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African-American Nomenclature: The Label Identity Shift from "Negro" to "Black" in the 1960s.

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by

Zenobia Desha Jaye Bell

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

African-American Nomenclature:

The Label Identity Shift from

"Negro" to "Black" in the 1960s.

by

Zenobia Desha Jaye Bell

Master of Arts in Afro-American Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Devon W. Carbado, Chair

In the United States, Americans of African Descent have held many identity labels: African, Colored, Negro, Afro-American, Black, and African-American. In the 1960s, there was a shift from the use of "Negro" to the use of "black" as a group identifier. In 1966 Stokely Carmichael shouted the phase "Black Power." Three years later, in 1969, "Negro" was replaced by "black" as the dominant label identifier. This paper will how I measured when the shift occurred and will also set out three major explanations for why the shift happened relatively quickly. Understanding the shift to "black" may help with understanding why the identifier "African-American" has not completely replaced "black."

The thesis of Zenobia Desha Jaye Bell is approved.

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Devon W. Carbado, Committee Chair

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I.

Introduction

The topic of which label to use to identify Americans of African Descent in the United States is a very interesting one. I became interested in the topic of African-American nomenclature in 2009 when I learned that the 2010 U.S. Census race label for the group would be described as: black, African-American, or Negro. Two questions immediately came to mind: who in 2009 still identifies as Negro? Why do we even have two, interchangeable terms (black and African-American)?

Currently the two dominant label identifiers are "black" and "African-American." If we figure out why labels where changed maybe we can understand why we have more than one primary label today (the latter will not be explored in this project). Some people might think that there is a difference in the meaning and significance between the two terms while others think the two terms are one and the same. Some prefer African-American better because it connects the people to a historical-geographical region of origin (however vague). Others dislike it for the same reason, many African-Americans have no familiar memories or knowledge of their African roots so they feel the term "African-American" is inappropriate. Some prefer "black" because it encompasses the diversity in the community; there are so many histories and varying degrees of lineage to an African nation or tribe that the term black captures all of those varieties better than African-American. While others do not like the term for similar reasons, it's too vague and it's a color and a color cannot accurately describe an ethnic community. Still many may use one or the other without even thinking about the meaning of the terms or they simply do not have a preference. Regardless of any of the above reasons for individual people deciding which term they want to use, there is still the issue that there are two distinct terms to represent one group is something to seriously investigate. By looking at the 1960s shift from "Negro" to "black" we may be able to find insight into all other acceptances and denials of terms for the African-American community.

Terms are very important to our world. The routine of identifying and labeling people, places, and things is how we are able to make a complex world into a slightly simpler one. However, there can be issues with labeling if people do not agree on the appropriate label for something or someone. There is power in the ability to label something and make others accept your label. Who labels a new immigrant into the United States, what happens to that label once they take all the necessary steps to becoming a citizen? How will their offspring be labeled? Who has the power to make these decisions? In the 1960s African-Americans[1] leaders took it upon themselves to invoke their community with the power of labeling and identifying itself, with its own definitions, and demanded the acceptance of that new label, understanding that "[t]hose who have the right to define are the masters of the situation."[2]

Kwame Ture (formerly known as Stokely Carmichael) explained black identity best in is co-authored book with Charles Hamilton Black Power – The Politics of Liberation: "We shall have to struggle for the right to create our own terms through which to define ourselves and our relationship to the society, and to have these terms recognized."[3] This project will examine the process of self-identification and recognition (or acceptance) that occurred in the 1960s in the United States in regards to the problem of Black Identity.

There were social definitions and political significances for the terms "Negro" and "black" that lead to the eventual denouncement of the former and the promotion of the latter. The questions to be addressed are: Why would the Black American community accept this term when they had been so accustomed to Negro? Why would non-Black Americans accept such a radical new change in the face of the structural changes that the Civil Rights Movement accomplished? How long did the general acceptance process take?

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1 I will use the term "African-American" throughout the paper to reference the group, to be consistent and not to be confused when I use the terms "Negro" and "black" to describe the same group.

2 Kwame Ture (formally Stokely Carmichael) & Charles V. Hamilton, BLACK POWER: THE POLITICS OF LIBERATION 36 (1967).

3 *Id.* at 35.

The process of identification is very complex. When applying theory to the real world, sometimes the model makes understanding it better and sometimes it complicates the process even further. Who does the labeling? Does the in-group label themselves or is identity shaped by the outsider? What happens to those that get labeled compared to those who label themselves? What is the process of acceptance of identity and what does it mean to those in the in and out-groups? Why would Black Americans and non-Black Americans accept the new term, especially if it comes with a new definition? What does it mean when the power institutions (Government, media) accept or reject a group identifier? Terms are very important, but what is just as important is having the other side (the out-group) accept the term under the same understanding and definition as the in-group (that is a power move of the in-group). Acceptance of a term is a political move.

The 1960s was not the first time "black" appeared as an identifier. It had been used by a minority of people throughout history. Yet it wasn't until the late 1960s that the term "black" became the overwhelmingly preferred and accepted name to describe African-Americans. In June 1966 James Meredith facilitated the solidarity "March Against Fear" from Memphis, TN to Jackson, MS. During that March Meredith was shot and killed. Stokely Carmichael, along with other prominent Civil Rights Leaders, continued the March in his name. While in Greenwood, MS, Carmichael was arrested and held for several hours. Upon his release he rejoined the marchers. Frustrated and enraged he gave a "Black Power" speech.[4] This was the first time the phrase "Black Power" was used publicly. It was used to empower the community, not just to try and obtain "freedom now" (a phrase promoted by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)), but to embrace their power as black people. That speech became the marker to change the identity label from "Negro" to "black."

4 History.com, *Stokely Carmichael*, http://www.history.com/topics/stokely-carmichael (last visited May 10, 2013). Not to be confused with the "Black Power" Speech Carmichael gave at UC Berkeley in October 1966. Voices of Demoncracy, The U.S. Oratory Project, *Stokely Carmichael, "Black Power," Speech Text (29 October 1966)*, http://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/carmichael-black-power-speech-text/ (last visited May 10, 2013).

These ideas that redefined what black meant were not the brain child of Carmichael, rather these concepts have been expressed by previous radical leaders such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, and Malcolm X. The identity descriptor black and its new definition may not have become popular during the previous times because it was missing the complimentary political struggle. Black was able to gain popularity during this particular time period because of the coinciding struggle (Civil Rights Movement) and maybe that partially accounts for why it hasn't been replaced. Redefining themselves helped with the Civil Rights Movement because without the redefinition "[o]ur incentive is broken and our will to fight is surrendered."[5] Defining the demands of equal rights through the new definition of the ethnic group label could have been a way to find solutions to success in gaining/obtaining Civil/equal/human rights in the 1960s? This may have been why black gained more popularity than in previous years than when African-American leaders spoke the essence of black power or used the term black instead of "Negro." It may also explain why the term is still around today; some people see that the group is still in the battle for equal/civil/human rights so the definition of 'black' is just as relevant and powerful as "African-American" and its definition.

Part II Construction of Identity breaks down Social Identity Theory and Identity Theory for a basis of the theories of identity, before attempting to explore Black Identity in depth through the 1960 shift. Part III Power to Name and Rename will explain the power behind language and naming that was the basis for the political and social strength for the label shift. Part IV, the historical section, will explore many of the major label changes in African-American nomenclature. After laying this foundation, Part V and beyond will deeply explore the "Negro to Black" shift. Using Carmichael's 1966 speech in Mississippi as a starting point, I will calculate when the shift actually occurred by looking at the language shift in *Ebony Magazine* during the 1960s. This showed that the shift happened in 1969, a mere three years later. Sections VI, VII, and VIII will provide three Models to explain why

5 Ture and Hamilton, *supra* note 2, at 38.

the shift happened so quickly. Model 1 will explore the definitions of the labels "Negro" and "black." Model 2 will explain Malcolm X's influence. While Model 3 will describe how the decline of the Civil Rights Movement and the rise of the Black Power Movement contributed to the label identity shift.

II.

Construction of Identity: Psychology of the label shift and "Black Power"

Before diving into the name shift, it is important to try and unpack the theories of Identity.

A. Social Identity Theory and Identity Theory

Post-modern scholarship in many disciplines (i.e. social science, anthropology, social psychology, sociology) has been reshaping the definition and boundaries of identity.[6] There are two main theories that shape identity: *Social Identity Theory* and *Identity Theory*. The process or act of the black community naming itself in American history is an element of both Social Identity Theory and Identity Theory, based on Stets and Burke's merge of the two.[7] There are elements of African-American identity that are both compatible and incompatible with the Social Identity Theory (according to the analysis of that theory by Huddy). Which is why I have chosen to look at the similar characteristics of both Social Identity Theory and Identity Theory, that Stets and Burke lay out, to analyze the name controversy. These are two competing theories, but when analyzed together it reveals the salient elements that define identity.

The base element of Social Identity Theory is the category or group and the base element of Identity Theory is the role. These theories are based on how members perceive themselves in relation to other members of the in-group and in contrast to members of the out-group. Since this paper will not

6 *See generally*, Leonie Huddy, *From Social to Political Identity: A Critical Examination of Social Identity Theory*, POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY, 1991.

7 *See generally*, Jan E. Stets & Peter J. Burke, *Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory*, SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY QUARTERLY, Sept. 2000.

be exploring in depth how individual African-Americans came to self identity with each term used to describe the entire group, a thorough analysis of the basis of identity in relation to the specific terms is not completely relevant. However, I do want to connect the basis of identity to a broader sense of American identity, because at every shift the goal was for the group as a whole to be American, just with a different racial, ethnic, and/or cultural background.

In Social Identity Theory "the uniformity of perception and action among group members" creates in-group identity (Stets and Burke 226). The "uniformity of perception" here was the opportunity to obtain the "Life, Liberty, and Pursuit of Happiness" that was supposedly guaranteed to all Americans. Inalienable rights, constitutional protection, and democratic freedom and equality are supposed to be automatic at birth. However, African-Americans have been denied many of these concepts in reality because of the institutions of slavery and *de jure* and *de facto* segregation and discrimination. The overarching goal in choosing a name for the African-American community was inclusion in the American society, but to also distinguish itself because they were different. They were not Anglo-Saxon, European descendant, white Americans; instead they were African-slave descendants who physically built America economically and culturally. Just like the white group, they felt they deserved those rights that came with being an American, so they needed a name, a symbol, which signified that they too were American.

In Identity Theory "the difference in perceptions and actions that accompany a role as it related to counterroles" within a group form the basis of identity (Stets and Burke 226). The political practice of self-naming was the set up of the differing roles within the overall identity of America, by defining "the meanings, expectation, and resources associated with a role," the role of being an American who happened to be black (Stets and Burke 227). It distinguished African-Americans from other Americans by making them a unified group with a political agenda (something to contribute to society). This basis of identity under both theories is an act of separate inclusion: being American (although mindsets and

actions from the dominant discourse many have seen otherwise), yet also being of a different race and having a separate history, but sill wanting to share the spoils of American Democracy.

1. Self-Categorization & Identification within the two Theories

Identity is a social construction, in that it is shaped by the society around us, because the in-group defines itself by the out-group. African-Americans defined themselves as Americans based on the out-groups perception of themselves as outsiders, non-citizens not worthy of equal rights. *Self-categorization* in Social Identity Theory and *identification* in Identity Theory are the processes that a group "categorize, classify, or name itself in particular ways in relation to other social categories or classifications."[8] These processes are important because names and classifications are "symbols that are used to designate positions" in our world.[9] After freedom, by announcing themselves as "Colored," "Negro," "black," or "African-American," instead of African as identifiers, the African-American community marked and defined themselves in American society. Allowing others to name you is significantly different from actively naming yourself, because you can then create what that identity means.

2. Activation and Salience within the two Theories

The act of self-naming is all about *activation* and *salience* of identity. Again the Social Identity Theory and Identity Theory have different definitions of salience and its relation to activation. The conception of salience in Social Identity Theory denotes "the activation of an identity in a situation" and under Identity Theory salience refers to "the probability that an identity will be activated in a situation."[10] For African-Americans when it became essential to activate the identity through the act of declaring a name for the group, then the practice of vindication is revealed.

The *activation of identity* is the act of self-naming in the historical context. In Social Identity

8 Stets and Burke, *supra* note 7, at 224.
9 *Id.* at 225.
10 *Id.* at 229.

Theory "salience is a product of accessibility," where accessibility is the inclination that an element of identity will be activated in a given context.[11] This eagerness to activate identity can be characterized as "a function of…current tasks and goals" and during the 1830s that meant the task of working hard on American soil for generations and contributing to the daily American society and having the goals of wanting all African descendants free from bondage.[12] African-American abolitionists and community leaders saw the contribution that they and members of their race were making to American society, and could not ignore the fact that most knew no other place to call home. They understood that "to continue to refer to oneself as African might encourage colonizationalists to believe one wanted to be shipped *back* to Africa," so they needed to indicate by their name that America was where they belonged.[13]

When the American-American leaders of the 1960s wanted to make their anti-racial intolerance stance apparent, they changed their name from "Negro" to "black." This change indicated to the dominant discourse that "the likelihood that certain objects or event will occur" needed to be increased at a more rapid speed.[14] These "objects and events" that the new term "black" was supposed to promote were "racial pride, militancy, power, and rejection of the status quo," with the status quo being unequal rights, discrimination, segregation, and everything else that came with the sentiment of being a second-class citizen in one's own home country.[15] This "likelihood" is another social identity theory element of activation, whereby an identity will become activated if one feels like certain events are likely to take place after the activation or acceptance of the identity. The injection of positivity and political power with the term "black" was an act to move away from "a term thought to be introduced by Whites to invoke negative images" and instead instill racial pride, work against racial injustice, and

11 *Id.* at 230.
12 *Id.*
13 Sterling Stuckey, SLAVE CULTURE: NATIONALIST THEORY AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF BLACK AMERICA 202 (1987).
14 Stets and Burke, *supra* note 7, at 230.
15 Tom Smith, *Changing Racial Labels: From "Colored" to "Negro" to "Black" to "African-American,"* THE PUBLIC OPINION QUARTERLY, Winter 1992, at 449.

to promote the sense that African-Americans deserved equal treatment to whites.[16] Activation of identity also is "tied to the social requirements of the situation," and during the late 1980s Jesse Jackson believed that Americans of African descent should be called "African-American."[17] In the growing multicultural society that emphasized ethnicity instead of race, the hyphened term African-American fit more in-line with other groups. This hyphened term "sought to restore [their] cultural umbilical cord," and it gave them a cultural and historical connection beyond the U.S. borders, like other ethnic minorities that had gained social mobility.

Identity Theory looks to "the effect of persons' position in the social structure" in relation to the activation of identity.[18] A large percentage of African-Americans during the 1830s lived in the South, many of whom were enslaved. Those leaders who were forming this non-African identity were free, many of whom were living in the North. Their social position was different than their southern counterparts, but they understood that all African-Americans were still at the lowest position in society, and they also knew there was a collective of people who "were promoting their view that America was not the African's home."[19] So these leaders had to keep that in mind when making the political move of naming themselves. If they continued to refer to themselves and their organizations as "African," then it perpetuated the ideology that they were not American, so they had to identify, via their identity label, more so with America.

One way to measure this "position" in identity theory is to look at the quantitative and qualitative components to the commitment of the identity itself. Commitment means the number of people tied to the identity and the strength of the tie between members of that identity group. When these two things are strong, the probability of activation of identity increases. This is especially true of

16 Gina Philogène, From Black to African American: A New Social Representation 7 (1999).
17 Stets and Burke, *supra* note 7, at 230.
18 *Id*.
19 Stuckey, *supra* note 13, at 202.

the "Negro" to "black" shift because the "Black Power advocates posed a class and cultural confrontation against middle-class blacks to force on them the Black Power definition of group identity."[20] It was not enough to have the poor and working class identifying with Black Power and the identity associated with being called black. Once they encompassed the middle-class, it strengthened the commitment to the identity and increased the power and political motives of the term.

Another way to look at the persons' position in society in relation to identity activation is to see how the process "of a person invoking an identity in a situation…[creates] a new situation."[21] With the "end" of the Civil Rights Movement African-Americans were gaining equality in education, politics, and other arenas through reversals of past court decisions, passage of the Civil Rights Acts, and with newly implemented affirmative action policies. In the 1980s more strides were being made that coincided with the name shift. Philogène states that the shift from black to African-American "must be understood as the making of a new social representation."[22] Jackson's 1988 campaigns (presidential election and name shift) helped invigorate political participation and helped to further unify the community. The name shift revived the awareness of African-Americans' roots beyond the institution of slavery and put them on a uniform plane with other cultural minority groups. This also contributed to the multicultural and less racial outlook of America because "culture would then become a lever for improving the lot of Blacks."[23] By refocusing the group to African roots and not black skin hue, it then reinforced the equality debate on cultural issues and not racial issues.

B. Other Relevant Theories

Social Identity Theory and Identity Theory are not the only theories to explain identity. Below are a few other theories within Black Solidarity that can also help explain the label identity shift based

20 Ben L. Martin, *From Negro to Black to African American: The Power to Names and Naming*, POLITICAL SCIENCE QUARTERLY, 1991, at 93.
21 Stets and Burke, *supra* note 7, at 231.
22 Philogène, *supra* note 16, at 17.
23 Smith, *supra* note 15, at 507.

on theories of identity:

- The Collective Identity Theory: A collective black identity is essential for an effective black solidarity whose aim is liberation from racial oppression; therefore, blacks who are committed to emancipatory group solidarity must embrace and preserve their distinctive black identity.[24]
- The Common Oppression Theory: simply acknowledges the existence of antiblack racism in America and calls on those who suffer under it to act collectively to end that oppression or at least to reduce its impact on their lives. The goal of this political program, then, is to free blacks from antiblack racism, and it sees black solidarity as a necessary means to that end.[25]
- The Collective Self-Determination Theory: is a form of black nationalism, and it maintains that blacks need to work together to bring about their collective self-realization as a people. Generally more pessimistic about the prospects for ending antiblack racism, this program seeks relief for black people through collective autonomy (political, economic, social, and/or cultural) and calls for black solidarity to bring this about.[26]

The Black Power Movement is a push for a new definition of identity that drew upon each and every one of those theories. Like Malcolm X, the movement focused on black unity through black identity based on black oppression. All of these theories work hand in hand, especially during the Freedom Movement.[27] The group came together to redefine the community's identity. The end goal was racial justice in society, and positive psychology of self.[28] Shifting the name was not going to do the entire job of fixing the psychology of the black consciousness or obtaining full rights, but it was one step in the right direction. That name shift was something they can obtain, thereby giving them more power to achieve the next goal, whatever that may be.

III.

Power to Name and Rename

It is a powerful act when a group to name or rename itself. That power will be explored in this section. During the 1960s the racial group identifier shift signified that there was "psychological war"

24 Tommie Shelby, *Foundations of Black Solidarity: Collective Identity or Common Oppression?*, ETHICS, Jan. 2002, at 233.
25 *Id.* at 232.
26 *Id.*
27 I will use the term "Freedom Movement" to explain the combination of Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement in the fight for equality.
28 Lerone Bennett Jr., *What's in a Name?: Negro vs. Afro-American vs. Black*, EBONY, Nov. 1967, at 54.

happening.[29] This war was about "whether or not black people [were] going to be able to use the terms they want...without white people's blessing."[30] Not being satisfied with the previous label indicated that there was a "serious struggle for positive racial and self-identity."[31] Not only was this about the group label, but the Freedom Movement overall. Being able to name and/or rename the group could be seen as the ultimate sign of freedom in the Freedom Movement, because as Richard B. Moore proclaimed: "free men name themselves."[32] The 1960s presented an opportunity where African-Americans could define themselves, their goals and their tactics without outside input.[33] Although the opportunity was there, it was going to be a "struggle" to accomplish the task of defining the terms to identify themselves and to have those terms recognized.[34]

Language is important. In 1967 Keith Baird recognized that "linguistic scholarship is virtually unanimous in its findings that names and words determine, to a great extent, what we see and what we feel."[35] Leaders during this time period recognized this and stressed it to the group as well. "[L]anguage tends to prestructure thinking."[36] Racism, discrimination, and inequality structured the lives of Americans of African descent for hundreds of years. That consciousness of racism, was seen by many, as being solidified in the current descriptor of "Negro." Names are very important. It can instill a sense of pride in an individual.[37] It can also invoke the impressions from others based on certain "association of ideas" based on the name.[38] For example, the "loaded names, 'native,' 'Kaffir,' 'Negro' are used to excite and to store up hate and hostility in prejudiced minds" which "perpetuate

29 Stokely Carmichael, A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE NEGRO PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES: 1960-1968: (VOLUME 7) 432 (Herbert Aptheker, ed. 1994).
30 *Id.*
31 Kenneth B. Clark, *The Search for Identity*, EBONY, Aug. 1967, at 42.
32 Richard B. Moore, A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE NEGRO PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES: 1960-1968: (VOLUME 7) 12 (Herbert Aptheker, ed. 1994).
33 *See* Carmichael, *supra* note 29, at 430.
34 Ture and Hamilton, *supra* note 2, at 35.
35 Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 52.
36 *Id.*
37 Mrs. Gainsley C. Smith, *Letters to the Editor*, EBONY, Jan. 1968, at 11.
38 Moore, *supra* note 32, at 3.

such inhuman, bloodcurling, and murderous deeds"[39] by others. The act of renaming the group was seen as an act of "racially oppressed individuals free[ing] themselves from both the falsification of their consciousness and the racist domination of their practical activity."[40]

Did African-Americans have the right or the power to name themselves? The answer to both is yes. Naming is a political power[41] that the group had, or was seeking to show they had, by changing their name and having it recognized. That political power was exemplified in the fact that the group did change their name (and have done so before), the change happened within a short period of time, and it gained national recognition on the 1970 Census.[42]

The renaming process had to happen at the individual level and the group level. On an individual level, every member of the community had to figure out what side of the debate they were on (Negro, black, or Afro-American)[43] and if they believed that their choice was a step toward "self-recognition or denial, depending upon what [one chose]."[44] However, on the group level it was believed that since the issue concerned the group as a whole, there needs to be a general acceptance of a term by the majority of the group[45] in order for "African-Americans [to be] respected as a people."[46] It takes a group of people to fight and gain a name change, which is where the power to name a group comes from individuals making and believing in the choice and collectively expressing that choice.

Many proponents of the name shift believed not only that African-Americans had the power to change their name, but that the name shift would change so much for the group. Changing the name

39 *Id.* at 5.
40 Eugene Victor Wolfenstein, The VICTIMS OF DEMOCRACY: MALCOLM X AND THE BLACK REVOLUTION 1-2 (1993); *see also* Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 47.
41 *See* Moore, *supra* note 32, at 11.
42 Under Question "4. Race or Color" one possible selection was "Negro or Black." Census.com, *History: Questionnaires 1970*, http://www.census.gov/history/pdf/1970_questionnaire.pdf (last visited May 11, 2013).
43 Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 54.
44 Diannia M. Monroe, *Letters to the Editor*, EBONY, Jan. 1968, at 10.
45 Moore, *supra* note 32, at 11.
46 F. Oblington, *Letters to the Editor*, EBONY, Jan. 1968, at 10-11.

gave the community the ability to "contest the racial disrespect that [it] routinely recieve[d]"[47] and "negat[e] the weak, individual self-image"[48] that was placed upon them. The power to change the group name was an act of "overthrowing the reality principle of the oppressing class."[49] In order to get rid of any old, negative consciousness and replace it with a new, positive consciousness, the group had to enact their power to change their name.

Being able to define "black," even if the definition was not always clear, meant the community could create a positive idea of blackness into the community and to non-group members. The new, positive definition fostered an increased self-esteem in the race.[50] Maybe previously people strove to be a "good Negro," as defined by the outsider's standards, but with a redefinition of black, people know internally that they didn't have to strive to be good, being black, in and of itself, was a great thing. Having that mindset propelled other powerful acts by individuals and the group. By increasing the community's self-esteem, they begin to question and challenge black exclusion.[51] Carmichael believed that in order to "raise hard questions, questions which challenge the very nature of society itself," they first must redefine themselves.[52] This goes hand and hand with President's Eisenhower's belief that a change in attitude that would help change the inequality issues in the country. The redefinition of the black racial identity was to help the entire community see their historical accomplishments and the power they had, in order to go and obtain what was rightfully theirs from the federal government – i.e. equal housing, jobs, and education.

A name is powerful. The power to name oneself is equally powerful. Not only is the named things affected, but because of certain associations with the name, the listener is also affected. The African-American community in the 1960s realized that Negro was no longer applicable and realized

47 Charles Mills, BLACKNESS VISIBLE: ESSAYS ON PHILOSOPHY AND RACE 87 (1998).
48 Wolfenstein, *supra* note 40, at 19.
49 *Id*. at 34.
50 *See generally* Clark, *supra* note 31, at 42.
51 *See* Mills, supra note 47, at 93.
52 Ture and Hamilton, *supra* note 2, at 34; *see also* Moore, *supra* note 32, at 4-5.

their power to change the label. In any situation you have to "dress the part," depending on who you are talking to and what you are trying to get. By the 1960s African-Americans had already won the battles for their "fundamental rights," but now they needed to win more. They had to change their "attire" (i.e. their racial identity label), firstly to gain the attention of their own people, and secondly to gain the attention of the government.

IV.

Historical Section

Throughout history the African-American community has gone by many names: African, free African, colored, Negro (un-capitalized and capitalized), Afro-American, black, and African-American, just to name a few examples. For a good portion of history, African-Americans have decided for themselves what they would like to be called and how the government and media should refer to them.

Black Identity, in terms of the group label identifier, has gone through many changes. Although labels may have changed, the bottom line has always been the same: being a true American while still maintaining their African-rooted identity. They did not want full assimilation, yet they did not want complete separation. Each shift occurred when the group was reminded that they were still not equal, still not first class citizens, and there were more rights to be gained.

A. African

The identifier African was a general ancestry identifier because many, those of who did know of a specific tribe, were not from the same locality. Freedman just indicated that one wasn't a slave anymore. Freedmen and slaves alike used the term "African" to remind themselves of their history and their motherland. There was even a movement to use the term African and Africa for social organizations (i.e. African Methodist Episcopal Church). With the rise of non-black "back to Africa" campaigns and the African Colonization Society, there was a push to decrease the use of the terms

referencing African, and instead used "colored" or "Negro."

B. Colored and Negro

Just like other racial and ethical groups, Freedmen needed to pronounce that they had no intentions on going back to Africa, that they were in fact American, and that they deserved those rights that came with being an American. They needed a name, a symbol, which signified precisely those issues. Choosing a name for Black Americans in the 1830s was "a struggle between integrationists and advocates of nationalism over the ideological and institutional means by which Afro-American liberation might be accomplished."[53] The political move of Freedmen was to liberate their brothers and sisters in bondage and to make sure that the American system had a place for all African-Americans once freedom was accomplished. They were trying to accomplish freedom and enfranchisement. The group used the terms "Colored" and "Negro" to accomplish those goals. Using "Colored" or "Negro" were more acceptable terms for African-Americans during the 1830s and beyond because they signified a domestic rather than a completely foreign placement.

Some appreciated the term "colored" but others did not, and similarly it was used in the titles of social organizations (i.e. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People). Some people felt the term was too broad, because it encompassed too many people of color, and some African-American leaders wanted to maintain the uniqueness of the group. The term "Afro-American" gained some popularity during this time period as well, but it was not as widely used as "Colored" or "Negro."

Negro, in its un-capitalized form became popular. However, many recognized that being an un-capitalized race was not dignified, so there was a movement to capitalize it. The capital "N" brought dignity and respect to the community and placed the term on equal grounds as other ethnic groups in America. W.E.B. Du Bois publicly expressed his desire for the term to be capitalized starting in the early 1900s, yet it was not accepted by the white print media as a legitimate proper noun to be

53 Stuckey, *supra* note 13, at 208.

capitalized until the 1930s.

C. Black

In the mid 1960s with the rise of the Black Power Movement the term "black" started to gain popularity, overtime the label replaced Negro as the group identifier. They used the formerly negative term Black and made it positive to define themselves and their goals. Also "from a linguistic point of view Black was seen as the best parallel and counterweight to White."[54] African-American leaders demanded this symbolic racial parallel in order to provoke racial unity within their group and racial equality as Americans. They wanted all the rights of their white counterparts. This process also symbolized that Black Americans were "uniting in their struggle against racial intolerance in America", but it failed to make America a color-blind country.[55] However, because the term was racially loaded, the presence of racial division was continued.

D. African-American

In a 1988 new conference Jesse Jackson announced that the black community would be labeled "African-American" and stated that "[t]o be called African-Americans has cultural integrity." That is what the group wanted: to be culturally included in the growing multicultural society that America was turning into.[56] What was being demanded was the need for inclusion. They wanted to justify their place in American society, so having the hyphenated label of African-American achieved that goal. It gave the community a sense of "reconstructed ethnicity" and connected the community to some sort of land and historical base.[57]

54 Philogène, *supra* note 16, at 8.
55 *Id.*
56 Martin, *supra* note 20, at 83.
57 *Id.* at 90.

V.

The "Negro to black" Shift in the 1960s

One night in June 1966 in Mississippi at the Meredith March, Stokely Carmichael shouted the phrase "Black Power" during a speech. "Black Power" was heard across the nation, and sparked African-Americans to question their identity and identity label. The proclamation of "Black Power" not only shifted the tone of the African-American Freedom Movement, but it also propelled the discussion of identity and the debate over "correct labels." This is a prime example where "[i]n periods of reaction and extreme stress, black people usually turn inward. They begin to redefine themselves and they begin to argue seriously about names."[58] But let's be clear, Carmichael did not originate the terms "black" as an identifier or the phrase "black power." Many before him, including Congress Adam Clayton Powell and Floyd McKissick of CORE[59] were also leaders to get African-Americans to question their identity label.

Three years later, in 1969, the group went from calling themselves "Negro" and started calling themselves "black." I used the language shift in Ebony Magazine to measure the shift. Below I will explore various explanations to why the shift happened so quickly. I say it happened quickly because the time period between Carmichael's proclamation of "Black Power"' and the shift in self-identification to the "black" label happened in a shorter period of time than, for instance, the transition from a lower case 'n' to a capital 'n' for "Negro," and the corresponding legal and social acceptance of the capital 'N' for Negro between the late 1800s and 1930. Aside from exploring why the shift happened in a rapid manner, I will emphasize the power that African-Americans themselves had in finding a new label, defining the new label, and replacing the old label without the approval of an outside group.

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58 Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 50.

59 Lerone Bennett Jr., *Stokely Carmichael: Architect of Black Power*, EBONY, Sept. 1966, at 26. [Hereinafter, Bennett *Stokely Carmichael*.]

Model 1 will examine what the terms "Negro" and "black" meant to both sides of the debate. I will also show that those two terms were not the only two terms in the debate at the time: "Afro-American" was also a strong contender to replace "Negro." However, by examining the definitions of all the terms, it is obvious that during this time period people started to question their current place in society, they believed that changing their identity label would contribute to having a better future for all citizens of African descent.

Malcolm X's influence will be explored in Model 2. He questioned the tactics and goals of the Freedom movement thus far, he sparked the youth, especially in the Northern ghettos, to question their future, and he questioned the mentality of the "so-called Negro." His strong ideology, religion beliefs, popularity and even his death casted a strong legacy for people to question their identity.

Model 3 will track the role that the shift from the Civil Rights Movement to the Black Power movement had on the label change. The change from "Negro" to "black" was paralleled by the decline of the Civil Rights Movement and the rise of the Black Power Movement in terms of the goals and strategies for obtaining those goals.

A. Ebony Magazine Research and Findings

One way to mark the shift then the African-American population shifted their identity label is to look towards the popular press. *Ebony Magazine* was created in November 1945 to emphasize the achievements of African-Americans in all aspects of their lives. It was founded by publisher John H. Johnson. Many topics appeared in the pages of Ebony, such as fashion, beauty, civil rights, education, African-American entrepreneurship, African-American celebrities and athletes, and other "stories important to the black community that mainstream publications often ignored."[60] A magazine that reflected various aspect of Black Identity was the best way to measure the label identity shift, because

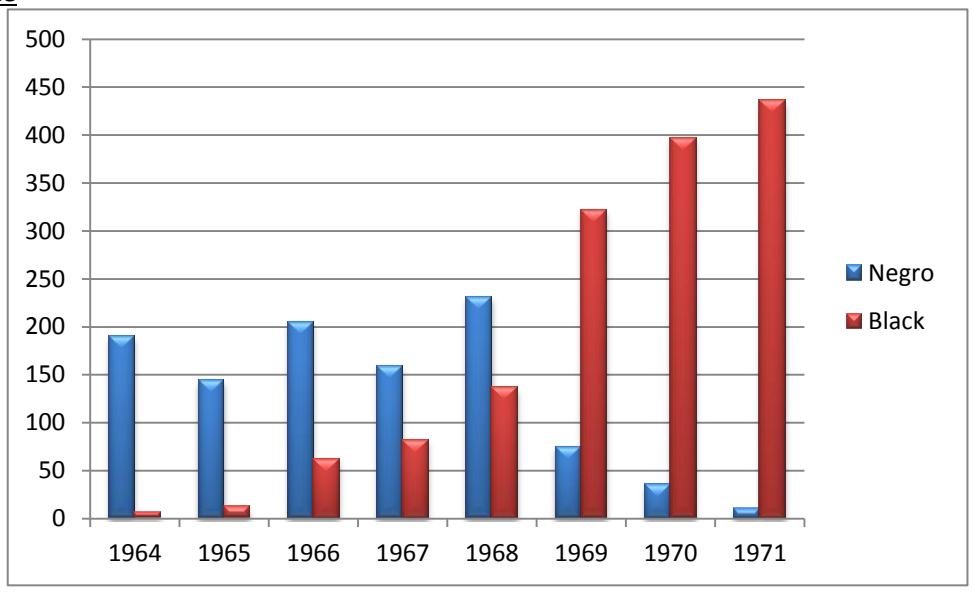
60 Sharon Shahid, Nuseum, *65 years Ago in News History: The Birth of Ebony Magazine*, http://www.newseum.org/news/2010/10/65-years-ago-in-news-history-the-birth-of-ebony-magazine.html (October 29, 2010)

it was assumed that the African-American media would accurately reflect the community. To capture the movement in the 1960s of the "Negro/black" debate, I looked to uses of the terms in the magazine. By seeing when the term "Negro" decreased in use and then when "black" increased in use, I can pin point the moment when the shift happened.

Table 1: The Number of Times "Negro" and "Black" appeared in Ebony Magazine Each Year in the January Article

Ebony: January Article Year	**NEGRO**	**BLACK**
1964	190	6
1965	144	12
1966	205	62
1967	159	82
1968	231	137
1969	75	322
1970	35	397
1971	10	436

Graph 1: The Number of Times "Negro" and "Black" appeared in Ebony Magazine Each Year in the January Article



The table and graph reflects the number of times the terms “Negro” and “black” appeared in the magazine. The “Negro” total included the singular (Negro) and plural (Negroes) forms. The “Black” total similarly included the singular (black) and plural (blacks) forms of the word, as they were used as an identifier of race (capitalized and un-capitalized). Therefore, “black” as a last name or color of a product (i.e. jet black wig) were not included in the count for “Black.” In order to determine how the term was used, I read the context of the surrounding passage.

The “years” reflect the count from the January edition of the magazine for the given year. For example, the data from 1964 comes from the January 1964 volume. This is not to be considered a complete representation of how many times the specific term appeared in a given year. Nor is it a reflection of an average of the term used for the given year. It simply shows the number of times each term appeared in the month of January of each year, to provide general information about the overall trend.

For each data point I counted the number of times the word appeared in each magazine. I counted every page (title page to final page), including the Table of Contents, Letters to the Editor, articles, and advertisements.

The data shows, generally, an increase in the term black, and a decrease in the term Negro, which was to be expected. Between 1964 and 1968 there was small, steady rise of the use of the term “black” as an identifier. In 1969 there was a significant increase in the use of the term “black.” From 1969-1971 there was a continued, but small increase in the use of the term “black.” Between 1964 and 1968 there was no significant difference in the amount of the use of the term “Negro,” because there were only small fluctuations during that time period. In 1969, there was a significant decrease in the use of the term “Negro” from 1968. After 1969 the use of the term Negro steadily decreased. This marks 1969 as the moment in the shift from “Negro” to “black.”

This signifies three significant time periods. Before 1965, “Negro” was the clear dominant

identifier for the African-American community. The term "black" was used in general contexts only. For example, a writer would state the phrases "black and white" or "black, white, and yellow" to mean the general races in America. Between 1965 and 1969 there was a debate over the term "black" and "black power" in the community and in the magazine articles. During these years, some writers would use "Negro" and "black" almost interchangeably. While others would use the two terms to identify sub groups in the community. Then beginning in 1969 and onwards, "black" appears to have become the overwhelming choice of the community. These time periods are not only reflected in the data, but also in the types of articles published.

There are a few things that should be noted about the data. The small fluctuations in the use of the term Negro may not hold any significance. There could be many explanations. For example, it could be due to the topics of articles published during the time period. Also, the use of the term "black" was used at a higher rate than the term Negro. This may be because authors felt more comfortable to speak more about the issue of "black" and "blackness." It could be also due to an increase in the discussion of "Black Power."

VI.

Model 1: Definitions of "Negro" and "Black" to Explain the Shift

This section will explain the role that the definitions played in the name shift.

A. Negro

Negro has not always been the primary chosen name for Americans of African descent. First this subsection will focus on the old definitions of Negro and then the shift to the 1960s definitions.

1. History of Definition of Negro

Negro (capitalized) only recently secured its place as the "proper" term for the group.[61] Europeans "arbitrarily branded them 'Blackmoors,' 'Moors,' 'negers,' and 'negroes,'"[62] since the group's ancestors were forcefully displacement from Africa. Once freed, many wanted to be called African and rejected the term Negro.[63] Many also referred to themselves as "blacks."[64] It seems that in the 18th century the term Negro was available for use as an identifier (because Europeans used it), but when it came to self-identification, the community overwhelmingly choose "African" because it represented where they came from.

This trend to emphasize African roots in their identity label ended in the early 19th century when the American Colonization Society organized to send Africans back to African. African-Americans realized that they needed to honor their roots while indicating their place in America as rightful citizens.[65] At this time "coloured" and/or "free persons of color" became the dominant term.[66] During this time Negro was seen as having no significance to skin color nor did it have any ties to history.[67] For the remainder of the 19th century Negro was still not the dominant identity label, which is exemplified by the fact that no National Conventions held by the group from 1830-1892 used the term Negro in their title.[68]

In the post-Reconstruction era Negro began to gain popular acceptance. It must be noted that "black" was also considered, but because of negative connotations of "black," Negro became the adopted term by early Nationalist.[69] For example, "Blanche Kelso Bruce, the first black man to serve a

61 *See* Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 50.
62 *Id.* at 48.
63 *See* Moore, *supra* note 32, at 7.
64 Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 48.
65 *See Id.*
66 *Id.*
67 *Id.* at 48, 50.
68 Moore, *supra* note 32, at 8.
69 Halford H. Fairchild, *Black, Negro, or Afro-American?: The Differences Are Crucial!*, JOURNAL OF BLACK STUDIES,

full term in the U.S. Senator, refused to use the word 'colored,' saying: 'I am a Negro, and proud of my race.'"[70] Negro began to "acquir[e] a dignity that it did not have in the past."[71] Militant radicals and nationalists, such as Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Marcus Garvey used Negro in a similar manner to how Black Nationalists in the 1960s were using "black":[72] "it was a term of militancy, self-consciously used by black men defiantly asserting their pride of race."[73] These leaders instilled a positive definition onto "Negro" to overshadow any previous non-meaning it may have held before. In 1930, the term Negro gained even more dignity with the acceptance of the capital 'N' by *The New York Times.*[74]

While "Negro" held dominance during the early-to-mid 20th Century, there were still some contemporary negative notions about the term. Many believed it was a degrading term used by whites to perpetuate the American prejudice system.[75]

> The English word "Negro" is a derivation of the Spanish and Portuguese word *negro*, which means black. The Portuguese and Spanish, who were pioneers in the African Slave Trade, used this adjective to designate the African men and women whom they captured and transported to the slave mart of the New World. Within a short time, the Portuguese word *negro* (no capital) became the English noun-adjective "negro." This word, which was not capitalized at first, fused not only humanity, nationality and place of origin but also certain white judgments about the irredeemable inferiority of the persons so designated.[76]

By accepting the term, blacks were accepting their "inferior social and political status." One young man even wrote to *The Crisis* in March 1928 to show his disdain for the magazine's use of the term "Negro."[77] In this letter he expressed his desire that the term be abolished in his lifetime.[78] Some of those earlier sentiments about the term were present even though Negro was the dominant term.

This underlying dissatisfaction could have played a role in the quickness of the shift. Also the

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Sept. 1985, at 53.
70 Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 48.
71 *Id.* at 50; *see also* Fairchild, *supra* note 69, at 53.
72 Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 48.
73 *Id.*
74 *See* Moore, *supra* note 32, at 11-12; *see also* Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 50.
75 Moore, *supra* note 32, at 7.
76 Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 48.
77 Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 50-51.
78 *Id.*

fact that the term did not reach its positive peak until 1930, in terms of no longer being seen as used in a degrading manner, was only 30 years before the shift happened. Negro did not get a strong, stable foundation, which could have also contributed to the quick shift.

2. 1960s Definition of "Negro"

This section focuses on the 1960s definition or understanding of the term "Negro." Positive and negative definitions contributed to the shift. Those who did not mind being named "Negro" could not convince others that the term should not change. The attitudes of those who opposed keeping "Negro" very much resembled the previous attitudes towards Negro. At the center of the debate for identity, the central question was "what does our name mean and represent to us and others?" In order to answer that question, people had to determine "whether one can make the word 'Negro' mean so many different things or whether one should abandon it and use the words 'black' or 'Afro-American'" instead.[79] Does 'Negro' mean so many things? Does it mean something positive? Does Negro accurately represent the people that use its name?

"Negro" has been the dominant racial label in use since the end of the 19th Century. Although some thought it was used in a degrading manner until it was capitalized in 1930, it was what the majority of Americans of African descent used as their identity label. They themselves made that shift from "colored" to "Negro." Negro gained the respectability and dignity that it did not have in previous generations. However, in the 1960s, there did not seem to be many positive definitions of Negro. Some thought that Negro did not connote an "inferior status"[80] as other terms may have. However, outside of that notion and the high level of respect that it gained after being capitalized, there were not other positive definitions for "Negro" during the 1960s. Was that because it did not need a definition until it was challenged? And now, that it was challenged, instead of supporters finding or making up a

79 *Id.* at 46.

80 Sue K. Jewell, *Will the Real Black, Afro-American, Mixed, Colored, Negro Please Stand Up?: Impact of the Black Social Movement, Twenty Years Later*, JOURNAL OF BLACK STUDIES, Sept. 1985, at 60.

definition, they simply stated their position that the name should not change? Possibly.

Supporters may not have been able to articulate positive definitions of "Negro," but they did express reasons for keeping the racial identity label. Many believed that changing the name of the group was ignoring the larger issues at hand, and that the group should not waste energy on the debate over names.[81] However, this argument is not very strong. The transition period from the Civil Rights Movement to the Black Power Movement was the perfect time to debate about the proper name. Other issues that were important to the community were being presented to the nation, and having a proper name is also an important issue that should also be brought to the attention of the nation. The group should not have to wait until "peace time," a time after they get the rest of their demands met, to demand a name change, because they probably would not get it, or would not have gotten it in a short period of time. The context of the Freedom Movement was probably the best context to debate over names.

Supporters also believed that the same connotations that are associated with "Negro" would simply transfer to the new term and nothing would change. "[T]he word 'Negro' is as accurate and as euphonious as the words 'black' and 'Afro-American'...A Negro by any other name, they say, would be as black and beautiful – and as segregated."[82] Because of this idea, these supporters believed the best option would be to change the meaning of Negro instead of changing to something else.[83] People will be so accustomed to the old definition. It would be easier to let those old associations to fade away with the old word, and bring in a new word with a new definition and new associations.

Other supporters focused on the humanity of the term and the people the term represented. For example, one person stated: "I will not and have not got anywhere by the name that is adjoined to my color. I am an 'individual unto myself' and the person looking out from my skin is neither black nor

81 Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 47.
82 *Id.*
83 *See generally* Sgt. Irwin B. Taylor, *Letters to the Editor*, EBONY, Jan. 1968, at 10.

white but a human being."[84] Another person stated: "I have no qualms about being identified as Negro. I regard that designation as nothing more than an impersonal, factual description of one of the major branches of humankind."[85] They saw "Negro" as just being a name for a group of humans. However, many believed that "Negro" meant something more, to not only Americans of African descent but whites as well, and that is what opponents were trying to combat. They were attempting to show they are in fact human beings, with a powerful history, who should be treated equally, and Negro did not say that.

There seemed to be a plethora of negative definitions and connotations for and associated with "Negro" in the 1960s. There could be many explanations for why the group started to question Negro: the introduction of the terms "black" and "Afro-American," the shift to the Black Power Movement, or the global rise in black consciousness. Whatever the reasons, the negative associations were not new; they reflected previous objections to Negro. First, Negro had a close relation to slavery.[86] It was created by white men,[87] more specifically slave masters,[88] and therefore Negros existed for white men and not for themselves.[89] Because of the slave orientation of the term, many believed there was a slave-master relationship that was perpetuated by the label "Negro" that was in the consciousness of both blacks and whites.[90] "Just as the slave exists *for* his masters, the contemporary Negro exists *for* the white man"[91] (emphasis in original). Many believed that accepting the "slave-masters" term also means accepting only those things the "master" is willing to give you – second class citizenship.[92] Negroes, therefore, had no control and could not attack the separate but equal society that was created

84 M. Elaine Boles, *Letters to the Editor*, EBONY, Jan. 1968, at 11.
85 Miss Judy E. Cummings, *Letters to the Editor*, EBONY, Jan. 1968, at 11.
86 *See* Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 52 ("slave-orientated name"); *Id.* at 47 ("slavery-imposed name"); *Id.* ("a slave-orientated epithet").
87 *See* Fairchild, *supra* note 69, at 53 ("it was Europeans who derived most of the current terms for naming Africans and Africans in the Americas").
88 *See* Moore, *supra* note 32, at 5 ("the slave master's vile appellation 'Negro'").
89 Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 48.
90 *Id.* at 46.
91 Wolfenstein, *supra* note 40, at 6.
92 Moore, *supra* note 32, at 6.

for them.[93] Continuously using the name "Negro" meant you could have nothing of your own without permission.[94] Changing from "Negro" would break down that mentality.

Secondly, and very much related, is the negative stereotypes about Negroes being oppressed people. Since the term was placed upon the group by the white man, many believed "Negro" represented the white man's image[95] of Americans of African descent, and that image is filled with negative stereotypes.[96] Even after slavery ended, keeping this term around kept the group oppressed and exposed to exploitation[97] by their previous slave masters because it still carried the same negative stereotypes and associations. Along with "Negress" and "nigger," "Negro" was a brand on the group for "discrimination, segregation, and social ostracism."[98] No one wants their name to instantly call upon images such as: "savage,"[99] having the "mentality of a child,"[100] or being "lazy, apathetic, dumb, good-times, shiftless, etc."[101] These were the stereotypes that were associated with being a Negro. However, some opponents would also note that those stereotypes were associated with blackness in general. But proponents of the label shift believed that by redefining a new term while simultaneously getting rid of "Negro," that the associations with blackness would change.

Thirdly, "Negro" is vague when it comes to a connection to land. "[T]he term 'Negro' denies Americans of African ancestry any sense of past history or present nationality."[102] Among the other racial groups in America, the "Negro" label was the only one that did not designate a land or nation of

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93 Louis E. Lomax, A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE NEGRO PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES: 1960-1968: (VOLUME 7) 53 (Herbert Aptheker, ed. 1994).

94 *See* Wolfenstein, *supra* note 40, at 7 ("As long as you call yourself Negro, nothing is yours. This negation must itself be negated if black self-affirmation action is possible").

95 Ture and Hamilton, *supra* note 2, at 37 ("this term is the invention of our oppressor; it is *his* image of us that he describes" (emphasis in original)).

96 Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 54.

97 Moore, *supra* note 32, at 3; *see also* Henry Hagins, *Letters to the Editor*, EBONY, Oct. 1967, at 22 ("The term 'Negro' does not let us identify with anything except 400 years of racial oppression").

98 Moore, *supra* note 32, at 4.

99 *Id.*

100 *Id.*

101 Ture and Hamilton, *supra* note 2, at 37.

102 Betty Bobo Seiden, *Letters to the Editor*, EBONY, Jan. 1968, at 10.

origin.[103] "Negro" doesn't tie the people to Africa or America. However, "black" does not necessarily do that either. People were dissatisfied with Negro, but, in regards to this "land" element, "black" would not satisfy the desire to be tied to a nation of origin or nation of citizenship.

Finally, many people just had a feeling that "Negro" should be eliminated without exactly pinpointing a negative definition. Some believed that "Negro" was not synonymous with "black" and therefore should be eliminated.[104] Others believed that since there were other terms that were irrelevant to the shift (i.e. progress, non-violence, integration, fear of "white backlash," coalition, etc), that "Negro" was also an irrelevant term that should be eliminated.[105] The media was called on to make changes as well. A reader requested that *Ebony Magazine* abolish the name.[106] While the *New York Amsterdam News* changed from using "Negro" to "Afro-American" with positive feedback.[107] Rejecting the name "Negro" was seen as an integral part in the revolution of Americans of African descent at the time.

B. Afro-American

I cannot ignore the fact that the term "Afro-American" was a part of the debate during this time period. Although I am focusing on the shift from "Negro" to "black," I cannot forget the role of other terms had. Not only did The Center for Afro-American Studies at UCLA used the term in its name in 1969, but the support for the term was exemplified by many "Letters to the Editor" in *Ebony Magazine*. Many wrote in to express that they wanted "Afro-American" to replace "Negro."[108]

Many preferred "Afro-American" over "black" and "Negro" because of its connection to the

103 Moore, *supra* note 32, at 10; Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 52.
104 *Id.* at 54.
105 Ture and Hamilton, *supra* note 2, at 50.
106 Winifred L. Watson, *Letters to the Editor*, EBONY, Jan. 1968, at 11.
107 Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 52.
108 *See, for example,* R. Byrd, *Letters to the Editor*, EBONY, Jan. 1968, at 11 and A3c Edwards D. Hitchens, *Letters to the Editor*, EBONY, Jan. 1968, at 11.

past and present. "Afro" reflects the group's African heritage.[109] While "American" clearly shows the group's current nationality. Moore, in his effort to rid Negro from peoples' vocabulary stated: "We are entitled to be called Americans, but some people desired to differentiate. If they must distinguish us, then in accordance with our human right, we will tell them what to call us – Afro-Americans."[110] Not everyone believed the term Afro-American came with a positive reminder of history. By referencing Africa, it reminded one that "his ancestors were dragged from their homeland."[111] From this hyphenated word it was clear where the people were from and where they were citizens.

Because of the rise in the Black Power Movement, and the very vocal supporters shouting "Black Power," the debate appears to be solely between "Negro" and "black." So although "black" many have had negative traits, such as appearing to be the opposite of white, was not historically accurate, did not incorporate all shades of blackness, was not geographically accurate, or was simply too vague, the term did "win" the battle. "Afro-American" may not seem to be a part of the debate because it was overshadowed by the shouting of "black" during the Black Power Movement.

C. Black

It was difficult pinpointing a definition of "black." The term may have invoked power to those who used it, but it was hard to articulate how "black" was different and better than Negro. Many had their own definition of the term, their own understanding of the term, or their own reasons for using the term. However, in the end "black" and all of its positive definitions became the dominate racial identity label, chosen by the people.

The 1960s sparked a period in the search for identity. The increased use of the term "black" and "black power" fueled that search.[112] However, not everyone active in the overall Freedom Movement

109 *See Id.*; Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 46; Moore, *supra* note 32, at 10.
110 *Id.* at 12.
111 Miss Judy E. Cummings, *Letters to the Editor*, EBONY, Jan. 1968, at 11.
112 *See generally* Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 48.

understood what the terms meant, and "Carmichael's vague and sometimes contradictory statements [regarding the terms] further confused the issue."[113] Because of the vagueness and lack of concrete definition many, for example, The National Urban League "carefully refrained from becoming involved in the fruitless dispute over the value of a slogan."[114] Despite the lack of a concrete definition from the originators, people were able to latch on to the various positive definitions that were popular during that time.

"Black" was not a new term, but this was the first time period where it gained major popularity. There were previous negative connotations associated with "black"[115] so the supporters had to redefine it with great positivity. The positivity injected into the term was to "effectively overcome the deep-rooted self-hatred and the lack of self-esteem" that affected "the majority of the black population."[116] It was also "not contaminated with the subordinate status of Negro."[117] Black was seen as escaping all the negativity that comes with second-class citizenship of being a Negro.

The term "black" also increased racial pride and cultural pride.[118] Since the community was separated and subjected to discrimination due to their blackness,[119] many believed that the community should, therefore, rally around that very blackness and no longer be ashamed of it.[120] Because no one handed out a standard definition of "black," many people developed this positive self image through what the Black Power Movement did. Demanding equality, identifying the group's heritage and major

113 Christopher B. Booker, *"I Will Wear No Chain!": The Emergence of the Urban Black Male: Increasing Black Power, 1945-1972*, THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE, at 6.
114 Whitney M. Young, Jr. , A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE NEGRO PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES: 1960-1968: (VOLUME 7) 437 (Herbert Aptheker, ed. 1994).
115 Fairchild, *supra* note 69, at 47.
116 M. V. Saurennann, *Letters to the Editor*, EBONY, Jan. 1968, at 11.
117 Jewell, supra note 80, at 60.
118 *See generally Id.* at 61 ("thus the adoption of the term 'Black'...marked a return to a cultural identity and revitalization of cultural continuity").
119 Bennett *Stokely Carmichael*, supra note 59, at 27.
120 Carmichael, *supra* note 29, at 430.

contributions to American culture,[121] and disseminating positive images of blackness, all contributed to this sense of a positive definition of "black."

Not everyone believed that "black" was a correct fit. "Black" was seen as a "loose color designation."[122] Not only was this color designation placed upon the group to separate the Africans from the European races, but it was further used to "demonize, subjugate, and dedignify Africans," similar to the term Negro.[123] Also, this color designation had no connection to land, culture, or history.[124] It seemed as a step in the right direction in discontinuing the use of "Negro," but it was not good enough.[125] One very important point was that "black" "implies alienation and lack of membership in the broader culture."[126] Therefore, these demands for certain rights as equal citizens are simply "verbalized rather than internalized."[127] However, I believe the entire Black Power Movement may have made this sentiment deminimus because those who were using "black" felt more empowered as a citizen.

D. Note About The Use of Terms During Debate

The label identifier "Negro" quickly came into question in the mid 1960s, and sparked a sharp increase in the use of "black." It is interesting to note that during this period of debate over identifying labels, people would use the terms differently. People may have shifted terms, but did they fully except what it stood for or their own blackness? Accepting this term meant mitigating their "guilt, anti-black attitudes or economic success," which may have been hard for many.[128]

During the time period of the debate people used the terms in an interesting manner. In the *Ebony Magazine* articles in 1967 the author seemed to be using the term "Negro" to define the whole

121 Alvin F. Poussaint, M.D., *A Psychiatrist Looks at Black Power*, EBONY, Mar. 1969, at 150.
122 Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 54; Moore, *supra* note 32, at 10.
123 Fairchild, *supra* note 69, at 52.
124 Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 54; Moore, *supra* note 32, at 10.
125 Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 54.
126 Jewell, supra note 80, at 64.
127 *Id.*
128 Poussaint, supra note 121, at 148.

community during a time where the author knows there is a debate happening. It was more neutral to use "Negro" than to say "black," if there wasn't a clear shift yet, even though the author may have used both "Negro" and "black" in the same sentence or paragraph. Just because the shift seemed to have occurred in 1969, it does not mean that every person of African descent in America accepted that shift.

Some would use them interchangeably. Others would use "black" to identify the community or the movement but use "Negro" to identify an individual. While others, would consciously separate the "Negro" from the "black." Sometimes it seemed that "black" was designated for those who were conscious of and accepted their blackness, while "Negro" was reserved for those "who [were] still in Whitey's bag and who still think of themselves and speak of themselves as Negros" and were not yet "emancipated."[129] Overall, race consciousness and unity were symbolized[130] by the quick and majority acceptance of "black" in the African-American community. There was still a debate on the table about whether changing the label identity term was necessary – evidenced by the Ebony Magazine February 1969 articles. But the increased use of "black" and the decrease use of "Negro" is a significant indicator that people were eliminating "Negro" from their vocabulary.

VII.

Model 2: The Influence of Malcolm X as an Explanation for the Label Shift

Malcolm X was a radical black nationalist, before it became popular, in the mid 1960s. He spoke to a new generation and a different geographical location than the typical Civil Rights Leaders. As an outspoken member of the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X was another element to spark the search the identity. Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X referred to African-Americans as "so-called

129 Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 47; *see generally* Poussaint, supra note 121, at 142-152.
130 Jewell, supra note 80, at 60.

Negroes."[131] Malcolm's understanding and speeches on black history, as taught by the Nation of Islam and Elijah Muhammad, focused on the need to reject white values and white Christianity and to restore a black identity.[132] Malcolm's replacement of the "X" for his original last name of Little exemplified "his ability to transcend the limits imposed upon him by his enemy."[133] This was done for his religious transformation. Although the average African-American Christian would not follow in this particular action, it did exemplify the power that one has in changing their name and transcending the negative associations with that name.

Much of what Malcolm would speak about struck a chord with a different audience than other Freedom Movement Leaders during the late 1950s and early 1960s. *De jure* Jim Crow laws and *de facto* discrimination were not exactly the same things. Legislation to eliminate poll taxes was not going to clean up the slum housing in the inner city. The issues were different, thus the leaders were different and had to speak and act differently. Specifically, Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. were different. "King was a political revolutionary. Malcolm was a cultural revolutionary."[134] Dr. King was trying to make political changes (top down approach), while Malcolm X wanted to make a cultural or mental change among the people (bottom up approach). Also, at least in the beginning, Dr. King's message did not get to African-Americans outside of the South. "[I]n Harlem's tenements, where the pacific voice of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. is but a whisper, the new power bid of Malcolm X is welcome news."[135] Each were speaking to their own experiences, and finally those in the North could relate to a leader.

In March 1964 Malcolm X severed his relationship with the Nation of Islam. Malcolm

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131 Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 50.
132 Wolfenstein, *supra* note 40, at 17.
133 Wolfenstein, *supra* note 40, at 19.
134 John Blake, *Malcolm and Martin, closer than we ever thought*, CNN LIVING (May 19, 2010) http://www.cnn.com/2010/LIVING/05/19/Malcolmx.king/index.html (last visited May 12, 2013).
135 Hans J. Massaquoi, *Mystery of Malcolm X: Fired Black Muslim denounces cult, vows to take part in rights revolt*, EBONY, Sept. 1964, at 39.

subsequently formed Muslim Mosque, Inc. and the Organization for Afro-American Unity (OAAU). These organizations focused on being black nationalists rather than black separatists.[136] These were the foundational steps to starting a cultural revolution for the next generation. By not just being the outspoken Muslim, but the black nationalist who so happened to be Muslim, he reached out to a variety of people and could play a larger role in the Freedom Movement.[137] Malcolm wanted the OAAU to "unite African-heritage peoples – 'to fight a common enemy...to bring about the complete independence of people of African descent..., and bring about the freedom of these people by any means necessary.'"[138] The later Black Power concept took after the OAAU's double nature of "an alliance of all the forces working for black liberation in American...; and it was to be a cohesive political organization, under Malcolm's leadership and orientated toward black community renewal and self-defense."[139] Malcolm's organization and his direction of black unity, or rather Afro-American unity, laid the ground work for the Black Power Movement. Malcolm did not hope and wish for a better future, he knew that hope was not enough and that African-Americans must form their own destiny.[140] He advocated that African-Americans had to fight their own battles to gain self-respect.[141] He also used the terms "Afro-American," "black man," "black people," and "black nationalism" along with other non-Negro labels as empowering phrases.[142] Malcolm X was fighting for a cultural revolution, and that ignited a fire for the next generation to redefine their identity.

Until his assassination in March 1965, Malcolm X was fighting for African-Americans to make a change for themselves, and there was a whole generation of people, especially youths, who would not let his legacy fade away after his death. Malcolm's actions either formed this new generation or he just

136 136 Wolfenstein, *supra* note 40, at 6; Michael L. Levine, *African Americans and Civil Rights: From 1619 to the Present*, THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE, at 21.
137 Massaquoi, *supra* note 135, at 39.
138 Wolfenstein, *supra* note 40, at 1.
139 Wolfenstein, *supra* note 40, at 9.
140 Betty Shabazz, *The Legacy of My Husband, Malcolm X*, EBONY, June 1969, at 176.
141 Booker, *supra* note 113, at 7.
142 George Breitman, MALCOLM X SPEAKS 307(1965).

so happened to be in sync with the rising generation of militant youth.[143] Either way, their actions seemed to align with Malcolm's proclamation. Youth's understood that if the system would not change voluntarily, then it must be changed – by them.[144] This is something Malcolm spoke about. As the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) grew, it became more of a Black Nationalist focused organization, the same path that Malcolm followed in his later years. Malcolm X knew "that 'black nationalist' would give 'the Civil Rights struggle' 'a new interpretation.'"[145] This is exactly what happened. "Indeed the present tendency on the part of militant Negro youth to use the term black rather than Negro seems to come directly from the Malcolm X form of Negro assertion of positive racial identity."[146] The youth took Malcolm's vows of black unity and made them into reality; most salient was the label identity change.

Many believed that Malcolm X was not a Negro, which made them not want to be a Negro. Malcolm helped everyone else become black like him.[147] I believe Ossie Davis, an actor and activist who was considered black by the members of the black movement, said it best:

> *I am a Negro. I am clean, black and I smile a lot. Whenever I want something – to get a job in motion pictures, for instance, or on television or to get a play produced on Broadway, whenever I need a political favor – I go to white folks. White folks have money. I do not. White folks have power. I do not. All my needs – financial, artistic, social, my need for freedom – I must depend on white folks to supply. That is what is meant by being a Negro.*
>
> *Malcolm X used to be a Negro, but he stopped. He no longer depended upon white folks to supply his needs – psychologically or sociologically – to give him money or lead his fight for freedom or to protect him from his enemies or to tell him what to do. Malcolm X did not hate white folks, nor did he love them. Most of all, he did not need them to tell him who he was. Above all, he was determined to make it on his own. That was why Malcolm was no longer a Negro. Malcolm was a man, a black man! A black man means not to accept the system as Negroes do but to fight hell out of the system as Malcolm did. It can be dangerous. Malcolm was killed for it. Nevertheless, I like Malcolm much better than I like myself.*[148]

There was a huge difference from being a "Negro" and being "black." Malcolm X was not a Negro,

143 Booker, *supra* note 113, at 7.
144 Shabazz, *supra* note 140, at 173.
145 Booker, *supra* note 113, at 7.
146 Clark, *supra* note 31, at 40.
147 Blake, *supra* note 134.
148 Bennett, *supra* note 28, at 54.

and those who were following in his footsteps knew that and want to shed their consciousness of being the white man's Negro to become a self-respected and empowered black man. This was important in why the label identity shift happened very quickly. His high self-respect led his followers to questioning the second class citizenship placed upon the Negro and thus rejecting the Negro name and affiliated status.

VIII.

Model 3: The Shift in the Freedom Movement as an Explanation for the Label Shift

A. Decline of the Civil Rights Movement

Between the 1940s and 1970s, African-Americans made tremendous progress towards equality with the Civil Rights Movement. "[The] Civil Rights Movement...established...two goals: (1) the removal of social barriers that preclude full participation of African-Americans in societal institutions and (2) self-improvement."[149] These goals included efforts to desegregated public schools at all levels, increase voter registration of African-Americans, integrate housing communities, integrate public facilities, etc. These efforts were started at the community, grassroots level through the increased power and confidence of Civil Rights organizations (i.e. the NAACP) due to increasing membership.[150] The masses were fed up with the system and they began to take systematic steps towards progress. This included "an aggressive legislative program at the federal level."[151] This was not an easy task, even the President had a hard time passing Civil Rights legislation. "[Congress] refused to pass his proposals to create an FEPC [Fair Employment Practices Commission], to abolish the poll tax, to bar segregated terminals in interstate transportation, to make lynching a federal crime, to ban housing

149 Jewell, supra note 80, at 59.
150 Levine, *supra* note 136, at 6.
151 *Id.* at 5.

discrimination, and to give home rule to Washington, D.C."[152] Finally, the people won. "At precisely 6:58p.m. [] July 2...President Johnson, in the presence of Congressional leaders, five Cabinet members, and Negro Religious, labor and women's group representatives, signed into law the Civil Rights Act of 1964."[153] Not only was this vindication for many peoples' and organizations' hard work,[154] but it signaled the power that African-Americans had in advancing their goals.

There were obvious changes that came with the signing of the Acts. African-American political power increased in the South. From 1964-1969 black voter registration significantly increased in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana.[155] Across the South, in order to win an election one had to cater to white and black voters alike.[156] Socially, in the South, African-Americans were beginning to be treated as equals. "[H]otels and restaurants began opening their doors...[t]he hated 'White' and 'Negro' signs began disappearing from water fountains and restrooms...[and] [c]itizens groups began sitting down with Negroes in an effort to save their businesses, and indeed, their entire communities."[157] There were also some changes in the North. Although the major issues, such as rat infested housing and *de facto* segregated schools were not affected in any major way, the Acts did show African-Americans that they did have legal rights and there were instruments to obtaining those rights that they could utilize.[158] This positive consciousness of the ability to gain legal rights affected African-Americans on a nationwide basis.[159] This attitude helped create a new positive identity.

In no way do I want to downplay the great progress of the Civil Rights Movement and the positive effects from the signing of the Civil Rights Acts. However, I will note these achievements were through the legislative and legal systems. Changing a law may not automatically reverse a

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152 *Id.* at 8.
153 Ebony Editor, *Progress Report 1964: Year of Decision*, EBONY, Jan. 1965, at 109.
154 *Id.*
155 Levine, *supra* note 136, at 16.
156 *Id.*
157 Ebony Editor, *supra* note 153, at 109.
158 *Id.*
159 Clark, *supra* note 31, at 40.

person's prejudices. Sometimes even the change in law does not immediately change a prejudicial practice. The movement needed something else, some sort of physical enforcement for these laws to take effect in the real world. Now people's mindsets needed to be changed in ordered to fully accept an African-American as equal. In order for African-Americans to realize that those successes were only the beginning and then be willing to take steps further towards full equality, their mindsets needed to change. In order for white Americans to really embrace the changes, their mindsets needed to change.

There was a decline in the Civil Rights Movement due to the limited ability of the laws to take quick and significant effects and because other needs became apparent. The old tactics and strategies would not work on these new issues. "The era of legislative action to promote civil rights and assist the poor ha[d] passed."[160] African-American political, social, and economic gains thus far were obvious, but the world around them was still rife with random violence and *de facto* segregation.[161] There were feelings that the economic disparities were still significant between white Americans and African-Americans,[162] that the legislative victories did not really affect the everyday lives of African-Americans.[163] Not only were the laws slow to hit the communities that needed it, but other inequalities began to become more apparent to leaders of the time, especially those that affected African-Americans in the North: housing discrimination, *de facto* school segregation, and poverty to name only a few.[164] Some believed the previous goals of the movement focused on the "interests of the talented Negro rather than the Negro masses."[165] Whether or not that was true, the movement took a natural shift towards these other issues, exemplified by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. going "North to fight the ills of

160 Levine, *supra* note 136, at 23.
161 Booker, *supra* note 113, at 2.
162 Statement by the National Committee of Negro Churchmen, A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE NEGRO PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES: 1960-1968: (VOLUME 7) 425 (Herbert Aptheker, ed. 1994) [hereinafter, Churchmen].
163 Bayard Rustin, A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE NEGRO PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES: 1960-1968: (VOLUME 7) 444 (Herbert Aptheker, ed. 1994).
164 Levine, *supra* note 136, at 5; *Id.* at 24.
165 Lomax, *supra* note 93, at 57.

the ghettos."[166] Were African-Americans the same? Could the movement stay the same? The label identity shift makes the answer to those questions appear to be "no."

Things were different. Dr. King did not have the expected success in Chicago which made him question whether he "would be able to render justice to blacks."[167] This was an indicator that tactics had to change. There were debates over the "nonviolence" tactics.[168] If the movement was changing and African-Americans' position in society was changing, this was a great point in time for their identity to change (i.e. be redefined). The fear that the new shout for power would eliminate or "endanger the 'gains'"[169] from the Movement thus far underestimated the fact that "institutional racism necessitates new forms of social activism."[170] One new form of social activism was in fact the label identity shift.

New needs required new strategies and new language. African-Americans couldn't expect more successes with the same strategies because there would be (and was) push back from people saying African-Americans wanted things to change too quickly, we already gave you what you wanted. In fact white backlash and President Eisenhower's reluctance to reduce the backlash, contributed to slow progress of the movement.[171] African-Americans had to redefine themselves, had to recollect their people and show them that the battle was just beginning. Most of the battles won in the 50s and early 60s were to combat overt, *de facto* discrimination and segregation. Now African-Americans had to attack the non-obvious forms of discrimination. The type of discrimination that whites could not or did not want to see.

African-Americans deserved the rights guaranteed to them by the Constitution and the equality of other opportunities in this country. One way to do that is to empower the community, more than the

166 Levine, *supra* note 136, at 23.
167 *Id.* at 24.
168 Lerone Bennett, Jr., SNCC: Rebels With A Cause, Ebony, July 1965, at 149 [hereinafter, Bennett *SNCC*].
169 Churchmen, *supra* note 162, at 425.
170 Jewell, supra note 80, at 73.
171 Levine, *supra* note 136, at 10.

empowerment from the fights and successes of the 1950s. One form of empowerment is to understand the current label "Negro." By realizing (true or not) that it was a label placed upon them by whites, they decided to change it. The fact that the term was also associated with, and maybe even contributed to, the continued oppression of the group, they needed a change. Something that said "we are here, and we want our REAL FREEDOM." Another form of empowerment is to learn the history of the entire community and not just their parents or immediate neighborhoods. Knowing the greatness of their people in this country and in their homeland contributes to the power they have and can have in the future. This is the importance of finding and defining their identity.

Redefining the community helped the Civil Rights Movement reach new heights because without the redefinition the group's "incentive is broken and our will to fight is surrendered."[172] To do this, African-Americans had to break away from the identifier "Negro" and show themselves (or whites? Or both?) that they no longer were going to try and be equal within this predetermined system of prejudice and inequality that kept them down for over 400 years, they were going to break out and define what they needed and define who they were (compared to who they were not). Being a "Negro" was to be apart (and complacent with little achievements) of the old system, but to be "black" was to be an equal citizen who demanded equal rights in every aspect of America life.

B. Rise of the Black Power Movement

The proclamation of "Black Power" changed a people and changed a nation. It marked a shift in the Freedom Movement from the Civil Rights focus to a Black Power focus.[173] It also marked a shift in the racial identity label and consciousness of African-Americans. This shift changed the strategy and tactics to gain freedom[174] from an "integration-orientated movement to a cultural and political

172 Ture and Hamilton, *supra* note 2, at 38.
173 Rustin, *supra* note 163, at 442.
174 Lerone Bennett, Jr., *The Rise of Black Power*, EBONY, Feb. 1969, at 36 [hereinafter, Bennett *Black Power*].

revolution of black consciousness, self-development and self-determination."[175] The movement was about acknowledging one's own black consciousness and, through that, obtaining the power to redefine the power structure in America. This moment was the perfect time to redefine blackness by changing the identity label.

Similar to the definition of "black," "Black Power" did not have a singular pre-set definition. The leaders pronounced various definitions and concepts of Black Power, and supporters may have had their own interpretation. Overall, Black Power was to be a means of uniting the black community around their own self-determination and positive black consciousness in order to empower the community to redefine their place in American society and create a true democracy for all. Black power was not anti-white,[176] or a form of isolation of the black community.[177] Black Power was a way to strengthen the black community from the inside out.

What was the "Power" in Black Power? In 1966 Carmichael himself stated that "Black Power is a demand that black and white people recognize and actualize the existing power potential of black Americans."[178] Is this political power or social power? How does one get black and white people to recognize this power? The riots during the middle of the 1960s in the North and West affirmed the militant youths' "power to destroy" a system that has kept them down.[179] But this was not the power that the movement envisioned.[180] Power meant joining together to discover just how strong the group was,[181] and realizing that they were not powerless, contrary to popular belief. Therefore, "power" meant organizational power[182] that translates into political power. To gain organizational power, the group must come together to recognize and develop the resources they already had and could build a

175 Poussaint, supra note 121, at 142.
176 Bennett *Stokely Carmichael*, supra note 59, at 28.
177 Churchmen, *supra* note 162, at 427-428.
178 Bennett *Stokely Carmichael*, supra note 59, at 28, 30.
179 Clark, *supra* note 31, at 42.
180 Bennett *Stokely Carmichael*, supra note 59, at 27.
181 *Id.*
182 Churchmen, *supra* note 162, at 426.

foundation around those resources.[183] This power was already exemplified in certain aspects of African-American life (i.e. the Church, fraternities and sororities, and professional organizations), but the movement called for more.

Once this organizational power was obtained then they could turn to political power. This did not simply mean putting African-Americans into more elected positions (especially since the Acts of 1964 and 1965 did much of that work). It includes making sure that those African-Americans in political positions were accountable and responsive to African-Americans needs.[184] They should represent all African-Americans from all walks of life – from the middle-class to those who live in the "slums and cottonfields."[185] It was about an "equal sharing of power,"[186] and not just "appealing to power."[187] It also was simply not about African-Americans just "being in charge of something white people control."[188] Power meant empowering the people internally in order to make real changes in society.

One large concept within Black Power is black unity and community strength. This concept meant a variety of things: black solidarity, Black Nationalism, self-pride and self-respect of black cultural identity, black autonomy, black consciousness, and black participation and change in black leadership. These could all be seen as interchangeable concepts; nonetheless, they all express the desire for black people themselves to look into themselves and start respecting themselves.

Before the Black Power Movement began, W.E.B. DuBois believed that black solidarity was necessary for overcoming oppression,[189] which became a major concept for the movement. Black

183 *Id*. at 427; Bennett *Stokely Carmichael*, supra note 59, at 27.
184 Bennett *Stokely Carmichael*, supra note 59, at 27.
185 *Id.*
186 Churchmen, *supra* note 162, at 425.
187 Bennett *Stokely Carmichael*, supra note 59, at 27.
188 *Id.*
189 Shelby, *supra* note 24, at 234.

Solidarity meant bringing middle-class and lower-class members together.[190] Certain people started to realize that they were not an exception to the target of racism, because that target was based on "black skin color alone."[191] Everyone needed to feel a mutual "sense of community" in order to deal with their problems as a unit.[192] Group cohesiveness, i.e. Black Nationalism, was important and necessary for African-Americans "who were de-nationalized and who today feel more kinship with the oppressor than with their own people."[193] Through this process there became a "climate for the awakening of" African-Americans.[194] Which meant making people aware of their own "black pride, black dignity, and self-determination,"[195] creating an innocuous cultural nationalism that eventually translated into an innocuous cultural label.[196]

Black Power was a call for change. Being able to come together and start doing things on their own meant they were "developing the *habit* of participation, the *consciousness* of ability to achieve, and the experience and wisdom to govern"[197] (emphasis in original). Even if on the ground people were battling over words and terms, there was "a tidal wave of black consciousness...over the black community."[198] This consciousness quickly changed the traditional leadership in the community.[199] One can postulate that the leadership class thought of themselves as "Negroes," however with the tidal wave, those leaders and that term were being washed away.

Supporters of Black Power were more assertive and militant in demanding whatever it was they were looking for. "*Powerlessness breads a race of beggars*"[200] and through Black Power African-

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190 Bennett *Stokely Carmichael*, supra note 59, at 30.
191 Poussaint, supra note 121, at 151.
192 Ture and Hamilton, *supra* note 2, at 39; *Id*. at 44.
193 Shabazz, *supra* note 140, at 180.
194 Chankuru Gondwe, *Letters to the Editor*, EBONY, Apr. 1969, at 18.
195 Bennett *Black Power*, *supra* note 174, at 36.
196 Jewell, supra note 80, at 63; Levine, *supra* note 136, at 22.
197 Ture and Hamilton, *supra* note 2, at 182.
198 Bennett *Black Power*, *supra* note 174, at 36
199 Churchmen, *supra* note 162, at 423.
200 *Id.*

Americans were no longer going to be begging for anything.[201] Now they were assertively[202] going to be working for things.[203] They were no longer going to be passive members of society, and they would band together to start speaking for themselves.[204]

The tangible goals of the Black Power Movement were to address the rising expectations of people after they started questioning society. Included in those raised expectations were issues that were not addressed in the Civil Rights Movement as well. The "piecemeal legislation"[205] were not changing things quick enough for some, especially the youth and those in the North, so Black Power resonated the most with them.[206] While process was slow in some areas, housing, employment and education still remained stagnant problems in the community.[207] People were searching for more than integration. Integration was seen as "moving to something white" which is moving to something better, therefore "integration is a subterfuge for white supremacy."[208] So the real strategy is to gain a power base in the African-American community through "black control of the organizations, institutions, and resources of the black community."[209] Instead of integration, people were demanding desegregation. Desegregation was a "power-orientated, holistic approach"[210] to attack the social, economic, and political issues facing the African-American community.[211] These were goals exemplified in the Platform of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, founded in Oakland, CA by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale.[212] However, the Black Panther Party was not the only organization

201 *See generally* Booker, *supra* note 113, at 9; John Hulett, A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE NEGRO PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES: 1960-1968: (VOLUME 7) 404 (Herbert Aptheker, ed. 1994).
202 *See generally* Booker, *supra* note 113, at 1; Clark, *supra* note 31, at 39.
203 *See generally* Hulett, supra note 201, at 400.
204 Carmichael, *supra* note 29, at 433; Bennett *SNCC*, *supra* note 168, at 148; Bennett *Stokely Carmichael*, supra note 59, at 27.
205 Lomax, *supra* note 93, at 57.
206 *See generally* Levine, *supra* note 136, at 20.
207 Ebony Editor, *supra* note 153, at 109; Bennett *Black Power*, *supra* note 174, at 37.
208 Bennett *Stokely Carmichael*, supra note 59, at 27.
209 Bennett *Black Power*, *supra* note 174, at 36.
210 Bennett *SNCC*, *supra* note 168, at 149.
211 *Id*.
212 Huey Newton, A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE NEGRO PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES: 1960-1968: (VOLUME 7)

actively fighting for the concepts of the Black Power Movement. Other organizations included: the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) founded in Chicago, IL, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the Lowndes County Freedom Organization in Alabama, and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.

This movement was formulated to combat racism in America in order to create a true democracy. Joining together because of the common experience of racism helped with the fight against racism.[213] To do this they had to do more than "seek[] legal redress in the courts and engaging in non violent direct action,"[214] they had to understand their own identity and strength in that identity. By redefining their identity they could then redefine the world around them to create the "possibility of authentic democracy in America."[215] False consciousness had been placed on African-Americans about themselves and the world around them, and the Movement vowed to rectify that. The label identity shift was a step in that process. By redefining "black" and "blackness" via positive definitions of the terms and culture and by replacing "Negro" with "black," they could then take the next step of redefining American democracy. The Black Power Movement therefore propelled the shift by opening up the minds of the people.

1. Criticism of the Black Power Movement

Not everyone jumped on the "Black Power" bandwagon. There was plenty of negative criticism about the new change in the Freedom Movement. But this criticism did not necessarily diminish the power that the movement created, which was evidenced by the quick label shift to "black." Some believed "Black Power" was simply a new fad.[216] However, the shift to the "black" racial label showed, indeed, that the new conscious movement was not a fad. Labeling the movement a

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405 (Herbert Aptheker, ed. 1994) (*The Black Panther Party Platform*).

213 Shelby, *supra* note 24, at 236.

214 Levine, *supra* note 136, at 18.

215 Churchmen, *supra* note 162, at 425.

216 Poussaint, supra note 121, at 150.

fad may have been the opponents' own discomfort with their blackness.[217]

Many believed the youth grasped onto this movement in their own search for identity, but that the movement was an improper way to find that identity.[218] One commentator stated that the youth have mistakenly "been brainwashed into judging their own past by white standards of history and accomplishment" and that if they wanted a good sense of their identity, that they should "look no further than their own parents and grandparents if they want to see strength and skill and character."[219] I believe this is also a misunderstanding of the movement and the search for identity. The youth were not looking for individual identity, nor was the movement. It was about a collective, unified identity that everyone could be proud to represent. The youth looked at how their parents struggled and realized that the other half did not live like they lived and had rights that they did not have. The reason was primarily due to skin color. They realized that they and their parents should not have to live like that anymore, so they rallied around their skin color to protest for their equality. Also, it wasn't just the youth who judged their past against white standards; the youth understood that many African-Americans did that unconsciously through the continued use of the term "Negro." Therefore, they wanted to disassociate themselves from that term and the mis-identity it gave them.

"Black Power" separated African-Americans from the larger American society, and many believed the new movement segregated African-Americans further from the society they were demanding rights from. They also believed that this would create a sense of racism towards whites, instead of focusing on the issue of desegregation.[220] Others thought the "propaganda"[221] of the Black Power Movement will do nothing but isolate the African-American community, which would increase

217 *Id.*
218 Ebony Editor, *After Identity, What?*, EBONY, Feb. 1969, at 98.
219 *Id.*
220 Rustin, *supra* note 163, at 442.
221 *Id.*

the forces against the community[222] and thus cause the whole movement to fail. This belief showed the lack of confidence in the African-American community. Yes, some aspects of the Black Power Movement were more direct, in-your-face, and a turn from the non-violence tactics[223]; but the overall goal was to empower the people. A fear that others, outsiders, would push against empowerment, a belief that there will not be any real change that can come from your own people. The label identity shift was a way to combat any fears and prove their new found empowerment. Even while people may have been rejecting the search for identity, they still used the term "black," indicating to some extent that they accepted not just the term, but the ideas behind the term.

IX.

Conclusion

If you are going to change the philosophy and ideology of a people, you have to change the vocabulary, especially if the vocabulary was forced upon you. Some might say in order to get what you want from others, you have to use their terms so that they understand your needs and desires (i.e. African-Americans should have continued with the use of Negro). However, since there were two goals (inwards to creating self-pride for our people and outwards to demand that our people get the needs we request from the government), the label identity shift showed that the inwards goal was more important. Uniting and building up a people will make them stronger and more forceful and could possibly help force the outer goal. The movement had to balance the two desires of the new label shift: building up the race from the inside, but also get what you need from whites. "Black" may not have had a particular meaning, possibly because it was meant to change everything: culture, pride, politic, economics, social conditions, education, etc.

222 *Id.*
223 *Id.* at 443.

New changes bring on a new attitude about one's self. There is no point of having this new foundation while being called the same thing. The community had to show the dominant group that they meant business, and that they are no longer going to be walked over as they were before. They were more powerful, and they considered “black” a more powerful name. The older generation laid this great foundation for change, the younger, (more Northern/Western locally generation) was ready to set the tone for the next step in the Freedom Movement.

A people cannot force a government to recognize that the government is keeping a whole race (or a majority of a race) down if they, themselves, don't recognize that they, as a people, deserve better. Black pride was a tool to unite the race in order for the race to stand up to the government to get what they need from that government. No one will fight for rights that they don’t believe everyone deserves. Everyone needed to be on the same page in order to attack the government, and black pride was the tool to make that happen. To have the extremes ends of the African-American community, and all those in between, shouting black pride, was the way to open the eyes and hears of the government. A newly defined racial identity would have shown the government that African-Americans were no longer going to be satisfied with the old system, there needed to be a change in every aspect of their lives. Black pride needed to come from both racial identity and racial accomplishments. The point was to not wait around for the government to give African-American what they needed; it was the time to force the government to give them their equal rights. Re-defining the racial identity label was step one in making that happen. Racial identity and racial accomplishment goes hand and hand. Black nationalists were not afraid to redefine the people for fear that the government would not stay committed to bringing equality for all. Redefining the people was a way to prove that they weren't going to back down.

Changing the identifier was meant to do just that. Why should that wait until a Birmingham or a Watts to be able to say certain things? They should be able to say them now if they are thinking it

now. They shouldn't have to wait until something terrible happens or until the people snap in order to be able to speak up and speak out. They should do it now. That is the power that the term "black" was supposed to instill in the African-American community. Because these other events and accomplishments were happening during the mid 1960s it was easy for the shift from "Negro" to "black" to occur.

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