survival is a major feature of Indigenous Research Methodology. Essentially, the worldview and principles of Indigenous research are embedded in the methodologies themselves and these worldviews are also made up of Indigenous principles such as respect, reciprocity, relevance, humility, gratitude, purpose, truth, kindness, sharing, balance, harmony, love, bravery and wisdom (Absolon, 2007. p. 63). IRM also requires of the researcher the ability to choose and use the right methodologies for the most positively impactful outcomes, requiring an understanding and readiness to respect and uphold the integrity of all community members (Weber-Pillwax, 1999). IRM allows Indigenous peoples to readily draw on their truths, histories, and knowledge without argument or explanation, without needing to justify their existence and thus transforming research from a tool of colonization into a tool of regeneration (Smith, 1999). Guided by an IRM and an Indigenous way of knowing and being, helped to ensure that I fulfill my personal accountability to the African Indigenous knowledge systems and also to the research participants.

Indigenous Research Methodology presents any researcher the opportunity to build lifelong relationship of mutual respect and relational accountability with the research participant. It requires the researcher (whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous) to be aware of and to uphold the relationship that may exist or would be established with the people and the environment, or with ideas, and be prepared to approach the research with mutual respect and reciprocity. Shawn Wilson (2008) refers to this process as relational accountability and further cautions researchers to be accountable to all our relations, make careful choices in our selection of research topics, our methods of data collection, forms of data analysis, and the way that we

present data. Wilson's (2001) explanation of relational accountability in Indigenous Research Methodology asserts that as a researcher you are answering to all the relations when doing research. You are not answering questions of validity or reliability or making judgement of better or worse. Instead, you should be fulfilling your relationships with the world around you. Your methodology then has to ask different questions: rather than asking about validity or reliability, you are asking, "Am I fulfilling my role in this relationship? What are my obligations to this relationship?" The axiology or morals need to be an integral part of the methodology so that when I am gaining knowledge, I am not just gaining it in some abstract pursuit; I am gaining knowledge in order to fulfil my end of the research relationship. This becomes the methodology, and Indigenous methodology, by looking at relational accountability or being accountable to all the relationships (p. 177). "Weber-Pillwax (2001) suggests that researchers should interrogate their relations with the researched paying attention to the following:

- The manner in which methods help to build respectful relationships between the topic of study and the researcher;

- Ways in which methods help to build respectful relationships between the researcher and the research participants;

- Ways in which a researcher can relate respectfully with participants involved in the research so that together they can form strong relationships;

- The role and responsibilities of the researcher in the relationship;

- The extent to which researchers are being responsible in fulfilling their role and obligations to the participants, to the topic, and to all of the Indigenous relations;

- The extent to which the researcher is contributing or giving back to the relationship and the extent to which the sharing, growth, and learning that are taking place are reciprocal" (Cited by Chilisa, 2012, p. 118).

The Indigenous Research Methodology framework recognizes that the foundation of research is a lived Indigenous experience (Weber-Pillwax, 1999); thus, this frame recognizes the importance of the researcher as being a part of the research. This is why some Indigenous scholars have argued that Indigenous Research Methodology should be conducted by Indigenous researchers who are fully aware of the Indigenous worldview and philosophies that promote Indigenous-based ethics and principles in the research process. According to Weber-Pillwax (2004) the question of who should participate in the development and practice of an Indigenous Research Methodology is critical since every scholar who has any connection with Indigenous research topics or Indigenous people will feel directly impacted through the process (p. 79). Steinhauer (2002) also asserts that Indigenous people are dependent on everyone and everything around us and we need each other to survive (p. 72). I am aware that as I "live" through my research and become the "active-centre" of the framework, I should expect to be impacted by the process and ensure that the research process and outcomes would be beneficial to my survival and research participants' survival, and to the community as a whole.

Indigenous Research Methodology requires the researcher to approach the study with the right motive and intentions, expecting that the participants and the communities included in the research will be impacted positively, and that the outcome(s) will be beneficial to all research participants. Indigenous Research Methodology helps the researcher to (1) approach the research with the right motive and intentions, and this motive and intent will help everyone involved in the research, (2) be impacted by the research process, and as well, bring change to the lives of the participants and community members, (3) be respectful, humble, kind, loving and diligent to protect the integrity of research participants, (4) build on the lived Indigenous culture(s) of my participants, using those as the foundation for any creation of Indigenous knowledge, (5) create and maintain relationships with everyone and everything around, and (6) work alongside

research participants and community members, listening, hearing and honouring expectations, and acknowledging contributions to be included in the research. (Chilisa, 2012; Weber-Pillwax, 2001; Wilson 2008).

Indigenous Research Methodology is a form of indigenized methodology where research methods and measures are tailored to the culture of the research. According to Chilisa (2012) indigenization is a process that involves the critique and resistance to Euro-Western

methodological imperialism and hegemony as well as a call for the adapting of conventional methodologies by including perspectives and methods that draw from Indigenous knowledges, languages, metaphors, worldviews, experiences, and philosophies of former colonized, historically oppressed, and marginalized social groups (p. 101). IRM is the central structure of support for the creation of Indigenous knowledge and ways of responding to the processes of colonization and is, therefore, the most appropriate methodology to guide research that analyzed the influence of African Indigenous Knowledge on BAIGS' identities and education within Canada's multicultural education and social experiences. The research was approached in a way that respectfully recognizes and acknowledges Black African immigrants' Indigenous and cultural backgrounds. Indigenous knowledge and epistemology, which are foundational to IRM, do in fact form a basis for analyzing and critiquing our present realities and contexts (Weber-Pillwax, 1999). Stories, experience, language, land, and memory will provide new insights and understandings and will be tools of analysis.

According to Shawn Wilson (2001) a research paradigm is a set of beliefs about the world and about gaining knowledge that goes together to guide your action on how you're going to go about doing your research" (p. 175). It was important to choose a research paradigm or framework that could accommodate the research needs and IRM created the space to access and articulate, understand and analyze this research. Using an Indigenous Research Methodology provided a research paradigm that aligned anticipated research processes with clear and

respectful research outcomes that honour Indigenous lived experiences. IRM within an Indigenous paradigm ensures and calls upon the researcher to be constantly and consciously aware that knowledge is not owned by an individual but is shared with all our relations around us (Wilson, 2008).

The research study is based on a social phenomenon on Black identity in relation to their educational experiences and the issues they encounter in North America. As a Black African immigrant, I have a responsibility to the members of the African immigrant community to ensure that my research findings contribute towards awakening the consciousness of BAIGS to recognize the significance of African Indigenous Knowledges on their identities and encouraging them to use their education to build capacity to address issues prevalent within the African community. As a researcher with family and relational connections to people within the African community; I am expected to uphold relational accountability and maintain the integrity of the community that I work within. IRM enabled me to keep the needs and interest of the participants central in planning the research process and in ensuring that information-sharing and decision-making about the research is conducted *with* and not *on* the participants. Using IRM ensured that appropriate cultural protocols were followed in order to uphold relationships and acquire information and knowledge in a respectful manner. Indigenous Knowledge does not exist in a vacuum; it belongs to a community and access to this knowledge is gained through contact with that community (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999, p. 5). Considering the collective nature of the term "African Indigenous Knowledge" to represent the diverse African knowledges, IRM guided me through the proper use of the term by paying particular attention to the respect and reciprocity characteristics of this methodology. Thus, I adopted culturally appropriate methods for research processes that surround validation, confirmation, feedback and knowledge translation or dissemination of research findings within and to the community. Notably, IRM guides the researcher to choose methods that would accord the necessary respect to participants

and their knowledge systems and ensure that the findings from the study are beneficial to the whole community.

This research awakens consciousness and encourages educational practices essential to decolonization of the minds of BAIGS; Indigenous Research Methodology helped to apply critical theories such as reciprocal respect that are grounded in Indigenous knowledge systems in the analysis of BAIGS' experiences. Reciprocal respect guided me the researcher and participants to reflect on the underlying factors and principles that define and characterize people's indigeneity. Considering the impact of colonialism in Africa, a study that analyses African Indigenous Knowledge requires a methodology that is respectful of people's Indigenous protocols and ensures that the research process is designed to benefit both the researcher and the participants. This study applied Indigenous Research Methodology from a critical theorist perspective where by understanding and building relationships with the participant, we would be able to work towards social change.

This research involved interactions and discussions related to non-Western values and belief systems and Indigenous Research Methodology expands the boundaries of knowledge production and research practices to recognize the fundamental human rights of the researched. Inasmuch as this study contributes to work in the academy, the discussions on Indigenous Research methodology helped to understand that utmost satisfaction is attained when the outcomes or findings of the research becomes beneficial and useful to the community or participants.

By using an Indigenous Research Methodology, the validity, credibility, reliability and overall trustworthiness of this study is viewed through the lens of an Indigenous paradigm, which acknowledges the existence of knowledge as epistemologically present in different forms. Even though the data was collected using mixed methods including orality in the interviews and focus groups, the interpretation of Indigenous knowledge from the participants, either through

the generational transfer of information or their understanding from written context, is

recognized and deemed credible through an Indigenous Research Methodological lens.

Ethical Considerations

The ethical application was completed as required by the University of Alberta research

regulations. The main ethical guidelines that guided this research are properly informed consent,

anonymity (if required), and confidentiality.

Informed consent. Informed consent "involves providing participants with clear information

about what participating in a research project will involve and giving them the opportunity to

decide whether or not they want to participate" (Wiles, 2013, p. 8). A thorough overview of the

research objectives with the participants helped to ensure that they understood the purpose of the

research and increased their commitment to participate. Participants were required to sign a

consent form, which included: full name and educational institution, a brief description of the

research purpose, any benefits that may accrue from participating, any identified potential risks to

the participant, assurance for confidentiality, permission to be recorded or not, opportunity to

withdraw within a specified timeframe, and the researcher's information or contact details. I

ensured that participants were comfortable with the consent form before they signed it prior to

conducting the interviews or focus group discussions.

Anonymity. Anonymity "is the primary way that researchers seek to protect research participants

from the accidental breaking of confidentiality" (Wiles, 2013, p. 8). One way to do that is to apply

pseudonyms to research participants, organizations and locations and to find other ways to not

reveal participants' real identities. I knew the names of the participants, which helped to match the

data to the source. The information on the master document were password protected on my

personal computer. Participants were given the opportunity to decide whether they want their names identified in the research or to apply pseudonyms and they were allowed to select their own pseudonyms, if so desired.

Confidentiality. This is closely linked to anonymity. It refers to the condition where the researcher takes steps to protect the identity and the associated information of the participants from others. According to Wiles (2013) "the duty of confidentiality is taken to mean that identifiable information about individuals collected during the process of research will not be disclosed" (p. 6-7). As noted in the context of anonymity, participants for this research were given the opportunityto decide either to be identified or remain anonymous. Some participants requested to remain anonymous, while others wanted their names and information represented in the research. For those who requested anonymity, I ensured that their identity was protected by using pseudonyms.

In the case of focus group discussions, all the participants signed a confidentiality form and insisted on strict adherence to the rules with constant reminders at the beginning of each group discussion.

Preparation

After receiving approval from the Research and Ethics Board of the University of Alberta, I reflected on the purpose of my study, the reasoning behind the choice of my research topic and the impact that the findings from this research will have on different people, particularly Black Africans in Canada. I was awakened to a heightened sense of responsibility and accountability. I took a step back into memory lane to personally embark on a journey that I was about to ask my participants to explore and share with me. I was concerned about my ability to maintain the right intent throughout the process while still fulfilling the academic expectations of this work. I revisited what Indigenous scholar, Cora Weber-Pillwax (1999) identifies as fundamental principles that underlay Indigenous research methodology: (a) the interconnectedness of all living things, (b) the impact of motives and

intentions on person and community, (c) the foundation of research as lived Indigenous experience, (d) the groundedness of theories in Indigenous epistemology, (e) the transformative nature of research, (f) the sacredness and responsibility of maintaining personal and community integrity, and (g) the recognition of languages and cultures as living processes (pp. 31-32). I asked myself questions such as, how do I ensure that I am doing the research with and not on the people? How do I maintain the right motive and intentions that will impact my relations positively? How do I identify and connect with participants who are grounded in Indigenous epistemologies and have not been given the opportunity to fully understand their indigeneity while living remotely from the land? How do I establish, build and maintain meaningful relationships with my participants while working virtually within confines and restriction of the COVID-19 pandemic? Although I didn't expect to have answers to all the questions in my head, I believed that by approaching the research with an open heart and an increased level of consciousness, my inner space that led me to this research topic in connection with my relations in journeying through this process will guide me to the answers that I seek.

From my Indigenous epistemology, what we seek is never always clear from the beginning, but the answers and understanding are gained in the process of engagement, with our relations and the contributions of the collective. In Ermine's (1995) description of the meeting over 500 years ago of two disparate worldviews that had 'diametric trajectories into the realm of knowledge', he asserts that: "One was bound for an uncharted destination in outer space, the physical, and the other was on a delicate path into inner space, the metaphysical" (p. 101). He says that, for Aboriginal people, that inner space is "the universe of being within each person that is synonymous with the soul, the spirit, the self, or the being" (p. 103). His work and others validate my understanding of valuing that inner space where our own knowledge lies, making space for the growth of deeper wisdom. I was confident that the methodology and every instrument I have set out to use in this process would be beneficial, not just by how they are defined for use, but by how I apply them with the participants

as we all work collectively to obtain the responses that will lead to the findings and guide me to answer the research questions.

Data Generation

I journeyed to understand and use Indigenous Research Methodologies to ensure that the research and the findings are to a greater extent relevant and reflective of the perspectives of the people I am researching *with* and *about*. I began with my personal preparation to reflect on the intent of this study before continuing the rest of this work. Afterwards, I began reaching out to potential participants and finding ways to connect with each person by acknowledging our relations each step of the way. The collection of the data was done collaboratively with recognition of the different ways that people like to share and the value that each person places on certain information. The analysis of the information gathered was a living reality of responsibility and accountability to the people and a reckoning experience to significantly represent the thoughts and insights of the people to the best of my ability. It was a dichotomy of my living reality and the quest to satisfy the academic requirements to answer my research questions.

For this study, I collected data from Black African immigrant graduate students who are interested in knowing more about themselves and improving the circumstances of Black Africans in Canada. I was interested in understanding how the participants interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 6). According to Merriam & Tisdell (2016) qualitative research design is the best approach in conducting research that is focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspective of those being studied because it offers the greatest promise of making a difference in people's lives (p. 1).

Research Methods

Research methods, such as interviews and focus groups were used to generate data and the Indigenous Research Methodology was conceptualized as a higher order of system that affects the selection of these methods. I used semi-structured interview questions to conduct in-depth interviews with individual participants and to guide focus group discussions. Using a semi-structured approach helped to broaden the scope of responses or data by setting up questions that are related to my research objectives while still leaving room to explore in more depth with follow-up questions for clarification. This is significant because within the Indigenous research paradigm, participant's input and expectations were very valuable in guiding the process for a mutually beneficial outcome. I conducted three rounds of semi-structured interviews with each participant lasting approximately one hour and three focus group discussions with the same participants from the individual interviews. Closed ended and open-ended questions were used for both the individual and focus group interviews. I had some written questions to guide the interview and to serve as a launchpad for the conversation; however, the process was guided primarily by the responses of the participants and what information they shared throughout the process (Hays & Singh, 2012).

In-Depth Interviews

In-depth interviews were used in this research as a technique to conduct extensive individual interviews and explore participants perspectives on the research topic. The interviews helped me to understand the participant's underlying beliefs, attitudes, thoughts and feelings on the research topic. Considering the health concerns posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were conducted online (using zoom). I sought the participants' consent to record the conversations and transcribed the data for analysis.

Round One. The first set of interview questions were focused on the individual participant's

experiences, if any, with African Indigenous Knowledge, their understanding of Canada's multiculturalism concept, and their relationships with the Indigenous peoples of Canada. I began with questions about their behaviors, interactions and activities from their home county, or with others such as family and community, to gather information on their Indigenous lifestyles and to get a sense of their personal experiences and understanding of African Indigenous Knowledge. The participants were asked questions on their colonial educational experiences from Africa and how that has transitioned into graduate studies in Canada. The second and third generation participants were asked questions about their educational experiences as Black Africans in Canada. The participants were asked questions about how African Indigenous Knowledge was/is connected in any way to their formal education at any level and eluded to questions related to their general experiences (lessons, challenges and/or any regrets) in the educational choices they have made either in Africa and/or Canada.

I included questions to get insight into the participant's understanding of Canada's multiculturalism and their thoughts about its objective to enhance cultural heritage and identity. I also included questions about participant's experiences or relationships with the Indigenous peoples of Canada, the impact of those relationships, and how those experiences or observations may have informed their personal reflection on indigeneity. The goal was to find out how their experiences with Indigenous Knowledges have influenced or shaped their identities as Africans. The intent was to get the participants to start reflecting on the colonial educational practices from Africa as well as in Canada and share what would constitute a meaningful educational practice for the next generations of Black Africans in Canada.

Round two: The second round of questions were focused on the participant's connections to the African community in Canada. I asked questions about how their educational experiences have either enhanced their sense of belongingness and commitment to advance the African community in Canada or rather, disconnected them from their roots or cultural heritage and identity. I asked

about the participant's knowledge of the colonial experiences of the Indigenous peoples of Canada and the existence of any commonalities in Indigenous worldviews. I inquired what they have gleaned from the Indigenous people of Canada and if anything about what they know has influenced their personal approach to reclaiming of self and identity. I included questions about how involved they are in their respective African communities and what may have encouraged them to participate or deterred them from building those relationships. The goal for this round of interviews was to find out how participants connect their individual educational goal(s) to the collective community responsibility through their understanding of African Indigenous Knowledge systems.

Round three: The last round of interviews were consolidation of the responses from the previous two rounds on how the participant's reflections on their identities and educational experiences helps them to contextualize their experiences. The questions were focused on the participant's knowledge of their personal experiences, the experiences of their children, as well as other family members and individuals in the community. I concluded with questions on how the influence of African Indigenous Knowledge on the identities and educational experiences of Black African immigrant graduate students could possibly inform the experiences of the next generations of Black Africans in Canada. The goal for this round was to find out how participants have reflected on the information shared throughout the process and how they expect the findings to aid in the understanding of their own identities and educational experiences; as well as, how to advance the next generation of Black Africans in Canada.

Focus Group Discussions

There were three separate group discussions of approximately 60 minutes each. It involved four to six persons who were recruited as participants according to the category identified for the research and have participated in the individual interviews. They consisted of diverse groups of

first generation Black African Immigrant Graduate students, and second generation Black Africans, who have experiences in African Indigenous Knowledge as well as colonial educational experiences from Africa or in Canada. The objective was to configure the group with persons who are capable of providing the highest-quality discussion about the topics being discussed (Greenbaum, 1998). I moderated the group discussions using guiding questions that was based on the research questions and allowed the participants do most of the talking based on the probes from the guide.This gave the participants the opportunity to listen to other perspectives on the topic and to reflect on their own experiences to provide further in-depth responses. The sessions were recorded for transcription and further analysis.

The first focus group discussion was centered on the participant's thoughts around the influence of African Indigenous Knowledge on the identities and education of Black African immigrant graduate students. They had an opportunity to hear each other's perspective on the topic and comment on other insights shared. The subject for discussion were conceptualized and framed within Canada's multiculturalism.

The second focus group discussion was about the relationship between BAIGS and the Indigenous People of Canada. The participants were given the opportunity to share their personal stories and lessons and how it may have influenced their own understanding of indigeneity or approach to education. Participants were asked to share their individual involvements in their respective communities, what is working or not working and how those positive lessons or experiences can be passed on to the next generations.

The third and final focus group was a recap of all the initial discussions, a summary ofthe lessons, final thoughts and contributions to the research, as well as questions to guide lifelong learning and future initiatives.

Data Collection

Data collection was conducted initially in the months of May through to December 2021 and additional information was gathered in August of 2022. It involved participant's recruitment and selection, connecting and building relationships with participants (including inquiring about any protocols), signing of consent/confidentiality forms, conducting interviews, and finally, the focus group discussions. The entire data was collected virtually, and no in-person meetings were possible due to the health restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recruitment

I started the recruitment process by describing the criteria for potential participants, designing flyers and other virtual advertising materials, putting together consent forms, confidentiality forms and guiding questions, setting timelines, acquiring virtual resources such as zoom account for the meetings and recordings. I then shared the flyer on my personal social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Instagram and directed potential participants to reach out to me by either phone or email since in-person contact was not permissible due to public health restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I also sent out invitation emails to student associations in Alberta - mostly targeting Black graduate student groups and reached out to organizations that serve Black students through WhatsApp, phone calls, and emails. Another avenue I leveraged to recruit participants was my personal network of graduate students whom I reached out to by text, phone calls or emails.

The interested people who responded to the advertisement and recruitment strategies had questions regarding the purpose of the study, reasons for the exclusion of other immigrant groups, timelines for the collection of data, compensation for participants and needed confirmation that virtual platforms will be used to ensure the safety of participants. After responding to several inquiries from the first round of advertisement, nine (9) Black African Immigrant Graduate students

who meet the eligibility criteria for participation agreed to join the research. Out of the nine eligible participants, eight were first-generation and one was second-generation. The eight participants were provided with the consent form, and they all signed it prior to the interviews. One of the first-generation participants withdrew after the first interview because of a family emergency and a new job that prevented her from fully committing to the time needed to contribute to the study. All the eight participants went through the interview process and most of them participated in the focus group discussion. I started the individual interviews while I was still recruiting more participants. Although I had indicated that I would be recruiting six to ten participants for the research, the decision to stop recruiting after conducting the individual interviews with the eight participants was based on the nature of information that was being presented. By analyzing the data that had been gathered during the interviews I reached a point of saturation after the eighth participant and decided it was time to stop recruiting, complete the individual interviews and move on to the focus group for more insight. Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend sampling until a point of saturation or redundancy is reached (as cited by Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 101).

However, after in-depth analysis and discussion with my supervisor, there was the need to recruit additional second-generation participant in order to increase their representation, as well as their perspective and contribution to the study. I used my personal network to reach out to potential participants by emails, targeting second-generation participants. I was successful in recruiting one second-generation participant to the study. This brought the total number of participants for this research back to nine.

I conducted two interviews with the last participant, similar to the interview sessions with the other participants. Unfortunately, she was not able to participate in the focus group discussion because that had been completed at the time.

Selection

In order to include people who have the experience needed to contribute to this research

topic, I adopted purposeful sampling method and selected my participants using a criteria-based selection strategy. The first criterion is that participants must be first, second, or third generation Black African Immigrant Graduate Student who self-identify as Black with roots/ancestry from Africa (where first generations are Blacks Africans who have migrated directly from Africa, second generations are those with parent[s] who migrated from Africa and third generation are those with grandparent[s] who migrated from Africa).

Second criterion is that participants must be eighteen years or older. In addition to the experiences in Canada, the first-generation participants must have lived experiences with African Indigenous Knowledge as well as educational experience (at least up to high school) from their home country. The second and third-generation participants must have lived experiences with African Indigenous knowledge through interactions with their family and/or the African community in Canada.

Third criterion was that participants must be a Black African Immigrant Graduate student living in Alberta at the time of this research. All the participants had to satisfy these three criteria before they could join the research. To establish and ensure that all the selected participants have met the above criteria, I asked the participants to confirm that they meet these criteria at our first contact.

Participants

The study was rooted in extensive review of relevant educational research and the sample drawn from a population of Black immigrant students in the metropolitan area of greater Edmonton. Alberta's capital city, Edmonton, is home to over 50,000 Blacks who comprise 4.5% of its population (Statistics Canada, 2017). The participants are Black African Immigrant Graduate Students pursuing masters or doctoral studies in a post-secondary institution in Alberta, Canada. As part of the criteria for sample selection, the participants were to self-

identify as Black Africans with ancestral connection to sub-Saharan Africa and be willing to participate in the study. For this exploratory research, I included first, second and third generation BAIGS who have parental links or family lineage to continental Africa. For the purpose of this study, first generation refers to Black Africans who are at least eighteen years or older, have studied up to undergraduate level in their home country in Africa, and have migrated to Canada directly from Africa or transitioned through other places before coming to Canada. Second and third generation participants would include graduate students who have at least one first generation (as defined for this study) parent and grandparent, respectively.

I relied extensively on the relationships that I have established with the Black Graduate Students Association at the University of Alberta, the Council for the Advancement of African Canadians in Alberta, and other Black African Immigrant Graduate students from the various African ethno-cultural groups to sample my participants for this research. My goal was to first gather information on their understanding of the influence of African Indigenous Knowledge on the identities and education of BAIGS and future generations of Africans in Canada within a multiculturalism framework. As part of using Indigenous Research Methodology I asked the participants to share their expectations for the research and to let those expectations guide me through the research process. Even though the research findings would contribute towards my academic work, it is particularly important to ensure that the findings become useful and beneficial to the people and community that are being researched.

Participants were chosen using purposive sampling in order to select persons who show more awareness of the issues concerning Black African Immigrant Graduate Students identities and education and who can perhaps articulate their feelings, experiences, and thoughts analytically. After discussions with a number of potential participants and advice from my supervisor, selected 6 to 10 students for this research. Participants included first generation Black African Immigrant Graduate Students who have lived and been educated in Africa prior

to their migration to Canada and who possess and can articulate some degree of understanding of African Indigenous Knowledge. Participants also included second generation Africans who were expected to share their experiences and insights on African Indigenous knowledge; their understanding of what constitutes their African heritage and identity; and what would encourage them to participate fully in the advancement of the African community in Canada. Participants were selected from diverse Black African Countries with representation from a number of linguistic and social class groups, as well as both sexes. Adopting a qualitative research method, I conducted personal interviews with individuals and facilitate focus group discussions using semi-structured interview questions.

The participants selected for this study met all the above selection criteria. The study focused on graduate students because of the level of autonomy or discretion that students at that level possess, at least in the selection of their research topic, which present them with some degree of control on the direction of their education. This exploration research process leveraged the limited freedom (although restrictive to a certain degree) that graduate students exercise in order to demonstrate and comprehend their inner potentials instead of being totally indoctrinated by the schooling system, particularly at the graduate level. Adeyemi and Adeyinka's (2003) description of education as the "slow and skillful process of extracting the latent potentialities of comprehension and dedication, in contradiction with indoctrination" is experienced or demonstrated at a comparatively greater degree by graduate students as against students in the elementary, secondary and undergraduate levels. In Freire's (2015) expression of discontentment for the banking concept of education, he asserts that students have transformative and creative power as well as critical thinking capabilities to adapt to their evolving realities instead of the oppressors lie that characterizes students as empty containers with the goal to change their consciousness of 'true' reality and maintain dominance over the students and their world. Freire (2015) further asserts that the believers in the banking concept of education approach, knowingly

or unknowingly, fail to perceive that the deposits themselves contain contradictions about realities, which may lead formerly passive students to turn against their domestication and the attempt to domesticate reality.

> They may discover through existential experience that their present way of life is irreconcilable with their vocation to become fully human. They may perceive through their relations with reality that reality is really a *process*, undergoing constant transformation. If men and women are searchers and their ontological vocation is humanization, sooner or later they may perceive the contradiction in which banking education seeks to maintain them, and then engage themselves in the struggle for their liberation. (Freire, 2015, p. 75)

Black Immigrant Graduate students have the potential to advance in this realization process by virtue of their higher educational level and position. Their participation and contributions in this study will cause them and others to reflect on the need for continuous engagement in the struggle for liberation from generation to generation. The study will highlight the existence and significance of the foundational knowledge acquired through the student's informal education from their experiences in Africa, in the case of first generations, or what has been passed on by parents or grandparents for second and third generations.

Nine individuals participated in the research and all of them were engaged in two or three interview sessions. The number of interviews with each participant was depended on the flow of the conversation and the depth of information that each participant was willing to share. The participants were diverse based on gender, nationality, field of study, immigration experience/status, marital status, religion, and the African language spoken. This contributed to the richness of the study based on the different perspectives that was shared. Despite the participant's differences, they had similar stories and unique connection, which came to bear as they interacted and journeyed together through this study (particularly, during the focus group

discussions) to reflect on the nuances of their identities and educational experiences. Each of the first eight participants joined at least one of the three focus group discussions; four were present for the first focus group, eight at the second focus group and six of them joined the last focus group session. The additional second-generation participant who was recruited later on was the only one who did not get a chance to participate in the focus group discussion.

All the participants signed confidentiality forms prior to joining the focus group discussion to ensure and confirm that information shared at the meeting will not be used elsewhere without prior informed consent of the person who shared it. This was reiterated at the beginning of each focus group discussion, and the participants were reminded that the information is mainly intended to be used as contribution to support this study.

In order to protect the identity of the participants, pseudonyms and first names would be used in this study. Below is a brief background about the participants as at the time of the data collection period for this research.

Joana is a first generation Black African Immigrant Graduate student from Gambia, which is in West Africa. She also identifies as a Sunni Muslim woman and is part of the Wolof tribe in Gambia. Joana lived and studied in Gambia until she moved to Canada in 2005 to pursue her undergraduate studies which she completed and graduated in 2011. Joana is currently in the last year of her graduate program. Her research work is on period shaming and social media error focusing on Muslim women. Joanna lives in Alberta with her husband and daughter.

Gabriel identifies as a male and is a first generation Black African Immigrant Graduate student from Nigeria, in West Africa. He lived and studied in Nigeria where he obtained his master's degree before migrating to Canada in 2016 to pursue his PhD program in Ethnomusicology at the University of Alberta. Gabriel's research interest is in music and boko haram – understanding the culture of boko haram. Before migrating to Canada, Gabriel was a

lecturer in Nigeria where he was teaching Islamic musical culture. Gabriel resides in Alberta with his nuclear family.

Joseph is a first generation Black African Immigrant Graduate student from Cameroon. He lived and obtained his medical degree (Doctor of Medicine) in Cameroon before he started traveling around the world, including Europe, to gain more experience in neurology, medicine and medical research. Joseph migrated to Canada in 2018 and is currently pursuing his PhD program in stroke and stroke risk related to Atheros sclerosis at the University of Alberta. His long-term goal is to go back home to Cameroon and use his knowledge and skills to improve stroke related issues, particularly in Cameroon, but with a bigger impact on the greater Africa continent. Joseph resides in Alberta with close relatives.

Kila is a first generation Black African Immigrant who has her African heritage and connection to Zimbabwe, close to the Southern part of Africa. She was born in Canada, but the family relocated to Zimbabwe when she was eighteen months and she returned at eighteen years to pursue her post-secondary education in Canada. Kila's research focuses on diversity and inclusivity in post-secondary leadership and what that means for leaders in the post-secondary context, specifically, in Alberta. She is a post-secondary leader who had the opportunity to live through her research – case study. Kila is a mother of three and lives in Alberta with her family.

Yodit is a second generation Black African Immigrant Graduate Students who has her African heritage and family lineage rooted in Eritrea, which is in the Eastern part of Africa. Her parents were refugees who arrived in Canada in the late 1980's. Yodit has lived and studied in Canada all her life, but she visited Eritrea a couple of times when she was younger. She is in the Education Policy Studies master's program at the University of Alberta and her research focuses on anti-Black racism within nursing education. Yodit lives in Alberta with her family.

Francis is a first-generation male born in Ghana, West Africa. He migrated to Canada in

2014 to pursue his graduate studies in Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta. Francis is currently a PhD candidate, and his research interest is in deconstructing western policy implementation frameworks that fail to address critical issues when adopted and applied in Africa or within the African context. He seeks to propose policy implementation frameworks that are responsive to the unique challenges in Africa. He resides in Alberta with his family and is a father to second-generation Black children in Canada.

Lebo is a first-generation Black African woman who was born in Botswana in the Southern part of Africa. She lived in Botswana where she received her elementary and secondary education. She moved to South Africa for her post-secondary studies and obtained her bachelor's degree from the University of Cape Town and her master's from the University of Witwatersrand. She migrated to Canada in 2016 to pursue her PhD in Performance Studies in the Drama department at the University of Alberta and she approaches her research work from a cultural and feminist lens. Lebo is a mother of two Black second-generation children and lives in Alberta with her family.

Elizabeth is a first-generation Black African woman who has her African heritage and lineage rooted in Ghana in the Western part of Africa. She was born in Ghana where she lived and received her bachelor's degree before migrating to Canada in 2014 to pursue her master's program first at Memorial University of Newfoundland and later at the University of Calgary. She is currently a doctoral student at the University of Calgary and her research is on financial mathematics and plant energy.

Obaapa identifies as a second-generation Black (Ghanaian) African Canadian who was born in Canada to immigrant parents from Ghana. She spent her childhood life and early education in Calgary and pursued her undergraduate and graduate studies at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. Obaapa is very active in sports and quite engaged with the Ghanaian community in Calgary. She visits Ghana frequently and has strong connections with the family in Ghana.

Relationship building/protocols

The first (pre-interview) meeting with each participant was used as an opportunity for relationship building. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions about the research and any concerns they had with the consent form. For the participants who did not have the time for the initial pre-interview meeting, I allocated the beginning of the first interview meetings to introduce them to the process and to find out any concerns they may have in order to establish good relationship. This was critical to the data collection process to ensure that participants were comfortable and well informed about their role, rights and responsibilities in the research.

To approach this work from an Indigenous epistemological perspective, relationship building is key to gaining participants trust. Good relationships can be established and maintained by respecting and acknowledging the relational accountability we share, as well as the reciprocal responsibilities we all carry as Black Africans. In-person meetings would have been ideal for us to get to know each other well and build trust. The initial plan was to share food or establish a process that was unique and/or significant for relationship building in each participant's culture. Unfortunately, this was impossible due to the pandemic, but participants were prepared to work with me to find other options to build that relationship in-spite of the health restrictions.

The interview questions delved into the lives of the participants, so I decided to share information about myself during the process to help make participants comfortable and for them to get to know me us well. I inquired from participants whether there were any protocols that had to be followed before they could share the information I was requesting. No specific protocols were required to collect the information from the participants, but I was aware of the inherent need to respect the people impacted by the research, recognize Indigenous knowledge that will be shared based on their respective backgrounds as legitimate and adopt the use of Indigenous methods whenever necessary or needed. The advantage in working with graduate students as participants

was that they were quite familiar with the general content of the consent form and were quite comfortable signing and going through the required process. The participants who joined the focus group discussions signed an additional confidentiality form to ensure that any information that was provided at the focus group will not be used elsewhere without the consent of the person who shared it.

Chapter Five: Findings and Data Analysis

This chapter contains the analysis of the information that was gathered and the findings from this research. This study was conducted using individual interviews and focus group discussion with nine participants. The interviews and focus group discussions were recorded and transcribed. The data analysis processes of this research was done concurrently as data was generated like most qualitative studies. The data collected after each interview was analyzed simultaneously to identify the relevant emerging themes that need to be explored further in subsequent interviews. By coding the initial data collected and conducting inductive analysis in the early stage of the interviews, I was able to identify the categories and running themes that were emerging and used that for the deductive analysis as I moved forward in the research. After conducting two to three sessions of individual interviews with eight participants, I realized that no new significant information or insight was being added at the individual level, so it was time to move on to the focus group discussion in order to avoid repetition and/or data saturation. I developed categories, themes and early findings that were robust enough to cover what would emerge later in the focus group. The focus group provided participants the opportunity to listen to other's experiences and to further reflect on their own experiences in relation to others. This process helped some participants to recollect past experiences that have influenced their current realities and exposed them to how all these experiences are interconnected. The focus group discussions, therefore, contributed to the triangulation of the data collected, which strengthened the credibility of what is later presented as the findings. I organized the data, reviewed and explored data, created initial codes, reviewed the codes and revised or combined them into themes, and finally, presented the themes in a cohesive manner for analysis.

Nowell et al. (2017) suggested that thematic analysis is a data analysis method that brings

rigor and trustworthiness to the data analysis process. They described thematic analysis as "a method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set" (Nowell et al., 2017, p. 2). Ryan and Bernard (2003) outlined several techniques to use when conducting a thematic analysis,

> An analysis of words (word repetitions, key-Indigenous terms, and key-words-in contexts); a careful reading of larger blocks of texts (compare and contrast, social science queries, and searching for missing information); an intentional analysis of linguistic features (metaphors, transitions, connectors); and the physical manipulation of texts (unmarked texts, pawing, and cut and sort procedures). (para. 4)

However, I prefer Nowell et al.'s (2017) simplified and more practical approach to thematic data analysis: familiarizing yourself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining, and naming themes, and producing the report (p. 4). In conducting the thematic analysis of the data, critical care was taken to keep it grounded in Indigenous knowledge and ensure the context of the data was not lost or misrepresented.

In order to contextualize and better understand the themes drawn from the data and the analysis leading to the findings that will help answer the research questions, I have further categorized the information into Identity analysis, Education analysis, Multiculturalism analysis, and Indigenous Relationship analysis.

Identity Analysis

The identity analysis section focuses on the description of the participant's identities and the role that African Indigenous Knowledge plays in defining or shaping those identities. I will begin with the participants description of their African Identity within the context of this study and

continue with detailed analysis of the factors that the participants express as having influenced their identities from an African Indigenous knowledge perspective.

African Identity

Inasmuch as the African identity can be described beyond being born in Africa, an established African family lineage and connection to the land and a place in Africa is significant to this study. The understanding of African indigeneity is best explained and comprehensive with direct or indirect connection to an African land. This is with reference to Gagnon's (2011) discursive categorization of Indigenous Africans as a distinct population that is shown to have a specific relationship to the land or territory they inhabit or a distinct culture often inclusive of language, practices, and art, and have not had their culture totally succumb to post-colonial global-consumerist culture (p. 324). The insights shared by the participants, particularly in relation to the description of their identity, is to a greater extent dependent on their personal, family or community relations through birth-lineage and connection to a place in Africa. Although the level of colonial impact on the experiences of the participants is not determined in this study, colonialism, and the segregation of Africans by national boundaries has created different experiences for Africans from different parts of the continent.

This study focuses on Black Africans because the experiences and existential realities of Black people in both Africa and in Canada are quite unique and different from that of other races (non-Black) who also identify as Africans. The participants described their African identity within different and intersecting contexts but first and foremost by their African nationality or family lineage to a land and place in Africa. Although the participants articulated these specific characteristics as foundational to their identities, they also acknowledged other intersecting factors that continue to shape and contribute to how they see themselves. They also described their identity as being defined and characterized within the contexts of religion, culture (developed from the

traditional ways of knowing and doing things), language, and race. Some of the participant's responses when asked about the main characteristics that define their identity are highlighted below.

First is a response related to language from a second-generation Black immigrant:

> For me, it's always been language because I didn't have an opportunity to be raised back home, so I was very fortunate that my parents were pretty diligent in helping me to learn my mother tongue and that was pretty…… like now that I am looking at others who don't have the ability to speak our language. It really does make a huge difference as to whether you feel connected or not, because I'm able to have relationships with people who do not speak English in my community and so I feel I have some accesses to things that other people don't because of that. So, I hold that very close. (Yodit, June 26, 2021)

Another response in relation to culture and race is shared here by a first-generation participant:

> I will say one of the things that is very dear to me is my culture and my skin. Yeah, why I say culture is because I'm already groomed, I'm already trained in a culture, which I understand, and it tells me what to do, how to respect people how to appreciate diversity. Then coming to Canada, I got to know that my colour matters and my colour is a very good symbolic that defines who I am – in person and how my research should be - so my colour and also my culture are two defining things that I hold very dear. (Gabriel, November 13, 2021).

For identity characteristics based on religion, Joanna shared that:

> It will be more connected to religion and culture. It is driven by the religion because I'm Muslim. I'm a Sunni Muslim and then by the culture, I'm Wolof, which is one of the tribes in Gambia. (October 20, 2021)

The response from Obaapa highlights her identity characterized by religion but mostly culture (food, cloths, ceremonies):

I think one of the main things is the food like we grew up eating Ghanaian food all the time.

Like obviously it's mixed in with like pasta and whatever, but it's a very, very large part of

our diet, even me like I know how to make some things…..it's one of the things that I've

always felt so connected to because it's a huge part of the culture, right? Another part is I

just think like the cloth and the entire. Since we were younger, we have been, you know,

getting Ghanaian clothing and like having that maid. So, feeling really connected in that

sense as well and then just understanding even just some of the traditions such as like a

traditional engagement or traditional wedding like those types of things. (August 8, 2021).

Elizabeth (first-generation) expressed how culture (cloths, food, etc.) and language continue to

define her personal identity and the knowledge that is passed on to the next generation:

So, like with the language, being here and being a Ghanaian and now I'm not in Ghana, that

you can say the language is a huge part of my identity. Because in Ghana you are bound to

speak the language no matter what. But here there are a lot of barriers. So, in as much not to

lose my language in the aspect of my kids, I have to make sure I influence them to speak it.

Because definitely when they go to school, they wouldn't be able to speak my language in

school so at home I have to make it like a compulsory thing that in the house we are all going

to communicate in our language. And another form of it is in our cultural way of dressing.

Our cultural way of dressing, even if in my home, I have to be able to show my kids, our

traditional way of dressing. Life in Ghana, we have dresses made of cloth, like our traditional

cloth. It can be top and down, pants or just a normal dress. I have to incorporate it in them

in my own small way, or instance, if I travel back home, I can buy those kind of things for

them. So that while living in Canada they can wear it and feel proud of being Ghanaians.

Also, in the community, one thing that is not yet done but one thing that I've been trying to

emphasize in the community, starting from my church is that when we go to church, I help

with taking care of the kids. So, during those periods I tried to communicate to them in our

language. At times they will say the language in a way that is very, very funny, but I encourage them to continue saying it by correcting them, telling them the right things to say, and also, I try to help them academically in the sense that I want them to feel very free to approach me. So, as they come close to me my way of interacting with them will be basically based on our cultural inheritance or our culture, the things that we really cherish most as being Ghanaians. (August 24, 2021)

Identity evolves and it cannot be limited or described based on one aspect of a person's life. It is influenced by multiple experiences (Oyserman et al., 2012; Mokhoathi, 2022). For first-generation Black African Immigrant Graduate students, migration from Africa to Canada is one significant experience that influences the identity they continuously form for themselves. The participant's responses to what characterizes their identities, while living in Canada, focuses significantly on the influence of African Indigenous knowledges as the foundation of their epistemological and ontological existence.

Influence of African Indigenous knowledge

Despite the presence and dominance of colonial practices and education in Africa, the role that African Indigenous knowledge plays in the lives of Africans living on the land as well as those who have migrated elsewhere cannot be ignored. The Indigenous knowledge of the African peoples cannot be limited to or described within the context of one experience, or at a particular place or point in time. African Indigenous knowledge is acquired through interactions with family, community, and society; participation in events and activities; as well as connection to a place and land. The acquisition of this knowledge begins from birth and continuous to the end of a person's life as a life-long learning process. African Indigenous knowledge prepares, equips and guides one for the different trajectories of life and could be described as a "wholistic education" - in colonial context - but it is without limits or walls to the space within which one gets to learn and explore

opportunities. The experiences and participation in Indigenous ways of knowing and doing contribute to the development of foundational principles and philosophies that define and shape a person's identity and their approach to life, including the choices they make.

The participants traced their indigeneity or ancestral African Heritage to countries in the West, East, Central and Southern part of the African continent where they migrated from (for first-generation) or their parents (for second-generation) came from. The struggles that each participant encounter's, as an African living in Canada, and the strength they glean from their African identity (considering the colonial legacies and negative socio-economic categorization associated with Africa) is inherently revealed in their responses.

Some of the African Indigenous knowledge systems that they identified as influencing their identities include, but are not limited to, (1) family and community relations/connections (2) connection to a place or land (3) appreciation of Indigenous languages (4) shared cultural values (5) respect for others and their culture (6), and Pride in Black African Identity.

Family and Community Relations or Connections.

The family (both nuclear and extended) and the community were identified as significant factors that play important roles in the identity of the participants. They indicated that their individual strength in their Indigenous identity, while living away from the land, is solidified and strengthened through their connection to their national heritage or Black African community. They expressed that the foundation of their identity is grounded in the interactions with family and community, which is guided by the African Indigenous knowledge system they have been exposed to. Additionally, they described their identity as shaped by both their individual experiences and the collective culture of the communities they belong to. Their individual contributions are meaningful when it is connected to the collective (Mokhoathi, 2022; Dei, 2000; Coleman, 1990; Zhou, 1997). Both the first and second-generation participants shared their experiences of how African

Indigenous knowledges, acquired mainly through their interaction with family and community, in their respective diverse African cultures, have contributed to the formation of the characteristics that define their identities. Some of the experiences shared by the participants regarding their interactions with family and their respective communities are presented below.

> So, one unique thing was that with Ghana, like when it comes to the extended family, everybody's child is everybody's child. So, growing up, I realized that if you are going wayward, it doesn't have to be your parents that were straightening you up. Your mom's sister can straighten you up. Your older cousin can straighten you up. So, growing up, I was shown so much love and everybody was watching out for us. Even if my parents were not there you wouldn't even feel their absence because at each point in time there were other families that were readily available to step in for us. So, that is one thing I realized growing up. (Elizabeth, August 24, 2021)

Gabriel (first generation) shared that,

> Back home in Nigeria, although you have your parents living with you in your home, your neighbors are a significant part of your life and a part of that family community, and that experience contributes to our growth. There were no fences, so we were free to interact with our neighbors. In Canada, the Black African community I connect with came around and took care of our baby when we didn't have anybody. Because government placed a travel ban due to COVID issues and my parents could not come. So, when my wife gave birth both of our parents could not come, and it was just left between us, so we tapped into the community. My immediate community became the first family that we tapped into, and we try to get them, and they came, and they really helped us. (November 13, 2021)

> Joanna (first generation) grew up with strong connections to the collective community. She maintained relationships not only with the nuclear family members but also with the extended family and the neighbors. The family and community instilled the habit to pray daily, fast monthly as well

as the need to be humble, generous, helpful, grateful, respectful, empathetic and kind, which continues to strengthen her religious and cultural identity. These values serve as a guide to the choices she makes and her daily engagements with others. It has also instilled in her the need for collaborative work and to establish good relationships.

> These values have taught me a lot and I'm glad that I came from a collective community with that mind because you know it's not just you, it's not always about you, and whatever we do in life it doesn't matter what your beliefs and your practices are, it has ripple effect. Whether it's a good thing that you do or a bad thing that you do. (October 20, 2021).

Passing these values on to her 6 years old daughter is part of the greatest accomplishments that she hopes to achieve.

Joseph reiterated the value of family and community connection and good relationships with the people around while growing up. Ceremonies and cultural activities created avenues to spend quality time with the extended family. He was inspired to pursue medicine because of the need to care for others in the community and partly because in Cameroon, there is guaranteed employment, future retirement benefits and a steady flow of income associated with the physician profession right from graduation. The guaranteed employment and economic stability are critical and important if one was to fulfil his responsibilities of supporting the family and contributing to the overall advancement of the community. He added that some of the values that has been instilled in him from the family and community include sharing, kindness, participating in activities for relationship building, hardworking, caring, and obtaining good education. There is also the requirement for one to be responsible, improve upon what others have done (thus, continuous advancement), and strive to uphold good family legacy.

Lebo grew up with strong connections to the extended family who all contributed to raising her parents and later on supported her. Relationship with extended family members was established through the ways of knowing and doing of the *Setswuana* culture. The daily assignment for males,

females and children were well understood and people went about their duties to contribute to the full functioning of the community, thus there were individual contributions towards the collective advancement of all the people. There was community support in caring and nurturing of all children, whether they were a part of their family or not. There was inherent commitment to support friends, family and community members in times of need, example during funerals, which were done very early in the morning before sunrise. She recalls times when her mother will travel back and forth on a two to three hours commute in the morning in order to support others in the community after which she'll go to work for an afternoon shift as a nurse. According to Lebo, there was great reliance on family and community relations to pass on cultural knowledge and wisdom to the upcoming generation – their children. The elders used the teaching processes to also fill in the knowledge gaps in their own generation and learning experiences from the previous generations.

Kila spent early developmental stages with extended family – aunties, uncles, grandparents, etc. Roles and responsibilities for performing daily activities or contributing during special occasions and ceremonies were naturally established within the family and amongst the community members. The activities and ceremonies were reminders of the connections they share as a family – nuclear or extended - or as a community. She noted that as children grow and experience a shift in their socio-cultural status, the lessons on how to perform the different roles are learned by observing and interacting with other people who were previously in those roles. The older generation create the opportunity for the younger generation to tag along and learn as the older generation perform their roles. According to Kila, the older generation is always ready and willing to guide and share wisdom and they also encourage the upcoming generation to use and trust their instincts in order to apply the knowledge distinctively in different situations as necessary. For example, they were taught that when working with other tribes and people from different backgrounds, it is important to understand their personalities and respect their ways of knowing and doing without imposing or presenting one's traditions as the ultimate standard.

Yodit's parent's life in Eritrea was interrupted by the civil war but upon migration to Canada as refugees they still maintained a unique culture, which differentiated their families' practices from that of other families in Canada. The arrival of more family members from Eritrea to Canada gave her a better sense of the bond or strong relationship that exists amongst her parent's extended family members. Her parents maintained connections with the family back home in Eritrea and sponsored the external family member's migration to Canada. Good relationship with family members and with others in the community is considered as important whether in Canada or in Africa and it extends beyond any geographical boundaries. The family invested great resources and time in community activities and contribution – social and community responsibility – to showcasing, representing, and sharing the culture with others. Example was the reinforced participation in Heritage Day performances in Canada.

> From the age of 16 to about 20 years I participated in heritage days activities so I was a performer for Eritrean youth who performed for heritage days. So, that's the festival that Edmonton does every year and we have a pavilion and we did it every other year because there was another Eritrean community that we would alternate with. So, that was a huge commitment that I was expected to be involved in. Yeah, also my father was on the board of the Eritrean association, and you know there were festivities or cultural activities so, for example, Martyrs day is a huge event within their community, which commemorates the martyrs of being in the war. I also participated in the Eritrean Independence Day. So, these are activities I went to growing up every year and my parents were very involved and expected our involvement as well supporting activities and being there. This provided me with knowledge and increased understanding and awareness of the characteristics that shapes and forms the foundation of my identity. (June 26, 2021)

Francis grew up in Ghana with family and within a community that was a very close net and have strong values of togetherness. The connections with the African (Ghanaian) community in Canada give him that sense of belonging, security, and general social support.

Obaapa shared that the Black African community has been a significant part of her life while growing up in Canada. The relationship with others in the community as well as the family back home creates a sense of belongingness to the Ghanaian African heritage and strengthens her knowledge and understanding of the characteristics that are a part of her identity. The inability to connect with others in the community at some point due to other life priorities created a gap in her relationship with the community members and the ongoing cultural activities.

Connection to a Place or Land

One unique characteristic that all the participants shared is the connection to a place or land in Africa through their family lineage. Betasamosake Simpson (2014) makes as understand that land is the context of all the wisdom that is produced as a result of the interactions between all the relations and that wisdom is shared amongst the people who occupy the land. The responses and insights from the participants reveal that there are collective values and norms that have been developed from different experiences of individuals who have interacted with their relations on the land. These values are shared and passed on to future generations in different ways. Knowledge is usually shared by modeling (their understanding or interpretations), teachings at ceremonies, and/or through storytelling.

The first-generation participants spent their early developmental stages in Africa. They have lived experiences from their interactions with their relations and engagement *with* and *from* the land at their respective home countries in Africa. In hindsight, they reflected on how they learned and gained wisdom daily as they discovered new ways of understanding life situations and making meaning of things around them by participating in family and community activities, such as running

errands, listening to stories, serving others and playing their roles at ceremonies, etc.

On the other hand, the second-generation participants have visited their parent's home country at different stages in their lives and have relationships with other Black Africans in the community in Canada where knowledge and experiences are shared. Although the second-generation participants have limited lived experiences and lack of direct interactions on the land, they shared the knowledge and wisdom acquired indirectly through the gaze of their parents and others in the community. Their own interactions with others in the community in Canada and those in Africa, as well as their experiences from their visits to Africa, continually give them their share of the wisdom that is transferred or gained from the land. This affirms Betasamosake Simpson's (2014) assertion that, the process of coming to wisdom within an Indigenous epistemology "takes place in the context of family, community and relations." (p. 7).

Kila in describing her experience on the land shared some of the individual experiences that have come together to create collective norms in the community or society and they are passed on to the next generation in different ways and forms. She noted that every action taken has either a story or a lesson that can be applied to life no matter where you find yourself in future. One example she shared was that:

> They would say don't stretch out your legs and you would say, why? They would say, well because you're going to get boils on your skin and if you get boils on your skin you are no longer pretty right, and I'm thinking boils ….. it doesn't quite make sense if you think about it but growing up you are told, don't do that, don't sit that way because you get boils on your skin. Later what I realized was it was a safety precaution because you've got fire logs and if you put your feet stretched out the chances of you accidentally hitting one of the fire logs and getting burned or injuring somebody else are higher. Whereas if you sit with your legs crossed you know they're not going to interact with any of the fire logs that are sticking out

from the center. So things like that is what would come up or you know in the urban areas now they would say, I remember them saying, whatever you do don't sit by the side of the road because if you sit by the side of the road a bird was going to land on you and poop on you, it's like something bad will happen to you but really again, it was for safety because on the road there are cars, there are vehicles and so that was a way to get us away from the main roads just for safety sake. (May 22, 2021)

The realization of the actual intent and wisdom behind the protocols, stories and activities started becoming clear to Kila during the later years as a teenager (between 18 or 19 years old) when she was being considered an adult and the relationship with the older generation had changed. She understood the right protocols for asking questions and the right time to seek the knowledge she needed. She learned that one of the right ways to ask questions was to offer a gift of tobacco to engage an elder in a deeper conversation and to request them to share their knowledge and wisdom. She noted that the observation of this protocol would lead you, in most cases, to get the response or explanation needed instead of just saying "why" when you are asked to do something. Also, she came to know the explanations to some of the protocols through experience. For example, when she became a mother, she realized that the advice to hand a baby forward-facing to another person was not just to ensure that the baby received blessings from the other person, but it was done to avoid the unintended complications or danger to the baby if it is dropped while being handed over backwards.

Gabriel shared his experience about how he acquired some of the collective shared values of respect and life-long learning from the community and family while living on the land in Africa. His interactions with others as he participated in the daily activities and played his role in the society led him to learn and acquire new skills through his own experiences.

Once you are growing up, your mom already taught you OK, this is what the society is about.

They will send you on an errand, so going on an errand, for example, is a process of learning about the environment. Getting instruction is a way of learning about the environment. So, by going on an errand, you are already learning a skill for yourself. So, most times we also try to question Mom, why am I not eating this kind of plant? And she tells you, that plant can kill you. So, you develop that consciousness that those plants can kill, and you don't get to that plant. So, I think lifelong learning is a very, very well modified way, though it is a western word because it was brought from the West, but we learn everyday as humans from our environment and from people. We all learn on daily basis and in Africa our knowledge is unlimited because the more we grow the more we learn the more we learn, the more we know about things. So, I think that life-long learning is one thing that is part of us…… because in my own time my dad went to school and had education, but he can also do bricklaying as a skill. Despite his education he can also do bricklaying. For example, I was going to school then and I was also into screen printing as a job, which I learnt to screen print and also how to mend shoes, like shoe mending, which I also learnt you know when I was growing up because my dad told me 'This skill even though you think you don't need it but let it be part of your own lifestyle'. So, despite the formal or colonial education people understand that you need that kind of setting, to learn those kind of skills for yourself so that you can be self-reliant or in case there is shortage of skills in the community, you can be of help. So, the community then was built on lifelong learning, everybody learns things, everybody does things. (November 13, 2021)

For Joseph the daily interactions with family and community while living in the urban places in Cameroon helped him with the continues acquisition of knowledge. However, he experienced deep emersion into the traditional culture and participated more in land-based activities when the family travelled to the rural areas to visit grandparents or other extended family members. Some of the activities the family usually engages in included, but were not limited to, farming (harvesting

maize/groundhogs, vegetables), cooking together and sharing meals. The family established systems for periodic meetings and the people made intentional efforts to connect regularly in order to build good relationships by working together on the land and participating in place-based traditional activities.

Lebo shared that one significant experience with living on the land was the natural connection and recognition of other living things, such as livestock, that were given the space on the land to graze and roam although this was most common in the rural settings. While men and women went about their daily activities to fulfill their community responsibilities, there was that acknowledgment of the presence of other things around that were cohabitating naturally as part of the universe for the full functioning of the community.

Although the first-generation participants live away from the land now while in Canada, they do carry the spirit of the land with them through the knowledge and wisdom they have gathered by their interactions and relations in Africa. They are passing the knowledge and wisdom on to the next or future generations by sharing the values and norms as a family or community.

On the other hand, the second-generation benefit from the wisdom from the land through the shared family and community values that are passed on to them. They gain their own knowledge us they visit Africa and interact with the land (through family, friends, community and relations). When they visit and connect with the land in Africa, they get the opportunity to acquire their own knowledge, which adds to or fills in the gaps in what has been passed on to them from their parents or other relations.

Obaapa shared that she has heard many stories from her mother and uncle about their daily lives, activities, and experiences in Ghana, which taught them to be resilient. She did not fully understand the need for the stories or its value at the time but as she reflects on the intent behind these stories, she recognizes that they are foundational to the family values of love, honour, respect,

resilience and responsibility that they all share collectively. The knowledge and experiences she has acquired while visiting Ghana on a regular basis have helped her to connect the stories to the meaning the land provides her. She continuous to make her own discoveries in life, develop new knowledge and acquire wisdom through her interactions from family, community and relations in Ghana. She noted that the combination of the values instilled in her from the family and community in Canada as well as the knowledge and wisdom she has acquired through her interactions in Ghana contributes positively to the decisions and choices she makes in life, such as the career pathway she is now pursuing.

Although Yodit (second-generation) has limited direct experience on the land, she expressed her contentment for a place-based experience on the land when she visited Eritrea as a teenager. According to Yodit that experience helped her to contextualize the stories she had heard about her parent's lives back home.

> They shared stories when I was growing up, especially, my father because he was a little older when he left, but it's kind of difficult to imagine because you know when they're describing things they were talking about the village, and I don't know what the village looks like or kind of what day-to-day life is. So, I did have an opportunity to go back. I went twice so when I was a child suppose about four years old, but I hardly have any recollection of that visit, but I went back when I was 14 in 2004. So, that was a little bit nicer because I could picture, I went to my father's village for example, and I could kind of picture what life was like there and so I was able to meet relatives and understand about what it was, what their childhood was like a little bit but overall, I don't feel like I have a good grasp of their experiences or the experiences of my family members. (June 26, 2021)

Yodit also mentioned that her parents were young when they left Eritrea and did not have a lot of knowledge in cultural protocols but as family members later arrived in Canada, they filled in

some of the gaps in the knowledge and she is continually learning new things as she engages and interacts with the family members and others in the community. Her parents also shared stories around the selection of their Indigenous names, which was influenced by natural occurrences at the time of their birth, or the environment as well as other events that have cultural and traditional significance. She shared that dates were not common during her parent's time in Africa as memories of occurrences were captured around the events and activities at the time.

Shared Customs - Cultural Values and Norms.

Most African families, communities, tribes and other groups or associations share collective values and norms, and this was highlighted in the participants experiences. The values and norms are embedded in the daily activities, cultural events, ceremonies and protocols that are performed by the people. Although the individual is expected to learn from their own experiences, the collective experiences of the family and community members as well as other relations influences the characteristics that inform one's own identity. Some of the shared customs and experiences that informed the participants' identities include the following.

Kila shared her experience and participation in marriage ceremonies and noted how the family members upheld the traditional values and norms while they played their role to ensure that the ceremony was successful.

> Most of us in the family looked forward to participating in the cultural and traditional activities because they were fun and there were a lot of life lessons embedded in the processes. For example, I looked forward to participating and executing my role as a sister, aunt and bride during the marriage ceremonies because of the heightened sense of belongingness, cultural pride, respect and integrity associated with the respective roles.

> During the marriage ceremony, there's a role for everybody in the family even the younger sisters so I could get involved as well. My aunties would be telling me what to do at different

stages of the ceremony because the bride doesn't actually lift a finger, it's her sisters who perform these tasks. So, from the moment the groom's family comes in to ask for the girl's hand in marriage they never really talk to the bride, they talk to the sisters. They are the ones who run around to the point where the family of the bride accepts the groom. After the whole 'bride price' (which is a traditional symbolic gesture to demonstrate extreme value but expressed in colonial language as *bride price*) is done it is always the sisters who the groom's family know and see until the bride is revealed to the groom's side of the family. Then there's the accompanying the bride to her new home, right - to the family where she's married to - again the sisters go with her, so lots of singing, dancing and household-type tasks that need to be performed, which is fun. There are a lot of fun; jokes are thrown left, right - one side trying to beat the other and trying to throw these jokes, a lot of teasing that happens. So, as sisters you have to be alert, you know you're watching out for your big sister, you're making sure she's represented really well. So, I participated in those myself and then when my turn came for my marriage again my sisters, younger sisters then performed their parts with my older aunties. So that ceremony I think has stayed intact as much as possible. (May 22, 2021)

As part of Kila's experience, every step or action taken has either a story or a lesson that can be applied in life no matter where you find yourself. Individuals learn different lessons from participating in the ceremonies, but some of the values that were prevalent were leadership and trust. She noted that as the upcoming generation continue to participate in the different ceremonies and learn from them, they are encouraged to take on leadership roles and believe that the knowledge and wisdom they have acquired over the period, with the support of their relations, will guide them to perform their duties. According to Kila, the children are encouraged to trust their instincts and make decisions as they observe and learn from the older generation. She shared a period in the marriage ceremony where the groom's sister visits with the bride and her sister's early in the morning to encourage her to go ahead with the marriage. Kila was the lead sister at her brother's marriage

ceremony (after observing the older female leads over the years) and before she went to the bride's house, she sought the advice of her grandmother on what to say or do. Her grandmother guided her and asked her to trust her instincts.

Trust and confidence in community elders and older family members was another shared value Kila's people share.

> You grow up knowing that the older generation is more experienced and knowledgeable about life issues and there is a good reason behind the guidance they provide, which do not always make sense at a younger age, but you learn to trust them. (May 22, 2021)

The two values that Francis and his family shared were kinship and excellence. Kinship was encouraged as a way to build social network for growth and to strengthen family values. Excellence was expected in everything they did as a family and one area where this was particularly prioritized was in their formal education.

According to Obaapa her family has great recognition and appreciation of traditional and cultural activities. For example, there is expectations for every child to participate and go through the full cultural processes for marriage ceremony, which is in two stages – the traditional and white wedding. As a second-generation living with her family in Canada, practicing these shared customs keeps her connected to her roots or place in Ghana even though they are not in close proximity to the land. She also identified religion as an important aspect of the family's life. This is shared and practiced in unison as a family. Their lives and activities are usually centered around the religious activities and their behaviors and attitudes are guided by their religious beliefs. Resilience is another shared value of the family. She noted that this value is founded on the zeal to overcome challenges and difficult situations in life. She made particularly reference to her parent's resilient attitude when they were navigating their immigration trajectories to settle in Canada. She has come to know, through conversations with others in the Black African community, that most Black Africans living

in the diaspora have gone through immigration challenges that are like what her parent's experienced. According to her, it is inspiring to listen and learn from the experiences that have contributed to their resilience and the strength they have developed to bounce forward from the challenges in their lives. In her reflection on some of the conversations with her mom in relation to the challenges, she shared that,

> Another one is just like, honestly, hustling. Like, my mom made it very clear like, she's essentially had to hustle for everything she has, and I feel like every day she tells me a new random story. But oh, did I say that time I had to work here and do this? And I'm like, no, I've never heard this one. And so, it's just like so inspiring to see what she came from and what she has now. (August 8, 2022)

Another one of Obaapa's family's shared customs is the collective approach to life and responsibility towards others.

> It's always thinking of not just yourself, at least in my family. It was never just thinking of yourself in anything. It's how does this affect your family? Or if you're doing something, are you thinking about it within the context of your family? Like, oh, let's go do this so we can help so and so in the community, you know, it's always thinking, how can we help and support others verses just ourselves? (August 8, 2022).

She noted that this has had a very positive impact on her as it has taught her to have empathy towards others, which she extents to all Black Africans and minorities, because according to her, society does not always accord us the needed support. This has also taught her to conceptualize her individual identity through the collective and to recognize the need for mutual support amongst Black Africans in Canada.

> Consciously like, always use that collectivist mindset like using empathy and thinking of others before myself and thinking of the community before myself and I wouldn't just look

at this for only Ghanaians because I have other Black friends that are not Ghanaian, but I think part of it also is recognizing like we are the minority here and so supporting other Black people in any way you can. Because I mean frankly, society might not. Let's see, I think like it has carried on in the way I live my life, in the way I have my relationships. (August 8, 2022)

Last, but not the least, for Obaapa's family's shared custom is the Love and honor for family.

Love and honor for family. Loving your family and like really honoring your family. I think that's also one of the reasons why I put so much effort into fostering relationships with my cousins, just because we've been taught that family is so important and it's really important to value family. (August 8, 2022)

Joseph grew up with a family and community where most of the shared values were passed on through grounded socio-cultural norms of a tribe or community association. For example, he noted that the origin, source or meaning of a family or personal name places expectations on the person to be hardworking, entrepreneurial, and successful in their education and all endeavors. Non-verbal cues from parents and other family members when communicating amongst each other were very impactful. The older generation lived their lives as a mirror for the younger generation and passed on these values in different settings and scenarios. There is also the general expectation from family and community to contribute and support the livelihood and growth of others.

In Lebo's family, one shared practice amongst the females was that women were independent within a paternalistic system of governance. The women developed skills to support themselves, their children, family and community, for instance through farming, brewing of beer, building houses, etc. Everyone within the family is expected to be hardworking, own their responsibilities and live up to it. Commitment to family and community was also an important shared value; for example, women and men were expected to raise their children either together or

independently with full commitment and support to the next generation.

Yodit's family has high expectations for all the children to attain higher education. Her parents emphasized the importance of education by letting the children know that education will give them access to the unique opportunities in Canada, which was not available to them or their families back home in Eritrea. Hard work was also required and emphasized as a survival skill to attain greater heights and better status in Canada. She shared that, her parents constantly reminder the children of the barriers associated with being Black and an immigrant in Canada, as well as other identity characteristics that are associated with Black race.

Relationship with family and community is another shared value for Yodit's family. She shared that, it is important to acknowledge members of the community in a public space or in any context. Greeting and saying hello to family friends or members of their community was considered a necessity. This included greeting them with a kiss on the cheeks, usually three times and more in certain instances. Religiosity was another strong value that Yodit's family shared. She indicated that her family belongs to and is part of a very old traditional orthodox Christian community. Last but not the least, was her family's shared value in the appreciation of history and wisdom derived from lived experiences. One example she shared was the historical context and cultural meaning behind the names of people in her community. This tradition, according to her, was expected to continue and be transferred from generation to generation.

Respect for others and their culture.

The participant's responses revealed that most African's are aware and cognizant of each group's unique experience, and it is important for them to ensure that other people's cultural standards are respected and treated distinctively. This understanding was based on the participant's experiences both from Africa and while living in Canada.

Gabriel's shared that his experience while growing up in a multicultural, multi-ethnic and

multi-lingual environment shaped his understanding of respect for other cultures. He noted that it wasn't about which tribe was better than the other, but the focus was placed on the opportunity to learn about other cultures and not to reinforce stereotype. He emphasized that, there is general acceptance of everybody in the multi economy or within the multi society and they leverage the diversity by soliciting ideas and contributions from different community member to address issues confronting the community.

Kila learned through her interactions with the elders while participating in ceremonies that their customs and practices were unique to their tribe and sometimes even family. She observed that the elders were intentional in letting the children know, through their teachings, that other groups of people may do things differently based on their needs, interests and historical backgrounds. Kila reiterated that they are expected to understand and respect other people who do not share their traditions and not impose or present their traditions as the ultimate standard.

Appreciation of Indigenous languages.

Language, culture and identity have been described as related within a community or socio-cultural context to the extent that the use of a particular language, coupled with certain cultural mannerisms can be associated with a specific identity.

In this study, all the participants recognized the connection between their respective Indigenous languages and their identity. Although different factors contribute to the participant's respective identities, they all recognize the significance of the Indigenous language to their African identity. The first-generation participants acquired their respective African Indigenous languages as their mother tongue at a very young age before learning the colonial language (English or French) later in school.

Some of Gabriel's reflection on his Indigenous language was:

The first thing that I was made to understand as part of my cultural identity was the ability to speak the local language, *Urhobo*, before even learning how to speak English. I was made to understand that the language will give me an outstanding identity factor anywhere I find myself and there was the opportunity to increase my cognitive ability as a multilanguage speaker. It fosters deep cultural interaction within the family and community, increases my sense of responsibility and belongingness, creates opportunities to build wider network and connections with others, particularly for education and career growth and advancement. Lack of this deep connection with others through the language would have led to depression and cultural alienation. (November 13, 2021)

Joanna expressed her deep appreciation of the Indigenous language by sharing that:

Knowing the local language, *Wolof,* in addition to Arabic and English helped in navigating the intersecting interactions between my religion, culture and formal education. *Wolof* was a great tool for community interactions and participation in cultural and traditional activities. (October 20, 2021)

Elizabeth reflected on her experiences with the Indigenous language and shared that:

Because I could read in my mother tongue (*Twi*) and write with it as well, even if I'm taught something in a different language, I'm able to translate it into my mother tongue that helps me to grab the idea behind what I was reading in the other language. And it made my life easier because like the mother tongue is something that I started speaking at a very young age and I understand it better…. what I can say is that it really helped me both academically and in my community. Teaching my children the Indigenous language and speaking to them with it, although we live in Canada, has been my priority because it is one way for them to embrace their Ghanaian identity. (August 24, 2021)

Lebo speaks *Setswana* and identifies with the Motswana people. Setswana is the mother tongue she grew up speaking and using for interaction with family and others in the community. She shared that

"My being able to speak Setswana is like one of the few things that has made me feel connected to my culture in my country" (October 9, 2021). She recognizes the immense impact of colonialism and the extent to which it has erased our culture from many aspects of our lives. She is particularly concerned with colleagues and the upcoming generation when they do not have their Indigenous language because according to her,

> It is the one thing I think that we had to hold on to. We weren't necessarily raised according to the culture, like intentionally or in an intentional kind of way. But we grew up speaking the language, and I was like, for me, I think that was one of the core tenants of our identity as Mostwana at the time. (October 9, 2021)

According to Joseph the Indigenous language contains specific values, sometimes spiritual, and the value or full context of what is communicated may be lost or diminished when it is translated into the colonial languages, French or English. The *Bandaounais* language is the local dialect of his parents, and this was used for communication and interactions during family/community meetings, ceremonies and other festivities.

> I remember things that my father or my mother used to tell me in our local languages, and it carries more weight than if I were to translate it in French or English. And I always remember how I will first say something in my local language and then say, OK, that is to say this or that, and then go ahead to express it in French or English. (October 16, 2021)

Joseph added that knowledge and experiences were shared and passed on from the older generation, especially those who could not communicate in French or English, to the following generation using *Bandaounais*. In addition to the common benefits of bilingualism, for example, advanced cognitive development, ability to learn and grasp another language easily, and contribution

to academic advancement, Joseph shared that the risk of having dementia is lower in people who speak many languages. Also, stroke patients who are bilingual tend to recover their language easily than those who are monolingual.

Kila on the other hand, learned to speak both Shona and English at the same time, she is simultaneously bilingual. Although she could speak with both languages at an early stage, she learned how to read and write with English at school before doing the same with Shona. She later learned French and moved from being multilingual to being trilingual. Kila noted that Shona is not associated with any particular group of people in Zimbabwe. It was introduced by the colonizers, and it encompasses different dialects for various tribes. She added that, although it was introduced through colonialism, Shona is the main form of communication and officiating language for cultural and traditional activities or ceremonies. The words and terms used in these activities and ceremonies do not have English interpretations and the meaning and purpose of those words are embedded within the Shona. She reiterated that an interpretation of Shona, within the context of cultural activities, into either English or French will cause it to lose its real or intended meaning.

The second-generation participants for this study are not fluent speakers of their parent's Indigenous languages. They have differing experiences due to the different family dynamics they come from in Canada. However, they are very cognizant of the significant contribution of the respective Indigenous language to their identity. Both Yodit and Obaapa (second-generation) assert that the Indigenous languages presents a strong sense of connection and belongingness to the specific African community associated with the language. They expressed their appreciated of the Indigenous language by sharing that:

> English was my first language and I picked up basic understanding of the Eritrea language from parents mainly with the use of words within the home context. But language was always a barrier when interacting with other family members who are fluent in the Indigenous language as they use words in other contexts, such as politics, music, etc. The most frustrating

part was not having access to the language or not having direct access to the people behind the stories and the history or the family experiences to fill in the gaps for better understanding. Knowing the language, at least understanding it, gave me the opportunity to support newcomers from my home country while working with a multicultural organization. As a limited speaker of the Indigenous language, I'm able to pick up unique mannerisms, intentions and certain actions that are portrayed by people when they are communicating in the local language, which is usually different in other western languages, such as English. Sensitivity to people's feelings is important when communicating in the Indigenous language but in the Canadian-English culture, people are expected to be direct. (Yodit, , June 26, 2021)

Despite Obaapa's limited knowledge and use of the Ghanaian language, she has a deep appreciation for the role it plays in the different cultural activities and the meaning it brings to the culture. She has come to the realization that it is also a strong tool that connects the individual to the external family both in Canada and in Africa. She shared that her mom uses the Indigenous language, Twi, when she is communicating with the grandparents in Ghana and asserts that this creates a unique connection between them. According to Obaapa, the inability to speak the local language denies her the opportunity to connect with some extended family members, particularly, those who cannot communicate in English.

I think if I knew the language, I would probably be able to connect with more people. My grandmothers can both speak English very well, but it's like, obviously they've been speaking Twi their entire lives. And so, I think, like, whenever my mom talks to my grandmas, she's speaking Twi and so, I wish I was able to speak to my elders in that way. I think that's the toughest thing about it all. And even just like we will go to the village where some of my like great aunties still live and it's like they just really don't…. I think one of them really doesn't know English and so I think that is the toughest thing. (August 8, 2022).

Pride in Black African Identity.

One similarity shared amongst all the participants was their strong sense of pride in their African identity, which is grounded in their heritage and the ability to trace their ancestry to Africa, a place they can call home. "I always take such pride in the fact that, yeah, like, I'm Canadian, but I also have this amazing other part of myself, this amazing other culture." (Obaapa, August 8, 2022).

For Yodit, her identity as a Black African, by association to Eritrea community and people who share similar identity characteristics and experiences, gives her a heightened sense of pride and belonging.

> I compared my experiences to the other community members or other Black friends of mine who are either Caribbean or African or Black settlers here. My identity as an Eritrean was almost like a bubble, that's the way that I describe it, there was sort of a buffer between me and the kind of wider Canadian culture. It was really healthy for me because I had a really good sense of who I was or at least I had it like a sense of pride. I knew that there is this other world like you know Canadians typically don't understand Black people or Africans so there was something that I could reference to be like, Oh no, this is how we do things in our culture, this is you know activities that we do. This is why we do it and so it was interesting, an interesting kind of little world that I lived in. I guess a subculture within the Canadian multicultural context where it informed me of my heritage and also the diversity among different groups like even within the Eritrean community, like all Blacks communities, you have various tribes ethnic groups you have you know different histories. (June 26, 2021)

Lebo also shared that her experience of being Black in Canada where we are a minority is different from her experience as a Black person in South Africa where Blacks are the majority although they do not have the power within that space. However, there is a sense of pride in being

a Black African in Canada, which mostly emanates from the fact that we have a 'home' in Africa where we can always go back to if the negative pressure becomes too much in Canada. She referred to some of the pressures that Blacks encounter as resulting from racism, socio-economic degradation and other forms of discrimination.

Educational Analysis

This section delves into the educational experiences of the participants with recognition of their different trajectories and social locations at each point in their educational journey. The contributions from the first-generation participants included their educational experiences from their respective countries in Africa as well as their educational experiences in Canada. The second-generation participants were educated exclusively in Canada from elementary through to post-secondary level and they shared their experiences accordingly. The contributions from all the participants regarding their educational experience at the post-secondary level are analyzed together within Canadian context.

Background to Educational Experiences

Black African Immigrant Graduate students in Canada have experienced unique challenges that have emerged out of different social, cultural, economic or political factors including, but not limited to colonialism from Africa as well as racism and other forms of discrimination in Canada. The participants for this study have their heritage and family connections to countries in Africa. These African countries have historical experiences of colonialism with former colonizers who came from countries such as Netherlands, Britain, France, and Italy. Prior to colonial contact, Africans had their own systems of acquiring and transferring knowledge, which was supportive of their people's ways of knowing and doing. The African knowledge systems constituted the different socio-cultural, economic as well as the political structures that the people used to navigate the

different aspect of their lives. Despite the influence of colonialism in the lives of Africans and the societal changes it brought to Africa, the African Indigenous ways of knowing and doing is still present in the lives of Africans and it is foundational to the epistemological and ontological existence of the people.

In order to distinguish between the colonial educational system and African Indigenous knowledge systems within the context of this research, the former is referenced to as 'formal education' while the latter is referred to as the 'informal education'. The educational system, as a formal learning institution, is one of the many areas that has significantly been impacted by colonialism in most African countries.

The first-generation participants experienced formal and informal education both in Africa and Canada. The second-generation participants, on the other hand, received their formal education through the Canadian education system while their discursive informal education has been acquired from family and the Black African community in Canada. Both forms of education occurred simultaneously for all the participants, which begs the need to establish that there are no defined parameters around the two forms of education except that one (formal education) happens through a structured institution while the other (informal education) is through general interaction with family and community.

First-generation: Formal and informal educational experience in Africa

The different African countries have differing formal educational systems, which is to a greater extent structured after the educational systems of their formal colonizers. Although these African countries are in the post-colonial era, the existing colonial influence in their respective educational systems is determined by socio-economic and political factors emerging from imperialism and neocolonialism. One significant characteristic of the colonial influence is the adoption of colonial languages as the official medium of instruction in the respective African

schools at the detriment of other African Indigenous languages. The colonial influence in the formal education system does not leave room for the proper recognition of African Indigenous knowledge system in most African countries.

In order to understand the experiences of Black African Immigrant Graduate students, the first-generation participants were asked to share their experiences with the formal and informal education in Africa. The two main themes derived from their responses were (1) disconnected educational systems, and (2) Foreign resources and pedagogy.

Disconnected educational systems.

The first-generation participants shared that the disconnection between the formal and informal education in Africa, which was as a result of the differences between the curriculum at school and the ways of knowing and doing at home and in the community, was challenging for them. They noted that aside from the different educational settings and mode of instruction that was used for the two forms of education, the differences in the information that was shared between the classroom and home created a wider gap between the two worlds for the students to navigate.

According to Gabriel, the information and examples used to explain concepts in the formal education in Nigeria were not directly linked to the informal education to help him gain practical understanding and make the connections between the two worlds. Example, what constituted a balanced diet was demonstrated in school with examples that were foreign, which created the perception that the local dishes or foods were not balanced diets. The foreign musical performances were graded higher even though such music were not understood by the community who are expected to be the consumers of the music being produced.

Joanna shared that she was unable to connect the learning from the private school, which had Western content, to the knowledge and experiences in the home and community setting. "The nature of the education received did not adequately prepare one to address the issues prevalent in

the community" (October 29).

Joseph also noted that the information and curriculum content in the formal education was not complimentary to what was being taught in the family or community or informal setting.

According to Kila, the information that was shared at school did not relate in any way to actual life experiences at home. She shared that class A schools, which comprised of students from higher socioeconomic status had a predominantly White population and the lessons or curriculum was unrelatable to the informal education of the non-white students. You learn how to live in two systems - what you do at home and what is done in school.

> So, there was two distinct systems that I navigated, what you do at home you switch caps when you go to school, you come back from school leave that at the door, and you do what you need to do at home. We inherited the British system so even some of the textbooks that we used, I don't remember them now off the top of my head, but very British in terms of the examples or rather maybe western in that sense. I think I mentioned the example of snow at Christmas as things that we had no concept of - but hey- it was part of the curriculum so come December Christmas plays you know that kids would do that at the end of the year. They were all remodeled on a western idea of Christmas with concrete examples to show the Christmas plays – Mary, Joseph, the donkey, the Christmas tree with cotton balls that symbolized the snow. Then there is Father Christmas with the white beard, we have all that right, but the reality was that you knew that come Christmas Day you were back in the village with grandma and it was a very different approach and really nothing to do with religion. (June 5, 2021)

Francis shared that in his experience less emphasis was placed on the Ghanaian culture, for example, students were discouraged from using the local language (Akan). He reiterated that,

> There was no connection between the community and school. There was no connection

between community values and the education we actually get in the formal center right and so you tend to be more confused as you get deeper in your education because you are not able to make any direct relation back to your community. Your education in the formal education setting does not prepare you to fit into your community or contribute significantly or make any impactful contribution into your community and so yeah there's disconnection between what you know from the formal education system and community values (July 25, 2021).

Lebo shared that the knowledge acquired at the formal and informal level were incongruent when she was in elementary school. Like most of the other participants, she studied the Indigenous language of the people, which is Setswana, as a subject in school while English was the main language for instruction.

We did Setswana as a subject, right? But I think the weak side of that is that we were doing Setswana as a language. But I guess even now as I think about it you can see the colonial aspects in our curriculum because it was weird. We learned Setswana as a language and we didn't, write or do much with it. So, it's taught to us as a language. Whereas in hindsight now, as an adult, I realize that teaching language, at least from my experience, when I attempted to learn French, is that when you are teaching a language, you're not just teaching language, you're teaching the culture as well. (October 10, 2021)

Lebo further indicated that, although some cultural activities, such as traditional dance and field trips to local sites, were embedded in the Setswana curriculum, students were not motivated to participate in the activities because they had not been socialized to do traditional activities in the formal education setting. The pervasiveness of colonial practices has caused the students to deem their cultures as of less value and as an embarrassment.

As a friend of mine, put it, we were being raised to be little white girls. Right. So, it's like I

grew up very much with that idea, especially because we went to English medium school in my town, right. So, because of that we really were kind of embarrassed of our culture and affluence was linked to how well you speak English and your family's income, and stuff like that. So, the folks, especially those that were like more upper middle class, higher income were definitely more removed from the culture. (October 10, 2021)

Some first-generation participants shared that, although at a minimal level, certain subjects that were taught through the formal education reinforced the understanding of the cultural and traditional protocols. Subjects such as social studies, cultural studies, music, religious and moral education (RME) created awareness of the social environment and provided the opportunity to learn to read and write in the local language. However, this was at a very basic level with little emphasis on the relevance of these information and knowledge to personal growth and career advancement.

"My love for music was instilled in me through formal and informal education, which has driven me to pursue a PhD in music - ethnomusicology" (Gabriel, November 13, 2021).

Foreign Resources and Pedagogy.

The participants shared that the use of foreign resources in the instruction and delivery of the curriculum as part of the formal education in Africa made the learning process less comprehensive and abstract. Formal education was introduced in Africa through colonialism and as such most of the resources including the curriculum, books, and teaching examples are foreign to Africa and the environment of the students. Additionally, the colonizer's language is used for instruction in the schools, which creates another layer of abstractness to the content and entire pedagogical approach. Considering that the first form of education for the students is the informal education, it is unequivocal that the introduction of students to the foreign materials or resources at school creates a dichotomy for the students to navigate throughout their education. The first-generation participants shared their experiences in the school system in Africa to highlight this

phenomenon and the consequential impact on their overall education.

Elizabeth shared that the impractical nature of the pedagogy for mathematics in Ghana limited her understanding of the concepts and caused her to perform poorly when she started her master's program. Although she is an exceptional academic student the abstract pedagogical approach used in Ghana did not give her the necessary practical understanding of the theories used in solving mathematics problems. She noted that there were other socio-economic and personal issues she encountered as a new immigrant to Canada, which created multiple inconvenience for her in the first year of her program. However, the foreign pedagogical approach that was used in Ghana was more impactful and contributed significantly to her initial academic difficulties in Canada.

According to Gabriel the musical concepts, terms, examples and general content were foreign based with less to no inclusion or recognition of African music or musicians.

Although I studied in Nigeria, I was automatically educated as a Western scholar or as a Western performer. The local and international career and professional opportunities are built around Western music. So, steering in the direction of African music, for instance, is perceived and portrayed as a limitation for growth and advancement. University curriculum was about 70% Western-based. Your talent level and professional expertise is tested through your ability to perform Western or foreign music. There are limitations on personal preference or choices at the early stages of education but the autonomy at the post-secondary level provided the opportunity for me to study in a way that allows me to understand and appreciate my culture, hence my interest in ethnomusicology. What I'm doing is understanding culture itself, that without the cultural music, the society don't exist, and we cannot frame our identity of music on western skills or on Western rubrics for us to be accepted as musical scholars, as music performers, that should not be the case. (November

15, 2021)

Joanna's elementary education in the public school introduced her to some information on Gambian history and slavery but she later transitioned into private school where the curriculum was British based with no information on the continent of Africa. According to her, the resources and information used for instruction were mostly foreign and of Western content.

Joseph shared that,

At the secondary level, the information presented for the history course was mostly about the history of France and other colonial content. The content covered issues relating to France, Europe, and the US with very limited information about Cameroon or the African continent. I remember we would learn the geography of Europe and we would have to draw the European continent and all the countries and put the capital city. So, I would say that probably I know more names of capital cities in Europe than in Africa, unless I've heard about it in the news. The books were from France, and I observed that they were preparing people to be *'good'* servants, to serve the economy of the colonizer who is still very present and doing things. Nothing in relation to African culture or the need for us to think about the organization of our country or continent and its development. (October 30, 2021)

Kila also shared that she started schooling in an education system that was very much inherited from a colonial system. She indicated that school resources, such as textbooks and the concepts and examples were all foreign, for example, learning about snow, santa clause, and other Christmas festivities were all very abstract to her and the other students.

Formal and Informal Education in Canada

All the participants have experiences with the educational system in Canada, albeit at different levels. While most of the first-generation students received their education in Canada from the post-secondary level upward, the second-generation participants shared experiences from

elementary to the graduate level. The information they shared showed that although they have different levels of introduction and participation in the Canadian educational system, there were similarities in their experiences, particularly in terms of the challenges they encounter from the post-secondary level. Some of the main challenges they shared were (1) racism (2) limited Black African representation in the academy (3) Funding bias and discrimination (4) mistrust and low expectation in Black student's capabilities, and (5) Immigrant socio-cultural gap and misunderstanding.

Racism.

Race, although socially constructed, forms one of the main identity characteristics of Black African immigrant graduate students. The 'Black' race that is associated with the identities of Black African immigrant graduate students continuous to have detrimental effects on their experience in school. Unfortunately, schools in Canada are some of the spaces where anti-Black racism is present and negatively impacting the lives of Black African students (Lopez & Jean-Marie, 2021). Joseph noted that as part of his experience in Canada, other non-Black students and colleagues will normally not reach out to you when they have question or need to bounce ideas with someone. They tend to question your intellectual ability and assume that you do not have adequate experience in the field because you were not trained in their environment. This behaviour is deeply and inextricably embedded within racialized policy discourses, which depicts anti-Black racism where the presence of Black bodies are even deemed as posing threats to the educational well-being of other students (Dumas, 2016).

Gabriel reiterated the presence and interplay of personal and systemic racism in the education system in Canada. For instance, he shared that he is aware of the experiences of Black African graduate students being referred to writing centers by professors in a way and fashion that tends to be demeaning and degrading to the students and this inferably renders them unfit to be in their status as graduate student. He added that the African foreign accent creates a language barrier

for Black African Immigrant graduate students as a result of racist and somewhat superior attitudes from the non-racialized community towards certain foreign accents. Gabriel shared that there were constant complaints regarding other people's difficulty in understanding his accent, which was new and unexpected when he first migrated to Canada. He tried to contextualize this experience by juxtaposing it with his interaction and encounter with other foreigners in his home country in Nigeria, where comprehension was never a problem. According to him, people naturally recognize the differences in accents and find ways to comprehend each other in Nigeria. Different accents were not conceptualized as a problem until his racialized and negative experience with it in Canada.

> One big issue I had when I first I came in was the issue of accent. You try to speak to people, and they say, what are you talking about? Even in the university. They say what are you talking about? We can't hear you. We don't understand. And it's a big problem. Initially I was saying, what is going on? Because once they come to Africa, we don't see them as having accents when they speak, we understand them. So why am I in a new place and I speak, and they say they don't understand what I'm saying. So, it became a bit frustrating at the early part of my life in Canada in 2016 because I didn't really understand what was going on and everybody was saying, oh yeah, I can't hear you, saying, can you come again? Can you come again? Can you come again? And I told myself I can't do that. Look, I can't change my accent, I can't change the way I speak because I want people to hear me. Because we find professors who are from China, for example, and when these professors speak, students understand. (November 15, 2021)

In another context, Yodit shared her contention with internalized racism, which comes from unfounded ideologies and myths about the negative impact of using the Indigenous language. She shared that new African immigrants are cautioned not to hold on to their Indigenous languages for racist reasons. This is done with total disregard for the benefits associated with knowing and using the Indigenous language. She noted that new immigrants are encouraged to exclusively learn and

use English in order to integrate into the Canadian society. This to her causes parents to avoid or neglect teaching their children the Indigenous language, which creates other consequential impacts in their lives.

Joseph says his experiences within the academy continuously reminds him that he is not Canadian, but a foreigner and a Black person.

They are not all overt forms of racism; the behaviours and actions are embedded in the system and they are presented in different ways in different circumstances. Even if you try to forget, one experience will crawl its head to awaken you to the fact that you do not belong here and you are not as visible as some other kinds of human beings. There is the constant pressure to put in more effort to get the same level of recognition or benefits as others from privileged groups or races. (October 30, 2021)

According to Francis,

Economic marginalization, stereotyping and racial discrimination is reinforced through the academy, which has failed to deconstruct the negative connotations to the African heritage. Black Africans are ranked low in the social structure, which tends to create limitations for their participation in society. The low ranked status shifts the burden on the marginalized groups, particularly Blacks, to constantly justify their right to equal opportunities in society. (August 16, 2021)

Lebo shared that anti-Black racism is prevalent in Canada alongside other forms of discrimination. By reflecting on her experiences, she noted that despite the prevalence of racism in Canada, which tends to devalue Blacks in every aspect of life, her fortitude comes from knowing that she has a home back in Africa.

It is just like feeling like I'm expected to be poor just because I'm from Africa. Like, there is a sense of that but then also becoming impoverished because like you know the systemic

barriers that you couldn't really see, but there's this kind of glass ceiling that is determined by the fact that I'm racialized as Black and I'm from Africa, right. That my education is devalued because it's from Africa and I'm devalued because I'm Black also. In some cases, the impact of racism comes from not having a place to actually call home, not having that grounding. So, I think that one of the things that I was able to draw strength from was having this place that I called home that I grew up in, that I had good memories in, that I had a strong sense of selfhood from and in, and that kind of sense of knowing that I can go back. (October 10, 2021)

Limited Black African representation in the Academy.

Another challenge that the participants shared is the limited representation of Black Africans and African resources in the educational institution. One example is the limited number of Black professors or senior lecturers with tenure or as significant members on the faculty or as decision makers in the educational institutions. Unfortunately, Black educators and faculty members are under-represented across Canadian universities, and they remain undervalued, despite their immeasurable contributions to academia and the Black community (CAUT, 2018; Cameron & Jefferies, 2021; Bell et al., 2020).

The limited presence and lack of Black African representation either at the personnel or resource level contributes to the lack of support or mentorship for Black African immigrant graduate students. The Black African immigrant students look for encouragement and support in diverse ways, such as mentorship, from the Black university teachers and their limited presence exacerbates the schooling challenges for Black African students. As the movement for Black lives following the May murder of George Floyd gripped countries around the world, many Canadian institutions have made attempts to address the lack of marginalized representation in their faculty, but the results are yet to be seen.

Gabriel, shared that,

There is limited Black professors who can serve as mentors to Black African immigrant graduate students. The students have difficulty accessing and connecting to mentors to guide them in their educational and professional journey upon migration to Canada and enrolment at the post-secondary institutions. The Black African immigrant graduate students usually connect with and rely on each other for support based on their shared nationality or background, as well as commonalities in their experiences with identity issues. (November 15, 2021)

According to Dei (1995),

Students argue that it is important to have a teacher who has the interests of Black students at heart and who would encourage them to do well at school. Although many see the Black teacher as an important role model, a few have spoken about the likelihood of the Black/African Canadian teacher having a social perspective they can identify with (see Dei, 1993b). Students talk about the Black teacher having a perspective on matters in the school to which the minority student can easily relate. Although students admit some of their best teachers have not been Black, they do point to the difference it makes to them to see a Black teacher around in their schools. Many have not had the opportunity to learn and appreciate what a Black/African Canadian teacher can do. But, perhaps more importantly, the idea of having Black teachers as part of the agenda to promote African studies rests on the fact that such teachers send a message to all students. It is a message that stresses inclusivity in the school, a recognition of the intellectual ability of all peoples, and an opportunity to learn about our varied social realities. This message is central when fostering a school climate in which the issues of race and representation in education, as well as the challenges of the relational aspects of difference, can be pursued in more practical and demonstrable terms.

(p. 163)

The participants also noted that there are no or limited resources such as books, articles or journals about Black Africans that are used or referenced in the various courses in the academy. Dei (1995) noted that issues such as relevance, student interest in African affairs, and availability of material resources are some of the substantive problems and challenges confronting the promotion and decolonization of African studies in Canada (p. 154). The participant's responses indicate that there is heightened interest amongst most Black African immigrant graduate students to access information about their indigeneity through the education system in Canada, but the resources are not readily available to support that need. The limited resources and limited Black representation contribute to the misrepresentation and tokenization of African information, which tends to impact the extent to which Black African immigrant graduate students get to explore and understand their identity in Canada.

Joanna added that,

> I guess we're not given a broad access to topics that we could use in both contexts, right? I feel like it's a bit narrow because I would have loved to take in more African history at the University of Alberta, but I believe one of the main universities that actually has a department in African studies is Dalhousie in Nova Scotia, right? So, and I always said like I would love to take maybe a course, but that would not be towards the degree but just as a knowledge base. (October 29, 2021)

Funding bias and discrimination.

Glogowski & Rakoff (2019) identified financial concerns as one of the major barriers for some students pursuing post-secondary education (p. 11). The participants in this study shared their discontentment regarding the inequitable funding opportunities available to Black African Immigrant Graduate students in the post-secondary education system. According to the participants,

most of the research grants, graduate teaching/research assistantship (GTA), graduate research assistantship (GRA) are not awarded fairly to support Black African Immigrant Graduate students in Canada. They assert that Black African Immigrant Graduate Students have limited opportunities for funding as compared to other non-Black and non-racialized students in the educational system.

According to Gabriel funding opportunities (GTA, research grants, etc) that are given to Black African Immigrant Graduate students, compared to other students in similar status and program, are limited and not equitably distributed in different scenarios.

Joseph also shared that,

Funding opportunities are labeled as opportunities for only Canadian citizens or permanent residents and this categorization favours students who are non-Black. Black African Immigrant Graduate students are usually excluded from the eligibility criteria based on different identifying characteristics and circumstances. This is an example of covert racism shown through decisions or choices to leave certain people in or out. This is a reminder that this is not our place. So, it's just as if because you are not Canadian student, you have less needs in terms of money or support from the University or from funding bodies that offer scholarships and fellowships to students. In instances where you are included, there is limited opportunities, and this leaves you wondering if your presence is for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) purposes just to help check a box to indicate the presence of your racial group. This tends to create self-doubt and makes you question, was I included here just because I'm Black? Or for EDI purposes, or do I really deserve to be here? (October 30, 2021)

Mistrust and low expectation in Black student's capabilities.

The participants shared that the mistrust in the capabilities of Black African Immigrant graduate student's skills and abilities to meet some western defined academic standards can be very

discouraging and condescending. This is manifested in the different negative strategies, such as language assessment, accent reduction programs, etc., that are continually put in place to test performance levels of Black African Immigrant Graduate students. Glogowski & Rakoff (2019) highlighted the lack of trust and low expectations from teachers and school administration as some of the issues that impact Black students.

Joseph shared that Black African students feel different and there is usually lack of trust in their capabilities, knowledge, and ability to perform in Canada or North America, especially since they were previously educated and trained in Africa.

They talk about it all the time, right, it's mostly about feeling different or not integrated as they would want you to be or as they think you should be. For example, in terms of competence, if I talk about physicians, if you come directly from Africa, it is always kind of bias that OK, how do they learn medicine? Did they learn medicine on real people? Animals? Are they able to think about a disease in the white person if they were trained in Africa? Do they even understand what the drug is? How this machine works? How you prescribe? And systematically, it's like they need African physicians to kind of deny everything that they learn in their own medical schools and then sit down again to write a test to demonstrate that they know medicines, that they can think about medicine, about the patient, diagnosis, the disease, the treatment, and I've always been kind of reluctant to do that, not that I cannot write a test and pass, but because for me it's kind of deconstructing who I am and what I have learned like why do you think that you need to bring me back to school or bring me back 10 years behind to sit down and write the General Medical licensing exam when I spent more than six, seven years practicing as a neurologists? Sometimes I ask neurologist here, if you yourself were brought back to write the General Medical examination that you wrote maybe 20 years ago with pediatrics, obstetrics and gynae, biochemistry and all those fundamental senses that you have forgotten about because it's no longer useful in your life

or your everyday practice, how would you feel? Bring me to the bed of the patient and let me show you if I know how to do the job.

> Joseph noted that these behaviors or microaggressions create self-doubts and causes one to always second guess themselves in whatever they do.

> You constantly wonder how your actions are going to be interpreted by others who see you differently, which constantly reminds you that you are on a foreign land or place. This behavior also affects Black student's confidence in themselves, especially after experiencing multiple and consistent incidents of opposition and discrimination in academia. (October 30, 2021)

Immigrant socio-cultural gap and misunderstanding.

Black African Immigrant students do not have an established or clear pathway to help them familiarize themselves with the socio-cultural norms in the academy. The gap between their place of emigration and destination in Canada creates challenges in their experiences as a result of the different socio-cultural orientation. This impacts the way they relate to peers and instructors and the way they position themselves within the Canadian society. Kila, who is a post-secondary leader, shared her experience with Black African immigrant students who migrant to study with very limited knowledge of the social and cultural environment in Canada. She noted that although the new student orientations play a role to support students settle into the academy, it focuses on providing basic information that is void of the hidden and unspoken norms in the institution.

> There are some unspoken norms, it's a culture of post-secondary, and nobody actually, specifically tells you when you're an international student or you've never studied in Canada, say hey, you need to do this step one, step two, step three in order to be successful. Yes, there are orientations that happen when new students come you know they get the orientation and etc etc but that's to find your classroom, to find the library, things like that. OK, now

that you found the classroom and the library and you know how to get to class then there are those nuances, how do you relate to your professor? what are those expectations in that relationship? how do you engage your academic studies? how are you evaluated? you know that can be very different than wherever somebody has come from. That's not always explicit. (January 19, 2021)

Yodit reiterated that there is lack of cultural competence by post-secondary instructors who engage with Black Africans, which impacts their interactions. According to her, this does not support the Black student's educational advancement and the goal to improve their social mobility.

Intersection of Identity and Educational experiences

This section focuses on the participant's reflection on the intersections between their identities and educational experiences. The analysis is based on the participant's insight into how their identities as Black Africans were influenced by their educational experiences or vice versa. This is presented under two main themes: (1) the consciousness or awakening stage and (2) the graduate research topic selection.

Consciousness or Awakening state.

Most of the participants identified a particular point in their lives or an event or series of events that caused their awakening or consciousness of something unique about their identities usually through their educational pursuit or academic inquiries. Even though each participant got to this state at different times or under differing circumstances in their lives, it was clear that the underlying issues were pre-existing prior to their realization of those situations or factors.

For Gabriel, his state of awakening was at the undergraduate level where his musical team participated in a musical performance competition at a local community and won the first place by performing western elitist music. Although the locals did not understand or connect to the music from his team, they still won. He shared that, the other performers who sang and performed with

the local music did not win the competition. Although the locals connected with the other team's music and their performance (which caused them to move and dance and sing along) they were, however, not deemed worthy to be in the first place. Even though the content of the other team's music was related to the people's issues and experiences in their community they still placed the western music ahead of theirs. This happened in Africa, and it was baffling to him as he began to reflect on the incident and realized the level of internal inferiority that is accorded to our own African culture as against the western content. He identified this and similar incidents as remnants of colonialism. This was an awakening to the fact that internalized inferiority of African culture and the knowledge system is deeply rooted in the minds and behaviors of the African people, which require intentional and persistent decolonization of our minds – unlearning, learning and relearning – to reclaim our identity and place.

According to Joanna,

Starting undergraduate program in Canada at the University of Alberta was a cultural shock, even to know that the instructors wanted to know what I had to say or contribution to a topic. That I had a voice, which needed to be heard was an awakening experience for me. The colonial education in Gambia did not give students the opportunity to explore their ideas and share their thoughts on the information presented at school or the educational content. It was mainly memorization and reproduction of what had been provided by the instructor or teacher. However, in Canada, there was the sudden urgency for me to consciously learn and train to switch from direct reproduction of information to critical thinking and analysis and to take a stand and express the reasoning behind any point of view. My awareness of my identity as a Black person started in Gambia with the interactions with the Lebanese community who were racist and discriminatory towards Blacks. (October 29, 2021)

Lebo shared different scenarios and incidents in her life that contributed to her awakening

and consciousness of her Black African identity. One of such incidents was listening to colleagues delve into the nuances of the traditional activities and rituals in their African Literature studies during her undergraduate studies in Africa. Identifying as Black and going through the experiences with South Africa's apartheid system was part of the awakening period for her.

Another awakening moment for Lebo happened upon migration to Canada to pursue the doctoral studies where she had the opportunity to learn about the cultures of the Indigenous peoples of Canada. According to Lebo, learning about Indigenous research methodology introduced her to the right literature where words were used to describe her feelings in a way that was most profound and enlightening. It was also at this point that she delved deeper into exploring societal issues around African feminism and how that was addressed from a cultural perspective and from a very gender biased front.

Additionally, Lebo visited home in Africa during the master's program where life experiences, such as being pregnant, having a baby and learning how to navigate all those trajectories of life reconnected her to the culture. She had a deeper engagement with her mother and other relatives who asked her to follow protocols (even how to break the news of the pregnancy) and learn about other cultural ways of knowing and doing. She realized that having personal conversations about intimate issues was another important and critical factor to relationship building. Engaging with her grandmother and aunt at this time in her life was how she started to learn the wisdom behind some of their cultural practices. Up until that point she held the perception that anything cultural was backward and it was just something that was done over there. She shared that "It didn't all make sense at the time but growing up and dealing with life experiences have taught me the reasoning and lessons behind the activities and actions" (Lebo, , October 10, 2021). She reiterated that generally, her connections through the people at school, the dance performances as well as the introduction to Black organizational leaders in Edmonton and the greater Alberta area caused her to think more about her identity and how to define it for herself.

Yodit shared that,

Growing up as a child, I always recognized and assumed sameness of all Black people, particularly in thinking that all Blacks were from the same African nationality as me. I became more aware of the differences amongst Blacks as a grew up. Another understanding of my Blackness came through discriminatory experiences from other kids who refused to play with me at elementary school in Canada because I was Black. The media was another avenue that highlighted the differences amongst people, thereby making me more aware of the culture that I belong to. I realized that my Black identity was both terminated and popular. (August 20, 2021)

Francis recognized that he was missing the cultural element in his education and life after his arrival in Canada to pursue graduate studies. "The doctoral program presented an opportunity to connect research or education to real life issues and it created the opportunity to delve into contents related to the characteristics that define my identity" (Francis, August 16, 2021).

Obaapa's consciousness was at the graduate level when she pursued her studies in public health. She shared that the program causes one to engage with and study the different issues that affect a person's life; hence, her increased and heightened knowledge in issues that affect Blacks in Canada.

Kila's most conscious period was when she registered and joined an Oprah Winfrey course to pursue her interest in reading and literature. This exposed her to issues relating to her identity and allowed her to explore, question and see identity differently through the differing perspectives shared by others around the world.

Through that course we had to read certain literature and if you look at the literature that Oprah has or had on her book club it was quite diverse from just different parts of the world. Of course, there was a lot of Black authors so my interactions with the Toni Morrison's of

this world. I remember reading *"Beloved"* complex complex book watching the movie and trying to dissect that and then relating that to my own identity. That's when I started having that consciousness more of my Black identity and now starting to question what I had grown up with in terms of the curriculum, the setup. (June 5, 2021)

Graduate Research Topic Selection.

The process that the participants engaged in for the selection of their research topic at the graduate level was another intersecting experience for their identity and education.

Francis shared that his research topic was initially informed by applicability, value, relevance and employability and all those factors were for survivalism in contemporary Canadian society.

Due to the limited knowledge and exposure to issues about my identity at the start of the graduate program, issues that relate to my experiences as a Black African Immigrant in Canada was barely part of the reasons for the choice of my research topic. So, my identity in the initial stages was not really a key or integral part of that decision. At the initial stages of my studies, you know, I was journeying in so many ways, right? Because there was a bit of conflict. The conflict stemmed from the fact that I was in a different environment where my choices and decisions were based on Western philosophies and the need to do things that would be relevant to the society in which I find myself right, and so there was that pressure to do things that were really relevant to the society and so to be able to do or come up with a work or do work that you know would contribute to the Canadian society and not to my roots or not to my African identity, right? And so, there was that conflict because after your school you need to also find a job, you need to also find employment and so you are compelled to do things that would be relevant and marketable in the Canadian society. But further on as I progressed in my education, I realized that there was more to the topic, and I

could add more value to my topic if it reflected my strong values and perspectives on things. Refocusing or reimagining my topic to focus on the African context was the only way that I could strongly articulate my ideas because I thought that I was not really grounded in the Canadian values and Canadian thought process in a way that could allow me to truly do incredible quality work, right? But then, the only guarantee of doing relevant quality, incredible work was grounded in my work in an African context. That resonated a lot with me and that allowed me and gave me the freedom to really articulate and strongly state my ideas. So contextualizing is within the African framework and trying to relate to this from my own experiences and background created the relevance of my research topic for me. A strong sense of survivalism was the main drive of what was initially leading me to this work but my background and the foundation of what forms my knowledge and understanding of my identity in terms of the African heritage helped in advancing the research work. (August 16, 2021)

Gabriel was attracted to the University of Alberta program in West African music ensemble, which was an opportunity for him to pursue music that would be associated with his identity within the African context. The program targets and constitutes mostly African students and two of the main instructors were Africans from Ghana. The African context was a great motivation, hence the selection of the topic, Music and Boko Haram: deconstructing the idea of classical music as being represented by western music and promote African cultural identity through our cultural music.

Joanna shared that,

The graduate program needed to be beneficial to me as a Black person as I became more aware of racial issues and discrimination. The prevalent barriers and discrimination against marginalized people, including Blacks in Canada, was the main drive for selecting my research topic, which is period shaming and social media error focusing on Muslim women

particularly during Ramadan. (October 29, 2021)

According to Joseph the caring character he developed by observing his mother and other nurses at work was part of what encouraged him to consider a profession in medicine. He added that a physician in Cameroon is a public servant and has job security and income flowing right after graduation, which helps to meet his need for economic survivalism.

> Research work is intended for all people, but the goal is to return to Africa, which is why I chose a topic or a field of neurology that is easily transferable to the African context. This has helped me to research and build expertise in diseases that are prevalent in Africa and do not require extensive financial investment and resources to diagnose or treat. (October 30, 2021)

Elizabeth shared that,

> The focus on financial mathematics stems from a personal interest which was initially not well supported through the education in Ghana. The abstract nature of the educational system in Ghana, particularly the curriculum content, made it impossible to fully understand and apply the mathematical concepts in real time. However, in hindsight, there were several activities within the informal setting that required the application of financial mathematics, such as the accounting strategies that were used to support community retail activities. This was efficiently administered by the locals who had no formal education. My realization of the potential connection between the informal and formal knowledge systems caused me to research options to possibly bridge the gap between the two worlds and to help others benefit from this experience in their educational journey. (October 7, 2021)

According to Kila her exposure to the French assimilative approach to diversity in France while working and teaching as a Black exchange student from Canada increased her consciousness on Black issues and awakened her to new realities in relation to her identity. She decided to pursue

a master's program in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) because of her interest in languages and after realizing her deep appreciation of what constitutes her identity as a Black African and the need to live expressively as a liberated human being. She also wanted to use her experience as a Black African immigrant in Canada to guide and support others who share similar identities because she was aware of the unique challenges that Black African immigrants encounter in Canada. Kila's selection of her doctoral research topic was deeply related to her identity; she shared that,

> I'm a doctoral student and the topic of my research is on diversity and inclusivity and I can tell you 100% is to do with who I am my identity, where I'm coming from where I'm going. Questions I have about myself as a leader, as a woman - a Black woman, living and working in Canada. Right? What does this mean to be a Black postsecondary leader at this time. (January 19, 2021)

Yodit's shard that she almost always naturally gravitated towards other Black African students, which made her very aware of the issues that impact them as well as her own experiences both in the academy and the general society. She indicated that her interest in the graduate program and research topic she selected for her thesis was influenced by advice received from the community and the contribution she wants to make in the Black community, particularly through the Black women united initiative she had co-founded. Her interest in anti-Black racism and nursing education as a research topic was to respond to the discrimination that Black women, including family members, friends and community members, were experiencing in the nursing program. She shared that it was also influenced by the lack of horizontal connection between Indigenous people of Canada and Black people that is often mediated by white discourse. She describes this as the multiculturalism issue where white people tend to be the norm and all other ethnic group or cultures are multicultural.

There is the horizontal conversation that wasn't happening between Indigenous and Black people because it was often being mediated by white discourse like Black people having a conversation about whiteness or through whiteness and then, but they were never having that direct conversation with each other which is what I would call the multiculturalism issue right? That white people or academia gets to control and mediate the conversations of other people of culture so they're kind of the default and everybody's the ethnic size studies. (August 20, 2021)

Impact on Future-Generation Black Africans in Canada

In exploring the identities and educational experience of Black African Immigrant Graduate students, the participants shared their perspectives on how their experiences impact the future generations of Black Africans in Canada. They highlighted some of the identity characteristics (formed from the African Indigenous Knowledge system) that should be transferred to the next generations to keep them grounded in their African identity. They believe that these African identity characteristics such as the language, religion and music, as well as community collectivism are some of the things that have contributed to their resilience and ability to navigate their education and other challenges as Black African Immigrant graduate students in Canada.

African Indigenous Language.

Language is built on the vocabulary acquired through interactions with family and community members. Vocabulary development and increased knowledge in the use of a language is experienced through participation in activities and events where the language is most present and alive. In the case of future generations of Africans living in Canada, they have limited opportunity to develop and use the African languages because of the lack of exposure to the activities critical for the development of the language.

The participants noted that Africans growing up away from the land, particularly in Canada, should be guided to understand the rationale for and value in the use of the language from an early stage. They identified the African language as an important identity factor that is critical to the growth and advancement of Black Africans in Canada. In order to support the future generations in their development of the African language, some first-generation participants shared that it is important to build a system within the daily lives of the children where there is no alternative to speaking or using the Indigenous language in order to help them find value in it. However, the different family dynamics and experiences determines the extent to which this system can be established or practiced within the family or community setting. Some of the participant's experience and insights were:

In Canada children like to ask a lot of questions. Whatever you ask them to do, they are always asking - why am I doing that? First, I feel we need to have this personal conversation with them, like those that even if they are not really old, those young ones. We can just come to their level, try to explain things to them in the essence of them probably knowing their language. We have to let them know how important it is. And we have to put in place some measures, for instance, for my case, it is compulsory that in the house you speak the language and one thing that is to me, I would say is helping is because my mom is here. My mom cannot speak English and mostly they have to interact with grandma and interacting with grandma means they have to use the Indigenous language. So that way it propels them to keep on speaking the language. At times they will say some of the vocabularies, they will not say it right and I will correct them. And now it is very interesting because I saw on YouTube that there are some rhymes in our language, rhymes in *Twi*. So, this world is changing, everything is changing. So, I know that there are Nigerian rhymes because I've seen it before. So, for instance, if you are Nigerian, you can let this child, at an even tender age as babies, they can start listening to the rhymes probably in *Ebo* or in *Yuroba* too. So, as

they are hearing it, they are getting used to it and if you have been speaking the language to them it helps. I feel like when it comes to them and the language, one main thing we can do is we can just start instilling it in them at a very tender age and we can be speaking it at home and with that we can build on it and I think they should be able to come around with it. (Elizabeth, December 11, 2021)

According to Lebo, the family members use English to communicate with the children as they go about their day-to-day activities in Canada. This gives the next generation limited opportunity to learn or use the Indigenous language. The issue is exacerbated when both parents speak and use different African languages.

As much as we try to speak our languages, especially to our daughter, we end up reverting back to English just because in our day-to-day already we tend to use English. Because we come from two different ethnic identity, right, and my husband does speak *Setswana*, but he's more likely to speak *Kalanga* when he's with other *Kalanga* speaking people and less likely to speak *Setswana* when he's around *Setswana* speaking people for some reason. (October 28, 2021)

Joanna's approach to help her daughter acquire the language and introduce her to the culture has been to let her spend more time with her Gambian family during school break, which gives her a better sense of the living experiences from the African community.

My goal as she's turning seven is that instead of her spending her summers here, she's going to spend her summers with her cousins either in the United States or in England. Because they're all in marriages where they are all from back home, so they all speak the language so it's easier for them to do that while for me, it's not as easy. (December 11, 2021)

Gabriel shared that,

If you don't teach your children the language, then they are going to get to the scenario where

African Canadian children would usually say 'my African parents', 'my Nigerian parents', 'my Ghanaian parents', 'my Congo parents' because this child is not well culturalized from the beginning to understand that we are this identity, this is where we are also coming from and we don't have to lose that. So, to every parent with little kids, now what they listen to is Cocomelon, which is one of the most powerful, powerful tools and recent research came out that says baby shark is the most viewed video of all times in the world. And guess the people who are watching it, African parents. We ourselves, our children watched it. We expose our children to that kind of musical exposure, and they get used to that kind of musical exposure and once they are grown, they will tell us that we have accent. Because we don't teach them our language, we don't know that language is a form of identification - cultural identification or cultural identifier. Like for example if a Ghanaian sees that this person is from Ghana, then we can say where we are coming from by using the language. So, if you don't speak our language to our children, at an early age it will come back to hurt us when they will tell us that we have accent and they themselves don't have accent. So, it becomes a problem and to avoid that kind of scenario, I study music and my baby for example she listens to less of these Western idioms and more of African themed idioms. I play *Yuroba* music, I play pidgin, they have other Nigerian songs. So, once you expose our diaspora kids here to music that makes more meaning of their culture to them it aids in their own development, and it also creates a picture in them of wanting to visit home. For example, like shea butter, which is very prominent in Ghana, like if you create a song that is about shea butter, the child will start saying and learning about shea butter. If you watch most of these Canadians they are always talking about marshmallow, marshmallow and as a result most African kids wants to taste marshmallow because these are things that they hear on different nursery rhymes. So, if we can connect them to it and there are many African nursery rhymes on youtube that we Africans can lean into. If our children don't even understand the language, little by little as

children listen, they sing. Like my baby can now sing 'A' for *Abalomo*, which is local name

for cherry and she's singing it even though she doesn't know the meaning. But as she

becomes actively engaged in the language, those songs will now have a good sense of

meaning in shaping his development. Any child that learns another language, have a very

good chance of cognitive development, in developing their cognitive ability, so exposing

them to your cultural music at an early stage will have a very great impact, one in shaping

your child's cultural identity and will safe you the stress of battling in future of your child

saying to you that you have an accent or my African parents or my Ghanaian parents or my

Somalian parents or my Tanzanian parents so you save us that scenario. (December 11, 2021)

Kila's contribution was that,

Knowing what it will take for you to continue a language when you are a small minority

group, we realized that speaking at home will probably be the best foundation we could give.

The opportunities available in the community can also be leveraged to support the next

generation in the development of their language. So in the home I will teach them about

Zimbabwe when they are out in the community, they need to learn about other African

groups, Black people and what it means to be Black in Canada, what it means to have the

lack of representation in the curriculum, what it means when your social studies teacher

decides to show the movie *'The Gods must be crazy'* in terms of showing you different

knowledge systems and for the children to be able to recognize that it is a really bad movie.

(December 11, 2021)

Francis shared that,

As someone who works in academia, someone who is really educated and has experienced

or I've had some level of experience in two different settings or two different context, I think

that there is deficiency in my learning or in my formal education of not having opportunity

to really learn my language under the perception that the ability to learn or really speak your

language limited your economic opportunities and was presented as a social dysfunction.

(December 11, 2021)

For Yodit who is a second-generation, the impact of the parent's actions regarding the language was

to a greater extent dependent on the trajectory of their migration experience. Her mother had to

learn English as a new immigrant as well as balance the process of interacting with them (Yodit and

her siblings) in English to build on her vocabulary. But she still found a way to build a system within

the family to teach them the local language because she believed that it was a very valuable

characteristics of their identity. Yodit's reflection on that experience was:

I think for a lot of parents who first came here in the 80s and 90s, my mother came without

knowing any English and so for some parents there was this desire to learn English and their

children were the way to do that in the easiest way possible. So, my mother used to watch

like Barney with me or cartoons because she could learn English from her children and

interacting with the kids. So, that kind of made it complicated because, obviously, that's

missing some opportunities for when we speak our mother tongue, so she would try to say

like, OK, from now on we are only speaking *Tigrinya*, of course, it didn't last very long. So,

you know, depending on how she was feeling or, you know, what was kind of going on, she

suddenly got motivated again, say, OK, we're going to learn *Tigrinya*. But one of the things

that I actually used to do as a kid is I would sit down with the adults, and I was a little bit

nosy. And I would just sit there and try to understand like it was sometimes the language

was a little too advance for me to keep up or to catch on, but the way that I have learned new

words or new concepts, and ways to express what I want to say has been oftentimes just

sitting down with elders, actually, which is interesting because usually they tell the kids to

go away, right? They say this is for the elders. Go away, go downstairs, go play outside. But

what I found was that my interests and me wanting to be a little nosy and you know, get into older people's business was actually beneficial. And I would ask questions like, oh, what does that mean or how do you tell me again how you use that expression so that I could say it again. So, I would say that I was a little unique compared to my other brothers and sisters in the sense that I personally had a great interest in exploring my identity, and I was also the oldest, so there's sort of like Elder Child kind of dynamic happening where oftentimes if there was like, let's say conflicts between my brothers, sisters and I or even my parents were upset with us I was the mediator, because I was the eldest child, which then required me to learn the language at a certain level of understanding so that I could express, because sometimes we speak, half *Tigrinya*, half *English*, and then it's, you know, it's all muddled up. So, we kind of lose, like things get lost in translation, right? Like something can come up as disrespectful. When you say it in English, but when you say it in *Tigrinya* it's very different and vice versa. So, you know, oftentimes I was playing this mediator role between my parents and my younger brother and my sisters and brother and sister and me. So that was so much a necessity and it was also so much like it was told to me, like in our culture, and I'm sure with yours, the eldest child has a very important position. Like I was told by my mother like you are the second mother in this household. You set the standard for your brothers and sisters. So as a kid I took that very seriously. And so for me it was like this is who we are, these are customs, these are our cultures, this is how you say you know, this is what I want. You know, I want to learn, be able to speak my language so that I could also retain as much knowledge about my family and also develop relationships with extended relatives. (December 11, 2021)

Religion and Music.

Religion and music were also identified as important identity characteristics for Black

African immigrant graduate students and they are influential and impactful cultural tools to guide the experiences of future Black Africans in Canada.

Yodit shared that the religious activities that she was introduced to and encouraged to participate in was another avenue to learn and acquire African Indigenous knowledge. She also identified the strong connection between language and religion, which reaffirms the connectivity of our relations and activities within our knowledge systems.

There is knowledge embedded in our church practices that help me to retain culture, so this for me is that in our world, faith and language and culture is not separate. In fact, I can't actually separate the two. It's almost impossible. And so that's also been like an institution to say that has provided a space for me to do that. And so, I think that's an area which I feel is very positive and I can work to a certain extent to help retain some of that culture along with the faith. It's also the cultural and the language that is also infused in that at the same time. (December 11, 2021)

Joanna is in an interracial relationship where she is the only person within the family with the African knowledge and experience to share with her daughter. She reiterated the connection between religion and language. Her participation in religious and cultural activities helps her to practice and use the Indigenous language while in Canada. These activities also present an opportunity for her to introduce her nuclear family in Canada to the African ways of knowing and doing which is embedded in the religious activities.

So, for me, religion is connected to culture. Culture is connected to religion, so we celebrate religious events, Eit al-Adha, Eid al Fitr. When I'm practicing Ramadan, I tell my daughter about it, my husband, I tell him about, like, they all know the importance of all the religious celebrations that we do. Prayer, she does Quoran classes three times a week, so I'm connected to her, to the religion that way as well. And then cultural celebrations, weddings,

anniversary's, naming ceremonies. We wear all traditional clothes, even for religious celebration we wear traditional clothes because I'm *Walof* from Gambia so that's how I connect things to her. So, for her she's Canadian and also has African heritage, which is Gambian. So, she's learning her Canadian heritage, from her father and also learning her Gambian heritage from me. So she's both. She's not just Canadian or she's not just African." (December 11, 2021)

Gabriel added that her child's participation in church and other religious activities, including singing religious songs in the Indigenous language contributes to her continuous understanding of her identity.

Community collectivism and Cultural immersion.

The relationships with other members of the diverse Black African groups and the interconnectedness between people in the African community play a central role in each person's identity. The participants highlighted the importance of such community collectivism in their identities and the significant role it will play in the experience of future Black Africans in Canada. Community collectivism is one of the main characteristics of African Indigenous knowledge, which teaches people to approach issues from a group perspective and guides them to act and made decision with full cognizance of the impact on the larger community. This characteristic was a unique and resourceful tool for governance in the pre-colonial African context and can be a powerful tool in addressing issues within the Black African community. The participants noted that we live in a society where one Black African's action is easily and usually interpreted and stereotyped as the action of the peoples who identity with that group. Inasmuch as this should be discouraged, it can also be leveraged to provide strength, support and guidance to the Black Africans through their connections and relations with each other.

Yodit has observed how the community members come together and draw on the Indigenous

ways of governance and conflict resolution to solve problems amongst the community members without full reliance on the Western governance systems in Canada. She noted that this usually results in amicable solutions that do not further disrupt the family dynamics as compared to the Western approach. From her experience, inasmuch as this African Indigenous approach to governance is not perfect, some of the strategies that have been adopted by African community organizations have helped to address certain issues. She added that,

> So, like being born and raised here, I have to commend, I think mostly my mom because she was very adamant when we were kids. Not always successful at creating… like the attitude she had was our house is Eritrea. That's it. You know, when we step into this house, we have our house rules. We have our cultural rules. It doesn't matter what's out there. We have our values, our customs or traditions, and you're going to follow them whether you like it or not, you know. So, that was really kind of a foundation for me as a child and part of that too was, you know, understanding the customs that traditions, how you relate to other community members, how you speak to elders. You know, certain traditions and customs or religious events were just mandatory, right? Like, no, you have to go to church, and this is something that is very important to us. And then the next day, we have this activity and other families come over and we celebrate together. You know, these are how I think it starts to build sort of the foundational aspects of like, practices that just become normal. In in your everyday way of being so, it's not a question on like, we celebrate Christmas on January 7th, because we followed the Julian calendar, we are Orthodox. So, I usually tell people like oh, we celebrate two Christmases, we celebrate the Canadian one, but we also celebrate this other Abyssinian, arbitrary Ethiopian Orthodox Christmas. And so that's something that we do all the time now. And I could imagine that for the rest of my life, that's probably going to be something that I do always and I probably teach to my kids or nieces and nephews. (December 11, 2021).

Gabriel highlighted the need to be cognizant of cultural evolution over time. The first-generation Black African immigrant graduate student's cultural experiences from their respective countries in Africa may have evolved and should, therefore, be presented differently in certain situations in Canada. There is an opportunity to leverage the experiences of different Black African Immigrant Graduate Student's experiences in Canada to guide the unlearning and relearning process that can be used to support the future generations. The redefinition of the new identity as a result of the cultural evolution over time will be supported through a community collective approach. He noted that association with his national African community organization in Alberta and participation in their activities helped him to learn more about important issues such as financial literacy within Canadian context.

Joseph also noted that the community collectivism approach can be used to support the transfer and sustainability of the Indigenous languages and other cultural activities for the future generation. He, however, emphasized that the impact of this approach is to a greater extent dependent on the economic and socio-cultural power available to the African community.

From the cultural immersion perspective, Kila shared that "storytelling is a strong tool that was used in transferring information, knowledge and wisdom while growing up and it has been a very helpful tool in explaining certain incidents to the next generation" (December 11, 2021).

Obaapa shared that the exposure and connection to the African culture makes her want to know more and it creates awareness of the cultural richness of the African heritage. Also, knowledge about other immigrant cultures makes her more curious about her own culture and African background.

Multicultural Analysis

The Canadian multiculturalism is a national identity characteristic that is well known to most people globally, particularly to immigrants in Canada. Inasmuch as multiculturalism is esteemed as a unique Canadian identity, its meaning differs to diverse groups of people depending on their background, experience and what they have been exposed to either from inside or outside of Canada. In order to understand the experiences of Black African Immigrant Graduate students in Canada, the participants were asked about their understanding of Canadian multiculturalism with regards to their identity and education. This section is an analysis of their responses including the insights they shared on the impact of Canadian multicultural on future generations of Black Africans.

The participants began by sharing their understanding of Canadian multiculturalism, which was followed by the positioning of Black African identity in Canadian multiculturalism and then their perspective on whether multiculturalism contributes to the reclamation of Black African identity. They also shared some of the challenges that hinder the reclaiming of Black African identity through education in Canada as well as some opportunities that the Canadian multiculturalism presents to Black Africans. This section also includes the participants insights into multicultural education and their recommendations to support the reclamation of Black African's identities within Canadian multiculturalism.

Understanding Canadian Multiculturalism

The participants were asked about what they know about Canadian multiculturalism and what it means to them either at the individual or societal level. Their responses revealed that they had all gained some meaning or understanding of multiculturalism based on different experiences and interactions with others or from the theoretical explanation of what it stands for from academia. Some of them were confused with what the term stands for within Canadian society because of the

dichotomy between the theoretical or true meaning of the term and their experiences with it in Canada. According to Kahika (2022),

> First, that state multiculturalism policy obscures how Blackness is socially constructed and subjugated in relation to a perceived norm of white dominance. Second, that multiculturalism commodifies diversity as a 'resource' by seeming to advance the well-being of Black Canadians, while leaving unperturbed the insidious co-existence of domination and oppression at the crux of capitalist society. Effectively, Canada's multiculturalist policy reinforces socio-economic boundaries of belonging and unbelonging, by marketing ideals of a post-racial society. Contradictorily, Canada sustains its political-economic interests as a progressive and inclusive society, by commodifying and obscuring Blackness using the principle of multiculturalism. (p. 438)

The participants responses to their understanding of multiculturalism in Canada were:

Gabriel described multiculturalism as a way of embracing your own culture and integrating into the new culture of the county, which in this case is Canada. This is the perception he has gathered based on his theoretical knowledge of the concept and how it has been portrayed by others in the Canadian society.

Lebo shared that she is aware of Canada's pride in the national multicultural identity, but she has been baffled by the lack to representation and visibility of Black people as part of the Canadian multiculturalism. "Canada prides itself on being a multicultural society but I remember like when I first got here like yes, but I'm not seeing the Black people and that kind of made me feel a little bit uncomfortable" (October 10, 2021).

Francis shared that he views multiculturalism as a mere act of patronage in the Canadian society. He expressed that the way Canada has approached and practiced multiculturalism does not

represent a genuine attempt to embrace the different cultures and embrace the diversity that are represented. "There is a tokenism approach to multiculturalism in Canada" (August 16, 2021).

Kila's understanding stems from the multiculturalism policy and Act in Canada.

My understanding of that is in a nutshell, it really seeks to promotes all or supposed to promote the identity of the different ethnic cultural groups found in Canada for them to be able to maintain or live out their identity's their cultures as they are and seen as just equally important our contributors. Right? So, there's no one culture that is superior to another, which is kind of the idea behind the multiculturism Act and any of the programs etc. that are then funded and pursued under the name of multiculturalism. (June 5, 2021).

According to Joanna,

So, they say Canada is a multicultural country, sure, but when we come here, they want us to like give up some of the cultures and be more Canadian, which I still don't get what it is. I've been here sixteen years. What is Canadian culture, right? So, I was like I can still be Canadian immigrant Canadian, but I still want to keep my values, my traditions. My culture doesn't really affect anything I feel like I'm adding more to the community that I'm in by being more diverse so I'm not too sold under multiculturalism of Canada. (October 29, 2021).

Joseph shared that,

Sometimes I don't really know what it means. I guess the simplest way of thinking about it is that most people here come from somewhere else. The other way of thinking about it is that they try to do this EDI think, and try to incorporate everyone as equal whether you're Black or white, whether you believe in God or not, whether you are I mean, no matter your specificity or peculiarities, cultural, professional, or racial they try to treat everyone that's equal and make it one nation, one nation with diverse people or origins. (October 30, 2021).

Deborah in expressing her understanding of multiculturalism noted that it is Canada's way of showing that it has an abundance of cultures, and she hopes that the goal for this concept would be to uplift all the different groups of people.

Yodit indicated that she is aware of the Canadian government's legal presentation of multiculturalism, which acknowledges that,

> We are all from different cultures and we are multicultural and all of us are equal and Canada is a democracy that allows the civil liberties of all people to practice and to be who they are without compromising their identity. (August 20, 2021)

Status of Black African Identity in Canadian Multiculturalism

Black Africans constitute part of the Canadian multicultural society but the extent to which this group is given the opportunity to fully live out and express their identity in Canada is uncertain. The participants shared their experiences on how and/or if multiculturalism has helped them to express and live within the context of their African identity in Canada.

According to Elizabeth, the Canadian multiculturalism helps immigrants to retain and celebrate her African identity and to pass on the knowledge to the children and next generation. This perception is founded on her experience with an immigrant preschool where the use of the Indigenous language is prioritized over English and the former is required for enrollment. She believes that this approach reinforces and strengthens the children's connection to their Indigenous languages and creates space for them to embrace their identity from an early stage in their development.

Francis on the other hand shared that there are limitations created within the Canadian multicultural society that create barriers for diverse populations, particularly, Black Africans to find full expression of themselves or identity and to address the issues and concerns that confronts us.

He further noted that the Canadian education system for instance is rooted in western philosophies and traditions and there is a sense of rigidity in the structures, which does not leave room for others from the non-dominant groups to express their real selves. He asserts that multiculturalism is presented as a concept that seeks to appreciate the different ethnicity and cultures but the true expression of what it stands for, which is to present equal opportunity for all people, is not well integrated in society. He added that, for instance, the level of commitment that is needed from leaders in the education system is not yet available; however, there are limited opportunities that can be leveraged as foundations to build a more equitable experience for the culturally diverse populations like Black Africans.

> My identity is constructed by the way, a dominant society, with dominant race, decides to construct me, right? And so, it is through that construction of a dominant perspective that I see myself, right? And so, there's that conflict of identity. The process of describing my identity has been a constant struggle as a result of this phenomenon. (August 16, 2021)

Joseph shared that multiculturalism is more like a concept.

> Contributing to identity….no, because multiculturalism is more of a concept or an idea to achieve. It's constantly taught, if I could put it that way. It is something that we look to and aim to achieve. I would say like Canada is not yet multicultural. It is trying to be multicultural, ultimately. So, in a sense, multiculturalism is an opportunity, it is an open door and you have to find your way to get in there, get your voice heard or to bring your culture to the table and if you see that way you could say, OK, it is an opportunity for that people or any other group that feels they are not heard enough or they are not involved in other aspects of society. (October 30, 2021)

> He added that the influence of multiculturalism on a person's identity from the cultural or

ethnic perspective can depend mostly on the individual's experience and their expectations when participating in the Canadian society. His position is that inasmuch as multiculturalism presents an

opportunity for people to be themselves, each person will have to decide on which aspect of their culture they want to foster and what they want to drop or leave behind as they integrate into Canada. He thinks that in some instances, it depends on what is legally allowed to be practiced in Canada even though it may be part of a person's identity from their home country.

Kila's response was that multiculturalism downplays, pushes down or quietens so many inequity issues that marginalized people, including Black Africans, face in Canada. Her view is that the Multiculturalism Act does not make room or establish processes to address the existing structural and systemic barriers that hinder opportunities for people to learn about their heritage and identities. She added that multiculturalism allows people to celebrate and recognize other people's heritage culture but within the confines of a dominant culture, which is not clearly defined.

> There is opportunity to a certain extent but what we're looking for or the depth that we're looking for which is really more structural and not you know the surface level, I don't think multiculturalism will necessarily get us there. It's a start, definitely an important start to that conversation because I think I mentioned this a few interviews ago, we've had multiculturism for years, decades in Canada, how much have we advanced you know as Africans in terms of other than you know yes you get the heritage festival you get some funding for you know different cultural groups you get some programs going, not to say they're not helpful, they are if they definitely moved us to some degree but structurally multiculturism hasn't addressed the structural challenges and it is not well positioned for Black Africans to get the impact that is expected to help in reclaiming our identities. (June 5, 2021)

Yodit added that Canadian multiculturalism theoretically presents Canada as a country that has had some racist history but welcomes everyone nonmatter their backgrounds as long as they believe in the democratic values; however, this is not the realistic experience of most people.

That Canada is this place where yeah it had some racist history in the past but since it opens

doors to people of all backgrounds it no longer has that problem and that is a mythology that

isn't real and in some ways we can say things have improved but in other ways we can say

that things have not improved. So, we've gotten better about how we talk about

multiculturalism, but we haven't gotten to the idealism of a multicultural society, which is

that people of colour are not experiencing disproportionate poverty, that's not true, we

haven't reached that yet. Racism is not a real thing anymore, that's not true, that hasn't

happened, we're not there yet. Or this idea that you know people of different backgrounds

will be treated equally regardless of what colour they are, what religion or whatever. So,

what I used to understand, this idea that Canada was welcoming to immigrants and I was a

benefactor of immigrants being welcomed here you start to recognize that Canada's

multiculturalism becomes kind of the way that they disarmer a conversation about race. It

begins to make it easier for white liberals, particularly, to not have to engage with racism

and more specifically Indigenous and anti-Black racism. You start to realize where there's a

rhetoric that is being expressed about multiculturalism and equity, diversity, inclusion and

even anti racism that is being said but the actions are not being followed and there's

something that we need to admit to and that is, multiculturalism was not invented for us, it

was invented for white people. It was invented for white people so that they don't have to

confront the racist past and how it's still continuing to shape the present and even the future.

(August 20, 2021)

According to Joseph,

Multiculturalism should become a culture rather than remain theoretical concept. Like

respect, you know, in any community where people don't feel respected or where people are

always treated differently the goal is to reach a point where everyone is respected for who

they are. To be treated fairly as a human being, so I think now we're more at this stage of

respect as a concept - multiculturalism's concept that we try to implement. But if it becomes

a culture or habit and natural way of doing things then we no longer need someone to

enforce it. (October 30, 2021)

Reclaiming Black African identity through Canadian multicultural education

To determine whether Black African identity can be reclaimed through their education

within the Canadian multicultural context, the participants were asked about their experience in

Canadian educational system and if that has contributed to the reclamation of their identity.

Reclaiming self-identity is described within this context as engaging in a process of finding out who

you really and truly are as a person. This is not about adopting a new personality and playing a role,

but it is about dropping all assumptions about who you were and who you should be now and

aligning with your truest self. Finding one truest self will help them to position themselves within

their environment. For Black African immigrant graduate students who are part of the minority

group in Canada, the reclamation process would help them to understand their position within the

Canadian multicultural society. As Moya & Hames-Garcia (2000) put it,

> Who we understand ourselves to be will have consequences for how we experience and
>
> understand the world. Our conceptions of who we are as social beings (our identities)
>
> influence--and in turn are influenced by--our understandings of how our society is
>
> structured and what our particular experiences within that society are likely to be. (p. 5)

Unfortunately, Black Africans in Canada have challenges and hurdles to overcome in order to

reclaim their identities. The participants shared some of these challenges particularly in relation to

their experiences with Canada's multiculturalism.

Challenges for Black Africans.

According to Gabriel, the mainstream educational system in Canada does not create

opportunities for Black African students to learn more about their culture either through the

curriculum or other structures in the academic sphere. He noted that this creates a disconnect between what Black African children learn at home and/or in the community through the diverse national associations and what they learn at school. His observation is that the community has taken on the responsibility of teaching the next generation about African ways of knowing and doing, which creates gaps in the different systems for acquiring knowledge for the Black African students. The families, communities and the students struggle to find ways to bridge that gap with no structures in place to support that process. "There is lack of inclusivity partly due to the educator's limited exposure to the experiences of Black and other marginalized students in Canadian schools" (November 15, 2021).

He further asserts that despite the recognition given to diverse ethnic cultures, there is limited value placed on the knowledge and contributions of Blacks who have migrated from Africa. An example he shared is when Black Africans who are well educated and have studied in English throughout their formal education are required to write and pass the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) before their knowledge and understanding of the English language can be validated in Canada for educational or career advancement. He added that educational literature and resources mainly reference North American writers and context even when being delivered to diverse African students. He emphasized that the difficulties and barriers that Black Africans experience in their educational and professional journey sends negative signals to the subsequent generations and discourages them from adopting similar pursuits where the structures in the Canadian multicultural society does not present equitable opportunities to Black Africans.

Yodit shared that in her experience with the Canadian educational system, western and European history and information is characterized as the norm or universal.

> The idea that the academy is the only place that Western society recognizes and legitimizes knowledge through a narrow process creates a genuine challenge as to how African knowledge can be translated into meaningful research. I feel like unfortunately there is a lot

of developments that need to be made in terms of African methodologies. Perhaps it is just

that I am not exposed to it. So, what are African epistemologies and methodologies? What

does that look like? How can I approach that? and I just don't have the tools and resources to

know how? and I don't even know who could train me or mentor me. How would research

done with and about Africa be shared or made accessible to Africans in an impactful way

when it is written in a particular way to meet western academic standards? If I was going to

try to pursue research or try to develop a curriculum, there are some things that you know I

certainly can do. But then there are just huge gaps that I'm not able to fill in. It requires

commitment and dedication from the academic institutions, from governments and also

from our communities more broadly to be able to meet that. Investment in Black African

research, knowledges, curriculum development, including languages, is critical. (August 20,

2021)

She added that aside the lack of African information in the curriculum to foster identity

reclamation, there is disproportionate representation of the different diverse groups of peoples

living in Canada.

The fact that we are living on Indigenous territory, and I grew up knowing nothing about

First Nations people is huge, huge violation of, like, you know, this to me is quite

ridiculous. We have to push for represented in the curriculum, we have to push for that to be

there. So that not only can our kids see themselves in the history of Canada. You know, not

only is it an accurate reflection, but also so that they could feel like they are a part of it.

(August 20, 2021)

Lebo shared that the lack of representation of African literature or information in the

Canadian education system and the universalization of European practices for all people is not

helpful to the process of Black African identity reclamation process. She added that it is important

to recognize that this has come to existence through colonialism, which then devalues and pushes

aside the Indigenous knowledges. "So, then we are always stuck trying to tell our stories, trying to communicate ourselves in European ways and in ways that are actually designed and made to exclude us" (October 10, 2021).

Obaapa shared that she did not learn about people that look like her through the Canadian educational curriculum. She was introduced to issues like slave trade during her visit to Ghana where she got the opportunity to visit slave trade castles.

> I learned more about the slave trade, and of understanding the slave trade by being in Ghana and going to slave trade castles like, I feel like I didn't gain a better understanding because they just didn't talk about it in school. They didn't focus on it in school, even like Black history in Canada. I didn't know anything. I didn't learn anything about Black history in Canada until what, couple years ago, a year ago when information has started to come out and I started reading on my own. Black people are never centered in in the curriculum. (August 15, 2022)

Elizabeth shared that the ethnic divisions, which is highlighted through Canadian multiculturalism, causes some groups to feel superior to others. She added that this results in the inequitable and unfair treatments of certain immigrants who belong to less privileged races, such as Black Africans.

> My husband experienced very unfair treatment in his job seeking experience, which diminished our trust in the system and also affected his enthusiasm to forge ahead confidently in his career. My children are harassed in school because of the color of their skin and there is no established system in place to address the issues that tend to impact the children from an early stage. (October 7, 2021)

Joseph noted that part of the goal for multiculturalism is to help people organize and contribute to the Canadian society and maybe carve their own space to exist with their values and beliefs.

However, sometimes when they come with multiculturalism, they already know, or they have already thought about what they want to put in there and what they don't want to put in there. This restricts opportunities for people, particularly Black Africans to define things for themselves, especially if it is not within the purview of what is presented. (October 30, 2021)

Francis noted that deconstructing and decolonization of African Indigenous knowledge within the education and the general Canadian multicultural system is dependent to a greater extent on the power dynamic that is at play in the Canadian society. Some of the questions he raised were: Who designs the curriculum? And who stands to gain from the content put in it? He asserts that the current content depicts white privilege and benefits a class of people who have benefited from systemic colonization over the years. He shared an example where an African graduate student studying in Canada focused the content of her academic paper within the African context and was penalized by a professor. According to Francis, this student was asked to overcome her 'Africaness' in order to integrate into the Canadian educational system.

According to Lebo, although there may have been some improvement in the recognition and appreciation of the diverse groups of people and cultures in Canada, there has been a deliberate attempt to leave out Black people. She cited the recent experience with COVID-19 pandemic where discriminatory policies were enacted against Black Africans in Canada as a revelation of our relinquishing position and location in this society. She reiterated her aversion for the discriminatory approach of Canadian multiculturalism against Blacks and indicated that:

I don't think I want a multicultural education. If Black people's perspectives on options for multicultural education are sought, the preference will be for an anti-Black racist and anti-racist education. Multiculturalism is actually one of the ways that anti-Black and anti-racist activism has been co-opted by the state. I think we need to problematize this idea of

multiculturalism, especially in our context where the majority of teachers are white. (October 10, 2021)

Kila approached this phenomenon from the power perspective. "With one particular group or grouping has that economic influence, economic power, we see that translated into a number of other areas or spheres in life" (June 5, 2021). She asserts that the role of power and who holds it should not be diminished or ignored in discussions on diversity and multiculturalism in Canadian society. She further notes that at the micro level, an analysis of the interplay within the personal, interpersonal and communal dimensions of power must be taken into consideration to understand issues that impact Africans within the multicultural spheres of Canada. She added that at the Macro level, it is critical to be cognizant of the influence of power in decisions relating to immigration and who is admitted into Canada, which reflects another dimension of power within the Canadian multicultural society. She shared that a recent depiction of this power is seen in the travel restrictions that were placed on people from select countries, mostly African countries, preventing them from migrating or entering Canada. She believes that all these factors play a role in how African Indigenous knowledge will be portrayed and received within a multicultural educational context.

Perceived opportunities for Black Africans.

According to Elizabeth, despite her limited knowledge and understanding of Canadian multiculturalism, she believes that it presents an ideology that creates space (with limitations for certain races, such as Black Africans) for others to function and participate in Canada. "In comparison with other European countries, immigrant students in Canada have a clearer pathway to becoming residents" (October 7, 2021).

Gabriel shared that through multiculturalism, spaces are created for ethnic groups and different African nationals to build separate communities that are reflective of their lived

experiences and ways of knowing and doing. He added that although mainstream institutions are not inclusive enough for Black Africans to find full expression of themselves, people still get the opportunity to connect with their community and to participate in practices that reinforces their identity.

Joanna shared that there is some merit in the multiculturalism albeit the inherent challenges that it presents.

> I guess because I'm still able to be who I am, a Black Woman Muslim, I'm still able to do my religion freely, I'm still able to carry my traditions when we have religious events, I'm able to dress up, I have a mosque in Edmonton, so, they do make room for that. But then also I'm able to learn other Canadian values, whatever it may be within it, right? (October 29, 2021)

Kila added that at a very superficial level, multiculturalism in Canada allows the different groups to celebrate and display elements that constitutes their respective cultures. Obaapa believes that multiculturalism gives her the opportunity to be a Ghanaian and a Canadian and she takes pride in both although there is not a clear distinction of how each of those identities are represented in her life.

Joseph's response was that "from the political perspective of multiculturalism, the quest for Canada to have diverse representation of the different cultures present an opportunity for Black people to be included in some spaces although the motive may be unclear or questionable in certain situations" (October 30, 2021). He reiterated that it sometimes begs to ask whether you are being included in a selection process by merit or to meet the multiculturalism requirement of a program. He further asserts that there are greater opportunities presented to Black Africans to express their identities within the multicultural groups or associations based on ethnicity, race, nationalism or other identity characteristics. As part of his observation, there is usually a better response to issues when it is presented by a 'multicultural' group than when it is presented by an individual. He shared

an instance where there was more uptake for a politician to pay attention to an issue when it is put forward by the Black Graduate Student Association as compared to the limited or rare chance of an individual to be heard. He asserts that the voices of the people are amplified when they work in groups and multiculturalism provides that opportunity to get together and strive for changes to issues such as discrimination of Blacks in different spheres of society.

Yodit shared that the multiculturalism policy in Canada, at some point was instrumental in creating an opportunity for Black people, including her parents to migrate to Canada in the 1980s. However, she noted that the extent to which this opportunity can be accessed and utilized positively is to a greater extent depended on the political will of the person or agency in the institution that is fostering multiculturalism in the way that it is ideally presented. She added that the discourse should eventually get to the conversation about racism, which will provide an entrance to engage in what will help to achieve real multiculturalism.

Recommendations

The participants shared that despite the challenges associated with multiculturalism, there are some opportunities that can be leveraged through the educational system to support Black Africans to reclaim their identities.

Increase Black African Presence in Canadian Academy.

Francis noted that considering the increased number of Black African graduate students in the Canadian educational system, it will be prudent to produce scholarship in great numbers, forge alliances within the community, and create coalitions and networks to make African scholarship readily available. He believes that this will lay a good foundation and options for the future generation to build upon.

Even the way we construct our own identity as Africans, even the way we understand or how we are located historically or situated within a society, is framed within a Western

epistemology, right? And so a starting point for me as an emerging scholar, or someone who aspires to work in academia is that you know, through my work, through the networks, that I create, through the alliances that I make, there should be that conscious and incremental effort to create scholarships that seeks to amplify the African narrative, that seeks to amplify the African story in a way that is not filtered through a western epistemology but it positions me to tell my story in a unique way, right? Tell my story in a unique way that my son who I am training in Canada, a society that is experiencing continuous colonialism, would not be lost in that sort of Western hegemony, but would find resources, materials that can inform his own thought process, that can inform his own way of thinking, that can inform his worldview and enrich his experience in his educational, professional or whatever sort of experience that you want to describe. (August 16, 2021)

Gabriel recommends the need for an increased presence of Black people in Canadian academy to lead the instruction of African literature. He gave an example of how African languages can be introduced into the Canadian multicultural education to increase its relevance. He shared that,

Africa in its diversity has different languages spoken by various people around the continent. It will not be ideal or feasible to subject every African in Canada to study one particular language or a specific African epistemology as the standard to include African knowledge into the education system. Different African programs of study can be developed and taught at different spaces to foster that African inclusive goal. For example, a Black African professor can create a course on African studies that is based on his or her background, which will build the knowledge of others about that group of Africans. Although this will not be a full representative of the entire African experience, it can be well positioned to advance the knowledge base about African Indigenous knowledge for a particular group of people. This initiative can also be connected to efforts at the community

level to advance the collective goals, views and ideologies of the people. However, all this will need to leverage the opportunities provided within a critical multicultural space and is depended to a greater extent on the financial provisions available to implement these structures. This approach also presents an opportunity to expose the next generation to the various African Indigenous languages and the other aspects of the culture. For example, the community members can teach the children mathematics using the African language and use practical and relatable examples from the community. Additionally, African Indigenous ways of doing things such as storytelling can be used as the medium of communicating and transferring of information and knowledge within the community setting. Government support and assistance is needed to advance such a multicultural educational initiative at the community level if multiculturalism is considered a priority for Canada. This will be a unique way to appreciate the multicultural identity of the nation (November 15, 2021)

Gabriel added that African educators must find opportunities to deconstruct the negative stereotypical perception about Africa. He cited an example as the lack of knowledge about the fact that Africa is a continent with different countries, which has diverse groups of people who have differing cultures. He believes that the misconceptions about Africa must be deconstructed, particularly within the educational spaces to ensure that the globally perceived receptive nature of Canadian multicultural identity that is portrayed to the external world will be reflected in the living experiences of Black Africans in Canada.

Joanna shared her experience at the graduate level to emphasize the need for more Black African personnel presence in the Canadian educational institutions.

There was only two Black Africans in my cohort. Well, I'm from Gambia and she was from Ghana, so we were the ones always going back and forth and bringing stuff up and we were like 'well actually where we are from, you know, blah blah blah, where I'm from you know' and added that context. So, we need more diversity, not just in professorial level, but also in

the graduate student level to bring in different perspectives and maybe expand on all the

topics that we bring in and make it more worldwide issues where you can apply more

widely than just the American context, which I totally get. But someone like me and the

other girl that was from Ghana like we live in Canada but if we were to go home, we need to

apply everything we have learned here. (October 29, 2021)

Build student's capacity to contribute towards the Economic development of Africa.

The participants noted that helping Black African immigrant graduate students to build their

capacity to contribute towards the economic development of Africa is a way to curtail the

continuing impact of colonialism, imperialism, and/or neo-colonialism. They assert that the minds

of most Africans have been corrupted and distorted through colonialism and that a decolonized

educational approach in Canada could be an opportunity for liberation. The participants strongly

expressed that an improved economic and political situation in Africa will have an impact on how

Africans are positioned in the west and internationally. They believe that an improved economic

and political situation in Africa will boost the confidence of Black African immigrant graduate

students in Canada and encourage them to highlight issues about Africa and their identity through

their education.

A critical analysis of the educational opportunities accorded to Black African immigrant

students while studying in Canada has revealed that multiculturalism can be used as a tool to either

liberate the students from the impacts of colonialism or perpetuate it. Considering that the negative

effects of colonialism has carried forward to generations of Africans in different aspects of their

lives, the implementation of educational initiatives to promote and support the genuine

decolonization of Black Africans will potentially have a positive rippling effect on future

generations of Black Africans in Canada.

From a multicultural educational context, Black African immigrant graduate students while studying in Canada can be given the opportunity to study and acquire knowledge about the economic and political interest of Africa and be supported to develop strategies that will address issues amongst Africans.

Joseph noted that such a conscious effort will present an opportunity for the students to pay attention and research about the issues in Africa. He added that it would encourage them to contribute to the democratic stability and economic development of their home country or to the upliftment of the greater Africa continent. He further asserts that the student's involvement and interest in the issues in Africa will help strengthen the pride and confidence that other Africans have in their identity even while living in Canada. He noted that inasmuch as Black Africans can successfully integrate and settle in Canadian society, their association or affiliation to the African nationality will always form a significant part of their identity. He believes that it is, therefore, prudent for Black African Immigrant Graduate students to contribute to the development of their countries, and the greater Africa continent, while living in Canada or the west in order to influence the global perception that will be projected on Africans no matter where we find ourselves.

> The level of economic, social or political power a group of people have determines the level of influence they exert or position they assume within the multicultural space. What we can achieve as Africans in the diaspora is dependent on the global positioning of our countries of origin. The economic condition in Africa will impact to some extent what Black Africans can do or the influence they have outside the continent. (October 30, 2021)

Gabriel also recognized that it is importance for Africans to have economic power and asserts that the global perception about the African continent that Black African immigrant graduate students are associated with contributes to the level of pride and confidence they have in their identity. He added that inasmuch as Africans like to pride themselves in their African identity, unfavorable economic situations deter Black African immigrant graduate students and other Black

African immigrants from going back home to Africa. According to him, efforts to overcome imperialism and neocolonialism in Africa is needed to build and strengthen the African identity on a global level. He further noted that an improved economic situation in Africa will encourage more Black Africans in the diaspora to return to their home country in Africa and reclaim the benefits associated with the closeness to the land.

Kila highlighted the significant role of economic power to national pride and identity. She asserts that it is important for all Black Africans to explore options to contribute to the economy in Africa either by going back home after school to apply their knowledge or contribute in other ways while in Canada. According to her, different situations influence these decisions but no matter how we contribute, our efforts help to create a foundation for how Africans or future generations can position or reclaim their identities in Canada.

Increase awareness and support the use of African Indigenous Languages.

Another suggestion from the participants to help Black African immigrant graduate students reclaim their Black African identity is the recognition of African Indigenous languages. They noted that Black African immigrant graduate student's knowledge in or association with a particular African Indigenous language plays a significant role in affirming their African identity. Joanna expressed that teaching the future generation of Black Africans their Indigenous language and encouraging them to use it is a great opportunity to uphold the culture of the people. She connected the lack of interest in the African Indigenous language to neocolonialism, which cannot be overlooked considering the struggle for global economic power and influence. She questions that to what extent can Black Africans pursue decolonization and full reclamation of their identities when the system back home in the home country is to a greater extent still dependent on colonial ideologies? She gave an example as the education system and other institutions in most African countries that are still connected to the colonizer's ways of doing things. She noted that the value

placed on the African Indigenous languages and the enthusiasm to teach and use it should be supported through multicultural education and reinforced with efforts to change the status quo, regarding colonialism, in Africa. She asserts that leveraging some of the assets we still hold such as the African language and culture will help guide us in the process of reclaiming our identities.

To reiterate the support for Indigenous languages, Kila added that it is important to recognize the unique colonial experiences of African countries and the impact that the delineation or disregard of African Indigenous languages has had on our culture. According to her this negative trend is continuing in the post-colonial era where the languages that most Africans are compelled to learn and use for their official communication is the foreign colonial language. Kila noted that this highlights the need for an in-depth decolonization of the minds of Africans as an attempt to undo, to whatever extent possible, the damage caused to the people as a result of colonialism.

Yodit shared that her father taught her how to read and write in the African Indigenous language, but she thinks that there should be an established system for the future generation to learn. She suggested the need for the cultural aspect to be built into the Canadian educational system to support the future generations of Black African Canadians.

> My father taught me how to read and write in our alphabet, it is called *Kittens*. He taught me that when I was a child. And so, I still retained some ability to read and write. But, you know, I think there needs to be formal education. There has to be a way to, you know, do what we do with Canadian schools here. Other communities…. like I heard growing up other kids will go to Spanish schools. And I actually started taking Spanish with the Spanish community when I was done university. I'm like, well, you know, this is something that can be easily done for our communities as well. So, there needs to be some kind of formal education or at least resources and materials that are very readily accessible, whether it's on the Internet or buying books for children that introduce them to words in our African languages. I think it's helpful. (August 20, 2021)

Elizabeth noted that as an immigrant with the African Indigenous language as a mother tongue, the foreign or colonial language creates a great barrier, especially within academia. She believes that the ability to translate information from the colonial language to the Indigenous language gives students a better comprehension of concepts. According to her, the first-generation Black African immigrants who do not have English or French as a first language are able to grasp concepts and apply them well when they translate it into the African Indigenous language. She further noted that the transfer of information from the first to the second generation is effectual when the latter knows the Indigenous language. She, therefore, recommends that the future generation of Black Africans should be introduced to the Indigenous language in order to bridge the gap and strengthen the relationship between them and the future generation.

Indigenous Relationship Analysis

This section delves into the relationship between Black Africans and Indigenous people of Canada and the impact of that relationship on the former's identity and educational experience. It is an analysis of the participant's perspective on how Black Africans could reclaim their identities and navigate the nuances of their educational experience through possible relationship with the Indigenous people of Canada.

I begin with the participants knowledge about the Indigenous people of Canada, including the foundation of that knowledge. I allude to some of the participants personal and individual or close relational experiences with Indigenous people in Canada. I then close this section with the participant's reflection on that relationship, thus, lessons and opportunities that Black Africans can use for the reclamation of their identities and the impact on their educational experience.

Knowledge and Personal Relationships

None of the participants claimed to have in-depth knowledge about the Indigenous people

of Canada, thus, their awareness level ranges between limited to no knowledge. Although most of the information the participants shared about the Indigenous people of Canada was gained through academia, there was no consistent or intentional or systemic approach to guide them through the process. The participants indicated that most of the information or knowledge that they have acquired about the Indigenous people of Canada was from courses, literature, media, seminars, workshops, and other group gatherings.

Additionally, the participants were asked to share personal experiences they have with Indigenous people or persons, if any. The goal for this added layer was to find out if the participants had personal or individual interactions or relationships with an Indigenous person(s) in Canada and to analyze the impact of that relationship. A few of the participants had personal relationships with an Indigenous person(s) of Canada outside the collective or group engagements.

Francis shared that he has limited knowledge on the issues relating to Indigenous peoples and the little information he has gathered while living in Canada was through the media and interactions with other non-Indigenous people in academia and colleagues within the professional spaces he has worked in.

According to Gabriel, he found out from the research he did prior to migrating to Canada that the Indigenous people are the original inhabitants of the land. He learned more about the right terminologies and recognition of the diversity amongst the Indigenous people of Canada upon his arrival in the country. He added that his participation in seminars exposed him to some of the nuances around the treaties from the perspectives of the Indigenous people of Canada. "I had the opportunity to hear first-hand narrative from a First Nation chief on their experiences in the signing of treaties as well as the journey for truth and reconciliation with the Canadian government" (November 15, 2021). He noted that his initial perception about Indigenous people upon arrival in Canada was good and welcoming people.

In terms of personal or individual relationships, Gabriel shared that the individual Indigenous students that participated in his class were studious, brilliant, kind and were always willing to share songs and cultural resources, such as throat singing, which was new to him. He added that the interactions with the respective Indigenous students on campus revealed some shared negative experiences on and outside campus, such as racism, discrimination as well as the remnants of the extensive impact of colonialism (although Nigeria had experienced a different form of colonialism from the British).

Lebo's knowledge about the Indigenous people of Canada was developed through participation in programs and events in the academic space. She shared that she is aware that they are diverse groups of peoples, they have been contentiously erased from the land, displaced, under resourced through colonialism, and that the takeover of land was facilitated through colonialism to develop the Canadian state. She is also aware that there was a concerted effort of cultural genocide through residential schools and afterwards through the foster care system. She knows that they are disproportionately represented in the incarcerated facilities in the prison system, in the care system, and in the foster care system and they experience poor health outcomes similar to Africans and Caribbean - Black folks. She added that finding out the background to the truth and reconciliation committee's work and other historical experiences between the Indigenous people of Canada and the government of Canada was eye opening to her as an immigrant.

> The initial picture about Canada was this good place to live right, like there's no racism, blah blah, blah as compared to the United States. Right? Knowing of the experiences about the Indigenous people was the turning point to being exposed to certain aspect of the colonial history of Canada. A lot of the learning has been influenced really by my being here [in Canada] and learning about and hearing about Indigenous cultures. (October 8, 2021)

Joanna shared that she started learning about the Indigenous people of Canada during her

undergraduate program where she had the opportunity to take Native Studies courses. She noted that she is aware that the Indigenous peoples of Canada have their own histories, traditions, cultures, and shared values as the First peoples. She added that she is also aware of the intergenerational trauma that they are still going through as a result of colonization and the efforts they are putting forward to bring more attention to their histories and their trauma and changes that need to be made.

Regarding any individual or close relationships, Joanna shared that she connected personally with Indigenous people in Canada while she was volunteering at the Faculty of Medicine. She noted that this gave her the opportunity to witness, from a personal level, how her Canadian Indigenous colleagues interacted with the elders and others in the community as part of the process of rebuilding the educational curriculum and incorporating Indigenous learnings and cultures into medicine in the academy.

Kila's knowledge about the Indigenous people was acquired through interactions with others at the professional level and exposure to the issues that impact them; access to such knowledge was gained through her affiliation with institutions that offer programs and community support to different groups. She indicated that her initial information about the experiences of Indigenous people in Canada was from interactions with friends and colleagues at work and in school. She added that she gained more knowledge through personal reading and participation in select graduate level courses that highlighted the impact of colonialism on the Indigenous people of Canada.

Obaapa shared that she is generally aware of the different groups of Indigenous people in Canada, thus, the distinction between First Nations, Metis and Inuit. She added that she was introduced briefly to residential schools at the elementary school level in Canada and that nothing else was mentioned about Indigenous people of Canada until at the graduate level where she took a course that highlighted some of the information and issues about them.

Elizabeth admits to having limited knowledge about the Indigenous people of Canada. She

shared that she is generally aware of the residential school system and some of the issues that affect the Indigenous people of Canada in society.

Joseph also shared that his limited knowledge about the Indigenous people was gained through the media and added that he had no idea about their existence prior to migrating to Canada.

Yodit admits to having limited information regarding the Indigenous people of Canada and most of what she knows has been acquired informally through friends and others in the community. According to her, another avenue that exposed her to information about the Indigenous people of Canada's ways of knowing and doing was when she took an Indigenous methodologies course to support her graduate research work. She added that although she received all her education in Canada, most of the information that was taught in school was centered around the creation of Canada with a very watered-down version of Canada's relationship with its Indigenous people. She shared that although there were limited instances to interact with Indigenous people of Canada (which was her experience when she lived on the North side of Edmonton that was really diverse and had a large urban Indigenous community) such interactions help to experience the realities of how the issues impact people in real time instead of what is presented as part of a number.

She further noted that Indigenous people's discourse is presented within the framework of problems that Canada has to fix without really talking about how we got here.

> So, the state of homelessness: it's obvious in Edmonton that there is a disproportionate number of Indigenous people who are homeless. You talk about the prison system. You know, there it is obvious. There's always talk about, you know high rates of imprisonment for Indigenous communities or the care system and the number of disproportionate Indigenous kids who are in foster care………Something that was always apparent was that you know this problem? There's a problem here that we need to manage, and that's the way that Canada presents Indigenous peoples' relationship to other Canadians. It is through a

framework of a problem that needs to be fixed, right? Without really talking about how we got here. I can recall, you know, my sister and I were talking when I was an undergraduate, because we had never heard of residential schools until we hit university undergraduate, and it wasn't until the end and we were like how the heck did we not learn about this? How did we not know what kind of destructive……you know, it's like you knew something was wrong, but you never understood the historical reasons for why we were at the place that we were. And then we never also talked about Indigenous sovereignty, the diversity of Indigenous peoples and languages - they tended to be thought of as a monolith. Because there is a lot that can be celebrated, but that wasn't generally the way that Indigenous people in Canada would often be talked about. (August 25, 2021)

Relational Reflection

The participants reflected on the positioning and relationship between the Black African Immigrants in Canada and the Indigenous people of Canada. Although the participants indicated having limited knowledge and varied levels of engagements or personal connections to the Indigenous people of Canada, there were some consistencies in the perspectives they shared from their reflection of the relationship between the two groups. They had more questions than answers from their observations of the relationship between Black African Immigrants and the Indigenous people of Canada.

Kila approached this from the positionality of Black African immigrants in Canada. In her reflection on the relationship between the two groups, she asserts that it is critical to pay attention to how Black African immigrants position ourselves, and how we are perceived? She shared that there is an existing tension between Black African immigrants and the Indigenous people of Canada, which is based on the positioning of the former as 'settlers' in Canada. Some of the questions that she puts forward as she reflects on this are:

Although Black African Immigrant Graduate students migrated from Africa and settled on turtle island, would they be considered as settlers within the context of other colonial settlers? What do activities such as land acknowledgements mean and what is our role? Even amongst Blacks and the tensions that exist between Black immigrants who relocated 'willingly' and Blacks who were forced to migrate as a result of the enslavement system, how do all these groups of Blacks interrelate with the Indigenous people and what would be the nature of that relationship? (June 19, 2021)

Yodit shared that there is lack of horizontal conversation between the Indigenous people of Canada and Blacks because this relationship is often being mediated by White discourse. She asserts that these two groups should have the opportunity to build their own relationship without the interference from the dominant White group. She reiterated the issue of Black 'settlership' as critical to the relationship between the two groups and shared her thinking and position on the issue.

I for right now settled at this idea of Black settlership in the way that it is interpreted by previous Black settler communities in that they too were seeking refuge from the Jim Crow of the United States, and they fled. For them pioneering and settlership isn't so much about creating a nation that's going to oppress other people, but rather it's in seeking freedom and safety and security. So that's how I would kind of describe myself.

On the other side, Joanna believes that Black immigrants have some level of 'privilege' accorded to us by virtue of our association to the colonizers or White or European settlers in Canada.

Regarding colonization of Indigenous people in Canada I believe as immigrants we need to also acknowledge some of the privileges we've had coming to Canada that some Indigenous people are still trying to gain access to, so we need to also acknowledge how we're kind of taking stuff away from them by being here. I feel like we kind of tend to miss that when we're always focusing on the settlers that are here and have benefited and have privilege

from all that has happened. But I also think that immigrants to Canada also have the responsibility to acknowledge some of the privileges that we have gained as well. (November 5, 2021)

Observed Measures or Strategies

Despite the issues that impact the relationship between the Black African immigrants and the Indigenous people of Canada, the participants believe that the relationship between these two groups could result in positive outcomes. The participants were asked if they have observed any unique measures or strategies that are used by the Indigenous people of Canada and could potentially be adopted by Black African immigrants for the reclamation of the African identity. Some of the measures and strategies of the Indigenous people of Canada, which the participants identified were, commitment to deconstruct western methodologies; lead narratives on Canadian Indigenous issues; united front to address specific issues that impact them (exercising the power of strength in numbers); determination and resilience; intentional investment in future generation; and appreciation of Indigenous cultures. Their responses are highlighted below.

Gabriel shared that Indigenous people of Canada exemplify an admirable energy and drive to address oppressive issues by employing decolonization strategies to deconstruct the various measures presented in society, particularly, in the education system.

Each time you find an Indigenous professor or student pursuing higher education the first thing that comes to their mind is how to deconstruct this whole Western space or this whole Western ideology about educational system itself. So, they try to use their own educational scholarship, one to promote their own culture. (November 15, 2021)

He added that the Indigenous people of Canada also take a lead and ownership of Indigenous narratives and pursue the truth relentlessly until their version is proven right. "Nobody will tell your story if you don't tell it yourself. If you let others to tell your story, it gets distorted. Yeah. So, they

try to tell their own story themselves" (November 15, 2021). She noted that these characteristics depicted by the Indigenous people of Canada strengthened his idea to focus his research and other educational pursuits on advancing the knowledge on issues that impact Nigeria, like Boko Haram, and issues that are also relevant to Africans. He asserts that the experiences of Black Africans in Canada cannot be accurately narrated if shared from the perspective of an outsider and noted that this has been the underlining factor for his interest to add to the empirical evidence on African music, which has a tremendous impact on Black Africans and their [religious] participation in Canadian society.

> We are pushing through the wall, and Indigenous people have deconstructed that idea that knowledge is not central. The knowledge is decentralized, so which means they are proud of their own culture and they tell their own story. Everybody has to take ownership of their own story and tell your whole story and define and forge their own identity for themselves. (November 15, 2021)

Kila shared her perspective as an educator at a community college.

> In a Community College setting like I am at with the very few Indigenous instructors and/or leaders that are there, particularly in the areas of social work, in nursing, what I see happening is the Canadian Indigenous people are really pushing for curriculum and ways of teaching that reflect Indigenous ways. (June 19, 2021)

Gabriel noted that although the Indigenous people of Canada are being relegated and marginalized, one thing that stands out for them is their united front for advocacy. Joanna reiterated this characteristic by highlighting that despite the diversity amongst the Indigenous people of Canada, they come together to focus on an issue and speak with a common purpose. She shared that:

> The main thing I do admire about the Indigenous community is how they all connect, even

though they are from different parts of the province and different bands, they still come together for the collective and take on the issues that affect them altogether, instead of saying well under Metis band, this is what we're going to put forward or someone who's from the Cree nation….. they always come together. So, I feel like as African community in North America we need more connection, so I guess instead of having like the Ghanaian community, the Gambian community, the Nigerian community, maybe we can expand more on the African community and then bring in all the different communities into that and then together push forward because it's a guarantee that whatever issue affects one Community will affect all of us because we are from the same continent. So, I would like to see more connection with the different formed African communities. (November 5, 2021)

Joanna added that the Indigenous people of Canada's ability to collaborate amongst themselves gives them the opportunity to leverage the strength from the number of people working together to advocate for change and/or address issues affecting their people. She shared that,

Strength in numbers is another characteristic that I admire. I feel like they found strength in numbers, right? So, for instance the Indian Residential Schools that affected everyone of them, not just one Cree nation or Metis, no it affected all of them. So, they came together and pushed the government to acknowledge the attempted genocide, pushing the government to do more surveys of all these old locations where residential school used to be and asserting that there could be potential grave sites. Pushing for reconciliation and for compensation and demanding like, for example, for the Pope to come to Canada and apologize. Because again, strength in numbers, so they all bonded together and push for all the issues that are affecting them. Like look at how many years some Indigenous communities have boil water advisory in Canada. Stuff like that they are all bonding together. It's not just one community, all of them. Even the communities that are not affected are standing behind them and demanding clean drinking water. So, I believe it's strength in

numbers and joining forces that way. (November 5, 2021)

According to Joseph, the Indigenous people of Canada's determination to establish the decolonized historical truth about their people and their journey in Canada is encouraging. He noted that the constant and persistence with which different evidence about Indian Residential Schools, for instance, were gathered and presented caused the colonizers to admit to the wrongs done and to apologize for it. From his perspective, what holds Black people back from diligently seeking justice is the quest for survivalism.

Obaapa noted that the Indigenous people of Canada are vested and committed to supporting the future generations.

Just the fact that they are always thinking about generations to come and it's like when they make decisions it's with that in mind and I'm just always thinking about that even like with our political system, it's so quick, four years, you're in and you're out with the accompanying short-term policies that are made. It does not consider longevity. It's just like what can I do for my platform now? And it really frustrates me and it's frustrating living in a system like that because it's like you could almost forecast, well, something's probably going to go wrong since we're not thinking about long-term implications. And so, I really, really value that. The Indigenous people really put a lot of emphasis on that. (August 15, 2022)

Yodit shared her observation about the Indigenous people of Canada's appreciation of culture and their ways of knowing and doing and made some analogies based on her experiences in her community. Her observation was about the Indigenous people of Canada's interest in reconnecting to their traditional ways of knowing and doing, their quest for self-governance and their belief in traditional expert roles and responsibilities for communal living.

So, who do we see as knowledge holders? Well, in this world typically you need a professional title, right? But in my community, in my family it's my elders. And that's

something that we share with Indigenous peoples of Canada, that elders are knowledge holders.

What kind of ways did they have in terms of conflict resolution or in understanding the conception of justice or fairness? You know that seems really interesting, because ultimately, how you govern a people determines their relationship in the community. The way that you can resolve internal conflicts and it's also a reflection of values of the people of community.

They have medicine men or medicine women. We also had something very similar to that where you would go to a person in the community who had this knowledge, and that knowledge was passed down within their family. So, they were the knowledge keepers of, you know certain kinds of practices. You know people had roles and responsibilities, so all of these things, I tend to think about a lot more in terms of the governance and community dynamics issues around conflict resolution. (August 25, 2021)

Advise to Black African Immigrants

Based on the participants observations and reflection on the relationship between the Indigenous People of Canada and the Black African immigrants, they provided some advice for the latter to help with their identity reclamation and improve on their educational experience in Canada. Some of the advice they provided based on their experiences is shared below.

Joanna shared that her exposure to the history of the Indigenous people of Canada and their experiences with the colonizer encouraged her to learn more about herself and to build resilience in dealing with racism.

Knowing the history of Indigenous people and their experiences with the colonizers made me want to even push more and fight more and learn more about racism, discrimination and how to empower myself. Knowing the history is one thing but also knowing how to fight the system full of barriers build to block people like me and people like the Indigenous people.

I need to know how to breakdown those barriers. So that helped put me on a path to be like OK how can we dismantle this system? What can I do to contribute to dismantling this system? (November 5, 2021)

Kila shared that one of the issues that impede the advancement of Black African immigrants in Canada is the lack of unison and collective approach to addressing issues that impact us in Canada. She noted that Black African immigrants in Canada work on different initiatives to address the issues that affect them, but the individual approach is detrimental to our growth and advancement.

So, what we're doing is we're doing it in pockets so I'm not sure that as long as we're in pockets it cannot be impactful in the way I'm thinking about it. So, there's this need for a brotherly kind of base to anchor some of these actions, otherwise, it's going to be less impactful on an individual basis. (June 19, 2021)

To emphasize Kila's point on approaching issues from a united front, Lebo added that Black Africans in the diaspora need to acknowledge the different shades of Blackness around us and beyond and assess our relationships with each other.

Deeper conversations should be had to recognize and address some of the tensions that exist in order to find ways to overcome certain divisive issues and move ahead. For instance, if Africans are to establish an Afrocentric school, would the initiative be hampered by the tensions around what language will be taught or used as a medium of instruction? Or would consideration be given to priorities that are most beneficial to the greater Black African community? (October 28, 2021)

Lebo further asserts that Black African immigrants should look at the African cultural ways of knowing and doing from a non-colonial and western lens. She noted that inasmuch as we may want to question some aspects of the African culture, it's important for us to appreciate the wisdom

behind some of our cultural practices.

> Look at the culture from the perspective of the culture….. recognizing that we actually, look at our culture from a colonial perspective, right. And when we look at our culture from a colonial perspective, it's always backward. Progress is always defined in Western terms. And when it is defined in Western terms it is defined in neoliberal terms. So, you're always participating in a structure that is not designed for you, be that it is built on your exploitation. I think with Africans, we above all people, need to be at the forefront of conversations about decolonization because we need to also decolonize ourselves and unlearn all the ways that we've actually been taught to reject our cultures, our cultural knowing and experiences, and also to acknowledge the ways in which dominant ethnicities, some dominant ethnicities have dominated others and have performed cultural genocide. We do carry wisdom….Western culture is not the marker of progress. (October 28, 2021)

Yodit shared the need for language revitalization for Black African immigrants in Canada.

> The language has always been something for me that was very important because it felt like it gives me insight into a different world. Like a different way of thinking and expressing oneself, you know that also goes with music, that goes with arts that goes with all of these other cultural productions. And so, the importance of creating your own understanding of the world rather than relying on other models, other systems of the knowledge systems and going back and creating new ways of interpreting understanding of our existence and how we need to create a future for ourselves. A future that's good for Black people. I think that's a huge, huge thing that would be coming from what I am really excited to see and hear about is the idea of Indigenous futures or Black futures. (August 25, 2021)

Opportunity for stronger relationships

Inasmuch as the relationship between the Indigenous people of Canada and Black African

immigrants is complicated for different reasons, the participants believe that there is an opportunity and potential for a stronger and better relationship to be established if these two groups are given the chance to function by their own terms. They emphasized the need for allyship, particularly, to address issues that impact both groups of people.

Joanna noted that although the Indigenous people of Canada and Black African immigrants have different colonial experiences, one of the common phenomena that impact both groups is racism. According to her, the two groups have an opportunity to come together as allies to address issues such as racism and discrimination and work in unison to request for changes.

Yodit and Kila support the need for allyship to address issues that impact both Indigenous people of Canada and Black African immigrants. Kila noted that the commonalities and similarities between Blacks and Indigenous people based on historical colonial experiences as a shared legacy. She, therefore, believes that there is opportunity for the two groups to work together to advance decolonization efforts.

According to Yodit, allyship between Indigenous people of Canada and Black African immigrants will be a great opportunity to tackle serious issues, such as police violence. She also emphasized the need to connect with each other and find ways to learn from each other instead of mediating our relationship through whiteness or Eurocentric lens.

> We can tackle police violence for one, that's a big one. Well, it affects both the Indigenous and the Black community. So, this is where allyship will actually work between the two, right? Because what is affecting one community is also affecting another, maybe in different levels, but we're still in the same boat, right? Why don't we all come together and create that allyship and see how we can even expand on that to include more marginalized individuals into it. Because who are the majority in the prison population, for example in Canada, Indigenous people then Black people. These are the two, right? So, we have an opportunity

there to push for at least one thing when it comes to our communities and police violence, racism, incarceration, those are big ones, food insecurity. It's always in marginalized communities that are mostly affected. So, these are all issues we can all get behind on and push for it. But then we should have a uniform message and demand across board. (August 25, 2021)

Chapter Six: Conclusion - Discussions and Recommendations

This work started as a quest to increase the empirical evidence that highlights the experiences of Black African Immigrant Graduate students in Canada and to accomplish an academic achievement. However, the process of engaging with myself and others (participants) has revealed a deeper version of my identity and its evolving nature in relation to others and the environment. I consider this undertaking of an exploration research as part of the journey to liberate my mind and that of others from the effects of colonization and its current forms such as neo-colonialism, imperialism and post-colonialism. As others (Freire, 2015; Wa Thiong'o, 2008) have noted, understanding and valuing who we are, first as a valuable person with responsibility to the people and community, is critical to how we approach life and the choices we make outside the influence and gaze of the oppressor. The research purpose, literature review, theoretical and conceptual framework, methodology, data collection and analysis, as well and the findings from the study have been instrumental in bringing the work to where it is now. This contribution will fill in some of the gaps and add to the knowledge that is needed to support the growth and advancement of Black African Immigrant Graduate students in Canada and to amplify the voices of others who are oppressed.

The diverse Black population in Canada is increasing and in 2016, Africa ranked second as a source of newcomers in Canada representing 13.4% of the share between 2011 and 2016. According to Statistic Canada (2020) a significant proportion (7 out of 10) of Black adults are reported as having a post-secondary diploma and the immigrant population is generally more likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher than the non-immigrant population. In spite of the growing Black immigrant population coming through Canada's educational system, the Black African Immigrant Graduate students have not been given the opportunity to explore the influence of African Indigenous knowledge through the western academic institution despite Canada's

multiculturalism policy. The reasoning leading to this research was that Black African Immigrant Graduate students who are disconnected from their African Indigenous Knowledge are deprived of their true sense of identity, which impacts their approach to education. The main purpose of this study was to find out the influence of African Indigenous knowledge on the identity and education of Black African Immigrant Graduate students. It is also intended to introduce new knowledge that will foster growth and advancement of Black Africans as well as other immigrants in Canada by creating awareness and sharing resources that will encourage educational and government policy changes.

The questions that guided this study, first, inquired whether African Indigenous knowledge influences the identities and educational experiences of Black African Immigrant Graduate students and the impact of their experience on future generations of Black Africans in Canada. The second question was to find out if Canada's multiculturalism policy supports Black African Immigrant Graduate students in their reclamation of self and identity through their education and the impact on the future generation. Last but not the least, the final question sought to understand the relationship between Black African Immigrant Graduate students and the Indigenous people of Canada and if that relationship could help the former with their identity reclamation or impact their educational experience.

The study used an anti-colonial Indigenous discursive theory and the multiculturalism framework to conceptualize and analyze the socio-cultural and educational experiences of Black African Immigrant Graduate students in Canada. Anti-colonialism is defined within this study as the reclaiming of self and the tool for challenging and resisting colonial practices or colonialism that has denigrated and rendered African Indigenous knowledge valueless and invalid for Black African Immigrant Graduate students. The multiculturalism framework is used to bring forward the interests and concerns of Black African Immigrant Graduate students and the definition in the study remain discursive because of its evolving nature and the dissenting views around the topic. These

theories are used in the analysis and interpretation of the data with full cognizance and inherent recognition of the distinction between the colonial experiences in Africa as against colonialism in Canada.

An Indigenous Research Methodology was used to guide this research process, including, but not limited to, the selection of the research methods as well as other instruments for reasoning and analysis of the data. Indigenous research methodology helped to ensure that the ontology and epistemology of the participants were respected within their own rights, and they were given the opportunity to share information in a way that is most meaningfully to them. It also allowed the participants to steer the flow of the research and contribute to the interpretation of the findings in a way that was most beneficial to them and their respective communities. The Indigenous research methodology also helped me, as the researcher, to reflect on my role in this research relationship and the obligation to meet my axiological or moral responsibility. I consider this exploration research as a tool to liberate my mind and that of others from the effects of colonization and its current manifestations such as neo-colonialism, imperialism and post-colonialism.

Identity, education and impact on future generations

The study revealed that African Indigenous knowledge influences the identities and educational experience of Black African immigrant graduate students in different ways. The student's experience with African Indigenous knowledge is evident in Africa as well as in Canada. Although the nature of their interaction with their relations and other factors of the African Indigenous knowledge is place-based, the influence and role it plays in their identity is significant. The limitations posed by the geographical location causes them to redefine and evolve in the way they connect or interact with their relations, but it does not entirely diminish the impact that African Indigenous knowledge has on their identities and their education.

The main characteristics that emerged from this research as foundational to the identities of the Black African immigrant graduate students were African heritage, religion, culture, language and race. The findings indicate that these identity characteristics are enriched through their interactions with family and community members; the ancestral connections they have to a place or land in Africa; the values, customs and norms that they share with others in the family or community; the knowledge and appreciation of their Indigenous language; and the pride they have as Africans. These factors, which influence the participant's identities, are all expressed and grounded in African Indigenous knowledge. Their experiences with African Indigenous knowledge were from different socio-cultural contexts, time and geographical locations; thus, some of these experiences were from when they were in Africa (in the case of first-generation participants) as well as what they are still experiencing and living through in Canada (for both first and second-generation participants). As Dei (2014) noted, "these knowledges evolve and can transcend boundaries" (p. 255). Black African immigrant graduate students have different experiences based on the various characteristics that intersect to influence their identities. The role that African Indigenous knowledge plays in their education in Canada is continually evolving and is significant to their existence.

The findings revealed that Black African immigrant graduate students recognize the existence of African Indigenous knowledge and acknowledge the role it plays in shaping and grounding them in their identities. As others (Weber-Pillwax, 1999; Shizha & Abdi, 2014; Semali & Kincheloe, 1999; Manyau, 2018; Ukwuoma, 2016; & Dei, 2014; Adeyemi & Adeyinka, 2003) have reiterated, Indigenous knowledge is legitimate with its own forms of epistemologies and philosophies. Therefore, understanding the role of African Indigenous knowledge and enjoining Black African immigrant graduate students to recognize the different ways it supports their educational pursuit contributes towards their liberation. As Dei's (1995) noted, African people's

strong sense of identity, history, and culture helps to deal with some of the problems of their existence, today and in the future (p. 155).

Black African immigrant graduate students continue to find solace and strength to forge through the challenges they encounter in their educational pursuit in Canada through their experiences with African Indigenous knowledge systems. It gives them the fortitude and resilience to overcome the continuing impact of colonialism, as well as the challenges they encounter in Canada, such as racism and many other forms of discrimination that were identified in this study. The pride, confidence and stability that Black African immigrant graduate students have in their identity, or who they are as part of a people, gives them the strength to choose educational pathways that solidify and support their existence. The path they create establishes a foundation that will equip and support future generations of Black Africans to reverence and leverage the strength from African Indigenous knowledge for their growth and advancement in Canada.

Although the educational systems, both in Africa and in Canada, do not present students with the decolonized information about their histories and backgrounds, the findings show that the students eventually come to a point of awakening or consciousness in their schooling process where their attention is drawn to their identities as being central to their experiences. For Black African immigrant graduate students, who are given some level of autonomy in their educational choices, this is reflected in the direction they go with their research, which is mostly centered on issues about their identity.

Despite the different geographical factors that create distinction between the experiences of first and second generation Black African immigrant graduate students, the benefits that accrue from African Indigenous knowledge, such as resilience, sense of belongingness, etc., are instrumental for the growth and advancement of the future generations of Africans in Canada. However, the onus is on the first-generation Black Africans in Canada to find ways and avenues to transfer the knowledge, such as the African Indigenous language and other cultural values that

foster community connections, to the future generation. Although the second and subsequent generations of Black African immigrant graduate students may not have direct connection or first-hand experiences from Africa, it is still a significant part of their identity. They have demonstrated, with emphasis from the first-generations, that they need the African Indigenous knowledge to solidify their sense of belonging in their identity, which gives them the strength to forge through their education and other pursuits in Canada. When people understand who they are and are given the opportunity to apply what they know, it creates an avenue or opportunity for them to develop strategies to address issues in the community or society at large.

Multiculturalism, identity reclamation and the impact on Black Africans

Canada's multiculturalism policy has evolved through various political and socio-cultural climate over different periods in time and it has been associated with Canada's national identity by people both within and outside of the country. The literature and the findings indicate that Canada's multiculturalism is understood differently by various groups of people based on their experiences in and knowledge about Canada. The responses received in this study show how vague and meaningless multiculturalism is to the Black African immigrant community in Canada. As noted by Kihika (2022), the Canadian multicultural identity sediments race and processes of racialization through an internationalist liberal framework and the well-intentioned multicultural value-script leave the realities of Black Canadians unintended and unrecognized (p. 439).

The findings indicate that the educational system in Canada does not give Black African immigrant graduate students the needed support and resources for them to learn about themselves and contribute to scholarship that will help them recognize and explore issues related to their identities and advance Black Africans. The limited and unacknowledged African information throughout the schooling process for Africans in Canada deprives them of the opportunity to reclaim their identities, especially when they have been and continue to be indoctrinated with

western and Eurocentric practices, which is presented as the universal culture. Some of the issues affecting Black African immigrant graduate students that emerged from this research were racism, limited Black African representation in the academy, funding bias and discrimination, mistrust and low expectation in Black student's capabilities, and Immigrant socio-cultural gap and misunderstanding.

These challenges create barriers that negatively impact the Black African student's participation in the educational system and hinders their growth and advancement. The limited Black educators means that there are less people who can serve as mentors or role models to Black African immigrant graduate students as well as future generations of Black Africans in Canada. The study revealed that Black African immigrant graduate students experience mistrust and lack of confidence from non-Black educators and students. I interpret this experience within the educational system in Canada and the behaviours of the agents (non-Black educators and students alike) within the institution as anti-Black racism. Research in other parts of Canada, such as in the province of Ontario, show that anti-Black racism in education negatively impacts the educational outcomes for Black students, which intends exacts a social cost to society (James & Turner, 2017; Turner, 2019). The findings emerging from this research purport that anti-racist education must be a critical component of the education system within a multicultural nation like Canada. This is critical and necessary to ensure that future generations of Black Africans are well supported in their educational, socio-cultural and other aspects of their lives in Canada.

Although Canada prides itself as a multicultural nation, a critical review of Black African's experience in the educational system does not reflect the real and truest intent of multiculturalism. Considering that ethnic studies in Canadian universities were a bureaucratic response to Prime Minister Trudeau's 1971 federal policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework (Cameron, 2002), the findings show that it does not present an equitable space for Black Africans to enrich their understanding of themselves and explore issues related to the Black African identity

without the influence of the dominant Eurocentric culture. As Dei (1995) noted, a better understanding of the Black identity is crucial for the liberation of all people oppressed primarily for reasons of race and cultural heritage (p. 155). The findings emerging from this study shows that Canada's multiculturalism is not inclusive of Black Africans in the educational and other socio-cultural context. There are elements of power in the system, which is reflected in who designs and decides on the structure of education, what is considered legitimate knowledge and acceptable learning process, who determines the required and acceptable academic standards, and last but not the least, who should be deemed as deserving of an academic recognition or included in academic opportunities. By critically analyzing the education of Black Africans within the multicultural context in Canada, it begs to question the intent behind their education when some African students are criticized for focusing their studies on African issues and context. They are not given wider access to African resources; neither are they supported to contribute towards empirical African scholarship. The non-existence of inclusive strategies to intentionally support Black African immigrant students to understand their identities and encourage them to pursue educational pathways that support Black Africans in Canada can be critically analyzed as a reflection of the colonial educational experience in Africa. According to Ocheni & Nwankwo (2012), supporters of African colonization argue that it brought western education to Africa, even though the colonial education focused on training clerks, interpreters, etc. to aid in the exploitation of Africa's rich resources, which ended up distorting the African Indigenous pattern of education. Ocheni & Nwankwo's assessment of the superficially positive contribution of the colonial education that was introduced to Africans is that,

> if it is subjected to critical analysis, it will reveal the hollowness or emptiness of colonial education which is partially responsible for the present African underdevelopment. The colonial education was not rooted in African culture and therefore could not foster any meaningful development within the African environment because it had no organic linkage.

Furthermore, colonial education was essentially literary; it had no technological base and therefore antithetical to real or industrial development. (51)

The findings from this research reveal and affirm the long-standing implications of colonialism in Africa's education, some of which the participants identified as abstract and disconnected from the economic, social, political and cultural realities of the people. This issue is exacerbated for Black African immigrants in Canada when the schooling process in a multicultural country like Canada does not present them with the opportunities to liberate themselves from the ramifications of colonialism and prepare them to address issues for the advancement of Black Africans. Black African families and communities in Canada are left with the burden of having to find ways to use avenues outside the mainstream education system to teach the Black African children about their culture and identity. Dumas (2016) has raised concerns about the celebration of diversity, particularly in education, when there is discrimination and lack of concerted efforts to dismantle anti-Black racism. Additionally, Ocheni & Nwankwo (2012) assert that "education that is not deeply rooted in a people's culture and environment cannot bring about any meaningful technological advancement" (p. 51).

To remedy these issues and to ensure that the right measures are instituted to support present and the future generations Black Africans with the reclamation of their identities through a critical multicultural educational system, the study recommends the following additional strategies:

- Increase Black African presence in Canadian educational institutions and establish resources to promote the teaching of African epistemologies and ontologies as part of the schooling process.

- Establish measures to ensure that the needed African resources are available to support Black African students to explore, understand and contribute to the advancement of Black Africans through their education.

- Review and revise educational curricula to ensure they reflect the diverse histories, cultures, and contributions of Black Africans in Canada and incorporate their perspectives into textbooks, learning materials, and teaching methods.

- Provide teachers with training and professional development programs in culturally responsive teaching and anti-racist pedagogy that would help them understand the needs and experiences of Black African immigrant students.

- Establish strategic educational initiatives (co-developed with Black Africans) to build Black African student's capacity to contribute towards the Economic development of Africa. This would include, but not limited to, supporting and encouraging Black African students to pursue studies and research in areas that contribute to addressing issues that affect the growth and advancement of Africa as well as the Africans in the diaspora.

- Offer scholarships and financial aid programs that specifically support Black African immigrant students and ensure that they have equitable access to educational resources to reduce the financial barriers to education.

- Conduct research to gather data on the educational experiences and outcomes of Black African immigrant students and use the data to advocate and inform policies and practices at the federal, provincial and local levels to address systemic inequalities in the education system.

- Increase awareness and support the use of African Indigenous languages.

The research participants support the fact that African Indigenous language gives Black Africans a strong sense of belonging and connection to the African identity. They believe that when the next generation of Black Africans are introduced to the African Indigenous language, it grounds them in their identity and helps them navigate things from an African worldview. The focus should not be about the selection of a particular or dominant Indigenous African language for the next

generation of Black Africans in Canada. Rather, it should be focused on leveraging resources to transfer what is readily available to support the next generation from time to time.

The capacity for future generations of Black Africans to advance in Canada will be enhanced by the legacy and foundation that would be laid out by their predecessors. Culture keeps evolving and different periods and seasons in the future will require Black African immigrants to adjust in many ways in response to the needs and interest of the people and times. However, the findings have revealed that their Black African identity, which is influenced by African Indigenous knowledge systems, will remain a significant part of them. As such, they must be encouraged to reach deeper into themselves and bring the best out through their education. The multiculturalism policy in Canada has not supported Black Africans in the reclamation of the African identity. However, there is hope for families, communities and the people to use the recommendations above, amongst others, to support the growth and advancement of current and future generations of Black Africans in Canada.

Black Africans and Indigenous people relationship: impact on the former's identity reclamation

The relationship between Blacks and the Indigenous people of Canada's is yet to be more fully explored and analysed. The findings from this study showed that most Black Africans are mostly unaware and misinformed about the colonial experiences of the Indigenous people of Canada from the latter's perspective. Most of what the Black African immigrant students know about the Indigenous people are from the media or through other colonial channels, which provides distorted and often filtered information through a Eurocentric lens. The Black immigrants do not usually interact with the Indigenous people at a personal level to get a practical understanding of their experiences and/or Indigenous worldview. The experiences shared by the participants indicate that the pathway to integration, settlement and educational pursuit in Canada does not include

intentional efforts to introduce them to the decolonized information about the Indigenous people of Canada. As a result, Black African immigrants lack a practical understanding of the Indigenous worldview and experiences. One of the key factors contributing to this situation is the lack of direct and uninterrupted interaction between Black Africans and Indigenous peoples. Canadian society and higher education contexts rarely provide the space and opportunity for these two groups to connect on a personal level and explore the nuances of their experiences. Their relationship is interrupted or mediated through Eurocentric agencies or systems, which further perpetuate a distorted narrative. The lack of direct and uninterrupted space for Black Africans and Indigenous people to interact and get to connect as Indigenes (although to different lands) exacerbates the issue. By implementing decolonized measures and fostering intentional spaces for connection and understanding, Canada can take significant steps towards building a stronger relationship between these two communities based on mutual respect, appreciation, and solidarity.

Black Africans migrate to Canada for different reasons and whether or not they are considered settlers remains an item of debate in different contexts. The findings emerging from this study shows that Black African immigrants who have emigrated directly from Africa and the generations after them do not have provisions within their immigration process to interrelate with the Indigenous people. The Black African immigrant graduate students migrated to Canada with the goal of pursuing their education and there are no systemic processes in the academy that intentionally connect them with Indigenous peoples. As a result, the responsibility falls on the individual initiative of the immigrant to learn and engage with Indigenous peoples.

In order to foster a better relationship between Black African immigrants and the Indigenous people of Canada, it is crucial to address the systemic barriers and Eurocentric interferences that currently hinder their connection. The findings emphasize the need for decolonized measures to be put in place, both within Canadian society and higher education contexts, to encourage a more authentic and meaningful understanding of Indigenous peoples' experiences from their perspective.

Despite the lack of connection between the Indigenous people and Black African immigrants in Canada, the findings from this study help to put forward some recommendations that could have positive impacts and support the reclamation of Black African identity.

First, Black African immigrants must be committed to deconstruct western methodologies and take steps to explore the use of Indigenous methodologies in their education and other endeavours to support the advancement of their people.

Second, Black African need to own and take the lead in presenting information about Black Africans and focus their energy on highlighting the issues that are most relevant to them for their growth and advancement.

Third, unity is the key for strength and empowerment of the people. Black African immigrants must endeavour to work together with a united front and not allow the national boundaries, that were created through colonialism, to create issues and disagreements amongst them. Working together is the key to survival and will help build a strong foundation as a legacy for the future generation.

Last, but not the least, Black Africans must intentionally invest in processes and systems that are necessary for the transfer of Indigenous knowledge and wisdom to help the upcoming generation.

Future Research

Further research is needed to identify ways that African Indigenous knowledge can be adequately supported and fostered in Canada and transferred to the next generation considering the influence it has on Black African immigrant's identity and their education. More qualitative research on the positive positioning of Black identity in Canada is needed considering the gaps in the multiculturalism policy, which has not been successful in supporting Black Africans to reclaim their identity.

Additional research is needed to unearth the nuances of the relationship between Black African immigrants and Indigenous people's relationship. Opportunities for future research could focus on further exploring the experiences, perspectives, and aspirations of both Black African immigrants and Indigenous peoples in Canada. This research could inform the development of policies and programs that address the systemic barriers and Eurocentric interferences, facilitating a more respectful relationship, and recognizing the Indigenous backgrounds and experiences.

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APPENDIX 1: Proposed Interview Questions (individual participants)

Round One

Family and community

1. Were you born in Canada, or did you migrate from Africa?

   (a) If immigrant from Africa (First generation): Where in *"Africa"* were you born and where did you spend most of your early developmental years? Is it urban or rural?

   (b) If born in Canada (Second generation): What do you know about life in Africa that you may have been informed either through visits back home or interactions with family or community members?

2. *First generation:* (a) Did you spend lots of time with family, friends and members when you were growing up back home in "*Africa – reference to home country*"? What did you learn about the traditional ways of knowing and doing things?
   Second and Third generation: (b) Do you spend lots of time with family, friends and members from the African community? What have you learned about the traditional ways of knowing and doing things in African context?

3. What are some of the traditional practices or cultural activities that are peculiar to your family or community?

4. What is your first language or mother tongue? How did that contribute or hinder yourinteraction or participation in society – either in Africa or Canada?

If mother tongue is English: have you considered learning to communicate in any

African language and did you feel supported or encouraged in the process?

If mother tongue is an African language other than English: How well have you been

able to maintain the language and what has been your experience with the

language in terms of your connection to your root and cultural heritage?

5. What lessons or life experiences have you acquired particularly from your family and community members?

6. Do you recollect any memorable activities or traditional protocols you have learned or participated in?

Schooling (Africa & Canada)

First generation:

7. At what age did you start formal/structured education in "home country" and how was that experience?

8. What was the main language of instruction at school in "home country"? Why was that language used?

9. What was the main content of the school curriculum? Did you build up on what was learned at home or was it different?

10. At what level of education did you start schooling in Canada?

11. How did you decide on what to pursue for your graduate studies?

12. Did you at any point in your education in Canada have the opportunity to learn about some of the elements that constitute your African identity?

Second and Third generation:

- What has been your educational experience as a person of African heritage in Canada?

- Have you received any information related to your African identity or history of Blacks in Canada throughout your education?

- What aspect of your educational experience has contributed to the formation of your identity as an African and/or explained your responsibility to the African community?

- Has there been any disparities or disconnect between your family or community norms/values and your educational experience(s)?

Canadian Multiculturalism

13. Have you ever heard about multiculturalism in Canada?

14. What is your understanding of Canadian multiculturalism?

15. Do you think multiculturalism in Canada helps people, specifically Black Africans, to reclaim their identities?

Canadian Indigenous peoples

16. What do you know about the Indigenous people of Canada?
17. Have you had the opportunity to learn about the Indigenous peoples of Canada,example through a personal relationship with an Indigenous person?

   a. If yes, what was the opportunity or whom were you in contact with and what

did you learn from that relationship?

b. If no, would you like to know more about the Indigenous peoples of Canada?

Round Two

1. Do you know about some of the African communities in Edmonton?

2. Are you connected to any of the African communities, and do you participate in theiractivities?

   a. If yes, what attracted you to that community and what motivates you to stay connected to them?

   b. If no, what has prevented or deterred you from connecting with the African community?

3. Are you aware of some of the challenges experienced by the African community in Canada?

I will elaborate on some of the challenges if the participant does not know them in order to transition into the next question.

4. How do you think your education or research would contribute to the advancement ofthe African community?

5. Do you know about the colonial experiences of the Indigenous peoples of Canada?

6. How would you describe their approach to self-determination and reclaiming of

Indigenous knowledges?

7. What do you think the African community can learn from the Indigenous peoples to find value in our Indigenous ways of knowing and doing?

Round three

1. If you had the opportunity to reconnect with your Indigenous knowledge systems from Africa, how would that have changed or contributed to your approach to education or other choices that influence your identity in Canada?

2. Do you think building relations with the Indigenous people of Canada could help BAIGS and other Africans in Canada learn the value in their African Indigenous knowledges and how that influences their identities and education?

3. Do you think Canada's multiculturalism has given Black African Immigrant Graduate Students the opportunity to reclaim their African identities and to include African Indigenous epistemologies in their education?

4. Do you have any children, family or members in the community who will be part of the second, third, or future generations of African Canadians?

5. How do you think your experiences from *"Africa - home country"* and in Canadawould be most helpful to the upcoming generations of Africans?

APPENDIX 2: Proposed questions - Focus Groups

Group 1

1. Upon further reflection and lived experience(s), how do you think African Indigenous Knowledges influence the identities and education of BAIGS either from back home in Africa or in Canada?

2. Would you describe Canada's multiculturalism as being supportive or detrimental to the reclaiming of identities and education of BAIGS or members of the African community?

Group 2

1. What is your understanding of the colonial historical experiences of the Indigenous peoples of Canada?

2. How can BAIGS' relationships with the Indigenous Peoples of Canada and/or a deeper understanding of the latter's experiences be helpful in guiding BAIGS to reclaim their identities and navigate their education in Canada?

Group 3

1. How do you think the findings from this research could be used to advance the African community and to inform the experiences of the next generation of Africans in Canada?

2. What are your thoughts and general contributions to this study?

APPENDIX 3: Contact Sheet

Contact Summary Sheet

Interviewee: _____

Date of Interview: _____

1. What were the main issues and themes that emerged from this interview?

2. What discrepancies, if any, were in the interviewee's responses?

3. Did anything stand out as interesting or important about this interview?

4. How does the information generated in this interview compare to others?

5. New or additional questions to be considered for the next contact.