



Coleman-King, C. (2014). *The (re-)making of a black American: Tracing the racial and ethnic socialization of black immigrant youth from the Caribbean.*

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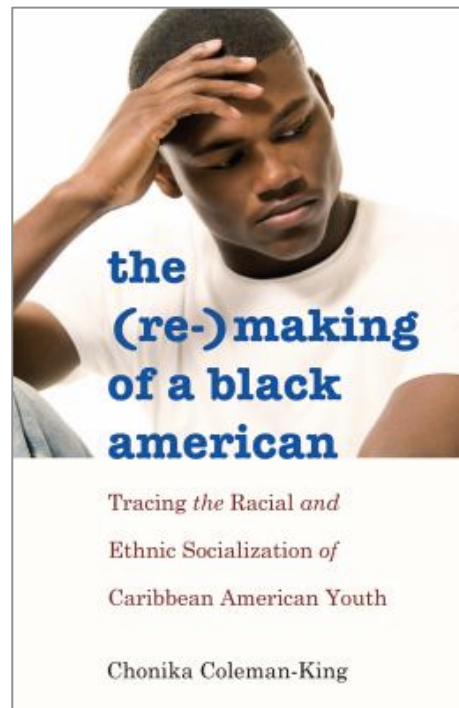
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Introduction

The author of this work opens up this book by attempting to dismantle the subject of race as a social construct. This is done by examining her own personal experiences as a Caribbean American. She laments about Caribbean culture not being represented in the school curriculum or having her culture acknowledged through elementary and middle school. Many of the experiences she expressed are similar to what ethnic minorities that often immigrate to the United States within educational institutions.

Body of the Work

The author goes on to describe her study of the cultural and racial experiences at a local school with an 11% population of Caribbean students. Each subsequent chapter describes the actual research study and the findings. Implications for this research study are discussed and delineated throughout this text. In *Chapter One – Historical Contexts, Transnationalism, and Race in the United States* the author discusses past research regarding identity development of Caribbean immigrant youth. In *Chapter Two – Life Narratives:*



Identities in Transition the author provides up close narrative case portraits of the parents of the children participating in this research study. In *Chapter Three – E(race)ing Socialization: Transnational Scripts, Ethnic Socialization, and Getting Ahead in America* and *Chapter Four – Caribbean Immigrants, Racism, and Racial Socialization* documents how Caribbean parents survive as immigrants and socialize their children regarding race within the United States. In *Chapter Five – Racial Socialization at Morristown Middle School: What Caribbean American Students Learn About Race and Racism by Way of the “Not So Hidden” Curriculum* documents the dual school experiences of Caribbean immigrant youth. In *Chapter Six – Converging Identities and Realities: Finding One’s Place in the Home, School, and World* the author discusses the dual or double consciousness of Caribbean youth and their experiences with identity development, socialization at school, and cultural experiences as home. In *Chapter Seven – The (Re-) Making of a Black American: Findings, Implications, and Recommendations* the author concludes the text by discussing the impact this research will have on future research studies.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Text

Much of the discourse in the introduction in the text ignores a great deal of history, cultural differences among Black Americans in general. There was little discussion about language differences; slave trading from Africa to the Caribbean to the U.S. African Americans within the United States is a broad category for people that represent many different cultures and experiences that include cultures such as Creole and Gullah. Some of the languages widely spoken include Spanish dialects, French dialects, Pidgin, Creole, Gullah, AAVE, Swahili, and native African languages. These languages are reflective of the cultural heritage of Africans Americans currently in the U.S. The author posits that this work is written from a transnational perspective. However, there appears to be no information contained in this work regarding the transnational slave trade and the African diaspora. This includes the experiences of Africans across the world over. From Australia to the West Indies and Brazil to the Philippines, there were enslaved Africans shipped all over the world. Most enslaved Africans have cultural experiences different

and distinct from the current populations in control over the continent where they reside. This is why it was puzzling to read the authors conclusion regarding the abolishment of slavery in 1833 in the West Indies vs. the abolishment of Slavery in the U.S. in 1865. The author posits that not much had changed in the U.S. However, during Reconstruction in the U.S. from 1865-1877 newly freed African slaves founded all black towns and had their own economic system and they self-governed all over the United States. Additionally, there appeared to be no information pertaining to the slave trade in New York that had slaves from the Caribbean. In fact, Caribbean's were not allowed to emigrate or immigrate in large numbers to the United States until after the Civil War in 1865 and not in large numbers until the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The author does however create an excellent case for exploring the importance of educating Caribbean children by recognizing and embracing their culture. Through this work the author paves the way for more work to be done in this area and for discussion to emerge about the broad classification of black American as a racial category. In the future, I expect this work to be a catalyst for more research on Caribbean American students in the K-12 educational system in the U.S.

Overall Thoughts

The author of this work has done something that few people in academia have been able to do successfully in relation to explaining the implications of race, social class, immigration, and academic experiences of minority youth. This work has created a space to show how immigrants from the Caribbean that often enter the United States with high hopes similar to their European counterparts are socialized in often negative ways that impact their children within educational institutions.

Educational Implications

This work is groundbreaking and should be read in academic programs such as African American Studies, Education, Sociology, and History. This work is timely since Caribbean-American Heritage Month is now a national United States holiday in June and has

been since 2005. The next phase of implementation in schools will have to include educating teachers, providing resources, and revamping current teaching materials to include the cultural and racial backgrounds of Caribbean historical figures in the United States. For example, there will be inclusion from current historical figures and artists such as Colin Powell, Eric Holder, Cicely Tyson, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Sidney Poitier, Harry Belafonte, Lenny Kravitz, and Maxwell to name a few. The increased population of Caribbean families in the U.S. has created an influx of new Black Americans with varying cultural norms and historical experiences. Thus, the way in which students are taught about the history of Caribbean's in the U.S. will have to be altered to include a more accurate view of history.

About the Reviewer


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