

3 Four modes of ethno-somatic stratification: The experience of Blacks in Europe and the Americas

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Introduction

In this chapter I argue that there are four modes of ethno-somatic stratification in Europe and the Americas: the North American mode of binary mobilization, the Afro-Caribbean mode of pluralistic underdevelopment, the North European mode of proletarian incorporation, and the Latin mode of hegemonic *blanqueamiento* or whitening.¹ Each mode refers to a unique configuration of ethno-racial ideology, ethno-demographic mix, ethno-class stratification, and level of societal racialization. Each is the product of distinctive socio-historical trajectories, as well as modern economic, political, and migratory processes. All four modes will be briefly outlined, but because of space constraints and the special interests of this volume, the paper will concentrate on the first three modes mentioned above.

The paper begins with a demographic portrait of the black diaspora populations circa 2000. We then move to an analysis of the broad patterns of adjustment by the post-diasporic populations of African-ancestry people in the Americas. Part three discusses the origins and formation of the three modes of the Americas. The fourth, and major, part of the chapter discusses the North European ethno-somatic mode then focuses on the nature and interactions between the three modes of special interest: the Afro-Caribbean, Afro-American, and Afro-British. We end with some concluding observations.

1 A demographic overview

Somewhere around 2000–3 some 164,208,800 persons of whole or part-African ancestry lived in Europe and the Americas.² In comparative global terms, the African-ancestry diaspora population is not especially large. There are three countries, having no persons of African ancestry, with larger populations: China, India, and Indonesia. As migratory

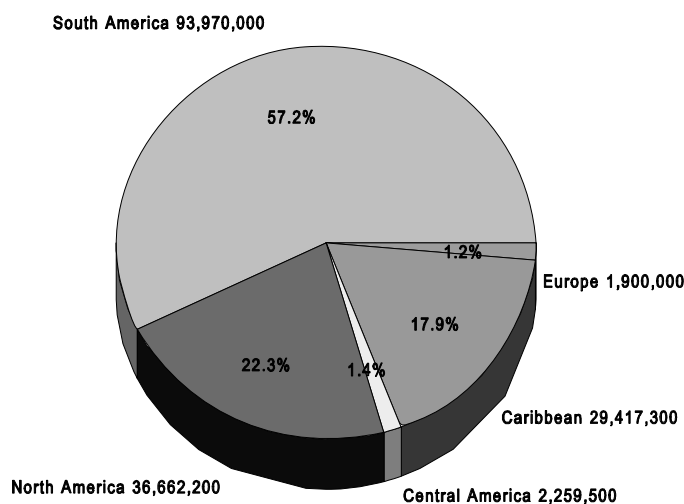


Figure 3.1 African Diaspora by region

populations go, however, it ranks second only to the Neo-European in size. In spite of the far greater number of Chinese and Indians, the African diaspora is substantially larger than those of these two peoples and it dwarfs those of the Jewish, Armenian, Kurdish, and other diaspora peoples. The African diaspora population is almost completely confined to the Atlantic lands, with the notable exception of the Pacific Afro-Colombian and Afro-Peruvian communities and, of course, Afro-Americans in the US Pacific coastal areas. Circa 2003 the diaspora populations were distributed as follows: 36,662,200 live in North America, of whom 36 million reside in the United States and 662,000 in Canada. There were 2,259,500 living in Mexico and Central America (not including Belize), the largest concentrations being in Mexico (approx. 1 million), Nicaragua (461,500), and Panama (414,500). Outside of Africa, South America is the continent with the largest number of persons of African ancestry (not counting Surinam, French Guiana, and Guyana). A total of 93,979,000 live on that continent, of whom 85 percent are to be found in Brazil. With 80,094,300 persons of self-identified African ancestry, Brazil is by far the country with the largest number of such persons outside of Africa. Indeed a little over one in two of all persons in the African diaspora live in Brazil and more persons of African ancestry live there than any other country except Nigeria. It should be noted also that this is a moderate estimate of the Afro-Brazilian population, restricted to persons who identify themselves as being of African

ancestry in the most recent (2000) census.³ By all accounts, a far greater proportion of Brazilians are actually of some African ancestry, something to which I return below. Colombia and Venezuela, with 8.7 million and 2.5 million persons conservatively estimated of African ancestry are, respectively, the second and third largest groups in South America.

At least 29,417,300 persons of identified African ancestry live in the Caribbean, of whom 15,042,700 live in the Latin islands of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic, while 14,374,600 live in the non-Hispanic Caribbean region which includes, culturally, Guyana, French Guyana, Suriname, and Belize.

Finally, there is Western Europe where, by 2002 there were at least 1,900,000 persons of African ancestry from Africa and the Caribbean: 1,148,700 live in Britain, at least 200,000 in the Netherlands; at least 500,000 in France, and about 50,000 in Portugal. Britain has by far the best data: 565,870 blacks are of Caribbean ancestry, making up 1 percent of the total British population and 12.2 of its total minority population. There are 485,270 people from Africa and another 97,585 designated "other blacks" by the US census.

Migration history

Diasporas are the products of forced or voluntary migrations, and we turn now to a consideration of the population movements that resulted in the present distribution of African-ancestry peoples. In any such consideration, we have to distinguish between primary, secondary, and even tertiary migration eras. The primary phase was the product of the Atlantic slave trade between the middle of the fifteenth century and the 1870s. Between the start of the seventeenth century and the ending of slavery in the 1880s some 9.9 million Africans were transported as slaves to the Americas nearly all coming from the West Coast of Africa, an area extending from Senegal to Angola (Curtin 1969, Lovejoy 1982). It has been estimated by Patrick Manning that the delivery of some 9 million slaves to the New World between 1700 and 1850 entailed the capture of 21 million Africans, suggesting a devastating demographic impact on this part of the continent. In addition, the trade almost certainly had many negative social and political consequences for the region.⁴

The second migration era began in the late eighteenth century. There was a not insubstantial movement of US slaves to Canada and the Caribbean during and after the American Revolution, followed in the nineteenth century by the movement of runaway slaves via the *Underground Railroad* to that country. From the first half of the nineteenth century Afro-Caribbean peoples began to move to the United States and

Table 3.1 *Legal immigration from the Caribbean 1950–2002 and totals for 1820–2002*

	1951–60	1961–70	1971–80	1981–90	1991–2000	2001–2	1951–2	1820–2002
Caribbean	123,091	470,213	741,126	872,051	978,787	347,369	3,532,636	3,873,162
Cuba	79,984	208,536	264,863	144,578	169,322	86,204	953,487	971,625
Dom. Rep	9,897	93,292	148,135	252,035	335,251	78,916	917,526	889,117
Haiti	4,442	34,499	56,335	138,379	179,644	80,179	493,478	456,125
Jamaica	8,869	74,906	137,577	208,148	169,227	59,769	658,496	628,383
Other Carib	20,935	58,980	134,216	128,911	125,343	42,383	510,768	927,902

Source: Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2003, *2002 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, Washington, DC.

Central America. By the end of the century over 100,000 West Indians had moved to the United States and well over 50,000 had moved to Central America. West Indians were the core of the labor force that dug the Panama Canal. Later they spread out across Central America where they worked as laborers and clerks on the large banana plantations. Today, most English-speaking pockets of peoples in Central America are from the Caribbean.

The movement of Caribbean peoples to the United States was halted by the explicitly racist immigration act of 1923, at which time over 150,000 had migrated there. The movement of peoples from the islands was reduced to a trickle between 1924 and 1965. However, with the change in US immigration laws in 1965 there was a sudden huge movement of peoples from the islands to the USA (see Table 3.1). Of all legal immigrants entering the USA from the Caribbean between 1820 and 2002 – a total of 3,873,162 persons – 91.2 percent came after 1960. Of the 2,012,410 coming from the non-Hispanic Caribbean, 82.6 percent came between 1960 and 2002.⁵ A third of all Jamaicans (more properly, Jamaican-identified persons), and nearly a half of the population of some of the smaller islands now live in America, especially the North East. The fact is little known, but one in three of all persons of African ancestry in New York state are of Caribbean ancestry.

Immediately preceding the renewal of the secondary diaspora to the US was the secondary diaspora of West Indians to Europe between the early fifties of the last century and 1962. The present African-ancestry populations of Western Europe are largely the product of this secondary Caribbean migration. Between 1948 and 1973, when it largely ended, over 300,000 West Indians had migrated to Britain. There were only 17,218 West Indians living in Britain. By 1961, the year before the British immigration act that ended unrestricted entry to Britain, the West Indian population had soared to 173,659. And by 1971, near the end of this

migratory wave, the figure stood at 304,070. Along with 244,000 children born in Britain to these migrants, the population of West Indians had soared from an estimated total 18,000 in 1951 to 548,000 in 1971 (Peach 1991).

West Indians from the French West Indies in France and Dutch-speaking Caribbean in Holland constitute the other half of Caribbean peoples living in Europe. Net migration from the French Caribbean to France surged only in the early 1970s, resulting in an increase in the Caribbean-born population of France from 61,160 in 1968 to 180,448 in 1982 and a total (including children born in France) of 265,988 that year (Peach 1991: p. 3, Table 2a). The flow from the Dutch Caribbean to the Netherlands began slowly during the 1960s and took off only in the mid-1970s. As late as 1970 there were only 28,985 immigrants from the region in the Netherlands; by 1975 this had climbed to 104,154 and to 247,000 in 1988. Along with second-generation persons the total Caribbean origin population in the Netherlands in 1988 was 308,000.

In the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries there was a secondary migration of freed slaves from the Americas to Sierra Leone and Liberia. We know little about the numbers that went to Sierra Leone, but it could not have been more than a few thousands. Between 6,000 and 11,000 African-Americans went to Liberia, mainly with the assistance of the Colonization Society from 1820 to 1865. They were joined there by a few hundred West Indians. There has also been a demographically insignificant but culturally meaningful secondary migration of West Indians to Africa, mainly Jamaican Rastafarians who moved to Ethiopia during the second half of the twentieth century.

Both in North America and Western Europe, West Indian migrants and their descendants are increasingly being joined by a new primary diaspora from Africa. Between 1960 and 1989 there was a net emigration of 138,719 Africans to different regions of the world. Of this total 71,193 went to North America, mainly the United States; 48,146 went to Western Europe; and the remainder, 19,380, went to various parts of Oceania. As we saw earlier, 24 percent of the African-ancestry population of Britain come directly from Africa.

Afro-Caribbean peoples are, in both absolute and relative terms, the most mobile of the peoples of African ancestry and account for well over 90 percent of the secondary diaspora movements across the Atlantic. They are also the only people of African ancestry who have engaged in tertiary diaspora movements. The most important of these have been the movement of people of color from central America to the United States which has been gaining momentum in recent years, and the small, still demographically insignificant, re-migration of Caribbean people from Britain to Canada and the US.

Other New World people have also engaged in secondary diaspora movements although nothing approaching the scale of West Indians in international movements. There was a movement of Afro-Brazilians between Brazil and Africa during the late nineteenth and first half of the present century. However, it is doubtful whether there was a net migration back to Africa of any significance.

So far I have considered only international migrations across the Atlantic. However, no discussion of movements of people of color would be complete without mention of the large-scale movement of Afro-Americans from the rural South of the USA to the urban north. In scale, range, and sociological consequences this was one of the great movements of peoples in modern times. However, it was internal and some may question whether it constituted a secondary diaspora movement. At the very least, it may be contested, a diaspora should involve a change of states. Others may dispute this. At any rate, no one doubts the social, economic, and political significance of this secondary, if internal, movement of African-ancestry people.

One major consequence of this movement, the urbanization of the Afro-American population, brings me to my final demographic observation. It is the fact that while homeland Africans are still predominantly rural, the great majority of diaspora peoples of color in the Atlantic region are predominantly urban. Afro-Americans are now among the most urbanized of Americans. Most Afro-Caribbean peoples in the Caribbean live in urban areas, although many in miserable squatter settlements and other slums. Afro-Caribbean peoples in North America and Europe tend to have far higher rates of urbanization than average; indeed, they are almost 100 percent urban (I exclude the annual movement of contract farm workers). And in most areas of Latin America people of African ancestry tend to be more urban than average although living under less than adequate conditions.

2 Patterns of adjustment in the New World

At least five major factors influenced the adjustment of Africans to the New World: the kind of slave system; geography; the African cultural background; the ethnic demography of the society; and the nature of the European culture of the contact group. These factors together account for the important variations found among peoples of African ancestry in the Americas today, and we will have occasion to return to them.

However, at this point I wish to emphasize the sociocultural commonalities of the New World black experience for it is these that justify any

talk of a black Atlantic. The most important common experience of all diaspora peoples was the generative, historical trauma of slavery which left in its wake certain critical uniformities that are still important.

Like slaves everywhere, the ancestors of all New World blacks were natively alienated from the communities into which they were forcibly inserted. By that I mean, not that the slave did not have a social life of his or her own, but that he or she had no legitimate place in the political, legal, and civic life of his or her society (Patterson 1982: Introduction). The centuries of enslavement suffered by the Afro-Atlantic peoples led to an ingrained view of them, by the dominant and all other nonblack groups (including the descendants of European immigrants who were to arrive centuries after the ancestors of blacks), as people who did not belong to the society at large, only to individuals and private estates. That view was to persist, with devastating consequences, long after the formal abolition of slavery. And it still plagues the experience of African-descended peoples in many parts of Latin America, including Brazil where they are, by most estimates, the majority.

Whether slavery resulted from, or was the cause of the racism experienced by blacks everywhere is a socio-historical issue we cannot debate here. What is certain is that it fully institutionalized the racist view of blacks as an inferior group. The actual cultural expression of these views varied, resulting in the different ideologies of racism to be discussed below.

Unlike many pre-modern slave systems, the primary motive for enslavement in the Atlantic Basin was the labor exploitation of blacks. In the dominant plantation systems this meant incorporation into a harshly regulated, gang-structured regime requiring little skill for the vast majority. There was, to be sure, a minority who were trained in semi-skilled and occasionally even skilled work. But for most blacks, slavery meant centuries of illiteracy and commodified labor. Slavery also denied blacks the right to hold and accumulate property. Hence blacks emerged from centuries of incorporation in the emerging capitalist systems of the Americas with little skill, near complete illiteracy, and no property. What's more, every effort was made to keep these disadvantages in place for another century or so after emancipation. Indeed, in some places like the US South, the proportion of blacks with skills that could facilitate mobility in the broader economy actually fell from their already low levels following emancipation.

Bereft of skill, literacy, and wealth, black people throughout the Americas entered the emerging capitalist orders after slavery with crippling disadvantages compared with all white native or immigrant workers. Even without the added scourge of racism, it would have taken decades to catch

up with descendants of non-slaves in the acquisition of social, cultural, and material capital.

There was, however, another equally devastating de-skilling of the black populations of the Americas which rarely gets mentioned, partly because discussing it is historiographically out of favor. Slavery denied blacks not only the security of dual parenting, but of effective parenting itself. On all plantation systems women had to labor at the same level as men. Indeed, in most Caribbean and many US and Brazilian plantations, women made up a higher proportion of the laborers in the fields than men. Not only were they given little time off during their pregnancy but were ordered back to the fields within weeks, sometimes days, of giving birth. Child-rearing, if one may call it that, was left in the hands of old and often incapacitated and certainly very tired slave women who were simply overwhelmed by the inhuman burden placed upon them during their final months of living. This was true even of the USA, in spite of the greater tendency to encourage slaves to reproduce there (Steckel 1986). The tragic result was not simply the fact that slave children were hardly socialized or trained – their childhood “stolen” as one scholar recently described it (King 1995) – but that the all-important social skill of effective child-rearing was severely attenuated.

Slavery also had certain harmful internal social consequences. The most important of these was the way it violated and distorted familial and gender relations.⁶ Throughout the Americas the female-headed family is the norm among African-ancestry peoples. Further, this household type emerges, not from the dissolution of marriages (as is true of most cases among nonblacks), but from nonmarital childbearing and paternal abandonment. While all Afro-Atlantic peoples continued to value kinship, the erosion of West African household patterns was replaced by adhoc, slaveholder-conditioned household arrangements that could not provide structures for secure marital relations or stable child-rearing. The view that slavery largely accounts for present household and parenting patterns among New World African-ancestry peoples has been strongly contested in recent decades although the scholarly tide has once again shifted back to the slave-genesis position (Patterson 1998). Poverty cannot explain existing household and gender relations (most peoples of the world are poor but do not find themselves with populations in which 60 percent of children have been abandoned by their fathers or in which the typical household type is headed by a lone parent).

Closely related to this, indeed originating in it, is another modern Atlantic social commonality: the distinctive role of women. Slavery forced women to be independent. As noted earlier, they were equally exploited as manual laborers in the fields, and in many cases even more so

than men. The frequent absence of a male partner (including cases of stable unions in which the male partner lived on another estate, so called "away marriages" in America) and the sole responsibility for parenting after slavery, led to higher labor force participation rates than those for other women. In recent decades, with increased educational opportunities, black women throughout the Atlantic diaspora have been closing the income gap not only with black men, but with white women. They also far surpass black men in the educational systems of all these societies, and in America they are now far ahead in professional training (Patterson 1998). Exactly the same holds for the Caribbean and most Latin American societies as well as Europe.

Finally, the African-descended peoples of the Americas emerged from the experience of slavery with creolized cultural constructions that, in spite of considerable variations, had certain underlying themes and deep structures that partly reflects their common West African cultural ancestry, and the adaptation of these transmitted traditions to the slave and post-emancipation environments. These commonalities are found mainly in the expressive-symbolic areas of their cultures, especially music, folklore, language, and other communicative patterns, and, of course, religion. I noted above that slavery was especially destructive of West African social organization. However, there were two areas of West African social life that survived the crossing and devastation of slavery. One of these was the strong emphasis on kinship and the tendency to use the idiom of kinship to express all close relations. My fieldwork in the Caribbean, as does the work of many others, certainly confirms this. However, it is easy to misunderstand what this means and revisionist historians have all but confounded the issue. Thus Herbert Gutman assumed that the evidence he found for strong emphasis on kinship relations was further proof of the existence of strong families. It was nothing of the sort. Indeed, the strong emphasis on kinship at best compensates for, at worst works against, stable conjugal or other cohabitational relations and broader affinal ties. This explains a paradox of New World black life that has long bothered anthropologists: that in spite of the fact that they so greatly value kinship, the network ties of black people, while dense, tend to be unusually narrow.

3 The consolidation of ethno-somatic modes

It is in the post-emancipation era that major differences were to emerge in the socioeconomic condition and cultural experiences of the peoples of the Afro-Atlantic. Slavery ended in very different ways throughout the New World with important differences in socioeconomic consequences

for the ex-slaves. In the Caribbean the slave owners paid off and many left, offering opportunities for the construction of a semi-independent peasantry that most ex-slaves in the larger colonies took advantage of. This, however, was the exceptional outcome in comparative terms, as Engerman has emphasized, and even here conditions began to deteriorate for the newly established peasantry by the last third of the nineteenth century (Engerman 1966). In the USA slavery ended only after a savage civil war engendering deep bitterness in the Caucasian population that was taken out on the ex-slaves. Indeed, what emerged in the USA was a neo-slavery system in which the personal ownership of the master was ended but the culture of slavery persisted. This was the worst possible situation for the ex-slave population which was later abandoned by its northern liberators. The result was a vicious system of terrorization which culminated in the lynching era that lasted from the 1880s to about 1950, during which some 5,000 Afro-Americans were slaughtered, many of them burnt alive. I have recently argued that a significant minority of these lynchings were classic instances of human sacrifice engaging entire communities and often officiated by an ordained clergyman (Patterson 1998).

What emerged from the conjunction of inherited peculiarities of the slave past, the new forms of labor exploitation, the political and social constraints placed on the ex-slave population and their descendants, the demographic mix and migratory policies of the neo-doulotic systems in which blacks found themselves, and the cultural, especially the religious and intellectual preoccupations of the dominant white groups, were the different modes of ethno-somatic stratification. As indicated earlier, there were five such modes which will now be briefly adumbrated.

The North American binary mode

The pattern of racism and “racial” domination that consolidated in America during this period constituted one of the four main forms of ethno-somatic (“racial”) stratification that emerged in the Americas (see Figure 3.2). North Americans developed what may be called a *binary* conception of race, more commonly known as the one-drop rule: the classification of all persons either as “white” or “black,” including in the latter category all persons with any known African ancestry, however somatically light-skinned they may be. Contrary to what is commonly believed, this system, though long in the making, was consolidated nationally only during the late nineteenth century. Important parts of the South, such as the Carolinas, more closely resembled the Brazilian mode discussed below. And, of course, Louisiana’s mode was very Hispanic until the late

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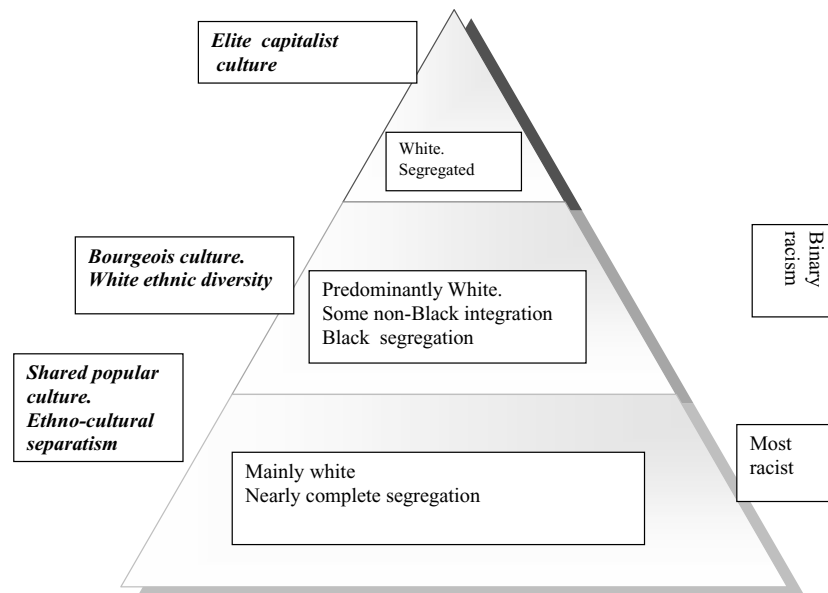


Figure 3.2 The North American binary mode

nineteenth century. Nonetheless, by the late nineteenth century the entire United States had converged into what is being called the North American binary mode.⁷ Its demographic base is a majority white population with deep internal class cleavages, and the fact that for most of American history, blacks were the major distinctive people of color. Native Americans had been largely exterminated and those that survived had been banished to reservations and were largely out of sight and out of mind. The binary system was developed in the South as a means of dividing the dominated groups and, at the same time, a way of establishing a hegemonic bond of solidarity between white elite and the mass of poor whites. Racial solidarity, notions of racial purity and avoidance, became a powerful means of diverting poor whites from the inequities of the system and their own exploitation (Morgan 1975). It is possible that this system was reinforced by the fundamentalist religion of the South, with its belief in a moral and social universe polarized between good and evil, God and Satan, elect and damned, sinners and saved, black and white.

In the North an equally powerful version of the binary system developed as a means of unifying the many disparate immigrant groups from Europe. Whiteness was reconstructed during the nineteenth century as a precious positional good – unknown in the European homeland where,

because everyone was white, whiteness had no meaning or social reality – which the immigrants eagerly grasped and consumed (Roediger 1991). It instantly gave them a sense of oneness with the dominant group, and a quick means of identity with the emerging mass democratic demos of Jacksonian America. Ironically, antislavery agitation was as much motivated by anti-black racism as it was by the noble struggle of principled, pro-black abolitionists (Davis 1984). The white working class and its leadership despised blacks as much as they despised slavery, seeing both as a threat to their dream of yeomanric independence on the frontier (Foner 1995). The high mortality rate of the Civil War reinforced this racist trend. When the capitalist classes later in the century began to use black labor as a way of breaking strikes, the die of northern binary racism was cast.

It is important to note, further, that northern whites used the binary conception of whiteness even more effectively than their Southern elite counterpart. In the South, whiteness was easily acquired: if a person had no black ancestry (true of all European immigrants) and looked vaguely white, he or she was included. In time, even the Chinese of Mississippi found that they could negotiate their way across the the boundaries of whiteness by placing enough distance between themselves and their former black neighbors (Loewn 1988). Not being black was the iron test. In the north it was more difficult. Being born in Europe was not enough, especially during the nativist era of hostility to immigrants. Many immigrant groups had to struggle for “racial” acceptance and inclusion into the fold of whiteness. These included the Jews (who only finally acquired full, pure white status after the World War II), the Irish (for all their freckles, pale skin, and light hair), Italians and other Southern Europeans. Indeed, as is well known, the restrictive immigration act of 1923 was passed primarily to keep out the inferior European races who were not really “pure” white.

Eventually northern and southern variants merged into the brutal anti-black binary system that persisted up to the end of the sixties, becoming the sociocultural foundation of a fully racially structured and stratified society. Other groups entering this system such as pre-1965 Hispanics, anxiously played by the binary ethno-somatic rules, sometimes agitating to get the census to define them as Caucasian, as Mexican-Americans successfully did during the thirties.

A final, very important, point to note about the binary system is that it was highly gendered. White women became the living symbol of white purity and Negrophobia, focused obsessively on sexual relations between white women and black men. The great dread of the binary system was race dilution through miscegenation and preventing this was a major

political and cultural preoccupation. Very often anti-black hostility was rationalized as the protection of the white women's honor, whatever may have been the original cause of the conflict. Many lynchings, I have argued, were elaborate rituals of human sacrifice meant not only to terrorize blacks, but to give communal expression to the sacredness of white women and, by extension, the inviolability of Jim Crow laws and the system of white supremacy. Of course, laws against intermarriage were universal in the South and were finally declared unconstitutional only in 1966, when sixteen states still had them.

The gendered element of binary racism, it should be emphasized, rested on a paternalistic view of women. Anti-miscegenation laws clearly assumed that women could not be trusted to keep the racial faith. Women were weak, precious extensions of male honor who were to be protected at all costs. As many feminist writers have pointed out, the conception of women and women's status implicit in the binary view of race was that of a group that was almost as dependent and inherently inferior as blacks. Where the dependency of the latter entailed their exclusion and degradation, the dependency of the former was expressed in their elevation on a pedestal. Both, however, were "owned" by white men – as despised laborers and cherished icon – and both were equally excluded from the public household (Wyatt-Brown 1982, Genovese 1988, Cash 1991).

The Afro-Caribbean mode

In South America and the Caribbean two different ethno-somatic systems emerged. They have in common the fact that they are non-binary. "Race" in all these societies is conceived of in denotative terms, ranging on a continuum from white, through various mixed shades (each with a given name) to black. Only people who are somatically black are so designated. An elaborate phenotypic terminology exists, especially in Spanish and Portuguese, to describe the different shades and types of somatic mixtures. A study by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics in 1976 found 134 self-designated terms for various shades of color in Brazil (Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatístico 1976).

However, there are extremely important differences between the Latin, Brazilian, and Non-Latin societies, based on differences in the relative demographic mix of the various color types and on the composition and racial ideology and behavior of the elite groups.⁸ In the Afro-Caribbean system – the second major ethno-somatic type – people of visibly African ancestry constitute the majority of the population. The lower and working classes in these societies are also visibly and (with the exception of Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana where East Indians

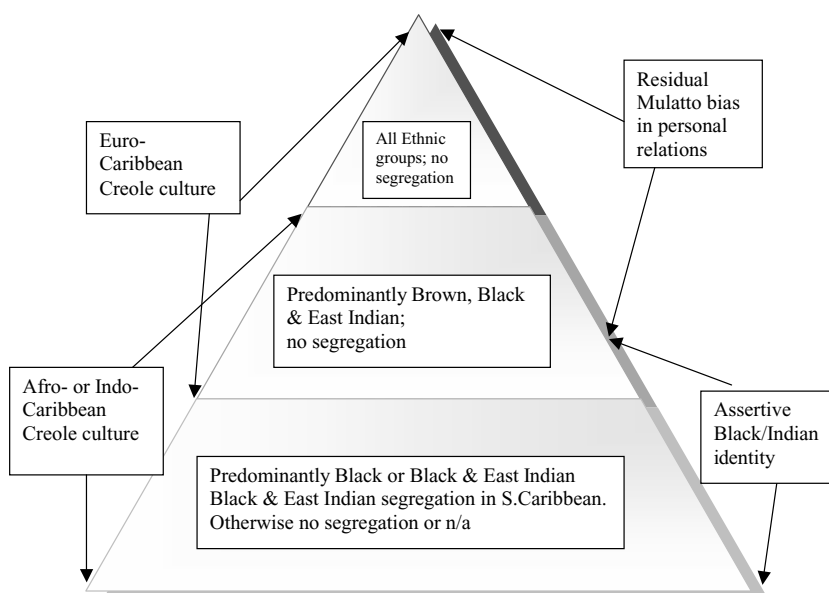


Figure 3.3 The Caribbean plural mode

make up approximately a half of the populations and a good part of the lower classes) almost exclusively of African ancestry. The unusual light-complexioned or European ancestry person of lower-class status is invariably classified as “red” (in Barbados, “Redlegs”). Until the 1950s, there was a close correlation between color and class and rampant color prejudice between shades, especially in personal relations and an elaborate trade-off between income and shade emerged in the marriage market.⁹ At the same time, there has never really been any legal segregation in the islands and intermarriage was not uncommon.

Since the early sixties – with political independence, modernization programs, and the growth of the middle class – an important change took place marking off this system from both the American and Latin modes. Significant upward mobility of black and brown people into the upper classes has resulted in elites that are now predominantly nonwhite and increasingly made up of persons of visibly black ancestry. Black and brown people dominate the political system, the professions, and play significant and increasing roles in business. This is found in no other part of the Americas or, indeed, anywhere else except Africa.

Non-Hispanic Caribbean societies are culturally pluralistic. Most are at least bicultural. There is an Afro-Caribbean Creole culture that emerged from the syncretism of African and European cultural patterns and

survival and adaptation to the exigencies of slavery, plantation life, and peasant communities. This was the culture of the black masses which, until the middle of the last century, was largely denigrated by all upwardly mobile West Indians, including those who were black. The other culture was the creolized version of European colonial cultures – French, English, and Dutch – of the ruling classes and middle-class groups. A very important and distinctive feature of all Afro-Caribbean societies is that this creolized elite culture was, for the late nineteenth century, largely mastered and transmitted by brown and black people in the region. The white plantocratic and commercial elites in most of them were both too small and too busy making money to attempt any direct hegemonic control of the system. Instead, it was left to the brown and upwardly mobile blacks to take over the professions and the teaching of the elite culture. Unlike America and the Latin regions, then, there is no identification of the culture of the elite, or things culturally European, with whites.

It should be noted, further, that West Indians, including those from the black poor, either are or aspire to be bicultural. Upwardly mobile blacks and browns learn the Afro-Caribbean base culture in the course of growing up. Mobility requires learning the Euro-Creole culture of the elites. People experience little problem in this, or in shifting between one culture and another in their daily interactions. Lower-class West Indians also move freely between the public areas of the Creole high culture and their own, most noticeably in their joint commitment to European Anglicanism or Catholicism (as in Jamaica and Haiti) on the one hand, and to the Cumina or Voudon Afro-Caribbean religion, on the other.

Nonetheless, there was until the last third of the last century a general slighting of things black and Afro-Caribbean in the traditional system and a major change in the evolution of the present Afro-Caribbean mode was the successful struggle for ethno-somatic respect and a change in the reputation of the Afro-Caribbean Creole. Under pressure from successful darker bourgeois persons, as well as assertive proletarian, black-pride movements such as the Rastafarians, and partly also under the influence of the African-American civil rights and black-identity movements, traditional phenotypical distinctions have faded, though by no means disappeared. They still operate in personal relations and, to a declining degree, in mate selection among middle- and upper-class browns and blacks. The enormous international success of the cultural creations of the Afro-Caribbean working classes – especially Reggae, Rastafarianism, and Calypso – and the rise of black political leadership before and after independence reinforced this trend, in the end creating a virtual social revolution in the role and reputation of Afro-Caribbean Creole.

The Caribbean mode is even more complex in its Southern Caribbean variant, especially Trinidad, Guyana, and Surinam.¹⁰ The main difference is the greater multiculturalism of these societies with their large demographic mix of East Indians and, in Suriname, people from Java as well. We find here the same set of contested color–class relations as well as two stratified Creole cultures. East Indians, who came as indentured servants during the nineteenth century, constitute nearly a half of the populations of Trinidad and Guyana. Furthermore, they too developed a flourishing Creole alongside that of the blacks. Indians, of course, brought over their own color values with them, which dovetailed only too well with the pre-existing Afro-European pattern. Although they came from the lowest castes in the poorest part of India and were generally very dark – often much darker than most Afro-Caribbeans – they looked more European and had straight hair. It was not long before they had plunged into all the nasty little nuances of the trade-off between features, hair type, color, status, and class that characterized colonial Trinidad and the Guyanas.

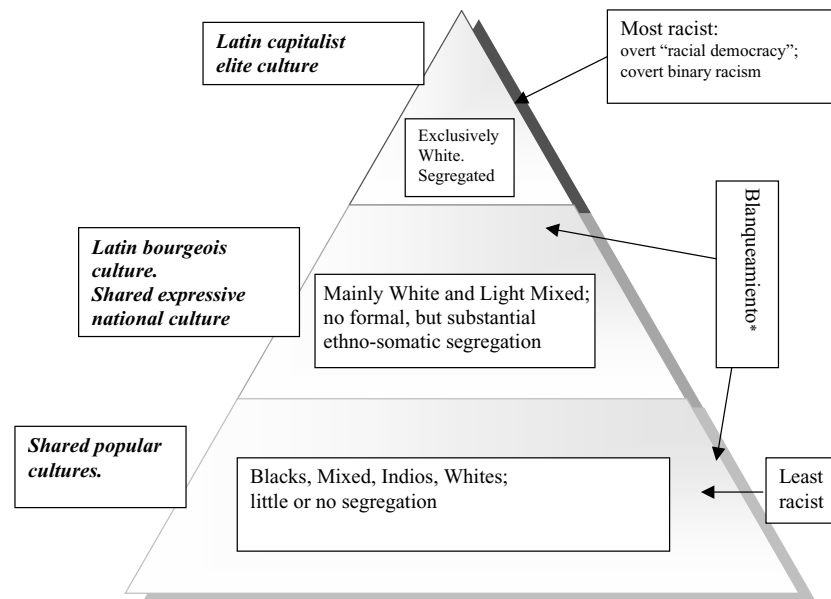
The Latin American mode: hegemonic blanqueamiento

As mentioned earlier, I will have less to say about this mode due to the focus of our volume. For context, comparison, and completeness, however, some account must be taken of it. The Latin mode, found in Spanish America and Brazil, blends important features of the binary and Afro-Caribbean modes although, let me hasten to add, it has several quite unique features of its own.¹¹ Between the lower and middle classes these societies behave much like the Afro-Caribbean with two important differences. Demographically, people of European (Hispanic) ancestry and very light-skinned persons are more prevalent and can be found among the lower classes, which is rare in the non-Hispanic. What is more, people of all colors mix freely among the lower classes. Here these systems differ sharply from the USA, where most Euro-Americans emphasize racial differences and segregation, especially the poorer groups. In Latin-America poverty integrates; in North America it segregates; and in the Afro-Caribbean it is demographically irrelevant to ethno-somatic issues since the poor are entirely nonwhite (with a few exceptions here and there).

The second, decisive, difference from the Afro-Caribbean system, however, is the fact that above the middle classes there is a sharply demarcated ceiling in the operation of the denotative pattern of race and interracial interaction. The elites in these systems are almost entirely white or white identified. They differ from the North American Caucasian elites in their

Four modes of ethno-somatic stratification

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* Spanish: Literally = "whitening." Brazilian Portuguese cognate: *esbranquecimento*

Figure 3.4 The Latin mode: hegemonic *blanqueamiento*

public acceptance of the denotative system below the elite levels, in the fact that they did not find it necessary to use binary racial solidarity as a means of hegemonic division and control (perhaps because of their use of direct, authoritarian means), in the absence of anxiety over interracial marriages at the middle and lower levels of the society, and in their celebration of hybridity and the myth of racial democracy. But they have very similar practices and private attitudes in their racist exclusion of all persons of color from elite positions, whether in government, the economy, the army, or in their own intimate relations. Though never formally legislated, elite occupations, neighborhoods, and intimate relations were, and still are, as segregated as anywhere in the deep South at the height of the Jim Crow era.

It has long been claimed that upwardly mobile lower-class people of color tend to marry up somatically – a process called *blanqueamiento* (*embranquecimento* in Brazil) or "whitening" – with the hope that their progeny will thereby climb the color-class ladder intergenerationally. While the whitening process certainly seems to operate in male mate selection (obviously this does not apply to women, since for every male

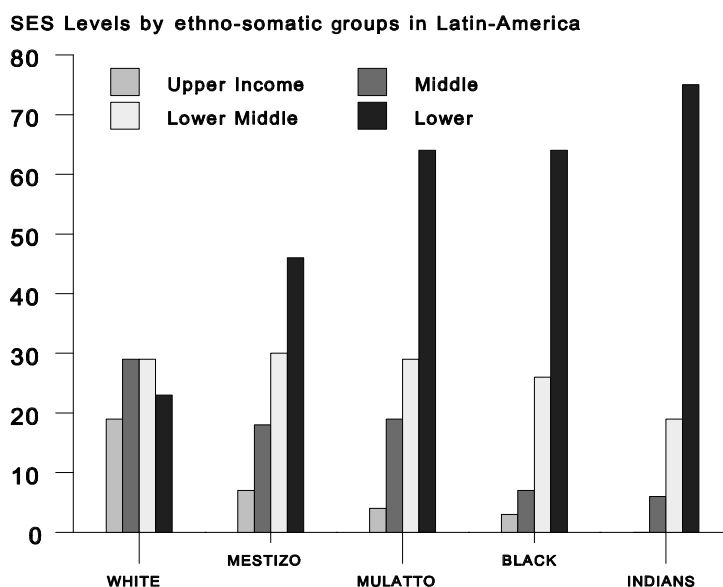


Figure 3.5 Class by ethno-somatic groups in Latin America

who marries lighter, there must be a female who marries darker), it seems to make little difference in terms of economic mobility, or in generating any close correlation between income and shade, as is commonly believed. This was the rather surprising recent finding of Edward Telles who discovered that blacks and browns in Brazil have very similar family income profiles, and are equally distinct from whites: the income of browns being 44.7 percent of whites, that of blacks 40.2 percent (Telles 1999: 86, Table 1). More recent work by Roland Soong confirms this (see Figure 3.5) as well as showing the high level of impoverishment among both.

The Latin mode of ethno-somatic stratification consolidated nationwide during the decades after emancipation in much the same way that the binary system did in the USA.

As Katia M. de Queriós Mattoso noted, in the post-emancipation era whiteness became even more important for those who could claim it:

The old families, bankrupt or not, prided themselves on their supposed all-white ancestry, despite all the evidence to the contrary. Everywhere there was racism, and everywhere it was denied. "Purification became a necessary prerequisite for upward mobility. In relations between individuals, the imperatives of humility, obedience, and fidelity were even stronger than they had been during the time of slavery." (1996: 211–12)

A similar consolidation took place in the Latin Caribbean during the late nineteenth century and intensified after emancipation. Governments pursued immigration policies that encouraged Europeans to immigrate to Cuba with the explicit aim of whitening the population, resulting in a significant demographic shift from a predominantly mixed and black, to a predominantly mixed and white one.

In many ways Brazil was, and remains, the worst possible system of racial stratification for people in the African diaspora. Their poverty levels approach 50 percent. They experience chronic unemployment. Nearly 40 percent of them are illiterate compared with a 25 percent rate among Caucasians. Most live in abysmal slums or *favelas*. They have extremely high rates of criminal victimization. Delinquency is a major issue and begins from early childhood. There are some 7 million abandoned children on the streets of Brazil, nearly all of whom are of African ancestry, who have no hope of sanctuary from the state and are regarded as human vermin by the light-skin and Caucasian elites. Periodically, Caucasian death squads, often hired by merchants, hunt them down and slaughter them like wild beasts. And their incarceration rates are horrendous: over 80 percent of imprisoned Brazilians are of marked African ancestry. This is what Brazilians used to call, with Orwellian bombast, "racial democracy." It has been more recently called, with some truth, a system of "de facto" and "unwritten apartheid." Although there are no segregation or apartheid laws, extreme Negrophobia remains rampant at all levels of the society. Nonwhite Brazilians are systematically excluded from all major positions in their society as well as all minor ones having to do with the public, including the job of office-boy. It is claimed that the public would not put up with a nonwhite person in any such position, in spite of the fact that the majority of the population is of African ancestry. Recent research suggests that the color bar works as viciously against mulattos as against dark-skinned educated persons, contrary to what was commonly believed. It has also been shown that in recent decades the Caucasian group has, if anything, become more exclusive and discriminatory (Telles 1999: 82–97). Telles observation that "black–white relations in Brazil are less separate but more unequal" (ibid.: 91) holds true for the mass of lower-class Brazilians, is less true of middle- and upper-middle-class communities, and is simply not true of the elite (Reichmann 1999).

At the same time, it has been difficult for Afro-Brazilians to mobilize against this system of racism and racial discrimination because they have so thoroughly bought into the *embranquecimento* ideology. Only in recent years has there been significant activism by educated Afro-Brazilians against this system. Their efforts have had some modest effects. It is

now generally agreed that the myth of “racial democracy” is well and truly dead. And in 1994 Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the president and a former sociologist of race and class, publicly acknowledged the reality of racism, racial inequality, and the need for state action. More recently the Brazilian government has introduced an affirmative action program for its higher educational system.

4 Continuity and change in contemporary Europe and the Americas

Beyond the different systems of ethno-somatic stratification, the most important external developments after slavery were the different patterns of economic development. The USA was to emerge as the major industrial power of the world in the century after slavery; while Brazil was to become the typical semi-peripheral Latin American economy and the Caribbean classic underdeveloped, plantation- and peasant-based systems. The socioeconomic and political conditions of the ex-slave populations varied with regard to their involvement in these economic systems. In America, Afro-Americans became trapped in the share-cropping system and were systematically excluded from the mainstream industrial economy in the North and the urban South. In the Caribbean all workers were caught in a moribund economic system, whether they were peasants attempting to eke out a living on farms that were nonviable small and getting smaller, or plantation workers being paid reservation wages. In Latin America rampant economic discrimination confined most persons of African ancestry to the plantations or domestic service.

This pattern of post-emancipation entrapment was broken by three developments in the second half of the twentieth century. One was the achievement of independence and subsequent attempts at economic development in the Caribbean; the other was the historically parallel civil rights movement of blacks in the USA. However, for the mass of non-US blacks in the Americas, including the Caribbean, the secondary migrations mentioned earlier were the major means of escape from permanent poverty. Caribbean blacks have made far greater use of migration as an escape mechanism than their Latin counterpart. This has resulted in both higher levels of income as well as greater exposure to the culture, ethno-somatic consciousness, and strategies of political mobilization of US blacks.

African-Americans

In a recent review of the Afro-American condition over the past forty years I concluded that considerable progress has been made – in the growth of

the Afro-American middle class (now 35 percent), in educational gains, in declining poverty rates (now 24 percent), in declining joblessness, in the integration of the armed forces and subsequent rise to high office in them by African-Americans, especially the Army where over ten of the officer corps is black, in the enormous influence of Afro-Americans on the nation's popular and elite cultures, and in the political clout of the group (Patterson 1997).

Overall, racism has declined substantially in the United States over the past thirty-five years. Only one in five Euro-Americans are now hardened racists. While this still means that for every two Afro-Americans there are three Euro-American racists, it is still a far cry from mid-century when over three-quarters of Euro-Americans were racists.¹²

For several reasons, America's traditional binary conception of race is currently undergoing considerable change. An important factor in the view of many scholars is the large inflow of people from Latin America and the Caribbean since 1965.¹³ The 2000 US census found that people of Latin ancestry are now the largest minority group in the nation, although the exact significance of this demographic change is not entirely clear.¹⁴ However, slightly over a half of them refused to designate themselves as either white or black in their census returns. Such a large "third" group undermines one of the basic assumptions of the binary racial model—that matters of "race" concern only blacks and whites. The binary construct is being further challenged by the growth of a still small but vocal mixed population. Some have suggested a long-term Latinization of America's racial attitudes, which would be different, though not necessarily a gain for the nation. A multicultural strategy is favored by many in the academic community but appears to have only modest support outside of Academe and is intellectually contested on many fundamental issues.¹⁵

At the same time, it is ironical that it is Afro-American leadership that is now most committed to the binary conception of race and the preservation of the "one-drop" rule of descent. A major reason is the fear of losing or diluting its political base as a result of any changing of ethno-somatic identities. The experience of Brazil clearly suggests certain political advantages in the binary conception of race for political mobilization and elite penetration by successful members of the black minority. But there are clear risks in clinging too ardently to this strategy since it reinforces the self-segregation of Afro-Americans from the rest of the society as well as its mainstream norms and networks, major factors explaining persisting failures not only among residents of the isolated inner-city ghettos, but middle class students who perform below what their more privileged background would predict.

Serious problems remain with the bottom quarter of the population which is marginalized from the mainstream economy. While their rate of poverty may now be near the historic low of 22.7 percent reached in 2001, the current rate of 24 percent still places the group as the poorest in the nation.¹⁶ African-Americans also continue to experience unemployment rates that stubbornly remain twice the national average. The main factors behind these rates are the skill-gap between the group and Euro-Americans,¹⁷ the historically high and still-growing proportion of female-headed families, and the paternal abandonment of children. Some 60 percent of African-American children are now being brought up in single-parent (overwhelmingly female) households, the majority of them in poverty. Significantly, African-American households headed by married couples have substantially closed the household income gap with their Euro-American counterpart.

While the proportion of the poor who live in segregated and highly concentrated areas of poverty has declined somewhat in the past few years (Jargowsky 2003), Afro-Americans as a group are still the most segregated population in the country (Massey and Denton 1993).¹⁸ As is well known, this segregation originated in legal restrictions and economic discrimination in the past. Today, however, it is not clear to what degree segregation results from persisting discrimination, inertia, or ethnic preference by blacks. Whatever the reasons, we share the view of Douglass Massey and others that the resulting cultural and economic isolation are major causes of black poverty and inequality. More recently, public-health officials have added yet another deleterious consequence of living in segregated ghettos: alarmingly high rates of stress and hypertension.

An important problem among African-Americans is the fraught nature of their gender relations and the growing gender gap in educational performance.¹⁹ Survey data suggest that these tensions exist in all types of unions. They are reflected in the low marriage rate of the group, their high rates of marital and cohabitational disruption, their low rates of remarriage, and in extremely high rates of intimate, inter-gender violence.²⁰

A related problem is the growing gender gap in educational attainment among African-Americans especially at higher educational levels. Black women are now almost twice as likely to attain a bachelors degree than black men and are 20 percent more likely to achieve a first professional degree. In striking contrast with other ethno-somatic groups, this holds for all disciplines, including business, law, and medicine (Patterson 1998: Chapter 1).

The issue of gender deserves special attention because it is one of the major continuities across the Atlantic diaspora as we will see when we

come to discuss the present Caribbean.²¹ Three major additional features of the group should be noted, especially in light of similar rates elsewhere in the black Atlantic. These are, the high rate of criminal victimization, nearly all at the hands of fellow blacks, astonishingly high incarceration rates, and extremely high rates of HIV infection.

In 2002, according to the US Bureau of Justice, 32 of every 1,000 African-Americans suffered some violent crime, compared with 24.5 of whites. The lifetime odds of a black male being murdered in 1997 has been estimated at 1 in 35, an improvement on earlier years. Even so, it was still five times greater than the odds of a white man being murdered (Akiyama and Noonan 2000). The incarceration rate of African-Americans, especially men, has drawn considerable attention because it may well be the highest in the world. A staggering 10 percent of black men between the ages of 25 and 29 are in jail or prison, and black men, a mere 12 percent of all males, make up 45 percent of America's inmate population. The main causes of this rate, as is well known, is the high involvement of blacks with illicit drug use and sale as well as the nation's draconian, and largely ineffective, drug laws.

The AIDS epidemic has recently emerged as one of the most serious problems confronting African-Americans and if present trends persist it will soon overshadow all other problems. Although only 12 percent of the US population, the CDC reports that in 2001 African-Americans accounted for half of all new HIV infections in the country: African-American men accounted for 43 percent of new cases among males, and African-American women made up 64 percent of all new cases among women. AIDS is now the leading cause of death among African-American women between 25 and 34, and among men aged 35 to 44. Since the beginning of the epidemic, 168,000 African-Americans have died of the disease (CDC 2003). It is important to note that poverty is not a risk factor for AIDS. The distinctive sexual practices of African-Americans, substance abuse, higher STD rates, higher turnover of partners, and reluctance to use condoms by men are major factors explaining the greater incidence of the diseases. African-American women suffer high rates of infection largely through heterosexual contact, often with partners who either refuse to acknowledge their infection or are unaware of it. Indeed, denial is a major cause of the rapid spread of the disease among African-American men. Not only do heterosexual men deny having the disease, but gay men often deny their homosexuality – the practice of living “down low” – and thus avoid prevention measures and messages directed at gay men (CDC 2003). In fact, a half of all AIDS cases among black men results from sex with other men.

Table 3.2 *Some basic socioeconomic indicators for selected Afro-Caribbean countries*

	GDP per cap PPP US\$ (2001)	GNI per capita US\$ (2002)	HDI Index 2001	Life expectancy at birth	Adult literacy rate % 15+ years
Antigua	10,170	9390	.798	73.9	86.6
Barbados	15,560	9750	.888	76.9	99.7
Haiti	1,860	480	.467	49.1	50.9
Jamaica	3,720	2800	.757	75.5	87.3
Surinam	4,599	1810	.762	70.8	94.0
Trinidad and Tobago	9,100	5,960	.802	71.5	98.4
USA	34,320	30,941	.937	76.9	100

Source: UNDP, 2003, *World Development Report*, World Bank, World Development Indicators.

The Afro-Caribbean

Most of the Afro-Caribbean economies are currently experiencing difficult times. Barbados, the Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, and Antigua are ranked among the better-off countries by the World Bank, measured in terms of their rates of growth, per capita income, and human development index. However, with the exception of Barbados, the economies of these better-off countries are all precariously dependent on only one or two industries – mainly tourism or some extractive industry such as oil. Furthermore, they still share many of the social problems found among African-Americans, such as high crime rates, drug dependency, fragile female-headed families, and high rates of HIV incarceration.

Haiti stands at the other extreme. It has the largest black population in the Caribbean; indeed, with 7 million persons of identified black ancestry (not counting the color-conscious 300,000 who explicitly reject a black identification), its population is larger than all the other black populations of the region put together. Haiti, sadly, has only its revolutionary anti-slave past to be proud of. With a GNI per capita of \$440, over half its population over fifteen years of age illiterate, a life expectancy at birth of only fifty-two years, and its economy currently shrinking, Haiti ranks as the poorest country in the hemisphere, and one of the poorest in the world.

Jamaica is typical of Afro-Caribbean societies and we will briefly focus on it. The first decade of development after independence in 1962 appeared impressive on the surface. However its 4.5 percent average growth rate during this period was based on a flawed import-substitution

model of growth, royalties from the highly capital-intensive bauxite industry, investment in tourist infrastructure, and a large inflow of foreign loans (Girvan 1971, Jefferson 1972). Improvement in educational and job opportunities led to a significant growth in the local managerial and middle classes. But accompanying this were the neglect of agriculture and a massive internal migration to the urban areas resulting in vast shanty-town settlements. Job growth never kept up with employment losses and chronic underemployment in agriculture, the result being the rapid rise of unemployment with so-called economic growth (a pattern found all over the Caribbean, including Puerto Rico with its once vaunted Operation Bootstrap model of growth).

Jamaica changed course in the seventies with the election of the People's National Party to power and its shift toward a democratic socialist strategy. However this incited the wrath of the United States and alienated the managerial classes who fled with their capital. Compounding this were sharp internal ideological differences within the ruling party. The result was economic chaos. The economy shrank during the last half of the seventies and came close to bankruptcy (Stephens and Stephens 1986). During the eighties, with the return to office of the conservative Jamaica Labor Party, Jamaica returned to the straight capitalist, open-market path and has remained steadfastly on it in spite of changes of government. While these structural adjustment policies have satisfied the IMF and other foreign lenders, on almost every social and economic indicator Jamaica has either stagnated or fallen behind over the past two decades. As the most recent United Nations Development report makes clear, after forty years of economic planning and change, Jamaicans are on average poorer now than they were on the eve of independence. The nation has one of the highest debt ratios in the world, a trap from which it is now impossible to extricate itself. The society is substantially more unequal. Social services and subsidies for the poor declined markedly during the eighties in the effort to meet IMF conditionalities (Looney 1987).

The abysmal and ever-worsening condition of the urban masses, combined with a traditional soft-drug (ganja) culture which has metastasized into hard drug use and absorption into the international trade in illicit drugs, and murderous political rivalries, has led to one of the highest crime rates in the world. The homicide rate of the island rose from 7 per 100,000 in the 1960s to 23 in the 1980s, to over 36 in the 1990s (Moser and Holland 1997).

One of the most serious problems currently threatening the black Caribbean is the AIDS pandemic, although it is still not given the priority it deserves by the region's leaders. The most recent UN reports indicate

that outside of Africa the Caribbean region has the world's worst infection rates (UNAIDS 2002). Over 6 percent of all adults in Haiti are infected with HIV and in some poor areas over 13 percent of pregnant women were tested HIV-positive. Although the Bahamas, as indicated earlier, is among the higher income states of the region, it ranks next to Haiti with an adult infection rate of over 3.5 percent. And Trinidad, another one of the better-off states, has adult infection rates over 1 percent. This is consistent with the finding, reported earlier, that low income is not an important risk factor for HIV infection. As in Africa and the USA, the high infection rates in the Caribbean are rooted in the region's traditional sexual and familial patterns: early entry into sexual relations, frequent turnover of partners, low rates of marital stability, and a strong reluctance on the part of men to use condoms. As in Africa, the sexual exploitation of young girls by older men results in much higher rates of infection among girls between 15 and 19: they are twice as likely to be infected than boys of the same age group in Jamaica, and five times more likely in Trinidad.

I have argued elsewhere that the future of the Caribbean lies in what I have called the emerging West Atlantic system (Patterson 1987). More recently, a growing number of scholars have interpreted this as part of a trend toward transnational communities. Unfortunately, this scholarship suffers, substantively, from a too great preoccupation with American ethnic and identity issues and, methodologically, from a rather too narrow ethnographic focus and a reluctance to place these transnational movements within the broader framework of Caribbean underdevelopment.²²

Caribbean societies have gone farther in this process than those in any other part of the world. Indeed, their migratory histories, forced and voluntary, seriously calls into question the qualitative newness of transnationalism as a social process. The "social remittances" which Peggy Levitt recently found among the returned migrants and villagers she studied in the Dominican Republic would be familiar to anyone with the slightest acquaintance with Barbadian or Jamaican cultural history from the late nineteenth century (Levitt, P. 2001). For example, the Panama Canal was dug by vast numbers of Jamaican and other West Indian workers at the end of the nineteenth century, most of whom returned home with Latin economic and "social remittances" that greatly influenced the popular cultures and gender attitudes of the then British islands. West Indian contract farm workers in America have been bringing back such cultural remittances to the islands for decades, one major outcome of which being the international music we now know as reggae. And to get a bit personal, one own very Latin, and most un-British first name-Orlando-,

was derived from Jamaican transnational cane cutters who brought the name back with them after cutting cane in Cuba during the “dance of the million” years of the twenties sugar boon in Cuba.

In quantitative terms, however, there is no gainsaying the growth of the transnational process. Caribbean economies are not just dependent – as they have been since the late fifteenth century – but increasingly enveloped by the United States, and their populations increasingly live in both the USA and the islands in so-called transnational communities. Over a third of all Jamaicans, and more than a half of many of the smaller island states of the Lesser Antilles, live in communities that are, in effect, colonies of settlement in America. The typical Afro-Caribbean migrant no longer considers himself as being abroad when he is located in the stateside part of his society, whether in Brooklyn, Miami, or Toronto. This process is likely to accelerate in coming years as the island economies become less and less viable.

We should be careful, though, in our predictions about this transnational process. The big question here is the extent to which second and later generations of West Indians in North America will identify with their ancestral Caribbean societies. It may be that transnationalism is a single-generation phenomenon, largely restricted to the generation that migrated. Oddly, in spite of the large number of studies of second-generation migrants from the region, there has been no rigorous attempt to assess the extent to which the transnational process is multi-generational. My own anecdotal experience talking to scores of second-generation students and other persons over the past thirty years suggests that while many of them use their Caribbean background in negotiating distinct ethno-somatic identities in America, as many studies have emphasized,²³ very few of the second generation return home or have any plans of doing so, and a surprisingly large number have rarely even visited the region as tourists.

The migration and settlement of Caribbean people in the USA has raised the question of their relative performance in this society when compared with black Americans and with West Indian migrants in Britain. Afro-Caribbean peoples in the United States are reputed to be moderately successful and are indeed even cited as classic upwardly mobile migrants (Sowell 1981). In contrast, West Indians in the UK are said to exhibit the usual set of problems associated with the Afro-American poor: low educational performance; little success in the occupational ladder; high unemployment; high crime rates and problems with the police.²⁴

Why the difference, scholars have come to ask? It is doubtful how useful this comparison is. Some scholars have recently argued that the popular view of West Indian success in the USA is itself largely a myth,

and can be explained away once we control for labor force participation (Model 1995). Others, along with Model, have also argued that income differences, insofar as they exist, pertain mainly to English-speaking Caribbean immigrants, but that being black remains the decisive factor in the occupational and income achievement of all Afro-Caribbean people in the USA.²⁵ One may reasonably conclude that earlier waves of West Indian migrants were successful, especially when the formidable hurdles of racism in the earlier half of the twentieth century are taken into account (Kasinitz 1993) and that Anglophone West Indians do indeed earn more and are better placed occupationally than their Afro-American counterparts (Kalmijn 1996).

The contrast with West Indian migrants to Britain is easily explained by the different migratory flows and by the selection process accompanying the movements to Britain and America. West Indians who migrated to the United States went in two major waves, as we noted earlier. The wave that ended in 1923–4 was a highly selected one. Many were among the most educated persons of color in the islands from which they came. It is remarkable, for example, that the mother of US Secretary of State Colin Powell – possibly the most famous and successful West Indian American of this earlier wave – was a high school graduate in the 1920s. This would have placed her in the top 2 percent of educated persons of color in Jamaica. In addition, the America that these early West Indian migrants entered offered considerable opportunities to act as brokers between the still politically unorganized Afro-Americans and the Euro-American power elite (Kasinitz 1993). One is hardly surprised at the success of this wave. Indeed, there is evidence of a persisting difference in the residence pattern and success rates of Jamaicans whose ancestors came in the earlier wave and those who came later. A study commissioned by the *New York Times* found that residents of the Williamsbridge-Wakefield area of the Bronx where Colin Powell grew up is the most prosperous of all Jamaican communities in New York (Nossiter 1995).

By contrast, the migrants who went to England between 1955 and 1962 came predominantly from the peasant and proletarian classes of the West Indies and, with the exception of Barbadians – many of whom have actually done moderately well in the UK – were not anywhere as educated as the earlier wave of migrants who went to America. They were also incorporated at the bottom of the manual labor hierarchy to do jobs that English workers did not want. Nor was there a politically undeveloped native Afro-British group offering the prospect of middlemen roles as was true of West Indians in New York in the earlier decades of the century.

In comparing the earlier wave of West Indian migrants with those of the post-fifties migrants to Britain we are really comparing apples and pineapples. A better comparison would be with the working- and lower-class migrants who moved to America in the post-1965 wave that is still in full swing. When we observe the economic performance of these less-educated migrants we find really little difference between them and their British counterparts, or for that matter between them and their lower-class Afro-American counterparts. They are failing at the same rates in schools and have income levels that, on a per hour basis, is lower than that of poor Afro-Americans. A recent study by Mary Waters (1999) suggests that West Indian migrants of the recent wave differ from earlier waves also in the tendency of a significant proportion of them to assimilate into Afro-American lower-class urban society. She argues, along with others such as Alessandro Portes (1995), that there is now a "segmentary assimilation" pattern among immigrants from the Caribbean and other areas of the Americas. Unlike earlier West Indians and European migrants, assimilation into American society means incorporation into Afro-American life, attitudes and problems, the argument goes. Hence, in sharp contrast with the past, it is precisely those second-generation West Indians who remain unassimilated and maintain close ties to parents and home who are likely to be more successful. While this argument may be true of New York and a few other northeastern cities, it hardly holds for all or even most West Indians in America today. Selective migratory factors, as Model, Sullivan, and others have noted, both before *and after* migrating to the USA sufficiently explain differences in outcomes. Many successful West Indians in New York, for example, re-migrate to Florida, which makes it problematic to generalize about the experience of the group from studies of New York.

Actually, this latest wave of West Indian migrants to the United States is highly bimodal. Migrants are coming more and more not from only the lower end of these societies but also increasingly from the top end. Intellectuals, professionals, and others who traditionally would have migrated to Europe now move to the USA. Hence the seeming paradox that although West Indians are disproportionately among the trouble-makers and deviants of America (the drug posses of the eighties having been a major problem) the islands have handed the USA two nobel laureates, a disproportionate number of its nurses, and an unusually large number of its academics of color. Milton Vickerman is correct in describing the West Indian situation in the USA as "multifaceted," one in which they share many of the burdens of racism along with Afro-Americans and have developed a strong sense of ethno-somatic consciousness as a

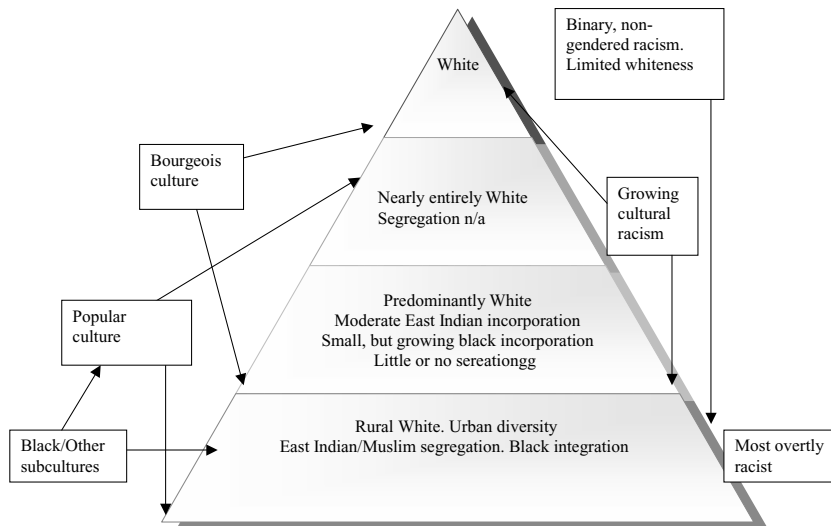


Figure 3.6 North Atlantic mode: prolaterian incorporation

result, but have maintained distinctive commitments to achievement and mobility. “Indeed,” he observes further, “their presence tends to show that opportunities for upward mobility blacks exist, but these commingle with, rather than displace, racism. Thus, West Indians help to illustrate the complexity, especially for blacks, of race in present day America” (Vickerman 1999: 126–7).

The North Atlantic mode: proletarian incorporation

Earlier we discussed three of the four modes of ethno-somatic stratification. In turning to Europe we come to the fourth mode, which will be discussed through the case of Britain where a half of all people of African ancestry on the continent live. As indicated earlier, there are 1,148,738 black identified persons in Britain, making up 2 percent of the total British population and 24.8 percent of the minority population. In addition, there is a mixed, black–white group of 225,705, constituting another 10 percent of minority Britons.

The first thing to note about the North Atlantic mode (see Figure 3.6) is that these are not racially constituted societies.²⁶ By this I mean that, unlike the USA and Latin American societies with large black populations, “race” never became a fundamental principle of social organization and social identity. Let me emphasize at once that this is not to say that

racism was and is not important here. From as early as Elizabethan times we find evidence (including the utterances of the Virgin Queen herself) of rampant racist attitudes in Britain. Britain, however, never made “race” a principle of social organization, for the simple reason that the black – and nonwhite – population there was, until the short wave of commonwealth migration between the late forties and early sixties, demographically insignificant. Whiteness becomes a salient basis of identity only where there is a continuous demographic, sociocultural, and psychological presence of blacks or other nonwhite groups and a history of *domestic* enslavement of this other group. To be sure, the English person who met a black person (in the colonies, on the docks, wherever) was often likely to interact with racist assumptions, but such meetings were rare for the mass of British people. And it is still the case that the typical British person who lives outside of the large metropolitan areas rarely encounters people of color.

Unlike the sharp, binary conception of race that was so constitutive of US identity, Britishness, as Robin Cohen observed in his very supple analysis, is a rather fuzzy and malleable identity: “Multiple axes of identification have meant that Irish, Scots, Welsh and English people, those from the white, black, brown Commonwealth, Americans, English-speakers, Europeans and even ‘aliens’ have had their lives intersect one with another in overlapping and complex circles of identity construction and rejection” (1994: 35). What is of even greater significance is Cohen’s argument that the more exclusive identity of Englishness carries “connotations of class, linguistic and cultural superiority” from which some whites are excluded. Being white may be assumed in this identity, but it carries little or no definitional weight and is in no way constitutive. In other words, in striking contrast with the answer one would most certainly receive from a white person from the US South – the classic region of binary racial identification – if one were to ask the typical English person to state what most defines his identity, it is very unlikely that being white would ever be mentioned. To be sure, the fact that being white is taken for granted has significance for those who are not white, but there is an important asymmetry here which cannot be neglected: the fact that nonwhiteness is important for nonwhites, in no way implies that whiteness is in any way meaningful for whites. And this is itself very important, both in distinguishing the British ethno-somatic mode from the others, and in the kind of interactions it makes possible in Britain.

To take one major implication of this asymmetry, miscegenation does not have anything like the same emotional, sociological, and political potency that it had, and in many areas, still does in the USA and Latin America. The binary system, as we have pointed out, is obsessed with

notions of racial purity and traditionally considered black–white unions the greatest social evil with laws forbidding intermarriage in America as late as 1967. It still remains true that mixed couples, while no longer lynched or stoned in America, still find themselves stared at even in the most cosmopolitan metropolitan areas of the country, by whites *and* by blacks. And in Latin America the Negrophobia of the racist elite means that not only are white–black marriages rare, but in the highly unusual case where it happens the white person is immediately ostracized from elite circles.

There is simply no parallel to this anywhere in Britain or Northern Europe generally. Mixed couples draw virtually no notice in the metropolitan areas where they tend to reside. I know this to be true not only from my own experience living for many years in different parts of Britain, but from the experience of every one of the numerous mixed British couples I have known. These anecdotal experiences are supported by almost every national survey that has probed British attitudes on mixed unions. As we will document later, 91 percent of British whites said that they would not oppose the marriage of their child to a black person. What is remarkable about this poll is the fact that more than half these whites claim that Britain is racist and a third admitted that they themselves have behaved in racist ways. What this means is that in Britain, unlike the multiethnic societies of the Americas, being racist is not necessarily correlated with being racially purist or positively valuing whiteness.

This brings me to the second important difference between British racism, and white–nonwhite relations generally, and those of the USA. It is the fact that British ethno-somatic relations are largely non-gendered. There is nothing there remotely comparable to the obsessive symbolic use of women as embodiments of the honor and purity of “the race.” This is partly due to the absence of a domestic history of slavery, and of a tradition of obsessive preoccupation with the fearsome, uncontrollable sexuality of males of a natively alienated, “inferior,” and wretchedly oppressed group. It may also be due to the greater secularism of North Europeans and, consequently, the non-moralizing of sex and women’s status. Whatever the reason, as we will see, the ungendered nature of British racism has meant that unusual levels of intermarriage and interethnic cohabitation are possible without this becoming a basis of interethnic conflict.

The mass migration of Caribbean and Asian peoples to Britain after the late forties marked a new era in British (as well as Dutch and French) societies, converting them to multicultural and multiethnic systems in their metropolitan areas. Even so, they still make up only 2.5 percent of the total. In addition, they are concentrated in the large metropolitan areas of the country, as Ceri Peach has pointed out.²⁷ What this means

is that for the mass of British people blacks are not part of daily social interactions. They are, however, now very much a part of the national and political landscape and a very real sociological presence in the most vital part of the country.

Multiethnic Britain has gone through three critical periods.²⁸ The first period of entry and settlement lasted for about three decades, between the late forties and 1980. It was characterized by periodic expression of cultural shock and growing resentment on the part of the native population and, on the immigrants' part, adjustment to the lower ranks of the laboring classes, as well as political passivity. Increasing waves of racist attacks by natives as well as harassment by the police culminated in the anti-police riots of the early eighties.²⁹ This marked the second era of adjustment characterized, on the one hand, by growing political awareness and antiracist activism by the minority populations and, on the other hand, the reluctant acceptance of the fact that Britain had become a multiethnic society by the natives. Immigrant political activism went through a period of defensive coalition by the different ethnic groups facilitated by a shared construction of political "blackness" vis-à-vis the white majority. This construction, however, was wholly expedient and was bound to be temporary. It was undermined by the cultural diversity of the immigrant groups, by their homeland hostility to each other (especially tensions between Indians and Pakistanis), by their own ethno-somatic values, including South Asian distaste for dark-complexioned people, by their very different pre-migratory experiences with, and attitudes toward the English, and by marked differences in economic performance and incorporation. This resulted in very different modes of adjustment to British society by the various ethnic groups, as we will see shortly.

The native British leadership during this second era was dominated by the Conservative Party under Thatcher and by a shift in attitude toward the immigrant population. The Conservative reaction moved in two apparently opposing directions. One was the rise of what Barker has called "the new racism" (1981). Old-fashioned biological racism – the view that nonwhites were genetically inferior – was replaced by the ideology of primordial cultural differences: the view that people had a natural preference for their own traditional ways of life and that these differences were so great and immutable that integration was unrealistic and may even be undesirable. A benign version of this view informed the activism of some of the new antiracist activists. In this view, people were culturally different but such differences were desirable. Here was the genesis of the new ideology of multicultural diversity, aided by intellectual imports from the United States which had moved in this direction in its post-civil-rights period.

However, as the realization sunk in that the immigrants were in Britain to stay, especially with the growth of the second generation of black British, a more ancient British attitude toward immigrants reappeared. In a nutshell, this view amounted to a close-the-door-and-absorb-the-aliens policy. In less homely terms: end immigration and integrate. I say it is an ancient British view because this is exactly how Britain had solved its immigrant “problem” over the centuries of its post-Anglo-Saxon history at all levels of its society: consider the Normans and the Danes; consider the history of its own royal families.³⁰ As we will see, whether consciously pursued or not, this approach has worked with precisely the group of immigrants we are most concerned with.

The third era of British ethnic adjustment began somewhere during the late eighties and early nineties. This era has been marked not only by intensifying activism, but a growing involvement in municipal politics – begun from the mid-seventies – and the emergence of minority participation in national politics, a “major breakthrough” coming with the election of four black Members of Parliament in 1987 (Fitzgerald 1990). By the nineties however, the ethnic coalition of the earlier era had fallen apart due to the underlying differences mentioned earlier. Ethnic Indian and other South Asian groups rejected the overarching identity of political “blackness” and began to assert their own separate identities. This was partly in response to the intensifying black identity movement among Afro-Caribbean and African British leadership, itself in part an adoption of black American identity politics, in part a homegrown Afro-Caribbean movement rooted in the popular music and culture of the Caribbean. As in America, the ideology of diversity has been adopted as the overarching rationale for activism in this new era.

Britain, however, is not America. The underlying differences in the total size and demographic mix of its ethnic populations, along with the different sets of ethno-somatic attitudes on the part of the British and the ethnic groups themselves, and the very different experiences of the ethnic groups in the British labor market and economic system generally, have resulted in a peculiar dissonance between the imported ideology of diversity and the realities of ethnic incorporation. As Figure 3.7 indicates, there are striking ethnic and gender differences in unemployment rates. Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and African men and women are not faring well in the labor market. Nor are Caribbean men. Indian men and women are participating at much higher rates, as are Caribbean women, whose participation and unemployment rates are nearly equal to that of white British women.

Much the same pattern holds for the proportion of the different groups in low income households, as Figure 3.8 shows, except that Caribbean

Four modes of ethno-somatic stratification

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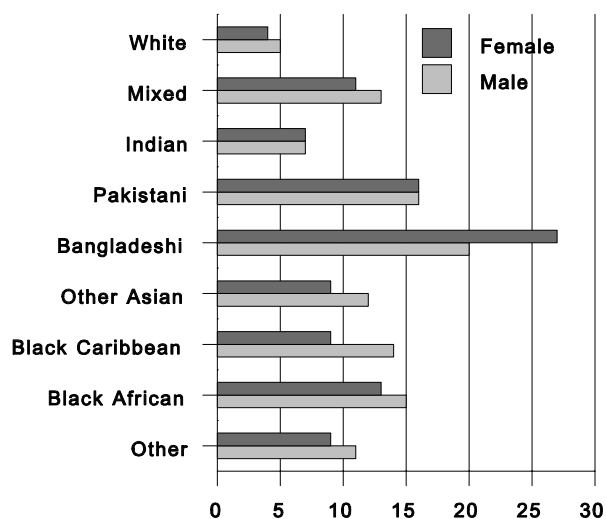


Figure 3.7 UK unemployment by ethnicity and gender

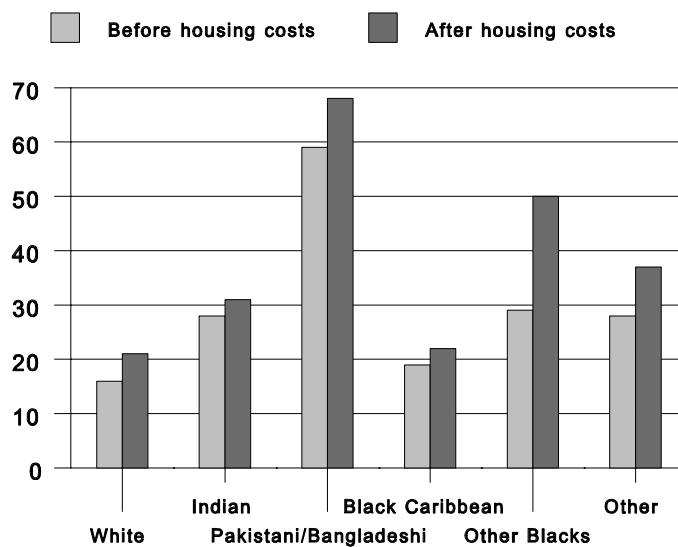


Figure 3.8 Households on low income by ethnicity

Table 3.3 *Percent of students aged 16 who achieved 5 or more GCSES, 1999*

England and Wales	Percentages
Indian girls	66
White girls	55
Indian boys	54
Black girls	46
White boys	45
Other group girls	44
Other group boys	40
Pakistani/Bangladeshi girls	37
Black boys	31
Pakistani/Bangladeshi boys	22

Source: UK Census, National Statistics On-line, posted 10/2/2003.

blacks and Indians are about on par in this regard. Indeed, if income before housing costs is considered, a smaller proportion of black Caribbean households than Indian households are in the low-income category. At the same time, this table does not register the fact that Indians are doing much better at the higher income levels and occupational structure than Caribbean blacks. One of the main reasons for this is the much better educational attainment of Indian men compared with Caribbean men and other men from South Asia.

Table 3.3 is interesting for two reasons. It partly explains the very different income and occupational outcomes of the different groups. However, it also shows that one of the striking continuities in the black Atlantic persists here: the gender gap between black men and women. In their GSCE results – the closest parallel to America’s SAT tests – black boys perform next to last of all the ethnic-gender groups, above only the Pakistani and Bangladeshi boys. The disciplinary and educational problems of black students has been a major issue in the British educational system.³¹ At the same time, it is remarkable that black girls are performing near the top end of the ethnic-gender groups. Indeed, they outperform white British boys in these exams.

Closely related to this is another sociocultural continuity with other black groups across the Atlantic: the high proportion of lone-parent families and low rates of marriage.³² A recent study summarizes the black Caribbean situation in Britain in terms that could apply equally to blacks in the United States, Latin America, or the Caribbean: “The key feature of family life in the (British) Caribbean community is the low rate of marriage. Caribbeans are less likely to live with a partner than white people; those who have a partner are less likely to have married them;

those who have married one are likely to separate or divorce" (Berthoud 2000). As is true also of the Americas, single female parenting is on the increase, the combined impact of traditional values and greater female independence. Thus 24 percent of immigrant Caribbean mothers were single compared with 48 percent of mothers born in Britain or brought up there (*ibid.*: 8–9).

Another continuity with the rest of the black Atlantic is the high rates of crime and incarceration of young Caribbean men. This is a highly contested issue in Britain. Young Caribbean men were, and to a lesser extent still are, profiled and harassed by the British Police, the indiscriminate and clearly racist use of the notorious SUS laws of the past being the main reason for riots in numerous towns and cities all over Britain in 1981 (Colman and Gorman 1982: 1–4). It has been suggested that the high rate of crime among young Caribbean men is partly the result of the greater tendency of the police to search and arrest them, exacerbated by biased crime reporting that emphasizes precisely those crimes most likely to be committed by young black men.³³ While there is certainly some truth to this, there is no denying the fact that young Caribbean men commit a disproportionate number of serious crimes and experience relatively high rates of incarceration. Seven percent of arrests in 1997 and 1998 were of black people and 11 percent of all who were stopped and searched (UK Home Office 1998: 19–26). Much of this criminal activity is related to drug use and trading, as is the case in the United States and the Caribbean.

There is one set of statistics that is largely free of police reporting bias: namely, homicide. Though only 2 percent of its population, in cases where both victims and offenders have been identified, blacks in Britain were 6.3 percent of its murder victims between 1977 and 1999 and were the principal suspects in 7.8 percent of its homicides (UK Home Office 1999: 17, Tables 4.2–4.3). Regarding incarceration, the figures in absolute terms seem better than those for black Americans, but this is largely a reflection of the much smaller rate of imprisonment in Britain. Black Caribbean men make up 7.4 percent of the total prison population and the total black percentage was 11.8; and black Caribbean women were 9.5 percent while the total black female incarcerated population stood at 17.9 percent (UK Home Office 1999: 42–43, Tables 7.1–7.4). Hence their overrepresentation rate in Britain's prisons (slightly over eight times what their proportion of the population would predict for Caribbean men, and 9.5 times for Caribbean women) is actually twice the overrepresentation rate of black Americans.

With such data, it is easy to exaggerate the negative aspects of the condition of blacks in Britain, a tendency that both British antiracist activists and those conservatives convinced that there is no hope for blacks

in Britain, find hard to resist. In fact, the overall trends in the condition of blacks in Britain are generally positive, and in one respect quite extraordinary. The first generation who migrated from conditions of economic hopelessness in the Caribbean all improved their situation, even if it meant employment at the bottom rung of the British labor market. More importantly, the second generation of Caribbean blacks have significantly improved their standing in the British occupational structure. Whereas the first generation of immigrants were nearly all unskilled or semiskilled manual laborers, by 1990 31 percent of black Caribbean people in the labor force – primarily the second generation of British-born blacks – were in professional or other non-manual occupations (Jones 1996: 99–100). Susan Model concluded from her analysis of the 1991 census data that, “Native-born Indians and Black Caribbeans attain significantly higher class positions than their foreign-born counterparts” (1999: 969–90). Indeed, by the end of the century Black Caribbean women had not only caught up with white British women in the attainment of higher education qualifications but had slightly surpassed them. A downside of this, however, is the fact that black men and women do not get the same returns to educational achievement as whites do, suggesting the persistence of a significant level of employment discrimination.

There are two respects in which the experience of blacks in Britain differ markedly from those in the Americas, and it is those which largely justify our claim that this is a distinct mode of ethno-somatic stratification. These are their much lower rates of segregation and their unusually high rates of inter-marriage with native white British persons. The segregation patterns of blacks and South Asians in Britain are the very opposite of what pertains in the United States. Overall, Britain remains a remarkably unsegregated society. Ceri Peach has neatly summarized the different patterns of socioeconomic and residential adjustment (1998). There is what he calls an Indian profile which is white-collar, suburban, and owner-occupying; a Pakistani profile that is blue-collar, inner-city and owner-occupying; a Bangladeshi profile that is blue-collar and council-housed in the inner city; and a Caribbean pattern that is blue-collar, council housed “but far less segregated than the Bangladeshis and with a pronounced tendency to decentralisation.” Indeed, it turns out that although Caribbean blacks are more blue-collar and inner-city than Indians, and are on the lower rungs of the occupational structure, they are far less segregated than any of the groups from Asia.

Even more remarkable are the rates of interethnic unions (both cohabitational and marital) between Caribbean and native white British persons. These are easily the highest rates of interethnic unions of any two groups

in Britain and they far surpass any such rate in the Americas, including Brazil.³⁴ The 1991 census indicates that 40 percent of all British-Caribbean men and 20 percent of women between the ages of 16 and 34 are living with a Euro-British partner (See Table 3.4). Even more telling, however, is the marital behavior of the second generation, those who identify themselves as “Black Other.” Over a half of all men *and women* who are partnered are living with or married to a Caucasian-British person (Barrington 1996: 199). This clearly implies an exponential growth of the mixed population. What is equally significant is that this mixed group largely identifies itself as simply British. Thus there is both a physical and an identity-stimulated leakage from the Afro-British population. The data bear this out. The Caribbean British population reached a peak of 590,000 in 1976 and began to decline thereafter. Thus there was a 3 percent decline between 1976 and 1981, followed by a 14 percent decline between 1981 and 1991. Since there has been no decline in the birth rate of Caribbean-British people and only negligible out-migration (which may have been compensated for with inflows, resulting in negligible net migratory flows), the only explanation for this dramatic decline is passage into the Euro-British population through miscegenation.

The high intermarriage rate of Caribbean blacks cuts across economic groups and is clearly a survival of Caribbean homeland ethno-somatic and culture-class attitudes. Although West Indian, especially Jamaican, popular singers endlessly celebrate black pride, and the Rastafarian religion has made a virtual cult of it, West Indians still have a strong preference for British people. There is some reason to believe that the attraction is not simply physical but cultural and the best evidence of this is their intermarital behavior when they migrate to another majority white society, the United States. Suzanne Model and Gene Fisher have found that while US-born Caribbean black men intermarry with white US women at three times the rate of African-American men, the rate itself is still quite modest (11.9 percent of partnered men are married to whites compared with 3.87 percent of African-American men). What’s more, immigrant black Caribbean men actually marry white US women at an even lower rate than African-American men. An even smaller proportion of immigrant and US-born Caribbean women marry white US men (Model and Fisher 2002). The contrast with the intermarriage rate of both immigrant and native-born black Caribbeans in Britain is remarkable: almost 18 percent of partnered immigrant and 40 percent of partnered British-born Caribbean men in their sample are married to white women, and a quarter of all partnered British-born Caribbean women are married to white Britons compared with only 8 percent of their US-born Caribbean counterpart.

Table 3.4 *Interethnic unions of all married and cohabitating UK residents, 1991*

Ethnic group of male partner	Ethnic group of female partner									
	White	Black Caribbean	Black African	Black Other	Indian	Pakistani	Bangladeshi	Chinese	Other	Total
White	126,150	102	41	63	71	10	0	79	287	126,803
Black Carib	225	559	8	10	4	2	0	2	15	865
Black Afric.	48	16	208	4	2	1	0	0	2	281
Black-Other	76	3	2	62	1	0	0	0	3	147
Indian	134	2	4	1	1,762	18	0	5	9	1,935
Pakistani	42	0	0	1	6	775	0	0	7	831
Bangladeshi	7	0	2	0	4	1	217	0	2	233
Chinese	34	0	0	0	2	0	0	234	0	270
Other	273	6	2	3	11	8	1	4	498	806
Total	126,989	728	267	144	1,863	815	218	324	823	132,171

Source: Berrington 1996: 199, Table 7.9.

Obviously, the different attitudes of white British and white American men and women toward interracial partnering partly explains this. But it does not explain as much as one might think. Although a majority of white Americans say they would not intermarry with a black person, a substantial minority are quite willing to do so, perhaps as much as one in five from surveys and other indicators. When we take account of the demographic fact that West Indians are a tiny fraction of the US population, this means that for every one of them desiring to marry a white person there would be several hundred potential takers on the marriage or partner market. The fact that Caribbeans in America are heavily concentrated in the large metropolitan areas also means that they are in the most liberal centers of America where most whites willing to marry blacks are likely to be found. Hence other factors are needed for a sufficient explanation of the low intermarriage rate in the USA, when compared with Britain. Since British whites and US whites are physically similar (well, sort of) the explanation must be a cultural bias in favor of British mates by West Indians.

This bias was, and remains, part and parcel of the Afro-Caribbean mode of ethno-somatic stratification. These societies are all culturally stratified with elites adhering to a creolized version of European cultures. It remains true even of Haiti, over two centuries after its successful revolt from France. Unlike African-Americans, what upwardly mobile Caribbean people most desire is not the rejection but the assimilation of this thinly islandized shoot of European culture, an assimilation that is vital for class mobility but no longer carries the burden of white ethno-somatic identification since the elites who practice and transmit it are now almost all black or brown. Among the masses, who rarely make it into this elite, there are still ways of appropriating the desired culture, the most powerful instance of which being the almost obsessive assimilation of the quintessentially British game of cricket. Nor should it be forgotten that British imperial propaganda was no idle hegemonic snare. The generation of West Indians who migrated to Britain on the eve of empire did sincerely believe that they were going to the mother country,³⁵ unlike those who went to America right after. It is easy to say now that they were soon to be disabused of such false consciousness, but the truth, as always, was far more complex than that. Contrary to the vexatious and proudful talk of racial spokesmen, the typical immigrant of the first generation was, on the whole, largely grateful for the opportunity to work a regular job and earn a living wage – a simple dignity which the society he had left behind had never allowed him to enjoy. For the first time in his life he could live in a real house rather than a corrugated, wattle and daub coop, with the privacy of his own and his woman's room, could enjoy the

domestic miracle of indoor plumbing, the unfamiliar regularity of three round meals a day and dress each morning as if it was Sunday. Even more, he could quietly marvel at the fact that his children would all attend high school – an elite assumption back home – and could even dream of them moving beyond his unskilled condition. These were pleasing things that made his passage worthwhile and largely compensated for the anxieties of displacement and the intermittent shock of racist abuse.

There was satisfaction, too (no doubt a trifle ironic), of laboring side by side with working men looking exactly like the people who, back home, naturally assumed the air of rulers. What's more, the typical British worker with whom he worked was not the compulsive racist bigot of antiracist abstractions. Whatever their misgivings about the immigration policies of their government and their bosses, most had the simple decency to live and let live and, in time, even befriend. It is this that explains the repeated finding of surveys, compulsively explained away by social analysts, that the typical black and white worker made friends at work. It also explains, along with the ethno-somatic values brought over by the immigrant, the tendency to intermarry with the natives.

With all this in mind, then, let us look more closely at a recent poll conducted in 2002 by the BBC, what is perhaps the most thorough and professionally executed survey of "racial" attitudes and experiences in modern Britain (BBC, 2002). The range of answers suggest that black and Asian as well as white British people have a realistic, but not pessimistic, view of the present and future of ethno-somatic relations in Britain. A slight majority of whites did not believe that immigrants integrated and made a positive contribution to Britain, a view not shared by minority respondents. At the same time, there was near unanimity (51–2 percent) across all groups that immigrant communities could do more to integrate. Over 70 percent of blacks and Asians thought that the police were doing a poor job, a view equally shared by whites, and 55 percent of blacks thought they discriminated on grounds of race. Most, however, thought they would get a fair trial in the courts. Speaking of their experiences in the labor market, some 40 percent of blacks claimed to have experienced personally, or witnessed, racism in employment, compared with 22 percent of whites and 34 percent of Asians; and approximately a third of blacks and 29 percent of Asians claimed to have actually suffered racial or religious discrimination at work. Finally, on the negative side, both whites (52 percent) and blacks (53 percent) were in near agreement that Britain is still racist: six in ten blacks and Asians claimed to have experienced some verbal or racial abuse, and about one in five physical racial abuse, and over a third of whites actually admitted that they had said or done something that others could consider racist. These

answers are consistent with expert accounts and observations of ethno-somatic relations in Britain in recent years which, in conjunction with their remarkable candor, increases our confidence in them and make their other more positive responses all the more persuasive.

Apart from their candor, many of the above answers could easily have come from a sample of African-Americans speaking about their own country. It is when we turn to personal relationships and opinions about where Britain is headed in its ethnic relations that fundamental differences between the two societies emerge. There was striking agreement among a majority (54 percent whites, 57 percent blacks and 52 percent Asians) that Britain is a more tolerant place today than it was ten years ago.

One remarkable feature of British ethnic attitudes which marks it sharply off from the Americas, especially the United States, is the finding, confirmed by another recent poll, that white Britons express *more* liberal attitudes in those areas where there are higher proportions of immigrants and black British (*Economist* 2003). As *The Economist* observes, "assimilation has done a lot to dissolve prejudice." This is in stark contrast with the United States where a large number of polls and academic studies have confirmed what is now a virtual sociological truism: that the greater the proportion of blacks in a metropolitan area or state, the greater tends to be the level of prejudice and segregation.³⁶

Returning to the BBC poll, we come upon another distinctive feature of British ethno-somatic attitudes and relations. When asked if their circle of friends included people from different ethnic backgrounds, a half of all whites, 82 percent of Asians and 87 percent of blacks said yes. Attitudes towards intermarriage seem consistent with the observed behavior of the different ethnic groups. Only 46 percent of both whites and Asians said they would marry or have a relationship with someone "from a different race" whereas 71 percent of blacks said that they would. However, very few whites (9 percent) said they would oppose the marriage of a child to someone of another ethno-somatic group (an inconceivable response anywhere in the Americas) and there was overwhelming agreement that there was either some or a lot of tolerance for mixed marriages in Britain.

If this trend, in conjunction with the high rates of intermarriage between blacks and white British, continues the Afro-British population of Caribbean ancestry, for all its cultural verve and assertions of black consciousness, will be absorbed into the mainstream British population over the course of the next three or so generations. Ironically, the very cultural vitality that now informs its identity, will contribute to its integration, since it is precisely what appeals most to the dominant popular

culture which rapidly adopts it.³⁷ Britain will have solved this part of its “racial problem” by one of its most ancient methods: through physical absorption and cultural appropriation. Before that day arrives, however, the Afro-Caribbean population will find itself in the paradoxical situation of experiencing serious problems of unemployment, poverty, crime, and racism, even as it fades into the lower-and lower middle reaches of the British populace.

It is worth noting that an almost identical pattern of high inter-marriage and high levels of assimilation among the second generation are found among black immigrants in the Netherlands from the Dutch Caribbean, especially Suriname (Mollenkopf 2002).³⁸

Conclusion

We have argued that there are four major contexts in which blacks in Europe and the Americas live. Nonetheless, striking continuities are still to be found among them. Variations in their present condition result from the interplay of these different contexts and underlying uniformities.

Let us first briefly summarize the uniformities. We may roughly distinguish between uniformities that are primarily external in origin (i.e., externally imposed or resulting mainly from their disadvantaged socioeconomic condition) and those that emerge mainly from internal patterns of behavior and attitudes, although it should be clear that the two are closely related, both historically and contemporaneously.³⁹ Throughout the Atlantic Basin, being black is still socially significant, and racism remains a major problem, although the consequence of this for their life chances vary from Latin America, at one extreme in which it is usually economically catastrophic, to the West Indies, where its impact is now largely confined to intimate relations. Throughout the Atlantic communities, also, blacks and African-ancestry people are disproportionately among the poorest groups and have the least opportunities for advancement. Everywhere they are disproportionately among the least educated, the worst housed, the least healthy and have the lowest life expectancies at birth. Throughout the Atlantic Basin blacks are incarcerated at rates that are usually more than twice that of other groups. This is in part due to the fact that they commit a greater proportion of crimes, but of equal importance is the fact that behaviors they are more likely to engage in tend to be criminalized to a far greater degree by the dominant white classes, the most egregious instance of which being the radically different sentences meted out to crack as opposed to powdered cocaine users in America. And apart from the non-Hispanic Caribbean, blacks throughout the Atlantic tend to be racially profiled and harassed by police forces

whose members tend to exhibit greater levels of racism and Negrophobia than their populations at large.

The internal uniformities are equally striking. Throughout the Atlantic blacks experience significantly higher rates of criminal victimization, usually at the hands of fellow blacks. As noted above, they also commit a disproportionately higher number of crimes, even after taking account of the greater tendency to criminalize their antisocial behaviors. Poverty and racial discrimination cannot explain much of this. Its origin is, rather, another major internal uniformity among all black communities of the Atlantic Basin: the fragility of their families and deep tensions in their gender relations. Throughout, we find far lower rates of marriage or stable cohabitational unions, far higher rates of union disruption where these do occur, far lower rates of re-marriage, far higher rates of single status among adults over thirty, extremely high rates of lone-parent, female-headed households, high rates of paternal abandonment, and resulting child-rearing arrangements in which over 60 percent of children are being brought up without the emotional or material security of their fathers.

However, the internal cultural adaptation of blacks to their Atlantic environments have resulted in a uniform pattern of disproportionate contributions to their respective national cultures. Much of what is distinctive culturally in the Latin societies where they reside are the outcome of syncretic constructions in which the African element is usually prominent. This is certainly true of the music, religion, dance, and literature of Afro-Latin societies. The case of the United States is unusual, but of great importance. Blacks, though a mere 13 percent of the population, have a powerful, sometimes predominant influence on the nation's popular culture – its sports, dance, popular music, fashion, literature, theatre, TV, and film – and were the primary creators of the nation's pre-eminent contribution to the world's heritage of advanced civilized practice, namely jazz. The fact that America is now not only the world's only superpower, but the major source of the emerging global popular culture has meant that the disproportionate black influence at its source is now rapidly being diffused as a primary global cultural agent.

Let us, finally, turn to a summary of the ways in which the black experience differs in the four socioeconomic and political environments we have distinguished. Each has its own distinctive configuration of constraints and opportunities, depending on the class and color of blacks we are considering. For those born in the elite and upper-middle classes, as well as the most talented of the upwardly mobile, the non-Hispanic Caribbean apart from Haiti offers the best prospects for African-ancestry people. Only here do blacks dominate the elites and control the economic and political course of the nations in which they live. But as we have seen,

these are all precarious economic systems, increasingly dependent on the American giant hovering over them. The mass of black people in most of these societies are impoverished and, other than an insecure life in their large informal and underground economic sectors, external migration is often their only hope. In seizing this opportunity, whether legally or illegally, they have created transnational systems which, contrary to current sociological views, have long been in the making. While these systems undoubtedly benefit those who participate in them, it is still not clear what their consequences are for those in the region who are not directly participating in them.

North America, especially the United States, undoubtedly offers the best prospects for the greatest number of blacks. Located in the wealthiest and most powerful country in the world, with an articulate and politically skilled leadership, with a vibrant and sophisticated culture that is, as we just noted, the foundation of the entire nation's popular culture, the majority of black Americans enjoy a level of income, and have opportunities, that are almost unimaginable anywhere in Latin America and in most regions of the black Caribbean. In recent years, too, black Americans have begun to penetrate the upper ruling and entrepreneurial elites of the country in numbers and proportions that now go well beyond mere tokenism. At the same time, the bottom quarter of the black population seems trapped in concentrated urban and rural ghettos of poverty and despair. Identity politics and ethno-racial mobilization, which has served the group well in its successful struggle for inclusion over the past four decades, may well now be on the verge of becoming a liability. A too racialized interpretation of their problems obscures the recognition of profound internal issues that thwart the acquisition of educational skills by youth of the lower classes that are essential for survival in a post-industrial society. Recent research suggests that even middle-class black Americans, especially young men, now risk being ensnared by these self-destructive processes.

Without doubt, Latin America is presently the very worst environment for black people of the Atlantic. They are at the bottom of land-starved rural wastelands and desolate urban barrios. They are denied all entry to the leadership of their societies in a systematic pattern of total racist exclusion that remnant of South Africa's former apartheid regime, Trapped in the self-denigrating psycho-phenotypic miasma of *blanqueamiento*; obscured and diverted by mass pageantry, carnivals, saints and spirits, and the Orwellian double-speak of "racial democracy"; blacks in Latin America – for all but the lightest *trigueros*, *mulatinha*-, and *acastanhada*-colored – are truly the wretched of the earth.⁴⁰

For the working classes and poor, Europe is without doubt the best environment for black people. While disproportionately placed at or near the bottom of the class system, blacks in these welfare states are at least ensured minimum standards of living and are spared the indignity of homelessness and the class- as well as racial contempt for the “losers” at the bottom found elsewhere in the Atlantic Basin. At the same time, as we have argued, it seems unlikely that there is a long-term future for blacks, especially black Caribbean people, at least in Britain. For some, this may be all for the good: racial tensions will have abated, and the melanin-impooverished British gene pool could use the infusion. For others, especially those engaged in the promotion and celebration of black identity, this may seem like a “racial” nightmare.

NOTES

1. This classification builds on earlier comparative work, most of which will be cited below. For now I wish to acknowledge the classic earlier individual and collected studies which shaped my thinking on the subject: Frazier 1957, Wagley 1957, Harris 1964, Smith 1965, Hoetink 1967, Franklin 1968, Morner 1970, Lowenthal 1972.
2. This portrait is based on annual reports of the UN Population Division, 1999; various national censuses; and annual reports of the US Department of State, 1999.
3. The 1980 Brazilian census counted 53.3 million of the nation's 119 million people as persons of African ancestry. However, it is generally acknowledged that these official reports grossly underestimate the true count because of Brazilians' tendency to overemphasize their “whiteness.” Estimates by Afro-Brazilian scholars place the proportion as high as 75 percent, or more than 100 million persons. See, Andrews (1991: 2).
4. Manning 1982, 1989. But see Eltis 1991, who suggests that the economic impact was minor.
5. See Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services 2002.
6. For a detailed discussion on the USA, see Patterson 1998: Chapter 1; on Jamaica, see Patterson 1967 and Dorsey 1995.
7. For a still valuable discussion of the late emergence of this mode and the complex reasons for it, see Williamson 1980, see also Davis 1993, Dominguez 1986.
8. See Hoetink 1967, for a discussion of variations between the Latin and Non-Latin Caribbean, as well as variations within the Latin system.
9. For classic accounts on Jamaica, see Henriques 1950, Smith 1965, Stone 1973; on the black Caribbean generally, see Lowenthal 1992.
10. On Trinidad, see Yelvington 1993, Ryan 1972; and on Guyana, Premdas 1996.
11. For what is still one of the best accounts, see Hoetink 1967. Of more recent studies, see Carrion 1997; and Oostindie 1996.

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12. While there is little disagreement that racist attitudes have declined in the USA there is still a considerable debate about the extent of this decline and the new forms that racism has taken over recent decades. My own interpretation of the abundant data tend to be more optimistic than others. See Lawrence Bobo [REFERENCE TO COME]
13. See, for example, Rodriguez 1992, Omi and Winant 1996, Vickerman 1999.
14. For one thing, it lumps all persons of Hispanic ancestry into a single category, which many consider sociologically questionable. The category "Hispanic" like "Asian" is largely the construction of the American Census Bureau, one that has been eagerly embraced by Latino and Asian political leaders anxious to play the politics of numbers.
15. See Schuck 2003.
16. All figures are from the US Census Bureau (2002). For a brief profile, see McKinnon 2003.
17. See Patterson (1967); Jencks (1998).
18. See, however, Jargowsky (1998), who emphasizes the critical additional role of economic segregation as opposed to purely racial factors.
19. I have examined these issues at great length in a recent study. See Patterson 1998: 3–167.
20. Overall, black women are 67 percent more likely to report incidents of intimate violence. In the mid-seventies black men killed their girl-friends at 6.5 times the rate of nonblacks and their wives at 7.5 times the white rate. More remarkable, however, was the fact that black women were driven to kill their lovers and their husbands at a greater rate than girlfriends and husbands were being killed by black men. The rate at which irate black women were killing both lovers and husbands was 18 times greater than that of their white sisters. Since then, mercifully, the rates have declined dramatically by over 75 percent for both genders, as have the black–white differences, although they remain substantial. US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics (2002).
21. There is a mushrooming, and very contentious, literature from scholars in the region. See Miller 1991, Momammed and Perkins 1998.
22. See Foner (2001), Cordero-Guzman, Smith, and Grosfoguel (2001).
23. See, for example, Waters 1994; see also Mary Waters and Peggy Levitt (2001).
24. See, for example, Foner (2001).
25. See Sullivan and Gilbertson 1990, Model 1991.
26. Here I am in complete disagreement with Ira Katsnelson who argues that both Britain and America are racially stratified societies (Katsnelson 1973: 199).
27. See Peach (this volume).
28. I have drawn on the on-line publications of the British Office of National Statistics for 2001 and more recent data as well as the two valuable collections of papers based on the 1991 census: Coleman and Salt 1996; Peach 1996. In addition to works cited separately, I have also found the following useful: Anwar and Roach (1998), Luthra 1981, Husband 1987, Skellington 1992, Goulbourne 1998, Goulbourne 1990.

29. Racial harassment by the police, while it has abated somewhat after a series of high-profile scandals, remains a serious problem in British interethnic relations. See Clancy 2001; for one of the most detailed, locality-based studies of the problem see Hess et al. 1992.
30. See Cohen 1994: Chapter 1. The Irish may seem to be an exception here. See the chapter on the group in this volume. However, it is hard to say just how much assimilation of the Irish has taken place, since earlier generations may have become wholly absorbed but were quickly replaced by new immigrants, given the open borders between England and Ireland.
31. For an analysis critical of the British school system, see Troyna 1988. For a different approach see Heath and McMahon 1996 and the paper by the same authors in this volume.
32. See Berrington 1996, Murphy 1996.
33. For the earlier period of police lawlessness and irresponsible racialization of minor offences, see Hall et al. (1978); on the 1980s see, Carr-Hill and Drew (1988). For the standard social science account of more recent developments, see FitzGerald and Hale (1996).
34. For a somewhat understated comparison, see Model and Fisher (2002).
35. See James and Harris (1993).
36. Indeed, American sociologists have restated this observation as a sociological law in a well-known theory of ethnic relations. See, for example, Blalock (1970).
37. The process of cultural infusion began within a few years of the arrival of the first postwar wave of migrants, a process I observed and discussed in an early paper (see, Patterson 1966). On more recent developments, see Paul Gilroy's fascinating discussion of the rise and decline of Jamaican Rastafarianism in the UK and the influence of Black British youth on British punk (Gilroy 1987: Chapter 4).
38. John Mollenkopf, 2002.
39. For a more detailed discussion of this distinction and the ways they interact, see Patterson (2000).
40. *trigueros*, Spanish: literally "wheat-hued"; *mulatinha*, Brazilian Portuguese: literally a lighter-hued white negro; *acastanhada*, Brazilian Portuguese: literally cashew-colored; *alva*, Brazilian Portuguese, "pure white"; *bem-branca*, Brazilian Portuguese, "very white." As noted earlier, The Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics found 134 racial terms for describing different color and physical combinations on the path to whiteness in Brazil. This was not a joke, but the results of a serious, well-designed study by one of the nation's most reputable research institutes.

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