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2014

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Politics and Culture in Context: Afro-Caribbean Political Incorporation in New York and
Los Angeles during the Obama Era

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Political Science

by

Cory Charles Gooding

2014

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Politics and Culture in Context: Afro-Caribbean Political Incorporation in New York and Los

Angeles during the Obama Era

by

Cory Charles Gooding

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

University of California, Los Angeles, 2014

Professor Mark Q. Sawyer, Chair

Concerned with the role of social context on political incorporation, this dissertation addresses three primary questions: 1) what are the social factors that influence Afro-Caribbean group attachments in New York City and Los Angeles County; 2) what are the factors that influence socio-political attitudes towards the Obama Presidency among Afro-Caribbeans in the United States; and, 3) how does social context influence the pathway to political incorporation chosen by Afro-Caribbeans in New York and Los Angeles? Relying on in-depth interviews with first and second generation Trinidadians and Jamaicans in New York and Los Angeles, as well as participant observations, the dissertation finds that Afro-Caribbean group attachments are influenced by group reputation in the public consciousness. As such, Afro-Caribbeans utilize culture as a mechanism for navigating ethnic, racial and country of origin attachments simultaneously. Multiple attachments and the emphasis on culture inform political attitudes towards the Obama Presidency, while also serving as a means of public claims making.

The dissertation of Cory Gooding is approved.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this dissertation is the result of a strong network of individuals and organizations that honored me with their encouragement and support. In particular, I must first extend my gratitude to the interview participants who shared their time, stories and perspectives. This project could not come to fruition without their participation.

I am very grateful to my committee for asking me critical questions and pushing my academic inquiry beyond disciplinary limitations. I am deeply indebted to Vilma Ortiz and Lorrie Frasure for expanding my academic field of vision and pushing me to be detail-oriented in this intellectual pursuit. I am intensely grateful to E. Victor Wolfenstein, whose passing left a void that cannot be filled. His scholarship and approach to political science continue to impact my work and will live on despite his physical passing. I must express my profound gratitude to Mark Sawyer, whose extraordinary guidance, support and wisdom have been critical to shaping my approach to the discipline. I am eternally grateful to him for standing firmly in my corner during every step of the process.

In addition to my committee, I must express my gratitude to the faculty and colleagues who have helped to shape my research. Brenda Stevenson, Berky Nelson, Raymond Rocco, Cristina Beltrán, Tracey Hucks and Anita Isaacs played vital parts in my development as a scholar. In addition, fellow graduate students Mzilikazi Koné, Erinn Carter, Natasha Behl, Megan Gallagher, Fred Lee, Christopher Lee, Janira Teague, Jennifer Garcia, Rita Rico, Maria Elena Guadamuz, Arely Zimmerman, Stacey Greene, Hector Perla were as instrumental in my development as the faculty.

Besides those who have shaped my work through discussions and classroom interactions, there are those who pushed me simply through their scholarly work. The intellectual

contributions of Reuel Rogers, Christina Greer, Mary Waters, Phillip Kasinitz, Shayla Nunnally and Alana Hackshaw form the foundation of my study of Afro-Caribbean incorporation. More broadly, Robert Huckfeldt, David Sears, Robin Kelley, Michael Hanchard, Sujatha Fernandes, Michael Dawson, Cathy Cohen, Lisa Wedeen, Lester Spence, Khalilah Brown-Dean, Tony Affigne, Lisa Garcia-Bedolla, Melissa Harris-Perry, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Evelyn Higginbotham, Karthick Ramakrishnan, Jane Junn, Cheryl Harris, Ange-Marie Hancock, and Michael Jones Correa serve as academic inspirations, provocateurs and role models for me in my academic pursuits.

I thank a number of individuals and organizations whose support were important in the development of this project. I appreciate Congresswoman Yvette Clark and Pastor Kelvin Sauls for their time and thoughtful contributions on the Afro-Caribbean community in New York and Los Angeles, respectively. Gerald Reneau, the Caribbean Treehouse and Larry's Jamaican Restaurant were critical to identifying study participants. Additionally, vital resources were provided by the Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity and Politics at UCLA, the Institute of American Cultures, the Bunche Center for African American Studies, UCLA Graduate Division, the Department of Political Science at UCLA, Social Action Partners and the Brotherhood Crusade of Los Angeles. Also Chie Davis, Joseph Brown, Jan Freeman, Lisbeth Gant-Britton, Belinda Tucker, Alex Tucker, Yesenia Rayos and Ana Christina Ramon provided support that provided the means for the completion of this project.

Valuable feedback on early versions of the project were provided by participants at the Politics of Race Ethnicity and Immigration Consortium, the National Conference of Black Political Scientists, the American Political Science Association, the Western Political Science Association, the Bunche Center Circle of Thought Lecture Series, the faculty in the Western

Washington University Department of Political Science and the Bowdoin College Department of Government and Legal Studies faculty and students.

The intellectual and project-based support only reflects a part of the network that contributed to the completion of this research. Friends like Raphael Travis, Dnika Travis, Murisiku Raifu, Timothy Richardson, Joy Richardson, Charles Dobard, Robert Taylor, Jack Beloney, Raquel Beloney, Kobina Yankah, Neil Kahrim, LeMar Mclean, Bobby Potts, Jerry Morrison, Henry Grayson, Emmanuel Rogers, Donald Williams, Celia Lacayo, Peter Forgenie, Porsche Small, Paul Mitchell, Barbra Williams Diallo, and Abdoul Diallo provided sustenance throughout the research. Members of the Sons of Africa organization at Haverford College, Press Christian Fellowship and the Los Angeles Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc. provided words of encouragement that were valuable when the end was far off in the distance.

I am thankful to family members including Colwyn and Wendy Todd, Christopher Todd, Khalil and Carolyn Nobles, Talia Bryan, Gregory Garnes, Marlene Bascombe, Robin Garnes, Joan Haynes, Natalie Phillips, Denyse Phillips, Sherri Phillips, David Harper, Shana Simmons, Stacey Simmons, and Larry, Jean, Kim, Shari, Cynthia and Don Byer for their support. I am also grateful to Donna, Anna and Deon Washington, Diane Lee Kelley, Wendell Kelley, Mark Dickerson, Tanisha Davis, Michael Dickerson, Rodney Dickerson, Tyson and Sorina Fant, Varron Dickerson, Ed and Alice Dickerson, Harry and Myra La Motte, Victor Dickerson, Robert Dickerson, Victor and Lisette Dickerson for their support. Since I began the program, I also had the good fortune to meet Lonnie Hinton (thanks to my wife), whose influence has been more profound than I could ever imagine. I am thankful to Lonnie Hinton for his ear, spiritual counsel, friendship, jokes and his laughter at my own increasingly corny jokes.

My grandparents Verna Garnes, Leotta Gooding and Charles Gooding have overwhelmed me with a love that is not simply captured with words. My heart is filled with gratitude for them and the way that they have influenced my life. God blessed me with Ivor Gooding as a father who is the definition of class and serves as my personal role model. God also blessed me with a mother, whose tutelage forms the foundation and inspiration for all of my scholarly interests. She was my first professor, asking the hard questions. I am also thankful for my sister, Chantel Gooding, whose mere presence pushes me to be better. She was my first and most lasting best friend and speaking to her every day causes the sun to shine brighter.

Lastly, my greatest accomplishment in graduate school was not completing the dissertation; rather it was finding and marrying my friend, my love, and my perfect partner Taigy Gooding. Her presence in my life brings me profound joy, daily. I thank her for her support and for Sanai Gooding, a daughter whose smile alone can erase the clouds that come with a bad day of writing.

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<http://repositories.cdlib.org/gseis/interactions/vol2/iss1/art10>

Introduction: Understanding Incorporation through Shifting Identities and Contexts

On Wednesday, October 3, 2012, the country prepared for the first presidential debate between the Democratic nominee and incumbent, Barack Obama and the Republican nominee, Mitt Romney. Journalists, pundits, late night comedians and social media users alike raised national awareness about the debate while I completed my field work in Los Angeles, California. Expecting an enthusiastic local response, I chose to watch the debate at a well-known Jamaican restaurant in the Inglewood section of Los Angeles.

Entering the doors of the restaurant, a barrage of red, white and blue decorations hovered above. The Jamaican flag was displayed prominently behind the bar and the face of Barack Obama was plastered on the walls. Patrons, predominantly black, proudly wore Obama buttons and t-shirts. This crowd was in clear support of the Democratic nominee. Two large television screens on opposite sides of the restaurant showcased the MSNBC coverage of the debate. On the left side of the restaurant, the chairs were assembled theater style facing the large screen, while the right side of the restaurant maintained a restaurant style set-up with small tables, eating patrons and another large screen.

Finding a seat on the right side of the restaurant, I placed my dinner order. Shortly after the debate started, it became clear that the televisions, tables and chairs were doing more work than simply providing a viewing experience. The seating arrangements also highlighted distinct social, cultural and political differences among the people on either side of the room.

The patrons on the right ate dinner, watched the debate and directed protests or comments to the television in accents from the Caribbean. The patrons on the left, thoroughly engaged, directed their protests and comments to each other in accents that were noticeably American. Once the debate ended, the Caribbean patrons on the right side of the restaurant quickly departed. What remained were primarily African Americans on the left side of the restaurant discussing the debate, complete with speeches and calls for volunteers to help campaign for the Democratic nominee and incumbent.

As I watched the debate less and the restaurant more, the dynamics in the restaurant proved striking because I never witnessed such a clear separation of the two communities in the same space. What appeared to be a single black community supporting a black presidential candidate was actually two socially, culturally and politically distinct communities. Both groups clearly supported the Democratic nominee and incumbent, however the differing political experiences and social norms inherent in each community produced significantly different outcomes in this social context. One group's support included the development of mobilization and campaigning efforts, while for the other group, it did not in that time and place. Such notable distinctions raise important questions for the study of political incorporation and engagement: How do the dynamics I witnessed complicate discussions about the "black community" in Los Angeles? What are the political implications of such group distinctions? How does Los Angeles compare with other locations where there is a larger Afro-Caribbean community?

I. Identifying the Limitations in the Political Incorporation Literature

As the black population in the United States grows more ethnically diverse as a result of immigration, greater attention is required for the resulting social and political relationships. In particular, the Caribbean¹ is among the regions sending the largest number of immigrants to the United States and more than half of the black immigrant population in the United States hails from the Caribbean (Thomas, 2012). The increasing numbers of Afro-Caribbean² immigrants raises questions about how members of the group understand their own social and political positions, as well as their interactions with other racial/ethnic groups and political systems.

Political incorporation, used here to reference naturalization, electoral, and/or non-electoral participation in the United States, is inextricably linked to issues of racial and ethnic identity. The election of a black president makes this statement no less true. Unfortunately, the political incorporation literature suffers from three deficiencies that impact our understanding of race and ethnicity: 1) the literature tends to discuss race and ethnicity as mutually exclusive terms without recognizing the overlapping and complex nature of identity; 2) the literature focuses on localities where the ethnic group of study

¹ The term Caribbean is used loosely to include nations in the Caribbean sea, Central America and parts of South America that share geographical proximity with the Caribbean sea, a history of European colonialism and a mix of African and European cultural elements. This broad definition lacks the level of specificity required for this study. Reference to the Caribbean in this study will be limited to the island nations located in or bordered by the Caribbean Sea. While the findings may be relevant to the experience of immigrant populations in the broader definition (i.e. Belize and Guyana) the data in the study do not include those populations.

² This project focuses specifically on the immigration of black people from the English speaking Caribbean. Immigration from the Spanish, French and Dutch speaking Caribbean are also an important piece of the Afro-Caribbean immigrant story however they raise larger issues around group consciousness, identity and linguistic difference that are outside the scope of this study. Social science studies on Caribbean immigration from non-English speaking Caribbean include Basch, Schiller, & Blanc, 1994; Itzigsohn, Giorguli, & Vazquez, 2005; and, Jones-Correa, 1998.

constitutes a substantive portion of the local population; and 3) the literature often omits the attitudes and behavior of those traditionally considered politically “inactive.”

While scholars move progressively towards identifying the ethnic diversity of America’s black population (Greer, 2013; Kasinitz, 1992; Rogers, 2006; Waters, 1999), the election of a black president causes many to fall into the all too familiar pitfall of viewing the black population in the U.S. as monolithic and wholly identified as African-American (Harris, 2012). Despite a growing scholarship that finds Afro-Caribbean political incorporation to be a complex process marked by dynamic conceptions of racial and ethnic group consciousness, discussions about black political attitudes continue to address race and ethnicity in dichotomous terms without acknowledging the complex nature of identity and group attachment. The dynamism that marks Afro-Caribbean political incorporation adds complexity to discussions about race and politics that are inherently inclined towards over-simplification because Afro-Caribbeans experience racial and ethnic difference simultaneously.

Afro-Caribbean immigration prompts several existing studies to focus on the social and political incorporation of the group (Greer, 2013; Kasinitz, 1992; Model, 2011; Portes & Grosfoguel, 1994; Rogers, 2006; Waters, 1999). While these studies provide important contributions to understanding race relations and black political incorporation, each of the existing studies develop from research based in New York City and other major gateway cities with a large Afro-Caribbean population. Meanwhile, little is known about Afro-Caribbeans in non-gateway settings, such as Los Angeles, and how those experiences may compare with those in places like New York.

In addition to the focus on the New York metropolitan area, there is also substantial emphasis placed on the segments of the community that are politically engaged, such as community activists (Kasinitz, 1992), political leadership (Rogers, 2006) and union members (Greer, 2013). While important for exposing the political impact of the Afro-Caribbean community, exclusive reliance on such perspectives can undervalue the perspectives of Afro-Caribbeans who are not otherwise engaged in politics or community movement.

Unfortunately, these three persistent gaps in the literature communicate the problematic message that 1) race and ethnicity are mutually exclusive, and 2) that the experience of Afro-Caribbeans in New York is representative of Afro-Caribbeans across the country. Lastly, such gaps leave the literature open to a one-sided analysis of how and why Afro-Caribbeans come to be involved in more traditional forms of political participation.

II. Addressing the Limitations of Immigrant Incorporation: The Current Approach

In examining Afro-Caribbean incorporation, Rogers (2006) offers important contributions concerning identity, context and participation that help to address the aforementioned limitations. In his study, Rogers identifies a key distinction between how Afro-Caribbeans and African-Americans understand the relationship between identity and politics. He finds, “Not only do Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans have different ideas about what their racial identity means, the findings from these interviews

suggest the immigrants and their native born counterparts also have distinct cognitive frames of reference for making sense of the political world.” (2006, pg. 202) The identification of unique conceptions of racial identity and distinct frames of reference highlights the need for analysis of Afro-Caribbean past experiences in understanding their political incorporation. Such past experiences include the pre-migration experiences that inform their political incorporation (Jones-Correa, 1998; Rogers, 2006). The inclusion of such experiences allows the study to address preexisting conceptions of racial group attachment; incorporate political socialization that develops outside the host country; and, includes cultural manifestations of political thought and communication that may otherwise be neglected.

It is also important to note, that the frames of reference that are developed through past experiences are also influenced by socialization in the host country. Rogers finds that, “Rather, consciousness appears to require a kind of inculcation in the group-based beliefs circulating within African-American institutional networks. Consequently, only those respondents with a history of socialization in these [African-American] networks expressed the collectivist ideologies researchers typically associate with black racial group consciousness.” (Rogers, 2006, pg. 191) Therefore, the investigation of Afro-Caribbean incorporation requires an examination of past experiences as well as the interactions that take place in the current social context. This project takes on such an approach to studying political incorporation by focusing on specific national origin groups as it investigates Afro-Caribbean group attachment, consciousness and political participation in New York and Los Angeles. Specifically, the project examines three primary questions: 1) What are the social factors that influence Afro-Caribbean group

attachments in New York City and Los Angeles County; 2) What are the factors that influence socio-political attitudes towards the Obama Presidency among Afro-Caribbeans in the United States; and, 3) How does social context influence the pathway to political incorporation chosen by Afro-Caribbeans in New York and Los Angeles?

To bridge the study of preexisting frames of reference and the socialization that takes place within the existing social context, this project examines the dynamic process of meaning-making that is performed through culture. Lisa Wedeen describes culture as follows,

“Culture in these accounts does not refer to essential values that identify a particular group or to particular traits that isolate one group from another. Rather, culture designates a way of looking at the world that requires an account of how symbols operate in practice, why meanings generate action, and why actions produce meanings, when they do.” (Wedeen, 2002, pg. 8)

Lisa Wedeen describes this approach to culture as the study of semiotic practices. By studying Afro-Caribbean incorporation through semiotic practices, the study avoids oversimplified notions of race and ethnicity. It highlights the impact of social context on meaning making and it is able to identify a range of political activities not typically captured by the incorporation literature.

As a framework for examining Afro-Caribbean semiotic practices, the study uses the Robert Huckfeldt Social Context Model (Huckfeldt, 1983), therefore allowing for a better understanding of the dynamic nature of immigrant incorporation. The study uses cross-sectional, multilevel data and relies heavily on seventy-one (n=71) in-depth interviews conducted with Afro-Caribbean immigrants in New York and Los Angeles during the first term of the Barack Obama presidency (August 2011 – January 2013).

Immigrants from Jamaica and Trinidad were exclusively targeted for the study, allowing for greater control over the social and political differences in the countries of origin.

While the study does take pre-migration experiences seriously, it does not assume that country of origin influences are exclusive to the first generation. As such, first through second generation Afro-Caribbeans were included in the New York and Los Angeles samples. In addition to the interviews, important information from Afro-Caribbean social gatherings and cultural events in New York and Los Angeles leading up to the 2012 presidential election also provide data for the study via participant observations.

III. Outline of the Dissertation

Chapter One examines the theoretical approaches to the study of race, ethnicity and political incorporation. The chapter highlights a tension between theories based on ethnic, country of origin, and racial group attachments and proposes culture as the mechanism that facilitates immigrant navigation of such groups. The chapter then introduces the Huckfeldt Social Context Model as the analytical framework for the study. Chapter Two identifies the specific study population and details the methodological approach of the study.

Chapter Three analyzes the impact of social context on Afro-Caribbean identity and group attachments in the two sites. The chapter finds that Afro-Caribbean identity is based in their attachment to multiple groups, including the country of origin, ethnic and the racial group. Such attachments are navigated with a keen awareness of how each

group is perceived by the dominant society. As such, their attachments manifest themselves differently based on the visibility and reputation of the various groups in the public sphere. Cultural practices and norms facilitate the identification of potential allies and those to be avoided.

Chapter Four investigates the implications for such attachments on political attitudes and the development of group consciousness. By analyzing the frames used to discuss American politics generally, and the presidency of Barack Obama in particular, the chapter identifies a perspective on politics that is unique to Afro-Caribbeans. While Afro-Caribbeans maintain a unique political perspective, it does not prevent their ascription to racial group consciousness in the context of the Obama Presidency as manifested by a politics of respectability.

Chapter Five considers the findings of the preceding chapters as it analyzes the impact of Afro-Caribbean attachments on political participation in New York and Los Angeles. Results indicate that an exclusive emphasis on electoral participation is likely to obfuscate consideration of alternative modes of Afro-Caribbean political participation. While Afro-Caribbeans express an aversion to politics informed by their country of origin frame of reference, the chapter finds a preference for voluntary, electoral and cultural forms of participation. As such, the pathways to participation are impacted by the existing social context.

Lastly, the Conclusion summarizes arguments in the dissertation and discusses implications for research on immigrant incorporation, Afro-Caribbean immigration, and black political attitudes and behavior. Political implications, study limitations and next steps are also discussed.

Chapter One – Locating Us and Them: Theoretical Approaches to Identity and Political Incorporation

Inherent in the study of political incorporation is the examination of how newcomers make sense of the social and political landscape in their host country. The process by which newcomers come to understand their new circumstances is a dynamic negotiation of experiences from the country of origin and the new realities of the host country. The result of this negotiation determines whether, how, and under what circumstances immigrant groups come to engage the political system.

Existing approaches to political incorporation emphasize the role that various identity-based attachments play in the development of political attitudes and behaviors. In particular, such approaches focus on ethnic, racial and country of origin ties. While such approaches capture particular facets of the incorporation experience, globalization and the growing diversity of immigrant populations push the literature to examine how these various attachments are experienced simultaneously by a single population or individual, as well as the political impact of such attachments.

This chapter examines the existing theories of incorporation that focus on ethnicity, race and country of origin and argues that culture is the tool that immigrant populations use to navigate each of these attachments simultaneously as they engage the social and political landscapes. Rather than a static conception of culture rooted in group traits, the chapter recognizes culture as a dynamic tool that is used to develop social and political communities that are heavily influenced by the existing social context. As such, the

chapter also introduces the Huckfeldt Social Context Model (1986) as a useful model for examining the impact of social context on identity and political incorporation.

I. Understanding Incorporation through Identity

A. Optional Ethnicity

The prevailing theory of political incorporation, consistent with assimilationist theories, conceptualizes incorporation as a linear process that takes place over several generations (Dahl, 1961). Focusing on white ethnics, Dahl finds that the ethnic group is a significant attachment in the development of political attitudes and behaviors among immigrant groups in the host country. Ethnic identity is conceptualized as a significant political factor for recent migrants, however once ethnic identity is no longer deemed politically advantageous, it is shed. While Dahl's theory remains the dominant theory of incorporation in political science, recent scholarship challenges Dahl's inability to capture the experience of more recent non-white immigrant populations.

B. The Racial Exception

More recent works recognize the limitations imposed on non-white immigrant populations in the United States and assert that incorporation into the American polity is not the same for all groups (Portes & Zhou, 1993). For example, the trajectory of incorporation for African Americans is vastly inconsistent with that of white ethnics, as African Americans are unable to cast aside the racial signifier of black skin and assimilate into the dominant group as easily as the white ethnics studied by Dahl

(Browning, Marshall, & Tabb, 1986). Similarly, Latinos, Asians, Native Americans and black immigrants also lack the ability to shed their racial or ethnic identity when it is no longer politically advantageous. Recognition of the role that racial difference plays on ethnic identity pushes scholars to examine race and ethnicity simultaneously. For example, Waters finds that Afro-Caribbeans, while phenotypically black, use ethnic difference to escape the black-white binary and chart a path towards incorporation that is neither defined by white ethnics or African Americans (Waters, 1999).

C. The Persisting Country of Origin

While racial and ethnic difference push social scientists to add nuance to theories of immigrant incorporation, Beltran (2010) and others continue to caution social science against painting with a broad brush. In her analysis of Latinos, Beltran (2010) highlights the internal diversity and fluid nature of group boundaries. Recognition of this internal diversity moves a growing number of scholars to focus on the country of origin in examining incorporation tendencies (Jones-Correa, 1998; Rogers, 2006). The emphasis on the country of origin allows for analysis of how both the country of origin and the host country influence incorporation; after all, Jamaicans and Trinidadians, while both ethnically Afro-Caribbean come from nations with unique interpretations of race and politics. The same can be said for Dominicans and Puerto Ricans, Mexicans and Columbians, Japanese and Koreans and Ghanaians and Nigerians.

Recent studies focus on the country of origin as the site of political socialization that informs both immigrant frames of reference while serving as the primary political attachment for the first generation (Basch, Schiller, & Blanc, 1994; Escobar C., 2004;

Jones-Correa, 1998, 1998; Lee & Ramakrishnan, 2007; Rogers, 2006). The maintenance of dual citizenship, participation in transnational organizations, and continued electoral participation in the country of origin highlight the role that the country of origin plays in informing political frames, priorities and engagement.

While some studies identify the impact of the country of origin politically, others focus on the emotional ties, which are sometimes manifested in a desire to return home to the country of origin at some point, usually retirement (Jones-Correa, 1998; Rogers, 2006). Such studies find that emotional ties can discourage participation and instead, in a very religious opiate type fashion, leave migrants focused on the return home. Rogers finds that political incorporation is limited by home country ties, particularly when home country ties are understood as the hope of returning to the country of origin (Rogers, 2006). This view of the political self as sojourner and the time in the host country as temporary reduces the likelihood that Afro-Caribbeans will see themselves as a part of the political system and discourages incorporation. Moreover, for those who do naturalize, political participation is far less inevitable than previous models of immigrant political incorporation would suggest. Ultimately, the emphasis on the country of origin, like theories that emphasize race and ethnicity prove significant for understanding the social and political incorporation of immigrant populations in the United States. It is here where culture operates as a tool for navigating this terrain.

D. Navigating Identity through Culture

The difficulty with examining political incorporation through identity is that individuals seldom identify exclusively with one group. Rather, as poignantly noted in

the intersectionality literature, individuals maintain multiple group attachments (Collins, 2008; Crenshaw, 1991). It is here where culture provides access to understanding how meaning, group boundaries and political interpretations are constructed. In political science, the concept of culture is closely related to essentialist claims about group traits and characteristics (Almond & Verba, 1963; Almond, 1956; Huntington, 1996). Scholars such as Samuel Huntington (1993, 1996) espouse interpretations of culture that are used to explain a variety of political hypotheses including why democratization is more or less successful in certain countries and why certain groups do not adhere to various models of political behavior. Lisa Wedeen (2002) points out some of the fundamental problems with these interpretations of culture and what it means to political science as a discipline:

“The understanding of culture as a specific group’s primordial values or traits is untenable empirically. It ignores the historical conditions and relevant power relationships that give rise to political phenomena such as “democratization,” ethnic conflicts, and contemporary radical Islamicist movements. The group traits version of culture, moreover, rides roughshod over the diversity of views and the experiences of contention within the group or groups under study.”(Wedeen, pg. 715)

Wedeen highlights the problem with addressing culture as an inherent value or trait is that it is unable to address the internal diversity of a given group. This problem with engaging culture as a group value or trait, prompts other scholars, particularly in sociology, to engage culture in terms of group norms and practices. Zhou and Bankston (1999) define immigrant culture, in particular as “an entire way of life, including languages, ideas, beliefs, values, behavioral patterns, and all that immigrants bring with them as they arrive in their new country. The original culture may be seen as hindering the adaptation of the ethnic group (the assimilationist perspective) or as promoting this

adaptation (the multiculturalist perspective).” (pg 11) Such an interpretation of culture shifts the focus from inherent traits to an emphasis on the in-group means of communication and interaction. While Zhou and Bankston (1999) highlight the tension that exists between maintaining and shedding the immigrant culture in the host country, Lowe (1996) elaborates on the political significance of this tension and the work that culture does for immigrant populations in the context of the host country.

“Culture is the medium of the *present*-the imagined equivalences and identifications through which the individual invents lived relationship with the national collective-but it is simultaneously the site that mediates the *past*, through which history is grasped as difference, as fragments, shocks, and flashes of disjunction. It is through culture that the subject becomes, acts, and speaks itself as “American.” It is likewise in culture that individuals and collectivities struggle and remember and, in that difficult remembering, imagine and practice both subject and community differently” (Lowe, 1996, pg. 3)

Lowe highlights the work that culture does in bringing together both past and present, which in immigrant populations is the country of origin and host country. Culture serves as the mechanism by which an individual or group develops, manages and engages various attachments.

The use of culture to navigate relationships is politically significant inasmuch as cultural practices produce political effects. Wedeen analyzes such practices in terms of semiotic practices, “semiotic practices refers to what language and symbols *do* – how they are inscribed in concrete actions and how they produce observable political effects. At the same time, insofar as semiotic practices are also the effects of institutional arrangements of structures of domination, and of strategic interests, activities of meaning-making can be studied as effects or dependent variables” (Wedeen, 2002, pg. 714). As

such, the dissertation takes culture seriously as both a mechanism and a dependent variable in the study of political incorporation. In order to capture the dynamic nature of the relationship between culture and political incorporation, the study turns to the Huckfeldt Social Context Model to analyze culture and incorporation in context.

II. Analyzing Culture and Political Incorporation in Context

“Politics is a social activity imbedded within structured patterns of social interaction. Political information is conveyed not only through speeches and media reports but also through a variety of informal social mechanisms, political discussions on the job or on the street, campaign buttons on a friend's shirt, even casual remarks.” –Robert Huckfeldt, 1986

This study seeks to push existing models of political incorporation towards a more thorough analysis of the interpersonal interactions that take place within an individual's social context to understand how culture facilitates or limits incorporation into host country politics for immigrant populations generally and for Afro-Caribbeans in particular. In particular, the racial and ethnic composition of the social context offers important insight for understanding political incorporation beyond individual and institutional level analyses.

Beginning from the premise that politics and political incorporation is a social exercise, social context highlights the contributions of interpersonal interactions in developing an individual's assessment of his or her own social location and its relationship to others. Like Huckfeldt (1986), this study uses social context to reference the population composition that structures opportunities for social interaction in a specific locality. In short, social context is conceptualized in terms of the demographics that

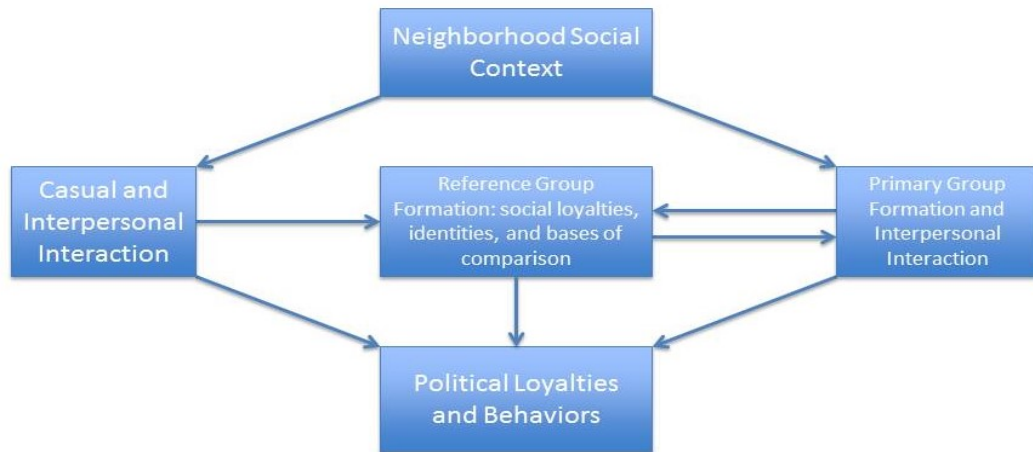
constrain or facilitate opportunities for person to person interaction. The political incorporation literature frequently frames political incorporation as either an individual endeavor or the result of institutional factors that encourage or discourage incorporation (Bloemraad, 2006; Dahl, 1961). While both individual and institutional levels of analysis provide important information for understanding political incorporation, such thinking can undervalue the persistent power of identity as a social reality that structures the everyday lives and influences political incorporation.

The individual level approach examines the incorporation process as guided by individual goals and objectives (Dahl, 1961), while institutional level analyses focus on the public policy, governmental support structures, and racial versus ethnically based multiculturalism to explain trends in political incorporation (e.g., Bloemraad, 2006). While these studies identify significant barriers and accelerants to political incorporation, they are limited in their ability to capture the diverse pathways to incorporation that are constructed locally and socially.

Between individual level analysis and national level institutional analysis lies models of political incorporation that emphasize social interaction and context. Unlike individual and institutional models of political incorporation, the social context approach captures the daily social reality of race and ethnicity in framing and constructing opportunities and motivations for engaging politics. Consistent with the recognition that immigrant incorporation is not necessarily a linear process, the study of social context allows for a better understanding of the dynamic nature of identity and political engagement, as it highlights how different social contexts can produce different trends in racial and ethnic identity and different pathways to incorporation.

This study uses the Huckfeldt Social Context Model³ (Figure 1.1), which provides particular purchase for thinking about political incorporation. Focusing on both the primary and casual interpersonal interactions that take place in the social context, Huckfeldt understands the neighborhood as structuring the interactions that influence friendship choice. The model presumes that people are more inclined to see themselves in terms of the group members that surround them. As such, the model is based on the development of a reference group, or group that informs an individual's point of reference, to inform social and political identities, loyalties and behaviors. The remainder of the section explicates the specific components of the Huckfeldt Model and how they are used to examine culture and political incorporation in the current study.

Figure 1.1 Huckfeldt Social Context Model



³ While there are other contextual factors that may influence political incorporation (i.e. government structures, local media, etc.), this study focuses on demography composition and density (i.e., residential segregation) within an individual's environment and networks to identify the impact of person to person contact on political incorporation.

A. Interpersonal Interactions and Primary Group Formation: Socializing Group Attachment

Scholars of social context place particular emphasis on the neighborhood and its ability to influence political activity (Huckfeldt, 1979; Katznelson, 1981). The literature on neighborhood context acknowledges a variety of factors that influence political participation including socioeconomic status, political attitude heterogeneity, as well as racial and ethnic heterogeneity.

As the social context literature evolves there is greater recognition that political socialization is not restricted to the neighborhood. Individuals live at the center of overlapping networks and points of contact with others (Huckfeldt, Plutzer, & Sprague, 1993; Putnam, 2000). Some of these interactions may take place near the home (i.e. community based organizations) while others, not necessarily so (i.e. churches). Regardless of their physical location, these interactions serve to influence the way people understand themselves and the political world around them by providing opportunities to develop and strengthen ties with others. Social context also serves to mobilize people towards some political goals and demobilize people towards others. As such this study examines the racial and ethnic composition and density of both the neighborhoods and networks as the social context where interpersonal interactions take place and political activity is influenced.

Interpersonal interactions provide opportunities for social capital acquisition that leads to political incorporation (Baybeck & Huckfeldt, 2002; Bedolla, 2005; Dawson, 2001; Harris-Perry, 2004; Liang, 1994; Putnam, 2000). Such scholars identify social capital as both the tangible and intangible resources that are accrued through relationships

with others who often exist within an individual's local social context. Each highlights the extent to which social capital can imbue people with the information, resources/skills and feelings of social obligation that can produce political engagement. Liang finds that “social capital is a useful resource that reduces the anxiety and cost of naturalization and facilitates the actual process [of political incorporation]” (Liang, 1994). To better understand how such interactions and capital is activated in the political realm, particularly in the case of marginalized groups, this study turns to the public sphere literature.

Lynch (1999) describes the public sphere as “that site of interaction in which actors routinely reach understandings about norms, identities, and interests through the public exchange of discourse.” Habermas (1991) understands this discursive arena to consist of private individuals of the bourgeois class, separate from the state, who use this arena as a forum for criticism of public authority and issues of common interest. Fundamental to the Habermas conception of the public sphere is the assumption that individuals from all segments of the polity are afforded access to the public sphere. Unfortunately, marginalized groups are often faced with exclusion from the discursive arena and are left with an inability to participate in the dominant public discourse even when the laws of the land promise them access. As Squires (2000) explains, African-Americans do not experience the public sphere as it is described by Habermas.

“Habermas proposes the existence of a single public sphere where participants leave behind status markers in order to engage in rational critical discourse. His idealized conception, based in eighteenth-century Europe, does not echo Black experiences with public spaces or the media. African-Americans have had neither the luxury of leaving the status marker of race behind (unless they could "pass" for white), nor have

they had access or been welcome to speak and participate in the dominant public sphere until very recently in American history.” (Squires, 2000, pg. 75)

The exclusion of marginalized groups from the forum that negotiates identities and public interests produces an arena that benefits included groups while limiting access and agency for excluded groups. Without a voice and a means of addressing group concerns and needs, marginalized groups are left to produce their own discursive arenas where they may voice their concerns and negotiate their identities in forums that seek to counter dominant public spheres.

Dawson defines this black public sphere as “a set of institutions, communication networks and practices which facilitate debate of causes and remedies to the current combination of political setbacks and economic devastation facing major segments of the Black community, and which facilitate the creation of oppositional formations and sites” (Dawson, 1994, 197). This black public sphere or counter-public sphere serves as an arena where marginalized groups can discuss how appropriate inclusion in the body politic can be achieved; how their needs can be addressed by public authorities; and, how interpretations of marginalized group identity might be amended to provide a more realistic and positive depiction.

Scholars highlight the role of everyday spaces in the development and preponderance of the black public sphere (Dawson, 1995; Harris-Perry, 2004). In particular, Harris-Perry identifies sites such as barbershops and churches as local sites of political discourse that serve to impact political thought, attitudes and behavior. As such, Harris-Perry and others identify not only where common identities, loyalties and attitudes develop (in the local

social context) but also how (through the personal and casual interactions where politics are discussed and assessed).

While it is important to understand the extent to which social context can encourage alignment with respect to identities and loyalties, a thorough examination of social context must also capture the extent to which these interactions can discourage incorporation as well. As Huckfeldt (1979) points out “incongruities between individual attributes and the social environment can discourage participation...” (581). In other words, social context can discourage political engagement if the individual's views differ dramatically from the context or if elements of the social context discourage participation. Similarly, while Liang finds that interaction with whites produces an increased likelihood of naturalization among immigrant populations, he also finds that the perception of discrimination operates as a determining factor in the case of political incorporation.

The experience of being an ideological or racial minority within one's social context can discourage political incorporation, particularly when the individual feels excluded, therefore highlighting the importance of an individual's preexisting political framing as well as racial/ethnic identity in the study of social context. Ultimately, whether functioning in the context of others who share one's background and political viewpoints or as a minority, everyday interactions serve to inform and influence political attitudes and activities.

B. Reference Group Formation: From Attachment to Consciousness

At the center of the Huckfeldt model, is the formation of a reference group. The reference group accentuates various individual level characteristics that makeup identity and strengthens loyalties with a specific group. Dawson (2001) draws attention to collective identity as the lens through which politics are experienced and engaged in the U.S. It is in this way that examining the relationship between the individual and the group can shed light on how social context can alter one's political framing.

Bedolla (2005) finds that affective group attachment is a significant contributing factor in the political engagement of first to second generation Latino immigrants in Los Angeles. Using a relational conception of identity, Bedolla demonstrates that political incorporation is an issue of personal motivation based on one's sense of responsibility to a group to which one maintains an affective attachment. The phenomenon of group attachment is not simply linked to personal identification but also societal recognition that may determine future outcomes. Dawson discusses this idea as linked fate or the idea that one's outcomes are inextricably linked to the outcomes of a larger group. This sense of attachment and linked fate then produce a sense of group coconsciousness or solidarity in the political realm (Chong & Rogers, 2005).

The move from identity or attachment to politics is frequently conceptualized in simple terms, without accounting for the complex nature of identity. Bedolla offers an important contribution in the way of highlighting the simultaneous coexistence of multiple identities in one body. As such, the scholarship is encouraged to take a more multi-faceted approach to the study of political incorporation, given that different identity-based lenses can frame the political landscape differently (i.e. immigrant,

ethnically, racially, etc.). Given the multi-faceted nature of group attachment and consciousness it is important to understand the role of these attachments in constructing the frames that determine political action.

Goffman defines frames as “a schemata of interpretation...that...allows its user to locate, perceive, identify and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its terms.” (Goffman, 1974) Frames work to identify problems, the cause, who is to blame, allies and adversaries, the solution, and the appropriate course of action (Benford & Snow, 2000). As such, the power of frames lies in their ability to position the self, the group, events, and institutions in relation to past experiences, present contexts, and future goals.

Rather than examining identity, political attitudes, and behavior separately, this project examines the frames that hold these phenomena together for this immigrant population and the social factors that influence such frames.

C. Political Loyalties and Behaviors: Walking the Pathways of Political Incorporation

Given that the collective frames within the reference group can influence political behavior, one should consider the diverse courses of action that the reference group can influence. In examining political incorporation, specific forms of engagement tend to take priority, namely electoral politics (i.e. voting and representation). However, history suggests a broader conception of politics as exemplified by the marches, speeches and organization of people like Marcus Garvey and Stokely Carmichael.

As non-electoral politics gain more academic attention, definitions of political engagement and incorporation expand to include other forms of political expression. In particular, Jones-Correa (2013) provides a road map for understanding the various and sometimes overlapping pathways to incorporation which extend beyond electoral politics to include voluntary (i.e. transnational, schools, community based organization, neighborhood organizations and professional associations), mass (i.e. protests and social movements), procedural (bureaucratic incorporation and access through lobbying), and illicit (violence and corruption) pathways to political incorporation, as well as electoral politics. Jones-Correa's approach acknowledges that political incorporation is not exclusively controlled by political organization and institutions. Rather, greater agency is afforded to those at the community and individual level.

While identifying the power of the individual to determine their own mode of political expression, the scholarship must also account for forms of political activity that lie in the realm of culture. Calling for more serious deliberation of culture in the domain of political action, scholars of race politics demonstrate that political information and ideology is expressed in ways that stretch traditional conceptions of political engagement (Guidry & Sawyer, 2003; Hanchard, 2006; Kelley, 1996; Scott, 1987; Wedeen, 2002). Fraser (1990) identifies the implications of addressing culture more seriously in her description of the relationship between culture and political participation,

“This means that participation is not simply a matter of being able to state propositional contents that are neutral with respect to forms of expression. Rather ... participation means being able to speak ‘in one’s own voice,’ thereby simultaneously constructing and expressing one’s cultural identity through idiom and style. Moreover, as I also suggested, public spheres themselves are not spaces of zero degree culture, equally hospitable to any possible form of cultural

expression. Rather, they consist in culturally specific institutions – including, for example, various journals and various social geographies of urban space. These institutions may be understood as culturally specific rhetorical lenses that filter and alter the utterances they frame; they can accommodate some expressive modes and not others.” (pg. 69)

Fraser’s description of the impact of culture on the public sphere highlights the extent to which culture dictates both the space and the mode of expression used in the negotiation of public interests. Consequently, an understanding of the means by which marginalized groups voice their political concerns requires analysis of culture and cultural practice as political.

Hanchard (2006) argues “that one of the analytic errors often made in studies examining the relationship between politics and culture is to treat culture as a separate sphere from the political, rather than as a separate sphere from the state. As a consequence, a more fundamental understanding of the relationship between politics and culture is often overlooked...” (pg. 14) This tendency to understand culture as separate from the political provides part of the explanation for why culture is often conceptualized as an issue to be addressed by sociologists and anthropologists as opposed to political scientists. However, recognition of the relationship between culture, politics, and the state creates a need for political science to address the issue of culture more seriously. By identifying cultural practices as an additional pathway to incorporation, this study is able to more fully engage the range of tools individuals utilize to alter the political landscape.

Frequently the literature addresses political incorporation as a goal, when in reality political incorporation is most often a means to an end, such as better financial resources, greater access and opportunities, etc. in the local context. Recognizing this, political

incorporation research should be broad in its assessment of political activities and the pathways of incorporation (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2 Key Components of the Huckfeldt Social Context Model

Social Context	Interpersonal Interactions	Reference Group	Pathway to Incorporation
Neighborhoods	Ethnic composition	Country of origin	Electoral
Networks	Population density	Ethnic	Voluntary
		Racial	Mass
			Procedural
			Cultural
			Illicit

III. Conclusion

Existing theories of incorporation recognize identity as a significant factor in the decision to engage the political system of the host country. Ethnic, racial and country of origin attachments prove vital for understanding why and how immigrant populations come to engage the political system. Amidst the attention paid to such attachments, existing theories are challenged with balancing the impact of racial and ethnic realities in the host country on one hand, and the socialization and ties that originate in the country of origin on the other. As ethnic, racial and country of origin attachments all play a significant role in political incorporation, culture reveals itself as a means of understanding how migrants balance the two country influences and engage the political system.

For immigrant populations, the cultural practices, language and symbols of the country of origin meet the cultural norms of the host country as they work to define the self, the group and potential allies in the existing social context. As such, culture is a

mechanism by which immigrant groups make sense of race, ethnicity, and country of origin groups, identifying acceptable and unacceptable behavior and identities. In addition to serving as a mechanism, culture is also a tool for expressing political preferences and producing political effects. It is in this way that culture is also a dependent variable in the study of political incorporation.

In order to examine culture as both a mechanism and dependent variable in political incorporation the chapter introduces the Huckfeldt Social Context Model to capture how the deployment of culture in political incorporation differs in distinct social contexts. Reflecting on each of the components (interpersonal interactions, reference group formation and political loyalties and behaviors), the Huckfeldt Model provides an opportunity to view the relationship between culture and political incorporation as dynamic. The following chapter identifies Afro-Caribbeans in New York and Los Angeles as the specific populations of study and describes the methods used as the dissertation follows the model described by Huckfeldt.

Chapter Two – Methodology: Examining Afro-Caribbean Politics and Culture in Context

Afro-Caribbeans in the United States represent a useful case study for examining political incorporation, as Afro-Caribbeans embody the complexity of ethnic, racial and country of origin attachments within a single population⁴. Amidst such distinct attachments, the Afro-Caribbean impact on race and politics in the U.S. is profound. Influential figures of Caribbean descent include Black Nationalist leaders such as Marcus Garvey and Kwame Ture (aka Stokely Carmichael) as well as political officials that include Mervyn Dymally, Colin Powell, and Yvette Clark. With 1.7 million first generation Afro-Caribbean immigrants in the United States (Thomas, 2012), Afro-Caribbeans continue to be a growing population in sites of political significance.

In its analysis of Afro-Caribbean political incorporation, this study seeks to address gaps in the extant literature as presented in the Introduction. Recognition of such assumptions results in three methodological choices that distinguish this study from the existing scholarship: the study expands the analysis of Afro-Caribbean incorporation to a site outside of New York; it focuses on Afro-Caribbeans of specific national origins and it extends the political incorporation analysis to the second generation. By extending the analysis in these ways, the study seeks to add needed nuance to the study of this group and immigrant incorporation more generally.

⁴ African and Afro-Latino immigrant also share this distinction however, this study focuses on black immigrants from the English speaking Caribbean in order to control for additional linguistic and political variables.

I. Study Sites and Participants: Immigration Coast to Coast

New York City is the most populous city in the U.S with a population of over 8.3 million people concentrated in an area of 469 square miles. Immigration is at the center of New York City demographics with 36.9% of the city's population being foreign born. New York serves as the center of Afro-Caribbean immigration, and is home to 38.0% of the Afro-Caribbean immigrant population in the United States (Thomas, 2012). Caribbeans represent the third largest ethnic group in the city behind Puerto Ricans and Italians, respectively. Given this large, highly concentrated population, as well as an elaborate public transportation system, New York finds itself near the top of the list of places where residential context may be conceptualized as more fluid and dynamic. In addition the city's black population is 25.5% according to the 2010 Census.

Individuals in a place like New York are capable of maintaining a relatively homogeneous Caribbean network without residing in neighborhoods that might be defined as Caribbean. This large population produces opportunities for predominantly Caribbean networks where politics are discussed and resources and skills are shared. Moreover, the density of the Caribbean population in New York increases the occasions when an Afro-Caribbean may come into contact with cultural forms of expression that can reify psychological connections to the ethnic group or country of origin and communicate political messages that may encourage or discourage traditional political engagement. As such, social context analysis cannot simply focus on residential communities but social networks as well.

As a point of comparison, Los Angeles County serves as a stark contrast to the New York City context. The dynamics of the two settings differ particularly with respect to the size of the Afro-Caribbean population. With a population of over 9.8 million people spread across 4,061 square miles, the Caribbean population comprises only 1.0% of the black population. In addition, only 9.3% of the county's population is black (U.S. Census, 2010). According to the State of Black Los Angeles (2005), there are 12,600 West-Indians.

Despite the small Caribbean population, Los Angeles is a county where demographic trends shift dramatically as a result of immigration. In particular, increasing immigrant populations from Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean now occupy neighborhoods traditionally viewed as African American. In addition, black flight to the suburbs in search home ownership is altering the face of Los Angeles and Southern California (Hunt & Ramon, 2010; Medina, 2012). The increasing diversity raises questions about how do black immigrants understand themselves in relation to a growing Latino community and a shifting African American population who still maintain important lines to the seats of power in the community and across the city. As such, Los Angeles presents an opportunity to understand the conditions that influence political incorporation in the context of a changing demographic and political landscape. Recognizing the prevalence of Caribbean culture and people across New York and the importance of social interactions in Afro-Caribbean incorporation, Los Angeles County presents a useful setting for identifying the impact of social context and interpersonal interactions on group attachment in particular.

II. Sample Selection: Place, Nation and Generation

Participants in New York were collected through personal connections to the Caribbean population. Meanwhile, participants in Los Angeles were accessed through connections to organizers of the Los Angeles Caribbean Parade, Hollywood Carnival and local Jamaican and Trinidadian restaurants.

Recognizing that Trinidadians and Jamaicans represent the largest number of English speaking Afro-Caribbeans in the U.S, this study chose to focus exclusively on Afro-Caribbeans from these countries. While frequently lumped together, immigrants from these two countries originate from countries with unique political histories and social backgrounds that warrant consideration. Jamaica is a democratic, island nation with a population of approximately 2.8 million people and a history of slavery, which was abolished in 1834. Approximately 89% of the population is of African descent, while another 6% is of Indian or Chinese heritage. A vibrant national history of engagement with Black Nationalism is evident particularly through the Rastafarian movement, and efforts to engage the profound socioeconomic inequality that falls largely along color lines.

Like Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago is also a democratic nation. Comprised of two neighboring islands in the Caribbean Sea, Trinidad and Tobago is home to approximately 1.3 million people; 40.3% of the population is of Indian heritage, 37.5% of African heritage, 1.9% of European heritage, 1.5% of Chinese heritage and the remainder of Arab, mixed and indigenous ancestry. This diversity is the result of immigration and the importation of indentured servants after the abolition of slavery in 1833. Like Jamaica,

racial pride movements are also a characteristic of Trinidadian history. Evidenced of such history is found in the Black Power movement that gained momentum in the late 1960's on the St. Augustine campus of the University of the West Indies. The relevance and significance of black identity and history is no less significant today in Trinidad, where African syncretic religions continue to grow, and the nation's most famous event, Carnival, consistently draws on African themes and traditions. In addition, race continues to underlie political interactions and negotiations of the major political parties. Given the unique social and political contexts of Jamaica and Trinidad, this research program focuses exclusively on these countries in order to identify variation across national lines.

The need for comparative analysis of the political impact of social context is coupled with a need for analysis that goes beyond the migrant generation. While the sociology literature addresses the home country ties and political incorporation of first and second generation immigrants (Kasinitz, 2004, 2009; Levitt & Waters, 2006; Potter, 2005), the political science literature is limited. This dearth of research is heightened when focusing on Afro-Caribbean immigrants and reflects a general assumption that ties to the home country do not extend beyond the first generation. As such this study includes the first generation, those who migrated during early childhood (also known as the 1.5 generation) as well as the second generation. Second generation participants were included as long as one parent was born in the nations of study.

III. Research Design

The study uses a quasi-experimental, cross-sectional design, allowing for a snapshot of the population of study. This is important because no study currently examines Afro-Caribbean political incorporation outside of New York. A quasi-experimental design allows for analysis of potential cause-effect relationships and the resulting differences between Trinidadians and Jamaicans in New York and Trinidadians and Jamaicans in Los Angeles.

IV. Data Collection

The objective of the study is to examine the impact of social context on immigrant attachments and political incorporation. As such, this study addresses the following questions: *1) What are the social factors that influence Afro-Caribbean group attachments in New York and Los Angeles; 2) What group attachments influence social political attitudes towards the Obama Presidency among Afro-Caribbeans in the United States; and 3) How does social context influence the pathway to political incorporation chosen by Afro-Caribbeans in New York and Los Angeles?* To answer these questions, data was collected via semi-structured in-depth interviews using a snowball sample. In-depth interviews allowed for an examination of identity-based group attachments and political attitudes. Additionally, participant observations were used to observe political behavior during social and cultural gatherings typically considered outside of traditional politics (i.e. voting, campaigning, and running for office).

V. Data Sources and Instruments

A. In-depth Interviews

All in-depth interviews were administered by the researcher (See Appendix B for interview protocol). The interview protocol was adapted from protocols utilized by Reuel Rogers (2006) and Jackson, Hutchings, Brown and Wong (2004), and focuses on six key themes: background, identity attachments and interethnic relations, political interests, political engagement, Barack Obama and cultural symbols. Seventy-one in depth interviews (40 first generation and 31 second generation) were conducted in New York City and Los Angeles County from August 2011 to January 2013 (See Appendix A for sample characteristics). Interview times ranged from 17-102 minutes, averaging 45 minutes⁵.

B. Interview Surveys

After the in-depth interviews, participants were also asked to complete a closed-ended questionnaire upon completion of the interview. Questionnaires address six themes: demographics; country of origin ties; religiosity; place of worship and politics; racial group consciousness; and, political participation and ideology (See Appendix A for questionnaire). Participants completed a printed or electronic version of the questionnaire based on personal preference and accessibility.

⁵ Interviews with personal friends and associates averaged longer periods of time, as trust had already been established and interviews were more informal.

C. Participant Observations

The study also relies on participant observations conducted in New York City and Los Angeles County. Events in New York City include the West Indian Day Parade on September 6, 2010 and a Presidential Debate watching gathering in an Afro-Caribbean home on October 16, 2012. Events observed in Los Angeles County include the Los Angeles Caribbean Carnival on October 17, 2010; the Los Angeles Culture Festival – Hollywood Carnival on June 30, 2012; a Steel Pan Exhibition at an Inglewood Trinidadian restaurant on September 26, 2012; and a Presidential Debate watching party at an Inglewood Jamaican restaurant on October 3, 2012.

VI. Data Analysis

Interview transcriptions were coded to analyze trends in Caribbean networks/neighborhoods and its relationship with group attachment, consciousness and political activity. Content analysis of major themes of discussion was coded by hand. Themes from the New York sites were compared with Los Angeles sites. Where possible, themes were quantified and analyzed.

Findings from the data analysis are detailed in following three chapters and are guided by the Huckfeldt Social Context Model, emphasizing interpersonal interactions, reference group formation and political behavior, respectively. Chapter Three begins with interpersonal interactions as it addresses the social factors that impact group attachment

Chapter Three – Ethnic Emphasis: Examining the Relationship between Interpersonal Interactions and Group Attachment

Central to existing studies of Afro-Caribbean incorporation is the role that social identity plays in the political attitudes and behavior of the group (Greer, 2013; Hackshaw, 2008; Kasinitz, 1992; Nunnally, 2010; Rogers, 2006). In particular, there is an emphasis on how social identity develops into affective group attachments⁶ for the Afro-Caribbean population in New York. While such studies provide needed complexity to the study of group attachment, there is limited analysis of identity and attachment in settings where the Afro-Caribbean community is not as large and elevated in the public consciousness. Waters suggests that external factors, such as the public consciousness play a significant role in the manifestation and development of social identity,

“Social identities are unlike material objects. Whereas material objects have a concrete existence whether or not people recognize their existence, social identities do not... It is only in the act of naming an identity, defining an identity or stereotyping an identity that identity emerges as a concrete reality. Not only does that identity have no social relevance when it is not named; it simply does not exist when it has not been conceived and elevated to public consciousness.” (Waters, 1999, pg.44)

The significance of social recognition in the existence and relevance of social identities suggests that the study of Afro-Caribbean identity and group attachment requires attention to more varying social contexts. As such, this chapter examines the social factors that influence Afro-Caribbean group attachment in New York City and Los

⁶ Group attachment is defined as in-group identification and a preference for members of one's own group and dislike for those of the out-group (Chong & Rogers, 2005; Gurin, Miller, & Gurin, 1980; Miller, Gurin, Gurin, & Malanchuk, 1981).

Angeles County. Like the existing studies of Afro-Caribbean identity, this chapter emphasizes the relationship between Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans in an effort to highlight the relationship between race and ethnicity in the United States (Greer, 2013; Kasinitz, 2009; Nunnally, 2010; Rogers, 2004; Waters, 1999).

In her analysis, Waters (1999) finds that ethnic distancing best characterizes the Afro-Caribbean relationship with African Americans. Waters emphasizes the different impressions found among the dominant society regarding the two groups and the extent to which Caribbean immigrants work to distance themselves from the racial stigma that is frequently attached to African Americans by the dominant society. Such stigma and stereotypes result in decreased job opportunities and increased racial discrimination for the African-American community. As such, Afro-Caribbeans seek to maintain a positive reputation particularly in the workforce by actively distinguishing themselves from African Americans. While Waters emphasizes this ethnic distance, others emphasize Afro-Caribbean racial attachment resulting from a common experience of racial discrimination and anti-black prejudice in the United States (Hackshaw, 2008; Kasinitz, 1992).

In a particularly nuanced description of black immigrant group attachment and identity, Greer states “Indeed, black immigrants face both the black-white binary and the binary of native-born versus foreign born that exists within the black community living in the United States. Therefore, black ethnics endure a “Du Boisian tripart Negro experience” (Greer, 2013 p 27). Drawing on and expanding Du Bois’s concept of double consciousness (Du Bois, 1903), Greer emphasizes the multifaceted nature of identity and the existence of multiple versions of a black experience. Greer argues that white group

promotion of Afro-Caribbeans, as well as African immigrants, to an elevated group status over native born black populations in New York creates competition with native-born blacks in the public sphere. Ultimately, white promotion encourages the Afro-Caribbean desire to remain outside of the black-white binary and remain situated as perpetual outsiders.

While each of the studies find Afro-Caribbean identity to be unique and distinct from that of African Americans, they also find that interpersonal interactions with native born blacks, whites, other Caribbean immigrants can impact such attachments (Greer, 2013; Kasinitz, 1992; Rogers, 2006; Waters, 1999). Waters suggests that assimilation into African American networks limit socioeconomic outcomes in the second generation(Waters, 1999). Meanwhile, Rogers finds that infusion into African American networks serves to alter political attitudes and framing(Rogers, 2006). Greer focuses on identifying opportunities for interethnic political coalitions between black immigrants and the native born population(Greer, 2013) and Kasinitz emphasizes the tradition of black political activism among Afro-Caribbean immigrants (Kasinitz, 1992). Such studies suggest that Afro-Caribbean group attachments may manifest themselves differently outside the presence of a large community of Afro-Caribbean immigrants as it is found in New York.

I argue that Afro-Caribbeans maintain attachments to multiple groups simultaneously, including the country of origin, ethnic and racial groups. These attachments are maintained with a keen awareness of how each group is perceived by the dominant society. As such, their attachments manifest themselves differently based on the visibility and reputation of the various groups in the public sphere. In particular, attachments

require recognition from outside of the group and reinforcement within the group to remain salient. Cultural practices serve as an important tool for group recognition and reinforcement. While a single attachment may prove more salient for an individual, an emphasized attachment does not negate the existence of the other prevailing attachments. Therefore, to analyze group attachment without accounting for the role that space and place play in the development of such attachments or the existence of multiple identities inherently neglects the social aspect of social identity.

I. Current Study

In order to understand the social factors that influence the Afro-Caribbean group attachments, I rely on in-depth interviews conducted with 71 Afro-Caribbean immigrants (40 first generation and 31 second generation) in New York and Los Angeles. Jamaicans and Trinidadians were selected as significant segments of the Afro-Caribbean population in both cities. Participants were recruited through a snowball sample of personal networks and through organizers and participants of Caribbean carnivals in both cities. The interviews were conducted from August 2011 to January 2013.

Using a semi-structured interview format, participants were asked about how they describe their background to others. In order to identify the salience of various attachments and the tendency to choose one group attachment over others, participants were also asked about how they identify themselves racially and ethnically on surveys such as the census. To identify the impact of interpersonal interactions, participants were also asked about the racial/ethnic makeup of their personal networks and residential

neighborhoods. Participants were also asked about the nature of their interactions with non-Caribbeans (i.e. African Americans, Asians, Latinos, and Whites). Reoccurring themes form the basis for conclusions made in this chapter.

II. Ethnicity, Nation and Race: Examining Intersecting Group Attachments

Intersectionality scholarship asserts that the individual functions at the intersection of multiple identities, including but not limited to race, class and gender (Collins, 2008; Crenshaw, 1991). Similarly, interview findings suggest that Afro-Caribbeans maintain attachments to distinct country of origin, ethnic and racial groups. Each attachment bears perceived social responsibilities that are neither static nor complimentary. Rather, they are dynamic and at times in sharp contrast with each other. Despite this complexity, Afro-Caribbeans navigate multiple attachments in order to maximize the potential for positive social and economic outcomes. Understanding how Afro-Caribbeans navigate these multiple attachments requires acknowledgment of how Afro-Caribbeans understand their own intentions for migrating.

As an immigrant population, Afro-Caribbeans migrate to United States in pursuit of opportunities not available in their country of origin. Whitley, a first generation Jamaican in Los Angeles describes the allure of the United States as such, “[The best thing about life in the United States is] opportunity. There is nothing you can't do if you put your mind to it. We have access to so many things.” (Whitley, first generation Jamaican in Los Angeles) Amidst the recognition of the benefits that come with life in the United States, Afro-Caribbeans maintain a strong and primary attachment to the

country of origin. Regardless of their citizenship status and the vows taken at the time of naturalization, the country of origin remains the primary emotional attachment for members of the group. Lana, a first generation Trinidadian in Los Angeles describes her attachment to Trinidad as follows, “I am a Trinidadian wherever I go... It’s an opportunity to be here [in the United States], but I represent Trinidad wherever” (Lana, age 56, first generation Trinidadian). The attachment to the country of origin described by Lana suggests that despite naturalization oaths, Afro-Caribbeans maintain a strong allegiance to the country of origin that echoes the findings in the transnational literature⁷.

While much of the existing literature emphasizes the role that the country of origin plays in reducing immigrant focus on the host country (Rogers, 2006), Johnson, a first generation Jamaican, suggests that the relationship between the country of origin and the host country is a more dynamic relationship. “People back home are counting on you to send something back and you have to make something of yourself here. You have to be an ambassador so you are selling Jamaica in the U.S. and provide some reality to those still living in JA” (Johnson, age 52, first generation Jamaican in New York). In his analysis of the attachment to the country of origin, Johnson emphasizes a responsibility to succeed, to inform friends and family back home about life in the United States and to represent the country of origin well. Ultimately, Johnson conceptualizes his role as that of an ambassador. He speaks to the responsibility for an immigrant to inform those in the home country about the realities of life in the United States but also to represent the

⁷ Studies of transnationalism describe a strong attachment to the country of origin that manifests in various ways including the maintenance of dual citizenship, participation in transnational organizations, continued electoral participation in the country of origin and a desire to return home to the country of origin at some point (usually retirement) (Basch, Schiller, & Blanc, 1994; Escobar C., 2004; Jones-Correa, 1998, 1998; Lee & Ramakrishnan, 2007; Rogers, 2006).

country of origin. By virtue of a positive representation of the nation, Johnson sees himself as advancing the cause of his friends, family and countrymen who seek a future in the United States. Johnson's interpretation of his role speaks to a larger trend among Afro-Caribbeans to be mindful of the group's reputation.

In order to distinguish the group and manage its image in the public consciousness Afro-Caribbeans rely on cultural explanations for group success in the United States. Specifically, Afro-Caribbeans explain that Caribbean cultural values emphasize education and hard work in a way that is distinct from what is found in African American culture. In addition, the absence of social safety net programs such as unemployment and welfare are evidence of the inherent self-reliance of the group.

Shared cultural practices and values form the basis of Afro-Caribbean attachments to immigrants from other nations in the Caribbean as well. Marlene expresses her primary attachments as such, "I have a Caribbean perspective on everything I do. First and foremost, I am Jamaican and I identify very strongly as Jamaican if I need to, but my focus has always been Caribbean" (Marlene first generation Jamaican in Los Angeles). Using cultural commonalities as the basis of the ethnic group attachment, Afro-Caribbeans manage their image in the public consciousness, not simply as Trinidadians or Jamaicans but as Caribbean immigrants as a whole.

The attachment to the ethnic group is where the distinction between Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans is made most evident. Among interview participants, 67% of Afro-Caribbeans emphasize a strong distinction between Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans. Andre, a second generation Trinidadian in New York describes the distinction as such,

“West Indian culture differs [from African Americans] in terms of work ethic. It could stem from a history as laborers. The Jamaican stereotype applies to the whole Caribbean. Non-West Indians don't have that. We still are pushed by our parents. American parents don't have the same push. They make fun of me. ‘He must be West Indian because he works so much.’ It’s a different kind of hustle. If you can't hustle Americans get welfare and social services. West Indians don't do that.” (Andre, age 32, second generation Trinidadian in New York)

Afro-Caribbeans define the group in terms of a common culture of hard work. The group culture is defined in contrast to American culture broadly and “African American culture” in particular. Such definition works to distinguish Afro-Caribbeans from African Americans while maintaining, what Greer calls, an elevated group status (Greer, 2013).

Despite the continued effort to draw clear distinctions between Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans, Afro-Caribbeans maintain an attachment to the Pan-African Diaspora that is rooted in historical and present day anti-black racism and discrimination. The interview with Iris, a first generation Trinidadian, exemplified this trend. Iris states,

“I always had a question in the back of my head... about blacks getting reparations for slavery. The Jewish people, because they went through the holocaust. What they went through was really bad, [but] what we went through [was] too. We suffered as a people and we are still suffering as a people... Not necessarily to get money or anything like that but when are they going to give us, like they gave the Jews recognition for what we went through?” Iris, first generation Trinidadian

Despite being born in Trinidad, Iris uses the first person plural “we” to highlight her own membership in the racial group. Iris traces the effects of slavery to the present day, highlighting her recognition that the effects of slavery and racism continue to impact the group status of black people in the United States.

Similarly, Afro-Caribbeans describe experiences of race-based discrimination that range from micro-aggressions, such as being followed by store clerks while shopping, to violent and systemic interactions with law enforcement that placed individual lives in danger. Consistent with previous works, Afro-Caribbeans express racial group attachment that responds to anti-black discrimination and racism in the United States and globally (Hackshaw, 2008).

Ultimately, Afro-Caribbeans manage country of origin, ethnic, racial group attachments while attempting to manage the reputation of the three groups in the public consciousness. An effort to manage these distinct group reputations, at times, requires an emphasis on one group attachment over and above the other groups in order to maximize positive outcomes for the individual.

The following section examines the presence of such attachments in two settings where Afro-Caribbeans occupy contrasting locations in the public consciousness. In New York, Caribbean culture and identity is readily recognized as distinct from native born blacks and other black immigrant groups. Meanwhile in Los Angeles, the relative absence of a large Caribbean community renders Afro-Caribbean identity as largely invisible to the public consciousness.

III. A Tale of Two Cities: Managing Group Recognition and Invisibility in

Context

A. Caribbean New York: Emphasis and Recognition in the Public Consciousness

“Walking around Brooklyn’s Flatbush Avenue, one immediately noticed that the Caribbean has come to New York. All along the avenue, signals of a vibrant

Caribbean immigrant presence shout at even the most casual observer. Storefronts advertise Caribbean symbolism – the bright colors of a flag, a palm tree, a stack of island newspapers in the window. Small, garrulous groups of men and women congregate in front of Caribbean bakeries and restaurants to discuss the news from “back home.” Their animated conversations are thick with the distinctive inflexions of Caribbean dialects. Jitney vans and dollar vans perilously jockey for positions as they compete for fares along the busy thoroughfare and above the din, the sounds of calypso and reggae music ring out. This is black New York.” (Rogers, 2001,163)

The description of New York provided by Rogers’ interview respondent speaks to the impact of Afro-Caribbean immigration on New York. The ubiquitous presence of Caribbean people, culture and organizations in New York mitigates the sharp distinction between life in the Caribbean and life in the United States. Andre, a second generation Trinidadian, describes life in New York as “comfortable because the community is vast with other Caribbeans who understand my culture, language, needs and wants. It’s almost like living in Trinidad.” (Andre, age 32 second generation Trinidadian)

The presence of Caribbean culture in New York is evident in the day-to-day elements as well as in an annual celebration of Caribbean culture, in the form of a large Carnival-inspired parade in Brooklyn on Labor Day, the West Indian Day Parade. Held in Harlem until 1964, the parade moved to the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn in 1969 where it attracts over 1 million participants each year, placing it among the city’s largest cultural events. Urban radio stations serving the tri-state area (New York, New Jersey and Connecticut) play reggae, soca and calypso music from the Caribbean throughout the weekend as local newspapers and television networks cover the parade. The parade highlights the presence of a vibrant Caribbean community in Brooklyn and across the region, therefore raising the visibility of the community and significantly impacting the

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

“I think it is easier because you will find a lot of people who will identify with you or your culture, especially because we have a parade. So even if you don't understand Trinidad or the culture, it's like, oh its West Indians they have that parade so it ties back to that. ...Everyone wants to be around people like themselves. In New York, it's that much easier [for West Indians].” (Carolyn, age 30 second generation Trinidadian in New York)

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

“Growing up in this neighborhood [Crown Heights]... I've met with first generation people who came over in their adolescence who felt like [being from the Caribbean] was something that they had to hide or shy away from because they didn't want to be ridiculed...everybody trying to fit in when they were growing up. I never thought that way. It was always a source of pride. I remember in high school with the whole coconut music and I was like I am perfectly fine with my coconut music. I love your country and everything but that's just not where I am from. I think the fact that there is so many of us here it's like okay and a strong community.” (Carolyn, age 30 second generation Trinidadian in New York)

Carolyn describes the experience of living within the ethnic enclave as insulating her from the ridicule experienced by earlier immigrants, and the strength of the community as enforcing a sense of ethnic pride. Similarly, Lionel describes what it means to be Trinidadian in New York and specifically in his neighborhood of East Flatbush, “It’s almost like the norm, you hardly hear somebody say ‘I’m American’ around here.” (Lionel, age 24, second generation Trinidadian in New York) The benefits of such co-ethnic interactions extend to participant social networks as well. Sophia, a second generation Trinidadian, describes her network in a way that is representative of the New York sample. “New York is made up of a lot of Trinidadians so it feels like home most of your friends are Caribbean” (Sophia, age 42 second generation Trinidadian in New York)

While New York respondents describe their neighborhoods as largely Afro-Caribbean, the length of time in the United States serves to impact social networks. First generation respondents largely describe their networks as immigrant while the second generation respondents describes their networks as pan-ethnically black (African immigrant, African American and Afro-Caribbean). Such choices make sense as people choose networks based on common ground. The immigrant experience is unique and provides important opportunities for bonding based on past experiences, the process of incorporation and the effort to hold on to home culture. Meanwhile the second generation connects with folks on the grounds that they share a common black experience in the United States. In addition, socialization in American schools facilitates network building across ethnic communities.

Despite variation in the ethnic makeup of first and second generation respondents, Afro-Caribbeans in New York express an overwhelming sense of responsibility to correct

false interpretations of the national origin group specifically, and the Caribbean community more generally. Monique, a second generation Jamaican, explains that as a Jamaican she needs to “Be mindful of how you portray yourself.” (Monique, age 30 second generation Jamaican in New York) Attempting to police the public perceptions of the national origin and ethnic groups that compose the Caribbean community causes Afro-Caribbeans to be sensitive to the external perceptions of the groups. Rachel, a first generation Jamaican highlights the various layers of the public consciousness towards Afro-Caribbeans.

“Because of the reputation of the few who make a bad name for us, ... people... think negatively. There’s the standing, so you got some of that good stuff to smoke right. That’s the standing thing but I take that lightly but there are people who really have no clue what life in the Caribbean is like so it’s a great opportunity for me to teach people about that when I can. There’s this whole notion that you are from Jamaica or the Caribbean you come over here and take our jobs from blacks who are native to America. But there are those who from the minute they here Jamaican they say Jamaicans are really bright they are this. So being a Jamaican in NY is interesting because NY is such a melting pot you are comfortable in certain ways and you feel like you brings something to the texture and culture of NYC but in a lot of ways you feel like you're on the side just competing because of some of the perceptions and misperceptions that people have.” (Rachel, age 51 first generation Jamaican in New Yorker)

While much of the literature that focuses on New York highlights the ethnic distancing between Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans this study finds that the story is more complicated than the literature suggests. While ethnic emphasis is strong in New York and that identification comes with a clear distinction between the two groups, the existence of the two groups in the same space causes a two-way assimilation process that is created by the city’s cultural landscape. Afro-Caribbeans in New York are able to

identify a distinction between themselves and African Americans, as well as a shared black experience.

First and second generation Afro-Caribbeans express great pride in their country of origin, ethnic and racial group attachments. With the country of origin serving as the primary attachment, Afro-Caribbeans emphasize a need to uplift, educate and represent what it means to be a part of the group in a positive light. Racially, the term black is a satisfactory identifier. Yet, New Yorkers identify the distinctions in outlook between African Americans and Afro-Caribbeans as rooted in a history of oppression that was not manifested in the same ways in the Caribbean. Afro-Caribbeans view African Americans as having a justified sense of entitlement for increased opportunities and support, based in the turbulent racial history of the United States. However, despite the justification, Afro-Caribbeans do not perceive the expectations to be entirely realistic.

While participants balance the layered attitudes towards Afro-Caribbeans in the public consciousness of New York, a noteworthy presence in the public consciousness allows Afro-Caribbeans to mark themselves as distinct and manage their social location in relation to other present groups. Still, the large size of the Afro-Caribbean community in New York is not representative of the community in other parts of the United States. Like the move of the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1957, this study moves to Los Angeles County, where Afro-Caribbeans are a small but growing section of the population generally and the large immigrant population specifically.

B. Los Angeles: Image and Invisibility

“Today, immigrants from Mexico and Central America live on blocks that generations ago were the only places African-Americans could live. In the former center of black culture in Los Angeles, Spanish is often the only language heard on the streets. Now, signs for “You buy, we fry” fish markets catering to Southern palates have been replaced by Mexican mariscos and Salvadoran pupuserias. In the historic jazz corridor, where music legends once stayed when they were barred from wealthy white neighborhoods in the city, botanicas sell folk and herbal remedies from Latin America.” (Medina, 2012)

Medina describes South Los Angeles as once the cultural center of Black Los Angeles but as now more representative of the growing Latino immigrant community in the southwest. The growth of the immigrant community in Los Angeles places immigration at the center of the public consciousness, impacting every facet of local politics and culture. With 35.3% of the county’s population being foreign born, the social, residential and cultural landscapes of the county are shifting as a result of the changing demographics. As greater attention is paid to Latino immigration in Los Angeles, the Afro-Caribbean presence in the social and cultural landscapes is largely unnoticed. Still Afro-Caribbeans are increasingly placing their stake in the social landscape of the county.

Since 1995, a small festival takes place in middle class neighborhood of West Chester emphasizing Caribbean culture and community. Started by a UCLA graduate student from Jamaica, the event grew and developed into an annual event. Still as the event grows, similar events are developing in other parts of in the county. During this study’s fieldwork, the first annual Hollywood Caribbean parade took place in June of 2012. Similarly, a small annual carnival paralleling Trinidad and Tobago’s Carnival in February also sprung up in downtown Los Angeles. Such events speak to a growing community

that is largely unknown to the larger Los Angeles community but encourages academic attention to its implications.

The growth of Caribbean cultural events is dependent on a well-connected community of primarily first generation Afro-Caribbeans who stimulate memories of home and maintain spaces where cultural traditions and norms are sustained. Such traditions are sustained in the relative absence of clearly defined Caribbean enclaves in Los Angeles. Study participants reside across Los Angeles County in primarily African American and Latino neighborhoods with few identified Caribbean immigrants in the surrounding area. Despite the absence of enclaves, first generation Afro-Caribbeans succeed in maintaining strong personal ties with fellow Caribbean migrants. 59% of first generation Afro-Caribbeans in Los Angeles described their personal networks as composed of Caribbean immigrants, therefore reminding us that social context is not easily defined by geographic space. In addition, first generation participants also identify their networks as comprised of other first generation immigrants from Latin America, Africa and the Pacific Islands. Often, the basis of such networks is described in terms of perceived cultural commonalities such as foods and music.

While, first generation respondents are able to maintain connections to other members of the Caribbean community and facilitate cultural events, Afro-Caribbeans remain invisible in the public consciousness. The effects of this invisibility are most evident among 1.5 and second generation participants. Rebecca, a second generation Trinidadian expresses the responsibilities that come with such invisibility, “In school I have to educate others including my professors.” (Rebecca, 2nd generation Trinidadian Los Angeles) The responsibility of educating others, falls to those who choose to emphasize

country of origin or ethnic attachments, however Jones shares the perspective of an individual who accepts the invisibility as a social reality in Los Angeles,

Q: What does it mean to you to be a Jamaican in Los Angeles?

A: "I'm just a regular black dude in L.A. I could answer that better in New York or Miami. In New York or Miami you feel like you can be with your own more. A lot of the Jamaicans here, you don't know their Jamaican unless they tell you. Even myself, people wouldn't know I was Jamaican unless I tell them because I'm so westernized now. I've been here for 19 years. I picked up a lot of the African American culture. Depending on when you came to L.A. or California or whatever you can kind of lose your culture. (Jones, age 29 first generation in Los Angeles)

While Jones describes his perspective as a first generation Jamaican who migrated as a young child, the description of his own social identity highlights a trend that was echoed among second generation respondents. This is explained by the reduced outward projection of Afro-Caribbean identity described by Jones. Similarly, Donna, a second generation Trinidadian states, "It wasn't really broadcasted that I was from Trinidad since I've been out here like they think I'm from like NJ" (Donna). Second generation participants largely describe their country of origin and ethnic attachments as a private affair, shared among family and close friends. "When it comes to Jamaica, I kind of vibe off of my family. I don't think about it too much. Aside, from my family everyone that I hang out with is just Americans." (Hillary, age 21 second generation Jamaican in Los Angeles) The hidden or private nature of Afro-Caribbean identity among the second generation resulted in limited participants as they proved to be a hard to reach population for this study.

For those second generation respondents who moved to Los Angeles, from other regions with a larger Caribbean population, Afro-Caribbean invisibility is a source of

frustration. Tanisha, a second generation Jamaican who had previously resided in the Northeast as well as Toronto expresses this frustration, “I have to fight to keep my culture it’s a very hard thing.” (Tanisha, age 28 second generation Jamaican in Los Angeles) The role that cultural reinforcement and public consciousness play in group attachment echoes the findings of Zhou and Bankston who argue that “families do not and cannot sustain and pass on cultural values in isolation. Rather, they exist and function in wider webs of social relations in the community.” (Zhou & Bankston III, 1999, 224) As such, the relative absence of a physical Afro-Caribbean community and the private nature of ethnic attachment among the 1.5 to second generation highlight the centrality of cultural reinforcement to social identity.

Ultimately, the invisibility of Afro-Caribbeans in Los Angeles does not significantly alter group attachments among the first generation. As seen in New York, it is rooted in cultural pride and an upright representation of the country of origin and ethnic groups. However, where New York and Los Angeles differ is in terms of the relationship with African Americans. I find more ethnic distancing in Los Angeles where first generation Afro-Caribbeans interact less with African Americans and where defining the ethnic group image in the public consciousness requires more activity.

First generation Afro-Caribbeans in Los Angeles emphasize their frustration about being lumped in with African Americans on surveys and in popular conceptions of blackness. Afro-Caribbeans in Los Angeles also draw larger distinctions between Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans in terms of their outlook on life and values. This trend disappears significantly among 1.5 and second generation participants. Afro-Caribbean identity becomes a personal matter, shared amongst family and close friends but not a

major part of interpersonal relations. They readily connect and identify with their African American counterparts as largely the same. Whereas Afro-Caribbeans in both cities readily connect with the term black, Angelenos demonstrate a heightened need for a national identifier as well. This difference in identity is the result of different patterns of interpersonal interactions and visibility in the public consciousness.

IV. Conclusion

Throughout the literature on Afro-Caribbeans, there is considerable variation on how scholars understand identity among members of the group. Sometimes Afro-Caribbeans are seen as distancing themselves from African Americans and at other times they are seen as advantageously lumping themselves in with African Americans. Amidst this variation, there is no discussion of how Afro-Caribbeans reconcile this variation for themselves. This gap in the literature highlights the difficulty with analyzing multiple racial and ethnic group attachments. Moreover, it highlights the extent to which the study of social context can help complicate and clarify the discipline's understanding of identity.

This chapter examines the social factors that influence Afro-Caribbean group attachment in New York City and Los Angeles County. It argues that Afro-Caribbeans maintain three distinct group attachments; country of origin, ethnic and racial. Each attachment bears with it social responsibilities that Afro-Caribbeans balance through an emphasis on culture. Cultural practices and values form the foundation for personal identity, social networks, and also serve as a tool for managing group image in the public

consciousness. Afro-Caribbeans maintain an acute awareness of group image in the public consciousness in order to maximize the personal success and to improve opportunities for other members of the group.

Afro-Caribbeans navigate and attempt to manage essentialist claims used by the dominant society to explain socioeconomic mobility or lack thereof, where the inability to attain socioeconomic success is coded as the result of cultural deficiencies which warrant the less than full acceptance as a member of the polity. The persistence of such group based assessments causes Afro-Caribbeans to tread lightly in their deployment of their various group attachments. This tendency prompts disagreement about whether Afro-Caribbean and African American relations should be characterized as ethnic distancing or ethnic attachment.

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

The chapter also finds the culture is the language of meaning making for Afro-Caribbeans, constructing a lens through which to understand potential allies, as well their own identity and group attachment in the host country. This home country attachment reinforces a concept of self that is primarily immigrant. This immigrant attachment results in a strong identification with other immigrant communities particularly in Los Angeles where there is only a small scattered community of co-ethnics and relative

invisibility in the Los Angeles public sphere. Meanwhile a large community of co-ethnics, higher visibility in the city's public sphere produces a two-way assimilation process that facilitates African American attachments in New York. Race is both a socialization and discrimination experience (Nunnally, 2010).

Results serve to confirm Rogers' findings that Afro-Caribbeans who are firmly enmeshed in African American networks are more inclined to tap into race-based group attachments. In particular, the absence of a large Afro-Caribbean community in Los Angeles strengthens the Afro-Caribbean frames among first generation respondents but such attitudes are notably less prominent among those socialized in New York. Meanwhile, a large Afro Caribbean community in New York serves to strengthen the country of origin and ethnic group attachments from the first generation *through* to the second generation. The chapter also challenges Waters findings by suggesting that a theory of ethnic distancing ignores Afro-Caribbean membership and identification as black. It suggests a more nuanced approach to Afro-Caribbean identity as the local community can be a powerful force that facilitates incorporation into a new country while also maintaining strong bonds to the country of origin (Zhou & Bankston III, 1999). Recognizing the bonds that Afro-Caribbeans maintain with the racial group, the ethnic group and country of origin, the following chapter examines the political attitudes of Afro-Caribbeans during the Obama presidency.

Chapter Four – Reference Group Formation and the Barack Obama Presidency: Examining Afro-Caribbean Attitudes towards Politics and Race

The capacity for Afro-Caribbeans to shift between distinct group attachments, as seen in Chapter Three, adds complexity to the examination of political attitudes among members of the group. Specifically, the complexity lies in studying a group that shares phenotypic similarities with African Americans, yet different histories and strategies for navigating American society. The complexity is also exacerbated by external social and political factors that can significantly influence political attitudes. As such, the study of Afro-Caribbean political incorporation requires an analysis of how group attachments become politicized and how this politicization manifests itself in the United States.

Chong and Rogers (2005) describe the politicization of group attachment as group consciousness. Specifically, they define group consciousness as a combination of “basic in-group identification with a set of ideas about the group’s status and strategies for improving it” (Chong & Rogers, 2005, pg 350). The difference between group attachment and group consciousness is that the latter emphasizes the social location of the group and an action-based approach to altering it. Therefore, these beliefs provide the basis for group mobilization. With particular attention to racial group consciousness, this chapter examines Afro-Caribbean political attitudes to determine the factors that influence social political attitudes towards the Obama Presidency among Afro-Caribbeans in the United States.

Existing studies find that key elements of racial group consciousness include a belief that what happens to the group generally will affect members of the group on a personal

level (Brown, 1931; Dawson, 1994). In addition, those who share a sense of racial group consciousness also believe that collective action is the best means by which the group can improve its status (Gurin, et. al, 1980). Studies of black political attitudes and incorporation find racial group consciousness to be an important feature of black political opinion and behavior (Chong & Rogers, 2005; Dawson, 1995; Junn & Masuoka, 2008; McClain, Johnson Carew, Walton, & Watts, 2009; Miller, Gurin, Gurin, & Malanchuk, 1981).

While studies find racial group consciousness to be an important feature of African American political attitudes, the Afro-Caribbean literature finds less traction with racial group consciousness among members of the group. Rogers states,

“Afro-Caribbeans don't evince the high levels of racial group consciousness African Americans tend to express. Group consciousness among African Americans has served as a cognitive device for diagnosing and responding to racism. The Afro-Caribbeans interviewed for this study showed less familiarity with the antiracist, collectivist belief system associated with group consciousness. In fact, the immigrants usually turn to their own distinctive ethnic identity to navigate racial barriers in the United States.” (Rogers, 2006, 174)

Rogers's findings suggest that despite a common racial categorization, Afro-Caribbeans do not necessarily share the racial group consciousness that defines African American attitudes. Rogers attributes this difference in worldview to a distinct background as migrants from predominantly black nations without the persistent problem of race-based discrimination. Similarly, Greer (2013) and Kasinitz (1992) find that while race remains an important element of Afro-Caribbean identity, Afro-Caribbeans maintain a set of attitudes towards politics in the United States that are distinct from those of African Americans. Such findings raise questions about Afro-Caribbean political attitudes in the

context of the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, where a viable black candidate ran for president amidst overwhelming support from the black community.

With racial group consciousness serving as the primary paradigm for understanding black political attitudes in the discipline, high levels of electoral support among black voters in the general election (95% in 2008 and 93% in 2012) prompts presumptions about black political attitudes that do not address black ethnic diversity. As the first non-white President of the United States, the campaign and administration of Barack Obama garnered recognition as a pivotal point in the history of the country. In particular, three frames characterize the literature and media coverage of the Obama presidency, each with a unique relationship with racial group consciousness: the post-racial usher, the new black leader, and a model of black respectability.

During the 2008 presidential campaign season, pundits widely debated the election of Barack Obama as the beginning of a post-racial era, whereby race no longer limited opportunities for racial minorities. The election of a black man to the highest elected office in the country provoked discussions centered on the belief that the country had moved beyond racism, citing a multi-racial coalition and electoral support as evidence. Among black voters, such a framing resists racial group consciousness by minimizing the significance of race in the wake of the Obama presidency. Although many rejected the framing of the Barack Obama presidency as the beginning of a post-racial era (Tesler and Sears, 2008), Bobo (2011) argues that the narrative persisted well into the Obama presidency.

While the framing of Barack Obama as a post-racial usher did not gain universal traction, consensus about what he represented did not exist. Some interpret the race of the

44th president⁸ as defining a specific set of responsibilities to improve the lives of members of the black community (Harris, 2012). Among them, Cornel West and Tavis Smiley criticize Obama for his lack of attention to the black underclass. Undergirding this interpretation is racial group consciousness and the belief that Barack Obama should embody the new black political leadership exemplified by historical black leaders that preceded him, such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Jesse Jackson.

While exceptional responsibilities were placed on Barack Obama in the scholarship and media, Obama, himself, acknowledged the multiple race-based frames during his 2008 campaign stating, “At various stages in the campaign, some commentators have deemed me either ‘too black’ or ‘not black enough’” (Obama, 2008). Amidst such frames, a third interpretation emerged. The third frame emphasizes the manner in which Obama represents himself as a black person in office. The frame focuses on the ability of Obama to counteract negative race-based stereotypes by being respectable. This frame harkens back to Evelyn Higginbotham’s (1993) analysis of the women’s movement of the black Baptist church, where Higginbotham identifies a politics of respectability that views reform of individual behavior as a goal in itself and as a strategy for societal reform (Higginbotham, 1993). While distinct from the new black leader frame, the respectability frame is also driven by racial group consciousness, as it emphasizes the status of the group generally as having implications for individual members of said group.

Amidst such frames, few investigations of black attitudes toward the Obama presidency focus on the ethnic diversity of the community (Harris, 2012; Tesler & Sears,

⁸ While the background of Barack Obama is widely recognized as bi-racial, his mother being white and his father being black, those who proscribe to the new black leader frame view these facts as tangential to his appearance and the history of blackness in the United States being defined by the one-drop rule.

2010). In examining Afro-Caribbean political attitudes, this chapter identifies the political and historical significance of the Barack Obama presidency for members of the group. The chapter argues that the multiple group attachments maintained by Afro-Caribbeans yield political attitudes and interests that are distinct from those found among African Americans. Despite this distinction, Afro-Caribbeans maintain attitudes towards race that are consistent with racial group consciousness. Racial group consciousness is most evident in Afro-Caribbean attitudes towards the Barack Obama Presidency, where Afro-Caribbeans express their support through a politics of respectability frame.

I. Current Study

In order to understand the factors that influence Afro-Caribbean social-political attitudes towards the Obama Presidency, the chapter relies on in-depth interviews conducted with 71 Afro-Caribbean immigrants (40 first generation and 31 second generation) in New York and Los Angeles. Jamaicans and Trinidadians were selected as significant segments of the Afro-Caribbean population in both cities. Participants were recruited through a snowball sample of personal networks and through organizers and participants of Caribbean carnivals in both cities. The interviews were conducted during the first term of the Obama presidency from August 2011 to January 2013.

Using a semi-structured interview format, the chapter examines participant attitudes towards the political interests of the group, racism, political representation⁹, and Barack Obama. In particular, the chapter examines participant attitudes the Obama presidency to

⁹ Studies of African American political attitudes and incorporation find descriptive representation to be an feature of racial group consciousness among members of the group (Bobo and Gilliam 1990; Gay 2001; Tate 2003).

determine whether the identified frames capture Afro-Caribbean attitudes towards the President.¹⁰

II. Attachments Politicized: Considering Group Interests and Representation

As shown in Chapter Three, Afro-Caribbeans maintain three distinct group attachments: the country of origin, the ethnic group and the racial group. Analysis of the participant political interests reveals that each of these attachments is politicized in the United States. Political interests are focused on the experience of being a Caribbean immigrant with attachments to the country of origin, while simultaneously concerned about improving the transition for newcomers to the United States and eradicating racism and race-based discrimination.

A. Three in One: Country of Origin, Ethnic and Racial Political Interests

Manifested

The first attachment, the country of origin, is particularly evident in the responses of first generation participants. While only 36% of respondents describe a sustained effort to keep track of politics in the country of origin, attachment to the country of origin still

¹⁰ In its analysis of the Obama presidency, the chapter recognizes the work of Ernst Kantorowicz (1957), which argues that the king's body simultaneously represents his normal human form, like all other bodies, and also as a representation of the sovereign. Similarly, Sawyer and Gooding (2013) assert that by virtue of their blackness, black football players on European football clubs are deemed incapable of representing a European nation, therefore highlighting a tension between race, nation, and citizenship. In such cases, the individual functions as a symbol that renders multiple significations through specific cultural lenses. A semiotic practice approach provides an opportunity to analyze responses to a person or entity and identify the symbolic significance and the political impact. Like the crown and black football players in Europe, the Presidency of Barack Obama is multifaceted, embodying multiple meanings.

persists among their political interests. Aslan, a first generation Jamaican speaks to the political interests of Afro-Caribbeans in his response to the following question,

Q. What are the most important political issues for Caribbeans in Los Angeles?

A. The most important issues are most people want to stay connected to the Caribbean, Jamaica. When they're here they become aware of their growing up and they generally want to see things better at home. Those people try to find ways in which they can help back home. They either do it through an organization or by themselves. Those are important issues for them, to promote their country. (Aslan, first generation Jamaican in Los Angeles)

Aslan's response highlights the politicization of a continued attachment to the country of origin. Afro-Caribbeans maintain an interest in the improvement of economic and political conditions back in the country of origin specifically but also in the Caribbean more generally.

Political interests in the Caribbean region manifests itself as an issue of international affairs but also as an opportunity for politicization of the ethnic group attachment. When focusing on the United States, Afro-Caribbeans describe the difficulty of adjusting from the Caribbean system of education to that of the United States as an experience shared by Caribbean immigrants. Florence describes the difficulties faced as an immigrant population from an alternative system of education. "It's really hard when Caribbean people come to America. They have to start all over again in terms of education. People from the Philippines, because they have the American system, they would come and the job opportunities would be higher" (Florence, age 37, first generation Trinidadian in Los Angeles) The political interests of the group emphasize the difficulty of entering and achieving in the United States amidst systemic obstacles. Participants highlight the need

for programs that facilitate immigrant incorporation into the education system and immigration reform. Rachel highlights the need for such political interests to be expressed as a group.

“There's too much fragmentation among the Caribbean population, we need to come together and understand that we have common experiences as immigrants or as Caribbeans living in the U.S., and we also have common goals. Economic stability, balance, service in our community, acknowledgment and recognition of our communities” (Rachel, age 51, first generation Jamaican in New York)

In addition to economic integration, Rachel's description of Afro-Caribbean interests highlights the need for Afro-Caribbeans to raise the visibility of the Caribbean community and culture in the local community. Echoing the findings of Chapter Three, gaining recognition of the ethnic group in the public sphere proves to be an issue of political concern for Afro-Caribbeans. This concern highlights the need for Afro-Caribbeans to distinguish themselves as a group of political significance.

While Afro-Caribbeans place heavy emphasis on their need to distinguish themselves as an immigrant population, members of the group are keenly aware of racism and discrimination and identify race based inequality as a major issue in American society.

“The driving force behind a lot of issues today is galvanizing of people who have rather extreme or prejudiced views of what America should be. I understand that your ancestors came and met someone. Came and built something. My ancestors you took and brought here, to help you build this place. And you're still looking at us that way. That's what it appears to me.” (Tony, first Generation Trinidadian in New York)

It is important to note that while my discussion with Tony took place in New York, his use of the term “here” is broad and alludes to the Americas broadly defined. This

discussion of slavery as connected to the present day racism draws on Afro-Caribbean identification with an African Diaspora that shares a common history of the transatlantic slave trade, colonialism and racism in social, political, and economic affairs. Frank echoes a similar sentiment, “No matter how you put it you are still black, you can take the American out of it but you are still African and that’s going to factor into the whole situation in America” (Frank, second generation Trinidadian). Such recognition of the pervasiveness of racism is derived from participant experiences of racism and discrimination that range from the relatively tame micro-aggressions of being watched or followed while shopping in stores to much more disturbing cases of being assaulted and then being arrested after calling 911. The prevalence of such experiences across the study sample resulted in a general agreement that racism is a major, if not the biggest, issue facing the United States.

B. Descriptive or Not: Identifying Political Representation Preferences

As Afro-Caribbeans balance the multiple group attachments that guide their political interests and their desire to raise the public profile of the group, participants express a need for representatives who identify the Afro-Caribbean community as a priority and seek to raise the community profile in local politics. Participants identify political representatives with an Afro-Caribbean background, such as Mervyn Dymally in Los Angeles and Yvette Clark in New York, as the political officials that seek to represent the community. While a Caribbean background is preferred for individuals seeking support of the Caribbean community, participants stressed a preference for figures who prioritize group interests and maintain a presence in the Caribbean community. Sophia, a second

generation Trinidadian New Yorker highlights the Afro-Caribbean perspective in this regard,

“I mean you have a couple...but they change once they get in office. Bill De Blasio...he’s married to a Trinidadian woman. And I guess he tries to represent the West Indian community as well. I mean you have him. Not to say his whole platform is about it...Marty Markowitz, he tries to do a lot for the West Indian community. When they tried to cancel the West Indian parade, you saw him standing up against it. You see him at a lot of West Indian functions. He has his pull in certain West Indian functions that happen down by the pools and libraries and stuff like that. Jumaane Williams, I don’t know if I’m feeling him. I haven’t really seen too much what he’s done for the West Indian community... I wouldn’t say that there’s a whole lot of them.” (Sophia, age 40, a second generation Trinidadian New Yorker)

Sophia’s identification of Bill de Blasio, predated his mayoral campaign in 2013 where the de Blasio family became a key feature of the campaign. Yet, his personal connection to the Caribbean community provided him with capital in the Caribbean community and ability to speak to community issues. Meanwhile, as Sophia expresses her support for Marty Markowitz, the Jewish-American, Brooklyn Borough President, she expresses confidence in him based on his presence in the community and continued efforts to raise the profile of the Afro-Caribbean community. While Sophia lauds the track record of Markowitz, she also demonstrates hesitation in supporting Grenadian-American Councilman Jumaane Williams.

While Sophia expresses intimate knowledge of the local political landscape, her response is representative of a larger trend among participants who prioritize a presence at community events and a focus on Caribbean group interests. An observable connection to the Caribbean community; a focus on Afro-Caribbean issues; and a presence in the Afro-Caribbean community served as the criteria for garnering Afro-Caribbean support.

Such political interests and preferences reinforce the difference between Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans. However, such distinctions do not negate the existence of racial group consciousness among members of the group. The campaign and presidency of Barack Obama served to highlight the importance of race in Afro-Caribbean political attitudes.

III. Framing Obama: Examining the Semiotic Significance of the Obama Presidency

Polls indicate that African American support for Barack Obama neared unanimity during the 2008 and 2012 campaigns. Responses to this study indicate that Afro-Caribbean support for the Obama presidency is also overwhelmingly positive. Consistent with Afro-Caribbean recognition of race as a significant issue in American society and politics, the historical significance of a black man being elected as President of the United States resonated strongly with study participants.

Participants highlighted the importance of the Obama election and emphasized the existence of a larger pan ethnic community that was deeply affected by his election. Wendy, a first generation Trinidadian in Los Angeles highlighted the historical nature of the event, “It was just so historical. I can think about it and just smile” (Wendy, first Generation Trinidadian in Los Angeles). Afro-Caribbeans describe the election as producing an emotional response that was informed by a broader history of black oppression and discrimination in the United States. In response to the question “How did you react to Barack Obama being elected President in 2008?” a second generation Jamaican responds, “The Caribbean community are mixed in with the African

Americans...Black people as a whole. People in Jamaica wrote songs about this. Food may be different [but] we are all black” (Tanisha, second generation Jamaican in Los Angeles). Similarly, Neil states, “Euphoric is the word. You didn’t even see American or West Indian. It was just Black, African. I felt connected” (Neil, a first generation Trinidadian in New York). While all of the interview respondents expressed support for the Obama presidency, analysis of why and how members of the group understand the significance of Obama’s race can provide greater insight to how various attachments are politicized for members of the group.

A. Ushering in the Post Racial Era

In examining Afro-Caribbean support for the Obama presidency, a belief in the post-racial usher frame should manifest itself in the belief that racial tensions are improved with the election of the first black president. In addition, a belief in Obama as the post racial usher should view the absence of above racial resentment, animosity and obstruction toward the Obama presidency. However, while Afro-Caribbeans hail from nations where race-based discrimination is not conceptualized as the norm, participants express consistent resistance to the post-racial frame. Participants describe the Obama presidency as marked by race-based obstruction and disrespect. Lana, a first generation Trinidadian in Los Angeles, describes disrespect as evidence of differential treatment based on race,

“When you look at the whole picture, race suddenly stepped in. It wasn’t about politics anymore. It was just a matter of race. This man wasn’t supposed to be there. I am yet to hear them really address him as president. There are so many times I hear disrespect... Mr. Obama did this, not like the president or our president. He has been

so disrespected in that way. I'm going to put you in your place...you are black, so you are Mr. Obama. You are not smart enough to be President Obama" (Lana, age 56, first generation Trinidadian in Los Angeles)

While Lana focuses on the language used to refer to the President, Tony, a first generation Trinidadian in New York, explains that the race of the president contributes to increased obstructionism in Congress "[It's not that] they didn't like... his policies, they didn't like him because he was black. And they were disappointed that they lost to a person of color because to them that should have never happened in their lifetime. So their view of us collectively as black people hasn't changed" (Tony, a first generation Trinidadian in New York). In addition, 64% of respondents believed that Obama's race had a negative impact on his presidency. Respondents cite an increase in hate crimes, discussions about Obama being a Muslim and birtherism (a movement to prove that Barack Obama was not born in the United States and therefore ineligible to occupy the office of President) as further evidence that race remains significant in U.S. politics.

Johnson, a first generation Jamaican in New York, describes a key moment in the 2012 campaign season where he recognizes the uncomfortable presence of race as a major factor in U.S. politics, "... the song that [Paul] Ryan used for his introduction to come on stage at the convention ... he used the song 'The Boys are Back in Town' that tells me. For me, that is a deep inner conflict." (Johnson, a first generation Jamaican in New York) Johnson's interpretations of the 2012 Republican candidates' song choice, highlights the belief that the "boys" alludes to a prediction that white men will return to power at the conclusion of the election. Such an interpretation of the Republican party as participating in race-based mobilization against Barack Obama echoes a larger trend among participants that race relations had not improved.

In response to the question, “what impact do you think a black president has had on race relations in the United States”, 55% of respondents believed that race relations in the United States either remained the same after the Obama presidency or had deteriorated. Moreover, respondents described the societal response to the Obama presidency as marked by disrespect, obstruction, and antagonism as a result of race. Consequently, while popular media outlets attempted to argue for a new post racial reality, Afro-Caribbeans firmly rejected such a framing of the Obama presidency.

B. A New Black Leader

Amidst the recognition that racial inequality persists, some look to Barack Obama for policies that focus on improving opportunities for members of the black community (Harris, 2012). Afro-Caribbeans resist such a framing, while asserting frustration towards race-based voting or governance. Participants maintain the position that voting for Obama because of his blackness is in error. Tony highlights this perspective, “There were those who accepted him only because of his ethnicity. I have a problem with that because when you view a person only because of that then your expectation is that the person will produce only a certain type of behavior or a certain level of expectation.” (Tony, first generation Trinidadian in New York) Tony describes the limitations of race-based voting as producing expectations that are frequently left unfulfilled. Similarly, Ryan states, “I think it’s great to have a black president but I don’t think we should vote just because he is black” (Ryan, first generation Jamaican in Los Angeles). While Tony and Ryan reject the idea of race as the basis for voting, Judith lauds Obama for his commitment to governing the nation as whole, as opposed to a narrow focus on the black community.

“I look at him as not being that type of man. I honestly and truly believe that yes he is a black man in there but he is in there looking out and trying to do the best for all. I know there is a ton of people out there saying he’s black and I’m black and whatever. I don’t believe in that. He is serving a country and a diverse country. So if he was going to go in there just to make *us* be better then he could’ve done something else. I think he is doing what he is supposed to be doing, looking out for all. I think some of us blacks need to start looking for themselves.”(Judith, first generation Jamaican in New York)

Like Judith, participants express support for the Obama campaigns and presidency in its broad focus without racial targeting. Sophia echoes a similar sentiment, “[He is] not President of the Black race” (Sophia, age 40, second generation Trinidadian in New York). Afro-Caribbeans recognize and experience the persistence of racism in American society and politics, however this recognition does not translate into support for race-based voting or governance, therefore rejecting the new black leader frame.

C. Modelling Black Respectability

While participants do not support race based voting or governance, Afro-Caribbeans still identify the Barack Obama as racially significant. Specifically, participants view Barack Obama as a descriptive representative of the Black community, while emphasizing his respectability. Afro-Caribbean use of the respectability frame manifests itself in the belief that Barack Obama counters existing stereotypes and models black success for future generations.

Participants describe Barack Obama and the first family as a model of how black people really are and should represent themselves. A first generation Jamaican in New

York describes the Barack Obama presidency as challenging negative stereotypes and racism directed towards black people,

“I admire the fact that a black man could stand up and say to the world all black men are not what you think they are. I was very happy that he was able to change the face of America. I absolutely love the way he loves his wife. He’s not afraid to show it. He’s always holding his wife. He’s always holding his kids. Even though it may have happened in other presidencies... But for me, you know that notion that black men are not as family devoted and committed...I like the fact that he presented everything that people think a black man isn’t. He’s intelligent. He presents well. He is a family man. As a rounded man that is who I would pick to represent me.” (Gwen, first generation Jamaican in New York)

Like Gwen, Afro-Caribbeans, highlight Barack Obama as representing a respectable conception of black masculinity that is rooted in his family life. Such responses emphasize Barack Obama’s capacity to counter negative stereotypes of blackness.

This modelling of respectability is not limited to the President but it also includes the entire first family. Denise, a second generation Jamaican in New Yorker highlights the symbolic significance of the first family, “The image of the way those girls are being raised. The way they dress, the way they are and how they are portrayed. It is very important for kids and everyone to see. Michelle looks good and rolls up her sleeves. She is still willing to work hard.” Respondents identified Michelle, Sasha and Malia Obama as all representing a black respectability that is important for members of the larger society to observe.

Robert describes the social and cultural significance of modelling respectability, “[Barack Obama] provides an improved image of black people and men and family. It reframes old stereotypes. We need Cosby show moments. It’s been important culturally. Way overdue.” (Robert, second generation Jamaican in Los Angeles) In addition to his

ability to counter existing stereotypes, respondents also emphasized his capacity to model respectability and success for future generations. “As a black person I was excited. He represents us well. He is a model...and...I'm happy that he became president” (Denise, second generation Jamaican in Los Angeles). Rick echoes a similar sentiment, “ It shows that we can do the job.” (Rick, first generation Jamaican in Los Angeles)

Taken together, Afro-Caribbeans identify a deep connection to the symbol of Barack Obama as a member of a global black community that embodies a model of black respectability. Such a frame underscores Afro-Caribbean recognition of their own connection to a larger black community by highlighting that he models and represents a group to which Afro-Caribbeans claim membership. Moreover, the respectability frame highlights the presence of racial group consciousness among Afro-Caribbean political attitudes.

IV. Conclusion

Confirming the existing literature on Afro-Caribbean political attitudes, this study identifies the Afro-Caribbean political interests as unique and distinct from those of African Americans (Greer, 2013; Hackshaw, 2008; Kasinitz, 1992; Rogers, 2006). Such works find that Caribbean acknowledgement of the persistence of racism in American society does not necessarily produce the same type of black community solidarity or common fate perceptions held by African Americans. Similarly, this study finds that the unique social location of Afro-Caribbeans results in the politicization of multiple group attachments not evident in African American political attitudes.

Afro-Caribbean political interests are derived from the experience of being an immigrant community and are focused on maintaining connections to the country of origin and facilitating the transition to the United States. Jones-Correa (1998) and Rogers (2006) emphasize the psychological connections that immigrants maintain with their countries of origin. Rogers (2006) highlights that the psychological connection to the country of origin is maintained and affirmed through frequent trips back to the country of origin, consistent remittances, property and financial holdings as well as strong relationships with family and friends who continue to live there. These group attachments are evident in group expectations of local political representatives, however the existence of such attachments and interests do not eradicate Afro-Caribbean attachment to the racial group.

Analysis of the Afro-Caribbean attitudes towards the Barack Obama presidency reveals an interpretation of Barack Obama as a model of respectability. While Afro-Caribbeans agree with Dawson (2013) in disavowing the validity of a post racial-era on the heels of Obama election, Afro-Caribbeans are also resistant to the more nationalistic frame that calls for more race conscious rhetoric and policies from the president. Rather Afro-Caribbeans tend to favor race neutral politics consistent with a radical egalitarian ideology. While some criticize Barack Obama for his treatment of the Black community as either dismissive or not representative, Afro-Caribbeans challenges such claims by demonstrating that a de-racialized strategy appeals to significant segment of the black population.

Ultimately, the Barack Obama presidency served to evoke a pan-ethnic identity among Afro-Caribbeans and a sense of solidarity with African Americans that is

consistent with racial group consciousness. While Barack Obama is a second generation immigrant, as his father was born in Kenya, Afro-Caribbeans do not focus on his immigrant background. Rather, they identify with his blackness as pan-ethnic and important for modelling respectable blackness in the United States and globally. Such resonance is apparent among Afro-Caribbeans in the United States, as well as in the Caribbean as evidenced by the naming of the highest point in the Caribbean nation of Antigua and Barbuda as Mount Obama.

Given that racial, ethnic and country of origin attachments are all politicized among Afro-Caribbeans in distinct political moments, Chapter Five examines the implications for political participation in New York and Los Angeles, where the social and political circumstances for Afro-Caribbeans vary significantly.

Chapter Five: Social Context and the Pathways to Political Incorporation

Political incorporation is traditionally analyzed as a sign of commitment to the host country, whereby voting signifies an investment in the outcomes of elections (representatives, propositions, etc.) and running for office represents a commitment to improving the country by increasing the level of engagement as measured by time, money and effort (Hochschild, Chattopadhyay, Gay, Jones-Correa, & more, 2013). The immigrant incorporation literature examines this investment in the host country as divestment from the country of origin, as citizenship in the United States requires the verbal renunciation of allegiances to other countries including the country of origin. However, the act of reciting the naturalization oath of allegiance and verbally renouncing other allegiances¹¹ doesn't necessarily make it so. A growing literature investigates the depth of ties that are retained to the country of origin despite residence and citizenship in the United States (Delano, 2009; Jones-Correa, 1998; Lee & Ramakrishnan, 2007; Leitner, Sheppard, & Sziarto, 2008; Levitt & Waters, 2006; Lien, 2010; Pantoja, 2005; Potter, 2005; Rogers, 2006; Staton, Jackson, & Canache, 2007).

¹¹ The Naturalization Oath of Allegiance to the United States of America states, *"I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God."*

In his influential study of Afro-Caribbean political incorporation, Rogers describes Afro-Caribbeans in New York as a “sleeping giant,” referring to the size of the population and their relative political inactivity (Rogers, 2006). Rogers attributes this inactivity to an attachment to the country of origin that is driven by the hope of return and the view of the political self as a sojourner. Moreover, Rogers finds that for Afro-Caribbeans who do naturalize, political participation is far less inevitable than previous models of immigrant political incorporation would suggest (Rogers, 2006). Similarly, Jones-Correa (1998) finds that a lack of political incorporation among Latin Americans in New York is affected by ties to the country of origin. Consistent with Rogers’ findings, Kasinitz (1992) argues that since the achievement of independence by the Anglophone nations of the Caribbean, Caribbean New Yorkers and their voluntary organizations remain largely removed from politics. Notwithstanding the inactivity found by Rogers and Kasinitz, Greer (2013) finds that both local and national levels of participation are higher among union members, suggesting that union membership increases political activity among Afro-Caribbeans.

While each of the existing studies on Afro-Caribbean political incorporation identifies limited political participation among members of the group, none examine the political activity of the group in a site outside of New York, where the Caribbean community is smaller. As such, existing studies do not fully capture the dynamic nature of Afro-Caribbean attachments to the country of origin, ethnic and racial groups and the subsequent impact on political participation. This chapter seeks to address this gap by examining the impact of social context on the pathway to political incorporation chosen

by Afro-Caribbeans in New York and Los Angeles, given their multiple politicized group attachments.

Existing studies of political engagement find that the racial and ethnic makeup of the community in which an individual resides impacts their political activity (Alesina & Ferrara, 1999; Carsey, 1995; Huckfeldt, 1983; Junn & Masuoka, 2008; Oliver, 2001; Rubenson, 2005). While studies agree that the racial and ethnic makeup of the neighborhood influences political activity, there is less agreement as to whether or not ethnic heterogeneity affects political activity positively or negatively. Some studies find that there is lower political engagement in racially heterogeneous neighborhoods (Kahn & Costa, 2002), while others find the answer to be more complex (Cho, Gimpel, & Dyck, 2006; Huckfeldt, 1983; Rubenson, 2005). Scholars of immigrant incorporation find co-ethnic communities to be particularly significant for first generation immigrants who seek to maintain social, economic and political ties to the country of origin (Jones-Correa, 1998). While these ties may facilitate the navigation of social relationships in the host country, consistent reinforcement of ties to the country of origin may produce a negative impact on political participation in the host country.

These conflicting findings are situated within a larger social context literature that highlights the individual's tendency to participate at levels consistent with those around them (Cho et al., 2006; Huckfeldt, Plutzer, & Sprague, 1993). As such, the emphasis on ethnic heterogeneity may require a greater understanding of the neighborhood and some of the mechanisms operating behind race and ethnicity (Baybeck, 2006; Branton & Jones, 2005; Matsubayashi, 2010).

This chapter finds that Afro-Caribbeans express an aversion to politics¹² in New York and Los Angeles. This aversion is prompted by experiences in the country of origin. While Afro-Caribbeans maintain attachments to the country of origin, this attachment does not produce enthusiasm for political participation in the country of origin, rather it informs how they understand politics in the United States. This frame of reference comes together with the Afro-Caribbean desire to be recognized in the political sphere and produces participation in low cost respectable politics (e.g. utilizing voluntary, electoral and cultural pathways to political incorporation). The universe of respectable politics is expanded and constrained by the racial and ethnic makeup of the social context, which provides varying opportunities for diverse forms of participation.

I. Current Study

This chapter utilizes two sources of data for its observation of social context and political incorporation; 1) in-depth semi-structured interviews with first and second generation Afro-Caribbean immigrants in New York City and Los Angeles County, and 2) participant observations.

Interviews conducted with 71 Afro-Caribbean immigrants (40 first generation and 31 second generation) in New York and Los Angeles provides the basis for study findings.

While the sociology literature addresses the home country ties and political incorporation

¹² This chapter relies on Jones-Correa definition of the political as “any methods or tactics used, by individuals or groups, to make claims about the allocation of material or symbolic public goods. The political does not include behaviors, for instance, related to purely to the labor market (e.g., ‘office politics’) or to the private sphere of the family. It takes place in public. In short, politics is public claims making. (Jones-Correa, 2013)

of first and second generation immigrants (Kasinitz, 2004, 2009; Levitt & Waters, 2006; Potter, 2005), the political science literature is limited. This dearth of research is heightened when focusing on Afro-Caribbean immigrants and reflects a general assumption that ties to the home country do not extend beyond the first generation. Jamaicans and Trinidadians were selected as significant segments of the Afro-Caribbean population in both cities. By focusing on specific national migrants there is greater control over factors in the country of origin that may alter the desire to return home.

Participants were recruited through a snowball sample of personal networks and through organizers and participants of Caribbean carnivals in both cities (August 2011 – January 2013). Using a semi-structured interview format, participants were asked about their networks, neighborhoods, and political activity. Reoccurring themes form the basis for conclusions made in this chapter.

In addition, data was also gathered via participant observations at six Afro Caribbean community events including: 1) the West Indian Day Parade on September 6, 2010; 2) the Los Angeles Caribbean Carnival on October 17, 2010; 3) the Los Angeles Culture Festival – Hollywood Carnival on June 30, 2012, 4) a September 26, 2012 Steel Pan exhibition at a Trinidadian restaurant in Inglewood, California; 5) an October 3, 2012 debate-watching gathering at a Jamaican Restaurant in Inglewood, California; and, 6) an October 16, 2012 debate-watching gathering at the home of a family of Afro-Caribbean immigrants in Brooklyn, New York.

II. Politics, No Thank You: Explaining the Aversion to Politics

Studies of Afro-Caribbean incorporation find members of the group to be largely uninvolved in the politics of New York City (Kasinitz, 1992; Rogers, 2006). In-depth interviews with Afro-Caribbeans in New York and Los Angeles suggest that such findings are also applicable to Afro-Caribbeans outside of New York, with Los Angeles and New York participants expressing similar sentiments towards political activity.

The Afro-Caribbean aversion to politics is generally understood as the result of emotional ties to the country of origin that are sometimes manifested in a desire to return to the country of origin (Rogers, 2006). Scholars who focus on the emotional value of country of origin ties find that such ties discourage participation and instead leave migrants focused on the return home (Jones-Correa, 1998). While the desire to return home may be a myth, the desire is strong enough to discourage political participation.

Such emotional ties to the country of origin proved persistent among participants in this study as well, with 52% of participants describing stronger sentiments of pride for the country of origin flag than the stars and stripes. Participants speak fondly about life in the Caribbean, emphasizing a slower pace of life and the potential for a return to the country of origin. However, despite an affinity for the country of origin, Afro-Caribbean attitudes towards the country of origin are not without complexity. George, a first generation Trinidadian in Los Angeles describes the push and pull of the home country when he states, “I always thought that I would go back to Trinidad to live, and then another year pass by, and then another year pass by and I still say, ‘one day I will go home to live.’ I don't know if I will do it because then I go back to Trinidad for two or

three weeks and I say man I'm ready to go back home" (George, age 56, first Generation Trinidadian in Los Angeles). George describes his feelings toward the country of origin where the memories of "home" can at times overshadow the reality. It is the reality of the country of origin that complicates political incorporation in the United States country.

New York and Los Angeles participants exhibit primarily positive attachments to the country of origin; however in-depth questions about politics in the country of origin reveal more complex attitudes towards political participation. Afro-Caribbeans maintained largely negative feelings towards politics in the country of origin, describing politics in the country of origin as similar as or worse than politics in the United States. When asked, "How would you compare politics in the United States with politics in Trinidad/Jamaica?" Ramon responds, "Similar, politics is politics. They say one thing to get in the door and then when they get in the door they don't really do anything to help you. We have a saying in Trinidad, we say poli-tricks. They use you and they trick you to get into power and then when they get in power you don't see them anymore." (Ramon, first generation Trinidadian in Los Angeles)

Like Ramon, Freddie expresses a pessimistic view of politics in the country of origin, responding, "Same. Poli-tricks. Money drives politics and then they mash up everything. It's different when you are in a small country versus the U.S. Politics is related to gangs. People die over it in Jamaica" (Freddie, second generation Jamaican in New York). Like Ramon and Freddie, 75% of respondents describe politics in the country of origin to be the same or worse than politics in the United States. Moreover, they describe their relationship to politics in the country of origin as distant with 65% of respondents stating

that they do not follow politics in the country of origin. While, there is a strong emotional connection to the country of origin, the connection is not politically motivated.

Although Afro-Caribbeans do not describe positive attitudes towards politics in the country of origin, attitudes towards politics in the country of origin do influence their attitudes toward politics in the United States. Participants use similar terminology and phrasing to describe politics in the country of origin and in the United States. Peter, a second generation Jamaican, uses the common Caribbean terminology to describe his political activity in the United States, “I tend to stay away from the poli-tricks.” (Peter, age 32, second generation Jamaican in New York) Drawing on the same term “poli-tricks,” Christal, a first generation Trinidadian living in Los Angeles states, “I don't really get involved in the politics up here because it is all tricks” (Christal, first generation Trinidadian in Los Angeles). Similarly, Ormond describes the American political context as such, “I see the way things are going. When one government [is] in power, they blame the other government.” (Ormond, first generation Jamaican in New York) Ormond's use of the term government to describe the political parties is consistent with the language used in parliamentary democracies such as Jamaica and the United Kingdom; however such terminology is not used to describe the political parties in the United States. Rogers (2006) attributes the phenomena of using country of origin experiences to inform political behavior in the United States to the Afro-Caribbean frame of reference.

This Afro-Caribbean frame of reference depresses political activity based on the belief that government officials behave similarly in the country of origin and in the United States, as evidenced by Pam, “I don't trust the police. Don't believe they can do anything. I don't trust the council people. I think they're just a paycheck and to be known.

I just go out and vote for the president and that's it. Anything else, I don't get involved in because I don't believe in them.” (Pam, first generation Trinidadian in New York) Pam expresses mistrust for government officials that echoes the language used by Ramon earlier to describe Trinidadian politics. Similarly, Erica describes politics in terms of a fear of corruption. “Government scares me. When government is corrupt, it’s corrupt and it spreads.” (Erica, second generation Trinidadian in Los Angeles)

Taken together, Afro Caribbeans describe politics and government officials in terms of self-interested individuals, partaking in corrupt practices with limited benefit for Afro-Caribbeans. The description of politics and government officials is consistent whether discussing politics in the country of origin or the host country. As such, Afro-Caribbean political inactivity is rooted in cynicism informed by their frame of reference.

III. Respectable Pathways to Incorporation: Identifying the Aversion Exceptions

While Afro-Caribbeans express an aversion to politics informed by their frame of reference from the country of origin, analysis of the occasions when Afro-Caribbeans do engage the political system provides insight into the preferred forms of participation and the nature of Afro-Caribbean pathways to incorporation. Jones-Correa (2013) describes a range of overlapping pathways to incorporation including electoral, voluntary (i.e. transnational, schools, community based organization, neighborhood organizations and professional associations), mass (i.e. protests and social movements), procedural (bureaucratic incorporation and access through lobbying), and illicit (violence and

corruption) pathways. Interviews and observations suggest that Afro-Caribbean participation is focused on underscoring the respectability of the group using voluntary, electoral and cultural pathways.

Chapters Three and Four demonstrate that central to Afro-Caribbean incorporation is the active maintenance of a positive group image. Higginbotham (1993) identifies a similar trend among members of the women's movement in the black Baptist Church as a politics of respectability. The politics of respectability views the reform of individual behavior as a goal in itself and as a strategy for societal reform. In other words, success and equal treatment is predicated on group behavior being deemed upstanding and respectable in the eyes of the public. This emphasis on group image manifests itself in Afro-Caribbean political activity as participants express resistance to political participation that detracts from the group image as a hard working family oriented population. Rather, participants emphasize a prioritization of hard work and family as exemplified by Kirk,

“I don't want to make excuses but I think blacks in general... I'm going to move away from the West Indian side and move to a broader umbrella. There is a couple reasons why blacks don't get involved in politics. They are not about going and sitting in city hall from 7:00 to 9:00 at night. They are more concerned with feeding the family, getting the family down that kind of stuff; whereas others, meaning our white brothers, may have more time because the economics of the situation allows them to be more politically involved than blacks” (Kirk, first generation Jamaican in Los Angeles).

Kirk's analysis of the lack of participation among Afro-Caribbean specifically, and black people more generally emphasizes a lack of interest in political participation that takes time, money, or energy from family life. The cost benefit analysis executed by study

participants leads to an engagement in politics that require minimal temporal cost. This view results in participation outside of traditional political organizations (i.e. political clubs or parties).

Study participants describe their experience with political participation or public claims-making as occurring primarily through volunteer organizations without an explicit political mission. The use of a voluntary pathway to incorporation is exemplified in responses from 25% of participants who highlight school involvement as a parent or student, work based participation, and membership in cultural organizations as pathways used to affect change. Participation in school-based organizations includes parent-teacher associations and student-run organizations focused on black student academic success. Involvement in work-based organizations occurs through membership in unions and black professional organizations among second generation respondents. Putnam (2000) emphasizes the significance of volunteer organizations in developing the social capital necessary for public claims making, while Greer (2013) highlights union membership as a key site of political mobilization for black ethnics in New York. Study participants also maintain affiliations with ethnic organizations. Such organizations focus on sponsoring cultural events and strengthening connections between Caribbeans abroad and those in the islands. While these organizations maintain no political agenda they are viewed as a viable route to political influence. Sultan states as much saying, “[The best way for Afro-Caribbeans to achieve their political goals is to] use some of the existing organizations to drive political goals like WIADCA (West Indian American Day Carnival Association). We organize for those things culturally but maybe we can advance political goals as well.” (Sultan, age 42, second generation Trinidadian in New York)

In addition to voluntary organizations, the other most notable pathway to incorporation used by study participants is electoral participation. Participants describe the primary forms of participation as voting, with noteworthy levels of political participation during the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections. As noted in Chapter Four, the candidacy of Barack Obama ignited an Afro-Caribbean interest in politics driven by racial group consciousness. The 2008 and 2012 presidential elections elicited a unique reaction to political participation as exhibited by Erica, “I try to stay away from politics because it is hypocritical but I took my two kids to vote for Obama.” (Erica, second generation Trinidadian in Los Angeles) Erica highlights the importance of the election and its ability to increase her political activity. Similarly, Elijah describes his own excitement about the election, “Four years ago I voted for the first time, for Obama. That was a cool experience. I voted for the change.” (Elijah, age 24, second generation Trinidadian in New York)

An important facet of the effects of the Obama campaign was its ability to incorporate previously inactive people and inspire some to participate beyond simple voting.

Describing a moment when he felt politically effective, Jack states,

“It would have to be the 2008 election. That was the first time that I even really voted. I registered and everything. I was treasurer of black student union. We had Solidarity Day, first Monday of November. When they held the debates, we’d rent out something and then we’d have a discussion after the debate. So it was basically to get people informed. We weren’t telling them who to vote for, but our goal was to register to vote. We felt like this was the time. You could really participate in history. Vote, just get out there. (Jack, age 27, second generation Trinidadian in New York)

Jack describes his participation in the 2008 election as inspiring his activity in registration drives and moving towards forms of political participation with higher time

costs. Similarly, Kirk describes his participation in the 2012 election that moves beyond simple candidate support of Obama. “Not that I don't want to get involved politically because I did with Barack. I did the phone bank thing and I campaigned for prop 30¹³ in the last election.” (Kirk, first generation Jamaican in Los Angeles) Kirk’s political participation in 2012 suggests that the Obama candidacy served to incorporate Afro-Caribbeans beyond a single candidate or mode of participation. The election mobilized voters around local propositions as well.

In addition to voluntary and electoral participation, participant observations reveal an additional pathway to incorporation in the cultural activities of the group. In September of 2012 when the country was preparing for the 2012 presidential election, a local Trinidadian restaurant in Inglewood, Los Angeles hosted a steel pan exhibition that became the site of a unique form of political campaigning not captured by the pathways identified by Jones-Correa (2013). The restaurant, a popular meeting place for the Trinidadian community in Los Angeles was packed with members of the Caribbean community. As the steel pan band played a range of soca, reggae and calypso music, attendees talked, laughed, tapped their feet and nodded their heads. From time to time the band would take a break while a DJ played music to maintain the festive atmosphere. During one of the breaks, the MC stopped the music to introduce an attendee familiar with many of people in the room. As the older gentleman approached the microphone, the band returned to their positions and the man began to perform an original song entitled “Yes We Can.” With the steel pan playing a calypso rhythm behind him, the gentleman

¹³ Proposition 30 is a California ballot measure focused on increasing personal income tax to fund education. The measure passed on November 6, 2012.

improvised a calypso song drawing on key talking points from the Obama campaign and emphasizing the need for four more years.

While the gentleman may not report such a performance on traditional political participation surveys, his performance must be understood as more than simply a cultural act. Afro-Caribbean ties to the country of origin serve to inform Afro-Caribbean attitudes towards politics but they also equip Afro-Caribbeans with alternative means of public claims making rarely addressed by political science. Guidry and Sawyer (2003) identify culture as an area of concern for political science, particularly in the case of marginalized groups. Guidry and Sawyer state, “Attempts by marginalized groups to gain a foothold in the public sphere can contribute to the development of democracy, even when these actors aren’t consciously organizing for the purpose of advancing democracy.” (Guidry and Sawyer, 2003; pg. 273) The impact that an individual or group can exert on the nature and substance of political discourse and policy is significant despite a desire to remain removed from it. Such moments where cultural practices meet political activity highlight the possibility for seemingly non-political actions to produce political change. Understanding that culture is separate from the state but not separate from the political allows one to understand how they complement each other in affecting power, politics, and the state; the primary interests of political science.

As study participants express a general aversion to politics, in-depth interviews and participant observations reveal that Afro-Caribbeans engage in public claims-making in a variety of settings including voluntary, electoral and cultural forms, all of which may not be traditionally conceptualized as political. Voluntary political activity is evident in educational, occupational and cultural organizations. In addition, the presidential

campaigns of Barack Obama provided opportunities to witness electoral and cultural political activity in action. While the voluntary, electoral and cultural pathways to incorporation serve as important means of participation for Afro-Caribbeans in this study, to assume that the use of such pathways is universally feasible omits the role of social context.

IV. Incorporation in Context

The Afro-Caribbean aversion to politics, informed by the country of origin frame of reference, emphasizes the impact of the country of origin on political activity. Given the strength of the country of origin attachment and the influence of racial attachments exhibited by political activity around the Obama presidency, it is important to identify the role that ethnic networks and neighborhoods play in political activity.

New York is a primary destination of Afro-Caribbean immigrants in the United States with 38% of Afro-Caribbean immigrants residing in the city (Thomas, 2012). With such a large population of co-ethnics, Afro-Caribbeans are able to stimulate memories and strengthen attachments to the Caribbean culture and frame of reference. The large Afro-Caribbean community in New York nourishes recollections of the country of origin and at times reaffirms the Afro-Caribbean aversion to politics. Evidence of a Caribbean frame of reference was most evident among participants in New York when they discussed U.S. politics, using Caribbean verbiage, such as “who is in power,” as opposed to “who is in office,” despite comparable mean years in the United States between New York and Los Angeles. While Costa and Khan (2003) suggest that ethnic community heterogeneity

produces trust issues, this chapter finds that any trust maintained in more ethnically homogenous neighborhoods may create agreement about the futility of political participation. While a general aversion to politics is reinforced by the large Afro-Caribbean population in New York, the existence of a large co-ethnic community also produces opportunities for cultural forms of participation.

Evidence of the influence exerted by Afro-Caribbean cultural claims-making is most evident during the annual West Indian Day Parade. During the time period of this study, the political significance of Caribbean culture in local politics resulted in high ranking political officials serving as grand marshals such as Congressman Charlie Rangel (2008), Governor David Patterson (2008) Secretary of State Colin Powell (2009), New York Governor Andrew Cuomo (2011), New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg (2011) and City Council Speaker and Mayoral candidate Christine Quinn (2012). The presence of a large Caribbean community in New York provides Afro-Caribbeans with alternative forms of political participation not afforded to Afro-Caribbeans in settings with a smaller population and public presence, such as Los Angeles.

Afro-Caribbeans interviewed in Los Angeles describe more traditional forms of political participation regardless of citizenship status. Bernadette, a first generation Jamaican in Los Angeles for 20 years explains that she is not a citizen but she remains politically active including campaigning for local candidates. Similarly, George states, “I even go to my city council meetings. There was one going on this evening but I didn't make it. I just go to the city council meetings so that I know what is going on in my town and who is doing what” (George, age 56, first generation Trinidadian in Los Angeles).

Amidst this traditional political participation, the absence of political activity in the larger cultural settings is noticeable when compared with the New York West Indian Day Parade. While politics are engaged in intimate cultural settings among members of the group, larger displays of Caribbean culture such as the Los Angeles Caribbean Carnival and the Hollywood Carnival are largely devoid of political messaging and mobilization efforts.

As political participation is not widespread among Afro-Caribbean participants in New York or Los Angeles, Afro-Caribbeans in New York lean heavily on their country of origin frame of reference to inform their political participation or lack thereof. While the county of origin frame of reference persists in New York, country of origin and ethnic attachments also serve to expand the range of incorporative pathways for members of the group in New York. A large ethnic population raises the profile of the group and large public cultural events serve to garner the attention of public officials and provide additional opportunities for group mobilization. While Afro-Caribbean political influence is not evident in Los Angeles cultural events, the growth of the group and the development of smaller carnivals across the county suggest the potential for increasing political attention.

V. Conclusion

This chapter set out to examine the impact of social context on the pathways to political incorporation chosen by Afro-Caribbeans in New York and Los Angeles, given multiple politicized attachments. Consistent with the existing literature on Afro-

Caribbean political incorporation (Greer, 2013; Rogers, 2006), the chapter finds that Afro-Caribbeans generally remain averse to high levels of political participation. The lack of political participation among Afro-Caribbeans confirms Jones-Correa's assertions about immigrant attitudes towards political incorporation,

“Much of the political participation literature has an implicit assumption a norm of participation and an implied preference for participation through electoral politics. There are two important caveats to this assumption. The first is that lots of people do not care for electoral politics or participate in it: many see electoral politics as something to be actively avoided. Second, participation should not be assumed to be a goal in and of itself: if participation simply serves to ratify existing distribution of power, then its value is debatable.” (Jones-Correa, 2013)

While political participation is read as the pinnacle of incorporation, political participation is not a universal desire or goal among people seeking to attain personal objectives. In addition, Junn's (1999) assertion that individuals who view participation as reinstating existing distributions of power are less likely to participate is also confirmed.

Afro-Caribbean immigrants maintain deep country of origin attachments that produce an aversion to politics. While the psychological connections referenced in the literature speak to a longing for home as the primary obstacle to political incorporation, this chapter finds that the psychological connection to the home country primarily serves to inform attitudes towards politics in the United States, confirming Rogers (2006) identification of an Afro-Caribbean frame of reference. While the naturalization process is a direct and explicit renunciation of any allegiance to the country of origin, naturalization does not erase the political experiences of immigrant communities.

Beyond the aversion to politics informed by the country of origin attachment, Afro-Caribbeans utilize voluntary and electoral pathways to incorporation. Voluntary pathways

are most evident in occupational, education and cultural organizations, while the candidacy of Barack Obama heightened racial group consciousness and ignited high levels of electoral participation. Besides the voluntary and electoral pathways, the Afro-Caribbeans attachment to the country of origin also results in cultural pathways to incorporation manifested in cultural practices and social activities.

The strong attachment to country of origin and ethnic culture is evident when comparing political activity in New York and Los Angeles. Country of origin attachments are reified by a city with a large co-ethnic population that constantly stimulates the memory of home. However, the large co-ethnic population is not without political benefit. The large co-ethnic population enables the use of ethnic culture to engage the political system that is less viable in Los Angeles.

Those who live in Los Angeles utilize traditional methods of participation. Separated from the consistent reminders of the country of origin, Los Angeles Afro-Caribbeans are less inclined to see country of origin and the United States as politically similar, particularly in the second generation.

The findings suggest that social context is an important consideration for understanding political incorporation. The pooling of different national origin groups is problematic because geographic location in the Caribbean Sea does not equate to identical political situations in the country of origin. The chapter provides insight into the Afro-Caribbean “community” in these two localities and suggests future research into the political incorporation of the community in terms of national differences, the sites of political socialization and the impact of the Barack Obama presidency on political activity. In addition, the impact of country of origin, ethnic group and racial group

attachments are evident in the political incorporation of Afro-Caribbean immigrants in both sites. Amidst multiple group attachments, analyses about when and how such attachments become politically salient remains an issue of significant academic concern.

**Conclusion: Afro-Caribbeans beyond Ethnicity, beyond New York and beyond
Traditional Politics**

Immigrants from the Caribbean represent an important group of study in the field of Race, Ethnicity and Politics. The field examines the means by which individuals and groups experience, understand and alter their social location in society. Race, Ethnicity and Politics places particular emphasis on the intersection of multiple group attachments within a single individual or group. As black immigrants to the United States, Afro-Caribbeans represent an opportunity to examine such an intersection and its impact on the political incorporation of the group.

As scholars examine the incorporation of Afro-Caribbeans into the United States, heavy emphasis is placed on how the group understands their social location as black immigrants in a nation with a long history of black oppression and disenfranchisement. This focus prompts some to examine Afro-Caribbeans as a group actively distancing themselves from African Americans by emphasizing their own ethnic difference (Waters, 1999). An alternative analysis of the group emphasizes experiences with racial discrimination and a common history as producing a strong sense of racial identity among members of the group (Hackshaw, 2008; Kasinitz, 1992). Amidst these two contrasting interpretations of Afro-Caribbean identity and group attachment, a high level of support for Barack Obama by the black community caused many to fall into the familiar trap of discussing the black community as a monolithic group with a singular vision of American society and politics(Harris, 2012). As such, political science is left

without a clear understanding of whether Afro-Caribbeans understand themselves as a part of the “black community” or define themselves as something different.

In addition to an inconsistent understanding about Afro-Caribbean identity, another particularly glaring gap in the Afro-Caribbean literature presents itself as requiring attention. In his influential analysis of Afro-Caribbean incorporation, Rogers (2006) finds that group-based beliefs in collectivism were found most prominently among Afro-Caribbeans socialized into African American networks. This finding highlights the importance of interpersonal interactions in Afro-Caribbean group attachments and political attitudes. Simultaneously, it also underscores the notable absence of studies that focus on sites outside of New York. Given that New York is the city with the largest number of Afro-Caribbean immigrants in the country, Rogers’ findings suggest that a clear understanding of Afro-Caribbean identity and incorporation may be limited by a narrow geographic focus on New York.

Lastly, as the analysis of Afro-Caribbean political incorporation moves beyond a major gateway city it is important to examine a multitude of pathways to incorporation as exhibited by Greer in New York (2013). A thorough investigation of Afro-Caribbean incorporation should include a range of activities, and not be limited to traditional forms of participation such as voting, campaigning, and financial contributions.

In sum, the examination of Afro-Caribbean incorporation suffers from three significant gaps, it discusses race and ethnicity as mutually exclusive terms; it focuses on localities where the ethnic group of study constitutes a substantive portion of the local population; and it omits the attitudes and behavior of those considered politically “inactive.”

IV. Contributions of the Study

In addressing such gaps in the literature, this study refutes the idea that race and ethnicity is an either-or arrangement. Rather, it argues that Afro-Caribbeans manage racial, ethnic and country of origin attachments simultaneously. By comparing Afro-Caribbeans in distinct social contexts, the study is able to examine how culture is used as a tool for navigating social and political life in the United States.

The study finds that a primary goal of the group is to maintain a positive group image in the local public sphere. The maintenance of such a positive group image results in attitudes towards other groups that are not always consistent. At times, Afro-Caribbeans are found to participate in ethnic distancing towards African Americans and at other times racial attachment is strong. This finding confirms the conclusions drawn by Waters (1999) in New York, but it also highlights the significance of a presence in the public consciousness in allowing Afro-Caribbeans to signify ethnic difference.

In the political sphere, this study finds that the countries of origin, ethnic and racial attachments maintained by Afro-Caribbeans are politicized to produce political interests and attitudes that are distinct from African Americans. While Afro-Caribbeans express a unique political perspective, the presidency of Barack Obama served to underscore the existence of racial group consciousness among members of the group. Study participants express overwhelming support for the first black president. Moreover, analysis of Afro-Caribbean attitudes towards Barack Obama highlights the centrality of group image in their support for the 44th president. Participants use a politics of respectability to frame

their support while resisting the post-racial and black leader frame, which maintains a more nationalistic ideology.

Given the identified politicization of all three group attachments, the study examines the impact of social context on the pathways to political chosen by Afro-Caribbeans in New York and Los Angeles and finds a general aversion to politics, which is consistent with the extant literature on Afro-Caribbean political incorporation (Greer, 2013; Kasinitz, 1992; Rogers, 2006). The study finds this aversion to politics is informed by the country of origin frame of reference identified by Rogers (2006). While participants generally resist political participation, the occasions where Afro-Caribbeans do participate in the political sphere is guided by a need to advance the image of the group as respectable. The study finds that Afro-Caribbeans primarily utilize voluntary and electoral pathways to incorporation. The voluntary pathway focuses on educational, occupational and cultural organizations without an explicit political mission. This is consistent with Greer (2013), which finds unions to be a significant site of Afro-Caribbean political incorporation. Electoral participation among Afro-Caribbeans is most notable surrounding the Obama campaigns. In addition to the use of voluntary and electoral pathways, the study also finds the use of ethnic culture to be another pathway to incorporation. It is in the use of the cultural pathway where social context is most influential, as the absence of a large Afro-Caribbean community and a public consciousness around the community reduces the opportunities for cultural events to become sites of political mobilization.

V. Limitations of the Study

Study findings rely heavily on in-depth interviews from a snow-ball sample and participant observations gathered during fieldwork. Reliance on such data limits the generalizability of the study, as representativeness comes into question. Given the need for trust-building within a black immigrant population, this sampling methodology was most appropriate, particularly in Los Angeles where Afro-Caribbeans prove to be a hard to reach population. A snowball sample of Afro-Caribbeans who learned about the study from close trusted sources allowed them to share their true opinion with the interviewer. In addition, the qualitative data also allowed this study to capture elements of Afro-Caribbean identity, attitudes and behavior that are difficult to capture via survey data.

The exclusive focus on two national origin groups also limits the generalizability of the study. However, the significance of country of origin attachments in this research requires consideration of specific political histories. The research program resists the assumption that all Caribbean nations share the same political context and history. As such, the emphasis on the specific immigrant populations allows for analysis of variation in the political attitudes and behavior of individuals along national origin lines.

In addition to the emphasis on two specific national origin groups, the study also focuses on two urban research sites. New York and Los Angeles do not represent the majority of American cities and communities in terms of demographics or local politics. Nevertheless, the study does not presume that Afro-Caribbeans in New York and Los Angeles represent the full range of experiences, attitudes and behaviors existing among

Afro-Caribbeans in the United States. Rather, it highlights the need for greater consideration of the contextual factors that influence political incorporation.

VI. Implications of the Study of Immigrant Incorporation

Ultimately, this study does not end the discussion about Afro-Caribbean political incorporation. Rather, it seeks to add nuance to the existing literature while expanding the boundaries of the discipline's attention to this group. The complexity of Afro-Caribbean identity and politics, raises important issues for the study of immigrant incorporation generally and Latino and Asian incorporation in particular. While the demographic trends indicate significant shifts in the racial and ethnic makeup of the United States, non-white immigration to United States is still met by negative stereotypes, racial discrimination and xenophobia.

The tools used by immigrant populations to 1) facilitate their own incorporation, 2) maintain connections to their family and communities in the country of origin and 3) establish a foundation for their children are not always visible through political parties, organizations and behavior. As such, this study suggests a more thorough analysis of culture as a tool for negotiating group image and making public claims for the country of origin, ethnic and racial groups. Recognizing the political significance of cultural organizations, events and institutions can inform those seeking to mobilize immigrant populations in sites where such groups are proven hard to reach. It can also shine a light on the moments when immigrant groups decide that a politics of respectability is no longer viable, as seen during the immigrant rights marches of 2006.

Future research is also required to better understand how immigrant groups understand and address veiled attacks on citizenship rights based on race, such as seen during the revived voter suppression efforts during the 2012 presidential election. Examining such sites of political contention offers important insights to understanding the new nuance that defines the immigrant experience and the study of race, ethnicity and politics.

Appendix A: Sample Characteristics

Study Sample based on City and Generation (in percentages)			
Generation	New York	Los Angeles	Total
First Generation	25	31	56
Second Generation	27	17	44
Total	32	48	100

Source: Politics and Culture Interview Protocol.

National origin and Age Range (in percentages)						
National Origin	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	Total
Jamaica	9	19	9	9	7	53
Trinidadian	7	20	9	0	11	47
Total	16	39	18	9	18	100

Source: Politics and Culture Interview Protocol.

Generation and Age Range (in percentages)						
Generation	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	Total
First Generation	0	17	13	7	18	55
Second Generation	16	23	5	1	0	45
Total	16	40	18	8	18	100

Source: Politics and Culture Interview Protocol.

Study Sample Marital Status (in percentages)	
Single	60
Married/Living with Partner	29
Divorced	11
Total	100

Source: 2011 – 2013 Politics and Culture Survey.

Study Sample Partisanship (in percentages)	
Democrat	65
Republican	3
Independent	18
Other/Don't know	14
Total	100

Source: 2011 – 2013 Politics and Culture Survey.

Home Ownership (in percentages)	
Own	27
Rent	47
Other	16
Total	100

Source: 2011 – 2013 Politics and Culture Survey.

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

I. Background and Context

Where are you/your family from originally?

How long have you lived in New York/Los Angeles?

Have you ever lived on the island?

Do you plan to go back to the island to live?

When was the last time you visited the island? How long did you stay?

What types of connections do you maintain on the island? Relatives? Friends? Real estate? Accounts?

What is the ethnic make-up of your neighborhood?

Please tell me about the ethnic makeup of your network of friends and family. Where are they from?

What are your impressions of life on the island compared to life here in the United States?

What does it mean to you to be a Jamaican/Trinidadian in New York/Los Angeles?

What kind of work do you do?

What is the greatest thing about life in the United States?

What is the hardest thing about life in the US

II. Identity and Group Attachment

How would you describe yourself to someone who asked you about your racial background?

Have you had any personal experiences with racism or racial discrimination here in the United States? Tell me about them. Have these experiences affected your view of the United States?

How do race relations in the United States compare with race relations in your home country? Are they better or worse? Why?

What other racial/ethnic groups do you feel close to?

Do you think West Indian immigrants and African Americans experience the same kinds of discrimination? Please explain

Do you feel that African Americans share the same values and outlook on life in the United States as Caribbean Americans? If not, how are the attitudes and values of these two groups different?

Some people think that West Indians tend to do better than African Americans. What do you think? Is there any truth to this? Why or why not?

Some people say that African Americans and West Indians do not get along. Is there competition or conflict between these two groups? If so, tell me about the sources of these tensions and why do you think they have developed?

Which is more important black, american, caribbean?

Do west indians and african americans have the same political interests?

III. Political Interests and Group Consciousness

What do you think is the biggest problem in this country today?

Do you feel that West Indians have access to the same opportunities as other groups of immigrants? If not, why?

What are the most important issues for West Indians in Los Angeles? And in the nation as a whole?

Do West Indians and African Americans have the same concerns and interests in politics and economics?

Do Hispanics and Asian Americans have political and economic interests in common with West Indians? Do these groups make for good political allies?

What are the organizations/institutions that best represent the interests of the Jamaican or Caribbean community in LA politics?

Which political officials, if any, best represent your political interests?

Have you engaged or kept track of politics on the island?

How do politics in the U.S. compare with politics in Jamaica?

What is the best way for West Indians to achieve their political goals in Los Angeles?

Most important issues for blacks

what is the most difficult thing about adjusting to life in the U.S.?

IV. Political Engagement

In what ways do you engage politics?

Are there any other ways or places that you express your political views?

Where do you get most of your information about news and politics?

Do you attend religious services frequently?

What is the ethnic make-up of your place of worship?

Are race, class, politics discussed at your place of worship? If so, what is the nature of these discussions?

What community, civic, voluntary, benevolent or political organizations are you involved in?

Are these organizations composed mostly of West Indians, African Americans, whites, or others?

How would you compare politics in Caribbean vs in U.S
a moment when you felt politically effective

V. Barack Obama

What was your reaction to Barack Obama being elected president?

Do you think that Barack Obama's race has impacted his presidency?

What impact do you think a black President has had on race relations in the United States?

What impact do you think Barack Obama has had on the Caribbean community? Black community?

Do you feel a personal connection?

What do you think about the job that Barack Obama has done as president so far?

Who do you plan to vote for in the 2012 Presidential Election? Why?

There is overwhelming support for Obama by Caribbean Americans, why do you think that this is, especially given that the Caribbean has a long history of black leadership?

What will be President Obama's legacy for future generations?

VI. Symbols and Cultural Practices

What comes to mind when you see the American flag?

What comes to mind when you see the Jamaican flag?
Does Location Matter?
What kind of music do you listen to?
Do they contain messages about race, class or politics?
Do these messages impact your thoughts about politics?
What are your impressions about Dread lock?
Why did you lock your hair?
Do dreadlocks have any political significance?
does music have the power to change political systems
What do you think about the rastafarian tradition?
music with family

Appendix C: 2011-2013 Politics and Culture Survey Questionnaire

A. Demographics: Please answer the following questions

A1. What is the month and year of your birth? MONTH _____ YEAR _____

A2. What city do you live in? _____

A3. How long have you lived in your city? _____ MONTHS _____ YEARS

A4. How long have you lived in the United States? _____ MONTHS _____ YEARS

A5. Have you lived anywhere else since you left the island?

1. Yes Please specify where _____
2. No

A6. What is your marital status?

1. Single
2. Married, Living with a partner
3. Separated
4. Divorced
5. Widowed

A7. Do you own your home or do you pay rent?

1. Own Home
2. Rent
3. Neither
4. Other _____
8. Don't Know

B. Caribbean Connections: The next set of questions asks about your connection to New York, your island of origin and the Caribbean community. Please circle the answer that is most appropriate.

B1. Do you consider New York/L.A. to be your permanent home?	Yes	No
B2. Have you ever attended or participated in the West Indian Labor Day Carnival/Los Angeles Caribbean Carnival?	Yes	No
B3. Do you eventually plan to return to the island and live there permanently?	Yes	No
B4. Do you send money or material goods to relatives or friends living on the island?	Yes	No
B5. Have you achieved what you planned or hoped for when you left your home country?	Yes	No

C. Religious Engagement: The next set of questions asks about your religion and your engagement in religious institutions. Please circle the answer that is most appropriate.

C1. What is your current religion or religious preference?

1. 7TH Day Adventist
2. African Methodist Episcopal/ AME
3. Agnostic or Atheist
4. Baptist
5. Buddhist
6. Catholic
7. Christian (Non-Denominational)
8. Christian Scientist
9. Church of the Nazarene
10. Disciples of Christ/ Churches of Christ
11. Episcopalian. Anglican
12. Hindu
13. Jehovah's Witness
14. Jewish
15. Lutheran
16. Methodist
17. Mormon, Church of Latter Day Saints
18. Muslim, Mohammedan, Islam
19. Orthodox, Eastern Orthodox
20. Pentecostal (includes Church of God in Christ)
21. Presbyterian
22. Protestant
23. Unitarian, Universalist
24. Other (Specify) _____
25. None
98. Don't Know

C2. How religious would you say you are?		Very Religious	Fairly Religious	Not Too Religious	Not at all Religious
C3. How often do you usually attend religious services?		At least once a week	At least once a month	A few times a year	Never (Go to Section D)
C4. How would you describe the ethnic mix of your place of worship?	Mostly White	Mostly Black	Mostly Caribbean	Mostly Hispanic	Other
If Other, please specify ...					
C5. Do you hold any positions at your place of worship, such as serving on a committee or board, serving as the director of a choir, or teaching a class?				Yes	No

D. Religion and Politics: The next set of questions asks about how much your place of worship is involved in politics. Please circle the number that corresponds to the answer that is most appropriate.

D1. In the last year, have you heard any discussions of politics at your place of worship?	Yes	No
D2. Have you talked to people about political matters at your place of worship?	Yes	No
D3. Has a member of the clergy, or someone in an official position, ever suggested that you take some action on a political issue—such as sign a petition, write a letter, attend a protest, march, or demonstration, or get in touch with a public official?	Yes	No
D4. Has a member of the clergy, or someone in an official position, ever suggested that you vote for or against certain candidates in an election?	Yes	No

D5. During the past year, have you heard a sermon, lecture, or discussion at your place of worship that dealt with any of the following:		
a. jobs, the economy, or the poor?	Yes	No
b. legal system or the police?	Yes	No
c. situation in Iraq or terrorism?	Yes	No
d. immigration or immigrants?	Yes	No
e. improving relations between members of different racial or ethnic groups?	Yes	No

E. Political Engagement: The next set of questions asks about how your involvement in politics.

E1. First, have you ever worked for a political party or campaigned for a political candidate?	Yes	No
Now, thinking about this past election year:		
E2. Did you talk to any people and try to show them why they should vote for	Yes	No

or against one of the parties or candidates?		
E3 Did you go to any political meetings, rallies, speeches, dinners or things like that in support of a particular candidate?	Yes	No
E4. Did you give or help raise money for any of the candidates?	Yes	No
E5. Did you help campaign for a racial minority candidate?	Yes	No
E6. In talking to people about elections, we often find that a lot of people are not able to vote because they aren't registered, they are sick, or they just don't have time. How about you did you vote in the elections this November?	Yes	No

E7a. Who did you vote for president in 2008?

1. Barack Obama
2. John McCain
3. Ralph Nader
4. Bob Barr
5. Chuck Baldwin
6. Cynthia McKinney
7. Other Please specify _____
- 8 None (Go to E8)

E7b. Would you say your preference for that candidate is strong or not strong?

1. Strong
2. Not Strong
8. Don't Know

E8. If you did not vote in the presidential election, what is the main reason you did not vote?

1. No Time
2. Not interested in Election and/or Candidates
3. Did not think my candidate would win
4. Illness of self or family members
5. I never Vote
6. Not Registered
7. No transportation to get to polls
8. Not aware of election
9. Not a U.S. Citizen
10. Other Please specify _____
98. Don't Know

In the past 12 months have you done any of the following:		
E9. Called, written, or visited a public official about a concern or problem?	Yes	No
E10. Attended a protest, meeting, demonstration, or march on some national or local issue (aside from a strike against an employer)?	Yes	No

E11. Attended a meeting about an issue facing your community or schools?	Yes	No
E12. Worked with other any people to deal with some issue facing your community?	Yes	No
E13. Participated in any groups or organizations, including your place of worship, that are working to improve the conditions of racial or ethnic minorities?	Yes	No

E14. When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as liberal or conservative?	Liberal	Conservative	Moderate	Don't know	
E15a. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a republican, a democrat, an independent, or something else?	Republican Go to E16	Democrat Go to E16	Independent	Other party	Don't know
Other please specify...					
E15b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican party or to the Democratic party?	Closer to Republican	Closer to Democrat	Neither	Don't Know	

<i>E16. Below is a list of statements about different policies. For each statement, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, disagree somewhat, or disagree strongly with each policy?</i>				
a. The U.S. should get our military troops out of Iraq as soon as possible.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
b. The federal government should guarantee health care for everyone.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
c. Abortion should be legal in all cases.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
d. Illegal immigrants should qualify for U.S. citizenship, if they meet certain requirements like paying back taxes and fines, learning English, and pass a background check	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
e. We need an amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would ban marriages between gays or between lesbians.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree

f. Immigration has an overall positive impact on the local economy	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
g. Illegal immigrants who grew up in the U.S. and graduated from High School here, should qualify for in-state college tuition	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
h. Middle-class families should get a tax cut by having the wealthiest families in America pay a little more in taxes.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree

F. Group Identity: The last set of questions asks about how race/ethnicity in the United States.

F1. People are best represented in political office by leaders from their own racial or ethnic background.	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
F2a. Do you think what happens generally to Black people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?	Yes	No	Don't Know	
F2b. Will it affect you a lot, some or not very much?	A Lot	Some	Not Very Much	Not at all

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