Ethnic Diversity and Pan-Black Racial Solidarity: Locating the Bonds of Political Unity among Black Americans and Black Caribbean Immigrants in the U.S.

by

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To my sources of inspiration: Mom, Dad, Carinne, Cherese, and Will

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Pan-Black Racial Solidarity and Black Political Incorporation

In the field of political science, our understanding of black politics is informed by the belief that black identity and black experience are unified within the larger black population in the United States. Cathy Cohen writes, "Researchers, politicians and elites…have generally constructed the political agendas and lived conditions of black Americans as extremely monolithic" (1999, 15). This perspective is mirrored in the wider society where few distinctions are noted or recognized within this group.

Diverse black immigrant communities from the Caribbean and the African subcontinent currently residing in the U.S., challenge the myth that blacks share a singular ethnicity in the U.S. Estimates based on survey data indicate that there are approximately 1.5 million black Caribbeans and 600,000 African immigrants in the U.S. (Logan, 2007, 49). Not only have these communities diversified the ethnic composition of the black population, they have expanded how we define black identity and black experience in the United States. Furthermore, their experiences and perspectives complicate the present paradigm of black political homogeneity. Their growing presence raises the question of whether social divisions among U.S. born blacks and foreign-born blacks will result in different narratives of black political incorporation.

Scholars in the social science disciplines have begun to explore the significance of ethnic diversity among blacks through research on the largest black immigrant

community in the United States: black Caribbeans. Black Caribbeans comprise approximately one-quarter of the black population in major cities in the U.S. including New York City and Miami (Logan, 2007; Kent, 2008). John Logan also argues that 25% of the growth of the black population between 1990 and 2000 was in part due to migration from the Caribbean and further, that black Caribbeans are growing faster and outnumber other more established ethnic groups in the U.S. (49).

Presently, the majority of black Caribbeans in the United States emigrates from the English-speaking and French-speaking islands of the Caribbean and they comprise one of the largest immigrant communities in New York City. The experiences of contemporary black Caribbean immigrants capture a shift in how we frame black identity and experience in the post-civil rights era. This dissertation project re-examines how changing dialogues about black identity and black experience in connection with black immigration impacts black political incorporation in the United States. This dissertation takes a new perspective on how group identity matters to political incorporation among blacks by comparing the experiences of U.S. born blacks and foreign-born blacks.

To address this topic, I examine patterns of political incorporation among black Americans and black Caribbeans. In this project, I explore political incorporation in terms of political attitudes and political behavior among blacks. I also examine political incorporation as the development of shared racial group identification between diverse communities of blacks. I explore how unique points of reference shaped by differences in birthplace among blacks help us understand the connection between group identification and how groups become politically incorporated in U.S. society.

The comparison of black American and black Caribbean political perspectives and political behavior presents a distinct opportunity to highlight nuances about black identity and experience that are often overlooked as relevant factors shaping political heterogeneity among blacks. The consensus in the politics literature is that blacks are politically unified because of shared identity, shared history and shared culture. However, the literature does not adequately address how the immigrant presence within the black population complicates these assumptions. This oversight relates to a general trend in the field where race and ethnicity are conceptualized as representing the same aspect of group identity for blacks: African ancestry. Further, black identity in the literature is defined primarily through the experiences of black Americans.

Despite growing evidence to the contrary, the paradigm of black political homogeneity prevalent in political science assumes that racial commonalties among blacks supersede other interests. In the post-civil rights period, changing social mores and social diversity have destabilized traditional boundaries of group identity among blacks and shifted the meaning of race over time (Omi and Winant, 1994). In the case of U.S. born and foreign-born blacks, the literature predicts that their paths of political incorporation will be defined primarily by race (Dawson, 1994; Tate, 1993). The paradigm does not address, however, how different experiences of racial socialization among black Americans and black Caribbeans distinguish the meaning of racial group membership for group members and whether such differences minimize the importance of racial commonalities. The changing boundaries of racial identity within the black community have great implications for how racial group membership is defined and how racism is experienced and interpreted among individual blacks. In this dissertation, I

explore intra-racial diversity as a backdrop for re-examining political incorporation of black Americans and black immigrants.

Racial and Ethnic Minorities and Political Incorporation

As a concept, political incorporation is typically defined and measured in terms of direct acts of participation. Scholars of minority incorporation, however, have often defined political incorporation as achieving representation, power, and influence in the political system. It has also been conceptualized as a measure of influence within society's political institutions (Marshall, Browning, and Tabb, 1984). These conceptualizations of political incorporation for racial and ethnic minority groups also emphasize that shared group identification is the prerequisite for participation in the political system within these communities. However, as social divisions among ethnic minorities have become more visible, scholars have begun to pay greater attention to the factors that contribute to political heterogeneity among racial and ethnic minorities in the United States.

As the two largest immigrant groups in the U.S., Asian Americans and Latinos have been the primary subject of recent scholarship on political incorporation among racial and ethnic minority groups. The experiences of the Asian American and Latino communities in the U.S. political system highlight that racial and ethnic ties play a central role in how these groups become politically incorporated in U.S. society (Lien, 2004; Desipio, 1996). Arguably, many of the issues of political incorporation facing Asians and Latinos are similarly confronted by black immigrants residing in the United States. The experiences of these contemporary immigrants highlight that the unique challenges of incorporation confronted by black immigrants distinguish their experiences from black

Americans. Consequently, the presence of foreign-born blacks within the larger black population raises the question of whether racial group membership continues to be the primary factor shaping political incorporation among blacks.

Including the black immigrant perspective within representations of black experience as well as within the traditional immigration narratives highlights there are multiple ways of understanding how political incorporation can happen within the black community. This dissertation project explores three possibilities of incorporation in connection with the presence of birthplace distinctions among blacks: 1) As black immigrants assimilate, they will take on the experiences and beliefs of black Americans, thereby reinforcing the paradigm of political homogeneity in the black community; 2) black immigrants will define their experiences and interests differently from black Americans, and follow more diverse paths of political incorporation; or 3) a hybrid position that is somewhere between the first two possibilities previously described. This third option represents pan-black racial solidarity. Pan-black racial solidarity is based on the idea that black Caribbeans do not share the same identities as black Americans, thus, black political homogeneity cannot be assumed because both groups share common racial characteristics. Rather, cooperation between black Americans and black Caribbeans will ebb and flow so that there will be times when they share the same interests and cooperate to achieve common goals and times when they do not. In the following sections, I review the contributions of the black politics literature and immigration politics literature to discuss the three paths of incorporation introduced above.

Racial Group Identification and the Black American Experience

Racial group identity is the dominant concept that informs explanations of black political incorporation in political science. The black politics scholarship emphasizes that the primary path to political inclusion for blacks is mobilization around racial group interests. Thus, the literature has framed racial solidarity as the strategic political response among black Americans to persistent racial exclusion in the United States. Studies within the field of black politics claim that concerns about racial group status distinctly shape the political orientations of blacks and are the basis of politicized identity within the black community (Miller, Gurin, Gurin, and Malanchuk 1981; Allen, Dawson, and Brown, 1989; Tate, 1993; Dawson, 1994, 2001). Consequently, most discussions define membership in the black community as the primary vehicle of incorporation for blacks.

There is little consensus in the literature about the conceptualization and measurement of politicized racial group identification among blacks. Scholars have measured racial group identification in the black population through feelings of closeness (Conover, 1984), group-consciousness (Gurin, Miller, and Gurin, 1980; Miller et. al, 1981) and race-consciousness (Shingles, 1981). In his seminal work on the significance of racial group identification among blacks in the United States, Dawson (1994) chronicles how systemic social, economic, and political exclusion defined the experience of African Americans throughout various periods in U.S. history. He argues that through slavery, reconstruction, Jim Crow, the Civil Rights movement, and the post-civil rights era, the economic, social, and political fates of black Americans were, and remain, tied to their membership in a racial minority group.

Dawson (1994) draws upon the concept of racial group interdependence, or common fate to explain why blacks tend to be politically unified. This simple concept captures the extent to which blacks' perceptions of discrimination shape their individual lives and those of the black community as a whole. He explains how the systematic racial exclusion experienced by blacks for most of their history in U.S. society has shaped a widely held perspective among black Americans that their individual lives are linked to the fate of the larger group. Dawson refers to this type of evaluation as the "black utility heuristic" (57) and draws upon the concept to argue that shared perceptions of racial interdependence have a unifying impact on the political concerns of blacks, particularly when it comes to matters of race.

The shared sense of interdependence among blacks is connected to their knowledge of black Americans' economic and social history as a group in the United States. Dawson argues that this knowledge is reinforced by personal and institutional networks within the black American community. Perceptions of common fate are believed to be maintained by commonly shared group resources including social relationships with family members, friends, and indigenous African American institutions (e.g., black church and black organizations). These group resources (Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson, 1989) are mediums through which African American perceptions about racial group interest are cultivated and reinforced. Community organizations, civil rights organizations and the black church are prime examples of institutions that emphasize the centrality of common fate and a group orientation towards politics. Thus, the development, transmission and reaffirmation of common goals, values, and beliefs about

racial group membership are embedded in “symbols”, “stories”, and, “rituals” (Swidler, 1986, 273) that politicize what it means to be black for black Americans.

Common fate is part of a shared narrative among blacks that provides a frame of reference for making sense of how race works and reinforces a sense of “we”, or shared collective identification among black Americans. This shared perspective incorporates a unique understanding of the world or what some scholars have referred to as “black common sense” (Harris-Lacewell, 2004; Lubiano, 1997). Lacewell’s (2004) language about the politicizing effect of narrative emphasize that racial common fate represents a shared story about race that “directs interpretation of the political world and structures expressions of political attitudes” (33). The perception of common fate is linked to the politicization of racial identity because it reflects a shared story that encompasses “personal experiences and collective realities about how race works in U.S. society” (33). Consequently, common fate perceptions shape how blacks evaluate the political world. Perceptions of common fate inform how black Americans evaluate the public policies they should support, the candidates they should vote for, and the type of political activities in which they should participate. In this way, a sense of shared identity mobilizes and structures the political orientations and political activities of black Americans.

The story of the black American struggle for political inclusion in the United States provides a central reference for understanding how racial group concerns shape the contemporary political perspectives of blacks in the United States. The literature emphasizes that racial group identification among blacks is the primary factor driving

black political incorporation. Further, shared racial group identification among blacks incorporates how they make sense of common experiences of discrimination.

Despite socio-economic cleavages among black Americans, research indicates that black political homogeneity persists (Tate, 1993; Dawson, 1994). Thus, a common argument in the literature is that despite social diversity, awareness of shared constraints related to race continues to link the political interests of blacks (Dawson, 1994). If we draw upon this logic to analyze the incorporation experiences of black immigrants, the literature predicts that this group will also follow the path of black political homogeneity. The fact that black immigrants share phenotype in common with other blacks will fold them into the traditional story of incorporation for black Americans, and they will feel connected with other blacks. Therefore, based on the black politics literature, the first hypothesis about incorporation is that the political incorporation path of both black Americans and black Caribbeans will reflect a homogeneity around race.

Ethnicity Theory and Black Political Incorporation

The discourse of the black politics literature emphasizes that racial group membership is the primary influence on black political incorporation because it is reinforced by group commonalities and group perspectives among blacks. The literature argues that racial identity supersedes other factors as a determinant of black political incorporation. However, a major limitation of explanations of black political incorporation that rely upon racial common fate is that, as they currently stand, common fate represents an interpretation of discrimination shaped by the shared history and culture of black Americans.

The discourse that links black political homogeneity with racial group membership has been challenged by the contemporary research on Asian, Latino and black immigrant identity. The black politics literature emphasizes racial solidarity as a central factor shaping black political incorporation, while the scholarship on immigrant political incorporation highlights that ethnic diversity within groups lead to diverse paths of political incorporation among blacks. Consequently, the immigrant politics literature has introduced models of incorporation which suggest that race does not always determine political inclusion of racial minorities in the United States.

The immigrant politics literature offers a different way of looking at black incorporation relative to the black politics scholarship. The scholarship on immigrant politics examines factors that influence intra-group diversity and further how these factors shape diverse paths of incorporation within ethnic and racial minority communities. Consequently, this discourse has offered additional insight into the persistence of ethnicity within immigrant groups.

Contemporary theories of immigrant incorporation are founded within ethnicity theories of the early twentieth century. By focusing on the ethnic group, or those with common culture and common descent (Glazer and Moynihan, 1963) sociologists and political scientists alike tried to predict how these groups would become part of the larger society. These theories were primarily based on the assumption of assimilation, or the belief that once an ethnic group achieved a certain level of social status in society, the significance of group ties would decline over time. In his work on political power and influence in New Haven, Connecticut, Dahl (1961) argued that ethnic groups pass through three stages on the way to political assimilation. As the immigrant group

assimilated or identified more strongly with the dominant culture, greater identification with the mainstream culture would foster political heterogeneity and weaken ethnic group ties.

Dahl (1961) based his theories of politics on the notion of political pluralism and drew primarily upon the experiences of European immigrants to make predictions about the possibilities of political incorporation of various racial and ethnic groups in the United States. By drawing conclusions from the relatively rapid assimilation of European immigrants and their children, Dahl (1961) like many other scholars, argued that ethnic politics "was a transitional phenomenon" (34).

In recent scholarship, assumptions behind assimilation theories of the early twentieth century have been challenged by research findings related to the incorporation experiences of non-white immigrants in the United States. Contrary to more traditional theories, scholars have found that immigrants and their children are experiencing diverse paths of incorporation that do not necessarily follow the European assimilation model. Furthermore, scholars argue that persistent discrimination and racial inequality plays a central role in the creation and maintenance of ethnic identity as a factor shaping the incorporation experience of contemporary immigrants.

In the field of political science, ethnicity continues to be conceptualized primarily as ties to a national origin group or heritage group (Alba, 1990; Halter, 1993; Desipio, 1996; Lien et al.2004) and scholars have relied upon this definition of ethnicity to analyze patterns of immigrant incorporation (Oboler, 1995, 17). These scholars have found not only that traditional straight-line models do not fit the diverse modes of incorporation experienced by new immigrant groups, but also that group identification

still has an important role in the political assimilation of these groups. Contemporary immigrants have shared history and common networks that reinforce immigrant identity and national origin ties.

Although their experiences have been examined primarily in connection with post-1965 immigration to the United States, black Caribbeans have been migrating to the United States since the late 19th century (Reid, 1939; Foner, 1979; Kasnitz, 1992; James, 1999). According to Foner (1979), prior to the passage of restrictive immigration laws, the "first wave" of black Caribbean immigrants came to the United States between the 1880s and the 1920s. These immigrants found that the racial mores of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century dictated that they navigate society as black Americans. The level of migration of the community steeply dropped off after immigration laws restricted the entry of non-European immigration to the United States.

However, the passage of the Hart Cellars Act of 1965 liberalized the restrictive immigration policy and was a major catalyst for the resurgence of black Caribbean migration to the United States. In his research on the Caribbean community, sociologist Philip Kasinitz (2001) noted that at the start of the twenty-first century, Caribbean blacks were approximately eight percent of New York City's population. These numbers accounted only for the first-generation—the number increased once the American-born children of black Caribbean immigrants were included (Kasinitz, 2001). After forty-plus years of immigration to the United, the post-1965, or second wave (Foner, 1979) of black Caribbean migrants are the largest immigrant black community in the United States. Further, they have created a social niche for themselves to express a distinctive ethnic identity from black Americans unlike the first wave of black Caribbeans.

While New York remains a primary destination for the black Caribbean community, census data indicates that this immigrant group has settled in other major metropolitan areas along the East Coast of the United States as well. The locations include: Florida, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maryland, and Washington, D.C, respectively.[1]

Research on immigrant identity highlights that one important factor that distinguishes immigrants from those who are born in the U.S. is the immigrant reference point (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996; Rogers, 2006). The immigrant reference point of black Caribbeans incorporates different norms about racial identity and social status shaped by prior experiences in the respective Caribbean nations relative to those they confront as members of U.S. society. Consequently, memories of home help them to make sense of the social world they inhabit in the United States and to provide them with an understanding of what it means to be black (Bryce-Laporte, 1972; Vickerman, 1999). Furthermore, these norms, which have been found to differ from those of black Americans, influence the significance of immigrant background and racial identity in the United States. Thus, different experiences of racial socialization play an important part in the presence and maintenance of ethnic distinctiveness among black Caribbeans.

The immigrant politics literature highlights that immigrant identity shapes differences in perspectives between black immigrants and black Americans on matters of race. Thus, scholars have drawn upon concepts such as "ethnic distinctiveness" and "social distancing" (Vickerman, 1999; 2001; Waters, 1999) to establish the presence of distinctions between black immigrants and black Americans about what it means to be black**.**

[1] This is based on analysis of the reported ancestry question from the 2000 Census.

A primary example of the influence of the immigrant reference point is the "majority consciousness" often exhibited by black Caribbeans.[2] Bashi and McDaniel (1997) argue that because black Caribbeans migrate from societies with more fluid racial categories relative to the more rigid system of binary racial classification such as the one in the U.S., many do not identify with the concept of minority status in the context of U.S. society. The authors highlight that many black Caribbeans emigrate from countries where blacks are the racial majority, or plurality, of the country's population; consequently, many come to the United States having experienced a different social hierarchy among blacks relative to black Americans. Experiences of racial socialization in the Caribbean influence a common perspective among black Caribbeans that blacks in positions of power and influence reflect the norm rather than the exception. Consequently, the knowledge of the social, economic, and political dynamics of their former homelands play a central role in how Caribbean blacks respond to American system of racial classification and, further, how they interpret racial discrimination in the United States.

Among black Caribbeans, population concentration and common networks with co-ethnics reinforce the salience of the immigrant reference point and perceptions of ethnic distinctiveness from other groups. For example, Crowder and Tedrow (1999, 2001) found that although black Caribbeans live in neighborhoods that are close in proximity to black Americans and experience a high level of residential segregation from whites, many live and work in enclaves with other members of the black Caribbean community. These black Caribbean enclaves reduce the likelihood of contact with

[2] I draw upon this term employed by Winston James (1999) which he uses to describe the attitudes of black Caribbean immigrants in the early twentieth century.

nonimmigrant persons and institutions and increase the likelihood of sharing networks and contacts with members of the immigrant group.

The maintenance of networks among black Caribbeans reinforces the salience of ethnic identity. Having family, friends, and colleagues who share the same ethnic background provide these immigrants with distinct opportunities to reproduce and maintain common cultural values, traits, and attitudes, which offer some psychological protection from the sting of racism (Bobb and Clarke 2001). Bobb and Clarke (2001) emphasize the impact of these influences on the perceptions of black Caribbean immigrants:

> "The labor market success that the member achieves belies racist stereotypes about the inability of black people to succeed in America. Thus life in an immigrant network is constituted by a series of socially supported experiences in the American housing and labor markets. Network and niche memberships both structure goals…and support the attainment of those goals. The support that first generation West Indians experience, as well as their concentration in workplaces and communities of residence, translates into an easier experience securing jobs and housing. This experience reinforces an insulation-both psychological and physical –from racist enmity and an ability to disregard racist stereotypes." (231)

Bobb and Clarke (2001) note that immigrant enclaves offer black Caribbeans insulation from interpersonal and institutional discrimination because they limit contact with others outside the immigrant community. Consequently, while scholars have found that black Caribbeans acknowledge racism as a fact of life in the U.S., they also argue that many black Caribbeans are reticent to acknowledge that race has a ubiquitous impact on their lives and opportunities in the U.S. (Vickerman, 1999; Waters, 1999; Rogers, 2006).

In his research on black Caribbean and African American political relations in New York City, Rogers (2006) finds that first generation black Caribbeans identify racially as black; however, they do not express the "highly cultivated" sense of racial group consciousness expressed by many African Americans. Furthermore, he argues that attitudes of distinctiveness among first generation black Caribbeans are connected to ambivalence about the effects of slavery in their lives and criticisms of African Americans for being too concerned with issues of race. His findings support prior research about identity among scholars where Caribbean blacks readily acknowledge their African ancestry, yet, strongly object to being categorized as "African American" (Vickerman, 1999; Waters, 1999). Thus, the immigrant reference point of black Caribbeans indicates there is often a dissonance between how black immigrants make sense of what it means to be black and how they believe they are viewed by the larger society.

Ethnic mobilization among black immigrants represents another phenomenon that complicates the possibility that racial group identification primarily shapes political incorporation among blacks. In cities like New York where black Caribbeans are disproportionately concentrated, ethnic group allegiances have limited mobilization between black Americans and black Caribbeans over shared racial group interests. Case studies of black Caribbean political activity provide examples of ethnic tension and conflict with black Americans when Caribbean candidates have competed with black American candidates for political office (Green and Wilson 1989; Kasinitz, 1992; Rogers, 2001). These studies highlight that racial commonalities do not always lead to solidarity around shared problems of race within the black community.

Another factor that reinforces attitudes of distinctiveness among black Caribbeans is perceptions of social mobility**.** Relative to African Americans, black immigrants have better occupational status and somewhat better socio-economic status (Kalmijn, 1996; Doodoo, 1999) and are uniquely posed to reap the benefits of affirmative action and diversity initiatives relative to their African-American counterparts. Recent studies have found that black immigrants and their children comprise a disproportionate number of black students at the most prestigious institutions of higher education in the United States (Massey, Mooney, Torres, and Charles, 2007). Black immigrants are also found to have the highest education attainment relative to other immigrant groups in the U.S. (Logan, 2007). These trends raise questions about whether the perceptions of socioeconomic status further exacerbate distinctions black Caribbeans perceive between themselves and black Americans. Perceptions of mobility among black Caribbeans may shape a perspective that that they are not limited by race like their black American counterparts. Specifically, the better off Caribbean blacks are educationally and economically, the less likely they are to see race as a primary factor impacting their lives. This may translate into political differences with African Americans that weaken or limit the possibilities of shared racial group identification. Conversely, upward mobility may result in stronger perceptions of racial group identification among black Caribbeans because they may perceive themselves to be in a position similar to other socially mobile black American counterparts, who have more but are enjoying it less (Hochschild, 1995). Experiences of discrimination may foster greater disillusionment because they may perceive they are limited in their efforts to attain the social status they seek as members of U.S. society.

Thus, socioeconomic status potentially has a role in distinguishing or linking the paths of incorporation for black Caribbeans and black Americans.

The immigrant politics literature highlights that if black immigrants' perspectives are defined by a sense of distinctiveness from black Americans, factors other than race will have a central role in helping us understand their political incorporation. Thus, instead of racial common fate driving political incorporation, we will find that differences from black Americans as well as differences within the immigrant group matter for understanding the experiences of this group. Recent scholarship on immigrant incorporation highlights that other factors play a significant role in distinguishing the immigrant perspective and identity. Specifically, length of residence, generation status and shared networks are important factors shaping the incorporation of immigrant groups. Immigration scholars have highlighted the significance of accounting for factors related to the migration experience that distinctly impact the salience of the immigrant reference point and further, its role in the incorporation process for immigrant groups (Jones-Correa, 1998; Junn, 1999; Lien, 2004; Ramakrishan, 2005). Migration-related factors such as length of residence, citizenship, and generation status have been found to inordinately influence patterns of political incorporation within immigrant communities and are central to explaining variations in patterns of incorporation within specific immigrant groups. Scholars have found that although immigrants may come to the United States with an identity, changes or shifts in identity are connected to how long they reside in the U.S., whether they are first-generation or second-generation immigrants, and whether they are in close proximity with other members of their immigrant group. These factors suggest that immigrant blacks are not going to follow the path of black

Americans, yet these factors also reveal potential heterogeneity within the immigrant group. The following section briefly addresses findings in the immigration politics literature that highlight how these factors matter to analyses of black incorporation and further, how they contribute to understanding differences in patterns of incorporation between black Caribbeans and black Americans as well as variations in incorporation within the immigrant group.

Generation Status

Among immigrant groups, generation status is generally conceptualized as "one's distance from immigrant ancestors" (Waters and Jimenez, 2005). Thus, generation status represents a temporal marker of distance from the original immigrant group that highlights that the process of political adaptation begins with the first-generation but continues beyond this group (i.e. the U.S. born children, or second-generation). With respect to black Caribbeans, although the first and second-generation share an immigrant reference point, this reference point is not the same. As the "original" immigrant group, the first-generation heavily rely upon values, beliefs, and practices of their originating societies to navigate U.S. society. The second-generation, however are individuals whose parents are immigrants but, who are born or "substantially" raised in the United States (Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, and Waters, 2004) (1). Kasinitz et al., (2004) also argue that the second-generation are different from the first-generation because they "see themselves as different from their immigrant parents…work in different types of jobs and have had different educational opportunities…[and] tend to think about race and ethnicity differently from their parents" (2). Therefore, the second-generation have a unique identity shaped by their connection with the immigrant community and their socialization

within U.S. society. Thus, the different experiences of the American-born second-generation and the foreign-born first-generation raise the question of whether these groups follow different paths of incorporation that are influenced by their unique perspectives about race and group identity in U.S. society. Identifying what transpires within the experience of the immigrant generation, and the changes in group attitudes and behavior with each subsequent generation is critical to understanding a group's overall adaptation process in society.

Length of Residence

Generation status represents one time-dependent indicator of change within an immigrant group; however, length of U.S. residence is also a temporal marker that specifically distinguishes the experience and perspectives within the first-generation group. Research on Asian and Latino immigrants suggests that length of residence is one of the most critical factors that explains the political incorporation path of first-generation immigrants (Cain, Kiewet and Uhlaner, 1991; Jones-Correa, 1998; DeSipio, 1996; 2006). The importance of this aspect of the immigrant experience has not been examined within the scholarship on black political incorporation.

The length of time immigrants reside in the U.S. is associated with the accumulation of experiences, knowledge, and interests related to their host society that can significantly impact the salience of the immigrant reference point. The general assumption is that the longer immigrants live in the United States, the more likely their attitudes and behavior reflects adaptation to American norms and practices, while immigrants who are more recent arrivals to the United States are more likely to rely on their knowledge about their countries of origin. As it pertains to political incorporation,

the longer black Caribbeans reside in the U.S., the greater the likelihood that racial group identification increases in salience for this group. Thus, we can expect there will be differences in racial attitudes and political acculturation among black Caribbean immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for a significant length of time relative to those who are considered recent arrivals.

Geographic location (Networks)

A current limitation of existing work comparing black Caribbean and black American political incorporation is that this phenomenon has been examined primarily through the experiences of those who live in New York City. While the New York City area is home to the largest population of black Caribbean immigrants in the U.S., its racially diverse population and large immigrant community represents a particularly distinct context where ethnic identity and ethnic competition are more likely to shape the relations of the black Caribbean and black American communities. However, the current trend of focusing on New York as the primary representation of black ethnic politics among black Americans and black immigrants potentially masks variations in how the two groups interact and view one another beyond this distinct context. Thus, the patterns of conflict and cooperation between black Caribbeans and black Americans that have been highlighted in the scholarship on this group (Kasnitz, 1992; Rogers, 2001) may look different elsewhere simply because the expression of ethnic identity in communities with a smaller black Caribbean population is likely to be much more limited.

If we adopt an immigrant politics way of looking at black immigration, the hypothesis is that black immigrants will have a very different experience of incorporation characterized by two distinct patterns: 1) They will not be like black Americans and their

political incorporation will be shaped by their ethnic identities which are informed by their distinct history and culture; 2) The incorporation experience of black immigrants will be affected by the factors that affect other immigrant groups such as generation status, length of residence, and proximity to other co-ethnics.

Pan-Black Racial Solidarity and Black Political Incorporation

The black politics literature and the immigrant politics literature offer two contrasting perspectives about black immigrant incorporation. The black politics literature offers that common history and culture as well as shared experiences relating to discrimination will create homogeneous interests among the black population. In contrast, the immigrant politics literature argues that heterogeneity within the black community and within the black immigrant community is possible. However, there is a possibility for a third perspective about black political incorporation**.** This possibility re-examines the roots of the existing paradigm of political homogeneity and accounts for migration-related factors that distinguish the experiences of immigrant blacks from black Americans**.** Such an analysis requires that we account for two relevant factors: the meaning of racial discrimination for blacks and manifestations of ethnic distinctiveness within the black community.

Research indicates that the lives of black Americans and black Caribbeans (and other black immigrants) are linked by shared problems of racial discrimination and racial inequality (Shibutani and Kwan, 1965; Vickerman, 1999; Water, 1999; Kasinitz et al., 2004). Thus, relative to other immigrant groups, racial (not ethnic) discrimination has an inordinate influence on the life chances of black immigrants and their children. Yet, despite, shared problems of race, black American and black Caribbeans do not

consistently view each other as members of the same group. It is much more difficult to argue that racial group identification matters politically for immigrant blacks the way it does for black Americans without understanding how ethnic differences matter for both communities.

The immigration politics literature highlights that traditional explanations about black political incorporation offer limited insight because it rests on common fate and what we currently know about common fate could potentially be a story solely about black American ethnicity. We do not know whether the emphasis given to common fate is similarly important for understanding political incorporation among black Caribbeans as it has been for understanding black American political incorporation. Consequently, we need to know more about common fate and its role within the broader narrative of black political incorporation.

My argument in this dissertation is that pan-black racial solidarity, rather than black political homogeneity or ethnic distinctiveness is likely to characterize the future path of black political incorporation. Pan-black racial solidarity is based on a common perspective that racial discrimination limits the lives and opportunities of blacks in similar ways. Consequently, pan-black racial solidarity represents a shared recognition among blacks that race shapes their opportunities, and further, that race discrimination has real implications in their lives.

The foundation of shared political interests among black Americans and black Caribbeans is that they will be defined in U.S. society by their common racial characteristics. As a consequence of these shared racial commonalities, political incorporation for black Americans and black Caribbeans will be defined by a shared

political consciousness that emerges from common experiences of discrimination related to race. Contrary to the black politics literature, however, pan-black racial solidarity is not predicated on the idea that commonalities in culture and history alone create political solidarity among blacks. Pan-black racial solidarity also incorporates the notion that there are particular contexts in which the meaning of black identity is not shared.

My conceptualization of black political incorporation recognizes that racial identity and ethnic identity shape patterns of political incorporation on the whole. Pan-black racial solidarity incorporates the awareness among blacks that although they not do share the same identities, experiences, and cultures, these differences are largely unrecognized in the larger society. Thus, pan-black racial solidarity acknowledges that national origin is not recognized as part of one's identity if you are black. Rather, it represents a shared recognition that there are common issues and common interests facing blacks that facilitate shared action on these matters. Thus, pan-black racial solidarity reflects a willingness among blacks to cooperate with one another when circumstances demand it. In this way, pan-black racial solidarity is a way of being political because it reflects the continued importance of racial group concerns in the political incorporation story of blacks.

The concept of pan-ethnicity (Espiritu, 1992) been applied predominantly to groups viewed as complicating the binary system of classification in the U.S. and whose trajectory of incorporation in the United States is often represented as uncertain. The pan-ethnic identity concept captures how ethnic origins are minimized for groups like Asian-Americans and Latinos in U.S. society, yet, one could argue that the ethnic origins of these groups are still more widely recognized in the larger society when compared with

blacks. While Asians and Latinos are able to claim race as well as nationality within census categories, people of African descent in the U.S., despite their growing ethnic diversity, continue to be limited to categories such as “black” or “African American”. Thus, black immigrants’ experiences of racial categorization often mirror those of U.S. born blacks, where race and ethnicity represent the same identity, and where national origin differences are either invisible or ignored by the larger society. Despite their experiences of racial categorization, on a number of dimensions, (i.e., rates of intermarriage and residential integration) Asians and Latinos demonstrate patterns of incorporation that reflect a greater level of inclusion in U.S. society that distinguish them from black Americans and black immigrants.

When compared with other immigrant groups, the experience of black immigrants often raises a cautionary tale, a warning about how the U.S. black-white system of classification limits the possibilities and identities of those who are deemed to be phenotypically black in the United States (Shibutani and Kwan, 1965; Vickerman, 1999; Waters, 1996; 1999; Rogers, 2001; 2006) A common theme in the immigration literature is that although black immigrants may find ways to challenge monolithic definitions of black identity in the larger society, it is extremely difficult to escape being labeled and treated as a black American. This idea is captured by the words of Wheeler (1975) who states that “a black man, wherever he is, whatever he is, cannot escape racial consideration, an experience untrue with other immigrants.” (as quoted by Jennifer Hochschild, 1995).

Pan-black racial solidarity is a more applicable term for analyzing political incorporation among blacks because as we look at the black community broadly, we are

examining the experiences of U.S. born blacks with a new and growing immigrant population that relies on national origin as well as pan-ethnic groupings based on geographic origins to distinguish themselves from blacks (i.e., the label West Indian is routinely used by immigrants from English speaking countries from the Caribbean to distinguish themselves from blacks).

The concept of pan-black racial solidarity illustrates how black Americans and black Caribbeans alike are forced into having a race by the larger society. The term pan-black represents a broad category within which diverse communities of blacks, immigrant and U.S. born are represented. The racial solidarity part of the term emphasizes that race is the basis upon which the interests of black Americans and black Caribbeans are connected. Thus, as a concept, relative to pan-ethnicity, pan-black racial solidarity is more appropriate for understanding how black immigrants and U.S. born blacks mobilize and cooperate around issues of race.

I use my conceptualization of pan-black racial solidarity to argue that black political incorporation is shaped by the development of shared group identification among blacks. The opportunity to compare black American and black Caribbean perspectives as well as perspectives across generations within the black Caribbean community allows us to understand the possibilities and limits of pan-black racial solidarity. The attitudes and behavior displayed by black Americans and black Caribbeans are indicators of how each group is politicized within the context of U.S. society.

Among black immigrants, the immigrant perspective is likely to be more salient for the first generation. Thus, first-generation black Caribbeans will express a strong

sense of distinctiveness from black Americans. Specifically, identification with their country of origin and other Caribbean immigrants will limit feelings of pan-black racial solidarity with black Americans. Furthermore, black Caribbeans who are within strong immigrant networks or are in communities where other black immigrants are densely populated are more likely to express ethnic distinctiveness and have a weaker sense of pan-black racial solidarity. However, black Caribbeans without such networks are likely to feel a stronger sense of pan-black racial solidarity with blacks because the opportunities to express a non-black American identity are limited.

I also argue that within the first-generation group, increased exposure to U.S. racial and social norms will be positively related to perceptions of pan-black racial solidarity. Consequently, length of U.S. residence will positively impact the salience of race among the first-generation as those who have resided in the United States for significant lengths of time are likely to feel a stronger sense of pan-black racial solidarity with black Americans than those who have recently arrived in the United States.

When the perspectives of first-generation black Caribbeans are compared with those of second-generation black Caribbeans, there will be a noticeable differences in the attitudes of each group with respect to race. The second-generation who are born and raised in the United States will display stronger feelings of pan-black racial solidarity with black Americans. Despite their identification with the immigrant community, the second-generation are more intimately acquainted with the significance of U.S. racial categories and norms. This knowledge will have a greater impact on their perspectives relative to the first-generation. Consequently, we can expect to see greater similarities in their perspectives and those of black Americans.

The first three chapters of the dissertation explore evidence of pan-black racial solidarity within expressions of racial group identification among black Americans and black Caribbeans. I examine the attitudes of black Americans, first-generation black Caribbeans, and second-generation black Caribbeans separately in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. I rely upon my findings from content analysis of the focus group discussions as well as descriptive and multivariate analysis of questions from the NSAL to examine attitudes of ethnic distinctiveness and perceptions of common fate among black Americans and black Caribbeans. My discussion focuses on how common fate perspectives inform the basis of pan-black racial solidarity between black Americans and black Caribbeans.

I continue my analysis of black political incorporation by exploring evidence of pan-black racial solidarity within the political attitudes of black Caribbeans and political behavior among black Americans in Chapters 6 and 7.

In Chapter 6 of the dissertation, I explore predictors of support for issues related to race and economic policy. In this chapter, I draw upon these measures to compare black Caribbean and black American positions on issues that relate to social and economic redistribution, including issues that directly focus on issues impacting minorities and/ or blacks specifically.

In Chapter 7, I examine the link between shared racial group identity and political participation between of black Americans and black Caribbeans. My analyses focus on non-voting and voting participation.

The recurring debate among scholars of incorporation centers on the specific path to inclusion that new immigrant groups in U.S. society will follow. In the case of the

black immigrant population in the United States, an important question is will their racial similarity with other blacks Americans define their opportunities for political inclusion, or will their ethnic distinctiveness lead them to different incorporation paths relative to other blacks? Based on the continued emphasis given to racial categories as markers of identity and social status of people of African descent in the U.S., as well as the persistence of racial discrimination, the answer lies in whether this group perceives they are able to escape these aspects of black life in the U.S.

Methodology and Terminology

This project examines two aspects of political incorporation among black Americans and black Caribbeans through the following: 1) the development and expression of racial group identification; and 2) patterns of political participation. To explore these aspects of political incorporation among black Caribbeans and black Americans, I rely upon focus group interviews and survey data. I use the survey data and focus group data together to explain patterns of racial group identification among black Americans and black Caribbeans, and draw upon the survey data to analyze predictors of political attitudes and political behavior within the two communities.

To discuss political incorporation within the black community, I use categories that represent group distinctions for the purposes of comparison. The following terms are used to make such distinctions throughout the dissertation. Among survey respondents and focus group participants, generation and immigrant status were determined by participants' place of birth and parents' birthplace. Thus, individuals born outside of the United States who migrated to the U.S. were defined as first-generation. Furthermore, individuals born in the U.S. with at least one parent born in the Caribbean were defined as second-generation black Caribbean. With respect to racial group labels, the terms black American/African American denote U.S. born blacks who identify their roots as being primarily within the United States. The label black represents a broad category that refers to the general population of people of African ancestry residing in the United States, both U.S. born and immigrant. The term black incorporates all aspects of social diversity among individuals who identify themselves as being of African ancestry in the United States. Use of these labels does not exclude the possibility that black Caribbeans

define themselves as black Americans, or that that those I identify as black Americans do not identify as Black. I primarily rely on these terms and their definitions to facilitate the comparisons made throughout this project.

Qualitative Data and Analysis

To examine patterns of racial group identification among black Americans and black Caribbeans, I utilized data from twenty focus group interviews of black Americans in the New York and Washington, DC metropolitan areas and black Caribbeans with origins in the French-speaking and English-speaking islands of the Caribbean.[3] Thirteen of the group interviews were conducted in New York while seven took place in Washington, DC. On average, there were six participants within each group. The strength of the focus group method is that it draws upon interaction between individuals to capture the meaning behind core themes, values, and beliefs on a specific topic (Morgan, 1996). Within the group discussions, I examine how participants use language and group interaction to describe race and ethnicity as politically salient categories (Verkuyten, 1995). I focused on "everyday talk" (Harris-Lacewell, 2004, 23) among black Caribbeans and black Americans to identify attitudes, values, and beliefs that define their "knowledge structure" about what it means to be "black" (Harris-Lacewll, 2004, 23). Since group identities are not shaped and defined in isolation, but are constituted by discussion and interaction, the focus group method facilitated a richer understanding of

[3] My analyses seek to examine how ethnic and cultural differences inform perspectives about race among groups that identify themselves primarily as being of African descent. This is why the perspectives and behavior of Spanish-speaking black Caribbeans are not included in this project. Their patterns of identification are more similar to those of national origin groups that tend to identify with the Latino community.

how individuals make sense of race and ethnicity with those whom they perceive to be similar to them.[4]

I examine the ideas that black Caribbeans and black Americans use to define their membership within the black community and their relationship to other blacks. Thus, I examine attitudes of ethnic distinctiveness as well as perceptions of discrimination to discuss racial group identification for both communities. The focus groups were a useful tool for discovering the nuances in attitudes that inform ethnic distinctiveness and common fate among black Americans and black Caribbeans. I was able to engage in group comparisons by conducting separate group discussions of black Caribbeans and black Americans. To explore the significance of generation status within the black Caribbean community, I also conducted interviews with first-generation and second-generation black Caribbeans separately. I incorporated these group comparisons to test the hypothesis that the American-born second-generation perspectives were different from the first-generation as a function of their socialization in the U.S. Also, when possible, I conducted focus groups of African Americans within similar age cohorts (i.e. 18-35 and 35 and older) to explore whether differences in age distinguish the attitudes of younger and older black Americans. All group discussions were conducted between December 2002 and December 2003.

The focus groups also allowed me to explore the possibilities of geographic distinctions in racial group identification among black Caribbeans and black Americans. Thus, I incorporated the perspectives of black Americans and black Caribbeans residing in two major metropolitan areas in the United States: New York City and Washington,

[4] The focus group protocol is included in the appendix to this chapter.

DC within my analyses. I include the city comparison of the black Caribbean and black American communities because there has been little scholarly research about the social and political fates of black Caribbeans in communities where they are not as densely populated, or institutionally established as in New York City, New York.

New York City is featured prominently as the site for research on the black Caribbean community because it has been the primary destination for settlement among black Caribbeans over the last four decades and black Caribbeans are one of the largest immigrant populations in the city. Consequently, geographic location is a proxy for social networks, where New York City represents a context with large Caribbean networks in which the development and expression of ethnic identity is more accessible.

Washington, DC represents a contrast to New York City because black Caribbeans do not enjoy the same level of visibility they have in New York, and further, they represent a smaller percentage of the black community numerically. Based on informal interviews with community leaders as well as group discussions, the Caribbean community is often characterized as a professional class, which includes immigrants who originally came to the United States to obtain degrees in higher education (often at predominantly black institutions). The comments of participants highlight that black Caribbean immigrants traveled to the U.S. to attend college or graduate school and many ended up staying in the U.S. after completing their education. Additionally, although a considerable number of black Caribbeans work and live in Washington, DC, the community is more widely dispersed across the District as well as parts of Maryland, including Montgomery County and Prince George's County. As another location where black Caribbeans in the U.S. reside, Washington DC represents a location with fewer

Caribbean networks, thus, the black Caribbean community may be more integrated within black American networks. Further, the wealthiest and most highly-educated black Americans in the U.S. reside in the Washington, DC area. As part of a larger community of socially mobile blacks in the DC area, black Caribbeans may feel less of a need to differentiate themselves from black Americans.

When it comes to politics, the descriptions of ethnic tensions that have characterized narratives of black American and black Caribbean relations (Rogers, 2006; Kasinitz 1992) in New York do not define the story of black American and black Caribbean relations in Washington, DC In the metropolitan DC area black Americans are the largest black population and when it comes to politics, their interests define the black political agenda. Consequently, the context Washington, DC represents a location where Caribbean identity is not a politically viable identity. Ethnicity appears to plays an important social role in the lives of many Caribbean immigrants and their families in the Washington, DC area; yet, it has not led to the ethnic mobilization that has occurred among black Caribbeans in the New York metropolitan area.

Recruitment and Organization of Focus Groups

The focus group participants were recruited as part of a snowball sample based on referrals from community organizations, local colleges and universities as well as personal networks. Focus group participants were from various nations in the Caribbean and lived in the city as well as the suburbs of Washington, DC and New York City. With respect to socioeconomic status, on the whole, black American and black Caribbean focus group participants were overwhelmingly college-educated and middle-class (see Table 1.1 and Table 1.2). Thus, the perspectives on race identity and racial community

that I discuss in relation to the focus groups are likely to represent the perspectives of educated, middle-class black Caribbeans and black Americans rather than a cross section of either group.

The similarities among participants in both communities, however, created a unique opportunity to examine the perspectives of comparable groups of black Americans and black Caribbeans with respect to education and wealth. The focus group discussions offered a window into the place of race in the everyday experiences and perspectives of upwardly mobile blacks.

The NSAL Survey

I rely upon data from the National Survey of American Life (NSAL) to augment my analyses of pan-black racial solidarity and to examine measures of political incorporation (political attitudes and political behavior) not included in the group interviews. The NSAL is a project affiliated with the Program for Research on black Americans at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan[5]. The NSAL has a nationally representative sample of 3,365 African Americans, 1,000 White Americans, and the first national probability sample of 1,600 black Caribbeans[6]. The Caribbean sample includes people of diverse ethnicities in the Caribbean and also includes first-generation and second-generation individuals of Caribbean descent. The survey data provides a distinct opportunity not only to make comparisons between African Americans and black Caribbeans, but also facilitates within group comparisons among Caribbeans.

[5] The data for the survey was collected between February 2001 and March 2003.

[6] The sample of 1600 includes black Caribbeans from English-speaking, French-speaking and Spanish-speaking islands of the Caribbean. For the purposes of my project I examine only the English-speaking and French-speaking Caribbeans (n=1,051)

Throughout the dissertation, I use descriptive analysis as well as multivariate analysis to explore political incorporation among black Caribbeans and black Americans. The NSAL data allowed me examine predictors of feelings of closeness, common fate perceptions, policy interests, as well as electoral and non-electoral participation among a nationally representative sample of black Americans and black Caribbeans. I also use the survey data to analyze patterns of responses to similarly worded questions within the focus groups to assess whether the trends in attitudes that emerged from the group discussions were unique to middle-class black Americans and black Caribbeans or if these attitudes were similarly shared by a cross-section of black Americans and black Caribbeans.

Table 1.1 Demographics of NSAL Respondents

	black American	**black Caribbean**
Mean Age	42.3 years	43.2 years
Gender		
Male	43.6%	52.2%
Female	56.4%	47.8%
Education		
High school	38%	32.7%
College	31.9%	37%
Beyond College	5%	9.9%
Income		
Less than $15,000	25%	12%
$15,000-$29,999	28.3%	31.5%
$30,000-$49,999	22.7%	24.7%
$50,000 or more	24%	31.8%
Immigrant Status	n/a	
First-generation (n=1065)		80%
Second-Generation(n=265)		20%
Length of residence	n/a	
0-10 years		25%
11-20		31%
20 or more		44%
National origin	n/a	
Haiti (n=298)		21%
Jamaica (n=510)		38%
Trinidad(n=170)		11%
Other English Caribbean (n=440)		31%
Naturalized Citizen	n/a	61%

Table 1.2 Demographics of Focus Group Participants

	black American	**black Caribbean**
Mean Age	40.7 years	42.4 years
Gender		
Male	43.62%	41%
Female	56.8%	56.4%
Highest Education completed		
High school	2.6%	N/A
College	39.5%	36.1%
Beyond College	21%	44.5%
Income		
Less than $15,000	5.4%	8.3%
$15,000-$29,999	2.7%	13.9%
$30,000-$49,999	10.8%	8.3%
$50,000 or more	81.1%	61%
N= 124		

Appendix

Focus Group Protocol

Identity

1. How would you describe your racial/ethnic background?
2. Do the terms black and African American mean the same thing to you? Why? Why not?
3. Do you believe that what happens to blacks in this country has something to do with what happens in your life? Why, Why not? Will it affect you a lot, some, not much, or not at all?
4. What are some important distinctions that you observe among members of the black community?
5. In your opinion, are the African American and Caribbean communities close to each other? If so, how? If not, why not?
6. Do Caribbean blacks have more in common with black Americans than they do with other groups in this country? Why? Why not?
7. What (if any) do you feel are major problems affecting the black community? What solutions do propose for some of these problems?

Ideas and Opinions about politics

8. There are a lot of important values and ideas that we associate with being members of American society, and I would like to talk about one in particular. Americans have strong opinions about the value of hard work and individual effort; many people believe that America is a land of opportunity where you where you need only work hard to succeed. I would like all of you to weigh in on this. What do you think about this particular perspective?

Chapter 2

Who are We as Blacks?: Ethnic distinctiveness and Pan-Black Racial Solidarity among Black Americans

"I see myself as an African American with high cheekbones, but not necessarily African. By that I mean I consider myself *black or African American* because I can't deny where my roots come from…but I don't see myself as African, because, I think if you call yourself African, you have to have that culture and I think what we're in now is a totally different culture." black American woman, age 42, New York.

In contemporary research, black American perspectives on intra-racial diversity are rarely examined. Furthermore, in political science the political implications of ethnic distinctiveness have not been examined among black Americans in political science. Rather, research on this topic within the black community has been examined primarily from the standpoint of black immigrants (Kasinitz, 1992; Vickerman, 1999; Waters, 1999; Rogers, 2006). This chapter examines different aspects of racial group identification among black Americans. Specifically the perspectives of rank and file middle-class black Americans are examined. I explore how rank and file middle-class black Americans perceive membership within the black community and further, what they believe links their lives with those of other blacks. I also examine evidence of ethnic distinctiveness and its relevance for pan-black racial solidarity. Drawing upon both the focus group and NSAL data, I examine racial group identification by looking at how black Americans describe themselves as part of the black community, how they view foreign born blacks, and their perceptions of common fate with other blacks. The data show that expressions of racial group identification among black Americans reflect particularized attitudes and beliefs about identity and racial solidarity that center on their

experiences as a group in the United States.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000) "a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa" is defined as black or African American in the United States of America. The categories black and African American are used ubiquitously to define a common identity among people of African descent in the United States regardless of their social differences. Perhaps because the definition of who is black in the United States is seemingly obvious, the significance of these labels within the black population has not been examined extensively. However, within the black population, patterns of self-identification mark boundaries within the group that capture distinctions on characteristics other than race (i.e., origins, immigrant status, and the presence of ethnic diversity among blacks).

According to the National Survey of American Life, a majority of black Americans prefer to identify themselves as black (42%) or as African American (32%). The rest of black Americans prefer to describe themselves using variations of these two categories (see Figure 2.1).[7] Table 2.1 reflects the distribution of preference for the terms black and African American by income, education and age among black Americans. The data show that across these social cleavages, black Americans generally view themselves as black. This preference is also present among black Americans in the highest income and education categories.

Using the group interview data, I draw upon black American focus group participants' descriptions of their racial background to understand the meaning of categories such as black and African American, and the sentiments that inform

[7] The question asked of NSAL respondents was: People use different words to refer to people whose original ancestors came from Africa. What word best describes what you would like to be called?

preferences for either of these labels. The discussions highlight how group categories define shared social characteristics that delineate the boundaries between black Americans and other blacks in the community. The perspectives of black American focus group participants reveal that they use specific terms to express their sentiments about what it means to be black in the U.S. society. Further, they also illustrate how these group labels distinguish their experiences from blacks born here in the United States and those born outside of the United States.

Patterns of identification of black-American focus-group participants in the Washington, DC, and New York City metropolitan areas mirrored the patterns of identification observed within survey data. Responding to both an open-ended question asked at the start of the group discussions as well as a written question prior to the focus-group discussion, a majority of black-American focus-group participants described themselves primarily as black or African American. Within the group discussion, participants' opinions also highlighted that black Americans also use these terms interchangeably to describe themselves.

When most focus-group participants initially described their racial background, many offered one-word, unembellished statements as though they were stating the obvious. However, to identify whether their responses reflected a distinct preference, or were associated with particular attitudes and experiences, focus group participants were also asked to elaborate on their comments with the follow-up question: Do the labels black and African American mean different things? The responses of focus group participants in both Washington, DC, and New York City emphasized a common sentiment about the significance of African ancestry and U.S. birth; however, there was

some variation across group discussions over which term was most applicable to black Americans. These differences however, were not connected to location; rather, they varied from group to group. An example of black American participants' attitudes about how ancestry and birthplace inform how they describe their racial background is captured in the exchange below among focus group participants from a suburb of Washington, DC:

> Moderator: Tell me some more about the term African American, for a couple of you they're [black and African American] actually interchangeable. My sense is that for a couple more of you is it [not] something that you're actually comfortable calling yourself?
>
> Participant #1 (male): Well, for me African American is something that, and I don't know if this is true or not but it's just another label that the white culture has come up with somewhere along the line. And that may be untrue—I don't know what its origin really is. But, I've never been to Africa. Sadly, maybe I don't know much about it and I'm not so sure that, in a direct sort of way, identification should put African in front of American. Like I said for me, black is good enough and it clearly is an association, a derivation which I totally accept. But to say African American like, somehow I have a direct link to Africa—yeah I'd like to someday but I haven't so far. So the opportunity or whatever hasn't availed, you know, presented itself so, I just go back to the original statement and I will stick with black. African American don't mean too much for me.
>
> Participant #2 (female): I think there is a difference between black and African American. I have some African friends and they were born in Africa and have siblings or children here—that were born there. They're native Africans but they were born in America, then that is what I consider an African American. I am black, I'm not associated at all with Africa in the sense that I wasn't born there, I don't have any relatives there. So for me I am black, not African American. (12.02.02, DC.)

In the above dialogue, the male and female participants establish that they prefer to identify themselves as black. The term black best captures their unique origins and history as a group in the United States. Participants highlight that for black Americans,

membership in the black community is defined by being born in the United States and being of African ancestry. For these participants, being labeled "African American" suggests that their African ancestry is given more weight than their ties to the U.S., and connotes a familiarity with African culture that does not fit with their experiences as people born and bred in the United States. Participants associate the "missing" link between themselves and Africa with feelings of discomfort about referring to themselves as African Americans. Their attitudes suggest that for some black Americans, the term "black" offers the freedom to claim an indirect link to Africa without minimizing the importance of their identities as Americans. The way that participants use labels to distinguish the experiences of blacks born in the U.S. and blacks born in Africa illustrates that race alone does not signify shared identity among blacks for black Americans.

Some black American participants emphasize that they identify with a specific racial label because that category uniquely captures the experiences of black Americans. However, some participants emphasize that some black Americans identify with both black and African American and use them interchangeably to describe themselves. A male focus-group participant from the Washington, DC, area explains why he uses both black and African American to identify himself. His comment further highlights how context is central to how some blacks choose to define themselves in relation to one another, and as well as with other groups. He suggests that there are situations where the terms black and African American are uniquely relevant:

> Participant #1 (male): "I see African American [as] speaking to our experiences as black people in America. When you say African American, you think America or an American, but a black American and that experience and that history is different than that of a person from Africa who may migrate here and become an African American. So—It's interchangeable in both ways. You could use the black term for both

> groups and it could interchange back and forth. But for some reason in my experience, in my background, in my conversations with people, when I say African American it talks about that history. It talks about the slavery, it talks about all the Civil Rights movement, it brings up all that history. That's why I go back and forth between them. So when I talk and I communicate with people and I say African American, I'm saying yeah I'm American. I'm an American who had this experience with my people for the past 200 years, or however long we've been here. When I use black it's just more cultural, it's more kind of like who I am and I identify with that, so, it depends on if I'm trying to make a point or get something across…and that will help me decide which one I use…If I am hanging out with my friends it means something totally different than if I were in a more mixed group of friends—friends who may be White or Asian or Latino…But, my thing is I don't want that history we've had…lost by our inconsistency of correctly labeling our culture, our people, here. Right now. Today." (5.13.03, DC)

The male participant highlights that African American is a term that he draws upon to evoke awareness of the unique experience and unique history of black Americans in the United States, when he is not around other members of the black community. Further, he represents his use of the term black as linked to being around other group members whom he perceives to be already in the know about what it means to be part of the black community. This participant's particular take on the applicability of each term is connected to what he believes it means to be black American in U.S. society.

Among participants in Washington, DC, and New York City, regardless of a preference to be called black or African American, or to be called both interchangeably, there is a shared perspective that the categories they use to describe themselves reflect a hybrid identity shaped by African ancestry and U.S. origins. The significance of these labels is informed by how they view the circumstances of birthplace, culture, and race among black Americans. Participants emphasize their long-standing ties in the United States, and represent their African ancestry as a symbolic part of their identities directly

linked to physical appearance but without the explicit connection to Africa. Participants share a common view that the general appeal of categories like “black” and “African American” is that they capture the fusion between African and American origins, an amalgam that uniquely defines who is part of the black American community in the U.S. society.

Locating Ethnic Distinctiveness among Black Americans

When participants are asked to share their views on factors that distinguish blacks from one another, participants typically mention class differences, skin color differences, and region-based differences—issues participants attribute specifically to the U.S. born black population. Black American focus group participants however, did not typically raise the issue of birthplace or national origins as significant distinctions among blacks when asked to talk about factors that differentiate members of the black community. Rather, focus group participants were asked to provide their opinions about the relationship between black Americans and black immigrant groups. As it relates to birthplace differences among blacks, focus group participants from New York City more readily addressed ethnic difference as a social cleavage among blacks relative to their Washington, DC, counterparts. Within group discussions in Washington, DC, some participants were less comfortable offering an opinion on this topic because they had little to no contact with blacks from outside the U.S. and therefore, did not have strong opinions on this matter. However, most participants generally offered well-formed opinions about their relationship with Caribbean blacks when asked to share their thoughts.

When asked their opinions about black immigrants, participants noted cultural differences between black Caribbeans and black Americans in terms of music, food, and accent; however, these distinctions were not emphasized as significant barriers between the groups. Rather, the explanations of the differences between the groups focused on what they perceived as black Caribbeans' negative attitudes towards black Americans. Within the group discussions, comments about distinctiveness generally centered on the common perception that black Americans felt a connection with black Caribbeans; however, black Caribbeans rejected their commonalities with black Americans. Across group discussions, participants were often disappointed or exasperated about the black Caribbean community whom they described as dismissive towards black Americans.

In both New York City and Washington, DC, participants routinely emphasized that black Americans were more invested in confronting racial discrimination that than black Caribbeans. In the following passage, an all-female discussion group distinguish black Americans as more supportive of the interests of the larger black community, and characterize black Caribbeans as focused on distancing themselves from black Americans:

> Participant #1 (female): I feel more like [black Caribbeans] than they feel like me.
>
> Participant #2 (female): Right! Because they don't feel anything like us.
> Participant #1: No! I don't think they feel for me what I feel for them.
> Participant #2: Right.
> Participant #1: Because we understand the ancestral contact that happened to us in coming over here. We remember how we came over here. We were taught very strongly about that…We are more alike than we are different.
> Participant #3: (female) No matter where you're from, it's all the same animal." (3.15.03, NY)

The exchange between the women illustrates how black Americans view shared problems of race, which represents a unique bond between blacks regardless of

background differences. Embedded within the comment about African-Americans' understanding of the "ancestral contact" is a value judgment about those who minimize the significance of racial commonalities among blacks**.** They capture a shared sentiment among group discussions where participants describe black Americans as more supportive of cohesiveness and cooperation than black immigrants.

The focus groups of younger African Americans (age 18-30) in Washington, DC, and New York City offer similar observations about how black Caribbeans view themselves relative to black Americans. They highlight how their perspectives as black Americans do not coincide with how black Caribbeans view themselves and express puzzlement over the salience of distinctions because of what race represents to them in the context of U.S. society. Below, female and male focus-group participants offer their opinions about the relationship between black Americans and black Caribbeans:

> Participant #1(female): I do know that I have friends who are Haitians and are Trinidadian, I have an eclectic bunch, and they tend to distinguish themselves. I don't label them into those categories. If an issue happens with let's say, I don't know, a Haitian-American who I'm friends with or whatever and they bring it up, I don't see a distinction, but I know that person sees a very big distinction in that they feel that I should care more about that issue, and I don't. You know, I may not care as much as they want me to, you know, whereas I think of, I just think of black people as black people…I think there's nothing wrong with different cultures, but in the real scheme of things, we are all black basically and we're all seen as black in America….
>
> Participant #2 (male): I think there's a tremendous division between West Indians and African-Americans. I think there's a cultural problem there. I think by and large West Indians look at African-American people as people who are lazy. They feel as though they've come here and they've accomplished more in a short period of time, and the flip side of that is an American resents that a Caribbean person did not have to go through slavery on this land and reaped the benefits. But I think there's a tremendous division just as there is with Dominicans and Puerto Ricans.

> We even look alike, but [are] so far away because of cultural differences." (6.02.03, DC.)

There is a common sense of frustration and disappointment among black American focus-group participants over what they perceive to be the black Caribbean community's indifference about the racial commonalities they share with black Americans and further, their dismissive attitudes towards black American contributions to U.S. society. Like older black Americans, these young black American participants are sensitive to the idea that black Caribbeans prefer to be seen differently from black Americans.

There is a general sense among focus group participants that black Caribbeans understand the significance of their connection with black Americans because they also confront the problem of racial inequality as members of the black community in the U.S. Consequently, the topic of distancing attitudes among black Caribbeans elicited intense criticism from some black American focus group participants. A black American male from the Washington, DC, area aptly summarizes the dissatisfaction and displeasure expressed by black American focus group participants when he describes why he believes black Caribbeans' distancing attitudes towards black Americans heighten ethnic tension between the two communities:

> "When I lived down here, I guess it was after high school and I didn't have any contact with folks from the Caribbean. But when I went to school in New York, college, that's when I got my exposure. I was up there about 10, 12, 13 years or so and I had some problems initially with folks from the Caribbean thinkin' they're better than black folks here in this country. I had a real problem with that. I thought it was arrogant on their part to think that way, especially, you know you're here because we had to struggle you know. We're the ones that had to knock down the doors and put our bodies on the line out there to make these policies so

> that everybody could come here.…. You could come here to think you're better than me."
>
> "I don't buy that line about your pain is greater than mine or your poverty is worse than mine in this country. Bottom line is you're right here in this country and you better understand that as far as white people are concerned in this country, you're just like us. You may speak with a different accent, you may have a different shade, your hair texture may be different… When you see a brother getting' beat down here in this country by the police, don't think it can't happen to you…you're in the same boat that we are." (5.13.03, DC)

This participant illustrates how distancing attitudes among black Americans are informed by the belief that black Caribbeans view themselves as superior to black Americans. What is distinctive about black Americans' discussion about ethnic differences is that they emphasize that other blacks, regardless of social differences, should understand and respond to racial discrimination the way that they do. Once again, black American participants' perspectives highlight that what they consider to be common knowledge about racial discrimination should also be common knowledge to black Caribbeans. Another focus group-participant draws upon widely publicized cases of racially motivated violence against black immigrants in New York City to argue that differences among blacks do not distinguish how they are viewed and treated by those outside of the black Caribbean community**:**

> "I think having lost Amadou Diallo from Africa and having lost Dorismond from Haiti that it has certainly put a spotlight on what can happen to you in this country as a black person no matter where you're from. And if you can't take those examples and use them to make yourself a more cohesive group of people and share your experiences, rather than focus on your differences then we are in trouble and we will be in trouble for a long time."(3.15.03, NY)

In this way, black American participants argue that cultural differences among blacks do not lessen the likelihood of racial discrimination or its impact on any segment of the black community. Rather, immigrant blacks and black Americans should use this knowledge to work together, rather than act separately.

Most black American focus group participants blame tensions between the black American and black Caribbean communities on the distancing behavior and attitudes of black Caribbeans, yet, one focus group participant argued that distancing attitudes and stereotyping of black Caribbeans within the black American community fostered divisions between the two communities:

> Participant # 1 (male): "There's a big divide where 'I'm from here, so I don't like you' or, 'I'm from this country, so I don't like you, I'm from this island so I don't like you', 'I'm from America and you're from the Caribbean and I don't like you'. So there's a big separate divide already from the beginning and that's the biggest problem to me right there. That we buy into the separate—cause you're Caribbean…and we perpetuate it with stereotypes and everything else."
>
> Participant #4 (male): "There are some stereotypes that we have on both sides. And some of them are nasty stereotypes. I am not Caribbean and I have heard some of the Caribbean criticisms and I have some of the people on our side say things like, it's not fair or nice… A lot of American blacks think Caribbeans automatically think they are better than American blacks when they come here…."
> (3.29.03, NY)

Some focus group-participants acknowledge that as much as some black Americans support the concept of community with immigrant blacks, this sense of community is not similarly extended to black Caribbeans in the way that it is to other black Americans. The attitudes of participants reveal that the imperatives of racial progress for black Americans do not always incorporate the ability to overlook mutual stereotypes and cultural differences between the two communities. Thus, focus group

participants recognize that black Americans also contribute to problems of organization in the black community and complicate the opportunities for political alliances and mutual cooperation with black Caribbeans when they reify and act upon perceived differences between the two communities.

The focus group discussions highlight the beliefs and attitudes that inform a sense of distinctiveness among middle-class black Americans. The NSAL data provides further evidence that perceptions of ethnic distinctiveness are present among a cross-section of black Americans. Perceptions of black Caribbeans incorporate attitudes of ethnic distinctiveness. To explore perceptions of distinctiveness among black Americans, their perceptions of closeness to blacks and closeness to black Caribbeans were examined separately. The NSAL asked two questions that measure black Americans' perceptions of how close they felt to blacks in this county, and how close to they felt to blacks from the Caribbean. [8]

Figure 2.2 reveals that there are differences in how U.S. born blacks respond to questions about feelings of closeness to blacks and feelings of closeness to black Caribbeans. When the lower categories of closeness are combined (not too close and not close at all), approximately 41% of black Americans claim not to feel very close to black Caribbeans, while only 9% feel this way about blacks in this country. The differences in patterns of response to the two separate measures of closeness highlight that black Americans are using black Americans as the reference group for questions that ask about feelings of closeness to blacks generally. The differences in these numbers suggest that

[8] The question used to measure common fate was a combined response to the following questions: 1) Do you think what happens generally to black people in this country will have something to do with what happens in our life? 2) Will it affect you a lot, some, or not very much? The responses were recoded into a four-category measure of common fate (the responses were a lot, some, not much, none).

black Americans feel closer to members of the black American community relative to blacks with origins outside of the U.S.

In summary, it appears as though feelings of closeness reflect how black Americans perceive ethnic or cultural similarity with other U.S. born blacks. As much as black Americans feel that the lives of blacks are similarly connected, that does not mean that they necessarily view black immigrants as similar to them in all respects. Based on the patterns of response in the focus groups as well as the survey, black Americans perceive real differences between themselves and black Caribbeans; and, black Americans emphasize a distinct identity from foreign-born blacks in how they view shared cultural characteristics with other black Americans. However, the importance of shared experiences that shape and reinforce a common identification among blacks are captured in how they define racial common fate with other blacks. In the following section, I discuss how black Americans' perceptions of common fate support the concept of pan-black racial solidarity. Black Americans view cultural differences as a social barrier within the community, yet, they also support the imperatives of working and uniting with other blacks regardless of social background.

"I Am Because We Are": Black American Expressions of Pan-Racial Solidarity

> Moderator: "What's the struggle?"
> Participant: "I'll tell you what the struggle is! I know exactly what the struggle is. The struggle is trying to survive in a place that does not want you there. That's the struggle." (12.06.02, NY)

Within the focus groups, participants were asked to share their ideas about the factors that they believe connect the lives of blacks. Generally racial discrimination was among the top three responses offered across group discussions in both Washington, DC, and New York City. Moreover, participants depicted racial discrimination as a simple

matter of custom in U.S. society. In the following exchange I draw upon the statements of two focus group participants from Washington, DC, to illustrate how participants perceive that racism uniquely connects all black people to each other:

> Moderator: "I'd be interested to hear from each of you [about] what you find…connects black people to each other…"
>
> Participant #3: (Male) "Well I guess, just racial oppression. I mean that's the first thing that comes to my mind. I mean I don't care what part of the country you come from or what land you're from other than this country. When you set foot on this land and you're perceived to be black—and we know there are still laws on the books—One drop law, Three-Fifths Law, and that sort of stuff, you're not as good. In controlling groups' eyes, we're pretty much all the same…So I'd have to say that's our common thread no matter how we perceive ourselves in relation to one another."
>
> Participant #4: (Female) "I agree with the struggle, oppression and discrimination as the common thread that blacks, black Americans experience. In some cultures people can hide their race. We cannot. People will discriminate against us because of the way we look, the color of our skin. So that is a common thread that we will all experience throughout our lives and I don't think it matters in all instances what degrees you hold, what positions you hold. There's still that common thread that exists among black people."
> **(**5.13.03, DC)

Participants routinely express concerns about pervasive negative stereotypes of "blackness" which they emphasize as the basis of common experiences of racial discrimination.

To understand in further detail the salience of the connection participants identify among blacks, participants were asked to discuss whether they perceived common fate with other blacks. Participants' initial responses to the question of common fate centered on how they believed they were viewed by the larger society, specifically those outside of their racial group. Participants offered similar comments that the lives of blacks are uniquely linked by how those outside of the community view them and treat them. Thus,

common fate incorporates an understanding that shared racial status impacts their lives regardless of social differences among blacks.

Racial inequality was routinely depicted by participants as the systematic denial of opportunities and disparate social and economic outcomes for blacks relative to other ethnic and racial groups in U.S. society, particularly whites. Thus, part of common fate "talk" among participants incorporates the view that blacks are often evaluated by different and unequal standards relative to other racial groups, particularly, whites:

> Participant #1: (female) "I know we always have to shine brighter at whatever we do just to sort of be in the game so to speak. To have opportunities we always have to be better than better."
>
> Participant #5: (male) "Be a star or sit on the bench."
>
> Participant #1: (female) "Right."
>
> Participant #3: (male) "In all the expectations are lower….
>
> Participant #4: (male) "Well-yeah I guess you're right."
>
> Participant #3: (male) "Depends on where you are. That's true we're just speaking in very general terms. If you're black in particular white surroundings and you are one of a few, the spotlight is definitely on you and often, not necessarily always, but often, expectations are lower**.** Gotta be better as you said. That's just kind of the way it's been**." (**5.13.03, DC)

Black American participants acknowledge that their perceptions of common fate are rooted in common experiences of discrimination. Although common fate is defined by the awareness of shared problems of race among focus group participants, it is also viewed as a remedy for addressing racial inequality. Common fate represents a path to deliverance from the destructive consequences of racism for focus group participants. Consequently, an expressed desire to see cohesiveness among blacks, or shared interests informs talk of common fate among New York City and Washington, DC, focus group participants. In this vein, participants emphasize similar expectations about how members of the black community should view and respond to shared problems of discrimination.

These ideas focus on how the behavior and attitude of individual blacks have implications for the status of the group as much as discrimination does. Consequently, the desire to improve the status of the racial group in society makes group cohesiveness, or unity, a compelling interest for black American focus group participants.

Black American focus group participants share the belief that common fate incorporates a belief that all blacks have a shared responsibility for what happens to the community. Thus, many perceive that members of the black community should recognize the scope of discrimination as a problem in U.S. society, and be willing to take common action on behalf of the community. The prospect of disunity elicits great concern among focus group participants because it represents the "death knell" of deliverance or racial progress. In the following exchange, a group of black American women from New York City focus on individualistic behavior and individualistic attitudes as catalysts of community dissolution among blacks:

> Participant #1: (female) "If we don't have a responsibility to each other then we will completely lose our cohesiveness and our children will learn nothing."
> Participant #3: (female) "Yes, we do have a responsibility to each other. We should be our brother's and our sister's keepers."
> Participant #1: (female) "That's right!"
> Participant #4: (female) "Absolutely."
> Participant #3: (female) "But sometimes we don't want to. I'm going my way, you go your way."
> Participant #1: (female) "But that's all a part of the whole individualism that's sold to us in the overall society. And we buy into that too."
> Participant #2: (female) "Learn how to disagree but agree...you know we all have different brains and think about things. But learn how to agree when it's a majority in order to get something accomplished. We don't always have to agree."
> Participant #1: (female) "We're not always going to agree."
> Participant #2: (female) "We could be agreeably disagreeable."
> Participant #4: (female) "Which is what we don't do." (3.15.03, NY)

The above participants recognize individual differences exist within the community, they also believe that that they must be measured against the interests of the community. Thus, they capture the idea that individual blacks ought to know when it is prudent to act in one's interest and when the interests of the racial community must also be taken into account. Another participant within the group discussion above further clarifies the significance of these comments by focusing on cohesiveness as a crucial community resource:

> "I think being in the U.S. we really have become our own tribe even though we're not monolithic, but, we have so much in common in this country…And I think that makes us a tribe and if we were smart enough, it would make us a very, very strong tribe. So, that's my feeling about that." (black American female, 3.15.03, NY)

In the above comments, focus group-participants emphasize the significance of a shared consciousness that aligns individual interests with community interests as part of the interpretation of common fate among blacks. They perceive that a shared awareness of the problems facing the black community as well as a personal investment in community are the prescriptions for improving the overall status of the black community in the U.S. society. Thus, part of fulfilling one's obligation to the community is about accepting the burden of race (i.e., being black) and playing a part in promoting the interests of the larger black community.

Perspectives of common fate among participants emphasize the importance of conformity around shared beliefs and practices that minimize the impact of discrimination and racial exclusion on the black community as a whole. Participants view the emphasis on conformity to group norms as a problematic approach to racial progress yet, at the same time they consider it unrealistic not to acknowledge that a unified

approach to eliminating racial inequality is crucial to improving the status of blacks as members of U.S. society. Thus, participants are acutely aware of the inherent tension behind having a sense of mission towards the group and being individuals. Yet, they perceive there are dire consequences for acting outside these group norms:

> Participant #1: (female) "I do think we are a role model whether we want to be one or not. The fact that we are educated, can sit around and talk about these issues is saying that you're a role model. You're a role model when you're going out and showing the other little kids that we can go beyond mopping and cleaning rooms; we can actually be educated people. We can speak out, we can write, we can articulate. We're still not past that stage even though we're 200 years away from that we still are trying to climb out of that and teach our children that there's a better way of life through education and hard work."
>
> Participant #2: (male) "I think that's why it's so hard for black people to feel that way, to watch other black people in whatever situation not take that ownership because that's even more weight then I ought to carry 'cause you're not carrying your part and in essence you begin to resent that person because they're not taking ownership of it. They're refusing to see, if they're gonna live their way, live their life to see it the way they want to see it and not own it…that creates a sense of dissidence right there… So I think that's what people have a problem with. We all have to deal with the consequences, there's no question about it, but who's going to be proactive about making a change so that we don't have these same consequences over and over again." (5.13.03, DC)

Participants perceive that fulfilling one's obligation to the racial group promotes shared consciousness and facilitates common action within the community, whereas "playing up" differences within the community is potentially divisive.

Among the group discussions in both Washington, DC, and New York City there was a remarkable similarity among focus-group participants in that most overwhelmingly claimed to feel common fate and shared similar perspectives about the individual responsibility to the group. The attitudes of participants suggest that common fate is a central factor influencing the political orientations of middle-class black Americans.

Furthermore, the attitudes of focus group participants provide evidence of pan-black racial solidarity as they highlight that although they perceive ethnic differences with black immigrants, shared problems of race supersede ethnic tensions that may exist.

If we look at the perspectives of a cross-section of black Americans in addition to the perspectives of middle-class black Americans, the NSAL data indicate that there is more variation in common fate perceptions within this group. Figure 2.3 provides a breakdown of the distribution of common fate perceptions among black Americans while Table 2.2 shows the breakdown of attitudes across income, education, and age categories.

The data in Figure 2.3 show that approximately fifty percent of blacks perceive that what happens to other blacks in this country will affect their lives. However, the data in Table 2.2 reveals that common fate perceptions are not distributed equally among black Americans. Stronger perceptions of common fate (those who have “some” and “a lot” of common fate) tend to be represented among black Americans in the highest education and income categories. Conversely, those who express “none” or “not much” were more likely to be less educated or fall within the lowest income categories. While younger black Americans appear to be more likely to claim no common fate than older black Americans, age does not seem to be associated with significant differences in perceptions of common fate among black Americans. The trends in attitude suggest that attitudes of common fate are more likely to be expressed among black Americans with higher socioeconomic status.

The survey data and focus group data reveal that group identification among black Americans is informed by their knowledge of the culture and history of the United States; thus, shared U.S. origins and African ancestry define those within the black community

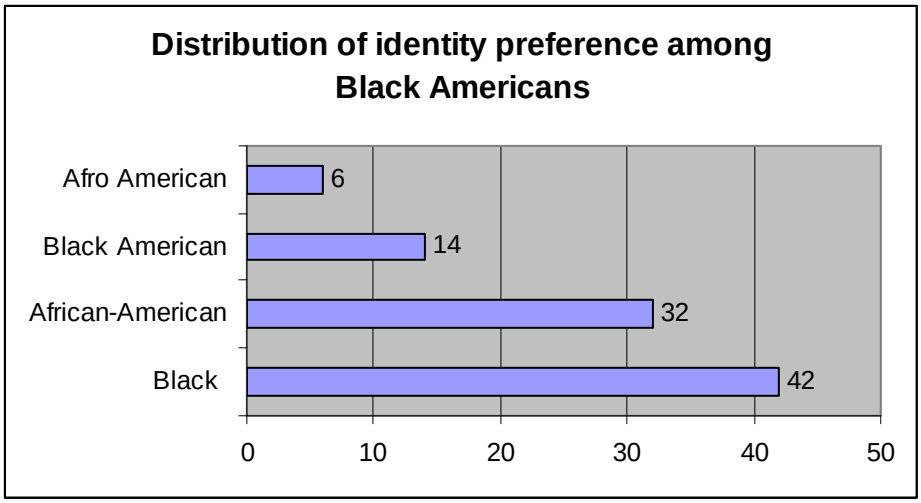
who are most like them. The attitudes of focus group participants indicate that black Americans draw upon their distinct history and experiences as a group to articulate norms of racial community and group cohesion between themselves and other blacks. Black Americans also express a sense of ethnic distinctiveness relative to black Caribbeans that is reflected in how they critique the attitudes and experiences of black immigrants through their own experience as a group in the United States. Black American expectations that all blacks similarly recognize problems of race, potentially conflicts with how immigrant blacks make sense of racial group membership in the United States.

While perceptions of distinctiveness are prevalent across social backgrounds for black Americans, the data highlight that middle-class black Americans are particularly supportive of the idea that shared experiences of exclusion link the fates of all members of the black community. Thus, the values that define "black common sense" among black Americans inform an expectation that what is common knowledge to them is similarly shared by other blacks, including immigrant blacks. This trend in perspectives among participants strongly coheres with Michael Dawson's (2001) claim that part of the political tradition within black politics is "the consistent demand that individual African Americans take political stands that are perceived by the community as not harming the black community." He further states that this perspective is associated with a "tradition of public community censoring and sanctioning" those seen as undermining the community (31).

The perspectives of black American focus group participants suggest that among middle-class blacks, racial common fate incorporates more than perceptions of group discrimination. Perceptions of common fate reinforce a sense of individual obligation to

the racial group and shape expectations of a unified approach towards the common goal of racial progress. Participants frame the black experience through common narratives of racial inequality—a narrative that they perceive applies equally to all blacks regardless of social cleavages that may exist within the group. Despite their feelings of distinctiveness from black Caribbeans, the data indicate that black Americans support cooperation and common action around shared problems. They espouse an example of shared identification through perceptions of common fate that emphasizes that racial commonalities transcend differences and individual interests among blacks. Consequently, the desire to mobilize around common interests for the sake of one's racial group reflects how perceptions of pan-black racial solidarity inform black American political incorporation. However, perceptions of black common fate are more prevalent among wealthier and more educated blacks. The descriptive analysis and multivariate analysis support that poorer blacks and less educated blacks are more likely to express stronger feelings of distinctiveness from black immigrants and feel a weaker sense of common fate with blacks. Consequently, the data indicate that pan-black racial solidarity within the black American community will have greater support among blacks with higher socio-economic status.

Figure 2.1 Percent Distribution of Identity Preference among Black Americans



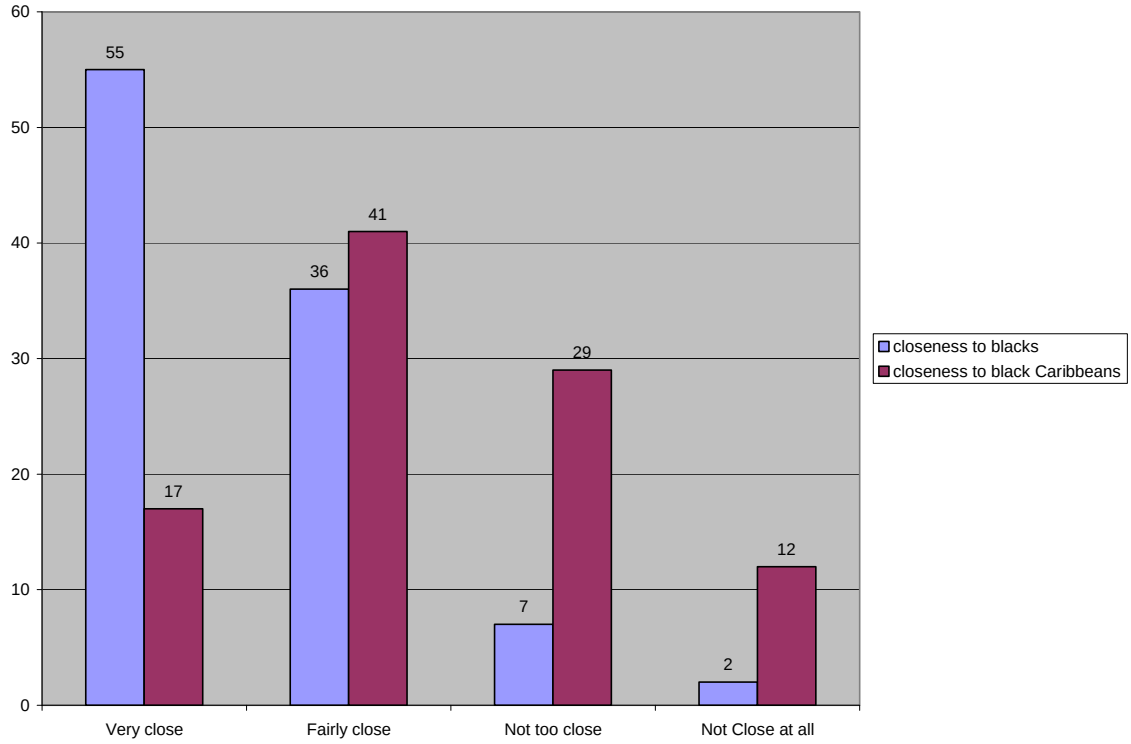
Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

Table 2.1 Percent Distribution of Identity Preference by Demographic Characteristics among Black Americans

Label	**Black**	**African American**
Education (n=3400) (F=2.68)		
Some high school	41%	27%
High school	43%	31%
Some college	40	35%
College and beyond	42%	37%
Age (n=3400) (F=4.06)		
18-25	42%	39%
26-35	42%	36%
36-45	38%	34%
46-60	44%	26%
60 and older	41%	22%
Income (n-3342) (F=1.99)		
0-14,999	41%	27%
15000-29,999	41%	29%
30,000-49,999	43%	35%
50,000-74,999	39%	12%
75,000 or more	45%	7%

Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

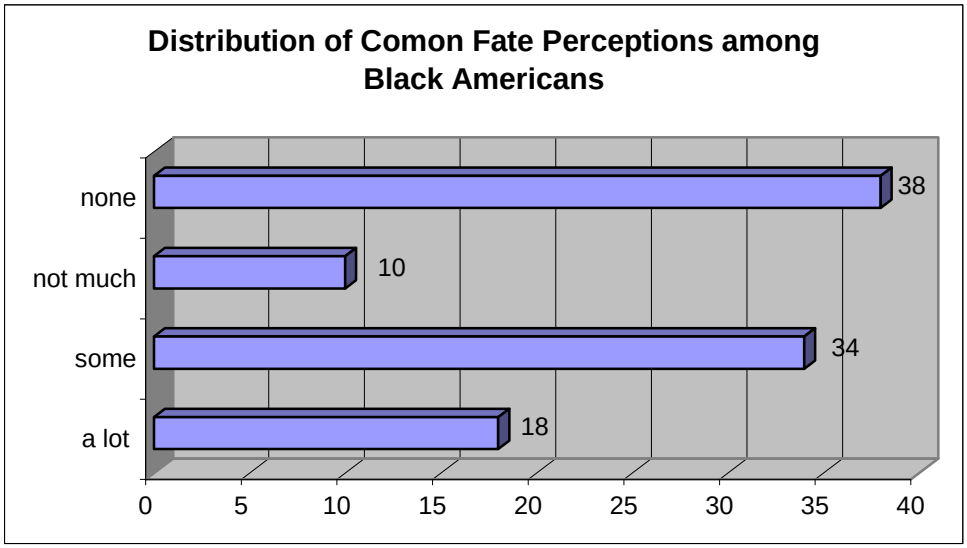
Figure 2.2 Percent Distribution of Feelings of Closeness to Blacks and Black Caribbeans among Black Americans



Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

Closeness to blacks N= 3248
Closeness to black Caribbeans N=3215

Figure 2.3: Percent Distribution of Common Fate Perceptions among Black Americans



N=3388

Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

Table 2.2: Percent Distribution of Common Fate Perceptions by Demographic Characteristics among Black Americans

	None	Not Very Much	Some	A Lot
Education (n=3388) (F=8.97)				
Some high school	45%	12%	25%	17%
High school	42%	10%	32%	16%
Some college	31%	10%	42%	18%
College and beyond	28%	8%	41%	23%
Age (n=3388) (F=2.00)				
18-25	41%	10%	32%	16%
26-35	42%	8%	30%	20%
36-45	37%	10%	38%	16%
46-60	35%	10%	35%	20%
60 and older	38%	14%	31%	17%
Income (n=2697) (F=4.35)				
0-14,999	46%	10%	28%	16%
15000-29,999	41%	12%	30%	17%
30,000-49,999	34%	9%	38%	20%
50,000-74,999	34%	8%	39%	19%
75,000 or more	26%	12%	42%	20%

Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

Chapter 3

Ethnic Distinctiveness and Pan-Black Racial Solidarity among First-Generation Black Caribbeans

"I cannot truthfully say I can identify with what's going on with all the Blacks in the United States…Not me! I am Barbadian by birth and by background I'm Black. I suit the profile of the United States in that I'm Black. I was a law-abiding citizen in Barbados and I'm hopefully still a law-abiding citizen while I'm in the United States and that's what we were taught from the ground-up. So, I don't see myself as the regular, run of the mill Black… My color is run of the mill, but in thinking, I'm not run of the mill…." (11.22.03, NY)

Scholars of immigrant incorporation argue that an immigrant reference point informs distinct expressions of racial identity among black Caribbeans and further, influences attitudes of distinctiveness from black Americans (Bashi and McDaniel, 1997; Vickerman, 1999; Waters, 1999; Bobb, 2001). This chapter explores what patterns of racial group identification reveal about the political incorporation path of first-generation black Caribbeans. Specifically, this discussion focuses on whether attitudes of distinctiveness inhibit among first-generation black Caribbeans.

To explore racial group identification among black Caribbeans, I relied upon questions in the survey data and focus group data that engage inter-group comparisons (comparisons with black Americans) among first-generation black Caribbeans. I examine measures of self-identification, perceptions of closeness to blacks, as well as common fate perceptions among first-generation black Caribbeans from the English-speaking Caribbean, and the French-speaking Caribbean. My analysis supports findings in the scholarship that the immigrant reference point heavily informs racial group identification of first-generation black Caribbeans. I also find, however, that common fate perceptions define the basis of pan-black racial solidarity with blacks for first-generation black

Caribbeans. The following discussion of self-identification, feelings of closeness and common fate perceptions examines how first-generation black Caribbean perspectives reflect pan-black racial solidarity with blacks.

Patterns of Self-Identification among Black Caribbeans

In Chapter 2, we learned from the perspectives of black American focus group participants that African ancestry and U.S. origins define black Americans' identification with racial categories like black and African American. Among first-generation black Caribbeans, the focus group data and survey data reveal that the importance of African ancestry and national origins also inform their patterns of racial group identification in a way that highlights their differences from black Americans.

The focus groups provided in-depth perspectives about the ideas and beliefs that inform the distinct patterns of identification among black Caribbeans. A comparison of the descriptions of identification shared by focus group participants in both Washington, DC, and New York City reveal highly unified perspectives about the categories these black Caribbeans believe best define them.

Within the group discussions, black Caribbean participants were asked to describe their racial background. Like their black American counterparts, they were also asked to share their thoughts about whether the terms black and African American represented the same identities. The ideas and opinions participants used to describe themselves contrast with the ideas highlighted by black Americans in Chapter 2. The perspectives of participants in New York City and Washington, DC, reflect the influence of a different reference point about identity relative to black Americans.

When first-generation black Caribbean participants initially described their racial background some quite simply described themselves as black. Many emphasized that they "know" that they are black; yet, this knowledge was not particularly remarkable to them. Participants' descriptions of their racial background included references to a specific country of origin in the Caribbean, or identification as members of a broader pan-ethnic Caribbean community; thus, some participants described themselves as Jamaican or Trinidadian (for example), and others described themselves as "West Indian" or "Afro Caribbean."

Focus group participants' descriptions of their racial background offer a contrast to the definitions of black provided by black Americans in chapter 2. Many participants were adamant that racial commonalities between black Americans and black Caribbeans did not mean that both groups had the same identity. In the following exchange, a group of black Caribbeans living in Brooklyn, NY, illustrate how first-generation focus group participants distinguish between being "black" and being "African American":

> Question: A couple of terms that are pretty often applied to people of African descent living in the United States are "Black" or "African American"… Do you identify with any of those terms? Is being Black the same thing as being African American?
>
> Participant #1 (male): I'm Barbadian!
>
> Participant #2 (male): I'm Black. Sorry.
>
> Participant #1 (male): I'm Barbadian. I know that I'm black. I've no problem over that. I live by that. No more.
>
> Participant #3 (female): I have no problem with the term "black." …black is good enough for me.
>
> Participant #4 (female): Yeah, I'm comfortable with black, but I don't see myself as an American, even though I'm a citizen.

Participant #2 (male): I have no problem with either terminology. If you say I'm Black, I accept that.

Participant # 3(female): But we don't say black American.

Participant #2 (male): I know.

Participant #1 (male): We never say black American, I mean, black is fine….

Question: So how about African American? Do you identify with that term?

Participant #4 (female): Well… if I have to fill out something I wouldn't check African American, Other. I would put Afro Caribbean.

Participant #5 (female): Um-hum.

Participant #4 (female): It is not on there. That is.

Participant #2 (male): If that's a choice.

Participant #4 (female): Yes. If you have Other, I put Other, Afro Caribbean.

Participant # 2 (male): Have to explain what it is.

Participant # 4 (female): Yes. Because they are different mindsets.

Question: So you see yourself as black but not as African American?

Participant #2 (male): Not really.

Question: So who is African American?

Participant #2 (male): People who were born here.

In the above exchange, participants define who is black and who is African American from their perspective. They highlight that as a category black represents a much broader group of people than black Americans. Although they define themselves as black similar to many African Americans they do not view themselves as African American. Thus, these participants' descriptions capture how differences in birthplace not

only inform the labels they use to define themselves, it also informs how they view themselves relative to other blacks, particularly black Americans. Consistent with studies in the immigration literature, the survey data and focus data confirm that black Caribbeans' sense of what it means to be black is different from black Americans and that they view themselves differently.

The trend among focus group participants to describe themselves as black or to emphasize their Caribbean origins is similarly reflected in the NSAL data. The distribution of identity preferences among black Caribbean NSAL respondents is reflected in Figure 3.1. The data show that the majority of first-generation black Caribbeans (41%) prefer to identify themselves primarily as black or they strongly identify with their Caribbean background.[9] Perceptions of distinctiveness are highlighted by the small percentage of black Caribbeans who identify themselves as African American (8%) which contrasts greatly with the 32% of black Americans who identify themselves within this category in Chapter 2. Black Caribbean patterns of identification with the black and Caribbean categories indicate that black Caribbeans perceive a difference between identifying themselves as black and identifying themselves as African-American.

Patterns of identification by age, income, region, and length of residence were also examined to identify how preferences were distributed among black Caribbeans. This break down is presented in Table 3.1. The data show that across social categories, black Caribbeans primarily identify themselves as black or identify with terms that represent their Caribbean background. Using designed-based chi-square tests of

[9] The label "Caribbean background" is a combined response variable that accounts for black Caribbean identification with national origin groups and identification with pan-ethnic Caribbean labels such as West Indian.

association, I find no significant association between income (F=1.12) or education (F=.8499) on patterns of identification among black Caribbeans. The tests for association are non-significant for age (F=1.41) and immigration status (F=.731) as well.

Using the NSAL, I was also able to explore how black Caribbeans evaluate the importance of their racial group membership and the importance of their Caribbean origins in relation to one another. [10] Figure 3.2 shows that the overwhelming majority (64%) of black Caribbeans perceive that being black and being from their country of origin are equally important, while a smaller percentage of black Caribbeans either claim that being black is more important (10%), or that their country of origin was more important (10%). These findings support the idea that race and ethnicity for black Caribbeans are not viewed in mutually exclusive terms. This way of thinking about identity is reflected in the perspectives of focus groups and is most evident in how they evaluate themselves relative to others. Both aspects of identity mutually reinforce perceptions of distinctiveness from other groups.

Black Caribbeans and Perceptions of Closeness

Within the group discussions, the discussions of identity also incorporated the ideas and opinions that informed perceptions of closeness to blacks among focus group participants. The comments generally focus on the significance of cultural similarities and dissimilarities among black Caribbeans and black Americans. Participants' opinions reveal how the salience of their unique experiences back home shape their perceptions of a connection with black Americans. In the following exchange, a group of black Caribbean women focus on values, pride, and self-esteem to explain how their upbringing

[10] NSAL respondents were asked the following question: "Which would you say is more important to you—being black, or being from (specific country in the Caribbean), or are both equally important to you?"

in their respective Caribbean countries impacts their feelings of closeness to black Americans:

> Question: How close do you feel in your everyday life to African Americans?
>
> Participant #1 (Female): For me, I feel closer to Africans than to black Americans because they [Africans] have a philosophy that we can identify with.
>
> Participant#2 (female): I have some Black American friends, but there are some cultural differences.
>
> Question: What is that difference that you see?
>
> Participant #2 (female): From everything. From foods to values to...
>
> Participant #3 (female): More values.
>
> Participant #1 (female): Right.
>
> Partcipant#3 (female): Family values.
>
> Participant#1(female): But there is a difference with blacks if they're of West Indian descent, though.
>
> Question: Tell me about these values that you see are different among...
>
> Participant #1 (female) Respect for their elders and respect for themselves.
>
> Participant #4 (female): That's the key right there. I think that's one of the basic differences between Black Americans and West Indian Blacks.
>
> Participant #1 (female): West Indian Blacks have tremendous pride.
>
> Participant #3 (female): Self-esteem.
>
> Participant #2 (female): But that comes environmentally. We were brought up in a Black culture where we had nothing but Black leaders. I mean everybody there in any position was Black. People of color. So it was natural.
>
> Participant #4 (female): The experiences they had we didn't have. We came with a sense of self-esteem and a sense of self….

> Participant #1 (female): Part of the difference is that Blacks in this country always had a need to prove themselves whereas we as West Indians never had that need to prove ourselves because we knew who we were. And I think that was a big difference…And so they come with that little bit of a chip because they have to prove themselves. I'll sit back and say "Wait a minute! I don't have to prove myself to somebody. I don't have to work twice as hard to get half the credit." I don't have to prove myself to anybody.
>
> Participant #3 (female): But they have to….
>
> Participant #1 (female): And another important factor that comes into play here is that we West Indians have great initiative as a whole. We don't wait for somebody to say that this needs to be done. You just do it. Again that comes from Blacks in this country having to know their place. And I think that makes a big difference.
>
> Participant #2 (female): But the converse to that is that I think we as West Indians see ourselves as being a little better than American Blacks and when we say better I don't think in terms of what you have but in attitude and what we would take. We didn't have the kind of experience that they had, so we couldn't really relate to that. We didn't struggle like them. We read about it. We could empathize
>
> Participant #3 (female): But Black Americans then see us as being a little arrogant about that.

On the whole, the topic of differences colored participants comments about how they view themselves relative to black Americans. The opinions shared among black Caribbean focus group participants reflect the influence of prior knowledge, memories and experiences from home. The comments reveal that they rely upon these resources to evaluate and respond to personal challenges they confront in the United States. However, the comments about distinctiveness from black Americans often centered on differences in how they deal with the racial discrimination they confront in U.S. society, and further, the salience of discrimination in their lives. Their comments reveal that attributes about discrimination were linked to how they view opportunity in the US society.

In the following exchange, a group of college students draw distinctions between the history and culture of black Americans and black Caribbeans to explain why they do not identify with the black American experience:

> Participant #1: "I can't claim the experience of being African American because I wasn't born in this country and my ancestors didn't go through the same thing the African Americans' ancestors went through. So it would be—I don't know, unfair of me to claim the same heritage as African Americans, just as it would be kind of unfair for them to claim my heritage, in a way. I mean, when you look at it, the bottom line is we're all African; we come from one, you know, from the same continent. But more specifically, on this continent, in this country sorry, you know, the civil rights from the Harlem Renaissance and everything else that African Americans have done, too, and have done for the United States. I, of course, cannot claim that, just as someone—they can't, you know, well truly claim everything that's Black Caribbean or Anguillan to me. So that's the way I look at it."
>
> Participant #2: "Basically, we walk, talk and act"
>
> Participant #1: "Differently…" (5.01.03, DC)

The salience of their immigrant reference point is captured in the participants' description of how the unique history and culture of their respective societies in the Caribbean shaped different values and norms of race that distinguish their ability to relate fully to various aspects of the black American experience. These first-generation focus group participants believe that they view the world through different eyes compared to black Americans because their origins are different. They acknowledge shared racial characteristics with black Americans, yet, at the same time emphasize that the identities of the two groups are distinct from one another.

Some first-generation focus group participants were particularly wary about interpreting the world through a "racial lens," or what some described as blaming one's problems on race. Other participants perceive that black Americans live with the

expectation of discrimination which they believe is a way some blacks absolve themselves of personal responsibility for their problems. The comments of two male focus group participants reflect the viewpoint of some participants that how black Caribbeans interpret and respond to discrimination distinguishes them from black Americans:

> Question: "What do you have in common with black Americans?"
>
> Participant #2: (male) "I should say besides color, I can't say anything else."
>
> Participant#1: (male) "Honestly…the only thing we have in common is color, that is it... I never understand how come everything here has to do with the black man being held down by someone else. I never understand if you don't get something that you want, first thing comes to you it has to be racial. If I don't get something I want… I'm checking myself first. Maybe I did something wrong, maybe I could have done something differently and I say it was because of my own shortcomings and never because I was black…" (12.08.02, NY)

These comments highlight how some first-generation Caribbean blacks are suspicious of assuming a direct correlation between race and opportunity in the U.S. Their perspectives support previous findings in the literature that first-generation Caribbean blacks are more likely to attribute their achievements and failures to the fruit of their individual effort rather than societal barriers (Bobb & Clarke, 2001).

Participants often describe success through individual accomplishments, or, through the achievements of family members. Individual success is depicted as an effective approach to countering discrimination. Consequently, many participants perceive that focusing on "past wrongs" presents a potentially self-imposed barrier to progress in U.S. society. This sentiment is reflected in the following comments by a group of students in Washington, DC:

> Participant #1 (male): "…the few times we get in conversations with African Americans, they start to talk about the struggle, they start to talk about, you know, opportunities. Opportunities. Opportunities."
>
> Participant #2 (male): "Right. Opportunities are available for whites and they're not available for us, etc., blah blah blah. And I mean, I understand that and to a certain extent, I agree with what the other guy was saying earlier, you know, that yeah, we haven't lived the experience, etc."
>
> Participant #3 (male): "Right."
>
> Participant #1 (male): "But my question is, at what point do you stop making excuses and start doing something? I mean, are you going to for millennium after millennium, just say, 'Well, we suffered and this was done to us, etc., blah-blah-blah, rah rah rah!' I mean, look at the Japanese! Look what was done to them 50, 60 years ago. I mean, who can talk to Japan now?" (5.01.03, DC)

The attitudes of focus group participants capture how their immigrant reference point filters their interpretations of race and opportunity and further, how it influences their evaluations of black Americans. The males in the above exchange sympathize with the experience of black Americans; yet, they depict the black American narrative of denied opportunity as outside of their own experience. Like other first-generation participants in Washington, DC, and New York City they perceive that black Americans are distracted from taking advantage of present opportunities for success because they are overly focused on past inequities.

First-generation focus group participants' perceptions of closeness are also informed by experiences of exclusion and conflict with other blacks. Participants offer similar descriptions of being told they had come to "take away" what belongs to black Americans, or that they thought they were "better" than American blacks. In the following statement a male student from St. Lucia explains how distancing attitudes

among black Americans reinforce perceptions of a social boundary between the two communities:

> "…We are constantly reminded by African Americans that 'you're not one of us'- that you are an outsider…I think that the fact that we try to make a concerted effort to reach out and… realize that it's not helping…you're feeling…worse because at the same time you're making that effort, you're recognized as just being a Black Caribbean or St. Lucian national and that's about it." (12.12.02, NY)

Experiences of discord with other blacks not only strengthen a sense of distinctiveness for first-generation black Caribbeans, they also inform the perspective that their struggle to feel included in American society is not defined primarily by their racial background. Rather, the manner in which other blacks respond to them as immigrants significantly influences their experiences as well.

However, not all black Caribbeans' ideas about closeness with black Americans were defined by attitudes of distinctiveness. Rather, some focus group participants described coming to perceive a dissonance between racial norms that shaped their lives in the Caribbean and their racial realities in the U.S. society. Part of this process involved developing greater sensitivity to racial discrimination and its impact on the lives of blacks in the U.S. These participants explained that as the connection between race and common experiences of discrimination became more salient, the similarities between black Caribbeans and black Americans became increasingly more important. In the following comment, a Jamaican woman who had been living in the United States for over thirty years described how her perspective changed as she became more knowledgeable about U.S. society:

> "When I came here just with my knowledge about African Americans, I was told that African Americans were lazy…that they were all on welfare and that we as Jamaicans were better…I have to be honest, I held these thoughts, but, after I began to read about the civil rights movement and I saw what they went through and what they did for us, they made it possible for me to come to this country and to go to school and get a job…I read about the lynchings and the protests and what they went through… And then I began to look at all the inventors and the Black scientists…I am grateful for them because they have done much for us. And other Blacks are usually in the forefront whether it is apartheid, Haiti, the issues in the Caribbean. They are usually out there for other Blacks…Diallo was not African American [but] they are in the forefront of the struggle…so I think we have more in common and I think it's the White people who help to make, who want to make this division by telling us, 'oh you work harder', and then we prove them right and go and work harder cause we want to show these African Americans that they are lazy." (2.01.03, NY)

This focus group participant contrasts her prior attitudes about race with those she cultivates as a member of U.S. society, attributing the shift in her attitudes to knowledge gained about the experience of black Americans. She perceives that the politics of distinctions potentially distract black Caribbeans from focusing on the more significant problem of racism and the commonalities they share with black Americans. Her comments illustrate that for some black Caribbeans, the black American experience is a primary point of reference for making sense of race in the United States. Thus, some black Caribbeans learn that the way that race "works" in their home country is not necessarily how race "works" within the context of U.S. race relations. The dissonance reinforces the commonalties they share with other blacks. Relative to most of the focus group participants, in both cities, this woman offers a nuanced perspective about perceptions of distinctiveness and how her social experiences in the U.S. informed a closer identification with black Americans.

The focus group data highlight the ideas and opinions connected to the immigrant reference point that captures how the first-generation draws upon knowledge, experiences, and memories of their home country to define themselves uniquely from other blacks and to characterize their relationship with black Americans. In the following section, the attitudes of distinctiveness among first-generation Caribbeans are further examined using measures of closeness in the NSAL.

NSAL and Perceptions of Closeness among Black Caribbeans

To further examine the salience of distinctiveness among black Caribbeans, I re-visit the two measures of closeness from the NSAL that were used to explore perspectives among black Americans in Chapter 2. Below, I discuss patterns of closeness as well as predictors of closeness among black Caribbeans.

Figure 3.3 reflects the distribution of black Caribbean respondents' perceptions of closeness to blacks and perceptions of closeness to black Caribbeans. Black Caribbeans' patterns of response to the question of closeness differ depending on whether the reference group is "blacks in this country" or "black Caribbeans." When black Caribbeans are the reference group (closeness refers to black Caribbeans), a majority of NSAL respondents (58%) claim to feel very close. However, when the question of closeness is asked about "blacks in this country," the percentage of black Caribbeans who fall within the "very close" category drops to 44%. Further, 16% of black Caribbeans claim to feel "not too close" to blacks, when only 2% claim to feel this way about black Caribbeans. On the whole, the data reveals that black Caribbeans express closeness to black Americans; however, a comparison of responses to both measures of closeness reveals that black Caribbeans feel closer to other black Caribbeans. NSAL respondents

are making distinctions about feelings of closeness depending on the black reference group.

The survey data and focus group data identify the attitudes and beliefs that inform perceptions of distinctiveness among black Caribbeans. Moreover, the model of closeness to black Caribbeans supports the patterns of distinctiveness in the opinions expressed among middle-class black Caribbean focus group participants in Washington, DC, and New York City. Participants assert their differences from black Americans and affirm their similarities with one another because of their social mobility in the U.S. Yet other participants reveal that exposure to American society and American racism has minimized the salience of ethnic distinctiveness from black Americans in the context of U.S. society.

The survey data and focus group data reveal that despite their perceptions of differences, first-generation black Caribbeans do acknowledge that there are ways that shared racial characteristics link their lives with those of other blacks, particularly black Americans. Although cautious about viewing the world primarily in terms of race and unwilling to be defined as black Americans, black Caribbeans perceive that discrimination is a common problem they share with black Americans. The following section examines the significance of this perspective for understanding pan-black racial solidarity among first-generation black Caribbeans.

Black Caribbean Perceptions of Racial Common Fate

Although first-generation black Caribbean focus group participants perceive their experiences and values distinguish them from Americans, they do claim to share a sense of common fate with black Americans. The focus group data show that if asked whether

they perceive a sense of common fate with other blacks, focus group participants readily claim that discrimination happens to all blacks in the U.S. regardless of origin.

> Question: "In this country, do you feel that what happens to other Blacks will impact you?"
>
> Participant #1 (male): "Most definitely! They don't see us as Caribbean."
>
> Question: "Who's 'they'?"
>
> Participant #2 (female): "Society."
>
> Participant #3 (male): "Yeah. They're not going to see us as Caribbean, even African…society's based solely on a first impression. First impressions [are] usually visual [in] form. They see the color of our skin; we are labeled like everybody else who's Black. So, whatever happens to the Blacks that live—that are native Americans, will adversely affect us solely because of the color of our skin." (5.01.03, DC)

The comments of the above participants reveal that discrimination happens to them because of shared racial characteristics among blacks such as phenotype and skin color. They perceive that these are the characteristics that the larger society will use to judge them, just like those who look like them. Participants express common concerns about racial profiling and police brutality to explain how "the West Indian community is affected as any racial community" when it comes to racial discrimination. (11.15.03, NY)

Similar to their counterparts in Washington, DC, a group of Haitian immigrants living in Brooklyn, NY, explain why they believe the experiences of blacks have implications for them individually. However, their exchange highlights that perceptions of common fate among black Caribbeans are also informed by concerns about how the behavior of individual community members reflect on the larger community:

> Question: Do you feel that what happens to other African Americans affects you?

Participant #1 (male): When they took the guy in Texas in the back of the truck, that hurt me. He is a black man just like me. I can be in the situation also…For some reason, the way they see him in this society, they see me the same way also….

Participant #2 (male) Rodney King—look at how they mistreated him. It wasn't because he was specifically African American. It was because he was black period. Whether [or not] you hate a black Haitian, black Jamaican, African American, once you are black you are black. They treat you the same way. If you go back years ago when black people couldn't vote, they didn't say black Americans couldn't vote, black Haitians couldn't vote, blacks couldn't vote. If you are black what happens to African Americans really affects all.

Participant #3 (male): The person in charge (the white man) who is making decisions, does not categorize when he is talking. He does not say specifically, African American or black American so therefore, it is going to affect us…

Participant #4 (male): They see us as black.

Participant #1 (male): When things are going well, they show me like they are so friendly with me. They tell me, you are a better guy than him. It is just a way to divide us. When the time comes to treat me the way he is supposed to treat me, he does not care if I am a better guy than he. "You are all black. Go away." That is the way he considers me.

Question: Did you learn this when you came here or coming from Haiti this is something you already knew?

Participant #1 (male): I didn't live it. But I studied and I know how the French used to occupy my country, mistreat my ancestors, therefore I have a big idea about it…We don't suffer back home, like here where they tell you 'we don't want you'… But, I don't know how my brothers who are African American, how they feel. I feel they really do have a limit. I don't know if they are ready to fight and change it. We already fight at home to change things…

Participant #5 (male): Yes it affects me, but it depends on the problem. If one black goes in a store and steals, it does not affect me, but if it is discrimination we are affected.

Participant #6 (male): I do not consider myself African American. Me and Male #1 have a different opinion. I am a Haitian, plain and simple. It's just that my skin color is black. Every time an African American does

> something, I am subject to the same treatment. If a black person provokes the police, that affects me.
>
> Participant #6 (male): We don't do enough to prevent certain situations. Sometimes the police always try to pin something on us, right? What I am asking us to do is find a way to not give them ammunition.
>
> Participant #1 (male): No matter what, they find something wrong with us. We are on the bottom. We are the subject of exploitation. No matter what you do you will never do enough because they have to get someone to carry all the blames, and they treat us as that someone. There is a way to understand it. (Brooklyn, NY, March 2003)

The comments that cultural and ethnic differences among blacks are often invisible to the larger society are representative of focus group participants in both Washington, DC, and New York City. Furthermore, they perceive that regardless of their differences, blacks face shared problems of racial stereotyping and racism in U.S. society. However, their above comments also capture another perspective of common fate—the idea that the individual actions of blacks also impact the lives of others within the black population. Black American participants raised this issue in Chapter 2 when they talked about the importance of individual responsibility to the group. However, in this instance the exchange among participants discloses how perceptions of common fate are also informed by the belief that negative behavior or misdeeds of individuals similarly impact how the black groups are evaluated by society.

NSAL and Common Fate Perceptions of First-Generation Black Caribbeans

The distribution of common fate perceptions among first-generation black Caribbean NSAL respondents is reflected in Table 3.2. The table indicates that black Caribbeans are split on this issue. If you combine the responses among those who perceive common fate, 48% of black Caribbeans express some or a lot of common fate

with blacks and 51% claim little or no common fate with blacks. This pattern however is not significantly different from black American common fate perceptions in Chapter 2.

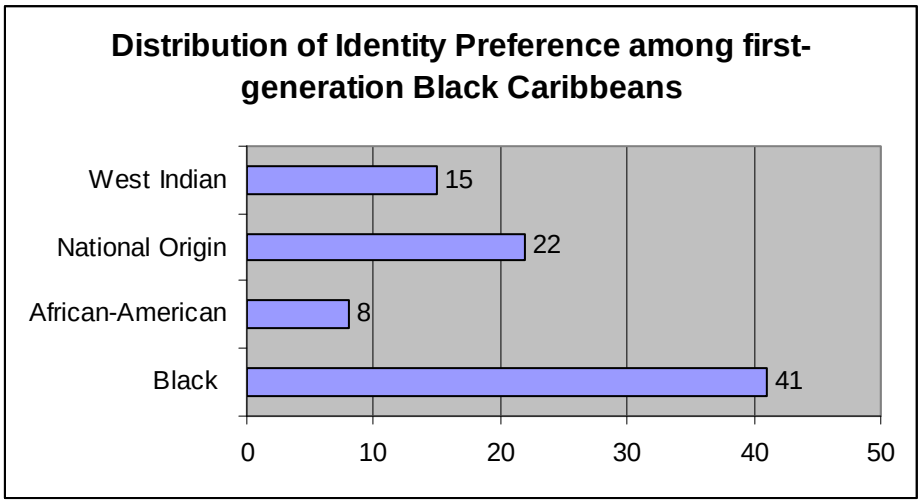
The survey data indicate that the views about common fate expressed by focus group participants are more likely to characterize the attitudes of black Caribbeans with higher levels of education. Further, the patterns of the survey data highlight that first-generation black Caribbeans who express a sense of common fate with blacks do not contradict the pattern of distinctiveness expressed within the group. They also help us understand the relatively high number of black Caribbeans who perceive a sense of common fate with blacks and at the same time, distinguish themselves from black Americans.

The comments of focus group participants reveal that common fate is not necessarily framed in terms of group cohesiveness based on history and culture for first-generation black Caribbeans as it is for black Americans (Dawson, 1994; Tate, 1993). The perspectives of first-generation black Caribbeans reveal that neither cultural similarity, nor a desire for racial group cohesiveness is a necessary requirement for pan-black racial solidarity with other blacks. Rather, the attitudes of first-generation black Caribbeans highlight that perceptions of common fate incorporate a simple calculation about how race works in the U.S.: racial discrimination is a common problem confronted by blacks because the larger society, overall, defines blacks based on their racial commonalities. However, perceptions of common fate for this group also incorporate the belief that the actions of individual blacks similarly have implications for the group as a whole.

The perspectives of first-generation black Caribbeans reveal that perceptions of common fate are the building blocks of pan-black racial solidarity with other blacks. Thus, expressions of common fate among black Caribbeans reflect the recognition that the way the larger society views blackness defines a common constraint faced by all who are perceived to be within that group (or those with shared racial characteristics), regardless of social differences. Thus, expressions of pan-black racial solidarity reflect the shared recognition among first-generation black Caribbeans that race discrimination has real implications in their lives. The awareness of such shared constraints related to race makes pan-black racial solidarity with other blacks possible for the first-generation black Caribbeans.

In the following chapter, I continue my analysis of the relevance of the immigrant reference point, perceptions of ethnic distinctiveness, and the possibilities of pan-black racial solidarity for black Caribbeans. Specifically, I explore patterns of racial group identification among second-generation black Caribbeans to understand whether generation status distinguishes the political incorporation paths of foreign-born black Caribbeans and U.S. born black Caribbeans.

Figure 3.1 Percent Distribution of Identity Preference among Black Caribbeans



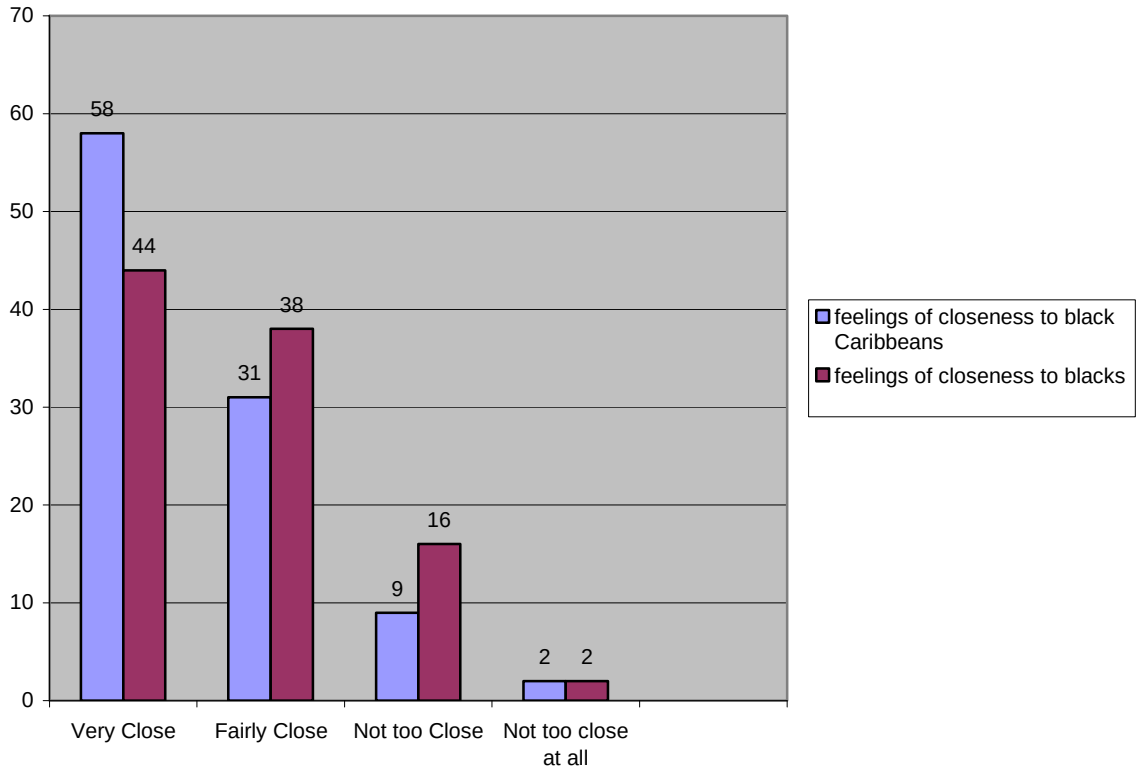
N=1013 Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

Table 3.1: Percent Distribution of Identity Preference by Demographic Characteristics among First-Generation Black Caribbeans

	Black	African American	Caribbean
Education (n=1013) (F=.731)			
Some high school	37%	12%	36%
High school	41%	5%	38%
Some college	39%	7%	46%
College and beyond	43%	4%	40%
Age (n=1013) (F=1.41)			
18-25	33%	19%	39%
26-35	34%	8%	46%
36-45	45%	6%	38%
46-60	42%	3%	40%
60 and older	46%	3%	37%
Income (n=1013) (F=1.13			
0-14,999	47%	5%	44%
15000-29,999	46%	9%	33%
30,000-49,999	27%	7%	50%
50,000-74,999	37%	7%	44%
75,000 or more	48%	4%	34%
Length of Residence (n=1013) (F=2.05)			
20 years or more	41%	5%	37%
11-20 years	46%	5%	38%
0-10 years	37%	12%	48%
Region (n=1013) (F=2.00)			
Northeast	37%	8%	36%
Outside Northeast (South, Midwest, West)	44%	5%	46%
Caribbean Origins N=1013 (F=5.49)			
French	35%	2%	57%
English	41%	7%	38%

Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

Figure 3.2 Percent Distribution of Feelings of Closeness to Blacks among First-Generation Black Caribbeans



Source: National Survey of American Life, 2001-2003

Table 3.2 Percent Distribution of Common Fate Perceptions among First-Generation Black Caribbeans

What happens to blacks in this country will affect your life?	
A lot	20%
Some	28%
Not Very Much	13%
None	38%
N	1010

Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

Chapter 4

Ethnic Distinctiveness and Pan-Black Racial Solidarity among Second-Generation Black Caribbeans

A defining characteristic of the second-generation is that they are both U.S. born and the children of immigrants. Thus, the experiences and perspectives of the second-generation are not easily categorized. Their perspectives reflect a duality that incorporates a sense of distinctiveness from other groups, and at the same time, consciousness of membership in a minority group in the U.S. However, we know very little about how the unique reference point of this group shapes their political incorporation experiences in the U.S. Consequently, understanding how the second-generation negotiate perceptions of ethnic distinctiveness and experiences of racial categorization offers a roadmap for identifying racialized perspectives within this group. This chapter examines how the dual reference point defines the political adaptation of second-generation black Caribbeans.

Mary Waters (1996; 1999; 2001) posits that the racial and ethnic identities of second-generation black Caribbeans reflect the meanings they attach to racial group membership as members of society. She finds that some second-generation black Caribbeans reject any form of ethnic identification and identify as African Americans, while others identify primarily with their parents' country of origin. Waters also argues that second-generation black Caribbeans who ethnically identify tend to downplay racism and distance themselves from black Americans, while "African-American identified" second-generation black Caribbeans are more sensitive to experiences of racial exclusion. She found that overall, those who identified racially were from poorer communities, while those who were ethnically identified, had middle class backgrounds.

In their research on second-generation immigrants in New York City, Kasinitz et al. (2004) argue that the identities and experiences of the second-generation black Caribbeans, like other second-generation minorities, will be shaped not only by their interactions with whites, but also by their networks with other second-generation groups as well as native minority groups. A recent study of political attitudes of the second-generation in New York City (Mollenkopf, Holdaway, Kasinitz, and Waters, 2006) highlights an important relationship between racial group identification and political incorporation particularly for second-generation black Caribbeans. The authors find that second-generation black Caribbeans perceive greater racial discrimination than their fellow second-generation counterparts and further, argue that these perceptions of alienation make second-generation black Caribbeans more likely to be politically engaged than their other second-generation groups in New York City.

Scholarly findings about how the second-generation are navigating the racial norms of U.S. racial attitudes underscore the importance of accounting for how experiences of racial categorization shape the perspectives of this group. Further the connection between racial group identification and social mobility must be further distinguished to understand the political incorporation of second-generation black Caribbeans. For example, although middle-class black Caribbeans were found to identify ethnically does this pattern of identification minimize perceptions of common fate with other blacks? Are second-generation black Caribbeans who identify more strongly as members of a racial group more likely to have a stronger sense of linked fate relative to those who do not identify similarly?

Social mobility has been linked to the weakening of ethnic group identity within the immigrant group among the second-generation and third-generation (Dahl, 1961; Glazer and Moynihan, 1963; Gordon, 1964). Consequently, if socio-economic status distinguishes how second-generation black Caribbeans perceive racial group status, membership within the black Caribbean community and, further, the significance of discrimination and opportunity in their lives, diverse patterns of political incorporation other than pan-black racial solidarity may characterize the experiences of this group. For example, second-generation black Caribbeans with high socioeconomic status may perceive that their opportunities for mobility in U.S. society (and those of their parents) contradict the idea that opportunities for blacks and whites are different in society, and further may define their interests in ways other than race. Conversely, second-generation black Caribbeans of lower socioeconomic status may view their position in U.S. society as a reflection of social and racial inequities in the larger society that may influence them to identify more strongly as members of an oppressed minority group. Yet, there is still a lack of research that addresses how patterns of ethnic identification and socioeconomic status shape patterns of political incorporation and the experiences of second-generation black Caribbeans.

Similar to the analyses presented in Chapters 2 and 3, I examine political incorporation through expressions of racial group identification among second-generation black Caribbeans. Using the focus group data, I examine the content of self-identification and racial common fate among second-generation black Caribbeans. My discussion focuses on common themes that emerged across focus group participants' descriptions of their racial and ethnic background as well as their definitions of common

fate. Using the NSAL, I explore patterns of racial identification among a cross-section of second-generation black Caribbeans to test the hypotheses that socio-economic resources may strengthen a sense of distinctiveness within this group, while fewer socio-economic resources lead to common identification with blacks generally. Thus, I examine the possibility that pan-black racial solidarity may be distinguished by socio-economic status for the second-generation.

The first part of this discussion examines expressions of ethnic distinctiveness among second-generation black Caribbeans and is followed by a discussion of common fate perceptions among second-generation black Caribbeans. I find that the second-generation attitudes reflect their dual reference point about race and immigrant identity and reflect their unique perspectives as members of U.S. society.

Ethnic Distinctiveness and Second-Generation Black Caribbeans

Race and ethnic self-identification among second-generation black Caribbeans reveal how they think of themselves as members of society and the groups with which they identify. An important finding of scholarship on first and second-generation Caribbean immigrants is that they do not define race and ethnicity in the same way, nor do they view race and ethnic identity as mutually exclusive (Rogers, 2006; Waters, 1999; Butterfield, 2004). Trends in attitudes within the focus group data and the survey data correspond with this finding in the literature. To evaluate race and ethnic group identification of second-generation black Caribbeans, patterns of response to the identity measures (previously examined in Chapters 2 and 3) were analyzed using the survey data.

The comments of focus group participants offer insight about the ideas that inform their identification (or lack thereof) with labels such as black and African

American and further how they express their connection to their Caribbean heritage. Second-generation participants were asked to write brief descriptions of their racial and ethnic background and later shared these responses during the group discussion. However, participants also define themselves as "hyphenated" Americans and use labels such as "Caribbean-American", and "West Indian-American", or talk about their ties to a specific national origin group in the Caribbean (i.e., Jamaican, Trinidadian, and Barbadian). They emphasize that they share their Caribbean heritage with others if asked. Among second-generation focus group participants in Washington, DC and New York City, some view the categories black and African American as interchangeable; however, many participants also argue that these labels represent distinct categories in the black community. The latter group of participants define the label "African American" as a "geographically specific" or "culturally distinct" identity that describes the experiences of blacks that identify their ancestry as primarily within the U.S. Their comments echo the comments offered by first-generation black Caribbean focus group participants in Chapter 3. In contrast to the term African American, the label "black" represents a broader category that includes all people of African descent which allows them the freedom to acknowledge both their race and Caribbean origins because of its lack of specificity. A statement by a young woman living in the Washington, DC area typifies this trend in opinion among participants**:**

> Participant: "For me the word African American means…United States American…I say you can't be African American unless you feel that your culture is American and you are black…[the term] black is broader." (5.12.03, DC)

The comments in the above passage highlight that when some second-generation black Caribbeans identify as "black" they are not identifying as black Americans or with

the black American experience. Rather, identifying as "black" allows second-generation black Caribbeans to simultaneously acknowledge racial similarity with others of African descent, as well as claim a unique cultural identity related to their Caribbean origins. Similar to the first-generation, the second-generation, conceptualize their black identities as part of the broader black community in the U.S., but at the same time, different from black Americans. Thus, an immigrant reference point also informs how the second-generation view themselves as members of the Caribbean community and in relation to other blacks.

Within the group discussions, participants in both New York City and Washington, DC offer diverse perspectives about how they see themselves as Americans, as blacks, and as people of Caribbean descent. The second-generation black Caribbeans in DC were no different than their counterparts in New York City in that respect. Generally, many focus group participants describe themselves as occupying a unique position as members of the black community; specifically that they are neither fully American, nor are they fully black Caribbean, but rather, both.

In connection with descriptions of self-identification, second-generation focus group participants highlight experiences within the immigrant community and within their families as primary factors that shaped perceptions of difference from other groups. Across discussions in New York and Washington, DC, focus group participants identify these norms through shared anecdotes about being "raised West Indian" or "raised in a Caribbean household" in the United States. A Guyanese-American woman explains how perceptions of cultural distinctiveness among second-generation black Caribbeans are cultivated and reinforced within the context of the immigrant family:

> I don't know if this is just a Caribbean thing but when I was younger I just started to feel it was different way of being raised. You know the whole thing of when you walk into the room you have to say "good morning", good afternoon, good evening…There is a difference in terms of respect, how you talk to you elders…My culture is Guyanese-American… but, I am very American. Just to still see that comparison, I know that somebody [who has] lived in another country and comes here it's just got to be really different, if I see the difference…. (5.12.03, DC)

A sense of difference often related to observing routine comparisons between American culture and Caribbean culture. Through talk of their upbringing, participants emphasize a common identification around how these norms linked their lives and experiences.

Among second-generation Caribbean blacks, the idea of being raised West Indian incorporates awareness that their day-to-day lived experiences within the context of the immigrant community, were not typically "American". Among participants in both cities, there was a common consensus that being born in America and "being American" were not the same experiences. However, participants had differing opinions about the significance of that distinction. Some participants express pride in their "hyphenated" American identities, while others define the hyphenation in terms of being more strongly identified with the black Caribbean community than with being American. The following exchange between two focus participants from New York City captures different experiences that shaped perceptions of distinctiveness among second-generation black Caribbeans:

> Participant #1: "In my household…like everything is very negative in my house to be American even though I myself am American and my parents are American citizens now…they also make distinctions between American and non-American. They think that Americans in general are very lazy and they don't really value education and bettering themselves and I see it myself. Like most Caribbean Americans do concentrate more

> on hard [work] and education …so they can better themselves from their situations [in] their original islands…."
>
> Participant # 2 "…I am American by default. I was born here and I reap the benefits of being an American, but I guess if I had to "choose", I'm not sure that I would pick being American…I don't think it's explicitly stated, but it's like trips to see family, staying with my father every summer. It's just that I range from being in one culture to being American at the same time. It kind of put the idea in my head that there is just something lacking about American culture that it is not fulfilling to be an American, so I try to claim my Caribbean heritage when I can." (12.12.02, NY)

These ideas were also present within the written comments of focus group participants where some describe themselves as "American-born and raised in a West-Indian culture/environment", or in comments such as: "I am an American citizen because I was born in America. I am Trinidadian by birthright" (in written comments, 6.08.03). While not all frame their upbringing in terms of dissonance with American identity, the second-generation offered concrete examples of how the family unit was influential in reifying practices and perspectives that reinforce a sense of difference from other groups.

Participants reveal that within the family and the immigrant community, the distinctions between American and black Caribbean culture often centered specifically on the differences between black Caribbeans and black Americans more so than any other group. One participant describes how the emphasis on cultural distinctions framed black Caribbean identity and black American identity in opposition to each other:

> "I was the first one in my family born in this country so it was always 'well you're this, but American blacks are this. They don't do this, they don't that; we do this, we do that. This is your history.' Although … American history is my history, that's not how I was raised… I was raised more with...a back home ideology… So that…separates us, American black versus West Indian." (1.25.03, NY)

The second-generation focus group participants highlight how their ideas about distinctiveness among second-generation are connected to value judgments that primarily frame Caribbean culture in a positive light and paint black American culture more negatively. They reiterate many of the ideas expressed by first-generation black Caribbean focus group participants in Chapter 3 when they relate differences between black Caribbeans and black Americans to group attitudes about achievement and opportunity in society. Participants in both Washington, DC and New York City routinely express that many black Caribbeans have a negative impression of black Americans because of societal stereotypes of the group. Within the immigrant community, participants observed that black Americans were depicted as lazy and unmotivated to succeed, while black Caribbeans were represented as hard-working and achievement-oriented. Across group discussions in New York and Washington, DC, participants routinely claim that in their families "work ethic" was the most important factor distinguishing black Caribbeans and black Americans. Although many did not agree with this perspective, they believed that there is a widespread belief within the immigrant community that people of Caribbean descent were better prepared to succeed in the United States than most black Americans. In the following exchange, a group of students from Maryland provide examples of how these cultural norms about the likelihood of success among black Americans and black Caribbeans were framed and reproduced within their families:

> Participant #1 (female): "Well personally, on my block there's definitely a dichotomy. Within the West Indian community, I see there's definitely a notion that black Americans are "those blacks", "those people" and they tend to be the negative reflection of everything that is. If something is going on, it's probably a black American that's doing it on the block or you don't want to act like "those black Americans".

> Participant# 2 (female): "My mother's thing is black people in America are waiting for someone to owe them something whereas black people from the diaspora or wherever, come to the U.S., find opportunities and kind of make do with whatever they have, but, because there's the social welfare system the government can help you out. She is like "They just need to get off that and do something for themselves instead of waiting for somebody to hand out something…"
>
> Participant #3 (male): "I feel that one of the biggest issues that I face is work ethic and just growing up and just seeing what my parents do with me in comparison to some of my other friends and school. Like my father, he used to sit me down-he had a Blackboard and a pointer in my house. He made sure before I went to school I knew everything, so it was just like me doing it again and I know just in terms of competitive drive, I find with a lot of black people from the U.S. in general--competition, the want, the drive to be first, to be the best in your class, I feel like that was instilled in me and looking at my other friends of Caribbean or West Indian descent I see that much more than some of my other friends." (12.12.02, NY)

Participants delineate how exposure to common stereotypes about blacks informs the lens that the second-generation rely upon to make sense of their values, beliefs, and behavior as a group relative to black Americans. For some participants, these negative stereotypes reinforce the cultural differences between black Caribbeans and black Americans.

The focus group data highlight the patterns of identification and ideas that inform racial identification among college-educated middle class black Caribbeans living in New York City and Washington, DC. To explore how these patterns appear among a cross-section of second-generation black Caribbeans, I examine the attitudes and opinions among NSAL respondents.[1]

[1] NSAL respondents were asked "Which term reflects what you would like to be called?"

Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of second-generation black Caribbeans' response to a question in the NSAL that asks them how they prefer to describe themselves. Table 4.1 reflects the distribution of responses among second-generation black Caribbeans by income, education, region, and Caribbean origins. Figure 4.1 reveals that a majority of second-generation black Caribbeans (52%) prefers to be called black, while 29% prefers to be called African American. Only a small percentage of second-generation black Caribbeans (8%) describe themselves using a pan-ethnic label (i.e., West Indian) or describe themselves as members of a national origin group. Table 4.1 reflects that the bivariate relationships between identification and socio-economic as well as demographic factors are not significant, which suggest that these factors do not distinguish patterns of identification among second-generation black Caribbeans. Thus, the NSAL data highlight that the attitudes expressed by the sample of second-generation black Caribbeans within the group discussions are likely to be expressed among a cross-section of second-generation black Caribbeans.

To patterns of identification among second-generation black Caribbeans are similarly reflected in how the second-generation evaluate Caribbean identity and black identity in relation to each other.[2] Table 4.2 shows the bivariate relationship between generation status and perceptions of race and immigrant origins. The table shows that 56% of second-generation black Caribbeans perceive that their Caribbean background is as equally important as being black, compared to 64% of first-generation black Caribbeans. While 37% of second-generation respondents believe that being black is more important than their origins in the Caribbean, only 81% of the first-generation

[2] NSAL respondents were asked the following question: "Which would you say is more important to you—being Black, or being from (specific country in the Caribbean), or are both equally important to you?"

express a similar opinion. The table also reveals that only 4% of NSAL second-generation respondents perceive that their country of origin in the Caribbean is more important than being black or equally black and Caribbean. The patterns of response among second-generation black Caribbeans captures a change in patterns of identification in this group from first-generation black Caribbeans, and indicate that American racial categories are more salient for U.S. born black Caribbeans. The percentage of second-generation black Caribbeans who perceive that being black is more important than their Caribbean origins is significantly larger than that of the first-generation. Further, a smaller percentage of second-generation black Caribbeans claim to view their Caribbean heritage as more important that their race, when compared to the first-generation. The chi-square tests for association reveal that the relationship between generation status and the importance of race and Caribbean origins is highly significant (F=24.94).

Second-generation black Caribbeans' identification with the terms black and African American reflect a greater willingness to identify with racial rather than ethnic labels, relative to the first-generation. Specifically, their patterns of identification more closely resemble the patterns of identification among black Americans examined in Chapter 2. However, the majority of second-generation black Caribbeans' who express the opinion that being black and Caribbean were of equal importance, emphasizing that they value their Caribbean heritage, and do not perceive race and Caribbean origins in mutually exclusive terms. This pattern of identification fits with second-generation focus group participants' descriptions of the term black as a broad category incorporating diverse groups of people of African descent who do not necessarily share the same culture and origins. However, the attitudes of the second-generation reflect a shift in

perspectives away from the first-generation and a willingness to describe themselves in terms that are different from those used by the first-generation.

Expressions of closeness to blacks and black Caribbeans among black Caribbean NSAL respondents also emphasize the unique perspectives of second-generation black Caribbeans. Figure 4.2 shows the distribution of second-generation black Caribbeans' perceptions of closeness to blacks and perceptions of closeness to black Caribbeans. Although the mean response of black Caribbeans for each measure were not very different (3.32 for closeness to black Caribbeans and 3.41 for closeness to blacks), a slightly larger number of second-generation black Caribbeans fall within higher categories of closeness to blacks generally, than they do for similar categories of closeness to black Caribbeans. Conversely, the percentage of black Caribbeans who fall within the categories that reflect a weaker sense of closeness to black Caribbeans is higher relative to the percentage of black Caribbeans that fall within the same category associated with the response for blacks.

The survey data and focus group data reveal how the second-generation black Caribbeans make sense of race and Caribbean origins as the children of immigrants in U.S. society. The patterns of identification in the survey data as well as the comments of focus group participants highlight similarities with the first generation when they rely upon norms within the family and the immigrant community to define their distinctiveness from other blacks. The choice to identify as black for some second-generation black Caribbeans reflects how they do not view themselves as culturally similar to black Americans, yet their perceptions of closeness indicate a perceived bond with blacks generally.

The attitudes of the second-generation reflect a generational shift within the black Caribbean community where the U.S. born children seem more apt to identify with a racial category rather than Caribbean origins, and some are more likely to prioritize their race over Caribbean origins. Further perceptions of ethnic distinctiveness for this group do not inhibit racial identification with blacks. To explore this phenomenon further within the perspectives of second-generation black Caribbeans, in the following section, I examine the relevance of common fate perceptions for this group.

Perceptions of Common Fate among Second-Generation Black Caribbeans

As it relates to the political incorporation of the second-generation an important question is whether expressions of ethnic distinctiveness limit expressions of pan-black racial solidarity with blacks. To address this question, I examine common fate perceptions of the second-generation black Caribbeans. The following section examines the political implications of this kind of racial group identification among second-generation black Caribbeans. I find the second-generation make clear distinctions between the contexts in which their Caribbean origins are most salient and the contexts when racial group membership primarily defines their experiences as members of society. The ways in which the second-generation distinguish between these contexts of identity illuminate the role of politicized racial group identification in their political incorporation as a group in the United States.

To explore the variation in attitudes that inform common fate perceptions among second-generation black Caribbeans within the focus groups, I coded responses to an open-ended version of the survey question that was asked within the context of the group discussions were analyzed. In general, ideas and language linking common fate

expressions between New York City and Washington, DC were highly similar. With few exceptions, focus group participants claim to share a sense of common fate with other blacks.

Many participants were genuinely surprised, even incredulous about being asked if what happens to other blacks would affect their lives. Focus group participants in New York City and Washington, DC felt that they were stating the obvious when they claimed that those outside of the Caribbean community (including African Americans) were either unaware of or ignored ethnic differences among blacks:

> Participant #1 (male): "The society looks at us as just black. That's it…so what applies for African Americans will apply to Caribbean Americans… too… When they are looking at you they are not going to decipher all that--you are black."
>
> Participant #2 (female): "If you are a minority, you will pretty much be affected if it's black or African American. If you are African American or a minority you will be classified like that."
>
> Question: "So how do you know this?"
>
> Participant #1 (male): "They don't distinguish between African American this or Caribbean that. When I meet with West Indians they start asking what country are you from? There is an instant bond. Other people ask me, I'll be like my parents are from Jamaica and there will be no more conversation. I just get the impression. They don't make distinctions. We do." (5.12.03, DC)

For the second-generation, being "just Black" summarizes how they believe others outside the black community view them. Butterfield (2004) describes similar expressions of identity in her interviews with second-generation black Caribbean youth in New York City and also refers to the concept of being "just Black" to explain how the second-generation express the awareness that their ethnic identities are all but invisible in the eyes of society. When focus group participants describe how others in society view

them, being "just Black" represents being lumped into a common, undifferentiated racial category. Their comments emphasize that they view that their identities are in part defined by how others view racial commonalities among people of African descent. The idea that Caribbean heritage is unacknowledged or ignored by others and that larger society perceives all blacks as a homogenous group regardless of their differences informs the shared viewpoint of second-generation black Caribbean participants. Overall, it signifies having other definitions or stereotypes about black identity imposed on them**.**

Similar to his counterparts above, a Guyanese-American college student from Long Island explains how negative stereotypes about blackness colors the common lens society uses to define blacks. These stereotypes he argues shape the simplest of interactions with other groups in society:

> Participant: "The minute I sit down, I walk in the class, before I say a word, they see I'm black…they already have these preconceived notions about me. And that's something I have to just face every time I walk into a room, every time I meet somebody… because I'm black there's things…you think you know about me…Whenever I meet you, you're going to have this perception of me…You're going to see stuff on TV, hear something on the radio… and it has nothing to do with me. But because it's about black people and I'm black, from that I step right into that, whether I want to or not." (12.08.02, NY)

The above comments capture shared expectations among focus group participants that their lives are impacted by society's negative and narrow definitions of Blackness. Thus, they perceive that all blacks are generally viewed in an unfavorable light in society, and will be treated in a similar fashion. These shared concerns related to racial discrimination informs the basis of common fate perceptions among second-generation black Caribbeans.

Among second-generation focus group participants, the conventional wisdom that underscores their perceptions of common fate is that racial discrimination fundamentally links the lives and experiences of blacks. Second-generation black Caribbeans readily acknowledge that their own sense of difference from other blacks offers no real protection or solution to racial discrimination. They perceive that regardless of their Caribbean origins, how much wealth they acquire, or how much education they attain, they cannot avoid discrimination as members of U.S. society. A Jamaican-American male emphasizes the ubiquity of racial profiling of blacks to buttress his point about the way discrimination works: "You're pulled over at two in the morning in Alabama or you're pulled over on the streets of Brooklyn at 4:30 in the morning, you have dark skin-doesn't matter if you're African, doesn't matter if you're Caribbean, doesn't matter if you were born in Washington, DC, you're black…." (2.15.03, NY)

Earlier in the chapter the second-generation describe the term "black" as a category of choice, a category that incorporates their African ancestry and Caribbean heritage. However, when they describe how others outside of the black community define what it means to be black, participants associate this with negative and undesirable consequences for themselves as individuals and for blacks as a group.

Common fate expressions among second-generation black Caribbeans are framed by a shared belief that racial inequality and racial discrimination have a significant impact on the lives of blacks in U.S. society. Focus group participants in Washington, DC and New York City similarly perceive that their individual opportunities and experiences of racial inequality are inextricably linked. Specifically, participants associate racial exclusion with significant barriers to social and economic opportunity. Unlike the first-

generation, most second-generation participants describe discrimination as a deeply entrenched societal problem confronted by blacks and consistently express this opinion within the group discussions. In the following exchange, participants identify how shared experiences of racial exclusion and "struggle" define the predicament of blacks in U.S. society**:**

> Participant #1 (male): "I do believe that...overall.... the government run by white people they feel that there something is there a word missing here?...you know, they have against black people. Just a simple thing like being bothered in a grocery store or shopping. I think it is a common feeling...that...that...there's a type of discrimination or some type of racism."
>
> Question: "What do you guys think about that?"
>
> Participant #2 (female): "I agree."
>
> Participant #3 (female): "I think black people on the whole, deal with the struggle…Everything is a struggle. Nothing is really given to you. Even if you do have money and you're up there, whatever, you still struggle to compete. The majority of black people, we all have to struggle whether we're poor or rich."
> (1.25.03, NY)

In Washington, DC and New York the second-generation focus group participants' emphasis on the idea of struggle captures a common sentiment that racism cuts across experiences among blacks, regardless of social and cultural differences. Thus, perceptions of common fate incorporate the shared viewpoint that experiences of racial inequality and racial discrimination are ubiquitous within the black community.

When focus group participants offer greater detail about why they perceive common fate, they reference the black American struggle for inclusion in the United States. The black American experience is the primary reference that focus group participants rely upon to discuss the implications of discrimination for blacks and identify

appropriate strategies for responding to discrimination. In the following exchange, a group of participants explain that their knowledge of the black American experience in the U.S. emphasizes how race represents more than a shared constraint among blacks, but, rather, a common bond among blacks:

> Question: "Do you feel that the history of African Americans is also your history? Do you feel close to it? "
>
> Participant #1 (male): "Yeah, me personally, I identify with it as much as my Jamaican culture. I can't say that one wins out more than the other."
>
> Participant #2 (female): "Me too."
>
> Participant #3 (male): "Reading history textbooks, and how black people were being lynched and Jim Crow laws, I got mad. I'm not really African American, but just to be black and to say that, I feel what they went through, I still feel it."
>
> Participant #4 (male): "I think we feel it so much because we feel its effects…but yeah like we said you can still walk into a store and get watched. You can still feel its effects, so that ties the past to the future together whether you want to deny it or not."
>
> Participant # 2 (female): "I want to say that I definitely feel a closeness to you know, the lynching and all that, all the oppression that African Americans have faced in America. One thing-if you look at people who suffered you say that could have been me-that person looks like me. If I was here earlier, that could have been me. You feel closeness to that." (5.12.03, DC)

The parallels focus group participants perceive between contemporary discrimination experiences by blacks and racial exclusion experienced by black Americans in the past represent a significant departure from patterns of common fate identification expressed by the first-generation. The links drawn between black American history and the present connects the ideas of second-generation focus group participants with those expressed by black Americans in Chapter two.

As participants describe access to economic and social opportunities they often talk about "working twice as hard as whites" or having to "prove themselves" to others in society. While they are optimistic that opportunities are widely available, they also perceive the U.S. as a racially discriminatory society, where these opportunities will come at greater personal cost to them than it would to their white counterparts.

The attitudes of the second-generation indicate more than simple group identification or the awareness of membership in the black community. Participants' perceptions of common fate reflect a deep concern about the implications of racial inequality in their individual lives and the lives of blacks broadly. Furthermore, as much as participants focus on problems of discrimination, they also devote their energies to discussing solutions that address shared problems within the black community. Thus focus group participants support for common solutions to racial inequality indicate a collective identification with other members of the black community as well as shared interest in improving the status of blacks in society.

Second-generation focus group participants may emphasize a distinct cultural identity relative to black Americans; however, they also perceive that common action among all blacks is crucial to their success as individual members of the black community and the overall progress of the group in society. Thus, many view common action to advance the interests of the black community is the effective approach to minimize the impact of societal discrimination. The ideas that inform group cohesiveness among second-generation focus group participants strongly echo the sentiments expressed by their African American focus group counterparts in Chapter 2. Thus, within their exchanges with one another, second-generation black Caribbean focus group

participants emphasize the importance of "unity", and "obligation" to help other members of the black community. A Jamaican-American woman from New York summarizes such sentiments as she reflects on the necessity of group cohesion among blacks:

> Participant: "I just believe that we are in charge of turning around our communities. If you don't like what your community is today, well fine! Do something about it…contribute something. Even if it's just playing a bigger part in a child's life, it should come down to the fact that we are the minority, that we are in the struggle, and we should identify with each other…That's the obligation…to make life easier for somebody else." (Jamaican female, NY, 1.25.03)

Other focus group participants address the matter of collective responsibility through appeals to black self-reliance. A Jamaican American male draws upon these concepts to articulate a vision of racial community and racial progress for blacks in the United States:

> Participant: "In a perfect world race shouldn't matter…but unfortunately in this world everyone has taken a side and they're generally siding with their own, and as black people we cannot go out to play a team sport individually. We have to be on our own team, if we are going to get somewhere. The whites are with the whites and then you have black people who just want to scatter. It doesn't make sense and it's not going to get you anywhere… My sense of it [unity] is supporting black business, living in the black community. The black community will not get anywhere if as soon as you get a job, [you] go to the suburbs." (2.15.03, NY)

With respect to navigating society, the second-generation define a sense of community that goes beyond their identification with the black Caribbean community. Participants express a desire for racial group cohesiveness among blacks with different levels of intensity; yet, most subscribe to the idea that racial unity among blacks is essential to the protection of rights and opportunities for blacks in the larger society. Further the trends in attitudes among second-generation black Caribbean focus group

participants demonstrate that second-generation black Caribbeans are strongly invested in their opportunities as members of U.S. society. The link between common identification with the status of blacks in the society as well as an interest in contributing to the improvement of the groups' position in society capture expressions of pan-black racial solidarity among second-generation black Caribbeans.

The focus group data highlight how perceptions of common fate inform how the second-generation view the possibilities available to them when it comes to navigating race as racial minorities in society. Thus, a common sentiment among focus group participants is that the first-generation emphasis on individual accomplishments is not sufficient as a primary strategy for confronting problems of race in U.S. society. Some participants express frustration at being told not to "rock the boat", or "to deal with things as they come" or "to work harder" to circumvent the effects of discrimination by other black Caribbeans, particularly those of the first-generation. Other participants explicitly distance themselves from such strategies through critiques of the first-generation's ideology about race and opportunity in U.S. society. In the following comment one participant readily emphasizes her "American" reference point to distinguish her perspective from her mother's on the issue of affirmative action:

> Participant: "I try to separate myself from the things that my parents do. One thing that my mother is against is affirmative action and I am for it and I could completely understand why she is against it, but, she comes from a predominantly black country where everyone is on the same playing level. When she came here for college, I know she did not take African American history and they surely did not teach it where she is from so she doesn't really know what the experience ….the hardships [of] people that were living in America…That's why she probably sees it as people being lazy and affirmative action being some handout. We have long conversations about me trying to explain to her that it's not the fact that people are lazy; it's just the fact that people weren't given the advantages that other people in America were given and that they do need

> to help. I don't think I'll ever win that battle with my mother, I don't think she'll ever believe that affirmative action is the way to go, but that I think that's one thing I can take from me being American and living here…" (12.12.02, NY)

As a second-generation black Caribbean, she perceives that she has greater insight about racism's impact on the lives of blacks, an awareness that informs her support for affirmative action. Conversely, this participant perceives that her mother's immigrant reference point impedes a full understanding of how race restricts the opportunities of blacks in the United States. The manner in which this woman emphasizes her American reference suggests a generational shift in attitudes in how the first-generation and second-generation interpret and respond to racism.

The focus group participants in both Washington, DC and New York city, overwhelmingly reflect perceptions of common fate with blacks. Using the NSAL data, I compared this trend within the focus group with patterns of responses to the common fate question among second-generation black Caribbean NSAL respondents. I analyzed responses to the four-category common fate measure used in Chapters 2 and 3.[3]

The patterns of responses to the common fate question based on the NSAL data are shown in Figure 4.3. That data indicate that almost two-thirds of second-generation black Caribbeans perceive "a lot" and "some" common fate with blacks, while another third perceive "not much" or "no" common fate with blacks. Using an OLS model of common fate, I examine whether identification with race and immigrant origins as well as socio-economic status explain common fate perceptions among second-generation black

[3] NSAL respondents were originally asked the following question: "Do you think what happens generally to people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?" Will it affect you a lot, some or not very much?" I combined these two questions into a four-category common fate with the following responses: (i.e. None, Not Very Much, Some, and A lot). Within the focus groups, participants were asked: Do you think what happens generally to people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life? Why? Why not?

Caribbeans. The results of the model are in Table 4.2. The importance of the race and Caribbean origins variable shows that those who perceive being black is more important is positively related to common fate (or having a higher mean response) than blacks who perceive that Caribbean origins are more important. However, this coefficient is marginally significant. However, this variable is a not significant predictor of common fate in the model overall. The relationship between socio-economic status and common fate perceptions reflect a non-significant relationship overall. The model indicates that traditional social background factors that have been found to distinguish common fate for other blacks do not explain what factors influence perceptions of common fate among second-generation black Caribbeans.

Conclusion

The survey data and focus group data highlight pan-black racial solidarity among the second-generation. Although many second-generation black Caribbeans do not identify culturally with black Americans, they do identify with the common experience of exclusion. Furthermore, they perceive these shared experiences are much broader than cultural differences among blacks. The second-generation distinguish their point of reference from the first-generation in how they draw upon the example of the black experience in the United States to validate their perceptions of common fate. In this way, the second-generation demonstrate that their perspectives are primarily defined by what happens to them as members of U.S. society.

Within the context of the immigrant community and immigrant family, second-generation black Caribbeans' cultural experiences inform unique perspectives about identity that do not necessarily fit neatly with American racial and social norms.

However, the second-generation display a unique ability to make competing perspectives about race and ethnic identity work together. When it comes to evaluating their experiences with mainstream U.S. society, expressing racial group concerns and perceptions of ethnic distinctiveness are not competing interests for second-generation black Caribbeans.

The second-generation display their dual reference point in how they artfully distinguish between contexts where ethnic distinctiveness is possible and when support for racial group interests is imperative. An immigrant reference point may facilitate the ability to downplay racial stigmatization among the first-generation black Caribbeans; however, in the face of persistent discrimination in U.S. society, this reference point may not offer adequate "protection" for the second-generation.

Bobb and Clarke (2001) argues that the success of the second generation is measured by their "ability to experience equal or exceed the social class of the first generation". Thus, the second-generation often rely on a different set of standards for evaluating success and achievement in the United States, relative to the first-generation. The social and economic outcomes that define success for the second-generation are shaped by norms defined within the context of the U.S. society, not necessarily those of their parents' former homelands. Thus, in the face of persistent racial categorization and discrimination, the second-generation are more likely to perceive that their opportunities for mobility in American society will be greatly impacted by racial group membership. Further, in response to racial ascription in society, a logical strategy of the second-generation is to draw from the experiences of other U.S. born groups. The perspectives of participants highlight how common experiences of racial subordination may result in a

political response that borrows from the African American political "toolkit" (Swidler, 1986).

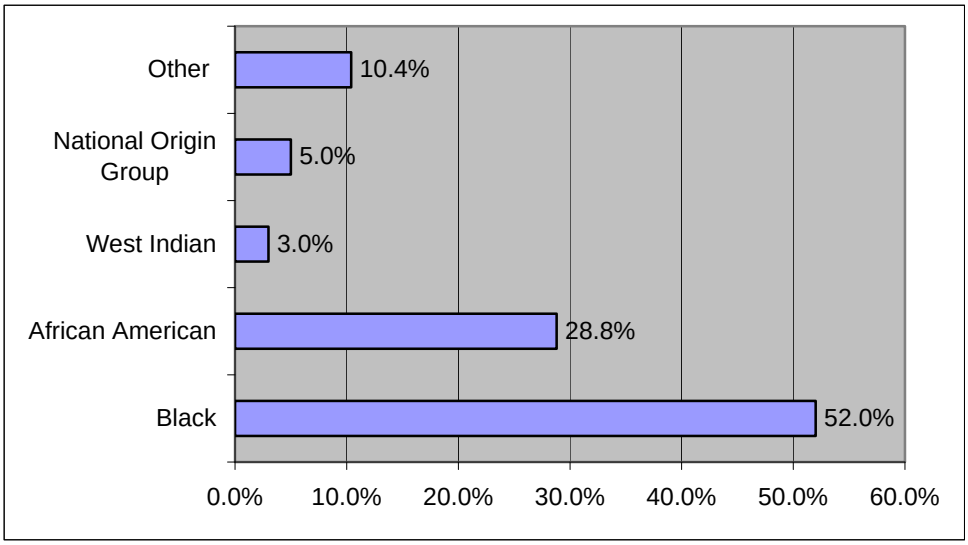
Not only do focus group participants in New York and DC express similar notions of common fate, they also use language and concepts similar to their black counterparts to describe common fate. The similarities in ideas and language that frame common fate that the second-generation black Caribbeans share with black Americans represents a significant departure from the first-generation whose ideas about common fate are mediated by their prior knowledge of different social structures in their respective countries in the Caribbean.

The sense of denial that second-generation blacks associate with an "invisible" Caribbean identity is linked to the idea that being perceived as "just Black" will inordinately shape their experiences as members of society. As second-generation Asians and Latinos are found to exhibit "reactive ethnicities" in response to racial categorization and racial discrimination from the wider society, the attitudes of focus group participants suggest that second-generation black Caribbeans are engaging in a similar process in response to the negative stereotypes they confront as members of U.S. society. Although identifying as "black" is connected to not being identified as African American for some second-generation black Caribbeans, identification as "black" simultaneously, incorporates the acknowledgement of a shared experience of race with others who look like them.

In contrast to the first-generation, the second-generation identify racial inequality as a distinct problem uniquely shared among blacks and one they persistently confront as members of society. Thus, the perspectives of second-generation black Caribbeans

incorporate concerns about race, minority status, and discrimination that overlap with the attitudes expressed by black American participants in Chapter Two. The attitudes of the second-generation suggest that the immigrant reference point does not operate in the same manner for the second-generation black Caribbeans when it comes to how they comprehend race. Thus, second-generation black Caribbeans' perceptions of common fate emphasize that they are directly connected to their experiences in U.S. society and their knowledge of U.S. society.

Figure 4.1 Percent Distribution of Identity Preference among Second-Generation Black Caribbeans



Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

N=260

The "other" category includes participants who describe themselves as black American (6.5%), Afro American (2.7%), and American (less than 1%) as well as more obscure categories

Table 4.1 Percent Distribution of Identity Preference by Demographic Characteristics among Second-Generation Black Caribbeans

	Black	African American	Caribbean
Education (n=260) (F=1.04)			
Some high school	27%	8%	10%
High school	19%	26%	35%
Some college	43%	41%	39%
College and beyond	11%	25%	16%
Income (n=251) (F=1.72)			
0-14,999	12%	8%	19%
15000-29,999	31%	19%	18%
30,000-49,999	18%	31%	35%
50,000-74,999	5%	20%	11%
75,000 or more	33%	22%	16%
Region (n=260) (F=1.96)			
Northeast	44%	32%	10%
Outside Northeast (South, Midwest, West)	64%	24%	8%
Caribbean origins (n=260) (p=1.29)			
French-speaking Caribbean	52%	24%	21%
English-speaking Caribbean	51%	31%	7%

Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

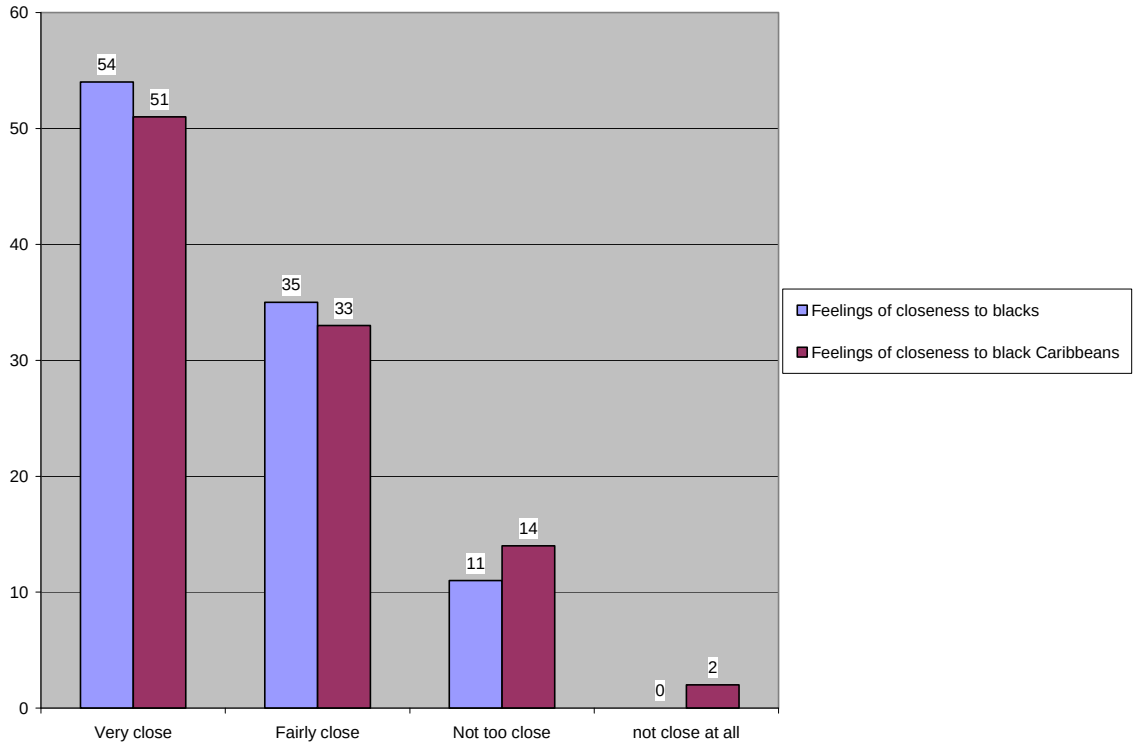
The categories of identity choice do not add up to 100 percentage points because of excluded categories such as “Black American” and “Other”.

Table 4.2 Percent Distribution of Importance of Race and Caribbean Origins among Second-Generation Black Caribbeans and First-Generation Black Caribbeans

	Black	Country	Both equally	Other
First-Generation N=1050	9%	10%	64%	16%
Second-Generation N=265 (F=20.11)	37%	4%	56%	3%

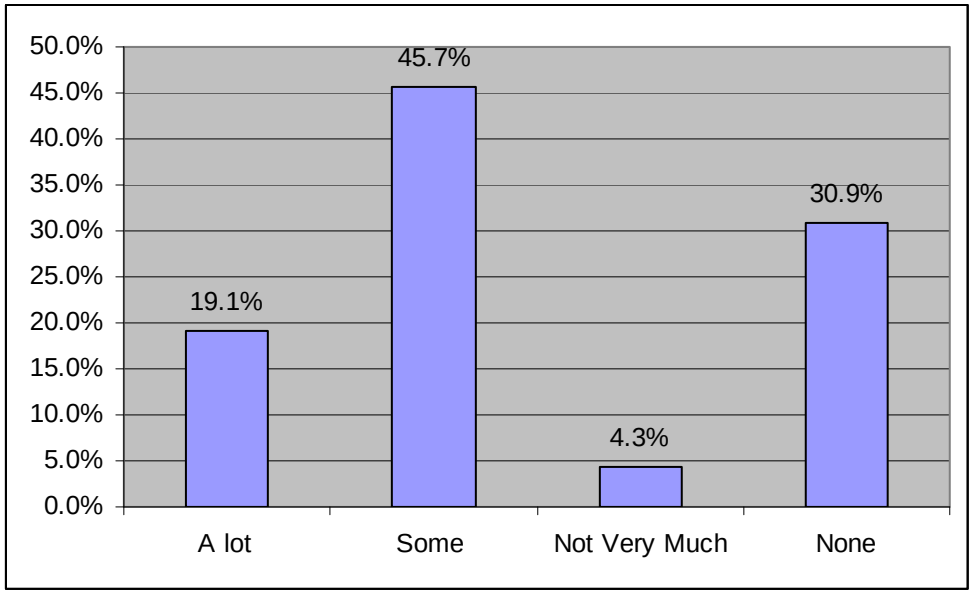
Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

Figure 4.2 Percent Distribution of Feelings of Closeness to Blacks and Black Caribbeans among Second-Generation Black Caribbeans



Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

Figure 4.3 Percent Distribution of Common Fate Perceptions among Second-Generation Black Caribbeans



Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

N=230

Chapter 5

Common Fate and the Roots of Pan-Black Racial Solidarity among Black Americans and Black Caribbeans

In Chapters 2 through 4, I explored how the U.S. reference point of black Americans, the immigrant reference point of the first-generation black Caribbeans, and the dual reference point of the second-generation distinguish perspectives about racial group membership in the black community. The focus group data and the survey data both captured expressions of distinctiveness as well as evidence of shared identification among black Americans and black Caribbeans.

In this chapter, I pull together my findings from the prior chapters to review the significance of ethnic distinctiveness for black Americans and black Caribbeans and explore the factors that shape perceptions of common fate within each group. Using multivariate analysis, I examine the factors that shape common fate perceptions for black Americans and black Caribbeans to explain the connections between this type of racial group identification and pan-black racial solidarity between black Americans and black Caribbean communities.

Evidence of Ethnic Distinctiveness among Black Americans and Black Caribbeans

Descriptions of identity that emerged within the focus group discussions revealed that black Americans and black Caribbeans express ethnic distinctiveness in how they define themselves as people of African descent and further, in terms of how they evaluate one another. The language and ideas that both groups employed to describe themselves as members of the black community captured how black Americans and black Caribbeans perceive cultural distinctions from one another. Within the NSAL data,

patterns of ethnic distinctiveness were also reflected in patterns of response to a self-identification measure as well as in measures of closeness to blacks.

The focus group data findings reflect that first-generation black Caribbeans define their racial identities in connection with common beliefs, values, and practices from their countries of origin as well as other members of the Caribbean community. Their perspectives about identity and Caribbean origins support Bobb and Clarke's (2001) claim that the immigrant first-generation "consistently interprets their new social circumstances in relation to the circumstances under which they lived in their country of origin" (229).

In contrast, black Americans and second-generation black Caribbeans appear to rely more upon U.S. racial categories to describe themselves, as patterns of identification for both groups fall within two major categories: black and African American. The focus group discussions, however, also clarify how ethnic distinctiveness is embedded in terms commonly used to describe race and membership in the black American community. Thus, some second-generation black Caribbeans emphasize that defining oneself as black is not necessarily the same as identifying oneself as black American. Rather, some perceive that the term "black" represents a broader umbrella category that incorporates diverse groups of people of African descent including people of Caribbean ancestry and black Americans.

Table 5.1 captures the variations in patterns of identification among black Caribbean and black American NSAL respondents. The tables reflect that first-generation black Caribbeans overwhelmingly prefer to identify either with a category associated with their Caribbean background or prefer to identify themselves as black. The tendency

to identify solely with Caribbean background greatly diminishes with the second-generation who are much more likely to identify primarily as black while black Americans identify themselves primarily as black or African-American. The differences in patterns of identification are most notable for black Americans and first-generation black Caribbeans.[11]

Ethnic distinctiveness was also present in perceptions of closeness among black American and black Caribbean NSAL respondents. Measures of closeness to one's racial group have traditionally been used as measures of affect or cohesiveness among blacks (Allen et al., 1991; Brown et al., 1999). However, the patterns of response to questions about feelings of closeness indicate that black Americans and black Caribbeans make distinctions about who they feel close to depending on which black ethnic group is referenced. The distribution of responses among black Caribbeans and black Americans in Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2 indicate that these measures of closeness tap into feelings of ethnic unity among blacks when feelings of closeness to another black ethnic group are referenced separately. The patterns of response among first-generation black Caribbeans and black Americans reflect that both groups distinguish between closeness to blacks in the U.S. and blacks from the Caribbean. Black Americans express greater feelings of closeness when the reference group is "blacks in this country." Similarly, black Caribbeans express higher perceptions of closeness when the reference group is "blacks from the Caribbean."[12] The differences in patterns of response to each measure of closeness among black Americans and black Caribbeans reveals that in the context of

[11] The chi-square statistic was statistically significant (F=40.9).
[12] The chi-square statistic for feelings of closeness to blacks was statistically significant (F= 5.85). The chi-square statistic for feelings of closeness to blacks from the Caribbean was also statistically significant (F= 46.36).

black ethnic diversity, the meaning of closeness to blacks is not static, nor is it necessarily a measurement of racial similarity for these two groups. Nevertheless, the focus group discussions and survey data indicate that expressions of shared identification can be found within the common fate perceptions of black Americans and black Caribbeans.

Black Americans, Black Caribbeans, and Common Fate

Social identity theorists (Tajfel, 1981; Turner, 1982) argue that although group cohesiveness may be an outcome of common identification among groups, it is not necessary to group identification. Instead Tajfel (1981) and Turner (1982) argue that awareness of common category membership is necessary and sufficient for group behavior. Relative to other forms of racial identification, shared identity is best captured in the common fate expressions of black Americans and black Caribbeans within the focus group data and NSAL data.

Black Americans and Black Caribbeans express strong commonalities about the meaning of racial group membership and racial discrimination when they define common fate within the focus group discussions. Furthermore, despite the patterns of ethnic distinctiveness present within self-identification and feelings of closeness measures in the NSAL data, the distribution of responses to common fate questions are very similar for black Caribbeans and black Americans (see Figure 5.3).

First-generation black Caribbean common fate perceptions within the focus group discussions reflect a shared viewpoint that blacks are often lumped into one undifferentiated category in U.S society. Further, first-generation black Caribbeans perceive that this common lens impacts how others respond to them as members of the

black community. Consequently, although the first-generation strongly emphasize the ways in which they are distinct from black Americans, they similarly express concerns that racial discrimination has implications for their lives similar to those of black Americans.

The focus group data also reveals that similar to first-generation black Caribbeans, black Americans and second-generation black Caribbeans express shared concerns about the significance of racial categorization and racial exclusion within U.S. society for blacks. Both groups readily acknowledge the ethnic tensions between the black American and black Caribbean communities, yet, also believe that their lives are uniquely linked by experiences related to racial exclusion. Black Americans and second-generation black Caribbeans similarly emphasize the importance of racial progress within the black community and expectations of individual obligation to the black community as a whole. Furthermore, both groups emphasize group action and racial group cohesiveness as key solutions to addressing racial inequalities faced by the black community. The shared perspectives in the focus group data and the patterns of response within the survey data capture a common identification among black Americans and black Caribbeans about the role of race in their lives as members of U.S. society.

Tajfel (1981) points out that new group identities can emerge if people are treated by others as if they are members of a particular group. Perceptions of common fate among black Caribbeans reflect how their own perceptions of racial identity have been modified by exposure to U.S.-based racial categories and definitions of black identity. Their shared identification with other blacks in the U.S. reflects a consciousness that the way they perceive themselves as blacks is not necessarily recognized in the context of

U.S. society. Shared group identification among black Americans and black Caribbeans is defined by a belief that the shared physical characteristics of both communities are the basis of racial discrimination experienced in society. The awareness that people of African descent in U.S. society face common problems of racial exclusion, informs a shared identification among black Americans and black Caribbeans that becomes the basis of pan-black racial solidarity among black Americans and black Caribbeans. Thus, pan-black racial solidarity offers one way we can understand how blacks who are culturally distinct mobilize around a common group identity.

Descriptive analysis of the survey data and analysis of the focus group data reveal similarities in common fate perceptions among black Americans and black Caribbeans. The common fate perceptions of the primarily middle-class, college-educated focus group participants suggest that blacks with high socio-economic status tend to express strong perceptions of common fate. While the perspectives of focus group participants were overwhelmingly supportive of common fate, the NSAL data capture more variation in common fate perspectives among black Americans and black Caribbeans.

Predictors of Common Fate among Blacks

In the politics literature, analyses of common fate among blacks are typically framed through the experiences of black Americans. Further, a commonly researched question about common fate among blacks is: what explains common fate perceptions within the black community? With respect to black Americans, the black politics scholarship indicates that socio-economic status is an important predictor of common fate among blacks.

Both Dawson (1994) and Tate (1993) argue that socio-economic status is a significant predictor of common fate among blacks. Dawson does not find support for a negative relationship between common fate and socio-economic status among blacks; however, Tate concludes there is evidence to suggest that social mobility among blacks weakens racial identification.[13] Hochschild's (1995) research on middle-class black Americans in the U.S., highlights that well-to-do black Americans strongly perceive that their individuals lives are linked to the status of the racial group in society. She finds that despite economic and social mobility, these members of the black community are strongly disillusioned about the myth of the American Dream, because they continue to confront racial discrimination. Consequently, some have found that experiences of racial exclusion reinforce the belief among black Americans that regardless of their social mobility, their experiences and opportunities are primarily defined by their membership within the black community. This pattern of identification among socially mobile blacks contradicts theories of incorporation that traditionally associate the weakening of group identity with the attainment of high socio-economic status. The relationships between common fate and socio-economic status used to explain black American racial group identification in the literature have not been similarly examined for black Caribbeans. The immigrant politics literature suggests that experiences related to race among socially mobile black Americans may not necessarily be interpreted with the same lens by black Caribbeans of high socio-economic status. Rather, social mobility may have a different effect on perceptions of common fate within the black Caribbean community when compared with what has been documented for black Americans in the literature.

[13] Dawson and Tate did not use the same dependent variables to measure common fate. Tate created an index of racial identification created from two group identification measures, while Dawson examined two measures of racial group identification, separately.

One possible outcome is that income could be negatively related to common fate among black Caribbeans. Black Caribbeans within higher income categories may express weaker perceptions of common fate for the opposite reason that black Americans have been found to express strong perceptions of common fate because social mobility with respect to income may belie the salience of racial discrimination. Those with economic wealth may view their social mobility in more individualistic terms rather than linked to the status of the group. In the case of black Caribbeans, economic wealth may disprove the relevance of racial discrimination and racial exclusion. Within the focus groups, first-generation focus group participants often minimized the impact of discrimination through emphasizing the importance of individual achievement and effort despite their perceptions that racial discrimination was a problem for blacks. Thus, economic wealth may reinforce the idea that their achievements in society are less likely to be shaped by race rather than how they take advantage of their opportunities. Thus their immigrant perspective may play a strong role in how they make sense of economic and education attainment and experiences of discrimination. Success despite racial obstacles may not cast a pall on black Caribbean perspectives in the way that it has for many black Americans. Thus, rather than strengthening common fate perceptions, socio-economic status may be a negative influence on common fate perceptions among black Caribbeans.

In addition to income, education represents a measure of socialization through experiences of learning within formal and informal networks and has also been found to shape common fate perceptions among blacks. With respect to black Caribbeans, education may be positively related to common fate perceptions. One example of how education works as a factor of socialization is reflected in how second-generation black

Caribbeans talk about their identification with the black American experience as a function of learning black history in school. Their exposure to black American history taught them to observe links between their own experiences as blacks in U.S. society and those of other blacks. As a function of such experiences (for example), black Caribbeans and black Americans may be more sensitive to racial inequality because of what they experience. As a factor of socialization, education incorporates learning in connection with contact and interaction with others.

Economic Status and Common Fate Perceptions among Blacks

Dawson's (1994) research on common fate also examines the relationship between economic evaluations among black Americans and common fate perceptions. A central premise of his argument about black American common fate is that economic evaluations are connected to black Americans' historical memory of having a socially and economically subordinate status in U.S. society. Consequently, Dawson argues that the contemporary vestiges of that history are captured in the link between perceptions of economic subordination and the group interests of blacks (76).

In the black politics literature, explanations of black common fate primarily depict a story about how common experiences of racial socialization and concerns about economic status within the black community foster and reinforce a common narrative about black identity in the context of U.S. society. Thus, if economic evaluations played a role in shaping common fate perceptions, one would expect that those who perceived themselves to be in a good economic position might express weaker perceptions of common fate relative to those who evaluate their economic positions in a more negative

light. Among black Caribbeans and black Americans, the more negative the economic evaluation, the higher one's common fate perceptions.

Using the measure of common fate previously analyzed and discussed within the focus group data, I examine the impact of these factors on common fate perceptions among black Americans and black Caribbeans to understand whether the factors that shape common fate differ for the two groups.[14] The other variables of interest in the models of common fate are migration-related variables discussed in further detail below.

Migration-Related Predictors of Common Fate

Factors unique to the immigrant experience have not been examined for their influence on perceptions of common fate among black Caribbeans. Specifically, length of residence and citizenship are both factors that influence perceptions of common fate among first-generation black Caribbeans. Arguably, first-generation black Caribbeans with the longest period of U.S. residence may express stronger perceptions of common fate relative to those who have resided in the U.S. for less time. Consequently, over time, exposure to U.S. race relations and the U.S. system of racial classification is likely to have a greater impact on those who have been in the U.S. the longest by reinforcing the salience of racial identity over other aspects of identity in the wider U.S. society. Thus, one would expect to see a positive relationship between length of residence and common fate among first-generation black Caribbeans.

Citizenship

[14] The question used to measure common fate was a combined response to the following questions: 1) Do you think what happens generally to black people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life? 2) Will it affect you a lot, some, or not very much? The responses were recoded into a four-category measure of common fate (the responses were a lot, some, not much, none). The common fate variable was recoded to a 0, 1 variable.

As an indicator of social status among immigrants, U.S. citizenship among blacks could shape perceptions of common fate in a number of ways. In connection with the choice to enjoy the privileges of full inclusion in society as citizens, common fate perceptions could be heightened for this group because they are invested in what happens to them as members of a racial minority group, and they perceive their experiences to be more closely aligned with those of black Americans. Conversely, the pursuit of citizenship may also negatively impact common fate perceptions if black Caribbeans if citizenship is associated with stronger identification with mainstream society rather than racial group identity. In this instance, citizenship could negatively impact perceptions of common fate among black Caribbeans.

Generation Status

As an indicator of racial socialization, generation status could influence distinctions in perspectives *within* the black Caribbean community among foreign-born black Caribbeans (first-generation black Caribbeans) and U.S. born black Caribbeans (second-generation black Caribbeans). The focus groups highlighted the importance of the immigrant reference point of the first-generation as well as the hybrid perspectives of second-generation black Caribbeans. Although, second-generation black Caribbeans' perspectives incorporate attitudes of distinctiveness, it has not been documented that this group has engaged in distancing behaviors towards black Americans that have been observed among first-generation black Caribbeans (Vickerman, 1999; Waters, 1999; Rogers, 2006).

The second-generation are strongly attuned to issues of race and racial inequality in the context of U.S. society and identify with black American experience while the first-

generation are more wary of defining their experiences overwhelmingly in terms of race (despite their concerns about discrimination). These different sensitivities about race could be reflected in different levels of common fate between the groups.

Black Caribbean intragroup diversity highlights the importance of including migration-related factors in models of black common fate. Length of residence, citizenship, and generation status may help us identify the source of possible differences in common fate perspectives with the black Caribbean community, which may also shed light on any differences in identification from black Americans. Accounting for the impact of these variables helps tap into how different experiences of racial socialization and perceptions of social status inform common fate perceptions within the black Caribbean community.

In the following section, I use regression analysis to examine whether socio-economic status[15] and economic evaluations have an independent effect on common fate among black Americans and black Caribbeans.[16] I present the findings of separate models of common fate for black Americans, first-generation black Caribbeans, second-generation black Caribbeans as well as a pooled model of common fate which incorporates all three groups. The model of common fate for first-generation black Caribbeans accounts for the impact of length of residence and citizenship. All of the models control for age and gender. The black Caribbean models control for Caribbean origin in addition to age and gender.

[15] Measures of income and education were used to measure socio-economic status and were coded as continuous variables.

[16] The measure of economic evaluation asked respondents to evaluate whether their financial situation improved, stayed the same, or got worse. The categories "stayed the same" and "got worse" were included as dummies in the model. Please note that (Dawson, 1994) uses both subjective and objective measures of economic evaluations among blacks to examine common fate. My analyses are limited to the subjective measurement of financial status as that was the best measure of economic subordination available in the survey.

Predictors of Common Fate for Black Americans and Black Caribbeans

Table 5.2, Table 5.3 and Table 5.4 provide the results of the separate models of common fate among black Americans and black Caribbeans. The models show that socio-economic indicators are important predictors of common fate for both black Americans and black Caribbeans. While both income and education were positively associated with common fate for black Americans, education was related to higher common fate perceptions for the first-generation black Caribbeans. The first-generation and black American models of common fate both indicate that black American and black Caribbean women express weaker perceptions of common fate relative to black American and black Caribbean men. The finding replicates earlier findings in the scholarship of a gender gap in common fate in the black American community (Dawson, 1994, 2001). While negative assessments of economic status were associated with higher common fate perceptions among black Americans, this variable did not have an independent effect on common fate perceptions among first-generation black Caribbeans.

Among the migration-related variables in the model of first-generation black Caribbean common fate, length of residence and Caribbean origin were not associated with common fate perceptions. Citizenship, however, was negatively associated with weaker common fate perceptions among first-generation black Caribbeans. This finding supports my earlier claim that citizenship weakens the salience of racial group identification among first-generation black Caribbeans.

Among second-generation black Caribbeans, perceptions of common fate were influenced by their subjective assessments of their financial situation. Specifically, black Caribbeans who believed that their financial situation had worsened over the years

expressed higher common fate than second-generation black Caribbeans who perceived their financial situation had improved. These individuals perceive a connection between their economic status and the status of blacks, supporting Dawson's (1994) claim that perceptions of economic subordination reinforce perceptions of common fate. The model also shows that socio-economic status was not related to perceptions of common fate for second-generation black Caribbeans, thus, we would not expect to see differences in common fate across income and education categories of the second-generation.

The pooled model of common fate in Table 5.5 reveals that there are no differences in common fate perceptions among black Americans and black Caribbeans. Specifically, Caribbean origins and U.S. origins do not influence common fate perceptions among blacks. The model indicates that common fate perceptions were positively related to income and education in the model as were negative perceptions of one's economic situation. Thus, those who perceived they were doing poorly financially expressed higher perceptions of common fate with blacks. The gender coefficient for the pooled model indicated that black women express weaker perceptions of common fate relative to black men.

To further examine gender distinctions among the men and women, I ran regression models of common fate separately for men and women in the sample (see Table 5.6). When common fate is examined separately among black men and black women, the models indicate that income and education positively impact common fate perceptions among black women, while education and negative assessments of economic status lead to stronger perceptions of common fate among men. The model of common fate for women, however, indicates that first-generation black Caribbean women express

weaker perceptions of common fate relative to black American women. The gender models of common fate indicate that socio-economic status matters for both men and women; however, concerns about economic status reinforce common fate perceptions among black men.

The goal of this chapter was to examine patterns of racial group identification and to understand how common fate perceptions are connected to pan-black racial solidarity between black Americas and black Caribbeans. Drawing upon the trends in focus group data and survey data, self-identification and feelings of closeness capture ethnic boundaries that exist between black Americans and black Caribbeans. The data in Chapters 2-4, however, also highlighted that despite perceptions of cultural difference, black Caribbeans and black Americans share the common sentiment that race uniquely impacts the lives of blacks in the U.S.

Common fate has typically been depicted as shared identification among blacks rooted in shared history of slavery, and economic and social exclusion in the United States. Further, these concerns about racial exclusion were strongly linked to perceptions of economic subordination (Dawson, 1994). Nevertheless, in the post-civil right era, despite the growing ethnic diversity of the black community, black Caribbeans and black Americans alike express common fate with one another.

The black politics literature has previously identified that socio-economic status has shaped common fate perceptions within the black American community. The models in this discussion highlight that these indicators also have a significant influence on common fate perceptions among first-generation black Caribbeans which suggest that the sources of common fate for this group are connected to their experiences of racial

socialization in the U.S. Specifically, higher levels of education and income lead to involvement in networks that increase the salience of racial identity for first-generation black Caribbeans. Thus, first-generation black Caribbeans' experiences belie traditional explanations about the negative link between social mobility and group identity in the politics literature (Dahl, 1961). In the case of the second-generation, perceptions of economic subordination are linked to stronger perceptions of common fate for this group.

The perspectives of black Caribbeans highlight that common fate is no longer a story about the historical experiences of black Americans; rather, its relevance in the black community extends helping us understand the perspectives of black immigrants as well. Common fate perceptions among black Americans and black Caribbeans are informed by the shared belief that race uniquely impacts their lives in similar ways, and this knowledge creates the foundation of shared political interest between the two communities. Thus, pan-black racial solidarity offers one way we can understand how blacks can express perceptions of ethnic distinctiveness, yet mobilize around a common group identity.

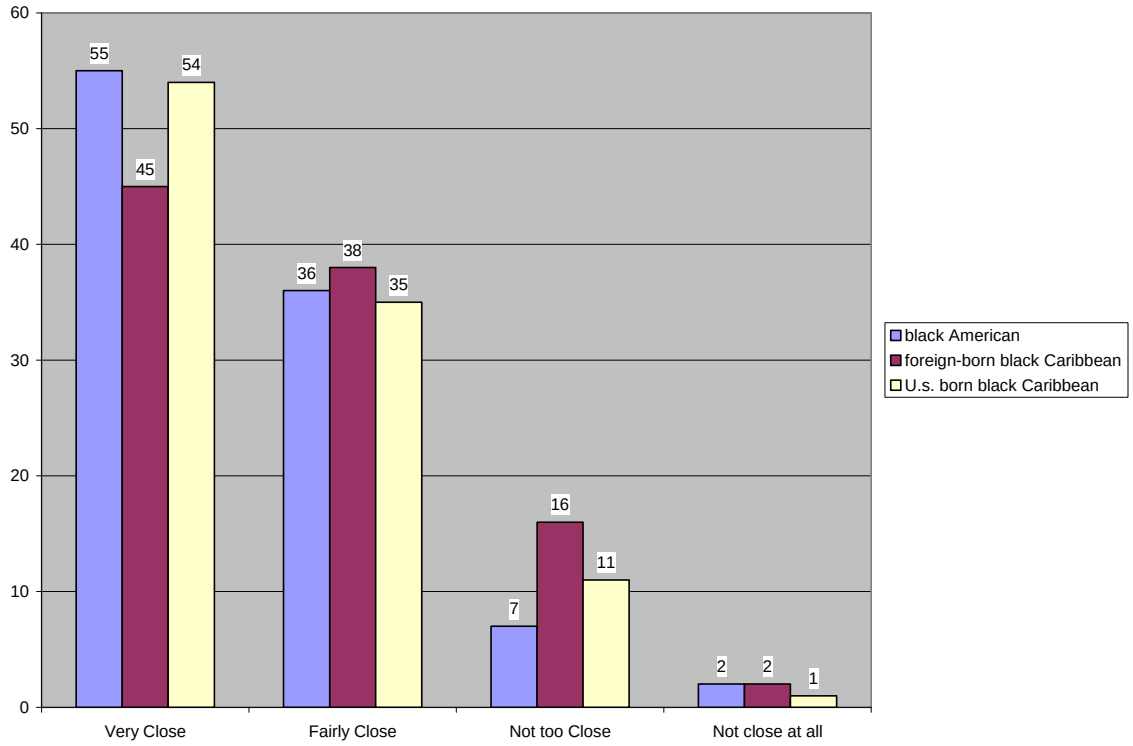
The following chapter explores the link between pan-black racial solidarity and shared political interests through an analysis of the policy views of black Americans and black Caribbeans on issues that center on race-conscious and race-blind policy.

Table 5.1 Percent Distribution of Self-Identification among Black Americans and Black Caribbeans

	Black	**African American**	**Caribbean background**	**Other**
Black American	42%	32%	n/a	13%
First-Generation black Caribbean	40%	7%	40%	11%
Second-Generation black Caribbean	51%	29%	9%	4%
N=4673 (F= 40.6)				

Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

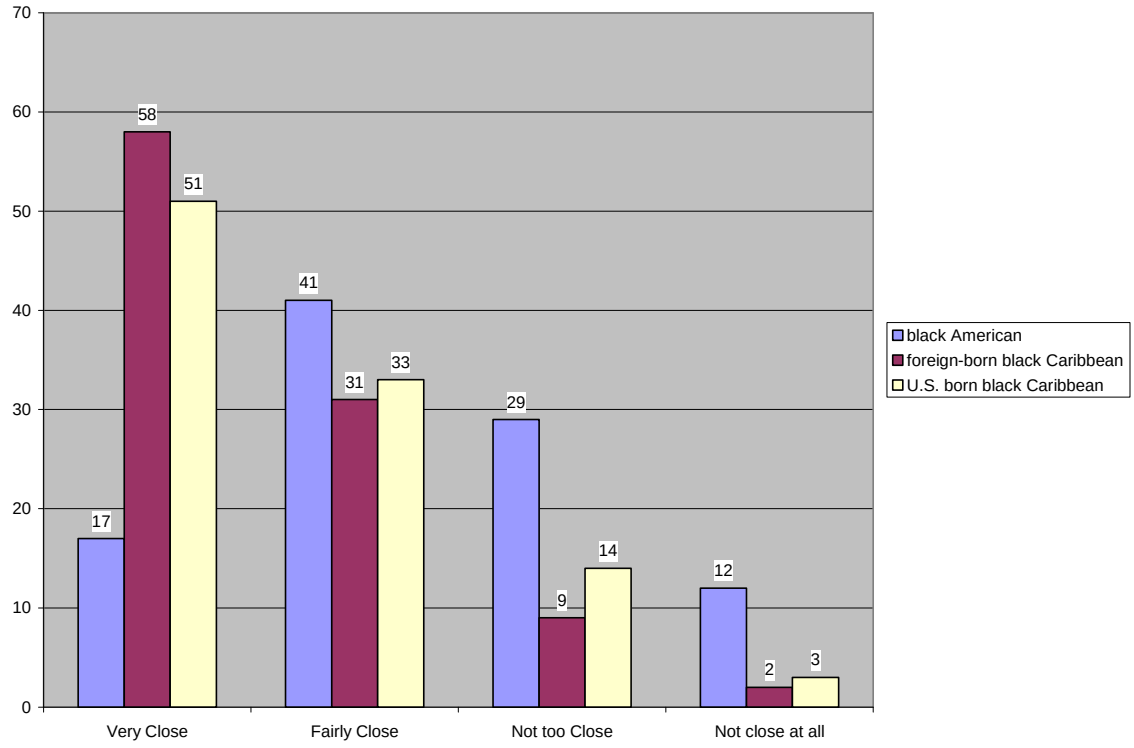
Figure 5.1 Percent Distribution of Feelings of Closeness to Blacks among Black Americans and Black Caribbeans



Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

N=4729
F=5.85

Figure 5.2 Percent Distribution of Feelings of Closeness to Black Caribbeans among Black Americans and Black Caribbeans



Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

N=4718
F=46.36

Table 5.2 Model of Black American Common Fate

	Model 1	
	B	s.e.
Age	.070	.054
Income	.459***	.131
Education	.292***	.049
Gender	-.059**	.019
Financial situation in the last 10 years		
Same	-.030	.025
Worse	.045*	.020
Caribbean origin (English)		
Constant	.199	.052
	N=3368	
	R^2=.03	

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 5.3 Model of First Generation Black Caribbean Common Fate

	Model 1	
	b	s.e.
Age	.142	.159
Income	.198	.612
Education	.309**	.097
Gender	-.148***	.042
Financial situation in the last 10 years		
Same	.061	.050
Worse	.005	.041
Citizenship (Yes)	-.100*	.044
Length of U.S. residence	-.331	.239
Caribbean Origin (English)	-.013	.035
Constant	.279*	.103
	N=854	
	R^2=.08	

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 5.4 Model of Second-Generation Black Caribbean Common Fate

	Model 1	
	b	s.e.
Age	-081	.309
Income	.577	.517
Education	.372	.289
Gender	.050	.063
Financial situation in the last 10 years		
Same	.063	.076
Worse	.269*	.100
Caribbean origin (English)	-.062	.189
Constant	.153	.218
	N=262	
	R^2=.07	

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 5.5 Model of Common Fate among Black Americans and Black Caribbeans

	(All groups)	
	b	s.e.
Age	.067	.052
Income	.438***	.124
Education	.292***	.046
Gender	-.063***	.018
Financial situation in the last 10 years		
Same	-.029	.024
Worse	.045*	.019
Origins		
First-Generation Black Caribbean	-.019	.028
Second-Generation Black Caribbean	.052	.039
Constant	.204	.050
	N=2821	
	R^2=.03	

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 5.6 Model of Common Fate among Black Men and Black Women

	Black Women			**Black Men**	
	b	s.e.		b	s.e.
Age	.080	.061		.042	.070
Income	.635***	.158		.288	.210
Education	.305**	.065		.263***	.069
Financial situation in the last 10 years					
Same	-050	.025		.002	.030
Worse	.030	.023		.067*	.031
Origins					
First-Generation Black Caribbean	-.078*	.030		.035	.041
Second-Generation Black Caribbean	.084	.035		.004	.070
Constant	.125*	.060		.234***	.064
	N=2929 R^2=.04			N=1694 R^2=.02	

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Chapter 6

Pan-Black Racial Solidarity and Policy Perspectives of Black Americans and Black Caribbeans

Despite increasing social diversity within the black community, there is a high level of unity in black American public opinion (Tate, 1993; Dawson, 1994; Harris, 1998). Relative to other racial and ethnic groups in the United States, black Americans are unique in their overwhelming support of policies that promote social and economic redistribution. Thus, public opinion often captures how racial group identity inordinately shapes the political concerns of black Americans (Conover, 1984). Furthermore, the political unity displayed by black Americans counters theories that argue that as ethnic groups advance economically and socially, group ties will have less of an influence on political interest, resulting in greater political heterogeneity within social groups (Dahl, 1961; Glazer and Moynihan, 1964).

The literature of race politics argues that racial group concerns significantly influence the political attitudes of blacks; however, we must consider whether current explanations of literature on black American public opinion are similarly applicable for black immigrants. The immigration literature highlights factors, in addition to racial group concerns, that possibly influence public opinion within the black Caribbean community. However, there are currently no models of black public opinion that distinguish the influence of factors related to immigrant background among blacks.

Dawson (1994, 2001) argues that the support exhibited by black Americans on issues of social and racial reform is contingent upon the extent to which black Americans

continue to perceive that their lives are inextricably linked by race. He cautions that when other social characteristics become more salient, we are more likely to see greater political diversity around support for the issues that have historically shaped black political agendas in the United States. If we evaluate Dawson's argument in connection with the distinctive attitudes displayed by black Americans and immigrant blacks in relation to one another, birthplace and differences in origin among blacks may very well represent a social characteristic that distinguishes the political orientations within the black community despite shared perceptions of common fate.

The discussion from earlier chapters establishes that racial group identification is not necessarily viewed in the same terms for black Caribbeans and black Americans; however, there is a shared sense of common fate among black Americans and black Caribbeans. In this chapter, I examine how perceptions of common fate influence the political perspectives of black Americans and black Caribbeans.

My analysis of black American and black Caribbean public opinion also examines the influence of migration-related factors such as length of residence, citizenship, Caribbean origin, and generation status and whether they significantly distinguish perspectives within the black Caribbean community (or the opinions of black Caribbeans from those of black Americans). With respect to political attitudes, the likely influence of length of residence on black Caribbeans who have resided in the U.S. for a significant period of time are likely to display stronger opinions on issues related to U.S. social and racial policy whereas those who have been here a much shorter period of time may express little interest or weaker sentiments on these issues. With respect to generation status, I expect to see few differences on race-conscious issues; however, I expect there

will be differences between the first-generation and the second-generation on issues that do not specifically address racial concerns.

Arguably, the attitudes of black Americans and black Caribbeans on issues affecting the black community represent indicators of how these two communities perceive that issues of race will define their lives as members of society. Further, the opportunity to explore the policy perspectives of black Americans and black Caribbeans allows us to assess another aspect of black political incorporation within the U.S. political system. Specifically, will black Caribbean and black American policy views reflect pan-black racial solidarity? To address this question, this chapter explores the relationships between U.S. origins and immigrant origins, common fate, and the policy perspectives of black Americans and black Caribbeans.

According to Pinderhughes (1987), "black Americans support people and causes that champion racial reform and racial equality; specifically…the party, action or individual candidate that is most supportive of racial reform" (as cited in Dawson, 1994, 131). Thus, I draw upon measures in the NSAL to compare black Caribbean and black American positions on issues that relate to social and economic redistribution, including issues that directly focus on issues impacting minorities and/or blacks specifically. I also examine issues that pertain to economic and social reform, but are race-blind in their wording. Thus, "race-conscious" issues directly address policies targeting problems of racial inequality that affect the black community, specifically, and racial minorities more broadly. Furthermore, "race-blind" issues address support for measures that address inequality more generally, in that, the questions do not focus on inequality among blacks or racial minorities.

Black American and Black Caribbean Attitudes about Race-Conscious Policy

I examine support among black Caribbeans and black Americans for race-conscious policies and race-blind policies that focus on racial and economic reform. The distinction between the two types of policies is that one addresses improvements in the opportunities of blacks while the other addresses expanding the opportunities for groups more generally without referring directly to any specific group. The first part of the discussion focuses on black Caribbean and black American attitudes towards race-conscious policies.

I use three measures to examine black American and black Caribbean support for race-conscious issues. Two of the measures ask respondents whether they agree or disagree with government aid to blacks, and the third focuses on using race-conscious policy to increase political representation among minorities[17]. The distribution of responses to the questions is displayed in Table 6.1 which examines the bivariate relationships between origins and support for race-conscious policies.

According to Table 6.1, black Americans and black Caribbeans overwhelmingly support race-conscious policies. A majority of black Americans and black Caribbeans support the idea that government has a responsibility to improve the economic and social position of blacks in the U.S. Furthermore, patterns of response to the question of support for increasing the number of minority-elected officials through redistricting reflects shared support among black Americans and black Caribbeans on this issue. The NSAL data show that the use of race-conscious policy towards eradicating racial inequality enjoys broad support between both groups.

[17] The wording of the measures can be located in the appendix.

With respect to the matter of government reparations to blacks for past injustices, black Americans and both first-generation and second-generation black Caribbeans exhibit high levels of support for this policy. The level of support for this issue among first-generation black Caribbeans is somewhat surprising because the question of reparations deals specifically with the historical legacy of slavery and its impact on black Americans in the United States, an experience that many Caribbean blacks are hesitant to claim as part of their own experience (Vickerman, 1999; Rogers, 2006). However, such reluctance would not necessarily preclude black Caribbeans from supporting such a measure if they perceive that racial inequality defines their own experiences as members of U.S. society.

The level of support for race-conscious policies displayed by both black Americans and black Caribbeans bring to light that, on matters of race, there is shared empathy within both communities regarding issues that affect members of the black community broadly. Black Caribbeans and black Americans share similar concerns about the position of blacks in the U.S. and the role of the federal government in improving the opportunities and rights for blacks on the whole.

Black American and Black Caribbean Attitudes about Race-Blind Policy

In addition to comparing black American and black Caribbean support for race-conscious issues, I also examine their support for issues that center on economic reform, but are framed in race-neutral terms. The following questions ask respondents to evaluate policies that promote the redistribution of economic resources to the most needy in American society.

The responses to these questions are also displayed in Table 6.1. A majority of both black Americans and black Caribbeans support providing jobs to those who want a job and also support the view that the wealthy should pay higher taxes than the poor. However, the level of unity displayed by black Americans and black Caribbeans for race-conscious policies are not replicated with respect to their views on reforms that do not directly engage the issue of race. There is greater variability in the degree of support for these policies among black Americans and black Caribbeans and among first-generation and second-generation black Caribbeans. For example, first-generation black Caribbeans trail black Americans and second-generation black Caribbeans in support for the policy measure pertaining to government jobs by almost twenty percentage points (when the strongly-agree and somewhat-agree categories are combined). With respect to support for taxing the rich, the distribution of responses among the three groups reflects support among a majority within each group. Based on the descriptive table, the first generation express weaker levels of support relative to black Americans and second-generation black Caribbeans on issues of economic reform.

The distribution of black American and black Caribbean attitudes on race-blind policies indicates agreement between these groups on these issues. However, within the black Caribbean community, there is greater variation in the attitudes of first-generation black Caribbeans relative to second-generation black Caribbeans and black Americans.

To further examine the factors that explain support for race-conscious and race-blind policy among black Americans and black Caribbeans, I use ordinary least squares regression. Three models were run for each policy measure. A pooled model of policy support included black Americans and black Caribbeans (i.e., all groups), and the

remaining two models examined policy support among black Americans and first-generation black Caribbeans separately.[18] The "all groups" models examined the independent effect of origins (i.e., black American or black Caribbean) and common fate on support for race-conscious policy and race-blind policy. Additionally, the first-generation black Caribbean models examined the independent effect of migration-related variables on policy attitudes among foreign-born black Caribbeans.[19] Both models control for age, socio-economic status (i.e., income and education), and gender.

Discussion of Independent Variables of Interest

The "origins" variable defines differences between black Americans and black Caribbeans in terms of birthplace and distance from an immigrant identity. Thus, the reference variable, black American, represents blacks who do not claim an immigrant background and define their origins within the U.S. In contrast, the second-generation black Caribbean category represents the reference point of U.S. born black Caribbeans whose parents (at least one parent) are foreign-born and black Caribbean. Thus, they represent a group that is U.S. born but, identify with the Caribbean community. Finally, the first-generation category within the origins variable represents the perspective of foreign-born black Caribbeans who were born outside of the U.S., but currently reside in the U.S. The first-generation represent the category closest to immigrant identity while black Americans represent a group farthest from the immigrant experience. The second-generation perspective is treated as somewhere between the perspective of black Americans and first-generation black Caribbeans. Using the origins variable, I examine

[18] Due to small sample size and concerns about the stability of model coefficients, separate models of race-conscious policy and race-blind policy were not run for second-generation black Caribbeans.
[19] The migration-related variables examined in the first-generation Caribbean models are citizenship (dummy variable), length of residence (coded 0 to 1) and Caribbean origins (i.e., French or English Caribbean). The Caribbean origins variable was treated as dummy variable in the models.

whether there are differences in support for race and economic policy associated with being close to or distant from an immigrant identity.[20]

Common Fate

The common fate variable measures black American and black Caribbean support for the belief that what happens to blacks as a group has implications for their lives, individually. The model examines whether there are differences in support for race-conscious and race-blind policy by strength of common fate. I expect that blacks with a higher sense of common fate will express greater levels of support for the race-blind and race-conscious policy measures.[21]

Migration-related variables

Length of residence

Length of residence represents a measure of socialization based on length of time black Caribbeans have resided in the U.S. Specifically, we would expect that black Caribbeans who have resided in the U.S. the longest may be more acculturated within the political system and, thus, may be more invested in the implications of race-conscious and race-blind policies in their lives. In contrast, those who have resided in the U.S. for less time, may not feel the same level of interest or concern for such issues. Thus, they may express weaker levels of support simply because they do not perceive these issues as personally relevant, or they are evaluating these issues primarily in reference to their political situation at home where a welfare state or social programs are not prevalent or popular.

[20] The origins variable represents a dummy variable in the analyses performed.
[21] The wording of the common fate measure was "Do you think what happens generally to black people in this country will have something to do with what happens in your life?" The variable was a four-category measure with the following responses: 4) a lot 3) some 2) not much 1) none. The common fate variable was recoded as a 0 to 1 variable for the purposes of this analysis.

Citizenship

Citizenship also represents a measure of interest in the political system. One might expect that black Caribbean citizens may distinguish themselves from non-citizens by exhibiting stronger opinions than non-citizens because they view these issues as having a more direct impact on their opportunities and status as members of U.S. society.

Caribbean origins

The black Caribbean sample of the NSAL includes respondents from the English-speaking and French-speaking countries of the Caribbean. Although an analysis by ethnic origin groups would be ideal, there is some difficulty in obtaining stable coefficients when the black Caribbean group is disaggregated by country of origin. To address the problem of sample size, potential differences among black Caribbeans by origin are distinguished along the lines of history and colonization. Thus, black Caribbeans from English-speaking islands who share more similar histories of colonization and independence are compared with black Caribbeans defined as French in origin.

Control Variables

The control variables included in the models of policy support are age, income, education, and gender. I examine whether age differences result in varying support for these issues, such as whether younger blacks who are part of the post-civil rights era are less supportive of these reform issues compared to older blacks who were socialized during the civil rights movement. Gender allows me to account for differences in perspectives among men and women on policy issues.

I draw upon income and education variables to assess the relationship between socio-economic status and policy attitudes. Typically, it has been argued that greater

social mobility within the black community may weaken support for race and economic reform. Scholarship in the black politics literature, however, finds the opposite to be the case among blacks (Tate, 1993; Dawson, 1994). I examine whether social mobility is connected to more liberal attitudes among blacks with respect to economic and racial policies.

Black American and Black Caribbean Support for Race-Conscious Policy

An index variable of the three race-conscious policy measures (reparation, government assistance to blacks and redistricting to increase minority officials) was created to examine support for race-conscious policy among black Americans and black Caribbeans.[22] In the following section, I discuss the findings for the separate models of policy support for each group as well as the pooled model of policy support among black Americans and black Caribbeans.

Table 6.2 is a pooled model (all groups) of policy support which indicates that American and Caribbean origins do not distinguish the support for race-conscious policies among first-generation black Caribbeans and second-generation black Caribbeans and black Americans. The non-significant origins variable indicates we can expect no differences in mean support for race-conscious policies when black Americans and black Caribbeans are compared with one another. However, the models indicate that different factors explain support for race-conscious policies when the separate models are run for each group. In Table 6.3, the black American model of policy support reflects a positive and highly significant relationship between support for race-conscious policies

[22] The reliability coefficient for the three race policy measures was .71. The variables were recoded to 0,1 variables to create the index.

and strong perceptions of common fate. Age is also positively associated with support for this type of policy.

When the black American model of policy support is compared with the model of support among first-generation black Caribbeans, the models reveal different factors that influence support for race-conscious policies for each group. The model of support in Table 6.4 indicates that first-generation black Caribbeans with higher levels of education express weaker levels of support for race-conscious policies. Unlike black Americans, common fate perceptions do not influence support for race-conscious policy among first-generation black Caribbeans. Furthermore, the factors connected to migration in the model, (i.e., length of residence, citizenship status and Caribbean origin) are not related to policy support for this group. Consequently, understanding perceptions of support for race-conscious policy within this group is primarily a story about individual socio-economic status.

Multivariate analysis of the index of race-conscious policy indicates that differences in birthplace and origins do not distinguish black Caribbean and black American support of explicit racial policies designed to improve the lives of blacks or minorities on the whole. The models of support for race-conscious policy indicate that when it comes to issues of racial policy, black Americans and black Caribbeans express shared political interest through common support for these issues. However, when the factors that shape policy support for each group are examined, the explanations for black Americans are related to group identity, or common fate. Common fate perceptions were a significant predictor of support for race-conscious policy among black Americans, but, did not appear to influence the attitudes of first-generation black Caribbeans. In contrast

to black Americans, we can expect to see a decline in support for these issues among black Caribbeans with higher social status. The first-generation members of the black Caribbean community, with higher socio-economic status are more reluctant to support these issues perhaps because they perceive that their own status in life belies the necessity for such policies. It is also possible that this group believes that policies other than racially-targeted ones are equally effective, or perhaps, more effective in eradicating racial inequality.

The models of race-conscious policy do not reflect significant differences in black American and black Caribbean support on race-conscious measures. The next section, however, examines the differences that emerge between the two groups regarding support for race-blind measures of economic redistribution.

Black American and Black Caribbean Support for Race-Blind Policy Measures

Similar to my previous analyses that examined support for race-conscious policy among black Americans and black Caribbeans, I utilize a race-blind policy index to examine black American and black Caribbean support for issues that focus on the redistribution of economic resources among groups generally, and that are not directed specifically at blacks or minorities.[23] I created the index using a measure of support for government jobs and a measure of support for higher taxes for the wealthy (see appendix for wording of the questions).

The pooled model of race-blind policy support in Table 6.5 reveals that the origins variable had an independent effect on support for race-blind policy (F=6.02). Specifically, first-generation black Caribbeans had a lower mean response on the index of support for race-blind policy relative to black Americans. Among the control variables in

[23] The reliability coefficient for the race-blind policy index was .32.

the model, age was positively related to support for race-blind measures. In contrast, however, income and education were associated with weaker levels of support for race-blind policy measures. Furthermore, those with high perceptions of common fate had a higher mean of support on the index. This significant common fate coefficient indicates that although they are not framed to help specific groups, support for some race-blind policies are influenced by racial group concerns among blacks. Consequently, some blacks view the implications of economic redistributive policies in terms of their implications for them not only as individuals but, also in terms of their implications for the broader black community as a whole. Thus, group interests color not only support for policies targeted specifically to help blacks and minorities, they also increase support for policy designed to improve the lives of a broad cross section of groups in society among blacks.

To further examine how origins distinguish the perspectives of black Americans and black Caribbeans, separate models of support for race-blind policy were conducted for black Americans and first-generation black Caribbeans (See Table 6.6 and Table 6.7). Similar to my results for the model for race-conscious policy, I observed a positive and significant relationship between age and common fate perceptions within the black American sample. However, I also observe a negative relationship between education and income and mean support for race-blind policy. While group concerns increase the likelihood of support for race-blind policies among black Americans, weakened levels of support are associated with greater education and income among black Americans. Although this particular result might be considered surprising, the lack of support for race-blind policies among wealthier and more educated black Americans possibly reflects

the disillusionment regularly expressed by successful black Americans who perceive that their achievements do not buffer them from the deleterious effects of racial discrimination. (Cose, 1993; Hochschild, 1995). While social mobility has been associated with the weakening of group ties and group identity for social groups in U.S. society (Dahl, 1961; Gordon, 1964), this has not been the pattern for black Americans, as scholars have found that strong attachments to racial group identity persist for this group (Dawson, 1994). The weak support for race-blind policies among the black American middle class may be connected to a lack of faith, perhaps even disdain, for the idea that race-neutral approaches to improving the opportunities of the disadvantaged in society (rather than specifically targeted approaches based on specific group memberships or social categories) are effective at eradicating inequality in the United States.

The model of race-blind policy support among first-generation black Caribbeans reveals that those with greater wealth and education express weaker support for race-blind policy. Similar to the race-conscious policy model, socio-economic indicators also have an important influence on first-generation black Caribbean views on these issues. Additionally, the model for first-generation black Caribbeans indicates there is no relationship between migration-related variables and support for race-blind policies among first-generation black Caribbeans. Furthermore, common fate perceptions do not influence support for these policies among the first-generation.

While income and education appear to be negatively related to support for race-blind policies for both black Americans and black Caribbeans, the significance of socio-economic status may function differently for each group when it comes to understanding their influence on support for race-blind policies. While African Americans with higher

education and income may perceive that race-conscious policies are more effective, black Caribbean immigrants of similar socio-economic status may view that their achievements challenge the necessity of economically redistributive policies. This may be reinforced by their immigrant perspective or through experiences in their nations of origin in the Caribbean where programs that emphasize economic redistribution do not exist or enjoy widespread political support. Thus, black Caribbeans with higher socio-economic status do not necessarily view that race-blind measures help those in need of assistance, rather, they may view them as unnecessary assistance to those who fail to take advantage of existing opportunities. In this vein, economic inequality is not viewed as the outcome of systemic inequities, but instead, is viewed as an outcome of individual shortcomings.

Summary

Drawing upon existing theories of black American public opinion in the politics literature, I examined their relevance for explaining public opinion among black immigrants. Thus, this chapter explored the influence of common fate perceptions on policy views among black Americans and black Caribbeans. My discussion also explored the relevance of migration-related factors such as length of residence, citizenship, and Caribbean origins and how they influence public opinion within the black Caribbean community.

The models of policy support highlight that there are no differences among black Americans and black Caribbeans related to issues that appear to directly impact the black community. The support for racial reform among black Americans and black Caribbeans captures pan-black racial solidarity within the public opinion of these two communities. Pan-black racial solidarity captures a willingness to support matters of shared interest between black Americans and black Caribbeans. Further, pan-black racial solidarity is founded in shared recognition among black Americans and black Caribbeans that discrimination similarly impacts their lives. Thus, race-conscious policy measures are viewed as solutions that alleviate the inequality black Americans and black Caribbeans associate with racial discrimination. In the case of black Americans, however, common fate is a significant predictor of support for both race-conscious policy and race-blind policy, while common fate is not related to policy support among first-generation black Caribbeans. Furthermore, when you look within the black Caribbean community, migration-related variables do not appear to influence the attitudes of first-generation

black Caribbeans on race-conscious policy or race-blind policy. Rather, based on the models, it appears as though individual status, or self-interest drives support for race-conscious policy and race-blind policy for this group.

First-generation black Caribbeans differ in their support from black Americans on economic reform policies because they make distinctions between the roots of racial inequality and economic inequality in a way that black Americans do not. The literature offers multiple examples of how black American perceptions between social status and economic status are inextricably linked together (Dawson, 1994). First-generation black Caribbean support for racial reform may be connected to a belief that racial inequality is the outcome of structural barriers (i.e., racial discrimination) that prohibit blacks from competing with other groups at the same level in society, while the economic inequalities are viewed as more directly related to individual initiative and effort rather than societal barriers. Consequently, first-generation black Caribbeans are significantly less likely to be supportive of issues that redistribute economic resources relative to black Americans. Although the literature has posited that blacks perceive a connection between their economic well-being and the overall status of the group in society (Dawson, 1994), it appears as though this is not a factor in how foreign-born blacks evaluate economic policies. Thus, the differences between black Americans and black Caribbeans over race-blind policies are connected to how black Americans make sense of race-blind policy through a racialized lens, while black Caribbeans make sense of these policies in more individualistic terms.

Support for race-conscious policy among black Caribbeans and black Americans demonstrate how concerns about racial inequality represent a common problem facing

blacks that require broad support and common action for both groups. Strong perceptions of common fate were positively related to support for issues that are viewed as having a significant impact on reducing the racial disparities that exist between blacks and other groups in society. Black Americans and black Caribbeans similarly support issues that are perceived as affecting the black community broadly.

Although a majority of black Caribbeans support measures that address both racial and economic inequality, first-generation black Caribbeans are less supportive of issues that they perceive can be addressed by individual action rather than government intervention. Specifically, first-generation black Caribbeans' differences from black Americans on race-blind policies capture how divergent interests, or issues that do not seem to directly relate to racial inequality, reveal the limits of pan-black racial solidarity. Further, they highlight the complexity of perspectives within the black Caribbean community, specifically with respect to the first-generation. The story here for black Caribbeans appears to be one about socio-economic status, while group interest appears to play an important role for black Americans. Consequently, when policy issues are viewed through a lens other than race, we may expect to see less political unity in the opinions of black Americans and first-generation black Caribbeans.

Table 6.1 Percent Distribution of Support for Race-Conscious Policy and Race-Blind Policy among Black Americans and Black Caribbeans

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Government Should Help Blacks				
Origins				
black American	48%	40%	9%	3%
Foreign-born black Caribbean (first-generation)	49%	36%	13%	15%
U.S. born black Caribbean (second-generation)	48%	47%	3%	2%
Government Should Pay Back blacks for Slavery				
Origins				
black American	46%	30%	16%	8%
Foreign-born black Caribbean (first-generation)	42%	31%	16%	12%
U.S. born black Caribbean (second-generation)	42%	30%	19%	8%
Need Political Districts to Elect Minorities				
Origins				
black American	27%	48%	17%	8%
Foreign-born black Caribbean (first-generation)	23%	45%	21%	11%
U.S. born black Caribbean (second-generation)	29%	46%	11%	14%
Government should provide jobs for all				
	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Origins				
black American	48%	31%	14%	6%
Foreign-born black Caribbean (first-generation)	34%	27%	21%	18%
U.S. born black Caribbean (second-generation)	43%	37%	14%	6%
People with higher incomes should pay more taxes				
	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Origins				
black American	43%	28%	19%	10%
Foreign-born black Caribbean (first-generation)	34%	32%	19%	15%
U.S. born black Caribbean (second-generation)	37%	43%	14%	6%

Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

Table 6.2 Model of Support for Race-Conscious Policy among Black Americans and Black Caribbeans

	All Groups	
	b	s.e.
Age	.225*	.097
Income	-.533~	.299
Education	-.036	.115
Gender (female)	.009	.036
Common Fate	.198***	.044
First Generation	-.055	.071
Second Generation	.035	.092
Constant	2.00	.101
	N=2490	
	R^2= .02	

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 6.3 Model of Support for Race-Conscious Policy among Black Americans

	b	s.e.
Age	.224*	.101
Income	-.614~	.322
Education	.033	.123
Gender (female)	.008	.038
Common Fate	.191***	.046
Constant	1.96	.106
	N=2001	
	R^2=.02	

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 6.4 Model of Support for Race-Conscious Policy among First-Generation Black Caribbeans

	First Generation Caribbean	
	b	s.e.
Age	.162	.458
Income	1.01	.770
Education	-.794*	.360
Gender (female)	.087	.132
Common Fate	.168	.137
Citizenship	-.090	.139
Length of US Residence	-.481	.417
Caribbean origins (English Caribbean)	-.013	.145
Constant	2.55	.322
	N= 330	
	R^2= .11	

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 6.5 Model of Support for Race-Blind Policy among Black Americans and Black Caribbeans

	All Groups	
	b	s.e.
Age	.165*	.070
Income	-.694*	.309
Education	.261**	.074
Gender (female)	.010	.028
Common Fate	.074*	.031
First Generation	-.190**	.055
Second Generation	.037	.069
Constant	1.53	.067
	N=2522	
	R^2=.03	

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 6.6 Model of Support for Race-Blind Policy among Black Americans

	b	s.e.
Age	.183*	.071
Income	-.663*	.319
Education	-.206*	.079
Gender (female)	.010	.028
Common Fate	.075*	.032
Constant	1.48	.065
	N=1979	
	R^2=.02	

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 6.7 Model of Support for Race-Blind Policy among First-Generation Black Caribbeans

	First Generation Caribbean	
	b	s.e.
Age	-.459	.392
Income	-1.37*	.628
Education	-.933***	.200
Gender (female)	.095	.126
Common Fate	.127	.091
Citizenship	-.124	.102
Length of US Residence	.248	.401
Caribbean origins (English Caribbean)	-.066	.094
Constant	2.35	.231
	N=335	
	R^2=.18	

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Appendix

Chapter 6: Question Wording

Race-conscious Policy Index (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree)

1. The government should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks living in the United States.

2. The government should give reparations to black Americans for historical injustices and slavery.

3. Political districts need to be formed so that more racial minority candidates can be elected.

Race-blind Policy Index (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree)

1. Government should provide jobs to everyone who wants one.

2. The rich should pay more taxes than the poor.

Chapter 7

Political Participation among Black Americans and Black Caribbeans

Chapters 2 through 5 explore the political incorporation of black Americans and black Caribbeans through expressions of shared racial identification. In this final chapter of the dissertation, however, my discussion turns to another aspect of political incorporation: political participation. Political participation represents the primary path through which individuals seek to express their interests and have them represented in the political system, and the literature in political science offers multiple explanations of how individuals and groups become politically involved.

In political science, scholars have argued that group resources among blacks significantly influence their levels of political participation (Gurin, Hatchett and Jackson, 1989; Harris, 1999; Dawson, 1994; Tate, 1993). However, more traditional theories of participation emphasize individual-level factors such as socio-economic resources as primary predictors of participation (Brady et al., 1995). Finally, the immigration politics literature argues that our analyses of immigrant incorporation must account for the ways that migration-related factors such as length of residence, citizenship, and generation status impact the opportunities for political involvement within immigrant communities.

With respect to participation, the literature suggests that there are multiple paths to political inclusion for black Caribbeans. In this chapter, I examine the relationship between racial group identification and black American and black Caribbean political participation. Among first-generation black Caribbeans, I also examine whether migration-related variables are predictors of their political involvement. I assess whether this aspect of political incorporation reflects any of the paths outlined in the literature: 1) mainstream politics, 2) racial politics, or 3) immigrant (ethnic) politics.

The Relevance of Individual Resources for Participation among Black Americans

Socioeconomic status is considered a central explanatory variable of political behavior in the United States (Verba and Nie, 1972; Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980; Rosenstone and Hansen, 1993). Historically, the relationship between socio-economic resources and participation for black Americans did not operate as it did for whites largely due to the systemic barriers to participation experienced by this group in the U.S. (Walton, 1985). However, with the passage of voting rights legislation and the "institutionalization" of black politics (Tate, 1993), scholars argue that socio-economic status has become a significant predictor of individual-level patterns of participation among black Americans.

According to Brady et al. (1995), socio-economic indicators like education and income influence resources such as "money," "time," and "skills" that facilitate participation among individuals. More recent scholarship on black political participation in the post-civil rights era argues that black Americans with greater wealth incomes and greater educational attainment are more likely to be politically engaged, politically involved, and, further, are more likely to have their interests represented than their

working-class and poor black American counterparts (Verba and Nie, 1972; Dawson and Cohen 1993; Tate, 1993; Dawson, 1994; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995; Harris, 1998).

While individual-level resources increase the likelihood of being politically involved, scholars have also found that institutional resources also have been found to facilitate participation among Blacks and other groups alike. Thus, affiliation with religious institutions has been found to play a significant role as sites where individuals can learn important civic skills and be exposed to political messages (Brady et al., 1995, 384).

On one hand, participation in religious institutions represents a context where individuals can develop skills and networks that may easily translate to the political arena (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995). According to Harris (1994), religion represents, "a political resource that offers motivation, organization, and social interaction." Conversely, religiosity can also have a demobilizing impact on political participation depending on church denomination and the amount of time individuals devote to involvement in religious institutions. Thus, the mobilization and demobilization of political engagement among Blacks depends on the type of political activity we examine.

Church attendance has also been found to have implications for the political incorporation of immigrants similar to those of the American electorate. However, the relationships between religiosity and participation that have been explored within the scholarship for black Americans have not been examined within black Caribbean communities. Specifically, the Black Church is an institution that has figured prominently as central to the development of political skills and the politicized orientations that have mobilized black American political participation in the United States. In his research on

black Caribbean political activity in the United States in the early twentieth century, Winston James (1999) finds that the Black Church did hold the attention of black Caribbean immigrants the way it did black Americans. Thus, the Black Church remains a unique historical and contemporary relic of the Black American political mobilization, yet religious institutions represent an institutional resource for immigrant groups that potentially increase possibilities of participation.

Group Resources, Individual Discrimination, and Black Participation

Scholars of black politics argue that individual-level factors such as socio-economic status do not fully explain black political incorporation in the U.S., but, rather, that group resources within the black American community have been central to black American political activity in the U.S. For example, some argue that indigenous group resources (i.e., black organizations and racial group identification) have been crucial to the black American political struggle for racial equality in the U.S. (Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson, 1989; Harris, 1994, 1999; Tate, 1993) and historically have played a crucial role in mobilizing participation among blacks (McAdam, 1984).

When we evaluate claims about the importance of group resources in the context of the growing black ethnic diversity, an important question is whether the relationships between group resources and participation that have been identified in the literature for black Americans also explain participation among black immigrants living in the U.S. Walton (1985) argues that political involvement of black Americans is rooted in "the black experience in America." He further argues that "to fully understand black political behavior, one must know the context from which it sprang and the factors that influenced and nurtured that context" (8). In his comment, Walton (1985) posits that the unique

historical and political contexts of exclusion faced by black Americans in the U.S. is a central part of the narrative that links racial identity and the political participation in a way that distinguishes explanations of their political participation from other groups.

There are a number of ways to interpret Walton's statement in connection with the political incorporation of black Caribbeans in the U.S. One interpretation is that current narratives about the relationship between racial group identification and black political activity do not explain participation for black Caribbeans because they have not experienced what black Americans have historically experienced as members of U.S. society. However, Walton's comment could also mean that the black experience encompasses the experiences of black Caribbeans and others defined as black in the U.S. who suffer racial discrimination similar to black Americans as members of U.S. society. Consequently, the link between group identity and political participation for blacks is connected to experiences of racial exclusion shared by a broader group of blacks in the U.S. in addition to black Americans.

As a group resource among blacks, racial group identification has been found to directly influence political activity among black Americans. Shingles (1981) found that political mistrust among blacks was positively related to rates of black participation while Verba and Nie (1972) found a positive relationship between the number of times blacks talked about race and their levels of political activity.

In her analysis of black participation in the post-civil rights era, Katherine Tate (1993) describes racial group identification as a "soft" or "alternative" political resource compared to other "hard" resources such as black organizations and the church (90-91). While group identification may have particular relevance for black Americans, as a

predominantly immigrant group, black Caribbeans may not share the common networks and institutions or "hard" resources that have traditionally shaped and maintained racialized perspectives that mobilized participation among black Americans. Thus, how we define group resources and their impact on political participation among blacks may look somewhat different for the black Caribbean community. The issue remains: what, if any, factors represent shared group resources with black Americans that may help us understand black Caribbeans' political activity as members of U.S. society?

Although black Caribbeans may not be fully entrenched within the indigenous networks and institutions that have been found to influence participation among black Americans (Harris, 1999), indicators of shared racial group identification, such as perceptions of common fate, represent a group resource that they have in common with other blacks. As a psychological group resource, common fate perceptions cut across existing social distinctions among black Americans and black Caribbeans (Dawson, 1994). Consequently, concerns about discrimination may work to mobilize political activity among immigrant blacks similar to black Americans.

In addition to common fate perceptions, individual experiences with discrimination are also relevant for examining participation among black Caribbeans. Although common fate perceptions appear to tap into individual concerns about group discrimination among blacks, conceptually, this may not be the same as experiencing racial discrimination at the individual level (Schildkraut, 2004). Rather, personal experiences of discrimination can potentially have a direct and independent effect on participation. Consequently, experiences of racial discrimination may be a catalyst for some blacks to become active in the political process as a way to protect their rights and interests as members of U.S.

society. However, individual experiences of racial discrimination may also negatively impact participation among some blacks because they may reinforce a sense of alienation from the political system (Lien, 2004).

Resource models and group interest models highlight that identity as well as structural factors play a central role in determining who participates and who does not within the American electorate. However, the significance of individual and group resources has not been distinguished for black immigrants within models of black participation in the literature. Further, the significance of these variables has not been examined in connection with variables directly related to the immigrant experience.

A common argument within the contemporary scholarship on immigrant political participation is that traditional theories of participation that draw primarily from the experiences of U.S-born groups do not adequately explain patterns of participation within immigrant communities. Scholars of immigrant politics argue that resource-based theories and group interest theories do not sufficiently explain political activity within immigrant communities because they exclude factors unique to the immigrant experience. The argument in the literature is that the migration factors that are regularly incorporated into analyses of immigrant incorporation ought to be included within analyses of political participation of immigrant communities as well. Thus, the variables currently missing from current explanations of black Caribbean participation in the U.S., such as impact of length of U.S. residence, citizenship, and generation status and their relevance for participation, are discussed below.

Length of Residence, Citizenship, Generation Status and Black Incorporation

Scholars of Asian-American and Latino political participation highlight the centrality of migration factors such as length of residence and citizenship for explaining political involvement among immigrants (Cain et al., 1989; DeSipio, 1996; Lien, 2004; Ramakrishnan, 2005; 2006; Wong, 2005). In their research on Asian-American political participation, Lien et al. (2004) argue that political activity within the Asian-American community is positively related to the amount of time spent in the United States. This pattern has also been found among Latino immigrants as well. Drawing upon his research on Latino immigrant incorporation in New York City, Jones-Correa (1998) argues that length of residence provides much greater insight about immigrant involvement in formal politics than socioeconomic status. Jones-Correa's claims emphasize that individual factors (i.e., citizenship, English language proficiency, and familiarity with the U.S. political system) determine how and when immigrants participate in formal politics in U.S. society. As a measure of acculturation, length of residence is the most important predictor of naturalization among immigrants. Furthermore, length of U.S. residence is connected to the acquisition of networks, skills, and knowledge that facilitate participation among immigrants in the U.S. which, in turn, impacts their opportunities for participation in formal politics in the U.S. (Cho, 1999; DeSipio 2006).

Like other political acts, the process of obtaining citizenship reflects a distinct claim for full inclusion into the wider U.S. society. Some scholars argue that the choice to naturalize reflects pragmatic decision-making on the part of immigrants (Lien et al., 2004), because obtaining citizenship increases access to a wider range of political activities, particularly voting. However, for others it defines the terms of inclusion (or exclusion) for an individual act that many believe represents one of the few opportunities

to express their political preferences as members of society. Thus, length of U.S. residence may be associated with greater familiarity with the U.S. political system and the eradication of individual barriers to participation within the black Caribbean community.

Figure 7.1 reflects the association between length of residence and political activity among first-generation black Caribbeans in the NSAL data. Among the various types of participation, the graph reflects that black Caribbeans with the longest period of U.S. residence have higher rates of involvement; however, the magnitude of differences in involvement varies by activity. The differences in participation by length of residence are significant for party work (F=4.62) and membership in black organizations (F=7.15). The test of association for neighborhood involvement is marginally significant (F=3.39). This pattern is not replicated when black Caribbean U.S. citizens are compared to black Caribbean non-citizens.

Among black Caribbean citizens and non-citizens, the differences in rates of involvement in electoral activities and non-electoral activities are reflected in Figure 7.2. One might expect that citizens would have much higher levels of political involvement compared to non-citizens; however, the difference in rates of activity are not statistically significant. The largest gap in participation between black Caribbean citizens and black Caribbean non-citizens pertains to activities that involve voting because of citizenship requirements. Although black Caribbean non-citizens do not hold the voting privileges of black Caribbean U.S. citizens, their patterns of involvement in non-voting activities reflect that they are politically active members of U.S. society.

The trends in participation among black Caribbeans found within the NSAL data, support the argument in the literature that a comprehensive assessment of political participation within immigration communities should incorporate analysis of other forms of political activity beyond voting (Jones-Correa, 1998; Cho, 1999; Junn, 1999). While citizenship status impacts some forms of electoral participation (i.e., voting) among black Caribbean immigrants, it may not be an important predictor of other forms of activity (e.g., contacting local officials, participating in protests or being active in local community groups and associations, etc.). The data suggest instead that the ability to draw conclusions about black Caribbean political incorporation (with respect to participation) will be influenced by the particular act examined. Consequently, if we look only at electoral behavior among black Americans and black Caribbeans as the primary basis for comparison of political involvement between the two groups, we run the risk of underestimating political activity for both groups, particularly black Caribbeans. Rather, the kinds of participation in which these groups are engaged will significantly influence what conclusions can be drawn from comparisons of the activities of black Caribbeans and black Americans.

The immigration politics literature emphasizes the importance of incorporating migration-related variables within models of black participation which appear to be associated with participatory activity among black Caribbean immigrants in the U.S. Thus, length of residence, citizenship, as well as generation status, are factors that must be accounted for within analyses of black Caribbean political activity. They not only offer possible explanations about differences in black Caribbean participation and black American participation, but, they also help us understand the factors that influence

differences in political activity within the black Caribbean community beyond traditional explanations in the politics literature.

Generation Status

In previous chapters, generation status was highlighted as a significant indicator of political incorporation among black Caribbeans. The second-generation have a distinct advantage over the first-generation as U.S. citizens because they do not face the barriers to participation often confronted by the first-generation (e.g. citizenship requirements, familiarity with the political system, mobilization, etc.). Thus, the constraints associated with immigrant background are less relevant for explaining participation in this group.

In contrast to the first-generation, participation among the second-generation is likely to be mainly related to their interests as members of U.S. society. The concerns about racial group status and opportunity expressed by the second-generation black Caribbeans earlier in the dissertation project provide one example of how the second-generation are strongly invested in what happens to them as members of U.S. society. Thus, the advantages the second-generation enjoy as citizens facilitate the opportunity to be more politically involved than the first-generation.

Furthermore, because second-generation black Caribbeans are socialized within the U.S. political system, many face fewer barriers to political involvement unlike the first-generation that must learn to navigate a new political system and its distinct rules. Furthermore, many first-generation immigrants must overcome the psychological hurdle of cultivating an interest in U.S. politics because allegiances to their countries of origin can limit, and possibly demobilize interest in becoming politically active in their host society (Desipio, 2006; Mollenkopf, et al., 2006).

With respect to black Caribbean participation, Ramakrishnan's (2005) multi-group analyses of political activity among immigrants in the U.S. highlights that when you compare participation among first-generation, second-generation, and third-generation immigrant generations, black immigrant participation is more likely to reflect a step-wise pattern. Thus, as you move beyond the first-generation, one would expect to see group political activity increase in a linear fashion. Based on the advantages of U.S. citizenship, we can expect that second-generation black Caribbeans will exhibit higher rates of political activity relative to first-generation black Caribbeans.

The step-wise pattern, Ramakrishan (2005) argues, that characterizes the participation trajectory of black immigrants, differs from the patterns found among Latino and Asian immigrants whose rates of involvement are non-linear. The pattern also suggests that more traditional models of participation typically associated with European immigrant groups and U.S. born groups will be useful for understanding the political incorporation path of black Caribbeans, overall, relative to other immigrant groups. Consequently, generational differences within the black Caribbean community indicate that migration-related variables are more relevant for explaining the political incorporation path of the first-generation rather than the second-generation and further, we can expect this variable will distinguish patterns of activity within the black Caribbean community.

Migration-related variables appear to be associated with levels of participation among black Caribbean immigrants in the U.S. Length of residence, generation status, and citizenship are migration-related variables that must be accounted for within explanations of black Caribbean political activity. They not only distinguish the

participation of this group from black Americans, but they also help us understand the source of differences in activity within the group itself beyond traditional explanations in the politics literature.

The following section explores bivariate relationships between origins and patterns of participation among black Americans and black Caribbeans. Similar to the analyses discussed earlier in the chapter among black Caribbean citizens and non-citizens, I address patterns of electoral and non-electoral participation for each group.

Electoral and Non-Electoral Participation among Black Americans and Black Caribbeans

Figure 7.3 shows the distribution of black Caribbean and black American NSAL respondents with respect to electoral activities which include voting in the 2000 election, voting in state and local elections, and involvement in party or campaign work. A comparison of black Caribbean and black American responses reveals that for both voting measures, black American respondents report the highest levels of participation. With respect to voting in the 2000 election, the distribution of responses for black Caribbeans is surprising when first-generation black Caribbeans and second-generation black Caribbeans are compared with each other. Among black Caribbeans, a larger percentage of the first-generation respondents claimed to have voted in the election than the second-generation black Caribbean NSAL respondents, who have the lowest levels of voting activity at 49%. The chi-squared test of association is significant for the vote in 2000 (F=4.38). With respect to participation in state and local elections the distribution flips among black Caribbeans, and you have a slightly higher percentage of second-generation black Caribbeans than first-generation black Caribbeans reporting involvement in this type of activity. The difference between the groups is also statistically

significant (F=5.69). While party and campaign involvement also show black Americans exhibit higher rates of participation in comparison to black Caribbeans, the difference is not statistically significant (F=2.76).

Figure 7.4 reflects the distribution of black American and black Caribbean participation in non-electoral activities including: 1) contacting an official about a problem; 2) participation in neighborhood groups; and 3) involvement in black organizations. The patterns of activity for these measures of non-electoral participation reveal that the participation gap between black Americans and black Caribbeans significantly diminishes. Furthermore, none of the differences in participation rates for black Americans and black Caribbeans in relation to these activities are statistically significant. Figures 7.3 and 7.4 reflect that black Americans exhibit higher levels of participation than black Caribbeans overall; however, the data also show that the differences in activity between black Caribbean and black Americans are not as great as they appear once non-electoral activities are included in the analysis.

The NSAL data do not support the idea of a second-generation advantage when it comes to participation. Overall, second-generation black Caribbeans, exhibit the lowest levels of participation across the various types of activities when compared to black Americans and first-generation black Caribbeans. One explanation for the participation gap of the second-generation is their youth. Relative to the average age of black Americans and black Caribbeans, the second-generation tend to be a much younger group. The mean age of second-generation Caribbean respondents was 33 years compared to 42 years for black Caribbeans and black Americans. Since older citizens have been found to have higher levels of political knowledge and interest (Rosenstone

and Hansen, 1993), youth is often negatively associated with political activity. The second-generation appear to be following the trends of other young Americans by being less politically active than first-generation black Caribbeans and black Americans (which on average represent an older group).

The bivariate tables reveal interesting and unexpected patterns when the political activity of black Caribbeans and black Americans are compared. The descriptive data contradict the idea of a second-generation advantage in connection with U.S. born background and citizenship, and further challenge the idea of a participation gap between black Americans and black Caribbeans when non-electoral activities are included. With respect to first-generation black Caribbeans, the data illustrate the importance of looking at multiple forms of participation, rather than relying primarily on voting (or electoral behavior alone) to assess political incorporation among blacks.

Building upon the patterns observed from the descriptive analyses of electoral and non-electoral participation among black Americans and black Caribbeans, in the next section of the chapter I rely upon multivariate models to further examine black political participation. The politics literature argues that group identity and socio-economic resources explain participation among blacks; however, scholars of immigration politics also claim that migration-related variables matter to predicting participation within immigrant groups. I draw upon these theories to examine how resources, group identity, and migration-related factors impact black political participation.

Predictors of Participation among Black Caribbeans and Black Americans

Similar to the multivariate analyses conducted in Chapter 6, a pooled model of black American and black Caribbean participation was run as well as two models that

examine black American and first-generation black Caribbean participation separately. All of the models examine the independent influence of socio-economic status, origins, common fate and church attendance as well as control for age, gender, and employment status. In addition, the first-generation black Caribbean model accounts for the impact of migration-related factors, including length of residence, citizenship, and Caribbean origins.[24]

The dependent variables of interest in this discussion include an index of electoral participation, an index of non-electoral participation, and a measure of involvement in black organizations. I used the two voting measures previously discussed in the chapter as well as the measure of party/campaign involvement to create the electoral participation index.[25] The non-electoral participation index was comprised of two measures that ask NSAL respondents about their involvement in neighborhood groups and their willingness to contact government about problems.

The following section addresses my findings from multivariate analyses of electoral participation among black Americans and black Caribbeans and is followed by a discussion of the results from my analysis of non-electoral participation for both groups.

Electoral Participation among Black Americans and Black Caribbeans

Table 7.1 shows the pooled model of electoral participation among black Americans and black Caribbeans (i.e., all groups). The model indicates that there are differences in electoral participation among black Americans and first-generation black Caribbeans. Specifically, the model shows that first-generation black Caribbeans have a significantly lower participation mean for the electoral index relative to black Americans

[24] Separate models of participation were not run for second-generation black Caribbeans due to small sample size and concerns about the stability of the coefficients.
[25] The specific questions used in the indices are included in the appendix.

which is indicative of a participation gap between the two groups. There are no differences, however, between second-generation black Caribbeans and black Americans on the index. The pooled model reflects that church attendance, income, age, and education all had an independent effect on electoral participation. The coefficient for common fate, however, was not significant in the models.

When separate models of electoral participation were run for black Americans and first-generation black Caribbeans, they reveal that different factors explain participation for each group. The models of electoral participation highlight that socio-economic indicators and participation in religious institutions positively influence participation among black Americans. The black American model of electoral participation in Table 7.2 reveals that church attendance, age, income, and education were associated with a higher participation mean on the index. The coefficient for common fate, however, was non-significant in the model.

Relative to black Americans, the factors shaping black Caribbean electoral participation were impacted by factors associated with acculturation to the U.S. political system over time. The model of electoral participation in Table 7.3 shows that older black Caribbeans and black Caribbeans with the longest periods of U.S. residency have higher rates of electoral participation. [26] As proxies for political socialization and exposure to the U.S. political system, age and length of U.S. residence facilitate the acquisition of skills, knowledge, and networks that influence black Caribbean electoral participation. Church attendance and common fate, however, do not influence the electoral activities of this group.

[26] Because of the voting measures included in the index, analysis of the electoral participation index was restricted to first-generation black Caribbeans with U.S. citizenship.

Factors shaping electoral participation among black Americans fit with resource based theories while the factors that impact black Caribbeans are linked to experiences of acculturation over time and indicate that migration-related factors matter for the latter group. The models also indicate that, overall, racial group identification does not influence electoral participation for either group. In the following section, I examine whether these factors offer similar explanations of non-electoral participation for black Americans and black Caribbeans.

Non-Electoral Participation among Black Americans and Black Caribbeans

Using multivariate analysis of a non-electoral participation index and a separate model of black organization involvement, I examine non-electoral activity among black Americans and black Caribbeans.[27] Using a pooled model of non-electoral activity as well as separate models of black Americans and first-generation black Caribbeans, I discuss my findings below.

The pooled model of the non-electoral participation index in table 7.4 shows that age and education have a positive and highly significant relationship with involvement in non-electoral activities. The model also highlights that those with higher perceptions of common fate perceptions as well as those with high levels of church attendance also have a higher mean on the non-electoral participation index as well. Unlike the results of the pooled model of electoral participation, the origins coefficient for the non-electoral index was non-significant in the model, indicating that there were no in differences black Americans and black Caribbeans' mean levels of participation.

[27] I created an index from a variable that asks participants about involvement in neighborhood groups and another variable that asks respondents if they had ever contacted a local government official about a problem. The reliability coefficient for the index was .32

The results of the pooled model of black organization participation in Table 7.5 also indicate that age, education, church attendance, and common fate are associated with a higher participation mean on the index. Similar to my findings for the pooled model of the non-electoral participation index discussed above, the model of black organization involvement indicates that there are no differences between black Americans and black Caribbeans with respect to their involvement in this type of organization. This finding supports arguments in the literature that immigrants are involved in other forms of participation other than electoral activity to advance their interests as members of U.S. society.

The individual model of non-electoral participation among black Americans shows that age, education, common fate, and church attendance are related to higher rates of activity among black Americans (see Table 7.6). The relationship between these variables and black organization involvement (see Table 7.7) also holds up as well which support explanations in the literature that the political activity of black Americans are influenced by socio-economic and institutional resources as well as group identity.

Among first-generation black Caribbeans, the model of first-generation black Caribbean non-electoral activity in Table 7.8 indicates that individual and institutional resources matter. Thus, age, income, and education are positively related to non-electoral participation for this group. Further, being affiliated with religious institutions is also associated with higher levels of participation among first-generation black Caribbeans. Migration-related variables including citizenship, length of residence, and Caribbean origins, were not related to non-electoral activity, nor was common fate.

Predictors of involvement in black organizations among first-generation black Caribbeans are not the same as those previously discussed for the non-electoral index. Specifically, Table 7.9 reveals that common fate and church attendance are not associated with non-electoral activity among first-generation black Caribbeans; however, black Caribbeans with longer periods of U.S. residence have higher rates of involvement with black organizations. Furthermore, the model indicates that there are differences of involvement by Caribbean origin and gender among first-generation black Caribbeans. Specifically, black Caribbeans originating from the English islands of the Caribbean have higher levels of involvement in black organizations and, further, first-generation black Caribbean men have higher levels of involvement in black organizations relative to first-generation black Caribbean women. The difference in involvement between English and French Caribbean black-organization involvement suggests that black Caribbeans from English speaking islands may face fewer barriers (related to language and culture) that potentially limit their ability to be active in such organizations, relative to French black Caribbeans. The gender gap in black organization involvement highlights that black Caribbean women are less likely than black Caribbean men to perceive their interests are represented in black organizations. Overall, the involvement of black Caribbeans in black organizations possibly reflects a purely instrumental approach to political involvement considering that group identity does not influence their membership in black organizations. Consequently, first-generation black Caribbeans involved in black organizations may view this as an opportunity to acquire information and develop networks that minimize barriers to the political inclusion they face as immigrants in U.S. society.

Summary

The electoral and non-electoral activities of black Americans and black Caribbeans were examined in this chapter to understand how the phenomenon of black ethnic diversity fits within existing theories of political participation. Thus, this discussion explored how individual and institutional resources, racial group interest, and immigrant background influenced political participation among black Americans and black Caribbeans. More importantly, however, the goal of this discussion was to make sense of what, if anything, political participation tells us about the political incorporation of the black community when you account for the experiences of black Americans and black immigrants.

With respect to electoral participation, a participation gap exists between black Americans and first-generation black Caribbeans that is connected to factors shaping political acculturation among the first-generation. In contrast, black American electoral activities appear to be explained primarily by whether or not members of this group have the resources to be involved politically. Group identity, however, does not play a role in electoral participation for either group.

The factors shaping non-electoral participation support claims in the immigrant politics literature that it is important to look at different kinds of activity (rather than just electoral activity) to evaluate political participation within immigrant communities. Despite the participation gap in electoral participation, previously highlighted between black Americans and black Caribbeans, there were no differences in non-electoral participation between the two groups for the measures included in this analysis. The disappearance of the participation gap when non-electoral activities are factored into the

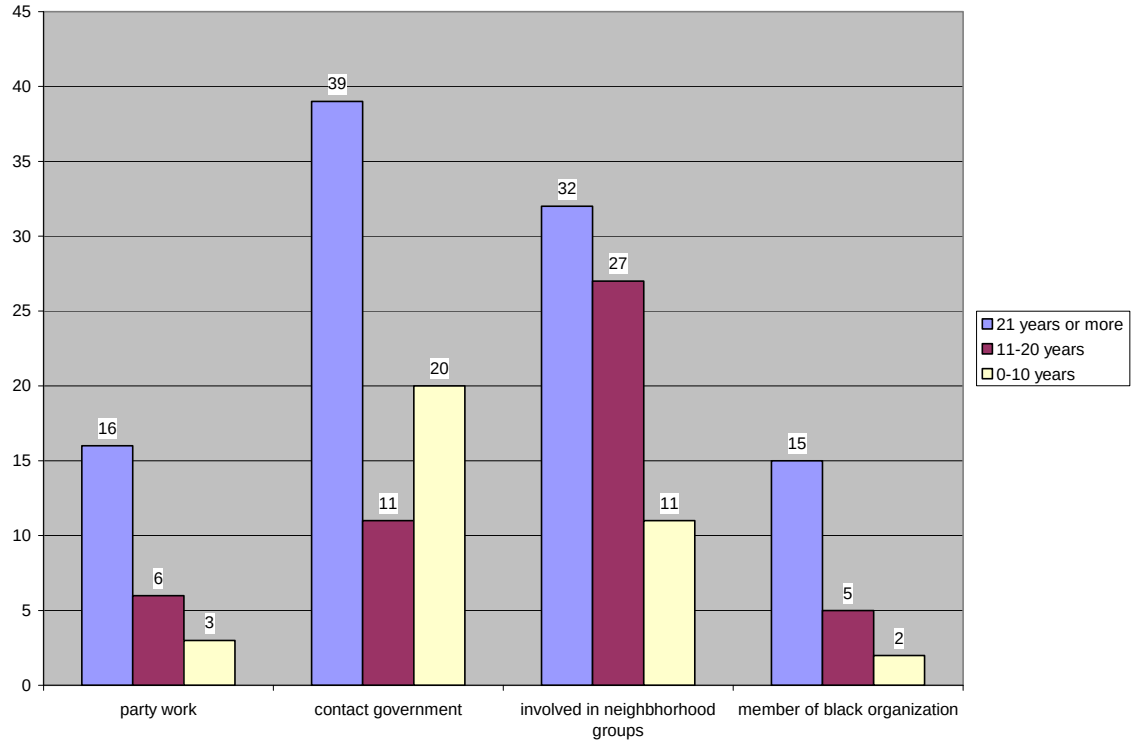
discussion also support the argument that political incorporation with respect to participation may be happening in non-traditional places for black immigrants relative to black Americans.

In contrast to black Caribbeans, the story of non-electoral participation is overwhelmingly one about resources and racial group identification for black Americans. The models of non-electoral participation however, that more traditional explanations of participation (i.e. resources) also matter for first-generation black Caribbeans when it comes to non-electoral participation. However, the importance of resources also depends on the type of non-electoral activity in question.

My analyses reflect that there are different factors shaping black American and black Caribbean involvement in the political system. Further, mainstream models of politics and racial group identification models are not sufficient for explaining first-generation black Caribbean political activity. The models also show that individual resources influence participation for this group but only as it relates to non-electoral activities. While common fate perceptions helped explain non-electoral activities among black Americans, in general, there was not a lot of support that racial group identification matters to participation among first-generation black Caribbeans.[28] Migration-related factors must be incorporated into models of black political participation if we want to understand how black immigrant communities are politically involved as members of U.S. society.

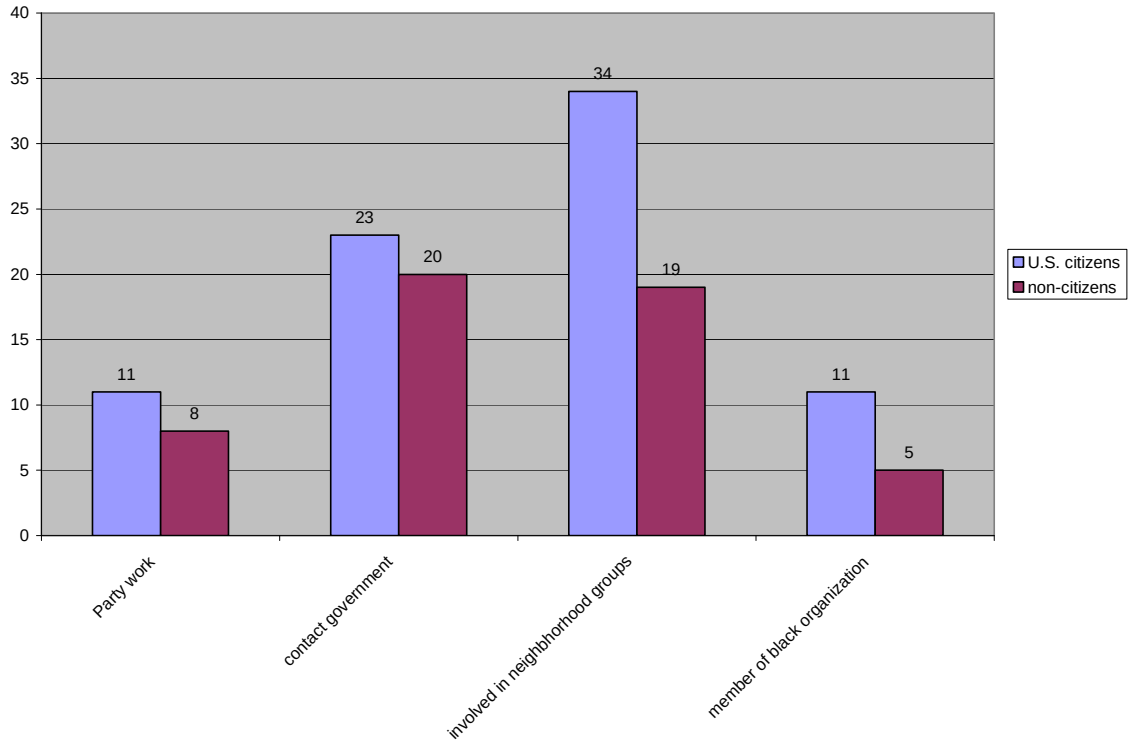
[28] Tate (1993) noted that a direct link between racial group identification and political participation is more spurious among those researching black political behavior in the post-civil rights generation.

Figure 7.1 Percent Distribution of Political Activity by Length of Residence among Black Caribbeans



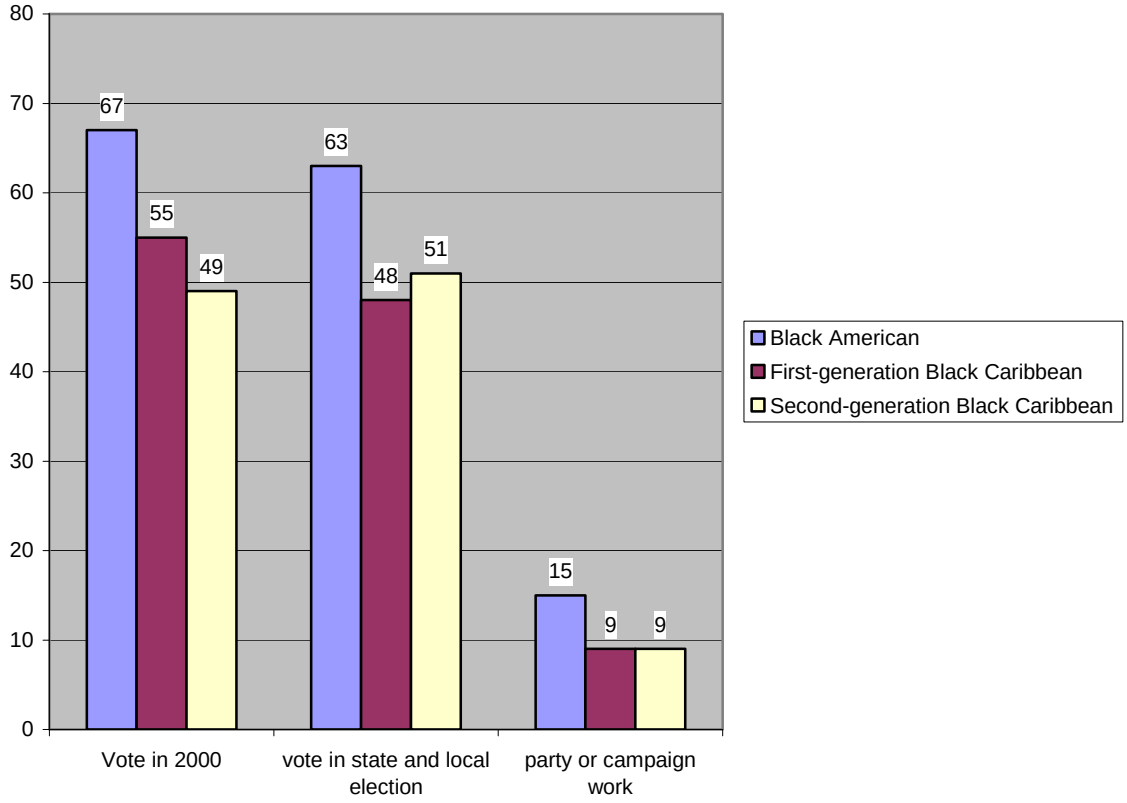
Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

Figure 7.2 Percent Distribution of Political Activity by Citizenship among First-Generation Black Caribbeans



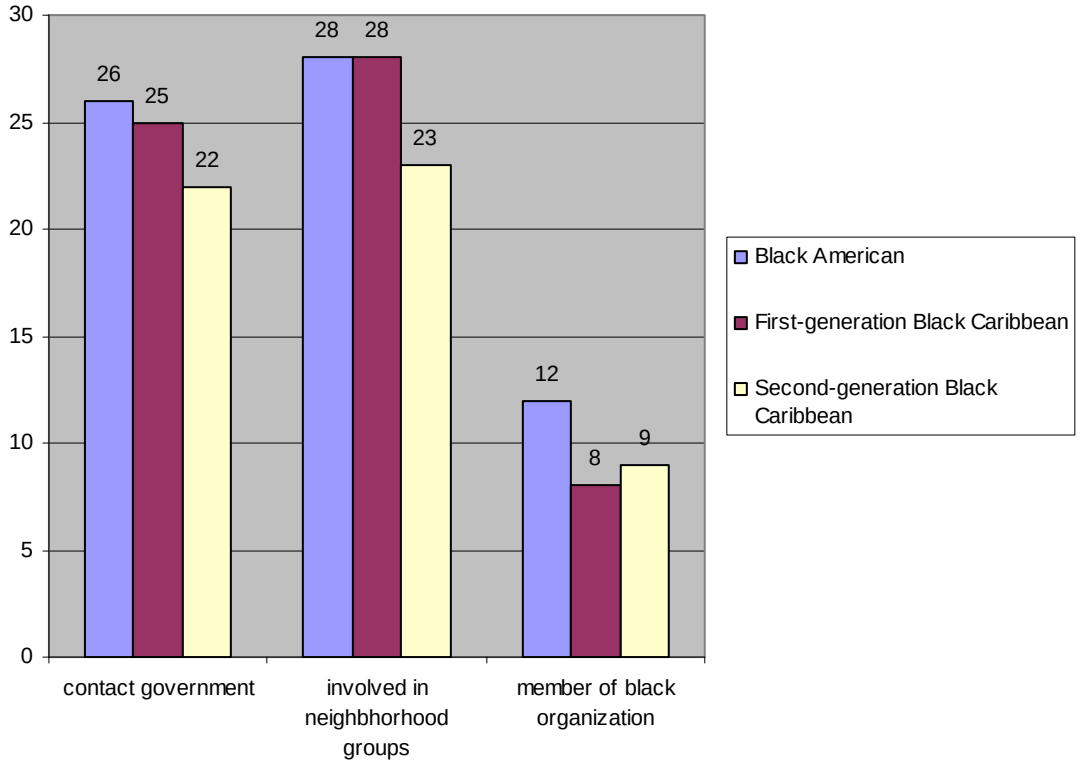
Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

Figure 7.3 Percent Distribution of Electoral Participation among Black Americans and Black Caribbeans



Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

Figure 7.4 Percent Distribution of Non-Electoral Activity among Black Caribbeans and Black Americans



Source: National Survey of American Life 2001-2003

Table 7.1 Model of Electoral Participation among Black Americans and Black Caribbeans

	All Groups	
	b	s.e.
Age	1.84***	.163
Income	1.05*	.434
Education	1.57***	.207
Gender (female)	.089~	.053
Common Fate	.083	.080
First Generation	-.376**	.132
Second Generation	-.148	.123
Employment	.037	.071
Church Attendance	.324**	.106
Constant	-.851	.173
	N=2355	
	R^2=.15	

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 7.2 Model of Electoral Participation among Black Americans

	b	s.e.
Age	1.81***	.168
Income	1.09*	.436
Education	1.71***	.218
Gender (female)	.105~	.218
Common Fate	.094	.082
Working	.043	.074
Church	.317**	.109
Constant	-.961	.175
	N=1878	
	R^2=.15	

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 7.3 Model of Electoral Participation among First-Generation Black Caribbeans

	First Generation Caribbean	
	b	s.e.
Age	2.19***	.478
Income	1.55	1.44
Education	.575	.547
Gender (female)	.149	.195
Common Fate	-.093	.153
Length of US Residence	1.51*	.714
Caribbean origins (English Caribbean)	.178	.203
Employment	.264	.178
Church Attendance	.288	.293
Constant	-.875	.637
	N=309	
	R^2=.38	

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 7.4 Model of Non-Electoral Participation among Black Americans and Black Caribbeans

	All Groups	
	b	s.e.
Age	1.20***	.100
Income	.578	.374
Education	1.22***	.166
Gender (female)	.024	.036
Common Fate	.179**	.051
First Generation	.022	.085
Second Generation	-.002	.103
Employment (Yes)	.002	.043
Church Attendance	.152*	.064
Constant	-1.14	.124
	N=3150	
	R^2=.13	

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 7.5 Model of Black Organization Participation among Black Americans and Black Caribbeans

	All Groups	
	b	s.e.
Age	.302***	.049
Income	.442*	.269
Education	.550***	.082
Gender (female)	-.030	.020
Common Fate	.041*	.019
First Generation	-.048	.034
Second Generation	-.013	.047
Employment	.002	.018
Church Attendance	.090**	.025
Constant	-.492	.056
	N=4282	
	R^2=.11	

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 7.6 Model of Non-Electoral Participation among Black Americans

	b	s.e.
Age	1.81***	.104
Income	.441	.362
Education	1.24***	.175
Gender (female)	.031	.036
Common Fate	.172**	.053
Working	-.005	.044
Church	.140*	.066
Constant	-1.13	.130
	N=1879	
	R^2=.12	

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 7.7 Model of Black Organization Involvement among Black Americans

	b	s.e.
Age	.267***	.049
Income	.637*	.264
Education	.551***	.066
Gender (female)	-.024	.015
Common Fate	.036*	.015
Working	.002	.015
Church	.088**	.029
Constant	-.484	.047
	N=3132	
	R^2=.11	

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 7.8 Model of Non-Electoral Participation among First-Generation Black Caribbeans

	First Generation Caribbean	
	B	s.e.
Age	1.26**	.389
Income	3.34*	1.35
Education	.716*	.314
Gender (female)	-.103	.142
Common Fate	.251	.218
Citizenship	-.122	.143
Length of US Residence	.891	.557
Caribbean origins (English Caribbean)	.137	.151
Employment	.215	.133
Church Attendance	.645*	.292
Constant	-1.57	.391
	N=515	
	R^2=.36	

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 7.9 Model of Black Organization Participation among First-Generation Black Caribbeans

	First-Generation black Caribbean	
	b	s.e.
Age	-.052	.124
Income	.147	.310
Education	.121	.160
Gender (female)	-.095*	.040
Common Fate	-.077	.061
Citizenship	.044	.028
Length of Residence	.488***	.103
Caribbean Origins (English Caribbean)	.107	.037
Employment (Yes)	-.016	.070
Church Attendance	.067	.049
Constant	-.117	.148
	N=775	R^2=.13

Source: National Survey of American Life (2001-2003)
~ p<.10, *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Appendix

Chapter 7: Question Wording

Electoral Participation Index (Worded Yes or No)

1) Did you vote in the last presidential election (2000)?

2) Did you vote in any state or location election during the last year?

3) Have you ever worked for a political party or campaigned for a political candidate?

Non-Electoral Participation Index (Worded Yes or No)

1) Have you ever called or written a public official about a concern or a problem?

2) Are there any groups in this neighborhood such as block clubs, community associations, social clubs, helping groups and so forth? If so, are you involved with any of these groups?

Black Organization Involvement (Worded Yes or No)

1) Do you belong to any national groups or organizations that are working to improve the conditions of black people in America?

Chapter 8

Conclusion

The central goal of this dissertation project was to re-examine how blacks are becoming politically incorporated in the post-civil rights era in the United States. Drawing upon the perspectives and behavior of black Americans and black Caribbean immigrants, I explored whether birthplace and national origin distinctions shape different paths of political incorporation within the black community. Thus, I examined political incorporation as the development and expression of racial group identification among black Americans and black Caribbeans. I also examined black American and black Caribbean political incorporation through the relationship between racial group identification and of patterns electoral and non-electoral activity

This dissertation project explored three possibilities of incorporation in connection with the presence of birthplace distinctions among blacks: 1) As black immigrants assimilate, they will take on the experiences and beliefs of black Americans, thereby reinforcing the paradigm of political homogeneity in the black community; 2) black immigrants will define their experiences and interests differently from black Americans, and follow paths of political incorporation that reflect greater black political heterogeneity; or 3) black political incorporation for black immigrants and black Americans alike will reflect a hybrid position that is somewhere between the first two possibilities previously described. This third option represents pan-black racial solidarity.

According to John Turner (1972), “we may not after all tend to join the people we like so much as the people we perceive ourselves joined to.” (17). Based on my analyses, I conclude that the concept of pan-black racial solidarity best helps us understand how immigrant blacks and black Americans mobilize around a common group identity despite their differences from each other. Further, pan-black racial identity represents a shared group identity based on common concerns and a shared sense of interdependence about racial discrimination. This shared identification represents a political resource upon which blacks can work together to advance their common interests within the U.S. political system.

In light of the growing ethnic diversity of the black community, the concept of pan-black racial solidarity does not treat race and ethnicity as synonymous concepts for analyzing black incorporation. Pan-black racial solidarity incorporates that black immigrants and black Americans do not necessarily share the same social identities. Thus, there will be times when both communities share the same interests and work together to achieve common goals and there will be times when they do not. Rather, racial solidarity is the outcome of cooperation between black Americans and black immigrants.

Both black Americans and black immigrants express different perspectives about the content and meaning of black identity, and at the same time, reflect shared racial identification concerning how they believe they are perceived by others in the wider U.S. society. My findings suggest that attitudes of ethnic distinctiveness influence the political incorporation path of black Americans and black Caribbeans, but, common racial

identification is more salient, particularly when both communities share similar concerns pertaining to issues of race.

The immigration politics literature and the black politics literature offer different explanations about how race will matter for black immigrants in U.S. society. Although racial discrimination is considered to impact the lives of black immigrants, the perspectives of the first-generation indicate that the immigrant reference has an important influence on this group's political incorporation in the U.S., and not just their social incorporation This is true for first-generation black Caribbeans more so than second-generation black Caribbeans.

First-generation black Caribbeans demonstrate support for causes that protect them from the disparate impact of racial discrimination; nevertheless, this group continues to display wariness towards interpreting their experiences through a racial lens, and holds steadfast to the idea that individual behavior has an important place in eradicating inequalities in society. Further, there is no direct relationship between their political behavior and racial group identification of this group. Although first-generation black Caribbeans share a sense of common fate with other blacks, their perspectives do not fit the traditional narrative within the black politics literature about the foundations of common fate within the black population in the U.S.

Pan-black racial solidarity for first-generation black Caribbeans is not defined by collective memories of the black American experience. Instead, it connected to the recognition that in the context of U.S. society, black immigrants have limited alternatives to advancing their interests as a distinct community separate from black Americans. Roger's (2006) research on black Caribbean political mobilization in New York City

illustrates the limits of pan-black racial solidarity between black Americans and black Caribbeans. He finds that when the socio-political context facilitates a broader expression of black political agendas and black political interests, this can quickly result in political competition between ethnically distinct black communities.

The analyses of common fate perceptions offer insight about which members of the first-generation black Caribbean group are more likely to support pan-black racial solidarity. The data indicate that those more likely to strongly support pan-black racial solidarity tend to be those who are most educated within the first-generation black Caribbean population. Thus, the roots of pan-black racial solidarity for this group overall reflects a story about socialization into U.S. racial norms. However, the data show that the immigrant reference point matters not only to the social incorporation of the first-generation, but that it also influences their political incorporation. Consequently, despite evidence of shared identification with blacks, we can expect to see instances where first-generation black Caribbeans forge an independent path from black Americans politically, particularly when the issues do not directly pertain to race or when they see a conflict between their interests and those of other members of the black community.

The experiences of black immigrants have been described as somewhere between race and ethnicity (Halter, 1993; Rogers, 2006). While the concept is applicable to the political incorporation experience of first-generation black Caribbeans, it does not adequately frame the political incorporation path of second-generation Black Caribbeans. If you compare the first-generation Caribbean perspective to the perspectives of second-generation, generation status captures an important shift in perspectives within the black Caribbean community

Attitudes of ethnic distinctiveness are present within the perspectives of second-generation black Caribbeans, yet, these perceptions of distinctiveness do not have any "political kick" for this group (Junn, 2006) (34). Second-generation black Caribbeans are more likely than first-generation black Caribbeans to describe themselves in racial terms, are more likely to perceive that being black is more important than being from the Caribbean, and exhibit high levels of support for issues that they perceive improve the opportunities of blacks in U.S. society even if they do not directly refer to the matter of racial inequality. Further, their perspectives on common fate reflect concerns about racial group discrimination in the lives of blacks as well as emphasize the importance of group cohesiveness among blacks regardless of cultural differences. Furthermore, a cross-section of second-generation black Caribbeans exhibit support for common fate. Overall, the attitudes of second-generation black Caribbeans provide strong evidence that they support pan-black racial solidarity and that racial group identification will significantly influence the political incorporation path as members of U.S. society.

The perspectives of the second-generation capture a shift in perspectives from the first-generation, as the immigrant reference point of this group does not impact their political perspectives. The movement between the first-generation black Caribbeans and second-generation black Caribbeans is that racial identity plays a much larger role in shaping the political perspectives of U.S. born black Caribbeans. Second-generation black Caribbeans' intimate knowledge of U.S. society, their identification with U.S. racial categories, and their connection with the black American experience, have a much greater impact on their political concerns, and further, define the roots of pan-black racial solidarity for this group.

Consequently, second-generation black Caribbeans and black Americans express more similar patterns of racial group identification with one another relative to first-generation black Caribbeans. Black Americans reflect their perceptions of distinctiveness from black Caribbeans in the way that they emphasize how their origins and history as a group in the U.S. make them uniquely knowledgeable about race relations and combating racial discrimination relative to foreign-born blacks. Common fate perceptions, however, reflect that pan-black racial solidarity enjoys the most support among blacks with greater income and education. While pan-black racial solidarity may characterize the political incorporation experience of a cross-section of second-generation black Caribbeans, we are likely to see it matters most to wealthier and highly educated black Americans.

Political Participation and Black Political Incorporation

The data indicate that a relationship exists between racial group identification and political attitudes for black Americans and black Caribbeans; however, I did not find a direct relationship between racial group identification and political participation among first-generation black Caribbeans, only for black American electoral participation. Nor did my findings support a pattern of step-wise participation (Ramakrishnan, 2005) among black Caribbeans. My analyses however, support claims in the literature that migration-related factors are important predictors of participation among first-generation black Caribbeans (Jones Correa, 1998; Cho; 1999; Junn, 1999; Lien, 2004). The data reveal the importance of incorporating factors specific to the black immigrant experience that impact the possibilities of political participation for this group. In this respect, the data indicate that if we want to understand the participation gap between black Americans and black Caribbeans, with respect to electoral activities, we must understand the relevance of

citizenship and length or residence as factors that facilitate and inhibit participation among first-generation black Caribbeans.

The data illustrate that black Caribbeans are politically engaged in their communities even though they do not participate in system-related activities at the rate of black Americans. An electoral participation gap between black Caribbean immigrants and black Americans has implications for how the interests of black immigrant groups are communicated and represented within political agendas that claim to represent the voices of the black community in the United States. Consequently, the greater levels of electoral participation among black Americans may foster a "mobilization of bias" (Brady et al., 1995) in that what gets prioritized as politically relevant in the black community. One possible consequence of this bias for black Caribbeans is political marginalization in more traditional modes of participation (Ramakrishnan, 2005). This marginalization may be experienced more acutely by the first-generation relative to the second-generation. Thus, black Caribbeans may experience far greater limitations on being able to use the political system to advance their interests as members of society. Ramakrishnan (2005) highlights that this form of political vulnerability is particularly significant for immigrants who are confronting the current retrenchment of liberal immigration policy in the U.S. Consequently, political marginalization has significant negative implications for the social and economic mobility of first-generation black Caribbeans as well their status within the larger society.

As black immigration expands the cultural diversity of the black community, competing definitions of identity and interest among black immigrants and black Americans alike, beg that we redefine traditional explanations of political unity among

blacks. The racial categorization of black immigrants within the U.S system of racial classification indicates that the narrative of black political homogeneity remains a significant aspect of black political incorporation. However, the foundations of black political solidarity can no longer to be defined solely through the experiences of black Americans. A one size fits all approach to black political incorporation does not fit a growing and increasingly diverse black population.

The perspectives of black Caribbeans highlight that the existing discourse about the connection between identity and political incorporation must be expanded to incorporate a new and old communities of blacks, and further a new definition of black identity, one that encompasses a broader spectrum of interests in addition to those of the black American community.

What distinguishes pan-black racial solidarity from other explanations of black political homogeneity is that it is not based on shared history, shared culture, or factors traditionally believed to link the perspective of blacks in the U.S. Pan-black racial solidarity incorporates the idea that there are particular contexts where the meaning of race and blackness are not shared by blacks, thus it incorporates the expectation political homogeneity will ebb and flow as blacks unite around issues of shared concern and in other instances work to foster cooperation when there are competing interests among various members within the community. .Pan black racial solidarity facilitates an understanding of how ethnic differences and racial commonalities operate within the Black population, and further, how Black solidarity is possible among black Americans and black immigrant groups despite evidence of ethnically distinctive attitudes. Pan-black racial solidarity encompasses the idea that black identity and racial unity are not static,

but rather, are context dependent, and highly contested. Yet, this concept allows us to broaden how we conceptualize and define black identity in such a way that it encompasses the interests and experiences of a broader group people who are similarly defines as people of African descent in the U.S.

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