

Understanding Parenting in the Black Caribbean Population within the Context of Historical Trauma in Toronto

by

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Abstract

Maya Angelou (1993) has famously noted, “History, despite its wrenching pain cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again” (para. 26). This dissertation joined the ongoing conversation about generational trauma, also known as historical trauma. It argues that to understand parenting within the Black Caribbean population, consideration has to be given to their experiences with past trauma, including forced migration, physical and sexual assault suffered in slavery, segregation, and ongoing racial discrimination. Through a recognition that undesirable trajectories that have emerged in some Black parenting practices find their origin in transmitted generational unresolved traumas, those traumas can be addressed and disrupted. Using frameworks that employ an analysis of anti-Black racism, Black feminism and anti-colonialism as analytic tools, combined with literary exploration, this dissertation examines the impact of generational trauma on parenting practices among the Black Caribbean population. It contends that generational trauma exists, and has profound implications on parenting within this population, and that current routine assessments are not inclusive and considerate of historical racial experiences and the consequences of racism when they assess Black families. It reveals that the consequences of not doing so support the continuation of experiences that stemmed from the complication of racism and unresolved historical trauma, layering another burden of trauma on each successive generation. These findings recommend a critical pedagogy that educates, empowers, and mobilizes parents, professionals, and communities to recognize historical trauma as significantly present within the Black population, and to understand how this can be problematic in the functioning of Black parents and their families.

Dedication

With God all things are possible.... This is dedicated to my children Caia and Shael. Know if you dream big, anything is possible.

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I am forever grateful for all my family, friends, scholars, and research participants who have taken their time to have in-depth conversations with me. It is through these conversations that my ideas percolated and came to fruition in my journey of completing my dissertation. A special thank you to my friend, mentor and kindred sister, Professor Uzo Anucha, for first encouraging me to apply for my PhD and secondly for her ongoing support and believe in me.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background and Statement of the Research Issue

This research focuses on the interconnectedness of historical trauma and parenting in the Black Caribbean family. Historical trauma, also known as intergenerational trauma or multigenerational trauma, is very complex, and many generations and races are inflicted with such trauma. Several substantial bodies of literature exist that explore the topic of parenting. These bodies of work emphasize the importance of parenting practices that play a critical role in the development of children and the overall functioning of the family (Krane & Davies, 2000). They also provide a familial model that is important to children socializing, functioning, and adjustment outcomes (Beckert, Strom, Strom, Yang, & Singh, 2007; Krane & Davies, 2000; Luster & Okagaki, 2005). These bodies of literature often refer to parenting within the context of parents' action or inaction and give minimal context of individual or collective historical experiences. While context is sometimes provided about individual's personal histories of trauma and how that may impact the parenting experience, attention is rarely paid to historical trauma that stemmed from key historical events including slavery and colonialism (this information is drawn largely from this author's personal experience working in various social work contexts and will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters). Dr. Joy DeGruy (2005) introduced the concept of Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome; surprisingly, this is one of only a handful of research that discussed the full impact of history on the contemporary lives of Black people. As such, special attention will be given to her work in the literature review section. While valuable, her work focused on American experiences, and so does not address the void in understanding the Black Caribbean parents within the Canadian context.

This research focus is specifically geared to the Black-Caribbean population. As far back as 1972, researcher Diana Baumrind (1972) found in her exploratory investigation, that when Black parents are assessed based on Eurocentric values, they are seen as authoritarian. However, when compared to their White counterparts, they produce the most self-assertive and independent children. More recently, researchers such as Haight et al. (2002) and Wolfe and McIsaac (2011) gave consideration to the importance of understanding different cultural perspectives in their

discussion of the reality of parenting within different societies. Additionally, Kotchick and Forehand (2002) argued for the importance of having a broader comprehensive understanding of the historical, social, and cultural environments that created policies designed to assess parenting practices.

This study extends and deepens the discourse on parenting and the importance to children's well-being by illustrating that the historical traumatic experiences of the Black population contribute adversely to children's well-being. For example, within the child welfare sector, the impact of Black people's lived experience with racism and colonialism is omitted from discussions of children's emotional well-being and safety, despite evidence of the impact of societal racism (Bernard, 2002). This study recognizes that parenting practices are subject to societal influences, which are often constructed to reflect the dominant culture's beliefs and values. This research will not only give credence to the importance of Black families' histories, but it also offers practical value for community organizations, especially the child welfare system. It is envisaged that by initiating conversation around Black experiences, this research will create the impetus for change among Toronto's mainstream agencies.

The child welfare system in Ontario will be critically analyzed to show how its policies and practices are problematic in responding to and supporting Black families. This critical analysis is prompted, in part, by the fact that Black families are overrepresented in the child welfare system in Ontario (Clarke, 2011; Contenta, Monsebraaten, & Rankin, 2014; Pon, Gosine, & Phillips, 2011). Over the last decade, child welfare in Ontario has reached a turning point due to unfortunate incidents of child deaths. These deaths have forced the system to respond in a manner that does not fully recognize the inherent complexities involved in helping children and their families (Trocrmé, MacLaurin, & Fallon, 2000). For example, as a result of the unfortunate event of a child dying in his grandparents' care, the importance of history came to be emphasized in Ontario child welfare assessments. As a result of this death, policies were revised and developed to mandate that when measuring risk, practitioners must consider familial history in their analysis. Notably, however, the only history that practitioners must consider is that of individual abuse and neglect. The recognition of the importance of history by mainstream agencies is selective, as it fails to give equal importance to the influence of systemic traumatic history, such as experiences with racism, colonialism, poverty, and other collective or systemic

historical traumata. In 2014, *The Globe and Mail* published an article written by Blackstock and Picard (2014) about the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada filing a human-rights complaint under the Canadian Human Rights Act against the federal government (para. 3). Their summation was that the disproportionate amount of First Nation children in the care of Children's Aid Societies is a result of a broader social and economic challenges rooted in colonialism and residential schools and, furthermore, that these challenges are extended by today's child welfare system (para. 7). The importance of understanding how history affects the present is equally applicable to Black families, as their challenges in parenting are also rooted in the consequences of colonialism and slavery. To understand current functioning, one must give appropriate attention to past events.

This study also explores how, within social, educational, and legal systems, there is a pathological lens that produces stereotypes that are based on miseducation and misrepresentation. These stereotypes are used by mainstream organizations to generate knowledge and discourses that are created from a Eurocentric viewpoint, and they dismiss other cultural ways or reasoning as unintelligible (Barker, 1999). As Williams and Wright (1992) and, later, Adams (2014) argued, the dominant framework has given mainstream agencies and professionals alike a platform to promote Eurocentric parenting strategies and practices that perpetuate and maintain the dominant group's way of life, while concurrently trivializing the existence of other cultures, realities, and experiences. An almost inevitable consequence of this is an abundance of problematic assessments and approaches that result in detrimental outcomes for Black families, including forced separation and over-representation within the child welfare system.

Researchers such as Hines, Lemon, Wyatt, and Merdinger (2004) and Hoagwood, Kemp, Marcenko, and Vesneski (2009) have also written extensively about the overrepresentation of racialized families in the child welfare system. As a result of cultural differences and a lack of understanding of these differences from the mainstream society, certain races get referred to services more frequently than their White counterparts (Bernard & Gupta, 2008; Levine, Doueck, Freeman, & Compaan, 1996; Maiter, 2009a; Pon et al., 2011; Tilbury & Thoburn, 2009). Similarly, according to the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (2015), people of African descent are two times more likely to be investigated than Whites when a report

is made to the system. This overrepresentation is consistent with the comparable instances in other governmental systems such as the education and judicial systems. In the educational system, for example, students of colour are most likely to be overrepresented in special education classes (Brown & Parekh, 2010) and also more likely to be suspended (Teklu, 2012). In the judicial system, people of colour are more likely to be charged than referred to a divergent program and are given harsher sentences (Teklu, 2012).

Over the last 20 to 30 years, Canadian society has been changing due to immigration and other demographic factors. Many new Canadians have widely varying cultural and historical realities; these experiences are transferred through the generations and influence their parenting practices. In this changing context, where social agencies rely heavily on the dominant Eurocentric assessment approach in dealing with parenting and child protection issues, the status quo may be untenable (Luster & Okagaki, 2005). A planned overhaul of these systems and their assessments of risk are unavoidable, as these systems are forced to recognize the unique historical experiences of Canada's visible minorities. In focusing on the Black Caribbean community in the Greater Toronto Area, this research is an initial step towards a conversation on how attention given to their historical and cultural experiences can lead to better understanding and outcomes in their parenting.

1.2 Significance of Research Study and Relevance to Community Work with Black-Caribbean Families in the Canadian Context

Black Torontonians are culturally diverse; they are from the Caribbean, Afro-Brazilian, and the continent of Africa, and they all have developed new cultural patterns that are shaped by their experiences. For the purpose of this research, the focus is on Caribbean families, with recognition that while Caribbean families share some similarities, they are also not a homogenous group.

Black Caribbean people have been part of Toronto Society for centuries. Many came to Canada to seek work and educational opportunities. In 1876, runaway slaves came from the United States and were working building railways. In 1920, they came to work in the steel mills (Sadler, n.d.). Starting in 1910, many women came under the Caribbean Domestic Scheme, and

more women started arriving in 1955 through the Household Service Workers Scheme (James, 2009).

The Caribbean community contributes positively to Canada's economy and culture. For example, Caribbean people filled workforce gaps left by Canadians during the war efforts (Sadlier, n.d.). They were employed building railways and in the health sector as nurses and midwives; they also served as domestic workers and teachers (James, 2009). In today's society, Caribbean people continue to contribute significantly to all aspects of the Canadian society, including politics and the arts.

Over the past decade, Caribbean people in Toronto—particularly Caribbean youth—have been featured in the news repeatedly for negative reasons: increasing violence within the community and over-representation in the jail system. As noted by Khenti (2013), “Between 1992 and 2003, young Blacks were estimated to account for some 30% of murder victims and approximately 36% of offenders in Toronto area homicides. Yet, during this time, Blacks represented only about 10% of Toronto's population” (p. e12). While violence in and of itself cannot be said to have led to the erosion of family functioning, response reports from major newspapers in the City of Toronto have blamed the breakdown of the Black families on gun violence (p. e12). This prompted Watson (2012) to challenge the mainstream approach of minimizing the pernicious impact of the racism that is embedded throughout our society. He wrote,

Every time someone starts to sing from the “bad parenting hymnbook” as an answer to the root of gang violence, the subtext is that if the parents of kids who get involved with gang violence can be blamed—that would be Black parents—then the rest of society can count themselves free from contributing to the problem.

Yet, it's funny, but it is hard to find any commentary on Hell's Angels gangs that points to the harmful or negligent parenting of members as being at the root of their activities. It's also hard to find any such commentary pointing to the emergence and continued functioning of the mafia. (para. 3–4)

Media reports on the issues facing the Caribbean community in Canada have suggested that the Black family is dysfunctional. The media has identified such issues as single mothers and absentee fathers to be cause of this breakdown and resulting social malaise. For example, in an

article for the *Toronto Star*, Hurst (2005) reported, “Black leaders say it takes a family; Kids need rules, respect, 2 parents. Admit dysfunction breeding violence” (p. A.17). A 2005 article by Paris for *The Globe and Mail* was headlined: “The many fatherless boys in Black families” (p. C24). Additionally, in an article published as part of the Society’s Children Series in the *Toronto Star*, the title raised the question: “Why are so many Black children in foster and group homes?” (Contenta et al., 2014). These different headlines are categorizing Black families in a particular light: namely, that they are self-destructing. These headlines were no doubt purposefully selected. Going beyond the headlines reveals that the situation is more complex and is often exaggerated in media reports. Also, what may present as a breakdown of family functioning may in fact be the effect of a lack of understanding by the media of Black family dynamics as influenced by historical and cultural factors. As Taylor (2001) stated, “It is through language that certain things or people are either categorized together or separated out as different, and through language that value is attributed or denied” (p. 9).

Black families have endured significant disruptive events that have shaped their current-day functioning. However, it is through the family unit that they were able to survive the trauma of their history. Franklin (2007) noted that “family traditions among Blacks survived the slave system, then legal segregation, discrimination and enforced poverty” (p. 5). What the mainstream media outlets and other institutions have failed to realize is that there are multiple factors that contribute to the functioning of the family. These factors emerge from dynamic emotional, financial, social, and cultural conditions. They are influenced and shaped by the intersection of race, class, cultural expectations, and other aspects of identity and experience. Furthermore, the intricacies of these factors are imbedded in a matrix of domination and are impacted by multiple external institutions (Lawson, 2012).

Black families who have immigrated to Toronto have a diversity of needs that are not solely based on adjustment issues associated with relocation. They are also faced with subtle and unintended influences of racism, by which institutions use a Eurocentric lens to critically examine them (Bernard & Gupta, 2008). Caribbean immigrants in Canada (James, 2009) quickly come to the realization that they have to contend with more than just settlement issues as they are forced to confront systemic forms of discrimination based on race, class, and gender (James, 2009). These factors have profound impact on how they parent their children. Rather than

focusing on adjustment issues, they are now faced with protecting themselves and their children from racial inequalities and injustices. These parents are parenting with heightened stress levels, which manifest in their interaction with their children: for example, if a parent who was highly educated in his/her country of origin is forced to work in a low-paying job, this can have a serious negative impact on that parent's sense of self and expectations. This parent may bring his/her frustration home and, instead of being patient and present with their children, may unintentionally become frustrated, abrupt, and unavailable to meet their children's needs as a result of their experience in the workforce. It may also infuse their parenting strategy with constant lecturing. Using my own experience, the message I was given every morning before my parents left for work was: "Remember, you have to work twice as hard as a white person to be successful in this country."

Black families' parenting is often under scrutiny, which is the result of "individuals without expertise making racially biased judgments" (Berger, McDaniel, & Paxson, 2005, p. 654) without critically assessing their experiences. The result of this, as noted by several researchers, is that a disproportionate number of Black families are reported to the child welfare system (Berger et al., 2005; Clarke, 2011; Levine et al., 1996; Magruder & Shaw, 2008; Wells, Merritt, & Briggs, 2009). Furthermore, there is an acknowledgement that Black people live in an extremely race-conscious society, which influences their internal and external reality—a fact that is not often recognized by social workers working with this population. The political, economic, societal, and historical underpinnings of what has brought the system to the current historical moment—as well as the individuality of Black people—have to be recognized and understood in order to understand the difficulties of Black families. Thus, as suggested by Sudarkasa (1997), the conversation needs to move beyond debates over a false dichotomy of pathologies and normalcy in Black family life (p. 43) and beyond mainstream organizations using lenses dominated by Eurocentric policies and provision to make judgements about what parenting is and is not appropriate (Bernard & Gupta, 2008; Clarke, 2011; Maiter, 2009b; Onunaku, 2008; Pon et al., 2011) without taking into consideration the historical influences such as slavery and colonialism. Clarke (2011) further highlighted in her research that within the child welfare system, there are standardized and routine procedures that do not allow for variations in parenting styles. According to Lawson (2012), for "Caribbean-Canadians, parenting is a

contextual experience negotiated through a web of social networks, state policies and cultural expectations that complicates a functionalist view of the family” (p. 82).

Researchers have acknowledged the problem that Black families face in working within mainstream agencies, and they have emphasized the necessity of understanding the intersection of race and colonialism when aiming to assist Black families. Black families face a multigenerational process of disempowerment and oppression that took hundreds of years to manifest and is connected to the outcomes we see in Caribbean-Black families (The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond, 2016).

1.3 Purpose of the Research Study

This research focused on the narratives of Black parents and has demonstrated the gravity of the influence of generational influence on their parenting strategies. My research is distinctive, as this is an area that is under investigated, and attention needs to be given to the traumatic experiences that influence Black people’s lives, especially in the field of parenting. This historical analysis, using narrative inquiry, will highlight gaps that currently exist and the shift in practice that is required by the helping profession in working with Black parents from the Caribbean.

The research on parenting in the Black community highlights a dehumanizing pathology that shows the multigenerational process of disempowerment that has contributed to the parenting experiences of Black parents and how they come to parent the way they do. Research often described their parenting styles as punitive, and the external gaze has assessed their parenting style to be risky and at times abusive, but for this community, parenting strategies focus on avoiding danger. It has been this researcher’s experience over 20 years of working in social services that this external gaze is steeped in racist and colonial ideologies that are embedded in policies, procedures, and assessments. Thus, the narratives used in mainstream society and research fail to explicitly and unequivocally provide a conceptual understanding of this population that takes account of their experiences with the historical trauma that travels from generation to generation. This research unpacks these narratives, providing context and a detailed understanding and some truths about parenting within the Black community, while also highlighting accountability.

When discussions take place on parenting in the social services field, they do not directly recognize and address the role of historical trauma on parenting within the Black community. It is accurate to say that some of these researchers have focused on racism and oppressive practice, but their concerns do not directly speak to the uniqueness of Black people's experience. Black parents' experiences differ from those of other racialized parents because of their ancestors' experiences with slavery and forced migration. As such, there has been insufficient attention given to the transference of generational historical trauma and the impact this has on the Black population. Also, no research has been done using an anti-Black racism and Black feminist perspectives to assess and understand parenting within this community. These discourses recognize the uniqueness of Black families and give credence to the significance of Black people's historical traumatic experiences, which have been transmitted and amalgamated through the generations.

While the issue of historical trauma has been primarily left to the field of psychology, it is important that anyone working in the human services sector—especially child protection workers—understands the importance of recognizing and integrating historical trauma in their work with families and the implications of failing to do so.

1.4 Locating the “Self”: Interest and Significance of Research

This research is dear to my heart for professional and academic reasons. As a social work professional, I see firsthand how failing to acknowledge and understand people's historical experiences can lead to continued oppression and a repetition of past traumatic experiences. The focus of this research was on understanding and appreciating parenting within the Black Caribbean community, using a critical historical analysis of the functioning of Black families from slavery to present.

Locating myself within this study early recognizes the role of my subjectivity and it brings in my positionality as a tool (Mosselson, 2010). I have worked in the social services sectors for over 20 years, and I belong to the Black Caribbean community. It is through these lenses that I see the tensions that exist in addressing parenting within the Caribbean community in a colonial settler state.

I situate my work historically, while making a link to my current practice as a social worker in Ontario. Working within the child welfare system for over 20 years, I have seen the implications of not understanding a community's history, cultures, and experiences. For Black families, this results in an over-representation in the child-welfare system. According to the African Canadian Legal Clinic (as cited in Teklu, 2012):

African Canadian children and youth are significantly overrepresented in the province's child welfare system. According to the Child Welfare Anti-Oppression Roundtable. . . . In the City of Toronto where African Canadians make up only 6.9% of the population, African Canadian youth represent an overwhelming 65% of the children in care. (p. 9)

Professionally, I have observed that the over-representation of Black families in the welfare system can be largely attributed to structural and individual racism and a lack of understanding of Black people's culture and history. The literature on parenting that this system relies on has failed to consider the unique history of Black people. Mainstream literature often used a deficit approach when addressing issues within the Black family, but rarely did it give enough attention to the gaps that exist in using a Eurocentric lens to assess families. The reality that exists for Black families is that this Eurocentric lens affects outcomes. These informational and practice gaps that I have observed through my professional and academic journey are the reasons I decided to pursue this study.

Completing my PhD requirements in the department of Social Justice in Education has also provided me with a degree of comfort in discussing topics that people within the field consider "risky." It has also provided me with the knowledge to challenge dominant voices when they directly or indirectly suggest that I am "playing the race card." Furthermore, this experience gave me the confidence to step away from the traditional method of completing research and use a triangulation of data from texts (as secondary resources) and dialogue circles.

In my opinion, there is minimal acknowledgment of the fact that the policies that govern practice of service providers are steeped in racism and colonialism, and rather than challenging these policies, mainstream agencies continue to work within them. Thus, the cycle of oppression towards groups of marginalized people in society such as the Aboriginal and the Black populations continues. These populations come with histories that include violence, subjugation,

and oppression. Yet, there are no clear practices on how to understand and assess these historical experiences within the context of their current functioning. This provides the backdrop for my inquiry into understanding parenting within the Black Caribbean families.

As I continued to become more aware of social justice issues, I also became more knowledgeable of the impact of colonialism and slavery on the Black population. Subsequently, I began to question the discourse that is used to construct Black people, especially in the area of parenting. For example, in the child welfare system, Black parents' parenting style is often viewed as authoritarian and, at times, perceived as harmful to children's emotional well-being. The failure here is using a Eurocentric lens in their assessment: What assessors fail to take into consideration is that this authoritarian style is a result of parents desperately wanting their children to succeed and knowing the many barriers they are going to face in society as a result of their skin colour. In my own upbringing here in Toronto, the daily lecture I received from my parents was that you have to work twice as hard; this was their way of saying that racism exists, and to be successful, I could not afford to be complacent. Despite the harmfulness of racism and colonialism on the Black population, the policies that influence social practice continue to exist, pushing Black families to the margins of society. As a result, my social work practice has changed. My practice is now rooted in anti-colonial and anti-Black racism and Black feminism theories. These frameworks allow me to understand history in relation to the self, as it is clear that history significantly affects and influences how one functioning in today's contemporary society.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions that guided this thesis were based on the need for a fundamental change in the actions, attitudes, and practices of workers in many major societal institutions, including school boards and child welfare systems, when interacting with Black families. Jan Fook (2002) proposed that considering a multiplicity of factors in social assessments, especially when dealing with visible minorities, could lead to better outcomes. As such, this research was centred on two main questions:

1. How can the lenses of slavery, colonialism, and migration provide a new perspective in understanding contemporary parenting and functioning of Black Caribbean families?

2. How do the experiences of Black Caribbean families with slavery, colonialism, and migration influence their perceptions of Canadian social institutions, and how does that in turn influence outcomes for Black families?

1.6 Defining and Conceptualising Terms

1.6.1 Black Caribbean Population

The history of the Caribbean is complex. The Caribbean is comprised of small islands, which are deeply marked by centuries of slavery and colonial rule (Lowenthal, 1982). The Black Caribbean population is viewed as those whose ancestors experienced the slave trade. They are a mixture of many groups and subgroups, languages, and dialects that were influenced by European settlers in addition to the Caribs, Arawak, and Tainos, who are Indigenous People of the Caribbean.

1.6.2 Historical Trauma

Historical trauma can include many experiences, from war and genocide to famine and slavery. For the purposes of this research, it refers to the emotional, psychological, and physical experiences that resulted from slavery, forced migration, segregation, and racial discrimination. For Black people, racism permeates these experiences and resulted in disempowerment, as Black people became subjects of a colonial and military rule, political conflict, and genocide. Their experiences have inflicted emotional, psychological, and physical injuries on multiple generations of Black people. As such, historical trauma has recognized that family members transmit trauma to subsequent generations, irrespective of direct exposure to a traumatic experience (Kaitz, Levy, Ebstein, Faraone, & Mankuta, 2009). The effects of trauma have been festering for hundreds of years and can be pathologizing to the outcomes one sees in Black families today.

1.6.3 Parenting Practices

A parenting practice is a particular way that parents influence the development of and create normative expectations for children. Parenting practices are based on principles that are important for socialization. These principles encompass a set of morals and values that are transferred through generations and are used to preserve the practices of families (Rudy, Grusce,

& Wolfe, 1999). For the Black population, parenting practices include and are infused with an understanding of the lingering and unresolved issues of slavery and colonialization.

1.7 Overview and Organization of the Dissertation

In this chapter, I have provided background information about this study, discussed the purpose of this research, outlined the significance and relevance to community work with Black Caribbean families, located myself, introduced the guiding questions to the research, and provided key terminology definitions. Chapter 2, which follows, is an outline of the theoretical framework of anti-colonial, anti-Black racism, and Black feminism discourses. This introductory discussion highlights that these frameworks are needed to deconstruct and create change within institutions and organizations and to rupture the Eurocentric ideologies that are embedded in these systems. Chapter 3 contextualizes the relevant literature and focuses on a body of knowledge that informs and assesses parenting, while highlighting the Black Caribbean population and the child welfare system. Chapter 4 is an account of the research methodology and methods. In Chapter 5, findings from the narrative inquiry are shared, while in Chapter 6 a detailed discussion and a triangulation of the findings takes place. In Chapter 7, the implications for practice are considered, along with the conclusion.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework and Historical Background to Study

Theories are used to understand, explain, influence, and change behaviour. In the social sciences, critical social theories are used to inform an analysis of oppression, with a goal of eradicating all forms of oppression (Mullaly, 2002). This study's principle concern was to understand the modern-day functioning of Black Caribbean parents in Toronto by applying a historical lens. Theories that inform discussion on or about Black families require a connection between the past and present. To provide for this critical, historical approach, three theoretical frameworks guided my study: anti-colonialism, anti-Black-racism, and Black feminism. These philosophical frameworks offer an understanding of the social realities and practice as understood by the marginalized and oppressed (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001) and are powerful tools to disrupt this pathological understanding of the oppressed, providing a holistic indigenous approach that allows us to analyze the multiple, complex elements that inform and influence parenting.

My thesis focused on the multiple impacts that historical trauma has had on parenting in the Black community. This is critical to understand and appreciate, given that the continuous challenges Black families encounter in their efforts to survive in a harsh anti-Black racist environment are often considered their own failures or identified as pathologies rooted in their blood (Benjamin, 2003). With these theoretical frameworks, it is possible to disrupt the interlocking layers of oppression and power imbalances that are embedded in the fabric of the societies where Black families live. These frameworks draw from scholarly theories that recognize the interconnectedness of multiple forms of oppression, and they are relevant for understanding how race, class, and gender are embodied and constructed in society (Razack, Smith, & Thobani, 2010). Critical thinkers such as Dei and Asgharzadeh (2001), Fanon (1967), Freire (1970), Memmi (1991), Nkrumah (1964), and Wane (2007) helped frame these critical discourses to resist all forms of oppression and to include the voices and knowledge of Indigenous people. In their work, scholars such as Dominelli (1988), Maiter (2009c), Pon et al. (2011), and Prado (2000) continued to highlight the continuous, active presence of systemic and structural racism in Canadian society. These bodies of work collectively provided me with a

critical lens to operationalize my understanding of how many generations of subjugation have profoundly influenced Black people's current-day parenting practices.

Anti-colonialism, anti-Black racism, and Black feminism are analytic frameworks that challenge all forms of oppressive hegemonies. These hegemonies emerged mainly from Eurocentric ideologies and map onto all spheres of Black lives, including culture, the socio-political, and economics. I will commence by theorizing from a historical standpoint, as these frameworks are interconnected and, at times, enliven each other. Anti-colonial discursive frameworks inform discussions on history. Anti-racism illustrates the ways in which racism operates at the personal, ideological, and institutional levels (Calgary Anti-Racism Education, n.d.), and this framework provides a tool for disrupting racism by identifying and analyzing how it functions (Henry & Tator, 2006). Correspondingly, decolonization looks at the distorted views produced by a long history and legacy of colonialism and Western imperialism (Semali & Asino, 2013); as such, it gives legitimacy to the discourse of anti-Black racism and anti-Black feminism.

I will then examine the multiple stories that emerged out of colonialism and slavery that continue to shape the lives of Black Caribbean families. The focus of this section will be to understand the production and reproduction of inequalities that contributed to the destabilization of the lives of this population. In the next segment, I will explore the intersection of race and gender and theorize about the interlocking layers of oppression and power imbalances that frame the discussion on parenting within the Black community. In the final section, I consider the convergence and divergence of these theoretical frameworks.

2.1 Theorizing from a Historical Standpoint

Understanding colonialism is an essential foundation for this study of historical trauma as it relates to parenting within Black Caribbean families. This segment will rely on the works of scholars such as Dei and Asgharzadeh (2001), Loomba (2001), Memmi (1991), and Nkrumah (1964) to understand colonial experiences, while seeking to disrupt colonialism's structures and influences.

The legacy of colonialism is steeped in histories of misrepresentation, fragmentation, and disintegration of the material and psychological well-being of the colonized (Alexander, 2004).

Memmi (1991) asserted that it was through colonizers' discovery of the benefits of their privilege that colonialism took root, by creating dichotomies: Colonizers' living standards were high and the colonized were low; the establishment of laws were to benefit colonizers and suppress the colonized; and the more free the colonizers became, the more oppressed the colonized were. Loomba (2001) further explored these dichotomies and suggested that what is expectable behaviour lies within the notion of opposing differences of *Black* and *White* and the *self* and the *other*. An overview of the disruption of these historically opposing dichotomies that continue to suppress Black people is what is needed to understand the premise of oppressive practices that could inform in understanding Black families. Colonialism reinforces White dominance, thus creating a separation between them and Black people (Fanon, 1967). This thesis revisited the history of colonialism and its influence on the Caribbean population.

Indigenous knowledge is dynamic and is embodied in the experiences of the colonized, adapting and evolving over time to face societal and environmental changes (Shahjahan, 2005). The Black and other Indigenous populations' knowledge production and practice evolved from their relationship with the earth and ancestors and their everyday interactions with each other. However, over time, colonization eroded their knowledge base by challenging its credibility and violently imposing a domineering Eurocentric worldview. Memmi (1991) suggested that the colonizers grant themselves privileges to the detriment of those rightfully entitled to them. For Black people, the pinnacle of this was in 1885, when European countries began scrambling for African territories. Wesseling (as cited in Semali & Asino, 2013, p. 35) explained that "[f]rom that time, images of Africa and Africans seem to be static in 'colonial eyes,' frozen in the past, giving the impression of ethnic groups as primitive people, obsessed by traditions, rituals, and dubious religious practices." This Eurocentric worldview dismisses collective Indigenous ways of knowing and creates labels such as *primitive* and *dysfunctional* to describe their understanding of the world (Wahab, 2010). These labels created the backdrop behind the realities of profit, privilege, and usurpation that were at the core of colonialism (Memmi, 1991); needless to say, such oppressive laws and legislations were created to the detriment of the colonized.

The significance of this history is especially important to understanding how non-Africans produced documentation that misrepresents the reality of Black people and which is steeped in false ideologies and stereotypes (Barker, 1999). Semali and Asino (2013) used the global media

as an example of a source that continues to portray Black people in a manner that reinforces myths and stereotypes. They found that “however unintentional the distortions and omissions may be, images of Indigenous peoples continue to nurture racist doctrines and practices of white superiority and privilege” (p. 49). To illustrate, consider an article that Goldstein (2012) wrote for the *Toronto Star* newspaper about the gun violence that was plaguing Toronto in 2012. He indicated that:

We’re having another spasm of gang and gun violence in Toronto, but of course politicians don’t want to address the biggest cause of it. That’s the breakdown of the Black nuclear family and the reality of the absentee Black fathers, many of whom impregnate as many willing women as they can. (para. 1–2)

This statement invokes the epistemic stereotypes about Black people that are entrenched in mainstream society, shaped by histories of colonialism that have far reaching influences. Regardless of this reporter’s conscious intentions, his writing reveals an entrenched colonial thinking about the everyday lives of Black people.

The framework of anti-colonial discourse offers an opportunity to disrupt the colonial epistemology. Memmi (1991) acknowledged that having been removed from one’s history and community is the principal setback of the colonized. An anti-colonial framework is especially important to understanding historical trauma as it relates to Black families, as it highlights this injustice and assists in the reclaiming of histories. Anti-colonial discourse provides historical context and validates Indigenous knowledge (Castagna & Dei, 2000; Fanon, 1963; Memmi, 1991). Furthermore, it uses collective local cultural sources of knowledge as a form of resistance to everyday devaluation, denial, and negation of the creativity, agency, resourcefulness, and knowledge systems of African peoples (Dei, 2010).

The key tenets of anti-colonial discursive framework, as outlined in Dei and Asgharzadeh’s (2001) article “Power of Social Theory: The Anti-colonial Discursive Framework,” were especially important to my study, as they gave credence to Indigenous knowledge as a standpoint for theorizing about issues emerging from colonial and colonized relations. This is important for Black people, as since the advent of colonialism, their voices have been silenced and their knowledge stance degraded. Secondly, Dei and Asgharzadeh acknowledged that knowledge is

anchored in the collective of the Indigenous consciousness. For Black people in North America, this knowledge is their collective memory, as it relates not only to their history pre-slavery, but also with their experience with events such as slavery, colonialism, and segregation. Thirdly, it recognizes the role of societal institutions in producing and reproducing widespread inequalities. In Canada, this is apparent in the overrepresentation of Black people in such institutions as the criminal justice system and remedial education and suspension programs. Fourth, it recognizes the continued impact of colonialism and imperialism on marginalized communities. The realities of child welfare in this country provide an example that demonstrates this impact, as children of African descent are 36% more likely to be placed in foster care than their White counterparts when there is substantiation of a child protection concern (Ontario Association of Children's Aid Society, 2015). Finally, it calls attention to the historical and institutional structures and context that sustain intellectualism. According to Memmi (1991), these structures intentionally or unintentionally privilege certain perspectives and interests at the exclusion of others.

Dei's (2012) work with Black/African education in a diaspora context, by which he asserted the need to develop theoretical perspectives that are rooted in the lived experiences of Black culture, histories, and heritage, is accepted in the context of this study. Dei further indicated that these perspectives create Indigenous epistemologies that are transformative for all learners. This supports Serequeberhan's (1998) fundamental concern about the importance of reclaiming history in order to overcome being an object of European history. It is especially important for social services to draw from these theorists to understand how to work with Black families when they come to their attention. Like Dei suggested, transformation is required to remove the misnomers about Black families. Dei asked poignant questions around listening for multiple stories that help us to understand the whole story. In other words, it is necessary not to accept stories at face value and always ask who is speaking, who is questioning, for what purpose, and for whose benefit. Just as the educational sector has done and continues to do, the social services field needs to wrestle with these questions. When Black families present themselves in social service agencies, there should be recognition of the existence of colonial practices and policies that, as suggested by Memmi (1991), by their mere existence creates oppression. These agencies impose a system of Eurocentric values marred with histories of oppression against Black people in the name of providing support.

An anti-colonial discursive framework provides an opportunity for resistance and gives Black parents the power and permission to reclaim their traditional ways of knowing, thinking, and problem solving by equipping them with the knowledge to challenge oppressive systems. “The first act of freedom that the colonized engages in is that attempt to violently disrupt the ‘normality’ which European colonial society presupposes,” claimed Serequeberhan (1998, p. 29). It is also a means by which Black families can uplift and rehabilitate areas in their lives that were repressed and eroded by colonialism and slavery. This discursive framework is transformative, and while it gives credibility to the parenting styles of Black families, it also holds them accountable for examining, challenging, and changing disruptive behaviours that are rooted in colonial practices. As Fanon (1963) explained,

During the colonial period the people are called upon to fight against oppression, after national liberation, they are called upon to fight poverty, illiteracy, and underdevelopment. The struggle, they say, goes on. The people realize that life is an unending contest. (pp. 232–233)

It is within this consistent state of *fighting* that trauma from the past continues to manifest.

2.1.1 Emerging Out of a Colonial Past

In the eighteenth century, to support White superiority in Western Society, science produced defining ideologies about race and Black women that took root, but were later discredited (Loomba, 2001). Although these ideologies were discredited, their seeds had been planted and had grown deep roots; they continue to sprout vines that choke Black men and women. The emergence of racism stemming from colonialism is based on

Three major ideological components: one, the gulf between the culture of the colonialist and the colonized; two the exploitation of these differences for the benefit of the colonialist, three the use of these supposed differences as standards of absolute fact. (Memmi, 1991, p. 71)

As such, anti-Black racism and Black feminism frameworks are relevant to this research, as they acknowledge the interconnectedness of race and gender in historical oppression. Anti-Black racism and Black feminism speak to the interconnectedness of critical feminist and anti-racist

frameworks to structure a discourse that speaks specifically to Black people's experiences. Anti-Black racism and Black feminism frame the discussion around the experiences of Black people in the realm of parenting. The approach borrowed for this thesis came from critical race feminism, in that it:

Interrogates questions about race and gender through a critical-emancipatory lens, posing fundamental questions about the persistence, if not magnification, of race and the "colour line" in the twenty-first century; about racialized, gendered relations in an ostensibly race-and-gender neutral liberal state; and about the ways in which these interlink with continuing coloniality and Indigenous dispossession in the settler state. (Razack et al., 2010, p. 9)

Subsequently, like other critical theories, anti-Black racism and Black feminism provide a tool for disrupting widespread dominant values and general practices that are conveyed and reinforced by existing institutional structures, such as political parties, the family, schools, churches, media, and other cultural organizations (Razack et al., 2010; Tremblay, 2003). The principles of this framework ensure that we understand race and gender not as problems of patriarchy and racism, but as aspects of human agency that recreate and occupy multiple, shifting, alternate socio-political and influential positions (Calliste & Dei, 2000). In analyzing the importance of history on current-day parenting practices, this framework gives credence to the intertwining forms of oppression that are embodied in Black families' experiences. These forms of oppression are based on hegemonic values made to be implicitly adopted by marginalized populations in society (Gramsci, as cited in Tremblay, 2003); they are rooted in Eurocentric ideologies that plant false beliefs about Black families and other racialized groups in mainstream society, which are often also internalized by some people about themselves.

This framework draws attention to the fact that in the twenty-first century, race still matters. As such, Benjamin (2003) defined anti-Black racism as "a particular form of systemic and structural racism in Canadian society, which historically and contemporarily has been perpetrated against Blacks" (p. ii). In addition, there is also recognition that a significant number of Caribbean families are headed by Black women (Mata, 2011). Thus, gendered issues are taken into consideration from a Black women's perspective.

The Black family has faced numerous challenges throughout history, and the web of these issues created disruption of cultural norms and parenting practices. Before enslavement, African women played a central role in the family, and they were able to combine work and family without much difficulty (Schildkrout, 1983; Ware, 1983). The Black family structure, however, changed as slavery took ground and society evolved. Black families found themselves facing many challenges that created significant disruption to their cultural norms. This confusion left families disorganized and their traditional practices depersonalized and shattered. Their sense of being was battered and their voices silenced.

Hill Collins (2009) explained that “the denial of marriage, citizenship, and even humanity, during slavery took away the privacy of parenting, forcing Black families to rely on a communal parenting as women had to be in the workforce with their men” (p. 56). This was a significant change in the family structure, and kinship care became a way of combating the dehumanization of the family (hooks, 1990), bridging the gap in parenting created by the institution of slavery. The enlistment of the community was a way to counteract the slave owner’s influence on their family, as it was difficult for the Black family to maintain a private household in public spheres controlled by the White slave owners (hooks, 1990). Thus, according to many authors, Black mothers taught their children to trust their self-definitions and value themselves as a powerful tool of resistance (Hill Collins, 2009; hooks, 1990; Mohammed, 1998).

After slavery and during the industrial revolution leading to today’s society, the Black family faced additional challenges. With the abolition of slavery and the rise of capitalism, the Black population found themselves struggling for survival, as capitalist firms learned that cheaper labour could be found in other places in the world (Brewer, 1993). This new struggle found Black people in a predicament wherein racial discrimination prevented them from fairly competing for employment, and although slavery was abolished, its foundation had established a racial division of labour whereby Blacks were relegated to dirty, manual, non-intellectual jobs (hooks, 1990). Black feminism makes visible the realities of many Black parents’ lives and contends that the existing systems have underlining biases and stereotypes that are embedded in them. Thus, a Black feminist approach encompasses the reality of the Black family, as supported by Hill Collins’ (2009) observation that:

Black women's work and family experiences and grounding in traditional African-American culture suggest that African-American women as a group experience a world different from that of those who are not Black and female. Moreover, these concrete experiences can stimulate a distinctive Black Feminist consciousness concerning that material reality. Being Black and female may expose African-American women to certain common experiences, which in turn may predispose us to a distinctive group consciousness. (p. 25)

I situated my study across this historical context and within these theoretical frameworks, as they are informative, relevant, and applicable to an understanding of Black parenting in today's society. The historical evolution of these theories centres on the compound oppressive ideologies that are contributors to ongoing injuries to the Caribbean population.

2.2 Multiple Stories: The Production and Reproduction of Inequalities

Colonialism has wreaked havoc on the social, emotional, physical, and economic well-being of the Black population. Colonialism, in the past and in the present, produced and continues to reproduce widespread inequalities and oppression for this population. Its ideologies rose out of material circumstances (Loomba, 2001). Colonial discourses are interested in reshaping the existing knowledge structures of the colonial subjects with a structure of knowledge that is tied to stereotypes, images, and the knowledge of colonial subjects and cultures that are tied in with institutions of economics (Loomba, 2001). To highlight this point, Memmi (1991) indicated that:

Nothing could better justify the colonizer's privileged position than his industry, and nothing could better justify the colonized's destitution than his indolence. The mythical portrait of the colonized therefore includes an unbelievable laziness, and that of the colonizer, a virtuous taste for action. At the same time the colonizer suggests that employing the colonized is not very profitable, thereby authorizing his unreasonable wages. (p. 79)

Loomba (2001) reasoned there are multiple stories that influence the lives of the oppressed. Their oppression has been reinforced through socialization and educational processes (Freire,

1970). These colonial processes continue to produce theories in areas such as behaviours, attachment, and parenting that are counterproductive to Black lives (DeGruy, 2005). These theories often do not take into account history and the experiences of oppression that have influenced Black lives and functioning. The unintended consequence is that these theories inform practices that are racist and oppressive. As supported by Loomba, these theories are monolithic and do not incorporate all individuals into their structure and, thus, require a questioning of their objective truth. The Caribbean experience will be used to demonstrate this.

The Caribbean is comprised of small islands, which are deeply marked by centuries of slavery and colonial rule (Lowenthal, 1982). As discussed in Chapter 1, the Caribbean islands are made up of a mixture of many groups and subgroups, languages, and dialects that were subject to many influences, including Europeans, Caribs, Arawak, and Tainos. The main purpose of the European settlers was to dominate and control industries that produce wealth; however, according to wa Thiong'o (1986), "The most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonized" (p. 16). While the settlers' focus was on accumulating wealth, to facilitate this process they attacked Indigenous sources of knowledge and produced pedagogies that strengthened their position. At the same time, the settlers' practices, structures, governmentality, and politics were arranged to protect their interests by maintaining a sharp focus on sustaining colonialism, acquiring Indigenous lands, and enacting the actual/attempted elimination of Indigenous peoples (Snelgrove, Dhamoon, & Corntassel, 2014).

The Consolidated Slave Act of 1824 in the Caribbean saw legislation that removed the more brutal provisions of slavery, but allowed racialized laws took root (Newton, 2008). For example, Newton (2008) noted that "one clause made it illegal for slaves to strike white people whereas the original law had referred simply to free people" (p. 95). Black people in the Caribbean historically were *shut* out of things and denied opportunities in the political, social, and economic realms because of racism. Their long history of colonization steeped in racial oppression crippled Caribbean self-confidence and self-reliance and set up a vicious circle of psychological dependency (Lowenthal, 1982). The discussion of Frantz Fanon (1967) in *Black Skin White Masks* will be used in this segment to highlight the production and reproduction of inequalities that frame the multiple stories of Black families from the Caribbean.

Racism is inherent in society, but it is rarely taken up in a holistic manner in the discussion about Black families. Racism needs to be understood and addressed not only by Black or other racialized people, but also of by the White or racialized people they interact with within mainstream institutions. According to Aguiar, Calliste, and Dei (2000), no focus is given to the characteristics of counselors' or assessors' attitudes towards racialized clients, power imbalances inherent in that relationship, or the structural barriers that limit racialized families' access to services. Understanding the multiple stories of these families framed around racism leads to better understanding of the existing problems in parenting in the Black community. The stresses of the consequences of racism (e.g., underemployment, poverty, inadequate housing) all have a profound impact on parents' mental stability. The prolonged effects of these are transferred throughout the generations, and they become problematic for the well-being of the family. Subsequently, acknowledging and addressing racism can disrupt historical trauma and lead to better outcomes for children and families. In order for assessors to do this effectively, they will need to critically examine their own social locations.

There is a fixed understanding of the concept of Black that continues to define Black people; it is rooted in areas such as language and behaviour (Fanon, 1967). It is through this lens that many stereotypes were developed, and it is also through this lens that Black people internalize their oppression by trying to be like White people. Fanon (1967) stated that "nothing is more astonishing than to hear a Black man express himself properly, for then in truth he is putting on the white world" (p. 36). The use of language is a tool that is used to mimic the White person. Fanon spoke to the fact that Black people buy into stereotypes of images that determine what is good or bad, pretty or ugly, and they subsequently engross themselves into mutilation of their bodies. For example, the idea that light-skinned Blacks have more value than dark-skinned Blacks is a principle that continues to preoccupy some Caribbean individuals. This psychological degradation of the self, Fanon noted, is a "historico-racial scheme" (p. 84). He indicated that laboratories "make it possible for the miserable Negro to whiten himself and thus to throw off the burden of that corporeal malediction" (p. 111). This story is important to understand how the self-esteem of Black people continues to be influenced from their need for acceptance by White people, which may indeed be a survival strategy on their part. Despite these reasons, it is this imposition of inferiority that has developed and continues to follow generations of Black people.

Fanon argued that a Black person does not make oneself feel inferior; the reality is that he is made inferior.

The breakdown in the Caribbean economic system led to a growing number of economic migrants moving from the Caribbean to North America, bringing with them the psychological impact of colonialism and racism. They often also brought with them practices drawn from their African ancestors, the Indigenous people of the Caribbean, and those of their European masters. To complicate matters, they continued to be judged based on the colour of their skin by systems and structures similar to those in the Caribbean that were built on oppressive colonial and racist practices. This led to confusion for Black families, as unconscious indirect or direct trauma was triggered. Fanon (1967) argued that Black children's trauma manifests in childhood instances where they hear stories based on White superiority or through witnessing fathers beaten or lynched by White men; trauma experienced in adulthood includes constant rejection.

To understand parenting in the Black Caribbean population, one has to realize that irrespective of social and educational success, colour is an outward manifestation of race, which is the criterion from which one is assessed (Fanon, 1967). Society judges this population because the dominant people in society do not understand the multiple stories of oppression that inform parenting within Black families. They are referred to institutions, such as the police and child welfare, if their parenting practices do not conform to the European ideology of parenting. Subsequently, to understand, address, and support these parents appropriately, the questions must become: How can we understand and encourage Indigenous/cultural practices while ensuring the safety of children? How do we educate mainstream society along with the Black community about its history in a way that is authentic and focused on capacity building, rather than presenting a reflexive response to the issue of the day? To answer these questions, transformational knowledge needs to be created and shared among all institutions.

This transformation needs to build critical social theories that cannot be privileged only to academics and intellectuals, but must also be available to directly inform anti-oppressive practice and actions (Dei, 2012). Institutions inherently create endemic inequalities (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001), and as such, there needs to be a revamp of social work and social services education that currently use materials primarily produced and reproduced with a Eurocentric interest. Training

of workers should reflect a genuine inclusion of the many ways of knowing, rather than objectifying Indigenous people.

2.3 Identity: The Intersection of Race and Gender

This study adopted anti-Black racism and Black feminism frameworks as critical lenses to understand historical trauma as it relates to parenting in the Black Caribbean communities. I assert that people have multiple identities that are steeped in history that influences how they navigate the world. An example of such identity is a Black woman who is part of the LGBTQT community. She may be rejected because of her race, gender, and sexual orientation. This list of rejection can be endless and include such things as poverty and lack of educational opportunities. The oppression she may face because of her identity is rooted in the legacy of colonialism, and the vitriol effect of this for her evokes experiences of trauma that are tied to her identity. Amoah (2007) shared: “When people recognize that the basis for the differential treatment, or the way in which they experience the world, is due to personal characteristics, then they have no choice but to enter the fray of identity politics” (p. 100). It is for this reason that this study embraced anti-Black racism and Black feminism frameworks.

2.3.1 Theorizing Using an Anti-Black Racism Lens

Anti-Black racism recognizes that Black people’s oppression is rooted in colonial history and legacy that are grounded into policies; hence, race still matters. Benjamin (2003) defined anti-Black racism as “a particular form of systemic and structural racism in Canadian society, which historically and contemporarily has been perpetrated against Blacks” (p. ii). This definition is especially important to this topic, as racism continues to have an active presence in influencing equal and equitable services in many institutions in Canadian society (Dominelli, 1988; Maiter, 2009c; Pon et al., 2011; Prado, 2000), thus Benjamin (2003) concluded that “the naming of anti-Black racism is a form of resistance against dominant and hegemonic systems of Whiteness and the building of agency and social transformation against racism and other forms of oppression” (p. ii). Some may argue that anti-Black racism fragments and weakens the total anti-racism movement. It is, however, important to note that the anti-racism dialogue has caused minimal change in practices and attitudes towards the Black population. This lack of change is entrenched in dogmas that form the current social structures, which have constructed the White race as

superior and legitimized social relations by exploiting, dominating, and destroying racialized people (Dei, 2010, 2012; Goldberg, 1993). Regardless of whether or not they fit into the dominant value systems, Castagna and Dei (2000) noted, “While different forms of racism are manifest in society, racism is more frequently and more harshly manifested against those who are furthest from the ‘white skin colour norm’” (p. 20). Racism is not only limited to White people (Rattansi, 2007), it is also prevalent among other people of colour (Aguilar et al., 2000). This stance of inferiority is evident, as Black people continue to be viewed in many areas and by other racial groups who buy into the colonial thinking and construction of Black people as the *other*. The problem is that the adoption of the stereotyping of Black people has failed to recognize the history of Black people that is embodied in a colonial construct of White superiority. This is especially important to this discussion, as Black families face a number of disparities within the many systems that they interact with on a daily basis. Theorizing from an anti-Black racism lens is an analytic tool that speaks to today’s reality for Black families, as they are impacted by racism within the child welfare system, a removal of their children at an alarming rate by the child welfare system, and discriminating practices supported by racist policies in the education and judicial systems.

2.3.2 Locating Trauma in Historical Experiences: Highlighting Experiences through the Lens of Anti-Black Racism

“To live without anguish, one must live in detachment from oneself and the world—one must reconstruct the odors and sounds of one’s childhood” (Memmi, 1991, p. 26).

To understand the need for an anti-Black racism framework, one has to revisit history to locate the injuries that were specifically directed at Black people. Aimee Cesaire (1998) ascertained that there is no innocence or impunity in colonization, and she indicated that colonization dehumanizes. Its activities are based on a contempt for the other and the objectifying of the colonized by the colonizer as animals and, as such, imparts brutalization, degradation, violence and race hatred that provides the foundation that shapes how Black navigate their world. Tsenay (as cited in Serequeberhan, 1998) defined colonialism as: “The negation of the ‘community of projects’ which constitutes the historicity of the colonized. The colonized ‘native’ is forcefully barred from and does not historicize. Rather he endures a subordinate thing in the historicity of the colonizer” (p. 243). Nkrumah (1964) wrote about colonialism as the means for extracting

wealth from countries, while at the same time developing policies that are aimed at assimilation. He further indicated that: “We were trained to be inferior copies of Englishmen. . . . We were taught to regard our culture and traditions as barbarous and primitive” (p. 49). By these definitions, it is apparent that colonialism has eroded the colonized people’s esteem and confidence, and there was a violent negation of indigenous cultures (Serequeberhan, 1998) in a way that caused long-term injuries. As noted by Nkrumah, the social effect of colonialism is more destructive than the economic impact, as it goes deep into the minds of people and takes longer to eradicate, undoubtedly causing the colonized (i.e., Black People) to experience generational psychological damage. Loomba (1998) contended, “The colonial experience is a lived experience in the consciousness of these people. . . . The experience is a continuing psychic experience that has to be dealt with long after the actual colonial situation ends” (p. 185). Fanon (1967) asserted that colonialism’s attempt to re-arrange and demoralize the natives’ way of thinking highlights the importance of breaking away from colonialism, despite the formidable difficulties involved in doing so. He further stated, “If this is not accomplished, there will be serious psycho-affective injuries, and the result will be individuals without an anchor, without a horizon, colourless, stateless, rootless” (p. 241). In other words, it creates a people without knowledge of their values, culture, and history.

Colonial ideologies and Western intellects maintain the current institutional structures. These structures are used to maintain White domination and oppress racialized people. Black people continue to be the focus of such oppression, as evidenced from their overrepresentation in many of these institutions, such as the child welfare, remedial education, and criminal systems (Teklu, 2012). As Gaztambide-Fernández (2012) suggested, educators are called upon to play a central role in constructing the conditions for a different kind of encounter, an encounter that both opposes ongoing colonization and seeks to heal the social, cultural, and spiritual ravages of colonial history (p. 42).

Colonialism delegitimizes the colonized culture. Africans traditionally pass on their knowledge of parenting through storytelling, folklore, and proverbs: “African education, children’s beliefs in and acceptance of moral lessons, and roles drawn from legends, proverbs and initiation ceremonies were reinforced by practical examples in adult life relative to the norms of society” (Boateng, 1983, p. 334). A good example of this is the West African Anansi stories that are told

in the Caribbean. Elders traditionally tell these stories to children to both entertain and instill values and moral obligations. Along with the influence of religion, these stories were told to inspire, teach, and guide children. However, the transfer of this knowledge is increasingly being interrupted and lost through migration, as these children have limited access to their elders. Instead, the focus is put on North American stories, such as those written by Dr. Seuss. To put it another way, these Anansi stories were significant parenting tools, as it was a way of instilling values, discipline, and expectation of behaviour. With these stories no longer readily available, the teachings of the Europeans become dominant, European culture became the culture to aspire to, and Indigenous knowledge was devalued. Serequeberhan (1998) told us that to counterclaim this dominance, that there has to be a reclaim of humanity.

Sum, Desai, and Ritskes (2012) stated, “There is power in questions and questioning, in being able to live in the understanding that not everything is known or knowable” (p. xi). Yet, in understanding parenting within the Black community, there is a quest for more knowledge and analysis, rather than accepting that there are multiple ways of knowing and that there are limits to knowledge. Social work and social services institutions can benefit from intellectuals in the educational sector, as they use an anti-colonial framework to work with alternative, oppositional paradigms based on the use of Indigenous concepts and analytical systems and cultural frames of reference (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001). Wane, Jagire, and Murad (2013) indicated that giving people permission to return to their original ways of knowing and being without being judged or punished (i.e., ensuring the emotional and physical safety of the child and the family) allows them to develop their self-esteem, realize their full potential, and problem solve themselves more effectively.

The judgment passed on Black families within society is insurmountable, and individuals and families are forced into unstable situations. Parents often are labeled as uncooperative, without acknowledgment given to their distrust of systems because of their experience with racism for over 400 years. The World Health Organization (2012) recognized racism as a social determination of health issues, and they conferred that racism causes mental health problems or worsens pre-existing mental health concerns, and Krieger (2003) recognized the influence of racism on clinical outcomes. This finding is especially important to this discussion on anti-Black racism, as it highlights the specific consequences of racism on Black people. It is not then

surprising that Black families are experiencing many pressures in their parenting as they struggle with racism. The problem within society, and even within the Black population, is that the topic of racism is not taken up as a factor in their struggles. Thus, denying the race concept is denying the historical realities as outlined for Black people (Castagna & Dei, 2000).

The reality of a colonial history and understanding of the Black family in today's society can be seen in many stories of Black families interacting with the different institutions in the Canadian society. It is not rare to hear harsh comments about Black families, which continues to perpetrate the violence of colonialism. The following story highlights the importance of the anti-Black racism discourse as an analytic tool. This is a story of a Black woman braiding her child's hair while being observed by a White worker—the child was removed from her care, and she only sees the child at a social service agency. This mother was challenged by a worker for spending valuable and limited time combing her child's hair without interacting or playing with the child. This worker made inaccurate assertions about this parent. In fact, during the combing of the hair, the mother was speaking to the child about many things, but this was missed because the worker was focused on the objectification of the combing. The worker lost a valuable opportunity to seek to understand what this interaction/experience/other appropriate phrase means for this mother and child. Habermas (as cited in Dancy & Sosa, 1993) stated, "Social sciences cannot adopt the 'objectivizing' attitude of casual explanation, but must seek to understand human practices from the perspective of potential participants, by focusing on the explanations the participants themselves would give for their actions" (p. 167). The discourse of anti-Black racism disrupts the oppressive assertions that are made about Black people and highlights that to help Black people, one has to be able to listen and ask questions, rather than adopting a judgmental attitude.

The fundamental importance is to retake their position in history "to again become historical Being. It is to negate the negation of its lived historicalness and overcome the violence of merely being an object in the historicity of European existence that the colonized fights (Serequeberhan, 1998, p. 235).

2.3.3 Theorizing Using a Black feminism lens

Black feminism emerged in the 1960s to address the many forms of oppression and suppression of Black women. Oppression is defined as “any unjust situation where systematically and over a long period of time, one group denies another group access to the resources of society. Race, class, gender, sexuality nation, age and ethnicity among others constitute major forms of oppression” (Hill Collins 2009, p. 4). In response to Black women’s exploitation, their denial of rights and privileges by mainstream societies, and the negative images that were produced mainly by White men, leading Black women scholars, such as Patricia Hill Collins (2009), Bell hooks (1990), and Alice Walker (1988), challenged these oppression by writing extensively on Black women’s experiences. They came to realize that Black women’s voices were silenced in mainstream feminism movement, which prompted hooks (1990) to write her famous text *Ain’t I a Woman*. The concept of Black feminism is relevant to this discussion on parenting, as women in Canada continue to experience on a regular basis economic, political, and ideological oppression that influence their position and agency in society. The positionality of Black women’s voices in this study is prevalent, given that generations of single-parent families in Canada are headed by Black women from the Caribbean community (Mata, 2011). Black women represent the largest segment of lone parents among other racialized groups (Chui & Maheux, 2011). In this context, Black feminism provides an explanatory tool to understanding Black families by including Black women’s experiences and voices. Wane (2002) wrote:

Black feminist thought is a theoretical tool meant to elucidate and analyze the historical, social, cultural and economic relations of women of African descent as the basis for development of a liberatory praxis. It is a paradigm that is grounded in the historical as well as the contemporary experiences of Black women as mothers, activists, academics and community leader. (p. 38)

Positioning Black women within the history of slavery and colonization is important, as their oppression is rooted in this history and legacy and was not limited to a particular time or space. The importance of time and space challenges one to look at what exactly is being projected onto specific bodies dependent on location (Massaquoi, 2007, p. 80). Their oppression goes beyond a micro understanding and expands to the macro, as systems were built and policies were drafted that gave mainly White men ultimate privileges. Before slavery and African colonialization,

Black women contributed to the economy as entrepreneurs, as their work benefitted their lineage group and their children. Children were often present with women in their entrepreneurial endeavours, thus learning significant skills at an early age. When older, the children took these lessons and applied them to their duties, such as looking after their younger siblings and running errands (Hill Collins, 2009). Women had a central role within the family, including providing guidance and life skills to their children from an early age. This matrifocal pattern of parenting among Black families, however, was disrupted by slavery (Tanner, 1974). The slave political economy made it unlikely for patriarchal or matriarchal domination to take root (Hill Collins, 2009), and neither Black men nor Black women ruled Black family networks during this period (Burnham, 1987; Davis, 1981).

During slavery, Black women and the Black man were equally oppressed; however, as pointed out by Thornton Dill (1994), there was a gender-based division of slave families, as women were mostly responsible for the household and childcare. When Black men and children were sold by their slave-owners, it was the Black mothers who were left to provide for the ones who remained, and alternately, it was also the Black mothers who took care of the Black men and children who were bought by their slave owners without their mothers or wives. This problem was, however, two-fold, as one woman took on the responsibility of not only her biological family, but also that of the communal family. Secondly, these phenomena created instability in the Black family.

The instability among Blacks resulted from the effects of slavery on Black family life ... Slavery established a pattern of unstable Black families because of lack of marriage among slaves and the constant separation of families as males and older children were sold. Slavery therefore, destroyed all family bonds with the exception of those between mother and child, leading to a pattern of Black families centred on mother. (Ricketts, 1989, p. 32)

From slavery to present day, Black women had worked outside the home, in factories, in the field, and other peoples' homes (hooks, 1990). In contrast, their White counterparts got the privileges associated with having white skins; thus, while they are fighting for gender equality, Black women are fighting for both gender and racial equality. Given the central role of Black women in parenting, and the high percentage of them who parent alone, as outlined by Chiu and

Maheux (2011) and Mata (2011), these working conditions for Black women are important to understanding the fragmentations that continue to exist within Black families compared to those of their White counterparts.

Due to the centrality to the matriarchal focus on Black families, any disruption to Black women's lives equaled disruption to the family and its practices. Black women worked without pay in slavery and were responsible not only for meeting their slave owner's arduous demands, but also having to ensure that she was able to teach lessons of survival to her children. During the industrial revolution, again women carried the burden of the family because of the reality of the inherent racism that had a profound impact on the family. For example, Black men were prevented from competing fairly for appropriate jobs close to home; hence, they worked away from the home for extended periods of time. Subsequently, Black women had a difficult time maintaining the family structure (Hill Collins, 2009) and encountered unfamiliar ways of living, and because of their difficulties of coping, family lives became disorganized (Ricketts, 1989).

Black feminism is a critical discourse that addresses the reality and histories of Black families and makes sense of their everyday experiences by balancing a gender consciousness with race consciousness (Few, 2007). This discourse provides a viable focus on the liberation of Black families by challenging traditional ideologies.

Including a Black feminism framework in this research may be critiqued as seeing parenting as a woman's problem rather than a collective duty of both men and women. However, while gendered issues are central to Black feminism, it also acknowledges that Black men and women can work together in their common struggles in liberating ways to balance gender consciousness with race consciousness (Few, 2007). As such, this discourse provides an analytic framework for understanding the historical importance of parenting due to its heterogeneity, as it not only responds to gender identity, but also includes race/ethnicity, class, and nationhood (Mohammed, 1998). This study focused on Black families within the Canadian context. Hence, while acknowledging the contribution of all Black women in the African diaspora, the study adopted a Canadian Black feminism lens.

2.3.4 The Canadian Experience

Over the last 20 years, the work of prominent Black women scholars, such as Dionne Brand (1991), Afua Cooper (1994), and Njoki Wane (2002, 2007), have brought the voices of Black women in Canada into the centre of the feminist movement. Their research highlighted the experiences of Black women in Canada, and similar to their counterparts in the US, the struggles of Black women were exemplified. Sylvia Hamilton (1994) has offered a historical context of the multiple layered stories of Black Canadian women's struggle and survival. She wrote:

From her first arrival in Nova Scotia, the Black woman has struggled for survival. She has had to battle slavery, servitude, sexual and racial discrimination, and ridicule. Her tenacious spirit has been her strongest and most constant ally, she survives with strong dignity and an admirable lack of self-pity and bitterness. She survives, but not without struggle (p. 13)

The work of Black feminist writers in Canada further embodies the importance of using a Black feminist framework in understanding parenting and challenging conventional ideologies as it relates to the Black Caribbean community. Their perspectives are situated within history and contribute to understanding the current particular conditions and issues that frame Black women's lives, which may indirectly or directly influences their family members and communities given their central roles that they hold within the family and communities. For example, Cooper's (1994) research on Black women and education in the nineteenth century in North America showed the importance and influence of Black women teachers in educating Black children when the education system denied them the privilege of attending school because they were Black. Weaver, Newman, Williams, Massaquoi, and Brown's (2013) research on the acceptance of HIV treatment by the African, Caribbean, and other Black women in Toronto not only brings attention to a particular issue that some Black women are facing, but also brings focus on addressing this matter through the credibility of their work. Through her discussion on cultural competence, Williams (2006) provided support for this research, as she indicated that "addressing racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, religious and other diversities in practice is one of the most pressing dilemmas of contemporary social work" (p. 218). It is by examining issues like these that Canadian Black feminism exposed the ongoing oppression of Black women. One likes to believe that oppressive practices are not in the *backyards* of Canada, but in examining

Canada's history with colonial practices, the inclusion of the Black feminist Canadian lens becomes increasingly important in analyzing Black families' experiences.

Wane's (2007) discussion on Canadian Black feminism also provided context for this research. She discussed liberation within the framework of the past by indicating that Canadian Black feminist thought "is a creation of a combination of many fragments from our past; and if we are to truly have a meaningful framework, we must cast our eyes and attention to the struggles and experiences of other Black women" (p. 296). Her concept is relevant especially in the discussion of Black women and lone parenting.

Canadian Black feminist researchers introduced the notion of spirituality as a tool of resistance for Black women in the country. They acknowledged the historically significant trauma that is associated with the outcome of colonialism; however, they offered spirituality as a strength-based intervention. Their introduction of the notion of reclaiming spirituality as a tool of empowerment and as a disrupter to their oppression is important for addressing parenting, as it is through this tool that parents can garner support in parenting. Yvonne Bobb-Smith (2007) suggested that spirituality is a tool of resistance that is integral to the survival of Caribbean Canadian Women, and this paper fully adopts this formation of religion as a tool of resistance. Historically, spirituality was important to many Caribbean women, but was tainted by Western influence. Wane and Keegan (2007) discussed the importance of Black women reclaiming spirituality as an empowerment tool. They concluded:

It is important for us as Africans to reclaim our roots and our cultural expressions, which have emerged from the resilience of our ancestors—our laughter, and our music, our drumming, walking, and standing. Bearing witness to our lives as deeply spiritual women and human beings remains key to our identity and spirituality as people of African ancestry. (p. 44)

The Black feminism analytic tool brings the voices of Black women to the centre, thus removing them from their historical position that stationed them at the periphery of discussions. The strength of this framework is that it names oppressive practice and shows how power, race, and class privilege other women (Crawford-Brown, 2007). Using this lens gives Black women the permission to reclaim their identity. Through this framework, this study hoped that Black parents

would reclaim their strength in parenting, thus disrupting stereotypes and labels that are used to define and identified them.

The intersectionality of race and gender embodied the experiences and identity of Black families. Anti-Black racism and anti-Black feminism share a history of a racial construct that denies them individual and collective privileges and keeps them in a state of oppression. Both theories as analytic tools recognize the importance of the subjective experiences of each individual within the Black community, while connecting their past to their present.

2.4 Convergence and Divergence of the Theoretical Frameworks

Anti-colonial, anti-Black racism, and Black feminist theories converge in their quest to liberate Black people and restore individual and collective freedom, privilege, and respect. Together, these theories allow for an analysis of social and political thoughts that are purposefully embedded in individual unconsciousness and institutional policies. They call attention to the historical underpinnings of oppression and disrupt the oppression of Black people.

A consideration of anti-colonialism is important to any fair analysis of parenting within the Black Caribbean community, for colonial ideologies are embedded in peoples' lives in ways that significantly impact the realities of Black family units and the individuals who comprise those families. Anti-colonialism is very important to a historically based understanding of anti-Black racism and Black feminism, but it's main value for this thesis is to provide a chronological understanding of Black people's experiences throughout history. It brings a critical lens to the colonial ideologies that are entrenched in institutional practices and policies. Some have argued that society is in a post-colonial era and that anti-colonialism is outdated and no longer relevant. This belief is mistaken. When a Black family experiences a person of authority—generally someone from the dominant culture—enter their home and tell them what good parenting is and what they are going to do with their children, the power dynamics of colonialism become evident.

Anti-colonialism gives Black parents the power and permission to recover their traditional ways of knowing, thinking, and problem solving (Wane et al., 2013). It is also a means by which they

can uplift and rehabilitate areas in their lives that were repressed and eroded by colonialism and slavery. The psychological impact of colonialism is profound, and it is not always visible. Minujin and Nandy (2012) explained that “colonization is a mental state that is rooted in earlier forms of social consciousness in both the colonizers and the colonized” (p. 174). The anti-colonial framework allows one to understand the psychological impact and influence of the colonial gaze, while shedding light on current policies that are used to maintain colonial power. Finally, the use of its methodologies can be used as a form of resistance to colonial power.

Anti-Black racism emerged out of the historical oppression of Black people highlighted by the anti-colonial framework. Along with Black feminism, an analytic tool that centres an understanding of anti-Black racism is used in this paper to understand the everyday and often nuanced forms of oppression that are specifically directed towards Black people. It starts from the position that power, privilege, and oppression are present in everyday interactions that Black people have with individuals and institutions. Stephen Lewis’s (1992) *Report on Race Relations in Ontario* summarized the main intentions of anti-Black racism. He indicated the main target of racism cannot be ignored and he noted that:

While it is obviously true that every visible minority community experiences the indignities and wounds of systemic discrimination throughout Southern Ontario, it is the Black community, which is the focus. It is Blacks who are being shot, it is Black youth that is unemployed in excessive numbers, it is Black students who are being inappropriately streamed in schools, it is Black kids who are disproportionately dropping-out, it is housing communities with large concentrations of Black residents where the sense of vulnerability and disadvantage is most acute, it is Black employees, professional and non-professional, on whom the doors of upward equity slam shut. (p. 2)

Black feminism holds up the unique experiences of Black women, which allowed this thesis to spotlight Canadian Black women’s experiences. Unlike anti-colonial and anti-Black racism frameworks, this approach amplifies Black women’s voices—voices that have historically been silenced and marginalized. Secondly, its critical lens acknowledges multiple levels of interlocking positions to offer an understanding not only of behaviours, but also of the socio-historical context of particular groups of people (Few, 2007; Neville & Hamer, 2001). Black

feminism concerns itself with the functioning of Black people's communities. This discourse makes some people uncomfortable, as it forces people to confront Black women's oppression. However, as stated by Collins (1996), "Using the term Black feminism disrupts the racism inherent in presenting feminism as a for-whites-only ideology and political movement" (p. 13). Another criticism of Black feminism is that it further divides the Black community. However, Black feminism is an inclusive discourse, one that disrupts the assertion that men are the centre of the struggle against oppression. Liberation pedagogies, such as those posited by Frantz Fanon (1963), Paulo Freire (1970), and Albert Memmi (1991), spoke about the liberation struggle from a male perspective, ignoring women's oppression. Black feminism is not for women only, and Black feminists' consciousness has been found to be prevalent among both Black men and women (Few, 2007). Feminism is vital, both in its power to liberate people from the terrible bonds of sexist oppression and in its potential to radicalize and renew other liberation struggles (hooks, 1990, p. 42).

Through this paper, I have taken the position that each of the aforementioned frameworks is equally important in addressing the issues of parenting with the Black Caribbean population. Theories that inform discussion on or about Black families require an inclusive understanding that highlights the consequences of colonialism (Fanon, 1967), anti-Black racism, and the specific experiences of Black women. Adopting all three frameworks intertwiningly disrupts the divisions that colonial societies' attempt to create between Black-focused ideologies; instead, using these three frameworks creates bridges for Black people to work together with the common interest of constructing a resistance movement against colonial, racial, and gendered oppression.

2.5 Chapter Summary

I began this chapter with a review of the historical underpinnings of anti-colonialism, anti-Black racism, and Black feminism. These frameworks, used concurrently, offer a comprehensive understanding of how many forms of oppression are rooted not only within individual ideologies, but also in practices and policies. Such practices and policies are informed by colonist thinking and are used to oppress Black people. The three theoretical frameworks laid out in this chapter bring attention to the intersectionality of racism within institutions, such as the educational, judicial, and social welfare systems.

An anti-colonial approach is critical to this discussion, as it offers a macro-level overview of the foundations of our current society and offers a lens that allows for the disruption of said foundation. Furthermore, it introduces a language that allows us to have an intellectual discussion about the impact of colonialism, thus legitimizing the critique of our current system. The intersectionality of race and gender analyses creates a holistic framework for understanding parenting within the Black community, as it takes into consideration the unique realities of the Black family. Anti-Black racism and Black feminism are critical frameworks that disrupt the everyday colonial narratives about Black people. Putting Black people's experiences at the centre of discussion and understanding them through these frameworks allows for the unique experiences of Black parents to be understood in a manner that is transformative and resists existing colonial structures.

Chapter 3

Review of Literature

Parenting, the concept of historical trauma, and parenting specifically within the context of the Black Caribbean community is discussed in this chapter, while considering the implications of the child welfare system. Black people worldwide have a complicated history steeped with White domination that is supported by colonist and racist ideologies (The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, 2016). These ideologies created a dehumanizing pathology that continues to grant White people privilege while oppressing Black people (The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, 2016). Partly as a result of this reality, when discussing the Black family and parenting, much of the literature spoke solely about poverty, single parenting, absentee fathers, and violence, and make them definitional for the Black family. It is through these lenses and constructs that mainstream society views and understands the Black family. Foucault, in his critical inquiry of knowledge and practice, questioned these types of assumptions and the way that their perceived truth sustains stereotypes (Chambon, 1999).

In this chapter, I will begin with review of the literature on historical trauma, paying particular attention to Dr. Joy DeGruy's (2005) research. I then examine the existing research on parenting using the theoretical lenses discussed in Chapter 2. I then take a closer look at the Caribbean experience, paying particular attention to the historical picture and to factors informing parenting. The review will conclude with a consideration of the child welfare system, as this is the sector with a mandate to assess parenting.

3.1 Historical Trauma

Historical records dating back over 400 years capture the trauma and pain of Black people. This suffering was the result of ideologies and propaganda that were advantageous to a few over the many (Adams, 1999). The field of psychology is a trailblazer in illuminating the historical trauma that emerged from events such as forced migration, exploitation of labour, and ethnic cleansing. In contrast, the fields of social work and social services have lagged behind in understanding then creating and using tools that account for the influence of intergenerational trauma from events such as slavery. Research on historical trauma suggests that to understand

many Black families who are involved with the helping professions, workers should undertake to understand Black people's history. The reality is that family members transmit trauma to subsequent generations, irrespective of direct exposure to a traumatic experience (Kaitz et al., 2009).

As Schindlmayr (2006) put it,

These legacies of one generation manifest themselves in the next. If left unaddressed, they can have lasting repercussions throughout an individual's lifetime and that of his or her offspring, especially if the occurrence happened during childhood. The repercussions could also spill over into the wider community. This transference goes against the spirit of intergenerational equity, as the next generation lives with the negative experiences of the previous one. (p. 182)

3.1.1 How Historical Trauma Works

Historical trauma is very complex, and many generations and races are impacted by such trauma. Although my research focused on the historical trauma caused by forced migration, segregation, and racial discrimination of the Black Caribbean population in Toronto, it is important to note that other populations, including Aboriginals, Japanese, and Jewish populations, also have complex experiences with historical trauma. For the Aboriginal population, such trauma includes colonization and the residential school system; for the Jewish community, it includes the Holocaust; for Japanese people in Canada, it includes the internment camps during World War II. My research is situated amidst similar inquiries by and into the experiences of other populations.

Generations of Black ancestors experienced trauma because of colonial rule, political conflict, genocide, and military rules. This trauma can surface and manifest itself across generations in many different ways, and the impact can be even more severe if left unaddressed or ignored. To consider a parallel example, Aboriginal experiences with colonization saw these people suffer significant and crippling losses, including loss of people, land, and culture; many turned to alcohol and other drugs to manage their pain (Gone, 2014). Understanding and confronting historical trauma empowers people to address their past (Durham & Webb, 2014), which can

lead to positive outcomes for children and families. Recognizing this, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) acknowledged the trauma of the past by extensively documenting Aboriginal communities' experiences with colonialism and residential schools. This report honoured the truth of Aboriginal and Canadian history and recognized the direct correlation between these events and this population's current-day functioning. Similar recognition is required for Black people, who have been impacted by slavery, segregation, and racism. The recognition of this history and its attendant trauma could be a first step towards reconciliation.

To understand the full effects of trauma, one must take a holistic perspective and consider both the individual and collective within the Black population. Physical and psychological traumatic experiences affect mainly the person, while group trauma speaks primarily to the loss of identity and meaning (Eyerman, 2004). Weingarten (2004) stressed the importance of understanding an ecosystem that includes direct and indirect experiences that embody trauma. A direct experience might be a parent's or grandparent's personal experiences of racism or *shadeism*. For example, if they had darker skin tone than other members of their family, they were often reminded of their colour through nicknames such as *darkie* or *Blackie*, and it is not unheard of that they receive harsher punishment than siblings who are lighter than them. An indirect experience includes the emotional messages that the generations of parents deliver to their children because of their own direct or indirect experiences. For example, DeGruy (2005) spoke about Black mothers not allowing their children to explore in a bank because of fear of surveillance and targeted as criminals because they are Black. Additionally, Weingarten highlighted the need to understand the biological, psychological, familial, and societal mechanisms that have a role in the transference of trauma. This understanding is meaningful for this research; although many of these events happened many years ago, the legacy of trauma continues to be reflected in some of the behaviours and beliefs of Black people. At one point, these behaviours and beliefs were a necessity for survival; however, in today's society, these same practices are undermining their ability to be successful (DeGruy, 2005).

3.1.2 Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome

The term Post Traumatic Slavery Syndrome (PTSS) was coined by Dr. Joy DeGruy (2005), which Cromwell (2012) referred to as "the psychological trauma affecting enslaved Africans in

America and their descendants, thus connecting the legacies of these brutal colonial experiences with current issues of racism and its negative impact on contemporary ‘Black culture’” (p. 17). Looking to post-traumatic stress disorder as outlined in the DSM5 (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) as a guide, DeGruy (2005) concluded that Black people in the Americas are victims of slavery and its aftermath. She suggested, “Cycles of oppression leave scars on the victims and victors alike, scars that embed themselves in our collective psyches and are passed down through generations, robbing us of our humanity” (p. 4). In defining PTSS, DeGruy drew a link between historical trauma and continued oppression and absence of opportunity, and she identified these as causes of this syndrome.

Through her discussion of PTSS, DeGruy (2005) illustrated how the trauma of Black people’s histories does not dissolve in one generation, but is passed on through families. She highlighted that each generation faces its challenges, and these challenges multiply and are transferred to the next generation. Her concept of PTSS helps unravel of a segment of Black people’s complicated history, identify the trauma that has been festering, and helps people detect it in their parenting practices.

Understanding the history and present-day impact of White superiority is critical to this thesis. DeGruy (2005), Dubois and Beauvois (2004), West (2001), and many others have noted that theorists and intellectuals made claims regarding the inferiority of Blacks despite the lack of scientific evidence. Using the examples of the pseudo-sciences of phrenology and intelligent quotient testing, DeGruy highlighted some of the justifications that emerged as early as slavery and continue to this day to reinforce the dehumanization of Black people and the superiority of the White race.

DeGruy’s (2005) examination of history underscored the conditions of torture and unimaginable suffering experienced by millions of African men, women, and children when they were transported to Brazil, the West Indies, Europe, and the United States through the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. She shared that approximately 10 to 15 million Africans arrived in the Americas as slaves, a fact that is not widely known due to a reluctance to include this in history lessons. In her review of various American historical documents, she highlighted the experiences of slaves to show their reality—They were considered less than livestock, and they lived a life marked by

brutality, deprivation, and abuse. She spoke powerfully about how Black women's bodies were used by scientists and about Black women's experiences with rape.

According to DeGruy (2005), the legacy of slavery is trauma transmitted through beliefs and behaviours of African Americans; these beliefs and behaviours at one time were necessary for survival, but in today's environment, have come to undermine Black people's ability to be successful. She included child-rearing practices in her discussion and explained that those practices are influenced by the parents' experiences of being raised. Parenting is, of course, one of the many skills passed down from generation to generation. DeGruy highlighted that parenting for this population is associated with adapting to a lifetime of torture. She argued that children live and learn behaviours and attitudes from parents who were broken and stressed, and she surmised that individual, families, and the collective most likely suffered from PTSS, based on the differential anxiety and adaptive survival behaviours passed down from previous generations. She linked the current-day functioning of Black people to the crimes committed against their ancestors.

DeGruy's (2005) PTSS is depicted in Figure 1, which illustrates how the traumata of slavery have a long-lasting impact on both the individual and the collective. She explained that the slave experience was an attack on a person's body, mind, and spirit. It is within this critical understanding of historical trauma that this research was grounded. To begin to understand parenting within the Black community, one must adopt a historical lens of slavery and its aftermath.

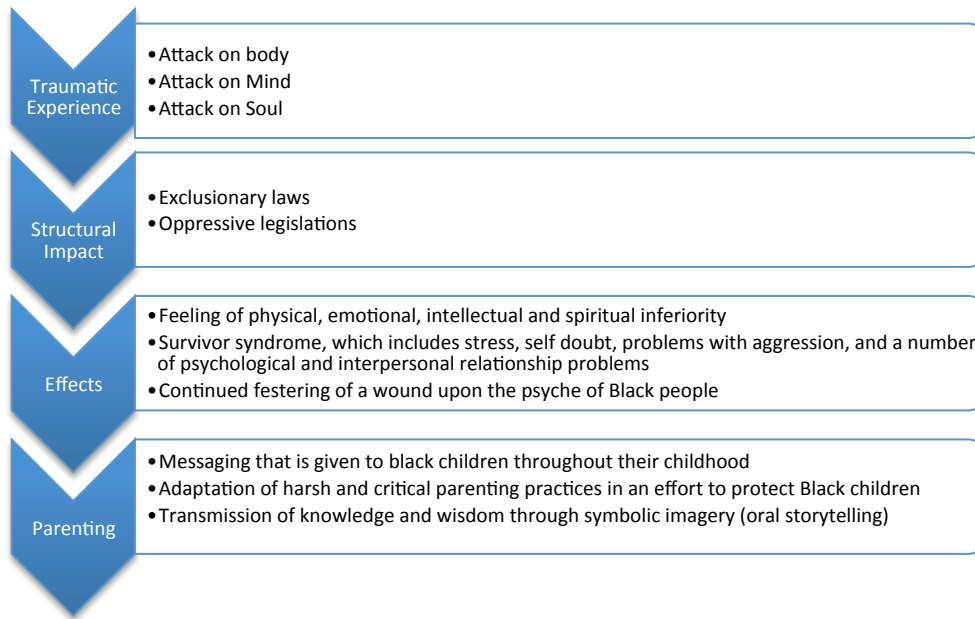


Figure 1. Post traumatic slave syndrome, generational evidence.

3.2 Parenting and Its Importance

It is generally understood that parenting is important to every community in society. It assists children to confront the many challenges they face in society by maintaining a strong sense of personal integrity (Baumrind, 1991). Parenting also influences development and creates normative expectations for children. These expectations are based on principles that are important for socialization and that encompass a set of morals and values that are transferred through generations and are used to preserve the practices of families (Rudy et al., 1999). Generally, parenting establishes a foundation for life success by providing structure and creating rules that are important to families. These rules dictate how children should behave and present themselves in society. Similarly, parenting also establishes consequences if behaviour does not adhere to the rules. Thus, for parenting to be effective, there have to be consistent and firm rules and reprimands.

3.2.1 Authoritarian versus Authoritative Parenting Styles

Two general categories of parenting are discernable from the available literature (Baumrind, 1972, 1991; Wolfe & McIsaac, 2011). These categories are authoritative and authoritarian parenting. According to Wolfe and McIsaac (2011), authoritative parenting is associated with

parents who can provide predictable structure, routine, and guidance, while at the same time providing ongoing warmth, especially through times of stress and uncertainty. The main focus of this approach is the freedom and individuality of the child. This approach rarely views the child as disobedient when rules are not followed. Instead, the child's behaviour is seen as an attempt to assert him or herself (Thirumurthy, 2004). On the other hand, the authoritarian parenting approach characterizes parents as overly rigid and strict and is associated with poor parenting. This approach views parents as imbalanced in their child rearing method, as they are not able to blend responsiveness, demand, and control (Wolfe & McIsaac, 2011). The emphasis of the authoritarian attitude is on obedience and respect, as the goal here is to promote cooperation and interdependence.

This dichotomy is both artificial and problematic. Grouping parenting practices into two broad categories has a number of shortcomings. First, the approach suggests that society is homogenous and it does not recognize that there are many differences such as ethnicity, language and religious systems that inform all aspects of society. Second, it assumes that parents can neatly fit into these two groupings, thus ignoring the many individual and cultural differences in parenting styles. Third, placing families in these two categories comes with numerous value-laden assumptions about particular groups of people. Those who write the definitions—almost always members of the dominant group—get to define what is considered *good* and *bad* parenting. For the colonized or the minority, such categorization often leads to judgement through a colonial lens.

A more nuanced approach would have parenting examined in the context of parents' social, racial, and cultural viewpoints. Luster and Okagaki (2005) suggested that across a culture, there are common general goals for parenting. However, they indicated that parenting strategies for meeting these objectives may vary across cultural groups. They further stated that there are many influences on parenting, and the interaction between a person and their environment needs to be considered. Thirumurthy (2004) further expanded on this notion by indicating that thought has to be given to cultural expectations and contexts in order to understand and assess parenting. Thirumurthy also indicated that the authoritative and authoritarian groupings are Western constructs, and they create normative categories based on principles that are not necessarily shared by the rest of the world.

There is a stark difference between much Western and non-Western parenting, and as part of the debate, there appears to be an imposition of grouping parenting into categories such as individualism versus autonomy by Western cultures. Western cultures generally focus on empowerment of individualism and autonomy, whereas non-Western cultures often believe in imposing absolute standards on their children. For example, in North America, children may be encouraged to wander and explore, whereas in non-Western cultures, children may be expected to use self-control (Thirumurthy, 2004).

Authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles—to use those categories as placeholders—can be examined within the context of culture, and each culture will view the respective styles either favourably or not. For example, Rudy et al. (1999) argued that in the North American culture, authoritative parenting is viewed more positively, whereas authoritarian parenting correlates more with negative connotations, such as parental anger, incompetence, and undesirable perceptions of the child. By contrast, within the Chinese culture, parents are viewed as controlling; however, their goal is to ensure that their children develop to their full potential and conduct themselves morally in society (Chao, 1994; Kelley & Tseng, 1992). This variety speaks to the importance of examining one's views and values when trying to understand parenting, especially when parents are not from the dominant culture. The implication of not doing so is that a Western cultural lens is used to create a universal standard to assess and compare parents' performance. This narrow focus excludes the benefits that can be learned from all (Strom, Strom, & Beckert, 2008).

3.2.2 Deconstructing the Caribbean Experience

The significance of understanding the history of the Caribbean people in relation to parenting and child rearing is that it provides important context to help understand the prevalence of particular practices. The limitation of past research in this area is that the focus has been mainly on the disciplining methods of parenting for this population, without situating the practices in their historical context, and as such has inadvertently criminalized them. Traumatic historical events such as slavery and colonialism shaped how Black people negotiate their world and develop their values, norms, and beliefs—all of which are transferred generationally.

3.2.3 The Historical Picture

The history of the Caribbean is complex. There was an influx of importation of Africans to the Caribbean between 1508 and 1515 after the first voyage of Christopher Columbus to the Caribbean region in 1492 (Bohl, 1994). The Transatlantic slave trade saw approximately 11.6 million Africans enslaved in the Caribbean, Latin America/Brazil, and the USA. These Africans coped and survived through accommodation, resistance, and creativity; the inevitable result was that these experiences shaped their *being* and their cultural practices (West-Duran, 2003). The economic fertility of the Caribbean saw Europeans, including the British, Spanish, Dutch, and the French, each jousting for control in the region and each imposing their cultural ideologies on Black people once they conquered an island (Bohl, 1994). According to West-Duran (2003),

Depending on colonial power that enslaved them, [Black people] were faced with policies and laws that [held] widely contrasting viewpoints in terms of religious doctrine, language acquisition, educational possibilities as well as in terms of attitudes toward miscegenation, or race mixing power. (pp. xix)

As islands fought to gain their independence and destroy the colonial empire, neo-colonialism emerged. Caribbean islands only gained their independence in appearance, while their politics and economies were fiscally controlled by their *mother* countries—their colonizers (Lowenthal & Institute of Race Relations, 1972). Understanding this historical background is significant, as it shows how politics, economics, and social influences are interwoven to construct Black Caribbean culture and practices.

Caribbeans emerge from a complicated history of slavery and colonial rule, and the mix of people from different religious and ethnic groups influences its social and cultural structures (Lowenthal, 1982). These ethnic groups include people of African descent, East Indians, Black Caribs, Chinese, and Amerindians (Caribbean Child Support Initiative, 2006). These subcultures come with their own origins that they use to ascribe meanings and interpretations to areas of their lives, including childrearing practices. Parenting practices in the Caribbean are, therefore, influenced by the rich histories of each subculture, as well as the parents' social location. This research focused on Caribbean people of African descent and the structure and nature of parenting among this population, being mindful of the complexity that exists within the

community. The commonality shaped by Black people in the Caribbean and its diaspora is that their ancestors were slaves, their lands were ravaged and pillaged by slave traders and colonizers, and they subsequently continue to experience the social and psychological implications of this historical past (Jackson & Cothran, 2003).

3.2.4 A Note on Diversity in the Caribbean Experience

In attempting to understand parenting within the Black community, one cannot assume that all Black people are homogeneous and share the same history. For example, people from the Caribbean and people from the continent of Africa are both Black, but have at least one fundamental difference in experience: Ancestors of the Black Caribbean population experienced the slave trade—immigration was forced upon them; whereas, people who emigrated from Africa generally view themselves as having had the choice to immigrate. While colonialism was an incident for some countries, for the Caribbean people, colonialism has a deeper meaning, as it had a significant presence in defining of their history (Lowenthal & Institute of Race Relations, 1972). While Africans, African Americans, and Afro-Caribbeans are united by their common ancestry and their history of oppression that began with colonialism, their differing historical experiences in different environments set them apart (Mwakikagile, 2007). Furthermore, while there similarities exist within the islands in the Caribbean, there are also categorical differences (Lowenthal & Institute of Race Relations, 1972), which are quintessentially influenced by the colonizing *mother* country.

To understand diversity in the Caribbean experience, one also has to examine the multiple stories that continue to shape the lives of Black families. These stories, at times, are steeped in insecurity and a deep need to be valued, which are part of the legacy of colonialism. At times, the beliefs that existed during slavery and colonialism continue to leave a mark on the population through internalized oppression, which is exhibited through the replication of colonial practices. Memmi (1991) indicated that “the colonized improved their lot by copying the colonizer in order to become equal and to resemble him to the point of disappearing in him” (p. 120).

Historically, the construct of *whiteness* grants one privilege over the construct of *Blackness*. For example, “if a white settler could not succeed on one island, he simply moved to another, carrying with him the ‘colonial patent of nobility’—his white skin—and began claiming and

exercising his privilege all over again” (Lowenthal & Institute of Race Relations, 1972, p. 30). Through this perception, whiteness is associated with everything that is good and grants people certain privileges without a natural curiosity or surveillance. Recognizing the privilege of colour, some Black people started to embrace colour bias, consequently devaluing themselves and feeding a collective unconsciousness idea that suggests an antipathy of their being—Blackness (Fanon, 1963).

The Caribbean is not homogeneous and, depending on the island, the value of whiteness is more or less prevalent; however, what is considered beautiful is very much linked to the colour of one’s skin. The colonial discourse in the Caribbean was predisposed to register visibility, and the skin colour is a natural sign of this visibility (Bohl, 1994). Lowenthal and Institute of Race Relations (1972) noted that the Caribbean is obsessed with whiteness, and West-Durán (2003) suggested that all Caribbean societies practice shadeism in the construction of their social hierarchies; this can be seen in messages that are passed on by parents to their children. For example, mothers sometimes tell their light-skinned daughters not to marry a dark man, and special treatments are given to people who are light skinned.

Among some, status is based on complexion; operating this way involves adopting a colonial mentality suggesting that the closer one is to whiteness, the more valuable one is. To hone in on this further, and to understand the depth and immersion of this issue in all aspects of Caribbean lives, the history of cricket—a Caribbean past time favourite sport—will be used to show the embodiment of racial stratification. The darker a player was, the more inferior position he occupied on the team. According to James (2013), historically Black players were often described in negative terms, and if they were doing well, credit was often given to the White men. One English person is recorded saying, in reference to some Black cricketers who played outstandingly, “Yes, they are fine players, but, funny, isn’t it, they cannot be responsible for themselves—they must always have a white man to lead them” (p. 233).

Understanding these and other multiple stories that shape all aspects of Black lives is important to understanding Black families. These narratives expose multiple layers of trauma and oppression, and the consequences of them can still be seen in how Caribbean people interact and negotiate their world, throughout the generations.

3.3 Factors informing ‘Caribbean parenting’

Researchers have characterized parenting in the Black community in a one-dimensional and ahistorical manner (Baumrind, 1991; Leo-Rynne, 1997; Sharpe, 1997; Smith & Mosby, 2003). They discussed current parenting practices with this population as associated with the authoritarian style, as discussed in the previous section, but little attention was given to the reasons why Black parents may be using this style of parenting or what its benefits might be. The historical importance of slavery and colonialization on parenting cannot be downplayed because of the lingering, unsettled issues stemming from them, including unresolved historical trauma, poverty, and unemployment.

3.3.1 History of Slavery and Its Impact on the Family

It is well documented that slaves, both adults and children, were beaten by their owners into submission or to death when rules were broken. This beating was a regular occurrence during slavery; after slavery up to and including the present, physical violence against Black people shifted, but continued. Psychological violence was and remains common. This is ingrained in the psyche of Black people. Parallel process can ensue, where one follows what his/her leader does: The slave owner harshly punished the slaves, and the slaves harshly punished their children.

Furthermore, as many children were born into slavery, parents were only able to spend minimal time with them because of the demands placed on them. Thus, a significant proportion of their child-rearing skills when they became parents mimicked the master’s treatment of them. In her examination of corporal punishment in the West Indies, Arnold (1982) indicated that the extreme discipline may be the legacy of slavery, which used physical punishment as a form of discipline. As such, unresolved trauma may linger within the psyche of Black parents who may not have the time and resources needed to attend to this issue given their preoccupation with surviving in a racist and oppressive society. In understanding parenting in today’s context, this history is often not considered.

3.3.2 Ideologies Emerging from the Prism of Racism

One cannot discuss Aboriginal parenting practices in Canada without looking at their experience with colonialism, residential schools, and the Sixties Scoop, which saw these people

experiencing profound disparities and disruptions in the social, health, income, and educational areas (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). These realities emerged from racist ideologies. One result of such practices is the overrepresentation of this population in the child welfare system, as well documented by the recent report released by One Vision One Voice (Ojo, 2016). Comparably, one cannot discuss Caribbean parenting practices without discussing their experiences with slavery, colonialism, and immigration; nor can one understand the overrepresentation of Black children in the child welfare system without taking into account that children of African descent are 36% more likely to be placed in foster care than their White counterparts when there is substantiation of a child protection concern (Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, 2015).

What is lacking from the discussion of parenting within the Black community is an awareness about how racism is embedded in policies and practices; this prevents the recognition of the significance of history in creating perceptions and assumptions. Racism is widely acknowledged as a form of oppression. However, little is said about the causal relationship between the traumatic experiences of slavery and colonialism and its direct influence on current-day functioning of the Black family, and even less is said specifically about its impact on parenting. For example, corporal punishment is often associated with parenting within the Black Caribbean community. This can be directly linked to slavery as “the ‘excessive’ amount of discipline may be a result of the legacy which handed down physical punishment as a form of discipline” (Gopaul-McNicol, 1999, p. 79). Lazreg (1994), in her study of feminism and Algerian women, stated that to understand the present, she had to understand the past, especially the colonial past, which continues to haunt the present. Caribbean families’ past, including their experiences with colonialism and slavery, certainly continues to haunt their present. To have an open and honest dialogue, a decolonizing method must be used to rupture and reorganize the current knowledge structure that exists about Black families and to understand what it means to be dehumanized throughout history.

Moreover, consideration needs to be given to how the literature about Black parenting is created and disseminated. According to Jackson and Cothran (2003), the Western media, including news, television, movies, and books, has been the main culprit in reporting on Black people in a manner that supports a deficit perspective and reinforces stereotypes in understanding parenting

within this population. As discussed in Chapter 2, this media rarely examines the importance of historical events on the current-day child rearing practices of Black people, including how parents interact with their children and how they relate to each other.

Researchers such as Hill Collins (2009) and Jackson and Cothran (2003) noted the profound psychological impact of historical events on Black people's current functioning, which includes struggles with mental health and attachment issues. The omission of history by the mainstream does not acknowledge this psychological impact and speaks to the ongoing ingrained Eurocentric lens that is used to understand societal issues. The failure of using this Eurocentric lens is that it further perpetuates myths and stereotypes about Black people. Parenting within the Caribbean community is under the microscope in Canada, and if anything *bad* happens in the Black community, it is usually attributed back to the characteristics of a Black family. Black families are often discussed in terms of absentee fathers, as lone female parents head a significant number of Black families. For example, in a 2000 report on parenting in Jamaica, UNICEF indicated that 45% of all Jamaican households are headed by females, and in the Caribbean, there continues to be a significant number of single-parent households headed by women (Caribbean Child Support Initiative, 2006). Similarly, in Canada, there is a high prevalence of lone female-headed households from the Caribbean (Mata, 2011). One can argue that the absentee father is mitigated by the community and extended families' involvement (Reynolds, 2003). While absentee fathers may indeed impact and shape the problems that exist within many Black families, this position should be advanced with caution, as poverty and racism are other significant contributors to the dysfunctions that exist. Additionally, while a significant proportion of the Caribbean households are headed by single Black mothers, this reality has to take into consideration the influence of history. In understanding the transitions of the Caribbean family, one has to look as far back as slavery. During slavery, the Black family composition was forever changing, as slave owners traded and sold family members for financial gains. Black fathers were especially vulnerable, as their masculinity was of more monetary value. As a result of these trades, women became the head of their households.

Representation and deconstruction of the Black family, both in literature and in the media, tends to make assumptions suggesting that single parents are not capable of raising healthy children. What is known of the Caribbean family is that although single mothers are raising their children,

they are not doing so in isolation. They have assistance of their extended family and their community. In understanding parenting within the Black population, one has to understand that “the self, family and community are irrevocably intertwined” (Reynolds, 2003, p. 44). However, the difference with people in the diaspora is that this extended support is often no longer available when they immigrate. They may leave behind this support, or their support in the new country is not reliable due to the problems related to living in a big country, such as distance.

3.3.3 Priorities Informing Caribbean Parenting in North America

Caribbean parents in North America parent with a sense of urgency. This sense of urgency is based on the need for their children to be obedient, respectful, and successful in their education and is a result of the generational transmission of parental values, as well as parents’ own lived experiences with many forms of oppression. This need for children to be obedient and confirmative can be traced back to slavery, as in slavery, adults and children presented themselves this way to avoid punishment and the risk of being sold away from their families.

Caribbean families also focus on education, as they see education as the key to success and the tool to elevate them out of poverty and provide for their families. The emphasis on this value also emerges from the context of the Caribbean parent’s past. Pre- and post-slavery, Black people who were successful were those who could read, comprehend, and analyze information. At times, this knowledge helped them to avoid the harsh realities some of their peers faced. In their effort to protect their children from the harsh reality of a racist world, Black parents enforced through their parenting the need to be successful by any means necessary. Children who are not meeting these strict expectations can face severe punishment, including physical and verbal discipline. For example, in Jamaica, 46% of parents use physical discipline, and 25% use psychological methods, such as threatening to hit and shouting (Caribbean Child Support Initiative, 2006). A very real risk exists that discipline can merge into abuse, as the positive value of the parents’ messages may become entangled and ensnared with their own desperation for their children to be successful. This urgent behaviour may be based in the present and their attempt to prevent their children from going through comparable experiences, such as underemployment, unemployment and poverty, which can be linked to racism—but may also gain some of its tenor from the historical legacy of slavery.

Corporal punishment, in particular, is often associated with Caribbean parenting as a method of discipline. For example, parents value education, but when children are not learning, 20% use beating (Caribbean Child Support Initiative, 2006, p. 36). Corporal punishment is banned in many Caribbean countries; however, parents are having a difficult time understanding the adverse impact of corporal punishment. In fact, in the Caribbean community, the increasing crime rates are being associated with the decrease in corporal punishment (p. 37). Research has shown that “the use of corporal punishment increases the probability that children will engage in violent behaviours during adulthood, and that violence in one social domain tends to influence behaviour in other domains” (Lansford & Dodge, 2008, p. 257). This highlights that when dealing with vulnerable populations, a critical analysis of what is seen, heard, and reported is required within the context of the many complexities that may exist in their lives.

Researchers have written extensively about understanding parenting practices within a cultural context (Giles-Sims & Lockhart, 2005; Kelley & Tseng, 1992; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Nelson, Leerkes, O’Brien, Calkins, & Marcovitch, 2012; Reynolds, 2003; Rudy et al., 1999; Thirumurthy, 2004). For example, Brooks (2008) indicated that *proper* and *improper* practices are based on cultural expectations and contexts. What is evident for the Caribbean population is that their parenting practices are a direct or indirect and a conscious or unconscious result of the culture’s collective traumatic past experiences. Parenting within the Caribbean population is similar to many other non-Western countries that have a history of oppression and persecution. For example, the Chinese parenting style, like that of Caribbean parents, is described as authoritarian. Their parenting style is labeled as restrictive and controlling by much of the psychological literature (Chao, 1994). Furthermore, like that of Caribbean parents, Kelley and Tseng (1992) argued that for similar reasons of oppression and persecution, Chinese parents focus on good manners and education.

Parenting in Black families in the West and in the Caribbean is profoundly influenced by poverty. Impoverished parents’ main focus is on ensuring everyday survival of the family, and their focus on the intricacies of parenting is limited (Caribbean Child Support Initiative, 2006). For example, in research on African-American families, it was noted that measuring for income and education between poor and non-poor African American families may have accounted for differences in parental use of discipline (Lansford, Wager, Bates, Dodge, & Pettit, 2012).

However, there must be caution when drawing a link between parenting and poverty; negative parenting is not synonymous with poverty—poor families can also be associated with positive parenting. In their research on African American parenting, Tamis-Lemonda, Briggs, McClowry, and Snow (2008) cautioned that one of the dangers of associating poverty with African Americans' stories is that their stories become predominantly about poverty. McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi, and Wilson (2000) further stated that this angle will only reinforce stereotypes and prejudices if the distinction between parenting and poverty is not made. Blacks families in Canada face similar challenges as their African American counterparts since racism in both countries has a profound impact on the financial success of the family; family members have more difficulty than their non-Black counterparts finding employment, housing, and social assistance, all of which are critical primary needs that must be met to allow for effective parenting.

Today, and with exposure to the West, the Caribbean family is experiencing both positive and negative changes in its parenting style. For example, in a longitudinal study in Jamaica in recent years, generational changes were evident, as younger mothers were seen showing more affection to their children than older mothers. Similar findings were evident in Barbados (Caribbean Child Support Initiative, 2006). Some contributing factors to such changes for people in the Caribbean included travelling and their access to North American television and radio (p. 18). For Caribbean parents in the diaspora, along with the influence of their exposure to Western media and practices, there is also the influence of the Eurocentric policies, which outline what are acceptable and not acceptable parenting practices, which may go counter to their beliefs.

3.3.4 Traumata in Immigration

The number of migrants worldwide has continued to grow precipitously over the last 15 years; in 2015, international migration increased to 244 million compared to 222 million in 2010 (United Nations, 2016, p. 1). Of these migrants, United Nations estimated that 37 million (13%) of the migrants were from Latin America and the Caribbean. These numbers suggest that globalization is a changing force that is transforming not only the world, but it is also, inevitably, transforming the structure of the family (Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, & Louie, 2002). Like people from many other cultures, Black families from the Caribbean migrate in search of better economic and educational opportunities for themselves and their families. However, a substantial amount of

them face an increased risk of poor living conditions, economic exploitation, discrimination, and racism in their host countries (Perez Foster, 2001). Caribbean parents often make the decision to leave their children behind while they establish themselves financially, with the intentions of bringing their children over later. However, their experiences of seeking better opportunities unfortunately do not always materialize, as they often find themselves working hard in low-paying jobs (Arnold, 2006). The unintended consequences of this are the traumas that emerge from not only separation, but also from their experiences with economical migration.

The Caribbean has a long history of migration. The two most prevalent periods of this were post-World War II and in the 1960s, when, to meet their labour demands, the immigration laws changed in the Western countries. This has had a profound impact on the Caribbean family, as an estimated 10 to 20% of Caribbean children do not live with their parents as a result of migration (Dillon & Walsh, 2012). Bakker, Elings-Pels, and Reis (2009) reported that children of parents who immigrate are left without adequate guidance and protection, and according to Dillon and Walsh (2012), these children often experience disruption and inconsistent parenting. Subsequently, when they rejoin their parents, there is often a struggle to integrate and re-establish parent-child relationships. At times, conflict emerges around family relations, discipline, and culture (Gopaul-McNicol, 1998). In her research on the experience of Caribbean women with separation and loss through immigration, Arnold (2006) noted that a significant amount of her participants spoke about their painful traumatic experience of reunification with their mothers who were like strangers to them. Moreover, Bakker et al. recognized that trauma is not only associated with reunification, but also with experience pre-reunification; children who are left behind are denied their fundamental rights to grow up in a nurturing family, and they are more susceptible to abuse and exploitation. This history also assists in shaping and understanding Caribbean parents.

Immigration itself is fraught with multiple layers of trauma that are associated not only with issues emerging from Caribbean peoples' history of slavery and colonialism, but also from other experiences such as political unrest or natural disaster (Gopaul-McNicol, 1998). For example, in 1989, the catastrophe of hurricane Hugo left people in several Caribbean islands, including Montserrat and Antigua, traumatized; as such, in addition to the stresses of migration, people take with them the traumatic memories of this event (Gopaul-McNicol, 1998).

Caribbean peoples' stories of migration bears significant parallels to the story of their slave ancestors. The main noted difference is, of course, that slavery was based on forced migration, with the experience of a torturous voyage, institutional exploitation, and violence that occurred at the end. Post-slavery, migration from the Caribbean is mostly voluntary, with the exception of being forced by natural disaster or violence. However, the significance of both experiences is that migration involves traumatic experiences of loss and separation pre and post migration (Gopaul-McNicol, 1998; Tummala-Narra, 2001). Immigration, at times, brings back historical memories—whether experienced directly or indirectly—as Caribbean families often find themselves in situations in their host countries where they are devalued and denied opportunities in a way that is eerily reminiscent of their ancestors' experiences with slavery and colonialism. In her study with Asian children, Tummala-Narra (2001) found that the Asian immigrant children found themselves being more aware of their skin colour due to devaluing racial terms that are used in schools to refer to them. This experience parallels the experiences of Black Caribbean families, who when they immigrate are relegated to the bottom rung of the society's social order (Gopaul-McNicol, 1998).

A deconstruction of the immigration experiences of the Caribbean Black population provides another window into understanding the compounding impact of historical trauma. This highlights a significant correlation between their ancestors' experiences with forced migration and their current experiences with immigration.

3.3.5 A Decolonizing Approach

To discuss parenting in Black Caribbean families without also speaking to the strengths that exist among them would be neglectful. Identifying these strengths can be done by taking a decolonizing approach. Decolonization challenges existing social arrangements and the “idea of what it means to be human, and by extension, the logics of inclusion and exclusion that enforce boundaries, including notions of social, political, and civic solidarity” (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012, p. 49). A Eurocentric gaze has significantly impacted the Caribbean people through their imposed policies and practices. This was evident in the literature on the overrepresentation of Caribbean in many social systems in Canada, including child welfare and the criminal justice system. Scholars and activists within the Black Caribbean community are putting pressure on these systems to revisit how they are working with Black families. For example, from a macro

level, the African Legal Clinic and the One Vision One Voice report (Ojo, 2016) brought attention to the colonial practices of organizations and, through advocacy and labeling the problem as Anti-Black racism, are forcing organizations to adopt culturally appropriate practices.

3.4 Problematizing Child Welfare Assessments of Parenting Practices

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes the family as a natural and essential environment for the growth and well-being of children. It states that children, in order to reach their full developmental potential, should grow up in a family and be given the necessary protection and assistance (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1990). Based on this convention, many countries have established procedures and policies to protect children from abuse and neglect in their community and within their families. Within the Canadian context, and specially the Province of Ontario, the child welfare system was established to protect children and was given its mandate to intervene with families through the Ontario Child and Family Services Act (1990). Included in this Act under Section 72 is a provision that professionals have a duty to report if they suspect a child's safety is in question. It is through this duty to report that families often get referred to this system through mainstream organizations, such as schools, health systems, and the justice system. In a *Toronto Star* report referring to child welfare, the police, and schools, Everton Gordon, Acting Executive Director of Jamaican Canadian Association, indicated, "These institutions have problems with Black people to begin with... referring to police and schools. The minute it's a Black family it sets off alarm bells" (Contenta et al., 2014, para. 30). His comment suggests that Black people experience racism in their interactions with these institutions. Bonnie and Pon (2014) asserted that anti-Black racism is prevalent in child welfare, and there is a lack of recognition that "Black families are impacted by the socio-political and context of their lives, particularly by historical and contemporary racism" (p. 106). To understand the implications of child welfare, a light must be shone on institutional racism, assessments, and the lack of cultural competency within this system.

3.4.1 Institutional Racism

A major comprehensive investigation by conducted by Contenta et al. (2014) of the *Toronto Star* concluded that in Toronto, while the Black population represents 8% of the city's population, 41% of the children under the care of the Children's Aid Society of Toronto care are Black, a disproportionality that can be attributed to cultural misunderstandings, poverty, and systemic racism (para. 2).

While this system undeniably plays an important role of in protecting children from abuse and neglect, a gap exists in the system in understanding Black families. This gap emerges from the fact that those working within the system operate within a framework of institutional and individual racist ideologies. Furthermore, reinforcing this institutional racism are people whose personal views, consciously or unconsciously, support an oppressive and racist pedagogy. Tools, policies, and procedures that inform a Eurocentric agenda support institutional racism. Examples of this can be seen in the Child Protection Standards in Ontario (Government of Ontario, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2016b) and Ontario's *Child Protection Tools Manual* (Government of Ontario, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2016a). Bonnie and Pon (2015) noted that within these tools, "institutional racism is expressed through the explicit and implicit meanings contained within the notion of well-being" (p. 116). This is most easily seen in the omission of any explicit discussion of racism and its impact.

Institutional racism has been defined as "those policies, practices or procedures that systematically exclude individuals or groups on the basis of race or ethnicity with the intentional or unintentional support of the entire culture" (Barker, 1999, p. 116). Hill (2004) indicated that this type of racism is not necessarily visible, as it "can be overt or covert, unconscious or conscious, and unintentional or intentional" (p. 19). Minority groups have been profoundly impacted by institutional racism in society, including such racism found in schools, the health system, the justice system, and social welfare systems (Kirst-Ashman & Kay, 1993). These authors further noted that the same people who colonized Africa and other continents brought this racism with them to North America, which was evidenced by the continued oppression of Aboriginals by the first White settlers. As other races migrated to North America, racism became entrenched in the structures in society. As far back as 1972, Billingsley and Giovannoni recognized that institutional racism has wreaked havoc on Black people. Institutional racism is

across all systems; researchers such as Lavergne, Dufour, Trocmé, & and Larrivée (2008) have found that racism is embedded in referrals received to child welfare from schools, health care systems, and judicial systems.

3.4.2 Cultural Competency

Cultural competence is the ability to transform knowledge and awareness into interventions that support clients within the appropriate cultural context (McPhatter, 1997). It is also about becoming “more aware of, and sensitive to, the norms, and nuances that are specific to a wide range of cultural and ethnic groups” (p. 261).

There is an insufficiency of cultural competence within the child welfare agencies in Ontario. It has been this researcher’s observation over almost two decades of working in child welfare agencies that statements reflecting an absence of cultural competence are regularly made by professionals about Black families. Examples include: “The mother does not make any eye contact with child,” “The parents are very strict,” or “The parents spend the entire time during access visit combing the child’s hair.” These types of statements are often taken at face value; however, once race and culture are given consideration, those statements tell a different story. It is the ethical responsibility of the social agencies to provide ongoing training and evaluate compliance to ensure that workers adhere to a culturally competent practice. Edelman (2011) summed up the risks well by explaining that a “lack of cultural competency could result in errors of judgments and increased disproportionality” (p. 161). James (2009) reminded us that when one philosophizes and theorizes, one’s social location determines who benefits from one’s thinking. He concluded that it is important to be positioned at the crossroads, at the centre of a community. This suggests that in order to be competent in understanding parenting within the Black community, one has to be able to be vulnerable and centred in the middle of this community and understand community members’ viewpoints. From this position, one can recognize the impact of colonialization, racism, oppression, immigration, poverty, and other such conditions and forces on the parenting practices of Black Caribbean families.

Cultural competence calls for institutions, through their policies and procedures, and individuals within those institutions to be open for change. In December 2014, when the *Toronto Star* published a series on child welfare, including one about the over-representation of Black children

in the care of Children Aid Societies (Monsebraaten, 2014, p. A.17), this researcher observed a worker make the following comment in a dismissive and perturbed manner when asked for their thoughts: “I did not even read the article.” This response is emblematic of the lackadaisical and disdainful attitudes that are often evidenced when the discussion of racism arises. This type of attitude and statement falls within the realm of cultural incompetence as Jeffery (2009) described it; he indicated that peoples’ behaviour and ways of speaking are part of the mores of cultural competency. It is very concerning that people who are in charge of assessing Black families are not required to give consideration to such important stories. To be culturally competent, workers have to acknowledge that the structures of the institutions and society have a destructive impact on Black people; there should be interventions addressing cultural competence at the organizational, community, social, economic, and political levels (McPhatter, 1997). The lack of accountability within the child welfare system preserves a colonized culture that all but ensures the continuation of adverse consequences for Black families.

Cultural competency has its critics, as over-generalizations may be made, and Maiter (2009a) highlighted that there are cultures within cultures. Furthermore, workers’ own cultures may influence assessment as “they may try to view the client in the context of their culture but do that through the lens of their own culture” (p. 68). Jeffery (2009) further implied that cultural competency might strengthen dominance and marginality, as it can be considered paternalist in that it can reproduce assumptions about different cultures. Bisman (1999), however, indicated the need for a case theory construction that gives consideration to the social context and the individual content of behaviour.

3.4.3 What Constitutes an Appropriate History-Taking

Understanding parenting may seem simplistic; however, it is a very complex issue. The child welfare system in Ontario has not given enough attention to it because of a focus on risk at the expense of nuance. Angela White (2005) suggested that assessing parenting capacity could be part of a family assessment for gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the service delivery needs for the family or individual. White also highlighted limited empirical studies on the value of parenting capacity assessment, whose limits are further exacerbated by the lack of specific cultural definitional and clarity surrounding a shared definition of parenting. Workers, however, are asked to provide assessments on parenting with ambiguous understanding and

without having the proper training. As such, decisions are regularly made based on personal opinions, judgments, and subjective cultural experiences, with the main guideline being to avoid risk at all cost. Krane and Davis (2000) affirmed that “the problem is not in the judgment itself, but in the lack of reflexivity in the way that judgments have been developed and applied” (p. 43). The issue is that assessors are concerning themselves with the here and now, and they are making hypotheses and propositions about families that are based on their limited subjective observations.

According to Friedlmeier, Corapci, and Cole (2011), a paradigm shift that recognizes the complexities of understanding parenting is required, given the multiplicity of goals, values, and beliefs within a diverse society. Acknowledging and embracing a shift of this kind is especially significant for those who are assessing parenting within the Black community. Borrowing from Bisman (1999), this shift should move away from the current trend of relying on prepackaged mainstream tools to formulate assessments, to utilizing a medley of approaches that include (a) an understanding of the impact of historical trauma, (b) including the community in the discussion, and (c) recognizing that families and community members are experts on their own lives. According to Maiter, Stalker, and Alaggia (2009), this can provide insight leading to enhanced service for Black families. If a review of current written assessments by mainstream agencies was conducted with a critical race lens in mind, such a review would clearly reveal the omission of critical historical experiences of racialized families. This kind of omission is influenced by racism at the personal, societal, and cultural levels (Mullaly, 2002) and has serious, real consequences for Black families.

Assessment of the Black family cannot be based solely on their current-day functioning, but must include a holistic historical understanding. Freire (1970) summed this up by saying that people have to have critical understanding of reality; if, by capturing only fragments, people do not see how each fragment interacts with the whole, they cannot truly know what reality is. In sum, assessments have to be inclusive by discussing the past and acknowledging its determinacy to the present and the future in order to have an accurate and holistic understanding of parenting practices.

3.5 Chapter Summary

This literature review began with a review on historical trauma, with special attention paid to the concept of PTSS. The significance of this syndrome is that it presents a foundational lens in understanding historical trauma within the general conceptualization of parenting and, more specifically, the context of parenting in the Caribbean population. This literature review outlines a roadmap to understand how parenting itself has been constructed and, furthermore, how the narratives that surround Black parents have also been constructed and used to define Black parenthood. In the child welfare section, I highlighted the incongruence between what is happening in Black lives and what is captured in an assessments, and I took a *deeper dive* into the literature to recognize and acknowledge the interrelatedness of historical trauma to parenting in the Black community.

The psychological literature showed a well-documented common understanding that people's experiences with traumatic events, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional and psychological abuse, can affect their present and how they parent. Therefore, one can argue that as Black people's journey throughout history was full of these traumatic experiences—stemming primarily from slavery, colonialism, immigration, and continued racism—consideration should be given to the impact of these forces in considering how to work with and support these families.

Chapter 4

Research Methodology and Design

The methodological approaches I used to unpack my understanding of historical trauma on parenting within the Black Caribbean community are described in this chapter. My research was grounded in qualitative methodology that included an anti-colonial epistemology grounded in anti-Black racism and Black feminism. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2011) recognized these critical race and feminist theories embrace the open-ended nature of qualitative research and lead to resisting a single paradigm. Likewise, in addition to using anti-Black racism and Black feminism discourses, this study adhered to the anti-colonial tenets set out in Chapter 2. As indicated by critical thinkers such as Frantz Fanon, Kwame Nkrumah, Edward Said, and Albert Memmi, this framework shapes the discourse of resistance to all forms of oppression and includes the voices and knowledge of Indigenous people (as cited in Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001).

This chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section, I enter into a discussion of the qualitative methods that I use. In Section 4.2, I speak to the research design and data collection methods. In Section 4.3, I speak directly to the book analysis research process, while in Section 4.4, I discuss the dialogue circle process. Finally, in Section 4.5, I discuss triangulation and validity of data.

4.1 Research Method Rationale

Qualitative research allows for various types of designs, given its focus on understanding experiences in relation to outcomes in people's lives. As noted by Denzin and Lincoln (2011),

[It involves] the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials - case study, personal experience, introspection, life story, interview, artifacts, and cultural texts and productions, along with observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts-that describes routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives. (pp. 3-4)

Drawing from this rich variety of tools and methods, I used narrative inquiry and located a critical discourse analysis (CDA) within this inquiry.

Narrative inquiry is a subtype of qualitative research (Chase, 2011), and it treats stories as data by collecting them as a means of understanding lived experiences as told through research and literature (Savin-Baden & Niekerk, 2007). Chase (2008) conceptualized narrative inquiry as “an amalgam of interdisciplinary analytic lenses, diverse disciplinary approaches, and both traditional and innovative methods—all revolving around an interest in biographical particulars narrated by the one who lives them” (p. 58). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) conceptualized narrative inquiry as being on a three-dimensional continuum that is set in the past, present, and future, with a “focus on the personal and the social in a balance appropriate to the inquiry; and they occur in specific places or sequence of places” (p. 50). As such, with narrative inquiry, interest operates at both the micro and macro level (Polkinghorne, 1995).

CDA fits within the narrative inquiry, as it looks at words, statements, inferences, and concepts as important cues (Connelly, 2004). CDA is grounded in the work of Foucault, as he believed that discourse is the tool that we use to construct knowledge and exert power over others (Fairclough, 2001). CDA concepts have also been drawn from prominent researchers in discourse analysis, such as Fairclough (2001). Foucault (as cited in Hall, 2001) described discourse as the way knowledge about a particular topic at a given time is represented by language in a group of statements. Afful and Janks (2013) described CDA “as a social recognition, a view of looking at a phenomenon that guides, regulates, and shapes the practice and thinking of a group of people” (p. 195). Fairclough (2003) further suggested that CDA’s focus is on continuity and change at an abstract and structural level and that discourse is an element of social life that is interconnected with other elements. According to Fairclough (2003), the text gives meaning to social events, and van Dijk (1993) indicated that it allows for an understanding of how mainstream society manufactures the *other* and creates, legitimizes, and reproduces knowledge.

As discussed by Dei and Asgharzadeh (2001), it is important that when theorizing about issues emerging from colonial experiences, one recognize Indigenous knowledge that is anchored in Indigenous collective consciousness and, simultaneously, recognize how societal institutions produce and reproduce widespread inequalities. Applying CDA within a framework of narrative inquiry allows for this type of theorizing, and it supports the storyteller’s narrative by organizing it in a way that links events, perceptions, and experiences (Kramp, 2004).

4.2 Research Design and Data Collection Method

This research relied on two different qualitative methods: (a) narrative inquiry explored the data compiled from two dialogue circles, and (b) CDA was used to explore data drawn from two secondary sources: *The Book of Negroes* by Lawrence Hill (2007) and *No Burden to Carry: Narratives of Black Working Women in Ontario 1920's to 1950's* by Dionne Brand (1991). These secondary sources were chosen as a legitimate source of data both because the former is a piece of historical fiction and the latter a piece of non-fictional historical writing and—perhaps even more importantly—because they represent how we, as Black people, talk about ourselves. These books also highlight how this way of talking about ourselves differs from how we are discussed for public consumption. In analyzing these texts, my experience and standpoint assisted in constructing and co-creating the narratives I present in my research.

4.3 Book Analysis Process

The process of using CDA involved me purposefully reading *The Book of Negroes* by Lawrence Hill (2007) and *No Burden to Carry: Narratives of Black Working Women in Ontario 1920's to 1950's* by Dionne Brand (1991). These books were selected, in consultation with my supervisor, for their unique presentation of historical information that was central to answering my research questions. The process involved me reading the book several times: first a general reading, followed by several re-readings, where I highlighted concepts and made memos around my thoughts, ideas, and assumptions. Textual analysis deconstructs what is outside the known to see beyond the immediately obvious (Chenery-Morris, 2011), and it was through this lens that my analysis of these books evolved.

4.3.1 Importance of *Book of Negroes*

Lawrence Hill is a prominent Canadian writer who has published some seminal works on Black history. His 2007 book, the *Book of Negroes*, was strategically chosen as a secondary source for this research, as it provides an understanding of the critical events and traumata that have contributed to the overall functioning of Black people and which continue to shape their lives in today's contemporary society. While this novel's genre is historical fictional, some of salient points highlighted in the book are based on the author's review of factual documentation of slavery. Such documentation includes the original *Book of Negroes* that is currently located on

microfilm at the National Archives of Canada. Hills's book was central to my research. Although it is not specifically about an Afro-Caribbean experience, it provides transferable historical evidence as to how traumatic experiences develop. This trauma began with the capture of Black women, men, and children and continued through the passage on the slave ships and ended with Black people becoming the property of White men. This book was important to this research, as it highlighted the tortuous journey in a manner that helps the reader to understand some of the conditions that determined how some Black people came to experience and view their world.

4.3.1.1 Book summary

In his novel, *The Book of Negroes*, Lawrence Hill (2007) used historical documentation to inform his understanding of slavery to illustrate the emotional, psychological, and physical impact of slavery. While *The Book of Negroes* is a fictional novel, Hill used documented information from diaries and memoirs of slaves and information from historians to inform his writing. The author's writing reflected his understanding of the Black Loyalists and their history: "In terms of the sheer number of people recorded and described, the actual Book of Negroes is the largest single document about black people in North America up until the end of the eighteenth century" (p. 471).

Hill (2007) organized his novel in four books. His organization assists readers to understand the path of slavery by bringing to life the experiences of slaves and the trial and tribulations they faced. Through his central character, Aminata, he captured readers' attention by illustrating in intimate details life before, during, and after slavery.

4.3.1.2 Book 1

Now I am old: In this chapter, Hill showed readers what life was like for his main character, Aminata, before slavery. Through his scenic descriptions in this chapter, Hill revealed the transfer of indigenous knowledge through relationships within the family and the community. Likewise, he used this section to provide a roadmap that depicted the journey of slavery by having the central character, who is now an older woman, reflecting on her life. Hill used this glimpse to prepare the reader for the roller coaster of Aminata's life from freedom to captivity to freedom again. Hill's descriptive imagery gave the reader an idea of how the mundane daily tasks were used to set forth expectations based on family, gender, culture, and community.

Hill also described the darkest days of the main character's life and exposed the many significant losses that she experienced, which denied her the privileges and valuable lessons essential to being a child, woman, and parent. Hill showed the criteria of relationships and bonds and how they were strengthened and broken. His text demonstrated that Aminata's loss and grief were insurmountable as she grieved the loss of her parents, her children, her husband, her substitute families, her religion, and her culture and community. Hill showed the toll and the helplessness of these losses. He showed the intersection of grief and loss with psychological and emotional deprivation. Aminata was revealed as lamenting her life, which saw her crossing many seas, working like an animal, and the only thing that matters to her is that she did not have the privilege of growing up with a parent, being a parent to her children, and being a grandmother to her grandchildren. The influence of slavery on the emotional and psychological well-being of Black people was shown in this chapter. Shown in this chapter was how the loss of their family, culture, language, religion, and opportunities deprived them, no matter how resilient they were, of valuable life experiences and their indigenous knowledge.

Small hands were good -This chapter started with the main character speaking about how particular smells brought her back to her childhood. She showed how life lessons and education happened through everyday normal conversation and observations of her parents. These discussions set out expectations for her as a child, and her view provided her with valuable life skills. For example, in observing her father making tea and by her asking questions, she was not only able to learn about how to make a good cup of tea, but she also gained knowledge that was used to cultivate her mind. In addition, she learned the trade and skills of midwifery as a child by observing her mother while she delivered babies. Hill used this chapter to show how slavery not only physically disrupted lives, but also disrupted the source of knowledge.

This chapter gave a glimpse into the structure of the family before slavery and the dominance of gender-based roles. The men were usually the ones who were out hunting, and the women were the ones who worked closer to homes in the fields and tending their children. Gender expectations were shown in this chapter, where Aminata spoke about her cultivating her mind to her father, and her father insisting that her job was to become a woman. Also highlighted was that learning for children took place in their observations of their parents and other community members. The author showed how skills and trades were taught, the structure of communities,

and the hierarchal nature of tribal communities. He demonstrated how Aminata discovered injustices and oppression at an early age in her village based on tribal relations and religion.

Hill outlined the significance of slavery not only on the disruption of families and communities, but also on the individual through the central character mourning the fact that she never got to experience the rite of passage that was an expectation for women in her community. This loss showed disruption of cultural practices and the denial of opportunities to experience, learn, and transfer these important rituals.

In this chapter, Hill captured the readers' attention and imagination of the suffering that took place for Black people as Aminata recounted her violent capture and the witnessing of the death of her parents by the captors.

The revolutions of the moon: Hill highlighted the trauma resulting from ongoing abuse that Aminata and other captives experienced. He showed how men, women, and children slaves were robbed of their dignity and denied fundamental rights, thus treating them like animals. In this chapter, Hill started chronicling the journey of slaves and the many losses they encountered as discussed in the previous chapter. Hill used many examples to demonstrate these profound losses, including the case of Aminata having to accept humility during the beginning of her first menstrual cycle, as she did not have her mother or another woman to educate and help her.

In this chapter, Hill tugged at the emotions of the reader, in that he outlined the psychological impact of slavery and its brutality and the torturous environment that existed. He also transformed his text to show the importance of creating good foundations for children, as this foundation can help develop resiliency. He revealed that despite this cruelty, Aminata was able to find some resiliency by assisting other women in childbirth and using her skills learned in her short time with her mother.

We glide over the unburied: This chapter started out with Aminata reflecting on the lessons she learned as a child through the stories, observations, and teachings from her father. Ironically, these valuable lessons became her toolbox of survival strategies that helped her and other people throughout her enslavement.

Hill showed the reduction of men and women from adults to being treated as children. Hill further gave an insight into the emotional, physical, and sexual abuse trauma that slaves experienced. He recounted cases of rape, instances of torture, and cases where slaves were physically beaten and where they witnessed the death of their fellow slaves.

Hill's vivid account of the ocean crossing helps the readers to see the brutality and savagery of slavery. Through the eyes of Aminata, the reader was shown how children were forced to become adults without the lessons and guidance of their parents. The conclusion of the chapters demonstrated that despite the slaves' loss of homeland, culture, and their faith, they considered themselves lucky, as they had survived the crossing.

4.3.1.3 Book 2

In his second book of the novel, Hill started with the chapter "*And my story waits like a restful beast,*" with Aminata recounting lessons from her father that became advantageous for her survival. Aminata is shown standing up for the rights of slaves and revealed that while the abolitionists were allies, they were using Aminata to support their agenda. Hill explained that Aminata was propelling the voices of slaves by defying the plan of the abolitionist and out rightly condemning slavery.

In slavery foe becomes friend: Hill showed in this chapter how the strive for survival and deprivation forces one to go against cultural and religious beliefs. He demonstrated how the psychological impact and the reality of torture in slavery stripped away Black people's dignity and forced them to abandon cultural and religious beliefs for fear of reprisal from the slave owners. In this chapter, Hill showed the treatment of adults as children of the slave masters, thus forcing them to learn and adapt to their master's ideologies.

Hill outlined the contradictions of life and how, even as oppressed people, one can also be an oppressor as demonstrated through the interactions between his characters Fanta and Fomba. Before captivity, Fanta had Fomba as her slave, and even in captivity, she sees him as belonging to a class lower than her although they are both in captivity. Hill showed that despite the tribal hierarchy of villages, in slavery, all Black people were alike. Hill described scenes where slaves were treated like animals. His depiction of deprivation, loss, and suffering helps the reader to see and understand the pain that children as young as Aminata endured, which forced her to grow up

and deprived her of her childhood. However, Hill demonstrated the resilience of children, and if they are taught at an early age, these lessons can carry them through difficult times in their lives as in the case of Aminata. Aminata was able to utilize the lessons she learned from her parents in the short time that they parented her to help her and others survive.

Hill's description of the selling of slaves provided the reader with an insight into the inhumane nature of slavery. He showed that in slavery, there was no discrimination: Whether you were man, woman, or child, all that mattered was your skin colour. The description of the selling of the slaves who had come on the ship helped the readers to visual the destructive nature of the slave trade. Hill showed how racism and oppression were profound and reinforced through harsh punishments as a way of keeping slaves in line. Slaves were whipped, tortured, and deprived of the necessities of life as a method of governance.

Words swim farther than a man can walk: In this chapter, Aminata, who is now 12 years old, reflected on the loss of her childhood and adolescent. Hill demonstrated how she was forced to think and behave like an adult. Hill again highlighted the deprivation that slaves encountered and set out that in slavery, one's ethnic and cultural identity did not matter. Hill showed how one's skin colour became the marker of how one fared in slavery—The skin colour determined one's task, and the closer one was in skin colour to one's master, the better job one was assigned.

The author showed how the disruption of the family leaves Black people to imagine the life lessons that they were deprived of from their parents. In this chapter, Hill showed the main character longing for her father to be with her to protect her and to teach her how to survive in captivity. Hill also showed her using the little knowledge she gained from her parents as a foundation for survival and helping other slaves.

Hill used this chapter to show that during slavery, Black people were considered; a homogeneous group based on their skin colour when, in reality, differences existed among them based on culture, ethnicity, country, and region of birth. He used discussions between characters to demonstrate how assumptions and stereotypes are created amongst people who are oppressed.

The author, however, showed that despite these differences, slaves organized themselves and created substitute families to protect each other. As in the case of Georgia, another Black woman

on the plantation, who took Aminata under her care and taught her lessons that otherwise would have been thought by her parents, and the character Mamed taught her to read and write. Hill also showed how the substitute family was relevant to the survival of slavery, as they helped to protect each other from the brutality of the slave masters; they comforted each other through times of loss and grief. The importance of having a substitute family was most evident when the slave owner raped Aminata. Some of the slaves on the plantation provided a circle of care around her and treated her as any parent would care for their child. Hill showed how relationships were formed and lost, and he demonstrated how the relationship was protected from the scrutiny of the masters through secrecy.

Hill used examples to show the economic benefits of slavery. Slaves were deprived of medical attention, family, knowledge, and fundamental human rights, even though they were the force behind the success of the economy.

Milk for the longest nursing: In this chapter, Hill focused on the everyday reality of slaves and used examples to show that slaves at all times had to be one step ahead of their owners to survive. He highlighted the “by any means necessary” attitude as a survival strategy as shown by the character Aminata. She was able to build on the foundation provided by her parents, and she understood at a young age that her ability to read was going to be her saviour.

In this chapter, Hill also captured the readers’ attention regarding the plight of women in slavery. They were often raped not only by their masters, but also often by other white men. Hill also showed women’s fight to protect themselves from abuse by showing the circular reality. While one woman might be glad that she was no longer the victim of her owner, the reality was that the perpetrator had found another woman to be his victim. In the case of Aminata, she was relieved that she was no longer the rape victim of her owner, but was distraught that he found another young woman to victimize.

Examples were shown in this chapter, where relationships between Black men and women were denied, thus disrupting the lives of families and denying them the right to form their families. Through this denial, Hill showed how customs and traditions were disrupted, and new customs and traditions were formed out of necessity.

Like previous chapters, Hill demonstrated the amplification of the losses that slaves experienced. In their lives, there were not only the emotional loss, but also the physical loss as described by the central character's experience, which included: loss of her husband (forbade to have an intimate relationship); loss of her children (forbade to get pregnant without her owner's permission, and if she did get pregnant the child was sold; although she gave birth, she did not own her child); destruction of her property (forbade to dress as grand as other white women; her belongings were burned); loss of her hair (know the value of hair: no hair no beauty); and loss of her substitute family (when she used resistance to save her dignity, she was sold).

The overall vision of this chapter showed the double irony. Black people were invaluable commodities, and their labour was used to enrich their owners, but as humans, they were viewed as valueless.

Shape of Africa: Hill showed how a glimpse of freedom meant a graduation from being a slave to that of a servant. Through the conversation between Aminata and her new owner, the author bared that although some white people may also see themselves as oppressed, the tendency is that they fair better than the Black people who are oppressed based on their race. The structural hierarchy of race was made plain in this chapter by the example where the Jewish owner, who considered himself an outsider, was able to buy a Black slave—Aminata.

Hill highlighted that although there was some semblance of being treated as a human (as a servant) by other white people, it was not without their stereotyping and prejudices seeping through everyday interactions. Hill used Aminata's experiences with the Lindo's family to highlight this indifference to Black lives and the precarious relationship. In a particular scene, Lindo described the similarity between Jews, Muslims, and Christians, but despite this perceived similarity, in his interactions with Aminata, he was able to also expose the difference. For example, Lindo described Aminata as a wench and his wife as a woman. Furthermore, although Lindo was a Jew and an outsider like the Africans, he had more privileges based on his skin colour, and he was able to own slaves. Although they may have used a different term such as servant, the reality was that he still owned the person and any other children they may bring into the world.

Overall, Hill showed that during the period of slavery, there were allies in the struggle, and through this alliance, new skills were gained, however, not without a cost. In the case of Aminata, she learnt arithmetic and writing, but it was not without a cost. She was exploited for her midwifery skills, which brought income to the Lindo family. Despite the trauma of losing her child, she was expected to deliver babies, which financially benefitted the Lindo family.

In this chapter, the main character gained insight into the importance of education as a key to survival and genuine freedom. Aminata witnessed the trading of other slaves and reflected on her experience with slavery and pseudo-freedom; she understood that freedom was based on one's ability to educate oneself. In addition, Hill summarized the reality of slaves through his conversation about Black lives, where the past did not matter, their present was made invisible, and they had no claim to the future. Throughout this chapter, Hill linked how particular practices go counter to indigenous knowledge and practices.

Evidentiary in this chapter was that white superiority did not only enslave African people, but also created and changed the geography of the physical continent based on the white person's interpretation and agenda.

Words come late from a wet-nurse: In this chapter, Hill used many examples of loss to show the psychological impact of loss and grief. He showed the irony of slavery by using the example of Aminata's son being sold, nursed by another woman, and later succumbing to disease. Hill showed slaves had nowhere to place their losses, as they were expected to continue to function with this grief and loss that they were heavily laden with. Hill used many examples of losses to not only biological family members, but also substitute family members, to show the emotional toll of slavery on Black lives. Hill showed that slaves were often left to face this grief and loss alone.

Hill showed the overall predicaments and irony of slavery; if Black people did not work hard; they were whipped. If they worked too hard, they died without owning anything, and in tough times, they were the ones to suffer. For example, Hill described the disease that killed so many people that the indigo trade was disrupted, which negatively affected the economy.

4.3.1.4 Book 3

In this book, Hill focused on promises of better times and the meaning of freedom in an era where Black lives did not matter. In the chapter *Nations not so blest as thee*, Hill used his main character to show how abolitionist used Black people to promote their agenda. He also showed that one could never escape the psychological impact of slavery as particular experiences trigger memories that elicit strong emotions.

They come and go from the holy ground: Here, Hill gave readers a preview of the far-reaching impact of slavery. He not only introduced the reader to other free slaves from areas such as the Caribbean, but also revealed what it meant to be a freed slave. Although Black people were freed, they were still oppressed based on their skin colour, and colour mattered in this era. This was evident in the character Sam, who was the offspring of a slave owner and a slave from Jamaica. Sam was able to own a flourishing business, while other freed slaves lived in a shantytown away from the city.

In this chapter, the readers also given glimpse of politics and the tension between England and America. Ironically, white Americans felt enslaved by the British because of the taxes they had to pay; however, at the same time, these white Americans were brutally oppressive towards slaves.

Hill showed the reader how alliances developed between slaves who were freed. He also showed an act of resistance for these slaves and how some changed their names from that of their previous master as an act of reclaiming the self and reclaiming their cultural practices. This was aptly shown in the scene where they buried an older Black woman.

Aminata was shown using the skills she learned from her parents and in captivity to benefit herself and her community. She taught other Black people to read, and she was able to charge the British soldiers for her midwifery skills as she delivered babies that were the result of the sexual exploitation of Black woman by the British soldiers.

Negroes or other property: In this chapter, readers saw Black people profiting from the war and also how they were being betrayed. They worked with the British who promised them Freedom, but they were later deceived when the British surrendered and agreed to a declaration that saw

them not living up to their promises. Highlighted in this chapter was the fact that in this era, as a Black person, freedom was not a guarantee, as when the British left, white Americans started to claim Blacks as their property again. This was evident in the case of Aminata who was working with the British to register Black people to take them to Nova Scotia. Her past owners attempted to reclaim her, and she did not have the support of the British whom she was working for. In this chapter, it was evident that not everyone supported slavery, but the laws and policies made it easier for white people to retrieve them as slaves.

Hill showed the unscrupulous way that slaves were treated for profit, whether as a servant or as a slave. Hill also illuminated the disturbing nature of slavery on the family and relationship, as demonstrated by the example of the disruptive trajectory of Aminata and her husband's relationship.

Gone missing with my most recent exhalation: The setting for this chapter was Nova Scotia in 1783, and it showed one of the paths that led Black people to settle in Canada. In Nova Scotia, they had slaves, indentured servants, and free Black people. Black people were at the bottom of the pecking order and encountered ongoing racism. Although they were free in theory, they continued to be oppressed, and they lived in severe poverty as they had difficulties finding work because of their skin colour. Again, we see broken promises by the British, as the promised never materialized. Hill showed the resilience of Black people and their lust for freedom. One character spoke about having less food and comfort than when enslaved, but was basking in freedom.

In this chapter, like in previous chapters, Hill showed Black people organizing in tough times and helping each other. He showed the importance of a community and the church in keeping hope alive. He also showed the harsh reality of freedom that saw Black people being humiliated by being whipped and flogged in public. The emotional and psychological trauma continued to be multiplying in freedom. The description of Black people as travellers in this chapter emphasized that freedom was not actualized for them as they continued to be treated like animals.

Hill allowed the reader to see the disruption and depletion of the Black family. Aminata's experience of giving birth alone for the second time forced the reader to reflect on how these experiences formed the base and trajectory for Black families.

My children were like phantom In this chapter, Hill showed that although Black people were considered free, they were not free. Due to oppressive practices, they were often worked as indentured workers or servants to white people, as this was better than starving or freezing to death (hypothetically). Black people were, however, still considered the *other*, and they faced oppressive and punitive work conditions.

Hill also showed white people trying to assist Black people, but again, this assistance came with many conditions that saw Black people still in an inferiority position. Through all this, the readers got to see how traditional parenting took place with Aminata carrying her daughter on her back, allowing her to observe the ways of life and teaching her things that her mother taught her in her homeland. This teaching, however, came to a heartbreaking end when the white person she trusted stole her daughter.

In this segment, the politics of the day saw the demise of business and the Promised Land becoming a land of no opportunity. It also saw white people leaving Nova Scotia and Black people victimized by those who stayed. Here, Hill helped the reader to understand that in tough economic times, Black people were the ones who suffered. They were paid less than white people for doing the same work, and they were abused for their cheaper labor.

This chapter also saw trauma similar to the beginning chapters where the main character witnessed death in captivity at the hands of the white man or through disease. In freedom, she was seeing the death of other Black people by racist white men and through disease, as they did not have the privilege of doctors.

Elephants for want of towns: This chapter started with Black loyalists lamenting their oppression and the cruelty and brutality of their bondage. They could not believe that this was the intentions of the British Government, who transported them to Nova Scotia as free people, but yet they continued to experience oppression, cruelty, and brutality.

Again, the British came in to take them to another Promised Land—Sierra Leone. Africa. This introduced yet another promise to Africans from the British. The discussion of this Promised Land and freedom reinforced the view of women in this era, as not only were they oppressed because of their skin colour, but also because they were women. This was evident in the conversation of how Black women were permitted to go to Africa, but they could not go alone unless they had a man to vouch for their integrity and character and who promised to ensure her welfare. Although Aminata was more educated and skilled than some Black men were, she had to adhere to this rule.

Similar to other chapters, Hill discussed yet another loss for Aminata, as she learned about the sinking of the ship her husband was on. As shown in this chapter, her spirit was dying as she reflected on the loss of two children and husband, but she was also grateful that she was able to voluntarily take another journey back to her homeland.

4.3.1.5 Book 4

The sections of this book spoke about Aminata's experience in Sierra Leone. This section was dominant, as although Black people went back as free people, they were once again faced with the broken promises of the British. They arrived in a land with nothing to the point where they had to build a city from the ground up.

The reality of going back to Africa for Black people was that they felt as lost and oppressed as when they were in America and Canada. The irony of the trip was that although it was another crossing back to Africa, though voluntary, Amanita experienced similar conditions on the passage, where lives were lost at sea through sickness.

Another paradox of Book 4 was the helplessness of the free Blacks who witnessed other Negroes being rowed out to the ship to be taken away to the Americas or the Caribbean to be slaves. The semblance of trying to build a village from scratch as they returned to nothing in Freetown was also shown in this book. Hill also showed the hierarchal structure that happens in a society where the white person is at the top giving directions, which Black people had to obey if they wanted to survive. Hill showed the harsh reality for Black people, as, throughout time, they faced many deprivations that included not only economical, but also psychological and emotional. These

deprivations highlighted that Black people, whether in captivity or freedom, were not safe, and for them to survive, they had to be perpetual migrants.

This chapter is also a stark reminder that the reality of freedom is not always realized. The slaves returning to Africa found themselves in conditions where they had no friends, no land, no home, and no work; hence, they found themselves once again dependent on the white man for survival. Hill also showed the resiliency of Black people, as these former slaves, despite the conditions that existed, formulated a community where they worked together and helped each other. They advocated and became involved in injustice situations as in the case of Peter, who fought for freedom for all Black people.

The book ended with yet another crossing in a ship for Aminata. This time, the crossing was to England, where, as an elder woman, she advocated, in the parliament in England, for freeing slaves and denounced the slavery economy. Aminata also met her daughter, which resulted in her having some semblance of happiness. In reality, however, reunification between slaves and their stolen children were rare.

4.3.2 Importance of *No Burden to Carry: Narratives of Black Working Women in Ontario 1920's to 1950's*

Brand's (1991) book is based on interviews with several Black women in Canada a couple generations after the abolition of slavery. While one cannot make generalizations based solely on *The Book of Negroes* (Hill, 2007), Dionne Brand's interviews with 14 Black women—some of whom were from the Caribbean and all of whom were descendants of slaves—offers further insights into Black families' lives in Canada in a period that was marked by colonial ideologies and racism. Dionne Brand immigrated from the Caribbean, and she is well known for bringing attention to issues of gender, race, sexuality and feminism, white male domination, and injustices in Canadian Society. Through the experiences of Black women interviewed and published in *No Burden to Carry*, Brand highlighted, Black people's unceasing struggle for equality in Canada, which has psychologically continued to shape Black lives from generation to generation. Through the stories of these interviewees in Canada, one can gain critical insight into how parenting takes place within Black families.

4.3.2.1 Summary of Interviews

Violet Blackman 1900-1990: Through her narrative, Ms. Blackman introduced the reader to the role of women during a period when racism was rampant in society. Ms. Blackman showed the importance of Black women in the struggle for all Black people. Black women were involved not only organizing in the home, church, and community, but also largely involved in the resistance movement. In her dialogue, she provided a brief history in areas such as how Caribbean women came to settle in Canada through the domestic worker policy and a history of the resistance movement, with Marcus Garvey at the helm promoting an exodus for Black people back to Africa.

In addition, Ms. Blackman highlighted the dominance of racism during a period that saw the oppression of Black people in areas such as housing employment and the criminal justice system. Ms. Blackman also spoke about the problem within the Black community that saw businesses developed and failed through mismanagement, which was evident in her discussion of the Black credit union. She also shared her thesis around Blacks preventing other Blacks from succeeding due to competition.

In her interview, a glimpse into the importance of education and the message around success that parents gave to children in this time was provided. Ms. Blackman reinforced to her children the importance of education to succeed and helping others to succeed. In addition, she provided a glimpse into the importance of the church for the community, as their belief in God and prayers provided a tool for them to be hopeful.

Her interview gave readers an overview of everyday life for Black women in the social, political, and economic arena. It highlighted that women and their families continue to struggle similar to their ancestors. The stark differences compared to that of their ancestors is that they are free and no longer experience physical abuse.

Addie Aylestock 1909: Ms. Aylestock's narrative spoke about her experience as a Black, who was born in Canada, specifically Ontario. She highlighted the transiency that her family suffered because of her father having to find employment. Subsequently, she linked this experience to her current situation where she found herself moving consistently. Ms. Aylestock's narratives highlighted gender expectations at that time, where women mainly worked as a domestic worker,

dressmaker, and later in the helping professions. She also spoke about the educational trajectory for Black girls. Education was seen as useless, as there was a lack of opportunities for Black girls; hence it was not encouraged. She also highlighted the social cost of poverty through her experience of leaving home at an early age, as her parents were too poor to care for her and her siblings.

Ms. Aylestock mainly focused on the role of the church in her upbringing and as a woman. Her interview provided an understanding of the importance of the church in the Black community, where the expectation was for Black children to be in church every Sunday. It also gave us an understanding of the Black church structure, where males predominantly held leadership. In her interview, the reader got an understanding of how she resisted these expectations. In her account of her experiences, she went to Bible school and became a pastor in the Black church, despite many challenges from both men and women.

In her interview, provided an understanding of the deprivation that Black people faced because of prejudices. One also came to understand from her experience the need for perseverance despite all odds against one.

Bertha McAleer 1909: Ms. McAleer provided a brief history of Black churches in Ontario. This historical preview came from the fact that her father was a minister in the church, and she grew up involved in the church. She also spoke about the role of the church in their community, which not only assisted in formulating a community, but also acted like a charitable organization that helped people in the community and abroad. Like previous interviewees, she spoke about the importance of the Black church in her family and her life. She deconstructed the role of the church, and she concluded that people got along better in the past because they had the same church-like mind.

Like Ms. Aylestock, her narrative provided some indications where Blacks settled in Ontario and the transient nature of families based on employment perspectives. She discussed the impact of the depression and the war, and she recognized the opportunities that Black people and Black women acquired as a result. She highlighted that when given a chance, Black people can be successful. In her case, her husband's boss gave him an opportunity, and he excelled.

This interview gave a preview into parenting in those days and the expectations for children. She spoke about the strictness of her mother in their morals and upbringing. Through her lens, came an understanding that the community was important to families, as the community provided in times of need. Most importantly, she recognized the role of her mother, who was a widow, and the role of women in the community, as it was through their continuous work in the church that the Black community survived. She also introduced the notion of the impact of geographical separation from the community. She noted that whereas the Black community was previously living in a central area where they had the support of each other, as society progressed and Black people got better employment opportunities, they no longer lived centrally and the community support diminished.

Viola Berry Aylesock 1910: Ms. Aylesock helped one to understand further the migration of Black people to Canada as she recounted her family's history. She shared that her grandfather was an escaped slave who came from United States to Canada through the Underground Railway. Like the earlier women, she spoke in-depth about the supportive role of the church in her life and the importance of spirituality in her family's life.

She also discussed the roles of her mother and grandmother in the household, and through this discussion, the gendered division of labour was evident. For example, she shared that her mother never worked outside the home and described her primary duties as parenting her brother and taking care of the community. She emphasized lessons that she learnt from her mother, such as the value of education and the importance of caring for your elders. She also provided a look at the structure of the family, where Black women were often left to single handily parent their children, as Black men often left in search of better job opportunities or they died prematurely, as in the case of Ms. Aylesock's father and husband.

Her narrative showed the impact of racism on Black peoples' ability to secure particular jobs in Canada. She indicated that she initially went into the workforce like many other women because they were looking for workers while the men were off fighting. After the war was over, she reflected that Black people did not get the jobs they trained for because of their skin colour. This reflection informed the reader of a practice where Black people left Canada to go to the United

States of America because they were able to live a better life, but she stated that the irony of that is that they worked so hard that they were not able to enjoy the fruits of their labour.

A glimpse into the understanding of Blackness during this period was also provided. Her discussion on Blackness highlighted generational division, as she indicated that when they were growing up, they knew they were Black, and minimal discussion took place on the topic of Blackness. She indicated the difference between her generation and the younger generation was that the younger generation was displaying their Blackness through slogans and dress.

Bee Allen 1911: Mrs. Allen's discussion of her ancestors provided a good understanding of the path that her family followed to seek freedom in Canada from slavery. Once family moved to Canada, she also provided a roadmap of the many cities and provinces where they lived.

Her extensive discussion on her family gave a sense of the family structure during this period. She described her family as a matriarch, as the women had a significant role in the functioning of the household. She also spoke about the importance of grandparents and extended family in caring for children and elders. She talked about her experience with relying on her mother to care for her daughter. Her narrative showed the complications that can exist in families due to issues such as poverty, racism, and addiction. She spoke about her father's addiction to alcohol and the impact that it had in their lives and her husband's experience with underemployment.

In her interview, Mrs. Allen, for the first time, provided insight into the shades of Blackness that determined success. She used examples to show that prejudices existed amongst Black people based on the shade of their skin, which ascertained the degree of success. Ms. Bee, who was a lighter shade, demonstrated how the shade of your skin colour determined a person's type of job.

Mrs. Allen showed that she had a good understanding of gender issues. She realized that expectations for Black women were not only set out by the white men, but also by Black men in her community. She indicated that her husband expected her to stay home and care for their child. Ms. Allen also proved that she had a good understanding of women's issues and recognized that her mother's struggles were different from that of white women. She also understood her struggles as a Black woman who works hard to contribute to the family finances while still maintaining primary responsibility for the functioning of her household and child

rearing. Through sharing experiences in her life, Mrs. Allen acknowledged that women could do anything men can do.

Like the other interviewees, Mrs. Allen spoke extensively about the church's role in her family's life and the community. She also talked about Black woman's ability organize and mobilize to meet the needs of the community or to have fun, as demonstrated by their participation in the Eureka Club.

Saxonia Shadd 1912: Like the other women, Mrs. Shadd gave a detailed account of what she knew about her family history. She indicated that her grandparents were freeborn slaves who made their way to Canada. She explained her family structure, and she reported that her grandmother had 21 children. Mrs. Shadd spoke extensively about her mother, who was a single mother due to the death of her father. She talked about her mother working tirelessly to support her children and instilling in them lessons that her father had instilled in her. For example, Mrs. Shadd spoke about her mother teaching the value of education as her key focus. She also talked about her lost dreams that were compromised because her uncle would not pay for her medical school because she was a girl. Instead, she was pushed into being a teacher, which was viewed as a women's job.

Mrs. Shadd also spoke about her experience going to school, and she indicated that she was not conscious that she was different from other students, hence she had no racial problems. In her experience as an adult, she also denied being discriminated against as a Black woman and explained that she did not expect to be subjected to discrimination, so she did not look for it.

Unlike the other women, Mrs. Shadd recounted that she worked hard housekeeping, child rearing, and helping in the store and supporting her husband in his many endeavours. She demonstrated how she willingly put her teaching career on hold to benefit her husband and her family. Ms. Shadd's conversation about gender issues revealed that she believed in equal work for equal pay, but she did not think that women have to do certain jobs to prove themselves.

June Robbins 1913: Mrs. Robbins described that her ancestors came to Canada as fugitives, as her great-grandfather was a slave. She described a life of struggle marked by poverty and racism.

Mrs. Robbins provided a look into parenting in an era that was marked by racism and poverty. She described her father, who was away most of the time working on the railway, as strict and her mother more liberal in her parenting. She showed how the responsibilities of child rearing fell on her mother because of her husband being away working. She also highlighted that expectations of children were based on the reality of time, and she spoke about family members making sacrifices. In her case, she talked about quitting school to take care of an ill brother. Although Mrs. Robbins described fond memories of playing and having fun, she showed her disdain with the current generation, as she believed that they have it easier. Mrs. Robbins provided a resume of jobs she held, including those during wartime when there was a shortage of men. She described the racism and prejudice that she experienced in these positions. She also gave a glimpse of what it was like to live in a racist society. She shared how white people used Black people to patronize their business during the day, but at day's end, they did not want to socialize with them. She also demystified the notion that Blacks and White did not mix during this period by discussing the intimate relationships between Black men and White women. Mrs. Robbins's vivid account of her experiences showed that racism was prevalent and profound during this time.

Gwen Johnston 1915: Mrs. Johnston's recount of her family's history highlighted that Blacks were born Canadians before 1800. She spoke about her mother's history, which saw her working at a quite young age, and she showed the division of labour based on gender. Mrs. Johnston's story helps to understand the many obstacles and challenges Black families faced as Black men left the home in search of better opportunities. Her discussion showed that her grandmother was the matriarch of the family and was a strict disciplinary. She spoke about learning valuable skills from her grandmother. She also talked about the value of extended family.

Mrs. Johnston also provided a glimpse of what it meant to be a single parent, as her father deserted her family and her mother was faced to parent them with the help of the extended family. She spoke fondly of her mother working hard to provide her with a wonderful childhood. She talked about her mother and grandmother supporting her when she experienced racism at school in the 1920s.

Mrs. Johnston gave us a preview into how a life of deprivation and have assisted them to survive the depression. She explained that the Black people pooled their resources and helped each other; as such, the great depression did not have a profound impact on them.

Mrs. Johnston spoke about how, despite that they were financially limited, her husband insisted that she stay at home. She also talked about sacrificing and living with family members and other people because her family had limited income. She also spoke about the plight of Blacks, and how she and her husband saved and opened a bookstore with books that spook about Africa and Black people's contribution to the world. Through the bookstore, they were able to interact with many different people and gain insights and share knowledge about Black lives.

Her account of events showed that despite the stressors of racism, Black people were able to congregate socially and enjoy life. Mrs. Johnston also provided insight into Black women and men's relationships. She spoke frankly about the impact of the White women's liberation movement, and she encouraged Black men and women to work together and resolve their problems. She also spoke candidly about Black people working together to benefit their race economically and socially.

Grace Fowler 1919: Mrs. Fowler provided an insight into the life of young Black people during that period. They entered the workforce at an early age to assist their families, as in the case of Ms. Fowler. She worked in domestic jobs without adequate compensated. Her description of the great depressions leaves one to understand the implication for Black people, as they not only had to deal with racism, but they also had to deal with the politics of the economy. When the economy worsened, the White employers struggled, and Black employees were not paid. Through her examples, she demonstrated the oppression that she experienced as a woman and as a Black person, both in the home and in society.

Ms. Fowler's chronicle spoke to the oppression that Black women experience as a female and as a Black person, both within their home and community. She also talked about their resiliency and strengths. Her example of child rearing and working on the farm had a profound impact, as it highlighted the sheer resiliency of Black woman. Her discussion on the role of her ex-husband in the family showed the role of Black men in adding to the oppression that woman experienced through their belief of a woman's role in the household and their entitlements.

Ms. Fowler also highlighted that Black women did not always accept this oppression, as they participated in acts of resistance. She advocated for the rights of women in the workplace and the home. She defied her husband by refusing to do certain jobs in the home and by seeking employment outside of the home. She introduced the notion that women can work outside of the home while raising their children. Ms. Fowler was interested in carving a path for other Black girls, and through her experience in applying to join the army, one sees that often, ongoing roadblocks took their toll on Black women.

Ms. Fowler spoke about her experience of being mixed race and the rejection she encountered by both White and Black people. Her experience provided an understanding of the prevalence of skin colour in determining societal acceptance. She also spoke about the need to resist and challenge stereotypes about Black people. Through her narrative, she showed a Canadian history of racism and how it differs from province to province. In Toronto, she experienced blatant racism in areas such as employment and housing. She introduced the reader to anti-black racism as she experienced other races being hired, such as the Chinese and Japanese, over Black people.

Esther Hayes and Eleanor Hayes: These ladies' interviews gave the reader an understanding of the complexity of Black history, which saw a separation of African history from that of Canadian Black history. Eleanor used the examples of Africans coming to Canada. She indicated that they come here educated and could build on their education, where Blacks who first settled in Canada lived as peasants.

Their passionate discussion of racism helped bring understanding to racism within the Canadian context. It was their view that minimal progress has taken place, and they suggested that Canada has to move forward. Esther suggested that anti-racism should take a page from the Black women's movement, as they were able to progress because they saw themselves as equal to the Black men, whereas the Black men remained stagnant. She highlighted the problem is that Black people consider themselves "less than," and they are giving their children messages of inferiority.

In looking at child rearing practices, they spoke about education as the critical factor that determines success for children, and as such, they commented on the Black community's lack of organization in response to challenges in the systems. It was apparent from their discussion that

parents parented with racism in the backdrop, which influenced the messages they give to their children. According to Esther and Eleanor, parents encourage their children into gender-specific jobs—boys to the army and girls into nursing, as they thought this was a guarantee of their success. Their account of the family showed many disruptions that Black families experienced, which included the girls going to the United States to study, boys going into the army, and fathers working on the railway.

Like other interviewees, they discussed the importance of women belonging to community groups to learn and support each other and to develop respect for themselves and others. These women showed an in-depth understanding of feminism from Black women's perspective. They discussed the difference between the women's movement and the Black women's experience. They felt that Black women were raised as children to be equal to their men who helped them to become stronger, but at the expense of weakening Black men. They believed this is partially responsible for the current suffering of the Black family unit, as women became central to the family structure as they got stronger than men, which was problematic as it questioned the role of fathers in the home. They advocated for gender equality.

Their insight into the role of the war gave an understanding of its influence on Black lives. Their discussion reminded the reader that while the war provided opportunities for Black people, it also divided the community. Through their interview, it was apparent that people who came from the Caribbean, United States, and Africa were more educated than Black Canadians. They also spoke about the Black movement causing further division, as they did not see it necessarily as positive, and they reflected that mostly West Indians and Black Americans were involved.

Rella Braithwaite 1923: Ms. Braithwaite's discussion of her family history provided a lesson on the path of slavery. Her ancestors, who were slaves, immigrated to Canada from the Caribbean and the United States.

She highlighted the experiences of a Black person growing up in the city or in a small farm community. She discussed her mother's role in the stability of her family. Like the other women, her mother worked extremely hard in the home and in the fields, as her father's job took him away from the home for long hours throughout the year. Like other women, there was a clear

definition of the role of children in the household, and in her case, the older children cared for younger children.

She spoke about her experience growing up in a small community as a Black girl, then migrating to Toronto where she busied herself working in gender-specific roles. She talked about resisting this trajectory of going into the domestic role by educating herself and, as such, was able to secure a job outside of the domestic realm. Her discussion also showed the centralization of Black people in Toronto, and like the earlier interviewees, she highlighted the importance of the church, not only for spirituality support, but also for social support. This support was important to her, as she grew up in a small community where there were only a few Blacks.

She spoke about how the war disrupted families as men went overseas. She also talked about the challenges they faced with racism and employment, as in the case of her husband.

She also spoke about the role of women educating themselves to teach their children about Black history to build resiliency and hope for them. Through this research, Ms. Braithwaite gained an interest in Black women's history, as this information was often omitted from their classroom curriculum. She realized and mapped out for us those Black women's experience, as they were overburdened with taking care of their children while, at the same time, financially contributing to their household, as many of the Black men were underemployed or unemployed.

Ms. Braithwaite, like the other interviewees, spoke about the importance of education in the Black community. She honed in on the situation of Black boys and the increased number of them who are unskilled or dropouts. As such, she spoke about developing techniques for raising Black boys that concentrate on them knowing their identity and preserving despite discrimination. She discussed that developing a pride of being Black was a necessary factor in raising Black children.

Marjorie Lewsy 1923: Mrs. Lewsy spoke about the psychological impact that racism had on Black people. She discussed Black children's experiences in the education system, which saw teachers referring to them in a derogatory manner. She spoke about growing up in a segregated environment where different races did not play together.

Like several other women, she shared the impact that the depression had on her family and the community. She reflected that the impact on Black families was minimal, as they supported

each other through this terrible time by sharing. She also showed a community that cared for each other and spoke about the influence of the church. She also highlighted that despite the myriad of oppression Black women faced, they were continuously volunteering in many areas to help others in their community or abroad.

She also provided insight into the psychological impact and challenges experienced by Caribbean women who immigrated to Canada as domestic workers. Through this reflection, she spoke about her mother working hard and making sacrifices to sponsor her children to Canada. Again, as a child, education was drilled into her, as that was the key to be successful as a Black person.

Like other women, she spoke about the difficulties of many single mothers. In her circumstance, her mother was a widow who raised her children alone, irrespective of the oppression she experienced. Her reflection helped the reader to see that for a family to be successful, the contribution of all family members including children was essential. In her case, she dropped out of school to care for her mother who went blind.

Ms. Lewsy provided insight to her children by instilling in them that they need to stand up for themselves and keep going. She bravely addressed the anger and pain that Black women have experienced that have a profound impact on them.

Cleata Morris 1924: Ms. Morris shared that her ancestors were fugitives from slavery when they settled in Canada. Like the other women, she gave a detailed history of the places where her family lived in Canada and her experiences. Through this account, one saw that she concluded that she is more discriminated against as a Black person than as a woman.

She also spoke openly about the role of her mother and grandmother in teaching her lessons about honesty and hard work. She also talked about the expectations for a child in helping in the home and the fields and the importance of everyone contributing to the survival of the family.

She shared experiences of being a teacher and witnessing the discrimination of Black and poor White children. She spoke about extending herself to get parents involved and fight back against the oppressive education system. In this, she stressed the maternal role that Black women take on

to help everyone. She compared this to that of White women, whose purpose she stated was for the convenience of their husbands.

Fern Shadd Shreve 1924: Mrs. Shreve spoke about her experience growing up as a Black person in a rural farm community. She shared that both her parents and grandparents used an authoritative style of parenting. She also shared that poverty and racism influenced their style of parenting. She recounted the work that children had to do on the farm and the lessons that they received about hard work. However, she echoed that although her parents were hard on them, they knew their parents loved them.

Like Mrs. Morris, Ms. Shreve had many jobs, including that of a teacher, and she worked extra hard to contribute financially to her household. She spoke about the importance of the extended family in assisting her with child rearing, as employment took her and her husband away from the home for extended periods. On the topic of discrimination, she resisted the labels, Black and woman, as she indicated that she wanted people to see her as a person with something to contribute.

4.3.3 Data Analysis

Through my analysis of these texts, I looked for the following defined criteria: information of historical and contemporary relevance and individual experiences. I was able to identify many of all of these, and through this, I uncovered information that represented multiple truths. This was essential, as Taylor (2001) argued that there is no single truth, but rather multiple realities representing multiple truths. Furthermore, I uncovered that specific themes and concepts that are consequential to everyday functioning are entrenched in the psyche of the Black population. Ifversen (2003) indicated that text can be viewed from a macro level to make wide-ranging claims about a certain period of a certain society, which he justified in his discussion on analyzing text. This textual analysis is important in my field, as it provides context to texts that are produced by mainstream researchers and used by practitioners to make a wide generalization about people lives.

The questions that my research sought to address required an in-depth review of historical events to gain a thorough understanding of what occurred and to verify my assertion about the significance of past events on current-day functioning. This methodology may be challenged as non-scientific. Neale (2009) suggested that discourse analysis is a process of uncovering meaning rather than a method of research. Chinn (2007), however, disagreed with Neale and furthermore asserted that “science is a quest of knowledge developed in the historical context of Europe’s search for new lands and economic resources” (p. 1249), thereby questioning the purpose and validity of scientific research. Gee (2005) further disputed Neal’s claim by proposing that there is no “scientific method” in research, even in the “hard” sciences. Rather, what Gee suggested is that research should be and is versatile and adopts particular tools and strategies for inquiring about specific issues and problems within a context of a study. Gee further argued that these tools and strategies are communal. Given the nature of my research questions, I did not think that traditional methods would suffice. Adams (2014) suggested that knowledge is colonized and that mainstream research reflects a racialized perspective of the powerful and, so, reproduces domination. To counteract this, CDA brings the text of racialized people to the centre and gives importance to the subjective experiences of people who have been impacted by slavery and colonialism, thus supporting my methodological choice.

The two books I selected allowed me to analyze experiences during and post slavery and contextualized the current functioning of a group of people. This group—Black people—continues to be evaluated and assessed by mainstream theory and ideologies that dismiss or do not acknowledge the importance of past historical experiences. This was central to my research, as I sought to understand the effect of historical events such as slavery and immigration on the Black population in Canada.

I adapted Kuckartz’s (2002) format, as presented in Figure 1, to assist me in organizing the text. In organizing the texts.

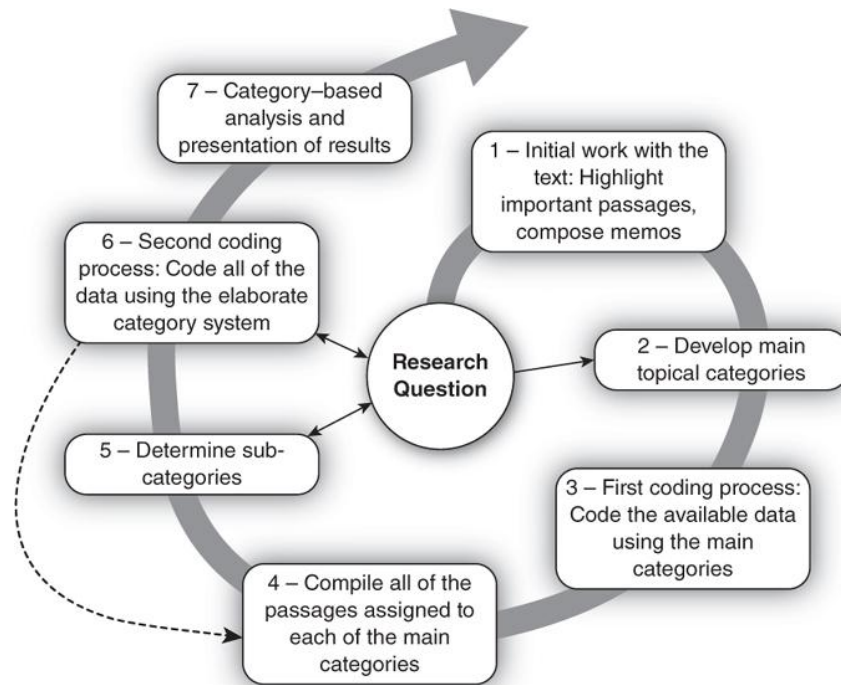


Figure 2. Thematic qualitative text analysis process.

Note: Compiled from Udo Kuckartz (2002, p. 70).

Through my initial work, I read both texts intentionally focusing on my research questions and my interview guide questions developed for the dialogue circles. As such, I started broadly looking for any segment of text that spoke to experiences within families, traumatic experiences, forms of oppression, migration experiences, and signs of empowerment. I then identified concepts that I associated with each major category (see Table 1).

This approach allowed me to develop categories central to my research. The categories I identified facilitated a process of compare and contrast based on my analysis. Kuckartz (2014) stated that one assigns objects to categories, and one's own perceptions and thought processes are influential in this categorization. He asserted that objects in the world do not dictate which categories they are assigned to and that categorizing is a fundamental cognitive process needed in everyday life. As part of my analysis, I developed categories to highlight the main themes in the book. These categories were organized and reorganized until the categories and subcategories became the final category (see Table 2).

These themes were reorganized in subcategories based on text within chapters in the book. Once all the coding was completed using the categories, I was able to analyze the information and make claims to support (and in some cases refute) many of my arguments. These findings are presented in my discussion chapter.

Table 1. *Development Process of Identifying Themes*

Major Categories	Associated Concepts
Experiences within families	Parenting and childhood experiences, community involvement, experiences with family, the community and the church
Traumatic experiences	Impact of slavery, colonialism and migration, physical punishment, sexual abuse, lack of opportunities
Forms of oppression	Individual, structural and institutional, gendered experiences, racial experiences, modes of discrimination, lack of opportunities
Migration Experiences	Separation from family, separation from community, search for opportunities, search for freedom
Empowerment	Areas of resilience, church and community as supports

Table 2. *Emerging Codes Related to Historical Experiences*

Themes	Subthemes
Racism	Structural Institutional Individual (attitudinal)
Oppression	Gender based Importance of Black women to the community and family
Separation	Loss of self Loss of community and culture Loss of family
Abuse	Physical Emotional Sexual

4.4 Dialogue Circles Process

4.4.1 Participants

Krueger and Casey (2015) asserted that focus groups are an effective way to gather participants' perceptions in a permissive and nonthreatening setting. With this in mind, I conducted two dialogue circles with Black parents over 49 years old within the Caribbean community in Toronto. These groups were conducted with the view of gathering participants' feelings and thoughts about historical events on their parenting practices. The aim of each group was to have between seven to nine Black parents, as Morgan (1988) suggested a lower and upper boundary of four to 12 participants and suggested a more favorable boundary of six to eight participants. However, I ended up with 14 members in the first focus group—rather outside the boundary. I had over-invited participants, as I had a difficult time getting confirmations of attendance. On the day in question, I felt ethically bound to allow everyone who had taken the time to attend the opportunity to participate. I felt there was minimal impact of having two participants more than the recommended number. In the second focus group, I had nine participants. In total, this study relied on the narratives of 23 participants.

4.4.2 Characteristics of Dialogue Circle Participants

The participants were given a demographic form to complete. The results are as follows: the total sample size for both groups was 23, with nearly 74% females as indicated in Table 3. The age of participants ranged between the ages of 49 and 85. See Table 4 for detailed age range. The average number of children that participants had was between zero and three. It is important to note that two participants did not have biological children, but fit within the tradition of the Caribbean families, parented family, or community members' children (see Table 5). Most participants have been in Canada for over 30 years and have parented predominantly in Canada (see Table 6).

Table 3. *Participants' Gender*

	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Total
Male	3	3	6
Female	11	6	17
Total Participants	14	9	23

Table 4. *Participants' Age Range*

	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Total
49-54	0	1	1
55-64	2	5	7
65+	12	3	15

Table 5. *Participants' Number of Children*

	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Total
0-3	9	5	14
3-5	3	2	5
5+	1	1	2
No biological children, but parented community/family members children	1	1	2

Table 6. *Participants' Number of Years in Canada*

	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Total
0-10	0		
10-20	0	2	2
20-30	1		1
30+	12	7	19
No response	1		1

Despite advertising widely through word of mouth and through emails to get a representation of the Caribbean islands, 86% of participants were from the island of Jamaica (see Table 7). Reasons for migrating varied amongst participants as seen in Table 8. Thirty-nine percent of participants were single parents for various reasons, as demonstrated in Table 9. While five participants did not respond to the question asking about their level of education, most participants had completed university (see Table 10). Finally, participants had various jobs in various industries while parenting (see Table 11).

Table 7. *Participants' Caribbean Island of Origin*

	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Total
Antigua	0	1	1
Barbados	2	0	2
Jamaica	12	8	20

Table 8. *Participants' Reasons for Migrating to Canada*

	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Total
Economics/Work	4	5*	9
Better Life	2	1	3
Children's Education		2*	1
Family Reunification	1	3	4
Came on Vacation	1	0	1
Experience	1	0	0
Marriage	1	0	0
No response	5	0	5

*participant responded in more than one area

Table 9. *Participants' Marital Status while Parenting*

	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Total
Single	2	0	2
Married/Common Law	6	7	13
Separated/Divorce	3	2	5
Widowed	2	0	2
No response	1		1

Table 10. *Participants' Level of Education*

	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Total
Completed Elementary School	1	0	1
Completed High School	4	1	5
Completed University	4	8	12
No response	5	0	5

Table 11. *Participants' Employment Status While Parenting*

	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Total
Nursing	2	2	4
Health Care	1	0	1
House Keeping	1	0	1
Carpenter	1	0	1
Phone technician	0	1	1
Stay at Home Parent		1*	1
Accounting	1		1
Social Services/Government		2*	2
Teaching		1	1
Did not specify Job	3	3	6
No response	4		4

*Participant responded in more than one area

4.4.3 Recruitment Process

After getting approval from the ethics committee at the University of Toronto (see approval letter presented in Appendix A), I emailed flyers (see Appendix B) to key people within the Black Caribbean community and asked them to distribute said flyers. I also spoke with people at churches frequented by Black parents. I contacted people within the community through the telephone (see Appendix C). I scheduled two dates for focus groups to be held, with one on each end of the city. The criteria to participate was being 50 years old or older, as an important aspect of this purposively selected participants was to ensure that they parented across a generation, and participants must have parented in Canada or both Canada and the Caribbean. All participants had parented their children mainly in Canada. Attempts were made to sample purposively, and stratification was used where possible to ensure that there was diversity, both in gender and country of origin. However, as noted above, participants who responded were mostly from the Island of Jamaica and mostly female. For the purpose of this study, generation was defined as

people within a particular population who experienced historical and cultural events within a given time period (Pilcher, 1994).

4.4.4 Consent and Overview of Study

A brief presentation on the scope and context of the study was given to the participants in both focus groups, and I used the interview guide (see Appendix D), with a focus on my two main questions:

- From your experience as a Black parent, how have the effects of slavery, colonialism, and migration influenced how you socialize and parent your children?
- What resources assist you in developing effective parenting skills? What things have impacted your parenting, and what would have made it easier for you to parent?

I also had the participants sign consent form, which was provided at the end of the research information letter (see Appendix E), and I had an in-depth conversation about confidentiality. I received participants' consent to audiotape the session, and I used a paid transcriber to transcribe verbatim to avoid gaining the type of familiarity that blunts investigators' analytical skills.

4.4.5 Cultural Purview

In qualitative research, the researchers positioning within their study can provide valuable insight (Berger, 2015) and can be advantageous, as it allows the researcher to be acquainted with subtleties of meaning (McCracken, 1988; Strauss & Corbin, 2008). Per se, my cultural purview enhanced my analysis, as it was with this purview that I was able to identify and clarify within the dialogue circles particular meanings. I was also able to match some of the stories from the participants to my experience growing up in a Caribbean household in Canada. McCracken (1988) suggested that the researcher "search out a match in one's experience for ideas and actions that the respondent has described in the interview" (p. 19). This familiarity enabled me to have a more thorough understanding of the participants' perceptions of their lived experience.

Relevant research positioning includes personal characteristics (Piercy, 2004), and as such, I situated myself as an insider in relations to the participants in both dialogue groups. The main characteristics that I shared with the group included being a female, member of the Black Caribbean community in Toronto, and an immigrant from the Caribbean region. Having shared

some of these characteristics, my position as an insider allowed me not only to have easy access to information, but also allowed me to understand the nuances, language, and particular reactions that may be construed as negative from someone outside of the culture. For example, when participants shared stories about racism and absentee fathers, they were very loud, and lively discussion took place. This discussion if observed by another researcher who may not be familiar with the culture may be described using negative connotations and the researcher, may feel some discomfort. However, I understood that the tone of the discussion was based on the passion they felt about these topics that have a profound impact on the Black community.

Furthermore, my experience of being parented in Toronto by parents of Caribbean background, as discussed by Berger (2015), provided me with the benefits of being equipped with “insights and the ability to understand implied content, and was more sensitized to certain dimensions of the data” (p. 223). Being an insider, however, did come with some issues. As a trained social worker, I am aware of transference and countertransference; hence, while I used my insider position to gain trust, I was very careful to ensure that I was actively listening. I did not make particular ascertains or assumptions, nor did I allow my own shared experiences to dominate the circle, as it was important for me to hear these parents’ voices. For example, I was very mindful of my reaction to particular stories. This mindfulness was two-fold. First, I wanted to ensure that I did not dominate the conversation in the dialogue circle, and secondly, I did not want to risk my reaction silencing participants. In reflection on the dialogue circle participants, with whom I share many similar characteristics, I struggled in sharing information about my personal experiences and how much to disclose. However, as the conversations progressed, I found myself sharing more information that centred on systematic issues, given my professional experiences.

As no research is bias free, I was constantly alert for not using my experience as a lens for projecting and viewing the participants’ experiences. As such, I reread my transcripts several times over a period of time, and I also outreached to some participants to clarify and confirm some of my findings. This process was important to me, as I wanted to accurately understand and reflect the participants’ stories without the interference of my own experience. As such, my analysis was assisted by this cultural purview as previously outlined.

4.4.6 Data Analysis

The data analysis followed the method described by Merriam (2015), with the research questions guiding the analysis (see Appendix D). While I came to the analysis informed by prior literature, I was also prepared “to glimpse and systematically reconstruct a view of the world that bears no relation” to these reviews (McCracken, 1988, p. 42). As such, the analysis was comprised of three stages that built on each other: (a) data reduction, (b) data consolidation, and (c) data interpretation.

Data reduction selects, focuses, simplifies, abstracts, and transforms the transcripts into written field notes. In my research, the data reduction process involved the identification of emerging codes. Codes may be descriptive, interpretative, or explanatory (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Saldaña, 2016). Data reduction organizes information into a manageable and easily accessible form. In this research, focus groups transcripts were loaded into NVivo (a qualitative data analysis computer software) for data analysis. A general coding framework was developed using the interview guide which asked for stories of migration, learning parenting/ being parented, parenting, and historical trauma. Although a general coding framework was developed, data analysis did not strictly adhere to this framework. Rather, the coding was driven by the data (i.e., open coding) in order to uncover emerging themes. Upon the completion of open coding, codes were compared to one another and refined to uncover patterns and relationships. Memos (i.e., notes) were written up during data analysis to describe the emerging relationships and patterns.

Initially, the data consolidation analysis was guided by my methodological and theoretical frameworks (i.e., CDA located within narrative inquiry and anti-colonialism, anti-Black racism, and Black feminism). In using CDA, the analytical intention was to uncover how competing discourses circulated within participants’ narratives. The theoretical frameworks approach was used to sensitize the analysis to the ways in which anti-Black racism is circulated both on macro and micro levels. Further, given the prevalence of anti-Black racism, a Black feminist approach was also used to inform a reflexive approach to data analysis to interrogate the generated findings.

The interpretation stage of data analysis will be discussed in the following chapter. As Miles and Huberman (1994) pointed out, this stage necessarily involved me noting themes, patterns, explanations, contradictions, and possible propositions that arose from reduction of data.

4.4.7 Triangulation and Validity of Data

Gibbs (2007) indicated that to integrate participants' perspectives gives validity to the research, and Flick (2007) supported this by stating that triangulations bring new ideas for planning comparison. The use of triangulation was my attempt to get to an in-depth understanding of my research questions. In addition, I used several participants to comment on some of my findings or to clarify statements that were made. In keeping with the anti-colonial anti-Black racism and Black feminism discourses, it was important for the voices of my participants to be centred in my discussion. These voices provided versatile lenses and multiple entry points into the interpretation of my data, and they added both validity and reliability.

My study was in line with Lincoln, Lynha, and Guba's (2011) discussion on ontology and educative authenticity. Their discussion was relevant to my study, as the intention was to raise awareness not only for my participants, but also for social organizations. Miles and Huberman (1994) supported a triangulation of several data sources, which I have adapted. This triangulation provided me with confirmation around my findings. This step allowed me to connect macro (i.e., historical) and micro (i.e., individual) levels and to take a *deeper dive* into understanding the influences of historical trauma on a group of Black parents.

4.5 Chapter Summary

I began this chapter by outlining the reasons for choosing a qualitative research method and centred the discussion within narrative inquiry and critical discourse analysis, which I described in Section 4.1. Throughout this chapter, it was important to remind readers that this methodology is centred within anti-colonial, anti-Black racism, and Black feminism frameworks, as I wanted to ensure that this study was inclusive of the voices of Black parents.

In Section 4.2, given that I used subsections to describe the two different methods I used to collect data, I described the process I undertook in my analysis of the book and my process for the dialogue circles. In Section 4.3, I provided characteristics of the participants in the dialogue

circle, as these characteristics provided further context to understanding the following discussion. In Section 4.3, I provided an overview of the dialogue circle process, including a description of the participants, the recruitment process, an overview of the study process, and a review of the data analysis process. In Section 4.4, a discussion took place around triangulation and validity to show the process entailed to interrogate the interpretations of the findings.

Chapter 5 Findings

In this chapter, I present the findings from the data collected using both primary and secondary sources, which followed the methods outlined in the previous chapter. The data compiled from books are presented in Section 5.1, and findings from the dialogue circles can be found in Section 5.2. In the discussion chapter, how the findings relate to each other will be discussed.

5.1 Data from Books

The findings presented in this section are organized by themes and are related to the question: How can the lenses of slavery, colonialism, and migration provide a new perspective in understanding contemporary parenting and functioning of Black Caribbean families? The data extracted from the reviewed chronicles were divided into four headings relevant to parenting: Separation, Racism, Oppression, and Abuse. These *parent headings* emerged from critical discourse and narrative inquiry analyses of the texts, as described in the previous chapter. Within these parent headings, I have identified subthemes that capture the experiences of Black people while conceptualizing and highlighting the gravity of the influence of their experiences on generations of offspring. I have also included a final subheading of resiliency to capture the experiences and messages of resiliency that were prominent throughout as well.

These parent themes and subthemes are conceptualized with the diagram presented in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Themes from texts.

5.1.1 Separation

Separation is the predominant theme that emerged throughout the stories examined. This theme is situated within narratives of loss that emerge as a consequence of continuous movement, including forced migration, search for employment, or betterment of life. This theme also highlights the reality of separation and the impact it has the individual, family, community, and at times country. Fifty-seven percent of the women's stories in *No Burden to Carry* (Brand, 1991) reflected some form of loss due to separation, and in *The Book of Negroes* (Hill, 2007), the story of Aminata depicted a life of constant loss and separation.

5.1.1.1 Loss of self

The loss of self was very pronounced in Hill's (2007) *The Book of Negroes*. He showed the intersection of grief and loss with psychological and emotional deprivation. In the central character's life, she experienced both emotional and physical losses. These included (a) loss of

her husband—she was forbidden to have intimate relationships; (b) loss of her children—first, she was forbidden to get pregnant without her owner’s permission, and second, when she did get pregnant and gave birth, her child did not belong to her, and so was sold; (c) destruction of her property—she was forbidden to dress as grandly as white women, and as a result, her belongings were burned; (d) loss of her hair—as punishment; and (e) loss of her substitute family—when she used resistance to save her dignity, she was sold. Hill showed that slaves had no physical or emotional space to experience their losses and, so, were forced to ignore them, and they were expected to continue to function with this grief and loss. Comments included:

In this new land, I had a different name, given by someone who did not even know me.
(p. 33)

The pain of my losses never really went away. The limbs had been severed, and they would forever after be missing. But I kept going. Somehow I just kept going. (p. 351)

5.1.1.2 Loss of family

Equally evident in the books was the impact of separation on the family. The narratives in both books highlight the fragmentation that happens in Black families because of separation. As noted by women in Brand’s (1991) book:

History of blacks has been one of fragmentation. For more than 240 years, slavery rendered black men and women impotent with regard to keeping their families together. After emancipation African Americans began to build their families. Many of our ancestors had to start from scratch to develop the necessary skills to maintain a family, skills that so many people take for granted. (p. 151)

The findings also demonstrated that families were also left fatherless, as men were often on the move looking for employment. Most of these men in Canada worked on the railroads, which took them away from the family for extended periods of time. Women, as a result, became lone parents. It was evident that Black men signed up for the war at alarming numbers, as this was their opportunity to assist their families financially: “It would be about 1914 when Daddy came to Canada, and they shipped him over to France- he didn’t know what he was fighting or who he was fighting for, or just what was going on” (Brand, 1991, p. 241).

The narratives that Brand (1991) captured also show that families were left to grieve the loss of their children, family, and community members because of separation—whether they were captured or because of death. This was prevalent in Hill’s (2007) novel as well. He noted:

My son ... was just ten months old, I woke up in the middle of the night to his bawling.... The crying was outside my little room.... I saw Robinson Appleby put my baby into a man’s arms up on a carriage.... And my baby disappeared into the darkness as fast as a falling star. (p. 183)

Separation in the family also shows up as abandonment, as noted in Brand’s (1991) book:

My dad hadn’t done his share at all, he had deserted us, and she had to struggle along. She never really got over that. My mother was a really sort of tender person, and she never really got over that, but she had her mother and her sisters to lean on, and they were wonderful. (p. 163)

5.1.1.3 Loss of community and culture

The loss of community was prevalent in both books. The narratives of some of the women in Brand’s (1991) book gave some indication of the transient nature of Blacks families in Ontario and suggested that this transience is because of employment prospects:

My parents were moving quite a bit—and now I am older, I move quite a bit. It was usually work that made them move, usually work. (p. 54)

When they decided to send my grandfather to Winnipeg, Manitoba, to open the BME Church there, naturally my grandmother was going with him. (p. 108)

Brand (1991) also introduced the notion of the impact of geographical separation from the community. She noted that in Canada, specifically Toronto, the Black community was concentrated in a central area where they had support from each other. However, as time went on, they moved with the hopes of better employment opportunities that often did not materialize, and their community supports that they once had were no longer available. Comments from Brand’s book included:

Some families moved from small town to small town, the men doing general labour and the women taking care of the children and, where possible, growing food. (p. 15)

My father ran on the railroad, and my mother had seven of us. She looked after all her children, all us little ones. The government didn't help you like they help all these children. We all had to work. (p. 144)

Hill (2007) spoke about the loss of cultural practices when Aminata mourned the fact that she never got to experience the rites of passage that were an expectation for women in her community. Hill showed how the disruption of the family left Black people needing to imagine the life lessons that they were deprived of from their parents. Children were left to parent, but they were not actually able to do that without experiencing a profound sense of central unease: "Without my parents, my husband, my children or any people with whom I could speak the languages of my childhood, what part of me was still African?" (p. 386).

5.1.2 Racism

Racism was another predominant theme that emerged from the narratives in these sources. *The Book of Negroes* (Hill, 2007) text highlighted the foundation of slavery. The narrative demonstrated how Black people's oppression continued way after slavery was abolished. Racism permeated the text of the stories of the women told in *No Burden to Carry* (Brand, 1991). Over 80% of the women mentioned or alluded to racism as having an impact on them, their families, and their community. Their narratives showed the complications of racism as the backdrop to struggles that existed within the Black community. Both these texts illustrate the social, economic, and political influence of racism in society at a particular time and moment in history and the influence of these three spheres on the Black family. The narratives showed evidence of racism at three levels: structural, institutional, and individual.

5.1.2.1 Structural

In both sources, the impact of racism is felt structurally. In *The Book of Negroes*, Hill (2007) showed that racism and oppressive practices were reinforced through punishment. Slaves were whipped, tortured, and deprived of the necessities of life as a method of governance. The structure maintained and supported racism as can be seen in language in the example below:

If you were born there, they call you an African. But here they call all us the same things: niggers, Negroes. They especially call us slaves. (p. 122)

The personal narratives of the women in *No Burden to Carry* (Brand, 1991) showed how racism is imbedded within society through their recounting of the personal following experiences:

I was living in Chatham and working in Wallaceburg. Thirty-four miles a day; it was seventeen miles out there and seventeen miles back. Black people couldn't stay there after dark. They were prejudiced. (p. 151)

Black people was having trouble getting in the army or getting in the air force...my oldest brother had to leave Ontario and he was in for four years.... But they didn't want Black people in the army-it was a white' man's war. (p. 206)

Most of the women that came from the Caribbean had to find a church, had to find a Black church.... They went to church one Sunday, and whoever the minister was those days asked the Blacks [to] not come back, to take their nickels and dimes and go to their own church, ... so there was a lot of trying to figure out just what this land was all about. (p. 240)

5.1.2.2 Institutional

Hill's (2007) book focused on how the treatment of Black people was steeped with racist ideologies. The narratives within Brand's (1991) book highlighted how systems were maintained and reinforced within institutions as can be seen below by the following comments related to employment, education, and housing.

Employment

The women in the family did mainly domestic work.... There was no other work that Black people could get in those days. The brother that went to New York worked on the trains, and the one known as Uncle Sam, who moved to Montreal, I don't know that he did—he worked in his early years; he worked in the post office, and then he went into the ministry. (p. 161)

Education

When we were children and sat in school, there was nothing taught about the wonderful history of Africa, nothing about what Black people had contributed to the world.... They just tried to cut us out of history. (p. 169)

We were always addressed as “niggers.” It was hard, I’m not kidding. The teacher used to put us under the window.... The reason she did that was because she said we smelled. (p. 237)

Housing

I think that this is very important: how earlier on, even during the days of the depression, Black people could not get an apartment in a decent area, and that lasted long after the Depression. (p. 166)

These narratives speak to the intersectionality of institutions and the need to understand that experiences are not often confined to one system, and often one’s experience in one system informs how the other system is going to respond. For example, due to racial profiling, a child may come to the attention of the school authorities, who may, in turn, make a referral to child welfare, who may, in turn, respond in an intrusive manner because of the visibility of one’s race.

5.1.2.3 Individual (attitudinal)

The racism at the individual level occurs when someone uses race to attack someone else’s personal value or worth. The narratives collected in both books showed personal attacks that were mainly based on the individuals’ race.

The Book of Negroes (Hill, 2007) was laced with personal attacks on the spirits of Black people. For example:

He has told me that Jews and Africans could understand each other because we were both outsiders, but even though the man preferred the term servant to slave, he owned me. (p. 209)

We have a law.... Niggers don’t dress grand. (p. 176)

Say I gots wool on my head, not hair.... It is just wool, and you ain't even got a right to it without my say so. (p. 178)

The narratives of the women from Brand's (1991) text highlight the directed experiences of individual racism that Black people encountered in Toronto many years after the abolition of slavery. The quotes below are extracts from these narratives:

I did not as a child notice difficulties, but, in retrospect, yes, it was difficult as a woman. There were struggles that my mother faced: there were struggles that she faced that white women did not have. (p. 110)

She had a great big dinner, her boys had returned from the army.... We all went there, and when we had gotten there, these little boys—they wouldn't be very old—she wanted us to call them master like they do down south—slavery. We all decided we're going to wait right till near supper time for them to sit down at the table. We all got up and walked out, just left. (p. 155)

5.1.3 Oppression

The distinctive experience of Black women is focused on in this section. As gendered experiences in the narratives were often interrelated with race, there may be some overlaps in narratives from data collected in all areas of this chapter. *The Book of Negroes* (Hill, 2007) was laced with issues relating to gender. Two of the first excerpts from *The Book of Negroes* that highlighted how Black women were viewed can be found below:

What is a wench? Woman, He said. Is Mrs Linda a wench? ... She is a lady.... I am no wench. I am a wife. I am a mother. Aren't I a woman? (p. 200)

Single women would not be permitted to journey alone, unless a man could vouchsafe for the integrity of their character and promise to ensure their welfare. (p. 357)

The excerpt below gives a glimpse into life before slavery, where norms were already established around expectations of a female:

As an infant, I travelled on my mother's back ... passed me among villagers.... I remember wondering within a year or two of talking my first steps ... why only men sat and drink tea and converse and why women were always busy.... As soon as I could walk, I made myself useful.... I was made to hold babies and kept them content.... There was nothing wrong with a girl as young as three or four rain seasons holding and caring for babies while mother did other work. (pp. 13–14)

This comment shows how lessons were taught and learning took place. It demonstrates the experiential way that was important for learning. One woman interviewed in *No Burden to Carry* (Brand, 1991) argued:

The institution of slavery had so degraded Black womanhood that the establishment of women's clubs and ladies' auxiliaries must be seen within the context of the rehabilitation of the images of Black womanhood and as fortresses against the invasions of white domination over Black female sexuality. (p. 19)

Brand's (1991) interviews with these women highlighted women's experiences of oppression dating back to over 60 years ago.

5.1.3.1 Intersection between gender and race

It was evident that women were aware of how they were constructed as Black women, and they were aware that their struggles were different from other White women's struggle. The narratives showed the intersection of race and gender:

I did not as a child notice difficulties, but, in retrospect, yes, it was difficult as a woman. There were struggles that my mother faced: there were struggles that she faced that white women did not have. (p. 110)

The quote below speaks to the understanding of how, although women have unique struggles related to their gender, the visibility of their colour was what defined if they were accepted or not. It highlights that the struggle of Black women is different from that of their White counterparts because whiteness is associated with privilege, as evidenced from quotes from Brand (1991):

I think I've been discriminated more as a Black person than as a woman, really. I think it's been as a person because when we go to places, even to eat, it was not because I'm a woman but because I was a Black person. (p. 262)

I had to put those from the baskets on the conveyer as it passed.... It was back-breaking work.... This man was sitting about three feet from me with a stick in his hand, watching the cans go around, making sure that they're straight on the conveyor belt. Honestly, the more I think about that the angrier I get. He got that easy job over the one I had. (p. 275)

A lot of those white women thought: oh you coloured people. We could work for 'em, but they didn't want you up home on level with 'em. A lot of 'em felt they were so much smarter than coloured women. They're always trying to put our race down. It don't matter what vocation or what you're in, they're always trying to put you down. (p. 155)

5.1.3.2 Reinforcement of stereotypes

Black women had a defining role in the family based on gender expectations. In the community, they faced many challenges as a result of their skin colour, but within their homes, they continued to experience challenges as a result of their skin colour. The men in their family exerted their power by setting defined expectations about women's role in the household.

I wanted to be a doctor, and because I was a girl, my uncle wouldn't help me—he wanted my brother to be a doctor. My mother couldn't pay, and he wouldn't pay for it. He said, “No, she's a girl.” (Brand, 1991, p. 132)

[I] started at daybreak and worked right on with the lights on at night until we got done it, ten or eleven o'clock at night, and the kids were all on this tractor, they were crying, and they were tired and they wanted to go ... as how I managed having the kids with me—that's why I say my husband was a hillbilly. That was women's work: he didn't look after the kids. When we came in, I'd been riding the tractor all day, but I fixed the supper, I washed the dishes, I got the kids ready for bed. (Brand, 1991, p. 178)

5.1.3.3 Evidence of resilience

The narratives of the women showed an instinctive ability to overcome adversity and use their inner strength to fight through their struggles.

My mother ran the farm with whoever she could get to help. Since an early age—soon as we could lift the hoe right—we were in the field hauling out the weeds and stuff. She was very determined, very determined not to be beaten down. She had her opinions. She wanted us all to be educated and she wouldn't let anything stand in the way. (Brand, 1991, p. 131)

Now, I look back, I realize just how clever my mother was. This is the way it is with most mothers, but we don't realize it at the time. I can remember her always saying that you must get an education, but don't become an educated fool. In other words, don't be a bore with it. My mother was a woman with foresight. She always said that it never hurt to carry an education: you could carry it without any stress or strain, and the more knowledge you had, the easier it was for you to make a good living. She just figured that if we get an education, things were bound to open up, which they did. (Brand, 1991, p. 93)

From the quotes presented in this section, one can see that although resiliency is strength, it meant for these women that they had to work harder and longer. The narratives also showed that Black women were aware of their struggle—not only as it related to being Black, but also as women. The voices of older Black women were influential, as they were able to impart valuable advice to disrupt the narratives that have been reinforced and supported by White people and Black men about them.

5.1.4 Abuse

Another pronounced finding was the significant amount of abuse that ran throughout the narratives of both these books. Abuse can be described in three categories, which are not exclusive to each other: emotional, physical, and sexual. Shared below is an extraction of narratives from Hill's (2007) book, which will be discussed in depth in the discussion chapter.

Emotional

My children were like phantom limbs, lost but still attached to me, gone but still painful.... All I knew was the people I had loved more than anything else in life had all been torn from me. (p. 350)

On the slave vessel, I saw things that the people of London would never believe.... I think of the people who crossed the sea with me.... Some of us still scream out in the middle of the night. Turned your mind from the ship, child. It is nothing but a rotting carcass in the grass. The carcass has shocked you with its stink and its flies. (p. 106)

Physical

They dragged me to the branding corner.... They aimed a finger's length above my right nipple, and pressed it down into my flesh.... I could smell it burning. The pain ran through me like hot waves of lava. (Hill, 2007, p. 52)

The next morning I tried to pray and a captor struck me with the rod. The next night, after another thrashing, I gave up prayers. (Hill, 2007, p. 33)

Sexual

Bought a new negro woman... I was relieved to escape his attentions, but it weighed on me that he had turned to another woman. (Hill, 2007, p. 163)

In the narratives of the women in Brand's (1991) interviews, the nature of the abuse they experienced was subtler than the abuses in *The Book of Negroes* (Hill, 2007). Their experiences were predominantly of emotional trauma and were infused with the intersection of gender oppression and racism as previously discussed.

5.1.5 Resiliency

This analysis would not be giving a full picture if it did not include narratives of Black resilience. As noted in Figure 4, the resilience of Black people is integrated into their church, family, education, and discipline. In *The Book of Negroes* (Hill, 2007), resilience can be seen in the support Black people gave each other:

We believe in helping one another at harvest time. We worked together. Ate together... We believed that we would gather when we died, return to those ancestors who had brought us to life. (p. 405)

Similar themes can be found in the narratives of the women Brand (Brand, 1991) interviewed. At least three women spoke about their determination to survive the Great Depression, as presented in excerpts from Brand's work:

The community was closer-knit than the white community, so they shared whatever they had. She added that Black people didn't "suffer much" because "we were used to doing without. (p. 15)

Black people was wonderful to each other during the Depression... The Depression was hard, but I don't think it was as hard for Black people as it was for white people because we were closer knit. We were used to doing without. (p. 166)

In the Depression, I do not recall being hungry. It must've been a very comfortable time in my life... I do recall my mother saying—this would be years later that she could never look another bean in the face. (p. 266)

Resiliency also took on the form of hope and resistance. Resistance was highlighted in the narratives, as it was a tool of empowerment and to disrupt the oppressive practices that had profound impact on their lives. This resiliency was often within the context of providing a better future for the next generation of Black people.

We have to learn to love ourselves; let us get together and be a nation, because if we don't, we'll be forever enslaved, forever at the bottom of the heap. Look at it economically, look at all the money we spend for everything, and none of it stays in our community.... What we must do as a race is learn respect for each other, sit down together and work out our problems, be honest with each other, so that we'll get the fruits of our labour. It should be that we wake up and work on our economic condition. (Brand, 1991, p. 174)

Civil Rights movement started in the United States... Most of them beforehand were just glad to get by: you had such a hard time and our parents had a hard time, just glad to make a living. But we didn't have the pride in our race that we should've and the Civil Rights movement really affected Canadian Blacks: before our children would go to bed the children were all marching up and down the floor: "I'm Black and I'm proud, I'm Black and I'm proud."... It really hit here in Canada, very strongly about the pride of being Black. (Brand, 1991, pp. 233–234)

5.2 Findings from Dialogue Circles

The findings presented in this section are organized by theme and are related to the questions: How do the experiences of Black Caribbean families with slavery, colonialism, and migration influence their perceptions and experiences with Canadian social institutions, and how does that in turn influence outcomes for Black families?

The narratives that emerged from the dialogue circles were vivid and highlighted the connection between past pains to current experiences as parents in Canada. The stories that emerged from the dialogue circles showed a group of parents with lived subjective experiences that connect them to their past ancestral experiences of enslavement and colonization. Their dialogue was congruent with the findings extracted from the books in Section 5.1. In Section 5.1, I provide a generational timeline to show stressors that have been influencing Black lives from over 400 years ago up to the present day. Building on the data from the books, the extracted findings from the dialogue circle are organized into four main themes: influence of historical trauma, the pervasive influence of racism, gender differences, and parenting. Within these parent headings are subthemes that capture the experiences of Black parents. A visual articulation of the findings can be found in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Emerging themes from dialogue circles.

5.2.1 Influence of Historical Trauma

Similar to the findings from the book study, the themes of loss and separation ran throughout the dialogue narratives of both circle groups. These often traumatic gaps in human connection had a profound impact on Black parents and continue to influence how they navigate their world.

5.2.1.1 Loss and separation

During the period of slavery, as Hill (2007) clearly outlined in *The Book of Negroes*, Black families experienced strikingly profound separations and losses, as families were captured and forcefully separated from their countries, cultures, communities, and each other, to benefit capitalist economies. Post-slavery, the trauma experienced from being separated was passed from parent to child and was layered over with additional trauma, as again families were separated out of necessity, as illustrated in the narratives of the women in Brand's (1991) research, where there was constant movement in search of better lives and better economic perspectives.

The narratives emerging out of the dialogue circle were strikingly—if unsurprisingly—similar to the narratives from the women in Brand’s (1991) book. Both sets of experiences were based on finding better employment opportunities and a better life for themselves or their children. Fifty-six percent of the parents in the circles indicated that they came either for better jobs, better education for their children, or a better life, which is similar to other cultures’ reasons for immigrating. However, while in Canada, these Black parents came to realize that many forms of oppression that were steeped in their colonial past impacted their dreams. While in Brand’s (1991) interviews with women, most of the loss was experienced from migration within Canada, for the parents in the circles, their experiences of separation were similar to that of those during slavery. Participants recognized that although they made a choice to come to Canada, it was a foreign land, where they found themselves longing for the support of their family, community, and a way of life, as they know it.

Striking in the narratives of the circle participants was the number of experiences and losses at several critical points in their childhood. As children, some experienced losses because parents could not afford to take care of them. This often meant a separation from their village or community and a loss of the familiarity. One parent lamented,

I also grew up on a farm. My mom and dad had eight children, and I don’t know why my grandmother wanted one; I’m the one. I grew up with my grandparents and they were well off. And unfortunately my grandmother died when I was 11, and so then I had to go to my mom, which I couldn’t cope [with], because it was a different life. I didn’t stay very long with them. I went to Kingston when I was 14. My brother was in Kingston, and so I went there, and so I got married early.

Participants’ experiences of loss and separations were also, in part, due to their parents immigrating to Canada, the USA, or England, leaving them behind often because their parents could not afford to care for them. Hence, they were sent to live with extended family or community members. The loss of their parents often left them experiencing reoccurring losses and instability, at times, as some participants spoke about moving between family members. As one participant noted,

My mom was in the Bahamas and she immigrated to Canada. My dad was in Florida. So for the first twelve years of my life, I was brought up by my grandparents on both my mom's and my dad's side.

The common thread throughout their narratives was the search for better economic prospects and the massive disruption of family life. One participant spoke about her parents immigrating to England to work to afford her and her siblings the benefits of an education. While she understood this, her experiences of living with extended family members in the Caribbean were very difficult for her. She recalled:

My parents went to England and left us thinking they were doing the best for us, but after one day, my brother ran away from that home where my aunt was so strict. She had everything, but we just couldn't mix. They'd give a lot of clothes to their children. Her children were spoiled brats, and we had to say master, like Master Keith, Miss Peggy. I used to say, "I'm not going to call you that," and I used to get a beating. So, I ran away, and my parents struggled and took us to England. So those are thing that made me.

While, by and large, most participants reported that now as adult parents, they understood their own parents' reasons for leaving them behind, many of them still appeared to have unresolved feelings and trauma stemming from their separation from their families. Some had positive experiences with their extended family members, but a significant number of them recounted traumatic experiences of abuse and neglect resulting from this separation. One parent explained,

We were transferred from my mom's parents to my dad's parents. There was no punishment on my mom's parents' side, but on my dad's side, we were whipped to the point where it would be classified as abuse. I can remember sometimes we had to wake up at four o'clock in the morning. We lived in this place called Cambridge, and we had to take a donkey with goods cause my grandmother would sell her stuff in the market. So we would have to walk from Cambridge to Golden Spring at like four o'clock in the morning.

The other type of separation and loss that impacted some of the participants was a breakdown of the relationship between their parents. While this experience, of course, occurs across cultures

and experiences, the dialogue circle participants revealed that it had a significant impact on how some of these parents parented. One participant shared how his father's own experience with loss and separation influenced how he was parented:

My dad lamented the fact that he never got the opportunity to go to a proper school because his mom, when he was 11 months old, took him to his dad. They were not married. His dad was married to another women—took him there, 11 months. He never went back, he stayed with his dad. He never went to an official school beyond elementary school; in Jamaica we call it primary school.... So the fact that he always lamented that he didn't have the proper education, he drilled it into all of us four children: three boys and a girl the importance of education.

Of interest is how this participant linked his father's loss of his mother to his inability to get a proper education.

It was visible from the narratives of the circles that the experiences with separation and loss impacted members in different ways, but there was no doubt that these experiences had a profound impact on who they are today and how they parent their children. All participants were able to identify and share how their experiences were precursors to how they function today. The way the group interacted and responded to each other's observations made it clear that their experiences were shared and familiar to each other. Their rumination on their experiences was fraught with pain and, at times, anger.

5.2.1.2 Festering of wounds

The festering of wounds emerged as an important subtheme in my findings. It was evident that some of the themes I identified in *The Book of Negroes* (Hill, 2007) and *No Burden to Carry* (Brand, 1991) were naturally echoed throughout the dialogue in the circles. Participants were able to organically discuss how historical experiences correlate to their current-day functioning. One participant eloquently and powerfully noted,

I knew about slavery, we read all the books, and we knew we could empower ourselves beyond it, but I must say, slavery has also taught our men. They were taken away and never able to raise their kids; that is some of what we are experiencing today. The woman

would get pregnant, and then he wouldn't be there for his children. We lost that in the last 400 years. Now we have to rewrite that narrative and rebuild it; I think it's a part of our DNA that we have to change. Slavery took away a part of that.

The unresolved multifactorial trauma points to the experiences that are influential on Black lives. As outlined in Figure 4, themes from the texts—the historical experiences of their ancestors with oppression, separation, abuse, and racism—continue to linger and fester in these parents' experiences in Canada. Thus, the themes that emerged from the participants appear to align with and perhaps have their origins in past experiences, which will be highlighted further in the subsequent discussions. This subtheme, perhaps more than any other, gives a sense of the emotions that were apparent in the dialogue circles and ties them clearly to the lingering apparition of historical experiences. One parent asserted,

So, getting back to how we parent, you know, our parenting is really and truly bracketed. Whether we think it or not, it's bracketed by our past of slavery and colonialism and current racism that we face.

Although, to this point, findings have focused primarily on the personal (i.e., micro) level, it was clear in the dialogue discussions that participants had an understanding of the macro level and how ongoing patterns of colonization continue in the Caribbean and continue to impact Black people.

Participants provided an analysis about how they were directly impacted by colonialism. Their stories showed the injustices of greed, colonialism, and racism. Their narratives spoke to an experience of White people feeling *deserving* and a corresponding feeling of resentment by Black people. Their personal feelings of resentment came from their experiences of White people treating them as second-class citizens. They spoke about their migration experiences, where White people in Canada refused to give them equal citizenship, while at the same time, White people go to the Caribbean and continue to oppress them by purchasing land and beaches and refusing Black people access. One participant passionately noted,

I returned to Antigua on vacation. I saw all these White people on the beaches, and Americans had bought the beaches, and the corrupt government had sold the beaches, and

I was getting really angry inside. I saw those White people in England. They used credit cards, they were enjoying our beaches on credit cards, and the people who are living here cannot enjoy the same things because they don't have credit cards.

This finding suggests that Black parents are acutely aware of the politics that continue to grant Whites privilege and deny them their rights in a neo-colonial era that sees resources of their Islands continually funnelled towards Europe and other countries in the Global North. These experiences result in continued feelings of anger and frustration, as practices that existed during colonization continue to be blatant today. One participant noted that seeing this, she sacrificed everything to ensure that her children can have an education so they can have the privileges that are associated with economic freedom.

This theme of the influence of historical trauma, manifested through recurring experiences of separation and loss and circumstances that contribute to a continued sense of injustice and the festering of wounds, set the framework for the following themes, as it was through this lens that these Black parents recounted their parenting experiences. This theme provided a framework for understanding the multiple stories shared by these parents.

5.2.2 Pervasive Influence of Racism

A persistent theme highlighted by the parents in the dialogue circles was their experiences with both overt and covert racism. These themes were consistent with the experiences of Black people during slavery, given light in *The Book of Negroes* (Hill, 2007), and evident from the narratives of the women in *No Burden to Carry* (Brand, 1991). It is apparent that racism is interwoven in the lives of Black people, and from the dialogue circles and the books, it is also evident that all forms of racism have left noticeable scars on the lives of individuals and the whole community. The traumatic experiences associated with racism continue to transform the lives of Black families and influence the messages that they intentionally pass on to their children. The legacy of oppression illustrated by the stories of circle participants has a far-reaching impact. This theme subdivides into three subthemes to show the depth of the impact of going racism. These findings extend from the results from both texts to demonstrate the lineage of compound trauma and its impact on Black families.

5.2.2.1 Lived experiences with racism

The narratives stemming from the dialogue circles echoed findings from the books that showed evidence of racism in Black people's everyday lived experiences as well as trauma that resurfaced through their interaction with individuals and institutions. It was apparent through the circle discussions that Black parents feel vulnerable, as they can be the target of racism at any time. For example, one participant spoke about how a simple trip to the pharmacy turned into him being identified as a potential thief and, as such, subjected to surveillance because the stereotypes about his race made him visible. He noted,

I'll give you one incident that occurred with me. I went to Shoppers Drug Mart to get my prescription filled, and they gave me an automatic thing so I would know when it's ready. I'm walking around Shoppers Drug Mart, and everywhere I turn, I see the security guard. Then I thought, "I'm going to see if he's following me," and everywhere I went, he followed me. I was so mad, but I was going to go confront him, but I'm a grown man right, and to see a security guard follow me because he thinks I'm going to steal something from the store.

The trauma of their lived experiences is associated with racial surveillance and aligned with the experiences of the women in Brand's interviews (as cited in Brand, 1991). They spoke about being denied opportunities or being targeted because they were Black. These lived experiences elicited emotions of anger, despair, and frustration, and it was through these daily experiences that their experiences with traumatic events continue to interact and to mount. There was recognition within the dialogue circles that their ancestors' experiences with slavery and their experiences with immigration have placed them in racist environments and that their experiences of oppression have left them with scars. The unintended, but real, consequence of their experiences was that it is through this lens that they parent their children. In the discussion on racism, one participant noted,

We were enslaved for a long period. We came to countries that were unnatural and were not a part of where we were meant to be. So over time, it has affected us. It has affected our parenting because parenting is what you learn through generations.

However, the acceptance of history's impact on parenting was not universally accepted amongst dialogue circle participants. The previously mentioned statement was challenged by another participant who indicated that racism has not impacted how she parented. This suggests that racism is not experienced by all Black parents in identical ways. However, this thinking was challenged by a significant number of participants. It was evident from the discussion that one's parenting ideologies are based not only on one's experience, but also experiences emerging from communal and generational experiences. One participant noted,

Parenting is something you learn from the people around you and the generations before you. No matter how you think you are in a silo and you are going to parent differently, you still learn to parent from the people around you.

This researcher expected the finding that most of the participants have experienced some form of racism that influences how they parent. However, it was surprising to see how some participants had a difficult time labeling their experiences as racism. This could have been because of the subtleness of their experiences, which could be a conscious decision not to give racism any prevalence in their lives, or both.

5.2.2.2 Institutional and structural racism

Most participants spoke about the ways that a racist society constructs Black families. Through the circle discussions and the researcher's observations, fear for the safety of their children was the most evident result of living in this kind of society. The parents' discussion centred mainly around worries for their children and how they were going to suffer from needing to interact with institutions and systems that have racist morés built within them. The degree of emphasis on these points that emerged in the dialogues took me back to the findings that emerged out of *The Books of Negroes* (Hill, 2007). In that text, parents always had a pressuring sense of anxiety about their children being stolen and sold off to slave masters, and they lived with an unending urgency to protect their children. The same could be seen with parents in the dialogue circles. Their heightened anxiety, while not associated with their children been sold, was related to an anticipated and very real loss of their children through institutional and structural racism. Participants were able to show how the policies of institutions, such as the child welfare and education systems, are linked to Black people's positioning in Canadian history that treats them

as *other* and criminalizes their behaviour. Their shared experiences demonstrated how Blackness is criminalized in the existing discourses of Canadian institutions such as child welfare, education, and so forth. A profound example that elicited sharing of many other examples was from a parent who works in the school system:

In my professional work, I have seen recently, two children involved in a ruckus, a disagreement. The Black child has no fault; no one can point to the Black child and say you are at fault. Yet when it was reported to the bosses, they decided, and they were White bosses, they decided to penalize the Black child. That was brought to my attention as a Black person. I confronted the bosses, and I was prepared to put my professional life on the line, and when I explained my side of the situation and they realized I was going to make a big stink about it, they reversed what their decision was. To my mind, if that was left to go on, that child would walk away feeling horrible, crying, thinking that “here it is, I didn’t do anything wrong and I’m punished,” and now I find several of these youngsters, whatever happens now, they’re coming to me. Someone mentioned earlier, there’s something in our society called institutionalized racism that still exists in its fullest.

Findings showed an acute awareness amongst most participants about the difference of reality that exists for White and Black children. They spoke about empowering and arming their children to respond to authorities, as they feared they would inevitably be unjustly accused of any manner of things because of their race. The prominent concern for these parents was how visible their children are in the Canadian society because of their race. A significant number of parents spoke about curtailing their children’s activities. One parent noted that he does not allow his boys to “hang out.” He stated,

I don’t want them hanging out with the Black boys, because when they see a group of them, it’s not going to be a group of boys hanging in friendship, it’s going to be a gang. It’s just a construct they put on Black children.

As such, for some Black parents, their parenting practices took on a central focus on equipping their children with tools to survive within racist systems. The contention lies in the fact that these parents’ parenting messages are mainly focused on the embodiment of race. Through their

experiences, these parents came to quickly realize the contradictions that exist when it comes to race—and who is given the benefit of doubt when a conflict arises. One participant recounted a conversation he was listening to on the radio, where they were speaking about the Italian mafia in a glorifying way, even though these were criminals who killed so many people. He indicated that if this story was about Black people, they would have been labeled as thugs or gang members.

Another significant finding that emerged was the feeling of hopelessness that parents experience when interacting with institutions. Parents described experiencing systemic barriers that support discriminatory practices that permeate Canadian institutions. Parents expressed that these obstacles manifested themselves in ways that disempowered them, as well as their children, because they are Black. Parents shared many stories where institutions, often in collaboration or connection with one another, failed Black children and parents.

Many examples emerged about the education system. Although participants strongly valued education, they described experiences that have led them to an overall conviction that the school system in Canada operates from a deficit perspective when it comes to Black children, funneling them towards sports as opposed to academic subjects because they consider them academically inferior. This belief in the intellectual inferiority of Black people correlates with practices that were used to oppress Black people during slavery and throughout the colonization era. As such, Black parents have to go above and beyond to support their children. The vignette extracted below, although lengthy, speaks to the complexities of Black children in the school system and points to the troubling work Black parents must engage in to advocate for their children because of the prevalence of racism. A female participant noted:

In the school system, you have a lot of teachers that have this colonial thing in their head, and you cannot expect this White woman here and your Black son there, she has fear already inside of her. She's just waiting for the slightest thing, and then next thing you know, your child could be in the system. It's just like sometimes, I remembered, when one of my sons had just gone to a new school and what had happened was the teacher, there was a ball in the classroom, and she asked him if he knew where the ball was. He didn't answer or anything because that's the way he was: very quiet but very smart. He

came home and told me, and I was working the night shift, and I was right there in the school, and I said to her, “My son came to this school. You are not going to mess with his self-esteem,” ... because she was trying to underestimate him, trying to get him molded in her way, and I wasn’t going to have that. I remember, at the time, he was supposed to get an A, and she gave him a B+, and I didn’t waste my time with her. I went straight to that principal. I tell you, thank God, I kept my hands quiet, because I really wanted to use them, and you know they bring out the anger within you, and they know, in a subtle way, to try and get you, and if you respond, you can get into a lot of trouble and mess it up for your children. So you have to go in there with your inner strength and always be there for your children.

Findings also showed that Black parents from the Caribbean experience a feeling of helplessness, as they feel that the government has taken away all their powers as parents, and their children threaten that they will report them. Parents talked about attempting to discipline their children and being told by their children that they are going to call the police. As a result, some parents resort to parenting from a distance. One participant noted about a child she knew:

One Friday, she didn’t go to school. She turned up on Monday morning when she’s ready to go to school, and she goes to school and says, “Mom hit me with her belt,” and so she was taken away from her. School called the police, police knocked on her door, and that’s the case with Government of Canada that I don’t like. They take away your children from you without knowing all the reasons, and she got pregnant when she was about 15.

This finding was significant, as it spoke to the problems that are currently noted about Black families, while explaining the ambivalence that Black parents have in seeking help outside of their home and community.

A notable influence on the perceptions of Blackness by mainstream society was the dialogue of the role of the media. Participants spoke about the media as a medium for sustaining racism through its reports and messages. One participant said, “But why do we hate ourselves, because of the messages we hear ourselves. Our children are getting these messages all the time on the TV; you are not good enough, you are not smart enough.” This finding connected with all the

other findings, as it is through the media that messages about Black people are enforced, engrained, and sustained.

5.2.2.3 Internalized racism

While it is well-known that people, at times, internalize their oppression, this researcher found it unexpected to hear how entrenched this oppression was in the souls of the Black parents in the dialogue circles. Like in *No Burden to Carry* (Brand, 1991), personal experiences of the legacy of colonialism and racism have left life-altering marks on some participants. This was especially noticeable in the way Black people treat each other and the discussion on shadeism.

Within the theme of internalized oppression, a discussion on lateral violence emerged as these Black parents attempted to understand what is happening with the breakdown of Black families. The discussion again drew a link from slavery and colonization to the current day practices. One participant noted,

Black people were taught by the British to fight against one another. Because with the slave mastery, who do you think take over when the British left. It is now Black man chastising Black man, and that is still with us; it never go.

While making this link, conversation also took on a blaming tone towards Black people. Participants suggested that Black people hold some responsibility for the way they are constructed in society. Participants tied this responsibility to materialism and Black peoples' quest to gain importance in society. Some of the narratives pointed to Black people's mistrust of each other; these conversations highlighted how, sometimes, Black people do not want to see another Black person progress over them. One participant indicated that this is part of a "slave mindset." The participant stated, "The slave master was very good at dividing and conquering, and taught us to hurt ourselves." It was evident that the pain of internalized oppression continues to affect Black families. Another participant noted,

There is so much pain that actually moved from one generation to the next, and we have spent so much time where we are unable to talk about it, and every time we get a forum to take about it, it is just like adjusting a Band-Aid a little bit.

The narratives shared in both the books and dialogue circles showed that this internalization is not straightforward; it is woven throughout the way participants understand each other and their families. This complexity can be attributed to the legacy of colonialism and racism that have left life-altering marks on Black people.

A surprising finding was the prevalence of the issue of shadeism in the messages that are passed on amongst Black people. The personal experiences shared in *No Burden to Carry* (Brand, 1991) and the dialogue circles highlighted a legacy of colonialism and racism that remain in the lives of some participants. As the concept of *shadeism* and *colourism* emerged throughout the dialogue circles, it was apparent that there was unresolved personal trauma stemming from the way some participants were treated within their communities or even within their families. This was demonstrated through many shared stories, but is well-encapsulated in the story of several participants who were treated differently amongst their own families because of their colour. Participants spoke about being targeted or oppressed because of their skin colour. One participant stated,

John, my brother, when he grew up, she raised him in such a way because he had the high colour, light-skinned. My brother, as sweet as he is, when he came here and migrated, he could not relate to Black women, he married White. I know it was something psychological for him.... I was the dark one. I remember when I got in trouble and my sister was the one who was wrong, I got the beating.

While the idea of shadeism and colourism may have adversely impacted some participants, this notion was resisted by others. It was identified as something that emerged directly from slavery: The lighter you are, the closer you are to Whiteness, hence the more valued you become. Some, through a counter-narrative that evolved out of significant movements—for example, the Black Power movement—experienced Black people rising to regain their power forcibly and rejected this idea. An example can be found in the story of this participant:

So racism and colonialism, when growing up, and I think I'm odd as a Jamaican. Growing up, I didn't see colour. There was no colourization in the area I grew up, because there were no fair-skinned and dark-skinned people really, but my dad and I am one of the younger of the kids, and I grew up in the years of Black Power. I grew up

when Angela Davis and all those people were coming to power, and Jet Magazine, and Ebony Magazine, and my brothers were militant people and changed their names to African names. So I grew up knowing there was slavery and that we can empower ourselves beyond that. Until I went to college, really, I never realized there was colourization. When I went to college, and you had different people coming with different skin tones, I was like: “Why do you think you would be better?” I grew up with that sense, and I must say my parents, especially my father, were a very powerful person regarding how he felt about himself, and he would impart that to his kids.

These findings demonstrate that the pervasive influence of racism must be examined through a holistic and multi-faceted framework, as it plays a significant role in how Black parents interpret their world, which, in turn, impacts how they parent their children.

5.2.3 Gender Differences

As approximately 74% of the participants in the dialogue circles were women. The researcher expected that there would be a more substantial discussion about gender issues. However, similar to Brand’s interview with women in *No Burden to Carry* (Brand, 1991), in the dialogues, the intersection of race and gender took precedence given that these Black parents felt that racial discrimination had a more significant impact on their lives than gender discrimination.

Gender issues did, however, come up in several areas. First, as discussed earlier in relation to shadeism, women in the dialogue circle identified that both within and outside of their race, Blackness is not valued. Participants described how this phenomenon plays out for Black women, as dark-skinned Black women are particularly vilified, while lighter-skinned Black women and White women are associated with goodness. These findings dovetailed with the stories of the women in *No Burden to Carry* (Brand, 1991). Their lives’ experiences involved observed and experienced differences between the struggles of Black and White women. Secondly, participants’ narratives revealed that they understood that gender relations during slavery and colonization were such that Black women were subject to sexual violence, while Black men were emasculated. Participants commented that this history continues to have psychological and spiritual wounds in gender relations today. Thirdly, issues of gender-based oppression emerged when participants discussed their fear about raising their sons. Both Black

men and women alike spoke about the concerns about the criminalization of Black men that had taken root in the Canadian society. However, the main focus of the participants' discussion on gender issues and differences was the interconnected issues of absentee fathers and single-parent families headed by women.

5.2.3.1 Black men and absentee fathers

In the dialogue circles, a poignant discussion took place on the role of fathers in Black families. Interestingly, it was a male participant who pointed out his frustration with the absentee fathers in Black households. In anger, he stated in anger,

Forget about the community raising the child. The responsibility is on the two people who brought the child into the world: the mother, and the father. Where the f*** is the father? The father is missing. Where is the father? The father is missing in action. Only if you push your head in the sand you won't accept that, more that 50% of fathers are totally missing, and if we don't come to that realization, the problem will never be addressed. The problem is with the fathers.

This statement provoked a strong reaction in the circle. Interestingly, a significant number of the women participants were vocal in their defense of Black men. They argued that the history of slavery influences this current reality. During slavery, Black men were taken away from their families and often did not have the experience of raising their children. This experience was dramatized powerfully in *The Book of Negroes* (Hill, 2007). Aminata's husband did not have an opportunity to parent his children because of forced separation. One participant's connection between the experience of forced separation during slavery to the realities of absentee fathers of today is illustrated below:

They were taken away, and never able to raise their kids, that is some of what we are experiencing today. The woman would get pregnant, and then he wouldn't be there for his children. We lost that in the last 400 years; now we have to rewrite that narrative and rebuild it. I think it's a part of our DNA that we have to change. Slavery took away a part of that.

The conversations about gender relations spoke to the existing reality of Black men's roles in families and how the internalization of colonialism and slavery is quite influential on the structure of Black families in contemporary society.

Participants' narratives also spoke to the complexities of understanding Black men and women, and the dynamics that create tension between these groups. For example, one participant shared: "I meet men now who say marriage is a White man's reality, and they're coming to control us.... Even Rastafarians do not get married because that is a White man's parameter."

One participant rejected the notion of exclusively blaming slavery and colonialism and pointed out that after these eras, a generation of men had the power to make decisions to remain in their children's lives, but instead, some left home thus abandoning their children. She shared:

My grandfather was married to my grandmother, and they were post-slavery, right away, and I think they wanted to reach for what was societally a very healthy thing. They were disallowed marriage, so they sought marriage, and my husband's grandparents were married, and his dad turned out to be a gigolo.

This woman's experience highlights that understanding fathers' roles in Black families also needs to be examined within the micro context of each individual family's experiences.

Findings in this area showed that amongst participants, different feelings exist about how they understand fathers' roles in the household. Some participants were upset and blamed fathers for some of the problems that exist within Black families, while others were more sympathetic to fathers. Those who sympathized with the difficult experiences of Black men also did not necessarily view fathers being absent as meaning that there were no male role models available for children. One participant argued, "If you did not have a father who was constantly present, then you would have grandfathers and uncles who were present."

5.2.3.2 Black women and lone parenting

Thirty-nine percent of participants indicated that they were single parents, and interestingly, all were Black women; 5% of this number were widows. This researcher was expecting a higher

percentage of female lone parents, given that the literature suggested that a significant number of Black women are lone parents.

A key theme that emerged in the discussion of single parenting was the impact of increased stressors. Like in *No Burden to Carry* (Brand, 1991), the dialogue circle participants highlighted that these women work tirelessly to provide for their families, and they are often judged or blamed for their plight. This researcher was also surprised at the blaming attitude that emerged in the discussion toward single mothers. One female participant stated,

On the other hand, you cannot only blame the fathers but have to blame the mothers too. If the lady is going to have a child and there isn't going to be a father, I mean she needs to be blamed too, she needs to stop going out there and having children.

Only a few participants shared this sentiment, but this narrative rebuked single women. The struggles of these single women were overwhelming, as most shared working three to four jobs at one point to support their family, while at the same time, parenting their children without help.

In the circles, a significant number of parents spoke about their grandparents and their community as being significant in their upbringing in the Caribbean. The finding here highlighted a gap in support that exists for some of these women when they immigrate to Canada; findings showed that this lack of extended support, especially for these single mothers, has in fact influenced their parenting.

One parent argued that when one focuses on the absentee father, one dismisses the plight of single Black mothers. She stated that the focus should be more directed to providing support and assisting these mothers with tangible help. Participants also reflected that the extended family and community structure that was common in their experiences of growing up in the Caribbean was difficult to maintain in in Canada. In large part, this is because Canadian institutions are set up around the nuclear family structure. In this structure, women are responsible for parenting work and, increasingly, also expected to do paid work. Participants expressed that this was particularly burdensome for Black women, who often bore the brunt of both the labour market requirements and parenting work.

The interrelatedness of the challenges of single motherhood and the cycle of poverty was abundantly clear in this discussion. Participants spoke about single mothers working long hours for low pay to support their children. While it was recognized that this is unintentional, the consequence of this was often that children were left vulnerable in their homes and in society. A participant spoke about her husband's mother who was very family oriented, but was a single mom working three or four jobs. As a result, her husband was left unsupervised, and he started using drugs and got himself in trouble with the law.

Throughout the dialogue circles, the strength of Black mothers was evident. However, it was equally apparent that, as working single mothers, they were at an impasse. They worked relentlessly to keep their family out of poverty. However, the unintended consequences of doing so were that they parented from a distance. The absence of their physical presence disrupted their parenting practice, as they were not available to reinforce valuable parenting messages.

In summary, in the discussion of gender differences in parenting, some participants appeared to have internalized the dominant society's view of Black families and evaluated others and themselves through a deficit lens. For instance, some stereotypical comments included mothers blaming, "absentee father" and the "strong Black woman" myths. Such discourses individualize problems and minimize or mask structural issues relating to immigration, racism, poverty, and sexism. Despite competing discourses, participants all believed that more support is needed to support Caribbean families in Canada.

5.2.4 Parenting

The findings presented under the topic of Gender Differences form the backdrop of the multiple influences that impact parenting within the Caribbean community, as shared by dialogue circle participants. The results in Section 5.1 of this chapter showed the disorganized manner of how parenting took place, given that parents were simultaneously parenting while they were physically and emotionally abused by their slave masters and later by oppressive regimes. In *No Burden to Carry* (Brand, 1991), it was evident that although parents were free, an oppressive ideological hegemony rooted within society added to their vulnerability as parents. The stories shared in the dialogue circles built on the narratives that emerged from the books and pointed to their ancestors' history as influential in their parenting.

The following discussion of parenting from the dialogue circles will be arranged into two categories: (a) historical trauma as it relates to current-day parenting, and (b) resilience and current-day parenting. Each category will explore several subthemes.

5.2.4.1 Historical trauma and current-day parenting

Participants all emphasized that their parents, grandparents, the community, and the church were influential on their parenting. Their narratives suggested that they all had experience with extensive social support as children. Participants spoke about parenting as a communal experience in the Caribbean. They shared that in the Caribbean community where they grew up, anyone can act as a parent, and everyone was interested in each individual child and would assist them to develop appropriate and respectable behaviour and skills. In addition, they spoke about generational parenting, where they learnt from their parents and people in their communities by watching and modeling. There was an acknowledgement that the method chosen to transmit values (often physical discipline) was, at times, punitive and harsh, but some participants shared that this strictness was what contributed to their own success in Canada.

Participants told various stories of how they learned values through being parented. Participants noted that parents, grandparents, church, teachers, and other extended family/community members were central in the transmission of these values. Subsequently, the findings in this section are organized in the following themes: (a) education as a transmitted value, (b) respect and responsibility as transmitted values, (c) physical discipline and its meanings, and (d) influence of the Church. Parents were cognizant of the fact that slavery and colonialism impacted them in a negative way, and they wanted their children to avoid having the same negative experiences as them. As such, they enforced these themes in their parenting to ensure positive outcome for their children and for their children to “get ahead” in life.

5.2.4.2 Education as a transmitted value

All participants spoke about the importance of education and how this was a value of utmost importance, stressed to them by their parents. They spoke about parents who were living in poverty and sacrificed everything to send them to school; education was seen as a vehicle of success, and a way to escape poverty. During slavery, it was apparent that parents and children did not have the opportunity to attend school, and in *No Burden to Carry* (Brand, 1991), some

women struggled to attain education because of their gender. These findings suggest that historical experience informs the drive these parents have in emphasizing—possibly even over emphasizing—the importance of success in school for their children. Parents noted that their experiences with racism were rampant when they were growing up, and as such, they were pushed to be successful. Following this example, they, in turn, sacrificed everything to ensure that their children had the same or better educational opportunities as they had. One parent noted:

My parents stress the importance of education, and there were eight of us, and they make sure that every one of us gets a proper education. It wasn't cheap; it was expensive considering there were eight of us, and he was the only one that did the working. He was the officer in charge at psychiatric hospital, big job and little money. It was a big government job, but no money, and my mom doesn't work outside the house, but she had so much work inside with eight of us to look after, but they stressed education about everything else.

The over emphasis on education was seen as a tool to elevate children out of poverty and also providing children with the tools they could use to uplift themselves and challenge forms of oppression directed at them. One parent stated that the White person can take away everything from them, but they can't take away their knowledge. Some parents spoke about generations of Black people not having the opportunity to have education and, as such, impacted their ability to find appropriate jobs, housing, and so forth. The over emphasis on education seemed to also conjure up trauma as parents spoke about the physical abuse in the home and in the school if there was a perception that they were not learning what they were being taught.

5.2.4.3 Respect and responsibility as transmitted values

Above all, most participants spoke about respect as a significant value. They indicated that respect for themselves and community were significant. They spoke passionately about respect, especially to the elders, as they saw the elders as their knowledge keepers and should be always protected. They believed that having respect for people empowers children to develop appropriate behaviour. One participant stated, “You learn about respect when you go out there. Out there, if you disrespect any big person, even your neighbour, they do not wait to go to your mom. They spank you, and then they go tell your mom.” One wonders if this emphasis on

respect emerges from their ancestor's experiences of not being respected as individuals and not recognized as humans.

Interestingly, while parents are attempting to instill this trait, there is a backlash from their children. As the children become more aware of their history, they are resisting having to *bow* to White people because they felt that generations of Black people were treated worse than animals in and post slavery, as they were not respected as human beings. The younger generation is resisting and the older generation is insisting because these parents tied the value of respect to the insurance of their children's personal safety. They felt that within society, people such as the police and teachers would use any form of disrespect as an excuse for maltreatment towards their children.

Parents saw the value in emphasizing respect in their parenting practices, despite their ancestors been whipped into subordination if their slave owners and other white people felt that they were disrespectful. Circle participants acknowledged that this part of history was painful; however, they saw the importance of enforcing this trait. Parents indicated that in assessing the value of respect, they see that enforcing respect will assist their children to interact positively with people.

Participants spoke about responsibility in relations to one's self and to helping one's community. Participants spoke about their parents sharing the importance of this responsibility through storytelling and parables, and they have found themselves infusing their parenting practices with this value. For example, "Idle dog kill sheep," which means if you do not keep yourself busy, you are going to get in trouble. "Fire there a mus mus [mouse] tail, but he thinks it is a cool breeze," meaning that sometimes you find yourself in a situation where you do not realize you are in danger. The moral is that you must always be aware of your situation, as things that appear to be fine are not always.

Another finding was the importance to the family of ensuring that children have routines and chores. Participants spoke about how having routines and chores themselves as children assisted them to develop the values that are necessary to succeed. Participants all spoke about the differences that they are seeing in the generations behind them, and most felt dismayed about what is happening to their children and grandchildren, as it was apparent to them that their messages in the home were competing with counter messages from mainstream society.

The emphasis on the value of their children having responsibility relates to these parents wanting their children to model good behaviour and is also tied to developing good habits so that, as adults, they would be able to protect themselves and take care of their children. Participants' emphasis on this seemed to emerge out of the discussion around absentee fathers, where single mothers are living in poverty and parenting without the financial or emotional involvement of Black fathers.

5.2.4.4 Physical discipline and its meanings

In the dialogue circles, physical discipline was framed as an important part of parenting and in the upbringings of the participants. It was delivered by parents, grandparents, and extended family as well as other socializing agents such as teachers. Although some participants were clear about how they classified physical discipline—either as abuse or a means to socialize children—the narratives of physical discipline demonstrated that participants used multiple interpretive frameworks to make sense of this experience. Equally clear was that certain frameworks (e.g., Canadian laws, woman abuse, Christianity, history of enslavement, caring and teaching values) were dominant, given the context. The meanings participants attributed towards a given experience of physical discipline also varied with time. Of note is that, generally, participants in the dialogue circles classified some of their experiences of physical discipline as abuse. Those who viewed physical discipline as a means of transmitting values and teaching lessons sometimes recounted these stories with humour and emphasized that it was delivered in caring relationships. Others saw physical discipline as cruelty to children because many times it was not deserving, and sometimes it was extreme.

The narratives of discipline can be roughly categorized into two groups: (a) physical discipline as a means of transmitting values, and (b) physical discipline as abuse. There was an acknowledgment that, overall, physical discipline was used with the hope of instilling and reinforcing values in children. In both groups, the debate over physical discipline as abuse or transmission of values was significant. While participants acknowledged the importance of discipline, there appeared to be unresolved issues as to its value. What was evident from the discussion on physical abuse is that it conjured up a lot of unresolved historical trauma that was traced back to how they were parented, how their parents were parented, and how their

grandparents were parented, which was copied from the slave owner's need to control and ensure conformity.

5.2.4.5 Influence of the Church

In both dialogue circles, participants emphasized that the church was central to parenting. Participants spoke about the importance of the church and community in developing their parenting skills. They traced these experiences back to their lives as children. One participant noted, "My grandmother, she had nine kids. Moreover, my mom had seven kids. Moreover, we all grew up together, going to church. Not a Sunday that we missed going to church." Participants all shared that the church was central to their upbringing. Another participant noted:

I tell you one thing I had to do. You know a lot of people in the country parts of Jamaica can't read, and one thing I had to do every morning was to go to this lady's house and read her Bible with her. So those are the discipline, you know, you learn how to help people from a very early age. People were coming to my father's house and helping because he helped run the church. So we learned to volunteer, always running errands for people. We learned to volunteer and it's still a part of what we're doing now

As evident from the quote above, religion was important to parenting practices, as it is through this lens that many values are learned and practice. Church, however, was tied to the historical oppression of Black people. The missionaries who came during colonization were implicit in inflicting emotional and physical abuse on Black people. During this time, religion's ulterior motive was to get Black people to conform to a Eurocentric way of being. Despite this, Black people, especially women, embrace their spirituality in a manner where they found solace. A participant acknowledged that during the period of slavery, churches were a place where resiliency was built knowing that you have religion as a protection, although not literal, but the perception of protection provided a comfort to ease the traumatized human spirit. Through religion, Negro spiritual songs, such as *By the River of Babylon* and *Roll Jordon Roll*, developed, as these songs had words of resistance in them. In the 60s, these same spiritual song provided inspiration for Black people during the Civil Rights movement.

5.2.6 Resilience and current-day parenting

Although the participants were aware of and felt the impacts of historical trauma and oppression, their narratives demonstrated agency and resilience. Participants were actively challenging colonial and anti-Black discourses. They highlighted the implications of oppression and pointed to the legacy of oppression in its influence on how Black people understand themselves, their families, and their community.

The participants had a good understanding of historical events and how those events have impacted them. It was evident that their knowledge of slavery was not taught to them formally; it was through self-directed education that they were able to gain some understanding of the experiences of their ancestors. It was obvious that some of the residues of slavery still exist in the minds of participants; they were generally able to identify its impact through comparing their interactions with other people who are different from them. Through these experiences, a self-determination for success was forged and a sense of urgency was developed in trying to protect and educate their children.

While resilience is given its own heading in this section, its presence can be found throughout the narratives of the participants. In all aspects of the conversations, courage and perseverance could be found, despite living subject to a system that suppresses Black families. Despite the challenges and barriers faced by Caribbean families in Canada, participants loved and had pride in their children and passed on their traditional values. They were intuitive about the system and realized that the foundations of a Eurocentric approach were not designed with Black families in mind. It was evident that their faith in Christianity and religion assisted them with this resilience, as it was through their faith that they were able to get support and develop hope.

Their indigenous knowledge (i.e., cultural ways of knowing) was valued by participants, and this knowledge was used as a tool of resistance. Drawing on Indigenous knowledge assisted participants to remain resilient, as accessing this knowledge meant realizing that systems in Canada do not always understand who they are. To support this statement, one participant stated, “We came to countries that were unnatural and were not a part of where we were meant to be, so over time, it has affected us, it has affected our parenting because parenting is what you learn through generations.”

It is important to note that resilience for these participants also meant recognizing that they have faults as parents as well as recognizing that the Canadian system is steeped in racism. It is through the recognition of both of these truths that they were able to identify some of the problems that exist within Black families.

I think we pass on good and bad, and we don't get a course on how to parent. We just try and we do our best at what it is we do. The advantage of what we had before was the communal thing, where not just you was parenting your kids, someone else saw your kid and they had a concern, they cared. It was a community thing, so adopting this nuclear family construct we have here has not worked for Black people, especially when you have poverty, because with racism it means you don't always get opportunity. Sometimes there's a mother who needs to work three jobs to pay for rent, and then she needs someone else to help make ends meet, and so that piece where the village raises the child, that's something that has to happen. We understood that when your parent couldn't be there, an aunty, grandmother, neighbour, friend was there. If you didn't have a father who was constantly present, then you would have grandfathers and uncles who were present, and so you weren't talking about things, like that language about role modeling, people just did the thing, it just was.

The narratives of the participants demonstrated that Black families could emerge successful in the future if they form communities in Canada and embrace some of the positive aspects of their Caribbean culture.

5.3 Chapter Summary

In Section 5.1, the themes of separation, racism, oppression, abuse and resiliency emerged from the historical experiences prominent in the texts. They showed the influences and foundations of traumata that predominantly started in slavery and continued to compound during and after colonization. The stories that emerged from the dialogue circles in Section 5.2 showed the trauma experienced by generations past, which was influential and impactful on how these Black parents parented their children. In Canada, parents found that they were in a colonist society that does not understand them and continues to be oppressive towards them. There was an acknowledgment that the social structure that once existed in the Caribbean is no longer

available to support them once they are in Canada. For instance, participants explained that back home, they coped with poverty through relying on an extended family and church. However, in Canada, this extended family support was not available. Thus, they have found themselves in precarious situations, where they see that opportunities and assistance are not afforded to them because of their race. These findings made clear that for Caribbean families, parenting values are steeped in messages influence by racism and are intended to propel their children to success in Canada. However, the dilemma that emerged is that their parenting practices may be, at times, in conflict with Canada/Western society traditional values.

Chapter 6 Discussion

This thesis aims to gain a better and more nuanced understanding of parenting in the Black Caribbean community; in particular, it explores the influence of historical trauma on this population's parenting. In previous chapters, I examined the various discourses that shaped the understanding of parenting from the mainstream perspective, and I presented alternative and critical theoretical frameworks to understand this issue within the Black population. My intention in this chapter is to integrate the voices of the Black parents from the dialogue circles and the historical experiences found in Brand's (1991) and Hill's (2007) books in my discussion to demonstrate the multiplicity of experiences that embody parenting within the Black communities. This discussion engages these voices to show that parenting is experienced on a continuum of people's conscious or unconscious experiences and, as such, demonstrates the complexity of understanding the influences of a history steeped in trauma on today's parenting in the Black Caribbean population. This issue is extremely relevant in today's society, given the recent mainstream visibility of discussions on overrepresentation of Black children in the care of Children Aid's Societies (Monsebraaten, 2014)) and over-representation of Black people in the remedial educational and criminal justice systems (Teklu, 2012).

Although discussions have taken place on parenting in the social services field, they do not directly recognize and address the correlation of historical trauma with parenting in the Black community. It is accurate to say that some of these researchers focused on racism and oppressive practice, but their concerns did not directly speak to the uniqueness of Black people's experience. Black parents' experiences differ from those of other racialized parents because of their ancestors' experiences with slavery, forced migration, and colonialism. As such, there has been insufficient attention given to the transference of historical trauma generationally and the impact on Black families in Canada. As such, I begin this discussion with the relevance of anti-colonial, anti-Black racism, and anti-Black feminism perspectives in discussing the results.

6.1 Generation of Colonial influence and Black families continuous struggle for Equality and Equity

The narratives that emerged out of my research in combination with a review of literature confirmed that in the twenty-first century, Black people continue to struggle for equity and equality because of a colonial legacy that continues to espouse pedagogies embedded in practices that suggest Black lives do not matter. This colonial posture acts like a gatekeeper, and people from the dominant culture who have the power continue to ensure that White privilege is maintained by perpetuating ideologies that support a minority status and an inferiority position for Black people. Freire (1970) argued that this support and protects a superior citizenship status that is greater than that of an oppressed group.

The results of my research further highlighted that to unsettle and disrupt the colonial hold on society, there needs to be a transformation of system and minds to close the existing disparities for Black families. This transformation will lead to outcomes that are just and fair, casting the gaze away from creating what Loomba (2001) termed opposing differences between Black and White. This is why the movement Black Lives Matter is increasingly important in today's twenty-first century. Similar to the Black Power movement of the 60s, Black Lives Matter calls attention to the injuries that continue to be inflicted on the souls of Black people. As such, it became a necessity to anchor my thesis in anti-colonial, anti-Black racism, and Black feminism thoughts because Black Caribbean families continue to be victims of racism and sexism that are grounded in their colonial history.

The over representation of Black children in the child welfare and judicial systems, as mentioned throughout the paper, sheds light on how overt racism is perpetrated in modern-day societies. When there are no overall significant difference in the incidence of child maltreatment between Whites and people of African descent and professionals and individuals are more likely to report people of African descent than Whites to the child welfare system (Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, 2015), it becomes progressively urgent to dismantle and disrupt colonial institutions and their hegemonic practices. I am arguing that the *triplicities* of the three adopted frameworks positioned this study to focus on the stories of Blacks from generations past to show how their ancestral traumatic experiences have influenced parenting in the twenty-first century.

It is not difficult to understand that the colonial legacy had an overall impact on the physical and mental health of Black people given its punitive practices. It is also not difficult to understand that as a result of oppressive practices emerging out of colonialism, Black families—a significant number of single families headed by females—find themselves struggling to keep out of poverty, to find gainful employment, to find appropriate housing, and for equity and equality. It is through this analytic and interpretive lens that I situate the anti-colonial, anti-Black racism, and Black feminism discourses to assist in understanding of parenting within the Black Caribbean community. Why is this important? This research is important and distinctive, as this is an area that is under investigated in Ontario, and attention should be paid to the traumatic experiences that influence Black people's lives, especially in the field of parenting, as failing to do so further supports colonialist, racist, and sexist ideologies, thus continuing the marginalization and oppression of Black families. This discussion will bring the voices of Black parents to the centre to highlight the shift in practice that is required by the helping profession in working with Black parents from the Caribbean.

In completing this qualitative research, I am also using the *triplicity* of the chosen frameworks to analyze my influence on this study. As an insider of the Black community and also as an insider of a social institution, I was consistently reflecting on my social location and how it influenced my overall interaction with the data. I am aware that my insider status might have created some biases in the way I interacted with and understood the narratives. However, in qualitative research, bias is inevitable, given that persons are products of their culture (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Throughout my analysis, I adopted a stance of reflexivity to ensure that I adhered to the principles of my three critical discourses (i.e., an anti-colonial, anti-Black racism, and Black feminism lenses), each of which allowed me to focus and encouraged me to locate the voices of the parents at the central point of my discussion. This focus also allowed me to ground their voices within history to pinpoint key events that shaped future practices.

The following section of this discussion was merged from the findings from both my text analysis and narratives from the dialogue circles. From this merge, I identified four themes: (a) historical trauma: loss, separation, and festering wounds; (b) pervasive influence of racism; (c) gender differences; and (d) parenting (see Figure 5).

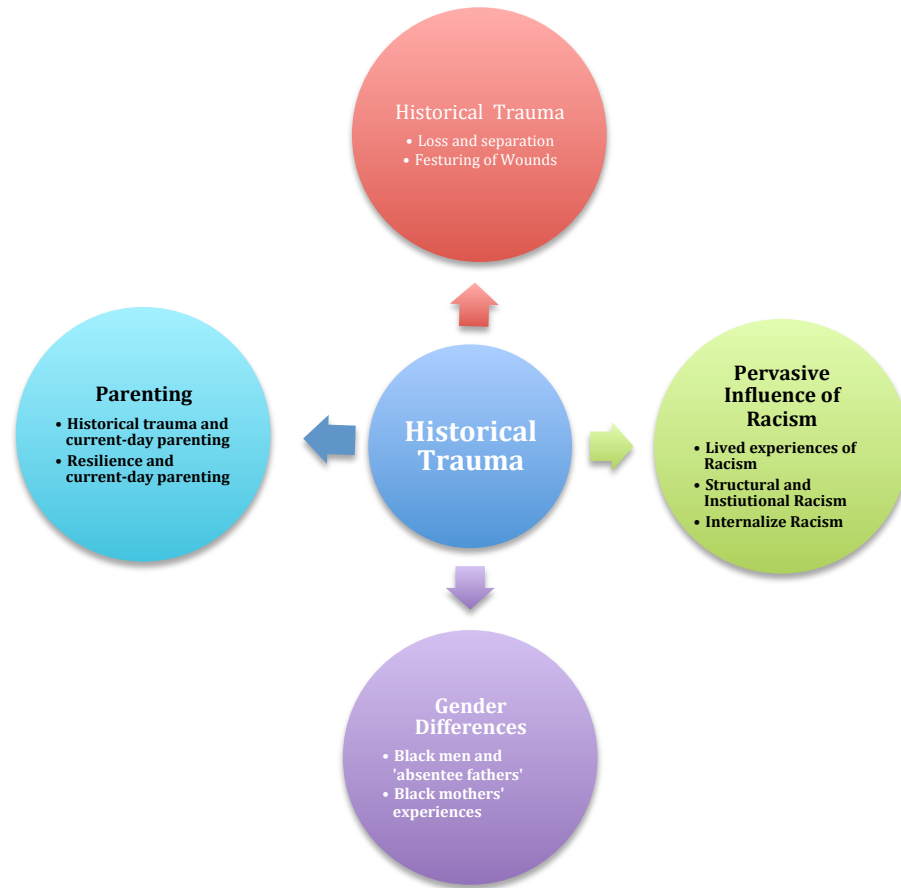


Figure 5. Discussion roadmap.

6.2 Historical Trauma: Loss, Separation, and Festering Wounds

A notable theme from the narratives was the influence of trauma on Black people's life. In this section, I will discuss the influence more generally, and then zero in on the specific links to subthemes that I identified—specifically “loss and separation” and “festering of wounds.” I quickly came to realize early in this study that to understand the effects of trauma, I had to adopt a holistic view that took into consideration the impact on the individual and the collective within the Black population. Eyerman (2004) noted that physical and psychological traumatic experiences affect mainly the person, and group trauma speaks primarily to the loss of identity and meaning. As discussed previously, Weingarten (2004) stressed the importance of understanding the ecosystem that includes direct and indirect experiences that embody trauma. Weingarten recognized that biological, psychological, familial, and societal mechanisms all have

a role in the transference of trauma, and it is with this lens that I approached this study. Through this critical lens, I acknowledged that although the events of slavery, colonization, and segregation took place many years ago, the legacy of trauma that emerged from them continues to be reflected in some of the behaviours and beliefs of Black people. DeGruy (2005) concluded that at one point, these behaviours and beliefs were a necessity for survival; however, in today's society, these same practices are undermining Black people's ability to be successful.

In Canada, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) recognized the traumatic past of the Aboriginal communities and extensively documented their experiences with colonialism and residential schools. This report honoured the truth of Aboriginal and Canadian history and recognized the direct correlation of these events on the Aboriginal population's current-day functioning. This research acknowledged the importance of Aboriginal people and respected that they are the first citizens of Canada. In this research, I looked to examples like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that acknowledge and demonstrate the importance of recognizing the impact of history and calls for a similar recognition of the current-day impact of slavery, segregation, and racism on the Black Caribbean population. The appreciation of this trauma or history could be the first step towards understanding the practices of Black Caribbean parents. This recognition begins by acknowledging and confirming that unresolved traumata emerging from experiences of loss and separation continues to influence how Black people navigate their world, and the reality is that generations experience festering wounds.

6.2.1 Linkage to Loss and Separation

As I revisited my findings over and over again, it was evident that Black people's experiences with loss and separation have had a significant impact on them. Many scholars wrote about the effects of loss and separation using a psychological analysis (Arnold, 2006; Perez Foster, 2001; Tummala-Narra, 2001, 2014). However, interestingly, the impact of loss and separation has not been taken up effectively across disciplines that work with Black families. The effects of trauma have accumulative and detrimental consequences to the Black family, which is influenced by an unprecedented number of losses that date back over 400 years and include loss of self, family, language, and community.

The manifestations of such losses are unhealed wounds that influence the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of individuals and their families; these wounds and their influences are transmitted from generation to generation (DeGruy, 2005). My results showed that the issues of loss of self, family, community, and countries have left Black people feeling vulnerable. As trauma associated with such loss is left unresolved, it continues to manifest itself in many ways that may not necessarily be understood—either within the Black communities themselves or within a larger colonial state. DeGruy (2005) indicated that “new ways of addressing some of the most life-threatening problems can be found if there is an understanding of the influence of ancestors on Black people’s lifestyles” (p. 142).

The reoccurring questions that continued to plague me in my analysis of the impact of loss was: How do we know what we know, and how do we think that we can do things differently to better understand and work with Black families? This answer peered out at me when I started using the lens of the triplicity of my frameworks. In interrogating the importance of loss and separation, they assisted with making the once invisible now visible. We often speak in abstract terms when it comes to slavery. We know that it was very punitive, but to understand the intimate details within a timeline framework helps to pinpoint entry points of particular traumatic experiences into the conscious or unconscious memory. Following the concept of a timeline, my findings pointed to an abundance of situations of loss and separation that have left significant traumata markers on Black people.

I started the timeline with *The Book of Negroes* (Hill, 2007), which was reflective of a significant number of slave experiences as documented in history books. The main character’s experiences of loss began with the killing of her parents by her captors (i.e., loss of family); her own capture (i.e., loss of self, loss of family, loss of community, loss of country); and continued as she experienced numerous other losses throughout her life, including the loss of her children, her husband, and her country. These losses denied her the privileges and valuable lessons that she needed as a woman and parent. She summed up her loss close to the end of the book by saying, “The pain of my losses never really went away. The limbs had been severed, and they would forever after be missing. But I kept going. Somehow I just kept going” (p. 351). This sentiment continues to exist amongst Black people.

Participants' narratives in the dialogue often allude to the need to forge ahead despite their adversity. Their ability to forge ahead was considerable and admirable. However, one cannot shy away from the fact that this forging ahead has unintended consequences, and unresolved issues with Black people's experiences of trauma continues to play itself out in other ways. For example, they may respond harshly to their children when they experience something that triggers them, which may, in turn, cause judgment to be passed on them, as documented in the literature on parenting presented in Chapter 3 of this thesis. This judgment usually places them in the authoritarian category, which is often associated with unresponsive and poor parenting as it applies to Black parents (Rudy et al., 1999; Wolfe & McIsaac, 2011). The problem with forging on is that if the trauma is not addressed, the ongoing frustration translates into parenting behaviour that supports the tenets of the authoritarian parenting style.

Attention is given to separation, as when I continued to follow a timeline formation of trauma, the results showed considerable evidence of children separated from their parents, women from their husbands, and families from their community. With this separation came a loss of self, culture, and community that evidently have continued to redefine families' interactions with each other—especially parents and children interactions. For Black parents, the feelings of loss never go away. Black parents are expected to function normally, despite these unresolved traumata. There is a brokenness that exists within some Black families, which the data revealed can be traced back to issues of loss and separation.

In *No Burden to Carry*, Brand (1991) shared narratives of women interviewed about their experiences between 1920 and 1950 in Canada; it was evident that the trajectory of loss continued for Black families beyond slavery. Although these losses were not as a result of physical violence, the underpinning reasons for their losses remained the same as those who were victims of slavery; in both cases, losses were grounded in racism and capitalism (Carrington, 2003). Violet Blackman, born in 1900, noted that Black people continued to struggle like their ancestors, with the only difference being that they were free and they no longer experienced physical discipline (Brand, 1991). The same thing can be said for Black parents in 2016. They are free, but they continue to have similar experiences of family separation, loss, and grief through the over-representation of Black children in the criminal justice and child welfare systems.

The impact of the experience of loss associated with migration cannot be modulated because the migration process can be complex and can illicit cumulative reactions and have a profound and lasting consequences (Tummala-Narra, 2001). Dialogue circle participants spoke with passion and vigor about their experiences with migration and separation. Many Caribbean children were left behind with their extended families as parents tried to settle in Canada. However, after several years of separation, they encountered overwhelming problems in adapting to their parents and a new society, while, at the same time, grieving the loss of the caregivers that they left behind (Gopaul-McNicol, 1998). One participant spoke vividly about her mother leaving her in Jamaica and the issues that arose from her reunification with her mother. These issues led to the child welfare system intervening and her being separated from her mother again. Much like how Aminata's children were stolen from her, participants described many stories of children from the Caribbean community being removed from their families to be incarcerated or apprehended by the child welfare at an alarming rate. On participant noted:

I'm talking about two children that I know. One Friday, she didn't go to school, she turns up Monday morning when she's ready to go to school, and she goes to school and says, "Mom hit me with her belt," and so she was taken away from her. School called the police, police knocked on her door, and that's the case with the government of Canada that I don't like. They take away your children from you without knowing all the reasons.

There is a considerable amount of literature on grief and loss related to separation, whether a mother's losing her children or death of family members. These literature sources gave rise to the many available treatment programs. However, for Black people, there is minimal recognition of the impact of separation related to lack of cultural and racial knowledge and misunderstanding in practice. When viewed on the timeline continuum, the pain of loss has been documented as consistent. This pain was constant and has had, and continues to have, adverse consequences for Black individuals who were directly and indirectly exposed to such trauma. In her finding on intergenerational trauma, Lev-Wiesel (2007) explained that suffering can be transferred generationally, and she found that major life trauma can have significant and lasting effects on later generations.

The accumulated effects of the losses outlined in this discussion have left unhealed wounds that influence the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of individuals and their families, wounds which are then transmitted from generation to generation (DeGruy, 2005). Whitbeck, Adams, Hoyt, and Chen (2004) indicated that establishing a measure for historical loss is important in understanding the trauma associated with it. This is significant for understanding past trauma, as we need to look beyond a mainstream understanding of loss that happens to an individual in his/her own childhood or near past. Instead, the issue of knowledge loss should be viewed in a holistic way that considers both the individual and the collective, looking at experiences in the near and farther past as well as the present. When considering the impact of loss in the present, again, both the individual and the collective should be considered. It is evident from my experience in the social work field that the historical experiences of Black people are not given this consideration, which often results in services being provided that are not always meaningful or useful. Separation and loss are cornerstones of Black people's history and must be considered in every interaction that one has within the helping relationship.

Often, mainstream society speaks of slavery as something that took place over 400 years ago, and it appears that the people who are working in the human services field do not understand the persistent and pernicious consequences of this on current-day functioning. The characterization and discussion of parenting by researchers such as Baumrind (1972) and Bornstein (1995) have failed to include generational trauma as part of their critical analysis of parenting. Instead, some researchers focused on grouping parents in particular labels without the disclaimer and recognition of racial and historical factors that influence these tags. Luster and Okagaki (2005) and Thirumurthy (2004) supported the need to include cultural context to understand and assess parenting. In her book, *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*, DeGruy (2005) gave further context to the need of understanding parenting by stating,

The effects of trauma were never addressed, nor did the traumas ceased. African Americans have continued to experience traumas similar to those of our slave past ... more impactful than the physical assault on their bodies was the daily assault on their psyches. Since their captures and transport of the first African slaves, those brought to these shores had to deal with systematic efforts to destroy the bonds of relationships that held them together. (p. 115)

Unlike other races that experienced traumatic events, in Canada, Black people's experiences with slavery are rarely acknowledged. Experiences of racism and years of abuse on the psyche and well-being of Black people are rarely seen as a plausible predictor of parent's behaviour. Instead, some opponents, as discussed by Gone (2014), suggested that recognizing historical trauma is simplistic, resulting in polarizing of the races. This statement communicates a belief that Black people need to *get over it*, without addressing or acknowledging unresolved issues. Rarely is this helpful for Black parents.

6.2.2 Festering of Wounds

Notable in the findings were that the injuries from past indirect or direct traumatic experiences continue to have a profound impact on the lives of Black parents who participated in this study. This was evident in the rigor and passion they presented and described their stories. This finding suggests a need for a fundamental shift in systems and individuals working with Black families. This shift should focus on understanding the conceptual underpinnings of unresolved loss and grief, both indirect or direct. The system could be more supportive to the emotional well-being of Black families by developing programs that are geared to historical trauma, which was imparted by an unjust and unfair system throughout history. When discussing grief and loss, Walker (2007) argued that the ongoing and intransigent problem is not the traumatic experiences themselves, but the individual's ability to resolve the issues. For Black families, this statement is often seen as contentious, as it holds the individual responsible for not resolving an issue that is not widely recognized and that they may not be able to even name.

In the literature on parenting, critical thinkers such as Hill Collins (2009) and Jackson and Cothran (2003) spoke about the mental health struggles and attachment issues directly correlated to historical events. In addition, generational legacies of social inequality, as discussed by Schindlmayr (2006), highlight the impact historical events have on social capital and development. Without this acknowledgment, it is hard for Black people to progress. Their experience within the social systems can be compared to someone who is suffering from a mental health issue. If they and those around them do not acknowledge that there is a problem, then it is difficult or impossible for treatment to take place. Without this acknowledgment, their past trauma will continue to remain unresolved and will continue to impact generations of Black families to come.

The trauma of slavery has shaped Black people's subjectivity, and rarely is it acknowledged that it is the result of subjugation, cruelties, and deprivations (Jurist & Gump, 2010). The emergent stories from the dialogue circles encapsulated this disruption and gave credence to the fact that Black lives continue to be disrupted. These disruptions can be linked back to slavery, colonialism, and segregation and, as such, necessitate adapting an anti-colonial discourse. Such a discursive approach to the conversation helped put Black people in the centre of this discussion. It allowed them to theorize about the unresolved trauma that emerged out of a history of losses by using the collective knowledge fixed into their consciousness (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001) not only to theorize, but to also develop a critical tool to assist in addressing their unresolved trauma.

Lazreg (1994) stated that to understand the present, one has to understand the past. To understand this past, one has to acknowledge that Black people's history with colonialism and slavery continues to disrupt to their current-day lives. For example, in the selected text below, the main character spoke about the trauma that continues to haunt her years after the abolition of slavery.

On the slave vessel, I saw things that the people of London would never believe.... I think of the people who crossed the sea with me.... Some of us still scream out in the middle of the night. (Hill, 2007, p. 106)

Although Hill's (2007) *Book of Negroes* is fictional, it is historical fiction, and the quote above describes the experiences of most of slaves, which has been well documented in many history books. This quote illustrates how these feelings do not go away with the death of a person who experienced slavery, as this person who experienced slavery was a parent who screamed out in the middle of the night and who parented based on having lived through those experiences.

For mainstream society to understand the historical trauma that informs Black lives, they have to have an understanding about Black Caribbean families' histories. It is only through this understanding that change can take place within a system that supports and sustains repressive practices that continue to make the wounds of Black families fester. According to Freire (1970), people's world view is manifested in practices that represent the oppressive attitude that is present in society. Often, individuals who have little understanding of the impact of history on Black lives are charged with judging them.

Likewise, Black parents who are descendants of a set of traumatized people's world view are influenced by it and transfer this learned world view to how they parent their children, which may include sending them hurtful, constraining, or demeaning messages. All too often these children begin to internalize the demeaning criticisms. Furthermore, these criticisms create feelings of being disrespected by the very people who they love and trust the most: their parents. It is not hard to imagine the impact of these painful, vilifying remarks on the self-esteem of many Black children, especially when one considers years of repetition. Sadly, often neither the Black mother nor her children fully and clearly understand the historical forces that have helped to shape the mother's behaviour. (DeGruy, 2005, p. 15)

The festering of wounds is symptomatic of unresolved generationally transmitted traumatic experiences, which have had profound consequences on the way Black parents parented and raised their children. Schindlmayr (2006) indicated that these experiences affect the overall mental well-being, self-esteem, and ability to relate to each other, which can be seen in an interview from Brand's (1991) work:

Toronto had a lot of prejudice amongst Blacks themselves, they did, and mostly it was based on color. There was many of them had good backgrounds-maybe they had a family that was light. If you didn't have this background, but you had the light skin, in Toronto, you could move up to whatever it was you were supposed to be that you were doing.
(p. 115)

This was also highlighted in the dialogue circle participants' discussions on lateral violence. Passionate debate flared up when one participant said that that Black people are trying to protect their sons from their kind and the police. This statement conjured up a lot of emotions for participants. This discussion revealed the lingering effects of trauma supported by the constructs that continue to linger about Black people. The discussion also revealed a division exists within the Black community in relations to how they understand their history. One tone suggested that individuals are to blame: "I'll tell you one thing, what I said to my son ... to stay away from Black groups. Honestly, to stay away from his kind." Another tone suggested that constructs about Black people emerged out of their experiences of slavery and continues to cause fear for Black parents, as put forward by this participant: "Black people were taught by the British to

fight against one another.... Who do you think take over when the British left? It is now Black man chastising Black man, and that's still with us. It never goes.” This conversation illustrates to two main points. First, it makes clear that one cannot generalize and assume that all Black families share the same understanding of their histories. Second, and perhaps more importantly, it illustrates the fear that exists for Black parents because of how Black criminality is constructed—and mainstream media have reported about Black people—and directed primarily towards their sons.

While this segment of the discussion supported the notion that to understand historical trauma one has to understand the impact of separation and loss and the unresolved issues that emerge from such experience that continues to fester, it is not without its critics.

While some may acknowledge the trauma of loss and separation that emerged out of historical experiences, others may discount experiences of loss after slavery by saying that Black people chose to migrate to Canada. This thinking is problematic, because this argument is not linked to the impact of colonization and capitalism that affected the Caribbean people. It also does not include that their experiences from slavery do not automatically *go away*, as they are transferrable generationally, not only in the unconscious of the people, but also through policies and practices that are steeped in White dominance that continues to exist today. In the dialogue circles and the narratives of the women from Brand's (1991) book, a high percentage of participants spoke about their families coming to Canada in search of better opportunities. For some, this meant leaving their children behind with extended family members or people in their community, and for others, this meant their parents left them behind. One can take a Marxist view of the reasons for these changes, but to understand these changes within a cultural view, one has to look at this issue using a progression of lenses that show a continuum of Black people's experience with trauma to understand its influences. To understand this progression, it is critical that the tenets of the anti-colonial and anti-Black racism discourses as discussed in Chapter 3 are adopted.

6.3 Pervasive Influence of Racism

Oppression destroys. Similar to historical and current-day literature, the result of this research emphasized that racism continues to have a pervasive influence on Black lives. Many forms of

oppression were woven throughout the major themes in this discussion, especially as they related to racist practices and ideologies. While the effects of loss and separation were discussed in the previous section, the interconnectedness of many forms of oppression throughout this entire study is recognized in this section. “Oppression is understood as the domination of subordinate groups in society by a powerful (politically, economically, socially, and culturally), group” (Mullaly, 2002, p. 27). For Black individuals and families, their history with oppression has a far-reaching impact. Accordingly, the salient epistemic point is that one cannot understand oppression or domination if one does not appreciate the position of those at the receiving end. For Black people, this also includes the question of how they understand their domination.

To comprehend Black people’s traumatic experience, one has to have an acute understanding of their unique experience, based on the construct of Blackness that supports an inferiority stance that views them in animalistic ways, to appreciate how this legacy has come to define them throughout history. The extract below offers a glimpse into the unimaginable experiences and the foundation of this personal trauma. As DeGruy (2005) noted in her research:

Millions were forced onto cargo ships bound for unknown lands that included Brazil, the West Indies, Europe and the United States. Here they would dwell for many weeks to several months in the bowels of the ship. They were deprived of any human comfort and shared in a collective misery. This disgusting place was where they slept, wept, ate, defecated, urinated, menstruated, vomited, gave birth and died. (p. 73)

Black people’s legacy of slavery and later colonialism has remained painfully present in their everyday present-day functioning, as their successes continue to be undermined by policies within institutions that are oppressive in nature and support the dominant culture’s beliefs. This becomes evident in today’s society that sees Black children and families overrepresented in many institutions, such as the criminal justice, remedial education, and child welfare sectors. Mullaly (2002) acknowledged that everyone has things that hinder and restrict them, and he indicated that:

What determines oppression is when a person is blocked from opportunities to self-development, is excluded from full participation in society, does not have certain rights that the dominant groups take for granted, or is assigned a second-class citizenship, not

because of individual talent, merit or failure but because of his or her membership in a particular group or category of people. (p. 28)

There was abundant evidence in *The Book of Negroes* (Hill, 2007), *No Burden to Carry* (Brand, 1991), and in the voices of the dialogue circle participants to support Mullaly's statement. Today, the bequests of slavery, colonialism, and other significant historical events remain etched in the souls of Black people. The impacts of their history can be witnessed daily in their struggle to understand who and what they are and in a jaundiced vision of who and what they became. The power of oppression is determined from the place where one casts one's gaze. For Black people, as an oppressed group of individuals, their gaze is focused on a continuous struggle for respect and equality. This extract from Brand (1991) helps one to begin the journey of understanding how oppressive practices touch every realm of society:

Most of the women that came from the Caribbean had to find a church, had to find a Black church.... They went to church one Sunday, and whoever the minister was those days asked the Blacks not to come back, and to take their nickels and dimes to their church.... So there was much trying to figure out just what this land was all about. (p. 240)

In understanding Black parents' experiences with oppression, this part of the discussion is centred on the following three emergent principles from the analysis : (a) lived experiences of racism, (b) institutional and structural racism, and (c) internalized racism.

6.3.1 Lived Experiences of Racism

This study identified countless narratives supporting that race continues to be a powerful marker in society, and it is influenced by the construction of difference and the ascription of meaning. Correspondingly, "racism is the belief that human abilities are determined by race, that one race is inherently superior to all others, and, therefore, has the right to dominate all other races" (Mullaly, 2002, p. 162). As indicated by this extract from DeGruy (2005):

Opinions about race was written as fact and despite these facts failing to produce scientific evidence to support their opinions, their ideas continued to be referenced in scientific communities throughout the western world. Given the widespread

dissemination of these fallacious beliefs, it is not difficult to understand why belief in racial superiority took root in 21st century and continues to exist today. (p. 159)

Subsequently, as I move forward in the discussion on Black parents lived experiences with racism, I will be using an anti-Black racism lens to inform my discussion. An anti-Black racism approach to discourse, whose tenets are outlined earlier in this thesis, identifies that the racial construct of Black is the root cause of racism and, as such, recognizes the need for a recalibration on the discussion of racism to address the shortcomings in understanding Black families and those who are assessing them.

The data revealed that Black people are often seen and treated as outsiders, and as such, there is an over-surveillance of Black families that appears to be connected to selective omission and selective ignorance. Society's attitudes automatically label Black families as *the other*, which is reminiscent of slavery when Black people were not seen as human. This was especially telling in the narratives in the dialogue circles during the discussion of the media. The Black parents in this circle spoke about the messages that are often reported on about Black people, which include messages of inferiority and criminality. The service providers who are also hearing these messages use these reports as credible sources, which is evidenced by the negative discourse and narratives that infuse their conversations about Black families (Bonnie & Pon, 2015). Within society, there is an underlying notion that all Black people are criminals; this comes clearly through from countless experiences that Black people have of being assumed to be a criminal when they walk into a store. Immediately, that person sets off a red flag, consciously or unconsciously, and a security guard follows that person around the store. This is an example of the frustration and racialization that Black families endure on a regular basis. Fanon (1967, p. 146) noted, "In the magazines the wolf, the devil, the evil spirit, the bad man, the savage are always symbolized by Negroes or Indians." These are the images devoured by children. This dehumanizing pathology constructed about Black people defines their everyday struggles of proving themselves worthy of *Being*. Like any other people, Black people have problems, but those problems are overemphasized because of the colour of their skin.

The anti-Black racism discourse counteracts the dominance of White supremacy discourses in society and points to the need to use this alternative ideology for understanding Black families,

including their parenting styles. This is critical for disrupting the narratives that continue to take root about Blacks. Statistics Canada's 2011 census indicated that immigrants in Canada make up 20.6% of the population (Statistics Canada, 2012). These statistics are important. As other cultures and races immigrate, they too buy into the Eurocentric rhetoric about Black people, and through this lens, they too unintentionally or intentionally participate in the oppression of Black people. The oppression of Black people by other oppressed groups dates back to slavery: "He has told me that Jews and Africans could understand each other because we were both outsiders, but even though the man preferred the term servant to slave, he owned me" (Hill, 2007, p. 209).

Like the previous segment, these results pointed to the importance of understanding Black people's lived experiences with racism from a timeline perspective. This timeline is connected to history, but for this discussion, it starts at post slavery. After the abolition of slavery, Black people found themselves in a precarious socioeconomic position that saw their suffering continued because of the prevalence of racism. This racism was based on the history of slavery that saw them as inferior to White people. As suggested by Freeman (1993), this history can prove to still be a powerful determinant of the current socioeconomic status of the group. As a result of discrimination, Black people found themselves unemployed or underemployed. They had difficulties finding appropriate housing, transience became an issue, and they had a difficult time accessing educational or training programs—all of which, according to Hartman (2003), are associated with poverty and feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness. The choking of Black folks' earning potential can be dated back to the 1800s. As noted by DeGruy (2005),

After the war, the government was called upon to distribute land from plantation owners and the government refused leaving all the freed blacks desperately poor. In order to feed their family many returned to work on their former master's land in return for a share of the crops they raised... These family having no money would buy the things they need on credit and merchants would charge exorbitantly high interest making impossible for families to pay off their debts. Other merchants took advantage of the fact that these black families were illiterate and create false billing. (p. 83)

The traumata timeline then connects to the 50s, 60s, and beyond—a period where Blacks were supposedly free. In the 1950s, over a 100 years after slavery, Black people continued to struggle financially:

We had some very difficult financial times, as far as Blacks were concerned in Toronto. There were no jobs. Mr. Allen was a very dark man and more or less paid the price for that. He'd graduated as an auto mechanic, but, of course, they weren't hiring Black auto mechanics. (Brand, 1991, p. 114)

Connecting this timeline to 2016, over 60 years after Mr. Allen faced anti-Black racism seeking employment in Toronto, Black people continue to struggle, simply because of their assigned skin colour. As noted by a dialogue circle participant.

Black people suffer, especially when you have poverty, because with racism it means you do not always get the opportunity. Sometimes, there's a mother who needs to work three jobs to pay for rent, and then she needs someone else to help make ends meet.

Another parent stated,

I work with a lot of business group and finance groups and banks, and every time I go, I look to see who are the managers, who are the bosses, and almost every time you see Whites, Indians, Chinese, Arabs, and you might see one Black person in one of every three groups. So those are the messages that have come out of colonialism, out of slavery, that's effecting us today—racism.

The multigenerational experiences of racism have disempowered Black families, and the outcome is seen in these families. Such outcomes include men leaving home to seek employment, as evidenced in the 1950s with Black men working countless hours, days, and year on the railroad, removing them from the homes. In the 2000s, we see this through Black.

During slavery, many brutal and atrocious crimes were committed against Black people, as they were seen only as property. After emancipation, their constitutional rights were disregarded, and they continued to experience harsh treatment (Broussard, 2013). The question thus becomes: How has this historical understanding of racism played itself out in parenting within the Black

community in today's society? There is a list of possible consequences, including those where Black parents often believe they need to sensitize their children against hate, bigotry, and discrimination at an early age. It forces Black parents to parent in a manner that prepares their children to expect that they will be confronted with racism. The significance of this is that it may take away a parent's and child's innocence much too early. Unfortunately, even further, this can lead to Black parents overcompensating in trying to prepare their children for the realities of racism, which can result in other issues, including reinforcing the stereotypical behaviour by mainstream organizations who may not recognize this heightened sensitivity to racism. While I agree with Fanon (1967) that one should not be a prisoner of one's history and one should not look to history to define one's destiny, I also acknowledge that based on the findings in this paper, unless there is a shift in thinking that adopts an anti-Black racism lens and policies are rewritten using this lens, then history will continue to define Black parents.

Another interesting finding from Black parents in the Circle was the urgency that they parent with and the overemphasis that they put on the importance of hard work, mostly because they understand that Black people have to work extra hard to succeed because they lack opportunities because of racism. This may lead to unfair or unrealistic expectations for some children, especially when it comes to education. These unrealistic expectations on their children come from a desire to challenge the portrayal of the Black race in general and their attempt to not have their skin colour define who they are; parents perceived educational over-achievement as the way of rising above that status quo. As one participant noted, "The fact that his father always lamented that he didn't have the proper education, he drilled it into all of us four children, three boys and a girl, the importance of education."

Racism not surprisingly permeated the findings in this study. This study, like many authors in the literature review such as (Bonnie & Pon, 2015; Clarke, 2011; Dumbrill, 2006; Maiter, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c; Onunaku, 2008; Tilbury & Thoburn, 2009), identified that racism continues to be impactful on Black families' lives. Hence, if people within these social institutions cannot acknowledge the underprivileged realities that racism presents for Black families, then there is no authentic solution to eliminating racism and giving Black families the same privileges enjoyed by other races. Given this, social institutions should be willing adopt an anti-Black racism lens when working with Black families. An anti-Black racism discourse will disrupt the

Eurocentric tools that support White ideologies' notion of what is acceptable or not and that are used to assess and judge Black parents. The elimination of Eurocentric assessment tools would allow Black families to be acknowledged as experts on their own lives and, as a result, would force service providers to focus on the explanation that they give to their own actions. Dancy and Sosa (1993), in their research, called for inclusion of voices of marginalized populations and directed the practices of institutions to redirect their attention to the explanation that people give to their lives.

6.3.2 Institutional and Structural Racism

The data highlighted that systemic and institutional barriers exist and have a profound impact on Black families, especially noted within the schools, the child welfare system, and the judicial system. These institutions have structures that disempower Black families and cause them to worry about their children ceaselessly. The parents shared countless stories, which again, were supported by the many ongoing discussion in the literature on racism by authors such as (Hill, 2004) and (Courtney & Skyles, 2003; Graham, 2007)). These systems collude, consciously or unconsciously, through their policies and structures to *gatekeep*, to see who can enter for their benefit and who stays out, thus becoming systems of oppression (Feagin, 2006), making these systems agents of power.

At this junction, I would like to contribute my *insider's* voice to support this discussion, given my years of experiences working within the system. The interrelatedness of these institutions shows that a Black family could get involved with child welfare because of a referral that is made by other systems using a racist lens. Bonnie and Pon (2015) underscored that “systematic forms of bias can negatively impact investigations: for example, Black families tend to be referred more often to child welfare authorities by outside sources such as schools and the police” (p. 112). The child welfare system does not have any policies or procedures to measure for racism or biases, and as noted by Bonnie and Pon, they are in a position where they cannot maintain neutrality. Their current neutrality stance supports the reality of the over representation of Black children in care of children's aid societies because of a set of institutional racist lenses used to assess and manage their problems.

Paulo Freire (1970) indicated that oppression protects the dominant group's interest, which ensures they receive privileged treatment in institutions. Similarly, Mullaly (2002) understood structural oppression as the organizing of institutions, social processes, and practices in a manner that benefits the dominant group at the expense of subordinate groups. The discussion on the anti-colonial framework in Chapter 2 is important at this juncture, as it serves to challenge the structures that continue to be rooted in colonial ideologies planted to protect the Eurocentric vision. The literature revealed how structures are supported and maintained through policies, tools, and organizational arrangements that safeguard the interest of the White population. This discussion is an insight into the importance of understanding the fundamentals and impacts of structures from slavery until present. This understanding also shifts one's mind to the question: How can one challenge such colonial structures created in a manner that breeds dependency? There is recognition that structures in society are very complex and tied to them are the notions of politics and economics, both of which produce power.

The recognition of structural oppression throughout the generations positions this discussion to show how this has influenced parenting within the Black community. DeGruy (2005) discussed how societal systems have a greater power than any parents or community. Furthermore, she indicated that within particular systems, legislation and policies were created to control Black people and were sustained from generation to generation. This was further highlighted by the voices of Black parents in the dialogue circles. Their voices supported what was emphasized by authors like Clarke (2011), Pon et al. (2011), and Wane et al. (2013).

The systemic racism embedded in the system puts Black people at a disadvantage and, at times, leave them depleted because they often find themselves fighting for justice and their rights. The problem for some Black people is that they fear these systems because of years of abuse they faced in dealing with these systems. A dialogue circle participant's story about the school system sums up the fear for some Black parents, including how they can find themselves entangled in many systems based on one experience. This story spoke to both individual and systemic racism.

In the school system, you have a lot of teachers that have this colonial thing in their head, and you cannot expect this White woman here and your Black son there, she has fear already inside of her. She's just waiting for the slightest thing, and then next thing you

know, your child could be in the system. It's just like sometimes, I remembered, when one of my sons had just gone to a new school, and what had happened was the teacher there had a ball in the classroom, and she asked him if he knew where the ball was. He didn't answer or anything because that's the way he was, very quiet, but very smart.

He came home and told me, and I was working the night shift, and I was right there in the school, and I said to her, "You are not going to mess with his self-esteem,"... because she was trying to underestimate him, trying to get him moulded in her way, and I wasn't going to have that. I remember at the time, he was supposed to get an A and she gave him a B+. I didn't waste my time with her; I went straight to that principal.

I tell you, thank God, I kept my hands quiet, because I really wanted to use them. You know they bring out the anger within you, and they know, in a subtle way, to try and get you, and if you respond, you can get into a lot of trouble and mess it up for your children. So you have to go in there with your inner strength, and always be there for your children.

I would like to say that a lot of the parents do not show enough interest in coming to the parent meetings and so forth. I don't mean the meetings with just their school record, but on a regular basis, they should come to those once a month, once every two weeks, to see which teachers are the racist ones. They need to know who is teaching your children, because when they have those meetings, many a time, the people on the council there, they're usually mostly the Whites. Very seldom you see parents of colour, and if they come and someone isn't speaking English, they do their best to stop them from coming in a subtle way. They don't give them a chance to speak up or anything, and the parents need, and maybe that's what you need to tell them. They need to go to these meetings and hear what these teachers have to say. A lot of them are racist, I'm sorry to say. Some are there that are good, but a lot of them are racist, and you can find out who they are, by attending those meetings, listening to the little comments and how they try to do their best to get you to not coming and going forward.

The potential impact of this awareness is that Black parents' ability to parent freely or express their feelings may be compromised because of fears of ramification from the different institutions, such as the police or child welfare systems. The unintended consequences may result in a hands-off approach to parenting, and as such, they might have difficulties managing their

children's behaviour and setting realistic expectations for these children. The frustration that faces the Black community is that interfacing with these institutions is unavoidable, because their policies and procedures are structured in such a manner that Black people get referred disproportionately as discussed in previous chapters.

This discussion on structural oppression interlocks with other forms of oppression; this is the root of other types of oppression that flourish in society. This finding suggests that the intent of structures within society is to maintain a Eurocentric view. Thus, for Black people to achieve equality and equity, a dismantling and rebuilding of these structures needs to occur.

While this study confirmed that institutional racism continues to be influential on Black parents, what was surprising is the fear that still exists amongst some Black parents when interacting with mainstream agencies and organizations. It was evident that they have an acute awareness and have experienced generations of racist ideologies and practices that are entrenched in these systems and which have impacted their lives. In the dialogue circles, the oldest person was 85 years old and the youngest was 49, and most could share an experience that spoke directly to institutional racism.

6.3.3 Internalized racism

The issue of internalized racism pervaded the discussion in both dialogue circles and was highlighted in the narratives of the women from the books. Surprisingly, in the twenty-first century, this study confirmed that internalized racism continues to have implications on Black people's self-worth, self-concept, and self-esteem. "Internalized racism is the degree to which members of ethnic and racial minority groups agree with negative racist stereotypes attributed to their racial or ethnic minority groups, and consequently act on these beliefs" (Cokley, 2008, p. 187). Interestingly, as noted by Gopaul-McNicol (1998), that people with lighter colour were given specialized treatment, but when they immigrate, they are shocked that their lighter colour does not afford them the same privileges nor does it protect them from discrimination.

Lowenthal (1982) also found that while some adopted successfully when they immigrate, some endured trauma from this experience. In the new country, they are faced with racism, going from majority to minority status—what was once accepted as white based on shadeism is now seen as black. The complexity of this is attributed to the legacy of slavery, segregation, and

discrimination. My research found similar results to those above: Internalized racism continues to leave life-altering marks on some Black people as it continues to affect their identity and self-conception.

Challenges in contemporary Black families can be seen through the discussions that arose out of the dialogue circles with these Black parents. It shows that internalized racism appears to be coloring some of their views they spoke of their understanding of the challenges in parenting. In drawing from Cokley's (2008) definition, it is evident that some members are adapting the stereotypes created about Black people in their attempt to identify the problem of parenting within the community. The discussion in the circles took a blaming turn, with some participants suggesting that Black people are responsible for their plight. This conversation tied responsibility to material possessions in search of a means of gaining respect and importance in society. Others pointed out that internalized oppression is evident in the way some Black people speak about colour and the value they place on been White skin. These modern-day narratives buy into the notion of the transmission of collective unconscious: "One is a Negro to the degree to which one is wicked, sloppy, malicious, instinctual. Everything that is the opposite of these Negro modes of behaviour is white" (Fanon, 1967, p. 192).

Most astonishing was the discussion on shadism because of the value based on the different shades of blackness. The concepts of shadeism and colourism emerged throughout the dialogue circles in a manner that spoke to the messages that parents give to their children about self-worth based on their skin colour. Often, if children are light skinned, they are considered beautiful, whereas dark-skinned children experience harsher punishments. This was supported by West-Duran (2003), who stated blackness is often linked with everything that is undesirable, poverty, laziness, and stupidity. The literature on Black families and internalized racism dates as far back as 1967 with Fanon's (1967) book on *Black Skin, White Masks* to the twenty-first century, where "within families, the lightest-skinned child is often openly identifies, for this reason, as the favorite, and the children quickly internalize the advantages and disadvantages associated with different skin colors" (Leo-Rhynie, 1997, p. 43). More recently, in the circle, for some participants, their direct experience with internalized racism had left a psychological traumata mark. This was encapsulated in the story shared by a participant:

Can I just say from my personal experience, there is this term called high White, the high White people, and my grandmother was mulatto. I remember the distinction in terms of how she'd treated all her grandkids, she would feed you and there would be food on the table, but there would be special treatment. She raised my mom's first child, and my mother was brown-skinned.. John, my brother when he grew up, she raised him in such a way because he had the colour, he had the high colour, light-skinned, and my brother, as sweet as he is, when he came here and migrated, he could not relate to black women, he married White. I know it was something psychological for him. I remember my grandmother, and I was the dark one, I'm the dark one, and I remember those, like you know, just a couple of times, when I got in trouble and my sister was the one who was wrong, I got the beating.

I didn't know my grandmother enough to want her love, but I remember those instances, and just looking at how it affected my brother, and the history of these ideas, I got so extreme because I wanted to counter the whole thing. I was 'Darkie' right, and my father's side of the family didn't treat us like that, but there were things that were there that affected how we were when we looked at colour. It came to the point where my mother would favour my sister because her hair was nicer, and there was a hairdresser when I came here who would put "relaxer" into my hair. I never felt necessarily like a sense of resentment, but as I got older, I started to see the picture, and it affected my brother in a particular way, but these things where he couldn't relate, and the way selection is made, and the ideas and these terms, favouring children, these are things I saw in reality.

The underpinning tone of this participant's narrative supports Leo-Rhynie's (1997) findings that spoke to the commonness of parents in connecting blame for misbehaving or lack of obedience to their darker-skinned children, as they had the "Negro features to indicate that nothing better can be expected of such children" (p. 43).

Internalized oppression manifests itself in many ways, including displays of self-hatred. As such, this study has emphasized that it is important for the social institutions to understand this mark that colonialism and racism have made on Black people. It causes some Black people to buy into

the rhetoric that Black is no good, because they have internalized the racism that they are experiencing. Memmi (1991) concluded:

The colonized does not seek merely to enrich himself with the colonizer's virtues. In the name of what he hopes to become, he sets his mind on impoverishing himself, tearing himself away from his true self. The crushing of the colonized is included among the colonizer's values. As soon as the colonized adopts those values, he similarly adopts his own condemnation. (p. 121)

The negative effects of internalized oppression can be magnified dramatically if one is unaware of them. Internalized oppression is complex and challenging to recognize. As a concrete example, service providers, at times, rely on some Black people to gain knowledge about the Black community. However, if they are relying on a person who has internalized his/her oppression, the information provided may not be credible because it is based on an individual who has internalized stereotypes and oppressive perspectives developed using a Eurocentric lens.

6.4 Gender Differences

This issue was expected to permeate the discussion, given that a high percentage of the participants in the circles were women. Gender issues were more visible in the results found in the books. Unforeseen for me in the dialogue circles, the main discussion around gender issues was within the context of absentee fathers and single mothers. As such, I am going to focus my discussion on these two areas. As an addendum, I will employ a Black feminist lens in looking in these two areas. This lens not only puts Black women's experiences in the foreground, but it is also a critical lens that rejects all forms of domination and oppression (Wane, 2002).

6.4.1 Black Women's Experiences

I had expected that the discussion similar to the literature would take place about Caribbean women's roles in the family, where they bear majority of the responsibility for the functioning of their household and child rearing as discussed by Barrow (1996), Leo-Rhynie (1997), and Sogren (2011). This was consistent with the results found in the books. These women narratives showed a clear delineation between women's role and men's role in the home. The women were

expected to work outside the home and also be the main caregiver for their children, and as one woman noted:

[We] started at daybreak and worked right on with the lights on at night until we got done it, ten or eleven o'clock at night, and the kids were all on this tractor, they were crying, and they were tired and they wanted to go ... as how I managed having the kids with me—that's why I say my husband was a hillbilly. That was women's work: he didn't look after the kids. When we came in I'd been riding the tractor all day, but I fixed the supper, I washed the dishes, I got the kids ready for bed. (Brand, 1991, p. 178)

What emerged from the literature is that a significant number of black families are headed by single mother. According to Chui and Maheux (2011), Black women represent the largest group of lone (i.e., single) parents in Canada. However, of note is that study participants, although a relatively small sample, did not reflect the statistics, as 56% of the participants were two-parent families. However, acknowledging that my sample was small, I adopted the findings from the literature. Hence, to properly understand this phenomenon of lone parenting I will start my discussion by stepping back into history. As an acknowledgement of their experiences and as a basis for their development, Black feminist thought emphasizes that an analysis of historical, cultural, social, and economic relationship is important for the development of a liberatory praxis (Wane 2007). Hence, similar to my discussion in the pervasiveness of racism, I will adopt a historical timeline.

Results from Hill's (2007) *The Book of Negroes* highlighted the Black women's journey throughout history. During slavery, they were seen as the possession of their White masters and, as such, experienced many brutalities, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. These women withstood abuse without anyone to intervene on their behalf. The womanhood of Black women was not recognized and was threatened. They were denied intimate relationships, and they were denied their rights to parent their children. Black men were helpless in protecting them, as they too were in a similar predicament.

The discoveries in Brand's (1991) *No Burden to Carry* demonstrated that Black women found themselves taking care of families and working in precarious conditions. Black Caribbean women who immigrated to Canada through specific immigration laws, such as the domestic

worker scheme, were forced to leave their children behind and work as domestic servants in the homes of White women. With the emergence of feminism, Black women continued to work as domestic servants, taking care of White women's children while the White women were out of the home fighting for their rights. The rights of Black women were ignored (hooks, 1990).

The literature review and theoretical frameworks chapters showed documentation supporting that throughout history, Black families have been directly impacted, not only by slavery and colonization, but also by other systematic issues steeped in racism that challenge the Black family structure. In reading and re-reading Hill's (2007) *The Book of Negroes* many times for this study and in connecting back to my discussion earlier in this chapter about loss and separation, it was evident that the Black women, despite their struggles, are the glue that keeps the family together. In Band et al.'s (1991) *No Burden to Carry*, the women who were interviewed had parents and grandparents who were the direct descendants of slaves, and they too spoke about the changes that they experienced in their families. The women interviewed talked of the responsibility of the family being left primarily to them, as Black men were forced to leave home in search of jobs, and in some cases when they were not able to find employment, they developed addictions. In almost all cases, the primary responsibility for child rearing fell on the women.

Women participants in the dialogue circles, voices and shared experiences echoed the voices and experiences of generations of women before them. Women participants spoke about losing community support when they migrated to Canada; and a result of this, their children became "latch-key kids"—letting themselves in at home after school—because their mothers had to work more than one job for unsociably long hours to make ends meet. The literature on parenting within the Black Caribbean family spoke to the notion of collective parenting, given that historically, entire villages are instrumental in providing support and nurturance (Arnold, 2006; Barrow, 1996; Sogren, 2011). However, with immigration, the extended family and community members became dispersed, and their roles in providing childcare and child rearing are no longer viable (Evans & Davies, 1997). As such, participants spoke about the burden they felt in parenting, as they went to work and parented with no assistance. One participant noted:

The only thinking was that since there are so many fatherless children being brought up by the mother, she has to work, comes home late, pick up the kid maybe from school/daycare/wherever. If this thing is on a Tuesday, she is not going to go because she cannot. On the other hand, you cannot only blame the fathers, but have to blame the mothers too. If the lady is going to have a child and there isn't going to be a father, I mean she needs to be blamed too. She needs to stop going out there and having children.

The narratives explored for this research spoke to the reality that historically, Black women were not considered as women; they were often portrayed by society especially in books, music and television as unworthy and referred to in derogatory terms. They were not afforded the same privileges as other women. In today's society, Black women continue to struggle with race and gendered issues. As indicated in previous chapters, a significant number of Black families are headed by Black women, and given the functioning of historical trauma, it would be accurate to say that this sense of inferiority does impact their parenting skills. What emerged out of the data is that Black women are adaptable, which was supported by West-Duran (2003), who shared that the negative stereotypes that once viewed Black women as pathological, which is the residue from slavery, has been challenged by the strength of Black women and their adaptability to their circumstances and their critical lens that rejects the stereotypical definitions of them. The Black feminism discourse advances this discussion with the Caribbean women, as it empowers them to redefine their socially-constructed identities (Bobb-Smith, 2007). Work by educators and researchers such as Hill Collins (2009), Pratt-Clarke (2012), and Smith (2000) have tried to disrupt the inferiority narratives about Black women by establishing alternative narratives, thus empowering Black women.

6.4.2 Black Men and 'Absent Fathers'

While this was not one of the main themes—however important, the results from this study suggest that further exploration is needed around Black men's experience in being parented by single mothers. Through this conversation, a discussion about Black men's roles in the family emerged. Interestingly, it was a male parent that brought up this issue. He was infuriated at his father for abandoning his mother with many children, and it was evident through his choice of language that he had unresolved trauma. Surprisingly, this brought out some deficit lens thinking, as some participants spoke about the Black family by discussing the absentee father

and the “strong Black woman.” Such discourse suggests an internalization of how the Black family is presented by the media through a Eurocentric lens. Imposingly, some women in the circles defended the notion of an absentee father, and instead of taking a blaming attitude, they recognized the impact on Black men from the legacy of slavery, thus they were more sympathetic. One female participant went as far to state, “You cannot only blame the fathers, but have to blame the mothers too.” Similar to Evans and Davies (1997), this study has acknowledged that although fathers may be absent from the home, they still played a significant role in child rearing.

This study confirmed that the relationship between Black men and Black women is central to understanding parenting practices within the Black Caribbean. As highlighted in the findings, their relationship is complex because of many factors, which was evident in the discussion mainly from the circles. An opposing view emerged out of the discussion, which is similar to what Loomba (2001) posited: Expectable behaviour lies within the idea of opposing differences. In relations to this discussion, and as pointed out by one participant, when focusing on absentee fathers, it is at the risk of taking away resources from supporting single mothers. The complexity of this argument showed the protectionism stance and the jousting for acknowledgment of their experiences that is important to both genders. While there is some jousting from each gender, one has to put children at the centre, and in doing so, this research asserts takes a commonsensical approach that both parents are important to child rearing. The danger of not supporting and encouraging this is that children turn to outside influences that portray Black parents in stereotypical ways that suggest women are dependent and are sex objects and fathers are irresponsible (Evans & Davies, 1997). If not addressed, this negative undertone will define Black families for generations to come and will continue to sustain generations of unresolved issues.

In sum, this study supports that in constructing a holistic understanding of the Black family, the complexities of gender differences have to shift away from blaming and individualizing problems. Such individualized discourse takes attention away from the root causes of the problems, embedded in colonialism, capitalism, and racism. A Black feminist framework highlights this power imbalance and the historical injustices that exist that mask Black women

and men experiences with racism, poverty, and sexism, which are all influential on understanding their relationship.

6.5 Parenting

This findings in this study emphasized that parenting with historical trauma almost inevitably leads to a poor outcome if the injury of the trauma is not recognized or resolved. The issue of trauma and its influence on parenting has grown critical in light of the recent statistics discussed in previous chapters that showed the overrepresentation of Black families and their children in systems, including child welfare, remedial education, and criminal justice.

6.5.1 Historical Trauma and Current-Day Parenting

The results of my findings confirmed that the Black family is parenting with significant problems because of the residue of historical trauma that continues to be influential. To properly understand the issues associated with parenting in the Black community, one must consider the themes that emerged out of an analysis of the data. My analysis speaks to changing family structures and roles, parenting under scrutiny, and the use of physical discipline. Adams (1999) shared that consideration should be given to Black people's collective historical experiences with forced migrations, exploitation of labour, constrictions on the development of personhood, ethnic cleansing, and the propagation of ideologies that spanned over 400 years. These factors bear evidence to the influence of collective trauma on the systematic lessons and messages on parenting that are unconsciously or consciously transferred and developed throughout the generations, which is grounded in the sum of prejudices and myths (Fanon, 1967). It is through this historical lens that this study offers an understanding on the discourse on parenting.

The data illustrated that omitted from today's conversation on parenting is the *piling on* of traumatic experiences from one generation to the other—and the accumulative influences on parenting practices. This lack of recognition leads to the wrong outcomes for children, as according to de Viñar (2012), the traumatic marks produced by violent events are repressive and are sustained in children's development and personality and the family group as a whole. My research has pointed to the problematizing of Black parenting practices within the context of the presenting problems in families, without looking at historical influences. When things go wrong, there is a tendency to resort to blaming parents and labeling children. Researchers demonstrated

very clearly that for Black people, racism brings particular attention to their parenting practices (Barn, 2007; Clarke, 2011; Courtney & Skyles, 2003; Pon et al., 2011). My results are also supported by Goodman (2013), who articulated that the other factor that contributes to this disproportionate representation of Black families is based on sociopolitical histories and forms of intergenerational and systemic oppression.

This research succeeded in analyzing specific historical incidents to confirm that consideration has to be given to historical trauma when analyzing parenting practices within the Black Caribbean community. The findings noted in the previous chapter help one understand the traumatic experiences of Black people and demands an answer to the question: How are they parenting with over 400 years of imprinted trauma?

The focus is not only on the mainstream's understanding of Black parenting; also pertinent is Black people's understanding of their parenting within the context of their history. This inquiry pondered if Black people recognize their ancestors' experiences and how those experiences translate into their parenting, their parents' parenting, their grandparents' parenting, and their great-grandparents' parenting. These types of inquiries ought to be traced as far back in generations as possible to provide some understanding and deconstruction of their parenting behaviour. In *The Book of Negroes*, Hill (2007) provided a glimpse into parenting practices pre-slavery and during slavery. In the narratives presented in *No Burden to Carry*, Brand (1991) also offered a glimpse into parenting experiences between 1920 and 1950s, and the dialogue circles brought the voices of 23 Black Caribbean parents between the ages of 49 and 85 with experiences of parenting to the centre of this debate.

6.5.2 Fundamental Underpinning Reality of Parenting

The insights provided in the results suggest that as Black people continue to experience serious trauma, their child-rearing practices are continuously changing to reflect their experiences. As many of the psychic realities of Black people remain the same in the context of living in a racist society, the messages received and transferred from generation to generation appear to still be the underpinning for how Black children are raised. The unfortunate reality about these messages is that they are constructed on past pain. This pain is transferred and incorporated into children's lives without an understanding of what is being passed on and, subsequently, passed on again to

other generations who may experience it as problematic or damaging (Walkerdine, Olsvold, & Rudberg, 2013). Thus, it is conceivable to suggest that some Black parents may be parenting from a place of a deficit, which is similar to other races that experienced historical trauma, such as the Aboriginal communities (Barney & Mackinlay, 2010; Pearce et al., 2015; Roy, 2014). As identified by members of the dialogue circle, this deficit in today's society manifest itself in many different ways and is visible by (a) the number of Black families living in poverty; (b) the number of families that are lone parents headed by females; (c) the number of parents working unsociable and long hours and multiple jobs, leaving older children to care for younger children without the needed surveillance or support; (d) the number of parents with mental health instability; (e) the number of parents who are underemployed or unemployed; and (f) the number of parents who are suffering with addiction issues.

The fundamentals of parenting within the Black community are based on principles that resulted from a reaction to years of oppression. These principles are transferred from generation to generation and appear to compound as other traumatic events are experienced. Parenting principles seemed to be based on the need to survive and develop skills to ensure success. Black parents continue to push their children not to become complacent in society, as they perceive that society does not see them as equal to other children.

The findings emerging out of the dialogue circles highlighted that Black parents' experiences with oppression have influenced the way they parent their children and the messages that they believe are important to pass on. It is important to note that the messages are delivered to build resilience, which is usually missed in the literature on parenting. In the literature, the predominantly Eurocentric studies that inform parenting do not give enough attention to the value of resiliency that emerged from Black parents' discussions in the circles. From the groups' discussions, it was evident that the values transmitted to children by these Black parents were meant to provide their children with the tools to function in a racist society.

6.5.3 Parenting under Scrutiny

Evidentiary presented in this report supports that the reality for Black parents in today's contemporary society is because of their race. Their everyday interactions are scrutinized, and as Fanon (1967) noted, race becomes the marker for oppression for Blacks. For example, Black

families are losing an unprecedented number of their children and youth to crime, incarceration, and child welfare systems. As discussed in previous chapters, these losses are closely linked to oppressive practices, policies, and procedures steeped in racist ideologies. Accordingly, acknowledging the reality of the over-representation of Black children in the systems, this research showed that some Black parents have come to parent with a passion based on a desperate need to ensure their children do not come into contact with these systems. Participants in the dialogue circles acknowledged that this attitude of desperation is associated with messages deeply rooted in their subconscious and psyche that represent hundreds of years of emotional, physical, and sometimes sexual abuse. Such messages are a combination of tribal messages about morality and values, lessons from their slave masters who treated them worse than animals, followed by lessons post-emancipation, which taught them about their inferiority as a race.

Unlike parents from some other races, Black parents are constantly forced to produce a counter-narrative to the negative rhetoric that continues to follow them, reproduced through the media, music, and in the literature. However, some Black parents are not able to produce such counter-narratives given their level of traumatization.

Black Caribbean parents may have shortcomings in their parenting that can reasonably be connected to the consequences of parenting with true, insufficiently acknowledged, and unresolved suffering. Undoubtedly, Black parents' history is marred with the trauma of significant losses, ranging from the murdering of family members to the forced separation from their family and community (DeGruy, 2005). Historically, they had also witnessed their parents being abused and belittled by their slave masters.

6.5.4 Parenting with a Sense of Desperateness for Success

This research contends that physical discipline continues to be a tool that Black parents continue to use to reinforce obedience and good behaviour. In her examination of corporal punishment in the West Indies, Arnold (1982) indicated that the extreme discipline may be the legacy of slavery, which used physical punishment as a form of discipline. As such, unresolved trauma may linger within the psyche of Black parents who may not have the time and resources needed to attend to this issue, given their preoccupation with surviving in a racist and oppressive society.

This research asserts that in understanding parenting in today's context, this history is often not considered. For example, some Black parents may over-discipline their children, attempting to enforce values and discipline to ensure they will be successful. As a result, their parenting style is often associated by mainstream organizations with that of an authoritarian style, as discussed in Chapter 3. Some Black parents in the circle argued that they are parenting in this manner to prepare their children to go out in a racist society whose punishment would be harsher. The problem with this parenting style, however, is that the pendulum has swung too far, as parents adopt a strict parenting style out of desperation for their children to survive and thrive. This parenting style can be considered abusive and can be criminalized by mainstream society that does not understand Black parents in the context of historical trauma based on many forms of oppression. Arnold (2012) also found that corporal punishment was viewed as a way to instill discipline, as the African Caribbean mothers "wanted them to be seen as having been well reared, and not to exhibit behavior which would cause parents to feel ashamed in the eyes of an already critical society" (p. 85). Although this parenting style may be frowned upon and physical abuse cannot be tolerated, the reality for Black families is that they are parenting their children from a place of concern, knowing and having experienced living in a racist society. In the dialogue circles, although some parents attributed their success as adults to being physically disciplined by their own parents, most acknowledged that there is a difference between spanking and discipline. The interesting point to note is that those who saw physical discipline as a transmission of values and teaching lessons recounted their experience in fondness. However, for those who experienced it as abuse, it was evident that their experiences had traumatized them. Anti-Black racism and anti-colonial, Black feminism are critiques of and underscore the pitfall of understanding Black families within a colonial lens and according to Reyes-Santos (2015), highlights the inequities shaped by histories of colonial subjugation and dependency.

This research showed that the unintended consequence of parenting that needs to be addressed with this population is the desperateness with which they parent their children. This desperateness stems from parents wanting to protect children from an unforgiving, racist society. Parents are aware of what their ancestors went through, and although certain behaviours of the past are not sanctioned, there are still policies and procedures that are steeped with racist and oppressive ideologies. Subsequently, instead of criminalizing certain behaviours of Black parents towards their children, the focus should be on understanding where that behaviour is coming

from and presenting parents with tools that are culturally appropriate so that they can be empowered to parent rather than feeling disempowered.

6.5.5 Resilience and Empowerment and Current-Day Parenting

Of interest, this research not surprisingly found that within all the challenges that they face as parents, they were able to be resilient. Black families' strength is drawn from their resiliency and their ability to overcome despite many adversities that are directly linked to their historical experiences. Researchers have noted that Black parents emphasize education, discipline, and respect (Barber, 1998; Barrow, 1996; McLoyd et al., 2000; Moore, 2005); this thesis considers these values to also be strengths.

One of the exciting results was the use of storytelling to assist in empowering children and encouraging them to develop life skills and respect for the land, elders, and community. Wane and Keegan (2007) indicated that respect for elders is significant to the socialization of children, as it recognizes the importance of their ancestral heritage. In the literature review, storytelling and parables were not given much attention; however, within the dialogue circles, it became apparent that storytelling was very important for this generation of parents. This was how they learned and taught lessons about respect, discipline, and responsibility. Examples of such parables included "Idle dog kill sheep," which means if you do not keep yourself busy, you are going to get in trouble. Another example was: "Fire there a mus mus [mouse] tail, but he thinks it is a cool breeze," which means that sometimes you find yourself in a situation, but you do not realize that it is a danger—always be aware of your situation, as things are not always fine. Most parents explained that these parables are what stayed with them and became their guiding principles. Boateng (1983) saw these kinds of parables as moral lessons.

Not surprising, another value stressed was that of education. The value of education was significant to the group, as they viewed education as a tool to escape poverty. With education, they believed that their children would be able to stand up to their oppressors. Interestingly, although success was the end purpose of the value placed on education, the interpretative lens differed amongst the two dialogue circles. In the first circle, the participants were older, and their emphasis on education was because some did not have the opportunity to attend school, and thus, they worked in unfavorable jobs. In the second circle, most of the parents had completed higher

education, by their parents sacrificing and struggling to send them to school, and they were able to secure “good jobs,” and they were acutely aware that without education, their Black children would not enjoy the same success as they had. One participant indicated that education was stressed above everything, and her parents struggled and sacrificed everything to ensure all eight of their children received an education. While education was found in participants’ narratives to be a tool of empowerment, in problematizing the value of education, one possibility is that over-focusing on education could be distracting Black parents from focusing on other important aspects of childrearing, and through this, children may be missing out on other opportunities that could also reap success. For Black parents in the dialogue circles, however, their reality was rooted in a firm belief that education is the tool to lift their children out of poverty.

6.5.6 Is Spirituality the solution to parenting?

In keeping with the passion on the discussion of religion in the data, data from this study strongly supported that religion is a significant contributor to participants’ parenting. This initial discovery was surprising, given that for the Caribbeans, Christianity was an altruistic self-serving interest used by economic-colonist interest under the mask of spreading civilization, which, at the same time, contributed to the oppression of Black people (Serequeberhan, 1998). While there was recognition of the historical lingering of oppression as described by Serequeberhan (1998), for the participants in the dialogue circles, religion was summed up as the most significant factor in their lives. This made sense, given the importance of religion to how they were parented; in turn, religion had a great influence on how they parented their children.

While this finding was not surprising, it was interesting to know the urgency that was stressed in the discussion of religion as it related to parenting. Over 90% of the participants spoke passionately about the role of Christianity and religion in their upbringing, and they cited it as a valuable tool for their parenting. Participants described Christianity as a tool for grounding children in values at an early age. One participant noted that if children do not have God, then they fall for other things and lose their morality. These parents used religion as a major source of resilience. Bobb-Smith (2007) noted that spirituality is an integral part of Caribbean homes, and it assists families to negotiate their lives as well as that of their community. She also saw spirituality as a tool of resistance, which dates as far back as slavery. Like the slaves who turned to the spiritual hymns for saving grace, these parents saw the values of religion as their

children's saving grace. These parents' valuing of religion was reminiscent of the women in *No Burden to Carry* (Brand, 1991). A significant number of those women participated in church activities within their community, and it was through the church that they gained their community support for parenting.

6.6 Applying Results to Current-Day Practices: Shining Light on Assessment Design, Training, and Accountability

The results of my findings open the flood gates for an in-depth conversation about how to address parenting issues within the Black Caribbean population. Assessments of Black parenting practice within social service agencies such as child welfare usually occur with limited knowledge of Black people's lived experiences with oppression. Though the literature available on parenting assessment within the Black community is sparse, it showed a disturbing trend. For instance, in a US study, Jones, Lavalette, and Penketh (1998) found assessments to be inadequate, not speaking to the full historical experiences of Black folks. This gap represents the omission of critical historical experiences influenced by racism at the personal, societal, and cultural levels (Mullaly, 2002). Overall, the literature called for a shift in the dialogue, theory, and knowledge used to formulate assessments and define Black families. Many critical researchers drew attention to the need for critical thinking in practice to fully assist the oppressed people, but their findings are not fully adapted by mainstream agencies (Bisman, 1999; Fook, 2002; Freire, 1970).

As a result of some high-profile cases over the last few decades, the proficiency of child protection workers have been called into question. In response, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services in Ontario developed tools that they hoped would enhance the knowledge and skills of child protection workers. These tools included the *Ontario Risk Assessment Model* (Government of Ontario, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2000) and the Differential Response System (Government of Ontario, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2016a). These models were thought to be important, and the intention was to streamline workers' decision making, enhance workers' professional knowledge, and introduce workers to a broad range of risk factors that need to be taken into consideration (Dumbrill, 2006; Tilbury & Thoburn, 2009; Trocmé, Knoke, & Blackstock, 2004). However, an unintended consequence of

using these tools was that they became prescriptive in their application, and workers became risk adverse. These tools do not fully address or encourage critical thinking (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2011; Fook, 2002; Green, 2011; McRoy, 2011), and they give minimal consideration to racism and the many forms of oppression that affect people of colour.

Prada, Barnoff, and Coleman (2007) indicated that a priority internal to the child welfare system is to have standardized decision-making processes. These researchers found this priority problematic, because standardized tools are too narrowly conceived, and they do not equal better protection for children or better services to families. Krane and Davies (2000) concurred that while risk assessments are meant to enhance overall child protection services and identify high-risk cases, “such systems may also foster and reproduce often concealed relations of gender, race, and class” (p. 35). This leads to confirm assessors’ biases, which, in turn, leads to subjective assessments that do not consider the intersections of migration, race, class, and gender as they relate to parenting.

A major problem with the current system is that it has no built-in measurement for accountability. One can safely argue that a worker’s assessment of clients rarely considers or measures how the worker’s experiences, identity, and attributes influence their decision-making processes (Trocmé et al., 2004). Trocmé et al. (2004) strengthened this assumption when they stated that a “client’s race may affect worker’s perception and attributions, influencing the ways in which information about caregivers and families is represented” (p. 582). Furthermore, Maiter et al. (2009) suggested that for objective assessments, workers need to have a profound understanding of families’ experiences with immigration and as members of a minority group. As well, Foucault brought to our attention that knowledge is much more a matter of the social, historical, and political conditions from which statements come to count as true or false (McHoul, 2015). This implies that for assessments to be reflective of the reality of a family, one has to look at underlying factors that contribute to and inform workers’ assessments.

The focus on assessing parenting within a child welfare system highlights the inadvertent consequences of individual and institutional oppression experienced by Black families. The current system as it stands does not have the sophistication to recognize and understand these consequences. The literature revealed minimal research in the Canadian context that discussed

the issue of parenting within the Black community in Toronto; as a result, this paper relied on data from other countries such as Britain and United States of America. For example, regarding child care policy and practice, Barn (1993) noted that:

For the concept of partnership to become an equal opportunity exercise, it is essential for social services organizations and social and worker to take cognizance of the external and internal reality of Black people in Britain's extremely race conscious society. (p. xiv)

One can only conclude the same for Black people in Canada.

The assessor who enters the home often focuses on immediate risk, and the lens that the assessor is using to assess parenting is often based on broad practices and policies that are laden with Eurocentric values. For example, when a worker removes a child from his/her home, many Black parents' behaviours become uncontrollable. These workers label this behaviour as aggressive, violent, and unsafe for workers. These labels become markers on parents. Workers fail to recognize that this behaviour is reactionary, and the workers' actions triggered the ancestral generational trauma that was dormant and may not even be recognized by Black parents themselves.

In reviewing certain documentaries and literature on slavery, parents' reactions as described in this section are very similar to that of parents in slavery when children would be taken away to be sold by their master. Instead of empathizing and reassuring families that a child would return once the child protection issues were addressed, parents are left alone to console themselves—similar to the slave parents whose children were stolen and sold. Protection workers' interventions and perspectives are often based on a deficit approach loaded with stereotypes and myths and does not recognize and acknowledge Black families' lived experience in the context of societal racism (Graham, 2007).

6.7 The Story of Hope-*Implications for Black Families*

The primary focus of this study was on historical trauma and, as such, the findings of this research acknowledge the existence of historical trauma and pain that continues to manifest within parenting in the Black community. It was, however, evident from the participants of the dialogue circles that one cannot let this trauma overshadow the strengths that exist within Black

families. As noted by participants in the dialogue circles, this power is what drove them, despite their adversities, to raise successful children. Some participants reflected on their ability to navigate the Canadian systems, despite the oppression that they experienced, which has been profound in assisting them to raise successful children. It is through these experiences that the story of hope emerged for Black families. This story of hope recognizes that the resiliency of Black people and their ability to be successful is also part of their transferrable history, and it propels the community to move beyond a mainstream problematizing of their parenting skills.

The story of hope emphasized that the church continues to be important within the Black community, as it provides not only spirituality guidance, but it also offers a sense of community and a forum for older generations of Black parents to give support to the younger generations. The story of hope also recognizes the creation of other informal spaces for parents to dialogue with each other and share information that would support positive parenting. For parents who require support with their parenting, hope supports them in being willing to allow others in their home to assist if they have discomfort with group settings. The importance of community support was highlighted in the process of this study, as a significant number of parents reported that participating in the dialogue circles was impactful on them, and they wish they would have an opportunity to continue to meet with other parents to have these types of discussions.

The story of hope also speaks to parents not fearing systems, but instead challenging these systems to ensure that their needs and their children's needs are met. This story reverts to the cliché of *It Takes a Village to Raise a Child*, and as such, this story centres around the Caribbean community mobilizing to challenge systems and to advocate for those parents whose voices have been silenced by years of oppression.

The story of hope recognizes that Black parents come with their unique history that, at times, impacts their ability to parent effectively. Hence, there is an acknowledgment that parenting problems exist within the Black community, and as such, this story gives parents permission to seek out professional assistance.

This story of hope speaks to everyday practical experiences that recognize the values that continue to be generationally relevant to parents, including those values of education, respect, discipline, church, and community. The story of hope speaks to balancing these values within a

home environment that provides children with emotional and physical security. There is a recognition that this would lead to positive outcomes for children, as was evident from the stories of parents in the dialogue groups.

6.8 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I spoke about the different forms of oppression that Black people continue to face on a daily basis and which impact their outcomes, not only individually but also collectively. I began by identifying key areas of oppression and showed that the social institutions cannot enter into a helping relationship with Black parents and their families without giving this consideration in their assessment of family functioning. The voices in the narratives spoke unequivocally of generations of trauma that emerged from oppressive practices. Any tools developed to assist Black parents should be developed from the foundation of an anti-racism lens, specifically an anti-Black racism lens. The systems should also recognize that tools are not enough, as there also need to be measures of accountability built into the system to shift workers' attitudes and perceptions.

In summation, to understand Black parenting within the Caribbean community in today's society, consideration must be given to historical trauma. Without this consideration—and perhaps even with it—mainstream organizations and their practices may trigger behaviour associated with trauma. Equally, consideration needs to be paid to the complexity of understanding Black parents' child-rearing practices. One must also consider the role of the *village*, which includes the church, community, and extended family, in resolving the parenting problems within this community. As evident from the women who were interviewed by Brand (Brand, 1991) and parents in the dialogue circles, the church played a crucial role in families, as it created a support system for families. The church was a forum that reminded children of their values.

While the issue of historical trauma has been left primarily to the psychology field to address, it is important that anyone working in the human care fields, including social services and social work field, understands the importance of this lived reality and the implications of not understanding and integrating a historical trauma-informed lens in their work with families. Historical trauma, also known as intergenerational trauma or multigenerational trauma, is very

complex, and many generations and races are inflicted with such trauma. While my research focused on the historical trauma caused by forced migration, segregation, and racial discrimination of the Black Caribbean population, other populations such as Aboriginals, Japanese, and Jewish populations have also experienced significant historical trauma. My research may be useful for those peoples also.

The two texts I studied and the two dialogue circles I conducted generated topics pointing to issues of trauma that were not addressed in the review of the literature by most researchers. Thus, in understanding this research thesis, there is recognition of the need for a discussion on historical trauma. In seeking to understand the effects of trauma, one has to have a holistic perspective of the influence of trauma on the individual and the collective within the Black population. This understanding is meaningful for this research; although many of these events happened many years ago, the legacy of trauma continues to be reflected in some of the behaviours and beliefs of Black people. DeGruy (2005) indicated that at one point, these behaviours and beliefs were a necessity for survival; however, in today's society, these same practices may be undermining Black people's ability to be successful.

This discussion is important, as it shows a correlation between historical trauma and current-day parenting. It was important to discuss these themes, as they are directly linked to changing parenting behaviour that would influence better outcomes for children, as it is through these children that generational trauma is transferred. In this chapter, it was equally important—as emphasized by participants in the dialogue circles—to highlight that strengths do exist within parenting in the Black community, and it is through this lens that the implications discussed through the *Story of Hope* are underscored as implications directed towards Black parents.

Chapter 7

Conclusion and Recommendations

The objective of my study was to highlight the impracticality of understanding parenting practices within Toronto's Black Caribbean community without a fundamental change in the actions, attitudes, and practices of workers in many sectors of society, such as the school board, child welfare system, criminal system, and within the media. The fundamental change required is an acknowledgement of generational/historical trauma on present-day functioning. According to Schindlmayr (2006), "Generational legacies are presently hindering the formation of social capital and social development, as well as preventing individuals from reaching their full potential" (p. 181). Although Black Caribbean parents in today's society may not be primary subjects of this trauma, they are descendants of men and women whose pain has been communicated and transmitted to them in a variety of ways (Walkerdine et al., 2013).

As such, my research sought to deconstruct two fundamental questions:

1. How can the lenses of slavery, colonialism, and migration provide a new perspective in understanding contemporary parenting and functioning of Black Caribbean families?
2. How do the experiences of Black Caribbean families with slavery, colonialism, and migration influence their perceptions of Canadian social institutions, and how does that in turn influence outcomes for Black families?

As previously stated in Chapter 1, it was imperative for this research to complete an analysis that represented narratives from the past to provide a linkage to understand the residue of generational trauma. Subsequently, by engaging with these narratives from two books (Brand, 1991; Hill, 2007) and from the dialogue circles, this study moved away from a traditional method of understanding the complexities that exist within the Black population by adopting a critical analysis of text to understand their subjective experiences as they relate to their parenting.

The overarching emergent theme highlighted the significant amount of mental, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse that Black people experienced stemming from slavery and colonialism. The findings suggested that while the physical abuse may have stopped after the abolition of slavery, the prevalence of racism added another layer of trauma to each successive generation. Subsequently, not only are Black people addressing the influence of trauma that is transferred through their family members (de Viñar, 2012; Kaitz et al., 2009; Lev-Wiesel, 2007; Walkerdine et al., 2013), but they are also responding to their direct experience of trauma based on racism. This research found that the layering and transferring of generational trauma was often not recognized as informative to the assessment of parenting within the Black community, specifically the Black Caribbean community.

The findings also suggested that there is a significant probability that Black people continue to experience issues stemming from unresolved historical trauma. Thus, this research acknowledged that there are problems with parenting in the Black community, which likely leave children vulnerable in their home. The blame, however, cannot be assigned to individual parents because what is evident is that the recognition and influence of historical trauma may not be clear to parents themselves nor to agencies in charge of assessing parenting. Subsequently, for any parenting programs geared towards Black parents, it is pertinent to have a beginning conversation on generational trauma, as acknowledging this issue is the key to changing parental behaviour. However, one must be cautious that one is not making blanket statements that suggest that Black parents with historical trauma are homogeneous. It was evident in this research that Black people's experiences with trauma vary, based on where they are in the healing process and the level and intensity of trauma that they experienced; hence, each parent's experience has to be treated as unique.

Also, findings propose that mainstream organizations should be deliberate and thoughtful about how they use standardized tools to assess parenting for this population. They should find a way of bridging these standardized tools to include the traditional storytelling methods. The significance of this is a change in the worker's attention from administering an assessment tool to listening to Black people's stories. Listening to their stories not only assists in building relationships with this community, but will also help in identifying and recognizing problematic areas in parenting that may be linked to historical trauma. In saying this, however, there is an

acknowledgment that not all Black Caribbean people experience the effects of intergenerational trauma, but if an acute and keen awareness is present when Black parents are telling their stories, there will be the ability to recognize this trauma when it presents itself. Another principle finding is that the Black community needs to be aware of the impact of generational trauma, which presents itself subtly in their behaviour and influences their action. Black parents having the ability and confidence to name this reaction would lead to a reduction of feelings of frustration and inferiority.

The narratives showed the importance of building community capacity to provide support to parents. This study also holds the Black community accountable for bringing attention to this issue. Subsequently, it speaks to the need of having a champion in the Black community who can advocate for tools and programs that are inclusive and reflective of Black people's experiences with generational trauma. The findings also speak to the need to develop a unique relationship with churches and community organizations. In Canada, there are some associations from the respective Caribbean islands, and there has to be a way for including and reaching out to them for coordination of services.

Historically, the church has been a place for support and inspiration for Black people. However, with the declining church attendance in Canada and the acknowledgement "that Canadian society has become more individualistic, while young people are more focused than ever on attaining the credentials, internships and education required for good jobs" (Stunt, 2012, para. 3), this support is no longer reliable. The churches in the Black community play a significant role in supporting practices and rituals, thus enlisting their help reduce the possibility of parenting in isolation.

7.1 Study Recommendations

Research recommendations may not be a panacea to solve all parenting issues within the Black community, but it is a call for action. The recommendations presented in this section speak directly to my research quest.

The first recommendations suggest a critical pedagogy using either an anti-colonial, anti-Black racism, and/or Black feminism discourse be adopted to review how services are provided to Black families. This critical analysis should give credence to historical trauma, using this critical

lens to embrace non-traditional forms of knowing, thus creating programs and services in spaces that are safe. From this critical pedagogy, as outlined in this first recommendation, there should be a revision or development of a parenting program that includes activities on understanding the influence of intergenerational trauma on the individual. This framework would serve to provide clarity and, although specific towards the Black experience, could be beneficial to other races.

Secondly, there is the need to build community capacity by working in partnership with community organizations, such as the churches or other appropriate organizations, to encourage Black families to get involved in their community. Moreover, these organizations must be willing to meet Black parents in their own environments, recognizing that parents may feel discomfort and threatened in particular organizations. Through this involvement, support for parenting could be organically formed with people with similar experiences. Through this assistance, Black parents could utilize their resiliency skills to be creative and ensure that their children are protected and safe in their homes and community. This recommendation acknowledges that informal organizing is a way for Black parents and their children to inspire and support each other.

Thirdly, like the Aboriginal and Jewish population, the Black community needs to advocate for recognition of intergenerational trauma, which emerged out of slavery and colonialism, on their current-day functioning. This recognition would force a change in practice and would hold the Black community accountable for creating changes within government organizations by insisting that they rewrite their policies that are steeped in colonial ideologies.

Fourthly, there is a need for evidence-based practice. Training on anti-oppressive practice is in place for frontline workers. What is known is that despite these trainings, the system continues to operate in a racist framework, and mindsets about Black people have not changed. Hence, this recommendation suggests that there must be not only a focus on training, but also a focus on measurement outcomes to hold the providers accountable in their everyday practice. This proposal serves to provide evidence on changes that are or not occurring.

Fifth, similar to the recognition of poverty and other issues on parenting, there needs to be a bold statement made by mainstream agencies recognizing intergenerational trauma's impact on parenting. Knowledge of historical events such as slavery and colonialism need to be woven into

assessments tool, as it is through this knowledge that Black people and those who are assisting them can be able to recognize and address any unresolved trauma. It is also pertinent for Blacks to begin the tasks of deconstructing their actions to understand their behaviour, as this understanding supports better outcomes for children and their families.

The final recommendation is directed to Black people for them to embrace anti-colonialism and anti-Black race feminism to understand their families, as it is within these frameworks that one understands the trauma and disrupts the trajectory based on this trauma, which can set the stage for better outcomes for their children and families. This can be accomplished by:

1. Creating structures within the Black community that prevent their children being removed from the community when parenting becomes a problem for Black parents;
2. Reclaiming their Indigenous knowledge and educating their children in ways that connect them back to the continent of the Caribbean and Africa;
3. Mobilizing at a wider Black community that includes all Black people, as it is through this coming together that they can effectively support each other in addressing the lingering unresolved trauma.

7.2 Relating to Previous Research

These research findings are broadly in line with research on intergenerational trauma in the discussion chapter, and they are in harmony with research on anti-racism and anti-oppression practices. Regarding my first two research questions, which looked at the structures and individual responses to understanding slavery, colonialism, and migration, the findings of this study appear to be influenced specifically by the work of the researchers discussed in Chapter 2. Many of these researchers spoke directly to the understanding of past-colonial structures in shaping today's society. This knowledge is essential, as it is through these structures that the traumatic experiences took root.

The book summaries and the voices of the Black parents from the dialogue circles, both of which were presented in Chapter 5, were able to demonstrate why mainstream assessments and theoretical frameworks of understanding parenting within the Black community are ineffective.

As apparent in Chapter 3, the mainstream grouping of parenting in categories served to objectify parenting within this community in a negative manner. Researchers such as Berger et al. (2005), Bernard and Gupta (2008), Clarke (2011), Pon et al. (2011), and Trocmé, MacLaurin, and Fallon (2000) were on the right track when they spoke about the influence of racism on oppressive practices in systems that are responsible for assessing parenting. They provided some support to my discussion presented in Chapter 6. However, they fell a bit short by not fully recognizing the influence of intergenerational trauma.

A main work applied to this research was in the chapter two discussion on the critical theory framework, which referenced modern critical thinkers such as George Dei and Njoki Wane, who spoke to the tenets of anti-colonial, anti-Black racism, and Black feminism discursive. This literature helped me to interrogate critically and deconstruct Chapters 4, 5, and 6 to formulate my assertions and recommendations.

7.3 Limitations

I should stress that my study has been primarily concerned with understanding the intimate details of traumatic events that have influenced intergenerational trauma. The sample size of the dialogue circles represents only a fragment of the Black population, hence wide assumptions cannot be made about all Black parents' experiences.

Another limitation is that the books selected inadvertently focussed more on Black women's suffering during these traumatic experiences, but there is an acknowledgment that Black men's sufferings are just as important. In addition, despite the attempt to get an equal amount of Black men and women, men were underrepresented in both dialogue circles.

7.4 Autobiographical Reflection

Undertaking this research study has proven to be an invaluable experience. I have gained extensive knowledge of research methodologies and the complexities that arise out of the research process. For example, I have learned that despite having defined categories, when I went to complete my coding, the narratives did not fit neatly into these categories. Hence, a significant amount of time was spent coding, recoding, and redefining categories.

This research also had a profound impact on me personally. I understood that slavery was traumatic for Black people. However, analyzing the intimate details of abuse they encountered helped me to understand some of the behaviours in today's society. Through this research, I was able to understand the gravity and influence of intergenerational trauma. Because of this greater awareness and my role in the social work field, in every conferences and meeting that I attend when the opportunity arises, I bring attention to the influence of intergenerational trauma. Furthermore, in my personal circle, I will also use opportunities to speak to Black parents about understanding their parental behaviours in relation to historical trauma.

The other exciting possibility that arose out of this research for me was the opportunity to consider creating a parenting program that moves away from traditional parenting courses to adapt a traditional storytelling methodology to assist Black parents when parenting becomes an issue.

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Appendix A: Ethics Approval



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT,
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

PROTOCOL REFERENCE # 33752

November 28, 2016

Dr. Njoki Wane
DEPT OF HUMAN, SOC SC & SOC JUSTICE
EDUCATION
OISE/UT

Ms. Carol Wade
DEPT OF HUMAN, SOC SC & SOC JUSTICE
EDUCATION
OISE/UT

Dear Dr. Wane and Ms. Carol Wade,

Re: Your research protocol entitled, "Parenting within the context of historical trauma: Understanding the parenting experiences of the Black Caribbean population in Toronto"

ETHICS APPROVAL

Original Approval Date: November 25, 2016
Expiry Date: November 24, 2017
Continuing Review Level: 1

We are writing to advise you that the Social Sciences, Humanities, and Education Research Ethics Board (REB) has granted approval to the above-named research protocol under the REB's delegated review process. Your protocol has been approved for a period of **one year** and ongoing research under this protocol must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol or consent materials must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process prior to its implementation. Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Research Oversight and Compliance Office - Human Research Ethics Program as soon as possible.

Please ensure that you submit an Ethics Renewal Form or a Study Completion/Closure Report 15 to 30 days prior to the expiry date of your current ethics approval. Note that ethics renewals for studies cannot be accepted more than 30 days prior to the date of expiry.

If your research is funded by a third party, please contact the assigned Research Funding Officer in Research Services to ensure that your funds are released.

Please note, all approved research studies are eligible for a routine Post-Approval Review (PAR) site visit. If chosen, you will receive a notification letter from our office. For information on PAR, please see <http://www.research.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/documents/2014/09/PAR-Program-Description-1.pdf>.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Brower, Ph.D.
REB Chair

Appendix B: Flyer

Department of *Social Justice Education*

OISE, University of Toronto

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH

On

Parenting within the Black Caribbean Population

**I am looking for volunteers to take part in a study on
*Understanding Parenting in the Black Caribbean Population within
the Context of Historical Trauma***

**As a participant in this study, you would join a focus group to share
your parenting experiences in Canada.**

**The time commitment would be: one session for approximately 60
to 90 minutes.**

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this
study, please contact:

Carol Wade at [phone #]

Email: [\[email address\]](#)

Appendix C: Telephone Script

(For participants who call to inquiry about information they received from flyer or word of mouth)

Me: Thank you for contacting me regarding this research.

Me: I am a Ph.D. student in the Department of Social Justice and Education at the University of Toronto. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Dr. Njoki Wane on Understanding Parenting in the Black Caribbean Community within the Context of Historical Trauma. As part of my research, I am conducting two focus groups with participants to understand their experiences on parenting in Canada.

If you agree to participate in this study, I will provide you with further written material. I will also make myself available to meet with you at a mutually agreed upon location and convenient time for you.

OR

Potential Participant – Can you provide me with this information now?

Me: Background Information:

- I will be conducting focus groups starting in November December 2016. The group session would last about one hour.
- Involvement in this interview is entirely voluntary, and there are no known or anticipated risks to participation in this study.
- The questions are quite general. For example, how have migration influence how you parent in Toronto?
- You may decline to answer any of the interview questions you do not wish to answer and terminate your participation at any time. With your permission, the focus group session will be tape-recorded to facilitate the collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis.
- All information you provide will be considered confidential.
- The data collected will be kept in a secure location and disposed of in two years time.

If you have any questions regarding this study or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please feel free to contact my supervisor Dr. Njoki Wane at [phone #] or email [email address]

I would like to assure you that this study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Toronto Research Ethics Committee. However, the final decision about participation is yours.

After all of the data have been analyzed, you will receive an executive summary of the research results.

With your permission, I would like to email/mail/fax you an information letter which has all of these details along with contact names and numbers on it to help assist you in making a decision about your participation in this study.

Potential Participant - No thank you.

OR

Potential Participant: Sure (get contact information from the potential participant i.e., mailing address/fax number).

Me: - Thank you very much for your time. May I call you in 2 or 3 days follow up. Once again, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 416-562-3732.

Appendix D: Interview Guide

Interview Guide- Discussion with Dialogue Circles on Understanding Parenting Within the Black Caribbean Population within the Context of Historical Trauma

Introduction

1. I would like to thank everyone for agreeing to participate in sharing your experiences as parents.
 2. I would like to ask your permission to record the session to make it easier for me to remember what we talked about but I guarantee confidentiality. After the session is transcribed, the recording will be destroyed. Your real names will not be used in any typed documents. .
 3. Your responses are confidential and will only be seen by my direct supervisor or myself at the University of Toronto. Your responses will not be shared with anyone. Given that this is a group reflection, I am asking that you please agree to respect each other's confidentiality and not repeat anything discussed here.
-
1. Ground Rules:
 - i. I would like to hear many different viewpoints and would like to hear from everyone;
 - ii. I ask for you to be honest even when your responses may not be in agreement with the rest of the group;
 - iii. In respect for each other, I ask that only one individual speak at a time in the group.

Inform group that I will hold a session in the future to share research findings and remind them that I may contact them to verify or validate information if required.

Discussion will focus on three main areas:

Section A: Your overall experiences as a parent in Canada or the Caribbean;

Section B. Your understanding of different events in Black history including slavery and colonialism;

Section C: Your understanding of how these events impacted how you parented your children in Canada;

Section D: Comments on the themes of the narrative inquiry that were acquired from my critical narrative analysis of the books, *The Books of Negroes*, *No Burden to Carry* and *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome*

Section E: Demographic Information.

4. Ask if there are any questions? Turn on recorder).

Section 1: Ice-Breaker- About the Participants

Interviewer: Questions below may require some degree of exploration and can be modified accordingly. For each other to get an understanding of whom in the room can you share some background information about yourself? For example:

1. How long have you lived in Canada? What is your country of origin or family's origin?
2. What made you decide to come to Canada?
3. Did you parent in both the Caribbean and Canada?

Interviewer: All questions below require degree of probing. Encourage participants to provide details. Probe for concrete examples.

Use encouraging phases such as:

- What makes you think that?
- What do you mean?
- Can you please give me an example?
- Why?
- What for?
- When?
- How many?
- Tell me more

Section 2- Overall Parenting Experiences

Can you share your memory of how you were parented?

Where do you think that your parents/caregiver learned their parenting skills?

Can you talk about the messages you received in your childhood and the messages you passed on to your children?

Was your parenting practices influenced by these messages?

If you have children or know of other parents younger than you that are parenting, what are the differences and similarities in how they are comparing to your parenting experience.

Section 3: Knowledge of Historical Events

Can you talk about your understanding of historical trauma? What are some of the events that can contribute to trauma? (May needs to define trauma).

What are the outcomes of such trauma?

Can you share your experience or your family's experiences with slavery, colonization, and migration (forced or voluntary)?

Can you talk about the psychical, emotional, psychological and mental aspect relating to the effects of these events on you or your family?

Section 4: Understanding of historical trauma on parenting practices in Canada

How would you describe your parenting style?

What are things from your culture that influences how you parenting?

What are some of the things that impacted your parenting (poverty, etc.)?

What are the supports that were available to you (i.e. church, community)?

Oppression is understood as the domination of subordinate groups in society by a powerful (politically, economically, socially, and culturally), group. Have you experience forms of oppression that impacted your parenting.

Have you had to seek any assistance in parenting? Did these services discuss the possible influence of such things as racism and generational trauma in their assessment of your family?

Are there things that you would have done differently as a parent? Why

What are your personal beliefs relating to parenting? Are these believes influence by your experience living in Canada or your ancestor's experience with such things as racism, colonialism, etc.

(Optional) Section 5:

Share with them my critical analysis of the two books and share the following findings that with participants and ask for comments on them:

1. The effects of historical trauma links to:
 - Loss of self and culture
 - Festering of wounds
 - Feelings of inferiority
 - Resiliency
2. Multiple oppressions that shape Black people lives and influences behavior:
 - Racism
 - Structural oppression (may need to define this)
3. Recognition that the generational trauma that is transferred through Black people's DNA influences parenting.

Appendix E: Information Letter and Consent Form for Focus Group Participants

Dear Participant:

The purpose of this research study is to learn more about how the structures and foundation of slavery, colonialism, and migration affected the functioning of the Black Caribbean family in the area of parenting?

What is my Role in this Study?

I am asking you to participate in a focus group to share your experiences on parenting. You will be asked questions on things that have influenced your parenting across a generation. There are no right or wrong answers. The focus group will take about 60-90 minutes. Your answers and that of other participants will be analyzed to find out how service providers assessments can be improved to lead to better understanding and outcomes for Black families.

Why Should I Participate?

Your involvement in this study is very vital because of your experience as a parent or caregiver. Your participation in this study will help the Black Caribbean workers and community organization to address the parenting needs of Black families in a manner that respects their historical experiences.

Are there any Risks and Benefits to My Participation?

There are minimal risks. For some people, participation may cause some uncomfortable feelings. Please remember that you do not have to answer any questions if you do not want. Your answers will be confidential, and no one other than the other participants and me will know your specific answers. You and all the other participants in the focus group agree to respect each other's confidentiality and not repeat anything said in the focus group or attribute anything said to any particular member. Your answers will be combined with the responses of all the other participants in the two groups. Also, I will maintain the privacy of your answers by never using your real name in my final dissertation.

The research study you are participating in may be reviewed for quality assurance to make sure that the necessary laws and guidelines are followed. If chosen, (a) representative(s) of the Human Research Ethics Program (HREP) may access study-related data and consent materials as part of the review. All information obtained by the HREP will be upheld to the same level of confidentiality that has been stated by the research team.”

Given that this discussion may elicit some emotional responses, given my role as a trained social worker, I will make myself available to meet with participants who are impacted, and I will be able to refer to free services in the community for follow-up should the need arises.

Note- if you are currently parenting or in a caregiver's role and there is any information reported that suggest that a child is at risk, I have a duty to report information to a Children’s Aid Society.

I will provide each participant with a \$20 Tim Hortons card as a token of gratitude for his or her participation.

Do I have to Participate?

No. You do not have to participate. Participation in this study is voluntary. You can choose not to answer any question. You may withdraw your agreement to participate at any time.

Whom Do I contact if I have questions about this study?

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please call Carol Wade- [phone #].

Thank you for agreeing to be part of this research.

Sincerely,

Carol Wade

Doctoral Student

Department of Social Justice Education

OISE University of Toronto

INFORMED CONSENT

I have received a copy of the description of the research, and I understand it in full. I have been assured that Carol Wade, Department of Social Justice-OISE- University of Toronto will respond to any questions I may have.

I know that I can refuse to answer questions and may withdraw my consent at any time.

I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this research as stated above and the possible risks from it. I at this moment agree to participate in this research.

I hereby consent to participate in the study.

(Signature of Participant)

(Date)

(Printed name of Participant)

(Date)

(Signature of Researcher)

(Date)

Appendix E: Participants' Demographics

1. First Name: _____
2. Best way to contact you for follow up (if required): _____
3. If by tel., what time _____
4. Current Age (*please check applicable circle*):
 - 50 – 54
 - 55 – 64
 - 65 years +
5. Marital status while parenting (*please check applicable circle*):
 - Single (Never been married)
 - Married/common-law
 - Separated/Divorced
 - Widowed
6. Education (*please check applicable circle*):
 - Completed Elementary school
 - Completed High school
 - Completed University/College
7. Number of Children: _____
8. Number of Years in Canada: _____
9. Reason(s) for migrating to Canada: _____
10. Caribbean Island of Origin: _____
11. Employment status (*While parenting*): _____