Internationalization Policies and In/equitable Experiences of African International Students in Canadian Post-secondary

by

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Abstract

This study critically interrogates the gaps between policy claims on equitable internationalization and the ground-level realities of Black African graduate international students in a Canadian Public University. The attraction and retention of international students is vital to Canada's future and sustainability as a country, society, and economy, and the first ever international education strategy of Canada (2014-2019) and its subsequent version (2019-2024) emphasize the importance of this national policy position. Despite multi-level policy and marketing efforts (at federal, provincial, and institutional levels) to attract students from different parts of the world to study, stay, and contribute to enriching Canadian society, insufficient attention has been given to the equitable integration of these students in Canada. In the midst of a global internationalization agenda dominated by an economic rationale, a growing body of research and scholarly critique further underscores the need for more comprehensive and nuanced approaches to understanding and addressing incongruences between the policies and (inequitable) realities experienced by foreign postsecondary students during their post-admission settlement and integration. Within a Decolonial and Critical Race Theory of Education (DCRTE) frame, I deployed Critical Ethnography and Critical Policy Ethnography methodologies to deconstruct how policy claims and inequities shape or impact internationalization and integration experiences of Black African graduate international students in a Canadian Public University. I analyzed policy documents and conducted interviews and focus groups with 16 African students and six officials that support internationalization at the university where this study took place. Findings highlight the different ways in which Black African international graduate students (and in some cases their spouses) are impacted and marginalized by an intersection of policy inequities and contradictions during their migration and integration experience in Canada. Furthermore, the study unveils how and

why incongruences between policies and actual experiences persist, and how Black African graduate international students are faced with opportunities to draw on their agency and resilience to resist or navigate (neo) colonial policy-induced challenges that delay, prevent, or influence their equitable integration into the Canadian academy and society. I draw on decolonial and anti-colonial theorists such as Sefa Dei, Fanon, Mignolo, Mbembe, and Walia. Thinking with these theorists helps me deconstruct and confront the coloniality of power and inequity in international education and related policy. Achille Mbembe's *necropolitics* lens illuminates and challenges how state and institutional policies exert sovereign political power to decide which subjects are indispensable and expendable, and helps me interrogate how the persisting precarities experienced by Black African international students are exacerbated by policy barriers unfavourable to their integration in internationalization contexts. Harsha Walia's concept of *Border Imperialism* allows me deconstruct the manner in which visible and invisible structures of border governance operate through inequitable policies and systems that impact the outcomes of racialized students at different junctures of a migration journey from the border of entry to the point of integration into Canadian society. This study contributes to the critical literature (in internationalization) by problematizing the current approach to internationalization that integrates academic, economic, occupational, political, and socio-cultural dimensions of the student experience from the perspective of Black African international graduate students. It enunciates a decolonial and critical epistemology of internationalization on the margins, presents hybridized theoretical and methodological approaches for understanding and explicating in/equity in internationalization policy and practice, highlights implications for equitable internationalization theory, praxis, and research. It also provides internationalization stakeholders with useful recommendations for more equitable internationalization initiatives. The work

pushes the boundaries of internationalization equity by advancing an anti-racist and decolonial understanding in how we see, think, and approach internationalization at the nexus of policy, praxis, and experience among marginalized/racialized African students in Canadian higher education. Ultimately, this study makes a critical case for reimagining and advancing towards more equitable and decolonial internationalization futures in Canadian higher education.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Benjamin Torhide Denga. The research project of which this thesis is a part received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name "Internationalization Policy and International Students in Canadian Higher Education: A Critical Study of International African Graduate Students' Experiences in a Canadian University", No 00091983, October 03, 2019.

Dedication

To my precious parents, stellar academics, and educators in their own right who inspired and supported me on many levels before and throughout this important and challenging journey. I am eternally grateful.

To my adorable family, whose patience, encouragement, understanding, and sacrifices were invaluable throughout the duration of my doctoral program, every one of you is simply priceless. And to current and future Black and equity-deserving international students (or education migrants) whose voices and struggles are usually hidden or ignored by the system and whose experiences and outcomes my work has impacted or may positively impact in the future, I dedicate this work to you.

Acknowledgement

I am eternally grateful to God Almighty, the Creator, without whom this work would never have been initiated or completed.

I acknowledge my position and status as a migrant (and now settler) to the beautiful and sacred Treaty lands of Turtle Island where this work was completed, and the rich presence, histories, and cultures of the Indigenous Peoples from whom I have learned a lot and benefitted during the course of my studies.

I thank and appreciate my incomparable supervisors, Dr. Lynette Shultz and Dr. Randolph Wimmer, whose invaluable guidance, patience, perspicacity, and incredible support contributed immeasurably to my successful completion of this work. I am also grateful for the special developmental support and insights received from Dr. Bukola Salami, who along with rest of my supervisory committee provided critical feedback that contributed to the quality of this work. I recognize my stellar academic and professional mentors and teachers, the former Chairs and Associate Chairs of the Department of Educational Policy Studies, including Dr Larry Prochner, the outstanding Dean of Education, Jennifer Tupper, and all the amazing professors, staff and colleagues who provided different kinds of support and encouragement to me throughout my doctoral journey. I acknowledge the funding support received from the University of Alberta and the Government of Alberta (particularly towards the end of my studies) that helped offset some of the colossal costs associated with completing my program.

Finally, I express my profound appreciation for the precious participants of my study – students, professionals, and administrators involved with internationalization – who took the time to engage with me and provide the invaluable data and insights that made this study possible.

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Chapter 1: Situating the Study

Introduction

Located at the intersection of internationalization, migration, and Black diaspora studies, this dissertation presents a critical study on the discrepancies between multi-level policy claims on internationalization and the ground level experiences of Black African international graduate students in a Canadian Public University. The details of the study are systematically unpacked in seven chapters, beginning with this opening one that situates the study. In this chapter, I describe the research problem and the purpose and significance of the study. I outline my background and location in the study, and the worldview that informs and orients my inquiry. Next, I provide definitions of some key terms, outline my guiding research questions, and conclude the chapter with a brief description of how the rest of the dissertation is organized.

Research Problem

The research problem that inspired this study is couched in the paradox that international students in general, and Black African international graduate students in particular, are experiencing a different reality while adapting and integrating into Canadian higher education system and society in relation to the goals and intentions of *equity, inclusion, and access* claimed or assumed in Canada's internationalization policies and strategies at government and institutional levels (Al–Haque, 2017; ACDC, 2014, 2016; CBIE, 2014; Government of Canada, 2014a; Universities Canada, 2017b). The social inclusion of these students appears to be a taken-for-granted assumption that requires close examination in terms of the disparity between what policy says or intends and what really happens on the ground – especially from the perspective of the students.

Adaptation and integration of international students (in both the academy and society) has been a shared objective of the Canadian government and many international students who come to study in Canada; this shared expectation is anchored in the attraction and retention of international students who are considered perfect candidates for subsequent immigration due to their skills and what they offer to Canada upon graduation (Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy, 2012; Government of Canada, 2014b). Many of these students are attracted from Africa through a combination of concerted and coordinated Canadian government/institutional efforts and marketing strategies, combined with personal student choice and aspirations (Findadmission, 2018; Harris, 2017).

Demand for international education from students in sending countries (such as Africa) and increasing international marketing drive from host countries (such as Canada) who benefit from the hefty fees paid by international students have been climbing (Trilokekar & Kizilbash, 2013; Usher, 2018b,c). This well documented profit drive/focus has been described as both a feature and risk associated with internationalization of higher education (Jibeen & Khan, 2015; Albach & Knight, 2007). Jeptoo and Razi (2012, p. 365) submit that "the recruitment of foreign students has become a significant factor for institutional income – one aggravated by the increasingly severe pressure on university resource levels which has driven institutions to implement aggressive marketing campaigns through collaborations."

The Canadian government continues to see the attraction and retention of international students (including from Africa) as a cornerstone of its international education strategy, and links this strategy to directly addressing Canada's need for global competitiveness, innovation, and sustainable national development, addressing a growing skills shortage, replenishing a fast-aging workforce, and promoting a diverse multicultural society (Government of Canada, 2014b;

Matthews, 2016). However, the challenges faced by racialized and visible minority student groups in blending equitably into a Western historically White academy (and society) do not appear to have been given the attention they deserve.

The uncritical acceptance of internationalization policy and the inconsistencies or disconnect between international education policies and strategies, versus the actual everyday experiences of international students in Canadian postsecondary education, has increasingly come under scholarly critique in the past decade (Beck, 2013; Guo & Guo, 2017; Anderson, 2015; Larsen, 2015). Amongst others, these critical researchers have argued that the immense thought and effort put into the construction and advancement of policies has not been adequately matched with empirical or ground-level commitment (by government, postsecondary institutions, and other stakeholders) to understand and address the tensions and gaps at the intersection of internationalization policy and international students' experiences. Others have questioned the extent to which institutions are invested in international students' adaptation (Lowe, 2011; Cox, 2014; Guo & Guo, 2017) and visible minority international student integration (Kamara & Gambold, 2011).

Scott et al. (2015) further highlight the discrepancy between Canada's international education approach and the real experiences and adaptation outcomes of international students. According to these authors, the lived experiences of international students "do not necessarily align with key policy assumptions of Canada's *International Education Strategy*" (p. 15). They contend that despite Canadian policy makers' view of international students as potential 'Ideal Immigrants' who should naturally/smoothly adapt in the Canadian educational and labour system, their actual integration and adaptation experiences in society are hampered by adjustment difficulties pertaining to language abilities, poor connectedness to host communities,

and perceived employer discrimination (including racism) against them. They also advocate for the implementation of improved and more equitable policy measures to ensure better outcomes and experiences for international students.

Against a backdrop of growing awareness around discrepancies between policy and international student realities, and the limitation of studies on international students' (and particularly African international student groups') perceptions and perspectives on these issues, the need for further nuanced interrogation cannot be overemphasized. Advancing such interrogation will go a long way to unpack, disambiguate, or clarify the real, generic, and specific issues faced by groups of international students, including those who may be more at risk of marginalization or subjugation due to historical, racial, personal, and other social factors.

While my study is not focused on post-graduation workplace integration (of the sort also addressed in Scott et al., 2015), the nexus between international student educational experiences and subsequent student absorption or integration into the workforce is explicit in, and integral to, Canadian national education policy and strategy for internationalization, just as it is in the reality of students' expectations and perceptions before they arrive in Canada. Moreover, as a type of unofficial default (part-time) temporary migrant worker, the employment dimension of international student experience cannot be completely ignored. There is therefore a need to explore, amongst other focal areas of empirical gravity, the perspectives and experiences of racialized international students in this area in so far as they are influenced by internationalization.

In recent years, the importance of understanding and responding to the risks of internationalization in the Canadian context has been articulated by the Association of Canadian Deans of Education (ACDE) in their official publication titled *Accord on the Internationalization*

of Education. As part of their advocacy for principled educational practice across Canada (ACDE, 2016), they maintain that internationalization stakeholders everywhere in Canada should heed certain risks, such as the risk of exploitative practices emerging from an exclusive or primary focus on profit maximization; systemic exclusion; disruption or marginalization of individual identities and cultural practices; and the risk of (neo) colonization, including the subjugation of one group to the power and control of another, and the elevation of a predominantly imported mode of thinking above all other forms of knowing (p. 6). The identification of these risks by an important player in Canada's internationalization model supports the imperative for an empirical effort that will interrogate the extent to which a key section of the international student population – Black African international graduate students – are in/equitably impacted by internationalization policies and strategies within social, cultural, academic, economic, occupational, and political domains.

Most literature/studies and reviews around internationalization generally seem to have focused on everything else with less than proportionate attention given to bridging gaps between international students' experience and policy, or how to improve the internationalization adaptation/integration experience for international students (Bedenlier et al., 2018; Shutina, 2008; Yee, 2014; Yemini & Sagie, 2016). Even fewer appear to address issues of equity, especially in the case of Black minority international students (e.g., Paul, 2012).

The needs of visible minority international students seem to have been of minimal consequence in the ensuing inequity that has largely characterized global international education trends in the last decade (Evivie, 2009; Kamara & Gambold, 2011). Arguably, this reflects in the apparent lack of empirical appetite and effort to understand how these groups are faring in the context of internationalization (both globally and in Canada). This may not be unrelated to the

lack of support for more direct empirical focus on examining the reasons for discrepancies between internationalization policy and integration experiences of minority student groups such as African international graduate students whose cultures and backgrounds differ in many respects from the dominant norm in the Canadian system.

Equally of contextual relevance to my impetus for this study is the fact that racially-connected challenges and barriers faced by Black people (including Black students) in Canadian society have been historically and comprehensively documented (Jack–Davies, 2018; Kunz et al., 2000; Maynard, 2017; Statistics Canada, 2007). Despite Canada's reputation as a safe, welcoming, tolerant, and multicultural society, this evidence shows that Black people have either faced or continue to be exposed to inequities and discrimination in spheres including education, income, employment, and other aspects of social life in Canada; in many cases the inequities and unequal experiences they encounter may be anchored in a history of colonialism, slavery, and anti-Black racism manifested at systemic and structural levels. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau echoed this sentiment of social injustice in relation to Black people during a Black History Month commemoration in Canada, where he publicly acknowledged the existence of anti-Black racism and unconscious bias in Canada and implored Canadians to do likewise (The Canadian Press, 2018). In a call for more urgent and serious response to anti-Black racism among Canadians, he stressed that "it's time we hear — and believe — the stories of men and women who have been judged by the colour of their skin. It's time we take action to ensure equal opportunity and equal treatment of Black Canadians in our schools and our places of work." The fact that Black Canadians have faced and continue to struggle against systemic, structural, and personal racism and inequities (Maynard, 2017) may be a justifiable reason for further empirical

investigation in the context of local experiences of Black international students adapting to life in the Canadian academy and society.

Sheared et al. (2010) support the importance of understanding and addressing complexities around race in adult/higher education in their *Handbook of Race and Adult Education*. Their well-researched anthology presents a compelling and nuanced account, and underscores the reality, of race and racism; the problem of Whiteness, White supremacy, and privilege; and theoretical responses to race and racism within a variety of higher education and societal contexts.

Even as the traffic of African graduate students to Canada continues, and higher education institutions look to diversify their international student base (Graney, 2017), the role that these students' histories, race and racism, colonialism, and related systems of domination and control (amongst other factors) could play in how they navigate the process of integration warrants a closer and more critical empirical investigation. This is important within the current context of Canada's policy and strategy-driven internationalization model. A clearer understanding and explication of the reasons that underlie the discrepancies between internationalization policy claims on inclusion, access, and equity on one hand, and the actual everyday experiences of African graduate international students on the other, is imperative for several reasons. The mechanics of internationalization policy and strategy conceptualization, development, and implementation, as well as the assumptions of internalization policy makers and actors require a more critical analysis. This is particularly important if equitable international education approaches and outcomes are an institutional and government priority. It is equally important to unearth the (new) ways in which internationalization experiences are being negotiated as well as how they can be most equitably improved or optimized (in both individual

and collective ways) for the benefit of my research population, postsecondary institutions, government, and local and international education stakeholders.

While my study is focussed on Black African international student experiences of internationalization, some of the findings may be applicable to other international students of colour and international students in general. Furthermore, I acknowledge that although my findings reflect the voices of participants I interviewed, these views may or may not always or fully represent the perspectives and experiences of every Black international student from Africa who is studying in Canada. At the same time, the findings provide a foundation for more extensive and nuanced research of the equitable experiences of African and other racialized groups in relation to the provisions of multi-level policies that shape internationalization in Canada and other host countries, particularly but not exclusively in the Global North.

Background of the Researcher

In every research endeavour it is important for the researcher to situate themselves in the research at the outset (Creswell, 2013), because knowing the background and orientation of the researcher helps readers understand how the researcher's worldview and positionality may have influenced the selection of the study and other research decisions during the study. In commencing this empirical journey, I consider it pertinent to acknowledge and underline some of the key personal, paradigmatic orientations and belief systems that I believe shape or influence my world views, understandings, and interpretation of the world. This is necessary because they have had a direct or indirect influence in the conceptualization and choices around my inquiry.

While I started out in life with a positivist mindset, exposure to the realities and experiences in life and work encouraged me to adopt a more critical worldview that is oriented

toward confronting and challenging simplistic and majoritarian views of the world with the aim to improve outcomes for vulnerable and marginalized groups. This set of beliefs and perspectives energized my quest to understand and unearth the intricacies of how educational and social policy impacts the experiences and outcomes of vulnerable and under-researched communities. Perhaps the fact that I originally hail from a minority ethnicity in a majority Black country also reinforces my current orientation.

I approach this study as someone who arrived Canada as an African international graduate student myself and an observer participant who has been exposed to different manifestations of subtle or disguised forms of societal and institutional inequities and discrimination (including micro aggressions) not only in South Africa where I previously lived, schooled, and worked for over 13 years in the skills development/education industry, but also in Canada where I undertook my doctoral studies. Consistent with my social justice orientation and developing sense of obligation to amplify the voices of the voiceless and the less privileged, I see this study as necessary to bring to the fore the largely unknown, unheard, unconsidered, and unattended experiences of Black African graduate international students who are not only an important population group but also key contributors to the Canadian society, economy, and academy, in the context of internationalization. The study aligns with my aspiration to contribute toward the personal and collective (social and occupational) emancipation of the disadvantaged and racialized minorities that tend to be easily ignored even well beyond the post-colonial and post-modern eras. This empirical undertaking is an important opportunity to better understand and respond to underlying causes of inequities faced by a historically disadvantaged subsection of Canada's increasing international student population as they navigate the process of integration within the provisions and operationalization of internationalization policies. Indeed, the potential

that this inquiry offers to stimulate deeper conversations, further critical research, and catalyze meaningful change relating to the social, cultural, and occupational equity of African graduate students within a neoliberal hegemony is as profound as it is socially and intellectually liberating.

Personal experience and exposure to individual and organizational competency development acquired through involvement in research projects, intra-organizational skills development work and equity-advancing initiatives also lends itself to this study. My experience has included interventions such as competency needs-analysis, education and training program evaluation, and application of strategies for professional and occupational development, and integration of college students and workers across educational and workplace settings in two countries and continents. I have also been involved in planning, coordinating, leading, and/or contributing to some equity-advancing research projects involving newcomers and racialized people within institutional and community contexts. All these experiences intersect with my proclivity towards understanding, evaluating, and addressing how people negotiate the realities and challenges of integration within an educational and work environment.

My involvement in community service and student advocacy for racial justice has also centred on enhancing the successful social and occupational integration of students in different educational, career, and work contexts, as well as analyzing and addressing the factors that influence these processes. Through my experiences, I have increasingly come to realize and appreciate the role that policy plays in shaping learning and development outcomes, and how policy conceptualization and implementation can result in negative educational and social outcomes for the less dominant or underrepresented in society at different levels. This has accentuated for me the need to further examine how policy is equitably viewed or experienced

within educational settings, especially among visible (and vulnerable) minorities located on the margins, and how this can be redressed.

Before initiating this study just over four years ago, I crystallized my resolve to develop the requisite expertise in critical policy analysis and ethnographic methods as both a scholarly and personal career imperative in a complex world where such competence is invaluable for understanding and responding to educational and social problems, in the interest of social justice and equity. I believe that this also lends itself to my innate disposition towards emancipatory research on behalf of vulnerable, minoritized, or marginalized groups in society.

I am an ardent believer that public policy should be constructed, implemented, and experienced in ways that are socially just and equitable for all members of any society (including within international or international education contexts). I believe that policy should mean what it promises and do what it says, although I have found this not to be the case in many instances and for different reasons. Thus, I feel inspired that this type of study could be extremely useful in terms of providing a better understanding of the disparities between acclaimed policies and approaches to internationalization (in a Western host country), and the different realities and inequities faced by migrants after they arrive, the underlying reasons for these differences, and how the integration outcomes of such migrants (particularly in higher education) can be supported, both in the interest of the primary stakeholders and society as a whole.

More specifically, the decision to embark on this study was propelled by my desire to deeply understand, problematize, and improve how usually taken-for-granted and celebrated internationalization policies/strategies are locally experienced and viewed from the perspective of underrepresented bodies and voices within populations. Additionally, I was influenced by concerns about how international students, and especially visible minorities such as African

students, are coping with and managing to navigate the real and serious challenges related to social, cultural, educational/academic, and economic/employment integration within a foreign but inviting land within the context of a unique internationalization model. My interest in pursuing this line of inquiry was piqued by the understanding that many of these students gave up or sacrificed much (including finances, property, jobs, and in many cases family for a couple of years) in the hope of a better life that was contingent on successful integration within the academy and a Western society that may not necessarily be aligned with their expectations in reality. Given my background, experience, and ability to relate to the research context and objectives, I considered myself well positioned to embark on this timely study.

Purpose and Significance of Study

The purpose of this study is to explicate the disparities and equity gaps between Canada's internationalization policies and strategies on international education, and the social, cultural, academic, and career integration realities experienced by Black graduate international students who come on a study permit from Africa to Canada with the objective of settling into the university and society during (and after) their graduate studies. Current approaches to internationalization at home (IAH) may represent an oversimplification and romanticization of the complex realities experienced by students, particularly racialized minority students who come from the Global South for an education in the Global North. My research is motivated by a desire and the objective to move beyond the rhetoric, excitement, promises, and assumptions of internationalization to advancing a more nuanced examination and understanding of how this phenomenon is being experienced by Black African international graduate students in relation to the existing policies and strategies on internationalization in Canada. The current era in which

internationalization is in overdrive is attended by the prioritization of international education as a vehicle for national and economic development and sustenance by both government and higher educational institutions in Canada. This inquiry interrogates the discrepancies between internationalization policy claims on international student adaptation and integration, and the realities experienced by Black African international graduate students with the view to (a) unravel the underlying reasons that explain these discrepancies in relation to official federal, provincial, sectoral, and institutional policies and strategies on integration; and (b) provide strategies to equitably improve the internationalization approaches that relate to the integration process and outcomes of these learners within the academy and Canadian society. I attempt to uncover the underlying reasons that result in the tensions and disconnect between the integration experiences of this student population and the official positive picture of internationalization portrayed in/by Canada's higher education internationalization policies and strategies at federal, provincial, and institutional levels.

Through application of a critical theoretical lens and methods that are effective for researching the experiences of visible minorities within an environment largely influenced/controlled by dominant cultures and powers, this study attempts to uncover and articulate insights that contribute to existing knowledge, and stimulate further conversations, debates, and improved praxis in internationalization, and how it can be more equitably negotiated for all stakeholders (including the minority graduate students at the centre of the study). A critical approach allows me unveil assumptions, myths, and truths related to internationalization policy claims versus the actual experiences of my study participants, thereby providing a clearer and first-hand picture of the realities experienced by this group, independent of policy claims and statements related to their integration. This study raises consciousness

around ways of addressing and enhancing international education approaches at multiple stakeholder levels of policy making and practice.

At government and institutional levels, the study aims to inform new and more critical thinking around policy, strategy, and programs that address the gaps and opportunities for equitable, inclusive, and accessible integration for Black African international graduate students within Canada's internationalization model, academy, and society. It explores and uncovers complexities involved in the integration journey traversed by this student group. The resulting insights can support Black graduate students navigating their own integration experiences, based on accounts from similar students who have undertaken the journey or are at an advanced stage thereof. This critical investigation may also lead to a revision of integration-related practices in international education that address deep-rooted problems and needs that current practices overlook or are oblivious to, in the context of Black international student experiences.

My research generates knowledge that supports a rethink, renewal, adjustment, or revision of internationalization policy and strategy approaches that will ultimately support the decolonization of the academy (Sefa Dei, 2016) and the building an anti-racist university (Tate & Bagguley, 2017) where equitable and optimal internationalization experiences are more guaranteed than not for African international graduate students. It contributes to constructive debate and reflection around how best to dismantle discriminatory barriers that influence student experiences and outcomes while promoting agency and equitable internationalization outcomes for racialized graduate students.

While the focus for this inquiry was limited to experiences from the point at which the African graduate student participants gain admission to study in Canada to the time of their graduation, some findings have implications for the post-graduation phase of their experience,

including transition and integration into the Canadian workforce and society. This might inspire future cross-sectional and longitudinal studies on integration experiences of African and other (international or newcomer) minoritized student groups in relation to multi-level policy claims on equity. Given that much of current and previous research on newcomers has been centred on landed immigrants and refugees (and not internationals or education migrants), the new empirical inspiration that stems from this study will help illuminate the equity gaps between policy and reality for a group that has been largely missing in the Canadian (and Statistics Canada's) national research agenda. Moreover, researchers, policy makers, administrators, and other key international education actors (from both host countries and sending countries of international students) will be able to use aspects of this study as a basis (or additional resource) for further inquiry and response to the underreported and often ignored integration realities of Black visible minorities. The work will potentially enhance more equitable planning, support, and the realization of desired/desirable integration goals for Black African students, amongst others.

Overall, the study generates empirical data that sheds more light on the discrepancies between student experiences and multi-level policies and policy narratives on internationalization, particularly from the perspectives of Black African international graduate students navigating the process of settlement and integration in a Canadian Public University and community. It identifies opportunities for internationalization stakeholders (including policy makers, administrators, educators, and practitioners) to support international student integration and agency, address barriers to Black international excellence, and generate strategies for closing the gaps between Canadian policies and racialized international students' experiences at institutional, provincial, and federal levels; it also inspires a more equitable and inclusive vision

toward socially just futures for internationalization in Canada's fast-expanding higher education system (CBIE, 2018; ICEF Monitor, 2017).

In view of the above, I developed research questions that allowed me to pursue a meaningful empirical investigation. Articulated below, the questions align with the objectives, significance, and intent of my research.

Research Question(s)

To direct this critical inquiry, I developed three main research questions. These questions informed and guided the overall design and protocol of my study. They directly influenced the methodology applied and methods used to seek answers through the collection and analysis of empirical evidence from human participants and policy documents. The key research questions are as follows:

1. **a.** How do Black African international graduate students in Canada see themselves situated in, and impacted by, internationalization policy and strategy claims of *equity, access, and inclusion*?

   b. What are the perceptions of consistencies and discrepancies, and the reasons for either, in the socio-cultural, academic, and occupational experiences of Black African international graduate students while studying at a Canadian Public University?

   c. What explains the discrepancies between stated federal, provincial, and institutional internationalization policy and strategy claims on *equity, access, and inclusion*, and the experiences of Black African international graduate students in a Canadian Public University?

2. How are the experiences of Black African international graduate students affected, influenced, or shaped by actions, structures, or systems of domination in social, cultural, academic, and occupational settings?

3. What processes and strategies can promote more equitable internationalization approaches (including in policy and practice) and experiences for Black African international graduate students at a Canadian Public University?

Key Definitions

To disambiguate the meaning of key terms and avoid misinterpretation among readers, I provide some key definitions below that are used in this work.

1. **Anti-Black racism**. This term was first used in the Canadian context by Dr. Akua Benjamin, Professor Emeritus at the Toronto Metropolitan University School of Social Work. The term "seeks highlight the unique nature of systemic racism on Black Canadians and the history as well as experiences of slavery and colonization of people of Black-African descent in Canada" (Toronto Metropolitan University, 2023). In this work, it is also used to refer to "policies and practices rooted in Canadian institutions…that mirror and reinforce beliefs, attitudes, prejudice, stereotyping and/or discrimination towards people of Black-African descent" (University of Windsor, 2023).

2. **Comprehensive internationalization**. I adopt the following (shortened) definition of the American Council on Education (ACE) which views comprehensive internationalization as "a strategic, coordinated framework that integrates policies, programs, initiatives, and individuals (including students, faculty and staff) to make colleges/universities more

globally oriented and internationally connected in a continuous learning process that is central to the institution's equitable, intercultural transformation" (ACE, 2022).

3. **Decolonizing.** Engaging in a range of theory- and praxis-driven activities aimed at bringing about social justice transformation by dismantling the vestiges of colonialism that exist in the structures, systems, and practices of institutional/educational and social actors who contribute to shaping the world of newcomer students, and promoting sustainable equity in policy, experience, and outcomes of marginalized groups.

4. **Equity.** Ensuring fairness and parity in experience and outcomes for international students (including racialized students from Africa) from the point of admission in their home country to the point of integration in their host country and its educational and institutional spaces where these students study, socialize, work, and live; eliminating the different types of systemic, institutional, and social barriers that hinder them from being treated fairly, justly, and respectfully during and beyond their Canadian higher education.

5. **Higher education (HE).** My use of this phrase in the proposal/study applies to two related contexts. First, it refers to the kind of advanced credential-based education and education systems that specifically occur in the academy or university (within which my research is specifically located). I also use it to refer generally to the type of tertiary or advanced education that happens across postsecondary institutions such as universities, colleges, and polytechnics (amongst others) both in Canada and internationally.

6. **Inclusion.** Promoting a culture and environment through policies, systems, and practices that value, welcome, engage, and centre (instead of marginalize) African students within all the spheres (academic, employment, cultural, and social) of their mobility, settlement, and integration in the context of Canadian higher education and internationalization.

7. **Integration.** I adopt the definition from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, which describes integration as "a two-way process that involves commitment on the part of immigrants to adapt to life in Canada and on the part of Canada to welcome and adapt to new peoples and cultures" (Government of Canada, 2022a). In this dissertation, the word integration refers to the degree to which international students' diverse needs are taken into account and accommodated as they try to navigate and become ensconced in the academic, social, cultural, and economic or occupational dimensions of their international student experience within the context of internationalization and related policy provisions in Canada.

8. **Internationalization**. This refers to the practice and process of international education, specifically in the context of higher education. It is the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of postsecondary education as defined by Jane Knight (2003, 2008). It also encompasses both policies and practices undertaken by academic systems and institutions, individuals, and other social actors to navigate the international/global academic environment.

9. **Internationalization policies**. The term internationalization policies as used in this dissertation refers to any physical, electronic, or web-based policy documents or official policy statements on internationalization that are relevant to international students in general, as well as those particularly applicable to my research participants. The term encompasses both the policies and the ensuing or related strategies that reflect such policies, as conceived, articulated, and operationalized by government (at federal or provincial levels), by educational institutions, or by other official, influential, and recognized bodies within the Canadian higher education policy landscape.

10. **International students.** My use of the term international student is consistent with the definition of the Canadian government, which them as non-Canadian students who do not have permanent resident status and have had to obtain the authorization of the Canadian government to enter Canada with the intention of pursuing an education" (Statistics Canada, 2010). They are temporary migrants with temporary status limited to their study permit conditions in Canada. They are also distinct from Canadian citizens or permanent resident students who are regarded as domestic students and have more rights and access due to their citizenship or permanent resident status.

11. **International spouses.** This refers to the common-law or married partners of international students who accompany them to Canada on the grounds of the immigration policy that allows them to work while in line with the conditions of an open work permit issued by the Government of Canada.

12. **Settlement.** I adopt the definition from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, which describes settlement as "a short period of mutual adaptation between the newcomers and the host society, during which the government provides support and services to newcomers" (Government of Canada, 2022a). I apply it in a similar sense in my discussion with respect to the student participants of this study.

13. **Visible minorities.** Although a contested term, I adopt its usage in the following contexts. My use of this term is consistent with the definition set forth in Canada's Employment Equity Act (EEA, 1995). These are "persons, other than an Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour" regardless of place of birth. According to Statistics Canada (2021a), the visible minority population in Canada consists mainly of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Arab, Latin American,

Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean, and Japanese. While I loosely use it to encompass

Black people in some instances, I generally apply it as an umbrella term to refer to people

of colour visible minorities in most instances while avoiding ambiguity. Visible minorities

are one of the four officially designated groups in the Act (the other three being

Aboriginals, women, and persons with disabilities).

Delimitations

    With respect to methodological delimitations, this is a qualitative study. While

quantitative or statistical data references are made in limited instances to support analysis, the

primary data upon which this inquiry is based are of a qualitative nature. It is a critical

ethnographic study that seeks to understand the meaning and impact of policy, including what

policy does from the perspective of the racialized stakeholders, and that unearths the hidden or

ignored experiences of a specific community of racialized students. The scope of policy

document analysis includes national/federal, sectoral, and institutional (university)

internationalization policy and strategy claims or statements that directly address or relate to the

adaptation or integration of Black graduate international students in Canadian higher education.

The human participant perspectives include the views of administrators involved in

internationalization policy and practice, as well as the primary participant group of Black African

graduate international students drawn specifically from faculties in the Sciences, Arts, and

Humanities of the university.

Organization of the Study

The content of this dissertation is organized across seven chapters. The introductory chapter situates the study by locating the researcher and elucidating the problem, purpose, significance, research questions, and limitations of the study. The second chapter presents a literature review and conceptual framework that explores and summarizes topical aspects of the study addressing relevant existing knowledge and gaps. The third chapter articulates the theoretical framework or blueprint for my study and explains the ontology, epistemology, and axiology of the decolonial and critical lens I have deployed for analysis and interpretation of data within a paradigm of critical (internationalization) studies.

The fourth chapter on research design and methodology details how the study was methodologically constructed and practically implemented using a critical ethnography approach that drew on multiple data collection methods; it also addresses how I navigated my positionality, insider-outsider status, and other ethical and qualitative research considerations that shaped my study. In the fifth chapter, I present the key findings of the study based on multiple human participant group (student, administrator or staff) perspectives and insights from multi-level policy/document analysis. In the sixth chapter, I discuss the findings. I apply Harsha Walia's theoretical concept of *border imperialism* to explore and explain some of the key findings from my study linked to the border-mediated migration and immigration paradoxes experienced by Black graduate international students navigating life at the margins of international education; I briefly consider strategies that draw on the nexus of anti-colonial theory and decolonial praxis for combating the harmful impacts of border imperialism on the racialized participant group at the centre of my study. Furthermore, I deploy Achille Mbembe's concept of *necropolitics* and *necropower* in the context of internationalization in/equity to

explicate how sovereign political power is deployed through policy to the advantage of some and the disadvantage of others who may be considered expendable or disposable. Using these lenses, I analyze and discuss some human participant and policy-based findings from the study and theorize how students from the Black graduate international student community are being impacted by necropolitical influences that manifest (sometimes subtly, covertly, or inadvertently) through policies and practices in internationalization.

In the seventh and last chapter, I present concluding thoughts and recommendations under the umbrella theme *Reimagining Inclusive and Decolonial Internationalization*. The first part of this final chapter highlights Black international student excellence in internationalization by focussing on their diversity, intersectionality, agency, resilience, and resistance in the face of adversity. I draw on ethnographic group *observation* data and human participant findings to highlight how these different dimensions of their social identities and location in community contribute to equity in internationalization. The next part briefly outlines some implications of my study for internationalization policy, practice, and future research. I propose ideas for a decolonial project in internationalization as a contribution toward decolonizing internationalization, especially from a Black international lives' perspective in Canada. Finally, I articulate detailed recommendations for consideration by stakeholders that operate at institutional, provincial, national, and international dimensions of internationalization in Canada.

Taken together, this section provides an overview of the different components of my study and the logical sequence in which they are laid out from start to finish. The next chapter presents a review of literature and unpacks some key concepts that are relevant to this study.

Chapter 2: Internationalization of Higher Education: Concepts, Theories, Policies, and

             Student Experiences

Introduction

Drawing on past empirical and experiential evidence and existing literature, I highlight and examine below some of the key related concepts and variables that shape or have the potential to shape my research. While the concepts of internationalization and integration have been analyzed and debated in varying contexts and from different angles in the context of higher education (or postsecondary education), my focus here is to present and explore literature that simultaneously addresses them in relation to the equitable integration of international visible minorities, and particularly Black African international graduate students in Canada's international education context. Therefore, I attempt to balance between the breadth and depth of relevant literature, as I present views that intersect with internationalization and integration of international students—views that address key knowledge, facts, developments, gaps, positionalities, provoke deeper thought, and further the debate and critical inquiry around the phenomenon under study. The review of literature and concepts presented below is organized under themes that lay a foundation for the study.

Internationalization in Higher Education: Definitions, Rationales, Ideologies, Orientations

Internationalization is widely considered one of the most dominant influences in higher education today. As a term, it has historically been used in different contexts and disciplines to connote a sense of engaging in some form of international activity that includes adapting to other languages, cultures, or regions. For example, it has been popularly used in the context of economics to describe the process of increasing engagement of enterprises in international

markets through inward and outward activities/processes (Susman, 2007). Some have even used it either interchangeably or synonymously with "globalization." However, Altbach et al. (2009) argue that while there is a give-and-take relationship between globalization and internationalization, a key distinction between the two concepts is the notion of control: while globalization and its effects are beyond the control of any one actor or set of actors, internationalization is not (p. 23). Altbach and Knight (2007) believe that the concepts though related are not the same thing: "Globalization is the context of economic and academic trends that are part of the reality of the 21st century while Internationalization includes the policies and practices undertaken by academic systems and institutions—and even individuals—to cope with the global academic environment" (p. 290). Peterson and Helms (2013) emphasize the interconnectedness of both terms, the opportunities and challenges that globalization presents, and how 'global engagement' has influenced the priorities and approaches to internationalization at individual and institutional levels. Mitchell and Nielson (2012) characterize globalization as a transformational economic force that is turning knowledge into a commodity and changing the core functions and purpose of institutions of higher education to a commercial one.

Although the "internationalization" terminology and debates over its meaning are not new—especially in the realms of political science and governmental relations—its use in the field of education only became popular from the 1980s, with many countries adopting the terminology in place of terms such as "international education," "international relations," and "international cooperation," which were more popular in the 1960s (Knight, 2008). Despite the increasing acceptance and use of the term, Jane Knight—a Canadian-born expert and one of the most prominent and cited experts on the subject—insists that some confusion still surrounds its meaning to different people. According to Knight (2008):

some see it as a series of international activities such as academic mobility for students

and teachers; international linkages, partnerships, and projects; new international

academic programs and research initiatives. Others view it as delivering education to

other countries using a variety of face-to-face and distance techniques, ranch campuses or

franchises; and many also consider the increasing emphasis on trade in higher education

(or international development projects) as internationalization. (p. 1)

Knight (2011) characterizes the widespread misconceptions about internationality as the "five

myths about internationalization," which include the views that (1) foreign students are

internationalization agents whose mere presence on campus produces more internationalized

institutional culture and curriculum; (2) international reputation is a proxy for quality (despite

internationalization not always translating into improved quality or high standards); (3) a higher

number of international agreements or network memberships makes a university more

prestigious and attractive; (4) a higher number of international accreditation stars makes an

institution more internationalized; and (5) the purpose of internationalization is to improve global

branding. Jane Knight maintains that these myths, which impact internationalization approaches,

are driven by "implicit assumptions that need to be exposed and discussed." In the context of my

study, I might add a sixth myth that increasing diversity of student representation (i.e., excessive

focus on the number of nationalities represented while neglecting access and equity-related

dimensions of their experiences and integration) translates to equitable internationalization

experiences for all.

Despite the concept being no longer brand new in higher education, Gao et al. (2015, p.

300) observe that "new mechanisms and patterns of cooperation and competition between

universities have emerged in the past three decades along with a growing focus on exploring

various aspects of internationalization within higher education, including definitions of the term, rationales and strategies." They also point to the shift in focus from broad and general research on the subject "towards practical application of approaches, the 'how' of internationalization that aim to identify, measure and improve higher education institutions (HEI's) policies and practices" (Gao et al., p. 300). This depicts a growing empirical appetite for a more granular or nuanced understanding of the workings and impact of internationalization due to the apparent growing awareness of knowledge and practice gaps.

Within the context of higher education, Knight (2008, p. 22) identifies two streams of internationalization: "Internationalization at home" (referring to internationalization activities that happen within a home campus) and "Internationalization abroad" (denoting those activities that institutions and governments are engaged in abroad). The focus of my research and this literature review is mostly related to the former. She provides the following conceptual working definition of internationalization (which is the most widely used in the literature): "Internationalization at the national, sector, and institutional levels is defined as the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education" (Knight, 2003, p. 2).

Knight (2008) underscores that while there may never be a truly universal definition, her intentionally generic, objective, and neutral definition is "applicable to many countries, cultures and educational systems… and appropriate for use across a broad range of comparative purposes across countries and regions of the world" (p. 21). The objectivity of her definition takes into consideration the need to follow care in defining a universal phenomenon that may have different national and institutional contexts and purposes that are inextricably tied to the intentions and ideologies of the key actors and stakeholders driving the internationalization agenda and process.

It is also clear from the definition that the approaches to internationalization are driven at national, sector, and institutional levels through specific policies, strategies, and programs. What is perhaps lacking in her definition (and subsequent discourse of the subject) is that she focusses only on the process without any clear indication of what the outcome of this process should like, or what would indicate the effective outcome or success of the process; this is a gap which I think another definition (below) has attempted to address.

A revised version of Knight's definition (with modifications underlined) subsequently published by the European parliament attempts to incorporate a denotation of the outcomes of internationalization as follows:

> [Internationalization is] the <u>intentional</u> process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of postsecondary education, <u>in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society</u>. (de Wit et al., 2015, p. 29, as cited in Guo & Guo, 2017, p. 852-853).

This updated definition emphasizes the focus on internationalization outcomes such as "enhancing quality of education and contribution to society," which also implies the evolving focus on internationalization outcomes of social integration—the experience or realization of which (as earlier mentioned) also needs to be critically evaluated as opposed to solely focussing on the process emphasized in Knight's definition. Building on this notion, Kearney and Lincoln (2017, p. 823-824) insist that internationalization transcends "exchange of knowledge and academic excellence to wider and complex political and socio-economic issues such as graduate employability and the education/training needs of migrants."

Knight (2008, p. 39) further highlights the importance of monitoring and evaluating the process of internationalization (i.e., its progress and quality) on the one hand and its results/impact on the other. However, she only introduces tracking measures for evaluating the former. I argue that measuring the impact is as important as measuring the process because the process could be impeccable and yet still produce unintended or undesired results, particularly from the perspectives of the international students affected by such outcomes. In other words, a review of internationalization is incomplete without a determination of whether and to what extent the intended results are being realized. Knight believes that internationalization is not an end in itself but rather a means to an end. Assuming this stance is accurate, the assertion also invokes the logical necessity to not only evaluate the means but also the end product of such 'means' in order to fully comprehend the relationship between both, the areas of discrepancies, and how to systematically address them. I would additionally like to posit that the evaluation of internationalization (already established to be necessary) will not be possible without a careful consideration of how its rationales and policy claims of integration are being experienced among the international student groups, which further accentuates the value of doing a critical inquiry.

Another definition of internationalization provided by the Center for Internationalization and Global Engagement (as cited in Hawawini, 2016, p. 5) is that "Internationalization is a strategic, coordinated process that seeks to align and integrate international policies, programs, and initiatives, and positions colleges and universities as more globally oriented and internationally connected." Hawawini (2016) expresses dissatisfaction with the current or traditional definition of internationalization (as originally advanced by Jane Knight and others), citing its limitation as being too fixated on inward-looking dimensions and measures. Hawawini argues for an expanded definition that incorporates (a refined version of) outward-looking

measures, such as reference in the institution's mission to outward internationalization; the proportion of students studying abroad as part of their home degree; the proportion of students engaged in international projects that involve foreign institutions; the number of double and joint-degree programs; the number of academic joint-ventures, alliances, and partnerships; the proportion of faculty involved in international research projects; the proportion of international research projects and funding; the proportion of faculty who spend time abroad to collaborate with foreign-based faculty; and the number of research centres located in foreign countries and academic activities carried out abroad. Furthermore, Hawawini (2016, p. 5) suggests an alternative, broader definition, that better justifies the reality of what internationalization also entails (i.e., integrating the institution into the global economy): "Internationalization is an ongoing process of change whose objective is to integrate the institution and its key stakeholders (its students and faculty) into the emerging global knowledge economy." Although speaking particularly from a business disciplinary background, the argument and alternative definition presented by this author raises potential questions around how different institutional players view and interpret (and therefore engage with) internationalization. In other words, how can such differences of worldviews, interpretations, and even disciplinary and epistemic orientations affect or orient the way internationalization is understood, implemented, and ultimately experienced by students and other institutional stakeholders?

Speaking on the meanings and nature of internationalization or what he also refers to as "internationality," Teichler (2017) posits that although internationalization of higher education is in several respects differently understood and interpreted by different actors, experts, and countries, "a few elements of it—such as border-crossing, the implied trend toward growth, international student mobility and knowledge transfer—are shared by all actors and experts" (p.

179-180). Drawing on over three decades of research in the field and summaries of public discourse on the phenomenon, he argues that although the articulation of classifications may vary, the six most widespread meanings of internationalization include worldwide/border-crossing knowledge transfer, physical mobility across countries, international cooperation and communication, international education and research, international similarity (convergence, globalisation, Europeanization, etc.), and international reputation (world-class universities, international quality, etc.). Moreover, Teichler underscores the political nature of global international mobility and cooperation and how this influences the related strategic choices and decisions (such as who and how to partner) that countries/actors make in the context of internationality, and believes that amid "rising international political tensions and international misunderstanding in the post–cold war era, efforts in favour of international and intercultural understanding, as has been pointed out by observers, have become even more critical" (p. 210). The author's informed perspective on the meanings and nature of internationalization suggests (or gives credence to notion) that the choices and approach that a country or actors take toward internationalization can be influenced by their understanding and the politics at play.

Beyond the meanings and nature of internationalization, the need to clearly "distinguish between what is being internationalized (the what) and the rationale for internationalization (the why) is also important to avoid muddling the two as is often done in much of literature" (De Wit, 2011, p. 244). To avoid presenting "the what" as "the how," a clear understanding is required of the four broad categories of rationales identified in literature (De Wit 2002, p. 83-102, as cited in De Wit, 2011, p. 245): "political, economic, social and cultural, and academic." De Wit also notes the fact that while rationales could vary at different times and contexts, "economic rationale appears to be the most dominant" (p. 245). What is not clear is whether there could be a

joint equal dominance of more than one driver at any given point in time as the internationalization process evolves. Nonetheless, the preponderance of the economic rational raises concerns about the chances that international student consumers of international education will benefit from equitable considerations and experiences. It also raises questions regarding the degree to which existing internationalization policies, strategies, and practices will influence or orient towards beneficial experiences for students if an economic rational (or the "why") is indeed the dominant driver of international education effort.

The roles that the different institutional actors or stakeholders play in internationalization has gained significance in the literature because of how such actors could impact or be impacted by the process or the rationale and goals of internationalization. Some authors have stressed the importance of professors' attitudes and values alignment with those of their institution as the key to the success of internationalization efforts (Postiglione & Altbach, 2013) while others believe that further nuanced examination of how academic faculty members are impacted is necessary (Bedenlier & Zawacki-Richter, 2015). Hunter (2018) believes that, with more attention now being given to the role of university support functions, the various supporting roles that administrative staff can perform should not be ignored. However, she advocates the importance of adequate training in order to better prepare and equip administrative and support staff; she concludes that "internationalization (which inevitably, requires shifting roles) exposes and magnifies institutional weaknesses, and any university serious about internationalization must also be willing to take an honest and critical look at its traditional modes of operation and undertake the necessary change" (p. 17). Unquestionably, how the different roles of institutional actors are performed—from academics to administrators, and administrative support staff, amongst others—could potentially influence how students adapt and 'internationalize' through

their various points of interaction with these actors in academic/curricular, extracurricular, socio-cultural, and occupational contexts throughout the course of their studies. Some of these actors are therefore worth interviewing as their perspectives may provide valuable insights that contribute to an institutional international education research projects such as mine.

As the understanding of the concept and practice of internationalization has evolved in Canada, several educational institutions and bodies have developed principled statements on the phenomenon to ensure that the process and objectives are well understood and applied. For example, the Internationalization Leaders Network (ILN) released an *Internationalization Statement of Principles for Canadian Educational Institutions* that they believe reflects the core values of quality, equity, inclusion, and partnership (CBIE, 2014). Amongst others, the seven-point statement of principles underscores the centrality and value of internationalization in societal and institutional and global realms, the importance of embedding it in institutional missions' statements, the need to value and recognize international student contributions, and the imperative to engage with community members (including students, faculty, and staff) in the design and development of activities. Surprisingly (to me), the statement suggests that access in internationalization need not be exactly the same for all, or to the same extent, even though internationalization aims for equitable access to activities and should engage all members of the education community.

The *Accord on The Internationalization of Education* (ACDE, 2014, 2016) published by the Association of Canadian Deans of Education also contributes to shaping the internationalization equity agenda across universities and colleges in Canada. The *Accord* aims to promote: economic and social justice and equity across sites and contexts of educational practice; reciprocity as the foundation for engaging in internationalization activities; global

sustainability; intercultural awareness, ethical engagement, understanding and respect; and equity of access to education regardless of economic status or financial circumstance. The accord is framed in the context of three key areas of concern: (1) how increasing international mobility has facilitated the rapid internationalization of higher education, straining the capacity of institutions to respond to service demands in ways that are socially accountable; (2) how local and global forces are challenging educational systems to respond to increasing levels of complexity, uncertainty, diversity, and inequality; and (3) how the current economic imperatives of globalization have intensified the drive towards profit-seeking, standardizing, and potentially exploitative internationalization activities, often without full consideration of or particular attention paid to the vulnerability of marginalized communities (p. 4). The Accord provides opportunities for current and future teachers/professors who subscribe to its principles to adopt and integrate socially just global perspective in their approaches to curricula development, course design, pedagogical activity, and intercultural and sociocultural engagement within and outside the classroom. It equips educators as internationalization change agents to facilitate positive social and systemic transformation in learning and policy spaces across the academy. Although the institutional practice of internationalization comes with risks such as exploitative profit-maximization practices, systemic exclusion of some groups within Canada, neocolonialism (including epistemic colonialism), and other forms of individual and broader social marginalization of identities and cultures (ACDE, 2014, 2016), the potential benefits for all stakeholders far outweigh the risks, especially if equitable outcomes are the collective goal.

These influential and widely referenced policy statements by the above key actors in the Canadian international education landscape present important and interesting perspectives that have ramifications for institutional and (international) student stakeholders within Canada's

internationalization approach. A common thread across them is the orientation towards inclusion, equity, and social justice as well as a few differences (and perhaps contradictions; for example, the ILN principles refers to differential access in point #7, while the ACDE refers to equity of access across the board, regardless) that certainly deserve a closer analysis in the light of their meaning and potential (or actual) impact on student experiences (cf. CBIE, 2014; ACDE, 2016).

Several arguments and suggestions have been advanced to enhance the effectiveness and equitability of internationalization models with implications for the experiences (including integration-related experiences) of international students within local institutional, societal, and global contexts. For example, Turner and Robson (2008) argue for a localized internationally integrated environment through the development of intercultural competencies among university staff, supported by sustainable international management practices within higher education institutions. They maintain that such an internationally integrated environment can be fostered and sustained through a strategic development focus on certain aspects of internationalization among faculty and staff (Turner and Robson, 2008):

> Skills development in cultural awareness, intercultural communication and competence in diverse professional settings; management of complex and diverse international organizations, international resource and international HRM, including managing workforce diversity; diversity engagement and participation, including the development of disciplinary and cross-disciplinary communities of reciprocal practices to explore the implications of internationalization in different contexts; curriculum development in support of embedding international perspectives and learning into and teaching orientations into programming and curriculum; and academic practices that include

development in cultural pedagogy and the implications of internationalization for

constructions of teaching and learning and professional practices. (p. 123)

This localized, development-oriented approach, depending on how it is implemented, could

clearly influence how university faculty and staff perceive and interact with, and impact the lives

of, international students from different parts of the world, with important ramifications for their

social, cultural, academic, and employment integration experiences.

Drawing on case studies of what they characterize as "mobile" students from East Asia,

mainland Europe, and the UK, Brooks and Waters (2011) address a gap in the literature on

internationalization of higher education by highlighting students' own perspectives on their

goals, motivations, and experiences. Amongst others, they discuss theoretical debates/concepts

including employability, education, class, social reproduction, identities, and geographical

perspectives on education and policy, and how these underpin the mobility/migration

experiences of international students. They underline the importance of applying a lens that

attempts to "…better understand the often highly personal and always social reasons why

individuals migrate for education" (p. 163). While acknowledging that many students personally

benefit from internationalization experiences, they also emphasize that not all mobile

(international) students, countries, national economies, and societies involved in

internationalization are equally served (or equally benefit) from it. In response to this, they call

for a rethink of how internationalization is performed in the face of unequal gains by differently

situated stakeholders:

The neo-liberal vision of international education (invariably driven largely by mercenary

concerns) is not inevitable, and alternative futures for HE, involving different versions of

internationalization, must be imagined, deliberated and discussed. Our current review of

the state of internationalization in higher education (albeit one focusing on student

mobilities) suggests some very mixed outcomes. On the one hand…many students

benefit from international mobility, as do some national economies and educational

institutions. At the same time … the geographies of internationalization are highly

uneven and an overwhelming focus on the inevitability of internationalization fails to

recognize the countries, economies, societies and individuals (including local and mobile)

for which there are no gains to be had from this process…further research is therefore

needed, which attempts to understand how mobile students fit into the larger picture of

the contemporary transformation in the spaces of HE and how the advantage that accrues

from international mobility can be made more accessible to all students, and not just the

most privileged sections of society. (p. 171-172)

In sum, Brooks and Waters (2011) advocate for a more equitable approach that

challenges the political and economic imperatives driving internationalization strategies and

levels the playing field for everyone (including the currently disadvantaged stakeholders of

internationalization). They convey and reaffirm the notion that there are winners and losers in the

internationalization experience, both among local and international stakeholders (including the

international students), creating a situation that is unsustainable in the interest of equity and

social justice in internationalization.

Other international education literature provides further critical perspectives on

internationalization (cf. Hébert & Abdi, 2013). For example, Beck (2013) argues that:

the increased presence of international students and proliferation of programs and

international activities that suffice to claim progress on internationalization at university

campuses has not been matched by concomitant productivity in research and research-

based decision regarding policy and practice in internationalization. (p. 43)

She questions why there has not been significant critical appraisal of the beliefs and values that

underlie the theory, practice, and complexity of the (internationalization) phenomenon and

believes that the complacency in the assumption that an academic rationale for

internationalization is being practiced and addressed is highly problematic given the status quo.

Guo and Alfred (2013) also argue for the intensification of faculty engagement in the

internationalization of adult education through critical research and curricular engagement that

better embraces international dimensions and international students, and the general need for

Canadian and American adult education to "move beyond its near static nature that is more

locally focused to embrace more global issues and aspects related to internationalization." Some

believe that the 'perfect' impression provided or created by the website text and language

surrounding internationalization programs and activities by universities is not only an inaccurate

reflection but also an exaggeration of the level of progress, activities, and impact of

internationalization experienced on the ground (James et al., 2013). They suggest that the often-

stated but largely unrealized (internationalization) goals of intercultural understanding,

knowledge and language acquisition, international cooperation, and solidarity, amongst others,

cannot be achieved by merely exposing students and faculty to cultural diversity with the hope of

fostering an appreciation for such diversity. As well, they maintain that a sober or realistic

assessment of the actual degree of work required to truly and effectively internationalize needs to

be done to stem the largely unrealized outcomes demonstrated in the "low participation of and

retention rates among students from historically marginalized and racialized groups and limited

institutionalized changes in curricula, pedagogy, or faculty hiring criteria (as cited in Hernandez-

Ramddwar, 2009; Ryan & Carroll, 2005b; Henry & Tator, 2009)" (p. 153). Given their

complicity in creating or not effectively addressing the barriers to international student

integration in their higher education systems, governments, educational institutions, and

educators are enjoined to be more intentional and accountable in taking advantage of the

opportunities and possibilities that exist for creating "informed and educated world citizens that

are conscious of the world around them and our interdependency in the 21st century" (James et

al., 2013, p. 161).

The role of ideology in internationalization has also come under scrutiny. For example,

Jonas Stier (2004) calls for a more critical stand towards internationalization in higher education.

He suggests that many challenges encountered around implementing policies in

internationalization can be explained by the divergent conceptualizations and understandings of

internationalization within existing discourse, and divergent or contradictory ideologies that

guide higher education internationalization. Focusing his critique on the contradicting ideologies

of idealism, instrumentalism, and educationalism, Stier (2004) questions the paradoxical nature

of the idealistic standpoint that idealizes internationalization and creation of a better, pluralistic

world while approaching it from elitist and ethnocentric value systems. In the instrumentalist

standpoint that favours economistic goals, "wealthy nations attempt to attract academic staff and

fee-paying students from the 'poor' world, not only for short-term financial gains, but with an

intent to keep their competence in the country, thus risking to 'brain drain' their home countries"

(Stier, 2004, p. 91). Finally, in the educationalist view, Stier refers to the ideological

contradictions between organized, timebound, and resource-limited education for academic and

professional objectives versus lifelong learning that is neither organized or timebound; it is also

expressed "in a conviction that 'our' methods of teaching, research and degrees are better than

those of other countries" by teaching staff and researchers, or, demonstrated as "a rejection of the rules, routines or grading principles of foreign systems among Administrators" (p. 93). The manifestation of certain dimensions of these contradictions may be harmful to international students and disproportionately impact them in different ways.

A growing corpus of literature on critical internationalization has drawn additional attention to ethical issues that influence internationalization or constitute barriers to its goals and achieving socially just outcomes for stakeholders (e.g., De Wit, 2020, Garson, 2012; Pashby & Andreotti, 2016; Stein, 2016). For example, Stein (2016) highlights ethical challenges and tensions impacting different facets of internationalization ethics that manifest in its history and evolution. She suggests the need for more reflection, dialogue, and/or investment in ethical approaches to internationalization. Stein specifically argues that nationalistic political and economic agendas, the straining of equity and global access to education, treating higher education as a global product, epistemic dominance and market-drive, and liberal humanist rationales all create ethical complexities in internationalization. For his part, De Wit (2020) suggests:

> Traditional values that have driven international activities in higher education in the past, such as exchange and cooperation, peace and mutual understanding, human capital development, and solidarity, although still present in the vocabulary of international education, have moved to the sideline in a push for competition, revenue, and reputation/branding. (p. iii)

He emphasizes the increasing concerns about the ethical challenges posed by the neocolonialism and neoliberal dimensions and trends that appear to have overtaken internationalization.

It is obvious that there are several points of consensus, debates, tensions, and critique relating to how internationalization is conceptualized and approached. Critical questions have also been raised about the gaps and inadequacies that surround the institutionalization and practice of this phenomenon. While paying attention to the above, it is not unreasonable to extend emerging questions and problematizations to the specific life contexts of international student groups (including marginalized groups) so that we can better comprehend their realities and experiences of equity, access, and integration within Canada's celebrated model of internationalization. The status quo suggests the need for a critical simultaneous re/evaluation of (a) relevant extant policies and strategies that influence the different dimensions of internationalization, international student mobility, and integration; and (b) international student group inclusion and integration experiences with a view to understanding underlying discrepancies between policy and reality and making improvements. Without these, the rethink and advancement of internationalization approaches that impact student inclusion and integration may only remain cognitive or textual fantasies that are never realized in the lives and experiences of international students and internationalized institutions in need of more even or equitable internationalization experiences.

Immigration Policy and International Student Mobility in Canada

This section briefly examines the relationship between immigration policy and international student mobility experiences in the context of my study. Immigration policies of host countries have the potential to impact the mobility of students and their ability to equitably access and experience internationalization. In a tangible sense, a student's international education experience includes their border and immigration experiences largely influenced by

their destination country for international studies and settlement. Canada's immigration system is

constituted by a number of policy regimes and border governance structures that regulate who

comes into Canada, who stays out, and what status, rights, and privileges are accorded to

individuals who enter, stay, and exit Canadian borders. The Federal Government is responsible

for immigration in Canada and operationalizes it through Immigration Refugee and Citizenship

Canada (IRCC) – the department mandated to create and implement policies, programs, and

services that support the mobility and integration of people who come to Canada as well as

Canadian citizens; they work with partners to "advance global migration policies in a way that

supports Canada's immigration and humanitarian objectives" (Government of Canada, 2018a).

Table 1 below summarizes the genealogy of significant events and developments in the

evolution of immigration policy and practice in Canada and also highlights some of the laws that

informed them, particularly those that impacted Black and other minorities.

Table 1

Summarized Genealogy of Immigration Law and Policy Evolution in Canada

Date	Significant Immigration Events or Developments
	1600s
1604-1608	Over 4 centuries ago (between 1604 and 1608), Mathieu Da Costa was the first Black African or person of African descent/heritage to visit what we now know as Canada. Serving as interpreter for French and Dutch traders and explorers in the 17th century, he accompanied Pierre Du Gua De Monts and Samuel de Champlain in their voyage to Canada.
1628	In 1628, Olivier LeJeune was recorded as the first enslaved African to live in Canada (i.e., New France). Olivier LeJeune's birth name is not known, as he was taken from Africa as a young child and eventually given the last name of the priest who purchased him.
1629	The enslavement of African People in Canada commenced at this point in history (c. 1629–1834). Between c. 1629 and 1834, there were more than 4,000 enslaved people of African descent in the

	British and French colonies that later became Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick Government of Canada (2020a).
1689	Following complaints about labour shortages in New France (i.e., what is now called Canada), King Louis XIV of France gave permission for the colonists to enslave Pawnee Native Americans and Africans.
1700s	
1749-1782	Between 1749 and 1782, most of the Black Canadians and their communities brought to Nova Scotia were enslaved by English or American settlers. In 1750, about 400 enslaved and 17 free Black people were living in Halifax, Nova Scotia. During the War of American Independence (1775-1783), the British offered freedom to enslaved Africans in America who joined the British side during the war. Many saw this as an opportunity for freedom, and eventually 10 percent of the United Empire Loyalists coming into the Maritimes were Black. The Black Loyalists founded settlements throughout Nova Scotia. The Black Loyalists faced discrimination and were given considerably smaller plots of land, fewer provisions, and were expected to work for lower wages.
1790	Due to the tough and discriminatory conditions that they faced in Canada, in 1790 about 1,200 Black Loyalists accepted the offer of the Sierra Leone Company (a British anti-slavery organization) to resettle in Sierra Leone, on the Atlantic coast of West Africa.
1793	In 1793, the anti-slavery movement was emboldened by the actions of Chloe Cooley, an enslaved African woman in Upper Canada (now Ontario) who resisted being transported and sold into the United States. John Graves Simcoe, Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, who supported abolition before coming to Canada, had heard about Cooley's case. He introduced a law titled *An Act to Prevent the Further Introduction of Slaves and to limit the Term of Contracts for Servitude*. This Act freed people over 25 years of age, and made it illegal to bring enslaved people to Upper Canada, and made Canada a destination for those seeking freedom and an important base for the abolitionist movement.
1800s	
1800-1865	Throughout the 1800's, a number of historic Black communities were established across Canada. Some of these communities came as a result of war. Between 1800 and 1865, approximately 30,000 Black people came to Canada via the Underground Railway – the network of secret routes and safe houses used by enslaved

	Africans to escape into free American states and Canada with the support of abolitionists and their allies.
1807	In 1807, the *Act on the Abolition of the Slave Trade in the British Empire* received Royal Assent and became law throughout the British Empire.
1812	During the War of 1812, many Black Canadians and their communities sided with the British Empire. The Coloured Corps was inaugurated in Upper Canada (Ontario), comprised of free and enslaved Black men who fought in the Battle of Queenston Heights. In 1815, Black veterans of the War of 1812 received grants of land in Oro Township; however, much of the land was not suitable for agriculture and many of those who received grants found they had to seek out employment in other places.
August 28, 1833	The Slavery Abolition Act received Royal Assent on 28 August 1833 and took effect on 1 August 1834. It was passed to: (i) abolish slavery throughout the British Colonies; (ii) promote the industry of the manumitted slaves; and (iii) compensate the persons hitherto entitled to the service of such slaves (also known as the Slavery Abolition Act). This Act abolished enslavement in most British colonies, freeing over 800,000 enslaved Africans in the Caribbean and South Africa as well as a small number in Canada.
1858	In 1858, nearly 800 free Black peoples left the oppressive racial conditions of San Francisco for a new life on Vancouver Island. Though still faced with intense discrimination, these pioneers enriched the political, religious, and economic life of the colony. About 400 Black Californian families moved to Victoria or Salt Spring Island before the start of the gold rush.
July 1, 1867	**Confederation.** Confederation refers to the process of federal union in which the British North American colonies of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Province of Canada joined together to form the Dominion of Canada. The term Confederation also stands for 1 July 1867, the date of the creation of the Dominion. Beginning in 1864, colonial politicians (now known as the Fathers of Confederation) met and negotiated the terms of Confederation at conferences in Charlottetown, Quebec City, and London, England. Their work resulted in the British North America Act, Canada's Constitution. It was passed by the British Parliament. At its creation in 1867, the Dominion of Canada included four provinces: Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario. Between then and 1999, six more provinces and three territories joined Confederation.
1869	**Immigration Act, 1869.** Canada's first immigration act following Confederation contained few restrictions on immigration. The

	government of Prime Minister John A. Macdonald developed an open immigration policy to encourage the settlement of the West, seeking to enhance access to the region's natural resources and create a larger market for manufactured goods.
1879	By 1879, significant numbers of Black communities started immigrating to Alberta from Oklahoma, as they had been unable to find equality despite being experienced farmers and were increasingly alarmed by a series of Ku Klux Klan lynchings. In Canada, however, they had to contend with attempts to prevent Black immigration.
January 01, 1885	The Chinese Immigration Act, 1885. The first piece of Canadian legislation to exclude immigrants on the basis of their ethnic origin. It imposed a head-tax duty of $50, which later increased to $100 (in 1900) and $500 (in 1903), on every Chinese person seeking entry into Canada (Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, 2022a).
January 01, 1897	More than 5,000 South Asians, over 90% of them Sikhs, came to British Columbia before their immigration was banned in 1908.
January 20, 1899	About 2,000 Doukhobors from Russia landed in Halifax en route to farms in the West. Refugees from Russia, especially Jews, Mennonites, and Doukhobors, settled in Canada.
1900s	
January 1, 1902	The federal government concluded that the Asians were "unfit for full citizenship … obnoxious to a free community and dangerous to the state" (Canadian Encyclopedia, 2016, para. 5).
January 20, 1904	The ban on Chinese immigration was disallowed.
1906	The Immigration Act of 1906 introduced a more restrictive immigration policy, expanding the categories of prohibited immigrants, formalizing a deportation process and assigning the government enhanced powers to make arbitrary judgements on admission. The Japanese vessel *Suian Maru* landed at Beecher Bay on Vancouver Island. The group of 80 men and three women subsequently settled on Don and Lion islands near Richmond, BC.
January 1, 1907	An order-in-council banned immigration from India and South Asian countries.
September 7, 1907	Several hundred people rioted through Vancouver's Asian district to protest Asian immigration to Canada.
1908	Continuous Journey Regulation: An amendment to the Immigration Act in 1908, prohibiting the landing of any immigrant that did not come to Canada by continuous journey from the country of which they were natives or citizens. Immigrants were required to purchase a through ticket to Canada from their country of origin or otherwise be denied entry. In practice, this regulation

	primarily affected immigrants from India and Japan because the main immigration routes from those countries did not offer direct passage to Canada. According to *The Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*: In 1908 Canada instituted a restrictive immigration policy to curtail Black immigration. Between 1908 and 1911 more than one thousand African American Oklahomans sold their farms and migrated to Alberta or Saskatchewan. Some members of the Canadian White community vociferously opposed Black immigration. Considering Black immigrants to be poor farmers and bad citizens, they petitioned the government to restrict the movement. They argued that Black settlers took the place of more desirable immigrants and that property adjacent to Black settlements could not be sold. When Canadian officials decided to restrict the entry of African Americans, they used the argument that Black people were not real farmers, but in reality, most of the immigrants were accomplished farmers. The government started a campaign to instill fear among prospective Black immigrants, trying to convince them that they were not industrious enough or physically strong enough to cope with Canada's various soils and inhospitable climate. Conversely, however, the Canadian government continued to advertise, in Black as well as White newspapers, that the climate was splendid and hospitable and that the soils were adaptable and rich, producing bumper harvests.
Immigration Act, 1910	The Immigration Act of 1910 [8 (c)] gave the government the authority to exclude the entry of immigrants "belonging to any race deemed unsuitable to the climate and requirements of Canada [racialized peoples] or immigrants of any specified class, occupation, or character." The aim of the Act was to limit immigration to "healthy, white, preferably British or American agriculturalists" (Triadafilopoulos, 2012, p. 31). According to the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, the Immigration Act of 1910: (i) further enhanced the discretionary powers of government to regulate the flow of immigrants into Canada, reinforcing and expanding the exclusionary provisions outlined in the Immigration Act of 1906; (ii) under the new act, the list of prohibited immigrants expanded and the governor-in-council (i.e., federal cabinet) was given greater authority to make indiscriminate judgements concerning admissibility and deportation. A new provision specified that the governor-in-council could arbitrarily prohibit the landing of any immigrant deemed "unsuited to the climate or requirements of Canada"; and (iii) the Act introduced the concept of domicile, or permanent residency, which an

	immigrant could obtain after residing in Canada for three years. Until domicile was granted, an immigrant could be deported if they became classified as undesirable. Undesirable immigrants included prostitutes, pimps, vagrants and inmates of jails, hospitals, and insane asylums. Under the new Act, political dissidents advocating for the forceful overthrow of government and those attempting to create public disorder were also subject to deportation.
August 12, 1911	Order in Council P.C. 1911 – 1324 was approved on August 12, 1911 by the Cabinet Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier. The purpose of the order was to ban Black persons from entering Canada for a period of one year because, it read, "the Negro race…is deemed unsuitable to the climate and requirements of Canada." The order-in-council was the culmination of what researcher R. Bruce Shepard has called Canada's "campaign of diplomatic racism." Though the order never became law, the actions of government officials made it clear that Black immigrants were not wanted in Canada In early twentieth century Canada, there was widespread domestic pressure to ban Black immigration, although the number of Black immigrants seeking entry to Canada was quite small.[1] Immigration agents participated in the alarmist exclusion by creating many obstacles for immigrants of African descent. For instance, Canadian immigration authorities would often ignore Black inquiries for information or assistance. If pressed to respond, the immigration branch used a form letter that stated in part that Black settlers were not considered "a class of colonists who will be likely to do well in our country."
July 01, 1923	The Chinese Immigration Act, 1923 (also known as the Chinese Inclusion Act) replaced all previous Chinese immigration legislation and virtually restricted all Chinese immigration to Canada by restrictively redefining acceptable categories of Chinese immigration. The day on which Canada's confederation or national day (Canada Day) is also celebrated is remembered by many Canadian Chinese as "Humiliation Day" (Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, 2022b).
1947	In 1947 the formal ban on Chinese immigration was ended.
1952	A new Immigration Act maintained Canada's discriminatory policies against non-European and non-American immigrants.
1962	The federal government ended racial discrimination as a feature of the immigration system.
January 01, 1967	In 1967, a points system (i.e., Comprehensive Ranking System) was introduced to rank potential immigrants for eligibility. Race, colour, or nationality were not factors in the new system; rather, work skills, education levels, language ability (in speaking French

	or English), and family connections became the main considerations in deciding who could immigrate.
1973	The Canadian Government established its first formal administrative structure to process refugee claimants at Canada's borders and inland claims for refugee status. By the 1980s, the rising number of refugee claims ignited a national conversation about how Canada processed refugee claimants and whether the country's refugee determination system was fair, balanced, and efficient. In 1989, the Canadian Government established the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada to modernize the refugee determination process.
1976	Immigration and population policies were overhauled substantially in 1975. After substantial consultation, the Liberal government of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau passed a new Immigration Act, 1976. The Act, which took effect in 1978, was a radical break from the past. It established for the first time in law the main objectives of Canada's immigration policy. These included the promotion of Canada's demographic, economic, social, and cultural goals, as well as the priorities of family reunion, diversity, and non-discrimination.
1979	In 1979, Canada embarked on a unique program allowing private groups (most often churches and ethnic community organizations) to sponsor refugee individuals or families, bring them to Canada as permanent residents, and assist them in settling here.
1980	By 1980, five classes of immigrants had been established for entry to Canada: Independent, Humanitarian; Family, Assisted Relatives, and Economic.
1985	The Supreme Court of Canada's 1985 Singh decision had far-reaching implications for refugee rights in Canada. The Court ruled that the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms applied to every person who is physically present in Canada and that this entitled them to fundamental justice under the law. Therefore, refugee claimants had the right to a full oral hearing of their claims during the refugee determination process.
1990s	By the 1990s, after decades of legal and administrative reform, the racial make-up of immigrants was also changing. Asia (particularly China, India, and the Philippines) had replaced Europe as the largest source of immigrants to Canada.
2001	In 2001, after the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, Canada replaced its 1976 Immigration Act with the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. The new Act, which came into force in 2002, maintained many of the principles and policies of the previous one, including the various classes of immigrants. It also extended the family class to include same-sex

	and common-law relationships and gave the government wider powers to detain and deport landed immigrants suspected of being a security threat.

Adapted or quoted directly from *Government of Canada (2022c)*, *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (2022*) and the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21 (2022).*

Expanding on the table above, a Canadian-based organization that offers equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) educational, coaching, and community building solutions to governments, communities, and organizations provides a detailed chronology of racism and discrimination in Canada ironically titled "there is no racism in Canada – a timeline" (see Parris Consulting, 2020). The resource also presents a very comprehensive chronicle of how and when racism has occurred or evolved through significant historical epochs, junctures, and events in Canadian history.

Since the 17th century, Black people have been a part of the Canadian society and history. From that time, there have been periods and waves of Black migration and settlement that have occurred at different rates across different provinces and territories in Canada. While there may be some common threads and trends, the experience of each province and territory is unique in several ways, and those unique histories contribute to a better understanding and comparison between provincial and territorial contexts. Considering the chequered history of Black migration and settlement in Canada matters because it may lead to a deeper understanding of how the immigration policy has evolved or affected the mobility of Black people across borders and their settlement in Canada. As Canada's multicultural society has evolved, members of the Black community have both played a significant role and been impacted as history unfolded. In the context of my study on equitable internationalization experiences of Black African graduate international students, the relationship between migration and settlement policies and practices and contemporary Black student realities could shed further light on the dynamics at play during

integration. An empirical glimpse into history is not unfounded in a study of this nature because it can help scholars and researchers determine if current realities have historical antecedents, and whether there is a causal or correlational relationship between both. This could also inform how internationalization practitioners and policy makers align their approaches toward realizing more equitable internationalization futures for these members of a growing demographic in Canada.

While the Federal Government of Canada retains overall control over immigration and sets immigration targets, it may also collaborate with provinces and territories to identify candidates for permanent residency through the Provincial Nominee programs that allow provinces to identify and recommend skilled individuals for permanent residence. Among all the provinces and territories, Quebec exercises the greatest degree of control and autonomy in the immigration of people in some ways that are slightly different to the other provinces. IRCC oversees security checks, medical checks, and the process of issuing visas and makes the final decision on those matters before anyone can be admitted into Canada.

There are three types of immigration status under Canadian immigration policy: citizenship status, permanent residency status, and temporary status. People who have temporary status are those who enter Canada on a temporary basis, such as temporary foreign workers, international students who come for the purpose of study, and temporary workers and visitors. Permanent residents are people who qualify through one of the permanent residence programs or pathways to stay in Canada on a permanent basis. Canada admits permanent residents in four main categories: the *family sponsorship* class, which focuses on reuniting families by allowing permanent residents or citizens to sponsor a specified range of family members to come to Canada; the *protected persons and refugees* class, which caters to people such as international refugees and asylum seekers seeking to find refuge from wars, persecutions, or other challenges

and make Canada their home; the *economic* class (see more detail below); and the *humanitarian or other* class, which caters to people (who do not fall into any of the above categories) on compassionate or other grounds. In the economic class, people are selected for permanent residence through a point system on the basis of their skills and ability to become economically established in Canada ([Government of Canada, 2022b](#)). These include people who meet the required financial resources threshold for starting a business (i.e., the business class, based on meeting the criteria for acceptable financial networth and investment capital). The highest number of permanent resident candidates are selected through the economic stream. Understanding these immigration regimes are important as many of them are intended to offer pathways to permanent residency to newcomers, including international students who are generally seen as a viable source of skills to address Canada's current and projected significant labour shortage.

International Student Mobility

Canada's immigration system intersects with international student mobility from the point that students apply for study visas in their home countries; they apply for different types of immigration status at the various stages of their settlement and integration within Canadian higher education and society during and/or after graduation. The immigration policies that primarily affect international students are those that regulate the issue of study permits, post-graduation work permit (PWP), and permanent residence (PR).

Mobility justice theorist Mimi Sheller posits that "the production of unjust mobilities is a transnational and planetary problem that demands concerted efforts for social change" (Sheller, 2018a, p.17). Sheller's *mobility justice* framework (Sheller, 2018b) has been applied to situate

what Brunner ([2022](#)) refers to as *education-migration* issues that relate to international students who come to study in Canada. According to Brunner ([2022](#)), education-migration encompasses a three-step process in which international students transition through three stages of immigration status. It begins with the student status when they are issued a study permit, graduates to temporary foreign workers status when they meet requirements and receive a post-graduation work permit, and is completed when they receive permanent resident status if they successfully apply for and obtain it usually after a minimum cumulative amount of work experience following graduation. Although not officially acknowledged in the current Canadian immigration system, international students are also a type of temporary foreign worker because they are allowed to work on a study permit, albeit this is usually only for a limited number of hours. The phenomenon of education-migration "encompasses several areas, including international student/education mobility, the internationalization of HE, temporary foreign worker mobility, migrant 'integration,' settler-colonialism, and the global knowledge economy –presenting a complex array of entangling ethical issues" (Brunner, [2022](#) p. 82). Based on a multi-scale analysis method adopted from Sheller (2018b), Brunner deconstructs the social justice issues and challenges entrenched in the Canadian immigration system that particularly affects international students (including those from the Global South) as presented in Table 2 below (p. 83).

Table 2

Social Justice Issues Related to Education-Migration

Scale	Social justice issues
Individuals	- Racism, Othering, violence, and exclusion - Conflicting desirability discourses - Deficit and lack of agency discourses - Differential tuition - Inadequate support services - Legal temporality and limited rights

	• Difficulty obtaining and maintaining (im)migration status (both temporary and permanent)
Educational institutions	• Academic/linguistic imperialism • Neoliberalism • Fragmented educational quality • Institutions as immigration actors
State immigration regimes	• (Settler) colonialism, in relation to (im)migration • Meritocratic nationalism • Brain waste/overeducation
Planetary geoecologies	• Brain drain/abuse and inequitable flows between Global North and Global South • Global meritocracy and academic mobility as reproduction of privilege • Unsustainability

Retrieved from Brunner, L.R. (2022). Towards a More Just Canadian Education-migration system: International student mobility in crisis.

Based on Brunner's (2022) instructive analysis, the different scales appear to have potential implications for international students at individual, institutional, national, and planetary levels:

> the scale of individuals –the predominant scale within which education-migration research occurs– focuses on experiences of international students (and in some cases, recent graduates working as temporary foreign workers, referred to as TFWs) whose legal status and relative voluntariness of movement generally affords them a relatively privileged position...this scale highlights uneven and conditional inclusion, both material and at the level of discourse. Justice is generally positioned as being for individuals (i.e., international students, through inclusion in more robust institutions and state supports, or more facilitative immigration policies).
>
> The scales of educational institutions and state immigration regimes have commonalities; the literature positions them as both (1) sites of control and governance, while also (2) vulnerable in their systemic external dependency (e.g., on population/enrolment growth,

capital, and labour). In the case of HE institutions, justice is often positioned as being for the public (i.e., those who benefit from education as public good), although the public is defined in different ways (e.g., sometimes bound by a state, sometimes globally). In the case of state immigration regimes, justice is sometimes positioned as being for citizens (or permanent residents) bound within the state. (p. 83-88)

The literature is unambiguous about the scaler impact of immigration policy and practices on different aspects of international student mobility and status as education-migrants. This supports the quest for a closer interrogation that could shed more light on the nature of impacts such policies may have during the mobility and internationalization experience of specific groups of international students, and to what degree (if any) they could influence perceptions of alignment or incongruence between Canadian policies and ground-level realities of Black international graduate students from African countries.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Trends Impacting Internationalization of Higher Education in Canada

This section briefly addresses some key policy initiatives and trends designed to promote equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) across the Canadian HE or postsecondary landscape. These initiatives directly or indirectly impact internationalization and the experience of African students studying in the postsecondary sector.

The Scarborough Charter

The Scarborough Charter is one of the most recent and potentially influential EDI-related developments aimed at addressing inequity and improving inclusion in Canadian higher education. Entitled *The Scarborough Charter on Anti-Black racism and Black Inclusion in Canadian Higher Education: Principles, Actions and Accountabilities,* it represents a commitment to combating historic and current racism and discrimination that impacts the lives of Black stakeholders of Canadian higher education at the institutional, community, and individual level. The Charter was born out of a series of national dialogues convened by Black leaders in the Canadian academy and their allies in 2020 tagged the *National Dialogues and Action for Inclusive Higher Education and Communities*. The succinct but comprehensive charter document acknowledges the histories, legacies, and contributions of Black community to Canadian academy and society. It affirms the role of universities and colleges as institutions and ideal sites for advancing inclusion, equality, and social transformation and recalls the history of arrival, presence, and evolution of Blacks in Canada:

> the distinct, complex historical legacy of Black peoples since the first known arrival of interpreter Mathieu da Costa in 1608, including the enslavement of Black people in Canada, Black participation in the defence of British North America in the War of 1812, the establishment of Black communities from the Loyalist Era through the Underground Railroad, Black settlement on the Prairies at the turn of the twentieth century, contributions of people of African descent to the diversification and strengthening of this country, and the specificity of the relationship of descendants of enslaved Africans to settler colonial policies and to the first caretakers of Turtle Island. Considering that the urgent reckoning with the persistence of anti-Black racism, the depths of Black

underrepresentation, and the systemic loss of creative contribution compels bold, decisive, and transformative action. Acknowledging the role that institutions of higher education have played in constructing the bodies of knowledge about historically excluded groups and acknowledging the ethical responsibility to give voice to alternative ways of knowing while supporting community capacity building. (p. 5)

This Charter considers and responds to a number of international human rights and racial justice declarations and treaties recognized by the Canadian government, United Nations, and internationally. Some of these include the United Nations' International Decade for Peoples of African Descent (2015 – 2024); the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, and Economic Social and Cultural Rights, 1966; the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, 1965; the International Labour Organization's Discrimination in Employment and Occupation Convention, 1958 (No. 111); the Durban Declaration and Program of Action of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Intolerance, 2001; and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It subscribes to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action, and other human right codes that support social justice and equality in the broader community and across the postsecondary education landscape. The Scarborough Charter acknowledges the "public policy ecosystem in which universities and colleges are situated, the historic relationship of universities and colleges with the communities in which they are embedded, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally" and the responsibilities postsecondary institutions have to ethically and sustainably contribute to cultural, social, and economic flourishing of all their stakeholders,

including Black people who have largely been neglected historically. It recognizes the need to prioritize the mission of redressing anti-Black racism and promoting Black inclusion as a vehicle for achieving equality and inclusive higher education for all. Anchored on the four key principles of *Black Flourishing, Inclusive Excellence, Mutuality*, and *Accountability,* the charter details specific institutional and cross-sector institutional actions and accountabilities highlighted as a collective commitment for promoting Black equity and inclusion in governance, research, teaching and learning, and community engagement across universities, colleges, and sectoral spheres in Canada.

This Charter is significant for equitable futures in higher education with certain implications for internationalization and racialized international students within higher Canadian higher education in particular. The implications of the Charter's provisions for future postsecondary governance, research, teaching, learning, and community engagement deserve more exploration and action. The acceptance and adoption of the Charter's provisions across institutions is expected to translate to a greater commitment towards dismantling institutional colonialism and discrimination while pursuing social justice transformation goals in a manner that institutionalizes racial justice and equity for all, including Black African international graduate students. As we keenly observe to see the impact and outcomes of this Charter, perhaps a question for the future will be to measure how the commitments in the Scarborough Charter also enhance Black (African) international student inclusion and equity in the migration-dependent education landscape and economy of Canada.

Universities Canada (UC) and College and Institutes Canada (CICan)

The Canadian higher education landscape includes universities, colleges, and institutes. According to Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) – an intergovernmental body created by ministers of Education in Canada in 1967 to discuss and deliberate policy issues, collaborate on educational matters, consult with educational stakeholders/organizations and federal government, and represent the interests of provinces and territories internationally – there are 223 public and private universities and 213 public colleges and institutes in Canada. The advocacy and organizing entity that represents all the universities is called Universities Canada while its equivalent for colleges and institutes is called College and Institutes Canada (CICan). Both bodies have publicly subscribed to the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion with several official statements posted on their official websites.

The 2017 Universities Canada statement on EDI outlines several principles, including a personal commitment to recognizing the value of diversity and inclusion in each university; developing or maintaining equity, diversity, and inclusion plans in consultation with students, faculty, staff and administrators, and particularly with individuals from under-represented groups; taking action to provide equity of access and opportunity, including eliminating barriers to and supporting recruitment and retention of senior university leaders, Board and Senate members, faculty, staff, and students, particularly from under-represented groups; supporting career progression and success in senior leadership positions; integrating inclusive excellence throughout university's teaching, research, community engagement, and governance; applying an evidence-informed approach to addressing barriers and obstacles that impede advancement of under-represented groups, and sharing related best practices; and generating greater awareness of the importance of diversity and inclusive excellence throughout Canadian higher education (Universities Canada, 2017).

Notably, the Universities Canada statement was not updated in recent years even after the 2020 civil uprising when many universities issued new or updated old EDI statements. The official EDI statement of Universities Canada also does not specifically address Black people, Anti-Black racism, or Indigenous peoples. It is not clear what signal this may be sending to many Universities, 180 of which (at the time of writing this work) have not yet signed onto the recently created National Scarborough Charter that commits to promoting Black inclusion and addressing Anti-Black racism.

The 2021 CICan statement on EDI is similarly comprehensive for the landscape of postsecondary colleges and institutes. Amongst others, it "recognizes that inequities, bias, discrimination, racism, and oppression exist in our communities and that the Black Lives Matter movement has brought to the forefront the impact of systemic racism and discrimination on Black, Indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC)" (CICan, 2021). Furthermore, the CICan website indicates that it is "committed to using its privilege and network to advocate and support marginalized people who are being negatively impacted by institutional and systemic racism" and to apply the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #4 (Quality Education) as the foundation of its actions, activities, and programs in Canada and abroad. They undertake to "strive to dismantle systemic racism and advocate for equal access to education, career development, and learning opportunities for all building on this foundation" (CICan, 2021). The body commits to becoming a leader for all of its members in anti-racism and anti-oppression.

Despite their impressive and ambitious commitment to EDI principles, only a fraction of the CICan members appear to have signed off on the Scarborough Charter. This begs the

question around the commitment to Anti-Black racism, Black inclusion, and Black flourishing across most Canadian colleges and institutes.

Beyond responses to the Charter and its equity-related implications in postsecondary education, leading equity researchers in Canadian higher education acknowledge the following about the situation in Canadian universities (Frances et al., 2017):

Notwithstanding the promise of equity, the university is a racialized cite that still excludes and marginalizes non-White people, in subtle, complex, and ironic ways, from everyday interaction with colleagues, to institutional practices that at best are ineffective and at worst perpetuate structural racism. (p. 3)

Such incongruent realities deserve to be empirically examined in the context of how internationalization policies and practices (and the in/equities they may intentionally or unintentionally project) are also impacting the lives and outcomes of a marginalized and racialized subsection of the student body in Canadian postsecondary (university) settings, as this study seeks to accomplish.

Lastly, there is a recent trend across the Canadian university and postsecondary landscape reflecting an intensified focus on recruiting faculty and professionals from equity-deserving groups (particularly people of Black and Indigenous descent) as part of institutional strategies to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in the academy. While many institutions appear to have joined the band wagon, others appear to be either sitting on the fence or not yet fully convinced or mobilized to follow suit. It remains a point of interest to see how far these expressed intents of equity will go, how many institutions will stay the course, how racialized faculty will be supported to develop and succeed, and the impact that these trends will have on the ground-level realities of current and future Black (and Black international) students in the academy. The rate

at which Black domestic, Black international, and Black African international graduate students

benefit from this emerging trend may become another important point of analysis in the future.

Regardless of what the future outcomes will be, the current and emerging EDI trends in higher

education place the Canadian academy in a very exciting and interesting space of empirical

dialogue and analysis with potential implications for international education stakeholders and

international students in the years ahead.

Multi-Level Policies Impacting Internationalization Equity in Canada

Several policies directly or indirectly impact international education and how

international students experience it. Some policies and related practices may have a greater

degree of influence or impact than others. This section addresses some of the major federal,

provincial, and institutional level policies that influence internationalization approaches and the

equitability of Black African international graduate students experiences in Canada. Each level

of policies includes commitments or provisions related to equity, diversity, and/or inclusion, and

the performance or non-performance of those policies imply consequences for international

students located within Canada's current education and internationalization model.

Federal Policies Related to Internationalization

The relationship between federal policies and internationalization has been previously

established. For example, Al-Haque (2017) used a critical analytical lens and methodology to

interrogate the relationship between citizenship and immigration policies and internationalization

of Canadian higher education. The study found "policy misalignments within the federal

government with respect to immigration, internationalization, and labour policies – controversies

that highlight competing narratives of what is important for the Canadian economy and the value of international students" (p. ii). In his comprehensive analysis of Canada's retention and settlement policies and practices for "Model Immigrants" (international students), Dauwer (2018) also identified immigration policies as central and influential to students experiences and outcomes.

A list of key federal or national level policies that shape, influence, or direct internationalization (in the context of my study) are provided below:

- International education strategies (2014-2019; 2019-2024): this overarching national strategy set the tone for federal, provincial, and institutional policies and practices around attracting, admitting, and relating with students from all over the world in Canada. It also influences how actors and stakeholders and entities in transnational, national, and local settings interact with or influence internationalization and determine trends and directions in international education.

- Immigration policies (including visa approval and employment related) and Government of Canada/IRCC policies and policy statements/documents: these provisions significantly affect the entry, settlement, and/or integration process of all newcomers including international students at various stages of their internationalization journey.

- Federal Granting Agency policies: these agencies provide national scholarships, only a fraction of which are accessible to international students. Their practices have remained largely unquestioned from the perspective of internationalization equity or equitable outcomes of international students.

- Statistics Canada reports: these reports provide insightful data that enhance

  understanding of the immigration significance, economic impacts, and educational and

  social outcomes of international students. However, there is a dearth of the

  disaggregated data needed to provide comprehensive datasets and a fuller picture for

  analysis and more informed policy and practical decision making.

Provincial Policies Related to Internationalization

A range of key provincial level policies that shape, influence, or direct internationalization
(in the context of my study) include the following:

- Provincial International Education Strategy: for example, in Alberta, this strategy is

  based on the cornerstone that "future prosperity and growth depends on the mobility of

  talent, skills, ideas, and innovations across international borders" and focuses on

  strategies to market Alberta globally and attract, develop, and retain the best

  international students to contribute to the province's economic prosperity and

  sustainability after graduation (Government of Alberta, 2020). By comparison, the

  Saskatchewan international education strategy is anchored on goals with associated

  actions, outcomes, and supporting programs. The goals are focussed on increasing

  Saskatchewan's global and market competitiveness and commercializing research

  (Government of Saskatchewan, 2022).

- Foreign credential recognition policies: this refers to the sectoral or industry-based

  bodies/entities charged with the responsibility of awarding recognition and

  certification to credentials presented by newcomers based on education, skills, and

  experiences acquired outside Canada. Newcomers have generally had

issues/challenges around credential recognition, leaving many of them in a difficult position of unemployment or underemployment.

- Provincial legislation/policy on fees: this includes policy positions enacted and implemented through provincial government legislation enacted specifically from time to time to influence or support the freeze or increase in fees of domestic and international students. For example, in 2016 the Alberta government approved the freezing of fees for domestic students while international students remained subject to fee increases. Such provincial legislative action still occurred despite the fact that international students' fees were generally about twice the amount paid by domestic students. Statistics Canada (2021b) forecast an increase in both undergraduate and graduate fees for both undergraduate and graduate students across Canada for the 2021/2022 academic year. They also acknowledged differences between provinces during the same period with graduate fees remaining unchanged in Newfoundland and rising by 0.3% in Ontario and 7.4% in Saskatchewan.

- Provincial nominee program: this is a program available in most Canadian and territories where permanent residence candidates such as students, business people, skilled workers, and semi-skilled workers that meet eligibility requirements (in addition to police check and medical exam) are allowed to apply for provincial nomination for a permanent resident status. Once nominated by the province, the candidate can then apply electronically (online) for permanent residency either through an Express Entry or Non-Express Entry process.

Institutional Policies Related to Internationalization

Key institutional level policies that shape, influence, or direct internationalization (in the context of my study) are provided below:

- EDI strategy, statements, and commitments: these are policy statements or positions articulated by institutional entities (including HEIs) to signify their response, commitment, or mission related to specific equity and inclusion goals. Generally big on ideas, short on substance, they mostly fail to explicitly address anti-Black racism, or comprehensively address international student equity despite the prevalence of these in Canadian and Canadian postsecondary history.

- International Strategic Plan: this institutional policy presents goals and priorities that are also linked to accountabilities around building and engaging and expanding an inclusive community of undergraduate and graduate students and staff members from around the world and supporting students and staff/faculty to engage and integrate locally and internationally (through internationalization at home and internationalization abroad strategies and exchanges).

- Comprehensive Institutional Plans (CIPs): these documents provide an overview of how postsecondary institutions contribute to the government and institutional goals and priorities around quality and accessible education. They are a key communication tool on annual educational goals and priorities for universities and the government which sponsors them. For analysis in this project, I considered a 10-year span of CIPs and corresponding annual reports of the research site under study.

- Institutional and selected faculty/departmental funding and award policies: this refers to general policies adopted by the graduate faculty and schools, faculties, or

departments around creating and operationalizing awards for a diversity of students competing for them.

- Curriculum approaches: this refers to the guidelines, guiding philosophies, and course syllabi created to support the design and delivery of learning and creation of knowledge towards the realization of program or course outcomes by students. Western curricular approaches and ways of knowing still dominate teaching and research philosophies and ways of knowing and knowledge production in the Western academy. The introduction of Black/African studies is a relatively new development in Canadian universities (Benchetrit, 2021) and hardly existing in any of the colleges. There are very few or no examples of where Afrocentric epistemologies are embraced or integrated into curricula, course outlines, or pedagogy and research.

- International Student Services: these are staffed divisions created to support international students across many institutions with international learners. Many higher education institutions have made it a policy priority to offer specialized support services to international students as part of their efforts to improve access, settlement, and integration for both undergraduate and graduate members of the diverse international student community.

Relationship Between Federal, Provincial, and Institutional Policies in Internationalization

In many ways, federal, provincial, and institutional policies, laws, and regulations work to support each other in the operationalization of internationalization and achievement of international education goals. While most internationalization happens mainly at the institutional level (Knight, 2008), certain federal and provincial policies influence aspects of institutional

policy and vice versa. IRCC immigration (and international student) targets and regional and country policies and practices determine how many student applicants will eventually be allowed into Canada. Even after students have met institutional criteria and are enrolled into programs, institutions depend on the IRCC whose officers decide who will receive study permits and who does not qualify to do so from sending countries. To a significant extent, existing federal and provincial global and regional trade priorities and partners also influence where institutions target their marketing effort to attract international students. Federal and provincial immigration and funding policies may also directly or indirectly impact student mobility and welfare as institutions do not have control over these decisions. Institutions largely increase, reduce, or maintain their enrollment projections within the context of federal targets. Higher education institutions also rely on the amount of funding and supports available to them from provincial and federal government to set manageable and realistic enrollment targets. As government funding has deceased over the years, international student enrolment targets have increased to ensure sustainability of the institutions. The enrollment and graduation numbers reported by institutions and from each province and territory support federal government efforts to keep track of student progress and set future/other immigration targets. The funding that institutions are able to provide to international students depends to a large extent on what they receive from provincial governments and federal funding, including the funding allocated by the three main federal granting agencies—the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)—who support and promote high-quality student research across a variety of disciplines and areas in Canadian postsecondary.

Internationalization Policies and International Student Integration Experiences in Canada

Whilst acknowledging that policy is a very broad concept with multiple definitions across different contexts, only a few are considered below. O'Connor and Netting (2011, p.11) define policy as "a chosen course of action within a particular context that is intended to achieve valued goals" and emphasize that "value-based judgements drive policy, because every choice is based on some value or valued set of principles or preferences." For Dye (1972), policy is anything a government chooses to do or not to do. Howlett and Cashore (2014, p. 17) characterize policy-making as "involving a technical and political process of articulating and matching actors' goals and means"; they further explain that policies are "actions which contain goal(s) and the means to achieve them, however well or poorly identified, justified, articulated and formulated." These definitions and contexts are important to keep in mind as we explore the Canadian internationalization policy landscape in this section.

Prior to 2014, Canada did not have an official international education policy or policy on internationalization. Given this gap and the strategic need for one, the Government of Canada appointed an expert Advisory Panel in 2011 that was mandated to explore and advise on the development and implementation of an international education strategy. The panel's report was released in 2012, after which the formal adoption of an international education strategy was officially announced in 2014. As Trilokekar and Jones (2013) observe, the resulting report represents a major shift in the subsequent policy context and approach, which include but are not limited to the following:

The economic impact of recruiting international students is emphasized throughout the report. International education is valued as trade, but it is also viewed as an important "pipeline" to the needs of the Canadian labor market. Given Canada's low birthrates, future economic development depends on immigration, and today's international students may well be tomorrow's well-educated citizens…Canada now views international education as an economic and trade benefit. Further, it seeks to position itself competitively with other nations and vies for a leadership position to attract top talent to Canada. The report recommends a massive new investment in competitive scholarships for undergraduate and graduate international students, a positive step toward attracting the best and brightest. However, it is an approach that has little in common with earlier Canadian scholarship programs for students from developing countries. (p. 3-4)

Currently (and going forward), Canada's policies on international education and internationalization are expected to play an important role in shaping what students experience or how they are impacted at different levels and junctures of their adaptation and integration in the country. These policies exist at the federal, provincial/sectoral, and institutional (e.g., university) levels and are variously documented or articulated in the form of strategies, frameworks, or strategy documents, and on official websites or archives, amongst others. Examples of Canada's federal government policy documents on internationalization include *Canada's International Education Strategy* (Government of Canada, 2014a,b), the *Advisory panel report on International education* (2012), which shaped the conceptualization and priorities of Canada's formal international education approach, and other Government of Canada official policy statements that relate to internationalization or international students' immigration, integration and inclusion in Canadian higher education and society (Government of Canada, 2019; Al-

Haque, 2017). Together with federal policy/strategy, policies, strategies, and legislation created or implemented at provincial and especially institutional levels (Knight, 2008) also have the potential to influence or impact how internationalization is experienced by international students.

Since its official adoption, a central objective of the Canadian government's international education policy and strategy (implemented and supported through departments and agencies at federal and provincial level, in collaboration with educational institutions) is to ensure that the state remains internationally competitive and positioned to reap the economic and social benefits that accrue from promoting an innovative society with a skilled and diverse workforce, in the context of globalization and international competitiveness (Government of Canada, 2014a; Jones, 2009; Matthews, 2016). This international education drive (encapsulated in the Harper government's international education strategy launched in 2014) has been linked to neoliberal, market-driven ideologies and imperatives that are not only common to Canada but have become a global phenomenon influencing the evolution of internationalization (Altbach & Knight, 2007, Geo-JaJa & Majhanovich, 2010; Haapakoski & Pashbi, 2017). In addition to the often-stated academic/educational/knowledge and socio-cultural goals of internationalization, there is considerable consensus among critical scholars of internationalization that most global approaches (including Canada's) are unequally driven and influenced by economic rationales (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Shultz, 2007, 2013; Hébert & Abdi, 2013; Karram, 2013; Vavrus & Pekol, 2015; Viczko & Tascon, 2016). Specifically, commercial advantage and profit are widely regarded as central motivations for internationalization (Altbach, 2013; Altbach & Knight, 2007) and, increasingly, this imperative has become manifest in the competition and activities among transnational and provincial governments and institutions of higher education to attract

international (fee–paying) students from overseas even as the degree of public funding for education has declined.

It is therefore no surprise that a core aspect of Canada's immigration policy and strategy includes the attraction of skilled migrant workers as well as fee-paying international students regarded as future ideal citizens with the potential to integrate and add value to the Canadian economy and society (Government of Canada, 2014b). Many of these migrants become permanent residents, citizens, and high-value participants in the knowledge economy. This policy position becomes even more relevant in the context of an ageing Canadian workforce, shrinking prime workforce, and a projected shortage of skills in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2014). The policy stance both supports and is supported by a number of other internationalization policies and a "growing number of diverse policy actors, including government department or agencies, non-(or semi-)governmental organizations, professional associations or special interest groups, foundations and educational institutions and providers, many of who have influence or are involved in promoting, providing, and making policies related to the international dimension of higher education" (Viczko, 2015; Knight, 2008, p. 9-10).

There are a range of policies and/or official policy positions and programs at federal, provincial, and institutional levels that have the potential to influence international student internationalization and integration experiences. Examples of these are immigration policies and programs developed and implemented under the auspices of IRCC, such as the post-graduation work permits and Express Entry permanent residency programs as well as other related policies/programs that regulate how international students can access/immigrate, stay, and work in Canada. Others policies that impact international students' integration include provincial

legislation that impacts postsecondary domestic students; institutional (university) policies that regulate how much international students pay in comparison to domestic students, or who is subjected to fee increases and who is not; policy-influenced hegemonic societal or institutional practices that are insensitive to foreign students; educational curricula that overwhelmingly reflect and impose the dominant Western perspectives over others; and labour/employment related policies and/or practices that (may intentionally or unintentionally) favour domestic students and certain groups of international students over others. Moreover, there is little evidence to suggest that any international education policy effort at government or institutional has been significantly influenced or driven by interests of marginalized student groups, which constitute a sizeable number of the international student market and population for Canada. In this context, arguments made elsewhere for the embrace of race-conscious education policies as a veritable vehicle for promoting self-determination, inspiring democratic and social equality, and avoiding deficit education among students of colour (Moses, 2002) becomes more applicable.

Depending on how they are experienced or who experiences what, any of these policies have potential to impinge upon the ability of international students to effectively integrate into the Canadian higher education system and society. This possibility warrants a closer scrutiny of how these policies and strategies are conceived, constructed, interpreted, implemented, and experienced, especially in the light of the growing number of international students (including visible minorities) that could end up being or feeling socially, culturally, educationally, and occupationally/economically disenfranchised.

The increase in global demand and mobility for international education (which coincided with the decline in available public funding for higher education) has also been accompanied by

the intense competition among governments and educational institutions around the world for a sizable chunk of the global higher education student market (Anderson, 2015). Governments and higher education institutions have equally been active in adapting their internationalization policies and strategies to better attract and accommodate these students (Viczko & Tascón, 2016). In fact, the majority of Canadian universities and university degree-level colleges (where approximately 28% of the graduate student population were international students, according to the AUCC universities survey in 2014) considered internationalization as a major priority or a top five priority and key goal in their institutional strategic plans (AUCC, 2014; Universities Canada, 2014, 2017a). Consequently, the economic impact has been profound (considering the time period between 2008 and 2016): the total number of international students jumped from 280,170 to 523, 971, annual total spending of international students increased from $6.5 billion to $15.5 billion; and the combined direct and indirect economic impacts on GPD, job creation, and tax revenue were phenomenal (Government of Canada, 2017). Between 2015 and 2018, the number of international students in Canada increased from 457,828 to 686,855; the combined direct and indirect GDP impact of international student spending increased by 87.6%; and the annual total spending by international students in Canada almost doubled from $12.6 billion to $22.3 billion (Government of Canada, 2020b).

Despite the developments of internationalization and the benefits that accrue from its prioritization at national, provincial, departmental/sectoral, and institutional levels, and the integration of international students being a core promise and claim of internationalization efforts, the dedication to measuring and evaluating its impact on these students appears to have been insufficient. While a lot of "progress assessments" or "state of evolution" reports on internationalization have focussed on how effectively universities are implementing

internationalization into the teaching, service and support dimensions of the university and the quality of education delivered (see Weber, 2007; Altbach & Knight, 2007 and Knight, 2008), there still remains a significant gap and therefore a need for greater institutional orientation (and prioritization) towards a better understanding of on-the-ground realities that international students from different parts of the world are actually experiencing (Larsen, 2015), and the impact of the social, cultural, academic, and career/employment integration dimensions of internationalization in their lived experiences. Lowe (2011) suggests that a reliance on great (immigration) policies alone, without responding to the living needs of international students and investing in their settlement and integration support, may result in a failure to retain them as permanent residents after graduation, resulting in significant losses for the Canadian society and economy. She believes that this will result in lost investment for the Canadian state.

In an assessment of Canada's support for international student retention and settlement, Dauwer (2018) confirms that there are critical barriers to transition, and policy gaps that must be addressed at federal, provincial, community, and institutional levels to improve international students' settlement experiences. He calls for a greater collaborative effort between key internationalization stakeholders that moves beyond the assumptions of "smooth integration" for all international students to addressing, more decisively, the real issues and challenges they face in the different aspects of their adaptation and integration experiences.

It is also becoming widespread policy and practice for universities in the West (and sometimes host university cities) to provide career programs and services to support career management and development of university students (both domestic and international) through career centres. In a study conducted in the United States, Sangganjanavanich et al. (2011, p. 24) reported that despite the availability of infrastructures aimed at supporting their career

integration, international students felt they received "minimal support from career services" during their career search experiences. Some of these perceptions resulted from the challenges that this group of students collectively experienced coping with acculturation and effective exploitation of available resources (such as employment policies and laws and resources) that support (both local and international) workers' rights, amongst others. These findings suggest that not only the availability of, but also equitable accessibility to, career- and employment-related programs and services can influence international students' career trajectories within the context of internationalization. They imply that there might be opportunities for universities or public career centres and other related support structures to adapt more equitable policies and practices that improve international students' chances at securing employment (either on or off campus) both before and after graduation. Another critical exploration of Canadian policy and higher education programming relating to international students support found some disparities between programs and students' experiences, leading to recommendations for modifications of policy and service approaches that ensured better social inclusion and integration for these students (Cox, 2014). Issues pertaining to international student support and related barriers to integration are undoubtedly an area that requires more attention and assessment in order to better understand and improve policy and practice that align internationalization stakeholder objectives of adaptation/integration with actual student experiences.

Framing Discrepant International Student Experiences in Canadian Higher Education

Several studies have attempted to address the relationship between the claims of internationalization as evident in policies, strategies, and programs and real experiences of international students in Canadian higher education. Both positive and negative international

student experiences have been reported in relation to official policies and programs. Notable among some cited positive experiences are instances of favourable academic and personal growth experiences, while negatives include several persistent problems related to a neoliberal approach that treats internationalization as a marketing strategy, limited internationalization of the curriculum, and gaps between the internationalization policy and the lived realities of international students (see Guo & Guo, 2017; Kamara & Gambold, 2011; Lowe, 2011; and Liu, 2017). Both positive and negative aspects have been observed in relation to the effectiveness and impact of support programs initiated by Canadian universities to promote inclusion and integration of international students. For example, Cox (2014) acknowledges that while universities are increasingly engaged in developing and implementing specialized programming "in response to the barriers that prevent full and equitable inclusion of international students, significant barriers have yet to be dismantled" (p. 34-35). These barriers are most prominent in the areas of language, academic, cultural, financial, and employment/career and labour market preparation and integration. Cox argues that adequate effort and investment should be prioritized in these essential areas of critical need such as language and academic support to close gaps, proficiency gaps, cultural barriers, and more intercultural spaces to improve intercultural education and integration, financial support for students, investments in employment, social capital and career development, and improvements in their labour market preparation and student perception around it.

In response to some of the barriers and challenges faced by international students, more integrated and collaborative approaches to supporting their social inclusion and integration within the academy and community/society have been recommended. These will involve building networks services that can be personalized according to student need, are based on

closer engagement to understand and respond to student needs and wants, and equip/support

faculty and staff with best practice training for collaborating with and integrating international

students into academic and social life on campus (Snow Andrade, 2006). Kamara and Gambold

(2011) recommend a holistic and pre-emptive (rather than reactive) approach for addressing

international student challenges struggling with various academic challenges, a lack of university

support, and varying forms of social challenges that include discrimination in the community

both on and off campus. Their integrated and interrelated three-phased approach includes:

creation of a sociocultural grace period during which newcomer international students can

transition through the process of sociocultural learning and adaptation; university and

department-level orientations that are directly responsive to identified and anticipated student

integration challenges/needs from the first phase; and a more coordinated approach to providing

support services to international students involving professional development opportunities for

faculty members facilitated collaboratively by staff, faculty, and students (p. 27). These measures

may be worthy of further consideration and exploration as they could have important

ramifications for navigating barriers faced by different groups of international students when

attempting to integrate within the context of international education or internationalization of

higher education and the policies that claim to support this process.

A study on the challenges faced by African international students at a Western

metropolitan university (Evivie, 2009) also found that these students felt a sense of psychological

stress and social alienation or exclusion due to economic hardships/challenges that forced them

to work longer hours than necessary, thereby impacting their academic performance and ability

to socialize. Evidence of cultural exclusion and lack of solidarity among African students was

also found. However, the study did not find any perceptions of racial discrimination.

Recommendations included the creation of a forum for meaningful dialogue between the university and African students, through which their voices could be heard and their (especially financial) needs better understood and addressed; and the need for African students to join and actively participate in the African Students Association in order to improve access to helpful support groups, as well as strengthen the agency, solidarity, and support for and influence of African international students in the community (amongst others).

More recently, an international student social integration study conducted by the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE, 2015) revealed *internal* and *external* barriers that prevent international students from forging friendships with Canadian students in greater numbers. According to the report, the key internal barriers identified included personal characteristics and cultural traits which participants "self-identified as inhibiting their ability to form friendships with Canadian students largely due to drastic cultural changes; lack of participation in extracurricular activities; and limited language skills and accent" (p. 4). External/institutional barriers found in the study included socio-cultural and physical barriers which are presented to students by their environment on-campus. These were listed as: disproportionate promotion of diversity events to international students and attendance by same, thereby perpetuating a lack of two-way cultural exchange with Canadian students; disproportionately high numbers of international students in interviewees' fields of study making it difficult to encounter Canadians in their academic spaces; and negative social experiences with Canadian students accentuated by perceptions their Canadians counterparts are either shy or fearful of international students (p. 4-5). Despite these challenges, participants acknowledged the value of forging friendships with Canadians, and the better orientation/integration outcomes that resulted or could result. The interviewees also suggested the following recommendations for

promoting a better local/community connection with Canadian students in the institution: a more integrated approach to student engagement; cross-cultural awareness and skills building into the global classroom; strategies for striking a balance of international and Canadian students on campus; encouraging group/collaborative work between Canadian and international students to improve appreciation for cross-cultural differences; re-imagining/re-conceiving student orientation as an ongoing, non-linear process for all students, and strategizing around how to address barriers to participation for international students, especially at the beginning of the term; and that Canadian students could benefit more from international students by taking advantage of opportunities to access the cultural knowledge and perspective of international students (p. 7-8).

Social and adaption and integration that connotes the ways or processes by which international students become socially and interculturally acclimated within the local and with other members of their university communities is a critical dimension of integration that deserves more attention (Ward et al., 2009). It may be useful to compare and contrast the CBIE research findings cited in the foregoing with findings from this study that is conducted through a more critical lens by an observer participant immersed on the ground, with the view of establishing a more nuanced understanding of the lived experiences of fellow African international students whose experiences may or may not be at variance with some of those represented in the CBIE report.

Despite not deeply interrogating some other salient aspects or dimensions of integration (such as academic/educational and career/employment), the CBIE research findings above have important implications for providing appropriate support for international students and for internationalization policy in higher education. While it is possible that some of these experiences may differ between countries, provinces, institutions, and student groups, they are

nonetheless worthy of further exploration within specified research contexts and settings (as I attempt to do through this qualitative inquiry).

It is also pertinent to briefly note that while several studies have explored international students' experiences of internationalization policies and integration in Canada, most have (taken a homogenous approach that) simultaneously focussed on the experiences of undergraduate and graduate students, or racialized and non-racialized groups (e.g., Cameron, 2006); others have centred only on undergraduate students, while some have been more oriented to Black student groups from outside the African continent, even when related to international students of African descent (e.g., Paul, 2012). Moreover, most of these research endeavours have not made sufficient attempts at a more nuanced problematization and critical deconstruction of the current internationalization model in relation to student groups' integration experiences. Nor has there been enough attention given to addressing many of the false realities painted by the glossy picture of seamless (or almost seamless) integration of skilled foreign students into a Canadian academy, society, and economy. This is clearly a disturbing reality, from the perspective of international students in general but even more critically, one might argue, for marginalized students who originate from a society (such as Africa's) still impacted by the vestiges of colonialism, and who with a ticket of high expectations are plunged into a Western settler colonist society through the instrumentality of internationalization policies/strategies on integration that have yet to be fully empirically tested on the ground, especially through a critical examination of the experiences of international student groups at the margins or periphery of internationalization.

Consequently, my study aims to close the research and knowledge gap by undertaking a more in-depth and critical approach to exploring, understanding, and explicating the

discrepancies between the policy/strategy claims on (social, cultural, academic, and economic) integration and the actual realities of international Black African graduate students at a Canadian Public University. According to Vavrus and Pekol (2015, p. 6), such research is valuable in its ability to "illuminate structures of inequality (and power relations) that undergird certain practices of internationalization in higher education institutions" with respect to such groups. They further underscore the importance of critical theory as a "useful explanatory framework for analysing the political economy of internationalization and uncovering its representational and symbolic dimensions" (p. 7) and contend that a more critical view to internationalization is required to examine individuals from the Global South whose experiences differ from those of the Global North. This logic is not only relevant to interregional comparisons but also aptly applies in the context of interrogating the discrepancies in the realities experienced by Black African international students studying within Canada's internationalization framework at a Canadian Public University. In addition to revealing important taken-for-granted assumptions about them, such empirical interrogation may yield important empirical insights that inform future internationalization policies, practices, and experiences in the interest of these students, other internationalization/institutional stakeholders, and the wider Canadian society.

African International Students and Race in North American Higher Education

Although students from Africa have historically sought study opportunities abroad, the numerous opportunities provided by internationalization have seen increasing numbers of African students going abroad (Jowi, 2009). The high outbound mobility may indicate either increasing interest in study abroad or deficits in the home country (Mulumba et al., 2008, as cited in Jowi, 2009). Both push factors such as a desire for better life and pull factors such as attraction

to better career and life prospects, including the policy and strategy-based "promise and prospects of integration" into a Western/Canadian society (Smith, 2017; Matthews, 2016) collectively encourage cross border education among African international students. Given the trends of internationalization and the likely increase of the African population group, a study that explores the equitable prospects of their integration into the Canadian academy and society becomes more relevant.

The importance of considering the implications and role of race and racism in Canada's internationalization model as it relates to the integration of Black African international graduate students in the academy and society is underlined by the fact that race and racism play a significant part in the marginalization or oppression of groups and individuals within a predominantly White social or adult/higher education context (Johnson-Bailey, 2001; Johnson-Bailey et al., 2009; Sheared et al., 2010; Savas, 2014). Jones' (2000) methodological framework specifies three levels of racism that are extant in society (but also applicable in the context of education): institutional racism (manifested in form of structural barriers, laws, policies, and systems that allow more access to opportunities, benefits and resources to dominant groups than marginalized groups), person-mediated racism (when structural barriers created by institutional racism are intentionally or unintentionally maintained by individuals in the system through acts of prejudice and discrimination, differential treatment, or making certain negative assumptions about the abilities and motives of racialized people); and internalized racism (when the stigmatized race internalizes and acts out what the society says/believes about them). All these manifestations/levels of racism have the potential to impact the experiences of both local and international Black students of African descent regardless of their culture, history, and backgrounds.

Although anti-Black racism has existed from time immemorial, more internationalization scholars are highlighting the harms it poses to internationalization and calling for long overdue action. In a historic simultaneous acknowledgement by leaders in field of internationalization, Philip Albatch, Gerardo Blanco, and Hans de Wit cast anti-Blackness as a global and historical phenomenon that together with other forms of racism are exerting negative impacts on international education (Blanco et al., 2020). In response to pervasiveness of these disturbing trends and histories (that are not unconnected to colonialism), they call on all internationalization stakeholders to play their part by actively contributing to the global fight for racial equity and justice in their different internationalization spheres of influence.

As George Mwangi (2020) argues, anti-Black racism is also an international student issue that affects Black international students from outside the US and, despite an initial disconnection with systemic racism present in the US higher education, "over time, Black international students state experiencing more discrimination (such as social isolation and exclusion from group work, being called racial slurs, racial microaggressions, and other harassment from faculty, staff, students, and local residents of their college towns) than their white international peers" (p. 7). She alludes the initial disconnection experienced by these students to the distinction in racial realities between North American contexts and their Black majority home countries where their socialization around race is different. Ultimately, international Black students are not immune from the institutional prevalence of racism in White, Western, or Global South higher education institutions.

Elsewhere, research on racialized and Black students has shown that socio-historical and local contexts influence on and off campus experiences and perceptions of racialized students (Cuellar & Johnson-Ahorlu, 2020). George Mwangi et al. (2018) specifically found that Black

students' campus experiences reflect the overarching racial climate in the society within which the campus is situated.

Other literature and research also reveal that people of African descent have in some cases shown a tendency towards internalized racism (low self-esteem, colour prejudice, stereotyping, shame, or self-hatred) to varying degrees, which can result in dysfunctions or inadequacy among Black people (Bivens, 1995, p. 2) or feelings of 'not being good enough' or 'not being worthy of certain aspirations,' including within educational and career settings (Johns, 2010, p. 219). Johns believes that this type of racism does not only emanate from psychological sources but is also a reaction to systemic oppression and can only be combated on both (personal/psychological and systemic/social justice) levels for Black individuals to experience true liberation. To deal with internalized racism, he goes on to advocate for the introduction of a (racialized) pedagogy that incorporates the principles and theories of African-centred worldview or paradigms in the academy to bring Afrocentric experiences into the academy as well as providing community support and engendering meaningful dialogue.

Nonetheless, it is wrong to assume that all Blacks experience or view race and racism in the same way. For instance, research evidence shows differences in perceptions of race and racism among Caribbean Black immigrants and American Blacks, with many of these differences stemming from different ethnic/cultural and historical orientations (Waters,1994; Hunter, 2006; Alfred, 2010). In a study of cultural orientations, perceptions of discrimination and collective esteem among members of two Black populations in America (specifically African Americans and West Indian Americans), Hunter (2006) noticed some marked differences between the groups. This underscores the importance of understanding how Black graduate international students from Africa perceive and experience race and racism and react to it, as

well as the need to avoid the error and danger of generalizations or assumptions regarding their integration experiences despite being members of a historically marginalized race.

A United Nations Human Rights Council report expressed concerns over the continued manifestations of racial discrimination and anti-Black racism against people of African descent in Canada despite the country's legislative and other efforts at promoting a multicultural and diverse society (UN Human Rights Council, 2017). The report cited the fact that systemic and institutional forms racism that exist in different facets of society have in many cases been normalized or rendered invisible, especially to the dominant or non-racialized groups. According to the report, such forms of racism range from hate crimes, stereotyping, (hyper) surveillance by the State/authorities, overrepresentation or mistreatment in the criminal justice system, and differential experiences and outcomes across a variety of other sectors in the society. Based on a thorough examination of historical and recent evidence, the report confirmed that people of African descent still face several disparities in access to education, health, housing, and employment (UN Human Rights Council, 2017). It also stated that "educated Black immigrants struggle to gain recognition for skills and degrees earned overseas and often work below their level of competence and qualifications, and when they choose to upgrade their education, do so at great financial and personal cost" (p. 13).

Despite the 1995 introduction of an Employment Equity Act that sought (amongst others) to eliminate workplace/employment related inequities among workers under Federal Government jurisdiction, another report (more than a decade later) found that the Canadian labour market is still colour coded, with racialized individuals being significantly disadvantaged (Block & Galabuzi, 2011). The report confirms that in comparison to White people, racialized people (including immigrants and first-generation Canadians) are faced with significant

employment/occupational discrimination barriers that stop them from accessing commensurate employment opportunities (even when the data has been statistically controlled for age and education). The authors lament the "ongoing racialization of poverty" in Canada, which is characterized by the persistently 'high pay' and 'poverty rate' gaps between racialized and non–racialized Canadians/families (Block & Galabuzi, 2011, p. 5). To what extent these issues may compromise the adaptation/integration outcomes of visible minority graduate students today remains to be fully established. Nonetheless, the undeniable evidence of historical income and employment discrimination against Black workers in Canada, even when they are more educated than their local or international White counterparts (Galabuzi, 2001; Kunz et al., 2000; Samuel & Basavarajappa, 2006; Statistics Canada, 2007; Teelucksingh & Galabuzi, 2005) cannot be ignored or lightly dismissed in the context of my inquiry. Because occupational (career/employment, and therefore economic) integration is a vital integration goal of both the government and many international (graduate) students who come to Canada, this aspect of their experience and the attendant (or potential) disparities and inequities in relation to stated policies of inclusion certainly merits further critical investigation. Hearing and understanding the perspectives of Black graduate international students, who based on their level of education constitute a section of the more educated or highly skilled segment of the Canadian population, will shed more light on their realities vis-à-vis occupational/employment integration policy claims.

In an era in which race and racism still matter, and in which racial discrimination and inequality remain a critical issue in Canadian society and education system (Este et al., 2018), their impact or influence over the adaptation and integration journeys of African international graduate students cannot be overemphasized, especially given the ample and credible body of

related evidence that exists. While the effects of racism cannot also be homogenized across all peoples or students of African descent (who could possibly have differing experiences in relation to specific phenomena), the nuanced (and perhaps intersectional) impact that race and racial factors could have in their adaptation and integration process is important. Hence, the influence of these factors in the realities of racialized, visible minority graduate students deserves a thorough and deeper examination/comprehension, within the framework of Canadian higher education and the internationalization ideals it so strongly promotes.

Black/International Student Identity Self-Formation and Reconstruction

Rather than simply stereotyping Black students, a thoughtful consideration and understanding of Black student identity formation and development processes as it relates to Black African graduate international students who come to study and live in Canada is important.

Ritchey (2014) argues that "in and outside the classroom, Black students have to combat negative stereotypes about their race and culture directly or indirectly leading to a negative impact on their academic and personal success" (p. 101). An appreciation of Black identity development may help eliminate Black stereotypes and equip institutions with the tools to support Black racialized students during their educational, settlement, and integration process. Ritchey (2014) suggests that a good understanding of Black identity development can assist student affairs professionals contribute to institutional retention efforts and support Black students in predominantly White higher education institutions as they traverse the different stages and experiences of racial identity development.

Theoretical models of the Black identity development process that have been used to analyze and explain Black identity development particularly in African American contexts include two well documented and applied models known as Nigrescence (Cross, 1991, 1994; Cross & Vandiver, 2001) and the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) (Sellers et al., 1997). Nigrescence theorizes and examines the different stages of racial identity change or conversion navigated by Black (African American) youth and adults during the process of racial self-identification. There are five stages in Nigrescence (also known as the Black Racial Identity Model): (1) *Pre-encounter* depicts the identity to be changed. In this stage, people give low emphasis to race (or being Black) and may hold attitudes about being Black that are low salience, race neutral, or even anti-Black, according to Cross (1991), and it "occurs when someone does not realize that they have been raised with White westernized ideologies, because it is so embedded in their culture" (Ritchey, 2014, p. 102); (2) *Encounter* isolates the point at which the person feels compelled to change; (3) *Immersion-Emersion* describes the vortex of identity change; and (4) *Internalization* and (5) *Internalization-Commitment* describe the habituation and internalization of the new identity.

While there is agreement that racial identity plays an important role in the lives of African Americans, there is no consensus regarding what the nature of that role might be (Sellers et al., 1997). Building on the fact that there are divergent views and inconsistencies in the literature regarding what it means to be Black or how best to conceptualize, define, or measure racial identity in the African American context, the MIBI attempts to address this gap by deploying an integrated framework of measurement called the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI). As a model for measuring racial identity in African American contexts, MMRI draws on identity theory that "attempts to explain individuals' behaviours as choices in situations

in which there are various behavioural options... related to a salient (or personally relevant) role-identity" (Sellers et al., 1997, p. 805). MMRI is primarily concerned with understanding "African Americans' beliefs regarding the significance of race in (a) how they define themselves and (b) the qualitative meanings that they ascribe to membership in that racial group" (p. 806). The MMRI model measures four dimensions of African American racial identity namely *salience, centrality, regard,* and *ideology. Salience* measures the extent to which race is relevant to the self-concept at a particular point in time or in a particular situation. *Centrality* measures the extent to which an individual normatively emphasizes racial group membership as part of their overall self-concept. *Regard* measures the extent to which an individual feels positively or negatively about African American group membership in both public and private contexts. In the public context, *regard* measures the extent to which an individual feels that others view the African American community in a positive or negative manner. In the private context, it measures the extent to which an individual feels positively or negatively toward the African American community; it also measures how they feel about being a member of the African American community. *Ideology* dimension relates to one's personal philosophy about the ways they expect members of the African American community to behave or relate to others in society. The four philosophical subcomponents under which ideology is measured are nationalist (viewpoint emphasizing uniqueness of being of African descent), oppressed minority (viewpoint emphasizing similarity between African Americans and other oppressed groups), assimilationist (emphasizes alignment between African Americans and the rest of American society), and humanist (viewpoint emphasizing commonality shared by all humans). While individuals may emphasize one of these ideological philosophies more than the rest, their views are still likely to vary or change across different contexts, depending on the situation and factors involved. This

suggests some fluidity or the potential for more dynamism and flexibility in (at least the ideological) dimensions of Black identity development.

While these theories have not be comprehensively applied or researched in Canadian contexts, doing so might provide useful insights about the dynamics, psychology, and experiences of renegotiating Black immigrant academic identities (Vandeyar, 2018) and the newcomer self-identity development among Black domestic and Black African international graduate students and their spouses/families, many of whom are only for the first time studying or integrating in a historically White Western postsecondary system and society.

From a broader, more multiculturally-encompassing perspective, Rummens and Sefa Dei (2010) underscore the importance of identity for newcomer/immigrant students (which includes Black people and people of colour) and why it should matter to education stakeholders:

> Identity is about connection with others. It is about a sense of rootedness to particular places, cultures, histories, contexts, and politics. It is also about comparisons based on perceived similarities and differences, and the concomitant demarcation through identity construction and negotiation of social boundaries that serve to either include or exclude individuals and groups from access to social resources and statuses. (para. 1)

As Black graduate international students grapple with re/negotiating and re/constructing their evolving identities in a Canadian setting, they may encounter different challenges that impact their educational and societal integration outcome in inequitable and unintended ways. Rummens and Sefa Dei (2010, para. 8) present a few reasons why it important to consider the identity, identification, and marginalization among newcomer, immigrant, refugee and/or racialized students in Canada: our educational system and structures need to be responsive to changes in the composition of Canadian society; diverse youth sub-populations may face unique challenges;

and identification processes – particularly for contested identities – affect learning, and thereby the educational performance and associated life outcomes of our youth. To a lesser or greater extent, these factors may be applicable to newcomer and racialized African graduate students. Key actors in their learning and internationalization spaces should be cognisant of how they might be mediating or influencing equitable integration outcomes for marginalized student groups.

Another concept that I consider equally deserving of attention in the context of my study relates to how international students negotiate their self-formation process. The view and narrative (anchored in cross-cultural psychology) that internationalization for international students is simply about "adjusting to the host country" has been challenged (Marginson, 2014). Debunking the deficit view in which the student is believed to be totally dependent on the host country for adaptation and identity formation, Marginson (2014, p. 6) contends that international education is a process of self-formation within conditions of disequilibrium in which student subjects manage their lives reflexively, fashioning their own changing identities, albeit under social circumstances largely beyond their control. He identifies key premises and characteristics of the "self-formation process suggesting that international education is mostly (but wrongly) understood as a process of 'adjustment' or 'acculturation' to the requirements and habits of the host country – a paradigm that is consistent with the long emphasis on social order in functionalist social science which prioritizes the normalization and assimilation of migrant populations, including temporary migrants such as mobile workers and international student." Marginson (2014) believe that self-formation features include the tools of multiplicity and hybridity needed to different degrees by different students and suggests that institutions should provide supportive resources that will enhance international students' agency, such as

communicative competency and housing; he also posits that increasing spaces within which students are free of coercion (i.e., authoritarian administration and discriminatory practices) enhances their self-formation process in higher education contexts. Although he does not necessarily approach his study from a strictly critical or equity point of view, Marginson's insights could be useful in understanding some of the issues that my research participants grapple with, and for examining their adaptation experiences in relation to equitable access and inclusion in the internationalization model. Finally, Marginson's reference to the role of "hybridity" in the identity self-formation of international students inspires some curiosity with respect to whether and how the self-formation process actually leads to new 'mixed identities' for people who have migrated to a new region/culture and have to come to terms with those new foreign cultures without being merely subjected to assimilation or erosion of their own culture/identity, concepts popularly used by some cultural/postcolonial theorists (cf. Paul Gilroy, 1993 & Homi Bhabha, 1994).

Gilroy (1993) builds on W.E.B. Du Bois's concept of double consciousness, which posits that Black people understand themselves through a conflicted inner struggle to remain original to themselves or to conform (see themselves through the perception of others) to the majoritarian dominant culture within a society where racial hegemony and oppression are present. He argues that after leaving their homelands to enter Western territories such as America and Britain, Black people are compelled to develop a hybrid transatlantic identity and culture that is neither entirely Black nor White (Gilroy, 1993). He believes that this development or evolution of identity (that includes aspects of both original (home) and new culture is influenced or necessitated by the conditions of historical colonialism and institutionalized racism in a society dominated by Whiteness and permeated by White privilege, where Blacks are forced to see themselves as

inferior to the prevailing White culture and constantly gravitate towards an optimal identity that is a combination of several identities/cultures. Bhabha (1994) is also unequivocal in his view that hybridity is both the process and the result of the intersection of cultures and identities when the previously colonized enters into the former colonizer's space. In his view, it is a slippery (or fluid) third space location where the intersection of cultures and identities happen, necessitated by a situation in which the (previously) colonized is sandwiched between being cultural-othered (alienated) and submitting to the mimicry of the colonizer/colonizing powers (including for strategic purposes) in a bid to blend in better while not being excluded. However, such mimicry in Bhabha's opinion "also makes the colonial subject a 'partial', 'virtual' or 'incomplete' presence"(p. 85) in relation to the dominant powers or colonial forces. The different ways in which the notion and concept of hybridity is implicated in the internationalization and integration experiences of Black African graduate students can neither be overlooked nor trivialized.

Others (see Gacel-Ávila, 2005 & Killick, 2015) have contributed important thought and scholarship to this field by detailing important aspects of agency and global citizenship and how these support or impact student trajectories within the context of internationalization and international education. They expound on the relevance of internationalization in the development and shaping of a truly global citizenry who appreciate and better reflect the global ideals of internationalization. Focusing on the specific area of career management agency, Berdhal and Malloy (2018) provide a useful (proactive) guide that can assist PhD students (especially those within the social sciences and humanities) to pursue and prepare for alternative careers while studying in the university. They emphasize the importance of considering both academic and non-academic career options and preparing for both from the outset in other to increase chances of excelling at whatever opportunity eventually emerges. However, they do not

specify whether there is any difference as to how international students (including minoritized graduate students) can approach this phenomenon. As occupational aspects of integration and adaptation are of paramount concern to international students during and after graduate school, this tool may be a handy resource for supporting the self-formation that Marginson espouses.

In sum, literature and trends show the growing relevance of agency in/for goal actualization among international students as well as the importance of channeling resources to support the optimal development of both students' identity and higher education institutions through deployment of and support for agency. Consequently, a critical and more thorough consideration of student self-formation in international education may confirm previous theories or reveal new and unique realities concerning how African international graduate students navigate the self-formation and evolution of identities during their international education. experience.

Some Preliminary Theorizing Possibilities

The theorizing possibilities articulated hereunder build on the ideas of Critical Race Theory (extensively discussed in the next chapter), Latina/Latino critical theory (LatCrit), a version of critical race theory adapted for studying social and educational experiences of racialized people of Latin American descent, including Mexican Americans in the United States (Bernal, 2002; Stefanic, 1997), and a critical multicultural theory in education (MultiCrit) originally proposed by Harris (2016) to frame multicultural students' experiences with race in education. While building on the foundation of these theories, the following theorization is however driven by the desire to provide a critical theoretical and analytical frame that helps to more accurately capture

and explicate the conditions and integration experiences of racialized visible minority international students within the context of international education or internationalization.

Given the foregoing context, theory, and research, my thoughts (or theoretical musings) include the possibility that, following this study, critical education scholars may be inspired to, amongst others, begin conversations toward a *critical international education theory of integration* of international student visible minorities or an adaptation thereof (what I tentatively refer to or propose as IntCritt). IntCritt is about theorizing from the margins of internationalization within a critical theory paradigm foregrounding and deconstructing important, hidden, ignored and/or taken for granted issues impacting the lives of racialized and minoritized international students in the context of equitable integration. My inquiry presents an opportunity to explore, test, and refine my initial musings and assumptions of this theory, which include the following (potential tenets): 1) Racialized visible minority international students will usually be marginalized categories that may be more at risk of being partially or totally subject to the lack of access to certain rights, opportunities, and resources necessary for integration; 2) They will (generally) more often than not be faced with significant and additional barriers to cultural, social, educational, and/or economic and career-related integration, even when highly educated or more educated than other non-racialized international and local citizen/resident students; 3) These student populations will be confronted with layers of social inequalities associated with both their racialized as well as international status ("otherness" or "foreignness"), and exacerbated by the neoliberal imaginary of education that is an undisputable driving force behind international education praxis; 4) They will be better positioned to overcome integration struggles when they foster and draw on support and wisdom from community and role models that includes past and present visibly minoritized international

students/role models and the occasional sincerely willing ally; 5) They will require a significant degree of self-determination and struggle to access and optimize opportunities to overcome the systemic, institutionalized, and individual racism, inequity, discrimination, and domination through adaptive learning and social strategies supported by authentic social justice allies; and 6) In the context of international educational mobility and transnational internationalization, regions in the Global South and individuals from these regions will continue to remain unequally and disproportionately served and disadvantaged in relation to regions of the Global North and their representatives as a consequence of historical- and neoliberal-induced inequalities that shape and manifest in internationalization discourses, subjectivities, and exchanges.

Additionally, it might be theoretically relevant and insightful to explore the psychology and stages of Black identity making during the internationalization process. This may shed more light on how Black students from different parts of Africa and other parts of the world (e.g., the Caribbean) navigate racial identity formation differently and/or similarly during their higher education experience and settlement process in Canada. Research evolution and future related findings in the field may be crucial in exploring the extent of relevance and/or applicability of these initial theoretical musings.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Emerging understandings and theorizing must configure coloniality in order to bring international perspectives and dimensions to both decolonial and anticolonial politics.
-George Sefa Dei and Meredith Lordan

Introduction

My research draws on Decoloniality (or Decolonial theory) and Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a hybrid overarching theoretical and analytical framework to investigate how government and institutional policy claims on integration are in/equitably experienced among Black African international graduate students at a Canadian Public University. I combine my use of CRT with Decolonial theory, which draws from the works and writings of seminal anticolonial and decolonial theorists/thinkers including George Sefa Dei, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Achille Mbembe, Frantz Fanon (1925-1961), Walter Mignolo, and Aníbal Quijano (1930-2018), amongst others. Collectively, I call my theoretical lens a *Decolonizing and Critical Race Theory of Education* (DCRTE). This hybridization (of theories) is neither inconsistent (nor out of line) because the connection between race and colonialism (including decolonizing, i.e., the effort to address issues of colonialism and/or undo its continued impact) is undeniable, both in global contexts (Quijano, 2000) and in the North American/Canadian context (Wood, 2000; Nelson, 2017) within which my study is situated. In fact, Charmaine Nelson (2017) – Canada's first tenured Black professor of Art History, and an expert of Canadian slavery – contends that

modern racism in Canada has deep colonial roots. She argues that "there can be no full comprehension of contemporary racism without an understanding and acknowledgement of its historical, colonial roots" and sees contemporary racism as historical racism, i.e., "a continuation and adaptation in another form, another guise of policies, strategies, systems and indeed infrastructures of racist oppression which were put in place centuries ago to differentiate free from unfree people" (para. 3 & 4).

The CRT component of my framework allowed me to critically explore and examine whether and/or to what extent racialization, racism, and the inequities associated with them play an underlying role in the adaptation/integration experiences of my research participants during the course of their graduate studies. Decolonial theory enabled me to interrogate the impact, if any, that policies, social and cultural practices, and power relations influenced by Eurocentric systems, largely still under the control of those referred to as former colonizers, continue to have on the integration experiences of African international students—a previously colonized group attempting to settle and integrate within a foreign academy and community—and how these students are responding to these specific manifestations and experiences of international education. It will also help me critically analyze, explicate, and suggest effective ways in which the impact of colonialism and neocolonialism and their vestiges can be combated within the context of everyday internationalization experiences of the research participants towards a more equitable internationalization adaptation/integration experience. The juxtaposition of both theories was critical to unearthing, understanding, explaining, and addressing the unequal relationships/experiences and tensions that may exist between African international graduate students and the realities (or what I call the felt-impact) of the policy and social environment within which they are required to live and operate while settling and pursuing international

education in a Canadian university founded on and largely operationalized through Western or Eurocentric ideology. I further discuss below, the history, characteristics, and relevance of the constitutive elements of my theoretical framework and the advantage and potential tensions or challenges of employing them. Before that I provide a paradigmatic background to my critical study and a brief summary of the ontology, epistemology, and axiology of critical research frameworks that contributed to shaping this inquiry.

Paradigmatic Background to the Study

All researchers bring their assumptions and beliefs about the world, reality, the nature of knowledge, and what type of knowledge is true and valuable to the research process. As Creswell (2013, p.15) posits, "the difficulty lies first in becoming aware of these assumptions and beliefs and second in deciding whether we will actively incorporate them into our qualitative studies."

The way a researcher approaches inquiry is determined by the paradigm to which they subscribe. Guba and Lincoln (1994) define paradigms as: "a set of basic beliefs (or metaphysics) that deals with ultimates or first principles. ... a *worldview* that defines for its holder, the nature of the "world," the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts..." (p. 107). Paradigms reflect how a researcher views the world, the beliefs they have about reality, and the assumptions they make about the world around them. A researcher's thinking around their research problem and how they go about addressing or responding to it is informed by their paradigmatic orientation.

What elements constitute a paradigm? Lincoln and Guba (1985) see a paradigm as comprising four elements: epistemology, ontology, methodology, and axiology. Rhemand and

Alharti (2016, p. 51) view paradigms as "a belief system and theoretical framework with assumptions about 1) ontology, 2) epistemology, 3) methodology and 4) methods)."

A lack of paradigmatic clarity and consistency can compromise the architecture, integrity, and effectiveness of research. Of the several research paradigms that exist (such as Positivism, Constructivist/Interpretivist, Critical, and Postcolonial), my research is located within a critical paradigm.

This study was shaped by my current belief systems, which are anchored in the critical school of thought, a worldview concerned with the dynamics and workings of power, privilege and justice for the marginalized or disenfranchised in society. Although it has undergone some evolution over different eras, the critical school of thought has its foundations in critical theory and is associated with the Frankfurt School, where it was pioneered by renowned critical theorists and philosophers including Horkhemeir, Ardono, Marcuse, and Habermas (Bohman, 2005).

The critical worldview shapes my understanding and beliefs about what constitutes reality and how I approach it in life, research, and scholarship. In my empirical quest to deconstruct and explicate the discrepancies between internationalization policies and ground-level realities of African students, I draw on the critical worldview in the pursuit of deeper truth(s) about the realities of discrepancies between policy and student experiences, particularly as it relates to my research participants (a marginalized group) at the centre of my research. Consistent with a critical paradigmatic agenda, my pursuit of truth has an emancipatory, political, and social justice purpose to challenge the status quo, unearth hidden assumptions, and confront taken-for-granted assumptions about in/equity in internationalization policy and

practice in order to achieve (or propose) more equitable internationalization futures (or outcomes) for people currently marginalized in the system.

While several authors present a different combination of constituent elements of a research paradigm, three of the most common components in the literature include ontology, epistemology, and axiology. I briefly discuss these below from the perspective of a critical researcher/critical research paradigm.

Ontology, Epistemology, and Axiology of Critical Research Frameworks

Critical theorists and researchers are energized or inspired by a desire to transform society. They are concerned with perspectives and/or work from an onto-epistemological standpoint that aims to improve the state of society and the human condition rather than simply define rules. Critical theory confronts and addresses ways of equalizing unequal power balance between the majoritarian/dominant and the minority/dominated, the privileged and the less/under privileged, or those with political power and those without such power. It has been historically concerned with the emancipation or liberation of the marginalized, oppressed, and/or vulnerable in society such as women, youth, the elderly, and racialized or minoritized people.

Ontology

While critical researchers believe that the world is socially constructed, they also believe that people live by a set of assumptions, many of which are untrue and not a reflection of reality. They believe in delving beneath the surface to unearth and uncover the true knowledge and realities that lie beneath the facades that are uncritically accepted and integrated in the majoritarian perspectives.

Epistemology

Critical theorists and researchers know by critiquing. This is their way of knowing. They challenge taken-for-granted assumptions in the world and society, and in the data, by critically analyzing them in order to make meaning out and consider their true and effective application. In critical research contexts, critical epistemology seeks emancipation of the subjugated and avoids the epistemic violence demonstrated through marginalizing, silencing, or devaluing the knowledge and voices of participants.

Axiology

Research is value-laden in the view of a critical researcher. This is even more so for the critical researcher's axiological research position that prioritizes values in the approach and execution of research. In critical theory, values drive and guide the research objective/purpose, process, outcomes, and application in a manner that allows and demonstrates how and why the researcher is invested in a particular line of inquiry.

Decoloniality as Epistemology in Internationalization of Higher Education

The urgency and need to adopt decolonial epistemic perspectives have long been emphasized by several African scholars (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Ndlovu, 2013; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986). Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2021, p.78) goes further to (amongst others) call for a "intercultural translation of knowledge, mosaic epistemology/epistemology of conviviality, and ecologies of knowledges," which he considers vital to achieving success in decolonized internationalization of higher education anchored in pluriversity.

While decoloniality has traditionally been applied as theory in several fields, a growing body of critical scholarship is adopting, co-opting, or advocating for its use as epistemology in the field of internationalization. For example, Leal and Moraes (2018) propose decoloniality as

an epistemology for internationalization of higher education. Their research unearths scientific debates about the presence of colonial/neocolonial elements in the sphere of higher education that justify the need to develop decolonial studies for internationalization of higher education. Ernest (2008) explores epistemological issues in the internationalization and globalization of mathematics education. At the heart of these trends seems to be an appreciation of decoloniality not just as a theory to explain phenomena, but more as a philosophy, a way of shaping and directing more deeply how we engage and reimagine internationalization, and how we produce knowledge, situate, and contextualize experiences and knowing in the context of internationalization. Adopting decoloniality as epistemology in internationalization of higher education advances critical internationalization studies and opens up new directions and possibilities towards decolonizing internationalization theory, research, knowledge production, and praxis.

Decolonial Theory

I will preface my subsequent discussion by clarifying that, in choosing to apply decoloniality or decolonization theory, I am mindful of not using the term decolonization as a mere metaphor (Eve & Yang, 2012). Rather, I deploy it as a potent, authentic, and effective theoretical lens and epistemology for understanding, problematizing, and responding to the interlocking systems of colonialism and oppression that operate within the Canadian society and higher education system that hosts a variety of international students from all over the world.

Much has been written about decolonizing theories, praxis, and methodologies—which are generally aimed at excavating and disrupting the roots and continuing systems of colonialism and racism or redressing them—in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous contexts across the

world (cf. Fortier, 2017; Maldonado-Torres, 2004; Mignolo, 2007a; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018; Smith, 1999; Sefa Dei, 2000, 2008; Quijano, 2000). These writings and discourses which have largely been done in an anticolonial spirit promote and produce discourses and critique aimed at problematizing (and potentially reversing) the ills of colonialism, racism, and historically connected unequal relations of power. They expose and challenge the continued modern-day practices or manifestations associated with colonial and imperial systems of domination. It is in this orientation that I ground my selection of (decolonizing) theory, consisting of elements of anticolonial theories that challenge, expose, and attempt to provoke change and/or reverse the continuing impact of colonialism and the phenomena associated with it. In the immediate (two sub) sections that follow, I explore decolonizing theories/theorists with brief considerations of the implications that their thinking might have on my research.

Coloniality/Decoloniality

Historically, decolonizing or decolonization can be linked to the concepts of coloniality and decoloniality, first introduced by Anibal Quijano (Quijano, 2000; Mignolo, 2007b) and subsequently further developed by Walter D. Mignolo. Quijano (2000) considers coloniality to be a historical colonial domination, hegemony, and control that started in the sixteenth century and has continued through the post-colonial era to date, and which, under the guise of modernity and rationality, has defined the global and social systems within which we live and work (based on European-dominated perspectives). He coined the now popular term "colonial matrix of power" (in his ground-breaking article introducing the concept) to aptly describe a world system that can be conceptualized as a historical-structural heterogenous totality with a specific power matrix of control that affects all dimensions of social existence including sexuality, authority,

subjectivity, and labour. Apart from challenging us to think about social change and social transformation in a non-reductionist way, Grosfoguel (2008, p.15) believes that the 'coloniality of power' represents the "crucial structuring process in the modern/colonial world-system that articulates peripheral locations in the international division of labor with the global racial/ethnic hierarchy and third world migrants' inscription in the racial/ethnic hierarchy of metropolitan global cities; and maintains that it "allows us to understand the continuity of colonial forms of domination after the end of colonial administrations, produced by colonial cultures and structures in the modern/colonial capitalist world-system." As Mignolo (2007a, p. 156) succinctly submits, Quijano's seminal article "describes colonial matrix of power in four interrelated domains: control of economy (land appropriation, labor exploitation, natural resources control); control of authority (institution, army); control of gender and sexuality and control of subjectivity and knowledge (including epistemology, education)." This categorization and its inherent nuances represent important signposts that require attention during research related to previously colonized people operating in colonial contexts.

Building on the ideas of earlier decolonial/decolonizing scholars, Grosfoguel (2008) presents a comprehensive summary of the historical/continuing "colonial situation" (or colonial reality) in a so–called post-colonial/modern world system where colonialism and its workings are supposed to have ended:

One of the most powerful myths of the 20th century was the notion that the elimination of colonial administrations amounted to the decolonization of the world. This led to the myth of a "postcolonial" world. The heterogeneous and multiple global structures put in place over a period of 450 years did not evaporate with the juridical–political decolonization of the periphery over the past 50 years. We continue to live under the

same "colonial power matrix". With juridical– political decolonization we moved from a period of "global colonialism" to the current period of "global coloniality." The mythology of the "decolonization of the world" obscures the continuities between the colonial past and current global colonial/racial hierarchies and contributes to the invisibility of "coloniality" today…The multiple and heterogeneous processes of the world-system, together with the predominance of Eurocentric cultures (Said, 1979; Wallerstein,1991b; 1995; Lander 1998; Quijano 1998; Mignolo 2000), constitute a "global coloniality" between European/Euro-American peoples and non-European peoples…In these "post–independence" times the "colonial" axis between Europeans/Euro-Americans and non-Europeans is inscribed not only in relations of exploitation (between capital and labor) and relations of domination (between metropolitan and peripheral states), but in the production of subjectivities and knowledge. In sum, part of the Eurocentric myth is that we live in a so-called "post"-colonial era and that the world and, in particular, metropolitan centers, are in no need of decolonization.… However, as the work of Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (1993,1998, 2000) has shown with his "coloniality of power" perspective, we still live in a colonial world and we need to break from the narrow ways of thinking about colonial relations, in order to accomplish the unfinished and incomplete twentieth-century dream of decolonization. (p. 14-16)

In short, the physical end of colonialism in many parts of the world has still left in its wake the global and multifaceted problem of coloniality, which (through the instrumentality of existing systems and institutions) continues to work in the favour of the colonial oppressor and against the formerly colonized (non-European peoples). This continued perpetuation of unequal relations

of power, enhanced by the invisibility of coloniality, presents important implications that also require a more nuanced examination from the perspective of potentially affected minority groups involved in international education.

Quijano (2007, p. 168) underscores how Eurocentered colonialism ensured a "relation of direct, political, social and cultural domination that was established by the 'Western' Europeans and their Euro-North American descendants over the subjugated/colonized peoples of all continents, especially America and Africa," and how the imperial social constructs of the ensuing unequal power relations (between the West and the rest of the world) have inflicted/are inflicting a litany of damages, the effects of which continue into the foreseeable future. These damages are enumerated to include the interior colonization of the imagination of the colonized; the imposition of Eurocentric patterns of producing knowledge and meaning; imposition of racial criteria to produce new social and geocultural identities such as 'Whites,' 'Indians,' 'Negroes,' 'yellows,' 'olives,' using physiognomic traits of people as external manifestations of their 'racial' nature (p. 171) (of which a consequence is racial inferiority, stereotyping and subjugation). Other detrimental and continuing effects of colonialism include the global establishment and perpetuation of a Eurocentred capitalism; promotion of subject–object relations between the West and the rest of the world; Eurocentric paradigms of modernity, knowledge, and rationality as the correct and default paradigms; and the promotion of totality. In response, Quijano advocates a decolonization response through an epistemological reconstitution that includes liberating the production of knowledge, reflection, and communication from the pitfalls of European rationality/modernity. He stresses that the

> "liberation of intercultural relations from the prison of coloniality (including all power organized as inequality, discrimination, exploitation and domination), wherein all peoples

would be free to choose (individually or collectively) between various cultural orientations, and, above all, the freedom to produce, criticize, change, and exchange culture and society" (p. 178).

Following Quijano, Mignolo (2007a) rejects the misleading rhetoric of modernity, and like Fanon (1961), questions the pervasive and damaging logic of coloniality. He advances a critique of Western modernity, of the notion of Europe as the endpoint and centre of civilization, and maintains that coloniality is the darker side of Western civilization (Mignolo, 2011). He applies a decolonial reading (i.e. analytical reading through a decolonial lens) to challenge (German philosopher) Immanuel Kant's "readings on geography" –much of which Mignolo, in fact sees as a "totalizing" approach to spatially map/reinforce racial and unequal classification of peoples based on a European system of knowledge that is built on the colonial matrix of power" (p. 206-207). As a response, he suggests a re-orientation in the geography of reasoning through decolonial border thinking that orients towards more decolonized global futures, including a more pluriversal world system:

> Thus, if Kant's Geography aims at the universal, decolonial thinkers aim at the global; that is, they seek to move through the borders drawn by the always-mutating imperial and colonial differences. To the extent that its advocates attempt to spread the ideals of modernity globally, and to the degree that modernity's systems of thought are grounded in Western languages (Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, English, and German), those advocates and systems disqualify categories of thought not grounded in ancient and modern imperial languages. As an antidote, border thinking aims at pluriversality. Border thinking and border epistemology are the antidotes to the virus of

zero point epistemology. These are the anchors that support the shift in the geography of reasoning. (Mignolo, 2011, p. 207–208)

Like Mignolo, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2021) in the context of internationalization, and Escobar (2020, p. xi) in a broader global/societal context, strongly subscribes to the notion of pluriversality in which there are "multiple realities and possibilities with political consequences" as a different way to think about what is real and possible in a pluriversal world system. In rhetorical manner, and as food for thought, Mignolo (2007b, p. 449) wonders what Horkheimer's critical theory project would look like today in light of the pluriversal revolutions taking place around the world, and in what sounds like the musings of a critical theory of decolonization fleetingly considers "the possibility of subsuming critical theory into the project of modernity/coloniality and decolonization, and whether this would suggest abandoning the 20th century formulations of a critical theory project or, in fact suggest the exhaustion of the project of modernity." Elsewhere, Mignolo (2007a, p. 155) admits that his writing is "intended to be a contribution to decolonial thinking as a particular kind of critical theory. Regardless (of where/how that evolves, and its empirical purchase), he is unequivocal about the fact that, in the context of Quijano's articulation, the "coloniality of power" demands a simultaneous, two-pronged response (Mignolo, 2007b, p. 451–452), detailed as follows:

> (a) a decolonial approach grounded in the *analytic* – involving the re-construction and the restitution of silenced histories, repressed subjectivities, subalternized knowledges and languages performed by the totality depicted under the names (guise) of modernity and rationality.
>
> (b) the *programmatic* – delinking from the vestiges/legacies of colonialism.

Mignolo's (2007b, 2009, 2011) call for epistemic de-linking, decoloniality, and de-colonial knowledges "as necessary steps for imagining and building democratic, just, and non-imperial/colonial societies, is hinged on the argument that the de-colonial option in the 21st century starts with epistemic de-linking through epistemic disobedience" (2009, p.15). To further disambiguate and accentuate the notion of epistemic disobedience and the de-colonial option in the context of epistemology and politics, he revisits the problems/concepts of geo-politics, body-politics of knowledge, and the colonial epistemic difference, drawing on the practical example of Linda Smith-Maori, Indigenous scholar and author of *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999):

> The remarkable novelty comes when a Maori becomes an anthropologist and she practices anthropology as a Maori rather than studying the Maori as an anthropologist…No, she is not still practicing Western anthropology: she is precisely shifting the geography of reasoning and subsuming anthropological tools into Maori (instead of Western) cosmology and ideology. Certainly, there is a self-serving interest in Smith's move as much as there is a self-serving interest among European anthropologists observing the Maori. The only difference is that the self-interest not always coincides, and Maoris are no longer amenable to being the object observed by a European anthropologist. Well, you get the idea of the interrelations between the politics of identity and epistemology. You could certainly be a Maori and an anthropologist and by being an anthropologist suppress the fact that you are Maori … (for example). Or you can choose the de-colonial option: engage in knowledge-making to 'advance' the Maori cause rather that to 'advance' the discipline (e.g. anthropology). Why would someone be interested in advancing the discipline if not for either alienation or self-interest? If you engage in the de-colonial option and put anthropology 'at your service' like Smith does, then you

engage in shifting the geography of reason – in unveiling and enacting geopolitics and

body-politics of knowledge. (Mignolo, 2009, p. 171-172)

While maintaining the analogy of the Maori context, he then tries to provide the other side to his

argument on epistemic de-linking while highlighting its potential tensions:

You can also say that there are non-Maori anthropologists of Euro-American descent who

are really for and concerned with the mistreatment of Maoris and that they are really

working to remedy the situation. In that case, the anthropologists could follow two

different paths: Marxism which privileged class relations over racial hierarchies and

patriarchal and heterosexual normativity… or 'submitting' to the guidance of Maori or

Aymara anthropologists and engage with them in the de-colonial option. A politics of

identity is different from identity politics – the former is open to whoever wants to join,

while the latter tends to be bounded by the definition of a given identity. (Mignolo, 2009,

p.172)

He explains (in the context of delinking and epistemic disobedience) that his key point in the

foregoing is not about who has epistemic privileges over whom (e.g., Maori scholar over New

Zealand scholar, or vice versa) but rather that a New Zealand anthropologist of Anglo descent

does not have the automatic or default right as the guide or compass on what is good or bad for

the Maori (formerly colonized) population. Hence, they cannot impose their views/understanding

on the *Other*. Mignolo concludes that "de-colonial thinking presupposes de-linking

(epistemically and politically) from the web of imperial knowledge (theo- and ego-politically

grounded) from disciplinary management" and sees this leading to the point where "de-colonial

options, grounded in geo- and body-politics of knowledge, engage in both decolonizing

knowledge and decolonial knowledge-making, delinking from the web of imperial/modern knowledge and from the colonial matrix of power" (p.178).

In the context of explicating the discrepancies between internationalization policies claims on equity and inclusion, and the everyday experiences of graduate students from ex-colonized countries navigating their adaptation/integration journey in Canadian post-secondary, the interrelations between the *politics of identity and epistemology* (including how knowledge is perceived, constructed/produced, and utilized) and the role they play in African international graduate students' adaptation/integration processes would warrant a nuanced exploration. Moreover, Mignolo's call for epistemic de-linking raises important questions and presents important challenges around Sefa Dei's (2008) concept of *Pedagogical possibilities of anti–colonial education* in which he highlights the importance of students being more agentic (or co-constructors of knowledge/learning) in their forms/ways of knowing within the academy. Black African international student perspectives of how much the academic and related dimensions of their internationalization experience accommodate these notions of agency and anti-colonial/decolonial knowledge production are important.

Clearly, several decolonial/anticolonial theorists (cf. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2021; Sefa Dei, 2008, 2016; Mignolo, 2007a, 2009, 2011; Grosfoguel, 2011; Quijano, 2000, 2007, amongst others) view continued colonialism or neocolonialism as an inescapable complex global problem of 'coloniality' impacting both the so-called 'first world' and 'third world' countries with multidimensional (cultural, social, knowledge, economic, power-related) and far-reaching historical, structural, racial, and epistemic roots and consequences that require a systematic and comprehensive response (through the 'decolonial project') in order to achieve the goal/outcome of decolonizing. The relevance of this thinking/theory within international education contexts,

and how it impacts or explains the process and content of policy-making as well as policy actors and students impacted by policy or aspects thereof, cannot be over-emphasized.

As part of the hybrid theoretical lens for this study, decoloniality/decolonizing theory offers an analytical avenue to interrogate the complexities that surround the identities and experiences of African students who come from a colonial/postcolonial background and are trying to navigate a process of integration within another system that is equally (even if differently) colonial, Eurocentric, and historically oppressive to Blacks migrants. Majee and Ress (2018) consider decoloniality as a useful framework for understanding the complex challenges facing public higher education systems as they navigate (post-/neo-) colonial relations that also encompass internationalization contexts. Ndolu-Gatsheni (2021) aptly and conclusively posits, "there is no genuinely international higher education without decolonisation of knowledge and education" (p.78). I extend this to assert that the decolonization of knowledge and education is a necessary pathway or prerequisite for achieving true equity in internationalization of higher education.

Consistent with my quest to explicate the adaptation/integration experiences of my research participants in relation to expressed internationalization policies and strategies that promise them inclusion, diversity, equity, and access, this theoretical approach will help me separate intent and rhetoric from reality. It will help separate unexperienced policy claims from experienced truth in a manner that takes into consideration the historical and racial backgrounds and realities of the researched as well as the cultural and systemic contexts within which they operate, without compromising the credibility of the empirical process.

In subscribing to a decolonial and critical framework, I remain cognizant of its challenges or risks. For example, in arguing for 'decolonizing post-colonial research,' Grosfoguel (2011)

warns against the dangers of doing research about people in the Global South using theories and epistemologies of the Global North and expecting acceptable results that reflect the researched. He cites an example of how subaltern researchers living in the United States failed by attempting to apply Western thinkers to investigate and explain subaltern problems and issues. This framework enables me see the world from the perspectives of the researched; at the same time, it allows me to heed Grosfoguel's caution against "simply adopting an essentialist, fundamentalist, anti-European critique rather than one that is critical of both Eurocentric and Third World fundamentalisms, colonialism and nationalism" (2011, p. 3). The researcher's concern should not just be in relation to the source(s) of theories but also demonstrate sensitivity to the epistemological, methodological, axiological, and empirical fit in the research ecosystem, whilst maintaining a critical approach in favour of the researched and trustworthy outcomes. This however, I believe, does not mean that in every single case only theories developed in a particular region of the world can be used in/for research involving the people from that region, provided a critical approach is appropriately observed. I expect this understanding to positively influence my approach in terms of empirical authenticity but also consistency in the application of methodology and interpretation of results; in other words, it will help in keeping my research grounded in integrity.

Other Decolonizing Theories/Theorists

The 20th century witnessed the emergence and proliferation of influential authors and thinkers advancing decolonizing theories from different perspectives, angles, and contexts. The subsequent sections briefly discuss some of them and their works and, where relevant, how they are relevant in the context of my proposed study.

Some of leading scholars and scholarship on decolonial and anticolonial theories emerged in the first half of the twentieth century. Prominent amongst these was decolonial thinker, revolutionary writer, and liberation political activist Frantz Fanon, who is widely regarded as one of the most profound scholarly influences on the African struggle for liberation in that period (Abdi, 1999; Bhabha, 1987). The main elements of his writing include "first his stress on Black consciousness and his revolt against racist colonialism; secondly, his belief in and concern for creating a new humanism; thirdly, the incorporation of existentialist and Marxist influences; fourthly, the discovery of peasantry and lumpen-proletariat as new agents of revolution in the Third World; and finally, his glorification of violence" (as described by a critique of his advocacy for violence as a means of resistance) (Jha, 1988, p. 359). Some also view him as an original champion of decolonization (Gordon, 2015; Maldonado-Torres, 2017; Mignolo, 2009). Indeed, the profundity of his original insights and theorization on anti-Black racism, colonialism, and the state of and liberation of the Black man (and its applicability to the subjugated or dominated being) is recognized by both his critics and admirers.

Fanon's seminal works include *Black Skins, White Masks* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). In *Black Skins, White Masks* (originally written in French in 1952 but translated into English in 1967)*,* Fanon (who was completing his residency in psychiatry at the time of writing) uses, amongst others, an autoethnography methodology (integrating accounts of his personal experiences of anti-Black racism as a Black man living and working in French colonies) within a postcolonial and psychoanalytic theoretical framework to provide deep psychological analyses and insights into the experiences of a Black person living in and struggling to belong or actualize within a White-dominated world or community (Fanon, 1967; Seresin, 2017a) .

Using different examples (including painful accounts of his own experiences as well as those of other Black people) in this book, Fanon is critical of the Black people who travel to a White man's country and assimilate to its culture and ways in a bid to emulate the White man (put White masks on their Black faces/identity) in order to blend in and be accepted or to gain access to otherwise inaccessible resources and opportunities in a White-controlled society characterized by unequal power relations and racial inequities. Equally, he is highly critical of White people and colonizers who always sees the Black person as inferior (or/and makes them feel so), regardless of how much the Black person tries to prove his competence or cleverness to impress the White man. He examines and explicates the psychology of the oppressed (Black people) and the complexities surrounding their experiences and relationship with the oppressors or colonizers from very critical but varied perspectives that spare neither the Black person nor the White person who he feels are both complicit in perpetuating the cycle and permanent condition of oppression in which Black people are stuck.

In Lewis Gordon's (2015) *What Fanon Said: A Philosophical Introduction to His Life and Thought,* Sonia Dayan-Herzbrun describes *Black Skins, White Masks* as "not only a tale rich with profound critique, where all literary genre are mixed, but also a completely new theorization, where thought is originated from a sexed, colored, and colonized suffering body. It is the body of a man who knows what hell means and who will devote all of his short life to those whom he called 'the damned'" (p. xii –xiii).

Fanon laments the inability to escape from Blackness, which he sees as a present and perpetual state of psychological, physical, and social incarceration (and perhaps sets the tone for his latter and final book, *The Wretched of the Earth)*, and expresses the pain and shame and degradation of being subjected to racism in a society that is both hegemonic and racist. He also

refers to the Black person's futile need and search for identity (beyond imitation), and casts an air of despondency and resignation to the fate of the Black in White man's world. He unpacks the psychology of colonization, and draws on psychoanalytic theory in suggesting that an ultimate panacea for the predicament of Black person in is "collective catharsis" (p. 112).

Despite Fanon's frequent exhibition/manifestation of internal dissonance or ambivalence and oscillation between different positions of critique and resignation and occasional affirmation about aspects of his experience as a Black man in relation to White people, he succeeds in deconstructing the psychology of racism in terms of its psychological and physical/social dimensions and many complexities as a societal issue. He demonstrates that the experience is multifaceted and can be very subjective and should therefore be interpreted from the perspective of the experiencer, and not merely based on European Western theories that do not always hold true for Black people, or science that has at times misrepresented the reality of Black people and racism. Reacting to Fanon's critique, Mignolo (2009, p. 17) suggests that a historical turning point occurs when Fanon (1952) poses the question, "*What does it mean to be a Negro?*"; at this point, "the question is no longer to study the Negro using the arsenal of neuroscience, social sciences… but it is the Negro body that engages in knowledge-making to de-colonize the knowledge that was responsible for the coloniality of his being." In Mignolo's analysis, "Fanon's move is at once epistemic de-linking and epistemic disobedience. The de-colonial option in epistemology and politics began to fly" (p. 17).

Fanon concludes his book with a couple of questions and expresses the desire to be a man "who questions," clearly demonstrating his hunger and search for the truth about the condition of the Black man and liberation from it. Overall, his account in *Black Skin, White Masks* provides very deep insights that can inform a nuanced study of racism and colonialism/neo colonialism,

and how they influence racialized people living in formerly colonized places or those living in White controlled/dominated society. This combination of key characteristics makes his writing/theorization relevant in the context of my study.

The Wretched of the Earth was written just before Fanon's death. After leaving France for Algeria, he had worked in a hospital, attending disturbed and traumatized North African patients wounded in the Algerian war, before he later joined and fought alongside an Algerian independence movement—the Algerian National Liberation Front—until he fell ill and eventually died from leukemia just prior to the publication of the book in 1961 (Cherki & Benabid, 2006). [The National Liberation Front was a continuation of the revolutionary body that directed the Algerian war of independence against France (1954–1962) and later became the only constitutionally legal party in Algeria from 1962 to 1989 (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018)]. Despite its incendiary nature owing to his belief in the role of activist violence in decolonization struggles, which later attracted criticism (Jha, 1988), this book is widely regarded as a seminal discourse on colonization and the implications thereof. He describes the violence of colonialism but also (out of desperation) does not shy away from advocating violent resistance as part of strategies for decolonization in certain passages. The text portrays the injustice, wickedness, and tragedy of colonialism and the implications for the colonized, such as the reality of permanent cultural displacement, inequalities, and disparities that perpetuate the creation of a gulf between elitist race (European) and those seen/treated as inferior (Blacks). Fanon addresses this not only in relation to how the colonized were impacted during the repressive years of colonization and in the immediate aftermath of the so-called post-colonial decolonizing era, but also in relation to his perceptions of the implications of the legacy of the colonial situation on the global future of the

ex-colonized. Homi Babha captures the spirit and relevance of the book in his commentary in the foreword section of the text:

> In my view, *The Wretched of the Earth* does indeed allow us to look well beyond the immediacies of its anticolonial context–the Algerian war of independence and the African continent–toward a critique of the configurations of contemporary globalization. This is not because the text prophetically transcends its own time, but because of the peculiarly grounded, historical stance it takes toward the future. The critical language of duality–whether colonial or global–is part of the spatial imagination that seems to come so naturally to geopolitical thinking of a progressive, postcolonial cast of mind: margin and metropole, center and periphery, the global and the local, the nation and the world. Fanon's famous trope of colonial compartmentalization, or Manicheanism, is firmly rooted within this anticolonial spatial tradition. But there is another time frame at work in the narrative of The Wretched of the Earth that introduces a temporal dimension into the discourse of decolonization. It suggests that the future of the decolonized world- "The Third World must start over a new history of Man ..." - is imaginable, or achievable, only in the process of resisting the peremptory and polarizing choices that the superpowers impose on their "client" states. Decolonization can truly be achieved only with the destruction of the Manichaeanism of the cold war; and it is this belief that enables the insights of The Wretched of the Earth to be effective beyond its publication in 1961 (and the death of its author in that year), and to provide us with salient and suggestive perspectives on the state of the decompartmentalized world after the dismemberment of the Berlin Wall in 1989. (p. xiii–xiv)

Jean-Paul Sartre also prefaces the reading of Fanon's text with a vivid picture of the colonizers' "hauteur and uncooperative attitude" towards the liberation efforts of the colonized/ex-colonized peoples working towards decolonization: "Then came another generation, which shifted the question. Its writers and poets took enormous pains to explain to us that our values poorly matched the reality of their lives and that they could neither quite reject… nor integrate them… (p. xliv). Although Sartre's characterization refers to European colonizers' response to the emergence and agency of a new generation of resistance in the 20th century (that included writers and poets including Fanon, Aimé Césaire, and others), the fact that the colonial situation still exists today (as unveiled in my earlier articulation on 21st century decolonizing theory) makes it necessary to explore whether this domineering and exploitative attitude may be covertly or overtly at play within the internationalization machinery and operations in a previously colonized society such as Canada's.

It is evident from a review of Fanon's writing as well as the writings of his reviewers and biographers that these texts are not only relevant for his day but in very real and direct ways speak to Black/marginalized people's continued struggles against alienation, racism, and other systems and forces of domination that impact on both their being/existence and their quest to become (Fanon, 1952, 1961; Gordon, 2015; Macey, 2012; Hudis, 2015) in various contexts and facets of life, including work and education within local and global/international settings. A few other writers that have contributed to decolonizing theories/thinking are briefly discussed below.

The Négritude is another decolonizing force that emerged roughly around Fanon's time, although several members of this movement were older and started their activism a bit earlier (Seresin, 2017b). In a comprehensive articulation, Irele (1965) depicts the Négritude as a cultural parallel of Pan-Africanism with dual characteristics (or a double nature) :

…a psychological response to the social and cultural conditions of the 'colonial situation', and secondly as a fervent quest for a new and original orientation. In the former respect, the imaginative writings of the French-speaking Negro intellectuals offer a precious testimony to the human problems and inner conflicts of the colonial situation; in the latter respect, their propaganda writing and other activities represent an effort to transcend the immediate conditions of this situation by a process of reflection. Negritude is thus at the same time a literary and an ideological movement. (p. 499)

This Black philosophical/literary/cultural/political revolutionary movement (whose pioneers included Fanon's one-time tutor and mentor, Aimé Césaire and Senegal's founding president, Léopold Senghor) fought for the liberation of Blacks from White/colonial control and global solidarity among Africans and the African diaspora (Pan-Africanism) (Campbell, 2006; Seresin, 2017b). Most of their work was accomplished through art (literary, writing) and political activism. Not unlike Fanon, they also "challenged the ideologies of racial hierarchy and Black inferiority (including those believed to have been advanced by philosophers like Friedrich Hegel and Joseph de Gobineau) and championed the rehabilitation of African and African diasporic identity and dignity particularly among Black Francophone people" (Onwumere & Egbulonu, 2014, p. 148).

There are also authors who entered the decolonizing space from a postcolonial and anticolonial perspective (which I consider to also be in alignment with certain elements of the decolonizing lens I have adopted for this study). These eminent theorists and leaders of postcolonial thought include Gayatri Spivak, known for her widely popular essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (2010), and Edward Said, whose masterpieces include *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). Both authors employ critical theoretical approaches to

challenge the historical and/or continuing manifestations of White dominance over other cultures in/from third world countries.

A self-described feminist literary critic (and deconstructivist Marxist feminist), Spivak (in Morris & Spivak, 2010) deconstructs how the British in India historically created realities that gave them messianic status and therefore more control among colonized people. For example, she mentions how by banning the practice of *Sati*—an obsolete funeral custom among Hindus in which a widowed woman could take her own life following her husband's death—the Europeans were able to present themselves as "White men that saved Brown women from Brown men" and use the resulting psychological capital to justify and cement their stranglehold on power during colonial rule/era. Spivak (2010) also critiques the forces that have silenced and continue to silence the voices of the marginalized and challenges ways in which hierarchical and unequal dichotomy between those at the margins/periphery and those at the Centre, or the privileged and the less privileged, has been viewed without due deference to aspects of intersectionality (e.g., gender, race, class, caste, and religion, amongst other factors or narratives). Even to non-Marxists, her deconstructivist approach to unearthing and challenging underlying inequalities and social injustices and assumptions of knowledge in a neoliberal world holds value for ethnographic research involving people from marginalized places.

Said (1978) examines and unpacks the concept of orientalism as a discourse, drawing critical attention to the "enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage and even produce the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period" and emphasizes how through a network of self-serving interests "European culture has benefitted in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and underground self" (p. 3).

Continuing his critical and decolonizing approach in a landmark piece more than a decade later, he critically analyzes the relationship between culture and imperialism in a post-colonial context (Said, 1993). Here, he underscores that the "power to narrate or block narratives from forming or emerging is very important to culture and imperialism, constitutes one of the main connections between them" and emphasizes that this power "has been at play in the historical struggles for liberation from imperial subjugation and fights for equality…" (p. xiii).

Spivak and Said's (postcolonial/anticolonial critiques) show that the historical and continued impact of imperialism as a driving and impactful transnational force or influence of domination in economic, cultural, political, and educational (including international education) spheres, amongst others, cannot be underestimated. Perhaps my choice of theoretical framework will help shed light as to whether there is any veracity to the possibility that a form of imperialism may be at play, in HE internationalization policy context as well as in the concomitant experiences of African students trying to study and settle in Canada.

In his anti-imperialist essays in *Decolonizing the Mind,* Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1998) highlights the failure or reluctance of African writers to express themselves in their own language as the consequence of Euro-American imperialism, which he argues has been responsible for the deliberate devastation of African cultures and identity on several levels. He argues that instead of continuing to serve the interests and cultures of the West in literary expression, African writers should be oriented towards reclaiming and restoring their cultural identity and pride, through Indigenous literary expression, amongst others. Ngugi advocates for such intentional intellectually oriented reclamation actions as part of an overall strategy to decolonize the minds and restore the cultural dignity of (formerly) colonized people.

Sefa Dei (2016) believes that reframing or decolonizing the curriculum is critical and essential to decolonizing the academy. He argues that decolonizing the academy "is about subversion, putting a critical gaze on structures and processes of educational delivery (structures for teaching, learning, and administration of education) that continually create and reproduce sites of marginality and colonizing education for learners" (p. 28). To earnestly embark on the path toward decolonization, he suggests the need for universities to seriously consider some critical questions:

1. How do we frame an inclusive anti-racist and anti-colonial global future and what is the nature of the work required to collectively arrive at that future?

2. What education are learners of today going to receive and what are they going to do with it? The era of neo-liberalism and global capitalist modernity has not only implicated us in terms of how we think of our identities and subjectivities, but fundamentally, what collective meanings we produce and bring to the sense and purpose of education.

3. How do we "refashion" our work as a teaching faculty to create more relevant understandings of what it means to be human? And how do we work with the knowing and cultivate and instill the knowing that "something different is possible."

4. What sort of education should be taking place in the academy today?

5. How do we equip today's learners now, using multiple lenses of critical inquiry of knowledge? What I am gesturing to here is that fact that no one tells the full/complete story, so how do we tell multiple stories to get the whole story? How do learners of today read and understand our worlds in different ways, and further to this share such multiple knowings as a "community of learners"?

6. How do we challenge colonizing and imperializing relations of the academy? If we are to be critical scholars, then we must challenge our investments in colonial intellectuality and understand the relations of "politics to territoriality" (see Abraham 2011) as far more complex than simply who owns and claims to be entitled to certain spaces. It also involves the particular subject and intellectual praxis and politics that the "coming into a given space/land" requires us to uphold.

7. How do we engage "theory with a practice to boot"? That is ensuring that the theories we work with in the academy truly have "legs" and a "grounding" in local peoples' experiences.

8. How do we bring "humility of knowing" to our work? And how do we acknowledge and disrupt the power of "not to know" and replace the fears of reprisal of "to know" in the academy. (p. 30)

To Sefa Dei, such questions problematize contemporary education and provide multiple trajectories for further inquiry towards a decolonized education and academy. His argument raises important questions (as does Thiong'o's) about the systems of colonial reproduction of knowledge, who's knowledge counts or is valued in the academy, and, consequently, how stakeholders such as international African students could be inequitably affected in the different aspects of their adaptation experiences (both within and outside the classroom and in research).

Speaking from the perspective of the experiences of Indigenous peoples who suffered centuries of colonization, subjugation, and racism under European control, Coulthard (2014) also provides a powerfully illuminating and critical exposition of settler-colonial relations between the Canadian state and Indigenous peoples in which the former employs the deceptive '*politics of recognition'* to perpetuate the status quo of dispossession and accumulation that the Indigenous

people have suffered. He draws on Marx's thesis of primitive accumulation to argue that colonial relations of power are no longer reproduced by brute force or overtly, but rather through asymmetrical exchanges of mediated forms of state recognition and accommodation. This appears to be an effective application of theory to "unmask" disguised systems of injustice under which historically marginalized people continue to be dominated through a softer and more subtle form of violence. While there seem to have been genuine attempts to right these wrongs in the last decade (including through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and some developments and advancement in its aftermath), Coulthard's assessment calls for continued vigilance and effort toward more comprehensive and authentic approaches to unmask and combat colonialism, imperialism, and their vestiges, regardless of what form (disguised or recognizable) they may assume. Although African graduate international students (my research population) are considered settlers in Canada (as are all other non-Indigenous inhabitants), I believe that some strong parallels exist between the continued experience of (indirect) colonization, neo-colonialism, and manifestations of hegemony among Indigenous people, and the experiences that Black racialized settlers, including international students pursuing integration objectives in Canada. Some of these common parallels include stereotyping and other overt and (mostly) covert forms of racial discrimination faced by Black people (which also impact international students of African descent) at individual and systemic levels (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2017; Cotter, 2022).

While it is not possible for me to exhaust the list of scholars and theorists on decoloniality or decolonization in this space, it is clear that their common orientation and purpose is largely critical in nature: to expose the damaging or unequitable impact of historical, extant and/or residual colonialism and neocolonialism; and to combat its vestiges –in the interest

of liberating the colonized and challenging/changing the behavior of the colonizer towards the colonized. Reflecting on the foregoing, the work of Fanon and several other decolonizing theorists both during his time and after him appear to have had a profound impact on discourses and praxis around colonialism, racism, imperialism (their different modern or more subtle manifestations), and decolonization. The works of these anticolonial and decolonial thinkers have important implications for both the colonizer/White supremacist and the colonized/Othered. It is also clear that there is a relationship between concepts including colonialism, racism, and decolonization, including in the context of previously colonized and subjugated people who (like my research participants) may need to contend with both familiar and unfamiliar challenges in the midst of their historical, racial, and cultural identities and complexities as they attempt to advance their lives and integrate within the framework of Canada's international education model (internationalization policies and strategies).

Critical Race Theory (in Education)

Critical Race Theory (CRT) originated as a legal movement within Critical Legal Studies (CLS) in the United States of America in the 1970s and was born out of the confluence of major historical developments and the need to respond to those developments (Brown & Jackson, 2013, p. 9); these eventsinvolved major legal decisions that adversely affected the lives and futures of African Americans/racialized people who were historically oppressed or marginalized in society. Taylor (1998, p. 122) refers to CRT as both "a movement and form of oppositional scholarship originally pioneered by a group of legal scholars in America that included Derrick Bell, Charles Lawrence, Lani Guinier, Richard Delgado, Mari Matsuda, Patricia Williams, and Kimberle Crenshaw, and grounded in the need to challenge a society whose dominant view - including

shared beliefs stereotypes, and understandings and consciousness about Black people - was racially biased and oppressive." Taylor explains that "CRT scholars lost faith in traditional legal remedies after they saw many of the gains of the civil rights movement rendered irrelevant by an increasingly conservative judiciary" (p. 123), and this situation motivated the formation and subsequent activities of the movement.

DeCuir and Dixson (2004, p. 27-29) highlight the fundamental tenets of this CRT scholarship to include the following: 1. Counterstorytelling – the use of voice or counter-narrative (based on personal stories and experiences) to challenge and expose the popular and accepted dominant or majoritarian narratives, normalized dialogues, and privileged discourses of the majority (such as race neutrality, amongst others), thereby giving voice to marginalized groups. 2. Racism as endemic to American society – the belief that racism is permanent because it is normal or ordinary, and not aberrant in (American) society; 3. Whiteness as Property – whereby the rights to possession, use and enjoyment, and disposition have been enjoyed almost exclusively by Whites, including through the instrumentality of a myriad of policies and practices intentionally designed to restrict the access of coloured people or minorities in a White-dominated society; 4. Interest convergence – any effort to reverse racism is due to interest convergence or material determinism (when it favours both Blacks and Whites, and not just the former, i.e., only when the interests of both converge); and 5. Critique of Liberalism – to challenge the notions of colour blindness, neutrality of the law and incremental increase that have been embraced by liberal legal ideology, and which in abstract appear to be desirable goals but in reality perpetuate/allow the deployment and normalizing effects of Whiteness and White privilege; failure of colour blindness to recognize the persistence and permanence of racism and

the construction of people of colour as Other; and the adoption of colour blindness as a way to prevent the use of race-based policies for the redress of social inequities.

The application of CRT has extended beyond CLS to areas including sociology, women's studies, and education. Since the 1990s, it has been widely theorized in relation to educational theory (as CRT of Education), policy, and practice and applied as an effective analytical framework for studying (in)equity in education and society (cf. Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Stefancic & Delgado, 2013; Savas, 2014). CRT has also been instrumental in reframing the field of adult education through the lens of race by examining different paradigmatic perspectives people use in relation to race and racism, and how these sociocultural factors can change or reframe the ways in which teaching and learning and work is done within adult education spheres (see Sheared et al., 2010, p. 267). It has also been used in qualitative research to examine different forms of experiences and racial discrimination faced by racialized persons and racialized graduate students in the academy (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). This analytical approach both highlights the critical race-related challenges and opportunities present in adult and higher education contexts cohabited by minoritized groups and the rest. I find these very insightful in the framing and approach to my investigation, especially in how they assist me interrogate the dimensions and discrepancies in academic, social, cultural and career/employment integration experienced by Black African international graduate students in the light of national, sectorial, and institutional policy/strategy intent and claims related to internationalization.

My objective in selecting CRT is not motivated by a desire to seek and paint a damaging picture of Canada's higher education internationalization model or the experiences of Black African students within it. Rather, it is a search for multiple truths concerning how the policies

and strategies within this model are being experienced by African students. Further to this, it is a critical inquiry into their inequitable everyday experiences, the factors behind such experiences, and how overall international experiences may be equitably improved in the context of improved approaches to internationalization. My choice is significantly driven by a scholarly imperative and informed by the methodological appropriateness of the theory in the context of my research question and how it intersects with the tenets of CRT. Given the history of racism and its adverse historical and continued impact on society and the African diaspora (Sheared et al., 2010), CRT is an analytical frame that allows me, while deploying relevant research methodology and methods, to unearth how a historically racialized group is experiencing equitable/inequitable integration in relation to stated policy, within an international education context where the prevalent culture, systems, and arrangements are dominated by Whiteness and/or White ideologies. By the same token, it is a theoretical frame through which I can explore opportunities to improve the integration experiences and outcomes for visible minority international students and other stakeholders of internationalization.

CRT enables me explore the intersections between internationalization and race as a social construct within the ambits of international education; how race is implicated and affected by internationalization policies and strategies and vice versa; and how this translates or plays out within the experiential realms of Black African international graduate students studying at a Canadian Public University. Through this lens, I will explicate the areas of discrepancy between policy claims/approaches to different aspects of integration (i.e., academic, social, cultural, and economic/transition to employment) and the actual lived experiences of these university students with a view to establishing the underlying reasons for their realities and how the overall internationalization integration experience can be equitably improved. The historical

employment and income inequality/disparity faced by Canada's visible minorities (including

Black immigrants) despite possessing higher educational attainment ([Kunz et al., 2000](); Statistics

Canada, 2007; UN Human Rights Council, 2017) also justifies the use of this critical framework.

Applying a CRT lens to my investigation and methodology paves the way for a critical

analysis of how international policy text and discourses affect this highly skilled but

marginalized/racialized segment of the international student population with respect to how they

perceive and manage the process of integrating academically, socially, culturally, and

economically or employment-wise. CRT will also illuminate the degree of inclusion or exclusion

experienced by this group in the context of policy discourse and power relations

manifested/operating through existing systemic and/or institutional arrangements and structures,

and will allow a nuanced examination of how the integration objectives and intentions in

national, provincial, and institutional internationalization policies align or differ with their actual

lived experiences, or whether extant policies favour the overrepresented or underrepresented

within the context of international university education in Canada.

The discipline and application of CRT has not been without its criticisms from both

Black and White people. Many have branded it as too "cynical, nihilistic, hopeless or negative –

especially in response to its assumption of the permanence of racism and continued

subordination of blacks" (Taylor 1998, p. 124). The force of this claim is however negated when

considering the reality of racism and its continued impact on the marginalized both in local and

international contexts of society, including within higher education as well as the past and

current potential for CRT to contribute to improved equity in policy and practice around

multicultural education, diversity, and social justice in Canadian international education.

It is also important to note that I am not oblivious to the common misuses and misrepresentations of CRT in educational contexts. Accordingly, Lynn and Dixson (2013, p. 3) provide the following caution regarding the responsible use of CRT:

> some scholars claim a CRT project simply because their sample may be primarily composed of people of color. Far too often, scholars have invoked CRT in the introductory sections of their paper never to revisit the theory or even utilize any of its tenets in their analysis. As CRT scholars, we have both had our fair share of reviewing manuscripts submitted to a journal or for a conference that purport to use CRT but do so in a manner that is superficial, if utilized at all. By the same token, we have both had the pleasure of reading the work of both junior and senior scholars who not only demonstrate a rigorous and robust use of CRT but do so in a manner that moves the field forward in an exciting and significant way.

As Ladson-Billings (2013, p.42)) summarizes, "the work of the critical race scholar must be as rigorous as that of any other scholarship (or perhaps more so)." She maintains that "we have an obligation to point out the endemic racism that is extant in our schools, colleges, and other public spaces ….deconstruct laws, ordinances, and policies that work to re-inscribe racism and deny people their full rights" (p. 42). I consider these vital imperatives integral to my empirical orientation while upholding overall soundness in my inquiry's approach.

In view of the foregoing, I subscribe to a high level of empirical vigilance that is also alert to observing the relevant tenets and avoiding the misuse or irresponsible application of CRT in educational contexts. I remain committed to accommodating how factors such as intersectionality (including class, age, level of work experience, sex, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, and ethnicity or background), ideologies, student aspirations/desires, and other

expected/unexpected phenomena unearthed in the research process may potentially be implicated or relevant in my participants' experiences of the different dimensions of integration claimed or implied in Canada's internationalization contexts.

Bringing it Together: Decolonizing and Critical Race Theory of Education

While intricacies (issues and dynamics) involved in the equitable integration and adaptation process of African graduate students within Canada's internationalization model (cannot be subjected to reductionism or) are not necessarily/simply reducible to factors around race and colonialism/coloniality, I believe that Decolonizing Theory and CRT (given their combined epistemic, ontological, empirical, and contextual relevance) afford me the best opportunity to better interrogate, disambiguate, understand, and interpret findings from this research in a way that lends itself to empirical validity, and perhaps helps me get closer to the answers to my research questions. Collectively they allow me navigate theoretical binaries and limitations which using a single theory may not have done as effectively in response to the complexity of my research problem and questions. Therefore, I attempt to optimally and critically draw on this hybrid of theories in the operationalization of my research.

In employing my hybrid theoretical framework of a Decolonizing and Critical Race Theory of Education (DCRTE), I remain aware of the potential challenges as well as the strengths and similarities of the constituent parts of the framework to help me optimally understand, interpret, and articulate the findings that emerge from my inquiry. I ensure conscientious adherence to methodological coherence and empirical soundness in how I apply the theoretical framework in alignment with the overall architecture of my study and its different attendant sections (Osanloo & Grant, 2014) from my research questions to the findings/conclusions of the study.

Linking DCRTE to Border Imperialism and Necropolitics

Within the DCRTE framework used for this study, I prominently apply two specific analytical lenses that are particularly useful for analyzing and explicating important policy (and non-policy) related inequities faced by racialized, marginalized international students within a historically colonial Western institution and a global coloniality of power. Both lenses have their roots (epistemological foundations) in decolonial theory, which challenges colonial hegemonies in internationalization border and policy contexts. They also integrate or extend the tenets of critical race theory such as addressing the endemic nature of racism and using counterstories/counternarratives told from the perspectives of Black international bodies in the context of border and policy-mediated migration and integration experiences/inequities.

The first analytical lens –*Border imperialism* – helps me to analyze the stories and experiences of seen and unseen Black international student bodies/lives and the struggles they face in navigating the imaginary borders and border-like barriers that impact their experiences of access, inclusion, and equity at different points of their internationalization journey from their home country to settlement and integration in Canadian higher education and society.

The second analytical lens – *Necropolitics* – allows me to capture some severe and extreme ways in which inequitable experiences induced by harmful, violent, and sometimes deadly policies and policy processes are perpetuating or creating conditions of social death for many Black/racialized students from Africa. It draws on counterstories collected from human participant data and policy documents/narratives to highlight or illuminate the impact of harmful policies and policy positions on Black international lives who are trying to access, settle, or integrate within the Canadian higher education system and society.

Collectively, the two analytical lenses (undergirded by decolonial and critical race theory) provide unique (and in some cases overlapping) perspectives that are useful to interrogating, understanding, and challenging different forms of violence and oppressions exercised through the performance (or non-performance) of policies and policy discrepancies affecting Black/racialized migrant students navigating internationalization in global (neo)colonial contexts. I describe them in further detail below.

Theorizing Border Imperialism in Internationalization

Harsha Walia (2013) applies a Border Imperialism *analytical lens* (evident in her books titled *Undoing Border Imperialism* and *Border & Rule*) as an analytical framework for analyzing the root causes and impacts of migration and global displacement, including how Western nation states in the Global North exercise power and control through colonial practices, dispossession, managed migration, surveillance, securitization, criminalization (crimigration), labour exploitation, dehumanization, and the perpetuation of an apartheid form of citizenship (what I refer to as 2nd class citizenship) among marginalized populations. In a recent sequel, *Border and Rule,* Walia (2021) continues her analysis, and spares no side as she exposes the complicity of both right-wing adherents and neoliberals whose rhetoric and stance against migration she traces to a global capitalist agenda anchored in profitability and economic advantage. She provides a geopolitical analysis that invokes Anibal Quijano's colonial matrix of power, which refers to the continued Western geo-political and onto-epistemological domination in the main spheres of society across the world.

Border imperialism is connected to the Border thinking theory. Mignolo & Tlostanova,

(2006, p. 206) posit that "border thinking is the epistemology of the exteriority; that is, of the outside created from the inside." Graham & Hjalmarson (2019) posit that "Borders, at once a cause, symptom, and consequence of violent deracination, division, and dehumanization, serve as a justification for and by product of imposed imperialist will and forced uprooting—carved into the ground and onto bodies (p. 108). They continue that "Although arbitrary, borders signal to us who ought to matter versus who ought not; who is from a 'great' place versus who is from a 'shithole;' and who is human versus who is 'animal'" (p. 108).

Canada is an immigration-based country with strict controls and restrictions on a criteria-based flow of migrants to the country, on the state's terms. The government department responsible for dealing with matters of immigration, refugees, and citizenship in Canada is known as Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Immigration in Canada is governed by the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act from 2002. As a nation, Canada's future prosperity and economic sustainability are largely dependent on economic class immigration, which is focussed on attracting skilled migrants including workers, entrepreneurs, and groups like international students who are seen as future ideal immigrants who eventually apply for permanent residence.

The immigration system is tightly managed to ensure that only those who are wanted and desirable are generally allowed to come into the country, stay in the country and progress through subsequent immigration stages in their quest to settle or integrate in Canadian society. IRCC officers and decision makers review applications for temporary residence and other immigration categories to decide who they feel meets the criteria and who does not. Analysis of border imperialism encompasses the manner in which the application of immigration policies impact vulnerable and historically marginalized migrants. However, the analysis is not limited to

literal border policy issues and practices. It extends to other imaginary and non-traditional dimensions of border policing and its impact in geopolitical, national, and local contexts.

Theorizing Necropolitics in the Internationalization of Higher Education

A theory initially advanced by philosopher and critical scholar Achilles Mbembe through widely cited publications in 2003 and 2019, necropolitics stands for *the politics of death* in which those with sovereign or absolute power determine the safety, indispensability, and fitness to live or the expendability of subjects and groups in a population. Necropower is the power of death/social death and life exercised and assigned to people through the workings of necropolitics.

Mbembe's theorization is made in the (theoretical and philosophical) context of the phenomenology of Hegel, and the works of Georges Bataille, Giorgio Agamben, and Michael Foucault. He draws and expands on Michel Foucault's critique of the notion of sovereignty as it relates to war, biopower, and the state of exception to present the notion of necropolitics which according to him "assumes that the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die" (Mbembe & Meintjes, 2003, p. 11). Mbembe postulates that "to kill or to allow to live constitutes the limits of sovereignty, its fundamental attributes" and believes that "to exercise sovereignty is to exercise control over mortality and to define life as the deployment and manifestation of power" (Mbembe & Meintjes, 2003, p. 12). He maintains that in "imagining politics as a form of war, we must ask ourselves two important questions: First, *What place is given to life, death, and the human body?* Second, *How are they inscribed in the order of power?"*

A critical reading of Canada's overarching internationalization policy documents such as Canada's first and current International Education Strategies (Government of Canada, 2014, 2019) and related immigration policies that impact international students show that, despite some well-intentioned objectives, the overwhelming agendas driving internationalization efforts are economic and neoliberal. In the current context of internationalization in Canada, the stated goals in national and provincial international education policies and strategies aim at attracting international students to study and stay in Canada and replenish the depleting workforce through immigration. Despite the fact that international students contribute billions of dollars to the economy, support hundreds of thousands of jobs (Government of Canada, 2020b), and provide a pipeline of highly skilled workers to Canada, many internationalization policies remain thin on mechanisms for supporting their equitable and humane transition into the Canadian society and workforce. A growing body of research/knowledge also confirms that, in many cases, international student education realities do not reflect the glamorous policy rhetoric and promises about the Canadian internationalization experience. However, not enough has been done to name and describe some of the harsher realities and consequences of policy gaps for international students within the context of internationalization in the West, particularly in Canada.

Despite the scarcity of its application in educational contexts, necropolitcs has been used as a theoretical frame to shed light on the violence and death perpetuated in higher education (Torres, 2022; Zembylas, 2020) and internationalization contexts in the United States (Suspitsyna, 2021). In the context of internationalization, I suggest that necropolitics and necropower manifest through the (mostly covert) weaponization of policies and political authority to exercise absolute dominion over the different stages of international student migration and integration in ways that privilege the State and the already privileged, more than

the marginalized migrants among them. It is very much at work through systems that control, limit, or adversely influence the life trajectories and destinies of international students during the pre-departure, post-departure, and post-study phases of their international experiences, and marginalized and racialized groups are likely to be more at risk than others. The Government of Canada's view of international students as future ideal immigrants is demonstrated through immigration policies designed to attract them as economic class migrants who are skilled, educated, healthy, and likely to contribute significantly to the economy and help to close the skills gaps in the Canadian labour market both during and after their studies. In addition to institutional and provincial government marketing efforts, national promotion campaigns that target specific regions are also driven by dominant neoliberal policy priorities. For example, Universities Canada president Paul Davidson confirmed in an interview that "officials from universities, colleges and the federal government are now in the early stages of developing an 'aligned' strategy that will broaden campaigns in other parts of the world" and expressed optimism that Canada would "promote itself as an education destination in places with expanding economies and large populations of young people, like Colombia and parts of Africa" (Blatchford, 2019, para. 5). Before international students ultimately make it to Canada, there is clearly a multifaceted effort and range of policy-driven actions aimed at attracting those with the skills and/or potential to add value to the economy. However, the realities in a colonial system historically designed to sustain White privilege might mean that many international students after they arrive are treated as second-class denizens because their lives are subject to interlocking systems that covertly limit, oppress, over regulate, and subject them to constant surveillance and other realities that control or affect the limits of their expression and equitable life trajectories during their studies and beyond. Furthermore, this situation may be exerting a disproportionate

(heavier) impact on Black African graduate students owing to the fact that their experience of marginalization is likely to be exacerbated by operating or being situated in a system where Black people have traditionally experienced oppression and disenfranchisement (UN Human Rights Council, 2017). Necropolitics operates and thrives through a colonial logic that dominates and marginalizes (or potentially enslaves) the less powerful in society through overt or covert policy processes and practices hidden behind a veil of common sense and public good for citizens. Some potential scenarios in which necropolitics may operate are discussed or highlighted below.

According to the director of a food bank that serves thousands of students in Ontario (the Canadian province with the highest number of international students), international students "come prepared to pay tuition fees but have little money for anything else and quickly end up in traumatic situations"; he also underscores the fact that "most of the international students who come here plan to become Canadians and the government needs to ensure that a support system is in place for them" (Dawson, 2022, para. 5, 8).

Higher education and internationalization in particular have also been characterized as neocolonial projects (with neoliberal foundations) that serve the interests of Whiteness while perpetuating destruction and oppression particularly for Indigenous, Black, or racialized bodies through the double pandemic of COVID-19 and racism (Suspitsyna, 2021). Moreover, international students may not be immune from the destructive impact of epistemic violence and cultural marginalization reinforced by a global colonial matrix of power (Mignolo, 2007a) that centres Whiteness (Eurocentrism approaches) in academia while devaluing and regarding as less important or relevant the international knowledge and experience brought by racialized international students particularly from the Global South.

The precarious conditions and outcomes faced by international students (including many from the Global South) based in Canada were further exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic (Firang & Mensah, 2022; Varughese & Schwartz, 2022). These students experienced heightened levels of academic, psychological, and financial stress. As businesses and offices shut down and thousands of students could no longer work, their high fee-paying obligations remained unchanged compared to domestic students who have access to government loans, more access to scholarships and awards, and other significant lines of credit unavailable to international students. While the federal government provided financial supports in the form of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), there was widespread critique that many international students were largely excluded due to not meeting certain qualification criteria for the financial assistance. People critiqued the lack of adequate policy provisions made to accommodate these students' needs at the provincial and federal levels. For many of these students, the insufficient accommodation in government policy in this period of severe trial and isolation may have contradicted their image of Canada as a multiculturally and socially just society that the state traditionally projects to global/international student audience. Government-sponsored studies on the impact or projected impact of the COVID-19 pandemic were also largely executed through a capitalist lens focussing on the loss in revenue to postsecondary institutions and the Canadian State (for e.g., see Matias et al., 2021).

The COVID-19 era policy actions of the Canadian government and institutions that largely or completely ignored the existence of international students who contribute to their economy at best demonstrated an indifference, and at worst reflected a degree of inhumanity, towards the plight of the students who became less consequential or of less human value to the State during a devastating pandemic in which they were expected to magically figure out a way

to survive while their Canadian citizen and permanent resident counterparts received exclusive government support. Moreover, it is now widely understood that racialized people including international students were more severely impacted by the pandemic. The de-prioritization of international students' needs—a common trend in Canada and other leading Western host countries such as the United States during the pandemic—inevitably results in even more grave consequences for racialized and marginalized groups among them. The full extent of damage to Black lives and bodies during Canada's pandemic exceptionalism remains under-researched, under-analyzed, and under-reported.

Policies and policy positions that subtly, intentionally, or inadvertently disenfranchise, oppress, and infringe on the rights of Black African international students from the Canadian border to the academy and workplace only serve to perpetuate the conditions of inequity in which many Black Canadians have lived since their arrival as slaves (since a few centuries ago) and migrants. The consequences may be grave for future immigrants and citizens. Consequently, everyone involved with developing, influencing, or operationalizing policies that inform the experience of internationalization should be equally interested and concerned about examining the manner in which these policy processes and outcomes might be subtly, overtly, or inadvertently creating exception for some while creating educational, career, and societal precarity for others. This might be instrumental to avoiding cataclysmic failures in internationalization and education-migration futures. While such unwanted futures already appear to be brewing unconfronted, policy makers might still be unaware or unwilling to rock the boat. Following the unfortunate murder of George Floyd through a system of structural violence and the global civil unrest that followed in 2020, many institutions and entities became suddenly awakened to the pandemic of racism leading to a historic exercise of their social justice

responsibilities in society and the educational landscape, including in Canada. The social unrest highlighting the previously ignored subjugation of Blacks marked a turning point as many institutions began to use power they always had to drive change towards more socially just policies and policy outcomes for Black people. There have since been widespread calls for internationalization stakeholders (including institutions and governments) to develop a deeper understanding of international student vulnerabilities and more responsive policy measures to address their needs. Black African international graduate students live at the intersection of the marginalization(s) faced by international students and Black people in Canada and are therefore more likely than not to be exposed to the combined marginalization faced by both groups. Mbembe's necropolitics (and necropower) therefore seems to be an appropriate lens for understanding and unpacking the multidimensional ways in which incongruity between policy and experience continues to adversely and severely impact a marginalized international student group who are in some cases subject to multiple levels of oppression, social death, and violence as a result of their precarious social location in the Canadian international education system and society.

Chapter 4: Research Design & Methodology

The design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions" (Yin 2009, p. 29).

Introduction

This chapter addresses my research design and methodology by identifying and unpacking the constituent elements that contributed to planning and carrying out the study successfully. These include a description of my research site, the critical methodologies I applied, my methods of data collection, and how the data collected was processed, analyzed, and interpreted.

To carry out this study, I employed a hybrid theoretical framework as well as a hybrid methodology; this is because using just one in each case was insufficient with respect to addressing the dimensions of my inquiry and answering my research questions. Hence, on a broad level I adopted an Anti-colonial/Decolonial and Critical Race Theory (CRT) as the appropriate theoretical lens for situating my study (cf. Sefa Dei & Lordan, 2016; Fanon, 1952, 1963; Ladson-Billings, 2013; Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). I operationalized the research through Critical Ethnography (Madison, 2005) and Critical Policy Ethnography (Dubois, 2015, Young & Diem, 2017), which are useful in unravelling the stories of marginalized people and challenging dominant and controlling approaches to policy making. These choices of theoretical lens and

methodologies were driven by my critical paradigmatic orientation towards policy and research in a global society that is heavily impacted by inequity in education (Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, 1995; Savas, 2014) and coloniality (Quijano, 2000, 2007; Sefa Dei & Lordan, 2016). In addition to a prolonged period of observation at the research site, I collected data from 22 participants through multiple interviews and two focus groups. The participants included 16 Black African international graduate students and six officers/administrators involved in the implementation of internationalization policies and practice. Their collective views provided insightful data addressing my research questions and study objectives.

In my quest to explicate the discrepancies between Canadian internationalization policy and the quotidian experiences of international African graduate students, my choice and application of research design and methodologies align with the critical paradigmatic and theoretical framework within which the study will be executed; it is consistent with my theoretical framework of CRT and Decolonizing theory, jointly referred to as Decolonizing and Critical Race Theory of Education (DCRTE).

Both Critical Policy Ethnography (CPE) and Critical Ethnography (CE) present important methodological approaches that provide complementary field data that will collectively addresses both policy and non-policy dimensions of my study and research questions. CPE will allow me critically analyze localized internationalization policy phenomena while CE will enable me to interrogate everyday adaptation/integration experiences (including the non-policy and policy-related) from the researched group's perspectives. Before I justify my selection of each and explain how they will be relevant in my study, I would like to demonstrate below the linkage between the methodologies and my research questions.

Relating Methodologies to the Research Questions

In this section, I explain how each component of my methodology links with my research questions. This may allow readers to better appreciate the connection between the methodology I employed and the questions that guided my study.

Research Question(s)

1. **a.** How do Black African international graduate students see themselves situated in and impacted by internationalization policy and strategy claims on *equity, access, and inclusion*?

    b. What are their perceptions of the consistencies and discrepancies (with policy/strategy), and the reasons for either in the socio-cultural, academic, and occupational realms of Black African international graduate students' experiences at the university?

    c. What explains the discrepancies between stated federal, provincial, and institutional internationalization policy and strategy claims on equity, access, and inclusion, and the adaptation/integration experiences of Black African international graduate students in a Canadian university?

2. How are the experiences and adaptation processes of Black African international graduate students affected, influenced, or shaped by actions, structures, or systems of domination in social, cultural, academic, and occupational settings?

3. What are the processes and strategies that can ensure more equitable internationalization approaches (including policy and practice) and experiences for Black African international graduate students?

Critical Policy Ethnography Link:

The policy, strategy, and related document analysis that constitutes an aspect of my methodology addressed **questions 1a, 1b, 1c, and 3**. It helped answer the questions by enabling me, in the context of my research participants, to uncover policy assumptions; identify dominating or hegemonic power relations and oppressive forces discursively at work; unveil roots of policy ineptitude and inequalities, identify contradictions; and understand nature of the inconsistencies between participants' experiences and internationalization policy provisions/articulations that relate to their adaptation/integration in Canada. In deconstructing policy and related gaps and contradictions, applying this methodology also revealed or provided opportunities for theorization to address or close the identified gaps and rethink and pursue a more equitable internationalization model. Finally, it provided me with some thoughts/evidence for future theorizing and policy making/implementation around internationalization in the context of racialized or minoritized students.

Critical Ethnography Link:

The critical ethnography addresses questions **1c, 2, and 3**. Applying this methodology was intended to help answer these questions because they uncover hidden and taken-for-granted assumptions in participants' everyday experiences of policy implementation that impact them because of their racial or colonial heritage/identity and backgrounds. Critical ethnography will also help uncover how these students' social, cultural, academic, and occupational integration experiences may be inequitably affected due to exclusion and barriers to access to resources and other resources or opportunities. This method helped me to understand the complexities and nuances that surround student interactions with different internationalization stakeholders as they

navigate the integration process, and what psychological and physical, social, academic, and economic or occupational (and other) impact this has on them in the context of the claims of internationalization policy. Finally, the critical ethnography helped me to identify areas in which students have had success through positive experiences and use of agency; it allowed me tease out ways in which they think they themselves, other African graduate students, and any other specific internationalization stakeholders can contribute to improving or creating more equitable policies, strategies, and practices in internationalization. It also provided some thoughts/ evidence for future theorizing around internationalization in the context of racialized or minoritized students within the context of internationalization in/equity.

Research Design Chart

The chart presented in Table 3 below provides a summary of how my research design links my research questions to the theoretical framework, methodologies, and data collection methods that were employed in the research process.

Table 3

Research Design Chart

Theoretical Framework	Methodologies	Method 1	Method 2	Method 3	Research Questions
Decolonizing and Critical Race Theory of Education (DCRTE)	Critical Policy Ethnography	Document Analysis Observation (6-month to 2-year period)	Interviews (with selected officials & students)	Focus Group	Questions 1a, 1b, 1c, & 3

	Critical Ethnography	Observation (6-month to 2-year period)	Interviews with students & selected officials	Focus Group	Questions 1c, 2, & 3

In the immediate sections below, I provide a background and details of the hybrid methodology I applied to allow readers to understand and relate to how I approached my study.

Selecting a Research Site

For this study, I selected as the research site a research intensive Canadian Public University that offers both undergraduate and graduate programs to domestic and international students from different parts of the world including Africa. Choosing this site allowed me situate the study within an environment where authentic and meaningful data collection was possible in line with the study objectives and the research questions driving it. Moreover, universities have been used as suitable sites for studying racialization and racism in Canadian higher education and societal contexts; they have also served as useful sites for analyzing the mythologization of equity in higher education (Frances et al., 2017).

Situating Ethnography in Research

Ethnography has been employed as an effective methodology for studying and understanding the student experience in university or college contexts (Iloh & Tierney, 2014). It has also been framed in different ways, including as a method, methodology, and epistemology (see for example Green et al., 2012, & Lillis, 2008). Primarily deployed as a methodology in my

study, it supports the critical explication of paradoxical phenomena and creation of knowledge within a Canadian higher education context.

Implementing Methodology 1: Critical Policy Ethnography

I employed Critical Policy Ethnography to answer the policy-related questions of this study. O'Connor and Netting (2011) present multiple perspectives for understanding and evaluating policy; they equate policy analysis to research (p. 36-61) and suggest the three major ways of analyzing policy are *Rational Policy Analysis*, which they associate with the positivist/postpositivist paradigm, *Nonrational Policy Analysis*, which they associate with the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, and *Critical Policy Analysis*, which they associate with the critical paradigm. According to them (p. 207), critical policy analysis (which is consistent with the critical paradigm and theoretical framework of my study) is a more radical approach (compared to the other two) "built on critical thinking skills and critical perspectives, by which false consciousness is transformed into true consciousness, through both linear rational thought, and more circular, non-rational thought." Using a case study example, the authors show that an effective critical approach to policy analysis can "empower the disempowered by enlightening them about the false consciousness that has informed their behaviour until now" and "provide some questions deemed helpful for assessing the degree of criticality of critical policy approaches" to include the following (p. 233–234):

> Does the approach take a skeptical stance regarding the social problem or policy response?

Is it focused on the historical, structural, and value bases of the social problem or policy response?

Does it integrate contradictions and distortions therein?

Do the questions and analytic results reflect the values and priorities of a particular ideological tradition?

Is consciousness raising or enlightenment possible as a result of the process or product of analysis?

Is there an emancipatory action orientation inherent in the process or product of analysis?

Is political or social change possible as a result of the analysis?

Once the (policy) analyst has determined that either the precipitant for the analysis or the approach to the analysis is a critical one, there is still another profoundly important area of consideration before making the final decision to engage in critical policy analysis. It is wise to know the gains and losses involved in using a critical approach.

The foregoing underscores the need to both gauge the applicability of a critical approach to policy analysis as well as the cost and benefits (or value) involved.

The potential risks –what O'Connor and Netting also refer to as *costs* or *losses*– of applying a critical approach have been advanced. It raises difficult critical questions that do not have easy answers and/or identifies areas that require change without proffering solutions. Moreover, the critical approach comes with significant power, responsibility, and care that not every analyst may be able to manage or handle ethically. Furthermore, the results, impact, and possible resulting backlash (including intentional or subintentional intimidation) are out of the control of the critical analyst/researcher. All these (and other relevant risks) must be considered in the choice and application of a critical approach –which I conscientiously attempt to do.

At the same time, the benefits or gains of critical approaches to policy analysis include but are not limited to the fact that they challenge the status quo, attract attention of resistors to change, and allow for practical action-oriented knowledge to be produced through a consciousness-raising process, creating practical political impact and influencing change in the status quo (O'Connor and Netting, 2011, p. 225). The potential benefits of employing a critical approach to policy analysis outweigh (and I think also negate) the risks. Consequently, the justification for selecting this approach is further strengthened.

Several theoretical and methodological approaches have influenced (or shaped) critical policy analysis, according to Taylor (1997). She maintains that while there have been several influential theorists in the field of policy analysis, "all draw to some extent on Foucault's theories of discourse, often complemented by neo-Marxist cultural theorists like Gramsci (e.g., Fairclough, 1989; Kenway, 1990)" (Taylor, 1997, p. 25) and emphasizes the importance of theories of discourse to policy-making and highlights the centrality to this process of the often-taken-for-granted *language and meaning* (of text). She also acknowledges the usefulness of Meutzenfeldt's (1992) sociological framework, which examines how political processes and policy-making shape and are shaped by social power relations and the power of the state; she finds this framework instrumental for critical policy making because it intentionally takes into consideration issues of culture, practice, the different levels of policy making, and the political nature of policy making.

In their work titled *Critical Approaches to Education Policy Analysis*, Diem and Young (2017) explain that although there a variety of perspectives and approaches in critical policy research framing and implementation, four key similarities characterize the work and approaches of critical education scholars (p. 4-5):

1. Critical Policy Analysis (CPA) scholars are generally driven by, and focus their work around certain critical concerns –exploring policy roots and development processes (and how they reinforce dominant culture); how policies that are presented as reality are often political rhetoric; how knowledge, power, and resources are distributed inequitably (e.g., Flyvbjerg 1998); how educational programs and policies, regardless of intent, reproduce stratified social relations; how policies institutionalize inequality ("winners and losers"); and how individuals react to policy and policy processes (e.g., Street 2001).

2. Critical policy researchers tend to pay significant attention to the complex systems and environments in which policy is made and implemented. Indeed, CPA scholars tend to take time to provide the historical and/or cultural context of the policy issue under examination.

3. Critical policy researchers emphasize the inextricable nature of theory and method; they see theorizing as a vital part of methodology, and, as such, it is a central feature in the planning of a research project; that it impacts the identification of the research topic or problem, it impacts the way the researcher thinks about the problem, and it impacts the questions that they asks about the issue. Indeed, every attempt to make sense of the world around us begins with our notions, conceptualizations, and theories about it. In the case of analysis, which involves close examination and distinguishing among various components or aspects of a data set, body of knowledge, etc., They engage in judgments regarding what patterns we attend to and how we go about separating and examining. And they always have a perspective, and therefore their observations are always undertaken from a perspective.

4. Given the nature of their policy questions and perspectives, critical policy scholars are more likely to use qualitative research approaches than quantitative approaches in their work (deLeon and Vogenback 2007; Denzin and Lincoln 20005; Levinson et al., 2009). This does not preclude CPA scholars from using quantitative methods or a mixture of methods drawn from what the field has designated as qualitative and quantitative. Indeed, there is no single or correct critical policy analysis method. However, our observation has been that the majority of CPA work is qualitative in nature (Diem et al., 2014) and that this body of scholarship does provide guidance for others doing or hoping to do work of this nature.

The above characteristics provide a comprehensive foundation for approaching, conceptualizing, and operationalizing the critical policy research methodology, which I discuss below.

For my study, I selected Critical Policy Ethnography (CPE) as one of two complementary critical methodologies (as mentioned at the beginning of this section). Whilst admitting that a critical approach is only one of several approaches that are applicable to addressing the intersection between ethnography and policy, Dubois (2009, 2015) nevertheless emphasizes the empirical currency of such methods in the context of unearthing, understanding, and addressing the ways in which policy performance affects the marginalized.

Despite the dearth of literature on this methodology, Dubois (2015) makes an excellent effort to provide a historical context of CPE and its empirical relevance today. Drawing on his previous work in public welfare policy, Dubois (2009) asserts that "CPE allows researchers to carry out in-depth field work to analyze concrete practices through which a public policy is experienced in everyday life" and maintains that "policy ethnography approaches provide useful qualitative data that offer a nuanced and realistic ground-level view of policies too often

analyzed abstractly from the top" (p. 222). At the same time, he argues against restricting these approaches to "producing more precise information" rather than also "embracing opportunities to capture and analyze concrete practices of participants in the field –thereby optimizing empirical and theoretic potential" (p. 221). Dubois (2009) further contends that:

> critical powers of policy ethnography are only fully utilized when the right conditions are present, including policy structures that allow it, accessibility to lower level actors in the policy hierarchy, and avoidance of binary and academic oppositions between micro and macro approaches, or bottom–up and top–down approaches – which allows variation in scales and analysis levels. (p. 236-237)

These arguments emphasize that CPE is not 'policy business as usual' and is more effectively applied when we do not get stuck in the mainstream policy analysis traditions.

Drawing on John Bennett (1996), Dubois (2015, p. 464-465) traces the evolution of policy making from 'applied anthropology' in British and American historical policy contexts to 'critical policy ethnography' as we know it today. He notes two different national orientations of applied anthropology that historically existed: the British *paternalistic/colonial* variant (emphasis mine) that "was later used to fulfill a humanitarian advisory function in Africa under British empire" (Bennett, p. S24); and the mixed American *humanitarian liberalism/progressive industrial management* version (emphasis mine) that was applied in Native American reservation public programs, multidisciplinary management-oriented research programs on industrialization, and government agricultural community programs for rural rehabilitation. He observes some mutual characteristics of both orientations: the anthropologist was there to answer rather than ask questions, and the fieldwork researcher regarded as a "neutral subordinate without any say in implementation decision making" (p. 465). They also depended on policy makers and

administrators in the definition of the intellectual frame within which to conduct research; they were legitimized by their claim to neutrality; and they always stood by the side of the dominant policy makers and powerful administrators. These characteristics espoused by anthropologists were in direct contrast to those embraced by critical scholars and critical policy ethnographers: intellectual autonomy, acknowledgement of moral or political orientations and reflection on role of possible biases, and open stance against dominant ideas, to uncover power relationships and for expression of alternative views.

In an analysis of what the term "critical" means in the context of doing CPE, Dubois (2015, p. 473) identifies three characteristic features:

First, it can be used as a synonym for 'politically engaged', or at least politically conscious. This is what Jim Thomas proposes when he describes critical ethnography as 'conventional ethnography with a political purpose' (Thomas 1993, p. 4). According to this notion, critical ethnographers 'celebrate their normative and political position' and take on 'making value-laden judgments' (Thomas 1993, p. 4), as opposed to traditional scholars whose legitimacy rests on their claim to neutrality.

Second, the term 'critical' refers to non-positivist, interpretive and constructionist methodologies based on the idea that social reality is plural, and interpretively co-constructed (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow 2012, p. 4). I would add to this defining feature of critical research, however, that the various 'truths' on the social world may be equally valuable from a methodological or ethical point of view, but that they are not equivalent in the real world. Some of these 'truths' are made more 'true' than others through power relationships that promote them as unquestionable...

Third, a critical approach could be defined by its ability to question the taken-for-grantedness of the social world as an outcome of social and symbolic domination. Policy and the state play a central part here, and ethnography proves an effective tool in revealing it. Unveiling their role in domination is what, in my view, delineates the political significance of critical policy ethnography.

The author implies that these critical research features and considerations are non-negotiable in the effective operationalization of a CPE methodology. He argues that the critical use of ethnography in policy studies involves challenging dominant views in a manner that manifests in "not only understanding, but also accounting for subjective points of view – seeing like a citizen or a client of the state, or like any person exposed to its policy – as a means of deconstructing the official vision… and (to paraphrase,) identifying hidden policy–related issues that are ignored or even conflict with accepted societal or cultural norms and views" (p. 476). He also suggests that CPE entails "juxtaposing the observations of ethnographers to the beliefs of policy makers (e.g., as a means of checking and/or improving the effectiveness of public policy making), and deconstructing hegemonic discourses on policy" (as in the case of Morgen & Markovsky, 2003, as cited in Dubois, 2015, 474).

Dubois further underscores the discursive nature of CPE in highlighting the important relationship between policy performance, classification processes, and symbolic power. He emphasizes how CPE accounts for both the performance of policy (what I interpret as relevance and effectiveness) and what policy performs (what I interpret as policy outcome). Viczko and Tascón (2016, p. 1) also refer to the notion of discursive policy performance (within

internationalization policy analysis contexts) when they "map the actors, knowledges and spaces that are discursively produced through policy texts and engage in a relational approach to policy analysis that questions what comes to be assembled as these policies co-exist in the national landscape." Their key findings reveal tensions among policy actors and "the prevalence of an assumed neo-liberal discourse in the different policy texts and the recognition that universities are increasingly pressured to support and align with a globalized neoliberal agenda through internationalization" (p. 14).

Finally, Dubois (2015, p. 477) suggests a three-step process of a critical policy ethnography research program on categorization and classification processes to include: 1) unveiling the construction of official categories; 2) analyzing their mobilization in unequal power relationships by policy agents who process people and handle public problems; and 3) identifying the impact of official categories on people who come to internalize them. This is a way for ethnographic research to contribute to critical policy studies, understood as the analysis of social and symbolic domination exerted throughout the policy processes.

Based on my interpretation of the foregoing and understanding of the 'critical' intersection between policy and ethnography, I also advance my own definition of the concept thus: CPE examines and addresses public (including educational and social) policy and its effects through the (critical and constructive lens) eyes of the ordinary people most directly affected by it, and in the process paying nuanced attention to the systems of domination that are at work in the construction, interpretation, and implementation of the policy, as well as how the policy stakeholders impacted stand to either lose or gain from the policy. This methodology approaches policy analysis from a perspective or standpoint and objective of equity and equal opportunity for those most likely to be shortchanged or disadvantaged in what I call the 'policy experience

landscape.' The application of this methodology is grounded in both the need to uncover how policy, its origins, and its intent are perceived from below, as well as an orientation towards catalyzing enduring equitable change in the spirit of social justice for those intentionally/unintentionally disenfranchised in/by policy within social, cultural, economic, or political contexts.

Given its characteristics and purpose, I found CPE useful for researching issues that relate to social inclusion/exclusion in the context of internationalization policy claims (including text, language, and official policy) versus how the realities intended or projected (or expected) for/by the beneficiaries on the ground are actually being experienced and perceived. This was done within a critical paradigm.

The value and relevance of applying critical approaches to public and social policy analysis contexts has been underlined. Popple and Leighninger (2008, p. 43) describe policy analysis as the "disciplined application of intellect to the study of collective responses to public problems." O'Connor and Netting (2011, p. 59) believe that the "assumptions of the critical perspective in policy analysis go beyond a critical perspective into a paradigmatic approach based on critical realism, pragmatism, and value-guided subjectivity, having a goal of dialogic transformation." From an operational (methodological) perspective, they posit that critical policy approaches:

> …allow a deep understanding of issues through a dialogic process that requires reflective or analytic listening, active and independent pursuit of clarity of expression, and a search for evidence and reasons with certain inclusion of alternative points of view ...through considering multiple perspectives, applying critical reading and critical judgement to understanding the policy author's purpose (policy intent) and the policy reader's purpose

(goal of policy analysis), and using a nonlinear recursive moving forward and backward

process of critical writing to clearly articulate findings (that go beyond mere

descriptions)… (p. 3-4)

The dialogic ethos and principles highlighted above both informed and guided my application of

CPE in this study.

An important aspect (data collection method) of my methodological approach was to

obtain primary and secondary internationalization policy-related data. These included both

institutional (university) and government policy, strategy, or official statements that relate to

internationalization and/or impact how my research participant group interprets and experiences

equity, access, and inclusion during their integration process.

Through CPE, I gained deeper and richer insights regarding the nature, discourse,

context, meaning, complexities, and impact of text that are relevant to the subjects of my inquiry,

including the aspects that are at odds with their lived experiences. I attempted to ascertain

whether and/or in what ways socio-political discourse was re/producing and reinforcing

domination by the people at the centre (or in control of the system) over African international

students at the margins in the context of internationalization, and how this imbalance

undergirded by dominant ideologies and interests could be redressed in favour of more socially

just and equitable internationalization approaches.

In employing CPE, I integrated the methodological orientations above to examine

internationalization policy text/contexts on integration through the analysis of relevant national,

provincial/sector, and institutional internationalization policies and strategies pertaining to

international education. I used a critical document analysis process for analyzing both web-

based/electronic and hard copy (or printed) policy documents relevant to the study. I scrutinized

the content and context of policy language and articulation to identify various beliefs, politics, and ideologies and the interplay between or through them. I sought to determine whether and/or how they policies contain and convey hidden representations of oppressive, dominating, or subjugating messages and implications that adversely impact the social, cultural, academic, and career/employment integration experiences of Black African graduate international students. While paying attention to word (and phrase or sentence) construct, biases, and methods of persuasion, I also considered what was present and what was absent overall (O'Connor & Netting, 2011) to enhance my full understanding of the internationalization policy discourse(s) at play in the context of my research subjects' integration experiences.

By the competent and ethical practice (which it both promotes and allows), I deployed CPE to illuminate what was happening in the lives of my study sample in relation to the internationalization (and related policy) claims of equity, access, and inclusion in international education. I sought a better understanding of how policy construction and implementation benefits or disenfranchises minoritized and racialized graduate student groups such as Africans.

Despite the shortage of literature on CPE, its solid grounding in critical policy analysis approaches, alignment with decolonial/decolonizing theory, potential to critically interrogate colonial and anti-racist logics, and the clear guidelines available for its application enhanced my ability to utilize it effectively in this study. Moreover, the dearth of literature on the methodology provided an opportunity for a methodological and empirical contribution from the experience and findings of my study.

Four-Stage Process of Applying Critical Policy Ethnography (CPE) Methodology

Based on Dubois's (2015) articulation of the defining features of CPE, I deployed a four-

stage process to implement the methodology in this study:

#1. Identify specific policies that impact marginalized (Black African graduate

international student) lives during their internationalization experience of Canadian

higher education.

(I selected the most relevant policy documents and strategies at federal, provincial, and

institutional levels, excluding those that had nothing to do with internationalization/

international education, and including those that portrayed claims or provisions of access,

inclusion, and/or equity, and those that impacted migrant students' equitable

internationalization experience in academic, social, and other relevant spheres. The

policies selected included the Canadian Public University's (online) policies and

procedures that impact internationalization or international students, including the

comprehensive institutional plan and annual reports, EDI strategy, international education

strategy and other institutional strategy documents, federal and provincial immigration

policies and regulations that directly impact international student experiences and

outcomes, international education strategy and policy documents and statements at

provincial and federal levels, documented provincial or federal policy decisions that

affect international students, national statistics reports and research addressing (Black)

international students, and secondary published research reflecting impact of policies on

international students.

#2. Interrogate how and where policy is constructed, portrayed, and deployed. (I

unpacked or deconstructed information available about policy history, content, and

process, paying attention to what was said, why it was said, who said it, and what was silent).

#3. Ascertain the effect of multi-level policy and policy implementation on marginalized (Black African international) students' lives/integration at the ground level over time. (I analyzed policy performance in terms of the different ways in which the policies at federal, provincial, or institutional levels impact or are experienced by the marginalized research participant group over time).

- In doing this, I illuminated, unveiled, or highlighted the following:

    - mainstream positivist approaches to public policy that erase or ignore Black African, minoritized international student perspectives

    - common-sense and official views on policy in internationalization that intentionally or unintentionally discriminate against Black African international students

    - social, economic, political, symbolic domination processes operating in and through policy processes (including through assemblage, interpretation, and implementation of multi-level policy) to exclude, marginalize, or disenfranchise Black African international students

#4. Set individual experiences and micro-observations of participants in the broader perspective of power, inequality, and inequitable structures and policy.

(I linked/contextualized policy findings and experiences to the systems and policies of discrimination and oppression operating in the different spheres/domains of Black African international student experience, including academic, social, economic, occupational, political, cultural).

My application of (CPE) methodological approach was complemented by a critical ethnography methodology, which I discuss below.

Implementing Methodology 2: Critical Ethnography

I employed Critical Ethnography (CE) as my second methodological approach to allow me to simultaneously unearth the hidden, ignored, and unheard stories of participant experiences in the context of internationalization equity. Critical ethnography has been described as "conventional ethnography with a political purpose" (Thomas,1993, p. 4), critical theory in action (Madison, 2005), and more specifically as "a way of making accessible the stories and experiences of subjects *(participants)* whose stories are otherwise restrained or out of reach; unsettling or disrupting existing and taken-for-granted assumptions by exposing the underlying and obscure operations of power and control" (Madison, 2005, p. 5). I critically examined how the ideological and systemic factors supported by Whiteness, White supremacy, and other culturally or socially dominant arrangements and symbols shape experiences, policy, and policy discourse, and therefore the type of integration experienced by my sample group. This approach was deemed relevant because of its consistency with my theoretical framework (Decolonizing and Critical Race Theory of Education –DCRTE) and intention to interrogate underlying dimensions of Black African international student discrepant experiences of internationalization and integration. The methodology lends itself to the use of critique to explain social discourses/(in)equity, access, and inclusion within a lived domain, from the perspective of the research subjects or participants. The stories and experiential knowledge of the researched group that emerged through the use of this methodology were both critical and central to my evidence-

gathering and analysis process in this study. Ladson-Billings, Bell and Gillborn (2009) underscore the importance of narrated experiences and storytelling in Critical Race Theory using "counter-story, story, parables, chronicles, poetry, fiction and revisionist histories" (p. 23). Moreover, as Madison (2005, p. 5) put it, I was (in true CE fashion) able to "challenge institutions, regimes of knowledge, and social practices that limit choices, constrain meaning, and denigrate identities and communities" and in applying this methodology I essentially deployed "resources, skills, and privileges available to me to make accessible—to penetrate the borders and break through the confines in defense of—the voices and experiences of subjects (participants) whose stories are otherwise restrained and out of reach".

In response to concerns/critique around the inadequate consideration of 'own positionality' and 'irresponsible subjectivity' tendencies among critical ethnographers, I remained cognizant and integrated into my methodological processes the fact that critical ethnographers must declare and maintain awareness of their positionality by "explicitly considering how their own acts of studying and representing people and situations are acts of domination even as they reveal the same (acts of domination) in what they study" (Noblit, Flores, & Murillo, 2004, p. 3). I equally endeavored to "avoid submitting value judgments in place of facts or leaping to conclusions without a demonstrable cogent theoretical and empirical linkage" (Thomas, 1993, p. 22) in my inquiry process. These and any other related concerns were accommodated in my quest to uncover and interpret the emic (insider) views of my research participants while keeping my etic (outsider) views in constant check.

Apart from unmasking underlying reasons for disparity or incongruity between policy and experienced realities among my participant group, a critical analysis of Black African graduate international students' narrated stories and experiences in relation to policies provided

an opportunity for understanding and to make recommendations on how internationalization policies, strategies, and programs could be improved to better address the gaps and needs that influence equitable adaptation and integration of these international African students into the Canadian university system and society. My overall methodological approach aimed to help uncover previously unknown realities of how the primary research participants are shortchanged or benefit from the internationalization process and how they were navigating the challenges they encountered; such findings can be strategically and operationally useful for future students, international education policy analysts, and stakeholders at institutional, sector, provincial, and federal levels (both in Canada and the research participants' countries of origin). Moreover, gaining a holistic understanding of positive and negative experiences/perspectives from 'below' or from a group that are not dominant (Carspecken, 1996) politically, socially, culturally, or economically, in a White-dominant local international education environment (my Canadian Public University research site), was extremely valuable to the investigation. Finally, this methodology helped me examine and unearth ways in which specific internationalization policies and strategies, and associated participant experiences, are influenced, defined, or implicated by imperialism, colonialism, capitalism, and other factors related to their social, community, political, historical, racial, or individual/personal contexts.

Owing to the empirical and methodological complementarity of my selected methodologies (CPE and CE), and in answer to a potential critique (of why not one or the other), I maintain the stance that using just one instead of both would (amongst others) compromise the complex nature of my inquiry, the comprehensive requirement of the study (involving multiple data sources in both the policy and human categories), and the credibility of findings. I was also of the view that both methodologies work very well together to address my research questions,

especially given their shared ontological and epistemological principles and properties grounded in a critical paradigm.

Data Collection

In tandem with the overarching critical nature of my study, research question(s), and research methodologies (outlined above), I employed qualitative data collection and processing methods/procedures in this investigation. My choice of a qualitative approach was predicated upon the fact that it is more appropriate and effective when studying complex and nuanced worlds or phenomena (Rubin & Rubin, 2004, 2012) and provides richer, more in-depth understanding and insights than would otherwise be possible. The data sources for this study include: 1) analysis of policy and policy-related documents; 2) observation of international African graduate students at the research site; 3) 10 interviews with Black African international graduate students; 4) two focus groups with Black African international graduate students; and 5) six interviews with other internationalization policy university officials. Table 4 summarizes the demographics of the study participants (see the appendix section).

The qualitative methods and processes that assisted me elicit, collect, analyze, interpret, and report on relevant primary and secondary data in this qualitative study are discussed in further detail below.

1) Document Analysis

The first part of my data collection approach involved the identification and collection of relevant primary and secondary data documents to aid me in the rigorous policy analysis required for this study. I collected primary data related to internationalization policy and strategy from federal and provincial government policy document repositories (available online or in hard

copy); I accessed policy statements on internationalization published by officially recognized entities that represent internationalization policy stakeholders in the higher education sector (such as the Association of Canadian Deans of Education, amongst others); and I also obtained official documents that stated or articulated institutional policies on internationalization (including from the Canadian Public University online policy repository). My particular focus was on policy documents and statements that addressed or made claims on equity, access, and/or inclusion in the context of internationalization. I conducted extensive document analysis that included the identification, collection, holistic and contextual analysis, and interpretation of internationalization policy and related official text, as well as policy discourses at the national, sector, provincial, and institutional levels that relate to the academic, social, cultural, and occupational/employment dimensions of adaptation and integration of international students. In doing this, I paid close attention to the both what is said and what is not said, and bearing in mind the unique background, characteristics, and context of my sample group. I explored to what extent Black African international graduate students are equitably represented in the content and meaning of the policy. I also interrogated how policy-linked strategy and statements are consistent with original policy (considering for example: does strategy match policy; does institutional strategy match federal policy) in furthering the equity of African graduate international students' experiences.

Some of the specific web-based, electronic, and/or hard copy official policy and strategy documents (primary data) that I analyzed include the Government of Canada's International Education Strategy and any official policy documents relating to internationalization and social inclusion of international students, official Canadian immigration policy texts, and the institutional strategic policies of the Canadian Public University (including the EDI strategy),

other relevant Canadian Public University policies, and official Canadian Public University International Office policy texts that address international student equity, access, and/or inclusion and information related to faculty curricula and program policy. These constituted my primary internationalization policy and strategy data sources.

My secondary document analysis data were sourced by identifying key policy, strategy, and related literature/text/documents that provide a critical analysis of national/federal, sectoral and institutional (university) internationalization policy and strategy claims, or statements pertaining to the adaptation or integration of international students and racialized or minority populations who migrate from their home countries to participate in Canada's higher education system. My analysis of these looked out for both pronounced and nuanced expressions that relate to inclusion, equity, and access for international students within the internationalization model/approach. I examined statements that positively or negatively impacted participants' ability to navigate their adaptation/integration journey through the socio-cultural, academic, and occupational spheres of their experiences. Findings from the (primary and secondary) policy and strategy document analyses partly informed my focus group discussions and/or interview questions that were developed, refined, and applied in my empirical process.

The second part of my data collection approach involved interacting with participants – both primary (students) and secondary (internationalization officials) – through conversation/interviews and mostly group observation. [Note: I refer to the international African graduate students who this research is about as the primary participants; the secondary participants are the other internationalization stakeholders who I also interviewed to gain a more holistic sense and understanding of the context within which the primary participants' experiences were situated].

2) Observation of international African graduate students at the research site

During the study, I continued (and developed some new) quality relationships and dialogue with the primary research participants, i.e., Black African international graduate students from across several faculties at the university (among whom I was already situated as a participant observer). Consistent with the ethnographic aspect of my study, I continued my role as an insider observer (and outsider observer in some cases), taking part, learning, and taking note of relevant multiple activities and developments from the research site where these graduate students were situated (in the Canadian Public University) using an observation checklist and protocol, and documenting field notes. The records from this observation effort subsequently constituted part of my data for analysis, and marginally contributed to the construction or revision of my other data collection instruments and findings.

I applied the observation technique unobtrusively as an observer participant at the research site. Both unstructured pilot observation and more structured observation techniques were employed. Moments and activities or events of interest that potentially relate to my research questions were intentionally observed over a 2-year, 4-month period. I ensured pre-observation preparation by clarifying my purpose for observation, preparing myself by revisiting the guiding checklist, and preparing my field data gathering instruments. Participants did not have to be notified prior to observation sessions, which helped to preserve the integrity of the process. During observation, I paid keen attention to what was going on or not going on, who was doing certain things, and why. I recorded the context and activities/events as well as other nuanced developments that emerged during observations. I recorded as much relevant information as possible to ensure that all the data relevant to my research question were captured. Observed and recorded data were preserved for subsequent analysis using a field notebook and

prepared templates. After every observation, I reflected on the information/data collected as well as how I conducted myself to ensure that my methods and process and outcomes were valid. Employing the observation technique as a participant observer allowed me gain further insights about the participants and their perspectives and experiences. In some cases, I also observed developments by reading the news about the population under study and their activities. The observation instruments that I used (field notes and checklists) were based on approaches adapted from the literature and practice (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015; Silverman, 2008; Clearworks Ethnographic Field Guide, n.d.). I adhered to appropriate observation decorum and protocol for the purposes of empirical integrity.

3) One-on-one interviews of international African graduate students

The one-on-one interviews that I conducted with *Black African graduate international students* were operationalized through a semi-structured questionnaire to allow for flexibility and depth of responses without locking too much into theory. Attempts were made to interview all the selected participants. The interviews were scheduled at the participants' convenience (in terms of place and time) while also being mindful of, and complying with, the need for privacy, comfort, and the absence of distractions. Several venues that met these and other conventional and ethical requirements were considered and prepared in advance (including obtaining the necessary permissions) to accommodate emergencies while being also sensitive to the interviewee/participant needs and preferences. After contacting all participants in person, I followed up (via phone call or email) closer to the interview dates to ensure that the appointments were remembered and honored. Most of my interviews lasted for an average of 1.5 hours. All relevant interviewing decorum was followed to enhance the overall success and integrity of the process and data collected.

Interview questions were focused but open-ended, to avoid leading the participants and to allow for original insights. In some cases where a term or policy was not immediately familiar to the participant, I took the time to provide the necessary explanations. Every attempt was made to simplify the process and understanding of the participant. Questions were reviewed to ensure clarity and to direct relevance to the research questions as well as alignment with research objectives. My general approach during interviews included being alert and open to emerging themes and surprises while following the protocol and watching for any non-verbal or tone-related signals. Where unsure about any answer or response, I probed further or asked for clarity from the participant. All interviews were recorded to ensure that data were accurately captured for quality analysis.

4) *Focus groups with international African graduate students*

I conducted two focus groups sessions as part of the field data gathering process. Focus group sessions were only held with the student participants. Between four and six participants were originally considered for each session (to allow for extensive and in-depth exploration of phenomena/questions/issues and ensure everybody was given maximum opportunity to contribute). Two participants dropped out of the scheduled focus group meetings without any prior warning. The reasons were unclear but could have related to life challenges; participant drop out is not uncommon during qualitative data collection. The first set of questions focused mostly on discussing and understanding participants' interpretation of internationalization policy in relation to their integration experiences around equity, access, and inclusion. The second set of questions were aimed at exploring and unearthing their experiences and perspectives with respect to how racism, colonialism, and other systems of domination have affected their experiences of integration in the context of internationalization, how they have reacted, and the outcomes that

they have realized as racialized international graduate students. Both focus groups also explored how internationalization approaches (by stakeholders) and experiences (of Black African graduate students) can be improved (including through policy and specific stakeholder practices).

I allocated 2 hours for each focus group session although the discussion ended up taking a little bit longer in one of them. In addition to establishing a permissive environment through dialogue, I employed professional questioning, probing, facilitation, and interpersonal communication techniques to ensure that each session was optimally productive and meaningful for all those involved, and that all perspectives were aired and heard within a safe and brave discussion space. As in the one-on-one interviews, I avoided using leading questions, allowed for original insights, and was open to emerging themes during the sessions. I was also mindful of individual and topical sensitivities and assured everyone about the confidentiality of data and anonymity of final publication. I followed a protocol that included asking pre-determined questions and encouraging people from the outset to take turns to speak or respond to other participants' views/ideas.

All interviews and focus groups were recorded using an electronic device. The recordings were subsequently transcribed to enhance accuracy and integrity of data, analysis, and interpretation.

5) Interviews with other internationalization stakeholders

I solicited and collected data through approximately 60-minute questionnaire-based semi-structured interviews from six purposefully selected officials who were directly involved with (or influenced) aspects of internationalization policy. These included administrators and officers who either contributed to construction or implementation of policies that impact international student adaptation/integration across the Canadian Public University. Although I had initially

wanted to expand my sample of officials to include senior provincial and federal officials involved with internationalization policy construction or implementation, this was ultimately not possible. Although they all directly contributed to internationalization policy and practice, the six university officials I interviewed came from different divisions or specific areas of responsibility within the institution to ensure that in-depth exploration, analysis, and insights were achieved. The data obtained from these non-student participants provided complementary perspectives for a balanced and more nuanced critical analysis. As a precautionary data collection measure, I made preparations to email a detailed questionnaire (accompanied by clear instructions for completion and return) for any of the officials who could not participate in an in-person interview. I also explored the possibility of a telephonic interview to ensure the availability of alternative back up collection methods for potential interviewees to participate in the data collection process. However, the need for these did not arise. The questionnaire used in the interviews was focused but comprehensive enough to allow for rich and original responses; it included relevant, mostly open ended and semi-structured questions in addition to a few questions about demographics/background.

Description and Justification of Primary Research Sample and Instrument Selection

The primary research participant sample planned for this study (i.e., international African graduate students) was purposefully obtained using predetermined inclusion criteria to ensure their suitability for the study, and included individuals who were currently registered Black African graduate international students of the Canadian Public University research site, either single or married, had completed at least one year of a graduate program at the university, and were intending to stay and work in Canada after graduation. Several graduate students were

invited to participate in this research by sending emails to a network of graduate students from which the final sample of participants (who met the inclusion criteria) were selected.

The total sample of 16 student participants who participated in interviews and focus groups were drawn from some of the largest faculties at the university (that represent the humanities/social sciences and the sciences). This relatively small sample was in keeping with qualitative research conventions in which smaller samples are preferred for higher quality and richer in-depth exploration and analysis of phenomena. Moreover, data saturation or thematic redundancy was realized through the interviews and focus groups with many recurring insights on the key themes that emerged across datasets.

As part of data collection procedures, I collected some demographic information that also sheds some light on the intersectionality of my primary participant group (international African graduate students). This information included their gender, marital status, country of origin, and duration in graduate school, amongst others. The selection of the purposeful sample was based on their characteristics relevant to the inquiry/the inclusion criteria and/or their potential to provide rich and relevant information in line with the research objectives. In line with the *maximal variation sampling technique*—a variant of purposeful sampling that presents multiple perspectives of individuals to represent the complexity of the world (Creswell, 2015, p. 205-206)—I ensured as much as possible that the research sample simultaneously included as many categories as possible (albeit limited by the total number of people that volunteered to participate). Sampling simultaneously accommodated a diversity of participants with respect to certain aspects of intersectionality such as gender, marital status, socio-economic status, age, religion, as well as different African nationalities/regions (all student participants hailed from four African countries in two African regions).

The combined use of document analysis, focus groups, and a range of in-depth interviews and observation in my data collection was not only instrumental for deeper and richer exploration but also enhanced the triangulation of data collected (both from policy documents and human sources). My use of the various instruments earmarked for data collection was informed by the theoretical framework and methodological underpinnings of this study, my prior experience in constructing and using interview/questionnaire instruments, and my insights/experience as a member, follower, and previous leader in the Black African international graduate student community who was also navigating the integration/adaptation process within Canada's international education and internationalization model. The interviews and questionnaires were designed in line with methodological or empirical conventions drawing mainly on Creswell (2012, 2015) and Plano Clark & Creswell (2015), whose approaches are directly relevant to educational research and the nature of my study. The construction of the focus group additionally draw on Krueger's (2002) classic guide on focus groups administration to effectively and efficiently prepare, conduct, and report results of the focus group, in line with ethical requirements.

All interviews and human participant data gathering processes were guided by relevant protocols (an overview of which was available to the participants upon request before the data collection event), and all ensuing data were recorded for subsequent transcription using a top-quality digital recorder suitable for research interviews, and supported by back-up interview or field notes. Subsequent transcription involved the accurate conversion of recorded audiotape into a clearly labelled word processing file that includes the details of the interview, interviewer, and interviewee and the complete text of the interview. All records and duplicate records of electronic data were preserved confidentially in two different safe/passworded locations in

digital format while paper-based records were preserved in one secure location. All records were only accessible to the researcher.

Conclusion

As my human participant data collection process evolved, I was mindful to allow for the "emerging processes" in qualitative research design in which "the intent or purpose of questions of a study may change or be modified to better explore and understand the central phenomenon, in response to the direction set by the participants" (Creswell, 2012, p.130). This can prompt the researcher to conduct additional or follow-up interviews to ensure that the emerging issues/questions relevant to illuminating the central phenomenon are fully accommodated and explored. As I reviewed and reflected on the initial data collected vis-à-vis the questions asked, I incorporated more probing questions for subsequent interviews whenever I thought there might be opportunities to extract further insights. However, I did not find the need to conduct additional or follow-up interviews with the initial interviewees.

In addition to obtaining primary data from relevant internationalization policy documents and people/participants in line with the methodologies described in the foregoing sections, I ensured comprehensive/ongoing review and incorporation of relevant literature and emerging documented empirical evidence as the intensive data collection and analysis process progressed. This continued throughout the analysis and interpretation phase that ensued as part of a necessarily iterative qualitative process overall (Creswell, 2015).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

My data analysis and interpretation revolved around the two datasets I collected: policy-

based data and human participant data. I analyzed the policy-related data separately from the human participant data before subsequently identifying intersections and opportunities for synthesis of the findings at the later stage of analysis. My initial level of analysis involved a read-through of the policy documents and transcripts several times to establish familiarity with the data and document preliminary notes and reflections in memos. Birks et al. (2008, p. 69) assert that "through the use of memos, the researcher is able to immerse themselves in the data, explore the meanings that this data holds, maintain continuity and sustain momentum in the conduct of research." Memoing (or jotting down analytical notes about what I was learning from the data as the research analysis progressed) was particularly useful in helping me document ideas, questions, and insights about categories of data, relationships between (or across) categories, and patterns. I used memos to record analytical notes for both policy-based and human participant data.

I employed both deductive and inductive methods to analyze the data through a series of iterative stages. The triangulation of analytical methods helped me arrive at comprehensive themes that were a more accurate and holistic representation and interpretation of findings. Deductive or *a priori* analysis can help researchers to assign attributive codes, such as type of data (e.g., interview, focus group, policy document) and participant (e.g., student and non-students); it also assists one maintain focus on the purpose of research by organizing data into categories to maintain alignment with the research questions (Bingham, & Witkowsky, 2022). Applying a deductive approach helped me to organize my data into broad categories in alignment with the research questions (to enhance and maintain focus) and assign initial codes to support further data analysis. The theoretical framework of the study also supported or informed my creation and further articulation of data categories and subcategories. I used inductive analysis to

identify and generate themes out of the policy documents. The inductive approach also assisted me in identifying and extracting emerging themes from raw data/transcripts collected through research site observations, interviews, and focus groups with Black African international graduate student participants and university officials involved with internationalization.

In collecting and analyzing policy-based data, I followed the four-stage Critical Policy Ethnography methodology described earlier in the methodology section (i.e., #1 identify specific policies that impact marginalized participant group; #2 interrogate how and where policy is constructed, portrayed, and deployed; #3 ascertain the effect of multi-level policy and policy implementation on participants; #4 set individual experiences and micro-observations of participants in the broader perspective of power, inequality, and inequitable structures and policy). Then, I applied a reflexive thematic analysis as a hybrid document analysis approach to review and interprete data through deductive and inductive approaches in education contexts (Xu & Zammit, 2020). The rigorous analysis of my policy-based and human participant data was facilitated by integrating Braun and Clarke's (2006) steps, which have been widely used for qualitative thematic analysis:

> 1. familiarizing yourself with your data 2. generating initial codes (coding), 3. searching for themes (generating preliminary themes) 4. reviewing themes 5. defining and naming themes and 6. producing the report (final analysis and write-up of the study findings and interpretation).

The analysis and interpretation entailed a thorough examination and coding of data collected from document analysis, interviews, and questionnaires and other forms of applicable data in an optimal manner (Saldaña, 2016). Such coding included "assigning some sort of short hand designations to various aspects of my data for easy subsequent retrieval of specific pieces

of data during analysis and write-up stages" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 199) as part of my

overall data organization and management strategy. In support of the analysis and interpretation

process, my data management included the use of table of sources and organization of materials

by type (e.g., student interview transcripts, officials' interview transcripts, observation/field

notes, questionnaire, policy, strategy and program documents etc.) as necessary. The theoretical

framework adopted in my study guided my reading and interpretation of the data throughout.

I established relevant major and minor themes/categories from data analysis and

interpreted and reported on findings obtained from critical analysis of policy/strategy/documents,

participant observation notes, and data collected from one-on-one interviews and focus groups

sessions. This thematization was executed in a manner that both reflected and explicated the

underlying reasons for discrepancies between official policy/strategy/program views and texts on

equitable integration, and the student interviewees' experiential stories/accounts, within the

context of the Canadian Public University's internationalization model. I was open to

unexpected, unanticipated, or surprising findings, and ensured thick description—by paying

attention to and making explicit the contextual details of participants' experiences and striving

for the full representation of multiple views/voices—when detailing the field experiences of my

research participants (Geertz, 1973; Holloway, 1997) as part of my dialogic approach to

ethnographic reporting. While I grappled with which narrative best represented an emerging

theme in a few cases (as I could not include every single account and story/counter narrative in

this work), I ensured through analytical rigour that the final selected quotes supported all the key

themes that emerged and represented the voices and perspectives heard. I also presented detailed

narratives of participants' counter stories – with some more complex narratives articulated in

greater detail than others – to ensure a fuller appreciation of the unique perspectives of

people/voices from the margins. This approach was consistent with both my methodologies and the tenet of counter storytelling (or counter narratives) in CRT.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were paramount and instrumental in promoting a credible and acceptable research process throughout my inquiry. Before the ethnographic (human) element of the research commences, ethics approval was sought and obtained from the Research Ethics Board (REB) of the Canadian Public University in line with the stipulated procedural requirements. My application for ethics review included a detailed description of procedures that will be employed prior to and during the collection of data as well as the instruments that were used. I sought to comply with the Tri-Council policy statement on ethical conduct for research involving humans (TCPS2, 2018), which emphasizes the three core principles of *respect for persons* by recognizing their intrinsic value*, concern for welfare of participants* by being cognisant of their well-being before, during, and after the research process*,* and *justice* by honouring my duty and obligation to treat all participants fairly and equitably throughout the research cycle.

My ethical procedures included a recruitment approach that was contingent on obtaining formal, signed consent from participants, after informing them about the research purpose and process, prior to any data collection engagements. In addition to the voluntary nature of their participation, participants were informed of their rights to withdraw from participating in the study or from answering any questions at any point in the study, without any sanctions, penalties, or problems associated with such actions. Steps were taken to avoid all forms of harm or damage (and minimal disruption) to the research participants or research site, to respect their dignity and

privacy and protect their anonymity before, during, and after the study. Due to the potentially sensitive nature of information that was divulged by many participants, and to protect their confidentiality pseudonyms and unique labels (e.g., Martin, Doctoral Student from East Africa; Richard, Master's Student from West Africa) were assigned to them in the final published dissertation. The names of their specific university divisions, departments, or faculties were also anonymized as required. Furthermore, I used only anonymous quotations (or used quotations anonymously) in the final version of the dissertation. Compliance with all relevant Canadian federal, provincial, and institutional policies and codes that impact research ethics (including the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act) was ensured. Care was taken to ensure that the research instruments such as questionnaires, observation, focus groups, and interview protocols were devoid of any form of abusive, offensive, sexist, discriminatory, or damaging language or suggestions. In addition to refraining from exaggerated or deceptive communication about research purpose and objectives, I also fulfilled my ethical responsibilities regarding the sensitive and responsible management of "off the record" comments by interviewees, disclosure of institutional (or other) affiliations and sources of funding (although this was mostly not applicable), and avoidance of plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, and misleading/biased representation of primary data findings (Creswell, 2015; Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015). The above observance and practices contributed to an authentic, honest, accountable, and transparent research process and outcome.

To fulfill the need for reciprocity, participants were made aware that the study/researcher will give back to them via providing access to research findings, as well as through advocacy and recommendations for better internationalization approaches. Up to $10 reimbursement for parking was offered to eligible participants although no participant ultimately took up the offer.

A maximum of $15 incentivization was offered to participants in recognition of and appreciation for their time and effort. This amount did not represent an over-inducement that could influence the research ethics and integrity of the data. The incentives included refreshments (e.g., ordered lunch) for those who participated in person or a post-participation bank transfer to those who participated online. I absorbed the cost of incentives as a part of my overall research budget. The offer of incentivization was only taken up by some of the participants.

Navigating Power and Positionality

Considering and negotiating one's positionality with care in the planning, conduct, and reporting of research involving marginalized, underrepresented, and minoritized groups (Parson, 2019) is challenging but also non-negotiable good research practice. It is as much a responsibility of members of marginalized groups conducting research as it is for researchers from dominant groups. Throughout the planning and execution of my inquiry, I took care to ethically (and responsibly) manage my *power and positionality* as a critical ethnographer during the data collection, analysis, and interpretation process. In practicing reflexivity, I was mindful and candid about how my own privilege, viewpoints, background and personal motives, feelings, and reactions could influence (or potentially affect) the research process; I consciously refrained from misusing my positionality to influence the opinions of participants in any direction during data collection, and I remained aware of the fact that my interpretations were contextual and time-related and subject to further/future interpretations and dialogue with research participants and sources that will feature throughout the research cycle/process.

Overall, I ensured that ethical issues and risks were taken seriously by centering the needs, protection, and respect for participants in all my research procedures and interactions with

them. I safeguarded the research site, participants, and process by holding myself up to the highest ethical standards. I endeavoured to avoid any bias in the operationalization of my research methods, process, analysis, and interpretation by constantly articulating and remaining aware of my privileges, biases, and worldview, the impact or influence they could exert on different aspects of my research, and actively being in check of same. I also relied on the experience and guidance of my supervisors and supervisory committee (including periodic check-in meetings) for support and debriefs throughout the duration of the study.

Trustworthiness

Without question, the overall quality and credibility of a research paradigm, process, and outcome is significantly dependent on the researcher and the effort they make to ensure the trustworthiness of the inquiry. Consequently, I understood it as my responsibility to take all the steps necessary to enhance the realization of this objective in a manner that was accountable to the participants, all research stakeholders, and future readers and users of my research. I was alert to and/or addressed the methodological concerns/debates associated with my design (theory, methodologies, and methods) while ensuring optimal rigour, (substantive, ethical, and overall) validity, and all aspects of trustworthiness (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Guba & Lincoln, 1989) at every stage, as is required in qualitative inquiry and in line with criteria for 'good' research (Plano Clark & Creswell, 2015; Angen, 2000). Research data analysis, interpretations and resulting conclusions also have theoretical and/or empirical linkage (including the application of new theorizations). The empirical soundness and justifiability of how I went about my investigation and how/why my findings would be the complete and truthful reflection of what transpired was an important consideration in the build up to, and throughout, the

implementation of my research process. My final interpretations and conclusion also acknowledged how reflexivities have played a role or are implicated in the research process and conclusion. According to Palaganas et al. (2017, p. 426):

> "qualitative research and fieldwork changes researchers in many ways… and that in an iterative and empowering process, these journeys of learning or reflexivities – whether positional or textual (or otherwise) – actually bring about a change in researchers and ultimately the process of research."

My commitment to follow up and clarify participant comments in the analysis phase and apply different forms of triangulation (theory, method, data source triangulation) contributed to the credibility and dependability of the study findings. The purposive sampling approach I applied to select different, multi-level policy data, the diversity of human participants from major faculties and schools in the university, and their variety of backgrounds collectively increased the likelihood that the study perspectives and findings were largely representative and transferable. The documentation and transparency of the methodology and approach employed in this study allows for future replication of the study in other contexts, thereby increasing its confirmability.

Conclusion

Overall, my study design and its rigour and architecture articulated well with my theoretical framework, research purpose, and questions. This alignment facilitated a more thorough understanding of the relationships and underlying discrepancies between internationalization policy claims on integration, and the expressed and observed experiences of participants within a localized context of a Canadian Public University. I made a conscientious effort to ensure that my methodological approach, data collection, analysis, and interpretation

processes as well as all other related aspects of the research design and operationalization were consistent with the theoretical and conceptual framework (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012), and rigorously applied within the context of my (hybridized critical) research paradigm in a manner that ultimately and effectively addressed the objectives and questions driving my inquiry. My research design and methodology supported the objective to identify and highlight opportunities for equitable change and improvement in the Canada's current internationalization model as experienced by the sample group. The approach set the stage for a rigorous empirical journey for interrogating the status quo, exploring alternatives and advancing equitable policies and practices in relation to the (social, cultural, academic, and career/employment) integration experiences of Black African international graduate students within Canada's internationalization model and postsecondary system.

Chapter 5: Findings: Policy Gaps and Discrepancies Impacting Internationalization Experiences of Black African Graduate Students

Introduction

The following research findings emerged from a variety of critical data gathering activities that included relevant policy and strategy statements and document analysis, limited observation in the Canadian Public University over time, personal interviews with Black African international graduate students and university officials engaged with different aspects of internationalization policy and practice, and two focus groups with Black African international graduate students. I present the findings under four overarching themes, each of which has several sub-themes:

1. Perceptions and Experiences of Policy Claims on Equity, Access, and Inclusion in Internationalization

2. Perceptions and Experiences of Inequity or Policy Discrepancies

3. Underlying Reasons for Discrepancy Between Policy Claims and Realities

4. Key Considerations for Promoting Equitable Internationalization

These themes are based on the research questions that guided this study. In most cases, participants described the extent to which they felt that Black African international graduate students' internationalization experiences were aligned or inconsistent with multi-level policy claims on access, equity, and inclusion across academic, social, cultural, employment, and other spheres of interaction and exposure.

(1) Perceptions and Experiences of Policy Claims on Equity, Access, and Inclusion in Internationalization

In this section, I articulate some perceptions and experiences of equity, inclusion, and access, reported by student interviewees, based on their experiences of internationalization in a Canadian Public University. I also present policy document excerpts that address equity, access, or inclusion.

Awareness of Equity and Inclusion Claims in Policy

Although several participants were familiar with certain internationalization policy claims and provisions on equity, access, and inclusion, I observed that in some cases there was a general lack of policy awareness among the participants in my study. For students, this situation might make it difficult for them to fight for their rights of inclusion, equity, and access at federal, provincial, and institutional levels. Among the university officials interviewed, the lack of awareness could mean that they will be less sensitive to addressing policy gaps or implementing important policy provisions. For all the stakeholders, a partial or total lack of awareness of policy provisions may be reinforcing or perpetuating an uncritical approach towards internationalization and integration experiences of students, leaving both covert and overt systems of inequity unchallenged. The following narratives demonstrate varying levels of awareness among my participant group.

> *I am not sure I am aware of any standardized kind of policy that is geared towards internationalization...you just come into the university, apart from the first week of orientation where they tell you if you have problems, look at the resources available, you come to faculty responsible for graduate students, you come to GSA (Graduate Students'* Association), you can talk to your supervisor...I don't th*ink there is any structure I am aware of that basically says this is the thing that helps you feel included … I am just struggling to navigate by myself , so I can't say there is any policy I am aware of...Maybe that level of awareness is the problem and, maybe it is existing, but I don't know.*
> **Eugene, Doctoral Student Interview**

Another student seemed to have more extensive knowledge and experience about EDI policies

and practices that impact international student experiences at the university:

> *I can't claim that I have sufficient knowledge about the federal, provincial and institutional policies as per internationalization, but what I know is that the Canadian Public University seems to be interested in having a good number of international students on campus. And I remember last year one of the employees whose work is to recruit international students reached out to me and a couple of students from my [African] country to say he was traveling to a city in our home country to showcase the University and Canadian education to get people interested.*
> **Ignatius, Doctoral Student Interview**

A few others believed that there is a desire to have as much diversity as possible among

international students on campus and to promote internationalization at the federal and provincial

levels, particularly by capitalizing on the allure of Express Entry immigration policy.

In general, the student participants seemed more keenly aware of federal level

(particularly immigration) policies that highlight and support migration and integration of

international students into Canada. This may not only reflect an insufficient awareness of other

important equity-related policies but also indicate that policies and policy provisions highlighted

are the most consequential to Black African international students in the context of optimizing

pathways for equitable integration in Canada's internationalization system.

Equitable and Inclusive Experiences on Campus

Some student participants acknowledged that they had experienced a sense of equity and

inclusion during certain on-campus interactions both outside and inside the classroom. A few

narratives are presented here:

> *I feel equity...I have access to health services on campus without any discrimination; I am able to use the library just like anyone else... and in terms of academic resources. At*

times we are made to feel that we are part of the people in class. Some faculty members take conscious effort to acknowledge whatever we bring on board. I don't experience any physical inequity...
Alfred, Masters Student Interview

...students are treated with respect irrespective of where they come from. And this is my third semester, I have never had any situation where a lecturer or a co-student cast a kind of aspersion or a kind of negative statement. I have never been victimized…. Our advisors, my advisor is a good man... sending me emails once in a while to check on how I am doing... all the lecturers I have gone through... about nine lecturers, they are all wonderful people. I have not had any issues with anyone...
In the school…to be frank I have never experienced any kind of treatment that is negative, but that cannot be said in the outside world...one would have been happier if it is what we have in the University environment that we have in the entire society…
Idubor, Masters Student Interview

Another student appreciated the inclusive classroom atmosphere that supported

intellectual/academic freedom and allowed for diverse participation and contribution to critical

dialogue:

> *Faculty members have given everyone the opportunity to contribute the ideas they have in mind regarding the readings or regarding critique of authors they have read and so on. And even sometimes, when you don't have something to say, they just say... can you tell us what you think about this … Fellow students share their ideas and faculty members in classes usually correct them if they are wrong or they add to their examples…I have had the best interactive sessions during classwork.*
> **Eugene, Doctoral Student Interview**

Another Black graduate student participant provided a detailed, multidimensional account

of different ways in which they had experienced inclusion and support in academic and social

spheres within their department at the Canadian Public University. They highlighted unique

practices specific to their department that demonstrated the important role that students and

professors can play in the internationalization experiences of African graduate students. Some of

the inclusive and equitable practices mentioned by the participant included how the department

provides platforms and opportunities to intentionally prepare all students to develop teaching,

research, and job search skills early in the PhD program. The participant appreciated the rigour with which these tasks are approached outside of the regular curriculum in their particular department. Other department-specific examples mentioned related to the culture of support for newcomer students. A culture of peer support from senior students and faculty was reflected to their willingness to receive new student colleagues from the airport, welcome them in their homes, and orient them around the basics of living in Canada in ways that they would never have understood by reading online material or merely attending a general orientation session. Social support and friendliness from students and faculty/staff were helping students in that particular department to appreciate, acclimatize, socialize, and ultimately integrate better into the system.

The positive and inclusive experiences detailed above echo the narratives of most participants in my study. The sense of inclusion they felt during interactions with students, professors, administrators, and other university officials and service providers on campus demonstrate that the university is a generally welcoming and conducive social environment for the majority of the Black African international graduate students who participated in this study. At the same time, a few participants highlighted what they viewed to be experiences of inequitable course grading compared to their domestic student colleagues. This seemed to be one of the very few areas where they thought some professors could do better. I also note that a few participants emphasized that their generally positive and inclusive on-campus experience sharply contrasted with some of their unpleasant off-campus experiences.

Additional perspectives were provided by staff participants in my study, namely university officials who deal with internationalization policy or work with international graduate students (including Black African graduate students). For example, some officials from the university's International Office Division responsible for international student services said they

were invested in providing welcoming and inclusive experiences through a number of programs and supports accessible to all international students, including Black African international graduate students. They referred to several global education program initiatives and activities that allow students to participate in events that give students an intercultural perspective, and students obtain program credits from participating in these programs.

While not making direct references to Black students in particular, one official emphasized the importance of the roles played by the university's International Division in supporting international students achieve their objectives, which he said went beyond recruiting them for study and may not always translate to their graduating from the university that initially admitted them:

> *… International students' community looks to the University International Division with strong expectations on delivering on the international student experience. And that's not just recruitment, that's ensuring that students feel welcome and included and are achieving their objectives. And for us achieving objectives doesn't mean graduating from this university.*
>
> *Students come, they realize it's not the place for them. It's not what they want to do. They can go to The Institute of Technology and in two years they can get an applied degree with a practical training component and be out in the work place full time in two years. And that for them is more meaningful, and better meets their vision of where they are at, what they need to accomplish. There is no reason for that student to struggle here for four years...They might as well just go to an Institute of Technology or College, get it done. ...Students move … And that's not em, a defining element of this university's student experience. But for many other universities that may not be as highly ranked or as competitive to get into, those universities have real experiences of students coming for four-year degrees and after one semester they have already enrolled in a college for a two-year program because they want to get their credential and they want to get in the workplace and they want to become a permanent residence as fast as they can. That's the promise Canada is holding out, so if you figure out a faster pathway to your goal, why not? We all should be considering that a success.*
>
> **Mark, University Internationalization Official**

The official did not provide statistics or information on the demographics of students who drop out of the university or move to other smaller institutions and shorter programs. However, his

comments about student mobility to lower-ranked colleges were mainly in reference to international students at the undergraduate level of study. He could not provide data for graduate-level students. The official's observations and comments also appear to reinforce the idea about the neoliberal perspectives and objectives dominating internationalization, and how many international students are more concerned with exploring the fastest ways to transitioning beyond the academy into gainful employment and economic integration in Canadian society (which also appears to be in sync with government policy). It may be difficult to divorce their conceptualization of internationalization equity and inclusion from the real-life outcomes and economic consequences that hinge upon their ability to integrate in Canadian labour force and society as quickly as possible.

A second official involved with supporting students through a branch of the International Office Division provided their views on several intersecting aspects of internationalization that combine to influence or support inclusive experiences for international students from different parts of the world (including Africa) and the role that the International Student Office plays:

> *Underpinning academic success is your personal success, your social success which extends to how students' housing and financial needs are being met; the equitable pieces have to do with ensuring there is appropriate orientation and acculturation… the essential information that students need to know about immigration, health, working in Canada, what might be some academic supports, what might be some challenges to things like acclimatization to the weather, how to dress if a winter climate is not one that you have experience with. The acculturation that exists in terms of your basic needs when you arrive to …your socialization and … academically to ... students experience after graduation...*

> *…That's where I see the emergence of the Student Services to support all students, for helping international students understand the Canadian workplace experience and then extend that through to finding work. And that's in conjunction with the Centre that provides career support services to students*
> **Anna, University Internationalization Official**

A third official who works with the division responsible for graduate students at the Canadian Public University (my research site) provided some insight into what was being done by their division to advance equity for students, although the reach of such efforts was not immediately or statistically quantifiable at the time of interview. The official expressed the division's preparedness to respond to the needs of Black graduate students alongside other equity-deserving groups:

> *So, I think part of it is the scholarships or scholarship money that's being utilized for international students and then some of the advancements efforts that we're doing in order to increase the pool of scholarships for marginalized and equity-seeking groups.*
>
> *Now, are we targeting African students... And it'd be interesting to see how it is that we can take seriously what it is that your groups are looking for. I think what's important in this is that it doesn't come from a top-down perspective, us telling groups such as the Black Graduate Students Association, or students who are international students what they need but rather ... having them tell us what they need and working with groups like [that] to figure out what it is that we can do better...*
> **Lewinsky, University Official**

The International Education Strategy document of the Canadian Public University emphasizes the goal of "building a community of exceptional students, faculty and staff from the province, Canada and the world" and specifies the objectives and strategies that will be carried out to achieve this goal. A separate plan was created to support implementation and accountability.

The Canadian Public University policy on EDI appears to be focussed and comprehensive. It lays out in detail the guiding principles for EDI and defines the institution's focus and approach to EDI under broad themes. Each defined area of EDI is supported by a 3-year plan that depicts the driving goals alongside the projected outcomes, deliverables, and accountabilities for each goal. Additional accountability is ensured by a yearly progress report

that details how the institution has progressed against the projected goals and deliverables. This EDI policy and the accountability practices built into it at different levels of the institution may in several ways be contributing to creating a welcoming climate for many students including Black African international graduate students. It is however not clear to what extent and level the policy is accepted, adopted, and implemented or what mechanisms are in place to ensure uniformity and consistency of policy application and outcomes in the key areas most important to students across faculties and departments.

(2) Perceptions and Experiences of Inequity and Policy Discrepancies

This section of findings includes accounts of policy discrepancies in internationalization experienced by Black graduate students as well as some participants' narratives about their perceptions and experiences of inequity in different contexts of internationalization that impacted them, and in some cases their international spouses or families, in adverse, violent, and/or damaging ways.

Discrimination in Immigration and Study Permit Approval Process

Narratives and (counter) stories of participants described how Black African international students face discrimination and marginalization at the Canadian border, both outside and inside the country. I highlight how these experiences contradict policy while perpetuating inequitable experiences and outcomes that are both detrimental to the students as well as Canadian government, institutional stakeholders, and society at large. While there were several stories, I have chosen to begin with two stories that illustrate experiences of immigration and migration injustice from the perspectives a demographic most affected by it. The first example refers to the

post-graduation challenges related to immigration despite it being a key goal of attracting international students; the second story addresses the visa application and approval process followed by supporting evidence to unearth the extent of the problems.

Participants pointed to barriers, gaps, and incongruences in the federal and provincial immigration policies that adversely affect Black African international graduate students. Specifically, they referred to contradictory immigration practices that allow students to work while studying, but refuse to consider the work experience when students are applying for permanent residence (PR). They also referred to inconsistency or different standards across provincial policies regarding nominee programs or support for students' permanent residency applications.

> *Why should an international student who has been here for three years not even have a PR nomination when ... in provinces like Quebec ... after your first year, you are automatically nominated by the province for permanent residence. But in this particular province...when you complete your studies, look for a job and work within your field to get experience before you can be nominated.*
> *...The experience that you and I have being a graduate student, Teaching Assistant or Research Assistant, which is work experience to me -because we teach students, we do research, and we get paid for it -... those things are not counted as part of our experience for immigration. So, I think that is a systemic barrier ....*
> **David, Masters Student in Second Focus Group**

> *Meanwhile in Quebec, the province nominates international students after a year...I think BC [University of British Columbia] too.... But in our province, you have to finish school first before you can even think of nomination. And you need to get a job within your field. Think of I it ... if we finish our PhD definitely we can't get faculty jobs within a month or two months or three months or four months...it's going to take us time*
> *I think those things are problematic to me, and it affects the so-called inclusiveness and equity and diversity that the school tends to project.*
> **Edaza, Doctoral Student in Second Focus Group**

The provincial nominee permanent residency pathway programs referred to in the focus group discussion are the British Columbia (BC) Provincial Nominee Program (Province of British Columbia, 2022) and the Québec Experience Program (PEQ) Québec, through which the

Government of Quebec encourages and international students completing a program of
postsecondary studies in Quebec and foreign workers working in Quebec to permanently remain
in the province (Immigration.ca, 2022).

Another participant from East Africa who got a visa to study in Canada said her
application to bring along her family, including their 4-month-old baby, was denied several times
despite meeting and exceeding all visa granting requirements of IRCC. As a result, she was
forced to travel alone and remained separated from her children and partner for several years. At
the time of the interview, she had applied a total of six times and was still stuck in that cycle of
application and denial of visas. This separation from her family had a debilitating effect on her
mental health and academic and social experience during her studies:

> *Before I came in Canada, I also was thinking, maybe if my husband should come with me
> and work and support me during my study… my husband, my kids, they can support me.
> So, I tried to apply for my family to come with me. I've tried to apply for my family to
> come with me. I got a refusal six times. Yes, there is a policy, but they refused my family
> to come. Now I am struggling.*
> *My bank account….was really very strong… a nice job back at home, and my husband
> also. We have a lot of properties. And they didn't reproach any things [sic] related to
> finance. They just said, 'the purpose of your visit is not clear.' It's a bad story …. I
> applied to come into Canada in 2014. They delayed to respond to me until 2017. … my
> baby was four months. They said, 'either… decide to go … or decide to stay.' I tried to
> defer from August to January, just for my baby to grow up a little bit. So, it was a
> struggle and dilemma, and my husband said just go. If you decide to go, I will support
> you. Just go. I will take care of my baby.*
>
> *So, I came like that, hoping that when I would reach here, at least they would let my
> family come. And then, when I arrived here, I reapply [sic] again… and I got a refusal.
> So, I said, oh, what's wrong with these people? They are not human beings. Why can't
> they do this for me? So, I decided to find a lawyer, because this was too much for me.*
> **Amahoro, Doctoral Student Interview**

Despite exceeding the stated visa requirements, including proof of finance and home ties,
Amahoro was repeatedly denied the opportunity of bringing her partner and kids (including a
baby) to Canada. Not wanting to miss the slim window of opportunity, she eventually travelled

alone. She also reported experiencing some microaggressions from an immigration official with whom she interacted and this left her unpleasantly surprised given her initial impressions of Canada and high levels of expectation based on policy provisions about student migration.

Amahoro's harrowing experience appears to have been completely at odds with the well-publicized Canadian government IRCC policy that allows all international students who meet eligibility requirements to bring their partners and families to Canada after they secure admission from an eligible postsecondary institution (known as Designated Learning Institutions). It also flies in the face of Canada's national multicultural policy through which Canada prides itself as a welcoming country to diverse peoples. It also contradicts the country's national immigration policy position of welcoming temporary foreign workers (including international student spouses) as a means of supporting international students and addressing the skills shortage in Canada. Even to the most neutral of observers, this violence of this inhumane act of multi-layered policy contradictions raises questions around what it was about this woman and her family background that made her the subject of such devastating policy decisions by a Canadian immigration officer and the system or policies that support such practices.

The story above appears to be just one example of painful experiences faced by international students from Africa. Many of these stories are never told or vocalized in public spaces by the victims of Canada's international migration violence because they find themselves powerless or bereft of the relevant platforms and opportunities to speak out. On a broader and systemic level, experiences of discrimination faced by Black African international graduate students in Canada's immigration system is supported by recent reports and findings from immigration policy analysis. Findings confirm that international students from African countries suffer a disproportionate degree of visa denial despite meeting requirements. For example, a

2020 comprehensive analysis and report published by the Canadian Association of Professional Immigration Consultants (CAPIC)—the umbrella organization for the professional organization for immigration and citizenship consultants—found that immigration policies and practices toward African countries such as Nigeria declined between 2015 and 2020 (CAPIC, 2021). A 5-year statistical analysis of top ten source countries for study permit applications (including Nigeria) reveals that the most successful countries in the top ten (Japan, France, Korea, and the United States) boast success rates in the high 70s to high 90s; the remaining countries (China, Vietnam, India, Brazil, and Iran) are moderately successful with rates in the mid-to-high 40s (apart from Iran at 34%); however, Nigeria lags behind both the highly successful and the moderately successful groups with an approval rate that also declined from 40% in 2015 to 12% in 2020 (CAPIC, 2021, p. 11, 17).

Compared to other African countries with high or increasing application volumes, the negative change in approval rates over the 5-year period under analysis was disproportionately higher for Nigeria without any explanation as to why this was the case. A variety of evidence-based case studies sampled for the study also demonstrated how several students from the largest sending/source African country were denied visas despite meeting or exceeding the stated visa approval requirements.

Additional analysis of the Canadian study permit approval rates over several age brackets shows an even lower rate of approval for older applicants (ApplyInsights, 2020). Another report states that in 2019, the Canadian study permit approval rate was 44.1% for Nigerian nationals under 20, 14.6% for applicants 20 to 25, and only 6.0% for Nigerian applicants over 25 (ApplyInsights, 2021). This additional age-based layer of discrimination directly affects African

and Nigerian graduate student applicants who are usually older than applicants in other age brackets.

Further evidence suggests a degree of anti-Black racism in the immigration system that disproportionately excludes Black students from Canada even when they have been admitted into a university. A recent *University Affairs* article confirmed the discrimination present in the Canadian immigration system against Black African countries who experience unusually high rates of visa refusal despite being accepted by Canadian institutions (Venne, 2022):

> ...in recent years, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR) has been struggling with the federal government's unusually high refusal rate for study permits from students in francophone African countries – fluctuating between 78 per cent and 90 per cent between 2019 and 2022. By comparison, 90 per cent of Chinese students admitted to UQTR were granted a study permit. And the problem isn't unique to UQTR. Université de Montréal's recruitment efforts in French-speaking African countries have paid off with an increase in admission applications from these countries. But there has been no corresponding increase in enrolment. "It stands to reason that some students don't end up enrolling because the government refused their study permit application," says Université de Montréal's spokesperson Geneviève O'Meara. "Our records show that we have to unenroll more students from Africa compared to countries like India, China and Brazil – a gap that has only widened in recent years. (para. 2-4)

This discrimination has continued to occur unabated despite previous claims in Canada's International Education Strategy (2019-2024) that diversification is a priority for sustainability and equitable outcomes of international education in Canada (Government of Canada, 2019).

Along with the applicants, many immigration lawyers have been left confused and disappointed

by the discrimination that appears to favour students from certain regions over those from Africa

(Champagne, 2021):

> while the number of English-speaking foreign students is increasing in Quebec, the
>
> refusal rates for African countries continue to climb, and some 'impeccable files' are
>
> refused. Candidates who meet the criteria are thus prevented from continuing their
>
> studies. ...The overall refusal rate is also much higher in Quebec than in the rest of the
>
> country, according to data provided to Le Devoir by Immigration, Refugees and
>
> Citizenship Canada (IRCC). (para. 1, 3)

Further documented accounts buttress the claims of discrimination and inequity targeted

at African students in the immigration system. For example, another report contends that despite

IRCC claims that all applications are assessed equally, "the data shows that in 2021 alone, the

department refused 72 per cent of applications from African countries with a large French-

speaking population, compared to 35 per cent for all other regions of the world" (para. 6).

One of the several vague, contradictory, and confusing explanations usually provided by

IRCC visa officials for not approving visas is that they are not convinced the applicants

sufficiently demonstrated home ties or that they would leave Canada once they completed their

studies (CAPIC, 2021; Venne, 2022). This position along with the other immigration

marginalization practices directly contradict Canadian government claims and policies about

attracting international students to replenish Canada's ageing and shrinking workforce.

Universities and other immigration stakeholders agree that the risks and implications of denying

visas to qualified students or ignoring existential systemic barriers to immigration are colossal,

especially in an era of heightened global competition for scarce talent and increasing dependence

by Canadian government and postsecondary institutions on the massive economic inputs from international students (Friesen, 2022).

A recent CBC News article reported that African students face discrimination in visa application and approval processes (Irete, 2022). Citing University of Calgary Law professor Dr. Gideon Christian, the article highlighted a higher financial burden and bias in visa processing among the barriers that disproportionately affect international students from African countries. In a recent appearance before the House of Commons standing committee on citizenship and immigration, Christian addressed some of the key challenges faced by African students applying for Canadian study permits. Based on a recently concluded IRCC employee focus groups report on anti-racism (IRCC, 2021), Christian underscored the fact that racism is at the root of IRCC's discriminatory immigration policies and practices towards students from African countries (Christian, 2022). He stressed the need to harmonize visa requirements in order to ensure a level playing field for foreign students. Christian's research and the IRCC report support the claim that students from African students are being subjected to a very different immigration experience than their counterparts from other regions of the world. During his presentation to the IRCC committee, Christian—who specializes in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Law and is interested in the implication of race and AI on immigration—indicated that, without proper oversight, the current system of discrimination combined with the proposed IRCC AI system for visa processing was likely to cause more harm than good for African students; he suggested that it would further perpetuate the disproportionately low rate of visa approvals for African international students compared to their counterparts from other regions of the world (Christian, 2022). Callinan (2022) also argues that despite the claim of neutrality, "algorithms and AI tend to be embedded with the biases of their creators." Even after the current Chinook software

program currently used to process applications is replaced, it remains unclear how IRCC intends to address the issues of embedded bias in humans, which is also transferrable to new technology.

Given the historical and increased marginalization of Black international students in the immigration system across Canada and the risks of continuing discrimination, it is clear that the correct response is required to eliminate all form of discrimination faced by certain applicants. The two-tiered discriminatory immigration system that favours some international student groups while disadvantaging others is clearly a systemic issue that impacts how Black international students from African countries experience internationalization. Although it is one of the points at which their internationalization journey commences, the full consequences and implications of the inequitable visa immigration policies and practices on the lives of Black African international graduate students remains largely underexplored and will continue to be so until further extensive studies are conducted and additional disaggregated national level immigration data are made available on the phenomenon.

While IRCC has previously denied that racism and discrimination exist in its immigration policies, it has in the same breath admitted that it was "fighting against racism, bias, discrimination and all forms of inequity within the workplace" according to another recent report (Kigotho, 2022). The presence of racism and bias in visa processing and immigration practices and systems at IRCC was recently acknowledged and confirmed by the institution itself. Findings from the 2021 IRCC Anti-racism Employee Focus Groups surveys identified racial bias as a key issue underlying institutional activities at IRRC and the implementation of the federal gatekeeper's practices and policies. Key examples of racist and biased practices raised by employees who participated in the survey are summarized below (IRCC Anti-racism Employee Focus Groups, 2021, p. 7):

- Microaggressions ranging from well-intentioned comments with hurtful impacts to blatantly racist tropes;

- Sources of discrimination in hiring ranging from screening requirements that are biased against racialized candidates and selection criteria that do not sufficiently guard against implicit bias, to the location of management positions in places where the pool of qualified racialized candidates is likely to be low;

- Microaggressions ranging from well-intentioned comments with hurtful impacts to blatantly racist tropes;

- Sources of discrimination in hiring ranging from screening requirements that are biased against racialized candidates and selection criteria that do not sufficiently guard against implicit bias, to the location of management positions in places where the pool of qualified racialized candidates is likely to be low;

- Racial biases in the application of IRCC's programs, policies and client service that are believed to result from implicit biases among decision makers, as well as administrative practices that introduce biases or the potential for bias over time.

Markedly, the report cites numerous examples of microaggressions "verbalized internally by IRCC officers when referring to client groups, suggesting the possibility of implicit biases affecting client treatment and processing" (p. 10). One of such racist verbal microaggressions included "widespread internal references to certain African nations as 'the dirty 30', stereotyping Nigerians as particularly corrupt and untrustworthy, and referring to Latin American applicants as people who just come here to collect social insurance" (p. 11).

Although Canada's current Minister of Immigration has promised to look into the racism and dysfunction in the IRCC system and practices (Venne, 2022) that significantly affects

African international students, it is unclear what effective steps will be taken, how soon this will be done, and how far they will go to stamp out discrimination.

The forgoing evidence confirms the systemic and significant degree of anti-Black discrimination and inequity suffered by racialized IRCC staff and disproportionately experienced by Black African international students. While the extent of damage caused by the toxic racist and colonial work environment on clients deserves further interrogation, the significance of the problem cannot be overlooked. It is also not farfetched on the strength of supporting evidence to conclude that Black African students at the graduate level of study who are either applying to come and study in Canada or navigating the immigration process from within Canada are equally not immune from the harmful and far-reaching consequences of the toxic system portrayed in the IRCC anti-racism report. This discrimination is happening at the border of entry and impacting African students' ability to immigrate and transition into permanent residency status in Canada. Many African students despite meeting IRRC requirements still bear the brunt of these inequitable policy practices. Even after qualifying for admission into designated learning institutions and paying all visa application and processing fees (amongst other migration preparation costs), they still often do not have a guarantee of application success, resulting in dashed hopes and lost opportunities for both the students and Canada.

For the African students who eventually make it into Canada, certain IRCC policies allow them to legally work for a limited period, while other immigration policies fail to recognize their legal work experience and contribution to the Canadian workforce and economy. As a result, these students are forced to apply for permanent residence as if they were fresh newcomers to Canada without any Canadian work experience despite the varied experience accumulated as while working part time students or de facto temporary workers. In many cases they also have to

wait a year after graduation before they can obtain permanent residency to fully settle down. These experiences exacerbate the precarity of Black African international graduate students who already face an uphill battle within colonized institutions and society with a history of anti-Black racism.

In total, these inequities and policy contradictions fly in the face of Canada's multicultural policy and the IRCC policies that project a compelling rhetoric to attract international students from Africa to Canada. The next set of findings provide insights into the employment experiences of Black African international graduate students enrolled in a Canada public university.

Inequitable Employment Experiences of International Students and International Spouses

Conversations with students revealed experiences of inequity and discrimination in employment that affected both international students and their spouses. In one example, the student came alone, after which his wife followed with the plan to bring their children over after they both had settled. The wife (a graduate with many years of experience including at supervisory level) automatically obtained a work permit and sought employment in line with IRCC policy that allows international spouses to do so. On three separate occasions, she got to the last stage of interview process only to be told that although qualified, she could not be selected due to the lack of Canadian experience.

> *...My wife has been here, but my children are not here yet. My wife has been…here in the last eight months and …she also believes that there is a kind of racism and preferential treatment in the system. Because she has attended interviews where she got to the last stage and was told, go get police report, get this, get that ... it was as if the job had been given to her but suddenly they turned around and said, o we know you have this experience in [an African country] where you are coming from. You have worked for almost 20 years there, but you don't have the experience in Canada...*

They gave her work permit... but ... she can't find a job. So, what she is doing now is basically volunteering...in fact she is volunteering in three different places...she has been doing that now in the last three months.

Now, I am a student, I can only work for 20 hours. She can't get a job. We have children... how do we take care of ourselves, how do we pay our bills, how do we take care of the children back home if she can't get a job? Because her major purpose of coming was to get a job because the policy says you get work permit, you get job to support your husband. Now she comes in, she can't find a job. Anywhere she goes: "go and get Canadian experience." She will buy bus pass, we are eating, we are paying for house rent, she can't get a job. If we knew that was on ground then she would not have come. This idea that 'Canada is a land of opportunity, once you get there you become whatever you want to become' is just on paper, but it's not on ground...That has been our experience...it's heavy on us. Sometimes I find it difficult to sleep, I'm just thinking that if I had known what was on ground, I would not have come...

So, it's impacting on us both mentally and otherwise. I went to the hospital and the doctor said that "your blood pressure is increasing, what are you thinking about, what's going on"?...

Idubor, Masters Student Interview

Echoing the frustrations of others who have gone through similar experiences the above

participant lamented that, because his partner had already resigned from her job back in Africa,

there was no way to go back despite the unexpected employment hardships they were facing. He

expressed a strong sense of disappointment that the internationalization system takes away so

much from them but refuses to recognize their worth and experience despite all the sacrifices and

investments they had made to come to Canada in response to widely publicized benefits and

policy claims. They were also surprised that despite a North American World Educational

Services (WES) credential evaluation that confirmed his wife's educational qualifications were

on par with Canadian equivalents, it was still not enough to convince employers to hire her.

Another student said that his wife was also denied a job opportunity and, this time, the

reason advanced was that she was overqualified:

If you have your family, you are doing your program here...even as a single individual you're struggling. Now your family comes in...and the idea of ok, bringing your wife. ...okay, my wife will get a job and once she gets a job, she can support and things can go

well, I can focus on my studies...and your wife comes in and she applies for a job, and they say she is overqualified...
...back home she is a librarian. And she applied in the city's Public Library and they said she is overqualified for the job...that her experience in Africa is more than what they do here, so they believe she is overqualified for the job. And they are asking her to apply for managerial position, and you and I know that that is (laughs) is not going to happen very soon... Because... will say ok, you don't have the Canadian experience.
So now, you are trying to look for a job for your wife, you are schooling, you are trying to say ok... how you are going to survive...
Definitely it affects...and also, if you have kids... it is going to affect your daily routine and to some extent it also affects the quality of what one does... your health quality...and also family back home too...
Edaza, Doctoral Student in Second Focus Group

University of Toronto social work professor, Izumi Sakamoto has been studying what employers and professional associations mean when they refer to Canadian work experience. She observes that it is more about cultural workplace adaptation than professional standards, and maintains that "many employers, especially in small and medium-sized companies, emphasize Canadian experience during interviews to the point where it becomes a euphemism for racism and xenophobia — believing international experience is inferior, and justifying newcomers should conform to dominant white culture" (Szeto, 2022, para. 24). The deployment of "lack of Canadian experience" as an excuse for excluding refugees and other newcomers from employment opportunities has been comprehensively documented. What makes it really disappointing for international students is that their significant decision to bring their spouses and family members along to Canada was inspired by the specific IRCC policy that permits the spouse to work in Canada and the glamorous marketing rhetoric about favourable employment conditions that preceded their decision to migrate. Moreover, the spouses of Black African international graduate students that are granted work permits are usually highly educated. One wonders to what extent this unspoken rule or barrier about lack of Canadian experience is

affecting many other international student partners and international students who attempt to

migrate in response to compelling policy and marketing claims only to encounter the harsh

realities of invisible walls or borders that externally (at the border of migration) and internally (at

the border of employment and societal integration) keep them out of the system.

In a few additional examples, student participants spoke about employment challenges

that they faced despite being qualified to work in the area of their job search. These challenges

were related to limited work hours and/or a lack of Canadian work experience:

> *And I was also thinking to apply for jobs. I said I can work. I am a nurse with many years of experience. I said I can work, but on the visa, it said, as international student, you are allowed to work 20 hours only, and these 20 hours, to get a job and get appointment of part-time job, it's not easy, as they require the Canadian experience. There is something called Canadian experience. When you arrive in Canada, if you don't have any experience, it's not easy to get a job. It's another issue.*
> **Muhire, Doctoral Student Interview**

In addition to the necessity of employment during graduate school, several participants

expressed concerns about the prospects of their post-graduation employment and settlement,

especially in regards to finding appropriate and fairly remunerated employment and avoiding

underemployment and unemployment after investing heavily in a Canadian education. As one

observed:

> *There is still that apprehension about whether somebody can get a job after school. That apprehension is still there because you see a lot of people who are on the streets, who are qualified, who don't have a job... Masters graduates. They are there trying to get a job...some have PhD. They have not been able to get that job that they want to get...so they are doing jobs for which they are more qualified...hoping to get a better job...underemployed. So, if there is any way more jobs can be created by the government, I think this is the time to do that.*
> **Idubor, Masters Student Interview**

An internationalization official acknowledged that the university career services were well aware of some of the challenges faced by many international students, some of who leave family to come and study in Canada:

We know from working with students the destitute… conditions that they are living here when they are supporting someone at home.

Laura, *University Official*

The insistence in immigration policy that even highly educated students who had been accepted to study in Canadian institutions should be subjected to an English exam for permanent residency purposes was also questioned. One of the participants saw it as an unnecessary measure given their education level as a graduate students and scholars.

Some of the issues discussed above underscore the barriers that impede the participants' transition to permanent residency and adequate integration in the workplace and society. Despite employment prospects and post-education integration being a highly marketed element of internationalization policy, many Black African international graduate students remain concerned about their future employment prospects. Given the historical marginalization of Black Africans and the precarious status of immigrants in the Canadian workplace and society (Block & Galabuzi, 2011; Galabuzi, 2001; Kunz et al., 2000; Samuel & Basavarajappa, 2006; Statistics Canada, 2007; Teelucksingh & Galabuzi, 2005), their concerns may not be unfounded.

Inequitable Access to Scholarship and Award Resources

Despite paying twice or more the fees of domestic students, international students have access to a lower number of awards and are not eligible for a number of the more sizable and

federally administered ones. This creates a system of inequity that negatively affects international graduate student experiences and long-term career outcomes with a disproportionate impact on equity-deserving groups.

University officials involved with internationalization policy noted some of these challenges around inequitable funding faced by international graduate students (which also affects African graduate students), including the structural barriers of inequity created by this situation. Some of their perspectives epitomised by comments below corroborate with students' stated concerns in this study:

> *… there's a number of scholarships available to domestic students. But international students can't apply for many of them. So, things like the SSHRC, you would be available or be eligible for the SSHRC doctoral scholarship if you were a domestic student. But because you're international, you are not eligible for that. The one that you are eligible for is the Vanier. And the Vanier is one where we don't send many applications because it's very few of them to go around. So, even the way that some of these things are set up from their very… the initiation of the thing itself is creating structural barriers which are very difficult on our end to overcome.*

> *Funding is huge. It's a significant part of going to grad school because being a graduate student, you're not an employee, you are a student. And then, you are employed as a result of that status. So, when you have things like RA-ships and TA-ships, that's important, but having other forms of income are also important. So, thinking around scholarships and awards and thinking about how it is that we can make sure that all students are treated equitably when they apply is really, really important.*
> **Lewinsky, University Official**

They also acknowledged that the Tri-Council (joint council of the three national funding agencies in Canada: SSHRC, CIHR, and NSERC) was discriminating against international students in favour of Canadians by the very rules that they set up, which are becoming barriers to successful completion of programs in a timely fashion. They pointed to the discriminatory eligibility requirements that meant the *more significant*, multiple year scholarships offered by the granting bodies (such as SSHRC's) were only available to 65% of the graduate student body who

were either Canadian citizens or permanent residents. International students, including those

from minority of lower socio-economic backgrounds, were never considered for these major

trajectory-changing scholarships. Another university internationalization official agreed that

funding was creating structural barriers, especially for marginalized international students who

have such limited access to scholarships, are self-funded, or bringing funding from their home

countries and are therefore not on an equal footing with the rest.

Contrary to their original expectations and projections on the university's websites, some

participants reported their frustration with accessing funds, including scholarships:

> *I did not have any scholarship at the time I came, and when I reached, I ... visit the*
> *website of the university, they published some scholarships, and I tried to apply as I*
> *could, but I didn't get any scholarship. ... I felt it in me because I was thinking, oh, maybe*
> *because there are many scholarships, I will get some when I start my PhD.*
> **Amahoro, Doctoral Student Interview**

> *They exclude people even though they do not say anything, but you find yourself*
> *excluded. At the institution level, at the university as well, when you see how they*
> *advertise the institution on their website, you will find that they have a lot of*
> *scholarships. However, when you were [sic] in, you look for those scholarships and do*
> *not get them.*
> **Muhire, Doctoral Student Interview**

Another student underscored how the issue of funding discrimination could also be

prevalent at the institutional level when they compared experiences in their current university

with the previous one, which allowed students pay fees at the same rate as domestic students

after coursework was complete:

> *...when you are outside the university and you are looking for graduate student*
> *opportunities and you see the amount of advertising coming from the university, you will*
> *think that this is the best place in the world to be for graduate studies. They will tell you,*
> *you know the university has so many scholarships ...that the environment here is very*
> *supportive of international students. When you come here the reality is completely far*
> *from what they have said...*

In other universities, like the university of Manitoba where I came from, if you are international students, when you are done with your coursework, you start to pay tuition at the domestic student rate...but this university, they will continue to slam you international student tuition for as long as you stay, yet they will never give you a single opportunity for a scholarship. Coming from a poor country in Africa how do I survive? And because you do not have money you are forced to take part time jobs within the university and outside the university, that is if you are lucky. And the more you work on projects that are outside your core area of study, the more you stay in the program and the more you continue to lose money to the university in tuition. So you are kept in this perpetual cycle and there is no escape route. How fair is this? What does it take the university to establish a small fund for students coming from poor countries who might need [unclear]? And so, there is contradiction between what is stated as policy and what is practiced within the university.
Alphonsus, Doctoral Student in First Focus Group

Participants from both the Humanities and Health Sciences seemed disappointed that there was a disconnect between what they were led to expect and the reality they encountered regarding funding. Both interview and focus group participants made repeated references to the exclusion of domestic students from major awards and scholarships such as SSHRC scholarships, which significantly supports recipients for several years in a graduate program. However, participants from Engineering did not make any reference to any funding challenges which might indicate that there was less of a funding problem for them compared to others. This might be too surprising as supervisors in Engineering reportedly make sure that their students are fully funded throughout their program, according to some participants.

Some Black African international graduate student participants felt that while domestic students have more time/hours for work, almost unlimited access to government loans, and no immigration status concerns, they also have access to a greater number of scholarships including the best ones on offer, and this sets them up for greater career prospects. In contrast, they thought it was unfair that IRCC policy restrictions have generally limited international students

(including Black African graduate internationals) to 20 hours of work off-campus, have limited access to scholarships and awards, and in many cases face the risk of discriminatory scholarship and award decisions when competing against domestic students. Students also felt that limited local academic and social networks and an insecure temporary immigration status with the threat of consequences (including potential deportation) seriously limited their ability to find sufficient work to support their funding needs. Some participants also complained that certain employers cannot offer them work because the 20 hour per week limitation does not serve their organization's needs.

The majority of Black African international graduate students that participated in this study were self-funded. While some international students receive funding for their program from their home countries, the overwhelming majority are self-funded with many depending on contributions, institutional financial support, or loans from family and/or friends to make the expensive and courageous journey to study overseas. This is particularly true in the case of many African students who usually pay a huge price to get an education in Canada. A university official involved with policy-making on graduate student funding admitted that a policy review was imperative in order to address the downstream effect of those policies.

Homelessness (Houselessness) Among African International Students

The issue of homelessness (increasingly referred to as houselessness in many circles) was also highlighted as a problem that disproportionately affects Black African international students at the graduate level. One participant who has been involved with graduate student governance at the Canadian Public University alluded to this:

> *At the GSA (Graduate Students' Association) ... we had a report that...international students are becoming homeless, that was a fact...it came up at the GSA...international students are becoming homeless... It came up at the GSA.*
> **Edaza, Doctoral Student in Second Focus Group**

Another participant with considerable exposure to the social and human services sector in the city within which the university is situated provided a gripping account of how some current Black African international graduate students and graduates were experiencing homelessness:

> *... some international students stay in homeless shelter...I work in the homeless shelter. I have met more than ten African students who stay in a homeless shelter...Because they couldn't find a part-time job and they are not able to pay their bills. So they look for a place where they can stay and then a place where they can eat. And most of these homeless shelters provide these kinds of things. So they stay there, in the morning they eat, they go to school, when they finish from school they go back to that place, they eat there, they sleep there. So, if you don't go close to them you won't know they are students, they won't reveal their identity...graduate students, undergraduate students, mostly graduate students...Masters, PhD (graduates)... And if you see them on the road they will not tell you that that is where they stay. Because nobody wants be identified as a homeless person. But they are there. ...It is actually the ones from Africa that I know... So, the idea that international students will fill in the gap, which gap?*
> **Idubor, Masters Student Interview**

The above narratives suggest that homelessness exists, but is still hidden among international students and particularly Black African international graduate students who may conceal their experiences because of the stigma associated with this phenomenon. In light of the growing attention to homelessness in Canadian post-secondary, these accounts and insight from an international student who was deeply involved in the social and human services sector underscores the need for further research to determine the extent of the problem. They also highlight the need for a better understanding of which students are most affected and why, and what solutions would be optimal in the context of housing inequity and marginalization faced by the impacted student groups.

While a previous study suggests that postsecondary student homelessness (PSSH) affects about 70,000 people, mostly youth aged 17 to 25 in Canadian postsecondary (Weissman et al., 2019), a recent Canadian University Affairs news report places the number of students affected at over 100,000 (Rynor, 2022) with experts stressing the urgent need to uncover the root causes. A Statistics Canada study based on the 2018 Canadian Housing Survey shows that different forms of homelessness are a growing problem across Canada, resulting in substantially worse socioeconomic and health outcomes (Uppal, 2022). However, little research has been done around hidden homelessness or housing inequity among international students. There is no evidence of any significant national and provincial policy action to increase availability of housing in alignment with policy action to increase the Canadian population and labour force through immigration and education migration. This policy inaction, amongst other considerations, may be partly responsible for the cost of housing that appears to be increasingly prohibitive for a growing number of vulnerable international students. A recent international education news article confirmed that international students in Canada face physically and mentally traumatising experiences in their search for accommodation (Ronson, 2022), with some universities in Regina and Saskatchewan responding to the issue by bundling tuition and housing in discounted packages for students. According to a *University Affairs* article, the University of Alberta responds through a student homeless support program that provides between one day and two weeks of emergency housing along with food, career counselling, and other social support assistance for eligible students (Rynor, 2022), but it is not clear what happens to the affected students after the emergency assistance period stated on their website. The extent to which this critical issue affects international students in general, racialized international students, or Black

African international graduate students in particular warrants further investigative attention and response.

Criminalization of African Students

Participants were also forthcoming about some of their unpleasant experiences of being targeted and criminalized outside the academy. In one of those experiences, a participant reported being constantly and openly being subjected to surveillance on two occasions—while doing groceries and other shopping in stores outside the university campus:

> *One time I went to Goodwill (a thrift store in Canada). And as soon as I entered, I could see the security men just follow me around. I think it was before the coronavirus …. I went in there for some petty shopping. Then, as soon as I entered, I could see him follow me around.*
> *It's a shopping centre, kind of, where we buy clothes, shoes, and all that. So, I thought I was just being paranoid, but I looked at him for a while, and I saw that he was just following me in particular. I don't know. Maybe he does it to other Black people. I can't really say. And I've also experienced it at Southgate in Dollarama. There was this female security there. She also followed me around the shop. I don't know. I don't know why they do that. So, I don't see how that is inclusive if a White lady or a White man were just walking, and you believe that this person wouldn't steal anything. But a Black woman entered, enters, and you feel in your gut to follow the person around. I don't really see how you are including me in the system. This stereotype is still misleading people. Come on, I wouldn't steal anything in a Goodwill. It's a value shop to start with.*
> **Beatrice, Masters Student Interview**

Recognition of Credentials/Licensure for Internationally Educated Graduate students

Some student participants further highlighted the policy-induced inequities they experienced as international students from Africa due to the marginalization of their skills, credentials, and experience. This was demonstrated by barriers to licensure and a lack of recognition of African professional credentials—a situation which in the view of many students

compromised a wholesome international education experience and threatened their future career

prospects/continuity:

> *When it comes to internationalization and I think about the word equity, I think about access not just to education, but also access to employment, post the education. Because the way most of these universities publicize their programs, they give most international students the impression that there is a set pathway for you: once you go through the program you can actually be employable, and you know, able to access a lot of resources. But from my own experience I haven't seen that kind of guidance in the program -especially when it comes to access to licensure. Because for some of us who are in licensed professions like in Nursing, we really are not functional. Our graduate education or certificate is not functional without our license... But what I have found is there is that ... omission in the system... this silence about how graduate students are supposed to be supported to gain access to licensure. You are basically on your own in that regard. ... And these kinds of things kind of set us back upon graduation because we really can't access our profession. We can't work as a professor, we are not employable as a professor and as a clinician.*
> **Chinyere, Doctoral Student in First Focus Group**

> *I have more than 26 years as a nurse back home, but here, when I reached here, you have to go through ... the NNAS assessment process, which took [sic] longer, longer to get a RN licence and practice nursing here. ...meanwhile, while you are in that process, it's not easy to get another job because of the 20 hours work restriction for international students.*
> **Amahoro, Doctoral Student Interview**

Another student lamented what he saw as the devaluation of African knowledge, experience, and

qualifications

> *...to complicate issues, the certificates that we bring in here seem to be of no consequence. Some of us came in here with, I already had a Master's degree, and some circumstances back home made me to come here for...studies. And then you just feel that with your first degree, with your master's degree you get a job when you come in. And the policy says you can work while you are in school, but when you come in and you apply for jobs you are told that you don't have Canadian experience...And you begin to wonder, how do you get Canadian experience when you are just coming from... when you are just coming from Africa? How do you get the experience? But we were never told. It's not in policy that when you get to Canada you have to get Canadian experience before you can get these jobs. It's not there on paper, but when. you come in you see it on ground. And then when you come in you are now forced to begin to maybe volunteer... trying to get experience ... when you have fees to pay, when you have bills to pay...*
> **Idubor, Masters Student Interview**

The perspectives of university officials corroborated the narratives of Black African international graduate students regarding the recognition of credentials. In particular, two university officials who had supported internationalization efforts for many years admitted that the recognition of African credentials was a problem in the international context of the Canadian labour market:

> *When we think about international students, African students in particular… international students coming to Canada are coming without that practical experience in Canada... Canadian employers are bias towards seeing Canadian experience. We know that. I have never agreed with that. But it's is a challenge for graduate students to come to Canada and maintain their credibility they had in their home country in their field of study because Canadian employers don't recognize names of the schools, they don't recognize the names of the organizations, they don't recognize the names of the professions. So, there is that challenge...Our graduate students are coming with lived experience, are coming with past experience, but if they want to stay and live and work in Canada, that Canadian experience becomes very critical…*
> **Laura, University Official**

> *… I do know… that it can be really challenging to even be allowed to work in Canada. … for example…one student who is an African student who was a nurse in her own country. She is here now in Canada, but she can't practice as a nurse. Not only that, she can't teach in the faculty of nursing because she does not have a Provincial license... And so, she basically has to go through the training all over again. ...that's really unfortunate…because here is somebody who has a lot of skills that is reaching [sic] this barrier because of the way that we treat people who have international training. …I had another friend who was a physician for many years in South Africa, and she came here with her husband and her children and it took her years and years and years, I don't know if she's even still finished, trying to re-accredit herself as a physician…*
> **Adele, University Official**

Underrepresentation of Black and African Faculty in the University

Most participants agreed that internationalization equity at their institution was undermined by the lack of African representation in the academy and that this was negatively affecting their ability to navigate social and professional contexts of academia in international

education. They pointed to the scarcity of faculty of African origin, with many departments

hardly presenting one Black faculty member.

An internationalization official further explained that greater access to social networks and

mentoring support accessible to students from overrepresented groups may give them integration

advantages over students from underrepresented groups (such as Black African students). She

suggested that students from underrepresented groups experience greater challenges navigating

the social and professional contexts of academia in the context of internationalization.

> *...levels of inequity equity come from students not knowing how to access or not having the same access…And with students from Africa, if it is that they don't have senior students that can help them navigate that, if there are not enough faculty members that can help them to navigate so that they can form their spaces of network, it just takes so much longer.*
> *... you can have a graduate student for example from China, from India, who will come here and within two months they might find a community or faculty members that are from their home country if not from their home region who can mentor them in a way that there isn't a critical mass of teaching faculty here from African countries. So, therefore, graduate students may not see themselves reflected in the faculty and therefore they find it difficult to navigate the social and professional contexts of academia.*
> **Anna, University Internationalization Official**

The university official provided further perspectives on the Black underrepresentation and the

role that international services could play to improve Black students' connection to community:

> *... there is a very small population of peoples from African countries in [this university city]. It's historically tied to migration that had to do more with conflicts. … it's been Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea –countries in which Canada's foreign policy led to migration of peoples from those countries. But if you look at where international students are coming from... it would be primarily Nigeria, South Africa, recently, you know, Ghana, Zimbabwe recently, Kenya. So, the students didn't necessarily right away see themselves reflected in the local population….*
> *I think that where services [international student services] need to work harder is to help students find connection to community, and not necessarily community based on ethnicity, but community based on interests. E.g...if you are an international student really passionate about soccer... it is easier to find a connection to a soccer group in Edmonton that has an affiliation with different African communities...*
> **Anna, University Internationalization Official**

Lack of African Representation in Curriculum: Epistemic Marginalization

A number of participants described how the absence of African faculty scholars and an underrepresentation of African perspectives in curricula were resulting in inequitable learning experiences due to epistemic marginalization. Their reported experiences suggest a marginalization or delegitimization of African knowledge in academic programs and courses despite the claims to diversity and equity at the academy:

> *Curriculum content…problem would be the diversity in your faculty. If your faculty is not ... very diverse ... you tend not to enjoy the kind of curriculum that the department supports or runs.*
> *For example, if you are a student of Political science or History or Psychology or Philosophy and you are from let's say, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, and all you are being taught in the department ... is about ... Western Philosophy, ... Canadian politics, American politics, European politics, European history… it gives the impression directly or indirectly that there is nothing like African Philosophy, African history or African politics, or that African politics is about dictatorship, it's about violence ...all the kind of negative things that one could possibly think of...I would say in that sense it doesn't help, the curriculum ... because it doesn't appreciate the diversity in the concept of knowledge and it's transmission. So, for many students from a racial background it becomes a kind of problem. And in some cases when you even get diversity…it's mostly the ones who are considered to fit –in the sense that he or she does the same thing as others in the department, which is very problematic.*
> **Usman, Doctoral Student Interview**

One participant contended that the academy was too "Westernized, Eurocentric, and Canada-centric." She associated the lack of African studies and African perspectives in curricula to underrepresentation of Black African professors that specialize in Black and African studies while the academy prioritized a White-centred epistemology that left her disempowered:

> *I have been disempowered because all the course work we did...*
> *The academia is organized in such a way that it is representing western hegemony. The readings we are doing, scholars from US, Canada. You won't see things that reflect the stories of Africa. The Little you can see is maybe when we study something about middle east...I have not seen anything that represents my experiences that can make me theoretically see into what is going on and empirically relate it to what is happening in Africa ... It's basically like the academy is too westernized... all these other scholars in arts that are western...it's too Eurocentric.*

They are sharing mostly experiences within their own environment…within Canada.
Eugene, Doctoral Student Interview

Providing further perspectives, another student pointed out that the dearth of African

scholars and curriculum was compromising the quality of study and preventing many prospective

students from choosing the university as a preferred destination of study.

Othering in Social and Academic Contexts

Several participants reported instances where they experienced different forms of

othering in social, classroom, and other academic settings that made them feel excluded or

damaged their sense of belonging. A few of their narratives are presented below:

> *Actually, I have a personal experience … We had an event, a welcome party for a new faculty member. And we went to our faculty Chair's house for the event … And I walked into the house with about three more colleagues of mine, same PhD cohort. And they are all White, all Canadian. And one of the faculty members just hugged the other three and just waved at me. I was like getting closer the way she was hugging them one after the other, it gets to my turn she just waves and stood back looking at me. I was wondering, wow… okay, I know what happened there, but just pretended like nothing happened … even at the subtle level you can't place your hand on it, but it's happening. Things like that can just actually make you recoil back to your cocoon and not do well. You feel … this is racist.*
> *Even in classes you feel like the attention is drifting more to people that they feel … these are our own but you are the international, you are the odd one out. I have been to classes where I have been the only Black...and I noticed it was not the same as when I had other Blacks being in the same class, the flow was better than when I was the only Black in class. These little things I see every day. It also happens in … the opportunities that are being opened in the department...sometimes you don't even get to hear it.*
> **Eugene, Doctoral Student Interview**
>
> *They always ask me this question: 'where are you from?'; 'how are you liking this place?'; 'are you going back'? … we encounter these questions every day. And there was a guy who asked once… And I said, I am from this city. He said I know you are from this city, but where are you originally from? I said the name of my African home country. And I asked him, where are you from? He said, 'o… from eh, Saskatchewan.' I said no, 'where is [sic] your ancestors from? He said 'they are from Saskatchewan.' I said 'no, but where are they really from?' He said, 'o, they are from Ireland.' They don't want to admit where they are coming from, but always want us to say, ok this is where we are coming from. So, if you keep encountering that kind of word on daily basis it really*

affects...to some extent they are racial because you cannot ask a fellow White guy who has been here, where are you from? But why ask people of colour… Creates a sense that 'you are not part of us, you are not part of society.'
Edaza, Doctoral Student in Second Focus Group

Another focus group participant expressed a more ambivalent interpretation, suggesting that sometimes people who ask these questions may not necessarily have negative intentions and it may be out of curiosity, although he agreed that such intense line of questioning was not really necessary or inclusive.

A student spoke about several experiences of academic othering he had experienced at the point of admission and afterwards. He also suggested that instances of social othering were disproportionately experienced by Africans and other graduate students of colour. The participant referred to instances where he felt othered on cultural or religious grounds because he consistently refused to drink alcohol at social events. He also indicated that, while he goes to some social events, he does not attend others for personal reasons and does not see why he should be viewed or treated differently because he did not participate in activities like going to a pub. A few other participants also reported concerning experiences of cultural exclusion within classroom settings where they faced unwelcoming cliques among students in some of their departmental courses.

While some of the above participants' experiences of othering contrast with those of initial participant narratives who (see Section 1 of the findings) reported experiences of equitable inclusion, the foregoing evidence suggests that acts of social and academic othering are a reality for Black African international graduate students and contribute to feelings of isolation and harmful experiences of exclusion at the Canadian Public University. Considered concurrently, the contrasting experiences of racialized students in different micro-contexts of the same

institution suggest that specific micro environmental and stakeholder factors or dynamics may play a role in determining the nature and outcome of Black African international graduate student experiences in Canada.

(3) Underlying Reasons for Discrepancy Between Policy Claims and Realities

As part of the Critical Policy Ethnography methodology, it is important to set individual experiences and micro-observations of participants in the broader perspective of power, inequality, and inequitable structures and policy (Dubois, 2015). Amongst others, this section attempts to achieve that by juxtaposing observations of policy influence with some experiences of participants to explain the underlying reasons for persisting incongruity between policies and ground-based realities of Black African international graduate students who decide to study and stay in Canada.

A range of policies at the federal, provincial, and institutional levels appear to drive or influence the internationalization practices and realities experienced by international students from the point of acceptance into a Canadian postsecondary to their post-graduation settlement experience in Canada. The findings that precede this section confirm several discrepancies between what policies state or claim and what Black African international graduate students actually experience in several facets of their internationalization journey. The reasons for policy incongruences and inconsistencies and the downstream consequences for international students cannot be ignored or uncritically accepted. Drawing on data from human participants, policy document analysis, and observing policy in action, this section attempts to present underlying reasons for discrepancies with a view to promoting more equitable internationalization experiences for the Black African international graduate students at the centre of this inquiry.

Lack of Standardized Financial Support Policies Across Departments and Faculties

Interview and focus group conversations with student participants who belonged to different departments and faculties revealed a lack of policy standardization in the area of graduate student funding support at department or faculty level. For example, some students revealed that their departments or faculties provided them with guaranteed funding for a specified number of years at the point of admission, and this was included in their acceptance letter. For several other participants, there was no guaranteed funding from the department; they had to entirely self-fund their graduate education or compete intensely for scholarships that were generally far and few between. One participant submitted that although he had to do a lot of extra work to make ends meet for the family, they were surprised to find out that the basic guaranteed funding provided to graduate students in their department was not a common practice across all departments in the university:

> *In my faculty which I discovered is quite different...I thought the university ran in the same system, but it doesn't from what I have gathered. Upon admission as a grad student in my faculty, automatically you are eligible for an RA or TA position regardless of your background... the only time you lose your eligibility is if you have a huge scholarship from any of the Canadian funding institutions. ... they make sure that as you are coming in as a grad student you are going to have employment for your first four years ... the faculty is somewhat quite unique and different. And they do look out for their grad students, especially international students and then try very much to make sure that they are comfortable. Talking with other people I noticed that it is different from the entire university...it just seems that the people who are in charge of administration or management of my faculty at this point in time have different views and have a very broad level of exposure on what to do. So, that has been my experience.*
> **Itoro, Doctoral Student in First Focus Group**

Another Master's student participant opined that restricting certain scholarships to specific groups based on demographics was both addressing equity and at the same time

promoting it. The student felt that scholarship competitions should be open to all while ensuring that Black African students also have equal opportunities to be successful in their applications.

Absence of Disaggregated Data

A review of institutional policies and annual reports reveal a conspicuous degree of inattention to collecting and reporting disaggregated data at the Canadian Public University. This problem reflects what happens across faculties and departments in the university where this study took place. It is also emblematic of the situation at national level across the university landscape of Canada with very few institutions committing to disaggregated data collection and management policies. This lack of systematic collection, reporting, and tracking of data for visible and racialized minorities or historically marginalized groups contributes to making the experiences and outcomes of racialized and Black international students even more invisible. It prevents a deeper understanding of their challenges; it also sustains a lack of justification to commit resources or effort to addressing their concerns due to a dearth of science or data-based rationales. Even basic disaggregated statistical information was very difficult or impossible to come by. I struggled to get an adequate response from the faculty responsible for graduate students when I requested statistical information about African graduate students. Smith (2022, p. 442) argues that "efforts to address race-based inequities in higher education require rich student body data in order to understand Black student experiences and engagement, and to assess wide-ranging needs, such as academic, mentoring, and financial."

Given the objective of international education as a vehicle to boosting Canada's economy and labour workforce, and the priority placed on attracting international students from diverse countries into diverse institutions and regions of Canada (Government of Canada, 2019), it was concerning to find that there is still no specific system of disaggregated data collection in

place—either nationally or provincially—to track and monitor how these ambitious policy intentions are being achieved. As a result of the dearth of disaggregated data, many aspects of internationalization policy are likely being implemented on the basis of several unchallenged and untested assumptions. The consequences of this may only be discovered when it is too late for the losers and marginalized in the system.

Policy Gaps and Contradictions

Policy silence is not neutrality because it can intentionally or unintentionally create circumstances and outcomes that are detrimental to members of the public, not least racialized minorities located in a Western or historically White institution. Policies have consequences as does what they say or fail to address. Policy omissions, including what is included and excluded in the language and discourse, may be perpetuating systemic inequity in internationalization through subscription to harmful ideologies, inattention to equity concerns, as well as symbolic myths (Yanow et al., 1992). The mythologization of internationalization on the basis of incorrect implicit assumptions (Knight, 2011) whether operationalized unintentionally or intentionally through policy may misrepresent it and compromise its outcomes for both institutions and the students that they attract.

A combination of policy gaps in the form of omissions, silences, or misrepresentations appear to be contributing to marginalized internationalization experiences for Black African international graduate students in Canada. These gaps are extant in institutional and government policies alike. First, it is apparent that several key Canadian policies appear to project a utopian notion of international education. This is particularly appealing to prospective international students who are fed up with local conditions in their (sometimes previously colonized) home

countries and who have the means to migrate to Canada, which they perceive to be a welcoming land of immense opportunity. In a critical commentary, Professor Sá (2018) notes that discourse in the field of international education is dominated by an implicit overarching assumption that it is a force for goodness; he argues that there is a significant gap between rhetoric and reality regarding education. At multi-policy levels, there is coordinated marketing effort among institutional, provincial, and federal actors at selling this rosy notion of internationalization while being intentionally or unintentionally silent about some of the realities with which students have to grapple. On the one hand, there appears to be an overemphasis on hyper marketing the benefits of internationalization and attracting international students to a dream experience with huge investments made into this by institutions and all levels of government; however, on the other hand there is no concomitant effort to invest in more transparent information about migration realities or in policies that address challenges faced by these students in the migration and settlement process. In the context of internationalization equity, a lack of adequate transparency about internationalization realities might be one of the missing ingredients contributing to continuing policy gaps on internationalization. Manifestations of policy silence include policy opacity–*the lacunae or holes in policy agenda and outcomes*, absence of formal policy or policy undecisions, and policy inertia (Li, 2020). Moreover, the symbolic significance of policy positions that are intentionally constructed to project the utopian and promote commodification of education in way that misrepresents realities on the ground and reproduces inequities for many Black bodies cannot be lightly dismissed. Oftentimes, many of these bodies/students ultimately end up marginalized in the system that promised them much more than it delivered on the ground.

The current absence of national, provincial, and institutional measurement and evaluation systems that help track and evaluate internationalization progress and outcomes against goals and incorporates feedback from stakeholders including marginalized students might also be contributing to policy gaps and misrepresentations that adversely impact the participants in my study. Accurate and complete data can help stakeholders identify and address internationalization policy gaps and equity challenges that would otherwise remain unknown.

At the educational institution policy level, analysis of the Canadian Public University's Comprehensive Institutional Plans (CIPs) and their corresponding Annual Reports between 2011 and 2021 showed a progressive improvement in addressing and reporting on internationalization, because this was surprisingly not prioritized in the earlier years. Nonetheless, a careful read of the most recent CIP and Annual Report documents show an opportunity to provide more information about changing internationalization plans, priorities, and how they are being realized. Integrating more adequate and substantive summaries and statistical information on international student source regions, supports, and the equity initiatives to support internationalization and student settlement might be worth considering. The CIPs from 2011 to 2013 did not directly address internationalization while those from until 2014 to 2021 have a section dedicated to internationalization. Over this period, the university's international internationalization activities, collaborations, and partnerships appear to be concentrated or limited to few countries, particularly China, Brazil, Germany, India, and the United States. This geopolitical prioritization of international collaborations is telling. No African country is specifically mentioned as an official collaborator in the international or internationalization section. Furthermore, equity priorities around internationalization do not appear to be articulated in the CIPs or reported in the Annual Reports.

Beyond the current content of the CIPs and Annual Reports, many (critical) readers would be interested in knowing what priorities the institution places on internationalization, and how many dollars are invested towards both internationalization abroad and internationalization at home (IAH) initiatives, including the specific efforts and resources dedicated to supporting or improving diversity, equity, access, and inclusion for international students and the more equity-deserving groups among them. These elements could be more clearly and comprehensively outlined and easy to locate in the institutional policy documents.

Policy gaps appear to exist in the form of curriculum omissions and epistemic marginalization, as some participants stressed the need to integrate Black authors in course readings and institutionalize Black studies and Afrocentric ways of knowing as a tool for improving inclusion of racialized Black African international graduate students in the Canadian Public University. A review of existing institutional programs at the time of this study revealed no examples of Black studies programs for students of the Canadian Public University nor distinct examples of where Afrocentric epistemologies and content were robustly presented in curricula or courses. Such curriculum policy silence takes on added significant when considered in the context of the university's Strategic Plan for international education, which promises to integrate international dimensions in the learning experiences of all students to enrich their academic achievements, improve their global citizenship education and enhance their career success in a global economy. This is a very important consideration because this policy statement draws on the widely accepted definition of internationalization. Curriculum stakeholders and course designers should be ensuring that an international dimension does not mean a Canadian dimension or a European dimension, as that would be contradictory to

internationalization objectives and tantamount to excluding other ways of knowing and being in the knowledge production process.

Although the EDI strategy of the Canadian Public University is comprehensive, promotes EDI for all, and addresses specifics issues around reconciliation and support of Indigenous people, there is no mention or address of either racism, anti-racism, anti-Black racism, or anti-Asian racism, which you might expect in a strategy such as this. Furthermore, there is reference to the officially designated groups in the employment equity act: women, visible minorities, Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQ2S+ persons. At the same time, there is no reference to Black people, which may suggest the need for a more specific focus in that respect, especially in the light of recent trends across Canadian institutions that are becoming more intentional about addressing and highlighting historically marginalized groups in Canada. These silences may impact how responses to racial discrimination are prioritized, interpreted, and implemented by administrators and other stakeholders. Additionally, it is not clear to what level departments and faculties buy into the EDI strategy and whether there is consistency of interpretation and implementation on the basics. As an example, this is particularly important when one considers some of the discrepancies such as funding discrepancies for international students, with some departments providing guaranteed funding and others not.

Furthermore, there is no evidence of any concerted effort to specifically centralize and institutionalize policy addressing racism and anti-Black racism, which can help to confront and eliminate its covert and overt manifestations wherever they exist within institutional systems. There is opportunity for the institution to develop a separate anti-racism strategy that integrates terminologies and ideas from Canada's Anti-Racism strategy 2019-2022 and other national EDI policy documents. Alternatively, future revisions of EDI policy might do well to consider how

best to address the above gaps and symbolic inclusion for the diversity of students, including

Black Africans.

While a policy cannot attempt to cover every single thing, it must capture the zeitgeist of

that era and consider all the key stakeholders and their concerns, including the most vulnerable.

Policy gaps could both reflect the priorities of policy makers engaged in policy making as well as

who was absent at the policy consideration and construction table. It could also mean that certain

voices where heard while others were either not considered or even ignored. In the context of

internationalization equity, recognizing gaps is a first step toward ensuring policies are more

inclusive and effective.

Participants identified several policy contradictions that sabotage their

internationalization experiences. Once such example is the policy that allows students to legally

work a certain number of hours while the legal work contributions made during their education

are not recognized when they decide to apply for permanent residence. At the point of

application for permanent residence, none of the legally amassed work experience is counted in

the current immigration point system of Canada. Many African graduate students consider this to

be inequity in internationalization policy and practice. They feel that the meaningful

contributions they made during studies is unjustly devalued at the point of full integration,

thereby lengthening their precarious journey to permanent residency. Several participants feel

that this policy trivializes their contribution to the society and economy, and creates additional

barriers to their smooth integration. It also reinforces the belief of many African graduate

students that many policies claiming to support internationalization actually perpetuate systems

of oppression and colonialism that benefit the State rather than minorities such as African

graduate students who already suffer from a social capital deficit compared to many of their international counterparts from more developed countries in the Global North and Global South.

A second policy contradiction that appears to work against the purported goals of internationalization from the perspective of Black African international graduate students is credential devaluation/undervaluation. Some participants reported that the failure of Canadian licensing organizations and certification authorities to recognize or consider their previous certification, knowledge, and professional experience not only undermined their previous credentials but also made their transition into the workplace more challenging.

Another policy contradiction that emerged was the fact that although immigration policy allows international students to bring their families along in an arrangement where their spouse can receive a work permit and work full time in the host country, the reality is (a) the spouses and families of several Black African international graduate students have in several instances struggled to get visas to come to Canada even when they met the threshold requirements of IRCC, and (b) the spouses have struggled to find jobs to support them/family due to many local employers insisting on Canadian work experience as a criterion regardless of the high qualification or previous work experience these international spouses bring to Canada. These realities have made some Black African international graduate students feel like second-class citizens despite the international education policies projecting them as ideal and desired candidates for immigration into Canada (Government of Canada, 2014b; Matthews, 2016). Participants reported that these and other policy contradictions caused enormous strains on their finances, health, and future outcomes of their families, particularly when they were excluded from certain national scholarships due to non-citizenship/non-permanent residency status and prevented from accessing some of the most consequential scholarships and awards available

compared to their non-racialized peers and some international counterparts. Some focus group discussions also revealed that policy inconsistencies across different departments in the university favour some African graduate international students while exacerbating the integration challenges of others, especially with respect to particular supports and guaranteed funding for a specified period. As a result, some African international students experience more access to resources than others, depending on the department to which they belong even within the same institution that projects a global message of equity and access to attract fee-paying international students.

Speaking on the basis of several experiences, one participant noted resignedly that there is a stark discrepancy between what policies suggest and some of the economic precarity and uncertainty experienced by international students that arrive to study and live in Canada:

> *On the surface, most of those policies look very good. But when you come into the system you discover that it's not really as it is on paper that it is on ground. Most of the things that we learned of, we read that made us to be interested in coming here, we just come in to discover that most of those things are not the way that they are on paper in terms of policies. So, for me if I actually knew that things were like this on ground I would not have taken the steps that I took to come in here. Because those opportunities that we were looking at are not really on ground here. You know, you are told it's a land of opportunities, oh jobs are there, when you come in you just get a job...It does not work, it doesn't really work ...How I wish that those policies that are on paper, that we read in IRCC... are on ground so that when people come in they find their footing....*
> *This internationalization is designed by Canada to make money...and most of the students who come are from the Global South...once you come in, you will not want to go back, you are already like trapped in the system... you are just trying to keep your head above the water...*
> **Idubor, Masters Student Interview**

An official that supports internationalization provided additional perspectives and concerns about EDI policy in relation to internationalization. She emphasized that, despite the best EDI policy intentions, hearing, understanding, and integrating the unique and nuanced needs of internationalization stakeholder groups such as African students was critical for equity:

I guess, my concern would be that other groups who also need to be envisioned in...the [EDI] document. I think that it is well thought out...my concern is: what does that look like in practice and what kinds of policy and structural adjustment and changes are going to be made so that that actually can be realized?...
But students need to have a seat at the table. Because unless we aware of the specific needs we can't address them. Even though I can say with full confidence that every single person that works at the faculty responsible for graduate students is dedicated to students and wants to support students. But we can only help students as much as we know what their needs are. So, are their needs met in broad strokes? That's great, but what are the nuanced needs that are not being met and what is the potential impact of not meeting those...the heart of the issue is what are the unique needs of the African students, and how can we ensure that those needs are heard by the people who have influence over, programming, over policy, over structures...Otherwise even if there was the best intentions, we can't address the issue.
Adele, University Official

Amongst others, the consequences of the policy gaps, omissions, and contradictions (many of which are cited above) include unmet expectations, disappointments, and a misrepresentation of realities that translate into marginalization of many Black African international graduate students and other vulnerable members of the population whose needs and concerns are sacrificed in favour the majoritarian, hegemonic, or Eurocentric policy agendas.

Internationalization as Commercialization and the Neoliberal Agenda

Several students argued that internationalization is driven by neoliberal and capitalist agendas or priorities. For example, some focus group participants were unequivocal about what they had come to see as the real meaning of internationalization. They critiqued what they viewed as the Canadian Public University's overwhelming focus on commercialization that lacks a commensurate or concomitant support for international students, both in terms of their academic journey and employment prospects. In the comments of one:

... you know when I hear the University talk about internationalization I think they are actually talking about commercialization. I don't think the university is actually looking at diversifying its student population. They are looking at how much money international

students can bring to the university. If they were looking at diversifying the student population and enriching the academic culture that's supposed to be at the university, they would be pursuing different types of programs that would demonstrate that intent. What we have seen over the years is that the university recruits international students as a source of income for the university. And so, a lot of us come …thinking that we have something to contribute …And we come with the expectation that the university will support us financially and in terms of academic enrichment so that we can reach our goals. What I have seen over the years is the opposite.
First Focus Group 1, Participant #3

So, I feel like in a way, at the end of the day it still comes down to commercialization of the graduate program. Because they have your tuition they have your intellectual capital. They use it for the period of the time that you are in the program. But in your own personal professional development you are really set back.
So, I think that needs to be addressed... in terms of publicizing this internationalization idea and how they implement in the subspecialty areas in different faculties.
You are inadvertently investing your resources to the systems, institutions but you are not getting back commensurate supports
...so the question is what kind of equity is that? What kind of employment I am getting after I graduate? Where are my going to be positioned at the end of the day? Are my reaching my potential here? These are the questions that graduate students need to ask when it comes to internationalization policies.
David, Masters Student in Second Focus Group

Agreeing with the participant above, another student felt that institutions were perpetuating a one-sided equity that is benefitting the institution more than marginalized students despite the symbiotic institution-student relations that internationalization was supposed to foster:

In terms of equity, I won't claim that level of equity as they want to suggest. If as they say that international students do not take opportunities from Canadian citizens...in other words, in my coming here I haven't displaced any Canadian citizen, I don't really see any reason why I should be charged more than a Canadian citizen or permanent resident in terms of my fees. Because... I am coming here to learn, but you are also learning from me. It is a symbiotic relationship, it's not a one-way thing. I'm bringing certain cultures knowledge and all other things here also, attendant things to share with you especially as a graduate student. So, you are also learning from me. So, for that I don't think there is equity. And I don't think that's proper.
Chinyere, Doctoral Student in First Focus Group

The officials (involved in internationalization) who were interviewed did not contest the above narratives about neoliberal agendas driving internationalization. Many of them alluded to neoliberalism as a contextual reality influencing internationalization and the experiences and outcomes of students with disproportionate impacts on international students from marginalized groups.

Unwritten Policies Perpetuating Inequity

Insights from the accounts of participant experiences suggest that harmful and inhumane unwritten policies are contributing to and sustaining a significant degree of inequity for international students (in both the work place and academy). One major unwritten rule that repeatedly stood out is how employers boldly used the pretext of "no Canadian experience" to deny qualified and highly educated African international graduate students and their spouses job opportunities. Speaking from a deep place of lived personal and family experiences that also reflected the views of many others, one participant summarized his feelings thus:

> *My point is that it is not said in the policy that you should get Canadian experience before you can get a job, but that's what we find on ground. Unfortunately, ...I am so sorry to say this now... unfortunately people have to lie, people have to lie that they have Canadian experience and then they look for somebody who will stand for them as a kind of reference even if they didn't work there, to be able to get a job because they are desperate, because the system pushes them into desperation...and fortunately or unfortunately when he gets that ...he is able to do the job. So why was the job not given to him at the beginning?*
> ***Idubor, Masters Student Interview***

The above participant challenged the ethics of unwritten job discrimination policy and practice that appears to be pervasive across many Canadian employers. Their thoughts also reflect the perspectives of several student participants (and some African international spouses) who were impacted by exclusionary employment policies despite having considerable experience from

their home countries and an IRCC open work permit. These reflections underscore the need to more thoroughly interrogate and respond to unwritten policies, rules, and practices that are perpetuating inequity for Black African international graduate students from the Global South.

Underrepresentation in Policy Making: *That Gap Needs to be Closed*

Participants also emphasized the need to focus on representation in policy making as a critical tool for addressing policy incongruity and the consequences created for Black international students. In comments that captured many similar views, they suggested the following:

> *There should be representation because you can't feel what we feel if you have not migrated. Even if you migrated, maybe you didn't migrate as a student. For those of us who migrated as students, we are feeling something that we may not able to tell you. And when you stay in the offices and make those policies, you don't feel what we feel. Like, when I came here initially I wanted to encourage a lot of people to come, but when I begin [sic] to get myself used to what is on ground it's going to be difficult for me to encourage somebody to come, except things change. So, I think these policy makers should look for a way to look for people who have migrated here, who are here as students, maybe when they finish, get them into these offices, let them look at these laws again and then look at how to make it work, bearing in mind the experiences...so that policies ... will not be different from what is experienced. That's very important. ...those are the things that I think can happen for so that we can bridge this policy and what is on ground, yea. But on the overall, Canada is a good place...but it will be a better place if the policy reflects what is on ground. But for now, it is not so. That gap needs to be closed.*
> **Idubor, Masters Student Interview**

A university official added their perspectives on the issue of underrepresentation of Africa students in policy making:

> *I think there is a couple of problems. One of the challenges is who is at the table when these policies and ideas are developed. So, is there adequate representation of the people who are actually on the ground living these experiences? And then I think that the other challenge is probably the disconnection between aspirational documents like this and the institutional structure. And so, getting those, decreasing the distance between those two things is the challenge, and it takes time....understanding that lived experience and the*

people who are in place to influence policy and practice, they are the people that need to understand that because they are the ones that, they have the power to change things. And so how do you get the right people in the room to talk about the issue of EDI? Like, for example in the EDI committee, what kind of representation was at that table, and were there stakeholders missing from that conversation? I don't know the answer to that.
Adele, University Official

Anti-Black Racism and Discrimination as Official and Unofficial Policy

Racism or anti-Black racism is another form of systemic oppression that was identified in this study. Based on some of the experiences cited in earlier on policy discrepancies, it is apparent that international students from Africa can be affected by discrimination and racism. In this section, I underscore the fact that these incidents are not isolated or merely anecdotal. Rather, the evidence below suggests that systemic racism and discrimination exist and in some cases these anti-Black policies practices are operationalized as either official or unofficial policy. In the experience of Black African international graduate students, anti-Black racism policies can be identified through trends and practices in which IRCC officers have been complicit over time. And many of these damaging policies are targeted at racialized people, particularly Black international students from Africa. Racism and discrimination are operating at systemic levels in both covert and overt ways that are particularly detrimental to African students who want to study in Canada. The systemic nature of this problem is evident in the stories and comments provided by IRCC officials and employees who participated in a recent survey commissioned by IRCC to promote anti-racism (IRCC Anti-racism Employee Focus Groups, 2021, p. 7). Findings in the report demonstrate how systemic manifestations of racism and discrimination can be subtler and more covert, which sometimes makes them more difficult to readily recognize. The institutionalized nature of racist culture aligned with racist policy extends beyond internal impact on racialized employees of IRCC to the external effect on stereotyped international student

clients who are officially and unofficially targeted through quota restrictions, higher financial burdens, and, in several cases, arbitrary refusal decisions despite students meeting the officially published criteria for approval.

The institutionalization of systemic racism as policy was further confirmed by these audio interview comments made by an immigration layer and immigration firm senior partner from Quebec (Singer, 2020):

"...it depends on what part of the world you are from because unfortunately, and this is a fair statement, visa missions outside Canada depending on where they are located apply different standards. And I can say with certainty, there are certain parts of the world unofficially that the Quebec Government is targeting, because they feel that the individuals will have a better chance of economically succeeding in the province. Or for whatever the reason is, let us just say that there is informal discrimination that is practiced by governments in Canada. It is not official, but it is a fact that depending on what part of the world you are coming from, the criteria will be applied strictly or it could be applied more liberally. So, your profile is very important, but it's also important where you are applying from. So, unfortunately the realities of the current law of the land as we say, ...and of course government officials will categorically deny, but we see in our practice certain individuals who live in certain parts of the world have much easier access to these programs than others, and it's really a question of where you are living"

That racism and discrimination can be openly operationalized through government and institutional operatives in either official or unofficial capacities against individuals and people from a particular region or race provides a very disturbing picture of internationalization inequity

from the perspectives of African students who appear to be the intentional targets of institutionalized racism.

Participant experiences of anti-Black racism in the institution and the communities within which the academy is located also means that African international students are being impacted by racism and discrimination both on campus and off campus. While only a few overt/aggressive manifestations were reported, the majority of instances suggested that racism and discrimination were also occurring in more subtle ways, in the form of microaggressions. For example, several participants reported instances where non-racialized people avoided bus seats were Black students were seated. A few felt they were targeted in grading and scholarship adjudication processes in ways that disenfranchised them, but left them unable to challenge the outcomes. Less subtle incidents of racism experienced in a Canadian work environment off campus are exemplified by the personal story of another participant below:

> *...people have called me names, yea, all kinds of names: Go back to your country! You Nigger! Fuck you! Those kinds of words… Specifically, where I work, I come cross some people who don't want to see people of colour. The people I am serving. Not the organization, not the people I work with. Sometimes you go work in the kitchen in serving meal and then you are trying to give food to somebody and then the person says 'No, I don't want you to serve me, you Black nigger! You can go serve some other persons.' They want someone who is White to serve them. That kind of a situation...*
> *I have seen that quite a couple of times... We even had a situation where one of my friends was talking with a client speaking good English, an African ... and the White guy said 'I need someone who can speak English very well' with that kind of disdained look...*
>
> *...I would say racism is entrenched in the system, ... it's in the system. You may not see it like that, but it's in the system. Why do I say so?... it is more subtle but embedded. A friend of mine attended an interview. He went through several stages of interview, got to the final stage and then eventually the job wasn't given to him. And then later on he found out that that job was given to someone who had grade 10 -grade 10 drop out.... he confirmed that when he was not getting any feedback again. He had a Masters, he is doing his PhD here in this University...*
> **Idubor, Masters Student Interview**

The following participants appeared to suggest that racism and discrimination were short-changing equitable internationalization experiences and outcomes for people like them due to the structural underlying influence of White hegemony and discriminatory systems:

> *I think I just see a form of cappuccino kind of equality whereby they still want it to stay White on the top and Brown on the bottom. So that's why those structural limitations have been put in place to ensure that however bright you are when you come into the system you are not really able to accomplish your full potential within a system that doesn't offer you the resources that can help you to really blossom.*
> **Chinyere, Doctoral Student in First Focus Group**
>
> *Just to add to what has been said so far, I think overall, the province ... is one of the worst places to come as an international student. The province itself is racist and it runs through institutional policies including the university.... You are automatically disqualified by being an international student. But that's not even the problem. The problem is that ... on rare occasions when you qualify for a scholarship...you get outcompeted by local(domestic) students. And how they make those assessment is not even clear, how they arrive at those decisions you will not even know. Look, I was in a class with domestic students and ... I had better grades than they had. But when we applied for the same scholarships they were given I was not given. How come? What did they put in the application that I did not put? ... And so, the fairness of the assessment in itself is problematic.*
> **Alphonsus, Doctoral Student in First Focus Group**

The participant above was one among several who felt discriminated against in both the scholarship adjudication process even when their applications were strong and supported by a robust record of publications and distinctive academic performance. Systemic institutional barriers and discrimination against international students in general appears to be impacting Black African graduate students' perceptions and experiences of internationalization equity, and these experiences could be different from one province/institution to the other.

Another participant weighed in on how they felt racism traditionally advantages non-racialized students over their racialized counterparts, including Black international students, in the context of access to job opportunities:

> *But in terms of job opportunities, I think they get better opportunities considering their own race. I have heard...in terms of job positions and tenured positions, yes, they have better chances and opportunities than racialized students -both… within and outside the academy. It's a politics of race.*
> **Usman, Doctoral Student Interview**

Speaking in an observational capacity, another student alluded to need for institutional internationalization stakeholders to go beyond claiming they were not racist to actually doing something about fighting racism.:

> *… it is not just enough to say that, I am not racist. But what do you do to stop racism? So, I cannot really say that I have a personal experience to that. No, I cannot really say. But I don't know if people really work against racism. They will say, I am not racist. They will just employ a Black woman, a Black man to say that we are including people.*
> *… it is still going on, on the low. People will just shy away and say that, I am not racist. But I don't see how they are doing anything to stop it. ...*
> **Beatrice, Masters Student Interview**

One of the student participants recalled that while they did not personally experience racism (probably due to being off campus most of the time), alleged experiences of racism had been reported by fellow Black African international graduate students (although he was not able to personally verify all of these anecdotal accounts). The incidents had to do with being racially discriminated against and not being given the right degree of access to certain privileges that her White colleagues were enjoying. He also noted that unlike him who spent very little time on campus, others may be be more susceptible to racism:

> *for those who spend large chunks of time on campus, it is possible that they can fall*
>
> *victim to some of these overt and covert issues of microaggression or racism."*
>
> **Ignatius, Doctoral Student Interview**

Some participants were not optimistic that systemic levels of discrimination and racism could easily or ever be reversed. This perspective is consistent with the tenets of critical race theory that emphasize the permanence of racism. At the same time, it does not excuse a lack of sufficient effort at combating anti-Black and anti-Black African racism or discrimination in the system. These reported experiences, although sometimes subtly expressed, made the African students feel inferior, excluded, or unfairly discriminated against; it also delegitimized their past qualifications from Africa and sense of self-worth. One participant went as far as to suggest that the university is located in a racist province due to the level of systemic racism at play in their internationalization experience. Several participants suggested that the racism perpetrated towards them and their kind was expressed in very subtle or sophisticated ways that are sometimes difficult to recognize or effectively address.

Attitudes Towards Intercultural Development Opportunities

Attitudes of domestic students towards intercultural professional development opportunities with international students may be contributing to intercultural barriers with consequences for cultural integration. An official involved with supporting international and domestic student access to intercultural professional development admitted that despite the university's good intentions and efforts towards supporting such professional development, the lack of appetite among domestic students to attend the sessions alongside international students was a challenge. This may be thwarting or derailing institutional efforts to promote intercultural awareness and competencies that support internationalization and the ability of racialized students to settle and integrate in Canadian academy and society. Her comments suggest the existence of insufficient understanding and enthusiasm among domestic students to participate in

intercultural development training with the international students, which in a way could result in several challenges around integration and bridging cultural barriers.

Internationalization Policy as a System of Domination

A review of findings and student narratives in the foregoing point to the presence of systemic factors that are shaping and controlling internationalization outcomes for African students regardless of policy claims. Different forms of colonialism and imperialism appear to be dominating and shaping policy decisions and foci, policy implementation priorities, and policy outcomes in terms of how policy is experienced among Black African international graduate students. Some participant stories and insights from document policy analysis support this finding. Although they may admittedly impact students differently and disproportionately, the operationalization of policies is sometimes subtle, unseen, or unheard across the social, academic, cultural, and employment realms of the marginalized student experience. Whether subtly or overtly, policy inequities for Black African international graduate students manifest through bias, discrimination, and other forms of exclusion and hegemony that centre European interests and priorities while covertly or overtly ignoring the impact of policy inequity on racialized groups such as the one that participated in my research. Based on some students' relayed experiences, internationalization seems to be acting as a double-edged sword: a system of domination and a system of liberation. It presented as a system of liberation in the sense that several participants appreciated the opportunity to leave their home country for the promise and possibility of a better life and better outcomes. As a system of domination and oppression, several participants felt that certain Canadian policies related to internationalization and the

systems they support are set up to discriminate against them, particularly in the area of immigration, employment, and other specific related social contexts.

Some of the policies impacting internationalization appear to have a colonial foundation in the sense that they both stem from, and project, a Eurocentric and neoliberal agenda with little or no regard to needs and concerns of education migrants from Africa/Global South. A Eurocentric economic agenda carefully designed and grafted into policy objectives and performance to benefit the nation state appears to be driving internationalization. In most spheres of Black African international graduate student interactions, from the borders of entry to the often-challenging social experiences, they have to navigate in a settler colonial society with colonial institutions and a history of marginalizing Black settlers through unjust immigration and employment law and practices and other dimensions of social exclusion (Mensah, 2010). Despite the 2020 anti-racist movement that suddenly awakened institutions to the presence and horror of Black oppression that had historically existed, and the subsequent release of the Scarborough Charter that addresses anti-Black racism and promotes Black inclusion and Black decolonization in higher education, many institutions are yet to officially adopt it and fully subscribe to its provisions.

Certain polices that are purported to promote internationalization are instead perpetuating a form of oppressive border control for marginalized students, including my study demographic, by deciding who can come in and who should stay out depending on which regions are deemed more favourable to Canada. This is despite Canada's claims to a multicultural and welcoming policy echoed by government and institutional players engaged in internationalization. These stunning manifestations of border imperialism (Walia, 2013) in internationalization directed at both regional (e.g., Africa) and country (e.g., Nigeria) sending partners is buttressed by multiple

stories from the Canadian higher education landscape and statistical reports and case studies presented in the findings of the CAPIC (2021) study conducted by immigration professionals. The findings support the unofficial policy of deliberate effort to minimize international student migrants from Africa despite the high numbers of students who keep applying to study and pay the institutional and visa application fees (an income for Canada), with approval rates decreasing or remaining lower than those for other countries. The colonial "border" controls extend to other areas of international student experience when: (1) they act as invisible walls blocking access through refusal to recognize the experience and qualifications brought to the Canadian workplace by international students' and their spouses; (2) they pose barriers to professional access by undervaluing valid foreign certificates and qualifications of internationally trained students from Africa; and (3) they ensure inequitable access to scholarship resources and opportunities and major funding from the national granting bodies (particularly SSHRC and NSERC) who are exclusively open to domestic Canadian students. All these forms of systemic oppression and domination are mediated by policies or policy narratives that are purported to support internationalization experiences for students, including those from Africa.

The evidence presented in the above section and preceding ones demonstrates that the discrepancies between policy claims and ground-level realities of Black African international graduate students are being perpetrated and maintained by a number of factors. These include a lack of awareness among students and institutional internationalization stakeholders, as well as an internationalization approach that overemphasizes commercialization, marketing, and attraction of international students while underemphasizing and underprioritizing the equitable settlement and integration of students. There is also evidence of historical and unchallenged policy gaps and omissions, contradictions in policy provisions, an underrepresentation in policy

making and implementation, and, in some cases, policy inertia or the failure to take relevant policy action despite the glaring evidence of inequities associated with, or resulting from, discrepant policy. Furthermore, the continuing impact of colonial and discriminatory systems of domination strongly underpin and mediate both the construction and implementation of these policies. And while the projected policy agendas and objectives are intentionally crafted to look good and attract the best of international and African talent and resources, the underlying policy agendas appear to be heavily tailored toward benefitting the Canadian nation state and its institutions and economy with little or no critical attention afforded to equity, inclusion, and access for the marginalized groups who significantly contribute to Canada's internationalization goals.

Collectively these factors that fuel policy discrepancies are creating an alternative internationalization reality for many Black African international graduate students compared to many of their postsecondary counterparts. Even more concerning is the fact that these factors appear invisible, inconsequential, or trivial to the mainstream actors while manifesting as an intersecting set of multi-layered inequities that simultaneously and directly impact the short- and long-term experiences and outcomes of Black African international graduate students in disproportionate ways. The plight and precarity of the impacted students are exacerbated by their ongoing struggles to navigate the unexpected and challenging policy terrain they encounter from the point of admission to the point of integration or permanent settlement in Canadian society; their marginalized status as temporary residents and pressure to survive in the system in many cases overwhelm their ability to influence discrepant policy or reverse damaging policy inequities. For many, it becomes more practical to maintain the status quo regardless than face the risk of being ejected from the system they gave up so much to participate in.

Undoubtedly, a thoughtful and concerted internationalization response is needed to reverse the risk and impact of unfavourably policy-mediated consequences for marginalized international students from Africa, and to salvage Canada's reputation as a multicultural and equity-fostering destination. The next section considers a few potential ingredients that could be considered by different stakeholders as part of a comprehensive response to address policy gaps and discrepancies in internationalization.

(4) Key Considerations for Promoting Equitable Internationalization

Despite the uphill nature of closing gaps or addressing discrepancies between policies and student experiences in internationalization, participants put forward some ideas that might be worth considering to promote a more equitable and socially just internationalization for Black African international graduate students.

Institutional Policy Drivers of Internationalization

An interview with the International Division Lead of the Canadian Public University confirmed that internationalization approaches and activities such as marketing, promotion, recruitment, and student support activities are primarily driven by university policies and priorities with input from the International Division and other departmental stakeholders. The International Division is guided by central university policy and targets, meaning that they work very closely together with university administration. However, the International Division provides significant input into the creation of international education strategy, which ultimately drives internationalization. In turn, both the Canadian Public University and the International Division are largely guided by the provincial and federal government policy priorities on

internationalization in order to maintain the alignment necessary while allowing for some

autonomy and flexibility on the part of the university. This affects student recruitment trends and

the eventual composition of international student populations. Despite this, the International

Division lead maintained that the Division must still consider where the funding or best markets

(source countries) are located.

An interview with a senior official in the International Division revealed the distinction

between the Division's responsibilities with respect to recruitment and marketing for

undergraduate and graduate international students. While the International Division is

responsible for both marketing/promotion and recruitment at undergraduate level, they are only

responsible for marketing/promotion at graduate level:

> *We just do the promotion. When a student applies the decision is not made at the central*
> *institutional level. It is made at the individual professor's level. So we are not involved in*
> *recruitment of international graduate students. But International Student Services are*
> *involved in providing support to all international students, including undergraduate and*
> *graduate students.*
> **Cindy, University Internationalization Official**

The recruitment of graduate students involves professors and/or departments who have a direct

say in who is accepted and enrolled. The faculty overseeing graduate studies works with the host

department in the administration processes surrounding operationalization of admission

processes for graduate students. According to the Lead, the International Division is also

responsible for international relations, meaning they help the university build strategic

partnerships and with managing university agreements and developing and finalizing draft

agreement before making recommendations for the university provost to sign.

Clearly, while the International Division plays a key role, there is a confluence of policy

influencers and factors with different roles involved in determining and operationalizing

internationalization, and this directly contributes to how Black African international graduate

students are enrolled and supported. What is clear is that graduate students will not be recruited without the endorsement of their host department, which means that the departments have the opportunity to consider the supports available to the students before providing the green light for their recruitment and enrollment to the university.

Closing Intercultural and Acculturation Gaps

Another insight shared by an internationalization official related to the importance of closing intercultural gaps between international and domestic institutional stakeholders, including students:

> *I think that this idea of intercultural competence as I mentioned before, there is a perception that it's not my problem if I am a domestic person, it's somebody else's problem. And sort of deflating that perception is super important. And making the issue of equity everybody's problem and everybody's responsibility is part of that. So, how do we shift that culture?*
> *...there is an ethical responsibility that we have about that issue, but we have to raise awareness about that and we have to train people around that issue. I guess part of it is also encouraging international students to reach out to people who are Canadians because I think that often we go to what's comfortable. Trying to get more connections between the different groups is important...making the effort to reach out to people from other backgrounds...*
> ***Anna, University Internationalization Official***

A student participant suggested that the faculty responsible for graduate students had more work to do towards improving the orientation and integration of students within Canadian culture:

> *The faculty of graduate studies does not have a specific orientation program to educate you on what and what not to do when you are in Canada...that is necessary.*
> ***Richard, Masters Student Interview***

Canadian Employer Responsibility

Study participants underlined the need for Canadian employers to fulfill or take more

responsibility for improving the experiences of Black African international students in the Canadian higher education ecosystem. They thought that employers and institutions needed to do more to support the labour force integration of international students who need to work, earn, and develop their resume for better outcomes during and after their international education. There was some frustration that employers were not aligning/adapting their hiring policies and practices with the IRCC policy, which allow students and their spouses to work while studying. One participant challenged the (unofficial) policy and practice whereby many employers insisted on proof of Canadian work experience before they could consider international students for employment. They also introduced the idea of employers institutionalizing training and orientations to support the transition of job-seeking international students into the Canadian workplace. The comments below reflect some participants' feelings around this matter:

> *Employers, how employers can help us? This issue of "You don't have Canadian experience" ... I will keep talking about it. It's not good. For any job that anybody is taking, of course there will be training. Employers should ensure that they train their people ...but to reject people from getting job on the basis that they don't have Canadian experience, it doesn't look good....When you are taking somebody, somebody who is coming from another country, you should train that person for that job. That training can be for three days, it can be for one week... why denying us getting the job on the basis of Canadian experience when you can train that person... So, it's a subtle way of denying us that job. That's my conclusion of that matter.*
> **Idubor, Masters Student Interview**

Role of Career Support

Drawing on their experiences and observations, one of the graduate student participants suggested that students could be better encouraged to take advantage of career support services offered by the Canadian Public University. Simultaneously, they stressed the critical need for faculty and career services divisions in the institution to provide more targeted and accessible career enhancing services and programs that support newcomer adjustment and transition to

employment for Black African international graduate students. The participant also suggested the need to increase the frequency of career education opportunities and reduce or eliminate the fees charged for individualized career consultation and support provided by the university centre responsible for providing services.

A university career services official involved with serving and educating both domestic and international students noted that the centre that has played an important role in graduate student support, and that one of the recent priority areas has been a focus on the intersections between graduate student career and mental health needs. They linked this to the identified challenges faced by graduate students at the university. They also admitted that the Career Centre had made great progress but there was still a long way to go, and the future depended largely on future funding to continue certain programs.

Social Group Experiences

Many participants indicated that they found fulfillment in community engagement spaces with other Black students as it gave them a sense of belonging. It gave them an opportunity not only to connect but also to serve others. From their standpoint, it appeared like a continuation of this trend and further investment in it might result in more positive social internationalization outcomes, including for equity-deserving and marginalized student groups on campus.

EDI Initiatives

A senior official from the university faculty that oversees and supports graduate students commented on the importance of building on or moving forward with EDI initiatives to support

academic and social group initiatives among equity-deserving students, such as Indigenous and

Black graduate student groups:

> *One of the things that I'm looking at right now is the PhD thesis. And actually, some work that's coming out of [a particular] department is really pushing us to think otherwise about what is knowledge, whose knowledge matters, and how it's presented.*
>
> *So, we're working toward those goals ... but the accountability ... is really, really important. ... we're doing a variety of different things, so supporting student groups such as Black Graduate students Association and the Indigenous Graduate Students Association in our advancement efforts, trying to think about how it is that we can create awards and scholarships for equity-seeking groups... there's a lot of work that need to be done. So, that's why I say, I come back to this idea that we need to work with groups like the Black students group and the Indigenous graduate students group, and with international students to say, help us to make sense of your experience so that we can do a better job of advocating for you and pathing the way for not only a smooth but productive graduate experience. I really think that that is essential.*
> **Lewinsky, University Official**

One participant felt that initiatives to promote a feeling of inclusion and belonging require a

whole-of-institution approach (as opposed to a compartmentalized one):

> *It will be something that works both at the micro level and micro level, both at the department, faculty level, even student to student, faculty to student... in such a way that you are seeing it, and that will enable you function to your maximum capacity....How they are able to network, how they are able to build you up, how there are structures where you can go and speak up if the struggle is more than you[can handle] ...when sometimes you feel a sense of being excluded and even at the university level...you can also go and say... I want to know what ... resources are available to me that I can access and actually function maximally. When you feel that sense of having being included or belonging to that particular group and not having to feel odd or weird when you get into a place ... on the basis of your colour or gender, then you will feel the whole thing has worked out the way it should be, that the sense of diversity has been fostered, yea.*
> **Eugene, Doctoral Student Interview**

The Case for a Centre of African Studies

Several participants made a strong case for institutionalizing African studies in the

university as a strategy for promoting institutional and intercultural internationalization equity.

They suggested that a centre or institute for African studies be established:

One thing I think...at institutional...that needs to be done is Centre for African studies, which most universities have. Why I think that is necessary is that one, we need to have our own centre where we can have a dialogue....
We have Institute of Chinese, South Asian Studies...in this university... we have Middle East studies, we have Arabic, but we don't have a centre that is centralized for African Studies... I was told that it existed before. They called it Middle East and African Studies... but later the thing collapsed and turned into Middle East Studies...

...like most US universities...and Carlton university for example.......that Centre will give them a sense of belonging... It can also serve as a resource place for research...an archive base for research.... if we can have... a Centre for African studies, we are trying to deconstruct that racial barrier .... study and learn. ... what stops people from getting maybe a degree in African studies?... student will have mentors...And that Centre can also look for grants to support African students, like the way they have it in Carlton... they can look for grants, they can get SHRCC projects. ...they can also link most of the students who don't even have Research or Teaching Assistantships to work with them in their projects, in their research laboratories.
Edaza, Doctoral Student in Second Focus Group

Another focus group participant commented on the value of having an African Studies Centre for

non-African and non-racialized students that would contribute to a greater intercultural tolerance

and appreciation:

I think that is a valid concern...By studying these subjects the people, I mean the students become more tolerant towards people who are from those parts of the world...because now I know how you see things...I know what you like and what you don't like and why you act in a certain way...so it helps. I believe the same effect will be at play here if we have an African Centre where students...could get to know...
It will eliminate some of the ignorance... students, if they take courses there out of curiosity... they will appreciate people who are from that part of the world. I think that also boosts the confidence of the student that their culture has been acknowledged
David, Masters Student in Second Focus Group

Increased Representation in Policy and Implementation Decisions

The need to approach transformation at the graduate student level with a greater level of

dedication that centres graduate student needs and voices was stressed.

When we're thinking about EDI and if we're really serious about changing the nature of the institution and taking seriously what EDI means, graduate students is one of the primary places that we really have to start thinking about equity, and diversity, and

inclusion.
Lewinsky, University Official

The official also thought that the agency of students was important and should go beyond

representation to actually being allowed to meaningfully participate:

> *it's just the idea of advocacy, being loud, being there, being on different boards, being on council of faculty responsible for graduate students, being on the GSA council, getting involved in all these different decision-making bodies.*
> *I think it's really important that groups, all different groups, equity-seeking groups, are not only represented, because it can be an alibi: "Yes, we have an Indigenous graduate student." How are you incorporating that Indigenous worldview into the work that you're doing? How are you attending to the power structures and differences that are naturally occurring? So, being there, being a part of it, but it's also up to those people like myself to say, you know what? What you have to say, and your experience matters. And it's important for us, if we are going to take EDI seriously, that we not only consult with you, but you become part of the decision-making group.*
> **Lewinsky, University Official**

Re-considering the High Costs of Internationalization for International Students

Many participants were concerned about the high costs of internationalization and also in

agreement that government and the educational institution should consider a downward review

of the costs of internationalization, especially with respect to education costs and immigration

costs. Given their extra financial burden, some married participants felt that IRCC should lessen

the financial burden on international students who migrate with their families by reducing the

financial requirements associated with visas processing, especially because there is no guarantee

of getting a job immediately upon arrival in Canada. A strong case was also made for reducing

the amount of tuition or school fees that continually increase, particularly for international

students who already pay about two to three times the amount paid by domestic students.

Role of International Student Services

One participant said the school needed to be more sensitive to supporting the settlement

of international students, including putting in place mechanisms to welcome them on arrival for

the very first time, and ensuring suitable accommodation is readily available for them to pay and

occupy immediately. One student coming to North America from Africa for the very first time

recounted his experience of struggling to find his way when he arrived and struggling to find

accommodation:

> *When I was coming I was told that I will meet people at the airport who were going to bring me to the school. I got a letter from the school...from the university of...I think it should be the international office. I got to ... international Airport, I didn't see anybody... That was my first time ever to come into North America. I had to find my way to come to school. Because I was in the airport waiting...I wasted time so I got here a little late, came into the school, I didn't find anybody. With all my luggage...the International Office was closed. Maybe I would have slept outside that day, but I ran into somebody who took me in...*
> *.... I [sic] applied for a hostel accommodation that was never given to me. I was asked to pay some money so that I can be put on the waiting list or something, and I paid, but it wasn't given to me. So, you can imagine that somebody coming from Africa can't get an accommodation. Where did they expect me to stay? And I paid my fees from home...and it was received...I could have been in more trouble if I did not come across somebody who could help me... It is not easy to settle in a place like this.*
> **Idubor, Masters Student Interview**

Some student participants also complained about feeling/experiencing a lack of inclusion

in International Student Services due to a lack of Black African representation in the staff

members who catered to students. They advocated for the inclusion of Black African descended

staff as well as graduates who had previous internationalization lived experience who could

enhance the level of culturally appropriate support available to Black African students.

Role of African Professors in Mentorship

A few participants emphasized the vital role that Black African professors can play to

advance integration and internationalization equity for Black African international graduate

students at the university. As one student opined:

> *The African professors in the university can build a forum through which the new*
> *students can be mentored and guided by the professors.*
> **Ignatius, Doctoral Student Interview**

African Students' Resilience and Perseverance

The need for perseverance and resilience, and the role these play in helping Black

African graduate students navigate internationalization and settlement process, was accentuated

by several participants. The spirit of their position on this issue is encapsulated in the participant

quote below:

> *I think that one thing African students can do is to believe in themselves...Whatever you*
> *see here, you should encourage yourself and know that you are the best. They should and*
> *keep pushing. With time they will surely get those jobs that they want to get. I think the*
> *major thing is breaking into the system. Which you don't find on paper that you have to*
> *struggle and break into the system...you have to struggle and break in... they should be*
> *resilient until they can break through...No one should give up...you have to be patient,*
> *you have to persevere...*
> **Idubor, Masters Student Interview**

Intersectionality

Contrary to many taken for granted assumptions, I found that several African graduate

students represent an intersectionality of identities that impact their education and integration

experience differently. This came through strongly through their stories and background

demographic information. Despite being high-fee paying students, some of them come from

poorer socio-economic backgrounds and only managed to get to Canada through sacrifices and

contributions of friends and/or family. A few interviewees shared their experiences of being

"othered" when certain aspects of their identity such as culture or religion did not seem to align

with the social expectations or norms of people in their educational social circle. They felt that, in some cases, this translated to lost opportunities and access to resources. Older Black African international graduate students who are married or have family responsibilities navigate additional barriers that affect them and members of their families who are also trying to settle within a historically colonized society and institution. Many policies and practices at the institutional level were not designed to accommodate certain unique challenges faced by some African graduate international students as a result of their intersectional identities that do not necessarily fit the homogenous portrait of "ideal immigrant" assumed in policy by Canadian governments and institutions. Indeed, the fact that Black people and Black African international graduate students in particular are not a monolithic is an important factor to note when considering strategies for advancing equitable internationalization in the various spheres of student experience.

Managing Mental Health/Other Health

Student participants cited the (sometimes traumatic) impact of policy inequity and marginalization on their mental health and other related aspects of their well-being and family life. This, coupled with the fact that mental health is not historically accorded a priority in African communities may be exacerbating the health risk for international students who go through depression and experience other harmful physical health consequences. They underscored the importance of monitoring mental and general health, and taking steps to mitigate the associated challenges:

> *They should also go for medical check-ups and seek advice from people who have been here before. Earlier I said we don't believe in mental health issues, but truly there is mental health issues. And we need to be very serious about our own mental health. ...We*

need to check ourselves, we can seek advice, we can seek medical attention, which every student should...
If you go you do the test... and you know this what is wrong with you, you can manage it, you won't die prematurely...
Edaza, Doctoral Student in Second Focus Group

While also highlighting the challenges that African students face around the issue, another participant also pointed to how resilience can play a vital role (for some) in cushioning the damaging effects of mental health among Black African international graduate students like her:

I would say it has affected my mental health because where I come from, no matter how difficult the situation is we are kind of tutored to have that sense of resilience. So, I try to make sure that no matter how something gets to me, I look for a way to take my mind off it and try to continue functioning, knowing my primary goal of being here. So, that sense of resilience that has been drummed into me from home is really helping me. Otherwise maybe at some point when you see certain things ... because you are not Canadian or ... your colour is not like them, you would have broken down. But somehow, I am very resilient when it comes to that, I don't let that affect me. I try to make friends outside of the university environment.

... a friend the other day ... also telling me sometimes she feels like she is getting depressed because sometimes even in the department you can't make friends that easily...she feels like the door is so shut against her sometimes and even when she tries to get close they start acting like they actually don't want her there...
Eugene, Doctoral Student Interview

While it has been suggested that some Black people do not take mental health seriously, the vulnerability of Black African graduate international students to mental health challenges associated with different types of marginalization and racism are evident from this study. Several participants agreed that there would be some value in investing institutional effort to increase awareness and importance of mental health as well as encouraging check-ins and mental health care initiatives that, amongst others, target Black African international graduate students. Along with this, and more importantly from some participant perspectives, dealing with the underlying factors that result in negative mental health challenges and outcomes was stressed.

Words of Advice for Black African international Graduate Students

Based on their experiences navigating internationalization and settlement, participants

provided some words of advice that can support future students who intend to successfully study

and settle in Canada. Excepts are provided verbatim below:

*Be resilient. For anyone who really wants to adapt well in Canada, you have to have an outlook
that is informed by resilience. You've travelled very far to be here so you can't afford to
undermine all the resources you have put in to be here. So, you have to be resilient, you have to
take everything in your stride. Look for the right spiritual and/or social supports that will help
you.*
*There will be difficult moments and there will be moments that you want to give up as an
international student. But when you look back and then you look at the larger picture, you will
be able to adapt. Generally, for an immigrant, for someone coming from the Global South, it will
always be challenging because your worldview is different from the Canadian worldview.*

*As someone from the Global South you have a lot of family obligations, but Canadian students
they don't have that kind of family obligations. Whatever money they make, whatever they are
able to save is for themselves. But you as an international student whether you come from China
or from India or from South America or from Africa, you always think about family, because
family there is about extended family. So, once you put all those things in perspective and then
you have the right mind frame, you will be able to withstand all these challenges that will come
your way.*

*Be flexible and open minded. If you come to a country that is not your own, you can't afford to
be inflexible and rigid. You have to be open minded. You have to have a receptive outlook. In
being open you may have some wonderful experiences. Of course, you may have some negative
experiences, but openness is a virtue.*

*Cultural contributions. African students can contribute to internationalization equity by doing
the following:*

- *Re-energizing their association/groups if they have one, so it can be more vibrant and
more engaging with the students and with its immediate community on campus.
Generally, Africans are not political per se in the sense that when they come to a place
they don't think of building a united or political platform through which they can
mobilize their expectations, needs or demands (compared to other groups).*
- *Being proud of their culture and showcasing it to enrich overall university culture.*

*More international student-friendly institutional practices. The university having a more
concerted approach to internationalization to make international students feel more at home.*
- *The institution can develop policy initiatives which guide how students that have issues
can meet the right people who can handle or manage the challenges they have.*

- *Hiring more international professors. Because when you have international issues it's easier when people who are from those continents the Global South can guide you when you have problems. And into administration.*
- *Expose the people on ground to more intercultural and multicultural training.*

Be pragmatic; neither cynical or utopian. *I take life one day at a time. I ask myself what is the plan B if I can't achieve something. Some people plan for life, and some people allow life to plan for them. For me I am in-between: I plan and I am open to whatever possibilities life has for me. I don't use one experience to generalize. I don't want to be utopian in my outlook, neither do I want to be cynical…*

Broader Sociohistorical and Sociopolitical Considerations

The literature on Black Canadian history suggests that sociohistorical and sociopolitical factors have impacted the mobility or migration and settlement of Blacks in Canada, and that African Canadians have been subject to systemic discrimination and racism in different dimensions of their social experiences (Mensah, 2010; de Bruin, 2021; Williams, 2021). Despite this, many Canadians are more familiar with the historical slavery and oppression of Blacks in the United States than the racially motivated oppression and anti-Black racism experienced by Blacks in Canada where the government "has not traditionally been receptive to welcoming large numbers of Black immigrants" (Caldararu et al., 2021, p. 89). According to Williams (2021), Canadian immigration policy severely limited Black immigration at the turn of the century whilst aggressively pursuing recruitment of people from Europe, South Africa, and America. At a certain point in its origins as a nation state, Canada clearly prioritized the admission of European and lighter-skinned people over darker-skinned ones. Furthermore, Blacks who made it across the border to settle in Canada did not escape the anti-Black immigrant and anti-Black settler climate that was in certain instances exercised through the necropolitical policy machines of the government of the day. A devastating example of this occurred in the 1960s when the Halifax City Council in Nova Scotia voted to relocate the members of a popular African community and

destroy their homes with the objective of industrializing and modernizing the area. This decision resulted in the historic destruction of *Africville* – a once thriving and prosperous Nova Scotia seaside community that hundreds of Black settlers called home (Tattrie, 2021). The totalitarian act was carried out without due consultation or consideration of the human rights of those affected. And according to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, the decision came after the Council had ignored or denied repeated requests to provide more social amenities for the community. Given its status and symbol as a vibrant cultural hub built by Africans for Black community, the destruction of *Africville* represents an irredeemable physical, cultural, spiritual, and economic erasure of Black life and existence. Subsequent attempts by the City Council to offer monetary compensation to affected Black home/property owners could not expiate the harms sustained through intentional Black erasure.

Historicizing these Black settler experiences is helpful for a more holistic decolonial and critical analysis involving historically marginalized groups who deserve and expect just futures. It is difficult to contest that the inequitable experiences of Black Canadians have largely been as a result of the enactment of colonial and discriminatory policies and practices that continue to impact Black lives today. Moreover, while people of colour have historically been marginalized, darker skinned people such as people of African descent have been subjected to even more inhumane policies and treatment in both formerly colonized countries and in Western nations.

These histories accentuate the importance of considering broader sociohistorical and sociopolitical contexts when examining the ground-level realities of African (and racialized) groups that operate within a largely similar political and cultural ecosystem in which many of their immigrant predecessors were oppressed.

More recently documented empirical evidence lends further credence to the role of sociopolitical and sociohistorical factors in the lives of Black settlers and migrants in Canada. Following the extensive gathering and analysis of data collected from four major Canadian cities at the invitation of the Canadian Government, the *United Nations Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent* concluded that "Canada's history of enslavement, racial segregation, and marginalization, has had a deleterious impact on people of African descent" (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2017). While acknowledging the progress made by the Canadian Government to protect the human rights of people of African descent through legal frameworks and institutional policy measures, their report cited disturbing manifestations of racial discrimination experienced by the community in the criminal justice system, hate crimes, and disparities in access to education, health, housing, and employment. They also cited multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination disproportionately faced by people of African descent on the basis of ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, language, sex, gender identity, poverty, unemployment, and precarious immigration status. These findings may be of some relevance in the context of researching Black graduate migrant students who come to school in Canada with the objective of making it home.

A US study by George Mwangi et al. (2018) buttresses the point that campus racial climate can mirror societal racial climate for Black students in North American contexts. These findings supported the notion that Black students do not exist in a vacuum but, rather, they operate in a campus environment that in many cases or certain respects is a microcosm of the larger society and reflects its historical legacies.

The final results of a recent national survey conducted by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) confirm that, despite improved awareness of systemic racism, there is

increased pessimism around race relations in Canada, particularly among Black and other racialized groups (CRRF, 2021, p. 37):

> discrimination and mistreatment because of one's race is a common experience, with one in five Canadians reporting this happens to them regularly or from time to time.... such experiences are most widely reported by those who are Black (57%) or First Nations (45%), but also among those who are South Asian (48%), Chinese (40%), East or Southeast Asian (40%), Métis (36%), or those with other racialized backgrounds (35%).

The CRRF report also indicates that, between 2019 and 2021, a high proportion of Black (85%) and Indigenous (74%) people report a higher frequency in experiences of discrimination or unfair treatment, and "perceptions of discrimination highest among those born in another country (58%, up 12) and lowest among third-plus-generation Canadians (28%, down 7)" (CRRF, 2021, p. 31). The findings are unequivocal that "racial discrimination takes place across a range of settings, such as public spaces, in the workplace, in stores, and at school and university. And this is, by far, most widely experienced by Canadians who are Indigenous or Black" (p. 5). A recent Angus Reid survey also indicates that while an overwhelming majority of Canadians agree that diversity is great for the country, 34% believe that Canada is a racist country (Korzinski, 2021). Given the historical and recent trends on the state of race relations, it is not far-fetched to suggest that the external climate of racial and discrimination may very well be intentionally or unintentionally impacting how equitably policy is constructed, implemented, and experienced among Black students and Black African international graduate students in Canadian higher education.

Conclusion

The findings above provide important insights that contribute to a deeper understanding of the discrepancies between Black African international graduate student experiences and multi-level policies/policy narratives intended or purported to support their internationalization experiences. Evidence from participant counter stories/counter narratives and critical document analysis provide a clearer multifaceted portrait of the complex factors influencing how these students perceive, experience, and negotiate internationalization at the Canadian Public University research site. While findings suggest some bright spots and best practices in Canada's internationalization model, they also reveal opportunities to examine and address critical systemic factors that are inequitably impacting the Black African graduate internationalization experience for many.

As reflected in the apt title of his recent piece, Mignolo's (2017b) believes that: *Coloniality Is Far from Over, and So Must Be Decoloniality.* He is explicit about the gravity of continuing coloniality, the need for a decolonial response today, and the "necessary work of delinking from Western narratives in order to relink and affirm the modes of existence we want to preserve" (p. 39). The colonial and racial problems of previous centuries continue to haunt and affect us in different ways, in contemporary times and spheres of societal existence, including international education. Moreover, WEB Du Bois' (1903) "problem of the colour line" that perpetuated racial hierarchies and Black exclusion at the beginning of the twentieth century is still very much at work in institutions and policies in the twenty-first century, although today's colonial moment may come with added challenges and complexities. The combination of coloniality and racial discrimination present a lethal challenge to internationalization and must therefore be taken more seriously.

By virtue of their intersectional positioning as Black, African racialized, and non-national (amongst others), many Black African international students, spouses, and prospective Black African students appear to be particularly vulnerable to the interlocking systems of oppression in internationalization driven by policies that appear neutral or harmless while reproducing social death or *deathworlds* for them – sometimes through death by a thousand cuts, or in more subtle than overt ways as the evidence in this study shows. Some of these policies are creating short- and long-term harms (several of which may only be fully realized in years to come). It is therefore important to take meaningful steps at multi-policy and operational/implementation levels to stem their tide and help these marginalized students who are living at risk—from the international education border(s) outside Canada to the *integration border(s)* within Canada. It is important that policy makers and internationalization stakeholders respond to the realities that are (unintentionally or intentionally) producing or reproducing inequities that affect Black African international students' outcomes in Canada's international education model. The next chapter is a response to the findings above, including discussions supported by theoretical perspectives within the theoretical frame that underpins this study.

Chapter 6: Discussion of Findings

Introduction

The findings of this study on internationalization equity suggest that while there is some degree of congruence between international student experiences and policies that support internationalization, a consequential range of government and institutional (multi-level) policy contradictions, gaps, and inequities are contributing to the marginalization of Black African international graduate students experiences at the Canadian Public University where this research took place. In many cases, discrepant policies and policy rhetoric subtly operate through neutral discourses ensconced in a neoliberal ideology that is contributing to various forms of inequitable outcomes. The discrepancies between policies and student realities occur in the immigration, employment, academic, and social realms of student experience. While some were commonly experienced by the participants alike, other policy discrepancies were experienced in different degrees depending on the student's unique situation, positionality, or location (inside or outside the border or in the academy, such as the department or faculty to which they belonged). Some of the discrepancies between student realities and internationalization policy claims on equity are underpinned by the vestiges of colonialism and systemic discrimination and, in some cases, a lack of awareness and information that collectively contribute to negative outcomes for Black African international graduate students in Canadian post-secondary, particularly those who participated in this study at a Canadian Public University.

Clearly the findings of this study point to the need for more inclusive internationalization and equitable internationalization agendas and priorities in order to decisively address current policy gaps and inequities that disproportionately impact Black African international students in

the social, academic, cultural, and employment realms of their experience while studying in Canada. The study reveals that Canadian postsecondary institutions where African students, African faculty, and African curricula are underrepresented face the urgent challenge of how to increase African representation in these critical areas as part of a more inclusive internationalization policy despite the limited funding available. The Government of Canada and IRCC may need to collaborate more closely and positively in efforts to ensure that immigration barriers to African internationalization stakeholders such as graduate students (but also faculty and researchers) are mitigated.

The research findings also point to the existence of *anti-Black* and *anti-Black African* racism playing out as both official and unofficial policy in the immigration system, where certain Africa countries/regions including some Black French-speaking African countries appear to be deliberately and systematically targeted through disproportionate visa denial policies and practices that minimize the number of students who can come to Canada compared to other top-sending countries and regions. Amongst others, these inequitable policy practices appear to be operationalized by creating a higher financial burden and arbitrary visa refusal decisions even when the applicants appear to have exceeded requirements. These policies and practices are impacting these students' journeys at the immigration border, with many of them and their families experiencing inequitable access to visas, leading to financial, psychological/mental health, and other consequences for both students and their family members. These well-documented trends of discrimination in IRCC policy towards Africa deserve comprehensive attention because they are discordant with Canada's claim to multiculturalism as a national policy and prioritization of diversity in the 2019-2024 international education strategy.

Government at federal and provincial levels as well as postsecondary institutions must careful consider what it will take to move from a recruitment-based model (where the focus is largely on attracting and offering students admission) to a more equitable integration-based model (where international students and their spouses/families are better supported during their transition and settlement process). The strategies for an integration-based model should account for the different stages that include pre-arrival (after admission and when they are applying for visas and getting to know more about their host institution and host community/country), to arrival and subsequent integration in Canada. Inequities in any of these three phases can cause significant disruption to the internationalization experiences of these students and their families.

The experiences and perspectives of the student participants in this study also indicate that the major granting bodies who fund domestic students but deny international students major funding should consider a more equitable funding model that is consistent with Canada's policy claims of equity and true multiculturalism. Calling for such a sweeping consideration may not be too far-fetched, particularly when the students are considered to be highly skilled future ideal citizens who also pay taxes and innovatively contribute to the Canadian economy. Providing international graduate students (including Africans) access to federal funding that makes the academic journey much smoother and more productive with the promise of greater innovation and research impact may be a justifiable move in light of the current funding policy gaps identified in this study.

In several facets of the institutional level of internationalization, key actors including administrators and professionals involved with internationalization and international student support are faced with the challenge of demarginalizing the experiences and outcomes of Black international students. Amongst others, the focal points include the orientation and acculturation

support to other areas of social, academic, and cultural supports that promote a more equitable experience for them during the graduate school journey. University administrators and policy makers must pay attention to more inclusive policy construction, implementation, and experience, and ensure that racialized minority students are not left out in any part of the process.

As the research results confirm, employers and licensing institutions also play a significant role in the occupational and credential recognition experiences of newcomers because their policies and practices often act as facilitators or barriers to international student integration. The failure to adequately recognize the skills, education, and competencies that Black African international graduate spouses (and in some cases the students) bring to Canada despite the IRCC policy that supports them to work is a major concern for many international students, who as a result face the risk of unemployment and underemployment due to this form of knowledge and skills marginalization.

The role of community stakeholder organizations and entities in the local and broader community have come to the fore through this study. Their role (or failures/gaps) in promoting policies that recognize and combat anti-Black racism and the stereotyping and criminalization of international students from Africa (both at the border and inside societal spaces) is vital. How are policies and practices in sites of international student engagement such as stores, restaurants, housing accommodation, and other social spaces supporting inclusion for international students and racialized ones in particular? Interventions by the stakeholders who control or manage these spaces may prevent unnecessary trauma and stress that emanates from othering or other forms of discrimination that interfere with the students' wholesome internationalization experiences on and off campus.

An important theoretical gap and consideration also emerges from this study. Theoretically, the understanding of internationalization should move beyond the classroom or academy to incorporate the other international or internationalization spaces where student experiences are significant and contribute to their overall experience as international students in a new (global) host institution and host community as well as to their integration journey. Currently, the theory appears to inadequately capture all dimensions of the internationalization experience, particularly from the perspective of Black African international graduate students. At the very least, the notion of equity should be introduced into the definition and theorization of internationalization to ensure that those who are in different ways relegated to the margins of internationalization are also brought to the centre.

Finally, the empirical or research gaps emanating from this study, due to its limitations, suggest the need for larger studies with multi-institutional sample sets that will unearth more nuances around the issues raised here and support important policy decisions that affect the future of international higher education in Canada.

Overall, the policy gaps, incongruences, and contradictions highlighted above produce inequities that impacted the internationalization experiences of Black African international graduate students in the Canadian Public University research site. Together with the prevalence of anti-Black and anti-Black African racism in institutional and policy spaces, the gaps between policy and ground-level experience of students perennially subjugate and marginalize them. This will have both short- and long-term consequences. These issues and consequences may not be ignored in the interest of equitable internationalization outcomes for both African students and the Canadian government, institutions, and society. Failing to seriously consider and address the above issues will both compromise the success of the international education strategy for all, de-

accelerate student integration into academy and society, and result in many unrealized international education goals. All of this puts more pressure on the system instead of taking some pressure off. Underpinning some of the policy gaps and inequities impacting higher education and internationalization is a (neo)colonial system that overtly and covertly dominates, shapes, and perpetuates systemic inequities in higher education. In the spirit of decolonizing internationalization, it is therefore imperative to apply a decolonial analysis to unpack how the intersection of colonial forces and policy gaps are influencing and sustaining inequities that marginalize Black African international students in Canada's internationalization model, as well as considerations that may help key actors to combat or reverse them.

Situating My Analysis

The European (neo)colonial project that centred Whiteness, elevated White supremacy, and used modernity as an epistemological frame to dominate, control, and subjugate racialized peoples and global systems of knowledge production and ways of being is still very much at work today. This is expressed by Aníbal Quijano and Walter Mignolo, and acknowledged or alluded to in the writings of key theorists like Franz Fanon, Sefa Dei, Achilles Mbembe, and many other decolonial and critical scholars besides/after them. While efforts have been made to dismantle it, I argue that this damaging project is also very much in operation in internationalization; neoliberal and Eurocentric priorities and the inequitable policy approaches that ensue continue to turbocharge it and disadvantage marginalized and racialized people including education migrants like Black African international graduate students. The realities of this existential threat need to be more deeply interrogated, challenged, and addressed, particularly in the Canadian higher education context where it is resulting in damaging policy-

mediated integration experiences and outcomes for some Black African international graduate students and possibly many other racialized students living in the silent/invisible margins of internationalization.

To locate my study findings and implications in a critical theoretical perspective consistent with the Decolonial and Critical Race Theory of Education (DCRTE) frame, key insights are discussed in the next section using two decolonial lenses: border imperialism and necropolitics. In the context of a critical internationalization worldview, the border imperialism framework exposes the oppressive and colonial operationalization of border governance systems and structures in ways that create barriers to Black African international student access and integration in different spheres of their internationalization experience. Necropolitics extends the analytical interrogation of border imperialism to illuminate how policies, policy approaches, and sociopolitical agendas are enforced with sometimes deadly or precarious results for racialized international students and their spouses/families. This operates through the absolute political power and tools deployed by the State and its policy actors. Furthermore, necropolitics helps to illuminates how policies and policy discrepancies create or exacerbate violence and damaging outcomes for Black African international graduate students in the different dimensions of their internationalization experience while they struggle to navigate the integration process in Canadian academy and society.

Analyzing Internationalization In/equity Through a Border Imperialism Lens

This section applies the theory of *border imperialism* to aspects of policy inequities and contradictions found in my study, interrogating the gaps between internationalization policy and experiences of Black African international graduate students in a Canadian Public University. I

briefly explore some dimensions of the concept in the context of internationalization, including ways in which it impacts student experiences and outcomes at 'the borders' of internationalization. I also consider some strategies cited by theorists to reverse or 'undo border imperialism,' focussing on an international education or internationalization contexts. Harsha Walia (2013, 2021) applies *Border Imperialism* as an analytical framework for examining the root causes and impacts of global displacement and migration, including how Western nation states in the Global North exercise power and control through colonial practices, dispossession, managed migration, surveillance, securitization, criminalization (or crimmigration), labour exploitation, dehumanization, and the perpetuation of apartheid form of citizenship (what I refer to as 2nd-class citizenship) among marginalized populations.

Attracting and retaining international students is a policy priority at government and institutional levels for Canadian higher education, with international students viewed as ideal global citizens, most of who are expected to work and integrate in Canada during and/or after their studies. As economic class immigrants considered to be a part of the solution to Canada's low birth rate, ageing workforce, and increasing labour shortage problems, these students are cast in internationalization policy as future model immigrants to Canada. Despite this celebrated status and accompanying rhetoric, there is a dearth of research and literature regarding how these students experience equity in their transition from admission into postsecondary institutions and integration into Canadian society. Even less attention has been paid to the border equity experiences of students who come from Africa. Moreover, the analysis of border or migration injustice in the literature often excludes issues and challenges faced by international students living on the margins of internationalization.

Border Imperialism in Internationalization

While there is a growing corpus of literature about border imperialism in the broader sense of migration and immigration, not much has been written about it in the context of internationalization and international student experiences. In the context of international students and internationalization, both literal and imaginary border controls in Canada operate through the application of policies and practices that impact students' status as well as their ability to progress and integrate into Canada from the point of visa approval for temporary status to the recognition of credentials for employment integration and access to permanent residency and real citizenship status.

Immigration policies in Canada impact the lives and global citizenship status of Black African graduate international students who constantly negotiate the challenging borders of immigration and integration into Canada as placeless people with limited rights throughout their education journey. The deployment of harmful immigration policies and practices in leading international student host countries, such as the US and Canada, has resulted in border controls exercised to marginalize, disenfranchise, and/or exploit Black lives leading to unjust outcomes (Maynard, 2019; Walia, 2013). This has been promoted by a capitalist system and ideology that mostly exists to serve the interests of the Canadian state without much consideration given to the plight of African graduate international students. Even after managing to be among the fortunate ones who successfully cross the first immigration border following admission, international students at best remain a type of temporary foreign worker (who is allowed to work 20 hours a week and contribute to the Canadian economy). It can be argued that they remain subject to further exploitation because the work they do and the experience they accumulate is not considered by the IRCC during subsequent applications for permanent residency, despite the

value that their work added to the economy. These students remain without any real status and

are highly subject to deportation if they violate any terms of their temporary residency permit

because they are still economic refuges without citizenship or permanent residency while

negotiating the challenging and inequitable terrain of international education in Canada. As

Maynard (2019) aptly observes, "For Black migrants who live without precarious citizenship

status, placelessness is especially violently and continually enforced by the threat, or fact, of

indefinite migration detention or deportation" (p. 125).

Colonialism, Discrimination, and Anti-Black African Racism at the Border

Harsha Walia (2013, 2021) argues that systemic policies of racism and exclusion subject

or expose immigrants and newcomers to border violence perpetrated by the State. She also

believes that, through intentionally managed migration policies and practices, Western

governments bring people of colour from the Global South and exploit them while maintaining

control over them. This situation exacerbates the already precarious situation of people who are

already arriving with a number of disadvantages, such as a lack of social networks, no local work

experience, and little familiarity with the local education system in the case of international

students. Walia (2013) believes capitalism, colonialism, and racism are among the key driving

forces that fuel and sustain systems of border imperialism. Following her logic, I suggest that

marginalized and racialized international students, particularly those from predominantly Black

African countries, are among the most negatively impacted by the forces of border imperialism.

Extending the application of Harsha Walia's theory and argument, I refer to the type of

border discrimination and border violence specifically targeted at internationals of African origin

who experience a disproportionate level of rejection in visa applications as a manifestation of

anti-Black African border racism. Findings based on my study participant experiences and analysis of policy-related impact and practices demonstrate that African students appear to experience higher levels of discrimination in the form of visa denials. This is particularly true when it comes to temporary visa approvals to study in Canada or bringing their family members along even after they have received admission and presented sufficient proof of meeting or exceeding the threshold for approval. Furthermore, reports confirm that students from this region face a higher burden of financial proof because they have been required to provide higher levels of financial capability compared to students from other regions of the world (Irete, 2022). Stories of the impact of family separation experienced at the border when visas were denied to family members and tales of the hardships experienced when spouses where denied work in Canada are also real outcomes of border imperialism faced by Black graduate international students from Africa. These experiences are only a sample of the many stories that exist or voices that could not be heard due to the limitations of this study. Many more stories are hidden behind the statistics of visa refusals—refusals that reportedly appear discriminatory, vague, or unsubstantiated in several instances (based on the examples and data provided). I argue that Canada's immigration system appears to be operating through external and internal borders to create invisible walls that disproportionately exclude and harm the lives of Black African international graduate students and their spouses and families in many ways.

The external borders are constituted by Canada's excessively discriminatory external border controls that unfairly minimize the admission of eligible and qualified Black African students to Canada as ample evidence suggests. The internal borders are co-constituted by unfair employer and labour practices that continually exclude international students and their spouses from employment opportunities based on the pretext that they lack Canadian experience, and the

marginalization of foreign credentials, experience, and knowledge by licensing entities and some employers in Canada. The internal and external factors combine to create difficult and precarious conditions for many Black African international graduate students from the time they are accepted to attend a Canadian institution and need to apply for a visa to the time they arrive in Canada and seek transition to equitable employment. The social and economic barriers created by these invisible walls largely manifest in subtle and covert ways while making internationalization or aspects thereof an oppressive and marginalized experience for many with immediate and future consequences. For equitable internationalization to be achieved, an effective response to border imperialism is required.

Addressing Border Imperialism

The border is not only a site of oppression; it is also a site of resistance (Brambilla & Jones , 2021) where policies and practices that negatively or disproportionately impact groups of migrants can be challenged through a number of strategies, such as theory-based advocacy and community organizing and activism, amongst others.

To undo border imperialism, Walia (2013) both suggests and demonstrates the deployment of theory, advocacy, and praxis-based approaches for dismantling the neocolonial, racist, and hegemonic systems that control borders. These are also applicable to challenging systems of internationalization border inequities, decolonizing integration experiences, and promoting more equitable outcomes, particularly for marginalized students who are living on the margins of internationalization. Walia's approaches are located at the intersection of theory and community-based praxis, and this is a unique feature of her methods that in many ways align with Sefa Dei and Lordan's (2016, p. vii) call for "re-theorizing the *anti-colonial* for the

decolonial project of transforming schooling and education" within international education spaces. Specifically, Walia emphasizes the need for creative community spaces that foster meaningful debate and dialogue, encourage deeper self-reflexivity, and support the development of theoretical insights into how border-related systems of oppression, transformation, and liberation work towards undoing border imperialism.

Whether literal or imaginary, borders and the exercise of border controls have geopolitical and local consequences for the mobility and equitable integration of international students, and foregoing evidence suggests that Black African students are among the most at risk. The immediate and pernicious impact of border violence and discrimination on marginalized/racialized/newcomer bodies, including Black graduate internationals, is an important but overlooked phenomenon that warrants closer scrutiny and response from relevant policy and social actors.

Consistent with the Canadian model and "promise" of internationalization, which views all international students as ideal candidates for migration and integration in Canada, more needs to be done to ensure equity in policy impact and experience for students from every region of the world. Furthermore, IRCC immigration policies and practices should be reviewed to ensure that racialized students and their families, especially those from the Global South and Africa in particular, are not being subjected intentionally or unintentionally to border violence that results in more far-reaching consequences in the name of internationalization.

Considering the above measures and deploying effective strategies (Walia, 2013) to dismantle and undo border imperialism will help combat the prevalence of oppressive border experiences and outcomes among marginalized international bodies by challenging manifestations and root causes of policy inequities that serve to perpetuate such oppression.

Supporting intellectual and social justice activism that combines anticolonial theory with anti-racist and decolonial praxis to promote dialogue will help centre the traditionally ignored, unheard, or silenced experiences of a vulnerable internationalization stakeholder groups. Existing border-mediated paradoxes in internationalization policy and outcomes that manifest at the ground level among those viewed as future model immigrants will be disambiguated. Internationalization equity activism in scholarship, policy, and praxis will be enhanced and border policies decolonized. Ultimately, undoing border imperialism in internationalization will help promote social justice and equity for marginalized international students who live on the margins of internationalization, while upholding and promoting the ethics and values of global citizenship for them.

Analyzing Student Migration and Internationalization Through a Necropolitical Frame

Unlike most other Western countries where populist interests and agendas contribute to anti-immigrant/anti-migrant sentiment (or at least significantly restrict immigration), Canada's aggressive immigration policy (which intensified under the Conservative government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper and expanded under the Liberal government of Justin Trudeau) has received enthusiastic support from all of Canada's major political parties and most of its citizenry (Triadafilopoulos & Taylor, 2021). Canada boasts an internationally unique situation where the confluence of widespread public support for a diverse/multicultural society (undergirded by an official multicultural policy) and robust immigration policy work together to sustain the continuity and prosperity of the State. This and related characteristics that distinguish Canada from the rest of the world in a positive light, particularly in the context of migration/immigration, have been referred to by some as *Canadian exceptionalism* (Bloemraad,

2012; Adams & Neuman, 2018; Heath, 2017; Triadafilopoulos & Taylor, 2021). One dimension

of this exceptionalism is the heavy focus on attracting the best international students, drafting

attractive policies that are meant to provide opportunities for students to work during and after

studies, and providing access pathways to permanent immigration afterwards. As a footnote, a

key operationalizing mechanism of Canada's perceived exceptionalism is the points system-

based immigration policy that officially prioritizes the immigration/migration of the most highly

skilled and educated professionals and students (economic immigrants) who have a demonstrated

potential to contribute to Canada's economy and replenish the fast-depleting workforce. Despite

portraying Canada as a welcoming top destination, the narrative of Canadian exceptionalism has

been challenged and critiqued (Caldararu et al., 2021). Some view it as a political mythology that

needs to be more closely examined to the extent that it does not account for the discrepancies

that manifest through unspoken anti-immigrant sentiments that exist in certain societal contexts,

and the veiled implementation of discriminatory and anti-immigrant policies and practices (Time

to end the myth, 2017), while laying claim to the multiculturalism values that underpin it. Others

have been critical of Canadian exceptionalism in migration contexts (Boyd & Ly, 2021) or

characterized it as a myth that does not reflect certain realities of systemic racism or

acknowledge the histories and contributions of marginalized groups such as Black Africans and

Indigenous peoples (Millar, 2017).

Regardless of which view of Canadian exceptionalism one espouses, an undeniable fact

is that "human migration in a world of sovereign nation-states is inescapably political"

(Triadafilopoulos & Taylor, 2021, p. 13). And the impact of political tools such as policies that

influence who is allowed to cross borders, how they migrate, and what happens post-migration

cannot be underestimated. Mbembe and Meintjes (2003) assert that "to exercise sovereignty is to

exercise control over mortality and to define life as the deployment and manifestation of power"
(p. 12). In the exercise of sovereignty, which is the prerogative of government and other
institutional policy makers, policies can be put to effective and equitable use for all or can
become political tools of oppression or social death. This can manifest through the violence of
inaction and political indifference (e.g., Davies et al., 2017) among other overt and covert policy-
induced practices that negatively impact marginalized migrant subjects in both subtle and
pronounced ways over time.

The fact that internationalization is also a sociopolitical phenomenon (influenced by
political, social, and economic factors and actors) in which power relations are unequal with
consequences for winners and losers lends credence to my deployment of Achille Mbembe's
theory of necropolitics in the following analysis of internationalization experiences of the Black
African international graduate students.

Necropolitics and Internationalization Experiences of Black African Graduate Students

Necropolitics refers to the politics of death in which those with sovereign or absolute
power determine the safety, indispensability, and fitness to live, or the expendability and
precarity of, subjects or groups in a population (Mbembe, 2003, 2019). If equitable
internationalization is the goal, the question should not just be about the true intentions of the
policies or the actors that create and implement them; rather, the focus should also be on the
impact (intended or unintended) that specific policies at federal, provincial, and institutional
levels are having on the "process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension
into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education," as internationalization of
higher education is widely defined (Knight, 2003). Due consideration should also be given to the

outcomes of internationalization for people who feel marginalized or disenfranchised in the system. In this discussion, I relate necropolitics to findings from policy analysis and empirical data, and to insights from my study examining the experiences of African graduate students in the internationalization model of Canada.

Although there is no comprehensive federal or institutional data on the internationalization of Black Graduate students, statistical reports and certain empirical studies provide glimpses into the experiences and outcomes of the Black diaspora, which includes past and current international students or graduates from Africa. A review of key studies and Statistics Canada data over the last 20 years shows that Black people remain among the most marginalized in Canadian society. A research-based Canadian profile on racial differences in income and employment revealed that Black people experience some of the highest levels of employment and income discrimination (Kunz et al., 2000). A 2007 Statistics Canada report on the African community in Canada indicated that although people in the African community were more likely than the rest to have degrees, they were

> somewhat less likely to be employed, more likely to be unemployed, received the lowest income of about $6000 less than the national average, a large proportion of African employees lived below official low-income cut-offs and 47% of their children lived in low income situations. (Statistics Canada, 2007)

More recently, another analysis of Canadian immigrant labour trends unearthed similar and additional conditions systemically experienced by Black Canadians (Statistics Canada, 2021):

- Black Canadians are less likely to be self-employed;
- Black Canadians are underrepresented in management positions;

- 12.5% of Black Canadians in the labour force were unemployed at the time of the 2016 Census, compared with 6.9% of non-visible minority Canadians;

- from January 2020 to January 2021, the unemployment rate increased more among Black Canadians (+5.3 percentage points) than among non-visible minority Canadians (+3.7 percentage points) in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic;

- in the three months ending in January 2021, the unemployment rate among Black Canadians (13.1%) was about 70% higher than that among non-visible minority Canadians (7.7%);

- Black Canadians aged 25 to 54 also had a higher unemployment rate than non-visible minority Canadians in the same age group (9.4% versus 6.1%) during the COVID-19 pandemic;

- Black youth aged 15 to 24 experienced high unemployment during the COVID-19 pandemic, as almost one-third of the labour force in this group (30.6%) was unemployed in January 2021, which was almost twice the rate of non-visible minority youth (15.6%);

- one-third of Black Canadians live in a household facing financial challenges; and

- Black mothers with young children were less likely to participate in the labour market

Other national statistics show that, despite hardships in the workforce (in form of unfair treatment or discrimination), Black individuals were generally satisfied with their jobs and highly resilient (Statistics Canada, 2020), but this may also suggest conformity to conditions of marginalization in the face of very limited options. Analysis of the same national datasets also shows that although Black population experience the lowest levels of socioeconomic status (such as persistently lower employment rates and prevalence of low income), the challenges they faced could be more nuanced across different regions of the country and/or present themselves

differently within specific groups, such as among immigrants or women and men (Statistics Canada, 2020).

Findings from my study show that official and unofficial systemic manifestations of (what I refer to as) anti-Black African racist policy have been experienced by Black African students who want to study in Canada (Irete, 2022; CAIP, 2020). There is no evidence to indicate that these trends, which include various forms of socio-economic oppression and subjugation of Black students migrating to Canada, has changed. This context, along with the findings presented in the other parts of this study, support my theorization about the workings of necropolitics in the internationalization experiences of African graduate students. Despite government policies and efforts (e.g., the federal Employment Equity Act, 1995) that aim to address racial equity and discrimination at different levels, no significant change appears to have been experienced among Black Canadians. This is the overarching societal and community conditions within which Black African international graduate students and their families live. Due to a combination of written and unwritten policies and trends that adversely impact their lives, Black African international graduate students are exposed to conditions that challenge their expectations of social and ethical justice in internationalization. Such systemic and policy-induced exposure places them fall within the most at-risk categories of international students, particularly when the compounding and undeniable/inescapable effects of racism and colonialism in Canadian society and institutions are considered. From marginalized economic/employment and social opportunities to the psychological, health, physical, and generational impacts of these factors, it would be naïve to ignore them in the interrogation of in/equitable internationalization and integration realities. Necropolitics appears to be operating (covertly or/and overtly) through a series of contradictory policies and policy processes and practices at multiple levels of society (federal and institutional)

to exacerbate the precarity of these international students and largely reduce their experience and outcome to one of bare survival or worse, while they continue their obligated duties of contributing to the economy during and after studies. Necropolitics manifests in the persistent uncertainty and insecurity that many Black African international students (and their spouses) face because of their immigration pathway barriers, limited access to financial support (especially at the federal level), limited rights, experiences of criminalization and surveillance, employment and income discrimination, subjection to dominant Eurocentric systems of knowing and knowledge production, and other ways in which colonial structures and systems shape their experiences and outcomes in different realms of internationalization (including academic, social-cultural, health, occupational, or economic). Specific examples of these types of policy-mediated marginalization were addressed in the findings of my study based on participant accounts that correlated with results from a multi-level analysis of relevant policies.

Due to their precarious status and the significant pressures under which they operate, several African international students that participated in my study seemed to have experienced, observed, or were currently experiencing some conditions akin to what Mbembe (2003) refers to as "deathworlds," in which members of a population are subjected to conditions of the living dead, in which they have little to no say or options. Many students did not see going back home as an option due to several push factors (including political), while others felt stuck in the system and were ready to settle for anything as long as it helped them survive. These experiences of contradictory policies and policy inequity caused both financial and mental health pressures for some of these students who were also limited by a weekly 20-hour maximum work restriction off campus and very limited access to scholarships. The pressure was worse for the student participants whose spouses were denied job opportunities on the pretext of not having Canadian

experience. Some also struggled with the paradoxical reality that their knowledge, skills, and potential were valued before they migrated but subsequently devalued by overwhelmingly Eurocentric education curricula that excluded African perspectives, a credential recognition system that devalues their African qualifications and experience, and a work industry that discounted their spouses' non-Canadian work experience. Also worthy of note is the fact that a notable absence of mechanisms to track integration and employment experiences and outcomes of international and racialized international students in Canadian postsecondary may be concealing the necropolitical impact of certain policies on the lives of Black African graduate students, especially in light of the historical subjugation and oppression faced by the Black diaspora in Canada. For all the claims about being a multicultural nation that values diversity and equity (Campbell, 2020), the above policy gaps and contradictions may be shortchanging Canada's goals of realizing a multicultural robust workforce that includes a diversity of skilled immigrants.

COVID-19 and Related Policy Impacts

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed international students to an intersection of vulnerabilities which often occurred simultaneously and impacted them psychologically, academically and economically (Varughese & Schwartz, 2022). Most students who could not travel home due to border restrictions or other reasons were left trapped in Canada to endure the perils of the pandemic which had a disproportionate impact on the lives of Black people in Canada (ACCEC & Innovative, 2020). At a policy level, the general de-prioritization of international students' needs during COVID-19 – a common trend demonstrated in policy positions which mostly favoured citizens and permanent residents in Canada– inevitably resulted

in even more grave consequences for racialized and marginalized groups in the society, including Black international students who had limited access to assistance compared to their domestic counterparts. While the full extent of damage to Black lives and bodies during Canada's pandemic exceptionalism remains under-analyzed and under-reported, there is no denying that the livelihood of many Black international students (who had limited social ties and economic alternatives) was severely impacted by the lock downs, indefinite closure of businesses upon which they depended for employment, and limited or no access to financial aid from the authorities.

In certain cases, a combination of federal and institutional policies that were insensitive to international student realities helped exacerbate the state of precarity experienced by these students during the pandemic. For example, based on IRRC policy stipulations that allow international students additional accommodations in extreme circumstances, the Canadian Public University at which this study was conducted permitted students who were suffering from pandemic-related mental health exhaustion to take leave from studies or change their status to part-time students. However, these accommodations were contingent on strict conditions: international students who took advantage of this policy provision were prohibited from legally working or earning a living in Canada throughout the duration of their adjusted status. Both international students who were already beneficiaries of university scholarships and financial assistance as well as those who intended to apply for future awards were also prohibited from accessing them during their leave. It did not matter if the leave was taken as a result of mental health exhaustion caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This necropolitical catch-22 situation simultaneously put their livelihoods and lives at risk. In a necropolitical frame, maintaining such clearly unjust policies during a crushing pandemic could very easily be interpreted as an act of

appearing to be kind and humane on the one hand while also being devastatingly insensitive to the needs and realities of an undervalued population whose outcomes did not seem to matter as much as those of other students. It may unsurprising to learn that in order to be able to continue to earn a living and survive, many international students – particularly the most economically vulnerable and desperate – would chose to forgo the offer to taking a health leave even if such a decision jeopardized their physical and mental well-being.

Decelerated Integration

I would also like to turn readers' attention to the notion of 'decelerated integration,' which works in contradiction to the expectation of 'accelerated integration' reflected in Canada's international education strategy and policies. The stated intentions and clear expectations evident in Canada's international education policy is that international students will not only contribute to Canada's economy (through working and paying fees) while studying, but that many of them will stay behind after graduation, take advantage of immigration pathways, fill the gaps in the labour market, and advance innovation and prosperity. In the case of graduate students, most of them come with skills, experience, and qualifications that combined with Canadian education provide a competitive advantage for Canada's labour force and economy. Despite this potential and benefits they offer to Canada, many international students encounter barriers to equitable integration that make it difficult for them to settle and optimally participate and prosper in Canada. The natural consequences are longer periods of integration for these students to reach a place of meaningful contribution and actualization of Canada's internationalization promise. Many of these policies seem to have been designed to benefit the Canadian state and its institutions, regardless of the outcomes for international and marginalized students whose needs

appear to be among the least prioritized. Black graduate students from Africa appear to be amongst those disproportionately impacted compared to domestic and non-racialized students.

Moreover, widely documented research and observations reveal that, because they struggle to fit in, some Black foreign students (including those of African descent) have resorted to survivalist strategies such as codeswitching (forcing themselves to speak with a Whiter-sounding accent) and changing their surname to an English/European sounding one in an attempt to overcome barriers to access, integration, and survival. Regardless of whether policy designs that impede speedy integration are intentional or unintentional, the reality is that the contradictions, gaps, and inequities they produce continue to fuel conditions of decelerated integration outcomes that are completely antithetical to stated internationalization goals and expectations. These trends should be of grave concern to public policy makers, government departments responsible for immigration and social and economic development, as well as other influential stakeholders at every level of internationalization. When the so-called 'ideal immigrants' who should be supported through an accelerated integration processes are experiencing an onerous, drawn out process, then the system is either set up incorrectly or being implemented using the wrong mechanisms. The colonial logics of necropolitics that assign value to groups and choses winners and losers through inequitable policy processes also result in a condition of decelerated internationalization for international students. The resulting physical, mental health, and career and economic implications, if ignored, may in turn lead to other unwanted consequences for international students over time with the most disadvantaged and marginalized among them (such as African graduate internationals and their spouses) facing the highest risks. With a current and projected labour shortage in Canada, should internationalization

stakeholders not be doing more to accelerate the integration of Black African graduate international students alongside others?

Internationalization Inequity Creating a Caste System

By replicating and creating sustained situations of differential access, decelerated integration, and other policy inequities that disproportionately impact Black students, I argue that the harmful political calculus deployed through necropolitics may be gradually contributing to creating a caste system in Canadian society (hierarchical system within internationalization with more privileged at the top and less privileged at the bottom). This is affecting racialized international students and immigrants in particular, with Black African international (graduate) students among those relegated to the bottom of this developing caste system. On a general level, a Statistics Canada study reports that African-born immigrants had the lowest employment rate and highest unemployment rate of all immigrant groups in Canada (Yssaad & Fields, 2018). Most job advertisements and hiring opportunities explicitly and intentionally deprioritize international applicants while giving first consideration to Canadian or permanent residency applicants. Only when there is no suitably qualified PR or Canadian citizen candidate will international students be considered. Out of frustration and need for survival, many international students turn to menial or underpaying jobs far below their skill level—a trend that is likely replicated in thousands of cases across Canada, and most common among students from the Global South (including Africans) who also generally have less social capital and smaller networks.

Furthermore, international students' total exclusion from the most common federal granting-body scholarships (e.g., SSHRC and NSERC) and institutional experience of being

rarely selected for scholarships mean that they end up with less impressive CVs, which in turn

mitigate their ability to compete or qualify for professorial and other professional positions in

academia and Canada's workforce. For many international students (including Black Africans),

the euphoria of coming to Canada and living the Canadian dream may evaporate at the point

where the reality of unequal and inequitable access to employment becomes a reality at the point

of graduation. Others are forced to settle for menial or grossly underpaying jobs in which their

skills and qualifications are significantly underutilized. This may result in a (sometimes

prolonged) state of underemployment or unemployment, yet there are no mechanisms to track

these outcomes of internationalization. The current system whereby African international

graduate students are grappling with discriminatory funding and career challenges on top of

other forms of social and systemic barriers does not tell a progressive story about

internationalization equity. These gaps between lofty promises and incomplete policy narratives

that attract many students to migrate and the ground-level realities they encounter after migration

may be supporting future racial and social hierarchies that do not favour those on the margins.

Indeed, some may describe bringing the best, brightest, and healthiest only to subject them to

unequal opportunities and access to resources and opportunities that could help them attain their

highest potential as a form of colonialism. This appears to be the experience and plight of

international graduate students and could compromise their ultimate positioning in society, with

generational implications for their offspring whose opportunities are in many cases are limited

by their parents' resources and social location, thereby continuing a vicious cycle of colonial

marginalization that could have been prevented by more equitable policies. Mignololo (2017a)

acknowledges the colonial nature of the modern nature state:

> With the emergence of the idea of the nation-state and the definition of the 'Rights of Man and of the Citizen', doors were closed for lesser-Man and non-citizens, that is, 'non-nationals'… Non-nationals are lesser human beings; they are foreigners, immigrants, refugees, and for colonial settlers, indigenous from the land they settled in are second class nationals. (p. 39-40)

Mignolo's assertion connotes the characteristics of some host country relatable to students who feel treated like second-class citizens due to systemic discrimination experienced in key socio-economic aspects of their lives after arrival to study. While the caste creation trend may be challenged or go unnoticed in the present, the harmful social stratification and attendant consequences that it fosters in the long term will be contradictory to Canada's values of social justice and equity and further engender unintended societal inequity, inequality, and disequilibrium. Policy makers and enforcers should consider the multidimensional, long-term, and generational implications of policy contradictions and policy inequities that negatively and disproportionately impact international student groups including Black African graduate international students. The welfare of these students from Africa appears to be completely ignored or only an afterthought because their long-term equity needs, concerns, trajectory, and outcomes are not factored into policies that focus more on aspirations of Canadian prosperity and appear to deprioritize Africa in comparison to other regions of the world where Canada pursues stronger geopolitical relationships underpinned by commercial interests.

During the transatlantic slave trade, the rights (and lives) of millions of African men and women were trampled upon, and the slavers saw them people as commodities (Rowley & Behrendt, 2009) and mere expendables that could be traded for economic benefit. While internationalization of higher education involves the voluntary migration of students (and in

many cases, migration of people fleeing historically colonized economies and systems of government for a better life in Canada), the parallels between the commodification of international students and the transatlantic slave trade appear to be at least remotely (if not vividly) striking, particularly when considering students from Africa and some other Global South nations whose experiences and outcomes are most negatively impacted in internationalization.

Finally, it is a fact that despite the diversity focus of Canada's current international education strategy (2019-2024), internationalization recruitment efforts have so far been largely concentrated on a handful of nations (see Government of Canada, 2019) that the Canadian government and institutions appear to consider as better source countries. Thus, students from certain countries or regions of the world are overrepresented when compared to the volume of applications and international students received from those countries. An international student migration/immigration system where students from certain countries are favoured over others may ultimately result in a more culturally imbalanced workforce and contribute to future social, political, and economic domination by the students from preferred ethnicities or nationalities. It might also create a vicious cycle in which those who enjoy higher levels of visa approval and acceptance through government immigration policy and official institutional recruitment/admission targets are seen as the more ideal immigration candidates compared to students from countries that are viewed less favourably.

Conclusion

While the interpretation and explanation of internationalization inequity through a necropolitical lens might be viewed as extreme by some, considering it from the perspective of

the most marginalized and impacted would counter such perspectives. In the context of internationalization, necropolitics manifests through policies and practices that privilege certain members of society, positioning them to live and thrive while creating an exacerbating precarity for the marginalized. The power of this politics (necropower) is wielded to devastating effect by those who hold and exercise different forms of power, privilege, or control through policies, systems, regulations, and their implementation. Within the context of internationalization, the workings of this politics and power disproportionately impact international bodies from the Global South, particularly Black international students whose state of precarity is exacerbated by the history and continuing manifestations of anti-Black racism in Canadian higher education policy and experience. The pernicious effects of policy implementation and policy outcomes that contradict policy rhetoric have short- and longer-term consequences for the marginalized subjects or denizens whose interests are not prioritized or equitably served.

From the marginalization or delegitimization of African knowledge in their academic programs and courses to their subjection to conditions of intercultural bankruptcy, social exclusion, and various forms of discrimination and racism, the disproportionate impact of policy-related internationalization inequities on Black international student lives and bodies cannot be overstated. The consequences are real and the impacts can be grave with sometimes deadly consequences for entire families of international students, including their spouses and children.

As a response to the impact of necropolitics, policy makers and influencers should consider some essential questions that draw on the analytical lens of necropolitics to advance a decolonial and internationalization equity agenda in future policy processes.

- How might an intentional approach be adopted/applied to policy thinking and systems to liberate marginalized Black international bodies from living under the 'shadows of death'

into realms of equitable and socially just internationalization, realms where their internationalization and integration experiences are also more humanized and prioritized?

- Which students/stakeholder voices, concerns, and/or interests are negated, ignored, or silenced during policy making and impact internationalization experiences and outcomes?

- When internationalization policy outcomes are considered and measured, what are the continuing and emerging gaps between the 'promise of internationalization' and the realities of ground-level experiences among different marginalized and/or racialized groups (including Africans)?

- (In what specific ways) is the operationalization or performance of internationalization (through specific policies at federal, provincial, or intra-institutional levels) creating a visible or invisible 'deathworld' or system of oppression for members of marginalized groups in specific dimensions of their internationalization and integration experience?

- How can internationalization policy be reimagined, reengineered, or transformed to ensure more equitable and anti-colonial outcomes in academic, curriculum, socio-cultural, economic, and occupational/employment contexts (amongst other areas of consequence for international students)?

Despite the continuing threat of Westphalian sovereignty in internationalization (where states and state policies exercise absolute sovereignty and control over the lives and outcomes of their subjects), asking the above questions regularly within policy spaces that affect internationals can trigger critical and decolonial introspection that results in more equitable internationalization politics, policies, and outcomes for African and other marginalized students.

Concluding Thoughts on Findings and Analysis

Based on my findings from analyzing policy-based and human participant data, it is evident that several policy-and human actor-induced factors largely rooted in a history of (neo)colonialism and racial (or ethnic) discrimination are impacting the degree to which Black African international graduate students experience inequity in Canadian higher education. These factors operate at different levels and dimensions of students' interaction with the policies, systems, practices, and people that influence internationalization on national, provincial, institutional, and local community levels. They combine in different ways to cause the marginalization of racialized graduate students from Africa. These factors impact students' equitable access and integration throughout the three phases of their internationalization experience from the Canadian border, through the academy, to the Canadian labour market. The gaps between policy provisions and claims, and the ground-level experiences of these students, are the result of intersecting (and interlocking) systems of inequity that operate and persist at national, provincial, and institutional levels to keep students fully or partially excluded from realizing the promise of equity portrayed in Canadian international education policies.

At the same time, it could be argued that internationalization has been experienced by Black African international graduate students in Canada as both an instrument of domination and an instrument of liberation. It is an instrument of liberation in the sense that international education in Canada despite its attendant challenges provide an escape route for many international students who take advantage of the opportunity to pursue a higher quality education while, in many cases, fleeing persecution or other highly unsuitable circumstances in their home countries. On the flip side, internationalization appears to be manifesting as an instrument of domination through the criminalization of some African international students in Canadian

society (such as through overt or covert surveillance), subjection to deficit curricula experiences that exclude African authors, scholars, and thinkers while centering Eurocentric or other more popular epistemologies in knowledge production (including course syllabi) and pedagogical approaches (e.g., absence of Afrocentric approaches or Ubuntu or such options to select from), and limited exposure to and interaction with Black faculty, scholars, and Black scholarship due to underrepresentation in most institutions (disproportionate number compared to staff).

The workings of border imperialism (on external and internal borders), which systematically and disproportionately excludes/others Black African international students, and necropolitics, which perpetuates a socio-political culture, policies, and system of winners and losers or valued and the expendable (usually from racialized and marginalized groups), are detrimental to equitable internationalization futures. In the interest of a more socially just internationalization model that benefits all participants, local and global, these trends and forces that compromise or threaten internationalization goals and ideals warrant more decisive policy actions that translate into consistent ground-level experiences for Black African international students and others international marginalized in the status quo. The next section presents some ideas and recommendations for rethinking, reimagining, demarginalizing, and advancing equity in Canada's model of internationalization.

Limitations

This study is limited to a critical exploration of the experiences of Black African international (Master's and doctoral) graduate students (who identify as Black and African) from across different university faculties (at a Canadian university) who have had experiences around different dimensions of adaptation and integration (whether social, cultural, academic, and/or

employment/occupational) within the academy and Canadian society. The study focused on this unique group, whose experiences, perspectives, and narrated accounts are at the centre of my critical inquiry. The purposive sample I selected included male and female graduate students who came to Canada with the intention of settling and integrating into the society during and after their graduate studies. The human participants also included selected officials/officers directly involved with influencing or implementing internationalization policies and strategies that impact the international student participant group's equitable integration in Canada at the institutional, sectoral, and provincial (and in some cases at national/federal) levels.

Due to the nuanced nature of my qualitative study and other practical reasons (related to access to research site, participants, funding, and other critical limitations), the study is restricted to a single Canadian university research setting. The purposeful sample for my study was partly dependent on who was available or expressed interest in response to my invitations to participate. Although the participant sample includes male and female, married and single international African graduate students, only those who had completed at least one year of graduate studies were selected for the study. Any potential challenges related to these de/limitations were accommodated or addressed through a rigorous empirical approach to the study. While the findings of this study cannot be generalized to larger group, they are transferable to another research setting and would be useful as a foundation for further study and application. In hindsight, I also realize that although hardly any empirical endeavour is perfect, I could have stretched further to embrace a multi-institutional (several universities) model, as this would have allowed me access to a much wider range of research sites and population samples. If more time and resources had been available for this work, it would have provided me with a wider empirical scope or canvas for research and analysis. Nonetheless, I am optimistic that my

future research program will build and expand on this work in both university and college research settings across Canada (and maybe beyond).

Building on the findings and analysis of this study, the next and final chapter proposes ideas for reimagining an inclusive and decolonial internationalization. I also present data/evidence-informed recommendations that will assist readers and internationalization stakeholders in responding to this study.

Chapter 7: Reimagining Inclusive and Decolonial Internationalization: Final Thoughts and Recommendations

Introduction

It is more important today than ever for educators, scholars, policy makers, practitioners, and learners to envision and reimagine the future of internationalization and the role they play in contributing to a more inclusive and equitable internationalization for all, particularly those who have been the most marginalized intentionally or unintentionally by the systems, practices, policy gaps, and incongruences that impact ground-level internationalization experiences. In response to the findings of this study, in this section I briefly highlight some implications and accentuate aspects of Black excellence in internationalization. I also argue for reimagining a more inclusive and decolonial internationalization and outline critical recommendations for a more just and equitable internationalization.

Some Implications for Inclusive Internationalization Policy and Practice

The manner in which intersectionality positively or negatively affects the degree of internationalization in/equity experienced by international students may be instructive in orienting how policy makers and other stakeholders support the international education journey of these students. Findings from this study suggest implications that include the following:

- greater scrutiny of policy assemblage and implementation processes;
- reimagining internationalization through decolonial policy and practices in social, academic, cultural, and occupational/economic spaces and domains;

- accelerating integration through more equity-oriented policy processes for Black international students, spouses, and families;

- eliminating border imperialism through intentional anti-colonial/decolonial policy process and approaches;

- centering Black African international voices, perspectives, concerns, and needs from visa to PR and post-graduation employment;

- expand studies that integrate CPE (alongside other methodologies) on a regional and national level with universities, colleges, institutes, and other postsecondary actors;

- conduct comparative Canadian and transnational studies centering internationals in the margins;

- institutionalize disaggregated data collection and tracking;

- and provide more support for Black international students' agency and anticolonial activism/resistance.

Celebrating Black Excellence in Internationalization

To reimagine an equitable internationalization future, postsecondary and internationalization stakeholders must learn to appreciate and celebrate Black excellence. I start by highlighting aspects of Black Canadian excellence drawing from historical and statistical government data. Following this, I articulate my key observations of Black excellence in relation to African international graduate students at the Canadian Public University. These insights come from observing participants and the Black student group community over three years.

Despite negative and stereotypical characterization of Black people that has occurred in Canadian society, the reality could not be more different. Historical (and recent) records show

that they have "helped shape Canadian heritage and identity, and who have made and continue to make enormous contributions to the wellbeing, and prosperity of our country" in different realms of educational, economic, political and social life (Government of Canada, 2022d). In spite of the myriad barriers and discrimination many Blacks have historically faced in Canadian society, such as racism in the education system, overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, lower socio-economic status, and lower levels of representation in postsecondary (particularly among non-immigrant men and immigrant women; Statistics Canada, 2020), many Black people (in the core group of 25 to 54 years) achieve higher levels of educational outcomes compared to the rest of the Canadian population who are not visible minorities or Indigenous (Statistics Canada, 2022). The unique characteristics and identities of Black Canadians also include the rich diversity of backgrounds, ethnicities, nationalities, and cultures; they are not a homogenous group (Statistics Canada, 2019). Canada's Black population also has a higher positive outlook that life will improve in the future across both immigrant (76%) and non-immigrant (85%) groups (Statistics Canada, 2022). While these statistics and research data may not be specifically available for Black African international students, they provide what could be a useful glimpse into history, culture, and possibilities.

While much of my study focused on understanding and demystifying the discrepancies between multi-level internationalization policies and the ground-level experience of Black African international graduate students, my empirical interactions and observations uncovered interesting unique aspects/dimensions of the lives of Black students that are worth noting. Of particular interest to me were important dimensions of agency, resilience, diversity, and intersectionality identified through my interviews and observations of Black international students and their community engagement, advocacy, and contributions to the university

community. Much of the literature and studies about marginalized and racialized groups employs a deficit approach while ignoring the tremendous assets and potential that members of these groups bring and contribute to their communities and society at large. In the specific context of my study, I paid attention to the attitudes, reactions, and stories of resilience that emerged during the interviews as well as the activities of Black African graduate international students within governance and community leadership roles within the Canadian Public University.

Black Agency, Resilience, and Resistance

The student participants in my study included three individuals who were active members of a Black collective association on campus, while the rest were not actively involved in the group. One common sentiment among people from both categories was that having a Black student organization provided an avenue for much-needed community and meaningful advocacy that represented the interests of the members. I found that there was a high interest in university student governance among Black international students. In addition to participating actively in group meetings and initiatives, some were directly involved in shaping the agenda of influential student associations that led to some important policy changes such as the promotion of public university-wide discourse on matters of equity, diversity, and inclusion for students, staff, and faculty; strong advocacy for more Black representation, including the hiring of Black professors; and championing the creation of a scholarship dedicated to Black students and students of African descent.

In many ways, the Black graduate student group became a site and agent of intellectual resistance through the hosting of policy-provoking and intellectually provoking events on topics that drew attention to issues of in/equity, racism, anti-Black racism, discrimination, and other

manifestations of injustice in academia. Through strong and well-targeted advocacy, they were also able to challenge and speak truth to power and break down barriers that created policy changes and pathways for Black historically marginalized students to access critically needed funding to support their studies. They played a significant role in the mobilization of the institution's Black collective by engaging in united advocacy for change that supported the hiring of more racialized faculty at the institution; these efforts continued to bear fruit across the university at the time of writing this dissertation.

While the student group was composed of both domestic and international students, the international students played a pivotal role in pioneering and leading it for several years. I observed some degree of correlation between community engagement and certain benefits experienced by many of the active members, although this was not necessarily intended or planned. For most who were active in leadership and university/community service, such commitment directly or indirectly contributed to advancing their academic and career profiles and progression both within the academy and beyond.

In the course of my critical ethnographic study, I also observed and noted that over time, Black African graduate international students at the Canadian Public University demonstrated a disposition of resilience in their ability to quickly adapt to the new host environment and navigate a variety of challenges and encounters both within and outside the academy. In spite of limited social networks, stereotypical factors, microaggressions, and the systemic and policy-related challenges they faced at different points in their internationalization experience (from the border to the academy), students' anecdotal stories of resilience demonstrated their fortitude survive and succeed against the odds. These high levels of resilience may be related to their internal networks of support and prior socialization. At the same time, I noted that some students

appeared to experience higher degrees of struggle that required more advanced effort to adapt and integrate within an environment that was challenging on many levels.

Diversity and Intersectionality

The diversity and intersectionality among Black African international graduate students also came to the fore in my study. The profile of my participants, combined with notes documented from observations and interactions with members of the Black international graduate student community at the Canadian Public University, confirmed that these students come with different cultures, backgrounds, and social contexts, even in some cases of shared nationality. This is not surprising given the fact that many countries in Africa consist of multiple cultures and social orientations. Similar to Canada's Black population with its diverse histories, backgrounds, and experiences (Statistics Canada, 2019), African graduate international students are not a monolithic group. They represent a diversity of orientations, backgrounds, ethnicities, religions, and ideologies even when they come from a particular region or country. They are diverse in status and identity based on characteristics such as educational background, ethnicities, educational and professional history, gender, marital status, and religious orientations, amongst others. For several student participants in my study, their intersectional identities compounded their experience of oppression or inequity in international education. For example, several married student participants who migrated to Canada with their spouses struggled very much to find employment despite having solid foreign postsecondary qualifications and a significant amount of work experience and transferrable skills. As mentioned earlier in my findings, these situations caused them extreme discomfort. Another example is a participant who was heartbroken after she was prevented from bringing her 4-month-old baby

along after her family was denied a visa despite exceeding the financial and other policy requirements.

People's unique characteristics shape how they experience power, oppression, or barriers at both the systemic level and in everyday life. People from the same broad group or community may also have different intersectional identities, which results in varied experiences (or degrees of experience) of oppression and barriers and inequity within institutions and society. Intersectionality matters in a critical ethnography study because it provides a lens for uncovering how individuals with a unique combination of social identities are impacted by power, privilege, and systems of oppression and exclusion. It does so by giving them voice and reversing their erasure by accentuating their unique experiences that are otherwise buried, ignored, or marginalized in other ways. The intersectionality of Black graduate international student community members influenced the nature and degree of inequity they experienced between the border and their host institution and community in Canada. Hearing and analyzing the stories of participants showed how intersecting elements of their identities seemed to be reinforcing their exclusion and leading to other harmful consequences that impacted their well-being, such as increased levels of stress and mental health challenges. I noticed a gap that perhaps can be filled depending on the profile of future Black graduate students; this gap is that the student group did not have a space for Black parents who have unique circumstances to meet and share and draw strength from one another. Perhaps this contributed to most of the membership being single, or not having more married student parents join in the programs and discourses. This might be an area that such organizations may have to look at in order to attract and benefit from the input and active participation of a wider number of members from the Black graduate international student community. As in many other groups, it is possible some Black students struggling on the

margins need to be brought into the centre of the Black community at the Canadian Public University.

I also observed that, for several members of the group, certain intersectional factors related to their background and social network appeared to position them to a better advantage and in a slightly more privileged place than others. For example, those who had studied overseas (outside Africa) or amassed extensive experience from many years of experience seemed to be able to integrate better and faster and were in some cases more prone to easily volunteering for leadership positions.

Overall, specific dimensions of their social identity (or a combination thereof) seemed to disadvantageously locate participants, or in some cases give them some level of advantage, privilege, or opportunity within the academic, social, and cultural spheres of their internationalization journey. While the diversity and intersectionality of these students appears to have been largely ignored in the context of internationalization approaches and planning, considering such dimensions may be useful in informing more inclusive policies, practices, and initiatives that equitably accommodate them in the internationalization model of the Canadian postsecondary landscape. The manner in which intersectionality positively or negatively impacts minority students, and particularly African graduate international students, remains underexplored/under-researched despite the potential that such knowledge holds for navigation of academic success and societal integration among newcomers in Canada.

Towards Equitable Internationalization of Higher Education: A Decolonial Project

To close the gaps between policy and reality, and make internationalization equity a reality in which marginalized Black African international students thrive, action must be taken to

combat the existential challenges posed by Quijano's colonial matrix of power (Mignolo, 2007a), dimensions of which continue to covertly or overtly manifest through the interrelated domains of control (including various forms of economic/occupational subjugation, cultural, and ideological hegemony and subjectivity of knowledge, and specific types of institutional policy control) and anti-Black and anti-Black African racism. As data in this study show, these manifestations of imperialism and necropolitical power impact the life experiences and outcomes of many Black African graduate international students and their spouses (as well as other marginalized racialized students) who migrate to Canada to study and settle. The continuing and long-term consequences of multiple and intersecting inequities affecting their social, educational, cultural, economic, and occupational integration are both contradictory and inimical to the original goals of equality, access, and inclusion in Canada's internationalization model and supporting policies.

In order to realize a more equitable and just internationalization, I both suggest and propose a decolonial project in internationalization. While decolonial and critical internationalization work is already being done elsewhere, there is a call for more nuanced approaches to overcome the impasse (Stein, 2019). Besides, not much of this work has been specifically targeted at Black African students especially in Canadian internationalization contexts. The following preliminary thoughts for a decolonial project is a response that would contribute to reimagining and decolonizing internationalization from the perspectives of the students living on the margins, rather than romanticizing it from the perspectives of those located at the centre. However, it is also one that needs to be clearly defined, intentional, and adequately resourced in order to succeed. A decolonial project must incorporate Black resistance to neo-colonial repression, which has received little or no critical attention in the internationalization movement to date. Such a project will entail both an intentional disruption and realignment of

how government, institutional, and other stakeholders' policies are constructed and implemented to impact the migration and settlement of racialized students from the Global South. It will be grounded in a spirit of self-determination and faith, and will build on the foundations laid by those who came before us and who through sacrifice sowed the seeds creating pathways for the work ahead. It will acknowledge the rich histories, presence, and historical and continuing struggles of Indigenous peoples and how we as settlers have been ignorant or in any way complicit in the various dimensions of oppression they face. At the same time, it will include opportunities for improving allyship and collaboration between Black and Indigenous peoples.

In this collective and collaborative project, the hands of all key internationalization stakeholders and allies (or what many now refer to as co-conspirators) must be firmly on deck to challenge the current structures that undermine equity and promote or support the voices, values, policies, and practices that enhance equity particularly in internationalization at home (IAH) contexts. Black African graduate international students also have a big role to play in this project. As members of the future professoriate, educational leaders, and professionals in Canadian society, their input and participation is an important contribution to creating decolonized higher education and internationalization futures. Including their voices and perspectives throughout the policy making and delivery stages will be crucial to decolonizing student experiences and improving the ultimate outcomes of participating in Canada's internationalization experiment/model.

This project will integrate anticolonial theory and decolonial praxis (Sefa Dei & Lordan, 2016), and incorporate Black and African perspectives to counter the dehumanizing and harmful forces of necropolitical influences and border imperialism in internationalization by employing targeted counter politics. It will employ a *counter politics of liberation and life* that is grounded

in thoughtful, peaceful, and strategic community advocacy and activism advanced with the counter objective of creating *lifeworlds* as opposed to death worlds that sustain and perpetuate social death. These *lifeworlds* in internationalization will intentionally support societal conditions for thriving and optimal well-being in schools, workplaces, and society for vulnerable or marginalized international students at risk, deployed in ways that quickly command the attention and response of key policy and decision makers within the specific spheres of Black and racialized students' internationalization experiences (from outside the border to inside the border). This will call for coalescing focused grassroot movements in the academy that integrate Black, racialized, and non-racialized students, faculty, staff, and non-academic community members to advocate and work towards specific goals that dismantle colonial structures and systems, realign policies, and result in specific systemic changes and yield positive generational consequences for Black and racialized students alongside other members of the local community and host society.

The decolonial project in higher education is a continuing project that should respond to the evolution of internationalization while also keeping internationalization futures on its horizon. It must frame internationalization through a decolonial and intersectional lens that centres the experiences of those on the margins of internationalization to ensure more holistic and equitable outcomes. It must also be deconstructed into realistic and achievable goals or dimensions (e.g., at national, provincial, sectoral, institutional, and workforce levels) that ultimately culminate in the realization of the future desired vision or state of affairs in an inclusive internationalization model. Some of the recommendations below can be integrated into a cohesive decolonial project in internationalization that will lead to better outcomes for all

stakeholders, including the nation, the society, and (especially Black and racialized) international students on the margins.

Recommendations

Findings from this critical policy ethnography/critical ethnography study explicate discrepancies between the experiences of a marginalized and skilled international student group and policy claims that amplify or assume access, inclusion, and equity for every student in Canada's internationalization ecosystem. The recommendations that follow respond to the findings of the study, integrate perspectives of marginalized participants, and highlight ways by which internationalization stakeholders can respond to (or reverse) inequitable and harmful impacts of internationalization from a Black African student group perspective. Each recommendation is important and they are not articulated in any particular order of priority.

Celebrate and Replicate Best/Promising Practices

The findings of this study identify a few specific best/promising practices, what I refer to as some 'bright spots of inclusion and equity in internationalization,' that have worked for some Black African international graduate students. Such practices should be carefully considered, chronicled, acknowledged, and celebrated. Their replication should be also encouraged across the institution. Departments with identified best practices and policies that advance the inclusion of Black African international graduate students can share these with others as they collectively strive towards achieving a more sustainable inclusive and decolonial internationalization. The inter-departmental documentation and transfer of knowledge around best and promising practices should not be taken as embedded into institutional culture and practice.

Foster Social and Cultural Integration

Research findings from my study show that social and cultural tensions occur between international and domestic students and there is therefore a clear need to encourage greater integration between them at the Canadian Public University. This echoes previous research findings that international students have difficulty establishing strong friendships with domestic students due to internal (or interpersonal) and external (or institutional) barriers that inhibit integration (CBIE, 2015). A whole-of-institution approach that includes input from faculty in how they design and implement learning, International Students Services (ISS) units, and other facets of the university can adopt initiatives that help to mitigate these integration barriers. As I argued in Denga (2020, p. 208), fostering social and cultural integration should "create more intentional opportunities for intercultural, interracial interaction through social and cultural activities that bring both domestic and international students together to exchange ideas, solve problems and better appreciate one another's strengths (and weaknesses)."

Promote Equitable Integration Through Extra-Curricular Multicultural Events

Addressing racism and equitable integration challenges can be advanced by creating opportunities for multicultural institution-wide celebration events that bring many students, faculty, and staff (both international and domestic) together in non-hierarchical social settings where individual cultural (and international) uniqueness can be experienced and appreciated. One example would be a well-coordinated annual international food festival on campus where all the different cultural groups (from Canada and other parts of the world) are encouraged and supported to register and showcase their culinary delicacies and expertise in a diverse setting. Such universal (multi) cultural events can be integrated into official university programs,

supported by formal policy and the necessary funding required to foster intercultural and multicultural appreciation and friendships and mitigate anti-Black, anti-Black African and other forms of racism.

Decolonize and Change Inequitable Immigration Laws and Practices

An overwhelming majority of findings from the policy analysis and consensus from participants interviews point to the critical need to decolonize and make Canadian immigration law more equitable. Existing policies and practices that are causing different and disproportionate forms of violence and social death for racialized and African internationals in particular should be reviewed through a decolonial and anti-racist lens. A more humane and ethnoculturally sensitive approach to immigration decision-making involving internationals should be adopted and integrated. Some key areas of inequity that warrant attention include improving the visa approval equity for Black students from Black majority African sending/source countries that have suffered the highest degree of inequity in that area. The racist and colonial immigration practices that impact Black Africans at Canadian (external and internal) immigration borders should be checked and eliminated rather than excused or justified. Second, the policy analysis revealed policy-induced bottlenecks that prevent the smooth and accelerated integration of students. For example, while certain provinces such as Quebec allow international students to apply for and obtain permanent residency after their first year of full time studies, the federal and many other provincial immigration policies delay students' integration process because they typically require students to graduate before they can apply for permanent residence, at which point it is too late because many employers marginalize students on work permits by prioritizing employment access for PR holders. Why can this not be federal

and provincial policy across the board? The current immigration policy also currently requires that students who qualified to study and successfully completed their studies at the graduate level are still required to take an English exam in order to qualify for permanent residency. Furthermore, such students' advanced level of Canadian work experience acquired and demonstrated sometimes over a five- or six-year doctoral program does not count when they apply or are considered for permanent residency. Instead, they are expected to submit proof of work experience acquired before the five- or six-year graduate program for certain permanent residency pathway applications such as Express Entry. In another popular permanent residency pathway known as the Canadian Experience Class, students are required to work for a full year in their field following graduation before they qualify. For this pathway, it does not matter if students worked for about 20 hours a week (equivalent to 0.5 full-time employment) over a four- or five-year graduate program in their field of expertise despite this far exceeding the one-year accumulated Canadian work experience required. This policy erroneously treats all international students in all programs in the same manner regardless of the amount of highly valuable work experience some of them acquired during their program. By maintaining such policies and practices, the IRCC may be fostering inequity for many and slowing down international student integration in contradiction to the goals of economic class migration. The impact of this delay to permanent residency is exacerbated by many employment opportunities that prioritize candidates who have citizenship and permanent residence before considering candidates with a post-graduate work permit. The history, presence, and impact of anti-Black racism in much of Canadian society further compounds the immigration policy inequity for Black graduate students.

If the integration of the so-called model students is a sincere goal and not just rhetoric, then the immigration law and process should be made more equitable to accommodate them better, including those that have been systematically and perennially marginalized. This can be done by considering the relevant work experience acquired by students in their field of study during graduate school while contributing to the Canadian economy and society; for successful graduates of graduate degrees, the mandatory English exam should be eliminated as a criterion for permanent residency as the requirements for completion/certification in each graduate program (including the final examination) involves a far higher level of difficulty in all the areas assessed in the permanent residency exams.

Provide Canadian Black History Education for African Graduate Students

While Black students from Africa generally come from (previously colonized) countries that share some similarities in the history of colonial oppression, there are some differences between the Black African and Black Canadian colonial experience that are important for Black African international students to understand. The historical challenges and barriers to immigration, education, and integration that Black people have historically faced in Canada remain largely present, and Black African international graduate students have no option but to confront and navigate them just as those before them have done. To be adequately equipped to join in this cause of resistance, they will need better education about Black Canadian history, including the challenges and successes of Black people and settlers in Canada. This learning should be integrated into the curricula and university/postsecondary orientation programs for all international graduate students alongside their counterparts from Canada and other countries. In addition, Black graduate students from Africa should be exposed to information about specific

policy provisions that pertain to their rights, equity, and integration in different realms of their higher education and integration experiences. Ignorance or a lack of awareness can prevent marginalized groups from equitable access to resources and social justice. Both institutions and student associations have an important role to play in supporting Black history education.

In addition to Black History education, Black African international graduate students and their spouses/partners should be exposed to Indigenous and Canadian history education to improve their understanding, intercultural orientation, and ability to integrate more easily with a diversity of Canadians in the academy and workplace.

Adopt the Scarborough Charter

All postsecondary institutions genuinely interested in promoting Black inclusion and combating or anti-Black racism and discrimination that disproportionately harms Black African international graduate students should adopt the Scarborough Charter. As alluded to in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, the creation of the Charter represents a significant inflection point in Canadian higher education equity discourse because it raises consciousness around the history, struggles, realities, contributions, and possibilities of Black excellence when higher education stakeholders embrace Black inclusion and take a stake a firm stand against anti-Black racism. Since its launch, many postsecondary institutions have still not signed up or subscribed to the Charter despite the widespread acknowledgement of anti-Black racism in Canadian society and its institutions. At the very least, every university or postsecondary institution interested in eliminating or mitigating inequity for domestic and international Black students and stakeholders should immediately adopt this Charter and collaboratively work with other signatories to achieve better policy outcomes related to anti-racism and Black inclusion.

Address Gaps and Silence in University/Institutional Policies

Addressing institutional policy gaps and silences is imperative at different levels. Improving professional development programs offered by the university with international students' needs (and potential) is needed, as is incorporating culturally appropriate and relevant content and elements that facilitate and fast-track student integration into Canadian society and the workforce, as this will enhance the ability of such training to position students to succeed beyond university.

Curriculum and epistemological gaps should be addressed by including Black and Afrocentric scholarship and research in course outlines and curricula wherever possible. Postsecondary institutions must also equip and motivate teachers/educators to deliver it. Furthermore, mandatory components should be required for every new hire and form part of the evaluation process.

Policy silence should be addressed through a review of policies to include a clear policy stance against anti-Black racism, which should be specifically mentioned in equity, diversity, and inclusion policies and strategy documents for the university and its international education offices. Whilst all department and faculties may not be able to provide an equal level of funding, a basic level of funding should be available before any graduate student that is admitted, and this should be a non-negotiable for PhD students who are engaged in more advanced research work. Administrators in faculties and departments, curriculum developers, and/or course designers all have a role to play in making useful contributions towards addressing gaps and achieving equity in administrative, departmental, and curriculum activities that impact Black African international students.

Apply Decolonizing Policy Approaches at Multi-policy Levels

The battle and quest for an equitable and decolonial internationalization will be won or lost in the realms of policy and policy activism that target the decolonization the university, challenge anti-Black racism, and promote inclusion for Black and other marginalized groups traditionally relegated to the periphery in academic and societal institutions. These considerations were not necessarily front and centre in the conception of internationalization and its adaptation for mainly neoliberal objectives.

At multi-policy levels, it is critical that internationalization stakeholders, particularly policy makers and influencers at every level, intentionally do more to integrate an equity lens in every facet of the internationalization policy experience. Such work will need to address policies from the federal government (including IRCC, Global Affairs, and other departments and bodies that contribute to internationalization policy and strategy) to the institutional level (such as curriculum development and delivery, and university/faculty/departmental funding policies and practices). This will require a more concerted effort to identify and address how colonialism continues to inform how policies (from visa approval, permanent residency pathways, equitable federal funding, and course curricula) are constructed, presented, implemented, and experienced. It will mean challenging taken-for-granted assumptions, championing more inclusive approaches in every dimension of policy, improving systems to track accountability, and engaging in regular disaggregated data collection to better inform policies and strategies related to internationalization. It will also mean providing more opportunities/spaces for past and current international students and professors from minority or underrepresented groups to participate in consequential policy processes and decision-making at all levels of the internationalization model. Wherever existing policy discrepancies are identified, corrective and comprehensive

responses should be swift and informed by the periodic collection of data at each level of policy experience (such as federal, provincial, institutional, faculty, departmental).

Promote Intellectual Activism

Intellectual activism should be viewed and used as a medium for engaging with policy decision-making stakeholders at all levels of internationalization by systematically speaking the truth to power to challenge, dismantle, and reverse the negative and inequitable systems and trends in internationalization. In doing this, we should consider Collins (2013, p. 38) standpoint that "speaking the truth to power in ways that undermine and challenge that power is often best done as an insider. Some changes are best initiated from within the belly of the beast." Intellectual activists should immerse themselves in the system without corrupting themselves or becoming complicit, so that they are better able to understand its workings and develop the most effective ways of speaking truth to power of behalf of marginalized groups in internationalization. Collins (2013) also emphasizes the importance of "speaking truth to the people" (p.38) as another dimension of intellectual activism, and underscores the value of practicing dual or multiple forms of truth-telling in different languages that a variety of target audience can understand, particularly in "heterogenous democratic societies with diverse groups of people" (p. 41). This approach can help create maximum impact and change in various spheres and at multiple levels of internationalization policy decision-making and practice.

Scholars should systematically engage in creative intellectual activism that combines rigorous scholarship with activism through critical writing and mobilization of knowledge on pressing issues of internationalization equity and racism from the perspectives of the marginalized. Such writing can include a diversity of (formal and creative forms of) text that

accurately represent the realities and narratives of the most marginalized, silenced and under researched student groups while also inspiring meaningful and consequential debate in public policy squares. While embarking on such decolonizing and equity-advancing internationalization endeavours is challenging, the long-term benefits of truth-telling and intellectual activism go far beyond creating systems that support the increased attraction of students to Canada and Canadian institutions as preferred destinations of international education. It will mitigate the perpetuation of a caste system in internationalization (in which there are clear winners and losers from start to finish among student groups). It will also help combat trends of societal inequity driven by discriminatory immigration system or/and immigration conditions in the places where international students live, learn, and integrate.

Advance Equitable Internationalization Through Community-Based Activism

I believe that the responsibility for more equitable and decolonial internationalization cannot be simply left to policy makers, hence the importance of community activism. As Harsha Walia (2013) suggests, activism is a potent tool for undoing border imperialism, a phenomenon that clearly manifests during the experiences of international students from the border of entry (where families have been unjustifiably separated or qualified countries have been denied without good reason) to the point of workplace integration (both for spouses who accompany international students and international students who face unexpected barriers to unemployment). As a current and growing critical mass with increasing representation and political power, international students (and particularly those facing marginalization and greater barriers to integration inside and/or outside academy) should engage in peaceful activism that mobilizes other marginalized students as well as allies) to challenge colonial, racist, and anti-Black

institutional policies and systems and practices at work in the different realms of their experiences in curricular, extracurricular, financial, occupational, and other social contexts. The aims, goals, and operationalization of such activism should be thoughtful, targeted, and systematically deployed through advocacy, discourses, community building initiatives, and events that draw attention to the potential, needs, and stories of international students. While maintaining the integrity of their original cause, activist groups should engage in clear and sustained messaging through platforms that amplify their voices and visibility. They should incorporate extensive consultation and collaboration with key allies and accomplices to support or facilitate the speed of policy change and the reversal of inequitable practices.

Institutionalize Africa Studies and Research: A Centre/Institute of African or Black Studies

While there has been a recent wave of Black Canadian studies programs mushrooming across Canadian in recent years (Francis, 2019; Benchetrit, 2021; Orford, 2021), there is need to go beyond this to truly institutionalize Black and African studies across Canada. The Canadian education and postsecondary system is in dire need of such well-funded and well-resourced centre/institutes. Institutional decolonization cannot be adequately advanced without doing much more to institutionalize Black and African studies. As such, I join my study participants to strongly recommend the establishment of a Centre or Institute of African/Black Studies and Research at the Canadian Public University (the site of my study).

The erasure, silencing and delegitimization of Black peoples, their cultures, knowledge and ways of knowing in the history of Canadian/Western education and policies warrants a more comprehensive approach to addressing the status quo. A systemic approach is required to close the gaps and shortcomings that continue to marginalize Afrocentric and Black ways of knowing

and producing knowledge and research. In addition to its epistemological significance for supporting more culturally relevant and inclusive curriculum and pedagogies for interdisciplinary purposes, such a Centre or Institute would provide a platform for mentoring and supporting domestic and international students who need an intellectual and cultural space to thrive and experience the African or Black dimension of internationalization. African and Black-centred diaspora research can also be the focus of this Centre. Amongst others, this will help interrogate and shed light on phenomena that affect African and other racialized and marginalized people of colour, while providing opportunities for research collaborations in local Canadian and transnational or comparative education contexts. The Centre/Institute research can, inter alia, focus on important problems that affect people of Africa diaspora in their life course and identify the systemic and discriminatory barriers they face. Research initiatives through this Centre will produce evidence-informed policy correctives or solutions to critical issues faced by Black internationals and Canadians and enhance their ability to thrive and contribute to the Canadian society.

The Centre's existence will allow for more centralized planning, coordination, and implementation of initiatives targeted at uplifting and supporting the African diaspora within and outside the university community. Furthermore, it would be a veritable platform for engaging with civil society, community organizations, and industry/employers towards dismantling stereotypes about African culture, exchanging information, and creating pathways for better and faster integration of African students into Canadian society. Black communities, the Canadian Public University and postsecondary institutions, and the broader community and society at large will all be beneficiaries of the type of work such an organization can do in the interest of more comprehensive and equitable internationalization and multiculturalism. Host institutions should

go beyond creating isolated Black studies courses or minors and support Black professor

initiates to establish Centres or Institutes of African or Black studies (see Carlton University as

an example) that offer undergraduate and graduate level degrees and certificate programs. Doing

this will ensure more a comprehensive and institutionalized approach to integrating an

intercultural dimension in the purpose, function, or delivery of postsecondary education with

more widespread, generational/long-term implications for internationalization equity and

institutional decolonization. The scope of activities and services of a Centre for African Studies

can be incremental (beginning with a manageable range of programming to address most urgent

needs), and should be decided through consultations with the postsecondary institution, Black

academic and other community stakeholders from the African diaspora, amongst others. A rich

curriculum that includes Black Canadian history and centres other African/Afrocentric studies

and epistemologies will enhance the institution's internationalization goals and set the institution

apart. To be clear, the reference to African and Black studies should be understood to encompass

studies that also centre knowledge, knowledge keepers, and theorists from the continent of

Africa in addition to Black Canadian and other forms of Black scholarship (in the spirit of

internationalization equity).

Promote Equitable Employment Pathways for International Students and Spouses

The findings of this study suggest the need for more inclusive and equitable employment

pathways for Black African graduate international students and their international spouses, many

of whom are either underemployed or denied employment opportunities on the pretext of a lack

of Canadian work experience or credentials. Employers need to make the shift from a deficit-

based to asset-based view of international students and the skills and potential they bring to

enrich Canada's workplace, especially when provided the necessary trust and support. The intensity with which internationalization is marketed overseas to attract international students (including from Africa) should be replicated in marketing the potential, skills, and experience that these students bring to employers in Canada. Employers should be made aware of the benefits of employing international students (and their spouses), creating incentives for employing internationals, promoting policies that enhance gainful and equitable post-graduation employment for international students, encouraging culturally appropriate work and mentoring practices in the workplace, and eliminating licensure barriers experienced by many students whose credentials are not recognized, as such efforts will go a long way to level the playing field and provide greater (and faster) employment access for international students. Federal, provincial, and municipal governments should highlight the value of African and other international students to the economy in the context of a depleting and aging Canadian workforce, and remove the barriers that decelerate or prevent their integration into the Canadian economy and society (which is the cornerstone of internationalization policy at federal level) because of the skills that they (and their spouses) bring to Canada. The current Express Entry and Canadian Experience pathways to PR devalue and ignore the part-time work experience (20 hours a week or more in certain circumstances) legally acquired while studying in Canada. This policy should be revised to provide more equitable and accelerated PR pathways for international students.

Alongside specialized academic and interdisciplinary studies, universities should offer (enhanced) professional development programs that focus on the most important skills and competencies required by international students. Certain career and professional development programs services should be offered for free to international students. International students'

spouses or partners should also be offered these services for free at least in the first one or two years to fast-track integration. The rationale is that students (and spouses) who integrate quickly are more likely to experience equitable outcomes and avoid being stuck in a cycle of unemployment or underemployment when they are supposed to be contributing their skills and knowledge to the Canadian economy while also living up to the policy billing that views them as ideal immigrants.

The government and IRCC could explore ways of helping students qualify for PR before they graduate instead of continuing in a state of precarity, which the Post-graduation work permit still forces them to do in many cases because of limited access to work opportunities. Other provinces can emulate the practices of Quebec's and BC's immigration systems that allow students to apply for and transition into permanent residency status, as this increases their chances of employment as certain job openings prioritize Canadian citizens and permanent residents before considering international students or graduates on a work permit.

Improve Black (African) Representation in Internationalization Policy and Practice

Representational equity is needed. This is applicable to the different touchpoints or spaces of frontline internationalization experience where students encounter people. Considering the currently low number of racialized faculty across postsecondary institutions (including my research site), there is an urgent need to double efforts around hiring a diversity of Black professors. It is critical that such hires should include international student graduates. While recruitment should include Black Canadian and permanent resident job candidates, it is also very important that international student graduates and other internationals of African descent be equally considered for these positions. The staff complement among administrative staff and

university leaders and administrators should also be further diversified to include higher Black

African representation.

Similarly, the International Services Offices of postsecondary institutions should include

Black African representation in decision-making and service delivery to students. Institutions

should employ Black Africans with Canadian immigration expertise to ensure more culturally

diverse and appropriate services are available. Certain continents or ethnicities should not be

preferred over others if the creation of an equitable internationalization experience is a priority.

Existing international services officers should be exposed to intercultural training by experts that

represent the different ethnicities that are being served within the graduate and general student

body. Seeing people who look like them and understand them better on the frontlines of

international service delivery may encourage more students to use and achieve satisfaction from

the uptake of these international services.

Hiring initiatives in postsecondary should pay more attention to underrepresented groups

and people of African descent (such as the type of cluster hiring initiatives recently demonstrated

by several Canadian universities including Queen's University, the University of Waterloo, and

the University of Alberta). While this practice has now also been adopted by the Canadian Public

University in this study, the number of Black professors remains extremely disproportionately

low and indicates the need for an ongoing Black hiring strategy for Black and Black African

professors with support from the provincial and federal governments as well as private donors.

There is the potential that these measures could significantly enhance the university's

international reputation and integration of the intercultural component in the delivery of

internationalization for Black, African, and other students. Institutions also need to set up these

new hires to succeed by providing the necessary supports, mentorship and preventing the

debilitating effects of disproportionate levels of emotional labour they are often subjected to in comparison to their non-racialized colleagues.

Support Credential Recognition for International Students

Systemic and sectorial barriers to licensing and credential recognition should be addressed and systems and processes put in place by provincial governments and professional sector gatekeepers to fast-track the process of credential recognition. This will allow more internationally trained students (including Africans at the graduate level) to attain gainful employment, integrate within their professional fields, and avoid delayed/decelerated career trajectories and productivity. Doing this will also exert a significantly positive impact on the skills shortage and economic stability at sectoral, provincial and national levels.

Institutionalize Training in Anti-Black Oppression, Anti-racism and Anti-Colonialism

Much of the current anti-racism in education and training provided in postsecondary institutions is shallow and superficial. In many cases, it does not address the root problems, histories, and structures underlying the continuing systems of oppression and discrimination that plague the academy and differently impact African, Indigenous, and other historically marginalized students of colour. In response to the prevalence and persistence of discrimination and the neocolonial forces that reproduce oppressions through policy inequities and practices, governments and postsecondary institutions will do well to institutionalize training around anti-Black oppression, anti-racism and anti-colonialism. Such learning will help decolonize minds while fostering a shared understanding, competence and the ability among policy actors, staff, faculty, and other stakeholders to combat colonialism, oppression, and different forms of racism.

Importantly, the anti-racism training agenda must address anti-Black racism, but also illuminate how anti-Black African or Anti-African racism (racist policies and attitudes that specifically and disproportionately impact Black and Black international students of African descent) has been largely ignored so far. Faculty, staff and students should be able to access this training to improve their literacy around racism and their ability to internalize and advance anti-racist values and culture through their pedagogy/teaching, research and/or service. This holistic and more granular approach to understanding and combating racisms and the forces that support their manifestation will be instrumental in dismantling them and reversing their impact in internationalization.

Address Mental Health/Other Health Factors

This study shows that the constellation of inequities experienced by Black African international graduate students can compound the physical and mental health of these students, leading to more risky or dangerous conditions for both students and family members. Efforts should be made to create more awareness of resources available to manage mental health and to address the underlying factors that exacerbate mental health conditions among these students. Attention should be given to understanding and addressing how intersectional mental health marginalization (Salami et al., 2021) might specifically be impacting the mental health of Black African graduate international students (and their spouses or families) in disproportionate ways. The debilitating effects of stress and inequitable or necropolitical policy influences on all aspects of student health should be better understood and addressed at institutions of higher education, including through the availability of more culturally appropriate services and professionals.

Promote Equity and Inclusion in Internationalization Research/Future Studies

Supporting empirical initiatives that integrate an EDI lens and approaches is a sine qua non for meaningful internationalization inquiry with equity-advancing objectives. Not enough is researched or reported about the internationalization experiences of Black African international students and how policy narratives and practices impact their higher education outcomes. Funders, sponsors, and granting bodies at all levels should do more to support internationalization research that focuses on understanding and addressing the needs, concerns, challenges, and opportunities of such marginalized groups within Canada's international education contexts.

Disaggregated data collection, analysis, and application should become the standard rather than remaining a debate. Adopting and institutionalizing disaggregated data collection approaches will be helpful in understanding and measuring how internationalization policies, initiatives, and practices are impacting Black international students, amongst others.

Activating mechanisms to systematically collect and track disaggregated data at program, faculty, institutional, provincial, and federal levels would be extremely helpful for measuring trends, progress, and accountability and supporting EDI decision-making. A more nuanced or granular understanding of the qualifications, backgrounds, needs, and concerns of international students from across the world, including those from Global South and African countries, could inform institutional, provincial, and federal government strategies around funding and employment support, amongst others.

There is a dearth of comparative empirical studies on student experience across Canadian postsecondary institutions let alone comparative studies on experiences of in/equity in internationalization. Scaled critical and phenomenological studies will enhance deeper

understanding of experiences and in/equity operating in internationalization, and how these are impacting international students or being navigated by them.

I call for more comprehensive, collaborative, and comparative studies on both diverse and racialized international graduate students in every consequential sphere of their student experience and integration in academy and society. This should be operationalized across all postsecondary institutions (universities, colleges, etc.) and among/between various groups of student stakeholders. Doing this will generate a more complete picture of the performance and impact of the multi-level policies that are meant to support or effectuate internationalization goals and outcomes for students. More nuanced inter-provincial comparisons and establishment of internationalization best practices on a national level will also support the reimagination and work towards improved higher education futures.

Last but not least, longitudinal studies will assist with long-term tracking of trends, shifts, and developments within and across multiple windows/periods of Canada's international education strategies; they will also help federal, provincial, sectoral, and institutional policy makers monitor policy impacts on the internationalization outcomes of African and other migrant students and improve supports for their integration into the Canadian higher education, labour market, and society.

Tracking and Matching Educational Outcomes to Workforce Needs

Governments and institutions should work together to institute or improve tracking of employment outcomes of postsecondary graduates in general, and Master's and doctoral graduates including domestic and international students in particular. Alongside comprehensively tracking who is graduating and where they end up working, more effort should

be made to match workforce and industry needs to international education priorities. This may better orient the attraction and immigration of international students who want to study and settle in Canada. As opposed to following a haphazard or solely economically driven motive, a more thoughtful data-driven approach may ensure that domestic and international students find meaningful jobs that match their skills after graduation while contributing to the closure of specific gaps in the workforce and industry.

Promote Paradigm Shift: Immigration-Friendly to Integration-Friendly Policy Approaches

Currently, there is an overwhelming disproportionate amount of effort and resources dedicated to policy-based practices for attracting and inviting fee-paying students to study in Canada, including those from African regions. This can change if international education stakeholders negotiate an ideological, strategic, and practical shift from immigration-friendly focused approaches to integration-friendly policy approaches in internationalization (Denga, 2019). This will require that they commit commensurate or higher levels of investment into ensuring that African and other racialized students are supported to overcome barriers and exploit opportunities in the key domains of their post-migration internationalization experience.

Expand internationalization partnerships/collaboration with minority sending countries

On a geopolitical level, it might be beneficial to consider expanding strategic relations with other current and potential source countries as this appears to be an influential factor in internationalization policy. Furthermore, as I suggested in Denga (2020, p. 208), "expanding scope and equity of collaboration with Canada's internationalization partners - countries, organisations, academic institutions from so called third world countries - including those

associated with racialized international students' origins could ultimately contribute to more equitable internationalisation experiences for all." Intentional collaboration and academic and cultural exchange programs with diverse African countries may do more to level the playing field and increase transnational and intercultural understanding while optimizing intellectual synergies across many areas and fields of cooperation. The above and other equity-advancing geopolitical and transnational initiatives should be integrated into the overall internationalization architecture.

Opportunities for New Theorization(s)

My research findings confirm the opportunity and necessity to explore further theorization as initially mused in the second chapter of this dissertation. (For example, see references to LatCrit, MultiCrit and IntCritt possibilities articulated in Chapter 2). New or extended theorizations should consider the juxtaposition of critical theories with decolonial theories (such as necropolitics and border imperialism) in the context of internationalization equity, access, and inclusion particularly for (but not limited to) Black and Black African international students and their spouses. Specific attention should be given to understanding these education-migrants' life experiences before entry into Canada, upon entry into the Canadian higher education system and society, and their post-graduation experiences and outcomes in the labour market and society. It will shed further light on their settlement experiences and the barriers and facilitators that impact their equitable integration during and beyond their studentship. Theorization of the emerging phenomenon of anti-Black African racism should also be further explored and deconstructed as a specific type of racism that appears to affect students of Black African descent in systemic and unique ways compared to

others in the Canadian/Western/colonial education system. Closing the equity gaps between policy rhetoric and the marginalized student experience will necessarily include embracing theoretical approaches that further illuminate, deconstruct, debate, and challenge the nature and impact of such policy gaps on marginalized bodies and the internationalization project.

A Final Word

My study both unearths and confirms specific incongruences between African graduate international student realities and Canadian government and institutional policy claims on equity, inclusion, and access in internationalization. Critically, it highlights and explicates multi-level policy contradictions, gaps, and inequities underpinned by lack of awareness, neoliberal, colonial, and, in some cases, anti-Blackness (Blanco, 2020) and anti-Black African racism, from the perspective of Black graduate students in a Canadian Public University that expect equitable integration during and after their studies. At the same time, the study identifies opportunities for optimizing the agency of Black students and replicating or extending some best practices already demonstrated in the context of internationalization equity.

Although some of the issues identified in this empirical work may also affect other international students or minorities, the disproportionate impact on racialized graduate international students (particularly Black African international graduate students and their spouses and families, who in many cases are faced with additional layers of inequities and barriers as well as lower levels of social capital) cannot be downplayed. This study raises further questions about the integrity of internationalization policy construction and implementation. These questions include: Who is benefitting the most from Canada's policies on internationalization? How are the policies and policy contradictions impacting the goals of

internationalization, including the short- and longer-term outcomes of Canadian international students in the margins? How can the Canadian government and a postsecondary institution equitably accommodate the views and realities of minority international students in policy making and implementation at every stage of their immigration and integration journey? What should the government and local workplaces and organizations do to decolonize systems and practices that currently present barriers to integration for international African graduate international students in a Canadian locale?

Along with deconstructing policy contradictions and gaps, and how these and other factors and realities adversely or disproportionately impact the integration and immigration experiences of Black African international graduate students within and outside/after the academy, my findings represent a call to introspection and action for host country and host institution internationalization stakeholders. These actors need to be more invested in reimagining/reconfiguring internationalization policy and practice towards socially just outcomes for all. In addition to asking themselves tougher questions (including those raised in my study), they must act intentionally towards more equitable or win-win internationalization models that result in better outcomes for everyone. If bridging the gaps between policy and ground-level experiences is a priority, the concerns and needs of racialized minority groups such as Black African graduate students living on the margins of internationalization should no longer be ignored. Moreover, in internationalization futures where equitable policies and practices will become a competitive and strategic advantage, invested host country governments and institutions cannot remain indifferent. All stakeholders will need to understand and play their role in closing the gap between internationalization theory/policy and the realities experienced by racialized and marginalized international students.

The claims, assertions, and rhetoric reflected and conveyed in policies that support internationalization must match policy actions on the ground, and both should account for the fact that Black international student lives (George Mwangi, 2020) and Black African international graduate students' lives also matter. The mythologization of internationalization equity at the expense of understanding and responding to the concerns of its most vulnerable and marginalized participants is an existential barrier to realizing the inclusive and win-win higher education futures that many local, national, and global stakeholders desire. While appreciating the progress made in internationalization, we must systematically dismantle the barriers that remain and close the gaps between policies and equitable student integration experiences in Western host countries such as Canada.

Table 4

Study Participants

#	Pseudonym	Participant Role	Country/Region of Origin	Faculty/Division	Gender	Marital Status
1.	Mark	Official involved with Internationalization	Canada	University International Office	Male	Married
2.	Anna	Official involved with Internationalization	Canada	University International Office	Female	Married
3.	Cindy	Official involved with Internationalization	Canada	University International Office	Female	Married
4.	Lewinsky	Official involved with Internationalization at policy interpretation & implementation level	Canada	Faculty responsible for Graduate Studies	Male	Married
5.	Adele	Official involved with Internationalization at policy interpretation & implementation level	Canada	Faculty responsible for Graduate Studies	Female	Married
6.	Laura	Official involved with Internationalization at policy interpretation & implementation level	Canada	Dean's Office responsible for Student Affairs	Female	Married
7.	Chinyere	Doctoral Student	West Africa	Sciences	Female	Single
8.	Alphonsus	Doctoral Student	West Africa	Sciences	Male	Single
9.	Edaza	Doctoral Student	West Africa	Social Sciences and Humanities	Male	Married

10.	Itoro	Doctoral Student	West Africa	Sciences	Male	Married
11.	Muhire	Doctoral Student	East Africa	Sciences	Male	Married
12.	David	Master's Student	West Africa	Social Sciences and Humanities	Male	Single
13.	Beatrice	Master's Student	West Africa	Social Sciences and Humanities	Female	Married
14.	Alfred	Master's Student	West Africa	Sciences	Male	Single
15.	Richard	Master's Student	West Africa	Social Sciences and Humanities	Male	Married
16.	Idubor	Master's Student	West Africa	Social Sciences and Humanities	Male	Married
17.	Ignatius	Doctoral Student	West Africa	Social Sciences and Humanities	Male	Married
18.	Eugene	Doctoral Student	West Africa	Social Sciences and Humanities	Female	Married
19.	Amahoro	Doctoral Student	East Africa	Sciences	Female	Single
20.	Usman	Doctoral Student	West Africa	Social Sciences and Humanities	Male	Single
21.	Daniel	Doctoral Student	West Africa	Sciences	Male	Single
22.	Martin	Doctoral Student	East Africa	Sciences	Male	Married

This demographic table represents a total of 22 participants who took part in the data collection: six officials participated in interviews and 16 students participated in two focus groups and 10 interviews.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Introductory/Information Letter and Consent Form

Dear Participant,

Background
You are being asked/invited to participate in this study because you we view you as a potential information-rich participant who can contribute valuable information to this study that examines the relationship between Internationalization policy provisions on equity and access, and the actual ground level integration experiences of international African graduate students at a Canadian University.

The results of this study will be used in support of my doctoral thesis in the Department of Educational Policy Studies, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta.

Before you decide, one of the researchers will go over the attached consent form with you. You are encouraged to ask questions if you feel anything needs to be made clearer. You will be given a copy of this form for your records. Note that while the COVID-19 situation remains in place, data collection through interviews and focus groups can only be done virtually or via online technology. In such cases where only virtual participation is possible, your verbal consent will be collected/confirmed and recorded separately, prior to your participation in the study. A copy of the recorded consent will be shared with you for your records.

Purpose
The purpose of this research is to identify and explicate the incongruences between internationalization policy statements on inclusion and equity, and the everyday realities/experiences of the primary research participants- Black international African graduate students who have immigrated from Africa to study and integrate in Canada. The study also aims to identify both the barriers/challenges and opportunities that the research participants navigate in their internationalization process, and how this affects their sociocultural, academic and occupational integration experiences and outcomes. The outcomes of the study will address existing gaps in the literature, help explain the discrepancies between internationalization policies and ground level experiences of a racialized, visible minority international student group, and ultimately contribute to improved approaches to internationalization.

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to express your interest to participate in a proposed research project aimed at investigating the experiences of African international graduate students in the Canadian university system. The objective of the research project is to closely examine how inclusion and equity is experienced by a minority group (Black African graduate international students) within Canada's internationalization model in higher education.

Study Procedures
- The research process will involve the collection of a variety of data through various methods from different groups of participants. The first group of participants will comprise up to 12

Black African international graduate students who will take part in interviews. The second group of participants will similarly comprise up to 12 Black African international graduate students who will take part in 2 Focus Group sessions. The last group of participants will be (6) Administrators or officials experienced in interpreting and/or implementing internationalization policies, who will also be interviewed. Some of the graduate student participants will also be observed in naturalistic settings during public events and activities that provide further insights into their integration experiences in the context of internationalization over an extended period.

- **Details of data collection:**
  - **Interviews with graduate students:** 12 semi-structured interviews will be conducted with African international graduate students, each lasting for about 1 hour. Only those (self-identified) African graduate students who intend to stay and work in Canada after graduate school will be eligible/selected to participate in these in-person interviews. These interviews will provide individual perspectives about internationalization experiences of participants in relation to internationalization policy provisions on equity, access and inclusion. Each interview will last for about one hour approximately.
  - **Interviews with officials:** 6 semi-structured interviews will also be conducted with experienced administrators or officials who have been working in the context of internationalization or international education policy interpretation and/or implementation for 5 years or more. Their perspectives will contribute to further or more holistic understanding of how internationalization is interpreted and implemented from practitioners' perspectives. Each interview will last for about one hour approximately.
  - **Focus Groups with graduate students:** 12 students will be engaged in 2-hour two focus groups involving 4 to 6 participants each. Each group will collectively discuss and have a dialogue around issues related to their experiences around internationalization policy and practice in different realms (social, cultural, academic, occupational/employment) in the academy/university.
  - **Naturalistic Observation of graduate students:** over a four to six-month period, graduate student participants will also be observed in naturalistic settings during public events and activities that provide further insights into the equitability and inclusivity of their internationalisation experiences on the university campus.
  - While interviews and focus groups sessions will be recorded to ensure that the data is fully and accurately captured for analysis, the observation data will be recorded in field notes for subsequent analysis.
  - **Virtual Option for Interviews and Focus Groups:** Where it is not possible for you to physically participate in interview or focus group processes, virtual data collection will be employed using technology, i.e., Google meet video conferencing. You will be provided with a google meeting link through which will be able to join and participate in either an interview or a focus group –depending on which one you volunteer to participate in. Verbal consent will also be collected and recorded prior to your participation in the study. The data between the user and Google for video meetings is encrypted by default. All other data collection details and procedures related to the interviews and focus groups will remain unchanged (or as documented above in this section).

- **Procedures for Data Management**:
  - Strict and systematic data management procedures are in place to ensure the responsible, confidential and discrete processing of data through collection, initial storage, transcription, coding and thematic analysis, writing and knowledge dissemination, and eventual disposal of all data after 5 years.
  - After initial capture of data (during interviews and focus groups) using audio tapes, the data will be uploaded for transcription. After transcription, the data sets will be coded and thematically analyzed (together with the field notes) to identify patterns and themes and silences. Both transcripts and synopses of the analysis will be returned to members for verification of data collection and member checking-- to enhance the credibility and overall trustworthiness of the research.
  - With your consent, some study information will also be kept in a secure data repository to facilitate future research.

Benefits
- All respondents will also be provided with excerpts of the final results/outcome of the study.
- We hope that the findings from this study will help us better understand and promote/improve inclusionary and equitable internationalization approaches and experiences for the target population and respondents including yourself.
- Officials who participate will be provided with a synopsis of specific recommendations for improving internationalization policy and practice/implementation based on the perspectives of visible minority/racialized students' who are interviewed for this study.

Risk
- It is possible that in recalling and describing certain experiences in response to some questions on equity/inclusion/possible discrimination, memories of some unpleasant experiences may be uncovered triggering reactions of emotional or psychological discomfort.
- Some participants may also be very concerned about the anonymity and confidentiality of their participation and the risks associated with it (loss of privacy etc.) and the implications for their social, academic and financial welfare.
- If we learn anything during the research that may affect your willingness to continue being in the study, we will tell you right away.

Risk Mitigation Measures
- I will inform participants (or give them a heads up) at the beginning of the interview process about the possibilities that some conversations or questions can trigger unpleasant, uncommon or unique emotional/psychological responses.
- In the event that symptoms of emotional or psychological discomfort are shown by participants during the evidence gathering process, the evidence gathering session would be discontinued (with their permission).
- Adherence to the strictest tri-council/ethics policy requirements for anonymity and confidentiality will ensure that all data is anonymized and kept confidential through collection, analysis, final publication until data destruction after 5-years of storage. All data sets will be checked and rechecked (including by members/participants) to ensure that they comply with these requirements including the language used to describe the participants

(such as pseudonyms where required). A meticulous effort will be made to prioritize de-identification of all data at all times. In the case of virtual participation, the data between the users and Google is encrypted by default for/during video meetings and will remain fully secured throughout and after the study until it is permanently destroyed after 5 years.

- The session may be paused or discontinued to refer the participant for relevant assistance with qualified bodies/experts if the need arises during the interviews or at the debrief session at the end of each interview.

Cost of Participation (if applicable)

- The only foreseeable personal cost of participating are the cost of parking and the time spent in the interview or data collection process. Hopefully most interviews will be done during times when participants are on campus for other business and are therefore not (significantly) inconvenienced.

Reimbursement or Remuneration (if applicable)

- Participants will be given a $10 gift card in lieu of parking or transportation to the interview venue.
- Graduate student participants in the interviews and focus groups will be treated to refreshments or the financial equivalent up to a maximum of $10 (unless they decline).
- Those who only participate virtually will be offered up to $15 compensation in lieu of virtual participation time.
- In the event that you withdraw early from the study, you will not be required to return any reimbursement or compensation earlier received

Voluntary Participation

- You are under no obligation to participate in this study. The participation is completely voluntary, you are or not obliged to answer any specific questions even if participating in the study.
- You can also withdraw or opt out of the study without any penalty and can ask to have any collected data withdrawn from the data base and not included in the study.
- Beyond 60 days of completing the data collection (interviews), or 3 weeks of transcription of interview notes, participants will not be able to withdraw their participation/contributions to the study.
- Data withdrawal in Focus Groups is often difficult because meaning is derived from collective dialogue, and analytical insights are co-constructed between participants and researcher (Sim & Waterfield, 2019). The responses of study participants are based upon (or linked to) the responses of others and therefore, removing one participant's response from the transcript often results in a transcript that is confusing or does not make full sense. As a result, after the completion of the focus group sessions, individual participants will not be able to withdraw their data as it will be difficult to separate their perspectives and contributions from those of other participants in the data collectively generated. However, participants can withdraw from participation before or during the focus groups. perspectives and contributions from those of other participants in the data collected collectively.

Confidentiality & Anonymity
- Findings of this research will be used for completing my doctoral dissertation. Findings will also be published or disseminated through research articles, presentations, teaching, and web posting. No participants will be personally identified in any of these knowledge mobilization (KMb) strategies.
- Data will be kept strictly confidential, with only me and my academic supervisors having full access to it.
- While anonymity of the university site as a whole may not always be guaranteed, meticulous effort will be made to ensure that all individual participant data is fully anonymized and unidentifiable during the writing and dissemination of the research.
- Focus Groups: while we will make every effort to protect the confidentiality of what is discussed during the focus groups, we cannot guarantee that others from the group will do the same. Please respect the confidentiality of every participant beyond/outside of the focus group.
- The safeguards in place for security of data include keeping it in a secure place for a minimum of 5 years following completion of research project. Electronic data will be password protected (or encrypted) and when appropriate, destroyed (by deleting and emptying trash bin) in a way that ensures privacy and confidentiality. Hard copy data will be shredded before disposal.
- Access to the research findings will be made available to participants who fully participated and indicate an interest in receiving such materials. Indication of interest may be done via email.
- We may use the data we get from this study in future research, but if we do this it will have to be approved by a Research Ethics Board.
- After the study is done, and with your consent, study data will be stored in a secure data repository to facilitate re-use of the data by approved researcher (me). Any personal information (i.e., name, address, telephone number) that could identify you will be removed or changed prior to using or sharing the data with other researchers. Any researcher who wants to use this data must have the new project approved by an ethics board and sign an agreement ensuring your confidentiality and restricting data use only to the approved project. Your data may be linked with other data for research purposes only to increase the usefulness of the data, as subject to scientific and ethical oversight as mentioned above.

Contact Information
- If you have any further questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to contact Principal Investigator: Benjamin Denga (bdenga@ualberta.ca; 780-907-5790; Supervisors: Lynette Shultz (lshultz@ualberta.ca), Randolph Wimmer (rwimmer@ualberta.ca).
- The plan for this study has been reviewed by a Research Ethics Board at the A Canadian Public University. If you have questions about your rights or how research should be conducted, you can call (780) 492- 2615. This office is independent of the researchers."

Consent Statement
(Note that in the event that virtual interviews are conducted, verbal consent will have to be provided/confirmed by reading the following statements and indicating "yes" or "no.").

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and to voluntarily provide relevant information or take part in the following specific data collection process (please indicate Yes for the applicable one(s) that you choose to participate in):

(a) Interview_____(Yes or No)
(b) Focus Group_____(Yes or No)
(c) Naturalistic Observation in public places_____(Yes or No)

I will receive a copy or proof of this consent after I have verbally confirmed or signed it.

_____ _____

Name of participant providing (verbal) consent Date

_____ _____

Name of person/interviewer obtaining (verbal) consent Date

Appendix 2: Interview Guiding Questions for Student Participants

Note: Personal /demographic questions are administered prior to commencing interview/data collection for the purposes of establishing participant profile and granularity during analysis

1. What do you know about (a. federal, b. provincial, and c. institutional/university) internationalization policy, strategy statements related to your adaptation and integration in Canada?

2. Can you identify specific ways in which you have experienced policy claims on equity, access and inclusion in the context of internationalization at this University? *(Provide examples of policy claims on equity, access and inclusion from policy text analysis and probe for specificity in experiences).*

3. Can you identify specific ways in which your experience has been different in contrast with specific claims on equity, access and inclusion in the context of internationalization at this University *(Probe for specificity and examples).*

4. In what way do you feel your unjust or inequitable experiences have been normalized in the institution?

5. From the time you received admission into this university until now, are there any ways or any point at which you have felt excluded from cultural, social, academic or occupational resources or participation because of

    a. the colour of your skin?

    b. your (different) cultural background?

    What do you think was responsible for these experiences (where applicable)?

6. Have you ever felt (a) exploited (b) excluded because of your historical or cultural background? (If so) can you provide examples of such experiences?

7. In interactions with the following groups of people in University academic settings, have you felt silenced or allowed to engage on an equal footing?

   (Prompt and probe for specificity and examples)

   a. domestic students and other international students

   b. professors/academic staff

   c. administrators (at departmental/faculty/university levels)

   d. administrative staff

8. Have you felt powerless or disenfranchised by any experiences related to the following:

   a. Curriculum content

   b. Program content

   c. Extracurricular activities

   d. Occupational experiences (including RA/TA/GRA & others on and off campus)

   e. Others?...

9. What else can you tell me about equitable or inequitable experiences you have had?

10. While adapting/integrating to life at the university and in Canadian society as an African international student, what would you say have been the key underlying reasons for any inequitable experiences you have had (that contradict your understanding of the inclusive, equity and diversity provisions in internationalization policies)?

11. What do you feel is missing or should be included in internationalization policy (at institutional, provincial, sector and federal levels)?

12. How do you feel international graduate students from Africa can contribute to a more equitable internationalization experience for themselves and future African students who come to study in Canada?

13. In what ways do you feel that specific internationalization stakeholders can contribute to a more equitable internationalization experience for both themselves and future African students?

14. What would a more equitable internationalization approach look like to you (in terms of policy, practice or experience)?

    (Solicit responses under the following sub-categories).

    a. Socially?

    b. Culturally?

    c. Academically (both in and out of classroom, and in reference to curriculum/programing)?

    d. Occupationally?

15. How do you perceive the future outcome of your adaptation and integration journey -both in graduate school and beyond?

    Additional prompts/follow up questions:

    a. Do you have any concerns about inclusion, access or equity for the future?

    b. What are the (best) possible conditions under which the equitable benefits of internationalization are likely to be realized?

Appendix 3: Focus Group Guiding Questions for Student Participants

1. **Policy and student interpretation/experience**

(a) As Black African graduate international students, how do you see yourselves situated in, and impacted by internationalization policy and strategy claims on *equity, access and inclusion*? (*Prompt with examples of internationalization policy and strategy provisions as required).*

(b) What are your perceptions about the consistencies or discrepancies (relating to internationalization policy/strategy) and the reasons why either manifest in the socio-cultural, academic, occupational (or any other) realms of your internationalization experience in the University/academy?

(c) Can you identify any specific discrepancies between the adaptation/integration experiences of Black African international graduate students and internationalization policy at federal, provincial and/or institutional levels (including strategy claims on equity, access and inclusion)?

(d) What (underlying) factors are responsible for the discrepancies or inconsistencies between policies and your experiences?

2. **Racism, Colonialism, Domination and student experience**.

(a)How are your experiences and adaptation processes affected, influenced or shaped by actions, structures or systems of domination operating in your…

Social environment?

Cultural environment?

Academic environment?

Occupational spaces/settings?

(b) Do you feel comfortable sharing some stories of resilience, triumph and agency that you have personally experienced or witnessed during your adaptation/integration journey as an international student? Please elaborate on what you navigated and how you overcame (including what factors enabled you to do so).

(c)What specific processes and strategies do you feel can be undertaken by

(i) yourself; and (ii) other internationalization stakeholders (e.g., government, University, University officials, etc.) to ensure more equitable internationalization approaches, experiences and outcomes for Black African graduate international students?

Appendix 4: Interview Guiding Questions for Internationalization Officials/Administrators

1. What is your role in internationalization or international education policy in this institution/department?

2. How do you view the intentionality and adequacy of internationalization policies in relation to (a) international students generally (b) Black African graduate international students?

3. Do you feel the policy claims on equity, access and inclusion are being experienced during the adaptation and integration process of Black African graduate international students? Please explain (with examples).

4. In your experience, what are the main barriers to the successful adaptation/integration of African graduate students' within Canada's internationalization model?

5. How do you perceive the future process/outcome of your adaptation and integration journey both in graduate school and beyond? Do you have any concerns about inclusion, access or equity for African graduate students in the future?

6. What can be done to eliminate the barriers (mentioned above) and ensure equitable experience (including full access, inclusion) for Black African students in academic, socio-cultural, or occupational/work realms?

7. How do you visualize the future of internationalization in Canada – for international students generally and Black students specifically?