

ADDRESSING WESTERN ASIAN ALIENATION

Addressing Western Asian Alienation: Exploring the Application of Multiculturalism
in B.C. Government Messaging to Address the Rise of Anti-Asian Racism in B.C.
During the COVID-19 Pandemic

by

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Abstract

Despite multiculturalism serving as a policy for more than 50 years in Canada and 30 years in British Columbia to build acceptance of cultural diversity, the COVID-19 pandemic has served as an impetus for a resurgence of anti-Asian racism in Canada, particularly in B.C. This study explores how the policy of multiculturalism has been applied in Canada's westernmost province to address anti-Asian racism, examining its application from a communication perspective and its unique sub-national context. Using a pragmatic, mixed-methods approach, the study involved a survey of Canadians of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean backgrounds living in B.C., and a content analysis of B.C. government messaging related to multiculturalism and anti-Asian racism within the fiscal periods of 2017-18 and 2021-22. The study finds that the provincial government application of multiculturalism focuses on the fundamental acknowledgement of the existence and value of cultural and ethnic diversity rather than on a more advanced application promoting belonging and integration of immigrants into Canadian society. The findings suggest opportunities for government messaging to strengthen its focus on values related to inclusion that are of importance to Canadians of East Asian descent, and a need for the application of multiculturalism to focus on strengthening the sense of belonging between Canadians of all cultural backgrounds and ethnicities to collectively recognize the common values we share as a basis of a common civic identity.

Keywords: multiculturalism, anti-Asian racism, COVID-19 pandemic, integration, diversity, belonging

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Background

Since 1971, Canada has had a federal policy of multiculturalism that has aimed to acknowledge and respond to the challenges and opportunities of the country's cultural and ethnic diversity (Brosseau & Dewing, 2018). In British Columbia, multiculturalism has been enshrined for three decades with the passing of the Multiculturalism Act in 1993 (Government of B.C., 2022a). Despite this long history of laws and policies that have a shared stated purpose of promoting the full participation of people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, prejudice, racism and hate against Canadians of East Asian descent have not only persisted but surged during the COVID-19 pandemic (Guo & Guo, 2021; Kong et al., 2021). In B.C., the Royal Canadian Mounted Police reported a 350% year-over-year increase in anti-Asian hate crimes in 2020 in the Metro Vancouver suburban city of Burnaby (Burnaby RCMP, 2021), where more than 40% of the population is of East Asian descent (Statistics Canada, 2022a). The Vancouver Police Department (2020) also reported a 717% year-over-year increase in anti-Asian hate crimes in the city in the same year. Across Canada, the number of hate crimes against East or Southeast Asians reported to police also jumped 348% in 2020 compared to 2018 (Statistics Canada, 2021). For non-police reported cases, racist incidents against Canadians of Asian descent spiked in 2020, with 1,150 self-reported cases during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic (Kong et al., 2021). Such significant statistics have garnered international attention, with the Metro Vancouver region being labeled the anti-Asian hate-crime capital of North America (Pearson, 2021). In the second year of the pandemic, a report by the Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter (CCNCTC) and Project 1907 (2022) found that the number of self-reported cases of anti-Asian racism has continued to grow during the pandemic, rising 47%

in 2021 from 2020 levels, with most reports coming from British Columbia. This notable rise in anti-Asian racism has sparked a surge of academic interest in examining the causes and effects of prejudice, discrimination, hatred and xenophobia against immigrants of Asian descent in Canada and their Canadian-born descendants (Lambe et al, 2021; Leigh et al, 2022; Li & Nicholson, 2021; Lou et al., 2021; MacNab, 2021; Mamuji et al., 2020).

Discrimination and racism that immigrants and their descendants experience as they play active roles in the community can significantly impact Canadian society, which is experiencing an elevated level of social and cultural change because of historic levels of immigration in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2022b). According to the 2021 Census, there has been a continual shift in the ethnic makeup of Canada's population that has grown to 39.3 million as of October 1, 2022 (Statistics Canada, 2022c). While nearly 70% of Canada's population identified themselves as white in 2021, a quarter identified as being part of a racialized group. The largest racialized groups consisted of 2.6 million Canadian residents identifying as South Asian (7.1% of Canada's total population), 1.7 million people who identify as Chinese (4.7%), and 1.5 million who identified as Black (4.3%). The census also found that Canada now has the largest proportion of the population consisting of landed immigrants or permanent residents since 1867 at 23% of all Canadian residents. It also notes an increase of more than 1.3 million new immigrants arriving in Canada between 2016 and 2021, with nearly two-thirds coming from Asia and only 10.1% coming from Europe (Statistics Canada, 2022d), highlighting the continued evolution of global migration flows to Canada since Confederation (Brosseau & Dewing, 2018). The rate of change in the ethnic composition of the population is expected to rise with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (2022) planning to increase the annual number of immigrants it plans to

welcome to Canada to new historic levels. After a record number of 405,000 permanent residents landed in Canada in 2021, the government plans to steadily increase the annual number of immigrants coming to Canada to 500,000 in 2025, boosting Canada's population by a further 1.45 million by mid-decade. With Statistics Canada (2022b) reporting that racialized groups are twice as likely to have experienced discrimination since the start of the pandemic, there is a strong rationale to develop, review and enhance initiatives that address racism and support newcomer integration and greater acceptance of the people that make up Canada's diverse population (Berry, 2013; Guo, 2021).

Purpose of Study

This research explores the issue of anti-Asian racism from a communication perspective by examining the relationship between the current government messaging in British Columbia related to multiculturalism and the sharp rise in anti-Asian racism sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic. Much of the literature on multiculturalism in Canada focuses on its application in a broad context, exploring its socio-political dynamics, predominantly at a national, or nation-state level (Asia Pacific Foundation, 2021; Lou et al., 2021; MacNab, 2021; Soroka & Robinson, 2010). In addition, research on multiculturalism in Canada tends to focus on comparisons with the application of multiculturalism in other countries with multi-ethnic populations (Ghosh, 2018; Kymlicka, 2011). There is relatively little research examining the differences in how multiculturalism is applied at a sub-national level in Canada, despite each province's unique multicultural and multi-ethnic makeup and distinct legislation related to multiculturalism that reflect provincial areas of emphasis and differences (Bilodeau et al., 2022; Brosseau & Dewing, 2018; Proulx-Chenard, S., 2021).

This study aims to provide several key contributions to the scholarship. Given the ethnic, cultural, and regional diversity that exists in B.C., and how it differs from other provinces in Canada (Bilodeau et al., 2022; Vormann & Lammert, 2014), the study expands upon the literature by providing an empirical study on multiculturalism within a provincial context and from a communication perspective. Specifically, it examines how multiculturalism has been applied by the B.C. provincial government in its messaging to address the rise of anti-Asian racism, which has impacted Canadians of East Asian descent in B.C., a large and growing segment of the province's population that has continued to make social, cultural and economic contributions despite living with persistent racism and prejudice (Chou et al., 2020; Leung, 2004; Pearson, 2021). This involves exploring multiculturalism and anti-Asian racism from a communication perspective focused on gaining insight into the concerns and needs of the impacted group (Lambe et al., 2021), specifically Canadians of East Asian descent living in B.C. Secondly, this research adds to the literature examining anti-Asian racism by exploring how Canadians of East Asian descent in B.C. have been affected by anti-Asian racism during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the impact it has had on their impressions on multiculturalism and their sense of safety and belonging in Canadian society (Chou et al., 2020; Gover et al., 2020; Guo & Guo, 2021; Kong et al., 2021). Thirdly, the study offers practical implications for government messaging meant to address racism and strengthen the sense of belonging among racialized communities, specifically Canadians of East Asian descent, to support the socio-cultural goals of Canada's policy of multiculturalism and the economic objectives of the federal government's immigration program.

Literature Review

COVID-19 Pandemic Spawns Twenty-First Century Wave of Anti-Asian Racism

The COVID-19 pandemic is the latest global health crisis to spark anti-Asian racism in Canadian society, and in B.C. communities in particular (Guo & Guo, 2021; MacNab, 2021). While people of Asian descent have been in North America since European settlers established colonies more than 200 years ago (Yao, 2021), they have continued to experience racism, defined as beliefs and attitudes that serve to amplify inequality against a marginalized racial or ethnic group that can lead to discriminatory actions (Berman & Paradies, 2010). Anti-Asian racism in North America has persisted with stereotypes that have developed to frame Asians as being distinctly different from, inferior to, or generally unwelcome by the *mainstream*, or dominant, community in one way or another (Lee, 2007; Leung, 2004; Yao, 2021). A common stereotype that has persisted is the *yellow peril* trope that describes Asians as unclean, uncivilized people (Leung, 2004) or a threat to the purity of a historically European-centric colonial society (Chun, 2020; Lee, 2007). Associated with the *yellow peril* stereotype is the *perpetual foreigner* stereotype that promotes the prejudicial view that if someone looked Asian, they were less likely to be part of mainstream society in North America, even if one was born in the New World (Lou et al., 2021). This perpetual foreigner stereotype persists and is illustrated by racist slurs like “Go back to your country,” which are exclaimed by those who believe in the false assumption that if one is not of the same White or European background as the original settlers of Canada, one cannot be a full-fledged, contributing member of society (Lou et al., 2021; Wang & Santos, 2022).

Both yellow peril and perpetual foreigner stereotypes have continued to persist and have made a resurgence in the modern discourse during the COVID-19 pandemic with the coronavirus originally being discovered in the People's Republic of China (Chou et al., 2020; Lou et al., 2021; Mamuji et al., 2020). These prejudicial views of Asians have been amplified on social media and legitimized by people in positions of influence and leadership, like former U.S. President Donald Trump, who used the term *China virus* on his Twitter account to reference the coronavirus, amplifying the yellow peril stereotype on a global scale (Gover et al., 2020; Jack-Davies, 2020). Similar terms have appeared in various forms, even in a mainstream newspaper headline in B.C. (Nassar & Kelly, 2020). Both the yellow peril and perpetual foreigner stereotype have also continued to persist in *microaggressions* on Canadians of Asian descent, through seemingly small comments and jokes made in passing by non-Asians. These presumptuous prejudicial views have negative impacts on the recipients of such comments (Chou et al., 2020; Lee-Won et al., 2017). These examples during the pandemic illustrate a continuation of anti-Asian sentiments in British Columbia, a province that prides itself as Canada's most diverse province (Government of B.C., 2022b). In this context, and given the historic role of community leaders in perpetuating a negative impression of Asians in Canada and the U.S., (Backhouse, 1999; Leung, 2004), there is value in exploring the conceptual context of applying multiculturalism in B.C. government messaging to uncover practical implications that can help address anti-Asian racism.

Growing Academic Interest in Growth and Impact of Anti-Asian Racism During the COVID-19 Pandemic

There has been a surge of academic interest in the causes, effects and potential solutions to the rise of anti-Asian racism since COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization in March 2020 (World Health Organization, 2020). A recent search about COVID-19 and anti-Asian racism produced more than 2,200 links to studies published since 2020. More than 950 of those results have a Canadian connection, either involving studies done by Canadian researchers or focused on Canadian residents, illustrating the significance of this issue and a desire to explore the causes and impacts of this phenomenon (Chou et al., 2020; Guo & Guo, 2021; Lou et al., 2021; MacNab, 2021; Misra et al., 2020).

The resurgence in anti-Asian racism during the pandemic has led many scholars to identify potentially long-term negative impacts on Canadians of East Asian descent. At an individual level, Williams et al. (2022) outline a model that describes the cumulative effects of racism with the stresses associated with historical trauma and experiences with racism potentially leading to traumatization if not addressed appropriately. They note that Canadians of Asian descent who have experienced discrimination not only have their sense of belonging affected, but consciously make changes to their routines to avoid microaggressions, bullying, and the feeling of being an outsider in Canada. These changed behaviours are meant to avoid a negative emotional spiral where initial feelings of shock, fear, shame or anger can lead to anxiety, depression, and ultimately to post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms (Williams et al., 2022). Chou et al. (2020) also find that anti-Asian racism and prejudice are causes of stress that can lead to clinical anxiety and depression if the “chronic burden on the body” is not addressed in a

timely and effective way, which can be challenging given the stigma associated with mental illness (p.8). Misra et al. (2020) also note that the surge in anti-Asian racism during the pandemic and the elevated fears over the health risks associated with COVID-19 amplify the negative psychological impacts of both issues. Wu et al. (2021) noted that anti-Asian discrimination during the pandemic has created an “Asian-white” mental health gap in North America, with Asians who experience pandemic-related discrimination suffering higher levels of mental disorders than whites (p. 819).

Community Impact of Anti-Asian racism on Sense of Belonging and Integration into Canadian Society

The collection of individual experiences of racism can also contribute to broader community-level impacts, which, if left unaddressed, can lead to longer-term impacts on sense of connection and belonging (Berry & Hou, 2021; Bilodeau et al, 2022; Williams et al., 2022). In B.C., for example, the persistent racism-fueled incidents of vandalism against business owners in the City of Vancouver’s Chinatown district during the pandemic has significantly impacted the community’s immediate sense of safety and security (Chan, 2022; Robinson, 2022; Takeuchi, 2020). Given that Canada’s settler history is one defined by immigration, a large body of research continues to examine the conditions and experiences of immigrants and their descendants relating to integration with, and engagement in, Canadian society, and the development of their attachment to a Canadian identity (Bilodeau et al., 2022; Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; Berry & Hou, 2017; Berry & Hou, 2021; Stroink & Lalonde, 2009). Berry (1992) notes that immigrants engage in a process of *acculturation*, where they embark on a journey of cultural and behavioural change as they adapt to the social, cultural, and political

environment of their new country of residence. This can contribute to shifts in individual attitudes, beliefs, definitions of their individual identity, and level of connection with others (Berry 1992). Depending on their choices and experiences in Canada, immigrants and their descendants can embark on four journeys interacting with the society they are adapting to (Berry & Hou, 2021). Firstly, they can strive to integrate their ethnic and cultural identity with the new community and society they now reside in and create a new blended self-identity. Secondly, they can become assimilated into Canadian society and largely discard their ethnic heritage. Thirdly, they can separate from Canadian society and attempt to fully maintaining their original cultural and ethnic identity while living in Canada. Fourthly, they can disengage from Canadian society and their cultural or ethnic community and distance themselves from others (Berry & Hou, 2021). The direction and flow of this journey that immigrants and their descendants can take are dependent on the strength of their sense of belonging to their native cultural community relative to the sense of belonging they develop in the new society they find themselves in (Berry & Hou, 2021; Chin, 2019). Research has consistently found that prejudice, discrimination, and racism all have negative impacts on a targeted individual's or group's sense of belonging and desire to participate in society, which increases the risk of social disengagement or separation from mainstream Canadian society (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; Berry & Hou, 2017; Bilodeau et al., 2022). Stroink and Lalonde (2009) note that second-generation Canadians of Asian descent have to navigate an internalized conflict between Asian and Canadian cultural norms and values, and that this cultural dichotomy potentially leads to a weaker sense of belonging as they strive to fit into both socio-cultural groups. In their study of first-generation Chinese Americans, Benet-Martinez and Haritatos (2005) found a similar cultural conflict between the specific values,

attitudes, and behaviours between American and Asian norms, and that prejudice and discrimination pushed people towards a stronger adherence to their ethnic culture than integrating American cultural norms. This tendency was also found in a study involving 3,000 adult second-generation Canadian immigrants by Berry and Hou (2017) that found that those who have experienced discrimination have a stronger sense of belonging to their own ethnic group than to mainstream Canadian society. These studies illustrate that, aside from potentially affecting the mental wellbeing of these immigrants and their descendants, racism can feed this sense of difference and exclusion, encouraging cultural *separation* where there is a strong desire for an immigrant to strictly maintain their pre-existing cultural connection and identity and not attempt to integrate and participate in mainstream Canadian society (Berry 1990; Berry & Hou, 2017). Ideally, the predominance of positive interactions with immigrants as engaged participants in Canadian society, with the freedom to integrate their cultural and ethnic heritage, serves as the most constructive environment that promotes integration into Canadian society (Berry & Hou, 2021; Bilodeau et al., 2022).

Conceptualizing Multiculturalism to Foster Integration and Belonging

Despite the multi-generational existence of multiculturalism in Canada and B.C., the value and impact of this government policy have remained a contested issue in the academic literature. Much of the continuing debate over the benefits and dangers of multiculturalism focuses on whether the recognition of cultural and ethnic diversity helps to build a unique national civic identity (Brosseau & Dewing, 2018; Ghosh, 2018), or serves to facilitate the persistence of segregated ethnic groups (Kymlicka, 2011; Wong, 2008) that can perpetuate the prejudice, discrimination and racism the policy and laws seeks to prevent (Chin, 2019; Janezic &

Arsenault, 2021; Ku et al., 2019; Lee & Johnstone, 2021). Much of the research focuses on the challenges created by multiculturalism to establish a civic identity among individuals within and between ethnic minority groups in Canada (Berry & Hou, 2017; Cui & Worrell, 2019; Thurairajah, 2017).

While the literature is varied and inconsistent, the debate over the impact of multiculturalism in Canadian society can be segmented in terms of the evolution of how multiculturalism has been conceptualized and applied over the last half-century. Overall, multiculturalism has been used to describe either the sociological reality of Canada's cultural and ethnic diversity; the various government policies at the federal and provincial levels that aim to address the diversity of Canada's residents; or the beliefs and values that underpin the goals of multicultural policy across Canada (Brosseau & Dewing, 2018; Fleras, 2009). While these conceptualizations of multiculturalism are inter-related, the evolution of the relationship between them and the specific cultural, ethnic, geographic, historic, and political contexts within which they have been applied has impacted the various conclusions over multiculturalism's benefits and drawbacks (Bilodeau et al., 2022; Kymlicka, 2021). For example, in the years towards the development and implementation of a multicultural policy in Canada, there was an emphasis on issues related to the socio-cultural impact of a policy shift towards multiculturalism from an assimilationist English-French bicultural emphasis that had existed since Confederation (Berry 2013; Brosseau & Dewing, 2018). Fleras (2009) suggests that the understanding and application of multiculturalism have continued to evolve in Canada from its early emphasis on recognition and acceptance of cultural and ethnic diversity. He suggests the application of multiculturalism has moved to focus on inclusion and integration of cultural and ethnic diversity into Canadian

society (Fleras, 2009). In other words the conceptualization of multiculturalism has progressed from the focus on promoting acceptance of cultural and ethnic diversity, to varying degrees in various contexts, to being a means of fostering a continued evolution of Canadian identity through ongoing interactions between cultural and ethnic groups within Canada's broad cultural and historical mosaic (Fleras, 2009). Multiculturalism has also evolved from being seen as a tool to shift cultural policy from an assimilationist focus to one on acculturation, or the supporting of individuals with multiple cultural or ethnic perspectives and identities to interact and integrate with another (Berry & Hou, 2021; Bilodeau et al., 2022; Kaufmann, 2021). This conceptual evolution of multiculturalism does not necessarily eliminate the conflicting perspectives on the benefits and risks of a policy of multiculturalism, however, it provides an important overarching historical and evolutionary context from which to base the analysis in this research (Berry, 2013). Arguably, this evolution can foster the conditions for what Chin (2019) conceptualizes as *multicultural belonging*, a dynamic socio-political process of *reciprocal integration* that recognizes the benefits of cultural and ethnic diversity through an ongoing process of redefining the collective identity to which newcomers and existing members of a society develop together through continual engagement (p. 729).

Relationship Between Government Messaging and Racism

Government has an important role in addressing societal issues such as anti-Asian racism. Many scholars have effectively shown that prejudicial beliefs racial discrimination, and race-based acts of hate towards people of Asian heritage living in North America have continued to simmer for hundreds of years with the persistence of various stereotypes that paint Asians in a negative light (Jack-Davies, 2020; Lee, 2007; Leung; 2004; Lou et al., 2021). In particular,

Leung (2004) notes that the perception of Chinese residents as a yellow peril was widely held in the late 1800s in Canada, and particularly in British Columbia, by the media, community leaders, and politicians. These prejudices were used to justify various legislated forms of discrimination against people of Asian descent living in Canada, such as the Chinese head tax implemented in 1885 aimed at curtailing immigration from China, which led to a full ban on immigrants from China from 1923 to 1947 (Chan, 2020). The legacy of prejudice against Canadians of East Asian descent remains in various circles of society and the economy (Leung, 2004; Pearson, 2021). In B.C., implications of the yellow peril in the real estate market have persisted, manifesting itself in the continued existence of racist land title covenants that remain on land title records in B.C. (Pearson, 2021; Vauclair, 2021), and the blaming of foreigners, predominantly Asians, for being the cause of the housing affordability crisis in B.C. (Lupick, 2016; Pearson, 2021).

A main reason to examine current provincial government messaging revolves around the ability of official, authoritative communication to provide a needed response to an issue affecting the populace in a timely manner. Government messaging can be an effective means to address a problem in the short-to-medium term, while officials explore longer-term solutions (Kim & Kreps, 2020). This was generally the case, for example, with addressing the growing threat of COVID-19 in various jurisdictions in Canada with public health officers providing updated information and recommendations, many daily, to minimize the spread of the virus prior to the availability of vaccines (Fafard et al., 2020). For messaging to be effective to meet its goals, communication should be “unambiguous, clear, culturally appropriate and timely” (De Faye, Perrin & Trumpy, 2022, p.7). Effective communication proved valuable in B.C.’s response to the pandemic, with public support for the B.C. government remaining relatively strong compared to

other jurisdictions in Canada; the introduction of ambiguity and confusion in pandemic-related communications as pandemic restrictions were slowly removed played a significant role in the erosion of trust and confidence in the government (De Faye, Perrin & Trumpy, 2022).

Given the importance of government communication, this study would complement much of the research on anti-racism that focuses on educational initiatives and pedagogies to address the issue over the long term (Escayg et al., 2017; George, Maier & Robson, 2019; Miled, 2019). While education can be an effective tool to address anti-Asian racism over the long term, effective government messaging can be applied to provide immediate and medium-term support and community for those impacted by anti-Asian racism, such as by encouraging bystanders, for example, to take a more active role in preventing or mitigating racist acts from happening when they see it (Janezic & Arsenault, 2021; MacNab, 2021). There is also a need to examine the context of how multiculturalism is communicated at the provincial level in Canada, given that each province has its own legislative framework to meet the specific needs and targeted goals supporting multiculturalism, immigrant integration, and anti-racism (Bilodeau, 2022; Brosseau & Dewing, 2018).

Examining Words and Themes in Government Multicultural Messaging to Address Racism

A direct means of examining B.C. government messaging aimed at promoting multiculturalism and responding to racism involves an examination of the keywords used to meet this objective. Various scholars have recognized that particular words and phrases used to discuss issues such as racism and prejudice embody particular power dynamics and differentials between groups with and without power and influence (Backhouse, 1999; Chen, 2020; Joseph,

2017). The entire dialogue around race is itself one that implicitly acknowledges a power relationship between a dominant group and marginalized ones (Chen, 2020; Joseph, 2017). In the context of multiculturalism, Joseph (2017) offers a reminder that words come in and out of fashion as interpretations evolve over time. She notes, for example, that there was a time when the word *tolerance* was used to address the importance of recognizing the cultural diversity of a community. And yet, when used in everyday language, tolerance does not have a positive connotation. “In other words, we always tolerate something unpleasant,” (Joseph, 2017, p. 3309). So, the choice of words matters and not just in terms of current interpretation but also in terms of their future use.

An additional aspect of the analysis is a reflexive one for those focused on language evaluation and use around anti-racism. Joseph (2017) notes, for example, that while the word *difference* is a dominant way to describe the multitude of ways society is diverse, there is a fine line in interpretation when the word can cease being a value-neutral word and become one imbued with a negative power differential. Zhao et al. (2022) also argue that while Canadian multiculturalism may suggest that all ethnic and cultural groups are equal, in practice, they are subjugated within the historical colonial context of Canadian society where the dominance of English and French remains unquestioned and codified in Canada’s policy of official bilingualism in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Constitution Act, 1982). The federal Employment Equity Act also enshrines the term *visible minority* in Canadian legal discourse, with the word essentially defining any non-European settler who has immigrated to Canada as a visible minority and are specifically “non-white in colour.” (Employment Equity Act, 1995). This results in a form of othering based purely on socially constructed racial

differences defined by skin colour (Li & Nicholson, 2021), and can also imply that those who are within that category are not part of mainstream society, or embody a lower cultural or ethnic ranking than those who have a historical connection to original settlers to Canada (Zhao et al., 2022). Statistics Canada (2022b) recognizes that the use of the term *visible minority* is problematic and has shifted towards the term *racialized groups* to discuss people of non-European descent. However, Statistics Canada notes that its definition for the term *racialized group* is essentially the same as *visible minority* that is codified in the federal Employment Equity Act (1995), thus defining a racialized group as any that is “non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour” (Employment Equity Act, 1995, p.2). With this in mind, the challenge for those crafting messaging around anti-discriminatory campaigns is including the words in as relevant and meaningful context as possible to support marginalized and racialized communities facing prejudice and discrimination (Nelson et al., 2011; Cui, 2019; Haque, 2020; Janezic and Arsenault, 2021).

Before the messaging can be created, scholars also note the importance of uncovering the foundational values and direction of any anti-racist message. Various studies have suggested the importance of recognizing common values as a means of promoting successful integration into Canadian society for those who experience multiple cultural perspectives (Berry & Hou, 2017; Blake, 2013). Blake (2013) notes in his analysis of Canada’s citizenship guide, that there was a shift in emphasis in the guide’s contents towards an emphasis on integration into Canadian society. Still, the content was politicized and framed from a Conservative Party lens rather than as values more widely held by Canadian citizens. Janezic and Arsenault (2021) also suggest a

need for any anti-discrimination campaign to strive to evoke empathy as an effective means of creating fundamental changes in the perception of discriminated groups.

Various studies and surveys have identified and explored words that describe core values and themes that serve as a foundation for a sense of connection and belonging to Canadian identity. Keywords identified as core social values of Canadians include *compassion, diversity, equality, equity, freedom, multiculturalism, respect, rights, and tolerance* (Angus Reid Institute, 2020; Asia Pacific Foundation, 2021; Nanos Research, 2016; Soroka & Robertson, 2010). In examining multiculturalism, the impact of racism, or the acceptance of racialized groups in Canada, various studies have also explored values of *difference, inclusion, sharing, leadership, responsibility, security* (Asia Pacific Foundation, 2021; Joseph, 2017). Overall, these words have been used to discuss themes related to diversity and differences, inclusion, and general civic values underlying Canadian identity (Angus Reid Institute, 2020; Asia Pacific Foundation, 2021; Joseph, 2017; Nanos Research, 2016; Soroka & Robertson, 2010). This study incorporates these words and categorizes them based on their meaning and usage to describe cultural and ethnic differences, inclusion, and fundamental civic values (Janezic & Arsenault, 2021). In so doing, the analysis aims to provide additional context to the significance of these values for Canadians of East Asian descent in B.C. in provincial messaging incorporating multiculturalism to address anti-Asian racism.

Research Question

Overall, the review of the literature identifies a number of opportunities to provide a deeper understanding of how multiculturalism has been conceptualized and applied in Canada. This study builds on the relative dearth of research examining multiculturalism at a sub-national

level and from a communication perspective. It also contributes to the literature by examining the impact of heightened anti-Asian racism sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic, exploring the issue from the perspective of Canadians of East Asian descent living in B.C. In the context of addressing anti-Asian racism, scholars recognize that there is relatively little comprehensive engagement with affected communities that could provide meaningful context to address the issue from a communication perspective (Cui, 2019; Haque, 2020). This study adds value to the scholarly conversation by addressing this gap in the literature by identifying the Canadian values that Canadians of East Asian descent in B.C. feel best underlies the messages against anti-Asian racism.

Within the context of this research, the study of messaging related to multiculturalism examines the predominant themes and values used in addressing cultural and ethnic diversity within the broader mainstream society. While there are various nuances and differences in attitudes, practices, beliefs, and languages particular to B.C., the study explores basic shared values and needs that can form the basis for continued evolution of Canadian society in B.C. through intercultural and multiethnic interactions (Berry, 2013; Black, 2013). Various studies have mentioned the importance of shared values in connection with multiculturalism and Canadian identity. For example, Blake (2013) notes that successive federal governments have attempted to create a sense of shared identity to belong to by promoting particular values, such as those related to political rights, community, and diversity. Gulliver (2018) notes that care must be taken when attempting to promote any social value by ensuring it does not explicitly or implicitly demonize people who may not share or exhibit the values being promoted. In

particular, care must be taken to avoid ascribing negative characteristics or values to specific cultural, religious, or ethnic groups to prevent the formation of prejudice and discrimination. Fleras (2019) suggests, however, that the shared values that promote inclusion relate to more fundamental human values, such as a belief in equality and a basic need for acceptance. These values can foster a greater sense of belonging in the midst of diversity by encouraging a “lived inter-existence at local levels” instead of “passive coexistence” (Fleras, 2019, p. 43). In other words, by recognizing basic human values and needs shared by those with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, there is the potential to develop a sense of community and a willingness to foster connection. The success of this approach to creating a shared identity and genuine belonging depends, however, on identifying shared values and how these values are presented in order for it to generate meaning. This research aims to identify and articulate those values from the perspective of Canadians of East Asian descent living in B.C.

From this perspective, this study explores how the policy of multiculturalism has been applied in British Columbia, examining the policy’s application from a communication perspective to address the rise of anti-Asian racism affecting Canadians of East Asian descent living in B.C. In answering this question, the research explores the following sub-questions:

- What themes are emphasized in B.C. government messaging related to multiculturalism and anti-Asian racism?
- What are the words that represent the values that Canadians of East Asian descent believe are important to include in messaging to address anti-Asian racism?
- To what extent have Canadians of East Asian descent in B.C. been affected by anti-Asian racism?

- For Canadians of East Asian descent in B.C., what impact has anti-Asian racism had on their sense of belonging and integration into Canadian society?

Methodology

This study employs a mixed methods approach to answer the research questions and complements existing studies related to multiculturalism and anti-Asian racism in Canada with a focus on the province of British Columbia. Firstly, a quantitative survey was conducted with Canadians of East Asian descent living in B.C. to gather data on the impact of anti-Asian racism since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, and their perspectives on multiculturalism and important themes in government messaging to address anti-Asian racism in B.C. Secondly, a quantitative content analysis of B.C. provincial government messaging was conducted to identify key themes expressed in communications related to multiculturalism and anti-racism. Thirdly, a comparative analysis was conducted to explore the alignment between the themes emphasized in B.C. government messaging and those Canadians of East Asian descent in B.C. state are important to support multiculturalism and anti-Asian racism in B.C.

Research Samples

This research involved collecting data from two datasets. The first set of data involved a quantitative survey of Canadians of East Asian descent living in B.C. The survey identified and evaluated the English words that respondents felt were relevant Canadian values to be used in messaging to address and mitigate anti-Asian racism in B.C. The survey also gathered responses to understand the extent to which respondents have been impacted by anti-Asian racism and whether racism has affected their sense of belonging and integration into Canadian society.

The quantitative survey included closed-ended questions that employed ordinal level measurements, which allowed respondents to rank responses (e.g. top five out of 10 words) or measure responses using a Likert scale (Merrigan et al., 2012). Some of the quantitative survey questions were adapted from questions used in previous research (Asia Pacific Foundation, 2021; Kwok et al., 2011; Wang & Santos, 2022) to build upon existing research data.

The second set of data included texts of Government of British Columbia messaging around multiculturalism and anti-Asian racism in B.C. Specifically, the data collected included webpages related to multiculturalism on the B.C. government website; posted news releases and statements saved in the government news section (news.gov.bc.ca); social media posts related to multiculturalism and racism on the government's Facebook page, and the annual report on multiculturalism from the ministry responsible for the Multiculturalism Branch that outlines multicultural initiatives across all ministries in the B.C. government from the fiscal year periods of 2017-18 to 2021-22.¹

For the purposes of this research, words describing Canadian values and social needs relating to multiculturalism and anti-racism were identified based on a list of themes representing Canadian values that were used in previous studies and surveys, including terms such as *acceptance, belonging, difference, diversity, equality, inclusion, tolerance, respect, responsibility, safety, security, and understanding* (Asia Pacific Foundation, 2021; Berry & Hou, 2017; Joseph, 2017; Lund, 2009; Soroka & Robinson, 2010).

The purpose of exploring these texts over this time period is to discover the predominant words used in government messaging related to multiculturalism and anti-Asian racism, and

¹ Each fiscal year started April 1 and ended March 31 of the following year (e.g. April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018).

uncover any thematic shifts in focus over time before and after the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 (World Health Organization, 2020). This forms part of the analysis to identify and examine the themes emphasized in government messaging related to multiculturalism and anti-Asian racism in B.C., and whether the words and themes identified resonated with the values that Canadians of East Asian descent identified in the survey as important to support cultural and social integration of immigrants in Canada.

Data Collection

Survey Data Collection

The survey collection period ran for approximately four weeks between September 5, 2022, and October 10, 2022. The researcher sent out an initial email invitation and two follow-up reminders within two separate two-week periods. Participant recruitment primarily used a convenience and snowball sampling approach where participants were recruited through the networks of the researcher, and invitations were sent to community organizations within the East Asian community in B.C. to encourage organizational volunteers and staff to participate. Invitations and reminder emails were sent to 37 organizations during the survey period, which included ethnic, cultural organizations, ethnic post-secondary student clubs in B.C., ethnic historical societies, and other relevant non-profit community organizations. The survey invitation was also sent out via the researcher's Facebook account to be shared on social media. In total, 85 survey responses were collected.

For the survey data, the primary collection system was through SurveyMonkey, an online surveying software that provided a means to collect respondent data completely anonymously. Data was housed in SurveyMonkey's password-protected servers in the United States and was

downloaded into a spreadsheet onto the researcher's password-protected computer to be analyzed.

The survey included 32 questions directed towards people who self-identified as a B.C. resident of Canadian of East Asian descent, defined as someone with a Chinese, Japanese or Korean ethnic background. The questions explored the extent to which survey respondents were impacted by anti-Asian racism, the relevance of multiculturalism on their identity, and the English words they feel are most relevant that reflect values that are best emphasized in messaging to mitigate anti-Asian racism in the province. To ensure the survey included results from the target audience, the survey began with an introduction stating this focus, and those who self-identified as not of East Asian descent were redirected to a separate survey page that encouraged them to forward the survey to those who may fit the criteria as a way to support the research.

Survey Demographics

To participate in the survey, potential respondents had to self-identify their ethnic background. Of all survey participants, the vast majority identified as of Chinese descent (82%), followed by Japanese (17%) and Korean (1%). In terms of the respondents' status in Canada, nearly half (48%) were Canadian-born citizens, 46% were immigrants, and the remainder were temporary residents. The vast majority of respondents were from the Metro Vancouver region of the province (86%), with a few respondents each from B.C. Interior (3%), Vancouver Island (5%), and the Fraser Valley (6%) regions of B.C. Nearly half (48%) of the respondents were in the 25-44 age group, with nearly a third (31%) in the 45-64 age bracket, and 19% older than 65 years of age. About 3% were in the 18-24 age group. In terms of the gender breakdown of

respondents, 55% identified themselves as female, 43% male, and 2% other. The vast majority (85%) of respondents made more than \$50,000 per year, and all respondents had at least some post-secondary education, with the vast majority (80%) having a bachelor's degree or higher credential.

Demographics of Canadians of East Asian descent in B.C.

The composition of survey respondents was compared to the general population of Canadians identifying as of East Asian descent (Chinese, Japanese or Korean) in B.C. based on the most recently available information from the 2021 Census conducted by Statistics Canada (2022e). Chart 1 provides a comparison of the gender distribution, and Chart 2 provides the age distribution of survey respondents with the population of Canadians of East Asian descent living in B.C. In B.C., 53.6% of Canadians of East Asian descent identified as female, and 46.4% as male. In terms of age of the adult population, 8.4% were in the 20-24 age group; 36.5% were in the 25-44 age group; 35% in the 45-64 age group; and 20.1% were older than 65 years of age. In terms of ethnic breakdown, in 2021, Canadians of Chinese, Japanese and Korean descent make up approximately 14.5% of B.C.'s population, with 11.9% of the population identifying as being of Chinese descent, 1.5% of Korean descent, and 1.1% of Japanese descent. (Statistics Canada, 2022e).

Chart 1

Comparison of gender distribution of survey respondents to Canadians of East Asian descent living in B.C.

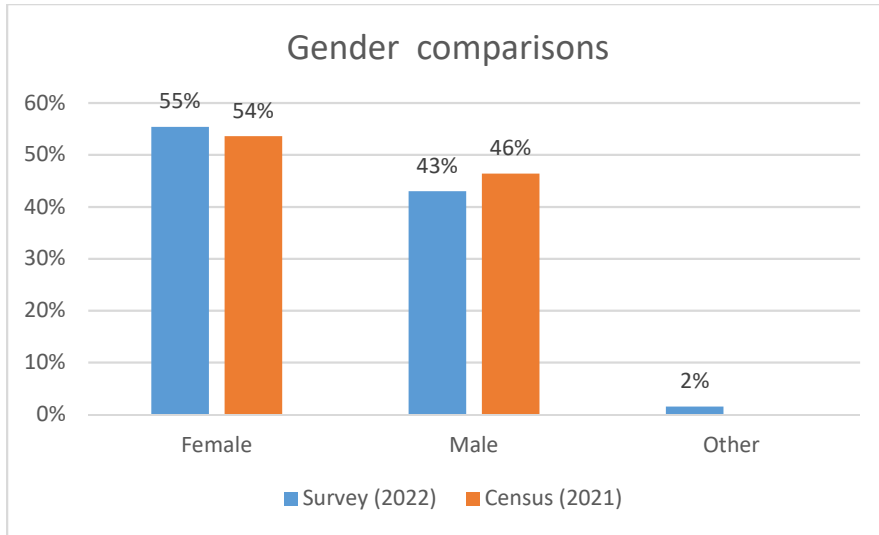
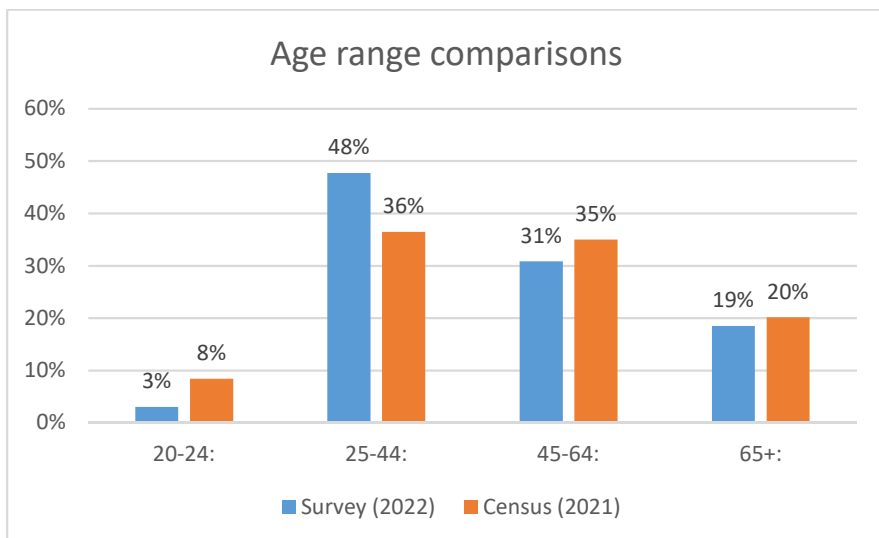


Chart 2

Comparison of age distribution of survey respondents to Canadians of East Asian descent living in B.C.



Government Messaging Data Collection

The collection of Government of British Columbia messaging around multiculturalism and anti-Asian racism in B.C. involved online searches of the government's news webpage (<https://news.gov.bc.ca>), where news releases and public statements are housed, the government's multiculturalism and anti-racism webpages, and the government's Facebook page. A search of the government's website and Facebook page initially focused on specific terms such as *multiculturalism*, *anti-Asian racism*, and *anti-racism*, however, a very limited number of results were found. The search was broadened to include the generally relevant terms of *multiculturalism* and *racism*, which collected a wider range of texts that related to the research question, and included texts related to relevant commemorative dates and events such as Multiculturalism Week, Asian History Month, and others.

The content was collected for the five-year period between 2017-18 and 2021-22, to cover an equal time period before and after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 to explore any potential differences in the themes around multiculturalism within that period. In total, 183 news releases and statements by government leaders, 62 Facebook posts, 11 government webpages, and five editions of the annual report on multiculturalism that outlines the province's multicultural initiatives across all ministries were collected to be analyzed. The combined dataset included 1,143 pages of content, including 666 pages from the annual report on multiculturalism, 430 pages of news release content, 32 pages of website content, and 15 pages of social media content.

Data Analysis

The research involved three separate but inter-related analyses. Firstly, it involved the analysis of responses to the survey of Canadians of East Asian descent living in B.C. to gather respondent insights into the impact of anti-Asian racism in their lives, the relevance of multiculturalism for them, and the English words representing values that they felt would be best emphasized in messaging aimed at mitigating anti-Asian racism in the province.

Secondly, it involved the content analysis of keywords in B.C. provincial government messaging related to multiculturalism and anti-racism in B.C. for the fiscal years 2017-18 to 2021-22, to discover the focus and main themes emphasized in the messaging. The list of words used to analyze the text included those used in previous studies and surveys identified as representing Canadian values (Asia Pacific Foundation, 2021; Berry & Hou, 2017; Joseph, 2017; Lund, 2009) and included in the study's survey of Canadians of East Asian descent living in B.C.

The analysis involved keyword analysis of the government texts, counting the number of instances of the words used in collected messaging related to multiculturalism and anti-racism. To conduct the analysis of such a large dataset of government texts, a software program, MAXQDA, was used, which is designed for computer-assisted content analysis. Using the program's coding and text search functions, all instances of each word were found and coded. Certain instances of words were identified and excluded, such as those that were capitalized and were part of a website address or used in headings and titles in the document or position titles (e.g. Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism).

As described in the literature review, the words representing important Canadian values as outlined in Table 1, were sorted and coded based on the research themes of inclusion, difference, and general civic values (Janezic & Arsenault, 2021).

Table 1

Words of Canadian values analyzed in government messaging

Words focused on inclusion	Words focused on difference	Words focused on general civic values
Compassion	Difference	Freedom
Equality	Diversity	Leadership
Respect	Equity	Responsibility
Inclusion	Multiculturalism	Rights
Sharing	Tolerance	Security

Thirdly, with the analysis of these two datasets, a comparative analysis was done to determine whether themes were aligned between those used in government messaging and those Canadians of East Asian descent believe are important to include in anti-racism messaging.

Findings

Survey Data Results

The quantitative survey included ordinal survey data from respondents who self-identified as Canadians of East Asian descent. This dataset was developed to provide the context and content to answer the research sub-questions explored in this study. Specifically, a descriptive statistical analysis (Merrigan et al., 2012) of the survey responses was used to gather the extent to which respondents were impacted by anti-Asian racism, respondent perspectives on the relevance of multiculturalism on racism and their sense of belonging, and respondent choices of the most important keywords to use for messaging addressing anti-Asian racism in B.C.

Participant's experience with anti-Asian racism

Fourteen questions in the survey focused on participants' views and experiences with anti-Asian racism in B.C. both before and after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. When asked to describe their "primary personal experience with anti-Asian racism," only 6% of survey respondents said they had no experience, with 46% indicating they had personally experienced it, 8% said they had witnessed incidents, 15% indicated they had heard about experiences from people close to them and 25% said they had heard about experiences in the news. When asked to describe the number of experiences of anti-Asian racism they experienced before the pandemic, 81% had some experience with racism, with 35% of respondents indicating they had very little experience, 36% of respondents indicating they had few experiences, while 4% said they had many experience, and 6% said they had several experiences.

When asked to describe the number of experiences of anti-Asian racism since the start of the pandemic, 29% said they had never experienced it during the pandemic. In comparison, 42% said they had very little experience, 24% said they had few experiences, 4% said they had many experiences, and under 2% said they had several experiences. When asked to "describe the kind of anti-Asian racism" they experienced, witnessed, or heard, micro-aggressions and verbal assaults were the most cited examples of racism. An equal proportion of respondents either agreed (43%) or strongly agreed (43%) with the statement that "anti-Asian racism has gotten worse during the COVID-19 pandemic" with the remaining 10% of respondents indicating a neutral stance, and 4% strongly disagree.

The concern over the rise in the number of incidents of anti-Asian racism in Canada since the start of the pandemic was significantly higher for those who had experienced racism during

the pandemic (70% moderately to extremely concerned) compared to those who had not (55% moderately to extremely concerned). The people most concerned with the rise in anti-Asian racism were older respondents, with 80% of those 45 to 64 years of age either moderately (35%) or extremely concerned (45%) and seniors 65 years and older moderately (17%) or extremely concerned (58%). Women were far more concerned about the rise of anti-racism since the pandemic, with 30% moderately concerned and 42% extremely concerned, compared to 7% of men moderately concerned and 31% extremely concerned. Respondents born in Canada were slightly more concerned (61% moderately or extremely concerned) than immigrant respondents (53% moderately or extremely concerned).

When asked if “witnessing anti-Asian racism either directly or second-hand through the news or social media” had affected their “sense of safety” in the community, 38% agreed, and 36% strongly agreed, with 21% indicating a neutral stance and 5% either disagreeing (3%) or strongly disagreeing (2%). When asked to identify “the top five feelings at risk because of anti-Asian racism,” safety, respect, belonging, acceptance, and equality were among the most at risk because of experiencing racism. There were notable differences in results between those who directly experienced racism in their life compared to those whose exposure was second-hand, such as through the media. Those directly experiencing racism felt safety, security, respect, and equality were feelings most at risk because of their experiences. Those who had not experienced racism directly said the feelings of respect, belonging, inclusion, and acceptance were the most important. When asked to rank the most important kind of activities or initiatives that were needed to stop anti-Asian racism in B.C., most people selected educational initiatives in the community and schools as the most important activity for respondents (56), followed by public

awareness campaigns (40), community building events (37), relevant laws and regulations (35), and followed by more law enforcement and protection (31). There were notable differences depending on whether respondents had personally experienced racism. Those experiencing racism selected having relevant laws and regulations as the second most important activity to address anti-Asian racism, and more law enforcement and protection as their third most important activity, with public awareness campaigns and community building events as their fourth and fifth most important activities, respectively. This is nearly completely the opposite for respondents who had not directly experienced racism, who had selected community-building events as their second most important activity to address anti-Asian racism, followed by public awareness campaigns. Having relevant laws and regulations and more law enforcement protection were the fourth and fifth most important activities, respectively. For those who experienced racism and those who didn't, educational initiatives remained the top activity to address anti-Asian racism.

Participant's views on multiculturalism

As the primary policy aimed at promoting the value of the cultural diversity of Canada's population, the survey asked five questions related to the significance and value of multiculturalism for respondents. Respondents had a fairly good understanding of what multiculturalism means in Canada, with 21% recognizing it as a term that describes the racial and ethnic diversity of Canada, and 31% recognizing it as a term that reflects the value of celebrating our cultural diversity. Forty-four percent of respondents recognized it as a term that describes the racial and ethnic diversity of Canada, the value of celebrating cultural diversity, and as a government policy.

However, there was a mixed view on whether Canadian multiculturalism has been effective at promoting inclusion and diversity. Only 55% agreed or strongly agreed; 35% of respondents were neutral, while 9% disagreed or strongly disagreed. There was also a mixed view on whether multiculturalism effectively prevented racism and prejudice. Less than half agreed or strongly agreed (48%), 32% were neutral, and 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Despite this perception of impact on Canadian society, multiculturalism was perceived more positively by respondents on an individual basis. More than half (52%) of respondents said multiculturalism was a positive influence on themselves and their families, with 34% strongly agreeing with the statement. More than three-quarters (78%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they had a strong connection to their ethnic background; 79% also felt fully integrated into Canadian society and culture, and 78% felt fully integrated in their respective workplaces and professional environments.

To assess perceptions of Canada's inclusiveness, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement that "Canadians, whether born in or immigrated to Canada, are welcoming and inclusive of others." Overall, a significant majority agreed, with 59% of respondents stating they agreed with the statement and 14% stating they strongly agreed. A quarter (25%) of respondents had a neutral stance, while 2% disagreed with the statement. There was notable difference in results between those who experienced racism and those who had not, with 78% of respondents who had never experienced or had very little experience with racism agreeing or strongly agreeing that Canada was a welcoming and inclusive country, compared to only 69% of those who did experience racism in Canada. Also, more immigrant respondents (81%) than

Canadian-born respondents (73%) agreed with the statement that Canada was a welcoming and inclusive country.

In exploring whether racism affected the sense of belonging of Canadians of East Asian descent in B.C., the survey included a question asking, “Since the COVID-19 pandemic, how often did you feel you did not belong or felt like an outsider because of your ethnicity or race?” Just under a third (31%) of respondents said they had felt like this sometimes since the start of the pandemic, and 3% said they usually felt this way. A quarter of respondents (25%) said they had never felt like this, and 42% said they have rarely felt this way. There was slight variance in the results depending on whether the respondent was born in Canada or an immigrant. However, the feeling of being an outsider was stronger for survey respondents who had experienced racism in their life with 15% indicating they never felt like an outsider because of their ethnicity or race, 38% said they rarely felt this way, but 44% said they sometimes felt this way.

Overall, hope for a racist-free community in B.C. was mixed. When asked whether they agreed that “anti-Asian racism can be eliminated in B.C.,” 9% of respondents strongly agreed, and 31% agreed with the statement, while 26% were neutral, 23% disagreed, and 11% strongly disagreed.

Participants’ views on keywords for messaging addressing anti-Asian racism in B.C.

Seven questions in the survey focused on gathering respondent insights into government messaging addressing anti-Asian racism in B.C. Most respondents (86%) indicated that the B.C. government should do more to stop anti-Asian racism in B.C., although the survey found that awareness of B.C. government programs and campaigns to stop anti-Asian racism was fairly low. Nearly a third (30%) were unaware of provincial anti-Asian racism initiatives, and 60%

were only slightly or somewhat aware. Only 10% were moderately or very aware of government activities aimed at stopping anti-Asian racism in B.C. Of the types of activities respondents said were needed to halt anti-Asian racism in B.C. were educational initiatives in the community and schools, followed by public awareness campaigns, a focus on relevant laws and regulations, increased law enforcement and community building events.

Survey respondents were asked to rank the top five words out of 15 that represented Canadian values they felt were the most relevant to addressing anti-Asian racism in B.C. The values with the most selections included: *respect* (52 selected), *inclusion* (40), *diversity* (36), *equality* (31), and *multiculturalism* (30). Of these words, the ones with the highest proportion of respondents who had selected the values as either important, very important, or most important were: *inclusion* (75%), *equality* (74%), *diversity* (72%), *respect* (69%) and *multiculturalism* (57%).

An analysis of the survey data based on various segments of survey respondents found that the most important words representing Canadian values varied among different groupings. For respondents who identified themselves as Canadian-born, the most important value to include in messaging addressing anti-Asian racism was *diversity*. For those who identified as immigrants, *inclusion* was their most important value. *Respect* was most important for female respondents of East Asian descent in B.C., while *inclusion* was most important for male respondents. For those who experienced or witnessed racism either before or during the pandemic, *equality* was most important. For those who said they did not directly experience racism either before or during the pandemic, *inclusion* was most important.

Survey respondents were also asked about the key action words to include in messaging to address anti-Asian racism in B.C. The top five words were: appreciate, celebrate, embrace, include, and support.

Table 2

Words that represent Canadian values that Canadians of East Asian descent in B.C. said were most relevant to addressing anti-Asian racism in B.C.

	Most important	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Least important	Top 5 selections
Respect	13	12	11	11	5	52
Inclusion	9	10	11	8	2	40
Diversity	10	9	7	6	4	36
Equality	11	6	6	5	3	31
Multiculturalism	5	9	3	4	9	30
Compassion	4	6	6	3	4	23
Equity	2	3	4	5	2	16
Tolerance	2	3	3	3	4	15
Responsibility	1	2	1	6	5	15
Security	2	3	1	4	3	13
Rights	2	1	2	0	8	13
Freedom	3	2	3	2	0	10
Leadership	1	1	4	2	1	9
Sharing	0	0	0	2	6	8
Difference	2	0	1	0	2	5

Government Content Analysis Results

Overall, the analysis of the texts found more than 11,100 relevant instances of the words that represent Canadian values. Words focused on difference comprised 45% of the total number of analyzed words found in the government texts analyzed, with 36% focused on words focused on inclusion and 19% focused on civic values. The predominance of value words based on differences existed in each type of content analyzed, specifically in social media posts, news

releases, and statements, government reports, and webpages. Table 3 outlines the results of the content analysis.

Table 3

Content Analysis of B.C. Government Messaging Related to Multiculturalism

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Five-year total
Civic Values - Security	11	8	7	17	28	71
Civic Values - Freedom	7	6	7	1	7	28
Civic Values - Responsibility	72	44	58	68	64	306
Civic Values - Leadership	56	45	87	125	161	474
Civic Values - Rights	127	174	223	253	432	1209
Civic Values (Total)	273	277	382	464	692	2088
Difference Values - Tolerance	8	18	14	23	13	76
Difference Values - Difference	53	45	82	66	79	325
Difference Values - Equity	33	51	126	277	0	487
Difference Values - Diversity	437	394	573	768	960	3132
Difference Values - Multiculturalism	173	143	171	226	325	1038
Difference Values (Total)	704	651	966	1360	1377	5058
Inclusive Values - Compassion	0	2	8	3	1	14
Inclusive Values - Equality	22	30	51	54	57	214
Inclusive Values - Respect	164	139	220	219	291	1033
Inclusive Values - Inclusion	193	201	374	576	799	2143
Inclusive Values - Sharing	80	69	107	152	185	593
Inclusive Values (Total)	459	441	760	1004	1333	3997

Ethnic Focus of B.C. Government Texts Related to Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism

In reviewing the texts, content analysis was conducted to identify the ethnic focus of government texts related to multiculturalism and anti-racism. The analysis included a keyword search of relevant groups affected by racism, searching for terms including *Asian, East Asian, South Asian, Black, Indigenous, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, ethnic, Jewish, and visible minority*. As outlined in Table 4, the predominant word identifying an ethnicity was *Indigenous*, with three-quarters of all ethnicity-related words referring to Indigenous groups. The second-largest

grouping of ethnicity-related words used were those identifying people of East Asian descent (Korean, Japanese or Chinese). The third-largest cultural and ethnic references were toward Blacks.

Table 4

Content Analysis of B.C. Government Messaging Related to Racism and Ethnicity

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Racism	67	149	204	729	795
Racism - Anti-Racism	22	32	88	306	413
Racism - Anti-Asian	0	0	6	73	23
Ethnicity	995	884	1492	2294	2482
Ethnicity - Visible Minority	4	5	5	6	6
Ethnicity - Jewish	1	12	14	11	27
Ethnicity - Asian	20	20	34	182	112
Ethnicity - Asian > East Asian	0	2	2	3	1
Ethnicity - Asian > South Asian	11	10	10	29	32
Ethnicity - Asian > South Asian > Indo-	1	1	2	0	2
Ethnicity - Ethnic	33	43	41	44	44
Ethnicity - Indigenous	637	601	1229	1658	1932
Ethnicity - Black	23	16	27	250	164
Ethnicity - Korean	36	14	22	15	23
Ethnicity - Japanese	132	19	16	19	78
Ethnicity - Chinese	97	141	90	77	61

Differences in Word Usage Before and After the Pandemic

The content analysis of government texts found a number of significant shifts in apparent emphasis in the messaging related to multiculturalism and racism in B.C. between 2017-18 and 2021-22. While the use of multiculturalism in government texts rose 76% within that period to 325 references in 2021-22 from 173 references to the word in 2017-18, references to racism grew more than 10-fold to 795 references in 2021-22 from 67 in 2017-18. Reference to anti-racism in particular, rose by an even larger proportion to 413 references in 2021-22 compared to 22 in

2017-18. Reference to anti-Asian racism in particular, was non-existent in 2017-18 and 2018-19 with only 6 references in 2019-20. References to anti-Asian racism peaked at 73 in 2020-21 and fell to 23 references in 2021-22. Meanwhile, the use of the word Indigenous has grown substantially between 2017-18 and 2021-22 by 200% in the period to more than 1,900 references in 2021-22 compared to more than 600 in 2017-18. References to East Asian ethnic groups generally declined over the five-year period studied from 265 references in 2017-18 to a low of 111 in 2020-21 before rising to 162 in 2021-22.

Discussion

This study explored the issue of anti-Asian racism from a communication perspective by examining the relationship between current government messaging in B.C. related to multiculturalism and the sharp rise in anti-Asian racism sparked by the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this research, it explored the short- and long-term impact of anti-Asian racism on Canadians of East Asian descent in B.C.; examined the themes in B.C. government messaging related to multiculturalism and anti-Asian racism, and explored opportunities to align the needs of those affected by anti-Asian racism and the messaging to address the issue by the B.C. government.

Impact of Anti-Asian Racism on Canadians of East Asian Descent in B.C.

The survey results obtained in the fall 2022 emphasizes that anti-Asian racism remains a significant issue three years after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. Firstly, it highlighted that anti-Asian racism has remained a persistent issue with a significant majority of respondents having experienced some level of anti-Asian racism both before and during the pandemic. These results align with those of national surveys exploring the perception of racism

by Canadians of Asian descent, which indicate that a majority of respondents have experienced racism before (EnviroNics Institute, 2019) and during the pandemic (Angus Reid Institute, 2021; Wang et al., 2022). Secondly, while 74% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that anti-Asian racism affected their sense of safety in the community, those who directly experienced racism were more concerned about their safety and security than those who only experienced racism second hand through media or from hearing about incidents from others. It is then understandable that introducing relevant laws and regulations and increased law enforcement and protection ranked as the second and third-most important activities needed to stop anti-Asian racism in B.C. after educational initiatives for those who experienced racism. This emphasis was different from survey respondents who did not directly experience racism. The latter felt education, community building events, and public awareness campaigns, in that order, were the most important initiatives to address anti-Asian racism in B.C. Thirdly, the survey found that racism had a negative impact on respondents' sense of belonging for a sizeable proportion of Canadians of East Asian descent surveyed, with 31% feeling like an outsider "sometimes" and 3% "usually" feeling that way.

The significant increase in racist acts against Canadians of Asian descent since the start of the pandemic, particularly in B.C. (Statistics Canada, 2021), has led the government and various community groups across the province to explore opportunities to build awareness and take action to combat all forms of racism across the province, some funded through the provincial government's multicultural grants program, (B.C. Ministry of Attorney General, 2021). The results from the survey, and the content analysis of government messaging, however, suggest that more needs to be done to directly address anti-Asian racism specifically, which

arguably begins with greater emphasis and reference of anti-Asian racism in government messaging related to multiculturalism and anti-racism. It may start with embarking on regular engagement with the community of Canadians of East Asian descent, and gather their insights to develop a comprehensive strategy to specifically address anti-Asian racism in B.C. Developing such a strategy could complement the work by the federal government, which has a comprehensive, multi-year plan to address racism nationally that not only outlines guiding principles, but describes a fully funded program to address racism, that involves engagement with relevant stakeholders, and a planned alignment with existing or complementary government programs and departments (Government of Canada, 2019). Having a similar strategic approach to addressing anti-Asian racism, arguably, would be invaluable and provide a roadmap toward positive change.

The survey results align with previous research examining the impact of anti-Asian racism, and highlight the importance of addressing the issue to avoid immediate and long-term individual and community-level impacts in B.C. Given the potential for the stresses associated with experiences of discrimination and racism to accumulate and result in increasingly negative mental health outcomes and illness (Williams et al., 2022), the survey results suggest an existing need for initiatives, including building relevant government messaging, that fosters empathy and emphasizes commonality with Canadians of East Asian descent, which are consistent with previous research findings (Janezic & Arsenault, 2021). The need arguably becomes more acute the longer health fears related to the pandemic and social concerns related to anti-Asian racism persist, further increasing the risk of both affecting the mental, physical and community wellbeing of Canadians of East Asian descent in B.C. (Chou et al., 2020; Misra et al., 2020; Wu

et al., 2021). Also, the survey findings suggest that the more Canadians of East Asian descent in B.C. experience anti-Asian racism, or feel the issue is not being addressed, the more likely their sense of belonging in Canada weakens. This aligns with previous research that has found discrimination and racism negatively affect the acculturation journey of immigrants and their descendants (Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; Berry & Hou, 2017). Given the historically rapid rise in immigration planned since 2020 by the federal government (IRCC, 2022), this issue can risk creating increasingly negative impressions of Canada among newcomers resulting in a disengaged community of immigrants who either become marginalized and isolated and choose not to participate fully in Canadian society (Berry & Hou, 2021; Bilodeau et al., 2022), against the goals of Canada's and B.C.'s multiculturalism policy (Brosseau & Dewing, 2018).

Towards an Evolution of Multiculturalism in B.C. to Respond to Anti-Asian Racism

The research explored the themes and values that were emphasized in B.C. government messaging related to multiculturalism and anti-Asian racism. A content analysis of the messaging between 2017-18 and 2021-22 found that 45% of the words analyzed representing Canadian values emphasized difference and diversity, compared to 36% emphasizing inclusive values. The remaining 19% focused on general civic values. As noted in other research, a focus on diversity and difference alone does not necessarily produce public acceptance of that diversity, or explicit recognition of any implied benefits diversity provides to individuals, the community, or the country as a whole (Janezic & Arsenault, 2021; Joseph, 2017). Studies suggest that such a focus can potentially solidify the view that differences, which, if left to their own devices, can lead to division, without any commonality between people of different backgrounds, be it ethnic, cultural, religious, or otherwise (Janezic & Arsenault, 2021; Joseph,

2017). From this perspective, this research suggests that B.C. government messaging remains largely based on the early conceptualizations of multiculturalism that focus on building recognition and acceptance of cultural and ethnic diversity (Berry, 2013) rather than on what Fleras (2009) suggests are more evolved conceptualizations that focus on integration and inclusion of different cultural groups into Canada's cultural mosaic and forming a continually evolving Canadian identity. This would seem to be an area to explore in terms of building a more comprehensive or developed government messaging related to multiculturalism and anti-racism initiatives. The survey results of Canadians of East Asian descent suggest a strong understanding of the meaning of multiculturalism in Canada and its value for themselves, their families, and Canadian society as a whole. However, survey respondents did not feel multiculturalism has effectively supported inclusion and addressing racism. Thus, an explicitly stronger emphasis on inclusion and integration in expressing multicultural policy in B.C. could help to address prejudice and racism in B.C. by not just acknowledging cultural and ethnic diversity, but promoting the common values shared by members of all ethnic and cultural communities that have shaped and contributed to our national and provincial histories. Such a focus would help support the creation of conditions for meaningful cultural and ethnic interaction and engagement that could support greater understanding and connection, supporting multicultural belonging (Chin 2019).

Values Alignment in Government Messaging Addressing Racism in B.C.

The research explored whether messaging related to multiculturalism and anti-racism incorporated values in its messaging that Canadians of East Asian descent in B.C. felt were important to include to address racism. Comparing the words that Canadians of East Asian

descent felt are most important in addressing anti-Asian racism and those used in B.C. government messaging finds a notable level of overall alignment. Both the results from survey respondents and the analysis of government messaging found similar words being used. Of the top five words Canadians of East Asian descent said were most important in messaging addressing anti-Asian racism, four were predominantly used in B.C. government messaging: *respect, inclusion, diversity, equality*. *Compassion*, was the word survey respondents rated as the most important, but it was referenced only 14 times in B.C. government messaging between 2017-18 and 2021-22. The content analysis of government messaging found more use of words referencing differences (e.g. *diversity, multiculturalism, equity, and difference*) than the usage of words referencing inclusion (e.g. *inclusion, respect, sharing and equality*).

There were some notable differences in the emphasis of words used between those Canadians of East Asian descent felt were important and those predominantly used in government messaging. *Equality* was a value identified by survey respondents as important to promote with respect to multiculturalism and anti-racism. However, its usage in government texts was about ten times lower than the usage of the word *inclusion*. Government messaging had a stronger focus on *equity*, which was a value that had the third highest usage in government texts. *Rights* were also a particular focus in government messaging but was not seen as an important value among survey respondents.

These results complement those exploring the application of multiculturalism in B.C. in that the values focus within government messaging emphasizes foundational issues with multiculturalism in B.C. rather than those of a more evolved conceptualization of multiculturalism. Specifically, the emphasis on particular values in government messaging –

entitlement to rights, and acknowledgement of the value of diversity – may not be a contested issue worth promoting if those values are widely acknowledged and not at issue, given multiculturalism’s long history in Canada that has effectively shaped positive views of the policy to the point that multiculturalism is seen as a core value of Canadian society and identity (Asia Pacific Foundation, 2021; Brosseau & Dewing, 2018; Soroka & Robinson, 2010). Shifting the messaging to promoting fundamental human values of respect, inclusion, and equality – which were values important to Canadians of East Asian descent – would align with the conceptualization of multiculturalism as a means of supporting cultural and ethnic inclusion and integration into Canadian society. Specifically, it would align with the application of multiculturalism as a framework for supporting the integration of cultural and ethnic diversity in Canada (Fleras 2009), and the fostering of multicultural belonging where continual engagement and interaction between cultural and ethnic groups forges a constant evolution of Canadian identity (Chin 2019). Given the historically high levels of immigration (IRCC, 2022), predominantly from Asian countries (Statistics Canada, 2022d), this shift would be a means to further help welcome immigrants into the community, and encourage their participation and engagement in Canadian society.

An item of particular note from the content analysis of government messaging was the discovery of a relative lack of specific reference to anti-Asian racism within the messaging over the five-year period analyzed. There were no references to anti-Asian racism in 2017-18 and in 2018-19, and only half a dozen references in 2019-20, which covered the period when the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 was discovered and started to spread globally and was officially declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization in March 2020. Reference to

anti-Asian racism peaked in 2020-21 with 73 references in the government messaging analyzed and declined in 2021-22 to 23 references, despite the continued existence of anti-Asian racism in Canada, and in B.C. particularly (Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter & Project 1907, 2022). This is notable in that, despite Canadians of Asian descent bearing the brunt of pandemic-related prejudice, racism, and hate, there was little government messaging specifically referencing the issue, and also declined in 2021, the second year of the pandemic, despite growing awareness and concern of the issue, particularly among Canadians of East Asian descent. The lack of reference to anti-Asian racism may help explain why the vast majority of survey respondents were not aware or had little awareness of government initiatives to address the issue. Thus, this discovery identifies an opportunity for the government to more directly address the issue in its messaging, and in so doing, note it as an issue of provincial importance that needs to be resolved to avoid the potential long-term health impacts to individuals and sense of safety, belonging, and integration of the communities affected.

Implications of Research

Given the persistence of anti-Asian racism in B.C. since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, this research offers meaningful findings that can provide the basis for actionable recommendations to address the issue from a communication perspective. Firstly, the survey results clearly identify the rise of anti-Asian racism since the start of the pandemic as a significant issue of concern for Canadians of East Asian descent in B.C. Various reports note the problem has not gone away, with many indicating that acts of discrimination and hate against Canadians of Asian descent have actually increased (Kong et al., 2021; Statistics Canada, 2021). Given the large population of Canadians of East Asian descent in the province of B.C., which

describes itself as one of the most diverse provinces in Canada, the provincial government has an active role to play in addressing the issue through all the various avenues of constructive activity available to them, including legal, communicational, educational, and community-based activities and initiatives (Janezic & Arsenault, 2021; Pedersen et al., 2010). Given the relative lack of focus on anti-Asian racism in its messaging related to multiculturalism and racism as the pandemic continues, this research suggests a need to bolster the emphasis on anti-Asian racism in its public awareness activities, particularly in its messaging responding to anti-Asian racism in B.C.

The research also suggests opportunities to focus and tailor its messaging to adequately address anti-Asian racism in B.C. For instance, values that Canadians of East Asian descent feel are worth mentioning should be considered in order to focus the promotion of multiculturalism and anti-racism towards emphasizing the inclusion of historically racialized groups and the integration of new immigrants who will be from predominantly Asian countries. Given the significant increase in annual immigration that will continue to reach historically elevated levels in the 2020s, a sense of urgency exists for messaging to reflect this evolved understanding of multiculturalism in order to avoid and limit the potential for newcomers to experience the anti-Asian racism that has manifested itself during the pandemic. It would also be valuable to tailor messaging to specific audiences to meet specific goals about addressing anti-Asian racism. For example, incorporating or emphasizing values of respect, inclusion, and equality, which Canadians of East Asian descent said are important to them, could serve as a means of fostering empathy, understanding, and commonality among Canadians living in B.C. from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Janezic & Arsenault, 2021; Nelson et al., 2011; Pedersen et al., 2010).

Such a focus can ultimately emphasize the common values we share as a member of Canadian society.

From a strategic perspective, the research suggests a significant opportunity for a meaningful shift in how B.C.'s legislative framework around multiculturalism is applied. From its current emphasis on basic recognition of cultural and ethnic diversity, there is an opportunity to not just encourage acknowledgement of differences through multiculturalism, but foster acceptance and multicultural belonging through an emphasis on shared human values (Chin, 2019; Fleras, 2009). Such a focus, particularly in government messaging, can present a more meaningful rationale and logic against prejudice and discrimination that goes beyond blanket statements that racist acts are illegal and racist beliefs are wrong. By amplifying common values, there is an opportunity to create a social environment that can foster inclusion and integration by encouraging action from those who want to support new immigrants, or members of vulnerable or marginalized communities (Janezic & Arsenault, 2021; MacNab, 2021).

Limitations

There are a number of limitations that affect the relevance and impact of the study results. The demographic makeup of the group of survey respondents reflects the limitations of the convenience and snowball sampling methods used and produced results that may not be representative of the general population of Canadians of East Asian descent living in B.C. Specifically, snowball sampling tends to experience selection bias where samples are dependent on the strength of a researcher's connection with potential participants, and the ability of initial participants to further spread the study more broadly (Parker, Scott & Geddes, 2019). This limitation was partially offset by expanding the potential survey participant population to include

relevant community organizations. Nevertheless, the survey was predominantly completed by Canadians of Chinese descent and thus is limited in representing the views of Canadians of Japanese or Korean descent. Also, the results should be interpreted with caution, noting that the demographics of respondents were not entirely representative of the population of Canadians of East Asian descent living in B.C. (Chart 2). In addition, the questionnaire did not provide explicit definitions for certain concepts such as racism, and key terms in the Likert scale such as *many* and *several*, which may have allowed participants to interpret these terms based on their own experience rather than on a consistent understanding for all potential participants. The survey was also distributed to Canadian citizens and residents of East Asian descent in B.C., thus excluding other racialized groups in B.C. that were not included in the analysis (e.g. people of South Asian descent from the Indian subcontinent) or living in other provinces in Canada. This exclusion was consciously made in order to gather data on a specific group of racialized Canadians who have been the focus of anti-Asian racism since the start of the pandemic. The study was conducted only in B.C., and thus is only relevant to Canada's westernmost province as the government messaging being analyzed would not be applicable in another province, and the perspectives and views of Canadians of East Asian descent in B.C. may not be reflective of similar people living in other provinces. The study was also conducted in English only, thus excluding a relevant segment of the researched population with a different primary language who may not be comfortable enough to complete the survey in English. This limited the number of people of older demographic or first-generation Canadian citizens or immigrants who could complete the survey, thus excluding relevant data for the research. Despite these limitations, the study provides recent and updated insight into the perceptions and needs of a broad community

of Canadians of East Asian descent impacted by racism, which can be used to find a more effective communicational means of addressing the problem of anti-Asian racism in B.C.

Opportunities for Further Research

Some of the limitations noted offer additional opportunities for further research. With respect to expanding the pool of potential survey respondents, the survey could be translated into relevant languages (e.g. simplified Chinese, traditional Chinese, Japanese, and Korean) to allow participation by those whose fluency level in English would have prevented their participation to provide their views. There is also an opportunity to expand the survey questionnaire to other racialized groups in B.C., or more broadly to include Canadians of European descent, to examine any differences and alignment in views related to the impact of racism during the pandemic, and the values they feel are relevant in any messaging related to multiculturalism and anti-racism in B.C. Further engagement and qualitative analysis (e.g. interviews) with Canadians of East Asian descent in B.C. could also complement the quantitative survey data that could be used to provide the input needed to gain deeper cultural or ethnic context to develop any strategic communication plans, tactics and messaging that effectively promote integration, inclusion and support anti-racism initiatives. With respect to the analysis of government messaging, a thematic analysis could also be done to provide additional context to potentially explain why there is an emphasis on difference versus inclusion.

Conclusion

This research builds upon the growing literature on the impact of the significant rise in anti-Asian racism that was spawned by the COVID-19 pandemic. It confirms that in 2022, three years into the pandemic, anti-Asian racism remains a persistent problem for Canadians of East

Asian descent living in B.C., which risks becoming a growing issue that can more broadly impact the health, wellbeing, sense of safety, belonging, and interest in engaging with and participating in Canadian society by Canadians of East Asian descent. Multiculturalism has proven to be an effective policy over the last half century to transform the perception of Canada from being a European colony with assimilationist desires for racialized communities to becoming a leading model of a society that accepts and welcomes cultural and ethnic diversity as part of its national identity. But, despite this transformation in perception by Canadians, and by those who aspire to live in Canada, there is a need for the application of multiculturalism to focus on strengthening the sense of belonging between Canadians of all cultural backgrounds and ethnicities to collectively recognize the common values we share. Conceptualizing multiculturalism in this vein would serve as a strong foundation to address the persistence of racism targeting Canadians of East Asian descent, who have been an active part of the history and development of Canada throughout its history. Addressing anti-Asian racism requires the application of an evolved understanding of multiculturalism that serves to promote the integration of various cultures and ethnicities based on a common understanding and acceptance that shared values exist between immigrants and Canadians who have resided in Canada since birth or for generations. Applying these shared values in government messaging to address racism and anti-Asian racism, in particular, would incorporate the needs of Canadians of East Asian descent who face ongoing risks of anti-Asian racism.

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Appendix A

Survey Questionnaire

1A) How would you describe your primary personal experience with anti-Asian racism in your life?

- a. Have personally experienced
- b. Have witnessed incidents
- c. Have heard about experiences from people close to me
- d. Have heard about experiences in the news
- e. Have no experience

2A) How would you describe the number of experiences with anti-Asian racism you have experienced since the start of the pandemic in March 2020?

- a) Never experienced
- b) Very little experience
- c) Few experiences
- d) Many experiences
- e) Several experiences

3A) To what extent do you agree that anti-Asian racism has gotten worse during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

4A) How concerned are you about the rise in the number of incidents of anti-Asian racism in Canada since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic?

- f) Not at all concerned
- g) Slightly concerned
- h) Somewhat concerned
- i) Moderately concerned
- j) Extremely concerned

5A) To what extent do you agree that witnessing anti-Asian racism either directly or second-hand through the news or social media has affected your sense of safety in your community?

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

6A) How would you describe the kind of anti-Asian racism you experienced, witnessed or heard? (Select all that apply)

- a. Physical assault (e.g. spitting, pushing, punching)
- b. Verbal assault (e.g. swearing, threatening, insulting, using racial slurs)
- c. Microaggressions (e.g. using stereotypes, making subtle insults based on ethnicity or race, denying racism exists, sharing racist/offensive jokes)
- d. All of the above
- e. None of the above

7A) To what extent do you agree that multiculturalism has been effective in preventing racism and prejudice?

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

8A) To what extent do you agree that multiculturalism has been effective at promoting inclusion and diversity?

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

9A) To what extent do you agree that most Canadians, whether born in, or immigrated to, Canada are welcoming and inclusive of others?

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

10A) To what extent do you agree that the B.C. government must do more to stop anti-Asian racism in B.C.?

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

11A) To what extent do you agree that anti-Asian racism can be eliminated in B.C.?

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

12A) Since the COVID-19 pandemic, how often did you feel you did not belong or felt like an outsider because of your ethnicity or race?

- a. Never
- b. Not often (a couple times a year)
- c. Often (every few months)
- d. Very often (every few weeks)
- e. Always (every week)

13A) How would you describe the number of experiences of anti-Asian racism you have experienced before the pandemic?

- a) Never experienced
- b) Very little experience
- c) Few experiences
- d) Many experiences
- e) Several experiences

1B) To what extent do you agree that multiculturalism in Canada has been a positive influence for you and your family?

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

2B) To what extent do you agree that you feel you are fully integrated into Canadian society and culture?

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

3B) To what extent do you agree that you have a strong connection to your ethnic background?

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neutral
- d. Agree

- e. Strongly Agree

4B) To what extent do you agree that you feel you are fully integrated into your Canadian professional environment/field?

- a. Strongly Disagree
- b. Disagree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Agree
- e. Strongly Agree

5B) What does multiculturalism primarily mean for you?

- a. Racial and ethnic diversity in Canada
- b. Celebrating cultural diversity in Canada
- c. A government policy
- d. All of the above
- e. I don't know
- f. Other (please specify)

1C) Please rank the top 5 of the following words in order of importance that you feel are shared Canadian civic values relevant to address anti-Asian racism:

- Compassion, Difference, Diversity, Equality, Equity, Freedom, Inclusion, Innovation, Leadership, Multiculturalism, Respect, Rights, Responsibility, Sharing, Sustainability, Security, Tolerance

2C) As a Canadian of East Asian descent, what are the top 5 most important feelings at risk because of anti-Asian racism in B.C.?

- Acceptance, Belonging, Diversity, Equality, Equity, Inclusion, Respect, Resilience, Responsibility, Safety, Security, Tolerance

3C) Please rank the top 5 action words in order of importance that you feel would be important to include in messaging addressing anti-Asian racism in B.C.:

- Appreciate, Celebrate, Contribute, Embrace, Help, Include, Inform, Support, Tolerate, Welcome

4C) How would you describe your level of awareness of government programs and campaigns to stop anti-Asian racism in B.C.?

- a. Not at all aware
- b. Slightly aware
- c. Somewhat aware
- d. Moderately aware
- e. Extremely aware

5C) Please rank in order of importance the kinds of activities or initiatives you think are needed to stop anti-Asian racism in B.C.:

- a. Public awareness campaigns
- b. Educational initiatives in the community and schools
- c. Relevant law and regulations
- d. More law enforcement and protection
- e. Community building events
- f. Other: (please describe)

6C) Please rank in order of importance the focus of the messaging to address anti-Asian racism in B.C.:

- a. Addressing acts of racism
- b. Addressing racist beliefs
- c. Building community
- d. Emphasizing inclusion and acceptance
- e. Promoting multiculturalism

1D) Which best describes your ethnic background? (Chinese, Japanese, Korean)

- a. Chinese
- b. Japanese
- c. Korean

2D) Which best describes your status in Canada?

- a. Permanent Resident
- b. Immigrant who is now a Canadian Citizen
- c. Canadian-born child of a parent who is an immigrant
- d. Canadian-born child of parents born in Canada

3D) Within which region of B.C. do you live in?

- a. Northern B.C.
- b. B.C. Interior
- c. Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands
- d. Metro Vancouver
- e. Fraser Valley

4D) Which age group best describes you?

- a. 18-24
- b. 25-44
- c. 45-64
- d. 65+

5D) What gender do you identify with?

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Other

6D) Which best describes your individual annual income?

- a. Less than \$20,000
- b. \$20,000 to \$34,999
- c. \$35,000 to \$49,999
- d. \$50,000 to \$74,999
- e. \$75,000 to \$99,999
- f. \$100,000+

7D) What is your highest level of education attained?

- a. Some high school
- b. High school graduate
- c. Some post-secondary education
- d. Post-secondary diploma
- e. Bachelor's degree
- f. Graduate degree
- d. Post-graduate education

8D) What professional field do you currently work in?

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| a. Administration | k. Healthcare |
| b. Arts, Entertainment, Sports | l. Hospitality |
| c. Business and Finance | m. Law |
| d. Information Technology | n. Manufacturing |
| e. Community/Social Services | o. Resources |
| f. Construction | p. Retail |
| g. Education | q. Sciences |
| h. Engineering | r. Sales |
| i. Food Services | s. Transportation |
| j. Government | t. Other (please specify) |