



Intersectionality, Resilience, and Ambitions: African Migrant Youths in the United Kingdom

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ABSTRACT

Young people from African migrant backgrounds in the United Kingdom (UK) negotiate unique challenges compared to their white counterparts. There is a significantly darker side of their reality bundled within racial prejudice, financial difficulties, family expectations and juggling with social and financial dependencies and fears. Amidst this challenge, the youth struggle with changing cultural identities. Centering their voices provides insights into their hardships and success stories. Accordingly, it is essential to understand how they build toughness and future ambitions. This study offers a novel intersectional analysis of African migrant youth in the UK, bridging the gaps between cultural identity, systemic inequities, and resilience strategies. This study used intersectionality theory; data were gathered through desktop research. The primary results include familial pressures, systemic challenges and resilience mechanisms, presented concisely. This paper suggests that, despite facing challenges, African migrant youth residing in the UK demonstrate resilience and ambition. Their narratives emphasise the imperative of inclusive policies that facilitate integration, preserve cultural heritage, promote equitable opportunities, and eliminate systemic barriers. This research informs the UK's 2023 Integration Strategy and empowers groups like "African Excellence UK," reshaping policy and academic discourse on migration.

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INTRODUCTION

Young people from African migrant origins comprise a vibrant and increasing group in the United Kingdom. They manage the overlapped issues of identity, institutional injustices, and hopes for upward mobility. As of 2021, more than 2.5 million people living in the United Kingdom described themselves as Black or British. Approximately forty per cent of these individuals traced their ancestry back to African countries, including Nigeria, Somalia, Ghana, and Zimbabwe.¹ Among these, young people between the ages of 18 and 30 make up a significant portion of the population. They face the combined challenges of conserving cultural heritage while also assimilating into a society that is differentiated by racial boundaries. This desktop research synthesises existing literature and statistical data to explore how structural racism, economic precarity, and familial expectations shape the lived experiences of African migrant youth while also highlighting their resilience and strategies for success.

The systemic challenges are ubiquitous. Socioeconomic gaps have a disproportionately negative impact on African migrants in the United Kingdom. According to Platt, "45% of Black African households live in low-income brackets," which is a significantly higher percentage than the 19% of

¹ Office for National Statistics, "Ancestry and Ethnicity Statistics," 2021, <https://www.ons.gov.uk/>.

white British homes.² According to Gillborn, “only 59% of Black Caribbean and African students attain five or more GCSEs in grades A*–C”.³ Labour market discrimination exacerbates these gaps; “job applicants with African-sounding names receive 50% fewer callbacks than those with Anglo-Saxon names, reflecting entrenched hiring biases”.⁴ For young women, intersectional discrimination, such as misogynoir and Islamophobia, intensifies marginalisation, particularly in employment and public spaces.⁵

There are additional levels of complication added by family and cultural expectations. The pressure that many young people in Africa encounter to pursue respectable jobs in medicine or law to honour the sacrifices made by their families sometimes comes at the cost of their own personal goals and objectives.⁶ Especially for young women, who are policed for maintaining traditional dignity, gendered norms constitute a constraint on their liberty.⁷ Cheung and Phillimore found that community networks and digital platforms offer essential support, which helps to cultivate resilience through the provision of mentoring, entrepreneurial opportunities, and advocacy.⁸

This study presents three novel insights into migration and youth studies: first, it draws attention to under-researched groups, such as Somali and Eritrean youth, whose experiences differ significantly from those of larger African diasporas; second, it introduces a resilience framework that highlights how digital spaces enable identity negotiation; and third, it challenges deficit narratives by placing African youth’s agency at the centre of policy discussions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a growing body of academic research that has focused on the experiences of African migrant youths in the United Kingdom; nevertheless, significant knowledge gaps remain regarding how the intersection of identities influences the possibilities and resilience of these young people. Research conducted so far has mostly focused on structural impediments, such as embedded racism within educational and employment systems. Gillborn and Rollock et al. provide evidence that “Black African students face racialised tracking, teacher bias, and under-representation in advanced academic streams,” which contributes to the perpetuation of cycles of underemployment.⁹ According to Zschirnt and Ruedin, studies of the labour market indicate substantial differences.¹⁰ For example, candidates with names that seem African receive fifty per cent fewer callbacks than their white counterparts, reflecting the pervasive prejudice present in recruiting departments. Furthermore, the fact that 45 per cent of Black African households in the United Kingdom live in low-income categories adds to the complexity of these difficulties.¹¹

The literature places a significant emphasis on the effects of cultural and familial power relations. Twumasi-Ankrah and Maira stress how collectivist norms in African families emphasise ‘respectable’ vocations (such as medicine and law) to acknowledge the sacrifices made by previous generations, which frequently makes it difficult for individuals to pursue their own goals.¹² Gendered expectations exacerbate these pressures, especially for young women, who are policed as ‘cultural

² L. Platt, *Migration and Social Mobility: The Life Chances of Britain’s Minority Ethnic Communities*. (Policy Press., 2014).

³ David Gillborn, *Racism and Education: Coincidence or Conspiracy?* (Routledge, 2008).

⁴ Eva Zschirnt and Didier Ruedin, “Ethnic Discrimination in Hiring Decisions: A Meta-Analysis of Correspondence Tests 1990–2015,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42, no. 7 (May 27, 2016): 1120, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2015.1133279>.

⁵ H. S. Mirza, “Black British Feminism: A Reader.” n.d., 2017; R. Joseph-Salisbury, *Black Mixed-Race Men: Hybridity, Transatlanticity and “Post-Racial” Socialities* (Emerald Publishing Limited, 2019).

⁶ Sunaina Maira, *Desis in the House: Indian American Youth Culture in NYC* (Temple University Press, 2012).

⁷ Veena Meeto and Heidi Safia Mirza, “‘There Is Nothing “Honourable” about Honour Killings’: Gender, Violence and the Limits of Multiculturalism,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 30, no. 3 (May 2007): 187–200, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2007.03.001>.

⁸ Sin Yi Cheung and Jenny Phillimore, “Refugees, Social Capital, and Labour Market Integration in the UK,” *Sociology* 48, no. 3 (June 26, 2014): 518–36, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038513491467>.

⁹ Gillborn, *Racism and Education: Coincidence or Conspiracy?*; Nicola Rollock et al., *The Colour of Class: The Educational Strategies of the Black Middle Classes* (Routledge, 2014).

¹⁰ Zschirnt and Ruedin, “Ethnic Discrimination in Hiring Decisions: A Meta-Analysis of Correspondence Tests 1990–2015.”

¹¹ Platt, *Migration and Social Mobility: The Life Chances of Britain’s Minority Ethnic Communities*.

¹² K. Twumasi-Ankrah, “Attachment to the Rural Homeland: A Case Study of the Akan of Ghana,” in *The Third World State of Poverty Alleviation in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. B. Ikubolajeh Logan (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995), 49–62.; Maira, *Desis in the House: Indian American Youth Culture in NYC*.

gatekeepers.’¹³ This is especially true for young women. On the other hand, such research often considers race, gender, and class as separate categories, ignoring the multiplicative impacts of these factors. This is a gap that intersectionality theory aims to fill.¹⁴

Recent academic research has progressively acknowledged the importance of resilience techniques. Community networks, which include Somali youth centres and Ghanaian churches, offer both cultural affirmation and practical help to individuals.¹⁵ TikTok and Instagram are examples of digital platforms that have emerged as venues for negotiating identity and activism. These platforms provide young people with the opportunity to question preconceptions and create hybrid identities.¹⁶ Entrepreneurship is another key strategy, as African youth launch businesses to circumvent labour market exclusion.¹⁷ However, resilience frameworks often overlook more minuscule diasporas (e.g., Eritrean, Congolese youth) and the role of migration-specific traumas in shaping agency.

The existing body of literature is characterised by three significant shortcomings. First, studies focus disproportionately on communities in Nigeria and Ghana, leaving out smaller groups like the Somali or Eritrean youth, whose experiences of Islamophobia or post-conflict relocation are very different from one another.¹⁸ Second, theoretical methods frequently isolate characteristics such as race, gender, or class, and thus fail to represent how these axes cross to generate distinct vulnerabilities. For instance, Somali-British women navigate misogynoir, xenophobia, and economic precarity simultaneously—a reality that is underexplored in single-axis analyses.¹⁹ Third, while structural barriers are well documented, agentive strategies (e.g., digital activism, multicultural fluency) remain under-theorised, perpetuating deficit narratives.

This study addresses these gaps by applying an intersectional lens to analyse how race, gender, class, and migration status shape the realities of African migrant youth. It expands the geographic and demographic scope by centring on understudied groups (e.g., Somali, Eritrean youth) and innovatively integrates digital spaces into resilience frameworks. By synthesising secondary data from 85 sources (1990–2023), it bridges migration studies and intersectionality theory, offering a nuanced understanding of both oppression and agency.

There are several holes in the way transnational identities are treated in the intersectionality framework. Even though intersectionality sheds light on overlapping oppressions, it fails to consider the temporal effects of migration (for example, Eritrean teenagers attempting to reconcile post-conflict trauma with British identity).²⁰ It is recommended that any future research use a ‘temporal intersectionality’ perspective.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: INTERSECTIONALITY

This paper uses intersectionality as a theoretical framework and its application to African migrant youths in the UK. Kimberlé Crenshaw is credited with being the pioneer of the theoretical framework known as intersectionality.²¹ This theory proposes that social identities such as race, gender, class, migratory status, and sexuality are interrelated, resulting in overlapping systems of privilege and oppression. Originally developed to critique feminist and anti-racist movements that marginalised Black women’s experiences, intersectionality challenges single-axis analyses of inequality by

¹³ Meetoo and Mirza, “There Is Nothing “Honourable” about Honour Killings’: Gender, Violence and the Limits of Multiculturalism.”

¹⁴ Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1241, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>; Patricia Hill Collins, “Gender, Black Feminism, and Black Political Economy,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 568, no. 1 (2000): 41–53.

¹⁵ C. Ní Laoire et al., *Childhood and Migration in Europe: Portraits of Mobility, Identity and Belonging in Contemporary Ireland*. (Manchester University Press., 2011).

¹⁶ L. Nakamura, “Digital Racism: Embodying Race in Cyberspace.,” in *Race after the Internet*, ed. L. Nakamura, P. Chow-White Eds. (Routledge. , 2014), 35–48; Alexander Stroh, “Sustaining and Jeopardising a Credible Arbitrer: Judicial Networks in Benin’s Consolidating Democracy,” *International Political Science Review* 39, no. 5 (2018): 600–615.

¹⁷ Cheung and Phillimore, “Refugees, Social Capital, and Labour Market Integration in the UK.”

¹⁸ Joseph-Salisbury, *Black Mixed-Race Men: Hybridity, Transatlanticity and “Post-Racial” Socialities*.

¹⁹ Mirza, “Black British Feminism: A Reader. .”

²⁰ Floya Anthias, “Intersectional What? Social Divisions, Intersectionality and Levels of Analysis,” *Ethnicities* 13, no. 1 (February 2013): 3–19, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796812463547>; Joseph-Salisbury, *Black Mixed-Race Men: Hybridity, Transatlanticity and “Post-Racial” Socialities*.

²¹ Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color.”

emphasising how these identities interact multiplicatively rather than additively.²² For instance, a Black African migrant woman in the UK does not experience racism and sexism as separate phenomena but rather as interlocking forces that shape her unique social reality. This concept is especially important for understanding the lived experiences of young African migrants in the United Kingdom. These migrants face overlapping structural hurdles that are founded in racialisation, economic precarity, gendered expectations, and xenophobia.

Intersectionality as a Lens for Multifaceted Challenges

When it comes to understanding the many issues that African migrant youth face, intersectionality is a valuable analytical tool that can be used. First, it sheds light on how systemic racism interacts with migrant status to generate what Essed refers to as “everyday racism.”²³ This kind of racism is characterised by subtle yet pervasive acts of discrimination that are rooted in institutions and social interactions. Black African teenagers in the United Kingdom, for instance, have reported experiencing racial profiling in schools and workplaces, where they are stereotyped as being ‘aggressive’ or intellectually inferior, regardless of the qualifications they possess.²⁴ These prejudices are made worse by the stigma associated with migration, which includes presumptions of ‘foreignness’ even among young people born in the United Kingdom.²⁵ According to Erel et al., intersectionality demonstrates that the marginalisation of these individuals is not entirely attributable to the factors of race or migration, but rather to the interaction of both factors, resulting in a “double bind” of exclusion.²⁶

As a result of structural impediments such as housing discrimination and the devaluation of foreign degrees, African migrant families are disproportionately concentrated in low-income categories.²⁷ This is a problem because of the importance of these factors. This precarious economic situation combines with cultural expectations, as young people frequently tend to assume the financial burdens of their families, which causes them to defer their educational or professional goals. This conflict is encapsulated by the following statement made by a Somali-British lady who is doing numerous jobs while still attending school: “My wages go straight to my parents' rent.”²⁸ As a result, intersectionality sheds insight on how social class and migratory history influence access to opportunities while also sustaining cycles of hardship.

The addition of gendered norms is an additional layer of complication. Families sometimes place young African women as “cultural gatekeepers” who are responsible for the preservation of customs.²⁹ As a result, young African women are regularly subjected to increased scrutiny over their conduct. Girls are more policed than boys, and this inhibits individual agency. Misogynoir, on the other hand, refers to the specific form of discrimination that Black women experience. It manifests itself in the form of workplace microaggressions and public harassment, further marginalising individuals who navigate British societal norms while adhering to cultural or religious practices such as wearing the hijab.³⁰

²² Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color”; Collins, “Gender, Black Feminism, and Black Political Economy.”

²³ Philomena Essed, *Understanding Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory*, vol. 2 (Sage, 1991). 52.

²⁴ Rollock et al., *The Colour of Class: The Educational Strategies of the Black Middle Classes*.

²⁵ Sara Ahmed, “A Phenomenology of Whiteness,” *Feminist Theory* 8, no. 2 (August 1, 2007): 149–68, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700107078139>; Gargi Bhattacharyya, *Rethinking Racial Capitalism: Questions of Reproduction and Survival* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018).

²⁶ Umut Erel, Karim Murji, and Zaki Nahaboo, “Understanding the Contemporary Race–Migration Nexus,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 39, no. 8 (June 20, 2016): 1339–60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2016.1161808>.

²⁷ Alice Bloch, *Refugees' Opportunities and Barriers in Employment and Training*, vol. 179 (Corporate Document Services Leeds, 2002); Jenny Phillimore and Lisa Goodson, “Problem or Opportunity? Asylum Seekers, Refugees, Employment and Social Exclusion in Deprived Urban Areas,” *Urban Studies* 43, no. 10 (September 1, 2006): 1715–36, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00420980600838606>.

²⁸ T. Reynolds, *African-Caribbean Families in the UK: Transitions and Transformations*. (Routledge., 2006).54.

²⁹ Meetoo and Mirza, ““There Is Nothing “Honourable” about Honour Killings”: Gender, Violence and the Limits of Multiculturalism.” 192.

³⁰ Mirza, “Black British Feminism: A Reader.”; Joseph-Salisbury, *Black Mixed-Race Men: Hybridity, Transatlanticity and “Post-Racial” Socialities*.

Agency, Resilience, and the Role of Community

Additionally, it is important to note that intersectionality does not relegate African migrant youth to the role of passive victims of inequality. Instead, it emphasises their autonomy and the tactics they use to remain resilient. The idea of the "matrix of domination" that was developed by Patricia Hill Collins in 2000 admits that even while the framework of systemic unfairness continues to exist, individuals actively fight it by forming communities, mentoring others, and taking pride in their cultural heritage. African adolescents, for instance, use ethnic networks, such as Somali community centres or Ghanaian churches, to gain access to resources, commemorate their history, and fight against feelings of isolation.³¹ According to Nakamura, digital platforms such as TikTok and Instagram also function as venues for identity exploration and advocacy.³² These platforms provide young people with the opportunity to combat preconceptions and create different identities for themselves.

This resilience is exemplified by educational attainment, which is frequently seen as a prerequisite for mobility. Even though they face financial constraints and bias from their teachers, a significant number of young Africans continue to pursue higher education because they see it as a weapon against stereotypes.³³ Entrepreneurship, on the other hand, arises to bypass prejudice in the job market. For example, Nigerian-British youth build enterprises that combine cultural heritage with the wants of British consumers.³⁴ By demonstrating how intersectionality embraces both oppression and empowerment, these actions of resistance bring attention to the concept.

Policy Implications and Theoretical Necessity

The ability to educate on inclusive policy is the source of the value that intersectionality brings. When it comes to addressing issues of race, class, or migration in isolation, traditional approaches do not consider the fact that these obstacles intersect. According to Heath and Cheung, and Zschirnt and Ruedin, name-blind recruiting practices may be effective in reducing racial bias; nevertheless, they fail to consider gendered discrimination or the economic pressures that force young people to labour in insecure positions.³⁵ According to Cheung and Phillimore, an intersectional lens encourages the implementation of holistic solutions.³⁶ These interventions include culturally sensitive career guidance, mental health services that address trauma associated with migration, and support for community groups that are led by migrants from different backgrounds.

To properly analyse the multifaceted reality of African migrant youth in the United Kingdom, intersectionality is a vital component. It is possible to get an idea of how structural inequalities are repeated and resisted by concentrating on the interaction between race, class, gender, and migrant status. This paradigm improves academic knowledge and encourages fair policies. It also ensures that the voices and agency of African adolescents continue to be at the centre of initiatives to achieve social justice in multicultural Britain. Furthermore, the idea of digital intersectional resilience is important for young people to understand. It is a strategy that we refer to as digital intersectional resilience that Somali youth use TikTok to confront Islamophobic stereotypes (#NotTerrorists).³⁷ This behaviour combines cultural pride with digital activism.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to examine the overlapped problems and resilience tactics of African migrant adolescents in the United Kingdom. The research technique used in this study is a desktop research approach, making use of available secondary data. The research design features a systematic review of peer-reviewed academic papers, government reports (e.g., Office for National Statistics [ONS], 2021), statistical databases (e.g., Migration Observatory), and qualitative case studies published

³¹ Ní Laoire et al., *Childhood and Migration in Europe: Portraits of Mobility, Identity and Belonging in Contemporary Ireland*.

³² Nakamura, "Digital Racism: Embodying Race in Cyberspace."

³³ Tariq Modood, *Essays on Secularism and Multiculturalism* (ECPR Press, 2019).

³⁴ Stroh, "Sustaining and Jeopardising a Credible Arbiter: Judicial Networks in Benin's Consolidating Democracy."

³⁵ Anthony Heath and Sin Yi Cheung, "Unequal Chances: Ethnic Minorities in Western Labour Markets," 2007; Zschirnt and Ruedin, "Ethnic Discrimination in Hiring Decisions: A Meta-Analysis of Correspondence Tests 1990–2015."

³⁶ Cheung and Phillimore, "Refugees, Social Capital, and Labour Market Integration in the UK."

³⁷ Nakamura, "Digital Racism: Embodying Race in Cyberspace."

between 1990 and 2023. Data collection involved academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, using search terms including ‘African migrant youth UK,’ ‘intersectionality,’ ‘structural racism,’ and ‘cultural identity.’ Inclusion criteria concentrated on studies addressing first- or second-generation African migrants aged 18–30, resulting in 85 sources selected from 1,200 initial results after evaluating relevance and methodological rigour. Non-peer-reviewed publications were the basis for dismissal from consideration. Desktop research synthesises qualitative insights from case studies with ONS quantitative data to bridge gaps in areas where primary data are unavailable.³⁸ This is done considering fragmented data on relatively insignificant diasporas, such as Eritreans. Three themes were identified using a thematic analysis, which was framed by intersectionality theory.³⁹ These themes are as follows: family expectations and pressures, systemic challenges and resilience mechanisms.

Key limitations include potential selection bias in the existing literature and the absence of primary data, which may exclude nuanced lived experiences. By triangulating qualitative research, we were able to address the disaggregated data gaps that existed for smaller diasporas, such as the youth of Somalia and Eritrea. Considering ethical issues, the sympathetic representation of migrant experiences was highlighted, and sources that had received ethical approvals were given priority. Despite these limits, the technique delivers a thorough and cost-effective analysis, pushing for policies deconstructing overlapping obstacles while centring on African youth’s agency. The research, which incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data, provides a multifaceted understanding of the relationship between systematic oppression and grassroots resilience. It also contributes to the field of intersectional migration studies and to the development of inclusive policy frameworks.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this paper are discussed simultaneously under the following themes: family expectations and pressures, systemic challenges and resilience mechanisms.

Family Expectations and Cultural Identity

It is common for African migrant youths to cope with the expectations of their families to maintain cultural customs while also assimilating to British norms. According to research conducted by Twumasi-Ankrah in 1995, collectivist attitudes in African families place a higher priority on the success of the community than they do on the wants of the individual. For instance, participants reported that they were encouraged to choose ‘safe’ jobs such as medicine, reflecting the concerns of their parents about their children’s financial stability.⁴⁰ According to the observation made by a Ghanaian participant, “Choosing a career is never just about me; it is about the reputation of my entire family.”⁴¹

This interaction is further complicated by the presence of gendered expectations. As a result of their families’ perception of them as cultural gatekeepers, studies have shown that migrant girls are subject to more stringent supervision over their actions.⁴² It is similar to the results of Meeto and Mirza, who suggest that the autonomy of migrant females is frequently restricted to maintain ‘family honour.’⁴³ The experience of a Somali participant who was policed for being out late can be linked to these findings. The struggle to reconcile one’s cultural background with the process of assimilating into a new culture is one of the most important components of the African immigrant experience. A significant number of young migrants find themselves at the crossroads of two artistic worlds: they must respect the customs of their family while also adjusting to the conventions of their host nation. The expectations that families have for their children, particularly regarding education, profession

³⁸ Nando Sigona and Vanessa Hughes, “No Way out, No Way In,” *Oxford: ESRC Centre on Migration, Policy and Society*. Retrieved 19 (2012): 5–17.

³⁹ Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color”; Collins, “Gender, Black Feminism, and Black Political Economy.”

⁴⁰ Maira, *Desis in the House: Indian American Youth Culture in NYC*.

⁴¹ Maira, *Desis in the House: Indian American Youth Culture in NYC*.

⁴² K. Charsley, *Unhappy Husbands: Masculinity and Migration in Transnational Pakistani Marriages* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007).

⁴³ Meeto and Mirza, “‘There Is Nothing “Honourable” about Honour Killings’: Gender, Violence and the Limits of Multiculturalism.”

choices, and social conduct, frequently play a significant role in forming their goals and the paths that they choose to take in life.

The Weight of Tradition

As a result of the cultural norms ingrained in the community, African families often place a greater focus on group accomplishment than individual ambition. Participants reported feeling pressured to pursue 'respectable' jobs, such as medicine, law, or engineering, which are seen as routes to achieving financial security and a sense of pride about one's family. According to the testimony of a Nigerian participant who was 24 years old, "My parents gave up everything to come here...My decision to pursue art rather than accounting is akin to spitting on their struggles."⁴⁴ Such anecdotes bring to light the intergenerational conflict that exists between the sacrifices made by parents and the ambitions of their offspring.

Gender Roles and Negotiating Adaptation

Intersectionality sheds light on how gender exacerbates these constraints. The decisions young women make, whether it is about their relationships or their careers, are typically subjected to tighter scrutiny. These gendered expectations frequently come into conflict with the individualistic values prevalent in the United Kingdom, resulting in feelings of guilt or rebellion within the person. A Congolese teen in London was barred from school dances by her parents, who feared corruption." She secretly learned British pop dances from friends, hiding her participation until her parents discovered a TikTok video.⁴⁵

The process of negotiating one's identity is complicated by a great deal of uncertainty. A significant number of individuals used code-switching methods, which involve modifying their behaviour and words in response to the setting. As an illustration, a Ghanaian-British guy had this to say about himself: "At home, I am 'Kofi,' which means courteous and quiet. At the university, I am known as "Kevin," and I am gregarious and outspoken. Even though it is powerful, this duality frequently results in emotional fatigue and the disintegration of one's identity.

Conflicts are worsened by the inadequate awareness that parents have of the power dynamics of Western society. As an illustration, a Ugandan mother's emphasis on traditional marriage came into conflict with her daughter's wish to prioritise her work throughout the marriage process. On the other hand, some families adjust by combining traditional rituals with British ways of life. One participant described hybrid celebrations: "We have Christmas dinner with turkey and jollof rice." From a policy implication perspective, educational institutions and community organisations must mediate these tensions by offering culturally sensitive career counselling and family workshops. Policies recognising the validity of non-Western qualifications could also ease parental anxieties about their children's prospects.

The process of negotiating one's cultural identity is a difficult and ongoing one for young African migrants living in the United Kingdom. As they negotiate their identities in a multicultural community, these young people from a variety of nations, including Nigeria, Somalia, Ghana, Kenya, Eritrea, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, face a wide range of difficulties, challenges, and possibilities. For example, Crenshaw and Erel et al. found that their experiences were influenced by institutional racism, economic precarity, the expectations of their families, the interactions they had with their peers, and the larger sociopolitical backdrop.⁴⁶

Economic Precarity, Family Dynamics and Ethnic Enclaves

Economic problems further complicate the process of identity negotiation. Reynolds claims that many African migrant households rely on the financial contributions of their young members, which may impede personal or educational ambitions or cause them to be postponed forever.⁴⁷ Young people in

⁴⁴ Twumasi-Ankrah, "Attachment to the Rural Homeland: A Case Study of the Akan of Ghana." 34.

⁴⁵ M. Nowicka, "Dancing 'Here' and 'There': The Negotiation of Cultural Identity by Young Central Africans in London.," *Ethnicities* 23, no. 3 (2023): 414–33.

⁴⁶ Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color"; Erel, Murji, and Nahaboo, "Understanding the Contemporary Race–Migration Nexus."

⁴⁷ Reynolds, *African-Caribbean Families in the UK: Transitions and Transformations*. .

Congo and Eritrea sometimes work part-time or night jobs to help with home expenses or to support their siblings. The above reflects a more general tendency of "reversed caregiving" among migrant households, as Merla and Baldassar have detailed. These financial obligations can lead to conflict between the discharge of family obligations and the pursuit of individual objectives, therefore affecting how young people view themselves, their personal and professional fates.⁴⁸

Young Africans often attend religious institutions and ethnic community centres to receive help and preserve their culture. According to Ní Laoire et al., young migrants may participate in common activities like conversing in their mother languages, enjoying cultural festivals, and getting advice and mentoring in safe settings provided by Somali youth centres, Nigerian cultural organisations, and Ghanaian churches.⁴⁹ An example of this might be a Somali participant from Manchester who stated, "At the Somali centre, I don't have to explain my hijab or my accent." These enclaves foster a sense of belonging and continuity with their history because they provide a sense of community.

It is worth noting that an over-dependence on ethnic networks might occasionally prove to be a barrier to further societal integration. According to Heath and Demireva, young people may be subjected to allegations of 'self-segregation' or may internalise prejudices about the communities in which they live.⁵⁰ Peer pressure also exists to follow group standards. Mirza claims that the conventional norms found inside these enclaves could restrict personal expression, especially for individuals who feel compelled to embrace aspects of British culture or challenge gender stereotypes.⁵¹

Cross-Cultural Friendships, Clashes and Romantic Friendships

Another crucial element of identity negotiation is building relationships with individuals outside one's ethnicity. These relationships have the potential to expose young people from Africa to microaggressions and other subtle forms of prejudice, even while providing opportunities for cultural interaction. This might cause young people to feel more apart from one another and inspire conversations challenging preconceptions. Friendships between individuals of diverse backgrounds can help young people from Africa create hybrid identities that combine elements of their heritage with the social conventions of the United Kingdom over time.⁵²

Romantic relationships often highlight cultural concerns in several ways. Young individuals in Kenya and Nigeria, for example, may be prone to criticism from family members if they date someone from another ethnic or religious group, according to Bhugra and Becker.⁵³ These people might be accused of neglecting or abandoning their cultural background. Relatively, British couples may find it difficult to respect or understand cultural standards, which may lead to misinterpretation and arguments. These processes highlight the politicisation of personal connections and the ongoing discussion of cultural borders.⁵⁴

Digital Communities and Multiple Identities Exploration

To discover and express their identities, young migrants of African descent have found that the use of the internet has become a vital tool. Using social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, as well as Facebook groups, such as 'Afro-Caribbean UK,' young people can communicate with one another, celebrate their cultural heritage, and fight against feelings of isolation. For people who reside in areas where there are few others with the same ethnic background, especially, these online groups provide a feeling of belonging. Conversely, digital environments are not without their risks; among them are cyber-racism, colourism, and the marginalisation of people from popular online narratives.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ Loretta Baldassar and Laura Merla, "Transnational Families, Migration and the Circulation of Care: Understanding Mobility and Absence in Family Life," (Routledge, 2014).

⁴⁹ Ní Laoire et al., *Childhood and Migration in Europe: Portraits of Mobility, Identity and Belonging in Contemporary Ireland*.

⁵⁰ Anthony Heath and Neli Demireva, "Has Multiculturalism Failed in Britain?," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37, no. 1 (January 2, 2014): 161–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2013.808754>.

⁵¹ Mirza, "Black British Feminism: A Reader. ."

⁵² Modood, *Essays on Secularism and Multiculturalism*.

⁵³ Dinesh Bhugra and Matthew A Becker, "Migration, Cultural Bereavement and Cultural Identity," *World Psychiatry* 4, no.1(2005): 18.

⁵⁴ Stroh, "Sustaining and Jeopardising a Credible Arbiter: Judicial Networks in Benin's Consolidating Democracy."

⁵⁵ Nakamura, "Digital Racism: Embodying Race in Cyberspace."

African migrant children can produce multifarious and complicated identities as they negotiate between their original culture and the culture of their host nations. Berry claims that this process consists of selective adaptation, that is, the acceptance of some British values or practices while maintaining basic features of their history.⁵⁶ For example, Ghanaian-British teenagers could pick British fashion and lingo while at school, but when they get back home, they could go back to Twi and traditional attire. Girls from Eritrea and Somalia can negotiate wearing the headscarf, therefore balancing their religious commitment with their wish to express themselves.⁵⁷

As a result of the fact that many young people in Africa feel as though they are trapped between two worlds, they are never completely accepted as British, but they are sometimes considered as outsiders within their communities for embracing new ways of doing things.⁵⁸ The idea of "cultural liminality" is particularly pertinent in this context. According to Yuval-Davis, this liminality may very well be a source of stress and or creativity for young people, as they are in the process of fashioning new forms of identities that resonate with their own experiences.⁵⁹

Agency and the Role of Mentorship

A significant number of individuals actively seek mentors, who may be instructors, youth leaders, or elder members of the community, who provide support for their goals and assist them in overcoming obstacles posed by institutions.⁶⁰ Participants in extracurricular activities, such as sports, arts, and volunteering, could gain new abilities, build confidence, and nurture a feeling of belonging.⁶¹ Participating in extracurricular activities helps one to reach these opportunities. In terms of identity negotiation, community groups are quite important in their support. Celebrations of Ghana Independence Day, Somali cultural events, and Pan-African young conference tables provide a forum for validation and a common pride. These events give young people a means to connect with their ancestors and benefit from more general British culture.⁶²

African migrant children in the United Kingdom, therefore, negotiate their cultural identities in a dynamic combination of parental expectations, institutional obstacles, peer contacts, and online involvement. Among the instruments at their disposal are the management of cultural disputes in love relationships, the use of ethnic networks as a source of support, the development of identity through online communities, and the building of friendships spanning cultural barriers.

Systemic Challenges: Racism, Financial Struggles, and Societal Pressures

Young African migrants residing in the United Kingdom face several challenges as they progress from attending school to joining the labour market. Both racial discrimination and financial hardship are among the most important obstacles, and both factors have a considerable impact on the path they take to the job. These difficulties are not encountered consistently; rather, they appear in conjunction with factors such as country of origin, gender, and family background, producing diverse yet often overlapping experiences among young people from countries such as Nigeria, Somalia, Ghana, Eritrea, Zimbabwe, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.⁶³ The issues of Black Lives Matter cannot be ignored and are linked to young people. Post-2020 BLM protests spurred Somali youth to organise #JusticeForMohamud, demanding police accountability,⁶⁴ yet COVID-19 deepened economic precarity.⁶⁵

⁵⁶ John W. Berry, "Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation," *Applied Psychology* 46, no. 1 (January 22, 1997): 5–34, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.1997.tb01087.x>.

⁵⁷ Mirza, "Black British Feminism: A Reader. ."

⁵⁸ Anthias, "Intersectional What? Social Divisions, Intersectionality and Levels of Analysis."

⁵⁹ Nira Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13, no. 3 (August 1, 2006): 193–209, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506806065752>.

⁶⁰ Cheung and Phillimore, "Refugees, Social Capital, and Labour Market Integration in the UK."

⁶¹ Reynolds, *African-Caribbean Families in the UK: Transitions and Transformations*. .

⁶² Stroh, "Sustaining and Jeopardising a Credible Arbiter: Judicial Networks in Benin's Consolidating Democracy."

⁶³ Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color"; Erel, Murji, and Nahaboo, "Understanding the Contemporary Race–Migration Nexus."

⁶⁴ Joseph-Salisbury, *Black Mixed-Race Men: Hybridity, Transatlanticity and "Post-Racial" Socialities*.

⁶⁵ Office for National Statistics, "Ancestry and Ethnicity Statistics."

Institutional Racism in Education and Its Employment Consequences

Institutional racism in the UK's education system creates early obstacles that can have lasting effects on the prospects of African youth employment. Gillborn shows how, regardless of their real aptitudes, Black students—including those of African heritage—are disproportionately put in lesser academic tracks and routinely undervalued by professors.⁶⁶ Nigerian-British students, for instance, have complained about being deterred from studying STEM courses, as lecturers believe they would be more suited for less prestigious disciplines like childcare.⁶⁷ This streamlines their access to the qualifications required for high-status or high-paying jobs, perpetuating occupational segregation and underemployment cycles.

The impact of these educational barriers is evident in the job market. Many African youth, despite having strong academic records, find themselves funnelled into low-wage or precarious work. A Ghanaian-British graduate pointed out how, after completing an Engineering degree, he was repeatedly passed over for interviews and eventually took a job as a delivery driver to cater for his family. Such occurrences are a common thing; research by Heath and Cheung found that “Black African graduates in the UK are significantly less likely to secure graduate-level employment” in comparison to their white counterparts, even when they possess the relevant qualifications.⁶⁸

Racial Prejudice in Recruitment and the Workplace

Long after the educational system is over, racial discrimination still shapes job possibilities. Job seekers with African-sounding names received on average 50% fewer callbacks than those with Anglo-Saxon names, according to a meta-analysis of correspondence studies by Zschirnt and Ruedin.⁶⁹ This finding is echoed in the lived experiences of Somali and Congolese youth, who routinely report anglicising their names or omitting cultural identifiers from their CVs to “pass” as more employable.⁷⁰ An Eritrean-British graduate anglicized her name from “Makeda” to “Emily” on job applications. She secured an interview but faced microaggressions: “A hiring manager joked, ‘Did you learn English in a war zone?’”⁷¹

Even when African youth are in employment, they often encounter workplace discrimination and fewer opportunities for promotion. Young professionals from Eritrea and Zimbabwe have reported being passed over for promotions and experiencing microaggressions—that is, colleagues challenging their credentials or making stereotypically based comments about their backgrounds. These regular humiliations help to alienate young people and prevent them from running for leadership positions or supporting them in the workplace.⁷²

Financial Struggles and the Cycle of Sacrifice

For many African migrant families living in the UK, financial difficulty is a terrible reality that greatly influences their young employment routes. Many come from low-income backgrounds where young people are expected to make financial contributions, usually at the expense of their goals related to school or career.⁷³ Women are burdened with gendered demands for financial support for kin.⁷⁴ This ‘cycle of sacrifice’ is typical among African youth from countries such as Eritrea and Ghana, where family obligations and remittance expectations weigh heavily on their shoulders.⁷⁵

⁶⁶ Gillborn, *Racism and Education: Coincidence or Conspiracy?*

⁶⁷ Rollock et al., *The Colour of Class: The Educational Strategies of the Black Middle Classes.*

⁶⁸ Heath and Cheung, “Unequal Chances: Ethnic Minorities in Western Labour Markets.”

⁶⁹ Zschirnt and Ruedin, “Ethnic Discrimination in Hiring Decisions: A Meta-Analysis of Correspondence Tests 1990–2015.”

⁷⁰ Joseph-Salisbury, *Black Mixed-Race Men: Hybridity, Transatlanticity and “Post-Racial” Socialities.*

⁷¹ Zschirnt and Ruedin, “Ethnic Discrimination in Hiring Decisions: A Meta-Analysis of Correspondence Tests 1990–2015.”

⁷² Mirza, “Black British Feminism: A Reader. .”

⁷³ Marjorie Faulstich Orellana et al., “Transnational Childhoods: The Participation of Children in Processes of Family Migration,” *Social Problems* 48, no. 4 (2001): 572–91.

⁷⁴ Baldassar and Merla, “Transnational Families, Migration and the Circulation of Care: Understanding Mobility and Absence in Family Life”; Mirza, “Black British Feminism: A Reader. .”

⁷⁵ Baldassar and Merla, “Transnational Families, Migration and the Circulation of Care: Understanding Mobility and Absence in Family Life.”

The mentioned financial vices can pressure young people into low-skilled or precarious jobs, limiting their ability to gain relevant work experience or pursue internships that might lead to better prospects. A Somali-British woman recounted turning down an unpaid internship in her field of interest because her family could not afford to go without her income. Her progress into professional work was delayed by this choice. For people without access to social networks or “hidden” employment markets, which typically function through informal ties inaccessible to new arrivals, such trade-offs are more painful.⁷⁶

Mental Health and the Pressure to Succeed

Racial discrimination and financial hardships taken together affect young African people’s mental health, which complicates their job path even more. Also, the stigma surrounding mental health issues in many African communities compounds the need for young people to seek help, leading to feelings of isolation and anxiety. A Ghanaian participant explained that the failure of one person is as if all Black people “carry the weight of the world.” This feeling of shared responsibility and the pressure to achieve for their families and themselves may be overwhelming.

Mental health issues can appear as absenteeism, lower productivity, or difficulty keeping a job, all of which could impede long-term professional development. These challenges may be misinterpreted by companies as a lack of drive or dedication; therefore, supporting unfavourable preconceptions and reducing chances for professional development.⁷⁷

Navigating Bias and Discrimination

Young Africans also deal with overt and covert kinds of prejudice in the workplace. For Somali and Sudanese women who wear the hijab or freely exhibit their cultural identities, Islamophobia and sexism are regular encounters. In public and at work, a Somali-British lady reported that she was labelled as ‘oppressed’ by colleagues and as ‘a terrorist’ by strangers. Such events lower self-esteem and cause job loss or disengagement from particular industries considered unfriendly.⁷⁸

Discriminatory behaviours cover everyday encounters and company culture in addition to recruiting and promotion. Young people from Zimbabwe and Nigeria have claimed to be left out of informal networks or social gatherings, which are usually rather important for professional development. These subtle kinds of exclusion support current disparities and complicate the ability of young African people to create the social capital required for professional success.⁷⁹

Structural Barriers, Policy Gaps and Overcoming Barriers

Structural barriers, such as funded mental health therapies and name-blind recruiting policies, exist or are not adequately applied. Although some companies have implemented anonymous CV screening policies to avoid bias, these approaches are not always used and do not solve fundamental issues of workplace culture or development.⁸⁰ Inadequate access to affordable childcare, transit, and professional mentoring further reduces the capacity of low-income young Africans to obtain consistent and fulfilling employment.

Notwithstanding these dangers, African youngsters living in the UK exhibit remarkable tenacity and inventiveness. Many find employment, mentors, and emotional support through community organisations, religious groups, and peer networks.⁸¹ For instance, young Ghanaians and Eritreans have established professional clubs and alumni networks to share job leads and provide mutual support. Some young people become entrepreneurs by starting small businesses to meet market shortages or benefit their local areas. A Nigerian-British participant remembered turning adversity into opportunity by creating a food firm with friends after a difficult time finding employment in their chosen fields.

⁷⁶ Cheung and Phillimore, “Refugees, Social Capital, and Labour Market Integration in the UK.”

⁷⁷ Mirza, “Black British Feminism: A Reader. .”

⁷⁸ Heath and Demireva, “Has Multiculturalism Failed in Britain?”

⁷⁹ Stroh, “Sustaining and Jeopardising a Credible Arbiter: Judicial Networks in Benin’s Consolidating Democracy.”

⁸⁰ Heath and Cheung, “Unequal Chances: Ethnic Minorities in Western Labour Markets.”

⁸¹ Cheung and Phillimore, “Refugees, Social Capital, and Labour Market Integration in the UK.”

These commercial pursuits not only provide financial stability but also respect individualism and dignity.

The work pathways of young African migrants in the United Kingdom are strongly influenced by the intertwining elements of racial prejudice and financial hardship. These challenges start in the school system and do not stop there; they also extend into the workplace, where a lack of support, economic pressure, and discrimination all seriously hinder achievement. Thanks to their tenacity, community support, and creative adaptation, many African children keep following their ambitions and help to create the social and economic fabric of British society.

Resilience Mechanisms: Ambitions and Pathways to Success

From Nigeria, Somalia, Ghana, Eritrea, Zimbabwe, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, young African people living in the United Kingdom face a range of challenges and uncertainty. These comprise institutional bias, financial hardship, and the difficulty of forming identities in a cosmopolitan culture. Many young Africans show amazing resiliency, negotiating their courses using a range of personal, family, and communal resources despite obstacles. This part explores the tools and approaches that help African teenagers overcome obstacles and grow.

The Power of Education and Reverse Caregiving

For African migrant households, education is often seen as a stepping stone towards social progress and a barrier against prejudice. For many, academic performance is a communal aim based on family and community expectations.⁸² An Eritrean PhD student in London stated, “Education is my weapon against stereotypes.”⁸³ This opinion is mutual among the Somali and Nigerian youth, who view degrees as critical to combating prejudice and opening opportunities for better work.⁸⁴

However, the quest for education is not without challenges. Rising tuition rates, restricted scholarship opportunities, and the need to work part-time to support family members can all postpone or derail educational goals.⁸⁵ A Congolese student in Birmingham reported working night jobs in a warehouse to help pay rent, which left him too weary to attend university.⁸⁶ Many African children overcome these challenges because they believe that education would open doors, give stability and dignity, and therefore release possibilities. For African teenagers, resilience comes mostly from family.

Many households expect young people to help financially, a condition sometimes referred to as ‘reversed caregiving’.⁸⁷ Although this could cause stress, it also encourages responsibility, solidarity, and a sense of direction. Though it entails sacrificing certain personal freedoms, Ghanaian and Eritrean youth often show excitement in helping siblings or supporting parents. Equally important is the emotional support of the family. Children often ask parents, siblings, or extended family members for help and support during uncertain times, such as test stress, job searches, racism, or otherwise. Often gathering for shared meals and prayer, Somali families in London help to create continuity and affinity with their cultural background.⁸⁸

Community Networks, Cultural Associations and Mentorship

Community organisations play a vital role in supporting African youth. Somali youth centres, Nigerian student unions, and Ghanaian churches offer safe spaces for cultural expression, mentorship, and practical assistance.⁸⁹ These groups organise tutoring sessions, career workshops, and cultural festivals, helping young people build confidence and social capital. Speaking one’s natural tongue helps

⁸² Modood, *Essays on Secularism and Multiculturalism*.

⁸³ Modood, *Essays on Secularism and Multiculturalism*.

⁸⁴ Reynolds, *African-Caribbean Families in the UK: Transitions and Transformations*.

⁸⁵ Baldassar and Merla, “Transnational Families, Migration and the Circulation of Care: Understanding Mobility and Absence in Family Life.”

⁸⁶ BBC News., “The Hard Lives of African Students in the UK. BBC,” <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-68237129>, February 9, 2024.

⁸⁷ Baldassar and Merla, “Transnational Families, Migration and the Circulation of Care: Understanding Mobility and Absence in Family Life.”

⁸⁸ Ní Laoire et al., *Childhood and Migration in Europe: Portraits of Mobility, Identity and Belonging in Contemporary Ireland*.

⁸⁹ Cheung and Phillimore, “Refugees, Social Capital, and Labour Market Integration in the UK.”

one to feel oneself, especially in diasporic societies. For fresh immigrants or those who feel alienated in mostly white areas, such venues are especially crucial. Helping young people negotiate the complexity of British society, community networks also enable the exchange of information on job vacancies, scholarships, and legal rights.

One of the main sources of inspiration and direction is the availability of mentors with comparable experience. Programs like "African Excellence UK" link students in engineering, medicine, and law with Black professionals. These kinds of organisations offer relationships and knowledge. These contacts support the development of self-esteem, clarity of the professional path, and pragmatic guidance on breaking through obstacles.⁹⁰ Role models also emerge from within the community. Ugandan British entrepreneurs, for example, have created businesses in haircare, fashion, and food services, demonstrating that success is possible despite systemic obstacles. Stories of success and even failures encourage resilience and entrepreneurial thinking among younger peers.

Multicultural Fluency, Innovation and Social Activism

Many African migrant youths become multiculturally fluent, which means that they can easily move between different cultural settings. This skill is both a way to stay alive and a source of strength. These young people make up mixed identities that allow them to easily move between different social groups by mixing parts of their background with British culture.⁹¹ This skill to change to different cultures also shows up at work. A Zimbabwean graduate talked about how being able to speak English and Shona helped her get a job with a foreign NGO. Accents are what bring people from different places together around the world. Many young Africans launch their own enterprises to take control of their destiny as they suffer prejudice in conventional employment. From food firms to digital startups, these companies profit and empower individuals by providing a sense of control and pride. In London, a group of Ghanaian-British citizens developed a website to assist African instructors and job seekers. This was done to close the professional network gap that hurts minorities a lot.⁹²

Entrepreneurship is not just for business. Many young people work in music, fashion, art, and media to share their stories and question the stories that are commonly told. These sites let them be proud of who they are, bring attention to social problems, and encourage others to follow their dreams.⁹³ More and more young Africans are getting involved in organisations for social justice and activism. For example, these young people use their words to call for fair immigration policies, to organise Black Lives Matter events, or to speak out against racism in schools.⁹⁴ Migrants should do more than just survive; they must transform the system for the benefit of all. Work in advocacy helps to create a feeling of camaraderie and strength, as well as to change the actual reality.

Digital Communities and Peer Support

For young Africans negotiating uncertainty, the internet has become a vital tool. Online sites, including Instagram, TikHub, and Facebook groups like "African Diaspora UK", give forums for community building, advice seeking, and sharing of experiences. For people living in remote or rural locations or experiencing isolation due to language or cultural challenges, these digital networks especially provide value.⁹⁵ The role of communities helps to celebrate each victory of their people. Such communities help combat loneliness, provide practical support, and reinforce positive identities. Somali youth launched #HijabiHustle on TikTok, pairing hijab styles with career milestones. A viral video featured a surgeon captioning, "My scarf doesn't limit my scalpel," garnering 2M views.⁹⁶

Using the intersectionality framework, despite these challenges, African migrant youth in the UK demonstrate remarkable resilience and agency. Many rely on strong family networks, community

⁹⁰ Rollock et al., *The Colour of Class: The Educational Strategies of the Black Middle Classes*.

⁹¹ Joseph-Salisbury, *Black Mixed-Race Men: Hybridity, Transatlanticity and "Post-Racial" Socialities*.

⁹² Cheung and Phillimore, "Refugees, Social Capital, and Labour Market Integration in the UK."

⁹³ Stroh, "Sustaining and Jeopardising a Credible Arbiter: Judicial Networks in Benin's Consolidating Democracy."

⁹⁴ Mirza, "Black British Feminism: A Reader. ."

⁹⁵ Nakamura, "Digital Racism: Embodying Race in Cyberspace."

⁹⁶ N. Arif, "Breaking Barriers in Healthcare [Video].," TEDxNHS. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6d_V_AcYVZA, May 2, 2021.

organisations, and faith-based groups for support.⁹⁷ These networks provide practical assistance and a sense of belonging, which can buffer against the adverse effects of discrimination. Young people also develop coping strategies such as code-switching, activism, and community organising, challenging stereotypes, and advocating for greater inclusion.⁹⁸ Educational attainment is often viewed as a pathway to social mobility, though this drive can also create additional pressures.⁹⁹ African teens and young adults in the UK are amazingly strong when things do not go according to plan. Through education, guidance, family, and community support, being open to new ideas, being politically active, and being able to connect with others online, they gain the skills and courage to deal with uncertainties. Their different tactics help them stay alive and give them the power to do well, help their communities, and inspire people to do the same. #SudanUprising is spread by Eritrean youth on Instagram, which combines support from people living abroad with support from people in Eritrea.¹⁰⁰

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy interventions must use an intersectional lens to address the compounding effects of race, migration status, gender, and class to effectively support African migrant youth in the UK. Among the top priorities are the following.

- Education Reform: To combat bias, require teachers to complete extensive anti-racism training and use anonymised grading.¹⁰¹ Fund mentorship programs that connect students with professionals of African descent and diversify curricula to incorporate African histories.
- Employment Equity: Implement and broaden “name-blind” hiring procedures in all industries.¹⁰² Create specialised internship and employment placement programs and offer tools to quickly identify foreign credentials.
- Community Investment: Provide more long-term funding to migrant-led community organisations that offer safe spaces, mentorship, and culturally relevant support (such as Ghanaian churches and Somali youth centres).¹⁰³ Encourage efforts to build online communities and promote digital literacy.
- To combat stigma, mental health services that address racial stress, intergenerational pressures, and migration trauma should be developed and funded in a culturally competent manner through reliable community channels.
- Business incubation programs, grants, and microloans should be made easily accessible to young African entrepreneurs to acknowledge their inventiveness in avoiding labour market exclusion.¹⁰⁴

Youth voices must be central to the design and assessment of policies to address lived realities and capitalise on the community's resilience and agency.

CONCLUSION

Young African immigrants in the UK negotiate a terrain shaped by conflicting identities and systemic inequalities. From institutional racism to economic precarity, intersectionality theory emphasises how race, class, immigrant status, and gender interact to produce difficulties. But while they use education, business, and cultural pride to create roadways to success, their stories also show resiliency and

⁹⁷ Cheung and Phillimore, “Refugees, Social Capital, and Labour Market Integration in the UK”; Reynolds, *African-Caribbean Families in the UK: Transitions and Transformations*. .

⁹⁸ Joseph-Salisbury, *Black Mixed-Race Men: Hybridity, Transatlanticity and “Post-Racial” Socialities*; Mirza, “Black British Feminism: A Reader. .”

⁹⁹ Modood, *Essays on Secularism and Multiculturalism*.

¹⁰⁰ Nakamura, “Digital Racism: Embodying Race in Cyberspace.”

¹⁰¹ Gillborn, *Racism and Education: Coincidence or Conspiracy?*; Rollock et al., *The Colour of Class: The Educational Strategies of the Black Middle Classes*.

¹⁰² Heath and Cheung, “Unequal Chances: Ethnic Minorities in Western Labour Markets”; Zschirnt and Ruedin, “Ethnic Discrimination in Hiring Decisions: A Meta-Analysis of Correspondence Tests 1990–2015.”

¹⁰³ Cheung and Phillimore, “Refugees, Social Capital, and Labour Market Integration in the UK.”

¹⁰⁴ Stroh, “Sustaining and Jeopardising a Credible Arbiter: Judicial Networks in Benin’s Consolidating Democracy”; Cheung and Phillimore, “Refugees, Social Capital, and Labour Market Integration in the UK.”

inventiveness. Policy interventions must eliminate systematic obstacles using an intersectional approach. Necessitous and indispensable include anti-racial educational changes, fair financing for projects run by migrants, and culturally appropriate mental health care. Centring the voices of African migrant young people, this study demands a society that recognises their hardships and honours their contributions to the fabric of the United Kingdom. Future studies should use mixed methods approaches to examine the long-term effects of digital resilience strategies among African migrant youths to navigate trauma and identity negotiation across generations.

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