

RESEARCH ARTICLE/ÉTUDE ORIGINALE

# Six Pipelines: Invigorating Race in Canadian Political Science

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## Abstract

This study examines the absence and presence of race- and anti-Black-related issues in Canadian political science. This research employs a six-pronged mixed methods approach, combining quantitative data analysis with qualitative examinations of race debates within the discipline. It investigates introductory textbooks, Black Studies programs, graduate courses, comprehensive examination reading lists, the *Canadian Journal of Political Science* and academic awards. The findings reveal that Canadianists are not exempt from the effects of racism. The results highlight significant challenges in decolonizing Canadian political science, such as incorporating race into university curriculum and providing diversity training for editorial committees at major academic presses. This study underscores the pervasive reach of racism and anti-Blackness in the country and calls for adopting relational approaches to studying Black people in Canada. It contributes to the growing discourse on anti-Blackness, addressing crucial gaps in the discipline.

## Résumé

La présente étude examine l'absence et la présence des enjeux liés au racisme et à l'anti-noirité dans le cadre de la science politique canadienne. Cette recherche utilise une approche mixte à six volets, combinant l'analyse de données quantitatives et l'examen qualitatif des débats sur la race au sein de la discipline. Elle porte sur les manuels d'introduction, les programmes d'études sur les Noirs, les programmes de deuxième cycle, les listes de lecture pour les examens complets, la *Revue canadienne de science politique* et les prix universitaires. Les résultats révèlent que les canadienistes ne sont pas exempts des effets du racisme. Ils mettent en évidence les défis importants que pose la décolonisation des sciences politiques canadiennes, telles que l'intégration de la race dans les programmes universitaires et la formation à la diversité des comités de rédaction des principales maisons d'édition universitaires. Cette étude souligne la portée omniprésente du racisme et de l'anti-noirité dans le pays et appelle à l'adoption d'approches relationnelles pour étudier la population noire au Canada. Elle contribue au débat croissant sur l'anti-noirité et comble des lacunes importantes dans la discipline.

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**Keywords:** Scarborough Charter; Canadian political science; anti-Blackness; racism; racial capitalism; doctoral training

**Mots-clés:** Charte de Scarborough; science politique canadienne; racisme anti-Noir; capitalisme racial; formation doctorale

Recently, Canada has witnessed a considerable surge in public discourse on race and anti-Blackness.<sup>1</sup> The expansion of these debates has heightened interest among scholars and policy makers to explore its effects on Black people. Canada's silence on racism and anti-Blackness is so ingrained that even scholars dedicated to studying the country miss crucial realities. Researchers call for greater attention on the obfuscation of race in the discipline and the application of anti-oppression frameworks (Nath, 2018: 2011). Studies show that introductory Canadian political science<sup>2</sup> (CPS) textbooks have failed to engage with race, contributing to the discipline's inability to effectively address racism (Tolley, 2020). Others examine how gatekeepers such as journals play a role in expunging race from critical debates (Thompson, 2008).

Added to this, neoliberalism's focus on individual responsibility obscures the pervasiveness of racialized violence in Canada (Teclé, 2021: 218–20). As Maynard (2017: 3) argues, Canada remains “insulated by a wall of silence” that downplays the structuring forces of racial capitalism. Racialized networks, institutions and cultures of exclusion in the Canadian academy are not incidental but “an endemic feature of the Canadian economy” (Galabuzi, 2001). Neoliberalism deepens this reality, reinforcing a racially segmented labour market that confines Black workers to low-wage, insecure employment. One thing is clear: Racial capitalism shapes all aspects of Black life yet remains absent from race-related debates in Canada.

Against persistent patterns of anti-Blackness, this study examines the barriers preventing race and anti-Blackness from gaining traction in CPS and outlines steps to advance decolonization. I begin by reviewing the literature on discussions of race in CPS. I then outline my methodology, which employs a pipeline metaphor to investigate the presence of race and anti-Blackness across six different areas of CPS: (1) introductory textbooks; (2) training materials on anti-Blackness and Black studies in Canada; (3) graduate core course syllabi and comprehensive examination reading lists; (4) literature on race in CPS's flagship journal, the *Canadian Journal of Political Science* (CJPS); (5) disciplinary awards and recognitions; and (6) books published on race by three of Canada's largest university presses (University of Toronto Press, McGill Queens Press and University of British Columbia (UBC) Press). Each pipeline represents a distinct conduit through which anti-Blackness operates in CPS. It offers a relational framework for understanding and challenging the structural barriers that shape CPS while offering a model for operationalizing intersectional research in the discipline.

The study examines these six modes of production to reveal the expansive reach of racism and anti-Blackness in the discipline dedicated to studying Canada. I close with recommendations for the discipline, such as partnering with Black Studies programs, reevaluating research principles and values and embedding anti-Blackness throughout introductory textbooks.

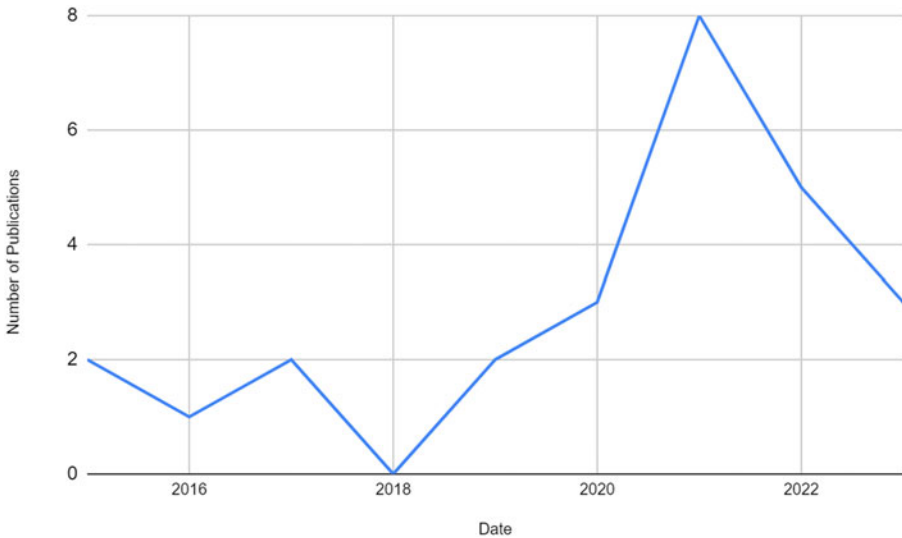


Figure 1. Surge in Publications on Racial Capitalism in Canada.

### Race and Anti-Blackness in CPS

In a landmark statement from October 2023, the *Canadian Journal of Political Science* (CJPS), in collaboration with the Canadian Political Science Association (CPSA), acknowledged the exclusionary role of whiteness and white androcentric paradigms within the discipline (CPSA, 2020). This acknowledgment came with a commitment to fostering “equity, diversity, inclusion, and decolonization” in CPS. The CJPS pledged to embrace new approaches, including collaborative and partnership-focused research. The historical context in which the CJPS’s statement emerged is critical. Three years prior, discussions on racial capitalism were at an all-time high, imploring the CJPS and its editorial board to take a stand on racial injustice in Canada.

Confronted with urgent realities, CPS came face to face with its tradition of absenting race and anti-Blackness from the discipline. As with many institutions, the CJPS was seemingly moved by the confluence of global events that pushed anti-Blackness into public consciousness between 2020 and 2022. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) Movement elevated discussions on race and anti-Blackness in Canada. At around the same time BLM peaked, the Scarborough Charter—led by Dr. Wisdom Tettey—was drafted by some 50 Canadian universities and colleges seeking to address anti-Blackness in the academy (Abraham and Bannerjee, 2024). Developed through extensive consultations with Black communities, academic institutions, government representatives and civic leaders across the country, it marked a pivotal moment in Canadian academia. The charter solidified commitments to increasing the hiring of Black faculty and expanding the availability of programs and courses focused on Black studies and anti-Black racism. Figure 1 depicts the surge in publications on racial capitalism in Canada across a range of scholarly venues, including the CJPS, that occurred after 2020.<sup>3</sup>

I understand racial capitalism as a mode of study examining the conditions under which race and capital emerge as inextricably linked (Alexander, 1985; Robinson, 1983; Yuzyk and Wesley, 2025: 5). Racial capitalism discourse asserts the need to centre the histories of racism, slavery and settler-colonialism in emancipatory projects, arguing that colonial structures of power are not behind us, but rather steadfast and enduring (Bledsoe et al., 2022; Go, 2021; Hjalmarson, 2022; Strauss, 2020: 1215). Although largely absent from CPS—especially until recently—Canadian scholars in human and cultural geography (Ranganathan, 2020; Strauss, 2023), intersectional feminism (Faraday, 2021), city planning (Dantzer et al., 2022) and public health (Sieroka, 2022) emphasize race as a structuring force in Canada, underscoring its ties to global White supremacy and racial capitalism. Emerging CPS scholarship on racial capitalism demonstrates that, although sidelined, discussions on race and anti-Blackness are not entirely absent in the discipline. Canadianists' failure to engage with processes of racialization elide broader patterns of exploitation, including in textbooks, classrooms, journal publication processes and the recognition of "exceptional scholarship." In shaping what is prioritized in CPS, Canadianists, journals and universities influence how race and anti-Blackness are engaged with in the discipline.

CPS has reached a troublesome consensus: The discipline has failed to adequately discuss and engage with race and anti-Blackness. Scholars have pointed out the deficiency in CPS's ability to understand and interpret racialization processes. Most have employed quantitative analysis to document the dearth of attention to these matters, in general. Quantitative analyses provide broad descriptive insights and generalizations of inequality using statistical models, but they cannot explain why racialization occurs the way it does in Canada (Dickovick et al., 2020: 23–24).

Thompson's (2008) study employed keyword searches on "race" and "ethnicity" in three top-tier journals to expose gaps. Thompson's study included an analysis of the *CJPS*, *Canadian Public Policy* and *Canadian Public Administration* (2008: 544). She found that, over the period of 36 years, race was mentioned in 1.6 per cent of the articles in the respective journals (2008: 532). This exclusion is crucial because top-tier journals are key gatekeepers that structure the boundaries and limits of the discipline.

Building on Thompson's work, Nath (2018: 620) and Dhamoon (2011: 7) argue that the omission of race in CPS journals and discourse serves to suppress analyses of White supremacy, colonialism and racism. The obfuscation of race, Nath argues, limits how we conceptualize constitutive forms of violence and domination that unequally impact Black people and other people of colour (2011: 162). These avoidances are not limited to the pages of flagship journals.

Examining about 2,500 pages of content in introductory Canadian politics textbooks, Tolley (2020) found that "diversity content" (that is, material that focused on immigrants and minorities from descendants outside of Canada's early British and French settlers and the Indigenous peoples) amounted to 26 per cent of material. Tolley's findings revealed that there is no mention of Black and Indigenous slavery in Canada, racially segregated schools in the country or its history of anti-Indigenous racism (2020: 61). These findings are crucial because they suggest a broader institutional suppression of anti-Blackness and racism from Canada. The study highlights that, when these topics are engaged with in textbooks, race receives

cursory mentions and superficial engagement (2020: 63). Tolley's findings are significant because textbooks are the most extensively circulated among academics and act as "discursive boundaries for students by introducing them to . . . ideas deemed to be the 'core' of the discipline"<sup>4</sup> (2020: 48). Textbooks set disciplinary norms about what is acceptable and important to study and provide introductory learners important tools on how to do politics and what counts as politics. The absence of race helps foster citizens who lack the capacity to acknowledge and understand processes of marginalization and injustice, cultivates scholars who reinforce the view that minority students do not belong in the discipline and cement disciplinary approaches that are incapable of explaining political inequality (2020: 51).

These studies offer a glimpse into the ubiquity of Whiteness in the discipline, but few have considered the multi-dimensional ways in which anti-Blackness flows into CPS. Pursuing this line of inquiry the present study asks: What are the barriers inhibiting the entry of discussions on race and anti-Black racism in CPS? The findings reveal the pervasiveness of racial capitalism as a primary explanation.

### Racial Capitalism: Theoretical Perspectives

Indigenous and Black scholars reveal how racial capitalism is operationalized through both body and land. Indigenous scholars highlight how racial capitalism reshaped entire ontological practices, severing relational ties to land. Despite extensive contributions by Black and Indigenous scholars, CPS has largely ignored the structuring realities of racial capitalism. Black study underscores the racialized movement of labour power by tracing how European powers extracted Black people from Africa and transported them to the Caribbean and North America to "settle" stolen lands (Nelson, 2015: 335). Black and Indigenous analyses show how the transplantation of European colonial violence and racist practices continues to shape lives in Canada. Indigenous scholars underscore how colonization continues to shape Indigenous relationships with land and reciprocal teachings. Coulthard (2014) explains that the loss of land is tied to the loss of Indigenous ontologies because land is tied to identity, survival and Indigenous people's ability to resist the colonial settler-state. Indigenous reciprocal relationships with land challenge colonial efforts to convert land into property.

Furthermore, Indigenous scholars highlight how settler colonialism, genocide and gendered violence structure settlement in Canada. Audra Simpson (2021) argues that, despite Canada's multicultural image, a deep-seated "death-drive" functions to disappear Indigenous women, evident in the Indian Act's removal of Indigenous women's land rights when they "married out" (2021: 8–10). This structural biopolitics targets Indigenous women's bodies, reflected in the ongoing crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and the state's longstanding refusal to launch an inquiry (2021: 4).

Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Simpson (2017: 154) explains that, in Nishnaabeg epistemologies, all knowledge comes through the land, reinforcing how racial violence and resource extraction sever these relationships (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2021a; 2021b; Simpson, 2017; Spillett, 2021; Starblanket and Kiiwetinepinesiiik Stark, 2018). They reveal the world-transformative, multi-scalar impacts of racialized

violence in Canada, showing how colonialism, racism and capital operate through multi-scalar gendered systems of power that are always unfolding "... within a territory—a specific, identifiable place or land" (Barker, 2019: 6), where power and violence shape and contest all forms of life. I employ the metaphor of six pipelines to highlight the multidimensional nature of structural racism and extractive violence tied to capital expansion.

Racial capitalism underscores the need to pay closer attention to the effects of settler-colonialism, primitive accumulation, slavery and imperialism on the racial inequalities that have shaped Canada (Ranganathan, 2020: 493). Melamed argues that "... 'racial capitalism' requires [one] ... to recognize that ... [capital] can only be capital when it is accumulating, and it can only accumulate by producing and moving through relations of severe inequality among human groups" (2015: 77). Preston points to how Canada benefited from the Atlantic Slave Trade, which extracted Black people from Africa and brought them to the Caribbean and North America, to streamline settlement (2017: 335). Dantzer et al. (2022: 164–66) adds that race and racism are crucial factors shaping urban cities in Canada, underscoring the global connection between White supremacy and capitalism.

Black scholar Wai (2012) traces the entangled relationship between colonialism, racial capitalism and knowledge production, showing how colonial institutions—now positioning themselves as allies—have long constructed Blackness through racialized stereotypes such as "cesspool of evil," "warlords" and "barbaric beasts" (2012: 9). Wai's concept of the "colonial library" shows how difficult it is to recover Black histories that have not been shaped by Eurocentric bias and anti-Blackness. When Black people do appear in the discourse, it is often at the margins: confined to the footnotes of published texts, the diaries of slave owners, or boxes in the basements of archives; tucked under stairwells; or buried in court cases. Archival and historical work on Black history in Canada is onerous and difficult to find, and to the majority of Black people, they are inaccessible. Colonization did not make the retrieval of Black history easy to find or navigate; convolution is technique (hooks, 1990: 12; Hartman, 1997: 10–4; Turner, 2021). The colonial library reveals knowledge gaps, silences, omissions and distortions not as patterns but as features. Thinking of structural racism this way helps us engage more critically with how knowledge is produced and consumed, along with whose purpose they serve (Foucault, 1972: 82; Zinn, 1980).

Race and capital are inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing, allowing one to centre dimensions of racial domination and exploitation that undergird nation-building (Alexander, 1985; Levenson and Paret, 2023; Robinson, 1983). Canadianists play crucial roles in structuring the socio-political and economic realities of Black people through novel policy interventions and cutting-edge theories. CPS is intertwined with modern systems of race and class domination, and it is essential for scholars not only to identify challenges of racism and anti-Blackness but also to propose meaningful solutions.

## Study Method and Procedures

This study views race as a social construct, a "floating signifier" whose meaning shifts over time. Originating from imperial and colonial domination, race was used

to govern and exploit, creating hierarchies for profit (Hall, 1997). Racism involves systematic processes, such as slavery, that devalue labour to maximize profit, leading to stark socio-economic and political disparities (Melamed, 2015: 77). While race and racism affect all racialized people differently, I refer to “anti-Blackness” to underscore the specific impacts of race and racism on Black people in Canada.

I employ a relational approach<sup>5</sup> to the study of race and anti-Blackness in Canada. I use empirical data to identify the presence or absence of discussions on racism and anti-Blackness within both the formal and informal academic processes involved in establishing norms, traditions and disciplinary cultures that define what is acceptable or desirable to study and that attract and train some students while repelling others. *CJPS* and *CPSA* are at the formal apex of the discipline, administered by the professional association with elected boards, policies and best practices. Below them are scholarly presses, textbook production, courses and other training materials. Though formal institutions influence the informal curricula, they are not administered by CPS. Individual political science departments set their own reading lists and training programs.

This study examines the political economy of racism and anti-Blackness in Canada by employing the metaphor of the “pipeline” to analyze the production, consumption and dissemination of knowledge in both Canada and CPS. Pipelines distribute essential resources across the discipline, modulating the flow and distribution of intellectual products and practices. Pipelines intersect and extend over vast geographical places, symbolizing the entrenched cisheteropatriarchal structures that have long influenced CPS. Disciplinary pipelines are emblematic of the broader political and colonial dynamics in Canada, influencing and reshaping locales and people.

Although pipelines suggest a unidirectional flow, their application here accounts for both the movement of knowledge through different valves of the discipline and the exclusionary processes that shape these flows. Just as pipelines facilitate the displacement of Indigenous peoples, knowledge pipelines regulate scholars by defining the boundaries of legitimate political inquiry, systematically structuring out Black and Indigenous experiences. Pipelines highlight that knowledge production is not passive but rather actively contested and reshaped. Resistance to pipelines is not just theoretical—it reflects real material and political struggles that challenge the structures governing knowledge, power and exclusion.

Table 1 delineates a six-pronged approach to training researchers and learners in the study of CPS and in major presses in Canada. Examining these six modes of production, the study seeks to investigate the full life cycle of research and processes involved in training scholars who study and teach Canadian politics.

I start with a qualitative analysis of five of the most widely circulated textbooks among political science departments and bookstores in Canada. I complemented my analysis of the top five textbooks by examining earlier editions and less widely used texts to observe changes in textbook length over time. While the five most widely used textbooks were analyzed in depth for content, the additional texts were reviewed for page count only. In total, the study examined 55 introductory CPS textbooks. In 2020, Tolley conducted a quantitative study on the absence of diversity topics in introductory CPS textbooks by Brooks (2015), Dyck et al. (2017), Malcolmson (2016), Marland and Wesley (2016) and Mintz et al. (2016).<sup>6</sup> Her study



**Table 1.** Six Modes of Production in Canadian Political Science

| Pipeline | Description   | Reasoning  | Number of texts, universities, awards and courses surveyed |
|----------|---|--|--|
| 1        | Introductory CPS textbooks  | Analyzes learning materials provided to novice CPS students  | 55   |
| 2        | Universities with Black Studies programs, certificates, courses, etc. | Examines available resources in Black studies  | 43   |
| 3        | Graduate syllabi and comprehensive exam reading lists                 | Identifies key discussions, themes, frameworks and methods used to train the next generation of CPS scholars | 19   |
| 4        | <i>CJPS</i> research articles   | Investigates race in CPS   | 1,464  |
| 5        | Books published by three leading CPS presses                          | Explores how publishing houses prioritize studies on race  | 900  |
| 6        | CPSA awards and recognitions  | Examines how CPS defines excellence in scholarship   | 117  |

examined the representation of immigrants and minorities, focusing on immigrants and non-Indigenous minorities.<sup>7</sup>

The present study qualitzes Tolley’s research to explore treatments of race and anti-Blackness. This qualitative approach is necessary because concepts such as race and anti-Blackness are often ghettoized into distinct chapters, making it convenient for instructors and students to skip over the content. Using a mixed methods approach I have focused on analyzing the prevalence of race-based discussions and how undergraduates in CPS are introduced to these debates. My study involved searching university bookstore websites for introductory course codes and assigned texts. I included all Canadian universities with undergraduate political science programs. This approach has limitations. Some search results did not populate, because textbooks rotate through bookstores according to school terms. Additionally, courses are sometimes taught by different instructors, leading to variations in assigned texts on the basis of their individual training and backgrounds. I supplemented missing textbook information using publicly accessible information, course syllabi and course outlines to identify the current most commonly circulated CPS textbooks. Using this method, I added one textbook to Tolley’s list: Bickerton and Gagnon’s *Canadian Politics* (2020). I identified key themes and concepts that unify these texts. I analyzed tables of contents, specific chapters on race and anti-Blackness, indexes and relevant areas. I extracted verbatim all content from the tables of contents and identified major themes and concepts such as federalism, constitutionalism and diversity. I then triangulated my findings through a heatmap generated by ChatGPT and Python, as demonstrated in Figure 2 below.

Heatmaps visualize thematic frequency in texts. I inputted the themes into the software as “codes,” and ChatGPT and Python reported how often each code appeared. The darker shades in Figure 2 indicate dominant themes, while lighter



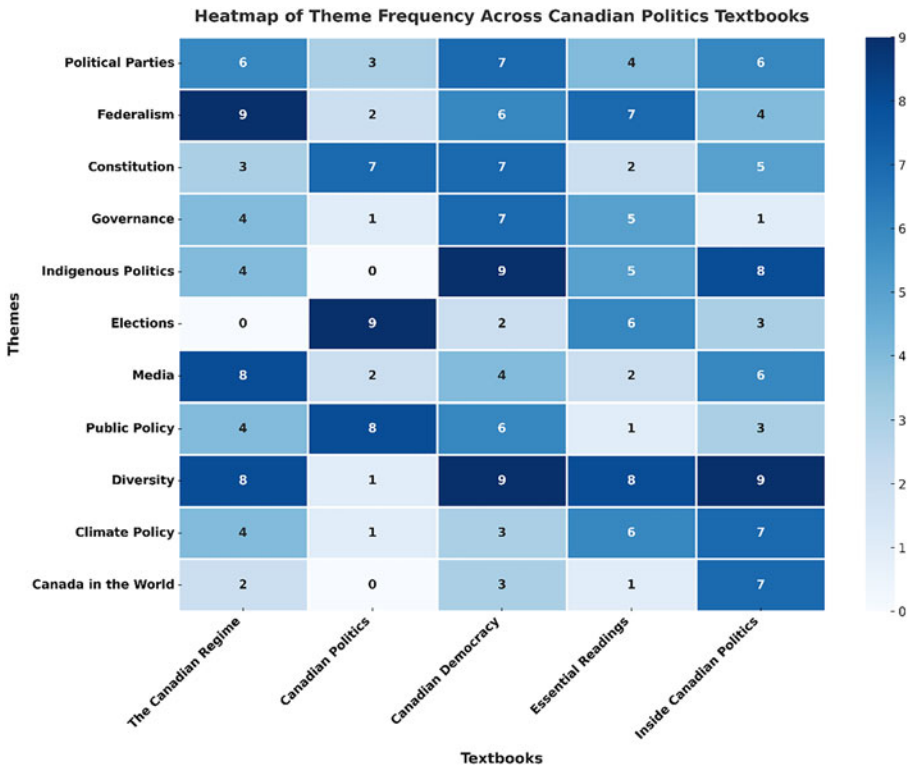


Figure 2. Heat Map of Key Themes and Discussions in CPS Textbooks.

shades highlight underexplored areas. The software processes text data, quantifies occurrences and maps them onto a grid, allowing for easy identification of gaps and patterns (Wilkinson and Friendly, 2009). Evidently, race and anti-Blackness are missing from canonical debates. Diversity figures prominently across all selected textbooks.

Moving through the second pipeline, I executed a broad search to identify universities in Canada with Black studies programs to see whether undergraduate students have access to courses on (anti-)Blackness. I have hypothesized that, if discussions around race and anti-Blackness are not present in CPS textbooks, then they may be occurring elsewhere, such as in interdisciplinary courses. Examining signatories of the Scarborough Charter, I took stock of efforts made in developing new Black studies programs across university campuses since 2020–2021. I assessed the degree to which Canadian universities have fulfilled their promise to foster increased Black intellectual presence on campus by establishing Black studies courses, diploma programs, certificates and degree programs.<sup>8</sup>

As a third pipeline, I conducted an analysis of core graduate courses in CPS by examining syllabi in doctoral programs.<sup>9</sup> I sourced course themes from publicly available information on program websites, along with syllabi procured by way of email request from 19 political science departments in Canada. Departments

**Table 2.** Lists of Awards and Distinctions Analyzed

| Award  | Description  |
|--|--|
| Jill Vickers Prize   | Awarded for feminist scholarship   |
| Donald Smiley Prize  | Awarded for books on Canadian politics   |
| CPSA Prize for International Relations                           | Awarded for international relations scholarship  |
| Vincent Lemieux Prize  | Awarded for French-language books on Canadian politics                                       |
| John McMenemy Prize  | Awarded for articles in the <i>Canadian Journal of Political Science</i>                     |
| CPSA Prize for Comparative Politics                              | Awarded for comparative politics scholarship   |
| C. B. Macpherson Prize   | Awarded for books on political thought   |
| Prix Francophone de l'ACPS                                       | Awarded for French-language political science publications                                   |
| CPSA Prize for the Best <i>CJPS</i> Article in Gender & Politics | Awarded for gender and politics articles in the <i>Canadian Journal of Political Science</i> |

without a political science PhD program were not included in this study. Core courses are a crucial pipeline to study since they help lay out learning objectives, outcomes and current debates for future faculty and researchers (Tolley, 2020: 68). Data from core courses were triangulated with an analysis of 16 comprehensive examination reading lists (also obtained by email request) to identify dominant focuses.

Fourth, the study analyzes peer-reviewed research articles published in the *CJPS*. This includes original articles, book reviews and research notes. The *CJPS* is the flagship journal for CPS, making it an ideal venue to trace the evolution or storyline of discussions on race in Canadian politics (Greenhalgh et al., 2005). I performed an extensive examination of publications on racism and anti-Blackness in the journal, identifying 142 such articles published between 1941 and 2024. The central keyword search included the following terms: “race,” “racism,” “anti-racism,” “anti-Black,” “anti-Blackness,” “Canada AND race,” and “Canada AND race AND politics.” I examined abstracts, paper introductions and conclusions and explored (sub) sections with relevant discussions. I also examined appendices, bibliographies and endnotes.

The fifth pipeline examines three of CPS’s largest presses to map discussions on race. Scanning race-related books published by McGill Queens University Press (MQUP), University of British Columbia Press (UBC Press) and the University of Toronto Press (UTP), I explored how race and anti-Blackness are discussed. Examining academic publication houses is pivotal, as they help shape the disciplines in which they publish and support broader disciplinary goals. Presses, formally and informally, help construct and coordinate the standards in the discipline and determine what remains outside academic discourse.

Lastly, I analyzed major awards in CPS to assess whether recognized publications engage with race and anti-Blackness in Canada. The analysis includes prizes awarded between 1992 and 2023. Table 2 contains a list of disciplinary awards and recognitions provided by the CPSA. Other major awards, including the Donner Prize, were excluded from analysis, as they are not awarded by the discipline itself. The analysis aimed to determine the extent to which the CPSA has historically

honoured race-related works. This strand of research is crucial since awards set the groundwork for disciplinary incentives, signifying the types of research and researchers the discipline values.

## Findings

### *Pipeline 1: Introductory Canadian politics textbooks*

During the height of the BLM movement in 2020 and onward, new textbooks were being published and old editions updated. Hoping “to produce the most accessible and interesting, yet comprehensive and authoritative introduction to Canadian politics available,” Brooks argues that, when it comes to “attitudes” toward race in Canada, Canadians believe that their society does better than the USA (2020: 57). Brooks contends, “There is little doubt that racism and racial violence have been less prominent in Canadian society” (2020: 57). Introductory students are told: “The fact is that demography and history ensure that race and racism are far more central to American political life than to politics in Canada” (2020: 57). Brooks also argues, according to the “World Value Survey, [Canada and the USA] are among the most racially tolerant countries in the world” (2020: 57). Students learn two things: (1) that Canadians have mixed feelings about diversity and (2) that race and racism are not as present in Canada as they are in America. Discussions on diversity and multiculturalism appear in the textbook as separated into distinct chapters, making it easier for students to gloss over. These (limited) discussions are disconnected and disjointed from conventional debates and commitments made under the Scarborough Charter.

Similarly, Malcolmson’s et al. (2021: 13) textbook lacks any mention of racism, anti-racism and (anti-)Blackness. Sporadic mentions of Black people are made in relation to judicial impartiality and democratic neutrality in Canada. Of the 297 pages in the text, 7 pages, or roughly 2.5 per cent, include mentions of “ethnicity,” while the term “minorities” is found on roughly 19 per cent of pages. When discussions on racialized people do appear, they are presented within case studies, leaving the reader with the impression that racism may be limited to a few isolated incidents.

In the case of Bickerton and Gagnon (2020), the study found alarmingly low coverage of race and diversity content. Of 552 pages in the text, roughly 3 per cent engage with race, indicating minute engagement. Although coverage is low, Abu-Laban’s et al. chapter posits that CPS has paid uneven attention to debates on diversity, race, immigrants and Indigenous peoples (2022: 357). Abu-Laban et al. (2022: 360) further observes that, in Canada and CPS, discussions on racism have predominantly engaged with race through the lens of culture, leaving questions about the economic implications of racism unexplored. She argues that, while CPS is now beginning to acknowledge the crucial roles in which Whiteness structures knowledge and power, when the discipline does take up debates on race they are sanitized of Canada’s history of slavery, genocide and colonialism.

Some have taken up the task of rebuilding and interweaving race-based and anti-Black conversations into their textbooks. The study found that Marland and Wesley (2020) infused discourse on race throughout their textbook, making it difficult for both students and instructors to bypass. The authors discuss racism in the past, such

as racism against Jewish people in the context of the Second World War; however, racism also appears in the contemporary context through coverage of the BLM movement in 2020. Marland and Wesley point to the crucial role social media played in deepening conversations on race in Canada, and in the active roles played by citizens to redress racism (2020: 428). They observe that, in 2019, when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was seen performing brownface and blackface on at least three occasions (2020: 449), it exposed the deep-seated presence of racism at the highest institutional level. They highlight the link between cultural genocide and European expansionism during early colonization and the role of the Indian Act of 1876 in state-led genocide through residential schools (2020: 17). The text also acknowledges the contributions of Black, Lebanese and Chinese Canadians to Canada's legislative system (2020: 448). Although these discussions are infused into the text, they are found on only 5 per cent of the 568 pages.<sup>10</sup>

Mintz et al. (2017) also mention race in passing. The text briefly mentions the historical exclusion of Chinese, Japanese and East Indian communities; the Underground Railroad; and the discrimination faced by Black Canadians, such as Viola Desmond in 1946. Racism is relegated to a historical *event* rather than a structure (Wolfe, 2006). Discussions on race are limited to three of 592 pages, amounting to approximately 1 per cent of the entire text. The exclusion of these histories from studies of Black Canadians reinforces myths of Canada as a sanctuary during the "Underground Railroad." Their inclusion, however, unsettles these assumptions, challenging the narrative of Canadian "racelessness" and exposing the state's deep entanglements with anti-Blackness.

The study evaluated the page count of 55 introductory CPS textbooks, including those from Tolley's study (old and new editions), published between 1990 and 2022. This part of the analysis focused solely on the page counts of less widely used textbooks, while also including the top five most frequently used texts. I wanted to determine whether textbooks were expanding or contracting in scope. Given increasing calls to decolonize CPS, the present study hypothesized that textbooks might be expanding owing to the inclusion of more race-based and diversity content. Contrary to the hypothesis, the present study found that CPS textbooks typically range from 400 to 600 pages on average. This trend has remained consistent since 1990.

This trend in textbook pages may suggest several possibilities: Textbook content and quantity may have remained stable over the past 30 years; some content may be replaced by new, specialized debates while maintaining overall length; or there may be a static interpretation of Canadian political life during this period. Crucially, it also implies that textbook content must remain consistent length owing to limited course time and declining attention span among students (Georgiou, 2023). A core finding indicates that the problem facing authors, presses, students and faculty is not merely the length of textbooks but also the values, principles and goals that undergird their teachings.

Aversion to race-related discussions is so entrenched in CPS that even the latest editions of introductory textbooks maintain an attachment to the Canadian myth of "racelessness," a pattern Thompson (2008) flagged over a decade ago. The concern is that, thus, despite national and global resistance to racism and anti-Blackness and deepening forms of inequality, foundational texts continue to exclude critical social

phenomena—an undeniable disservice to student learning and redressing cultures of domination. This approach suggests that, for some institutions, the Scarborough Charter functions as a symbolic gesture to bolster public perception and optics.

Coulthard (2014: 41) warned that, in the neoliberal context, policies of cultural recognition are more acceptable to the Canadian state because they do not disrupt existing legal, political and economic structures. Half-baked approaches to justice and equity reinforce colonial power dynamics, inhibiting meaningful transformation within cultures of exclusion. The inclusion of mentions of race and anti-Blackness in Canada does little to dismantle myths of the country's "racelessness" and "innocence." Instead, it maintains entire social ecosystems that foreclose the entry of diverse epistemological praxis.

Strong policy interventions are needed to restructure the distribution and allocation of funds, ensuring sustained support for rigorous scholarship on race. While the phenomenology of race affects all of us, the responsibility for systemic analysis should not rest solely on Indigenous and racialized scholars. Relational studies of race and anti-Blackness must emphasize the interconnected relationships that shape social and political phenomena, highlighting the need for a broader engagement with these discussions among *all* actors in the discipline and Canada as a whole.

Findings indicate that, if textbooks and the experts who write them are truly committed to studying racialization in Canada, 2020 is not the only starting point. Hudson and Diverlus (2020) argue that BLM had been active in Canada for at least 5 years prior to the 2020 context. Canadianists have had opportunities to engage with race, from the country's first race riot in 1784 to pivotal legal and political moments: the 1793 provincial emancipation law banning slave imports (Asaka, 2017: 55; Galabuzi, 2001: 27), the abolition of chattel slavery across British colonies in 1834 and the 1837 Rebellion, where some freed Black people fought for Canada's independence and were never recognized for their service (Asaka, 2017: 60–65).

### ***Pipeline 2: Exploration of Black Studies programs in Canada***

Over 50 universities and colleges signed the Scarborough Charter, committing to hiring more Black professors and increasing the number of available courses, degrees, certificates and diploma programs in Black Studies in Canada. Four years after its signing, it is time to evaluate its effectiveness and impact.

McGill University was the first university in Canada to develop a Black Studies program in 1978, followed shortly after by the University of Toronto. It would then take another 27 years for the next Black Studies program to be established in 2005 at the University of British Columbia. The greatest proliferation did not occur until between 2020 and 2024, when 15 new Black Studies programs were created in Canada. They were all developed in response to the Scarborough Charter, which has driven a 44 per cent increase in Black Studies programs. Given the glaring absence of race-based debates in CPS, it is essential that both students and faculty studying Canadian politics receive sustained training in racialization processes. Black and Indigenous thinkers have long theorized that the entangled relationship between race, capital and gender in Canada can serve as important springboards in advancing critical engagement with systemic racism. More universities now have opportunities

to train students and faculty by cross-listing courses, establishing new baselines for required textbooks and integrating guest lectures to streamline training.

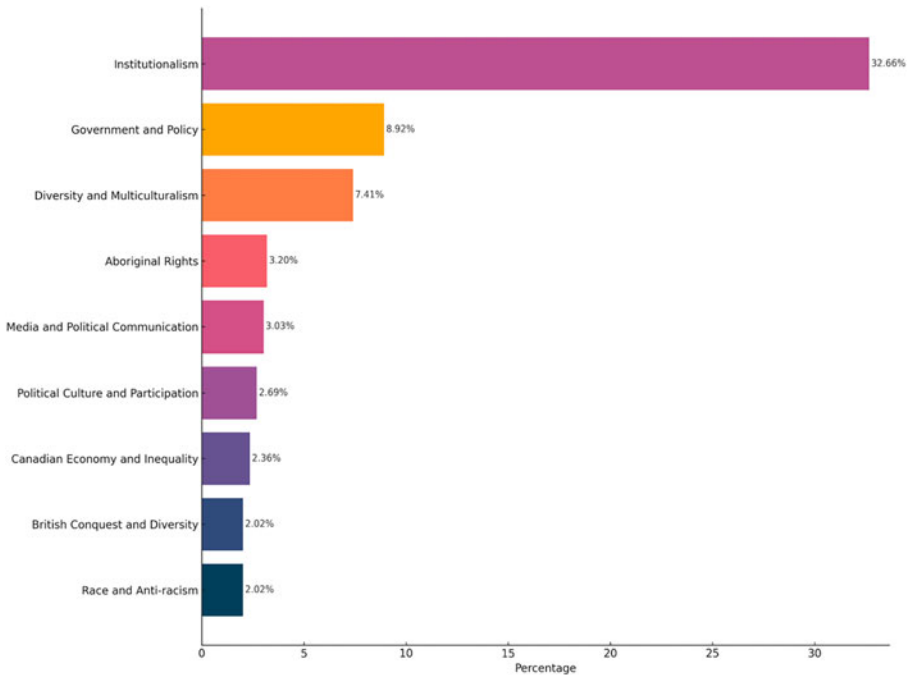
Although students now have more Black Studies programs to choose from, research is needed to examine how Black Studies programs are contributing to CPS undergraduate and graduate training. CPS could consider incorporating cross-departmental training and interdisciplinary approaches to the discipline. They could also consider collaborative approaches to knowledge production with Black scholars to identify common learning outcomes. As departments define the boundaries for optional course credits, it is necessary to investigate whether core degree requirements in CPS discourage students from enrolling in Black Studies courses. Additionally, because race and anti-Blackness have been historically underrepresented in Canadian academia and political science, students may be unaware of their broader impacts across the country—posing challenges to incorporating these topics into curricula.

### *Pipeline 3: Graduate core courses and comprehensive examination reading lists*

A survey of Canadian universities offering PhDs in political science reveals evolving doctoral training methods. Conventionally, PhD students have been required to “master” a list of canonical texts and pass a comprehensive exam. However, institutions such as the University of Alberta, Carleton University, York University and Dalhousie University are adopting flexible, research-relevant approaches to doctoral training. New models allow students to select readings aligned with their research, promoting diverse discussions and a less rigid list. By moving away from a canonical approach, this transition could create entry points for engagement with race and anti-Blackness in doctoral training. While it is early to assess the full impact of these changes on the discipline’s approach to race and anti-Blackness, it indicates a trend toward redesigning doctoral training to address issues beyond the conventional canon.

Although this change is promising, MAXQDA<sup>11</sup> cluster analysis indicated that roughly 33 per cent of training materials in syllabi and comprehensive examination reading lists fall within conventional areas of CPS, such as constitutional politics, federalism, regionalism, constitutionalism, Charter debates, democracy, Quebec politics, citizenship and party politics. Multiculturalism, in general, occupies a mere 7 per cent of key discussions in the discipline.<sup>12</sup>

Even more grim, racism and anti-Blackness constituted about 2 per cent of aggregate training materials analyzed in this study. The remaining materials were broadly categorized under themes of diversity, political culture, political economy, media and communications. This analysis revealed that scholarship in CPS is least interested in studying race and anti-Blackness. While themes of race were present in some course materials and reading lists, they rarely played a defining role in debates. Black, Indigenous and racialized scholarship were relied upon primarily for the provision of case studies and historical contexts. Anti-racism and anti-Blackness themes are notably absent from advanced discourse and training materials available to PhD students in CPS. The key themes identified in core courses and reading lists are displayed in Figure 3 as a cluster analysis.



**Figure 3.** Cluster Analysis of Themes in CPS Core Courses and Comprehensive Examination Reading Lists.

Race and anti-Blackness must be woven into undergraduate and graduate curricula, not as add-ons but as fundamental lenses through which core areas such as federalism, regionalism and constitutionalism are understood. The Canadian state is not merely shaped by racialization—it operates through it. The carving of provinces, regions and territories was/are never neutral processes; it was built on the dispossession of Indigenous lands. Constitutional practices, often framed as the highest legal authority, have been strategically violated to facilitate settler expansion (Rice, 2024: 6–9; Arneil, 1996).

#### **Pipeline 4: Race in the Canadian Journal of Political Science (1941–2024)**

Professors and instructors draw heavily from cornerstone journals such as the *CJPS*, positioning the *Journal* as a principal valve in CPS and an epistemic channel that circulates terms, concepts and frameworks. Journals push content into classrooms, textbooks and carefully curated syllabi. This flow of knowledge is not neutral. Journals operate as political institutions that construct strategic bridges between intellectuals, students and the broader public. I read journals as sites of confluence—always entangled with other pipelines in the production of Canadianists. These intersecting flows sediment disciplinary values, norms and expectations.

The *Journal* pipeline revealed a consistent and troubling pattern in how race is handled. As Figure 4 shows, 77 per cent of publications engaging race or anti-Blackness were confined to book reviews or treated race as a detached variable, while



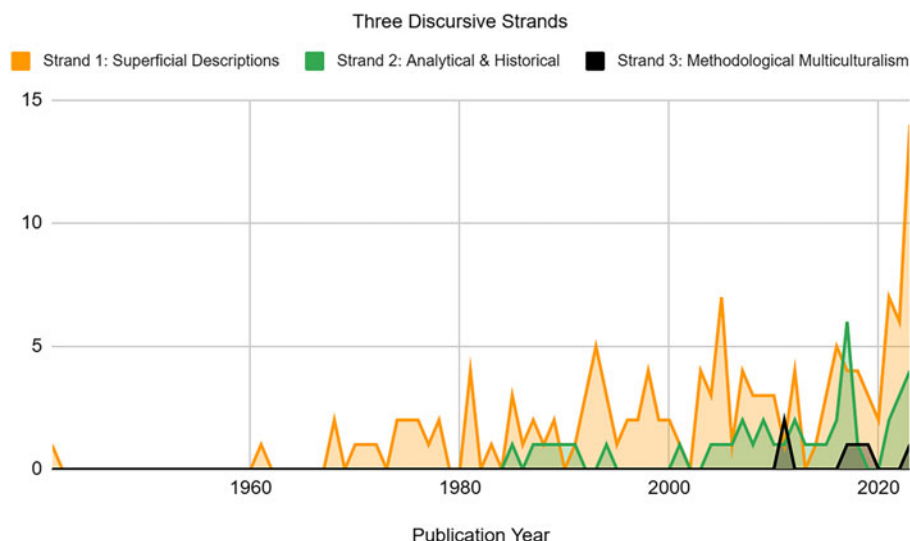


Figure 4. Comparison of Publications by Strand.

only 22 per cent of the discourse delved into race as an object of analysis and a mode of colonial power. When scrutinizing contributions that employ diverse methodologies and frameworks crafted by Black, Indigenous and other racialized scholars, the findings became even more concerning: a mere 4 per cent of discussions on race genuinely incorporated these rich, varied perspectives, titled here as methodological multiculturalism. In other words, since the *Journal's* inception, 7 out of 1,464—half a percentage of the *Journal's* total output—have employed frameworks and methods created by Black, Indigenous and racialized people.

I found that race related debates in the *Journal* can be divided into three strands—each strand corresponding to significant political events. I aligned the strands alongside three historical periods to trace the flows of race in CPS. The first strand, ranging from 1965 to 1979, sees the entry of race as a superficial variable, emerging in a context of racial and political upheaval in Canada such as the Quiet Revolution.<sup>13</sup> These contributions flatten and oversimplify discussions on race, referencing the term a handful of times without engaging it as a mode of power. This strand of scholarship treats race as part of a static dataset analyzed by neutral empirical observers. These conversations began with the works of Carrier (1968), who examined the ethnocultural disparities and racist attitudes that characterized the interactions among early, White European settler groups. Primarily, these contributions shed light on the complexities of racial identities and the dynamics of power between French and British Canadians. Vipond (1985) and Moulaison (2023) further delve into the characterization of French-British Canadians as a distinct racial group.

The second strand emerged between 1980 and 2000, a period shaped by federal debates on multiculturalism and the creation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. During this time, race was framed through historical and institutional logics tied to

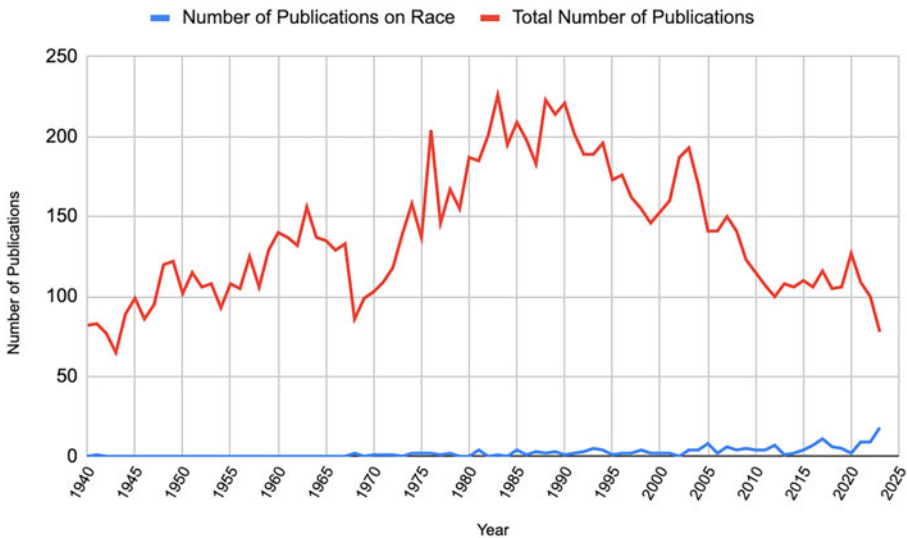


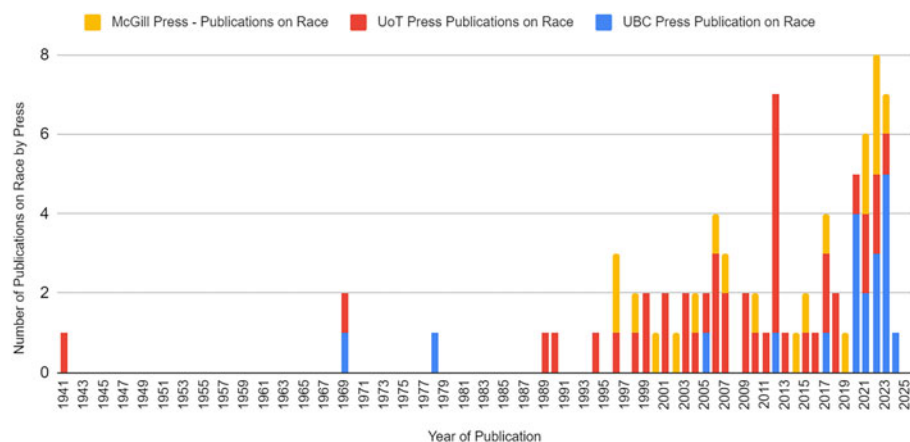
Figure 5. Race-Related Publications Versus Total Journal Output by Year.

colonialism and imperialism. The *Journal* saw increased coverage on discussions of multiculturalism, constitutionalism and federalism and growing debates on patriation and the Charter, shaping how race appeared on its pages.

My examination reveals that, within this segment of the discourse, conversations on structural racism and its persistent effects and renewal were key areas of focus. This strand investigates diverse topics such as issues facing racialized lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning, intersexual, asexual and more (LGBTQIA+) Canadians (Everitt and Tremblay, 2023), feminist advocacy (Green, 2001; Tolley, 2016), the construction of Canadian nationalism (Tossutti, 2012) and contentions around Indigeneity and race (Ladner, 2017).

Around 2011, a third strand of discussions on race appeared in the *Journal*, led by scholars who employed frameworks, methods and approaches created by Black, Indigenous and racialized people. This shift reflects what I call methodological multiculturalism. This shift corresponded to events between 2001 and 2020, including the election of the first Black US president, the expansion of anti-terrorism discourse and the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, all of which reshaped CPS. As shown in Figure 4, the *Journal* began publishing work grounded in Black and Indigenous perspectives, signalling a shift in the form and approach to politics within the discipline. These contributions unsettled dominant frameworks by foregrounding race, colonialism and power, offering methodological interventions that disrupted the normative logics of CPS. In the third strand, scholars engaged race through the worldviews of those most unequally impacted by racial capitalism, pushing the conversation beyond cursory mention.

As depicted in Figure 5, discussions on race have had a long history in the *Journal*. Race entered the *CJPS* as an ethno-cultural descriptor in 1941 (Angus, 1941). When I expanded the keyword search to include “anti-racism” and “anti-



**Figure 6.** Comparison of Race-Related Book Publications in Canada's Largest University Presses by Year.

Blackness,” four mentions appeared, with the first contributed by Abu-Laban (1997). The study revealed that, out of a total of 1,464 peer-reviewed articles published in the *Journal*, 10 per cent of publications used the term “race.” The present study includes 187 articles that address race and anti-Blackness. When I considered specific terms such as “anti-racism” and “anti-Blackness,” mentions shrank to just 2 per cent of the *Journal's* publication output.

Comparable studies in disciplines such as history and sociology in the USA indicate that political science lags behind both disciplines in addressing race (Wilson and Fraser, 2007). When scholars replicated a similar study in Canada, the findings were strikingly similar: “political science ranks last among its sister disciplines of history and sociology in terms of the inclusion of race but falls between the two for its consideration of ethnicity” (Thompson, 2008: 531). While Thompson (2008) focuses on the broader field of political science, my study narrows in on CPS, building on and updating Thompson's findings by extending the timeline beyond her 2006 cut-off. Between 1941 and 1999, 7.85 per cent of the *Journal's* articles engaged race-related topics. From 2000 to 2023, that proportion nearly tripled, reaching approximately 17 per cent. This increase signals a growing willingness to confront racialization in Canada. Although race-related publications are rising sharply, total output has dropped well below 1980–2005 levels, a shift that may reflect fewer editors, heavier workloads and other internal operational challenges shaping the *Journal's* current publishing capacity.

#### **Pipeline 5: Exploration of books about “race” in Canada's largest university presses**

Performing a deep scan of race-related publications in McGill Queens University Press (MQUP), UBC Press and the University of Toronto Press (UTP), I find a similar surge in books as was found in *CJPS* articles (Figure 6). Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the selection and formation of these different strands can be found in the Online Appendix.



Figure 7. Cluster Analysis of Core Themes in Academic Presses.

From 1989 to 2019, UTP led the country in publications on race and has since been surpassed by UBC Press. MQUP has been steadily publishing race-related works since 1996 and has consistently maintained this focus since then. This suggests a steady increase in discussions on race across university presses that publish work on CPS. However, this trend must be considered in proportion to each press's overall outputs, which have also increased. MQUP has published just over 3,000 books in its history, for example. Of these, race-related publications amounted to about 1 per cent. When narrowed to publications including discussions of race in Canada, the percentage is halved.<sup>14</sup> More precarious are conversations related to anti-racism, anti-Blackness, Black studies and the Black diaspora more generally. Only 17 MQUP books, or 0.5 per cent of the press's total output, engaged with Blackness. Findings on race-related books in UBC Press are also low. UBC Press has published roughly 2,490 books since its creation in 1971. The present study found that race-related publications amounted to about 2 per cent. A comparable trend was observed when examining UTP Press. The present study found that, out of 65,000 books published by the press between 1901 and 2024, only 8 focused on race were identified, demonstrating scant engagement with anti-Black racism. These findings suggest that book publications in Canada rarely discuss race, particularly within the country's own context. The study found that national and comparative accounts of race—on multiple scales of Black life in Canada—remain marginal.

An aggregate analysis of themes covered across these three academic presses throughout their respective histories indicates growing mention of race, social justice, gender and class. Figure 7 illustrates key themes and concepts that were present in these presses such as constitutionalism, federalism, racism and party politics. Nevertheless, the absence of anti-Blackness in key debates is glaring. I uncovered that, while there is a generalized acknowledgment of racial injustice in Canada, Canadianists have yet to advance critical conversations on the origins of anti-Blackness, specific to the country.

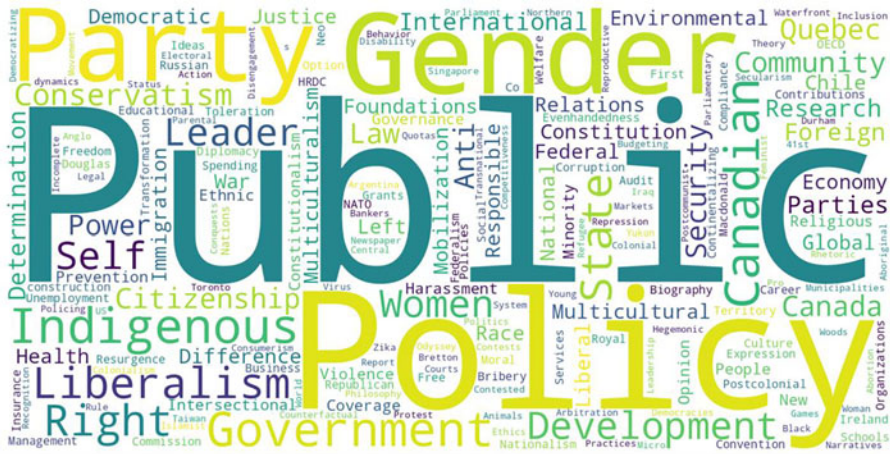


Figure 8. Cluster Analysis of Themes in CPSA Awards and Recognitions.

### Pipeline 6: CPSA awards and recognitions

Considering the multi-scalar modes in which CPS functions, it is crucial to examine how the discipline recognizes and promotes top-tier work. State recognition and disciplinary recognition must not be conflated; disciplinary recognition can serve as a catalyst, inviting students and faculty to critically engage with complex social phenomena and expand the boundaries of Canadian scholarship.

Awards and recognitions solidify disciplinary culture and study parameters while perpetuating power dynamics, including race and anti-Blackness. Examining over 117 individual awards granted by the CPSA since 1992, the study uncovered that race-related recognitions were largely absent. The findings indicate that 7 of 35 awards (or 20% of all awards) were won by scholars doing race-related work, including Thompson's (2022) exploration of Blackness and belonging in Canada. Indeed, the first race-related publication to win a prize from CPSA was Flanagan (2000)—whose *First Nations Second Thoughts* is not considered anti-racist—followed 15 years later by Thompson (2016).

Figure 8 depicts a word cloud of the themes in which CPS awards and recognitions were granted. Gender appears prominent among these awards because two of the awards included in the study are dedicated to feminism and/or gender scholarship (the Jill Vickers Prize). This study also found that themes in major awards and recognitions resemble those found in textbooks, core courses, comprehensive exam reading lists, key journal publications and undergraduate courses, illustrating the full life cycle in which key debates flow. Findings underscore the systemic obfuscation of race and anti-Blackness across all scales of the discipline.

### Invigorating Race in CPS: Racial Capitalism and the Path Forward

Racial capitalism has no fixed edges; it is both structural and phenomenological, moving through land and bodies, shaping varied dimensions of Black and

Indigenous life. Relational approaches mirror these complex dynamics, offering deeper explanations of racialization processes in Canada. Studying race relationally reveals how racial capitalism unequally structures lives across multiple scales. Rather than isolating race and anti-Blackness as discrete objects of analysis (King, 2019), relational approaches trace the expansive and multidirectional reach of racialized violence. This perspective moves beyond singular frameworks, capturing the interconnected articulations of race-related scholarship and the wide-ranging impacts of racial capitalism (Faraday, 2021).

To decolonize the study of race, CPS must foster space for relational approaches to study race, infuse textbooks with discussions on race, prioritize collaborative doctoral training, refine learning objectives, steer institutional transparency, establish intersectional knowledge hubs and strengthen mentorship programs for Black students and early-career scholars. I understand decolonization as the repatriation of Indigenous land and life, and the return of land and distinct relational practices (Tuck and Yang, 2012: 7). This reality, Tuck and Yang argue, makes discussions on decolonization uncomfortable for many. However, decolonization does not need to be studied in isolation from race and anti-Blackness, because Indigenous and Black slavery in Canada coexisted side by side until the early eighteenth century (Amadahy and Lawrence, 2009: 6). Slavery and settler-colonialism are mutually reinforcing. The dispossession of Indigenous peoples and the subjugation of Black communities through enslavement, segregation and economic exclusion have operated in tandem to secure land, labour and capital for the Canadian state. A more nuanced approach recognizes Indigenous sovereignty and Black liberation as deeply entangled, demanding an analysis that moves beyond siloed frameworks.

## Recommendations for Decolonization in CPS

### *Expand relational approaches*

To decolonize the study of Black people in Canada, CPS must adopt a relational approach. The discipline must realize that the political person is part of a web of national and international inter-relationships, and these relationships play important roles in how politics approaches Black life. As such, CPS must develop an intersecting, transnational way of conceptualizing how Black labour and capital enter Canada through racialized circuits (Cowen, 2019).

Analyses of textbooks, disciplinary journals and other tangential studies are first steps. Qualitative researchers should begin by turning their attention to the embodied experiences of racism in the academy and beyond. Interviews, focus groups and workshops can facilitate “thicker” explanations of the phenomenology of racial capitalism in Canada, further enhancing theoretical insights. Researchers should move away from methodological nationalism, which centres the Canadian state as the primary unit of analysis (Hart, 2024), and focus on the lived experiences of racism and systemic inequality in the country. This requires more proactive efforts on behalf of researchers to connect with communities to glean insights into the realities of racism in Canada.

Fortunately, similar debates are occurring in other disciplines from which CPS can gain insights. Racial capitalism scholars in Canada highlight the impacts and



presence of racism and anti-Blackness in Canadian institutions (Maynard, 2017), climate change (González, 2019), racial extractivism (Preston, 2017) and colonial architectures (Toews, 2018). CPS would be well-advised to explore the works of Indigenous feminists who rigorously examine relationships between race, capital, gender and cisheteropatriarchy in the country (Arvin et al., 2013; Simpson, 2017). Their analyses are crucial to underscore the unequal impacts of the colonial matrix of power that disproportionately impacts Indigenous women, girls and gender-queer people, highlighting gender violence as constitutive of settler-colonial governance.

### ***Infuse race into introductory textbooks***

Fragmentary approaches to Black study and racism truncate the complicated movements of power through colonial institutions, constitutions, federalism and other canonical debates. Discussions on race and anti-Blackness must be integrated throughout introductory textbooks. As my study shows, racism and anti-Blackness profoundly impact the lives of racialized people, and textbooks must reflect intersectional realities. This can be systematized by collaborating with faculty in Black Studies to address knowledge gaps or requesting that reviewers be drawn from Black communities. Notable scholars such as Austin (2013), Maynard (2017), Cooper (2006) and Mills (2016) extensively advance these debates. Textbook presses should ensure that Black scholars and instructors are involved in reviewing textbooks and training materials to address glaring gaps. Involving Black and Indigenous scholars would not only strengthen the review process but also distribute the workload more equitably, easing the burden they disproportionately carry alongside professional responsibilities.

Although there is no universal baseline for assessing engagement with race and anti-Blackness in CPS, its absence is conspicuous, especially given the extensive ways Black and Indigenous scholars have emphasized the lethal entanglements of racialized violence and colonialism. Rather than solely assessing progress in terms of statistical trends, focus should be on equipping professors, students and faculty with the analytical tools to critically examine the social and political phenomena. This requires Canadianists and students to be able to identify patterns and interpret trends and processes relevant to the Canadian context.

Race and anti-Blackness must be embedded across the discipline, not treated as peripheral topics, because the Canadian state was built on the systematic exclusion of Black, Indigenous and racialized peoples from dominant discourse (Nelson, 2015). Understanding these structures is not only the responsibility of Black, Indigenous and racialized people—everyone must critically engage with exploitation and injustice.

### ***Drive collaborative doctoral training***

Given the glacial pace of disciplinary evolution, CPS can leverage new Black Studies programs to pair doctoral students with supervisors trained in race and anti-Blackness. Institutions must also consider teach-ins, symposiums, workshops and conferences on anti-Blackness to reshape values and principles. This



recommendation aligns with CPSA's commitment to developing and implementing new approaches in the discipline. CPS and Black Studies departments should explore possibilities for sharing resources, facilities and other cross-disciplinary interactions to drive systemic change. Establishing a Black Studies Caucus to oversee, analyze and safely collect information on the Black professoriate in Canada could further evaluations on racial capitalism in the discipline. The discipline would benefit from a Canada-wide review of progress toward meeting the Scarborough Charter. This report could be led by CPSA in collaboration with the Congress of Social Sciences and Humanities and Black Studies departments.

Departments should replicate the Undergraduate Student Research Awards (USRA) model, which provides financial support for undergraduate students to engage in supervised, full-time research (Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), 2025). A similar initiative at the doctoral level would encourage Black and non-Black faculty to hire Black graduate students as research assistants. The USRA has been instrumental in developing strong research skills among undergraduates, and extending this model could bridge academic divides, foster collaboration and train the next generation of Black, Indigenous and racialized scholars.

### ***Streamline learning outcomes and objectives***

CPS departments should discuss learning outcomes and objectives across Canada to counter superficial engagement with race and anti-Blackness in the discipline. Infusing key values, principles and best practices can foster better training coordination. Cross-campus collaboration could create a new pipeline for comprehensive examination training. These changes must be done with focus on intellectual pluralism across campuses. Currently, some CPS students receive training in race and anti-Blackness, while others do not. Departments should share findings on new approaches and outline best practices for doctoral training. These discussions could happen alongside Indigenous and decolonization discussions at Annual CPSA Chairs Retreats.

### ***Cultivate institutional transparency***

*CJPS* requires transparency to be studied effectively. Researchers need to know what is being submitted, reviewed and published. Black scholars may avoid publishing in *CJPS* owing to sparse discussions and hostile intellectual traditions. Journal impact factors, publication standards and procedures and desired readership and tenure requirements shape how scholars and students publish. As new topics emerge in CPS, it is often difficult to find reviewers; partnering with Black Studies programs can help address the demand for Black scholars. Furthermore, evidence-based research is needed to understand the financial infrastructure of journals for researchers to effectively evaluate funding constraints.

### ***Build intersectional knowledge hub***

CPSA is a confluence where diverse values and principles meet, making it a central hub for driving change. The CPSA should create an Anti-Blackness Action

Committee to evaluate curriculum development, provide training and editorial support and work with students looking to advance race-related debates. Key actors in CPSA would benefit from Knight's (2024) course on Black Canada and similar training materials, as award adjudicators play crucial roles in determining which projects to fund. Journal and press editors must be trained in anti-Blackness to highlight biases and research positionality and how they contribute to the perpetuation of bias.

Training should be developed in collaboration with racialized communities to ensure synergistic practices. CPS must re-evaluate the guiding belief systems of specific pipelines in the discipline, as these values shape the motivations, methods and outcomes of research and knowledge mobilization.

The entire knowledge infrastructure of CPS is embedded in systems of White supremacy and racialized market practices that extract from and exploit the labour of some while securing the status of others. Exclusion, omission and the refusal to acknowledge Black, Indigenous and racialized peoples' lived realities are not incidental—they are foundational to a Canadian model premised on obfuscation and the sidelining of race and anti-Blackness. The discipline's stated principles and values must extend beyond mission statements and publications to confront these structural entanglements.

### *Develop and optimize mentorship ecosystems*

The Scarborough Charter outlines initiatives for academic institutions to address anti-Blackness and racism on campus, proving effective in advancing these debates. CPS should adopt a similar strategy by hiring Black scholars trained in these debates. These scholars should be informed by their histories and lived experiences to realign the discipline's culture and productive processes. However, the discipline must consider creative ways to attract Black scholars and students, given its longstanding traditions of Black exclusion. CPS should consider developing mentorship programs to support Black students and junior scholars in their academic careers. Currently, there are minimal incentives for students and scholars to pursue research on race and anti-Blackness. The CPSA and CPS departments should establish awards and recognitions cross-departmentally to attract world-class scholarship in race and anti-Blackness. This area of the discipline urgently needs critical scholarship, and awards and recognitions could act as catalysts by acknowledging the significant efforts needed to advance this area of Canadian scholarship.

### **Conclusions**

There is growing concern regarding the realities of racism and anti-Blackness in Canada. Often thought of as a multicultural mosaic, the country has basked in its genteel image while failing to address stark divisions. The academy, and CPS scholars in particular, have identified the ubiquity of racism and anti-Blackness, but explanations as to why and how they exist in the country are critically missing. I argue that the pervasiveness of racism and anti-Blackness in Canada is so profound that even experts dedicated to studying Canadian politics are affected.

From introductory textbooks and graduate school curriculums to flagship journal articles, book publications from top-tier presses and disciplinary awards and recognitions, CPS has its own culture, traditions and norms that exclude discussions of race in general and anti-Black racism in particular. While critics identified the absence of race in CPS, relatively little is known about anti-Blackness in particular. Studies tend to focus on broader, generalized accounts of racism, neglecting the specific modes in which distinct forms of racism are articulated.

To address these issues, CPS scholars must integrate discussions on race and anti-Blackness throughout the discipline—from introductory courses to graduate program curriculum to publications to awards. This will involve recognizing and restructuring old systems and awarding the crucial work done by Black scholars to address the pervasive impacts of racial capitalism across all scales of their lives.

Each step in a student's academic journey converges to constitute systems of thought and modes of production. Through these academic processes, culture is created, disciplinary boundaries drawn and rituals and traditions cemented. Publishers and associations such as CPSA act as the vanguard of knowledge dissemination and mobilization, reinforcing norms, setting limits and sketching out the "appropriate" parameters of the discipline. They must play a critical role in reshaping the discipline to consolidate anti-racist strategies.

**Supplementary material.** The supplementary material for this article can be found at <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423925100735>.

## Notes

1 Anti-Blackness describes the racism that targets Black people owing to specific historical experiences rooted in matrilineal chattel slavery, where slave status passed through the Black woman's womb (Morgan, 2018). Living in the afterlives of slavery, Black people descend from Black Africans whom European powers violently uprooted from their homelands.

2 I understand CPS as the study of Canada by predominantly Canadian scholars who share an interest in examining the country's political development. As a discipline it is focused on the historical development of the Canadian Westphalian state, with an emphasis on the role of the Canadian Constitution, courts and federalism (White, 2017: 1).

3 See the Online Appendix for information on publication selection.

4 I use the term "core" throughout to refer to the mandatory forms of learning that students and scholars must complete to earn a degree in political science—those curricular requirements, texts and frameworks that define success in the field. In CPS, the core is shaped by a recurring reliance on White intellectuals and Eurocentric epistemologies drawn from the colonial library.

5 A relational approach considers the broader processes and relationships structuring an object of study, enabling analysis of *general* racism and *specific* anti-Blackness. It focuses on the relationships that constitute, or make, the object of study.

6 For disclosure, the author's dissertation is being supervised by one of the authors of these textbooks.

7 Tolley's study excluded Indigenous peoples from analysis on race because Indigenous people's legal systems predate European colonization and are distinct from minorities and immigrants (2020: 49). The present study considers the intersectional overlap between Indigeneity and race.

8 The study does not include an analysis of hiring processes or the number of Black professors hired through the Scarborough Charter since 2020, because, as Coburn et al. (2017) note, little information exists on the professoriate and experiences of racism in the academy.

9 Details provided on p. 37 of the Online Appendix.

10 Author commentary can be found in the Online Appendix (p. 37).

11 Further details provided in the Online Appendix.

- 12 Details on the sourcing of themes, such as federalism and regionalism, are provided in the Online Appendix (pp. 37–88).
- 13 The Online Appendix (pp. 37–38) offers clarification as to how the strands are categorized.
- 14 Refer to the Online Appendix (pp. 30–33) for the total output per year by academic presses.

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