Black Immigration and Ethnic Respectability:
A Tale of Two Cities, New York and Los Angeles
Cory Charles Gooding
University of San Diego

All too frequently, Black politics and immigration politics are conceptualized as separate areas of interest in the United States. Such conceptualizations tend to rest on assumptions about immigration as originating exclusively from Latin America and ideas about a monolithic Black[1] community. A growing community of scholars (Rogers, 2006; Smith, 2014; Greer, 2013), including the contributors to this volume, resists these assumptions and provide nuance to the Black politics scholarship through rigorous studies of Black immigrant attitudes and political behavior. Such studies provide necessary complexity to the study of Black politics and the politics of immigration. This volume answers the call for the more expansive research that is needed to excavate the contextual factors that inspire, inform, and constrain Black politics in immigrant communities.

In particular, studies of Black immigration frequently focus on locales that maintain a large Black immigrant population. New York City, for example, represents the most popular site of study for understanding the social, economic, and political incorporation of Afro-Caribbeans (Foner, 2001; Greer, 2013; Kasinitz, 1992; Model, 2008; Rogers, 2006; Waters, 1999). New York serves as the center of Afro-Caribbean immigration, and is home to 38.0% of the Afro-Caribbean immigrant population in the United States (Thomas, 2012). The large size of the Black immigrant population, the local context, and

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[1] The term Black refers to people who trace their lineage to the African continent and identify as members of the African Diaspora. African American is used to reference members of the Black community who trace their lineage through slavery in the United States, while Afro-Caribbean is used for members of the Black community who immigrated from one of the nations situated in, or bordering the Caribbean Sea.

the geography of New York City[2] make this an important site of study for understanding

Afro-Caribbean political incorporation and its relationship to Black Politics more

broadly.

While New York remains a critical site of study, non-gateway settings can provide

greater clarity around the contextual factors that influence political incorporation. For

example, Los Angeles County has a population of 10 million people spread across 4,061

square miles (U.S. Census, 2013). Yet, the Caribbean population comprises only 1.0% of

the Black population, which equates to approximately 12,600 Caribbeans in Los Angeles

County (State of Black Los Angeles, 2005). The vast geographic and demographic

differences between New York and Los Angeles create radically different social, cultural,

and political landscapes for Afro-Caribbeans to navigate.

In each of these settings, Afro-Caribbeans face different obstacles in balancing their

identity with ensuring their social and political interests are addressed. Mary Waters

(1999, 44), in her influential work on Black immigrants in New York, highlights the

importance of local context in understanding social identity:

> Social identities are unlike material objects. Whereas material objects have a concrete
> existence whether or not people recognize their existence, social identities do not… It
> is only in the act of naming an identity, defining an identity or stereotyping an
> identity that identity emerges as a concrete reality. Not only does that identity have no
> social relevance when it is not named; it simply does not exist when it has not been
> conceived and elevated to public consciousness.

The dependence of identity on the public consciousness accentuates the need to

understand Black immigrant identity and politics in settings where the immigrant

community is not as elevated in the public consciousness because the recognition of

racial and ethnic identity proves to be a powerful motivator of political behavior and

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[2] New York City maintains a population of over 8.5 million people concentrated in an area of 469 square miles.

policy in U.S. politics at the local and national levels. New York-based studies find culture to be a prominent factor in helping Afro-Caribbeans raise their community profile, distinguish themselves from African Americans, and make political claims. Yet, how does a lack of public consciousness about the Afro-Caribbean community impact their identity, political attitudes, and political engagement? An almost exclusive focus on places like New York City, where Caribbean immigrants experience an elevated status in the public consciousness, leaves this question unanswered.

This chapter examines how social context impacts Afro-Caribbean identity. It focuses on the socio-political factors that inform Afro-Caribbean negotiation of racial politics, and the strategies Afro-Caribbeans use to improve their social and political standing in local communities. I argue that Afro-Caribbeans balance their country of origin, ethnic and racial identities, simultaneously. Whether in New York or Los Angeles, Afro-Caribbeans recognize the role of race and racism in American society historically and in the contemporary moment. In navigating racial structures locally, the visibility of the ethnic group in the public sphere proves to be a significant factor in determining how they engage their community and the government.

To be specific, my study complicates and expands the discourse on respectability politics, which is typically understood as exclusively an African American strategy for navigating racial structures. My findings reveal that Afro-Caribbeans deploy what I call *ethnic respectability*: the effort to use cultural difference to distance the self and group from racial stigma, improve socio-political standing, and to insulate the group from structural racism. The prevalence of ethnic respectability as a strategy varies between

New York and Los Angeles largely due to elevation of the group in the public consciousness.

To understand the social factors that influence Afro-Caribbean identity and politics, I rely on in-depth interviews conducted with seventy-one Afro-Caribbean immigrants in New York and Los Angeles. Using a semi-structured interview format, participants were asked to describe their background and identity, the racial/ethnic makeup of their personal networks and residential neighborhoods, as well as the nature of their interactions with non-Caribbeans. Reoccurring themes of group consciousness, group reputation management, and efforts to gain recognition from political officials form the basis for conclusions made in this chapter. My goal is to illustrate and describe the impact of social context on the identity and politics of Afro-Caribbean immigrants in various urban settings today. This chapter continues the effort of resisting conceptions of Black political attitudes as monolithic by unpacking the multiple identities that Black immigrants embody. The analysis centers Afro-Caribbean management of multiple identities in different social and political spaces, and it introduces analysis of a previously unstudied population, Afro-Caribbeans in a city where they do not constitute a large portion of the Black population, Los Angeles.

I proceed by first exploring the relationship between identity and social location as understood in the social sciences. I then highlight the contextual factors that influence Afro-Caribbean identity through an analysis of interview responses in New York and Los Angeles. I move to describing how contextual factors constrain, open and transform opportunities for political engagement. Lastly, I address implications on the study and practice of Black immigrant politics.

I.   Background and Context: Identity, Visibility, and Social Location

The dominant definition of social identity focuses on the individual's self-image as informed by their ascribed membership to a broader group (Tajfel, 1979). In other words, an individual's identity is influenced by how others classify them. Such identities are not merely abstract classifications. In the case of race and ethnicity, identities are developed with the recognition that phenotype is instructive of an individual's behavior. Omi and Winant (2015, 126) describe the perceived relationship between appearance and behavior as such,

> Our ability to interpret racial meanings depends on preconceived notions of a racialized social structure. Comments such as 'Funny, you don't look black' betray an underlying image of what black should look like. We expect people to act out their apparent racial identities. Phenotype and performativity should match up. Indeed, we become disoriented and anxious when they do not.

Embedded in this conception of race in the social structure is the recognition that racial systems depend on the individual and their ability to represent a broader community. If there are no preexisting ideas about how members of a specific group behave then there is no need to reconcile the behavior of the individual.

In the case of Black people in the United States, racial meanings attached to a particular range of phenotypes are heavily associated with negative conceptions of aggression, low intelligence, hypersexuality, low economic status and a range of other stereotypes. Such stereotypes are compared with other groups and employed to rationalize decreased social standing. As such, the social standing of Black people in the United States is informed by their perceived inferiority to other groups.

Relatedly, Claire Kim (1999) describes the social location of Asian Americans as positioned in relation to African Americans and white Americans in terms of their placement on two axes. First, Asian Americans are perceived to be culturally superior to African Americans, though inferior to whites by dominant members of society. Kim's theory of racial triangulation also emphasizes the notion that Asian Americans are considered to be perpetual foreigners, on the second insider/outsider axis. This theory of racial triangulation is not only useful for understanding Asian American standing in America's "field of racial positions," but other immigrant groups as well, including Black immigrants.

Recognizing that "groups become racialized in comparison to one another and that they are differently racialized," (Kim 1999, 107), individuals develop diverse ideological beliefs and strategies for improving the social standing, individually and as a member of the broader group. For some, ideological beliefs about their group's social standing inspire a commitment to collective action as the best means for improving that standing. Such beliefs and preferences compose group consciousness (McClain, et al., 2009). It is important to note that group consciousness does not determine the nature of group attitudes. Two members of the same group can share a sense of group consciousness, without necessarily agreeing about the most effective or expedient strategy for improving the standing of the group (Dawson 2001).

Bringing more nuance to the relationship between identity and politics, the immigrant incorporation scholarship emphasizes the diversity that exists on the basis of country of origin (Jones-Correa, 1998; Rogers, 2006). Country of origin differences can yield different ideological beliefs towards race; for example, Jamaicans and Trinidadians,

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while both Caribbean, come from nations with unique histories of race relations. The same can be said for Dominicans and Puerto Ricans, Mexicans and Colombians, Japanese and Koreans, and Ghanaians and Nigerians. Beltran (2010) highlights the internal tensions that can arise among Latino political movements as a result of this diversity.

The intersectionality literature is also useful in accounting for intra-group diversity as it reminds us that every individual functions at the intersection of multiple identities, including but not limited to race, class, and gender. Existing at such intersections means that individuals face overlapping systems of oppression such as racism, classism, sexism and nativism(Collins, 2008; Crenshaw, 1991). This recognition inspires Greer's analysis of black ethnic identity. Greer states "Indeed, black immigrants face both the black-white binary and the binary of native-born versus foreign born that exists within the black community living in the United States. Therefore, black ethnics maintain a "Du Boisian tripart Negro experience" (Greer, 2013 pg. 27). Drawing on and expanding Du Bois's concept of double consciousness (Du Bois, 1903), Greer emphasizes the multifaceted nature of identity and the existence of multiple versions of a Black experience. Given the multifaceted nature of identity and the multiple systems of oppression operating in the United States, Black immigrants must develop strategies for dealing with such systems, and these strategies may differ from African-Americans' who do not experience exclusion due to immigration status.

The Politics of Ethnic Respectability

Historically, some Black Americans have sought to challenge and avoid the consequences of negative stereotypes by conscientiously distancing themselves from the

stigmatized behaviors that are assigned to blackness. A growing literature traces this strategy in African American history and politics, describing it as a politics of respectability. Higginbotham (1993, pg. 187) describes respectability politics as emphasizing "reform of individual behavior and attitudes both as a goal in itself and as a strategy for reform of the entire structural system of American race relations." The belief embedded in the use of respectability politics is that one can alter the negative racial meanings that are assigned to Black people by consciously comporting one's self in opposition to those stereotypes and in line with white norms of behavior. Respectability can be used to advance the interests of a single individual. For example, by comporting one's self in a manner that counters negative stereotypes, one may be able to avoid racist or discriminatory interactions and develop acceptance among whites. Respectability politics is a strategy used to advance interests of a well-defined group of similarly situated individuals, as the logic of respectability suggests that an individual may be assigned to a broader group described as "good" or "well-behaved" according to White American standards.

Randall Kennedy (2015) discusses respectability politics as historically and contemporarily useful in challenging white supremacy in the United States. While disparaging the racial structures that create the need for such extreme self consciousness, Kennedy argues that being sensitive to one's public image has been successful in the fight for greater liberty and equality for people of color, citing the Civil Rights Movement and President Barack Obama as exemplars of respectability politics at work.

Critiques of respectability politics abound (e.g. Obasogie and Newman 2016, Reynolds 2015), arguing that respectability politics advance a false narrative that if you

work hard and play by the rules you can succeed, regardless of your race, ethnicity, or social class. Critics note that an emphasis on individual behavior does not challenge racist systems but rather reinforces them by suggesting that individual behavior exclusively explains negative outcomes[3]. Many of these critiques focus on African American usage of the strategy and start with the assumed goal of unraveling racist systems, however they do not frequently consider how other groups may use, reject, or transform respectability politics to their own ends.

While not traditionally engaged in the framework of respectability politics, the scholarship on Afro-Caribbeans describe a similar approach to the racial social structure. In her analysis, Waters (1999) finds that ethnic distancing best characterizes the Afro-Caribbean relationship with African Americans. Waters emphasizes the different impressions that the dominant society has of the two groups and the extent to which Caribbean immigrants work to distance themselves from the racial stigma that is frequently attached to African Americans by the dominant society. Such stigma and stereotypes can result in decreased job opportunities and increased racial discrimination for the African-American community. As such, Afro-Caribbeans seek to maintain a positive reputation, particularly in the workforce, by actively distinguishing themselves from African Americans.

Similarly, in her theory of elevated minority status, Greer (2013) emphasizes the extent to which whites promote Afro-Caribbeans, as well as African immigrants, to an

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[3] The Black Lives Matter Movement that developed in response to police violence inflicted on Black people in the United States rejects respectability politics as a viable strategy for systemic reform. Movement leaders are critical of narratives that seek to paint victims of state violence as more or less deserving of the violence inflicted on them based on what they were wearing or whether they were comporting themselves according to dominant middle-class white values. Rather, the movement calls for basic human rights and the recognition of human dignity for all Black people.

elevated group status over native born Black populations in New York. This promotion incentivizes Afro-Caribbeans to remain outside of the black-white binary, and capitalize on the improved status that foreignness can provide, as seen in Kim's (1999) theorization of racial triangulation and the Asian American experience.

While Greer (2013) and Waters (1999) examine Afro-Caribbeans' efforts to navigate America's racial hierarchy, both studies are based in New York where Black ethnic identity has a salient, well-understood social meaning and both presume that Afro-Caribbeans are working toward a white standard to improve their social standing. Given that there is limited analysis of Afro-Caribbean identity in settings where the co-ethnic community is not as elevated in the public consciousness, and given the significance of public recognition in the existence of social identities and locations, this chapter examines the social factors that influence Afro-Caribbean group attachment in New York City and Los Angeles County. With an eye towards identity, visibility, and the socio-political strategies of members of the group, the chapter seeks to understand how Afro-Caribbean populations understand their identity, what are the socio-political factors that inform their negotiation of racial politics, and what types of strategies that they deploy to navigate a socio-political landscape where those ascribed as Black are placed at the bottom of the racial hierarchy.

I argue that Afro-Caribbeans maintain attachments to multiple groups simultaneously, including the country of origin, ethnic, and racial groups. These attachments are maintained with a keen awareness of how each group is perceived in the public sphere. As such, their attachments manifest themselves differently based on the visibility and reputation of the various groups. While a single attachment may prove more salient for an

individual, an emphasized attachment does not negate the existence of the other prevailing attachments. Therefore, to analyze group attachment without accounting for the role that space and place play in the development of multiple identities inherently neglects the social aspect of social identity.

I find that Afro-Caribbeans, use cultural practices to garner group recognition and signal ethnic respectability. While the dominant use of respectability politics relies on conformity to Victorian or dominant white cultural norms to gain recognition, ethnic respectability consciously seeks to signal cultural difference from the black-white binary to avoid the consequences of negative stereotypes typically associated with Blackness. Ethnic respectability utilizes foreignness in the field of racial positions to improve social standing. This strategy is worth noting because it rests on the belief that acceptance is rooted in dominant values; it does not demand cultural performativity that is consistent with white cultural norms. The theory of ethnic respectability offers a more nuanced and accurate description of the relationship between social identity, context, and socio-political strategy

Data and Methods

The conclusions developed in this chapter are based on seventy-one in depth interviews that I conducted in New York City and Los Angeles County over approximately a year and a half. The interviews lasted from approximately seventeen minutes to an hour and forty-two minutes. Initial contact with study participants in New York developed through personal networks. Meanwhile, Caribbean restaurants, concerts and cultural festivals provided opportunities for initial contact with study participants in Los Angeles, where the Caribbean population is harder to find. The initial participants in

both sites then recommended other potential contributors, a technique known as snowball sampling.

TABLE 1: SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS	In Rounded Percentages
City of Residence	
New York	52%
Los Angeles	48%
Nation of Origin	
Jamaica	52%
Trinidad	48%
Gender	
Female	61%
Male	39%
Immigration Arrival	
First Generation	40%
1.5 Generation	16%
Second Generation	44%
Age Distribution	
18-24	16%
25-34	39%
35-44	18%
45-54	9%%
55-64	18%
Marital Status	
Single	58%
Married/Living w Partner	34%
Separated	1%
Divorced	7%
Residential Status	
Own	28%
Rent	48%
Neither (e.g. live with parent)	24%
Political Affiliation	
Democrat	65%
Independent	18%
Republican	4%
Don't know	10%
Other	3%

Political Leaning	
Liberal	40%
Conservative	11%
Moderate	27%
Don't know	21%
	N=71

Jamaica and Trinidad are among the largest segments of the Caribbean population in both study sites and immigrants from these countries maintain significant visibility in their communities[4]. As such, I focused on interviewing Jamaicans and Trinidadians in order to observe attitudinal differences based on country of origin[5]. Participants included first through second-generation immigrants[6] with an eye towards observing attitudinal changes that develop with more time in the United States. Of the participants, thirty-seven were from New York, while thirty-four interviews were conducted in Los Angeles. New York participants resided in Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens and the Bronx. Los Angeles based participants resided in South Los Angles, Mid City, Westwood, Bellflower, Long Beach, Inglewood and the San Fernando Valley. Study sample characteristics are included in Table 1.

The interview protocol focused on six key themes: background, identity attachments

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[4] Members of these communities have also made a significant mark on the political landscape in both cities, for example Congresswoman Yvette Clarke of New York's ninth district is a second generation Jamaican and Congressman Mervyn Dymally of California's thirty first district (1981-1993) was a first generation Trinidadian.

[5] Country of origin differences are not addressed in this chapter.

[6] First generation respondents represent those who were born and raised in the country of origin. The sociology literature highlights the importance of recognizing the country of socialization, as such I distinguish participants who were born in the country of origin but migrated to the United States before the age of 13 as the 1.5 generation. Meanwhile, those born to at least one parent from Jamaica or Trinidad are coded as second generation.

and interethnic relations, political interests, political engagement, the Barack Obama

Presidency and cultural symbols[7]. In order to solicit honest responses, I shared my

Barbadian heritage (second generation) with study participants and I changed participant

names to protect their identity. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed.

Content analysis of major themes of discussion was coded by hand. Themes from the

New York sites were compared with Los Angeles sites. Where possible, key themes were

quantified and analyzed.

II.   Country of Origin, Ethnicity, and Race in Context

Consistent with previous studies on Afro-Caribbean identity, my interview findings

suggest that Afro-Caribbeans in both sites maintain attachments to their distinct country

of origin, their ethnic group, as well as a racial group understood as the Black diaspora[8].

Each attachment informs Afro-Caribbean interaction with others within those groups'

boundaries and without. Moreover, each attachment bears perceived social

responsibilities that are neither static nor complimentary. Rather, they are dynamic and at

times in sharp contrast with each other. Despite this complexity, Afro-Caribbeans

navigate multiple attachments in order to maximize the potential for positive social and

economic outcomes.

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[7] The interview protocol was adapted from protocols utilized by Rogers (2006) and Jackson, Hutchings, Brown and Wong (2004).

[8] Studies of transnationalism describe a strong attachment to the country of origin that manifests in various ways including the maintenance of dual citizenship, participation in transnational organizations, continued electoral participation in the country of origin and a desire to return home to the country of origin at some point (usually retirement) (Basch, Schiller, & Blanc, 1994; Escobar C., 2004; Jones-Correa, 1998; 1998; Lee & Ramakrishnan, 2007; Rogers, 2006).

Between Home and the Diaspora

Two forces serve to shape study participant negotiation of identity politics, deep connections to the country of origin and recognition of historical and contemporary systems of racial oppression. As an immigrant population, Afro-Caribbeans in both cities maintain a strong primary attachment to the country of origin, particularly among the first generation. Regardless of their citizenship status, the country of origin remains the primary emotional attachment for many study participants. The country of origin attachment is exhibited by Lana, a first generation Trinidadian in Los Angeles who describes her attachment to Trinidad as follows, "I am a Trinidadian wherever I go... It's an opportunity to be here [in the United States], but I represent Trinidad wherever." Similar sentiments are expressed by participants in both sites with deep emotional, familial and, in many cases, financial connections to the country of origin. The attachment to the country of origin described by study participants suggests that despite naturalization oaths, Afro-Caribbeans maintain a strong allegiance to the country of origin that echoes the findings in the transnational literature (see Rogers 2006).

Amidst this country of origin attachment, Afro-Caribbeans also maintain an attachment to the Pan-African Diaspora that is rooted in historical and present day anti-black racism and discrimination. This finding resonates with Smith's (2014) study of Black immigrants. When asked about what relationship, if any, he feels to the African continent and Diaspora, Charles, a first generation Jamaican in Los Angeles, emphasizes the African continent as the roots of his heritage. Meanwhile, 1.5 generation Los Angeles- based Trinidadian, Frank lifts up the transatlantic slave trade as a history shared by Black people across the Americas. Likewise, Luke, a second generation Jamaican in New York, discusses the prevalence of anti-black racism stating "it may not be something

that we want to talk about, but there is still so much racism out in the world." Across the study sites, consciousness of a broader African diaspora was informed by the realities of historical and contemporary racial oppression.

Beyond the consciousness drawn out by questions focused on the African Diaspora, study participants also described experiences of race-based discrimination that range from micro-aggressions, such as being followed by store clerks while shopping, to violent and systemic interactions with law enforcement and institutional structures that resulted in significant trauma. When asked about experiences with racism or discrimination, first generation Jamaican, Charles recalls one such experience as driving with his family on a Los Angeles freeway and being rear-ended by a semi truck, flipping the car with his family over the median. While his family escaped without serious injury, the white driver was cited by law enforcement for relevant traffic violations. The accident resulted in a civil case against the truck driver, which was held shortly after the O.J. Simpson verdict. The jury consisted of nine whites and three people of color, with all nine white jurors finding the white truck driver not responsible for any damages and the three minority jurors finding for the plaintiff. While the facts of the case are not laid bare here, the fact that Charles understood the verdict as the product of racism speaks to his racial group attachment and its development in conversation with a racially unjust society.

Similarly, Charlene, a second generation Trinidadian in Los Angeles, describes the worst experience of her life as calling 911 for help when she was attacked by a white neighbor and subsequently being arrested by the police officers that arrived on the scene. Consistent with previous works, Afro-Caribbeans express a racial group attachment that responds to anti-black racism in the United States and globally based on historical

injustices as well as on their personal experience with race-based discrimination (Hackshaw, 2008).

Ultimately, participants highlight the importance of ethnicity in balancing the country of origin and diasporic attachments. The following section examines the presence of such attachments in two settings where Afro-Caribbeans occupy contrasting locations in the public consciousness. In New York, Caribbean culture and identity is readily recognized as distinct from native born Blacks and other Black immigrant groups. Meanwhile in Los Angeles, the relative absence of a large Caribbean community renders Afro-Caribbean identity as largely invisible to the public consciousness. The work of Stepick and his colleagues (2001) highlights the importance of public perception in creating social and political opportunities for immigrant populations. As such, how Afro-Caribbeans understand themselves, their group's social location, and their political opportunities must be framed by the public perception of these groups in the local and national context.

Caribbean Visibility and Public Consciousness in New York

Caribbeans represent a large ethnic group in New York City, comprising over a quarter of the Black population. The large, concentrated population is highly visible not only to Caribbean immigrants but also to the wider community. Rogers (2001,163) paints a particularly vivid picture in his groundbreaking book on Afro-Caribbean incorporation,

> Walking around Brooklyn's Flatbush Avenue, one immediately noticed that the Caribbean has come to New York. All along the avenue, signals of a vibrant Caribbean immigrant presence shout at even the most casual observer. Storefronts advertise Caribbean symbolism – the bright colors of a flag, a palm tree, a stack of island newspapers in the window. Small, garrulous groups of men and women congregate in front of Caribbean bakeries and restaurants to discuss the news from "back home." Their animated conversations are thick with the distinctive inflexions of Caribbean dialects. Jitney vans and dollar vans perilously jockey for

positions as they compete for fares along the busy thoroughfare and above the din, the sounds of calypso and reggae music ring out. This is black New York.

The density of the Caribbean population in New York increases the occasions when an Afro-Caribbean may come into contact with cultural forms of expression that can reify psychological connections to the ethnic group or country of origin while simultaneously signaling the meaningful presence of the ethnic community to the broader city.

This description speaks to the impact of Afro-Caribbean immigration on New York. For Afro-Caribbeans, the widespread presence of Caribbean people, culture, businesses and organizations in New York mitigates the sharp distinction between life in the Caribbean and life in the United States. Andre, a second generation Trinidadian, provides a portrayal of life in New York that is largely representative of New York participant responses, describing it as "comfortable because the community is vast with other Caribbeans who understand my culture, language, needs and wants. It's almost like living in Trinidad."

The presence of Caribbean culture is evident in the day-to-day elements of life in New York as well as in an annual celebration of Caribbean culture that includes a large Carnival-inspired parade in Brooklyn every September on Labor Day, the West Indian Day Parade. Held in Harlem from 1947 until 1964[9], the parade moved to the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn in 1969 where it attracts over 1 million participants each year, placing it among the city's largest cultural events. Urban radio stations serving the tri-state area (New York, New Jersey and Connecticut) play reggae, soca and calypso music from the Caribbean throughout the weekend as local newspapers and television

[9] The Harlem parade ended when the parade permit was revoked in 1964. The parade did not resurface until 1969 in Brooklyn. (Kasinitiz, 1992; Brooklyn Public Library, 2005)

networks cover the parade. Kasinitz (1992) describes the carnival as a generator of ethnic identity, as it highlights the presence of a vibrant Caribbean community in Brooklyn and across the region, therefore strengthening pan-ethnic ties and raising the visibility of the Caribbean population.

Carolyn, a second generation Trinidadian explains how the parade and the high visibility of Caribbean culture facilitates interpersonal interactions,

> I think it is easier because you will find a lot of people who will identify with you or your culture, especially because we have a parade. So even if you don't understand Trinidad or the culture, it's like, oh its West Indians they have that parade so it ties back to that. …Everyone wants to be around people like themselves. In New York, it's that much easier [than living in other cities with less West Indians].

Carolyn's description of life in New York highlights the parade's capacity to facilitate public recognition of Afro-Caribbeans as a distinct cultural group. She also alludes to a preference for living in close proximity to other members of the group. Existing studies find Caribbean residential patterns in New York to be dense and concentrated in central Brooklyn, northern Bronx and eastern Queens (Crowder and Tedrow 2001). Similarly, New York participants for this study resided primarily in central Brooklyn. Carolyn describes the benefits of living in the Crown Heights neighborhood of central Brooklyn as the Caribbean community has grown:

> Growing up in this neighborhood [Crown Heights]… I've met with first generation people who came over in their adolescence who felt like [being from the Caribbean] was something that they had to hide or shy away from because they didn't want to be ridiculed…everybody trying to fit in when they were growing up. I never thought that way. It was always a source of pride. I remember in high school with the whole coconut music and I was like I am perfectly fine with my coconut music. I love your country and everything but that's just not

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where I am from. I think the fact that there is so many of us here it's like okay and a strong community.

Carolyn describes the experience of living within the ethnic enclave as insulating her from the ridicule experienced by earlier immigrants, and the strength of the community as enforcing a sense of ethnic pride. She stresses her ability to emphasize her culture as a marker of her ethnic difference. Carolyn's response is significant because in New York she is able to maintain such a strong attachment to the country of origin that, as a second generation Trinidadian, she still describes the United States as "your" country when discussing a hypothetical American response to her attachment to her culture.

Similarly, Lionel (second generation Trinidadian) describes what it means to be Trinidadian in New York and specifically in his neighborhood of East Flatbush, "It's almost like the norm, you hardly hear somebody say 'I'm American' around here." The benefits of such co-ethnic interactions extend to participant social networks as well. Tim, a first generation Trinidadian, discussed New York as providing opportunities for him to pass on his culture to his daughter. Tim highlights the importance of his daughter playing steel pan with people from across the Caribbean as a member of CASYM (Caribbean-American Sports & Cultural Youth Movement, Inc.) Steel Orchestra.

While New York respondents describe their neighborhoods as largely Afro-Caribbean, the length of time in the United States serves to impact social networks. First generation respondents largely describe their networks as predominately immigrant, consisting mostly of other Afro-Caribbean and Latino immigrants. The immigrant experience is unique and provides important opportunities for bonding based on past experiences, the process of incorporation, and the effort to hold on to home culture.

Meanwhile, second-generation respondents describe their networks as pan-ethnically Black (African immigrant, African American and Afro-Caribbean). The second generation establishes relationships on the basis of a common Black experience in the United States; additionally, socialization in American schools facilitates network building across ethnic communities. Taken together, such choices make sense as people choose networks based on common ground.

The building of such networks is informed by a popular understanding of what it means to be from the Caribbean. In Los Angeles, this popular understanding does not exist. As a result, the experience of Afro-Caribbeans is vastly different in terms of interpersonal relations, cultural experience, and ultimately political engagement.

Ethnic Invisibility: Black in Los Angeles

Los Angeles County serves as a stark contrast to the New York City context. The settings differ particularly with respect to the size of the Afro-Caribbean population. Despite a Caribbean population of less than 13,000 (State of Black Los Angeles, 2005), Los Angeles is a county where demographic trends shift dramatically as a result of immigration. Increasing immigrant populations from Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean now occupy neighborhoods traditionally viewed as African American. Medina (2012) describes the changing face of Los Angeles as such,

> Today, immigrants from Mexico and Central America live on blocks that generations ago were the only places African-Americans could live. In the former center of black culture in Los Angeles, Spanish is often the only language heard on the streets. Now, signs for "You buy, we fry" fish markets catering to Southern palates have been replaced by Mexican mariscos and Salvadoran pupuserias. In the historic jazz corridor, where music legends once stayed when they were barred from wealthy white neighborhoods in the city, botanicas sell folk and herbal remedies from Latin America.

The changing face of Los Angeles is the result of multiple forces. Since the 1990's Black flight to the suburbs in search of home ownership has been one such force changing the face of Los Angeles (Hunt & Ramon, 2010; Medina, 2012). More recently, Los Angeles, like many other U.S. cities, is also changing as a result of aggressive investment and redevelopment in urban centers. New expansions of public transportation, downtown renovations and business development place many Los Angeles neighborhoods and communities in the midst of major demographic transformations. The increasing diversity raises questions about how Black immigrants understand themselves in relation to a growing Latino community, a fluctuating African American population that still maintains important seats of power in the community, and the existing white population who maintain economic and political power across the county.

The size of the immigrant community in Los Angeles places immigration at the center of the public consciousness, impacting every facet of local politics and culture. With 35.3% of the county's population being foreign born, the social, residential and cultural landscapes of the county are shifting as a result of the changing demographics. As greater attention is paid to Latino immigration in Los Angeles, the Afro-Caribbean presence has largely been unnoticed by political officials. Still Afro-Caribbeans are increasingly making their presence felt in the county.

Study participants reside across Los Angeles County in primarily African American and Latino neighborhoods with a few living in the surrounding area. There is a notable absence of Caribbean enclaves, as one might find in New York, and this absence made finding Los Angles participants more difficult. However, despite the lack of a geographic community, fifty-nine percent of first generation Afro-Caribbean respondents in Los

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Angeles described their personal networks as composed primarily of Caribbean

immigrants. While additional research would be necessary to determine whether an

ethnic enclave serves to strengthen such ties, this finding suggests that an ethnic enclave

is not a requirement for the development of ethnic community. In addition to co-ethnic

ties, first generation participants also identify their networks as comprised of other first

generation immigrants from Latin America, Africa and the Pacific Islands. Often, the

basis of such networks is described in terms of perceived cultural commonalities such as

foods and music.

While first generation respondents are able to maintain connections to other members

of the Caribbean community and facilitate cultural events, Afro-Caribbeans remain

relatively invisible in the public consciousness. The local press does not extensively

cover such events and ideas about who is Caribbean and what it means to be Caribbean

are not well known.

Jones, a 1.5 generation immigrant, shares the perspective of an individual who

accepts the invisibility as a social reality in Los Angeles. In answering the question,

"what does it means to be Jamaican in Los Angeles," Jones responds,

> I'm just a regular black dude in L.A. In New York or Miami, you feel like you can be
> with your own more. A lot of the Jamaicans here, you don't know they're Jamaican
> unless they tell you. Even myself, people wouldn't know I was Jamaican unless I tell
> them because I'm so westernized now. I've been here for 19 years. I picked up a lot
> of the African American culture. Depending on when you came to L.A. or California
> or whatever you can kind of lose your culture.

While Jones describes his perspective as a 1.5 generation Jamaican who migrated as a

young child, the description of his own social identity highlights a trend that was echoed

among second generation respondents. This is explained by the reduced outward projection of Afro-Caribbean identity described by Jones. Similarly, Tyler, a second generation Jamaican responds to the same question stating, "I feel like it's not something that comes up often. Nobody can tell I'm Jamaican. I'm just a Black girl. I don't feel like it really distinguishes me from anyone."

Second generation participants largely describe their country of origin and ethnic attachments as a private affair, shared among family and close friends. For instance, Joyce explains, "When it comes to Jamaica, I kind of vibe off of my family. I don't think about it too much. Aside, from my family everyone that I hang out with is just Americans." Similarly, in her description of what it means to be Trinidadian in Los Angeles, Rebecca, a second generation Trinidadian in L.A., describes a specific type of responsibility that comes with ethnic invisibility, "In school, I have to educate others including my professors." The responsibility of educating others falls to those who choose to emphasize country of origin or ethnic attachments.

For those respondents who moved to Los Angeles from other regions with a larger Caribbean population, Afro-Caribbean invisibility is a source of frustration. Tanisha, a second generation Jamaican who had previously resided in the Northeast, as well Toronto, Canada, which has a large Afro-Caribbean population and a significant presence in the public consciousness, expresses this frustration, "I have to fight to keep my culture. It's a very hard thing." The role that cultural reinforcement and public consciousness play in group attachment echoes the findings of Zhou and Bankston (1999, 224) who argue that "families do not and cannot sustain and pass on cultural values in isolation. Rather, they exist and function in wider webs of social relations in the community." As

such, the relative absence of a physical Afro-Caribbean community and the private nature of ethnic attachment among the 1.5 and second generations highlight the centrality of cultural reinforcement to social identity. The visibility of the community is an important factor for the group writ large, as well as for individual conceptions of the self as length of time in the United States increase.

On the surface, the invisibility of Afro-Caribbeans in Los Angeles does not significantly alter group attachments among the first generation. As seen in New York, this attachment is rooted in cultural pride and an upright representation of the country of origin and ethnic groups. However, where New York and Los Angeles differ is in terms of the relationship with African Americans. In Los Angeles, first generation participants reported their networks as having fewer African Americans than first generation New Yorkers. First generation Afro-Caribbeans in Los Angeles emphasized their frustration about being lumped in with African Americans on surveys and in popular conceptions of blackness. Afro-Caribbeans in Los Angeles also draw larger distinctions between Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans in terms of their outlook on life and values.

This trend dissipates significantly among 1.5 and second generation Angelenos. Afro-Caribbean identity becomes a personal matter, shared amongst family and close friends but not a major part of interpersonal relations. Those socialized in the U.S. readily connect and identify with their African American counterparts. Whereas respondents in both cities readily connect with the term Black, first generation Angelenos maintained a heightened need for a national identifier as well. This difference in identity is likely the result of different patterns of interpersonal interactions and visibility in the public consciousness.

III.   Improving Social Standing Through Ethnic Respectability

The politics of respectability is deeply committed to managing group visibility. Obasogie and Newman (2016, 541) argue, "Respectability politics is ultimately a performance and project of moving from the position of 'other,' to being incorporated into the normal, dominant and hegemonic." This conception of respectability politics places a group or individual (African Americans) in the position of performer attempting to gain the acceptance of the audience (white Americans) by mirroring the audience's behavior. It is this performance that will unlock the door to opportunities available to those deemed normal. This framework is useful but doesn't fully capture the strategies of all Black groups. Like the traditional politics of respectability, ethnic respectability is also concerned with the audience and how they perceive the actor. However, unlike politics of respectability, ethnic respectability is not concerned with mirroring white behavior. Rather, ethnic respectability accentuates the actor's position as an "other" through cultural signaling. This conscious othering is used to distance racial stigma and emphasize shared hegemonic values with the dominant group. This requires raising the profile of the group and policing representations of the group in the public sphere. In the case of Afro-Caribbeans this produces different considerations in New York in comparison to Los Angeles.

In New York, where the Caribbean community has a high profile, attachment to the country of origin proves to be an important factor in understanding Afro-Caribbean emphasis on visibility and representations of the group. Johnson, a first generation Jamaican in New York, suggests that the relationship between the country of origin and the host country bears tangible consequences.

> People back home are counting on you to send something back and you
> have to make something of yourself here. You have to be an ambassador.
> So, you are selling Jamaica in the U.S. and provide some reality to those
> still living in Jamaica.

Johnson emphasizes his role as ambassador with a particular responsibility to succeed, inform friends and family back home about life in the United States, and represent the country of origin well. Johnson's interpretation of his role speaks to a larger trend among Afro-Caribbeans in New York to be mindful of the group's reputation.

Respondents describe a sense of responsibility to advance positive depictions of Caribbean culture that distinguishes the group from others and challenges negative interpretations of the national origin group specifically, and the Caribbean community more generally. Andre, a second generation Trinidadian in New York highlights the positive attributes and distinctions of Caribbean culture as such,

> West Indian culture differs [from African Americans] in terms of work ethic. It could
> stem from a history as laborers. The Jamaican stereotype applies to the whole
> Caribbean. Non-West Indians don't have that. We still are pushed by our parents.
> American parents don't have the same push. They make fun of me. 'He must be West
> Indian because he works so much.' It's a different kind of hustle. If you can't hustle
> Americans get welfare and social services. West Indians don't do that.

Andre describes the group in terms of a common culture of hard work consistent with dominant values and this culture is contrasted with negative depictions of "African American culture." Making such claims are crucial to developing, what Greer (2013) calls, an elevated group status. However, beyond such interethnic distinctions, Rachel, a first generation Jamaican in NY, also highlights the management of negative stereotypes that are sometimes validated by other Afro-Caribbeans:

Because of the reputation of the few who make a bad name for us, … people…think negatively. There's the standing, 'So you got some of that good stuff to smoke, right.' That's the standing thing, but I take that lightly. But there are people who really have no clue what life in the Caribbean is like so it's a great opportunity for me to teach people about that when I can. There's this whole notion that you are from Jamaica or the Caribbean you come over here and take our jobs from blacks who are native to America. But there are those who from the minute they hear Jamaican, they say Jamaicans are really bright; they are this. So being a Jamaican in NY is interesting because NY is such a melting pot. You are comfortable in certain ways, and you feel like you bring something to the texture and culture of NYC, but in a lot of ways you feel like you're on the side just competing because of some of the perceptions and misperceptions that people have.

While much of the literature on Black immigration in New York highlights the ethnic distancing between Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans (Waters, 1999), this study finds that the story is more complicated than the literature suggests. Respondents demonstrate not only a distancing between themselves and "bad" African American stereotypes but also between themselves and "bad" Afro-Caribbean reputations. In their study of Haitians in Miami, Stepick, et. al (2001) highlight the powerful affect that a negative perception in the public consciousness can have on access to social, political and economic opportunities, particularly among the second-generation. Participant responses reveal an effort to maintain ethnic respectability in the public consciousness that will improve social and economic outcomes for themselves and their families back in the Caribbean.

While New York based participants are aware of this reality and work to police the reputation of the group, Los Angeles based respondents must overcome a lack of recognition in order to attain an elevated status. Like in New York, Los Angeles participants describe a desire to represent their country of origin and Afro-Caribbeans well. Monique, a second generation Jamaican, is cognizant of how her actions may

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translate to broader group inferences. She responds to the question of what it means to be

a Jamaican in Los Angeles by explaining that as a Jamaican she has to "Be mindful of

how you portray yourself." Attempting to police the public perceptions of the national

origin and ethnic groups causes Monique to be sensitive to the external perceptions of the

group and encourages Pam to draw distinctions between Afro-Caribbeans and African

Americans, as seen in New York,

"…we have a different mentality and we conduct ourselves differently and we can see
that we're worlds apart from an (African) American. Even though we have the same skin
tone, our thinking is different...We don't come here expecting this country to give us
something, we come here with the expectation that there is so much to achieve and in
order for us to achieve it, we have to work our asses off to get it... We don't go and sit on
the welfare system to collect a check."

Smith (2014) finds in her particularly nuanced study of Black immigrants, the term

"Black" is a satisfactory identifier, yet Afro-Caribbeans in both sites identify the

distinctions in outlook between African Americans and Afro-Caribbeans. Despite the

similarities in managing group reputation between New York and Los Angeles, the lower

profile of Afro-Caribbeans in Los Angeles results in a concerted effort to highlight

Caribbean culture. First generation Trinidadian, Jonathan, argues that what it means to be

a Trinidadian in Los Angeles is,

"Unique from[the] perspective[that] they don't have much of us here, so that's one
aspect. Secondly, with my accent, I draw people close to me. People will stop me
and say, "I hear an accent, where is that from?" and I tell them, "Trinidad," so it gives
me the opportunity to explain to them and show them Trinidad, because most people
don't know about Trinidad. On the east coast, yes, but here …when you tell them
you're from Trinidad, [they ask] "What part of Africa is that?"

Such circumstances result in the need to raise the profile of the community as an

individual and as a collective effort. Louis, a first generation Jamaican in Los Angeles,

describes what it means to be a Jamaican in Los Angeles as "Pride. Confidence. Hard

work…Promoting the whole culture and what we do in Jamaica is what I'm about, so I'm

unique and different because some people like to sit back and enjoy but its my job and its

my life, so being a Jamaican in SoCal is promoting Jamaica for me." While participants

in both sites balance the layered attitudes towards Afro-Caribbeans in the public

consciousness, a higher profile allows New Yorkers to mark themselves as distinct and

manage their social location in relation to other present groups. Angelenos, on the other

hand, emphasize a need to uplift, educate and represent what it means to be a part of the

group in a positive light.

In order to distinguish the group and manage its reputation, participants rely on

cultural explanations for group success in the United States. They emphasize education,

hard work and the absence of social safety net programs such as unemployment and

welfare in the Caribbean as evidence of the inherent self-reliance of the group[10]. This

emphasis on hard work does not stand alone to improve group reputation, rather cultural

practices and events serve to signal ethnic difference and to raise the profile of the group.

Developing Recognition through Cultural Signaling

For some political scientists, the concept of culture is closely related to essentialist

claims about group traits and characteristics (Almond & Verba, 1963; Almond, 1956;

Huntington, 1996). Scholars such as Samuel Huntington (1993, 1996) espouse

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[10] In her innovative and influential study of Black ethnicity in New York, Greer (2013) finds that Afro-Caribbean union members maintain attitudes towards welfare that are consistent with those of African American union members. Responses to this study set the stage for an extension of Greer's work to examine such attitudes among Afro-Caribbeans in Los Angeles and with non-union members, who may not be as politically engaged.

interpretations of culture that are used to explain a variety of political hypotheses including why democratization is more or less successful in certain countries and why certain groups do not adhere to various models of political behavior. Lisa Wedeen (2002, 715) points out some of the fundamental problems with these interpretations of culture and what it means to political science as a discipline:

> The understanding of culture as a specific group's primordial values or traits is untenable empirically. It ignores the historical conditions and relevant power relationships that give rise to political phenomena such as "democratization," ethnic conflicts, and contemporary radical Islamicist movements. The group traits version of culture, moreover, rides roughshod over the diversity of views and the experiences of contention within the group or groups under study.

Wedeen highlights the problem with addressing culture as an inherent value or trait is that it is unable to address the internal diversity of a given group. This problem with engaging culture as a group value or trait, prompts other scholars, particularly in sociology, to engage culture in terms of group norms and practices. Zhou and Bankston (1999, 11) define immigrant culture, in particular as "an entire way of life, including languages, ideas, beliefs, values, behavioral patterns, and all that immigrants bring with them as they arrive in their new country. The original culture may be seen as hindering the adaptation of the ethnic group (the assimilationist perspective) or as promoting this adaptation (the multiculturalist perspective)." Such an interpretation of culture shifts the focus from inherent traits to an emphasis on the in-group means of communication and interaction. While Zhou and Bankston (1999) highlight the tension that exists between maintaining and shedding the immigrant culture in the host country, the use of culture to navigate

relationships is politically significant insomuch as cultural practices produce political effects.

Guidry and Sawyer (2003) identify culture as an area of concern for political science, particularly in the case of marginalized groups. Guidry and Sawyer (2003, 273) state, "Attempts by marginalized groups to gain a foothold in the public sphere can contribute to the development of democracy, even when these actors aren't consciously organizing for the purpose of advancing democracy." The impact that an individual or group can exert on the nature and substance of political discourse and policy is significant despite a desire to remain removed from it. Such moments where cultural practices meet political activity highlight the possibility for seemingly non-political actions to produce political change.

Evidence of the influence exerted by Afro-Caribbean cultural claims-making is most evident during the annual West Indian Day Parade in New York. Between 2009 and 2013 alone, the political significance of Caribbean culture in local politics resulted in high ranking political officials serving as grand marshals including Secretary of State Colin Powell (2009), New York Governor Andrew Cuomo (2011), New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg (2011) and City Council Speaker and Mayoral candidate Christine Quinn (2012). Kasinitz (1992) traces this trend to the early 1980's. In the desire to make the political nature of the parade more explicit, Sultan, (42, second generation Trinidadian in NY) states as much saying, "[The best way for Afro- Caribbeans to achieve their political goals is to] use some of the existing organizations to drive political goals like WIADCA (West Indian American Day Carnival Association). We organize for those things culturally but maybe we can advance political goals as well." To be sure, the Black

immigrant population in New York warrants political attention due to the size alone. Afro-Caribbeans have electoral prowess, influence, and the institutional set up in New York elections incentivizes politicians to pay special attention to this group (Rogers 2004). Yet, the presence of a large Caribbean community in New York also provides Afro-Caribbeans with alternative forms of political participation not afforded to Afro-Caribbeans in settings with a smaller population and public presence, such as Los Angeles.

While politics are engaged in intimate cultural settings among members of the group in L.A., larger displays of Caribbean culture such as the Los Angeles Caribbean Carnival and the Hollywood Carnival are largely devoid of political messaging and mobilization efforts. Since 1995, a small festival has taken place in the middle class neighborhood of West Chester emphasizing Caribbean culture and community. Started by a University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) graduate student from Jamaica, the event has grown and developed into an annual event. Still as the event grows, similar events are developing in other parts of in the county. During this study's fieldwork, the first annual Hollywood Caribbean parade took place in June of 2012. Similarly, a small annual carnival paralleling Trinidad and Tobago's Carnival in February also sprung up in downtown Los Angeles. Such events speak to a growing community that is largely unknown to the larger Los Angeles community but encourages academic and political attention. The growth of Caribbean cultural events is dependent on a well-connected community of Afro-Caribbeans who stimulate memories of home and maintain spaces where cultural traditions and norms are sustained. Such traditions are preserved in the relative absence of clearly defined Caribbean enclaves in Los Angeles.

Despite the absence of such enclaves, the seemingly apolitical work of carnival organizing in Los Angeles yields political results. Through a collaboration between Hollywood Carnival organizers and City councilman Marqueece Harris-Dawson, the Los Angeles City Council declared June 21, 2017 the inaugural celebration of an annual Caribbean Heritage Recognition Day. Caribbean flags were draped around City Hall, stilt walkers, dancers, and steel drum music filled the council chamber as members of the city council looked on and some highlighted the contributions of the Caribbean community in Los Angeles. This celebration served to raise the profile of the Caribbean population. The use of cultural practices to highlight ethnic difference became an explicitly political project in Los Angeles. Such recognition and symbolic representation by Harris-Dawson prompts more substantive questions such as "what are the interests of this population" and "how do I connect with them and represent them effectively" from those seeking and maintaining elected office. Carnival events represent potential sites of engagement, claims-making and mobilization. While the size of the population in New York means that cultural events exist in conversation with more substantive and sustained political projects, time will tell whether and how cultural practices will be used to make political claims on behalf of the Black immigrant population in Los Angeles.

IV.   Conclusion

Black immigration challenges conceptions of a monolithic Black community at every turn. Diverse countries of origin, cultural practices, and migration circumstances translate into distinct patterns of engagement with co-ethnics, African Americans, other racial groups, and the government. The Afro-Caribbean population provides a useful window

into understanding identity, intergroup relations, and political engagement in this growing segment of the Black political landscape.

Scholars seeking to understand identity and intergroup relations among Afro-Caribbeans in the U.S. find considerable variation. Sometimes members of the group are seen as distancing themselves from African Americans, and at other times they are seen as advantageously identifying with their African American counterparts. Amidst this variation, there is little discussion about when, where, and how Afro-Caribbeans reconcile this variation for themselves. This gap in the literature underscores the complexity of racial and ethnic group attachments, their dynamic nature, and the potential political impact of such attachments.

This chapter seeks to address this gap by examining the social factors that influence Afro-Caribbean group identity in New York City and Los Angeles County. It argues that Afro-Caribbeans maintain three distinct group attachments; country of origin, ethnic and racial. Each attachment bears with it social responsibilities that Afro-Caribbeans seek to navigate through ethnic respectability. Study participants maintain an acute awareness of group image in the public consciousness in order to maximize personal success and to improve opportunities for other members of the group. As such, cultural practices and values serve as a tool for managing group image in the local public consciousness.

Participants attempt to manage essentialist claims used by the dominant society to explain socioeconomic mobility or lack thereof. The inability to attain socioeconomic success is coded as the result of cultural deficiencies which warrant the less than full acceptance as a member of the polity. The persistence of such group based assessments

causes Afro-Caribbeans to tread lightly in their deployment of their various group attachments.

The chapter finds that the size of the Afro-Caribbean communities in New York and Los Angeles has implications for the visibility of the community, the interpersonal interactions of group members, and the deployment of identity-based attachments. While social context bears little impact on the social identity of the first generation, second generation Afro-Caribbeans understand their attachments very differently in New York and Los Angeles, as exemplified by their perceived group allies, commonalities and shared values.

Culture serves as a language of meaning making, constructing a lens through which to understand potential allies, as well identity and group attachment in the host country. Home country attachment reinforces a concept of self that is primarily immigrant, particularly among first generation respondents in Los Angeles where there is only a small scattered community of co-ethnics and relative invisibility in the Los Angeles public sphere. Meanwhile a large community of co-ethnics and higher visibility in the city's public sphere produces a two-way assimilation process that facilitates social and political attachments with African Americans in New York.

My results confirm Rogers' findings that Afro-Caribbeans who are firmly enmeshed in African American networks are more inclined to tap into race-based group attachments. Meanwhile, a large Afro Caribbean community in New York serves to strengthen the country of origin and ethnic group attachments from the first generation through to the second generation. The chapter challenges Waters findings by suggesting that a theory of ethnic distancing ignores Afro-Caribbean membership and identification

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as Black. It suggests a more nuanced approach to Afro-Caribbean identity, as the local community can be a powerful force that facilitates incorporation into a new country while also maintaining strong bonds to the country of origin.

Ethnic respectability provides a roadmap for understanding Afro-Caribbean incorporation in places like New York. This strategy provides Afro-Caribbeans in New York with the capacity to evade some of the stigma associated with blackness in the U.S., and improve access to opportunities by using culture to retain their foreignness. This strategy provides hints for what might be expected in other cities where small immigrant populations struggle to gain recognition from the political establishment. In Los Angeles, for example, the growing profile of the Caribbean community is likely to gain greater attention of elected officials, including an increased presence of elected officials at cultural events such as carnival. While ethnic respectability may not immediately produce explicitly political claims in cultural venues, as the population and profile grows, political organization on the basis of ethnicity may push the Black political establishment to engage immigration, not only as a Latin American phenomenon, but also as an issue that is personal to a more diverse Black community.

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